

Stenographic Transcript
Before the

COMMITTEE ON
ARMED SERVICES

UNITED STATES SENATE

UNITED STATES NORTHERN COMMAND, AND UNITED STATES
SOUTHERN COMMAND

Thursday, February 15, 2018

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1 HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON
2 THE UNITED STATES NORTHERN COMMAND AND
3 UNITED STATES SOUTHERN COMMAND
4 IN REVIEW OF THE DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST
5 FOR FISCAL YEAR 2019 AND
6 THE FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM

7
8 Thursday, February 15, 2018

9
10 U.S. Senate
11 Committee on Armed Services
12 Washington, D.C.
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14 The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:32 a.m. in
15 Room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. James M.
16 Inhofe, presiding.

17 Committee Members Present: Senators Inhofe
18 [presiding], Wicker, Fischer, Cotton, Rounds, Ernst, Tillis,
19 Sullivan, Perdue, Sasse, Reed, Nelson, McCaskill, Shaheen,
20 Blumenthal, Donnelly, Hirono, Kaine, King, Warren, and
21 Peters.
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1 OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES M. INHOFE, U.S.
2 SENATOR FROM OKLAHOMA

3 Senator Inhofe: We will call the meeting to order.

4 We are going to receive testimony from two of my
5 favorite people. General Lori Robinson -- I have to say
6 that I taught her everything she knows from when she was the
7 wing commander at Tinker Air Force Base in Oklahoma. And
8 Kurt Tidd, Commander for the U.S. Southern Command.

9 I think there is a lot of overlap -- we have talked.
10 All three of us have talked about this -- between the north
11 and the south command. And I think that is one reason that
12 Senator McCain would want to have these meetings together.

13 The new National Defense Strategy, the NDS, identifies
14 protecting the homeland, sustaining American advantages in
15 the western hemisphere as key priorities even as the DOD
16 focuses on the rising challenge of great power competitors.
17 As we have seen from increasing economic and military
18 efforts by China and by Russia to gain a foothold in the
19 Americas, the boundaries between great power competition and
20 unconventional threats are increasingly blurred. I think
21 that is one reason when General Dunford made the observation
22 that we are losing our qualitative and quantitative edge on
23 China and Russia.

24 General Robinson, you are tasked with addressing the
25 missile and nuclear threats that we face, and while I am

1 encouraged by recent efforts to bolster our homeland missile
2 defense system, more needs to be done to address the
3 ballistic and cruise missile threats. I think particularly
4 recently we have observed others gaining talents that we
5 were not convinced that they already had.

6 And, Admiral Tidd, in SOUTHCOM, you are on the front
7 lines combating illicit networks, smuggling drugs, people,
8 weapons, and money and destabilize every country along the
9 way. You also face involvement in external actors that
10 present unique challenges in the theater and lack sufficient
11 resources.

12 I think that we have a lot in common, and for that
13 reason, we are having these together. And we look forward
14 to your testimony. And I appreciate the time that each one
15 of you spent in our office talking about the challenges you
16 guys have.

17 Senator Reed?

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

3 Senator Reed: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.
4 Let me join you in welcome our witnesses: General Robinson
5 and Admiral Tidd. Thank you for your extraordinary service
6 to the nation. Please convey our thanks to the men and
7 women in your commands who, as we all know, do the job every
8 day for us. Thank you.

9 General Robinson, your mission is to protect the
10 homeland to deter and defeat attacks on the United States
11 and support civil authorities in mitigating the effects of
12 attacks and natural disasters. We saw this demonstrated in
13 DOD's support to the States and territories affected by
14 hurricanes, wildfires, and floods in this past year, and we
15 thank you for that.

16 You are also dual-hatted as the Commander of the North
17 American Aerospace Defense Command, NORAD, which brings
18 unique responsibilities and partnering opportunities with
19 Canada to deter and defend against threats to our nation.

20 You are also responsible for the operation of our
21 homeland ballistic missile defense system. We look forward
22 to hearing about your priorities for further improvements to
23 the ground-based missile defense system. This is
24 particularly important in light of the growing threat from
25 North Korea.

1 Lastly, your relationship with the military leadership
2 in Mexico, along with your collaboration with Admiral Tidd
3 and other federal agencies, is crucial to promoting security
4 along our southern border. A number of problems at the
5 border originate in the SOUTHCOM area of operations and
6 efforts to address those problems require a whole-of-
7 government approach.

8 Admiral Tidd, you are on the front lines of a
9 significant threat facing our nation, the opioid crisis. In
10 2016, we saw 64,000 deaths from drug overdoses, an increase
11 from 52,000 in 2015. What has made the crisis worse is that
12 more and more Americans addicted to opioids are turning to
13 other dangerous drugs that are flowing into our borders from
14 Central and South America and Asia. The flow of heroin and
15 cocaine and other drugs like fentanyl into the country is
16 exacerbating this crisis. Cocaine production in Colombia is
17 up, as we spoke in our office, and is destabilizing the
18 countries of the Northern Triangle as it works our way to
19 our border and destroys lives here.

20 I was very encouraged to hear that SOUTHCOM held an
21 opioid conference last week which brought all the government
22 stakeholders together to work on this problem. Because it
23 is important to recognize, while our military has an
24 important role to play in the fight against narcotics in
25 this country, we will only win against this threat with

1 adequate resources for domestic agencies such as the Food
2 and Drug Administration, the Drug Enforcement
3 Administration, and the Department of Health and Human
4 Services. Admiral Tidd, I look forward to hearing from you
5 about the outcome of the conference and about SOUTHCOM's
6 effort to counter the flow of narcotics into the United
7 States.

8 In addition, China and Russia have been increasingly
9 active in Central and South America, committing millions of
10 dollars of investment and partnering with Latin American
11 militaries. Admiral Tidd, as you noted in your written
12 statement, China has pledged \$500 billion in trade with
13 Latin American countries and \$250 billion in Chinese direct
14 investment over the next 10 years. Increased economic
15 cooperation and the continued provision of financing and
16 loans that appear to have no strings attached provide ample
17 opportunity for China to expand its influence over key
18 regional partners and promote unfair business practices and
19 labor practices. I am concerned because of the cuts to our
20 State Department and USAID, we are not doing everything we
21 can to position ourselves as a partner of choice for our
22 neighbors in the region. Admiral Tidd, I would like to hear
23 from you on how China and Russia are investing in Central
24 and South America and how they pose a national security
25 threat to the United States.

1 Finally, we are all observing the humanitarian crisis
2 in Venezuela. We would like your perspectives on how much
3 longer the regime can survive and how the crisis will affect
4 neighboring countries. I am especially concerned about
5 Colombia, which is already struggling to implement its
6 disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration process and
7 is ill-equipped to deal with a long-term refugee problem in
8 the border region.

9 General Robinson, Admiral Tidd, again thank you for
10 your service.

11 Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Reed.

12 We will go ahead and hear opening statements by both of
13 our witnesses and try to confine them to 5 minutes, if you
14 can. And your entire statement will be made a part of the
15 record. Let us start with you, General Robinson.

16 General Robinson, I just found out that your husband
17 was best friends and a fellow F-16 pilot with my best
18 friend, Charles Sublett, in Oklahoma, and I was not aware of
19 this. I do not know how that went unnoticed.

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1 STATEMENT OF GENERAL LORI J. ROBINSON, USAF,
2 COMMANDER, UNITED STATES NORTHERN COMMAND AND NORTH AMERICAN
3 AEROSPACE DEFENSE COMMAND

4 General Robinson: Well, sir, you know, when you bring
5 him to the witness table, he has to tell the truth, noting
6 but the truth.

7 Senator Inhofe: I will share that was Charles.

8 General Robinson: Yes, sir, please do. Please do.

9 First of all, I would really like to say -- we know
10 that he is a figure here -- to Senator McCain and his family
11 and that I know all of our thoughts and prayers are with
12 him. And so I just wanted to extend that. I think that is
13 incredibly important.

14 You know, Senator Inhofe, Senator Reed, all the
15 distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to join
16 you today. David and I are honored to join you today to
17 testify alongside my friend, my shipmate, more importantly,
18 my wingman, Kurt Tidd. He and I do things arm in arm.

19 2017 was a challenging year. NORTHCOM and NORAD
20 addressed proactive actions by our adversaries while
21 simultaneously providing defense support to civil
22 authorities during an historic series of natural disasters
23 that required significant military capabilities and military
24 manpower.

25 However, I will say that those challenges were

1 definitely handled by a team of absolute professionals. And
2 I cannot tell you, sir, how much I am proud to represent all
3 of them here today.

4 In my 21 months as the Commander of NORAD and U.S.
5 Northern Command, I have been so impressed by the dedication
6 and vigilance shown by the soldiers, sailors, airmen,
7 marines, coast guardsmen, civilians, Americans, and
8 Canadians who stand ready to defend our nations and our
9 fellow citizens.

10 Looking forward, I see no reason to believe that the
11 threats to our homeland will decrease. Our adversaries
12 continue to extend their operational reach and are
13 developing new capabilities to range targets in North
14 America and in Canada.

15 Our preparation for these threats relies on a
16 dependable budget. We appreciate all that this committee
17 has done to help reach the 2-year budget agreement. In
18 2018, National Defense Strategy recognizes a return to great
19 power competition and lays out a long-term strategy for
20 addressing provocative behavior by China and Russia.

21 In NORAD and U.S. Northern Command, we understand the
22 urgency of keeping pace with these evolving threats. We
23 also recognize that North Korea represents the most
24 immediate threat to our homeland and therefore remains
25 NORTHCOM's highest priority. In the past year, Kim Jong-un

1 has demonstrated several successful ICBM tests. We continue
2 to watch their developments closely and are prepared to
3 defend the United States. And I want to assure this
4 committee today that I am confident that I can defend the
5 United States.

6 While I am confident that we can defeat this threat
7 today, it is critical that we continue to improve the
8 ballistic missile defense enterprise with emphasis on the
9 development of improved sensor networks, combined with
10 interceptor capability and capacity and reliability. We
11 continue to work with the Missile Defense Agency, the
12 intelligence community, and other combatant commands to
13 ensure our collaborative effort in outpacing the threat.

14 Russia continues to modernize its long-range bombers
15 and its submarines and has developed new cruise missiles
16 with the capability to hold targets at risk at ranges that
17 we have not seen before. To defend against advanced cruise
18 missiles, it is important that we continue to make prudent
19 and savvy investments in advanced sensors and defensive
20 weapon systems. The strategic advancements in Russian
21 submarine fleets to demonstrate their capability to threaten
22 our homeland for the years to come. The threats are the
23 most serious. However, we remain vigilant against the
24 adapting threat of terrorism, as well as unpredictable
25 natural disasters.

1 As we review the 2017 hurricane response and prepare
2 for the 2018 season, we are working with our mission
3 partners to include the active, guard, reserve forces to
4 incorporate the lessons learned to ensure that we provide
5 our best support to lead federal agencies.

6 With respect to Canada, we are building
7 interoperability across domains with a tri-command framework
8 that is comprised of NORTHCOM, NORAD, and the Canadian Joint
9 Operations Command. This arrangement allows further
10 planning integration while preserving our ability to conduct
11 unilateral missions.

12 With respect to Mexico, our military-to-military
13 relationship with the Mexican secretariats of national
14 defense, SEDENA and SEMAR, is unbelievably strong. We focus
15 on illuminating the pathways used to transit illicit goods
16 with my partner here, Admiral Tidd, with our interagency
17 partners, SOUTHCOM and SOCOM. Theater security cooperation
18 is an essential part of strengthening continental defense
19 and builds relationships essential for future cooperation.

20 And by the way, this year we have the 60th anniversary
21 of NORAD. Throughout its long history, this binational
22 command has seen several evolutions in the air domain, and
23 we are proud of that. The men and women of United States
24 Northern Command and NORAD stand united in a common purpose
25 ready to face the threats of the United States and Canada

1 today, and we are evolving to face the threats of tomorrow.

2 I need all of you to know that we have the watch, but I
3 also need you to know while, Senators, today you are going
4 to ask about me and about our capabilities and the things
5 that we need -- I want you to know that we could not do it
6 without our families. If it was not for our families and
7 our steadfast things that keep us grounded, we would not be
8 able to be where we are today. So I want to say thank you
9 to my husband, who is here today representing all the
10 families of United States NORAD and Northern Command,
11 because without them, we would not have the standard.

12 So, Senator, back to you.

13 [The prepared statement of General Robinson follows:]

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1 Senator Inhofe: Thank you, General Robinson.

2 Admiral Tidd?

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1 STATEMENT OF ADMIRAL KURT W. TIDD, USN, COMMANDER,
2 UNITED STATES SOUTHERN COMMAND

3 Admiral Tidd: Senator Inhofe, Ranking Member Reed, and
4 members of this committee, thank you for this opportunity to
5 address you today. And I join my colleague and partner,
6 General Robinson, in extending our very best, warmest wishes
7 to Senator McCain and to his family, and he is in our
8 thoughts and prayers today.

9 Also in our thoughts and prayers are the victims and
10 family members of yesterday's tragedy in Parkland, Florida.
11 As you probably know, some of our Southern Command teammates
12 have children who were present during the incident but were,
13 fortunately, unharmed. We greatly appreciate the first
14 responders, the faculty members, and other students whose
15 actions no doubt saved lives.

16 Now, as I said, I am here with my good friend and my
17 teammate, General Lori Robinson. We are products of the
18 intentions of the Goldwater-Nichols legislation that led to
19 an emphasis on jointness. This is not the first time that
20 we have appeared together. This is not the first time that
21 we have worked together. In fact, our partnership goes back
22 over a decade. So I would just like to say that it is
23 absolutely very much appropriate and fitting that we have
24 the opportunity to talk to you today about the western
25 hemisphere security challenges.

1 I look forward to discussing how our two commands work
2 together and to ensure that there is an absolutely seamless
3 defense of our homeland.

4 Over the past year, SOUTHCOM has focused on building a
5 regional security network of principled, inclusive
6 partnerships. Partners throughout Latin America and the
7 Caribbean are working with each other and with us on a range
8 of shared challenges.

9 These challenges manifest themselves in our hemisphere
10 in several concerning ways. Criminal and extremist networks
11 continue to threaten regional stability and our national
12 security. We know of specific cases of individuals who were
13 involved in plots to attack our homeland or our partners.
14 Fortunately, they were stopped but this remains a
15 significant, persistent concern.

16 Competitors like China and Russia seek to exploit the
17 perception that we are disengaging from the Americas, and as
18 they succeed in their efforts comes an increased ability for
19 them to interfere with our security relationships and to
20 hold our interests at risk. These challenges are less overt
21 and sometimes more insidious than in other theaters. They
22 are manageable with modest investment, sufficient attention,
23 and early engagement. For SOUTHCOM, that involves tools
24 that strengthen relationships and build capacity.

25 Now, we are not talking about brigade combat teams or

1 aircraft carriers in our theater. We are talking about
2 small teams of general purpose and special operations forces
3 to maintain critical training engagements. We are talking
4 about medium endurance ships with embarked helicopters and
5 particularly those that are interoperable with our partners
6 and with enough awareness to buy down risk against problems
7 early and stop threats at their source before they become
8 more costly.

9 We appreciate the attention of Congress to this region
10 and thank this committee for its support to the mission and
11 the men and women of SOUTHCOM and to our families.

12 I look forward to answering your questions.

13 [The prepared statement of Admiral Tidd follows:]

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1 Senator Inhofe: Okay, Admiral, thank you very much. I
2 appreciate it.

3 You just said in your opening statement, General
4 Robinson, that I can defend the United States today. And I
5 know that is true. You and I have talked about this. But
6 at what level of risk?

7 You know, when General Milley said -- this is a quote.
8 Before this committee, he said the most important of many
9 challenges we face is consistent, sustained, predictable
10 funding over time. Now, we corrected that a little bit with
11 our 2018 budget. So it is kind of predictable between now
12 until the year 2020, but then it becomes unpredictable
13 again.

14 So I would like to have both of you just very briefly
15 tell us at what level of risk are we able to do what we have
16 to do today that you can tie directly to the
17 unpredictability of the budget.

18 General Robinson: So, sir, I will start and then I
19 will turn it over to the Admiral.

20 To me, predictability is everything. As a consumer of
21 readiness, as the one that has to use the things that the
22 service chiefs have to organize, train, and equip for, for
23 me what is important is to understand what I have got out
24 there for capabilities. So I am telling you today I can
25 defend the United States of America when it comes to

1 ballistic missile defense, given what we have done from a
2 funding perspective but as importantly what we did with the
3 ATR and adding capability, capacity in Alaska and what we
4 continue to do with discriminating radars. So all of those
5 things I am comfortable for. But we have to allow the
6 services to be able to plan because they are the ones that
7 provide us that readiness.

8 Senator Inhofe: Admiral?

9 Admiral Tidd: Sir, as you and I have discussed,
10 anything that challenges the services' ability to provide
11 the forces that we request to be able to effectively secure
12 the southern approaches to the United States is a challenge.
13 Budget unpredictability has probably been the single
14 greatest impact on their ability to provide those forces.

15 The challenge that we have, when it comes to awareness
16 of what is going on in the environment -- we have already
17 discussed our ISR requirement. We receive about 8 percent
18 of what we have asked for. I am very appreciative of the
19 fact that about half of that has been provided as a direct
20 result of creative contract ISR capabilities that the
21 Congress has so generously funded. But that still is an
22 enormous challenge.

23 Senator Inhofe: Yes, not just for you but for all
24 commands. We hear that all the time, and that is one that
25 we really need to be direct.

1 Senator Reed brought up China. I actually read your
2 statement. Now, you did not cover it in your abbreviated
3 message this morning, but you made a statement in there that
4 caught my eye. You said that China in particular is
5 increasing aggressive and courting IMET students from the
6 region to attend their military school. I have never heard
7 that before. Now, I know in Africa, the IMET program is
8 singularly one of the really truly great programs we have.
9 Once we get them in with us, they are there for life, and we
10 see evidence of this all the time. I was not aware that
11 China is actually trying to move into that.

12 Could you kind of share that?

13 Admiral Tidd: Senator, I have long felt that the IMET
14 program is probably our single greatest long-term
15 investment, value for the dollar that we put into it. And I
16 would just highlight that it is an investment that sometimes
17 may take 2 decades or more to pay off, but when it pays off,
18 it pays off with relationships with strategic partners that
19 are absolutely critical. It creates the personal contacts
20 that many of the military leaders from across the region
21 that I work with on a day-to-day basis have participated in
22 the IMET program, have studied at our war colleges, gone to
23 our service schools.

24 China watches that very closely. They have recognized
25 the value of that strategic investment. And so they

1 basically have taken a leaf out of our book and they are
2 very lavishly funding to bring senior military officers from
3 a variety of key countries around our region to China for
4 very lavishly expensed, all-expense-paid trips for them, for
5 their families to be able to live a very high lifestyle in
6 the countries.

7 There is still a recognition from our partners that the
8 greatest value comes from studying in the United States. We
9 believe our country sells itself, and when people come here,
10 they get to know who we are, who our country really is, the
11 values that we truly represent. We think that is a very,
12 very important --

13 Senator Inhofe: Yes. We have always said once we get
14 them over here, we have got them forever. And that has been
15 my experience particularly in Africa because they are there.
16 And so it is very disturbing to me to hear that statement or
17 observation that you made that they are actually going after
18 the same individuals that we have already had. This is
19 disturbing. It has given us something new to address, and I
20 appreciate that very much.

21 Senator Reed?

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

23 Let me concur. IMET is absolutely critical. In a way
24 I have personal connections. Two of my classmates from West
25 Point later went on to become chief of service in the

1 Philippines and in Thailand. And they have been staunch
2 defenders of their countries but also our relationship. I
3 think the President of Costa Rica was a West Point graduate,
4 at least one of them.

5 That program is funded by the State Department.

6 Correct?

7 Admiral Tidd: Yes, Senator, that is correct.

8 Senator Reed: And it is another example of,
9 particularly in both of your commands, where whole-of-
10 government -- without funding State, there is no IMET. And
11 so when we see some of these proposed cuts to State, it will
12 play out in fewer opportunities for students to go to
13 American war colleges, American military academies, et
14 cetera. Is that accurate?

15 Admiral Tidd: Senator, I would agree completely.

16 Senator Reed: In fact, again both of you represent in
17 critical ways the need for not just the Department of
18 Defense but Department of State, Homeland Security -- Coast
19 Guard cutters are part of your intercept plan for narcotics.
20 In fact, what percentage of the destination of cargos that
21 you knew were en route can you intercept?

22 Admiral Tidd: Senator, the challenge that we face
23 right now is about 25 percent of vessels that we know that
24 are transporting illicit materials -- we can intercept about
25 25 percent.

1 Senator Reed: So a quarter. So if we could invest
2 more in the Coast Guard, presumably we could intercept more
3 than 25 percent of the ships.

4 Admiral Tidd: Senator, I believe security in our
5 theater is a team sport. It requires the efforts of many
6 departments and agencies.

7 Senator Reed: Again, I think both you and General
8 Robinson illustrate so dramatically how we have to get
9 adequate funding for every significant national security
10 component whether they are in the Defense Department or
11 outside the Defense Department.

12 General Robinson, when you say you can defend the
13 nation against missile attack, you are referring to a
14 limited missile attack by a country such as North Korea.
15 Correct?

16 General Robinson: Yes, sir.

17 Senator Reed: You are not making a generalized
18 statement.

19 General Robinson: No, sir.

20 Senator Reed: Thank you. I just want to make that
21 clear for the record.

22 General Robinson: I will defer all that to General
23 Hyten.

24 Senator Reed: In that issue you raised in your
25 testimony, there is the constant tension between capacity

1 and capability.

2 General Robinson: Yes.

3 Senator Reed: We are investing lots of dollars in
4 increased capacity. That is going to take a while, 5, 6, 7,
5 or 8 years to get some of these new fields up. But at the
6 immediate moment, we have real issues of capability whether
7 we can effectively take down through sensors, through shot
8 doctrine, through the kill vehicle anything coming at us.
9 Particularly, unfortunately, the offense in this game seems
10 to have an advantage if they can deploy decoys or multiple-
11 stage rockets.

12 So can you comment now about this issue of where we
13 should be focusing and how we should do it?

14 General Robinson: Yes. So, sir, I have to tell you I
15 am completely comfortable with where we are. The fact that
16 in the above threshold reprogramming that we added capacity
17 and then the redesigned kill vehicles -- and I think it is
18 2022 when we will have those. But at the same time, we are
19 looking at discriminating radar. So in 2019, we are going
20 to add the long-range discriminating radars to Alaska. We
21 are going to add radars to Hawaii, and we are going to do a
22 study on what we need as we look at Cobra Dane coming down.
23 Thank you to the committee for funding Cobra Dane until we
24 figure all this out. But I am very comfortable where we
25 are.

1 I think as we look at the discrimination of radars, we
2 look at the capacity of the fields in Alaska, I think we are
3 in a really good place because when we sit back and look at
4 what Kim Jong-un has done, he is looking at capability. You
5 and I talked about this. But he has not built up capacity
6 yet. And so right now, our capacity is very good where we
7 are and as we continue to move forward.

8 Senator Reed: Are you satisfied with the schedule, the
9 frequency, and the rigor of the testing of the system, the
10 actual testing?

11 General Robinson: I am very comfortable. You know,
12 one of the things that I say about Kim Jong-un all the time
13 is that he is not afraid to fail in public. You learn as
14 much from failure as you do from success. And so I am very
15 comfortable where we are with our testing and where we are
16 going in the future. And I rely very much on General Reaves
17 and where MDA is going, and he and I talk all the time.

18 Senator Reed: Thank you very much.

19 General Robinson: Yes, sir.

20 Senator Reed: Again, thank you both for your service.

21 General Robinson: Yes, sir.

22 Senator Inhofe: Senator Wicker?

23 Senator Wicker: Admiral Tidd, thank you. Thank you
24 both for your testimony and your service.

25 But, Admiral, our strategy now is great power

1 competition first and foremost. Senator Inhofe asked you to
2 drill down on China. So let me ask you to turn to Russia,
3 which you discuss extensively in your written testimony.
4 You mentioned Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela. Is that
5 principally where they are playing? What are they trying to
6 do there and where else do we need to be concerned?

7 Admiral Tidd: Senator, those are the countries in
8 which previously the Soviet Union had a longstanding
9 relationship and Russia has continued that relationship.
10 However, they continue to engage in a direct competition for
11 influence with some of our key partners around the region.

12 Our challenge is to be able to disprove the false
13 narrative that Russia peddles in the region, that the United
14 States is withdrawing, that we are not a reliable partner.
15 And so many of the actions that we engage in are directly
16 intended to show our partners, who are very much interested
17 in working with us, that we in fact share common interests.
18 We certainly share common democratic values and principles,
19 which neither Russia nor China share.

20 Senator Wicker: You are not a diplomat. You are a
21 military person. But if the President's new openness to the
22 Trans-Pacific Partnership advances, would that be helpful to
23 us in making the point that we can be a reliable partner?

24 Admiral Tidd: Senator, I do not profess to be either a
25 diplomat or an economist, but I would just observe that the

1 things that we do to show our partners directly -- and we
2 have Pacific-facing nations within the SOUTHCOM region --
3 anything that we can do to show that we are reliable
4 partners is valuable.

5 Senator Wicker: To what extent are we comfortable with
6 the militaries of these countries subscribing to the
7 position that we advocate and that we are the great standard
8 of the military being answerable to the civilian leadership?
9 And to what extent are the members of their legislative
10 bodies significant players in this regard?

11 Admiral Tidd: Senator, I think each of the countries
12 differs slightly. My relationships are with the military
13 leaders of the countries. My observations and my
14 conversations genuinely reflect that they recognize and are
15 grounded in the same democratic principles that really are
16 characteristic, that were the founding characteristics of
17 the Americas community. I think as we have seen, as a
18 number of elections that have occurred throughout the region
19 that led to changes in government positions, the militaries
20 in each instance have played a very reasoned, responsible
21 role, and they recognize that the ability to freely and
22 fairly express democratic preferences as enshrined in the
23 background of this theater have been respected. The one
24 country I think that I would highlight, though, that has
25 been singularly contrary to that has been Venezuela where

1 recent elections have been neither free nor fair.

2 Senator Wicker: Very good.

3 Let me ask you quickly to shift to the ships, the role
4 of the Coast Guard there. Clearly for you, it is going to
5 continue being almost totally Coast Guard. If you could
6 take a moment to say how you plan to integrate unmanned
7 systems into your platform.

8 Admiral Tidd: Senator, I have said before on a number
9 of occasions in the USSOUTHCOM region, my maritime force has
10 white hulls and orange stripes. And frankly, if it were not
11 for the United States Coast Guard and the significant effort
12 by the Commandant, we would not have a maritime presence.
13 That is not because my parent service, the United States
14 Navy, does not recognize the very significant importance of
15 the region. It is just a matter of strategic priorities and
16 availability of forces, and we run out of forces before we
17 run out of mission.

18 The Coast Guard cutters that have been participating
19 are irreplaceable. The national security cutters, terrific
20 when we get them. But the real workhorse, the cop on the
21 beat vessels, are those medium endurance cutters, many of
22 which are past 30 years in age. Some were built in the
23 1960s. And so the recapitalization of those medium
24 endurance cutters with the offshore patrol cutters I view as
25 extremely important to USSOUTHCOM's ability to provide an

1 adequate maritime presence in our region.

2 Senator Wicker: Unmanned?

3 Admiral Tidd: Unmanned vessels? Unmanned aerial
4 vehicles. There are some challenges procedurally to
5 incorporate them in the missions that we are engaged in, but
6 we are actively exploring efforts to be able to do that.

7 Senator Wicker: Thank you.

8 Senator Inhofe: Senator Peters?

9 Senator Peters: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

10 And to our two witnesses, thank you for your service to
11 our country. Thank you for being here today.

12 General Robinson, I am certainly pleased to hear that
13 you have great confidence in our missile defense
14 capabilities. But I would also like to have you expand a
15 little bit on how we can continue to strengthen those
16 capabilities. We currently have, obviously, the site in
17 California, as well as in Alaska. There is talk about
18 having an east coast site that would provide additional
19 capabilities, particularly given the potential threat from
20 Iran at some point in the future. If you could talk a
21 little bit about what the advantages would be to add a
22 ground-based interceptor capacity at another location in
23 addition to the two we have.

24 General Robinson: Sir, thanks for that.

25 So I tell everybody that I watch North Korea with an

1 eyeball and a half to North Korea and then a half an eyeball
2 to Iran. As I continue to watch them work on their space
3 launch vehicles, I know that they can maybe quickly transfer
4 that to an intercontinental ballistic missile defense
5 capability. Right now, they are very regional, and they are
6 staying within the JCPOA.

7 As I work very closely with Missile Defense Agency
8 understanding what we can do from Alaska and California, I
9 ensure that I have the battlespace that I need to defend
10 from the east coast. So I pay attention to that each and
11 every day, and as the Missile Defense Agency is working
12 their way through what does it look like for an east coast
13 site, I ensure that my words and the battlespace that I need
14 are there to defend the United States.

15 Senator Peters: Thank you, General.

16 General Robinson: Yes, sir.

17 Senator Peters: Admiral Tidd, you mentioned in some of
18 your earlier testimony the situation in Venezuela and one
19 that you are concerned about. Could you elaborate a little
20 bit as to how concerned you are with what we are seeing in
21 Venezuela?

22 Admiral Tidd: Senator, I think the fact that it is a
23 matter of very significant concern to the nations that
24 neighbor Venezuela is probably the most important piece to
25 point out. As we have seen, the impact on Venezuelans who

1 are fleeing the absolutely abominable economic conditions in
2 the country puts a severe burden on the school systems,
3 medical systems, the social support infrastructures
4 particularly of Colombia where over 500,000 Venezuelans have
5 now entered Colombia. It is putting an increasingly growing
6 strain on Brazil where we have seen tens of thousands that
7 have come across. But it also places a significant burden
8 on Guyana, on countries like Curacao and Aruba, as well as
9 Trinidad and Tobago. So it is having a very significant
10 impact on those countries, and those countries recognize
11 that they are going to have to be able to deal with this
12 humanitarian crisis.

13 Senator Peters: So it is certainly very destabilizing
14 to many of our allies and friends in that area.

15 And I would like you to comment, if you would, on the
16 involvement of Cuba in Venezuela. Things that I have read
17 -- there are commentators who believe that there are
18 hundreds to perhaps thousands of Cuban troops in Venezuela.
19 Some have said this is a play right out of the old Castro
20 playbook. What is your assessment of Cuban influence in
21 Venezuela, and how is that contributing to the instability
22 that we are seeing?

23 Admiral Tidd: Senator, I think we have read some of
24 the same documents, both open source and other. When I talk
25 with, again, my counterparts in the region, they have been

1 quick to share that we see significant presence of Cuban
2 advisors to the security forces that continue to prop up the
3 Maduro regime. And so I just think it is a matter of
4 concern.

5 Senator Peters: Well, thank you. I appreciate your
6 testimony.

7 Senator Inhofe: Senator Rounds?

8 Senator Rounds: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

9 General Robinson and Admiral Tidd, first of all, let me
10 just say thank you very much for your service to our
11 country.

12 Admiral Tidd, I would like to go back a little bit to
13 what Senator Wicker was discussing with you. Basically in
14 recent years, China, Russia, and Iran have all increased
15 their activities in the western hemisphere from economic
16 investments to military sales and engagement. Which of
17 these competitors concerns you the most in your areas of
18 responsibility? And what are doing to maintain and expand
19 our position as a partner of choice to Latin American and
20 Caribbean nations? I understand the desire -- and as you
21 said earlier, you recognize that you will do what is
22 necessary. I am wondering if you can give us some specific
23 areas that you either intend to move forward with or that
24 you would need additional assistance with.

25 Admiral Tidd: Well, Senator, without parsing, I think

1 as the new National Defense Strategy has clearly
2 articulated, Russia and China are significant concerns.
3 They are global concerns and so they are of concern because
4 they are very present and aggressive in the USSOUTHCOM
5 theater.

6 Iran also is present. Particularly worrisome is their
7 proxy Hezbollah, which is an area that we have been watching
8 for many, many years and is an item of concern.

9 When it comes specifically to Russia and China, the
10 very best thing that we can do is to be the best possible
11 partners that we can with countries who are absolutely
12 interested, committed, want to work with us. Sometimes
13 there are just things that make it difficult for us to be
14 the best partner that we can. Sometimes it is adequate
15 forces for us to be able to engage with them and so to be
16 able to conduct meaningful exercises with them, but also
17 sometimes our ability to be able to work with them and
18 facilitate the kinds of information sharing that is critical
19 to having an effective common defense for the challenges
20 that we face.

21 Senator Rounds: Let me work my way through it a little
22 bit because I am really curious about such things as foreign
23 military sales or foreign military financing for those
24 military sales, international military education and
25 training, the impact and so forth. Can you talk a little

1 bit about those specific ones with regard to our ability to
2 not only provide them with resources but also the training
3 as well? And where are we at right now with those same
4 partners? Is that working or is it not working? Do we have
5 the resources allocated there that we need?

6 Admiral Tidd: Well, Senator, I do not know a theater
7 commander who says he has got as many resources as he or she
8 would like to have, but I would say that particularly with
9 regard to the programs that you mentioned, FMS and the IMET
10 program, it is a small pie to begin with. The SOUTHCOM
11 allocation of that pie is smaller still based on global
12 priorities. And so our challenge is to make that small
13 slice of the pie go as far as it possibly can.

14 Now, sometimes programs that we offer -- it is
15 expensive for our partners to be able to come and live in
16 the United States and bring their families with them and
17 spend the time here. So that is where we really try to
18 maximize both the number who are able to come and I guess
19 the quality and the quantity, if you will, and finding that
20 balance point can be a real challenge.

21 But I think as far as particularly the IMET program, if
22 there was one program that I would say is a long-term
23 strategic investment -- and like financial investments,
24 sometimes they take a while to pay off, but when they pay
25 off, they are absolutely priceless.

1 Senator Rounds: Okay, thank you.

2 General Robinson, our 114th fighter wing in Sioux Falls
3 has been flying alert missions out of the March Air Base in
4 California since 2012. We have four jets constantly
5 deployed there and crews on a 24-hour flying alert basis
6 that really are part of that critical defense team for our
7 nation. NORAD recently requested 72 upgraded ASR radars
8 through a joint urgent operational needs request, and they
9 have been funded to include for the aircraft of the 114th.
10 The problem is that there are over 300 Air National Guard
11 F-16's, and we are only going to modify 72 of them with this
12 radar.

13 Our worry is that we will put real heavy wear and tear
14 on those specific modified aircraft, and that we will only
15 modify a handful of the aircraft, thus really wearing out
16 that particular group.

17 The cost to upgrade these jets is approximately \$2.1
18 million per jet, and compared to the additional capability
19 gained, it is probably a pretty good buy.

20 Can you talk a little bit about your perspectives on
21 whether or not we should upgrade the remaining F-16's in the
22 Air National Guard alert squadron so that we are not
23 focusing just on those 72 with that capability?

24 General Robinson: Yes, sir. I am working very closely
25 with the Air Force on this. First of all, I am grateful to

1 be able to modify those jets because that just happened
2 recently. So that I think is a really good deal. But I
3 continue to work with the Air Force on what does it look
4 like as we not just modify airplanes but what does the
5 transition to F-35's look like. And so I will look closely
6 and ensure that not only do we not rely heavily on just
7 those, but what does the long-term transition plan look
8 like.

9 Senator Rounds: Very good. Thank you.

10 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

11 Senator Inhofe: Senator Shaheen?

12 Senator Shaheen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

13 And thank you both for your service and for your
14 testimony today.

15 General Robinson, I especially appreciate your comments
16 about the support that everyone in the military receives and
17 at NORAD from your families. And I know that sentiment is
18 shared by everyone on this committee. So thank you both.

19 Admiral Tidd, I want to go back to Senator Reed's
20 question I think about the 25 percent. Did you characterize
21 that as 25 percent of the missions that you could do, you
22 are able to do, and because of the lack of resources, not
23 able to do more than that?

24 Admiral Tidd: Senator, I think the way that we
25 describe it and to clarify is we have pretty good

1 situational awareness on an awful lot of the trafficking
2 that is occurring, and that is based on a very close
3 partnership with a variety of countries in the region, most
4 notably with Colombia. Of the known tracks that we are
5 aware of -- and we think we have got a pretty good handle --
6 we are only able to intercept about 25 percent, about one-
7 quarter.

8 Senator Shaheen: Well, I am sure you are both aware of
9 the challenges that we face with the opioid and heroin and
10 drug epidemic in this country. It has hit New Hampshire
11 particularly hard. Can you estimate, if you had the
12 resources, that you could use to do all of the missions that
13 you would like for all of the interdiction efforts that you
14 are aware of, what difference would that make in terms of
15 the amount of drugs you are able to interdict?

16 Admiral Tidd: Senator, you raise an excellent
17 question. And the challenge that we have particularly with
18 regard to opioids -- that is the reason we hosted the
19 conference last week was because we recognize that what we
20 knew and the procedures that we had in place did not seem to
21 be having the kind of impact. And it is because the supply
22 chain of that particular illicit substance does not travel
23 in the same way that the supply chain for, if you roll the
24 clock back, marijuana originally and then cocaine where we
25 have well-understood and identified source zones, transit

1 zones, arrival zones and we are able to lay across those
2 various pathways a variety of primarily law enforcement but
3 also intelligence community and military resources to have
4 an impact on them. The opioid problem is a fundamentally
5 different problem. We understand it is different.

6 I would say the value of last week's conference was
7 bringing together many, many, many of the agencies that
8 touch that problem at least on the interdiction side and
9 recognize we have got to do business differently. I am not
10 prepared to tell you that we have an answer to it yet, but
11 we recognize the scope of the problem, the seriousness of
12 the problem, and the work that remains to be done and our
13 commitment to work together to put in place a more effective
14 mechanism than what we are doing today.

15 Senator Shaheen: Thank you.

16 And, General Robinson, are you seeing similar on the
17 northern border with Canada -- are you seeing similar traces
18 of drug runners coming across?

19 General Robinson: No, ma'am, not like what Admiral
20 Tidd would talk about.

21 The one thing I would like to also add and give Admiral
22 Tidd a lot of credit for is last month we had a meeting with
23 he and I and Admiral Duran from Colombia and Admiral Soberon
24 from Mexico to talk about as we watch things go from the
25 land-based transit to the ocean-based transit, those two

1 folks talking to each other about how do we decide how we
2 are going to combat this together. So under his leadership,
3 we had Colombia present a plan. We had Mexico present a
4 plan. We had the U.S. present a plan. And now the three of
5 us are going to sit down and go what is the best way we can
6 do this from an open ocean perspective to try to get after
7 that. And so this is not a single dimension conversation.
8 This is a multi-dimension conversation, and it is a multi-
9 combatant command conversation, which to me is what is
10 really important is the fact that he and I stand side by
11 side doing this.

12 Senator Shaheen: Well, thank you. I think it is very
13 important, as you all know. And I hope that we can provide
14 additional resources to make sure that you are successful.

15 I want to pick up on another issue that Senator Reed
16 raised with respect to funding for the State Department.
17 You both talked about the importance of working across DOD
18 and State in terms of what you are trying to accomplish.
19 And we have seen a proposed budget that would cut the
20 Department of State by 30 percent. Can you quantify what
21 that would mean in terms of your operations and your efforts
22 to work with State if they saw that kind of a cut?

23 General Robinson: So I do not know if I can give you a
24 number that would mean anything, but here is what I do know.
25 Every single day we talk about anything, Secretary Mattis

1 diplomacy leads. And so the fact of the matter that he says
2 diplomacy leads, then I know my role and responsibility is
3 to support diplomacy. So I cannot say is that 10, 20, 25
4 percent, but I can tell you that I know that I follow
5 diplomacy.

6 Admiral Tidd: I would just add again -- I cannot put a
7 number -- but so many of the programs that are critical to
8 building effective partners across the region -- actually
9 they come out of the State budget. We implement them, but
10 we could not do it if they are underfunded.

11 Senator Shaheen: Well, thank you both. I think that
12 is a very strong statement in terms of funding as we think
13 about increasing funding for the military and Department of
14 Defense. I know we are all on board for that, but we should
15 also be on board for funding for the State Department and
16 our diplomatic efforts.

17 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

18 Senator Inhofe: Senator Fischer?

19 Senator Fischer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

20 And thank you both for being here today.

21 General Robinson, your opening statement discusses the
22 increasing capabilities of Russian cruise missiles to hold
23 targets in the homeland at risk, and specifically you state,
24 quote, these systems present an increasing threat to North
25 America due to their long range, low radar cross section,

1 and the limited indications and warnings likely to be seen
2 prior to a combat launch. End quote. Can you elaborate and
3 characterize this threat in further detail, and how much
4 does it concern you?

5 General Robinson: So, ma'am, here is what I would say.
6 I tell everybody we should often look at the map from the
7 North Pole down. I know Senator Sullivan does every single
8 day. And we should look at the fact that Russia looks
9 different if you look at it that way.

10 And then every single day I would tell you I get an
11 operations and intelligence briefing that talks to me about
12 where bombers are, where submarines are, and what they are
13 doing and what their activity is. And I pay attention to
14 that every single day.

15 And so when I sit back and I look at that, I look at
16 their capability, what they are capable of. I look at their
17 capacity as they continue to train both their bomber pilots
18 and their submarine pilots. But I look at intent. In the
19 air domain, as the Commander of NORAD, I know from an intent
20 perspective their intentions -- I do not see that. But that
21 does not mean from a strategic, long-term perspective, as we
22 talked about in the National Defense Strategy what Russia is
23 out there doing.

24 But I have to tell you. I have to tell you. So one of
25 the things that we are doing is a northern approaches'

1 surveillance analysis of alternatives with Canada to
2 understand what is coming across the northern approaches,
3 both Canada and Alaska, because I look across the entire
4 part as the Commander of NORAD. And what I have said to
5 everybody is I want to be able to detect, ID, track, and
6 engage if necessary at ranges to defend our homeland. And
7 so those are the things I think about when I think about
8 Russia.

9 Senator Fischer: Your final comments there about being
10 able to detect early and then engage, if necessary -- do you
11 think we have enough of that capability right now? I know
12 that in fiscal year 2017, the Air Force began upgrading the
13 radars on the 72 National Guard F-16 fighters. Is that
14 going to be sufficient because is that not really our last
15 line of defense at that point?

16 General Robinson: Yes. So, ma'am, what I would say is
17 that is part of our homeland defense phase one. In phase
18 two, it allows us to use our fighters and tactics,
19 techniques, and procedures to move out further than we were
20 able to before. So we appreciate the committee's support on
21 that. But this is now the longer-range part, if I look at
22 the northern approaches, specifically to be able to do that.

23 Senator Fischer: And I happen to believe that our
24 missile defense system provides really an immense
25 capability, and the expansion of that system is going to

1 help us to continue to defend the homeland as this threat
2 increases.

3 Yet, over the weekend, General, we saw the "New York
4 Times" editorial board publish a column titled "The
5 Dangerous Illusion of Missile Defense." And in it they
6 described our homeland defense system as riddled with flaws
7 and repeated what I consider an old, tired claim that tests
8 were not conducted under realistic conditions.

9 So to be clear, do you have confidence in the ability
10 of the GMD system to defend the United States from a North
11 Korean ballistic missile attack today?

12 General Robinson: Ma'am, I am 100 percent confident in
13 my ability to defend the United States of America.

14 Senator Fischer: And do you believe the actions taken
15 by Congress and this administration to expand the system's
16 capacity and improve discrimination will enhance NORTHCOM's
17 ability to defend the homeland from ballistic missile attack
18 in the future?

19 General Robinson: So, ma'am, I would tell you I
20 appreciate the above-threshold reprogramming for the
21 capacity that we gave, and I think that is helpful as we
22 look at adding on to that the redesigned kill vehicle, in
23 addition to continued work, which we need to do, with the
24 discriminating radars. Between all of those three things, I
25 think we continue to outpace everybody, and it gives me more

1 and more confidence, continued confidence of our ability to
2 defend the United States.

3 Senator Fischer: Thank you, General, for presenting
4 valuable information and very clear answers. Thank you.

5 Senator Inhofe: Senator Donnelly?

6 Senator Donnelly: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

7 I want to thank both the witnesses. Thank you for
8 meeting this week as well.

9 I want to talk to you about what we talked about in my
10 office, which is the opioid crisis. Last week, the Centers
11 for Disease Control reported overdose deaths in Indiana
12 increased by 28 percent from July 2015 to July 2016. Over
13 1,700 Hoosiers died from opioid overdoses. Only six States
14 had larger percentage increases. But this is a national
15 epidemic. It is getting worse, not better. And your
16 commands are on the very front lines of this battle.

17 How would you prioritize the opioid crisis in your
18 command priorities right now? General Robinson and then
19 Admiral Tidd.

20 General Robinson: So, sir, I take this opioid crisis
21 as a personal issue. When you sit back and you talked about
22 it and it is about families and it is about people, it is
23 incredibly important.

24 I sit down every month and I talk to the Secretary of
25 DHS. I work very closely with my subordinate commanders who

1 work very closely with Mexico on all of this.

2 So this crisis is not something that I set aside. It
3 is something that I take very personally. And so what is
4 important to me is that I understand the support role that I
5 can give to DHS and the support role and information that I
6 can give Mexico which then translates to the things that I
7 can give to Admiral Tidd because the UCP line on the map
8 does not exist for Admiral Tidd and I, and so it is a very
9 personal thing.

10 Senator Donnelly: Admiral Tidd?

11 Admiral Tidd: Senator, I share General Robinson --
12 this is a crisis that has come to touch us all personally.
13 And so the challenge that we face is that how do you handle
14 it. How do you deal with it?

15 What became clear at our conference last week was the
16 United States Department of Defense cannot solve this
17 problem on its own. The Department of Homeland Security
18 cannot solve this problem on its own. Health and Human
19 Services cannot solve it on its own. It will only be
20 through all of us working together in a collaborative
21 manner. That is why our approach at USSOUTHCOM is to apply
22 a threat network-based approach. That is our number one
23 priority is threat networks.

24 Senator Donnelly: And I apologize because I have
25 limited time.

1 These drugs are coming across from Mexico not through
2 unguarded areas or anything but through checkpoints in the
3 back of trucks. And so we are in a position of seeing the
4 very checkpoints we have in our country allowing trucks in,
5 many of these trucks loaded with drugs.

6 There are two questions. Number one is detection
7 systems. In regards to fentanyl, tracker dogs die because
8 of the effects of fentanyl on their mucus systems and other
9 things. Where are we in finding new detection systems so we
10 can determine whether these are in the trucks? And are we
11 in a position where we simply need to say, look, your
12 refrigerator is not coming in today. It is coming in in a
13 month and a half because we are checking every box in every
14 truck because it is more important that a young person in
15 Logansport, Indiana be able to stay alive as opposed to
16 having your refrigerator come in on time. So first is
17 detection systems, and second, should we just simply change
18 the way we do business at the border and check every single
19 box that comes in?

20 General Robinson: So, sir, I will tell you in the
21 support role that we do for DHS, we have the opportunity to
22 provide them some biometric detection capability. We have
23 the opportunity to provide marine sensor platoons at the
24 border -- capability.

25 But as you know and as you and I talked about

1 yesterday, it is very much in a support role and the things
2 that we can do from a technology capability. Last year in
3 front of this committee, as you and I chatted about
4 yesterday, Senator McCain asked us to talk about what are
5 some of the technologies. And we will come talk to you
6 about some of the things that we are doing to provide and to
7 support DHS.

8 Senator Donnelly: Admiral?

9 Admiral Tidd: Sir, all I can say is there is no single
10 silver bullet that is going to solve this problem. This is
11 going to take the very best efforts across the entire
12 national security team to be able to work together
13 effectively.

14 Senator Donnelly: Is there a discussion about changing
15 the way we handle crossings at the border because that is
16 where it is coming through? Not that you know of.

17 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

18 Senator Inhofe: Senator Perdue?

19 Senator Perdue: Thank you both for being here. I have
20 got a question about the NDS. Three quick questions before
21 I get to the two on the NDS.

22 Admiral, to finish up on what Senator Shaheen was
23 talking about -- and before I do that, I would be remiss as
24 a Member of the Senate not to apologize to both of you
25 combatant commanders on behalf of the United States Senate.

1 Today we are officially sitting in a continuing resolution
2 again. And you have my personal commitment and resolve that
3 before I leave the United States Senate, we are going to do
4 everything we can to get away from this budget process that
5 puts us in this detrimental, high-risk situation. We are
6 doing more to harm the security of our country than any of
7 these people we are talking about today outside.

8 Sorry. Admiral, real quick. And General Kelly talked
9 about this too, but you have talked about -- there is an
10 asset that you could use in your AOR to actually interdict
11 more. We do not know what percentage we can get to. I
12 understand that. But you could close that gap without
13 spending a lot of money. Is that true?

14 Admiral Tidd: I think there are some platforms out
15 there that would be enormously helpful to us. Yes, sir.

16 Senator Perdue: So what would one of those look like?

17 Admiral Tidd: I think a littoral combat ship would fit
18 perfectly into the mission space that we are --

19 Senator Perdue: Rotary wing capability as well?

20 Admiral Tidd: Absolutely. It is a package. It is a
21 vessel that is capable of operating in the eastern Pacific
22 with rotary wing, with interceptor boats as a package,
23 coupled with maritime patrol aircraft.

24 Senator Perdue: In Latin America, Russia today is
25 supplying 40 percent of the arms sales. China is the second

1 largest trading partner in Latin America. Iran is in there
2 through Hezbollah.

3 The question I have is the NDS is pivoting toward near-
4 peer competitors. Heretofore, our mission in the last 15 to
5 17 years was mainly about terrorism. You were underfunded
6 in SOUTHCOM because we were pushing resources out to the
7 battle. Today the battle looks like it is getting closer
8 and closer to home. Are you being resourced in order to
9 support the NDS, and is the NDS focusing enough on greater
10 power threats, peer power threats in our own hemisphere?

11 Admiral Tidd: Not yet. The NDS recognizes these
12 challenging nations, and I think that we must move beyond
13 applying resources to the home ZIP code of where those
14 specific countries are and apply the resources to be able to
15 deal with them wherever they are found across the globe.

16 Senator Perdue: General, thank you for being here
17 again and thank you for being on the wall.

18 The Arctic. China just last month issued a statement.
19 Russia has been actively building resources in the Arctic.
20 We see sorties or whatever in the Arctic region increasing
21 at an exponential rate. Admiral, maybe I am going to ask
22 you. I am sure you can too. But I do not know how many
23 icebreakers we technically have. We do not have very many.
24 I think China or Russia has a multiple.

25 So can you talk about the threats in the Arctic? Are

1 they increasing? What is Russia's and China's strategy?
2 You told us last year about your strategic estimate. Can
3 you give us an update on that strategic estimate in the
4 Arctic?

5 General Robinson: Absolutely, sir. So I did a
6 strategic estimate. Out of that strategic estimate, I have
7 directed by two-star planner to provide a mission analysis.
8 As I have said to people, we have had our toes in the sand.
9 It is time to put our feet in the snow, and it is time to
10 understand more and more what is going on up there.

11 So out of that mission analysis, we are going to do a
12 couple of exercises. We did a Vigilant Shield last fall.
13 We are going to do an Arctic Edge. And we will be able to
14 understand certain tasks out of that. But at the same time,
15 we know that we need to look at the infrastructure, the
16 communications, and the domain awareness to understand what
17 is happening.

18 Senator Perdue: Both of you very quickly. I have
19 limited time.

20 Our strength against these near-peer competitors is our
21 network of allies. And I know Secretary of State Tillerson
22 has talked about that actively. Secretary Mattis has talked
23 about that actively. In your AORs, what are we doing with
24 our allies to help leverage our military expenses and
25 capabilities? Admiral, do you want to address that quickly?

1 Admiral Tidd: We are working together to help train
2 them. We are building their capabilities in the areas that
3 they are most interested in, and we are showing by our
4 actions that we trust them.

5 General Robinson: And if I can tell you, earlier this
6 year Secretary Mattis held a North America defense
7 ministerial with Canada, the United States, and Mexico to
8 talk about how do the three of us work together to show that
9 we have the longest borders in the world and that we are a
10 shining beacon of trust and cooperation.

11 Senator Perdue: Thank you both.

12 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

13 Senator Inhofe: Senator Warren?

14 Senator Warren: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

15 And thank you to our witnesses for being here today.

16 General Robinson, I know you have said that you are
17 confident in our homeland defense. And I was glad to see
18 that the most recent test of our homeland missile defense
19 system in May of 2017 was successful. It brings our record
20 to 9 out of 18, which is 50 percent. I know that testing is
21 important. Whether tests succeed or fail, we gather a great
22 deal of information and it helps us.

23 As the missile threat from North Korea increases and we
24 invest additional interceptors to meet the threat, it seems
25 to me that it is more important than ever that we accurately

1 assess the reliability of this system. Physical tests are
2 expensive and they cost hundreds of millions of dollars
3 each.

4 Predictive modeling is one cost effective way to
5 increase our data. But in his 2017 annual report, General
6 Behler, the Director of Operational Test and Evaluation,
7 criticized -- and I am going to quote him -- the lack of
8 independent accreditation of modeling and simulation for
9 performance assessment of our ballistic missile defense
10 system. He recommended that Missile Defense Agency
11 prioritize investments in modeling and simulation.

12 So, General Robinson, as NORTHCOM Commander, you are
13 the primary customer for our homeland missile defense
14 system. Do you agree with General Behler's recommendation?
15 Would increased modeling and simulation improve your
16 confidence in ground-based missile defense system?

17 General Robinson: So, ma'am, it is good to see you
18 again.

19 Senator Warren: Good to see you.

20 General Robinson: And so thank you for that.

21 So I would tell you two things. Modeling and
22 simulation is as good as what you put in is what you get
23 out. Right? And so I think it is very important that we do
24 modeling and simulation, but I also think that the
25 importance that Missile Defense Agency does with its live

1 testing helps answer into all of that. So when you take
2 both the live part and you can input that into the modeling
3 and simulation, that helps you with overall understanding.

4 But I want to say to you again I am confident today in
5 our ability to defend the United States. And so I think it
6 is important, not just the live testing but the modeling and
7 simulation, and put all of that together to make us
8 understand where we are going.

9 Senator Warren: So thank you, General.

10 You know, we have spent over \$40 billion on the
11 homeland missile defense system. So I do not think it is
12 asking too much to expect it to work 100 percent of the
13 time, and if that is not possible, to rethink our overall
14 approach.

15 DOT&E has been making the same recommendation that we
16 invest in modeling since 2010. That is 8 years ago. And I
17 think it is time to take that recommendation seriously, not
18 a substitute but as a both/and.

19 If I can, let me ask you one other question, and that
20 is, General Robinson, your responsibilities include
21 coordinating defense support to civil authorities in the
22 event of a natural disaster. And in 2017, Hurricanes
23 Harvey, Irma, and Maria --

24 General Robinson: And Nate and Ophelia.

25 Senator Warren: That is right. Strained our federal

1 response nearly to the breaking point.

2 I recently visited Puerto Rico, along with the
3 Massachusetts congressional delegation, and we were able to
4 see the damage firsthand. One sector that was particularly
5 hard hit was health care. We previously talked about your
6 decision to send the hospital ship Comfort for about 7
7 weeks. But I visited a hospital and a community health
8 center that were still struggling without clean water,
9 without reliable power months after the storm and more than
10 a month after the Comfort had departed. And now, even
11 though they have not recovered from last year's storms, they
12 are all starting to prepare for the next round of hurricane
13 season.

14 So I am about out of time, but General Robinson, can
15 you very briefly list, say, your top three lessons learned
16 from Maria and whether there is more that DOD can do to
17 support the health care sector specifically?

18 General Robinson: So, ma'am, I would tell you we just
19 finished -- very quickly -- an internal NORTHCOM lessons
20 learned conference. We are going to go out to OSD. The
21 conversation that we had is, is there a difference between
22 Texas, Florida, and Puerto Rico? So you have got State,
23 State, and island. So what can we learn out of that, and
24 can we think about that differently? So I would tell you
25 that would probably be the first thing that I would say back

1 to you.

2 Once we finish through inside the Department, I would
3 be happy to have me and my staff come talk to you about the
4 things that we learned and interagency, quite frankly,
5 because as you know better than I do, we are very much in a
6 support role to FEMA and the Governor. And so we would be
7 happy to come talk to you.

8 Senator Warren: Good. I appreciate that, and I
9 appreciate that you responded to my letter with a lot of
10 detailed information about the Comfort and its use in Puerto
11 Rico.

12 And, Mr. Chairman, with your permission, I would like
13 to submit the letter from the General for the record.

14 Senator Inhofe: Without objection.

15 [The information follows:]

16 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 Senator Warren: All right.

2 And just to say, Puerto Rico has still not recovered.

3 General Robinson: Yes, ma'am.

4 Senator Warren: And health care has been a
5 particularly hard hit area. DOD can move resources often
6 much faster than anyone else, and I think we need to think
7 much harder about the role that DOD plays in future
8 hurricanes because we know they are coming.

9 General Robinson: Yes, ma'am.

10 Senator Warren: Thank you.

11 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

12 Senator Inhofe: Senator Cotton?

13 Senator Cotton: Thank you, General Robinson, Admiral
14 Tidd, for your appearance and continued service.

15 Admiral Tidd, the President announced at the State of
16 the Union Address that we would once again be moving
17 detainees, where appropriate, to Guantanamo Bay. That falls
18 under your authority. Can you tell us a little bit more
19 about that plan and what you have in store for the
20 facilities there?

21 Admiral Tidd: As has been the case, our responsibility
22 is to ensure the safe, secure, legal detention of law of war
23 detainees. I am highly confident that we have been doing
24 that and we will continue to do that. You know, we have 41
25 detainees who are there right now. We are prepared to

1 receive more should they be directed to us. As of today, we
2 have not been given a warning order that new detainees might
3 be heading in our direction, but our responsibility will be
4 to integrate them effectively into that mission.

5 Senator Cotton: And what about the facilities there
6 and your personnel rotation plans?

7 Admiral Tidd: Thanks to the generosity, obviously, of
8 Congress and spearheaded by this committee, we appreciate
9 the support for barracks that are capable of withstanding
10 the environmental conditions of the Caribbean region
11 especially during storm season. We look forward, once the
12 money is in hand, to be able to start construction on those
13 barracks. I can anticipate, although I do not have a plan
14 for you today -- there were a variety of buildings that were
15 temporary in nature when they were put up that have
16 deteriorated beyond their useful life. We will be taking a
17 hard look and prioritizing those buildings that will need to
18 be replaced with facilities capable of withstanding the
19 environmental conditions in Guantanamo Bay.

20 Senator Cotton: Thank you.

21 Let us turn our attention to the south. You have
22 already spoken with a couple Senators about the situation in
23 Venezuela, which is rapidly deteriorating under the brutal
24 Maduro dictatorship. Can you talk to me about the
25 implication it has for Colombian security and especially the

1 impact it could have in the Colombian elections coming up?

2 Admiral Tidd: Yes, Senator, thanks.

3 Because of the significant number of Venezuelans, over
4 500,000 and continuing to rise, Venezuelans who have come
5 across the border into Colombia overwhelming their social
6 support infrastructure, Colombia has, I think, a grave
7 concern.

8 They are also beginning to see -- and this is based on
9 conversations with my Colombian partners. They are very
10 concerned that there are a large number of Venezuelans who
11 are being pushed across the border, that are being
12 encouraged to vote in elections. They have dual citizenship
13 as Colombia and Venezuela. And there is some concern that
14 that may skew the elections that will be very critical
15 taking place this spring and summer in Colombia.

16 So it is a matter of a security concern to Colombia,
17 but those security concerns I think are largely shared by
18 Brazil. Numbers are not as great yet, but it is beginning
19 to overwhelm the states that are directly across the border
20 from Venezuela, and we are seeing it affecting other
21 countries across the region. So the humanitarian disaster
22 is in progress, and our partners are very concerned about
23 it.

24 Senator Cotton: Thank you, Admiral Tidd.

25 General Robinson, I want to ask you about a story that

1 was in the news recently, the use by service members of
2 smart exercise devices, for instance, Fitbits or smart
3 watches, particularly overseas. But you, obviously,
4 underneath your authorities have a lot of sensitive sites
5 here in the United States. Could you tell us what steps, if
6 any, NORTHCOM has started to take to address this security
7 risk?

8 General Robinson: So, sir, Senator, thanks for that.

9 I would tell you as I watch and I work through the
10 service chiefs and to see what they are doing, while I worry
11 about force protection in all of the installations, I work
12 it through the service chiefs. So I am paying attention to
13 the steps that they are taking to make sure I understand to
14 ensure that I can implement anything that they need me to
15 do.

16 Senator Cotton: And you feel comfortable at this point
17 with what the services are pursuing?

18 General Robinson: Yes, sir.

19 Senator Cotton: Okay.

20 Thank you both for your testimony and for your service.

21 Senator Inhofe: Senator King?

22 Senator King: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

23 Admiral Tidd, since we have been talking here this
24 morning, four people in this country have died of overdoses
25 just in the last hour. As many people have died in the last

1 month as were killed on September 11th, including one a day
2 in my State of Maine.

3 I cannot believe we are having the same conversation
4 today that I remember having with General Kelly 2 or 3 years
5 ago and getting this figure of 8 percent of ISR resources
6 and 25 percent of known drug shipments interdicted, 75
7 percent get through.

8 I think you have identified the problem. If we give
9 you a mission, you will deal with it. The problem is nobody
10 has this mission. And I hope you will go back and talk to
11 this interagency group and talk to the White House. It is
12 inexcusable to be sitting here 3 or 4 years later and still
13 only being able to interdict 25 percent of the drug
14 shipments that we know about, and we would know about more
15 if we had adequate ISR. This is simply a question of
16 allocation of resources. And this is the most serious
17 public health problem this country faces. Four people have
18 died in the last hour. And you are giving me the same
19 figures that General Kelly gave 3 or 4 years ago.

20 Can you commit to me that you will move this to the
21 highest level of priority and kick some behinds and take
22 some names in this interagency cooperation? Please do not
23 come back here again next year with the same testimony.

24 Admiral Tidd: Senator, I can commit to you that not
25 only will I but I have continued to communicate the

1 challenge that we face. I will observe the services -- the
2 biggest challenge they have to being able to provide
3 additional resources, which they recognize very clearly are
4 required, are challenged by the inability to have budget
5 predictability to be able to produce more forces to make
6 them available. This is a team sport. This is a team
7 effort. We have to work together as constructively and
8 collaboratively as possible.

9 My commitment to you is that I will do everything
10 within my power to do my part.

11 Senator King: Hopefully we have just passed a 2-year
12 budget authorization. Hopefully again we will have the
13 final numbers within the next 2 or 3 weeks, and then we will
14 be able to move forward. But please make this the highest
15 priority. And I am not attacking you. I am attacking the
16 failure of our structure to adequately get at a problem when
17 we have it right in front of us. It would be one thing if
18 we did not know, but when we have it right in front of us.

19 General Robinson, let us move north. First question.
20 We all know that there is a Russian buildup along the
21 northern border along the Arctic Ocean. What is their
22 purpose? What can you discern? What is their strategic
23 reason for doing this? Is it defensive, offensive? Are
24 they looking to get closer to be able to attack us, or are
25 they simply protecting their shore?

1 General Robinson: So, sir, I would say I think what
2 you just said at the last is great, protecting their shore.
3 You know, as you and I chatted about the other day, the
4 opportunity for them to move their infrastructure around to
5 their different bases is incredibly important, just like I
6 do. You know, I move capability from Anchorage to Eielson,
7 from Eielson to Inuvik, from Inuvik to Tuele. And so we
8 move things around. But it is to make sure that they can
9 put things in the places they want to at the time and place
10 of their choosing.

11 Senator King: I think you made an important point
12 earlier that there are two elements of national strategy.
13 One is capability. The other is intent.

14 General Robinson: Yes, sir.

15 Senator King: And the problem is right now they may
16 have a benign intent or a lack of malicious intent. I would
17 put it that way. But they are building up the capability
18 which requires that we have to be alert. Are there assets
19 you need in the north that you do not have, for example, an
20 icebreaker?

21 General Robinson: So, sir, I will defer to my
22 colleagues in the Coast Guard for the icebreakers. But what
23 I will tell you is that I very much get ISR capability in
24 Global Hawk and other things that I share with EUCOM and
25 PACOM to understand what is happening in the region. But I

1 will tell you I am very good at advocating for needing other
2 capabilities such as, as an example, if you want,
3 icebreakers. I talk with my Coast Guard brothers often
4 about this because I think about it in the summer when
5 Crystal Serenity goes through.

6 Senator King: And we are going to see more of that.

7 General Robinson: Yes, sir.

8 Senator King: A final short question. If you had to
9 choose, if you could only have one priority in order to
10 improve our missile defense system, what would it be?

11 General Robinson: So I want to thank the Congress for
12 the capacity that we just got, but we have got to keep our
13 eye on discriminating radars.

14 Senator King: That is what I thought you would answer,
15 and I think that has got to be a very high priority.

16 General Robinson: Yes, sir.

17 Senator King: Thank you. Thank you both.

18 Senator Inhofe: Senator Ernst?

19 Senator Ernst: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

20 General Robinson, Admiral Tidd, thank you very much.
21 Sergeant Major, nice to have you here as well. Thank you
22 very much for joining us.

23 General Robinson, yesterday we had the opportunity to
24 talk about the counter-weapons of mass destruction
25 activities that we have going on here in the homeland.

1 SOCOM now has the responsibility for countering weapons of
2 mass destruction, but it is something, once it approaches
3 the homeland, we need to figure out how to respond to that.
4 You have a great role in that, as well as number of other
5 combatant commands, departments, and agencies.

6 One thing I want to point out is we tend to focus a lot
7 about North Korea and the threat that their nuclear program
8 might have on the United States. But we have to remember
9 there are other things involved with weapons of mass
10 destruction: chemical, biological, and radiological agents
11 as well. And we know that North Korea does have the
12 potential to develop some of those other threatening means
13 to the United States.

14 So can you talk a little bit about how NORTHCOM works
15 with all of these other COCOMs, various federal agencies,
16 how are we protecting the homeland not just from the nuclear
17 threat but some of the other threats as well?

18 General Robinson: Yes, ma'am. Thanks.

19 First of all, I think one of the things that I really
20 enjoy is my opportunity and privilege to work with DHS,
21 FEMA, and all the other intelligence agencies here in the
22 homeland. I have Joint Task Force Civil Support in
23 Virginia, an amazing guard unit, that works very focused on
24 the chemical and biological reaction. But I have other task
25 forces in the guard that help respond. One of them is

1 yours.

2 So for me, that whole relationship with the governors
3 and with the TAGs to bring the forces to bear when we need
4 them to be there, independent of the niche capability that
5 JTF Civil Support provides to me from Virginia, but in
6 addition to forces that other guard units provide are
7 amazing. And so it is understanding what is going to happen
8 here. You heard me talk about earlier about our exercise
9 Ardent Sentry, and you heard me talk about understanding
10 what the nuclear capability can do. So it is understanding
11 now the forces that we would need to support and defend
12 governors and States.

13 Senator Ernst: Thank you.

14 And we mentioned yesterday too those civil support
15 teams and others that work behind the scene. They truly are
16 those quiet professionals.

17 General Robinson: Yes, ma'am. They are the quiet
18 professionals. Yes, ma'am.

19 Senator Ernst: Thank you very much for that.

20 Admiral Tidd, thank you also for sitting down with me
21 and going through a number of really concerning issues. And
22 you have heard a lot of impassioned speeches from our
23 Senators today. And I think we are all very concerned about
24 the illicit trade that goes on and terrorism throughout the
25 region. We know that there is the trade of drugs, tobacco,

1 weapons illicit and sometimes, in cases, human trafficking.
2 And sometimes they are generating revenue for terrorist
3 organizations like Hezbollah.

4 Can you explain how you are trying to tighten down on
5 that nexus? And can you specifically address our wonderful
6 partners throughout the region, some of the countries that
7 have helped step up and combat some of these problems?

8 Admiral Tidd: Senator, thanks for your question.

9 I think the way that we have reoriented the way that we
10 do business in our main effort, being countering threat
11 networks, is specifically intended to maximize the tools
12 that we within the Department of Defense bring to bear into
13 this interagency and international partnership to be able to
14 counter these threat networks regardless of what commodity
15 that they are moving.

16 Partners like Colombia have been absolutely
17 irreplaceable, their willingness to work with us, to share
18 information with us, to be partners not just within Colombia
19 but also working side by side with Central American
20 neighbors to help them build their capacity to be able to
21 deal with, track down, apply pressure on, and disrupt these
22 threat networks.

23 I would highlight the terrific work that has been going
24 on that General Robinson and all of her work with the armed
25 forces of Mexico, SEDENA and SEMAR. Mexico is now exerting

1 I think a significant interest in helping to improve
2 security in Central America. And so we work together in
3 partnership, NORTHCOM and SOUTHCOM together, to facilitate
4 that particular type of activity.

5 Many other partners throughout the region. We have got
6 capable partners. I would highlight a few, and just working
7 around the continent, Brazil. Argentina has now come on
8 strong and played a critical role. Chile has for many years
9 been one of the premier security partners in the region.
10 Peru is now a very significant partner. And again, I come
11 to Colombia as probably our single most significant
12 strategic partner in the region.

13 Senator Ernst: Thank you very much. I think it is
14 important that we realize we do have solid partners in the
15 region. It is not all on our shoulders. We cannot do it
16 without them.

17 Admiral Tidd: Far from it.

18 Senator Ernst: So I appreciate your service. Thank
19 you very much for being here today.

20 Admiral Tidd: Thank you, Senator.

21 Senator Inhofe: Senator McCaskill?

22 Senator McCaskill: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

23 Thank you both for serving and thank you for being here
24 today.

25 I am not going to plow ground that has already been

1 gone over as it relates to opioids. But I just want to echo
2 that the threat of black market fentanyl to the safety and
3 security of Americans probably tops just about anything else
4 we are facing right now. And I do think it is an all hands
5 on deck moment for every part of our national security
6 apparatus.

7 I wanted to specifically ask about CBRN, and for people
8 that might be watching this that are not yet used -- or
9 maybe never want to get used to all the acronyms, obviously
10 that is chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear
11 schools that we have in the military.

12 As we look at North Korea and what they are doing,
13 clearly there is an issue about readiness as it relates to
14 the training that we need to have in terms of dirty bombs
15 and biological weapons and obviously the potential that
16 there could possibly be a nuclear threat to our country.

17 What I wanted to ask, General Robinson, do you not
18 think it might be wise if we started using our military
19 schools, on a space available basis, our CBRN training
20 programs, to start to begin to put some civilian first
21 responders into that training that could really be a force
22 multiplier? Because if we are actually in an armed conflict
23 with North Korea, we are really going to be stretched
24 because there are still going to be trouble spots throughout
25 the world. And it just seems to me if we have got space

1 available and we have got the infrastructure, that it would
2 be a really good idea that we would begin opening those
3 doors more widely to police departments and fire departments
4 and other first responders in our country to get this really
5 important response training to that kind of attack from our
6 enemy.

7 General Robinson: So, ma'am, when I first took over
8 command at NORTHCOM and NORAD, I think it was about a week I
9 was there and we had this exercise that was called Ardent
10 Sentry. And it was about I-5 corridor, earthquake, you
11 know, all those things happening. And when I walked into
12 the room, there were 200 people, 300 people in this room.
13 And I looked at one of my predecessors, General Jacoby, and
14 I go who are all these people. And what I discovered in
15 this exercise was the fact that it was local, State, and
16 TAGs and folks from emergency managers from all the States
17 that would be involved in that.

18 Last year, we had the same exercise, and it had to do
19 with a 10-kiloton nuclear event in New York City. And so
20 the same thing. We had local, State, emergency responders,
21 and all of that.

22 When Secretary Kelly took over, he said, Lori, I want
23 to talk about let us think about how we are going to do this
24 should something happen with North Korea, and then just
25 recently Secretary Nielsen.

1 So, ma'am, we are all doing this together saying what
2 does it look like, how do we go forward with this to
3 understand that.

4 Senator McCaskill: Well, I would like to consider,
5 with the chairman's, hopefully, support and bipartisan
6 support, something in the NDAA that would open up training
7 slots in our military CBRN schools to first responders just
8 on a space-available basis.

9 General Robinson: Ma'am, I would be happy to work with
10 the committee.

11 Senator McCaskill: That would be I think terrific. I
12 know we have a great one at Fort Leonard Wood. But there
13 are times that the infrastructure that is there is not being
14 fully utilized. It just seems to me this would be a hand in
15 glove fit for the threats that we face.

16 General Robinson: You know, come talk to me. I will
17 have my staff talk to yours, and I would be happy to work
18 with the committee.

19 Senator McCaskill: Thank you very much, General.

20 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

21 Senator Inhofe: Senator Kaine?

22 Senator Kaine: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

23 And thanks to the witnesses.

24 General Robinson, sometimes at these hearings I ask
25 questions to get information, sometimes to make a point, and

1 sometimes to educate the public about something that I think
2 I already know but I think the public should know. And my
3 question is going to be in that category, trying to educate
4 the public about something important.

5 Within the last month, about a month or so ago, we had
6 two news reports on successive days that caused some real
7 alarm among citizens in Hawaii. There was an emergency
8 alert sent out suggesting that there was an incoming missile
9 attack. It took 38 minutes for that improper emergency
10 alert to be, I guess, retrieved. And then a couple of days
11 later, the Japanese news agency NHK put out a warning about
12 an incoming missile attack from North Korea that I think was
13 corrected within a few minutes. But in each event, these
14 things caused a whole lot of public concern.

15 I was in a classified hearing recently where I had a
16 chance to ask -- and I think this is actually non-classified
17 material, and I hope you can get there. I was able to ask
18 the question of our military leadership, when these false
19 warnings went out, did our military immediately realize --
20 how quickly did the military realize that these were not
21 attacks? And I think that is the kind of thing that gives
22 comfort to people that there might be a false warning but
23 our military understands it pretty quickly, which reduces
24 the risk then of an accidental provocation, accidental
25 military action.

1 From your perspective as NORTHCOM Commander with NORAD
2 under your jurisdiction, can you talk a little bit about
3 those two incidents and how quickly we were able to confirm
4 that these in fact were not missile attacks?

5 General Robinson: Sir, in this unclassified hearing, I
6 can tell you very comfortably and confidently we were
7 quickly to confirm that nothing had happened.

8 Senator Kaine: That is, I think, an important thing
9 for the public to know.

10 General Robinson: But I do want to just say at the
11 first indications of a missile launch, NORAD and NORTHCOM
12 command centers will initiate a conference call to process
13 the event and make an attack assessment. And FEMA ops
14 center and their alternate ops center is a part of that
15 call. So I would like to add that into the record.

16 Senator Kaine: Right. So there are a lot of folks who
17 are reaching the same conclusion.

18 General Robinson: Yes, sir.

19 Senator Kaine: That is comforting, I think, for people
20 to know.

21 Let me ask you, Admiral Tidd. You talked a little bit
22 in response to Senator Perdue's question about the training
23 that we do with SOUTHCOM partners. It is the case that
24 nations in your area are purchasing more from Russia. There
25 is activity by Russia, by Iran, by China. But talk a little

1 bit more about the training side because I have had a chance
2 to see some of the training in action, and I am very, very
3 impressed with the kind of training we do, the degree to
4 which these nations want us to be their partner, the
5 relationships you build. Somebody you are training might be
6 the defense minister in 10 years or the president in 20
7 years. But talk about some of the nations and the training
8 exercises currently underway between the U.S. and nations in
9 your command.

10 Admiral Tidd: Senator, there is no doubt in my mind
11 that the countries that we work with unanimously prefer
12 working with the United States because we work together as
13 equal partners, because we work together defending the same
14 interests, the same values, the same piece of the hemisphere
15 together. So we try to find ways to make it as easy as we
16 possibly can.

17 We could not do that without the enormous support of,
18 for instance, our state partner program, National Guard
19 units that are active in virtually every country throughout
20 our region. They provide that long-term contact, personal
21 relationships many times with these countries that is
22 valuable and that helps build their capability and capacity.

23 I mentioned previously the enormous importance of our
24 very, very small but capable special operations forces that
25 come down and work with partner nations. They are highly

1 respected both for their professional ability but also for
2 their ability to work together and to understand how to meet
3 the needs of particular countries. I have told General Tony
4 Thomas he is oftentimes my most important force provider,
5 and special operations forces over and over again are my
6 major maneuver force. Small, small numbers but critically
7 important throughout this region.

8 Also other reserve forces, the regionally aligned force
9 that the Army provides, could not do a lot of the training
10 that we do in Central America.

11 And last but absolutely not least, our special purpose
12 marine air-ground task force that 6 months out of the year
13 during the hurricane season, come down, work with partner
14 nations, build their capacity, build their resilience to
15 deal with disaster response, and then when the need arises,
16 if a disaster occurs -- and for the last 2 years, they have
17 been directly employed in disaster response operations
18 throughout our theater.

19 Senator Kaine: I have had the opportunity to witness
20 some of these. In Honduras, deployment of mobile medical
21 clinics to remote areas which have a humanitarian purpose
22 but also help train our own folks to do deployment of
23 medical clinics in combat, if we need to. I have watched
24 training in Colombia where I have watched not only training
25 on military tactics but respect for the rule of law and

1 proper respect for human rights during the time when the war
2 was going on against the FARC. And so I have seen the value
3 of these trainings. I also know sometimes it is these kind
4 of training exercises that get really squeezed in budget
5 pressures. That is one of my hopes with the budget that we
6 have recently announced that you will have the opportunity
7 to continue to build those relationships, which I think put
8 us in a much stronger position.

9 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

10 Senator Inhofe: Senator Blumenthal?

11 Senator Blumenthal: Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

12 General Robinson, I have been to Puerto Rico twice, and
13 I have been impressed by the complete inadequacy of the
14 federal response to fellow Americans there. As we speak, I
15 think a third of the island's population lacks electricity.
16 The economy is struggling. In fact, it is on the brink of
17 bankruptcy if not there. The Army Corps of Engineers and
18 FEMA have worked hard. People on the ground are devoting
19 themselves valiantly, but my sense is that there is a lack
20 of resources from the Federal Government.

21 I recognize that NORTHCOM is in a support mission
22 there. I wonder -- and I know Senator Warren has asked
23 about it, and you have said you are conducting a review --
24 whether you have any preliminary insights or observations
25 for this committee about what could or should have been done

1 differently.

2 General Robinson: So, sir, one of the things I talk
3 about all the time is every hurricane has its own
4 characteristics. And so one of the characteristics of this
5 hurricane season was there were five hurricanes. People
6 forget about Nate, and we forget that Ophelia was out there.
7 But the fact of the matter is Puerto Rico is an island, and
8 that is different than Texas and that is different than
9 Florida. That is different than other things that we have
10 seen.

11 So one of the things that we are going to go back and
12 look at -- and we did an internal review inside of my
13 command, we are going to do inside of the Department -- so
14 how do we think about that differently. Do we have force
15 structures set up appropriately? Do we the have things that
16 we need? Because at the end of the day, sir, as you know,
17 we support the governor and we support FEMA, and we provide
18 niche unique capabilities that at that place, as an example,
19 that the guard might not have, and ensure that we have it
20 positioned at the right place at the right time to be there
21 when it is necessary.

22 Senator Blumenthal: Do you think that FEMA and other
23 federal agencies made full use of the resources that you
24 could offer?

25 General Robinson: Sir, I would say it this way.

1 Secretary Mattis told me I could have whatever I needed
2 whenever I needed it. And so whenever it was asked for, I
3 had a --

4 Senator Blumenthal: But my question is did they make
5 sufficient use of --

6 General Robinson: Sir, we have not had the ability to
7 have an interagency top-down conversation about that. I
8 think that is a different conversation. I think what is
9 important is the fact that Secretary Mattis said I could
10 have what I needed when I needed it.

11 Senator Blumenthal: And he said to this committee that
12 he would make available whatever was necessary when it was
13 needed.

14 General Robinson: Yes, sir.

15 Senator Blumenthal: I have no doubt about the
16 availability and your readiness and your willingness. I am
17 asking about resources that were unused because they were
18 unasked for.

19 General Robinson: Since we have not had a lessons
20 learned across the interagency, I would not want to answer
21 that conversation.

22 Senator Blumenthal: Admiral Tidd, my understanding is
23 that Hezbollah is very active in a number of South American
24 countries, particularly in money laundering, drug trading.
25 Is that your observation as well?

1 Admiral Tidd: Yes, Senator, it is.

2 Senator Blumenthal: What actions are being taken
3 against Hezbollah?

4 Admiral Tidd: Senator, we have been watching Hezbollah
5 for a number of decades now because, as you well recognize,
6 they have been in this hemisphere for a while engaged
7 largely in criminal activities supporting their terrorist
8 activities abroad. They are the A team that has been
9 mentioned from time to time. And so we are watching what
10 they are doing, working with our partners and with the
11 intelligence community within our country teams and
12 increasingly with partner nations to be aware of what they
13 are doing and to not be surprised.

14 Senator Blumenthal: Should there be more action as
15 opposed to watching? Have we reached the point where the
16 United States needs to be more actively engaged in light of
17 its interests in the Middle East?

18 Admiral Tidd: Senator, these actions are taking place
19 in sovereign nations that have their laws that they are
20 applying. We are making sure they have got the best
21 information available to them to apply their laws.

22 Senator Blumenthal: Thank you very much.

23 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

24 Senator Inhofe: This may fall into the category of
25 Senator Kaine's educating the public, but I would only say

1 that we have had a lot of varying experiences with Puerto
2 Rico. I can remember one that was not pleasant, and that
3 was when I personally lost the battle of Vieques. They had
4 the only area where we had the joint training capability,
5 and searching worldwide, we were not able to replace that.
6 And we did not get the cooperation that we should have
7 gotten, and it had some adverse effects.

8 Following up a little bit on Senator Cotton's comments
9 about Gitmo, Admiral, what I would like to do -- I was very
10 critical of President Obama when he was trying to close
11 Gitmo. And one of his alternatives -- what are you going to
12 do with all these guys you pick up -- was to put them into
13 incarceration within the United States. One such place
14 happened that was suggested by that administration was Fort
15 Sill in Oklahoma. Obviously, you cannot put -- these are
16 not prisoners. These are not criminals. These are enemy
17 combatants. You cannot put them in and intermingle them
18 with the prison population. Their job is to teach other
19 people to be terrorists. And so I am really concerned, as
20 we follow through with this.

21 I was happy when the President, in his State of the
22 Union message, talked about expanding, keeping open that
23 great resource that we have there. But I am very anxious
24 for that to happen.

25 So what I would like to have you do, Admiral, is kind

1 of monitor that, let us know why we are not using it more
2 already because I know that there have been some placements
3 that took place. If you could do that for me, I would
4 appreciate that very much and follow through with that.

5 Admiral Tidd: I will, Senator.

6 Senator Inhofe: And I had one last comment to make.
7 Why do you not go ahead, Senator Reed?

8 Senator Reed: No, sir.

9 Senator Inhofe: This would go to the gentleman sitting
10 behind General Robinson. We share a best friend whose name
11 is Sublett. Sublett actually had a lot of missions in
12 Vietnam, I think about 300 of them. When he got out -- they
13 changed the 570th -- and you are aware of this -- from the
14 F-16 mission to a refueling mission. And when that
15 happened, he took retirement from the reserves. And I was
16 his speaker at the retirement. And he wanted to keep
17 flying. And I am still a flight instructor. So what I had
18 to do, I say to you, David, was I took the awesome
19 responsibility. You know, anyone can fly fast. I had to
20 teach Charles Sublett how to fly slow. So I had to say
21 something you were not aware of, and that is it.

22 Any further comments?

23 Senator Reed: I cannot top that, Mr. Chairman.

24 Senator Inhofe: All right.

25 Anything more?

1 [No response.]

2 Senator Inhofe: Well, we are adjourned and we
3 appreciate very much your willingness and your
4 straightforward answers to the questions. You both did a
5 great job. Thanks so much.

6 [Whereupon, at 11:15 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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