HEARING TO CONSIDER THE NOMINATION OF
GENERAL JOSEPH F. DUNFORD, JR., USMC, TO BE
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

Thursday, July 9, 2015

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:33 a.m. in Room SH-216, Hart Senate Office Building, Hon. John McCain, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Committee Members Present: Senators McCain [presiding], Inhofe, Sessions, Wicker, Ayotte, Fischer, Cotton, Ernst, Tillis, Sullivan, Lee, Graham, Cruz, Reed, Nelson, McCaskill, Manchin, Shaheen, Gillibrand, Blumenthal, Donnelly, Hirono, Kaine, and Heinrich.
OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN MCCAIN, U.S. SENATOR
FROM ARIZONA

Chairman McCain: Well, good morning.

The Senate Armed Services Committee meets today to consider the nomination of General Joseph Dunford to be the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

General Dunford is certainly no stranger to the members of this committee. We have known him as Commandant of the Marine Corps and our commander in Afghanistan and many posts before that. He is a warrior and a leader of the highest quality, and we are grateful for his 38 years of distinguished service.

We are also thankful for the sacrifices General Dunford’s family has made over the years and their willingness to lend him to the Nation in service once again. As is our tradition, at the beginning of your testimony, we welcome you, General Dunford, to introduce the members of your family joining you this morning. I would, however, like to take this moment to express our special thanks to your wife Ellyn. We know how much of your husband’s service and his future absence will rest on you and we honor the sacrifices you are making through your continued support to our Nation, not to mention the downgrade in your residence that will be part of this.

[Laughter.]
Chairman McCain: The next Chairman will have to prepare our military to confront the most diverse and complex array of global crises since the end of World War II.

In Iraq and Syria, ISIL’s terrorist army has continued to succeed on the battlefield, including taking Ramadi and other key terrain in Iraq, capturing over half the territory in Syria, and controlling every border post between Iraq and Syria. The lack of a coherent strategy has resulted in the spread of ISIL around the world to Libya, Egypt, Nigeria, and even to Afghanistan where I visited last weekend.

There, our troops are supporting our Afghan partners in sustaining a stable and democratic future. But even as ISIL and the Taliban threaten this future, the President remains committed to a drastic reduction in U.S. presence at the end of 2016 before the Afghan government and security forces are fully capable of operating effectively without our support. This would create a security vacuum, and we have seen what fills similar kinds of vacuums in Syria and Iraq. Given your experience in Afghanistan, General Dunford, we will be interested to hear your thoughts about the appropriate U.S. and coalition presence going forward.

Meanwhile, Iran continues to threaten peace and stability across the Middle East through its support of terrorist proxies, pursuit of nuclear weapons, and
development of missiles needed to deliver them to targets far beyond its shores.

In Europe, Vladimir Putin’s Russia continues its onslaught in Ukraine. But even as Russian troops and equipment execute this neo-imperial campaign to undermine Ukraine’s government and independence, the United States has refused Ukraine the weapons it needs and deserves for its defense.

In the Asia-Pacific, China is continuing a pattern of destabilizing behavior, its reclamation and militarization of vast land features in the South China Sea, its continued military buildup designed to counter U.S. military strengths, and its blatant and undeterred cyber attacks against the United States. While our rebalance to the Asia-Pacific has shown some successes, especially in deepening of our alliances, this policy has not deterred China from its increasingly assertive course.

And yet, while worldwide challenges like these grow, the Defense Department has grown larger but less capable, more complex but less innovative, more proficient at defeating low-tech adversaries but more vulnerable to high-tech ones. And worse, the self-inflicted wounds of the Budget Control Act and sequestration-level defense spending have made all of these problems worse.

Army and Marine Corps end strength is dropping
dangerously low. The Air Force is the oldest and the
smallest that it has ever been. The Navy’s fleet is
shrinking to pre-World War I levels. With the present
operational tempo and drastic reductions to defense
spending, we will continue the downward spiral of military
capacity and readiness that will compromise each service’s
ability to execute our Defense Strategic Guidance at a time
of accumulating danger to our national security.

Budget cuts have also slowed critical modernization
priorities, imperiling our Nation’s ability to preserve its
military technological advantage. This is not just about
the weapons systems we hear the most about, fighter
aircraft, submarines, or armored vehicles. These are
important, but budget cuts also threaten our ability to
seize the future and make vital investments in cyber, space,
and breakthrough technologies such as directed energy,
autonomous vehicles, and data analytics.

The current Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has
stated that even if the Defense Department receives the
additional $38 billion above the budget caps that the
President’s defense budget requests, our military would
still, quote, “remain at the lower ragged edge of manageable
risk in our ability to execute the defense strategy.” More
worrisome, every one of our military service chiefs,
yourself included, has testified that continued
sequestration-level defense spending puts American lives at greater risk. Unless we change course, eliminate sequestration, and return to strategy-driven defense budgets, I fear our military will confront depleted readiness, chronic modernization problems, and deteriorating morale.

No matter how many dollars we spend, we will not be able to provide our military the equipment they need with a broken defense acquisition system that takes too long and costs too much. With this year’s National Defense Authorization Act, this committee has embarked on a major effort to reform this system, including ways to empower our service leaders to manage their own programs in exchange for greater accountability. General Dunford, we are very interested in hearing your views about improving the defense acquisition system based on your years of service.

Finally, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is the principal military advisor to the President. More than ever, we need an honest and forthright leader that offers his best and unvarnished military advice. The President will not always take your advice, but it is my hope that he will always have an appreciation of the military dimensions of the difficult problems our Nation confronts with you at his side.

Thank you for your willingness to serve once more. We
1 look forward to your testimony.
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3 Senator Reed?
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STATEMENT OF HON. JACK REED, U.S. SENATOR FROM RHODE ISLAND

Senator Reed: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Let me join you in welcoming General Dunford and to take this opportunity to thank him for his extraordinary service to the Nation. During his 38 years of military service, General Dunford has served with courage and distinction, and I am confident he will continue to do so as the next Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Finally, let me also recognize and thank his family. Ellyn, thank you. Patrick, thank you for being here today. I know Joe and Kathleen wanted to be here, but they are serving elsewhere. But thank you very much for what you have done to serve the Nation and the Marine Corps.

Last week, the current Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Dempsey, released the 2015 National Military Strategy. In his forward, General Dempsey stated that the current "global security environment is the most unpredictable" he has seen during his military service and that "global disorder has significantly increased while some of our comparative military advantage has begun to erode."

Without question, the United States faces a wide range of challenges around the world. If confirmed as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, you will be advising the President and the Secretary of Defense on these complex
international issues facing our national interests.

Possibly the gravest and most complex issue for the next Chairman will be countering the security threat from ISIL in Iraq and Syria and its spread beyond the Middle East region. As the President said earlier this week, our counter-ISIL campaign will be long-term and employ all elements of American power, including military, intelligence, diplomatic, and economic.

And if confirmed, General Dunford, you will be responsible for advising on the U.S. military's role in supporting our broader counter-ISIL campaign, including denying ISIL safe havens and building the capacity of local forces to counter ISIL, with training, assistance, and air support from the international coalition. The success of these efforts will ultimately depend on a broader, complementary effort to address the conditions that gave rise to ISIL and allowed it to thrive. I look forward to hearing your views on the situation in Iraq and Syria and your thinking on the most effective role the military can play in supporting efforts on the diplomatic front.

Regarding Iran, while there remains no clear outcome to the P5 Plus 1 negotiations over Iran’s nuclear program, no matter what happens, the Department of Defense will play a key role in reaffirming our shared priorities with our partners in the region, confronting common threats, and
working to deescalate or, where possible, resolve these threats.

General Dunford, if confirmed, you will also bring invaluable experience to oversight of the Department’s missions in Afghanistan where you have led the U.S. and coalition forces with distinction. While the Afghan Security Forces have fought courageously against Taliban attacks, more needs to be done to build the Afghan forces’ capabilities and deny any safe haven for extremists. The next Chairman will play a critical role in the President’s review later this year of the size and footprint of U.S. forces in Afghanistan for 2016 and beyond.

Another security challenge going forward will be deterring additional Russian aggression toward Ukraine and its European neighbors and reinforcing the Minsk ceasefire accords. Congress has made clear its support of military assistance to Ukraine, including defensive weapons, to help the Ukrainian people defend their sovereignty and territorial integrity. We will be interested in your views of the security situation in Ukraine and what additional steps you would recommend for assisting Russia’s neighbors in protecting themselves from the kinds of hybrid warfare tactics employed in Crimea and eastern Ukraine.

Our men and women in uniform remain the committee’s top concern, and I know they are your top concern also. Our
armed forces are nothing without its people, and the Department continues to juggle the twin goals of providing a high quality of life through fair pay and compensation and exceptional service through adequate levels of training and equipping. In my view, it is incumbent on Congress and the Nation to provide a sufficiently sized, trained, and equipped military of the necessary quality of character and talent to meet national defense requirements. Sometimes that means making hard choices, especially in the budget constrained environment we find ourselves.

To that end, as you well know from your time as Commandant, the Department and Congress have for several years considered various proposals for changes in compensation and health care to slow the growth of personnel costs so that those savings can be redirected to buy back readiness and modernization benefits. I would be particularly interested in your views on such proposals and the impact if such changes are not enacted.

Now, during consideration of the fiscal year 2016 National Defense Authorization Act, this committee had a robust debate on how best to fund defense programs. And I have repeatedly stated that sequestration is not the approach that we need to address our Nation’s fiscal challenges, and more pointedly, it undermines our national military readiness. Defense budgets should be based on our
long-term military strategy -- that is the point the chairman made very eloquently -- not sequestration-level budget caps. Even a 1-year increase in OCO spending does not provide DOD with the certainty and stability it needs when building its 5-year budget. As a consequence, this instability undermines the morale of our troops and their families who want to know that their futures are planned for more than 1 year at a time and the confidence of our defense industry partners we rely on to provide the best technologies available to our troops. I hope you will share your thoughts on this topic with the committee today.

General Dunford, thank you again for your willingness to serve our Nation. I look forward to discussing these issues.

Chairman McCain: General, before your statement, there are standard questions that the committee always asks of military nominees. So we have always done that, and so I would like to proceed with that before your testimony.

In order to exercise its legislative and oversight responsibilities, it is important that this committee and other appropriate committees of the Congress are able to receive testimony, briefings, and other communications of information. Have you adhered to applicable laws and regulations governing conflicts of interest?

General Dunford: I have, Chairman.
Chairman McCain: Do you agree, when asked, to give your personal views, even if these views differ from the administration in power?

General Dunford: I do, Chairman.

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

General Dunford: I have not.

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

General Dunford: I will, Chairman.

Chairman McCain: Will you cooperate in providing witnesses and briefers in response to congressional requests?

General Dunford: I will, Chairman.

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

General Dunford: They will.

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

General Dunford: I do, Chairman.

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

General Dunford: Yes, Chairman.

Chairman McCain: Thank you very much for complying
with that formality. Thank you. Please proceed with your
testimony.
STATEMENT OF GENERAL JOSEPH F. DUNFORD, JR., USMC, TO
BE CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

General Dunford: Chairman McCain, Ranking Member Reed, distinguished members of the committee, good morning and thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am truly honored to be nominated as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I want to thank the President and the Secretary of Defense for their confidence in me, and I want to recognize General Dempsey and his wife Deanie for their extraordinary service to our Nation, our men and women in uniform and our military families.

Joining me today is my wife Ellyn and our son Patrick. Our son Joe and Kathleen were not able to be here. Ellyn has been a great mother to our children and has served as a tireless advocate for military families. I refer to her as the MVP in the family. Her sense of humor, flexibility, and endurance have been tested in over 30 years as a military spouse, and I would not be here today without her love and support.

I would like to begin by thanking the committee for your commitment to our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines. Due to your support, they comprise the most well trained, well equipped, and capable military force in the world.

As I appear before you this morning, I am mindful of
the complexity and volatility of the current security
environment. Chairman, you mentioned that. This committee
is also well aware of the pressing challenges we face in
Europe, the Pacific, the Middle East, Africa, space, and
cyberspace. While dealing with these and other issues, we
also face the need to restore readiness and modernize the
joint force in the context of fiscal challenges and budget
uncertainty.

If confirmed, I will provide the Secretary of Defense
and the President with my best military advice in a full
range of military options for addressing the current and
future challenges to our national security.

When asked, I will provide the Congress with my best
military advice. And when delivering best military advice,
I will do so with candor.

I will also work with the Joint Chiefs, our civilian
leaders, and members of the committee to maintain a joint
force that is capable of securing our national interest
today and tomorrow.

Most importantly, if confirmed, I will dedicate myself
to properly leading, representing, and keeping faith with
the men and women in uniform and our civilian workforce who
volunteer to serve our Nation.

Thank you again for allowing me to appear this morning,
and I am prepared for your questions.
[The prepared statement of General Dunford follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]
Chairman McCain: Thank you very much, General.

The day before yesterday, we received testimony that so far with $500 million committed, there have been 60 individuals who have been trained to go into Syria and fight against ISIS. What do you know about that particular situation?

General Dunford: Chairman, what I know is that we have got Major General Mike Nagata who has been working that for some months. Those numbers are certainly much less than what he estimated. The feedback I have received is those numbers are largely attributable to the vetting process, that they think they have learned some things during the process of these first 60. They have made some other contacts. But, frankly, Chairman, until I have an opportunity to get on the ground and speak to the commanders, what I really know about that now is secondhand.

Chairman McCain: Do you believe that we should be getting a pledge from these recruits that they will only fight against ISIS and not Bashar Assad?

General Dunford: Chairman, what I understand right now is that we do not have the authority to take action against Assad’s forces. So unless that policy would change, then that pledge would be required.

Chairman McCain: Given your experience in the military, do you think it is a good idea to train people and
send them into a conflict to be attacked and barrel-bombed by another entity and not defending them?

General Dunford: Chairman, I do not. If we train those individuals and they go back into Syria to fight, then I think we need to -- if we expect them to be successful, we need to provide them with enabling capability that will allow them to be successful.

Chairman McCain: In other words, prevent them from being barrel-bombed by Bashar Assad, which is routine now?

General Dunford: I think, Chairman, we need to provide them with a full range of capability for them to be successful.

Chairman McCain: I recently was over in Afghanistan over the Fourth of July, and there is great concern both amongst our military and with Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah and other Afghans about the present proposal to have our force in Afghanistan down to a, quote, embassy-centric force by 2017, meaning that we would be giving up or turning over our bases in Bagram, Kandahar, and a force that is only based in the U.S. embassy. A great concern was voiced concerning this plan or articulated, announced plan by the President of the United States.

As you know, the Taliban did not respect the non-fighting season. As you know, the Afghan casualties are extremely high, higher than they have ever been. And we now
have ISIS getting a hold, and we also have the Iranians providing Taliban with weapons.

Is this a wise decision on your part to have a calendar-day withdrawal of American troops rather than a conditions-based withdrawal? Given your background and experience there, I think you are probably pretty well qualified to make that judgment.

General Dunford: Chairman, I am aware of the consequences of our mission, the importance of our mission in Afghanistan, and clearly I also have a degree of personal commitment, having spent time there. I can assure you, if I am confirmed, I will provide advice to the President that will allow us to meet our desired end state, and I think that that will be based on the conditions on the ground, as you have articulated.

Chairman McCain: Rather than a calendar-based decision.

General Dunford: Chairman, my experience has been that sometimes the assumptions that you make do not obtain particularly with regard to time, and that is certainly the case in Afghanistan.

Chairman McCain: Thank you.

In Ukraine, it is obvious that the Russians continue their military buildup. I was in eastern Ukraine and watched the surveillance video that was made by the
Ukrainians showing the gradual buildup of Russian forces inside Ukraine.

Do you believe that we should give the Ukrainians with the counter-battery systems with which to defend themselves from mass Russian artillery and rocket strikes, and should we provide them with Javelin or TOW anti-tank missile systems to defeat the Russian T-90 tank parades?

General Dunford: Chairman, from a military perspective, I think it is reasonable that we provide that support to the Ukrainians. And frankly, without that kind of support, they are not going to be able to protect themselves against Russian aggression.

Chairman McCain: General Dunford, I just would like to repeat again my appreciation for your service, and I am confident that you will serve with distinction. And you are the principal military advisor to the President of the United States, and that is a unique role as designed in the 1947 act I believe. So I hope that you will keep in mind your obligation to the President but also to the men and women who are serving who we may have to send into harm’s way and make sure they are provided with the best capabilities.

And finally, I hope in answer to some of these questions, because I have run over time, you will talk about the devastating effects of sequestration on our ability to
defend the Nation. Maybe you will just make a brief comment on that now.

General Dunford: Chairman, I have dealt with the issue of sequestration as a service chief, and quite frankly, if we go into sequestration, we will be unable to support the current strategy that we have to protect our Nation. And quite honestly, the readiness of the joint force and modernization of the joint force will suffer, what I will describe and without exaggeration, catastrophic consequences.

Chairman McCain: I thank you, General Dunford.

Senator Reed?

Senator Reed: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Once again, thank you, General, for your service and your sacrifice.

Following a bit on Senator McCain’s final question about sequestration, the administration -- and Secretary Carter made this clear -- has adopted an anti-ISIL campaign with nine lines of effort, two principally controlled by the Department of Defense. Are you comfortable with that overall approach at this point?

General Dunford: Senator Reed, I am comfortable with that overall approach.

Senator Reed: The other lines of effort are controlled by other elements of the Government, State Department,
Homeland Security, et cetera. And apropos of Senator McCain’s question about effects of sequestration on the Department of Defense, are you concerned that these partners in this effort could be hamstrung just as much as you would be if the BCA went into effect for them?

General Dunford: Senator, very much so. And I would say that not only do we just represent two of the nine lines of effort, but we cannot be successful in either Iraq or Syria or, frankly, in any of our other endeavors without a whole-of-government approach.

Senator Reed: Let me just ask you since you are the expert. You were in Afghanistan. We had a significant military effort, but we also had a significant civilian agency effort, the State Department, FBI, Drug Enforcement Administration, all of these agencies. I would assume you considered them to be integral and essential parts of your effort, and without them or without their ability to provide resources, you could not have accomplished what you did. Is that fair?

General Dunford: Sir, I think it is absolutely fair. And although we have challenges remaining, I think we have accomplished quite a bit over the last few years, and from my perspective, that is because we have been able to integrate the capabilities of those organizations that you mentioned. In particular, I think the relationship that we
have with the State Department in Afghanistan was absolutely
critical to our success.

Senator Reed: One of the most difficult issues you
face is building the capacity of the Iraqi Security Forces,
and this has been an endeavor frankly that we have tried for
a long time. Do you have any sort of sense at this juncture
of what we can or should be doing differently of how do we
do this? We have heard colleagues come before the committee
-- your colleagues -- and suggest that there are gaps of
leadership at the upper levels. Just your perspectives on a
length of time and the efforts we have to undertake to get a
credible Iraqi force in the field, which will secure the
country.

General Dunford: Sir, with the caveat that I have been
away 11 months, but certainly, if confirmed, will go back
almost immediately, the areas of most concern were
intelligence, logistics, special operations capability, and
the aviation capability, and then more broadly the
ministerial capacity. Frankly, our estimates always were
that that was a long-term endeavor. It would take years to
grow the kind of capacity that we have in this country, and
frankly, what we are not trying to do is develop the
capability that we have in this country, something far less
than that, but the ability at the ministerial level, at the
minister of defense and the minister of the interior to
support tactical-level organizations. And so I think continue to stay the course in the plan that General Campbell has and recognizing that is going to require continued resources and patience is the way for us to be successful.

Senator Reed: Now, I focus for a moment -- I know your practical experience is Afghanistan and other places, but in Iraq there are the same capability problems. Does your analysis apply there also in terms of the long-term need to build up the Iraqi Security Forces and ministries?

General Dunford: Senator, it does. In some ways the situation is the same. There are also some vast differences. I think one of the biggest challenges in Iraq has been when Prime Minister Maliki was there, he eliminated many of the capable quality leaders that were in the Iraqi Security Forces. So I think at the tactical level, it is fair to say today the Afghan forces actually have some pretty solid leaders. We have seen them. We have developed them. They have gone to our schools. I feel pretty good about where we are with the Afghan leaders. I think we have some work to do to rebuild the Iraqi Security Forces, frankly to get them back to perhaps where they were a few years ago.

Senator Reed: There is one other aspect -- in fact, there are many aspects of the situation in Iraq, but one is
this tension, sectarian and geographic tensions in the country. But our policy is to support a unified government in Baghdad and work with them so that they are able to integrate their ethnic communities. Is that the approach that you think makes much sense?

General Dunford: Senator, that is going to be very difficult to do, but at this point I believe that is the best prospects for long-term success is a unified, multi-sectarian government in Iraq. Frankly, if confirmed, if at any point I no longer believe that is possible, then my advice to the President will be adjusted accordingly.

Senator Reed: Thank you very much, sir, and again, thank you for your service.

Chairman McCain: Senator Inhofe?

Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

In responding to one of the chairman’s questions, you were talking about you did not have the authority to go after Assad. Is that not what you said that you do not have the authority to go after Assad?

General Dunford: Senator, my understanding is that we do not have the legal authority at this time to go after the Assad regime, and it is also the policy of the administration not to go after the Assad regime militarily.

Senator Inhofe: Okay. Well, I think for the record I would like to have you expand a little bit on that as to
whether or not it would be desirable for you to have that authority.

[The information follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]
Senator Inhofe: We have been talking for a long time and with you also at these hearings about the amount of risk that we are at right now. You were quoted as saying our combatant commanders face increasing risk. So we are talking about the risk that is out there. And you know, risk equals lives. We talk about this in all these areas.

But how do you define too much risk? Are we there yet?

General Dunford: Senator, I believe today we are capable of providing adequate security to protect our national interests. I also believe that we are at the razor’s edge, and that has certainly been a subject of testimony several times before this committee is that our readiness level is at the point right now where were we to go below this level, we would have to adjust the ends of our strategy. We would no longer be able to support our strategy.

Senator Inhofe: And that is similar to the responses we get, whether it is General Odierno or any of the rest of them. They are very much concerned about the level of risk that we are accepting now that we never had to accept in the past.

In the Ukraine -- I am particularly sensitive to that. I happened to be there when they had the election that resulted in, for the first time in 96 years, no communists serving in their parliament.
We talked about what they really should be having there. Are there obstacles, if you were to make that determination, as to giving them more to defend themselves, the things that we agree that they should have? Is there an obstacle that we could help with, or do you think you have that authority now?

General Dunford: Senator, from a military perspective, additional capability to the Ukrainians would clearly help them to deal with both the separatist and the Russian threat in the Ukraine. There are some policy issues associated with that that do not fall into the DOD and military --

Senator Inhofe: Yes, I understand that and I appreciate that answer.

Kind of the same thing with the Kurds. Now, they have a need for, I guess, anti-armor, MRAP’s, and a lot of these things. I get two conflicting stories, one from some of the top people in charge saying that by sending through Baghdad, you have a problem in getting it up to the fight. And yet, I heard just yesterday from someone who is charge that that problem has been resolved now. Is that really resolved? Do we have a problem getting the equipment that they need up there and those fighters to effectively fight?

General Dunford: Senator, I watched carefully the hearing on Tuesday and the exchange that took place on this particular issue. You know, I have been briefed that in
fact the issues have been resolved and the support is
getting to the Kurds right away. But this would be one of
those issues that, if confirmed, again Iraq, Afghanistan,
and places where our young men and women are in harm’s way
would be the first places I would go to visit. This issue,
because it is so important, would be one issue that I would
look into personally.

Senator Inhofe: Good. I appreciate that.

In this morning’s “The Hill,” General Petraeus had a
couple quotes in there, and I will just read these. He said
we can schedule an end to our role in that -- talking about
Afghanistan -- in that nation’s conflict, but we cannot
schedule an end to the war there or an end to the threat
from Al Qaeda, the Islamic State, or other extremist
elements of the global jihad. Going to a zero option next
year would be playing roulette with Afghanistan’s future.

Is Petraeus right?

General Dunford: Sir, I think he is absolutely right
with regard to the war would continue whether or not we are
there or not, and I think you can assume that the war would
get worse were our presence not to be there. Again, my
assessment is that our presence ought to be based on the
conditions on the ground, and I will certainly go over there
and check those as soon as -- and if confirmed.

Senator Inhofe: Very good. Thank you very much.
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman McCain: Senator Nelson?

Senator Nelson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, ISIS with regard to Iraq and Syria. Would you generally ascribe to the fact that in Iraq it is going to require the Iraqis to have the will to fight to meet ISIS in Iraq and be successful?

General Dunford: Senator, our current campaign is dependent on the capabilities of the Iraqi Security Forces to deal with ISIL.

Senator Nelson: Go over to Syria. Now, that is a hodgepodge. How much do you think that the Assad regime staying in power would complicate the issue of us being able to take down ISIS in Syria?

General Dunford: Senator, my assessment is it plays a significant role. I think Assad’s brutality to his people was certainly the primary factor giving rise to ISIS is at least one of the assessments, and I ascribe to that particular assessment. And I think his remaining in power has certainly continued to inflame people and gives ISIS the recruits and the support that they need to operate inside of Syria.

Senator Nelson: I agree with that.

And then the question is, when do we really press to have some kind of political settlement for Assad to exit?
Do you have any thoughts on that?

General Dunford: Senator, I do not. I am not involved in the dialogue today in that regard. The political resolution is one of the lines of effort that is part of our overall strategy. And while I do not know, I would assume that today that issue is being addressed, and certainly if confirmed, I expect to be part of those conversations and know a bit more than I do today.

Senator Nelson: And, General, someone of your stature is going to be very comforting to us to have the confidence to know that those very tough decisions that will be made with regard to limiting the effectiveness and ultimately defeating ISIS will be made with you sitting there at the table giving counsel.

If you just look at a map of who is in control of Syria in the different geographical areas of Syria, it is a mess. And how you bring order -- thank you. Senator McCaskill has shown this is Syria and the different colors representing the different entities that in fact are in control in that geographic area. So it is comforting to know that you are going to be there giving your wise counsel.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman McCain: Senator Sessions?

Senator Sessions: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

General Dunford, with regard to the Budget Control Act,
which includes the sequester, the Budget Committee, the Armed Services Committee, with a bipartisan strong vote, has voted out legislation that will add, I believe, $23 billion above last year’s spending for the Defense Department. I believe the Appropriations Committee has already voted out that same spending level, and it is on the floor.

The problem is that the commander in chief, the President of the United States, is insisting on blocking that bill, encouraging Democrats to filibuster it until there is an agreement to spend an equal amount on non-defense. And I just believe that the fact that we have a crisis internationally and we need to spend more on defense does not require that this Nation spend more on non-defense. So that is the difficulty we face. You will be seeing more of that, I guess, as time goes by.

General Dunford, with regard to Iraq and this ISIS situation, is it not true that the threat in Iraq is not just a threat to Iraq but it implicates the national security interests of the United States and that we have a national security interest in blocking a takeover of Iraq by this extremist group ISIS that chops off heads and does other extreme things?

General Dunford: Senator, I would agree that the issue of ISIS has both regional issues -- it is creating regional instability, but absolutely we have U.S. national interests
in a stable Iraq that is not a sanctuary for extremists.

Senator Sessions: So I think it is a mistake sometimes to just sit back and say, well, we are going to wait on the Iraqi army to get its act together. We have trained the Iraqi army for over a decade. They have battalions and companies and organizations. They are not well led, and their morale is not good. But they have an army. The question is can we help encourage them to be more effective in fighting back against ISIS. Would you not agree?

General Dunford: I do agree with that, Senator. And I would just say, despite the challenges, we have had, as you know, some thousands of men and women from the United States Central Command that have been in Iraq and conducting strikes into Syria over the last year. And despite the challenges in pretty difficult conditions, I think they have had some accomplishments over the past year that we can be proud of. Clearly we are going to do more. I think Secretary Carter made that clear on Tuesday. Clearly we need to do more to assist the Iraqis in moving forward, and I think that is the plan.

Senator Sessions: Well, the President’s press conference 2 days ago did not encourage me and did not clarify in my mind that we have a good strategy for Iraq. And frankly, I think General Dempsey and Secretary Carter following up on that were not very persuasive either in
convincing me or the American people that we have a good plan.

Now, based on your experience, is it not a fact that if we had a limited number, just five, special forces embedded with an Iraqi battalion of 600, that that can give confidence to that battalion, help improve their morale, and help them be more effective on the battlefield?

Senator Sessions: Senator, it has been my experience that when U.S. forces have accompanied Iraqis -- or for that matter, my experience in Afghanistan -- that those units are more effective.

Senator Sessions: Well, General Dempsey said he has not yet recommended that we embed a limited number, a very small number, of such forces in the Iraqi army, but he would do so if he thought it was appropriate. Do you not think it is time for us to maybe move from being in Baghdad in headquarters and actually move out to help provide this kind of confidence, the air cover, the direction of munitions, giving confidence of resupply and American commitment? Is it not time for us to move forward in that direction?

General Dunford: Senator, without appearing to be evasive, what I really would like to do, if confirmed, is have the opportunity to get on the ground, speak to the commanders, and frankly provide a more comprehensive recommendation to how we can move the campaign forward in
Iraq without focusing on one or another of the factors.

Senator Sessions: Well, I hope you will do that quickly.

And just one more thing. Senator McCain warned yesterday that we could be facing the same situation that he warned about Iraq in 2011 when we pulled out prematurely. And now we are going to be facing this decision in Afghanistan. And I hope that you will be clear and firm in your recommendation to the President if you believe this plan we have today, date-specific withdrawal, is in error, and I hope you will do that. Will you do so if you think it is in error?

General Dunford: I will do that, Senator.

Senator Sessions: Thank you.

Chairman McCain: Senator McCaskill?

Senator McCaskill: Thank you.

My good friend and colleague, Senator Sessions, and I have worked together on matters of fiscal accountability and trying to spend less money, but I have a different take than he does on where we are in terms of the military budget.

I cannot figure out any reason why we would be putting the $40 billion increase into the war fund instead of into the base budget. I cannot think of any reason to do that other than one of misleading the American people about whether or not we are balancing something because that is
the only place they can put the money and not have to pay
for it. So they put it there so it did not have to be paid
for and completely short-changed national security for our
country in the form of cybersecurity, port security, airport
security, FBI, CIA, all of which I know you would
acknowledge, General Dunford, is a very important part of
the role of keeping America safe. Would you agree with
that?

General Dunford: Senator, I would absolutely agree
that all those organizations play an inextricable role in
keeping us safe.

Senator McCaskill: And let us make very clear, if in
fact we go down this path of pretending we are balancing
something by putting it in a fund that we do not have to pay
for, will in fact the OCO funds, or the war fund as I like
to call them -- will they do anything to avoid the force
structure cuts that are looming across our Nation if we do
not get off of this path of misleading the American people
about what we are balancing?

General Dunford: Senator, I think all of the service
chiefs that have to balance a budget and certainly me
included where I sit right now would much prefer that money
to be in the base budget because that provides a degree of
predictability that we can get after the two main issues
that we have to deal with. One is modernization of force,
and the other is to get the readiness back to a level that
we are comfortable with.

Senator McCaskill: So the cuts that we have seen this
week that General Odierno announced -- they are a drop in
the bucket as to what is coming if we continue on this
bizarre idea of putting all of this money in the war fund as
opposed to in the base budget where force strength belongs.
Correct?

General Dunford: If the budget level goes below what
has been requested in the President’s budget 2016, there
will be significant additional cuts made.

Senator McCaskill: Thank you.

You know how hard we have all worked on the problem of
sexual assault in the military. I am pleased that the
incidents are down. I am pleased that reporting is up. I
am pleased that the efforts that are being made to measure
victim satisfaction with command look good. I think it is
too early to declare success, obviously. We have a lot more
work to do.

But the thorny problem that remains, General, and one
that I really want to make sure you have at the top of your
list is retaliation. And I know that there have been some
initiatives begun, but I would like to see a written plan
from you as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs with all of the
chiefs signing off on what is your path to getting at this
culture. The problem is not, based on the survey, the command. The problem is primarily lower level command, unit command, and peer-to-peer, not that there may not be some outliers there, but that is the bulk of the problem. And that is a culture issue, and that means from the top.

I am disappointed that we have not had more prosecutions. Retaliation is a crime. I know it is new. I know people might be very reluctant to bring somebody up on those charges because of what that might mean within their unit. But that is where you guys come in. And I would like a commitment from you today that you would be willing to put a plan in writing that we could follow.

General Dunford: Senator, I would make that commitment. I think you have correctly identified peer retaliation as the real issue that we are trying to grapple with in the wake of the RAND report. And I can assure you that the leadership across the Department has been carefully looking at that issue in an effort to set the right command climate where retaliation is unacceptable.

Senator McCaskill: I will put a question for the record about the unused building report that SIGAR pointed out in Afghanistan. I know there was an investigation. You, of course, were not found to be a problem in this, but it is a problem the investigation found no problem and in reality there was a huge problem, that somebody signed off
on a building for $36 million that is never going to be used and is sitting empty. And we have got to make sure we avoid that.

My final question is -- if you do not have time to do it now -- I am just about out of time. I want to make sure that we get your take on ISIS in Afghanistan. I know they are trying to move everywhere. Obviously, this is a Shia-Sunni issue and that is something that is prevalent throughout the region. And with your experience in Afghanistan, are you comfortable that we have a handle on what ISIS is trying to do in Afghanistan?

General Dunford: Senator, what I know from General Campbell’s reports and intelligence is that we have seen a number of Taliban rebrand themselves as ISIS. But beyond that, I do not have a good feel at this time for the depth of the problem, but certainly it would be one of the issues I would look into if confirmed.

Senator McCaskill: Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman McCain: Senator Wicker?

Senator Wicker: General Dunford, I think you are just the man for the job, but let me tell you you have got a lot of crises to preside over. And I would simply ask you, during the course of your term in office, tell us what you need. Come back to us and be honest and tell us what our
men and women in uniform need to succeed and get the job
done because I do not think we are quite there.

I was privileged to lead a bipartisan delegation of
House and Senate Members over the past week to Ukraine. We
met with President Poroshenko in Kiev, and he is grateful
for the $300 million that this Government provided in
military assistance during the past year. He also mentioned
the need for Javelin anti-tank missiles. I think your
testimony earlier today is that that is a reasonable request
on the part of the president of Ukraine, and it will be
necessary for him to get those in order for him to defend
his country. Was that your testimony?

General Dunford: Senator, it was. From a military
perspective, those kinds of capabilities in my judgment
would be necessary for him to deal with both Russian
aggression and the separatism issue that he is dealing with
in Ukraine.

Senator Wicker: Separatists that are backed by the
Russian hierarchy.

Would you also agree that it is unacceptable that this
month’s transfer of 100 armored Humvees to Ukraine took over
a year to process due to bureaucratic delays at DOD and
State?

General Dunford: Senator, if it took a year to do
that, it would be unacceptable. I am not personally aware
of that issue.

Senator Wicker: Okay. Well, look into that for us.

I also led the delegation to Helsinki for the OSCE parliamentary assembly. Before the delegation left -- before the Russian delegation left en masse because of a dispute over five delegates being on the EU sanctions list -- the head of the delegation, Nikolay Kovalev, said that Russia’s neighbors have no reason to be threatened by Russia. Now, of course, Russia has -- under Mr. Putin’s leadership, Russia has twice invaded neighbors, Georgia in 2008, Ukraine last year. And we see now that there is a Russian official investigating the legality of Mr. Kruschev’s transfer of Crimea back in the day saying that this perhaps was not an invasion because Crimea was never legally transferred to Ukraine by the Russian Federation.

It concerns me that this same official is now investigating whether the transfer of the Baltic States, whether the giving of independence to the Baltic States, Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia, was also legal. Perhaps that was not legal at all, this Russian official suggests.

And we can get to the issue this way. I just want to ask you this about our NATO commitment. I can envision a situation where there are small jurisdictions within Latvia that have a majority of Russian speakers, small jurisdictions within Estonia that have a majority of Russian
speakers. And a pretext of a plebiscite is created at that point. I realize I am posing something to you that is hypothetical, but in light of pronouncements from officials in the Russian Federation, I think it is something to be concerned about.

Zbigniew Brzezinski spoke to this committee earlier this year and said we need to create a trip wire in the Baltics and that this trip wire should communicate clearly to Russia that NATO will not tolerate violations of the territorial integrity of our allies.

What do you think of this idea and can you highlight to this committee the steps DOD needs to take under leadership to send a credible message that this sort of pretext by the Russian Federation would absolutely not be tolerated by the United States and our NATO allies?

General Dunford: Senator, I think our experience in Ukraine and in the other examples that you used highlights the fact that we need to update our deterrence and response model to deal with the kind of threat that we have today, which has been described as a hybrid threat from Russia, which combines political instruments, unconventional warfare, as well as support for separatists in these countries. And quite frankly, that needs to be a priority. You are asking what should the Department do. We frankly need an effective deterrent model for the 21st century to
deal with the kind of threats that we are now seeing in
Russia because, quite frankly, I think that kind of
asymmetric threat is one we will continue to see in the
future and certainly we are going to continue to see that in
the European context.

Senator Wicker: Would an incursion of Russian troops
or Russian-back separatist troops in small jurisdictions of
Russian-speaking majorities within Latvia and Estonia --
would that be completely unacceptable to this Government?

General Dunford: From a policy perspective, Senator, I
cannot answer that. From a personal perspective, it
certainly looks like a violation of sovereignty to me.

Senator Wicker: Under article 4 of NATO, in my view it
would be absolutely unacceptable. And we need to make it
clear. This administration needs to make it clear. This
Congress needs to make that we will do what is necessary to
prevent this sort of idea from ever being considered in the
first place.

General Dunford: Senator, I agree with that, and I
think this also applies to the cyber threat as well, again,
the idea of deterrence in response to a changing threat in
the 21st century, and I think we need to update our models
for both.

Senator Wicker: Thank you, sir.

Chairman McCain: Senator Manchin?
Senator Manchin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, General, for your service to our great country, your family’s dedication and sacrifice they have made with you I know over the years.

And, sir, I am sure you have had the opportunity to form opinions on what our threats have been and what our threats are today. What would you consider the greatest threat to our national security?

General Dunford: My assessment today, Senator, is that Russia presents the greatest threat to our national security.

Senator Manchin: Would you want to elaborate on that to a certain extent?

General Dunford: Well, Senator, in Russia we have a nuclear power. We have one that not only has the capability to violate the sovereignty of our allies and to do things that are inconsistent with our national interests, but they are in the process of doing so. So if you want to talk about a nation that could pose an existential threat to the United States, I would have to point to Russia. And if you look at their behavior, it is nothing short of alarming.

Senator Manchin: I have been very much concerned about the same issue. I think we have talked about it briefly before when you visited my office. But I have been told by major scholars that the Cold War is colder today than it was
when it was declared because of the lack of communications, the lack of inter-party affiliations. Do you find it to be true, and can you change that course in your new position?

General Dunford: Senator, certainly the relationship of Russia a few years ago, if you recall -- we actually were including them in NATO meetings and so forth, and those kinds of exchanges have stopped. From my perspective, my role would be even as the relationship is challenged and even with the difficulties that we face right now, I think it is important that we attempt to maintain a military-to-military relationship, an effective military-to-military relationship, with our Russian counterparts to the extent possible to mitigate the risk of miscalculation and begin to turn the trend in the other direction in terms of trust.

Senator Manchin: Thank you, General.

And also, going back to Iraq -- it has been spoken previously, but could you find yourself at some time recommending to the President for a three-state solution in Iraq versus staying the course of a united Iraqi government?

General Dunford: Well, Senator, from my perspective, I can imagine two states in Iraq. I have difficulty imagining a third separate state given the lack of resources that would be available to the Sunni. And frankly, I think if it was in thirds without a federal government, I think we would have some difficulty, the same difficulty that we have today
exacerbated by the fact that there is not a central
government.

Senator Manchin: Basically you are acknowledging that
the Kurds are strong, prepared, ready to go if they were
given that opportunity?

General Dunford: Senator, you know, again it is
probably out of my lane to talk about what the organization
of Iraq might be in the future. But I think from just a
pure economic resources and governance perspective, the Shia
and the Kurds are certainly much more equipped to set up a
separate state than the Sunni would be at this time.

Senator Manchin: I know it has been spoken about also,
the mistake of us leaving Iraq, pulling our troops out when
we did. Did we have an option to stay?

General Dunford: Senator, I was not involved in the
discussion at that time. The assessment of the
administration at that time was we did not have an option to
stay.

Senator Manchin: So basically those of us who believe
that maybe there could have been some forces left there or
basically the evaluation Maliki was not doing his job, once
we went down the path of democracy democratizing that
country, we did not have the option to go back and stay
there.

General Dunford: Given what we were demanding of the
Iraqis, they were not meeting our demands. I am not sure I
would say that meant we had no option to stay.

Senator Manchin: I have spoken many times about the
lack of an audit. The only agency in the Federal Government
that we do not audit is the Pentagon. Defense. And the
Marines have made an effort. I will say they have made more
of an effort than any other branch of the military to do an
audit, but it has not been fulfilled.

What would your commitment be, sir, for us to have an
audit, especially for us to know about our contractors, how
much money we spend on contractors, how many contract forces
that we have doing the job that I believe maybe our military
and definitely our National Guard could be supporting in
that effort that we are not doing today?

General Dunford: Senator, we cannot be effective as a
warfighting organization and we certainly cannot be
efficient with the taxpayers' dollars if we do not have an
effective audit. As you alluded to, we worked that pretty
hard in the Marine Corps. I worked it both as an Assistant
Commandant and then over the last year as the Commandant.
We did make a significant amount of progress. We were able
to get to the point where we could internally audit all of
the resources that were directly under the cognizance of the
Marine Corps with some database challenges outside. But I
can assure you that, if confirmed, you will have my
commitment to continue to press hard in that direction and to support the efforts across the Department to make sure that we can come to you with a clean audit.

Senator Manchin: General, I again want to thank you. You do have my support and I think the confidence of the American people, definitely the West Virginians. Thank you, sir.

Chairman McCain: Senator Ayotte?

Senator Ayotte: General, I just want to thank you for all that you have done for the country, and I think that you will do a tremendous job as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. And I want to thank Ellyn and your family for what they have done for the country and continue to do. We appreciate it.

I wanted to also add my support to what Senator McCaskill said about the issue of retaliation. I think this is a very important issue as we focus on the work that we have done in this committee to eliminate and to work to prevent sexual assault in the military and to support victims and to hold the perpetrators accountable. So I think that is excellent. I look forward to seeing that proposal from you.

I wanted to ask about the situation, as we look at Iran and their support for regional terrorism. How would you assess Iran’s current activities and where are they engaging
in support either directly or through proxies for efforts that are undermining security in the region?

General Dunford: Senator, Iran is clearly a malign influence in the most destabilizing element in the Middle East today. They are providing support to the Huthis down in Yemen. They obviously provide support. Hezbollah is a clear malign influence in Lebanon. There are indications they are involved in Syria, and certainly they are involved and trying to expand their influence into Iraq. And they are creating I think -- they are exacerbating at least the Sunni-Shia sectarianism across the region.

Senator Ayotte: I want to follow up more on that, but I also want to ask you. I saw reports that they were also engaged in supporting the Taliban in Afghanistan more now. Is there anything you can share with us on that?

General Dunford: Senator, I have seen those same reports, and from my perspective, what I have seen in the reports is that they have provided some support to the Taliban in an effort to counter ISIL.

Senator Ayotte: Do you believe, as we think about your experience -- I know you commanded troops in Iraq. But certainly Iran has the blood of American soldiers on its hands for the explosive materials that they provided to the Shia militias in Iraq that killed many of our men and women in uniform. So do you think, as we look at the situation in...
Iraq and what is happening with the Shia militias you referred to, how could they be a malign influence in the longer-term solution in Iraq?

General Dunford: Senator, they clearly could be a malign influence, which is why I believe we should not provide any support to those forces unless they are directly under the Iraqi Government and not provided support by the Iranians.

Senator Ayotte: Thank you.

I wanted to also ask you about the situation on cyber because the FBI Director -- we have received briefings on the OPM breach, but the FBI Director has said that he believes this is an enormous breach. Millions and millions of individuals who provided background information have been breached. And Director Clapper has said that they believe it is the Chinese who have done this breach.

When we look at the threats facing our Nation, how grave do you think the cyber threat is? And also, how would you assess our current posture with the Chinese and how we should be addressing the situation?

General Dunford: Senator, I would agree with you. The cyber threat is clearly very significant. Frankly, every week we learn a bit more about the OPM breach. My number one concern, obviously, as a service chief is for the data and the wellbeing of the men and women whose data that is
having been compromised.

One of the challenges is, of course, attribution. But from my perspective, if confirmed, my role will be to provide the President with a full range of options to deal with these cyber attacks, which is what the OPM breach was.

Senator Ayotte: So I know that Senator Manchin had asked you what you believe our gravest national security threat was, and you identified Russia. And certainly we have seen this aggression by Putin in Russia certainly invading other countries essentially.

But what is it -- as you look at the national security situation, you think about immediate threats to the country, what keeps you up at night the most?

General Dunford: Senator, what keeps me up at night the most is our ability to respond to the uncertain. I am very confident -- very confident -- in the joint force today and our capabilities and capacities to deal with the challenges that we have today, albeit we need improvement in cyber, other capabilities, but on balance, the force that we have today is able to deal with the challenges that we know. There is very little residual capacity. And this is the issue that has been discussed many times before this committee and that you have had some personal engagement on. It is the readiness to respond to the uncertain, frankly, that keeps me up at night as a service chief and certainly
one that would keep me up at night were I to be confirmed as
the Chairman.

Senator Ayotte: Thank you.

Chairman McCain: Senator Gillibrand?

Senator Gillibrand: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and
Ranking Member. I appreciate this hearing.

Thank you, General Dunford, for your service. I am
grateful for your wife and children being here with you. We
all know you serve together.

I want to continue along the line that Senator Ayotte
started with with Iran. We are expecting a potential
nuclear agreement between P5 Plus 1 as early as today. Are
you concerned that lifting sanctions on Iran might allow
that country to invest more money in terrorist activities in
the Middle East, and what can we do to address those
concerns?

General Dunford: Senator, there is no question that
signing an agreement will change the dynamic in the Middle
East. And the first thing I guess I would say is that, if
confirmed, I know I would have the responsibility to develop
options for the President to deal with the changing dynamic.

With regard to increased resources for malign activity,
I think it is reasonable to assume that if sanctions are
lifted, the Iranians would have more money available for
malign activities. But I would probably say that regardless
of whether there is an agreement or not, my expectation is that Iran will continue the malign activity across the Middle East that we have seen over the past several years.

Senator Gillibrand: I also want to continue the line started by Senator McCaskill about retaliation. Senator McCaskill was correct when she said this is something we are all very concerned about, and she said it is not just peer-to-peer. She mentioned unit commanders. And I want to be specific about this issue so you know the problem you are dealing with.

So 53 percent was peer-to-peer retaliation, but 35 percent was adverse administrative action. 32 percent was professional retaliation, and 11 percent was punishment for an infraction. So you have to recognize some of this retaliation is being perceived by survivors to be done by unit commanders or someone within the chain of command because administrative retaliation or perceived administrative retaliation or professional retaliation is serious. So there is still a climate issue that the chain of command is responsible for, particularly unit commanders and lower level commanders, that is not getting the right message.

In fact, the recent RAND survey said that 60 percent of women who said they experienced sexual discrimination or some kind of negative behavior came from their commanders,
their unit commanders. So you have to recognize there is a climate issue that is not being adequately addressed. So when you do your report for this committee, I would like you to look at that issue as well.

You also have the challenge that in the reported cases, 1 in 7 of the perpetrators who were alleged have committed rape, sexual assault, or unwanted sexual contact was also in the chain of command. So you have a challenge with lower level commanders that is not yet being addressed that I would like your report to cover as well.

And somewhat related, I want to talk about combat integration. I strongly believe that we should have standards that meet the needs of each position and then allow anyone in who meets those standards to compete. You have not been very vocal on this issue, but if confirmed, you will be one of those individuals who are advising the Secretary of Defense about whether the services should receive any exceptions to policy.

Do you expect the services, especially the Marines, who I assume you have been tracking most closely, to ask for exceptions?

General Dunford: Senator, I am not able to answer that question right now, and I can just explain the process in the Marine Corps. We have looked at this issue pretty hard. As you know, we put together a task force that is just
completing. In fact, they will stand down this week. I expect the data that we have collected over the past 18 months in a very deliberate, responsible way to be available to me in the August-September time frame. And we will meet the timeline established by Secretary Panetta and General Dempsey in a letter from 2012.

Senator Gillibrand: Okay.

Will you be looking across the services to see if one asks for exception in a position whose equivalent another service does not request an exception for? Will you be doing a comparison between services?

General Dunford: Senator, my understanding of the way it will work now, again, if I am confirmed, sitting as the Chairman, is that I will have a responsibility to look at each one of the requests on its own merits and make a recommendation to the Secretary of Defense.

Senator Gillibrand: Okay.

And then with my remaining 30 seconds, I want to address cyber. We are constantly being confronted by our need for a capable cyber force. CYBERCOM and the services have been building out those capabilities, but there is still work to be done. How do you envision the force, and what do you see the role as the reserve component?

General Dunford: Senator, I envision the force, as you mentioned -- it is certainly going to grow, and I would
support the plans that Admiral Rodgers -- and I think he has
tested here before the committee. I think he is setting
the right path in terms of growing the capacity of the cyber
force.

The reserve component is going to be very important.
In fact, in many cases and certainly as a service chief who
looked at this, some of the skill sets that are unique to
cyber are available to us in the reserve force. And we need
to figure out a way to maximize and leverage those
capabilities.

Senator Gillibrand: Thank you.
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
Chairman McCain: Senator Fischer?
Senator Fischer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, General Dunford, for your many years of
service to this country and to the men and women under your
command. I would like to also thank your family, your wife,
your son who is present today, and your niece who is here as
well. So thank you, sir.

I was pleased to see that you listed modernizing the
nuclear enterprise among the top challenges that you do
expect to face in your response to the committee’s advance
questions. And you also described our nuclear deterrent as
the Nation’s top military priority.

Do you believe it is critical that we maintain the full
triad of our delivery vehicles?

General Dunford: Senator, given the nature of the threat today, I do believe that.

Senator Fischer: And do you support a bomber leg of the triad that is armed with both the gravity bombs and the cruise missiles?

General Dunford: I do, Senator.

Senator Fischer: And the gravity bombs, as you know, and the cruise missiles -- they are entirely different capabilities. And so one does not make the other redundant. Is that correct?

General Dunford: It is, Senator, and my understanding of the issue is it adds a degree of complexity for the threat and gives us a greater assurance of being able to deliver, should that be required.

Senator Fischer: Great. Thank you.

And as you know, modernization has been delayed and deferred for some time, and we are now at a point where the life of the delivery systems cannot be extended any further. As Deputy Secretary Work put it recently, the choice right now is modernizing a losing deterrent capability in the 2020’s and the 2030’s.

Some have argued that these bills are simply too large and we cannot afford to retain our nuclear deterrent. But according to the Department’s calculation, at its peak the
nuclear mission would be about 7 percent of the nuclear budget. I think it is a little confusing when we hear about our deterrent described as unaffordable, and to me the alternative, letting that deterrent age out -- that has the unaffordable cost to us.

Do you have any thoughts on that?

General Dunford: Senator, I would say I would pose the question -- you know, some people would ask whether we can afford it. I would probably flip that around and say I think we need to think about how we will fund it. It is a capability that is required. Again, we have identified that as the number one capability that we need to have to protect the Nation, and nuclear weapons certainly create an existential threat. So for me, it is a question more of how do we work together moving forward to fund this as opposed to whether or not we can afford to do it.

Senator Fischer: That is 7 percent of the budget at its peak, though, and being the number one priority, should that not be what we fund first?

General Dunford: Senator, frankly, it is more complicated to me than that, and I have some experience with that inside the Department of the Navy. When I looked at the Ohio class replacement, as an example, and what that would do to pressurize the shipbuilding account, we would have to make some very difficult decisions inside the
Department from a capability perspective. And so while it is clear that that is the priority, it is not an issue of exclusivity. And so balanced capabilities is what the joint force needs, and so I think we need to approach it from that perspective.

Senator Fischer: Fair enough.

I also appreciate the connection that you made between the modernization and the reductions to the hedge of our non-deployed weapons. I think that this linkage is often overlooked, and I think it is based on simple logic. If you have a modern stockpile and you have a responsive infrastructure, you do not keep as many spares. And I think you are more insulated as well from what is happening in the world. You are more insulated from those surprises and also from technical failure.

But to be clear, do you believe that it would be premature to make any significant changes to the hedge before we have a modern stockpile and before we have a responsive infrastructure?

General Dunford: Senator, my understanding at this time from the briefings I received is that would be the most prudent course for us to take.

Senator Fischer: Thank you, sir.

With respect to further nuclear arms reductions, do you believe that any reductions below the New START force levels
must be achieved through a negotiated treaty and also be verifiable?

General Dunford: Senator, I do. I do not believe we ought to take unilateral action in that regard.

Senator Fischer: Should non-strategic nuclear weapons be included as well?

General Dunford: Senator, I would like to take that particular question for the record.

[The information follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]
Senator Fischer: Thank you.

And do you agree that any arms control negotiations must take into account Russia’s current behavior, especially its compliant record. You mentioned at the beginning that you feel that Russia is our greatest threat.

General Dunford: I do, Senator.

Senator Fischer: Thank you, sir.

Chairman McCain: Senator Donnelly?

Senator Donnelly: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I want to also thank General Dempsey and his family for everything they have done for the country.

General Dunford, you and your family -- thank you very, very much for stepping up to the plate. We are really in your debt.

As you know and we have discussed in the past, I believe one of the greatest threats to our troops is when they find themselves in a personal place where they start to think about something like suicide. We lost over 400 young men and women in the past year. And I know you have worked very hard in this area. You have done a lot of rigorous screening in the Marine Corps.

Will you have that same screening used across the branches when you look at recruits and early on in their careers?

General Dunford: Senator, one of the thoughts I had as
a service chief was to ensure that once we identified a
better way to screen, as you said, and identified people at
risk and take appropriate action, that we would share that
as best practices across the services. And I would
certainly look to facilitate that if confirmed.

Senator Donnelly: And then the other question I wanted
to ask you in this area is a lot of times, in talking to the
parents, there has been a stigma for the young men and women
to seek help. I know that you are committed to removing
that stigma. Are we going to make sure that everybody
knows, look, it is a sign of strength to try to get some
help, to talk to somebody, as opposed to any weakness?

General Dunford: Senator, absolutely. You know, this
is one of those areas where you are never complacent, you
are never satisfied with where you are. But I would tell
you this. I really believe this. Over the past probably 5
or 7 years, the issue of stigma as it associates with
suicide has changed dramatically. Even the way we deal with
families in the wake of suicide, if you think about where we
were a decade ago, is completely different. And I do think
the command climate is much more receptive to somebody today
seeking help than it was in the past and making sure that
help is accessible and, where appropriate, anonymous. But,
again, I am not suggesting that we are satisfied with where
we are, but I do believe we have made a lot of progress in
that particular regard.

Senator Donnelly: Thank you.

Last week, I was on a trip led by Senator Kaine. We went to Iraq and met with a number of our forces there, some of the leadership. And one of the greatest concerns was the Iraqi troops, and when you look at the number of ISIS fighters in Ramadi compared to the Iraqi troops, it was a very sparse number of ISIS fighters, but they won the day anyhow because the Iraqi troops turned and left.

I know that that has to be a focus of the leadership of the Iraqi forces. Are we going to send the message that the only way through Ramadi is through Ramadi, that there is no back door anymore in these kind of efforts?

General Dunford: Senator, again, you have been on the ground more recently than me now, and I know you have talked to the commanders there. I did have an opportunity to listen to General Austin the other day, and I have seen General Terry’s plan, and I think they have made it very clear to the Iraqi Security Forces how important Ramadi is. In fact, they have been working hard over the last couple months to set the conditions for the Iraqis to be successful in Ramadi. It probably is one of those issues where it is a tactical action to go back in Ramadi, but there is no question in my mind that from an information operations perspective and frankly from a perception of the campaign,
it is a strategic action. I think the Iraqis understand that.

Senator Donnelly: One of the other groups we met with -- and I know the marines have shed so much blood and treasure in Anbar Province over the past years. We met with a lot of the Sunni tribal leaders, and they said, look, we are still united with you but we need to know that you are in this, that you care, that you will be there. And I mentioned this the other day to Secretary Carter and General Dempsey. One of the council members from Haditha said, we have got people eating grass in our town now. These are people who worked with the United States. They are now eating grass. There is no milk for our children. We need you to help in this humanitarian crisis.

And so I think we not only have to win the battles, we have to reacquire the hearts and minds of the people there. And they said, if you do, we will move these folks out. And I just wanted to get your views on that.

General Dunford: Senator, I agree, and I think with regard to Anbar, I have got both a personal and a professional stake, having lived in the province for a year and developed relationships with some of the people in the Anbar Province. And I could not agree with you more that their confidence in our commitment, their trust in our commitment will absolutely have an impact on the success of
our campaign not only from the military perspective, but from the perspective of the people’s willingness to support us.

Senator Donnelly: The last thing I wanted to mention is Syria. It appears that the plan we have right now is really no plan. You know, we have talked about buffer zones when we were in Saudi Arabia -- Chairman McCain with a group of us. And we talked about creating no-fly zones there. And so we seem to be in search of a plan. And my fear is that Assad is going to fall, and we are hearing that from a lot of folks in the area that he is on very shaky ground right now. And do we then look up the next day and see a race between ISIS and al-Nusra to take over the rest of the country, which is a nightmare scenario at that point? And so you are stepping into a real challenging position, but I think one of the very, very front on the lens is Syria is going to change. It is going to change quickly, and we had best be prepared for that change and be ahead of it or else we are going to look up and an entire country is going to be gone.

    Thank you.

General Dunford: Thanks, Senator.

Chairman McCain: Senator Cotton?

Senator Cotton: General Dunford, thank you for being here today. Thank you for your years of service. Mrs.
Dunford, thank you for your years of service.

General Dunford, you said earlier that you believe Russia is the gravest threat that the United States faces. I take it that is because, in large part, Russia is the only country with a nuclear capability to destroy the United States and our way of life?

General Dunford: That is one of the reasons, Senator, and of course, that is combined with their recent behavior.

Senator Cotton: Given that Russia, according to the administration, is currently in ongoing violation of the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty, do you believe the United States should consider withdrawing from that treaty?

General Dunford: Senator, I would like to take that for the record.

[The information follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]
Senator Cotton: Okay. We would like to hear a response to that for the record because as it currently stands, Russia and the United States are the only parties to the treaty, and Russia is violating it. It means that the United States is the only country in the world prohibited from developing missiles with a range of 500 to 5,000 kilometers.

The President currently has a proposal to preposition some equipment in our eastern NATO allies’ countries as a response not just to the capability that Russia has but also the intention they have displayed to put stresses on our alliance. I find that proposal somewhat underwhelming, although a step in the right direction. Are there barriers to stationing troops in those countries up to the battalion or even brigade level?

General Dunford: Senator, I think that proposal is part of a wide range of activities. One is to have infrastructure that we can support deployments. The other is to preposition equipment so we can rapidly move forces into Europe. And then the other piece of it is actually rotational forces, as you are suggesting. So I think rotational forces are envisioned as part of the whole package that Secretary Carter announced at the defense ministerial in NATO a month ago.

Senator Cotton: Thank you.
I would like to move now to Iran. As far as I know, there has still not been an announced nuclear agreement with Iran. But under any such agreement, Iran will probably get a signing bonus of billions and billions of dollars. How do you expect Iran will use that signing bonus?

General Dunford: Senator, again, from the outside looking in, there are two challenges they have. One is their economy internally and the disaffection of the Iranian people as a result of that economy, and the other is that they use resources that they have available to support their malign activity across the region.

Senator Cotton: So you believe that at least part of that money can go to terrorist organizations they support like Hezbollah, as well as to destabilize governments in the Middle East like support for the Huthis in Yemen or Shiite militias in Iraq.

General Dunford: Senator, I think it is reasonable to assume that.

Senator Cotton: Does the United States have the military capability to destroy Iran’s nuclear program?

General Dunford: My understanding is that we do, Senator.

Senator Cotton: You have served in Iraq and Afghanistan. Do you know how many soldiers, marines underneath your command were killed by Iranian activities?
General Dunford: Senator, I know the total number of soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines that were killed by Iranian activities, and the number has been recently reported as about 500. We were not always able to attribute the casualties that we had to Iranian activity, although many times we suspected it was Iranian activity, even though we did not necessarily have the forensics to support that.

Senator Cotton: So about 500 confirmed, but many more suspected killed in action and even more wounded in action. You have a reputation for being particularly thoughtful when you deal with the families of fallen service members. What would you say to family members of a soldier, sailor, airman, or marine that was killed by Iranian activity if we make a nuclear agreement with Iran before they change their behavior in the region?

General Dunford: Well, Senator, what I would say is that my expectation is that regardless of there being an agreement or not, Iran will continue to be a malign force and influence across the region. And then if confirmed as the Chairman, I will make sure that our leadership has a full range of military options to deal with Iranian activity.

Senator Cotton: It has been reported that your nickname is “Fighting Joe.” Is that correct?

General Dunford: Senator, actually it is not one I
Senator Cotton: But it is one that has been given to you. Correct?

General Dunford: Senator, perhaps by my wife. [Laughter.]

Senator Cotton: Do you care to tell us the origin of that nickname given to you that you choose not to use?

General Dunford: Senator, I would prefer to talk about that in private, if you do not mind.

Senator Cotton: So I have heard it reported that it was because of your activities as a commander in the early days of the Iraq war as an infantry officer.

Given whatever budget agreement we reach, it will probably be inadequate to meet the forces that we face and the long-term modernization needs that we have, whether it is the long-range strike bomber or the F-35, the Ohio class replacement submarine. Are you worried about the next generation of infantrymen in the Marine Corps and the Army, that we are going to be taking money from our ground troops to put in major capital investments, which are clearly needed?

General Dunford: Senator, I am concerned, and I think it is broader than just the infantry piece. I mean, I think experience tells us we need a balanced inventory of capabilities and capacities in the joint force to be
successful.

And when I answered the question of Senator Ayotte earlier when she asked me what kept me up at night, I talked about the need to respond to the uncertain. And what concerns me are people who actually think they know what the future is going to look like because our experience tells us we do not. And so having a full range of capabilities that includes effective marines and soldiers from my perspective is the prudent thing to do.

Senator Cotton: Thank you.

In your long and distinguished career, I think we put ground forces at a minimum into Grenada, Panama, Iraq, Somalia, the Balkans, Afghanistan, Iraq again, and there is no doubt that we may be called upon again in the future. So I hope in your tenure that even if you do not want to be called “Fighting Joe,” that you will be on the lookout for all the Fighting Joes in the Marine Corps and the Army so the country will have them ready to serve once again.

General Dunford: I will do that, Senator. Thank you.

Chairman McCain: The committee will not review how the Senator from Arkansas got his nicknames here in the Senate.

[Laughter.]

Chairman McCain: Senator Kaine?

Senator Kaine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, General Dunford, to you and your family.
General Dunford, with the President’s recent announcement about 500 more advisors going into the anti-ISIS mission in Iraq and Syria and in the region, we are now up to 3,500 troops that are serving abroad in that battle serving as advisors, as trainers, special forces coordinating air campaigns, conducting ground strikes. The war passed its 11-month anniversary yesterday. 2 days ago, General Dempsey was here and testified that he believed in a mission of this complexity, it was likely to be a multiyear effort that would require a sustained commitment by the United States to defeat ISIL.

Do you think it would be received positively by the troops who we are asking to deploy far from home and risk their lives if Congress were to have a debate and authorize and affirm the U.S. mission against ISIL?

General Dunford: Senator, I do think it would be positive from a couple perspectives. One, the reason you mentioned is — I think what our young men and women need — and it is really all they need to do what we ask them to do — is a sense that what they are doing has purpose, has meaning, and has the support of the American people. So that is the first reason.

But I also think that there is a second benefit from such a debate, and that is to send a clear and unmistakable message to our adversaries and to our allies that we are
Senator Kaine: Thank you, General.

With respect to the anti-ISIL effort, I want to pick up on something Senator Reed was talking about earlier. The whole-of-government approach, as you referred to it, has sort of nine lines of effort, and just for the record -- I think we know these, but for everybody there -- supporting effective governance in Iraq, denying ISIL safe haven, building partner capacity, enhancing intelligence collection on ISIL, disrupting ISIL finances, exposing ISIL's true nature, disrupting the flow of foreign fighters, protecting the homeland, and humanitarian support. Those nine lines -- two are purely DOD, denying ISIL safe haven and building partner capacity. The DOD has a piece of some of the others, but the others are generally non-DOD.

You have testified that you think the effect of sequester on the DOD mission could be catastrophic. But given the fact that seven of these line items are non-DOD, would you agree that the allowance of sequester cuts to come back full force October 1 would also significantly hurt the other seven lines of effort, which are critical to defeating ISIL?

General Dunford: Senator, I do. And if you just do not mind, I would just like to talk about the relationship between the two lines of effort in the DOD and the other
seven because I think it highlights the issue.

Senator Kaine: Please.

General Dunford: From my perspective, the two lines of effort that we have right now -- one, deny sanctuary and to build partnership capacity in both Iraq and Syria -- really are buying time and space for those other seven lines of effort to work. But to be quite honest, you know, I do not see how we can have an enduring success unless those other seven lines of effort are addressed, and they are, in the final analysis, more important.

I think the military lines of effort will set the conditions for those other seven lines of effort to be put into effect, but I certainly cannot see us being successful without all of them being properly resourced. When you talk about threat finance, when you talk about moving foreign fighters, and as importantly, when you talk about the State Department's efforts to negotiate to develop effective governance in both Iraq and Syria, those are going to be very important actions to be taken for us, again, to have enduring stability in the region so we can actually deal with this issue once and for all.

Senator Kaine: I think there has been some suggestion that if we fix sequester for defense, that is all that we need to do. But even for important defense priorities like defeating ISIL, the testimony you have just given about the
connection between non-defense investments and defense investments in defeating ISIL is really important. And I will just note, by my count, 95 of 100 Senators are now on record either by voting in the budget or voting in the NDAA or in their public statements for supporting the notion that sequester should be fixed both for defense and non-defense accounts. And it is my hope that we will do that.

With respect to training and equipping opposition in the anti-ISIL battle, just two items. Senator McCain first raised in September in a hearing -- I think it was in this room -- the question of if we train folks to fight ISIL in Syria and they get attacked by the Assad regime, will we protect them? And he still has not gotten an answer to it. He asked it again yesterday. So by my count, September to now, that is 9 months without a clear answer.

We were told in theater last week that the current rules of engagement still would prohibit U.S. effort to support U.S.-trained anti-ISIL fighters in Syria if they come under attack by the Assad regime. I have asked questions for the record to get that clarified, and I would like to know if that is in fact the policy, if DOD intends to change the policy, when they will change the policy, and if not, what do we need to do to change the policy because I do not believe we should be sending U.S.-trained folks into a theater of war without giving them a guarantee that they
will be protected. Those questions will be record questions
from the hearing 2 days ago, but I just want to let you know
that those are coming and we view that as a very important
matter.

General Dunford: Thank you, Senator.

Senator Kaine: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman McCain: Senator Sullivan?

Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And General and Ms. Dunford, I want to thank you for
your service to the country taking on this new
responsibility. I certainly know that marines all over the
country, whether on active duty or retired, take great pride
in the fact that you are only the second marine ever
nominated for this post. And I know your career has
exemplified the values of honor, courage, and commitment
that are the values of the Marine Corps. And I certainly
plan on voting for you with enthusiasm and encourage my
colleagues to do so as well. So we look forward to seeing
you tomorrow night at the parade.

I wanted to ask a few questions about the military
relationship with the Congress, even though your role is
going to be principal advisor to the President.

First, in the area of force posture, this committee
occasionally weighs in through the NDAA and other means on
key force posture issues, number of ships, basing of troops,
aircraft like the A-10. When this happens, how important is it that the military follow the defense guidance of the Senate or the Congress?

General Dunford: Senator, I think it is very important, given how explicit it is in the Constitution what the responsibilities of the Congress are in that regard.

Senator Sullivan: So let me provide a couple examples. So let us say there was an amendment from the chairman and it was about the number of aircraft carriers, passed unanimously through the committee, votes on the Senate floor. Do you think the CNO should say, well, the chairman does not know that much about the Navy anymore, we are going to blow that advice in the NDAA off? Is that an appropriate role for the military?

General Dunford: If Congress passes a law, Senator, it would not be appropriate to ignore it.

Senator Sullivan: So how about an NDAA amendment that says it is the sense of Congress, in support of the President’s rebalance in the Asia-Pacific strategy, to increase forces in the PACOM AOR? Is it appropriate to ignore that or even significantly decrease forces? What do you think our response to that should be if that is happening?

General Dunford: Senator, first, obviously, the sense of Congress ought to inform all the actions --
Senator Sullivan: There is a recent amendment that says exactly that.

General Dunford: Right.

Senator Sullivan: Let me provide a second area that we have talked about a little bit in terms of emerging threats. You know, sometimes the Department of Defense civilian and military officials, because there are so many threats out there, miss certain threats. And let me provide an example of one that everybody seems to be focused on with the exception of the Department of Defense.

You may have seen “Newsweek” this week had a cover story on the Arctic and what they called “In the Race to Control the Arctic, the U.S. Lags Behind.” It is a very long article. It talks about how this is the world’s newest great game, Kipling’s term for the struggle between major powers to dominate the earth’s remote but very strategic places. It talks about how the Russians are very, very aggressively moving military forces into the Arctic, serious military exercises, and how, whether it is the Coast Guard or the Secretary of Defense saying this new kind of geopolitical cold war the U.S. is in danger of losing. We are not even in the same league as the Russians. We are not even playing this game at all. So I think it is safe to say the Department of Defense has been asleep at the switch on this.
Congress has been more attuned to this issue. In this year’s NDAA, there is a section that requires the Department of Defense to provide Congress with a military strategy, given the new threat levels, and an OPLAN for the Arctic based on the increased interests and threats.

Does it make sense to cut any of America’s limited number of cold weather-trained warriors in the Arctic before this congressionally mandated strategy is completed?

General Dunford: Senator, I guess I am not sure which forces you are alluding to be cut.

Senator Sullivan: Well, there are only certain forces in the Arctic right now. They are all in Alaska.

General Dunford: Senator, I would like to take that for the record. I am not aware of the full range of decisions that are being made right now and what the implications are.

[The information follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]
Senator Sullivan: General, I mean, I think it is important to recognize, you know, it is hard to figure out appropriate force levels and capabilities in the Arctic without having a plan. And we have mandated the desire and need for a plan, and I think we are getting a little bit of the cart before the horse, cutting forces before we even know what our plan is. But we certainly recognize that there is an increased threat. Congress has, and we hope the DOD will recognize it is as well.

General Dunford: Senator, if confirmed -- I know I have had some conversations with both the current Chief of Naval Operations and Commandant of the Coast Guard about the implications for the Arctic. And the commitment I would make to you is that we will, in fact, develop an appropriate role for the military in support of our economic and political interests in the Arctic.

Senator Sullivan: Thank you.

Chairman McCain: Senator Hirono?

Senator Hirono: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and General Dunford and Mrs. Dunford and your family, for your service. I just wanted to pick up very briefly on the issue of sexual trauma in the military and the concerns about retaliation. And I think that you had noted that you would determine the root causes and continue to work to ensure that the culture does not support retaliation.
And I would ask you to have a sense of urgency as you respond to this committee on how you are going to address and resolve the issue of retaliation because even as we downsize our military, it is even more important that our troops' morale remain strong and that there is cohesion, and there could not be strong morale or cohesion if some of your troops are encountering sexual assault and harassment and retaliation. I just wanted to make that point.

Could you share very briefly your views on the rebalance to the Asia-Pacific?

General Dunford: Senator, I can. It is absolutely critical that we do that, given both the demographics in Asia but also our economic future. So there is no question about it. That is going to require us to modernize our alliances, and I think you have seen some progress in that regard, our relationship with South Korea, our relationship with Japan, our relationship with the Philippines, Vietnam, India, Australia have all been adjusted here in recent months. I think we have an unprecedented level of exercises and engagement right now in the Pacific again to assert our influence and to provide a stabilizing presence.

The most important thing I think the rebalance to the Pacific does is it provides a security infrastructure within which we could advance our national interests. That is what has existed for the past 7 years, and I think the rebalance
to the Pacific, as we know it today, is designed to modernize that security infrastructure and make sure it is in place so that just as we protect our national interests over the past 7 years, we can do that in the indefinite future as well.

Senator Hirono: I just got information on the cuts that will happen to PACOM as a result of the budget necessities. And I am glad to know that General Odierno did say that the cuts were with regard to the importance of a rebalance, and therefore, we want to make sure -- and this is something that I know that Senator Sullivan shares with me -- that the rebalance to the Asia-Pacific remains a very strong commitment on our part.

You mentioned that Russia is the greatest threat to our national security. Where would ISIL, China, and North Korea fall with regard to our national security dangers?

General Dunford: Senator, if I had to rack and stack them today, I would have Russia down as number one. I would have China down as number two.

Senator Hirono: And could you explain why briefly?

General Dunford: Sure. Russia, of course, because of nuclear capability and their aggression.

China because of their military capability, their growing military capability, and their presence in the Pacific and our interests in the Pacific. So it is a
relationship between their capabilities and our interests. It does not necessarily mean they are a current threat. It does not mean they view China as an enemy. But, again, as someone in uniform, I get paid to look at both somebody’s intent and their capabilities. So when I look at Chinese capabilities relative to our interests in the Pacific, I would have to consider China as an area of concern for security, again as distinct from a threat.

Clearly, North Korea with ballistic missile capability and the potential to reach the United States and attack the homeland is high on that list.

And then ISIL.

But, you know, Senator, I just want to make it clear. As I go down that list and prioritize, I do not view that meaning that we can attack those issues in sequence or that a prioritization of one at the expense of the other is necessarily something we would have to do at this particular time. All four of those security issues are ones that require the Department to look at. They all create a challenge that needs to be addressed.

Senator Hirono: And that is why we live in very complicated times.

I would like to focus on our distributed laydown in the Pacific. Specific to Japan, I am aware of the concerns of the Okinawan population and of their leadership’s desire to
halt construction of the Futenma replacement facility. Can you characterize our relationship and the challenges for relocating our forces from and within Japan? Because that is very much a part of the rebalance that we are committed to.

General Dunford: Senator, thanks. I recently did visit Japan. I was encouraged by my visit. I met with a number of their senior leaders, to include the minister of defense. I received nothing but their full commitment to continue with the Futenma replacement plan. And so my sense is that the Japanese Government is committed to that. They recognize that that is important for us to continue with the preferred laydown that you alluded to. And so my sense right now is that our relationship with the Japanese and their stated commitment -- we are in a pretty good place with regard to the Futenma replacement facility.

Senator Hirono: And do you view the Okinawa situation as mainly a concern that should be dealt with within Japan and their government?

General Dunford: Senator, we -- and I specifically now talk about the marines in Okinawa. We need to be good neighbors and set the conditions for a positive relationship with the Okinawan people. So I think we can make a contribution. But at the end of the day, the issue of the Futenma replacement facility from my perspective is in fact
an internal Japanese political issue that has to be worked by the Japanese Government.

Senator Hirono: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman McCain: Senator Heinrich?

Senator Heinrich: General Dunford, welcome to you and your family. In your written testimony, you state, as Senator Fischer pointed out, that our nuclear deterrent is the Nation’s top military priority. And that leads me to a specific question related to how we plan for that priority over time.

The health of our Nation’s whole nuclear weapons complex is critical to our nuclear deterrent. And one of the things you wrote in your written testimony is that we must recruit and train our next generation workforce capable of certifying stockpile requirements and to modernize the nuclear weapons infrastructure.

Can you share with me your thoughts specifically on LDRD, or laboratory-directed research and development, and the life extension programs that are going on at our national labs and their role in achieving recruitment and retention of that next generation nuclear workforce?

General Dunford: Senator, that is an issue that in my current capacity I frankly have not developed any level of expertise, and I would like to take that one for the record.
[The information follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]
Senator Heinrich: That would be fine. I look forward to engaging you on that in the future. I think it is going to be really important for us to view some of the particulars of how we manage the labs and particularly the things that bring people into the pipeline at the front end with the greatest amount of expertise and then they stay in those positions, rise up through the labs, and provide the continuity that it is going to take to make sure that we have the kind of modern deterrent that we need.

I want to focus my next question on some of the challenges here at home. In my view, defense innovation is moving too slowly, oftentimes in cycles that last years, while commercial innovation can be measured in cycles of months.

This committee included a section in this year’s NDAA to authorize funding, about half of which would be dedicated for directed energy to accelerate the fielding of a variety of important offset technologies including, in addition to directed energy, things like low-cost, high-speed munitions, cyber capabilities, autonomous systems, undersea warfare, and intelligence data analytics.

What role do you think the development of these new technologies like directed energy and robotics will play in our national security posture? And what steps should we take to develop and deliver operationally useful systems
more quickly?

General Dunford: Senator, in my capacity as the Chairman, if I am confirmed, I view the future of the joint force as being one of my critical responsibilities. And a key piece of that is making sure we keep apace of innovation so that we not only get better at doing what we are doing today, but we find fundamentally different ways to do things in the future that are more effective and they maintain our competitive advantage. And so I think what you are outlining is certainly an area of concern for me. Even as a service chief, I would tell you that over the past decade our efforts at innovation probably were at a lower priority than they ought to be, and we have, over the past year, tried to energize that. And I would certainly bring that same focus and attention if I was confirmed as the Chairman.

Senator Heinrich: I appreciate that.

One other challenge at home here is that the Air Force’s remotely piloted aircraft career field is under really severe strain, largely through increased combatant commander requirements, insufficient personnel policy actions to improve Manning levels, and just the basic reality that the Air Force is losing more remotely piloted aircraft pilots than it is training. We have heard from Secretary James and General Welch. They have assured this committee that they are dedicated to resolving the
shortfall, but I also want to get your commitment to helping resolve this issue. So if confirmed, I would just ask that you make that a priority.

General Dunford: Senator, I would maybe just comment quickly that those men and women that are in that field represent a core capability in the joint force, and their effectiveness, their morale, their willingness to continue to serve is absolutely important. I have spoken to General Welch about this particular issue, but I will certainly reinforce the efforts of the Chief of Staff of the Air Force and the Secretary of the Air Force to make sure that those individuals are appreciated and that they have a climate within which they want to remain airmen.

Senator Heinrich: I appreciate that deeply. I think it is an area where we are seeing some severe strains and where folks really need our support. So thank you.

Chairman McCain: Senator Tillis?

Senator Tillis: Good morning, General Dunford. Thank you for your service and for your family’s longtime serving our Nation.

I leaned over to Senator Sullivan during some of your comments, and I also thoroughly appreciate your precise answer to questions. It is refreshing to get that in the committee.

I would like to go back to a question or build on a
question that Senator Sessions asked of you, and it had to do with the plus-up of spending and the use of OCO as a way. But we all know that that is not the best way to do what you need to do, primarily for the purposes that you pointed out, the certainty. It still does not give you long-term certainty.

But my question to you is have you given thought to how you could potentially use this funding, although it is not a long-term commitment, to take the edge off of sequestration and any ideas on precisely how you would?

General Dunford: Senator, we started to look at that, and it would really require a change in the rules for using OCO for us to be able to do that. Right now, if you gave us OCO, given the current rules, we would not be able to use it in the places where we most need it. Much of the money that we requested, in addition to the BCA level in the President’s budget for 2016, was really focused on modernization. That is the thing that has suffered the most over the last 2 years, in addition to readiness. So we have looked at it, but there are some very practical limitations in our ability to apply OCO to some of the areas that we need it applied to.

Senator Tillis: Will you be making specific recommendations for things that we need to look at to make sure you get the most productivity you can out of it?
General Dunford: Senator, I will certainly do that through the Secretary of Defense as he works this issue.

Senator Tillis: Thank you.

I wanted to go back to also questions that were asked about Afghanistan and Iraq. I visited both countries and spoke with a number of people while we were there. And it seems like in Afghanistan we have got the right mix. We have got them in the right roles and the Afghans have proven that they can fight successfully.

In Iraq, I understand what you said about some of the political decisions of the past administration have caused a problem. And those structural issues have to be addressed.

But have you given any thought to, assuming that you get to the point to where you have the right command infrastructure among the Iraqis, what we may need to actually create a credible, trained, effective fighting force for the Iraqis beyond the 3,000 currently present troops?

General Dunford: Senator, you know, I can address that conceptually in terms of their ability to develop combined arms and in terms of their ability to develop institutional training and in terms of their ability to develop the capacity at the ministerial level to support tactical-level forces. But frankly, it has been a few years since I have been on the ground in Iraq, and what I would like to do is
take the opportunity, if I am confirmed, to visit Iraq, talk
to the commanders on the ground and again develop a
comprehensive recommendation that would help us to move the
campaign forward.

Senator Tillis: On the flip side, I know the Afghanis
have made a lot of progress, but I think they still rely on
us heavily for our train, advise, and assist role and our
ISR capabilities in the region. I know that I have heard
you say we cannot have a calendar-based approach towards
reduction in forces. But the sense that I got when I was in
Kabul was that those who are very much in touch with the
situation on the ground now think that it would be a very
bad idea to substantially reduce our current presence over
the near term. Now, I assume that that is because they are
looking ahead to 12 months, 18 months from now and saying we
are still not going to at a place where the Afghanis can be
completely independent. Do you share that view?

General Dunford: Senator, what I can tell you is the
assumptions that we made in the recommendation that was
delivered in December of 2013. So it is now some 19 months
ago. And some of the assumptions affected the timeline.
And we certainly did not expect there to be as much of a
delay in the elections process of 2014, and there was. And
that was a great distracter in our efforts to develop
ministerial capacity. When I was on the ground, it was very
difficult to get my counterparts to focus on some of the practical side of growing ministerial capacity when they were involved in a very real challenge of providing security for the election. So it delayed our efforts in growing ministerial capacity.

And there have been other areas where we made some assumptions about things that could be done within a certain period of time that we actually did not in the event get done during that window of time.

So from a distance now -- and again, another area where I would go over and talk to General Campbell and General Austin down at Central Command, if confirmed, immediately. From a distance, it certainly makes sense to me that the timeline that we originally identified in 2013 as being possible has probably been affected by the political events inside of Afghanistan and other events associated with the enemy.

Senator Tillis: Thank you, General Dunford. I look forward to supporting your confirmation.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman McCain: Senator Blumenthal?

Senator Blumenthal: Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you for your service, General, and thank you to your family who are here today for their service as well.

I want to begin with what you assessed as the primary
threats from Russia and China and talk about a weapons platform or system that has not been raised today, our submarine force. I recognize that is not immediately part of your background, but obviously a grave responsibility, if you are confirmed. And I certainly am going to strongly support your confirmation as the next Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The Ohio replacement program is critical to our nuclear deterrence, and the cost of that program has been estimated in the range of $100 billion. The Navy has said that it cannot pay for it out of its Navy budget. I am wondering whether you will consider and whether you will support looking at the Defense Department budget as a whole to fund the Ohio replacement program, which I am assuming you agree is critical to our nuclear deterrence.

General Dunford: Senator, thanks.

First, I do agree it is critical. It is the most survivable part of the triad and a critical capability for us to modernize.

I am very familiar with the budgetary implications of the Ohio class replacement on the Department of the Navy’s long-range shipbuilding plan. And what I can tell you with a degree of surety is that were we to fund the Ohio class replacement out of the Department of the Navy, it would have a pretty adverse effect on the rest of the shipbuilding
plan, and the estimates are somewhere between two and a half and three ships a year. And again, we are not anywhere near where we need to be right now. And so the 30-year shipbuilding plan was intended to get us where we need to be.

So I do think a broader mechanism for the Ohio class replacement makes sense. Otherwise, we are going to have some pretty adverse effects on the Navy. And as I mentioned a couple times in testimony today, one of my perspectives coming into this role would be, if confirmed, is that we need to have some balance, and that includes a balanced Navy. So as important as the Ohio class replacement is, the United States Navy, in terms of the forward presence they provide, in terms of their warfighting capability, has many other capabilities that are critical to our Nation as well. And it would be difficult to balance those were the Ohio class replacement to be paid for within the current Department of the Navy’s projected resources.

Senator Blumenthal: Thank you for that answer, General. I am hoping that you would agree with equal surety that the continuing program to build two subs a year, two Virginia class subs a year, should continue as planned right now.

General Dunford: Senator, here is where I defer to my partner, the Chief of Naval Operations. But that is
certainly his plan, and I trust his judgment in that regard.

Senator Blumenthal: Thank you.

Going to another area that I do not think has been raised yet, I know of your very passionate and admirable commitment to the men and women who are our greatest asset in the United States armed forces, their wellbeing and their welfare. And I hope that you can commit that you will continue the effort to coordinate better with the Veterans Administration for men and women who are leaving active duty on everything from transfer of medical records to drug formularies to a range of issues. I do not need to expound on them for you, but I hope that you will focus and continue those efforts.

General Dunford: Senator, absolutely. Just so you know, I view keeping faith with our men and women in uniform as one of the primary responsibilities of leadership, and that is both when they are in uniform and when they are out of uniform. And we have an expression, you know, certainly in the Marine Corps that once a marine, always a marine. And from my perspective, once you have served our country, the service and support that you should get in return as part of that bargain that we make with young men and women who enlist is something that is pretty sacred. And I absolutely will continue to support the efforts to make sure that the health care transition that our young men and women
make when they are in uniform to the Veterans Administration is as seamless as possible. I think we owe them that.

Senator Blumenthal: One last question, General. Your predecessor, General Dempsey, has stated repeatedly -- and I am quoting -- we have the capability to use a military option if the Iranians choose to stray off the diplomatic path. End quote.

My question to you is are you satisfied that our Nation has done enough to prepare militarily for the option -- and the President has said that all options should be on the table -- if necessary, to use a military option there, as much as we all may wish that the negotiations should succeed?

General Dunford: Senator, my understanding today is that we have both the plans in place and the capability in place to deal with a wide range of eventualities in Iran.

Senator Blumenthal: Thank you. Thanks very much.

Chairman McCain: Senator Cruz?

Senator Cruz: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Dunford, congratulations on your nomination and thank you for your 38 years of distinguished service and your leadership as Commandant of the Marine Corps. Our Nation is fortunate to have a military leader such as you serving at a time of great peril.

I want to ask a question of you that is the same
question I asked your predecessor, General Dempsey. If the
objective were to destroy ISIS, not to weaken them, not to
degrade them, but to utterly destroy them within 90 days,
what would be required militarily to accomplish that
objective?

General Dunford: Senator, my assessment is that it
would not be possible to destroy ISIL within 90 days, and I
also do not believe that we can develop an enduring solution
simply with military force against ISIL although I do think
the military aspect of the campaign is critical.

Senator Cruz: Well, if the time frame I have suggested
is not feasible, let me ask you a follow-up question which
is what would be required to destroy ISIS and what time
frame is necessary. Specifically if that were the
objective, what would be required to accomplish it
militarily?

General Dunford: Senator, if I am confirmed, I will
continue to look at this issue, but my perspective today is
that this is a long-term endeavor. This is on the order of
years not months in order to defeat, destroy in your words,
ISIL.

Senator Cruz: And what would be required to do that in
whatever time period is necessary?

General Dunford: From a military perspective, the two
things that we are doing I think we would need to continue
to do, and that is, to take action to deny ISIL sanctuary wherever it may take root both in Iraq and Syria and elsewhere. That would require us to build local forces, build partnership capacity, if you will, of the local forces that would be the real defeat mechanism for ISIL in the respective countries, given the way that it is spread right now. You would have to have effective governance so that you had the conditions set for long-term stability where ISIS could not then get traction again in the future. It would have to address the foreign financing of ISIS, where they get their money, as well as their economic assets within each one of those countries. You would have to address the movement of foreign fighters back and forth. And probably as importantly, the one thing we need to do, Senator, is we need to undermine the narrative of ISIL and discredit the narrative of ISIL.

Senator Cruz: In your personal judgment, are you concerned about the rules of engagement for our current use of airpower, that it is overly constraining the effectiveness?

General Dunford: Senator, I am not. And one of the reasons is when we go to war, we go to war with our values, and we conduct proportionality in the planning and discrimination in execution. And the thing that we are doing now is ensuring that we do not have civilian
casualties. And I think that, frankly, supports our narrative and gives us the credibility we need to be successful long term in this campaign.

Senator Cruz: In recent days, the administration has informed Congress that we are arming the Kurds. This is something I have called for for a long time. I spoke this week with a senior Kurdish leader who reported that the commanders on the ground of the Peshmerga are not confirming that. What can you tell this committee about the extent to which we are providing serious arms to the Kurds and it is actually getting to them rather than being bogged down in Baghdad?

General Dunford: Senator, first, I would agree with you. The most effective ground forces both in Syria and Iraq today are in fact the Kurds.

My understanding is that the issues associated with supporting the Kurds have been addressed, and they are now getting the material support that they need, as well as the training that they need. And if I am confirmed, I will certainly, as a matter of priority, go over there, visit, and make sure that I am able to make my own personal assessment based on the facts on the ground.

Senator Cruz: Will you commit to providing this committee with specific details in terms of what is being done to arm the Kurds?
General Dunford: I will do that, Senator.

Senator Cruz: Let me ask concerning Iran. If Iran were to acquire nuclear weapons, what is the national security risk in your judgment to the United States of that occurrence?

General Dunford: Senator, I think it is significant, particularly if accompanying that is intercontinental ballistic missile technology. It is a significant threat to our Nation. It is also a destabilizing action in the Middle East. And I think we can expect a proliferation of nuclear arms as a result of Iranian possession of nuclear weapons.

Senator Cruz: So, General, my final question. I am concerned about morale in the military. We have discussed in this hearing how the world is getting more and more dangerous, and yet at the same time, I think we are dramatically undermining our readiness, our ability to defend this Nation. The “Military Times” did a survey where in 2009 they asked soldiers whether overall the quality of life is good or excellent. 91 percent said yes. In 2014, that number had dropped from 91 percent to 56 percent.

Likewise, they asked whether the senior military leadership has my best interest at heart. In 2009, 53 percent agreed. In 2014, that had dropped in half to roughly 27 percent.

Do you share the concerns about declining morale in the military, and if so, what do you see as the causes of it and
the proper approach to fix it?

General Dunford: Senator, thanks for the question.

First of all, with regard to the morale of our force, it is clearly one of the things that distinguishes us. And I was able to say in my opening statement that we have the most capable military force in the world today, and that clearly is rooted in the men and women that we have in uniform and their willingness to do what we have asked them to do in the last decade. And it is not something I would be complacent about.

I do have concerns as a service chief about how hard we have been running our men and women over the last few years. As an example, Senator, we had had a plan where we wanted to have a 1-to-3 deployment-to-dwell ratio. That means our forces would be deployed about 7 months, home for 21 months. That allowed us to get adequate training. It allowed us to take care of families, allowed the marines to kind of be what I describe as a sustained rate of fire. Many of our units now inside the Marine Corps are at or below a 1-to-2 deployment-to-dwell rate. So they are home for less than twice as much time. So they will be deployed for 7 months, home less than 14 months, and back out again, and that continues on and certainly has an effect on the families and, again, our ability to train across the range of military operations.
If I am confirmed, Senator, this is absolutely going to be one of the areas that I focus on. I think I have a responsibility to lead the young men and women in uniform. I think I have a responsibility to represent them, and when I say represent them, that means to articulate to our leadership, both here on the Hill, as well as the executive branch, what material support, what leadership, what resources they need to remain the finest fighting force in the United States.

And it bothers me greatly if our young men and women do not have confidence in their senior leadership, and I can tell you that every day when I wake up, if I am confirmed, that will be an issue of priority for me, that that will be exactly what I seek to do is gain the trust and confidence of our young men and women and let them know that they are in fact properly represented back here Washington, D.C., and that we as leaders recognize that we are asking them to do a lot. They do not ask much more in return than to have the wherewithal to accomplish the mission with minimal loss of life or equipment. And I will commit to you that is exactly what I will do.

Senator Cruz: Thank you, General.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman McCain: Has sequestration not bred uncertainty which has contributed to this drop in morale?
General Dunford: Chairman, thanks. I should have mentioned that when I talked about how busy the forces are. There is a tremendous amount of angst across the force, and a large part of that is driven by the uncertainty about how big the force will be, what will happen to their particular careers, and will we have the equipment necessary to accomplish the mission. So I do think, Chairman, that sequestration is a factor.

Chairman McCain: Senator Sullivan had one follow-up question, and then we will turn to Senator Shaheen.

Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And, General, I just wanted to get back to the issue of the military’s role in relationship with Congress. Do you think it is an important role that we have to make sure that our services do not replicate missions and core competencies, particularly in an austere budget environment like we have right now?

General Dunford: I do, Senator.

Senator Sullivan: Let me just provide a quick example. I believe one of the core competencies that the Army has is large-scale airborne units that can deploy in a moment’s notice anywhere in the world. Do you think that is one of their core competencies?

General Dunford: I do, Senator.

Senator Sullivan: A few months ago, a military general
testified in front of one of the subcommittees here about putting troops and helicopters on naval shipping for, quote, expeditionary maneuver throughout the Pacific. What service’s core competency would you associate that mission with?

General Dunford: I would associate that with the United States Marine Corps, Senator.

Senator Sullivan: So if I told you that was an Army general describing the Army’s new Pacific Pathways strategy, would that surprise you?

General Dunford: It would not, Senator. I have seen that description in the open source.

Senator Sullivan: Do you think that costly new Army mission is a redundant mission to the United States Marine Corps’ mission, and is that a good use of America’s taxpayer and military spending?

General Dunford: Senator, given the shortfall of the amphibious lift -- I am speaking now as a service chief -- I think the priority ought to go to the United States Marine Corps.

Senator Sullivan: And would be it an appropriate role of this Congress to try to limit such redundancies by making sure military funding goes to core competencies like much-needed Army airborne brigades in the Asia-Pacific and the Arctic as opposed to redundant activities like troops and
Army helicopters on naval shipping?

General Dunford: Senator, I do agree that the Congress has a critical role in ensuring that we have a proper division of labor within the Department of Defense and that the joint capabilities and capacities that we have are right-sized.

Senator Sullivan: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman McCain: Thank you for that single follow-up question.

Senator Shaheen?

Senator Shaheen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I apologize for getting back so late. I was in an Appropriations markup.

But, General Dunford, thank you very much to you and your family for your service in the past and for your willingness to continue to serve. And I have to say after watching you before the crowd of New Hampshire business folks and hearing from them, how impressed they were. I look forward to the impression that you are going to make as the new Chairman of the Joint Chiefs.

I wanted to follow up on Senator Wicker’s questions about Europe and the concerns in Europe because I recently returned from a visit to Poland and to Latvia where I saw the NATO exercises in Latvia at Adazi Base and heard extreme
concern about the potential for Putin to engage, as you
pointed out, in an asymmetric instigation in the Baltics and
in other eastern European countries. And I am concerned
about the failure to date of Europe to commit to the 2
percent of their GDP for defense spending and wonder if you
have thoughts about what more we might be able to do to
encourage them to ante up.

General Dunford: Senator, I do think it is important
that our NATO partners bear their share of the burden. That
is an issue that I know Secretary Carter and his
predecessors all addressed. They came out of the Wales
conference with a commitment for all those nations to meet
that 2 percent.

From my perspective, given the shortfall of
capabilities and capacities in Europe in areas like
intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, defensive cyber
capabilities, strategic lift, and so forth, I think it is
going to be absolutely critical for our partners to develop
those capabilities and capacities.

I would also add that I have seen firsthand in my
previous assignment in Afghanistan when our NATO partners
are properly resourced, they do have capabilities and
capacities that can be integrated to great effect. And so I
do think the alliance, were it to be properly resourced, can
be a very effective force for stability in Europe, as well
Senator Shaheen: I agree and hopefully we will see that commitment followed through on because clearly the threat from Putin and from Russia continues, and our eastern European allies are very concerned about that.

I want to ask you about -- you talked about the deployment pressures on our military. I wonder if you could give me your perspective on the appropriate active-to-reserve ratio and the importance of the National Guard and Reserve and continuing the military mission that we have in this country.

General Dunford: Senator, I can. And, of course, one of the things we have to do when we talk about using the Reserve and the Guard is balance the concerns of employers, concerns of families with the willingness and the desire frankly for the Guard and Reserve to continue to serve in what is more of an operational or strategic sense. And what I mean by that is there was in the past the sense that the Guard and Reserve would be something -- in the case of a major war, we would mobilize the Guard and Reserve. I think we found today, particularly with the size of our U.S. military force and our commitments to the Guard and Reserve, is much more operational in that they are useful and necessary on a day-to-day basis.

My sense is as a service chief -- and I will certainly
look at the implications across the other services if I am confirmed -- is about once every 4 years is a reasonable time for a major deployment, although in many cases, depending on what their employment is and so forth, individuals can be available on a much more routine basis. But for whole units, probably about 1 to 4 years, 1 year deployment and mobilization and then 4 years back focused on their families and employers, seems to be sustainable. But, again, if I am confirmed, I will certainly consult with the appropriate leadership in the Guard and Reserve to make sure that I have a full appreciation for their challenges, as well as the other service chiefs.

Senator Shaheen: Well, thank you. We have seen in New Hampshire the significant contribution of the Guard and the integration, particularly with the air refueling, of active duty and Guard in providing that mission. So I think it is very important.

Let me ask you if you would commit to two things. One is in 2013, the Department announced the elimination of the direct combat exclusion policy and announced plans to fully integrate more women into all occupational fields. I hope that you will continue that effort and see it through. As we know, women are making up a greater percentage of our military these days, and making sure that they have the ability to compete in all areas I think is significant.
The other question. I noticed this week that the Navy announced that they have tripled the maternity leave policy for women serving in the Navy, and I would urge you to consider that across all branches of the military. Again, as women are making up more of our troops, I think it is important to address the family issues that they have, and certainly maternity leave is a big part of that. So I hope you will do that.

General Dunford: Thank you, Senator. I will look at both of those issues.

Senator Shaheen: Thank you.

Senator Reed [presiding]: Senator Graham?

Senator Graham: Thank you.

General, I think you are an outstanding choice. The President could not have chosen a better person to be Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. So congratulations to you and your family for a lot of great service. The best is yet to come.

When it comes to stopping ISIL -- that is the stated goal is to degrade and destroy -- what if we fail in that goal? What can America expect?

General Dunford: Senator, if we were to fail in stopping ISIL, I think you will see an expansion of ISIL not only across the Middle East but outside the Middle East. And we have, obviously, seen now elements of ISIL in the
1 Maghreb all the way over to Afghanistan.
2 Senator Graham: So they are an expanding power, as we
3 speak?
4 General Dunford: Well, Senator, I think they are
5 expanded in terms of geographic location. I have not yet
6 concluded that they are expanded in terms of capability.
7 Senator Graham: Got you. But I remember when we were
8 talking in the office, you said if we do not stop these
9 guys, we can expect a tsunami of ISIL and their
10 sympathizers. Is that fair?
11 General Dunford: Senator, I think it is fair. That is
12 exactly what I said, and I stand by that comment.
13 Senator Graham: So at the end of the day, I do not
14 want the tsunami to come, so we are going to have to stop
15 these guys.
16 Is it fair to say that Iraq and Syria need to be viewed
17 as one battle space when it comes to ISIL or to stop them in
18 Iraq if you do not address their presence in Syria?
19 General Dunford: Absolutely, Senator. The enemy does
20 not respect the boundaries that we see on the map.
21 Senator Graham: Can you envision a scenario where you
22 have a regional army made up of Arabs and maybe Turkey that
23 would go into Syria and fight ISIL alone, leaving Assad off
24 the table? Would they join up for such a fight?
25 General Dunford: Senator, it is hard for me, watching
the politics from the outside right now, to see that degree of integration, given the divergent interests that those countries have. But I can certainly see where that would be an effective way to deal with this is to have a regional army that would be willing to deal with ISIL.

Senator Graham: Right. But my question is if you did not put Assad’s removal on the table, it would be hard to get them to join up just to fight ISIL because they are worried about Syria becoming a puppet of Iran.

General Dunford: That is right, Senator. Most of the countries that you spoke about all have a shared goal of removing Assad from power.

Senator Graham: Would you agree with me that Assad’s presence is sort of a magnet for Sunni extremists?

General Dunford: I think if not the proximate cause of the ISIL movement, certainly one of the primary drivers of the ISIL movement was the abuses of the Assad regime.

Senator Graham: If we go down to a thousand Kabul-centric U.S. forces in 2017 in Afghanistan, do we substantially lose our counterterrorism mission?

General Dunford: My assessment is we would have a significant degradation of our counterterrorism mission in Afghanistan, were we to do that.

Senator Graham: Would we lose our eyes and ears along the Afghan-Pakistan border that we enjoy today?
General Dunford: We would, Senator.

Senator Graham: Would in your view that create a lot of risk to the gains we have achieved over the last decade if we did not have those eyes and ears and counterterrorism forces?

General Dunford: Senator, there is no question it would create risk.

Senator Graham: When it comes to 60 Free Syrian Army troops being trained under the current regime, would you agree with me it is going to be very hard to recruit people to go into Syria if you do not promise them protection from Assad because if they get any capability at all in fighting ISIL, Assad would assume that capability would be turned on him one day and he is not going to sit on the sidelines and watch a force mature and develop without hitting them? Does that make sense to you?

General Dunford: I agree with that assessment, Senator.

Senator Graham: So the most logical consequence of training a force to go into Syria to fight ISIL alone is that Assad will see them as a threat to his regime and most likely attack.

General Dunford: I agree with that, Senator.

Senator Graham: And it would be very, I think, immoral to put someone in that position knowing that is coming their
way with some capability to defend themselves. Does that make sense to you?

General Dunford: Senator, my assessment is that if we train moderate Syrian forces, the new Syrian army, then we ought to also provide them with the wherewithal to be successful.

Senator Graham: If this war in Syria continues the way it is going for another year, do you worry about stability in Jordan?

General Dunford: I do, Senator.

Senator Graham: Do you worry about stability in Lebanon?

General Dunford: I do, Senator.

Senator Graham: So the consequences of going into Syria with a regional force and all of the problems associated with it have to be balanced against the consequences of ISIL surviving and thriving.

General Dunford: I agree with that, Senator.

Senator Graham: In your view, over the long haul, is it in America’s national security interest to do things necessary to degrade and destroy ISIL?

General Dunford: I do believe that is absolutely in our national interest to do that, Senator.

Senator Graham: Do you agree with me that whatever regional army we may form, there are certain American
capabilities that would be outcome determinative in any
fight against ISIL, and it would be in our national security
interest to provide those capabilities?

General Dunford: I agree with that, Senator,
particularly in the case of aviation, intelligence,
surveillance, reconnaissance, and probably special
operations capabilities.

Senator Graham: Finally, if a soldier or a member of
our military falls in Iraq or Syria trying to destroy ISIL,
would you agree with me that they died protecting their
homeland?

General Dunford: I would, Senator.

Senator Graham: And that is the reason some of them
may have to go back.

General Dunford: Senator, there is no question in my
mind that the young men and women that we have deployed
right now, the 3,500 that are inside of Iraq and those that
are in the surrounds working through CENTCOM in this
campaign, are protecting our Nation.

Senator Graham: God bless them. God bless you. Best
of luck.

General Dunford: Thank you, Senator.

Senator Reed: General, on behalf of Chairman McCain,
let me thank you for your testimony, thank you for your
service and the service of your family.
And also on behalf of the chairman, I will now adjourn the hearing.

[Whereupon, at 11:53 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]