HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON
UNITED STATES AFRICA COMMAND AND UNITED STATES SOUTHERN
COMMAND IN REVIEW OF THE DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST FOR
FISCAL YEAR 2020 AND THE FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM

Thursday, February 7, 2019

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:16 a.m. in Room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. James M. Inhofe, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Members Present: Senators Inhofe [presiding], Wicker, Cotton, Rounds, Ernst, Sullivan, Perdue, McSally, Scott, Blackburn, Hawley, Reed, Shaheen, Gillibrand, Blumenthal, Kaine, King, Peters, Duckworth, and Jones.
Senator Rounds: The committee will come to order.

I -- good morning. On behalf of Chairman Inhofe, he has indicated that he wants to start these on time, and asked if we would begin with opening statements. He should be here shortly.

The committee meets today to receive testimony on United States Africa Command and Southern Command. I welcome our witnesses and thank them for their service:

General Thomas Waldhauser, Commander, U.S. Africa Command;
Admiral Craig Faller, Commander of U.S. Southern Command.

General Waldhauser, this is likely your last hearing before this committee. I want to thank you for your nearly 43 years of dedicated service to this Nation.

It's also fitting to note that 12 years ago yesterday, February 6th, 2007, President George W. Bush directed the creation of U.S. Africa Command. It was the right decision, and AFRICOM continues to play a vital role in the defense of our Nation.

This committee's top priority is to ensure the effective implementation of the National Defense Strategy, which identifies competition with China and Russia as the central challenge to U.S. prosperity and security. Both AFRICOM and SOUTHCOM should be viewed as key fronts in our
global campaign to compete with China and Russia. In both of your areas of responsibility, China and Russia are increasingly active, using economic and military means to expand their influence and challenge U.S. interests.

And while, on behalf of the Chairman, we agree with the need to prioritize our efforts against China and Russia, we cannot take pressure off of terrorist groups like ISIS and al-Qaeda. Despite operational setbacks, these groups continue to control territory in Africa and still pose a very real threat to U.S. interests and our partners.

Lastly, while the challenges in your areas of responsibility are on the rise, both of your commands have long suffered from resource shortfalls. We look forward to you to explain how these shortfalls increase risk to your forces and impact your ability to execute the National Defense Strategy.

Want to remind our members that Admiral Faller and General Waldhauser will be available at SVC-217, immediately following the open hearing that we're in today, to discuss any classified matters that may come up today.

And, with that, Ranking Member.
STATEMENT OF HON. JACK REED, U.S. SENATOR FROM RHODE ISLAND

Senator Reed: Thank you very much, Senator Rounds.
And let me join you in thanking our witnesses for appearing today to provide an update on our security situation and the U.S. military activities in your respected areas of responsibility. Both of you are leading commands during very challenging times, and we thank you for your continued service. And please also extend our gratitude to the men and women under your command for their outstanding service and dedication. And let me join Senator Rounds, General Waldhauser, in thanking you for your distinguished service to the Nation in the Marine Corps.

I'm very concerned about the growing Chinese and Russian influence in both Latin America and Africa. China is leveraging its economic might and influence to gain access to ports and loaning large sums of money for infrastructure projects, many of which are not economically viable and will leave these countries beholden to Beijing. Russia is engaging in massive disinformation campaigns to undermine U.S. influence and propping up authoritarian regimes in both regions. Both of you are tasked to counter Russia and Chinese influence with limited funds, equipment, and people, as many of the Department's resources are being diverted to the INDOPACOM and EUCOM AORs. I would like to
hear how this implementation of the National Defense Strategy has affected the resources that you have to counter Russian and Chinese influence in these critical regions, as well as any additional resources you might need for this vital task.

In Africa, as in South and Central America, we are working with local and international partners to advance our shared security goals. However, the complex and often interlocking challenges to stability will not be solved by military means alone. Indeed, many significant issues, including rapid population growth, demographic changes, famine, and migration, are long term and multidimensional in nature and require whole-of-government policies that take an equally long-term view of investment and engagement in the region.

In December, the administration announced a new U.S. strategy for Africa that highlighted the importance of the region to the U.S. economic interests and the growing competition with China and Russia throughout the continent. However, the administration has repeatedly submitted budgets that slash critical aid dollars and reduced engagement across the AOR. General Waldhauser, I hope you will discuss the importance of long-term engagement in Africa and the types of investment we should be prioritizing to best position ourselves for strategic competition in your AOR.
Admiral Faller, you also have a difficult problem set. Narcotrafficking has flooded central and South America with illicit funds that exacerbate rampant corruption, especially among police forces. Poor economic conditions and a lack of citizen security has led to a humanitarian crisis that forces families to flee to look for better living conditions. Authoritarian governments propped up with Russian and Chinese support are undermining democratic values and destabilizing the region.

Despite all of these problems, I do want to note that there are some bright spots. We have several capable partners in the region, such as Colombia, Peru, and Argentina, who are willing to work with us and are now net exporters of peace and security.

On a final note, Venezuela is an unfolding crisis. I am hopeful that there will be a peaceful and democratic transition in Venezuela led by the Venezuelan people and supported by the international community. It has been terrible to watch the starvation of the Venezuelan people and the destruction of the Venezuelan economy by Maduro and his regime. Current efforts to support interim President Juan Guaido are being led by the State Department and Treasury. Congress must be consulted if there is any military planning action beyond the current planning for the evacuation of U.S. citizens and embassy personnel. I know
the events on the ground are changing day by day, and it is impossible to tell what event or set of events will trigger Maduro's departure. I'd like to hear any updates you might have on what you expect in the weeks to come.

Again, thank you, to our witnesses.

And, Senator Rounds, thank you.

Senator Rounds: Thank you, Senator Reed.

General Waldhauser, would you like to care -- would care to begin with your opening statement? And your full statement will be made a part of the record.
STATEMENT OF GENERAL THOMAS D. WALDHAUSER, USMC, COMMANDER, UNITED STATES AFRICA COMMAND

General Waldhauser: Thank you very much, Senator Rounds. Appreciate it.

Senator Rounds, Ranking Member Reed, distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to update you on the efforts of United States Africa Command. I am honored to be here this morning with Admiral Faller and discuss many of the similar challenges we face in both the AFRICOM and SOUTHCOM areas of responsibility.

I would like to begin this morning by remembering the soldier we lost on the continent during operations in Somalia this past year. I offer my sincere condolences to the family of Staff Sergeant Alexander Conrad, United States Army. We honor his commitment, service, dedication to duty, and dedication to our country.

We also honor the sacrifice of our African partners, who paid the ultimate price across the continent this year, as well, to bring security, stability, and prosperity to Africa.

Additionally this morning, I would like to thank our families, servicemembers, and civilian workforce, especially those who serve on the continent, oftentimes in remote locations, for their professionalism and commitment to AFRICOM's mission.
2019 marks the beginning of AFRICOM's second decade as a combatant command. As we enter this period, we have adapted our strategy for Africa based on updated national guidance, which includes the President's 2017 National Security Strategy and the 2018 Secretary of Defense National Defense Strategy. These documents have shaped the focus of the armed services, outlining broad guidance to enhance readiness for high-end combat while instructing the combatant commands, among other things, to strengthen alliances and attract new partners.

The recently released U.S. Strategy Towards Africa, the Department of Defense Strategy for Africa, and the National Strategy for Counterterrorism refocused our whole-of-government approach in the era of great-power competition to advance United States influence and maintain strategic access not only in Africa, but around the globe.

Taken comprehensively, the overall U.S. strategic interests in Africa are very clear: prevent the undermining of our alliances or destabilization of African nations, counter violent extremist organizations, decrease the potential for Africa to become a failed continent, protect U.S. citizens and the homeland, and advance American influence, including economic opportunities and transactions.

To underscore the strategy for disrupting extremists,
we remain committed to synchronizing our kinetic authorities. Persistent pressure on al-Shabaab, ISIS, and al-Qaeda-associated groups remains necessary to prevent this destabilization of African nations. U.S. strategic interests on the continent cannot be solely advanced through the use of military force alone. As such, AFRICOM utilizes the military tool, in concert with diplomacy and development efforts, to help negate the drivers of conflict and create opportunity.

In Somalia, we work closely with the Ambassador, now permanently stationed in Mogadishu alongside with the USAID Mission Director, to help the Somalis assume responsibility for their own security and own prosperity.

In Libya, our counterterrorism commitment supports the U.S. Charge, who works closely with the international community to prevent civil conflict and facilitate the political reconciliation process.

Additionally, our engagements, exercises, and activities throughout Africa are designed to increase U.S. influence, strengthen local security, and ensure our status as the preferred security partner. For example, in East Africa, our programs continue to modernize partner security forces, as in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda, who also export security and contribute forces to the African Union mission in Somalia.
In North Africa, we have seen significant return on investment with Tunisia and Morocco, demonstrating the capacity to absorb advanced U.S. programs and to lead security-related exercises and operations.

In the western Sahel and Lake Chad region, AFRICOM provides training, advice, and assistance to the western African nations, which make up the G5 Sahel organization, as well as those who make up the Multinational Joint Task Force, working to contain violent extremism and secure the borders of the Lake Chad Basin countries.

Our partner networks and influence ensures U.S. access for U.S. forces in times of crisis to protect our personnel and facilities on the continent, such as in Djibouti, a location which is -- which has strategic significance to multiple combatant commands.

In conclusion, the most important use of the military tool on the African continent is where our engagements emphasize relationships and capacity-building. And I am proud to lead a team of professionals who have built a -- strong and trusting relationships with our African partners, U.S. interagency, and the international community to foster security, stability, and prosperity in Africa.

On behalf of the servicemembers, the civilian employees, and families of United States Africa Command, thank you for your support. And thank you for the
opportunity to be with you here this morning. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of General Waldhauser follows:]
Chairman Inhofe [presiding]: Thank you, Senator Waldhauser.

Senator Faller.
STATEMENT OF ADMIRAL CRAIG S. FALLER, USN, COMMANDER, UNITED STATES SOUTHERN COMMAND

Admiral Faller: Chairman Inhofe, Ranking Member Reed, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today with my shipmate, General Waldhauser. And thank you for the steadfast support you provide our men and women every day.

I'm joined today by my wife, Martha, who is passionately committed to serving our military families and ensuring their readiness and welfare. Also with me are SOUTHCOM's Command Sergeant Major Brian Zickefoose, my eyes and ears, representing the backbone of our military, our noncommissioned officers, and Master Chief Stacie U'Ren, our dedicated gender advisor. Sergeant Major, Master Chief, and our human rights team work together to build professionalism both within our SOUTHCOM team and with our partners.

Professional forces have legitimacy within their ranks and their populations. Professional ready forces build trust.

Western hemisphere is our shared home. It's our neighborhood. We're connected to the nations in Latin America and the Caribbean by history, culture, and geography. My headquarters in Dural, Florida, it takes me longer to travel to D.C. than it does to many of the countries in our area of responsibility. We're connected in every domain: sea, air, space, and cyber and land. Our security and prosperity are inextricably linked. When our
neighbors succeed, we succeed. And when our neighbors are threatened, we are threatened. Our partnerships in this region are critical to the layered defense of our homeland and to our collective ability to meet complex global challenges. Ultimately, we want enemies to fear us, friends to partner with us, and the western hemisphere to shine as a beacon of peace, prosperity, and potential.

To ensure the security of the homeland, SOUTHCOM works closely with interagency teammates: the Department of State, USAID, Department of Homeland Security, and the Department of Justice. Teamwork within the Defense Department, especially with Northern Command and the U.S. Coast Guard, is also critical to mission accomplishment.

Over the past 2 months, I've traveled to Colombia, Trinidad and Tobago, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador to get a firsthand view of the opportunities and challenges that directly impact the security of this hemisphere. Criminal organizations, narcotraffickers, illegal immigration, violent extremists, corruption, and weak governments are principal among those challenges.

The most disturbing insight, however, has been the degree to which external state actors, especially Russia, China, and Iran, are expanding their influence in the western hemisphere. Russia, in particular, enables actions in Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Cuba that threaten hemispheric
security and prosperity. And as a leading state sponsor of
terrorism in the world, Iran's activities in this hemisphere
are concerning.

Venezuela. The situation in Venezuela is dire. Maduro's illegitimate government starves its people by using
food as a weapon, while corrupt generals are rewarded with
money from illegal drug trafficking, oil profits, and
businesses, all at the expense of the population and other
-- and the rank-and-file military. Migration out of
Venezuela is now over 300 million, creating a crisis for our
friends in Colombia, Brazil, Ecuador, and Peru. While
Russia and Cuba and China prop up the Maduro dictatorship,
the remainder of the world has united. SOUTHCOM is
supporting diplomatic efforts, and we are prepared to
protect U.S. personnel and diplomatic facilities, if
necessary.

I saw, firsthand, the impacts of this humanitarian
crisis in Venezuela when I visited the United States naval
ship Comfort. The solidarity and compassion displayed by
Comfort's international medical team made a lasting
difference in the lives of thousands. The United States of
America provided Comfort as part of our enduring promise to
the hemisphere, while Russia flew nuclear-capable bombers.
Who would you want as your friend? And who would you trust?

Building strong partnerships is the best way to counter
threats and turn the challenges of our hemisphere into opportunities. In this hemisphere, our neighborhood, a little goes a long way. We need the right, focused, consistent military, education, and presence. We cannot achieve positive results and influence outcomes without being on the playing field.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Reed, thank you again for the opportunity to testify today. SOUTHCOM team -- our civilians, military members, and our families -- appreciate the support Congress has provided us. We will continue to honor the trust you and our fellow citizens have placed in us. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Admiral Faller follows:]
Chairman Inhofe [presiding]: All right. Thank you very much.

First of all, let me apologize for being late. I had a very small part to play in the National Prayer Breakfast, so I had to choose Jesus over you guys.

[Laughter.]

Chairman Inhofe: But, that's behind us now, so we're ready to get back to work.

First of all, let me just go ahead and -- with the areas that you're working so hard in. I -- I've been concerned about China for a long time, because we saw it coming. In fact, in Djibouti, that was the first time -- it's my information, anyway -- in Djibouti is the first time that China actually did devote its attention to actually starting a function in a country outside its city limits. And that happened in Djibouti. Now they're as far south in Africa as Tanzania. They're making things happen. And, I mean, everywhere you go, the same thing, they say, "America tells us what we need, and we -- China gives them what they need." And they have also -- you know, I -- we're all committed to the IMET program. They actually, in China, as you and I discussed in my office, the -- for the first time, they've invited 50 -- 50 of the leaders showed up in China, in Beijing, out of 52 nations, talking about how much the -- how close they want to be with them and trying -- what
they're trying to do is expand the IMET program, that we've been so successful in, into China. So, anyway, that's something that is there, and I'm sure you're feeling some of the effects of that.

I'd ask both of you -- because it's happening also in SOUTHCOM, what kind of -- what are the effects right now that you're seeing that -- from China that weren't there in just -- until recently? Starting with you, General.

General Waldhauser: Thank you, Senator Inhofe.

You know, it's interesting about Djibouti. It is the first overseas base that China has developed.

Chairman Inhofe: Yeah, the first one. Not -- people are not aware of that, that this is the first base that they've established outside of their city limits.

General Waldhauser: That's correct. And, you know, it puts us in a very unique position, because we have a Chinese base roughly several miles from the front gate of our location in Djibouti. So, we have some interesting engagements with safety flight, weapons training on the ranges, and so forth. So, we have a requirement to work with them to work through some of those issues.

But, that said, overall on the continent, China has been there for quite some time, and they have worked at this relationship. What we try to do, from the AFRICOM or DOD perspective, is try to show that we are the best partner --
the type of training we give them, the weapons, perhaps, that are sold by the United States of high quality -- and try to make sure that our influence remains. It's a difficult task.

You mentioned the issue of all the security chiefs into Beijing. You know, as an anecdote -- I have no way to prove this, but in April of 2017, we, in AFRICOM, invited all the chiefs of defense to Stuttgart for a conference. And we had about 40 or so turn up. I believe the Chinese read our playbook, and I believe, after that particular engagement, they saw it, and they wanted to make sure that they were on the same playing field as we were.

But, moreover, I would say that, in addition to the Chinese defense -- or their defense group, in September of this year, China had a forum for cooperation between China and Africa, where over 50 of the heads of state of Africa went to Beijing, and where President Xi rolled out $60 million or so -- $60 billion or so of loans and grants and programs.

So, the Chinese work at the relationship, and that's one of the things that we try to combat in AFRICOM by just being good partners.

Chairman Inhofe: Yeah. It's been my experience in the continent that China never comes in unless there's something they can gain from it. And, of course, they use their own
labor, and they're not doing that much of a benefit. But, nonetheless, they have resources. And I can't figure out where it all comes from, but much more than we seem to.

And the same thing, you don't hear so much in SOUTHCOM about the activity of China. Just real briefly, just what are your thoughts on that?

Admiral Faller: Senator, in SOUTHCOM, they're invested in over 56 ports. I recently returned from a trip to Central America, and my small team, the entire hotel floor right below ours was completely booked by Chinese. They're offering schools, all expense paid, 13 days for a half-day school, no strings attached, and cash for the countries to do what they want. Again, our -- so, they're there, and they're there in force, and they have a long-term vision, economically and militarily. Our best counter is education and being there. The IMET program is huge for our partners. They want to come to the United States. They want to go to our schools. Our schools remain the world's best and something to emulate.

Chairman Inhofe: Yeah. This is my own opinion, but I think some up here agrees with this. Of all the coms that we have, AFRICOM and SOUTHCOM are the two that are the most under-resourced. And I'd like to have you be very blunt on -- just very briefly, do you agree with that? And what do we need to do to correct it?
General Waldhauser: Senator Inhofe, I do agree that we're under-resourced. However, we do make the best and the most of what we have.

Chairman Inhofe: Yeah, I know that.

General Waldhauser: Certainly, with reconnaissance assets, ISR assets, Medevac assets, and also non-episodic, but where we can count on --

Chairman Inhofe: Of those you just named, which are the least resourced right now? ISR --

General Waldhauser: As any COCOM would say here, we would prefer more ISR for our counter-VEO fight.

Chairman Inhofe: Yeah. Yeah.

Do you agree with that, Admiral?

Admiral Faller: I would agree with that. We could also use some naval assets, as well, Senator. I know our Navy needs a bigger navy. We need some of that.

Chairman Inhofe: I understand that. You're doing great work.

Senator Reed.

Senator Reed: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Again, gentlemen, thank you for your service.

Admiral Faller, with respect to Venezuela, your views would be very much appreciated, but there's a presumption that the military, at this point, is the key, sort of, power base for Maduro, and that, as long as they stay with him, he
will be incentivized to stay in Venezuela. Is that accurate, from your perspective? And what are we doing to try -- and what are the Venezuelans -- the legitimate President, what is he trying to do to pull the military away?

Admiral Faller: Senator, Venezuela has about 2,000 generals, more than all of NATO combined. And a majority of them are on the payroll of Maduro via illicit drug trafficking and corrupt businesses. And that's what he's using to buy their loyalty and their protection. In addition, Cuba, as I mentioned in my opening statement, pretty much owns the security around Maduro, and is deeply entrenched in the intelligence service. And we can go into more detail in closed session. And so, that remains the center of gravity for Maduro.

The legitimate government of President Guaido has offered amnesty and a place for the military forces, most of which we think would be loyal to the constitution, not to a dictator, a place to go. And I think the diplomacy path is that path that we're trying to support.

Senator Reed: Thank you.

Over many, many years, I have had complaints about the human rights abuses in Central -- Honduras and Guatemala, particularly. In fact, there's a report, regionally, that -- provided by the Sisters of Mercy, that a former member of
the Honduran Congress who's been in prison for, in a press
conference, suggesting who might have been involved in the
killing of Berta Caseras, who was a prominent
environmentalist in Honduras. And this is one example. So,
how are we conditioning our security assistance and our
human rights training in these countries to promote the rule
of law?

Admiral Faller: During my recent trip, Senator, I
emphasized professionalism as the key to being a legitimate
force. And professionalism, a big part of that is human
rights. It's like blood running through your veins. If
you're not legitimate to your people, you're not going to
have a force that is going to, ultimately, secure that --
the population. We had those discussions with all the
leaders of those countries, the chiefs of their defense.
And we have a human rights team that goes in there and
performs workshops. Part of the steps that must be taken by
the Embassy and our country teams to certify the deliverance
of those aides includes a certification that they're going
to go to vetted forces and forces that have complied. So,
we're looking at that every day, Senator. It's very
important to our efforts.

Senator Reed: Let me turn to General Waldhauser. But,
there's a -- I think, an issue that both of your AORs share.
It's under-resourcing, both military, but also on the -- to
the inside -- the AID, State Department, et cetera. And when you talk about capacity-building, both of you are very eloquent and very focused, but I've traveled through AFRICOM, as you know, General Waldhauser. You were -- hosted when I returned. In Somalia, one of the reasons al-Shabaab is so influential is that they're able to collect taxes, administer justice, provide basic public services, the civilian capacity. And so, the question here now is that, you know, all -- even with all the military effort we put in, if we don't have the civilian capacity component, I don't think your mission is going to succeed. So, can -- you can start and -- you have the similar problems, I think, in South America, also.

General Waldhauser: Senator, thank you.

To just provide some context, you know, today, since the first time since 1991, we have a USAID Mission Director in Mogadishu with the Ambassador. Now, this is a very important step, because, in December of 2017, USAID signed a -- over-$300 million compact with the country of Djibouti. This is very significant. There are issues of education, agriculture, of government business, and so forth. And so, it's very important now that we have an Ambassador in the country, alongside with a senior USAID rep, who can oversee and synchronize those development efforts and make sure that the return on investment of that $300 million is well spent.
Senator Reed: But, that is a good example of how it's working, but there are many more examples where we don't have the resources, we don't have Ambassadors. The Ambassador in Mogadishu arrived, what, a few months ago, finally, after years? So, I mean, there is this complementary civilian-capacity issue that, if we don't get right, you can do your jobs very well, and we will not succeed. So -- 

Admiral Faller, your points? Because there are many of the same situations in South America and Latin America.

Admiral Faller: Exactly the same situation. The military needs to be the small "m" in support of the big diplomacy and the big economic "e." And I see that, where it's working. An example would be in El Salvador. We've made some significant progress in the reduction of violence. And this has been by targeting in really bad neighborhoods, some 50 locations, where USAID comes in with public and private partnerships and partnership with the government. And we're there in small presence to connect those vetted police force with the military.

Senator Reed: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, gentlemen.

Chairman Inhofe: Yeah.

I think we're all aware that we're going to have a closed session after this. So, anything that gets into an
area that's more appropriate in a closed session, you can pass that on to that one.

Senator Rounds.

Senator Rounds: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Waldhauser, I'm just curious. In your opening statement for the record regarding Djibouti, you note that our continued access and the ability to use, in an unimpeded basis, the Doraleh Container Port is critical to our logistical efforts in and around East Africa. Given China's increased presence within the port complex, do you have any concerns that our access and usage could be at risk, short or long term?

General Waldhauser: Senator Rounds, thank you.

You know, last year at this time when I testified, Djibouti had just taken that port over from the UAE. Now, there's been some international court issues of adjudication. I won't get into that today. But, the Djiboutians have run that port now for over a year. Based on data that we get from the Embassy, the Djiboutians have, quite frankly, done a better job, been more efficient and have had better throughput than when the Emirates ran the port. I have spent time directly with President Guelleh, talked with him and with the Ambassador -- our Ambassador there, and spoke with him about our concern that we need unimpeded access. Because it's no secret that roughly 98
percent of the logistics support for Djibouti, as well as Somalia and East Africa, come through that port. That port is one of five entities in the overall Djiboutian port. And so, our access there is necessary and required.

We have the word from President Guelleh that we will always have access there. You -- and they're -- have no intention of selling out to China. Those are his words. And his actions, thus far, have backed that up, so I have no reason not to believe that.

But, the bottom line is, I still remain concerned about our access there, because if we were denied access or had limited access, it would have a significant impact on our activities in East Africa.

Senator Rounds: Thank you.

I'm also curious. I want to just change subjects a little bit. You made a comment in your statement for the record pertaining to Algeria. You note that U.S. relations with Algeria continue to foster cooperation and further regional stability. Can you give us some examples of what AFRICOM can do to foster the U.S.-Algerian security relationship?

And I just want your thoughts, also, with regard to the security implications of the Tindouf refugee camps for Algeria. That refugee camp has been there for 40 years, and there clearly is an issue there that we -- I've been there
once, and I plan on being there again. I'm just curious, what's your thoughts about that situation? How big of an issue is that for security for Algeria, who clearly is allowing these folks to be there, and they're providing humanitarian aid at this time? And I'm presuming that we're offering some assistance there, as well.

General Waldhauser: So, let me start by talking a little bit about our relationship with Algeria. And, first of all, I would say that the Russians' weapon sales on the continent, that's one of their number-one customers. They sell high-end weapons to them -- ships, submarines, that type of thing. So, the Russians, who sell the majority of equipment on the continent, Algeria remains a big partner of theirs.

That said, I've personally visited Algeria, met with senior officials there, and the AFRICOM relationship is one that is -- a crawl-walk-run stage. We have limited engagements, but we work some issues with equipment and repairs, we have visits periodically. We've participated in some of these D-Day activities, and so forth. So, although it's an arm's-length relationship, we do all we can to continue to foster that.

Now, with regard to the refugee camps, you know, on the continent, 12.3 million internally displaced people are all over the continent. This is -- has a lot to do with
conflict, it has a lot to do with famine, drought, and the
like. And all these particular camps require a lot of care
and the ability for our NGOs, our nongovernmental
organizations, to work there freely. This has been a
significant issue over the last few years, because many --
some of the terrorist groups don't adhere to the rules of
war or the laws of war with regards to NGOs. So, these
camps, they -- they're perpetuated all over the continent,
and the one in Algeria, though, I'm not directly familiar
with.

Senator Rounds: Okay. Well, I understand that the --
it has to do with relationships between Algeria and Morocco,
challenges for the group of people that have been literally
out of their -- what they consider to be their homeland for
nearly 40 years now. And it seems to me that, at some stage
of the game, some additional attention to that would be
appropriate. And I'm not sure whether it starts with you or
with the State Department, but most certainly it's an item
that I think should be of interest.

And, Admiral Faller, I'm just curious. You mentioned
that, most certainly, the U.S. Navy could use some
additional assets. On your wish list, if you were to
request additional resources, specifically what would be the
resource that would be number one on your list of requested
items or equipment?
Admiral Faller: Senator, the additional ISR, maritime patrol aircraft, helicopters, coupled with ships. So, we look forward -- the Navy plans to deploy a littoral combat ship later this year. That's mission fit for the kind of missions that we'd have down there, which would involve partnering with nations, training -- humanitarian assistance, possibly, but also the drug interdiction. So, that would be number one, top of my list, sir.

Senator Rounds: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Rounds.

Senator Shaheen.

Senator Shaheen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you both very much for your many years of service.

General Waldhauser, we will miss you. I'm sure you won't necessarily miss coming before this committee, however.

You reference, in your written statement, General Waldhauser, the Women, Peace, and Security Initiative. And in the 2019 Defense budget, we included $4 million in funding for full-time gender advisors. I was pleased, Admiral Faller, that you introduced your gender advisor, who is here this morning. But, AFRICOM has been commended as a leader in implementing the Woman, Peace, and Security
Initiative. Can you talk about what you have seen, and the success of this initiative, and how you've see it -- seen it be helpful in Africa?

General Waldhauser: I think -- thank you, Senator Shaheen -- I think the strategy we've applied over the last few years is just: take little things and keep moving forward. So, for example, out of the AFRICOM headquarters, we run a program every year, where we bring about 15 to 20 females from the African continent and take them all over the United States to talk to various military leaders, and so forth, to give them, basically, a leadership seminar. We also have seen growth -- for example, we have -- we run communications seminars in Capo Verde, which is an island off of western Africa. The number of females who have come to those particular engagements has increased significantly over the last few years.

You also have an example of -- we have a Flintlock Operation, which is a Special Operations main exercise of the year, which, by the way, will start here later this month in Burkina Faso. Last year, when it was in Niger, USAID was able to bring together leader -- women leaders, business leaders, bring them to this exercise, and have a discussion, in a forum with military members, about women and peace and what women can contribute.

The bottom line is, we've -- we kept chipping away at
small programs. We think they're having an impact. And
we're pretty proud of how well we do.

Senator Shaheen: Well, I agree. I think you're to be
commended. Can you talk about what kind of impact you see?
Why does this make a difference?

General Waldhauser: Well, I think, first of all, it's
just exposure. I mean, to let the -- to see that, you know,
a mixed-gender military is a better military. And with
various -- you know, we have a large continent, with
different countries and different cultures, and so forth,
and it exposes them to our leadership, it exposes the
African military male leaders to what the female can bring,
if you will, to the military. So, I think, from that
perspective -- it's really a bottoms-up approach.

Senator Shaheen: Great.

Admiral Faller, I want to switch topics, because we are
still struggling with the opioid epidemic here in America.
And New Hampshire has had, consistently, unfortunately, one
of the highest overdose death rates in the country from
opioids. And much of what we're seeing in New Hampshire is
heroin that has been produced in Mexico, but also in a
number of Central American countries. And it comes in by
boat and by air into the United States. At one point, we
had a -- before you became the head of SOUTHCOM, we had a
briefing with then-head of SOUTHCOM, who said that we
interdict a very small percentage -- my recollection was about 20 percent of the -- what we see that we could interdict -- because we are lacking in resources. Can you update us on whether you're seeing an improvement in those numbers and what you need to have in order for us to do a better job with interdicting those drugs coming into the country?

Admiral Faller: Senator, it's a national security crisis. Over 70,000 deaths, as you're well aware, from your home State. And, while I'd say we've made progress -- 2017-2018 were record interdiction years -- we've got a lot of work to do. We're not there. And we're focused on our partners. El Salvador stepped up. Guatemala, Panama. But, there are other partners that need to do more. And we need some additional assets -- some ships, some force -- we call them force packages from the ISR that we would need to detect to what you'd need to interdict. And so, more work to be done, for sure, in this problem, Senator.

Senator Shaheen: Well, thank you. I'm glad you mentioned El Salvador, because New Hampshire's National Guard has a State Partnership Program with El Salvador. Can you talk about the difference that those partnership programs make in a country like El Salvador?

Admiral Faller: It's a -- it's one of our main efforts. They bring a lasting, long relationship to the
State. Before I went to El Salvador, I had a videoconference with your general, and we shared -- he shared more with me than I was able to share with him. And I sent him my trip report afterwards. It really helps us build capacity. They go in there, and they work on that mil-to-mil engagement. They also work on civil affairs projects, where they'll go out, build a school, dig a well, and things -- other things that we need to help stabilize the conditions for the citizens. It's very important, Senator. Thank you for the support.

Senator Shaheen: Thank you.

I'm out of time, but, General Waldhauser, the last time you were here, I asked you about the girls who had been kidnapped by Boko Haram, and what we're doing in AFRICOM to help the Nigerians, in particular, address that issue. Do you have any update for us?

General Waldhauser: Ma'am, I really have no update. I would just tell you that, of the 276 girls who were kidnapped in April of 2014, I think the number of 163 have been recovered. But, the other hundred-and- -- there's 113, or thereabouts that still are unaccounted for. I could talk in more detail in a classified session. But, the bottom line is --

Senator Shaheen: Okay.

General Waldhauser: -- there has not been much
progress, from what I can see, in terms of getting any of those remainder back.

Senator Shaheen: Thank you.

Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

Senator McSally.

Senator McSally: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thanks, gentlemen, for your leadership.

General Waldhauser, it was about 12 years ago that I -- I was sent to Stuttgart as part of the AFRICOM transition team to stand up your Command. We had just a handful of us, no resources, no facilities, no assets at the time. We were going to be the kinder, gentler command, without a whole lot of operational focus. I was the J-33, Chief of Current Operations. We very quickly realized, you know, Africa continues to be a potential hotspot for terrorist activity, both on the east coast and the west coast and other areas in ungoverned spaces. And we had to ramp up very fast to be able to take on that task. However, you know -- and I see, in your testimony, you're talking about al-Shabaab and the challenges in Somalia. At the time, when we were running the time-sensitive targeting operations, we watched -- literally watched, with our ISR, hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of al-Shabaab-trained militants out there in the middle of nowhere, with no collateral-damage concerns, being trained at training camps, and then being released, because
the -- at the time, the civilian political leadership in our
country didn't want to -- didn't feel they -- we needed to
do anything about it. Like a cancer growing and
metastasizing, it, you know -- we continued to see their
strength grow, and their capabilities grow, but we just
didn't do anything about it. So, do you have the
authorities you need to address the terrorist threat on --
in your area of responsibility now, unlike back when I was
there? I've got bad memories about all that. And also, you
know, how does that fit within our vital national interests
and the National Defense Strategy?

General Waldhauser: Thank you, Senator. There's a lot
there, and I hope we are living up to your expectations of
how AFRICOM is performing. And it's a little bit better
than when you were there, starting things up.

Senator McSally: I know.

General Waldhauser: Look, let me just take the strikes
on. I'll try to be brief, but I think it's important to
provide some context.

In April of 2017 -- and we were given authorities, from
the national security apparatus, to initiate, to be able to
have offensive capabilities inside of Somalia. That,
combined with the legitimacy of a federal government there,
our strikes are tied to their strategy. Our legitimacy
comes from our authorities as well as the federal government
that we're tied in with. We had strikes for 7 months in the year of 2017, where we had 35 strikes. Last year, in 2018, we had 47 strikes for the overall 12-month period. Thus far this year, we've had, I think, 12, so far. But, the bottom -- the point I want to make is that the strikes are tied to the transition strategy that the federal government of Somalia and the Somali National Army are trying to execute. So, in other words, we're trying to support their plan.

Senator McSally: Right.

General Waldhauser: President Farmajo has indicated that his main effort for security is Mogadishu. And so, his transitional strategy has that in mind.

Finally, I would just say that, at the end of the day, these strikes are not going to defeat al-Shabaab, but they're going to provide the opportunity for the federal government and the Somali National Army to grow and assume the security of that country.

I would just say that -- and that points to, really, my -- my bottom line is, the strikes won't defeat. They -- we know that they are causing problems. We know that they are deterring. It's an open question as to how much, but we know it's causing al-Shabaab problems, giving this opportunity for the government. But, the bottom line is that the Somali National Army needs to grow, it needs to
step up, and it needs to take responsibility for their own
security, not only for our strikes, but the overall
international community that's tied there. We're talking --
I mean, we're talking about the European Union, we're
talking about the United Nations, the U.K., Turkey. We all
have pieces of the puzzle down there, and our -- one of our
pieces is the strike aspect.

But, the bottom line is, the Somali National Army needs
to grow, needs to step up. And we have made this point very
clear, both the new Ambassador and myself, on numerous
occasions to President Farmajo and Prime Minister Khayre.
They know this. They've got to step up. It's up to them to
take advantage of the opportunity that they have right now.

Senator McSally: Great. Thank you.

Admiral Faller, I just have a little bit of time left, but I want to get back on to the counterdrug and the drug
flow in your AOR. And I know you're resource-- you're
short of resources that you need. What are you seeing, as
far as the trends of the cartel activity over water, over
land, submarines, light aircraft? I mean, they're nimble,
and they're innovative. So, what are the trends? Are they
still going, kind of, over water, up until then -- over
land, from Mexico up, or, like, what are you seeing the
trends, and what else do we need to combat it?

Admiral Faller: They are very nimble, and they're
agile and the -- in many cases, better funded than the security forces they face. So, they adapt. We're seeing them go further out to sea, as far out into the Pacific as around the Galapagos and up. We're seeing them integrate with fishing vessels in a different manner. We're seeing them with lower-profile vessels, including some submerged vessels. In the air, we're seeing them use Venezuela as a launch point to fly out of Venezuela. So, cross-border traffic, if you will, using Venezuela's current state as a launch point up through the middle of the Caribbean and then into remote airfields throughout Central America. And so, as they adapt, we adapt. But, they adapt faster, and they have more flexible resources. And so, we're trying to get after it. But, it's a challenge.

Senator McSally: Thanks.

I'm out of time. Appreciate it.

Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator McSally.

Senator Peters.

Senator Peters: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, gentlemen, for your testimony today and your distinguished service over many years.

Admiral Faller, last year, I asked Admiral Tidd about the situation in Venezuela, including the role of military advisors from Cuba. Certainly, a lot has changed since that meeting. I want to follow up on the question that Senator
Reed asked that, basically, related to the military. And your response was that there are more generals in Venezuela than there are in NATO. So, my question is, If Maduro's going to be really relying on this military to prop him up, what is the extent, to the everyday soldiers, the enlisted folks, the discipline in the military? Do those generals really have command over that military?

Admiral Faller: Senator, the leaders, including the Cuban guards that completely surround the illegitimate government of Maduro, seem to have a grip on the top level. What we read in -- at this level, that we can talk about more in a classified session -- that the rank-and-file are starving, just like their population. I had the opportunity to go on the Colombian-Venezuela border to one of our medical camps in -- that was operating off the Comfort, and see some of these kids that were -- had lost 25-30 pounds in a year. They were stick thin. They had never had medical attention. We think that condition affects a large swath of the population. And we think that that population's ready for a new leader, Senator.

Senator Peters: Admiral Faller, you also mentioned some of the additional assets that you need: ISR and ships. And you mentioned the littoral combat ship coming online, and how that's going to contribute to the fulfillment of your mission. Could you give us some sense of the status
and timing of that, and how you see that being fully
developed in the months and years ahead?

Admiral Faller: Senator, the -- we expect to have a
littoral combat ship this year, and that will be a big
benefit for our exercise program, for our engagement with
partners, and because of the flexibility it brings for
counternarcotic interdiction. Counternarcotic will be its
first mission. And then we forward to continuous presence,
moving forward.

We're working with our Navy. They have readiness
challenges, and they don't have enough ships. I think
that's well -- been discussed well before this committee.
And we have the support we need. We look forward to the
assets.

Senator Peters: In addition to those assets, I know
your predecessors have talked about the fact that the Navy
and the Southern Command has white hulls. That's the U.S.
Coast Guard. Performs brilliantly in those counternarcotics
missions, as well as other missions related to your task.
You know, I visited Coast Guard units in Michigan who were
incredibly stressed as a result of the government shutdown.
They're concerned about their families, particularly junior
enlisted, that were living on the edge. You have men and
women in the Coast Guard being deployed away from home,
worrying about their families. Could you talk a little bit
about the impact of the shutdown on morale and the ability
to execute the mission?

Admiral Faller: Sir, Monday morning, I had the
opportunity to stand on the deck of the Coast Guard cutter
Ford with Admiral Schultz, the Commandant of the Coast
Guard. This crew of 110 of America's finest had deployed
over Christmas. Record-number seizures. Seventeen metric
tons of cocaine, which is hundreds of lives saved in the
U.S. They did that deployment with -- in large part,
without pay and without adequate parts, because that was
affected by contracting. And it was difficult for Admiral
Schultz and I to address some of their questions. They had
remarkable resiliency and a remarkable attitude. And they
are our main battery. During that period, there was nine
Coast Guard cutters deployed, counternarcotics missions,
some 1600 Coast Guard men and women working for United
States Southern Command, and it did have an impact. And
we're thankful that the shutdown's over, Senator.

Senator Peters: And why we can't have any more
shutdowns, for that very reason, to make sure that our men
and women of the Coast Guard are getting paid, like every
other member of the military out there defending us. So, I
appreciate those comments.

General Waldhauser, we have talked in this committee
quite bit about China's influence in Africa and as it
continues to increase. You mentioned, in your opening comments, that Russia is also increasing their involvement. Would you please elaborate on that involvement to the committee, and why we should be concerned about Russian involvement on the continent?

General Waldhauser: Senator, I think the issue with Russia has to do with influence. I think, in recent months over the past year, they perhaps got more involved in mineral extraction, but, to a large degree, it's still a matter of influence, especially in areas we're not or especially in areas where they can say that the United States or the U.K. or Western partners are perhaps backing away from Africa. It's, I think, clear that their strategy along the northern part of Africa, southern part of NATO, if you will, in the Mediterranean, to have influence inside Libya, for example, the relationship -- the relationships across that country, they want to have -- across the continent -- they want to have influence on the continent. I would just point to the Central Af Republic right now, where the Wagner group has about 175 trainers, where some individuals are in, actually, the President's cabinet, and they're influencing the training, as well as, at the same time, having access to minerals in that part of the country. So, we're concerned that that model might be looked at or viewed positively by other countries, in terms
of their ability to train and their ability to influence the
government at the presidential level, as well as then
getting involved in extraction of minerals.

Senator Peters: Thank you.

Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Peters.

Senator Scott.

Senator Scott: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Admiral Faller, can you talk about Cuba's intelligence,
security, military influence in Latin America, and what
they're doing, and what -- how we can combat it?

Admiral Faller: Can't talk about Cuba without talking
about Russia. And Russia is entrenched in Cuba, weapons
systems and support. And then looking at -- across Latin
America, we see Cuba inextricably, just, intertwined in all
elements of Venezuela. In fact, the National Security
Advisor called it "Cubazuela" yesterday. I would agree with
that characterization. We see that in Nicaragua, as well.
And it's not helpful to democracy, and it's an autocratic
way of life that runs counter to, really, the principles of
the hemisphere, which are very much a democratic hemisphere.
So.

Senator Scott: The sanctions that we've imposed on
nationals in both Cuba and Venezuela, have you seen them
have any impact? Have you seen anybody change their action
as a result of them?
Admiral Faller: We're watching that closely. We're watching the intelligence. There's a discussion of the impact. We are seeing impacts. But, we haven't seen the desired result, which is a peaceful, democratic transition to a legitimate government, yet, Senator.

Senator Scott: But, the -- you know, the sanctions we've done against individuals in Cuba -- and we've done that over a period of time. Have you seen -- has anything happened?

Admiral Faller: It doesn't seem to have affected the overall calculus of the Cuban regime, other than harden it, solidify it, and tie it more closely to Russia. But, it -- I think it's almost like deterrence: you don't know what happens when you don't have them, Senator. So, it probably has an impact. We don't see it. I would recommend -- full-court pressure works.

Senator Scott: Okay. In the Venezuelan military, have you -- I mean, is there -- have you seen any cracking, from the standpoint of what we've been doing over the last -- especially the last 2 weeks? Has anything changed?

Admiral Faller: Certainly, the -- there's been readiness aspects of their military that we've watched very closely. It's a degraded force. But, it's still a force that remains loyal to Maduro, and that makes it dangerous. We're looking for signs of those cracking, and we can talk,
in the closed session, on some more details and trends we're seeing.

Senator Scott: Okay.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Scott.

Senator Jones.

Senator Jones: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, I'd like to ask you about a question --

Well, first of all, thank you both for not only your -- being here today, but for your service and all you do for this country.

General, I'd like to ask you about a -- there was an article yesterday by Reuters concerning the cutoff of assistance to Cameroon because of concerns about human rights abuses by the Cameroon Government. That program halted -- included C-130 aircraft, a number of different things. And I'd like to -- it -- that report indicated there was a 2017 report by the U.S. State Department that listed a number of significant human rights violations and abuses that were observed in the Cameroon Government. Could you comment on what we're doing there, other than just this halt? Are we making progress on trying to get that government to stem the tide of their human rights violations?

Admiral Faller: Senator, thank you. Let me try to
explain this. And I'll start by why we're in Cameroon and
what we're doing there.

We talked this morning about the Chibok girls from a
couple of years ago, but Boko Haram is the issue there. In
2015, they were the number-one terrorist group on the
planet. Depending on what you read, they have killed over
20,000 people, some estimates quite higher than that, over
this timeframe, the Chibok-girls issue, all kind of
atrocities. They are an extremely volatile group that needs
to be dealt with. So, in that region, our mission there is
to train the counterterrorism forces in northern Cameroon
that deal with Boko Haram. We have been doing that for
several years, and, quite frankly, the BIR, the brigade of
rapid intervention, is the top-shelf counterterrorism unit
inside Cameroon. They have performed well, and they -- and
that training, by the way, has, certainly, law-of-war and
battlefield ethics. So, that's why we're there.

The issue on the Anglophone piece, I won't go into
detail on that. I think the article, plus the video this
morning, did a very good job of explaining the history of
how it got to the point where we are today. In October of
2017, when it came, kind of, to a head, the Anglophone
states said, "We want to actually form our own state, the
Ambazonia state." There have been issues there with
atrocities, issues with allegations of law-of-war issues.
And this is something that brings all this to a head. Over the last several months or so, the State Department has put on hold several security force assistance programs. Right before the election in October, I, with the Ambassador, went and paid a visit with President Biya, and we had a very direct conversation with him with regards to investigation into these atrocities, transparencies of these atrocities, and appropriate battlefield behavior. Since that time, the State Department has made the decision not to allocate significant money, but, at the same time, they've released some money that's been on hold to things like ScanEagle and Cessna aircraft that assist in the Boko Haram fight in the north. We still have programs that we continue with them, all kind of small engagements, as well as exercises. We did have the -- we talked about the State Partnership Program with Nebraska. We put that on hold. And, in conjunction with the Ambassador, AFRICOM, we decided not to pursue that, because it wouldn't have been a good place for that particular group to be, so we put a halt to that.

So, the bottom line is, right now in Cameroon, they have been a good partner with us, counterterrorism-wise, but you can't neglect the fact that they have -- there are alleged atrocities in what's going on there. And so, we continue to take our cues from the State Department and from
the Ambassador, and our level of engagement will continue, but not get out ahead of what the State Department would say is -- if we have to take other actions. We were very emphatic with President Biya that the behavior of his troops, the lack of transparency, could have a significant impact on our ability to work with them.

Senator Jones: Great. Well, thank you very much for that.

Admiral, I was struck by a couple of things with your testimony. Number one, I was struck by the charts that you provided. And -- because I think people are not paying as much attention. We've always heard of -- since the Cold War, about the influence of Russia, but the Chinese influence in our backyard is just incredible to me. And I was struck by your initial comments about our shared responsibilities, our shared security with our neighbors, and how we share so many things together. And I'm new to this committee, and so I've been reading a lot, and I've seen that there are initiatives for the Pacific and in Europe. Would a -- some similar initiative to that be appropriate for Central America or for SOUTHCOM?

Admiral Faller: Senator, I think a big idea, an initiative that recognizes the importance of our neighborhood, recognizes what goes on right here in areas connected by sea, land, air, space, cyber, is important to
our shared security and our future, would be of great
benefit. I worry, Senator, that we're not going to be
present on the field in enough numbers to play the game.
You've got -- we've got to be there to influence the outcome
and the results.

       Senator Jones: All right. Well, thank you, sir. And
we'll send you some more Mobile-based -- Mobile-built LCSs.
       Chairman Inhofe: Senator Cotton.
       Senator Cotton: Thank you, gentlemen, for your
appearance today and your service to our Nation, for all
those men and women who serve underneath you in Africa
Command and Southern Command.

       Admiral Faller, I want to return to your comments about
the presence of Cuba and Russia in Venezuela. You said,
earlier, Cuban guards completely surround the Maduro
government. Does that mean that Maduro is dependent on the
Cuban security and intelligence forces for his continuation
in office?

       Admiral Faller: Senator, I think it's a good sense of
where the loyalty of the Venezuelan people are that his
immediate security force is made up of Cubans.
       Senator Cotton: So, the men that surround Maduro, like
our Secret Service, are Cubans, not Venezuelans.
       Admiral Faller: That is my understanding and
Senator Cotton: So, Venezuela's intelligence security services are so corrupt, so incompetent, so disloyal, so sclerotic that Maduro cannot even count on his own personal safety in his bed at night, on his own people.

Admiral Faller: That's a fair assessment, as I understand, Senator.

Senator Cotton: How far does that go throughout the Venezuelan security and intelligence services? Does Nicolas Maduro have to depend on Cubans and Russians on the streets to beat his own people to keep them in line?

Admiral Faller: Senator, I'm not -- beyond the -- what I characterize -- I'm not aware of the details, but we watch that closely. We've seen reporting of Russian security forces being flown in. We're looking for evidence of how that will play out. And certainly this is an area that has our focus, as well as all our partners in the interagency.

Senator Cotton: And that was another point. You mentioned that -- you said you can't speak of Cuba's presence in Venezuela -- let me stop myself. Can you estimate, in this setting, how many Cuban security and intelligence officers there are in Venezuela?

Admiral Faller: Sir, I don't have that number. I'd take that for the record.

[The information referred to follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]
Senator Cotton: Is it fair to --

Admiral Faller: I'm --

Senator Cotton: Is it fair to say there are lots?

Admiral Faller: I'd say there's -- there are many, sir.

Senator Cotton: And --

Admiral Faller: I also would mention, Senator, the presence of China in -- China has not been helpful in a diplomatic way. I'll leave that to the diplomats. But, China's in there, and they're involved in cyber in ways that are absolutely not helpful to a democratic outcome.

Senator Cotton: You talk about Russians traveling into the country. Have we seen an increase in Russian presence in Venezuela in the last 2 months as the National Assembly began to take its seat and President Guaido declared himself as interim President, and the United States and so many other nations around the world have recognized his legitimacy?

Admiral Faller: Senator, it's hard, with Russia, to figure out what they're really up to. I --

Senator Cotton: You don't say.

Senator Cotton: There was reports last week by Russian official TASS news agency that I was actually on the Colombian-Venezuela border, and they rolled that with B-roll footage of amphibious landings and helicopter assaults. I
was actually walking out of Senator Rubio's office at the
time. But, I don't think the truth goes very far when it
comes to their media, sir.

Senator Cotton: Okay, thank you for those comments,
Admiral Faller, about Venezuela.

You mentioned China's activity in Venezuela in the
cyber domain. They obviously are very active, as well, in
what you might call debt diplomacy through their Belt and
Road Initiative. Secretary of State Pompeo was in Panama
last October cautioning that nation, and all nations who are
participants in China's Belt and Road Initiative, about what
it could mean for their sovereignty. Obviously, China has
foreclosed in the port outside Colombo, in Sri Lanka.
Malaysia recently left the Initiative because of China
trying to throw its weight around. What's been the results
of Secretary Pompeo's visit in the region? And what
feedback are you getting from some of these Belt and Road
Initiative members?

Admiral Faller: Senator, they -- the states in the
region, the countries, they want to continue to partner us,
but I've cautioned the leaders that I've met with that,
"While you might want to do that, if you leverage your ports
and many of your businesses, including your IT
infrastructure, to Chinese companies, with no strings
attached and limited understanding of what the internal
workings are, that you've actually put yourself in jeopardy of having a meaningful security relationship with us. It gets to a point where I won't be allowed or authorized to share information, because I just don't know where that information is going." So, I've been very emphatic about that, in terms of how it would affect us being a partner of choice. This is my concern to other questions that have been asked about what this hemisphere looks like, 10, 15, 25 years from now, and who the partner of choice is. We've got to be present, Senator.

Senator Cotton: Thank you, Admiral Faller.

General Waldhauser, one question for Africa. This is a little bit outside the warfighting domain, but the American military is called upon to do a lot outside that domain around the world, especially in your area of operations. Nigeria has its elections next weekend. Nigeria is the seventh-largest country in the world, way larger than Russia or Mexico or Japan. Important ally of ours. What are the prospects for that election? Does it appear that it will be free and fair, and that either party, should they win, will continue to be a partner of the United States?

General Waldhauser: Senator, we're very much aware of the elections on February 16th. From the military perspective, we will watch that from the standpoint of actions leading up to and what will happen afterwards. We
are -- on the intelligence reports, we hope it'll be a peaceful election, but I think our sights are set on forward, and not in the rearview mirror, meaning that whoever would win, that now, okay, let's sit down and talk about where we are and how we can best help, whether it be the displaced people and the issues with -- humanitarian issues in northern Nigeria, whether it's their army and their work against Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa. So, my answer to that question is, let's get the election over. And they're watching this today, by the way. I mean, they -- my comments are going to be watched in Nigeria, and it's very important that I don't sway, either way.

Senator Cotton: Sure. Well --

General Waldhauser: And the bottom line is, whoever wins, we want to sit down with them and now, how do we move forward and improve the situation?

Senator Cotton: Good. Well, I appreciate that answer. And, of course, their election is a choice for the Nigerian people, and we want to have a good, stable relationship with whoever wins, to help continue that partnership.

Thank you, General.

Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Cotton.

Senator Duckworth.

Senator Duckworth: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, thank you for being here today.
We've already discussed and gotten a good idea of how complex your missions are in both of your areas of operation. And, you know, our own vital national interests are threatened by violent extremists, by great-power competition, and all of multifaceted challenges that you face. As I looked at recent reporting on SOUTHCOM, much attention has been on the dictator's effort to clinging to power; in AFRICOM, the persistent presence of violent extremists. Are these events merely symptoms of a larger systemic problem in both regions? And what, in your assessment, are the prime drivers of instability in SOUTHCOM and AFRICOM? And how are your commands postured to deal with the root causes? Because it's one thing to deal with the symptoms, but what are we doing to really get to the root causes that are occurring in both of your regions?

General Waldhauser: I'll go first, Senator. Thank you very much.

And I'll use Niger as an example. Niger has a population of about 19 million. About 50 percent of those are under the age of 15. They certainly are in a very difficult area of Africa, meaning that they have a pressing from all sides, whether it be ISIS-West Africa, JNIM, in the west; whether it be AQ coming down through the Algeria-Nigerian border on the way to Mali; they have ISIS-West Africa on their eastern flank. So, they're in a tough
situation. But, I think this is -- what goes unnoticed sometimes is the whole-of-government approach that is used in Niger. So, for example, USAID has about $150 million a year that they use for things like education, especially for young girls, for government, and -- government infrastructure, and so forth. Moreover, the Millennium Challenge Corporation has a -- they're on the -- I think, the second year of a 5-year compact down there which has to do with agriculture, watering crops, and so forth. So, if you look at the security assistance that we're providing, and you add to that USAID's effort and the Millennium Challenge compact, that's, I think, a good example of a whole-of-government approach of how we're trying to deal with a country that has some very significant security challenges.

Senator Duckworth: Thank you.

Admiral Faller?

Admiral Faller: We do have some bright spots. I'd like to point out, Brazil has been a exporter of security in our history, same with Colombia. And the trajectory of both our mil-to-mil relations with those countries is very positive. In the current Venezuela situation, we're sharing a lot of information, we're looking at this as a regional solution. Chile commanded, in our largest exercise, the Rim of the Pacific. But, around the region, corruption, weak
governance, lack of jobs, these are things that are of
effect, and these are -- the military is a part of this
whole government solution.

I saw this Honduras. I was in an outreach center run
by USAID. It was right next to a partnered police station.
We had a few Army civil affairs people there meeting with
some young men and women that had been supplied jobs. And I
asked the one individual -- he had gone all the way to the
U.S.-Mexico border, and turned around and came all the way
back. Walked, as part of the caravan, but he came back. I
said, "Well, why did you come back?" He said, "It was
pretty scary for me. I felt that I should come home." I
said, "Well, why did you go?" He goes, "The family next to
us was starving -- or we were starving, and the family next
to them was starving, but across the street, they had some
food because their father had made it to the United States
and was sending remittance back." So, at the heart of this
is -- it's a -- it's the want of a better life and economy,
and the want to have your kids go to school. And all
citizens of all the world deserve that.

Senator Duckworth: Thank you.

So, looking at this whole-of-government approach, how
easy has it been -- or, for you each, to work with other
executive branch agencies to provide a coordinated whole-of-
government approach? And is this happening -- for example,
it -- you may be happening in Niger, but is it happening in other parts of Africa? And how are we -- are we consistent in applying this approach? And what can we do to really help you be part of this, this team, so that we can get at the root causes?

General Waldhauser: Well, Senator, I would say that the AFRICOM staff has individuals from those agencies that work very closely with on a -- with us on a daily basis. Moreover, as dollars become tight, our return on investment needs to be demonstrated. As a consequence, we have to be better stewards of the -- of our efforts, in terms of where we want to place our emphasis. We need to coordinate that and synchronize that with this agency, because, really, it gets, I think, to a -- the larger issue of influence, and the China influence, as well. We need to demonstrate that we can compete with them. We may not be building soccer stadiums or government buildings, but, at the same time, we're teaching them how to be better farmers, we're showing them what education can do for them. So, the bottom line for us is, we need to continue to work with our partners, which we have good relationships with, by the way. This development, diplomacy, and defense effort in the AFRICOM -- at State Department and with AFRICOM is very, very positive experience.

Senator Duckworth: Admiral?
Admiral Faller: We have representatives from every interagency at my headquarters, and they sit in at every meeting. We're working this problem set hard, and we're work it in conjunction with country teams in the Embassy. A consistent level of resourcing is important, and recognizing this is a problem that will take years to solve, not months or days.

Senator Duckworth: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Duckworth.

Senator Ernst.

Senator Ernst: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair.

And thank you, gentlemen, for being here today and, of course, to the men and women in your commands. We thank them for what they do for all of us. To the family members that are here, thank you so much for the support that you give to your loved one. So, thank you.

Admiral Faller, I'll start with you. We've talked about a lot of different groups that are engaged in SOUTHCOM, but what I'd like to do is dive in a little bit to Hezbollah. They do have a notable presence in South America. And, as we saw last year, Argentina and Brazil, they both took action against Hezbollah assets in their respective countries. And we've heard, from regional authorities, that they are aware of Hezbollah's presence in
the tri-border area of Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay. So, can you go a bit further into the threat that Hezbollah presents in SOUTHCOM? And what are our interests in making sure that they are not affecting us? What are those national security interests for us and our partners?

Admiral Faller: Hezbollah is present. We watch them closely. It points to the importance of partnerships in the intelligence-sharing relationships that we are keen to develop and strengthen even further, because a lot of what's required to monitor them is human intelligence, and those nations know their terrain best.

Hezbollah's connection to Iran can never be understated. Iran is the largest sponsor of state terrorism in the world. There is a nexus there that goes back. And we watch that working, in partnership with the other combatant commands, Defense Intelligence Agency, very, very closely. We look for trends, indications, and warning. A terror threat anywhere around the world could be a threat of our homeland.

Senator Ernst: And I appreciate you highlighting how Iran is interconnected here. We talk about some of those near-peer threats with China and Russia in the SOUTHCOM AOR, but we also need to recognize that Iran is a player, as well. So, thank you for making that connection.

Do we have sufficient information-sharing authorities
in place, then? You've mentioned the need to communicate
with friends and allies. Do we have the right authorities
available?

Admiral Faller: Senator, we have to work that on a
country-by-country basis. And that is -- it's a key thing
that we look at when we do our country engagements. So, the
answer is, we never have enough. We have countries where we
want to sign additional agreements. We have to get
assurances with them about what they'll share and who
they'll share it with. It goes back to my concern about who
owns the IT infrastructure in a given city or a given fusion
center. And so, we're constantly looking this. I fly,
Sunday, to Brazil for my meeting with their new military
leadership. This will be one of our top areas of
discussion. I would say that's a very healthy intel-sharing
relationship that's growing, and we've been able to really
work with our partners. Because sharing information
intelligence builds trust, frankly. And that's -- building
trust is what is going to ensure our long-term interests in
this hemisphere are safeguarded.

Senator Ernst: That is very good. And we've also
talked about the role that Special Operations plays in
achieving your objectives in SOUTHCOM. Part that ties back
into Hezbollah and others. But, what are some of the
biggest challenges that you'll face with regard to resources
or authorities when it comes to our Special Operations and how we employ them in SOUTHCOM?

Admiral Faller: We have very small numbers of Special Operations teams that are engaged with partners, building their security forces, and building it very effectively. Those need to be habitual relationships that are keyed off of what the partner needs. It's also good for our training, as well, as our partners train in jungles and tough kind of terrain.

I would say our challenge is maintaining that. Our SOF forces are under pressure worldwide. And, as we look at what their deployment ratio is, the amount of time they're spending away from home to the time they spend at home, making certain that we get that balance right, making certain that we don't decremate the small presence that we have, which would break trust and really break the training and stability of our partner nation security forces.

Senator Ernst: Thank you. Yes, our dwell time is very small. We need to work on that.

Before I move on to the General, we have also talked about GITMO, Guantanamo Bay. And right now, we do have Iowa National Guard soldiers deployed there as a security force. And so, what can we do to ensure that the troops that we have that are stationed or a rotational force at GITMO, that they are being cared for, that they are safe? Not only do
we want to make sure that those that are held there are kept in a safe environment, but also for our troops. What more can we be doing? Can you explain some of the challenges that we have at Guantanamo Bay right now?

Admiral Faller: I had the honor to visit with some of your Iowa Guard prisoner guards, detainee guards --

Senator Ernst: Thank you.

Admiral Faller: -- just last weekend, Senator.

They're doing fabulous work. So, thanks --

Senator Ernst: Great. Thank you.

Admiral Faller: -- for the -- to the State for that.

They -- the facilities were built with about a 5-year lifespan, and that's been 15-20 years ago. And so, our responsibility is the safe, humane treatment of the detainees, but also the safety of that Guard force. So, we have facilities that we -- were beyond the ability to repair the roofs, where the alarm systems are questionable, based on the water intrusion. And so, we're -- we have -- when the President's budget is released, I expect it to include money that would be put for some long-term facility upgrades in development. We need that for the safety of the Guard force and for the future of safe detainees.

Senator Ernst: Thank you. I appreciate that.

And, in the few seconds I have remaining, General, as well, Special Operations Forces in Africa, do we need to
maintain our Special Operators in Africa and the work that they are doing?

General Waldhauser: Well, we certainly need to maintain them, and we certainly have to take a close look at how we employ and deploy them, and what their schedules are. And we do -- we continually reevaluate that all the time. The bottom line is, yes. But, I would say, what we really need in AFRICOM are some predictable general-purpose forces that can do things with regular armies on a somewhat episodic, but yet predictable, basis.

Senator Ernst: Very good. Thank you, General. I appreciate it.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Ernst.

Senator Kaine.

Senator Kaine: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

And thank you, to our witnesses.

The Chair and Ranking indicated that a unifier in your two regions is that you’re under-resourced. I think another unifier is, in both your regions, you have a real cross-disciplinary, non-siloed focus, not just military assets, but the entire spectrum of what the U.S. can do. And I think that's a -- something about SOUTHCOM and AFRICOM that I really appreciate.

Admiral Faller, let me start with you. The discussion
about Venezuela is a really important one. And if the world wants to see a democracy-versus-dictatorship challenge, Venezuela is just, like, the perfect test case for circa 2019. What do democracies care for, and what do dictatorship care for? The Venezuelan government of Maduro is supported by Russia, Cuba, and Iran. And they're enabling him to do all kinds of horrible things, economically and in violation of human rights, et cetera. The Guaido interim government, which has a constitutional claim that, in the vacancy of a President, the Speaker of the legislative assembly becomes an interim President, is supported by the United States and the EU. You really can see what it -- what the difference between democracy and the aspirations of democratic governments and dictatorships, and what they care about, writ very clearly in the Venezuelan circumstance now.

But, here's a reality. We're dealing with regional institutions, like the OAS, for example. In the OAS, every nation has one vote. The U.S. has a hard time getting the OAS to firmly come out against the Maduro government, because many Caribbean nations still support the Maduro government. They have been bribed to do so, with low-price oil. But, it's very hard for us to do something like this on our own. And when a principal regional institution like the OAS isn't completely with us, it's hard to put the
appropriate pressure on.

And I guess the point that I want to make is: Hard to beat something with nothing. The Chinese and Russians have been investing so heavily in Venezuela, billion -- tens of billions of dollars, over and over and over again. These Caribbean nations, they might feel culturally closer to the United States, but they are getting -- they're getting something from Venezuela that they need.

And your point about "We need to be on the field" is really, really, important. And, as I talk to leaders in this region, they say, "We're so much -- we would so much more like to do work with you guys. We are culturally connected, and we're all Americans, you know, but the other guys are there and present and investing. And even if we have suspicions, they're there with resources, and you aren't." And so, I think that's an important lesson.

Want to ask about the northern triangle. It's a resource question, as well. The Alliance for Progress has been an initiative in the last few years to invest money and security and economic development assistance in the three nations in the northern triangle. Would it be your recommendation -- so long as we can make those investments smart, would it be your recommendation that, if we can improve the security and economic development of -- arc in those three countries, that that would help us deal with
Admiral Faller: Senator, the week before last, I visited projects, in all three countries, that were a direct result of the investments that you just cited. Those projects were USAID, State, INL, and a small footprint of Department of Defense working side by side to bring security, with local policing, and jobs, and host-nation investment in a way that stabilized some of the worst neighborhoods and showed hope. We talked to citizens that live there. We saw the results. And I think consistent investment, in accordance with our laws, is a good thing in that area. Investment, a dollar there is going to save lives and result in better security here at home.

Senator Kaine: That's really important. The funds for those initiatives have been pretty dramatically slashed, the last 2 years. We don't know what the budget submission will be that we'll get, hopefully, by the end of the month. But, I think it's penny wise and pound foolish to cut development and security assistance and then complain about people coming to our border. We need to help build and support economies there, and security there, if we want people to not leave their own countries.

Let me quickly -- General Waldhauser, to you -- on page 5 of your submitted statement, you write, "In the fight against Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa, we operate with
partners in the Africa Union-enforced Multinational Task Force." The fiscal year '18 NDAA included a provision, in section 1264, that required the administration to provide an initial report and subsequent updates on the legal and policy frameworks for use of military force. I'm interested in the initial report, which was submitted in March of 2018. I'd like to put that in the record, if I could. It makes no --

Chairman Inhofe: Without objection.

[The information referred to follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]
Senator Kaine: It makes no mention of ISIS-West Africa or Boko Haram as an associated force. And, as far as I know, there's not been an updated report submitted to this committee, as would be required if any new determination were made. Has Boko Haram or ISIS-West Africa been determined to be an associated force within the -- either the 2001 or 2002 AUMF?

General Waldhauser: Senator, first of all, we do not have offensive strike capabilities or authorities in those countries. So, we can't strike. We can strike in Somalia, we can strike in Libya, but not in Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, and the like. So, we don't have authorities there.

Now, ISIS-West Africa has grown -- they go by different names every once in a while, but they have grown in numbers. They're now probably in the neighborhood of around 3- to 4,000. That's the best estimate that we have. They have been very aggressive over the summer, into this year. They now have taken large pieces of real estate in northern Nigeria. And, I think, of the two, right now they're the one that we have the most concern about, because we're not sure what their intentions would be with regards to outside the region. Boko Haram, probably around 1,000. Bottom line, though, Senator, I can't say for sure whether they have been designated or not. I know that we don't strike them.
Senator Kaine: Do you -- when you say you "don't strike," do you -- you also include you don't strike under a collective self-defense doctrine?

General Waldhauser: No. Collective -- we -- if we are accompanying -- that's the whole key here, now -- if we are accompanying, we have the right of self-defense and collective self-defense. If we are not accompanying, which we have not done at all in Nigeria, and very -- we haven't accompanied inside other places for quite some time -- we do not have collective self-defense, because I haven't designated it, and we don't use it.

Senator Kaine: Great. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Kaine.

Senator Hawley.

Senator Hawley: Thank you very much, gentlemen, for being here. And thank you again for your exemplary service, and for all those under your command.

General, let me start with you. The National Defense Strategy, of course, reemphasizes great-power competition that we've talked a lot about today and you mentioned, to great degree, in your testimony. I want to ask you about China, in particular, in your AOR. What could you tell us -- to what degree and in what ways are we continuing to shift focus and resources to engage in this great-power
competition and counter Chinese influence in your AOR? And I'm thinking, in particular, of China's growing influence. Its base in Djibouti. I've seen estimates that there may be as many as 25-27 Chinese bases across the continent. What can you tell us about that and what we're doing to counter this growing influence there?

General Waldhauser: Well, thank you, Senator. Let me try to take that from the 50,000-foot level. And, first of all, just to emphasize, China has one overseas base in Djibouti. They participate in U.N. peacekeeping operations, places like Mali, places like Sudan, but they do not have other bases. Will -- is that in their future? That's perhaps.

What I would say is -- from the African perspective, is, China has been there for quite some time. They're in the process of building over 300 miles worth of railroads, railroads tied primarily to areas of mineral extraction, which, again, then take this goods to a port somewhere. So, they're heavily invested and heavily involved.

From the African perspective, they, the Africans, do not want to be in the middle of this. They don't view it as, "We either choose the U.S. or we choose China." And they don't want to be in the middle of that particular engagement.

I think that one of the things that we do, from the DOD
perspective, is, we try to just show -- just be good partners. When Secretary Tillerson was there, a year or so ago -- or whenever the visit took place, I believe it was a year or so ago -- you know, he talked about, "We need to work with the governments of those countries to make sure the arrangements they make are in their best interests." And you had leaders from the African Union, you've had -- Paul Kagame is another one that -- you know, that -- the African governments will make their decisions based on their best interests, and they're capable of doing that.

On the other hand, Chinese efforts, in terms of selling of equipment and some of the arrangements that have been made, there has been some blowback from various countries. Sierra Leone, for example, is walking away from an airport agreement that was supposed to be built by the Chinese. The Kenyans, for example, have very, very -- have problems with the Chinese equipment that's been sent to them. So, again, the bottom line is, in the AFRICOM AOR, China is there.

The final thing I would say, in order that -- this issue of influence and how we want to be the best partners -- the Chinese work hard at developing and maintaining the relationship with the senior officials of the governments inside the African continent. We are very grateful, for example, of Senator Inhofe and his team and his visits that they make there, but the -- I read an article the other day
that talked about, in the last decade, 80 senior-level --
we're talking Minister and above, to include the President
of China -- visits on the African continent. That's a lot.
And, moreover, since 1990, their Foreign Minister, his first
trip is -- every year, in January, is to a country in
Africa, just to see how they're doing.

So, I would just say, the whole-of-government approach,
if we want to maintain influence, we have to kind of up our
engagement, and develop and work at the relationship part of
this.

Senator Hawley: You testified, I think, last March --
to a House committee, March of 2018 -- that you expected
that China would -- we should expect an increasing number of
bases -- outright military bases. Do you think -- is that
still your assessment?

General Waldhauser: Well, I think the -- first of all,
the Belt and Road Initiative is what is driving all of this.
And I think what the Chinese are doing is, they're taking a
lot of lessons learned, and they are learning a lot from
their first overseas base that they have in Djibouti. This
is not an easy thing to do. The United States is very good
at it. They watch what we do. But, they're learning this.
They certainly have their eyes on other facilities. Ports,
for example, are a key to what would facilitate their, not
only mineral extraction, but their markets for their goods
to come into the continent, as well. I mean, they view this
large youth bulge, the population demographics, which we
haven't talked about today, but it's in the testimony --
they view a large consumer class as a place where they can
sell their goods sometime in the future. So, although
they're -- they don't -- Djibouti is the only base, they
certainly are looking at other options.

Senator Hawley: Let me just ask you, more generally,
about our European allies and their help, or lack thereof,
in your AOR. What things should we be doing in order to
encourage our European allies to -- in this era of renewed
great-power competition, to be helping us with our strategic
objectives in your -- in the area under your command?

General Waldhauser: From the AFRICOM perspective, the
European Union does a lot on the continent with regards to
training, so they have European -- there's -- there are
European Union training missions in Mali, there are European
training missions inside Somalia. And those are just two
examples. And we work closely with them, because we are --
we are one -- for example, I've indicated, in Somalia, we
are one of a group of in -- of organizations and countries
that is trying to, you know, make things right there. The
European Union is a big player, and we coordinate with them.
I talk with their leadership all the time. And we -- and
our effort to coordinate the training activities in a place
like Somalia, the European Union is a big player. They do a lot. And they, by the way, are the ones who pay the stipends for the Somali National Army. They've put a lot of money into Somalia, no doubt about it.

Senator Hawley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Hawley.

Senator Blumenthal.

And it's Senator Reed, presiding.

Senator Blumenthal: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you both for your service and for being here today in critical commands that are perhaps less in the spotlight, but no less important than any of the others that we oversee, both of them absolutely critical to our national security. And so, thank you and the men and women who serve with you, for your service to our Nation.

I want to begin on the topic of military partnership programs, also perhaps less visible to the public, but very important. And both of you, I think, have endorsed the State Partnership Programs. The International Military Education and Training Program, as General Votel testified on Tuesday, are, he said, "dollar for dollar, the most effective funding that CENTCOM receives, from a strategic perspective." And the Connecticut National Guard, as a matter of fact, is an active participant in the State Partnership Program, and currently partners with Uruguay.
Next year is the 20th anniversary of this partnership. And to date, the Connecticut National Guard has conducted over 110 mutually beneficial exchanges with their Uruguayan partners. In April, the Connecticut National Guard will send 40 soldiers and airmen on a Connecticut Air National Guard C-130H to Uruguay, marking our last -- largest contingent to Uruguay to date. This is an enormously educational, beneficial experience for them, for the Uruguayans, and it is repeated again and again and again all around the world. And this kind of relationship, I think, is extremely important to both countries, to us and other countries around the world. So, thank you for your support.

And, General Evon, our TAG, was here this morning, and we had a chance to meet with him.

I want to ask you, General Waldhauser. I was searching for the exact statement you made, about a year before the Niger tragedy, if I may put it that way, about the lack of sufficient intelligence resources devoted to your command, particularly to that area of your command. And I note, in your testimony, you say, "Over a 3-year period, U.S. Africa Command has increased Nigerian counter-IED capability, as well as intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets, sustainment maintenance, and operation." Your estimate as to the dearth and deficit of intelligence in that part of the world was striking to me before the Niger
incident. How much improvement has there been in the
investment in intelligence in that part of the world?

General Waldhauser: Senator, I think the best way to
answer that question is, you know, our mission there really
is to work with our partners. And, in this case, it's the
French. And I would say, over the last year, that our
relationship with the French, to include intelligence-
sharing, has really gone to as good as I've seen it. And
so, you know, the French have the lead in that area. You --
we support partners, and, in that particular case, in the
Sahel area of northern Mali, Niger area, they have the lead,
and it's our job to support them. So, we kind of use the
phrase, "It's African-led, French-assisted, and U.S.-
supported." And what I would say is that our intelligence
professionals, as they synchronize what we bring and what
they bring, is something that has really added to our
ability to understand the situation there over the last
eyear.

Senator Blumenthal: Do you think, now, that it is
satisfactory? Adequate? Excellent? How would you
characterize it? You said "as good as you've seen," but
that was not very good in the year before the Niger
incident.

General Waldhauser: So, I would use the words, as you
said, "satisfactory and adequate." We're never going to
have the ISR total that we need, to include the human
intelligence that goes into places like that, but, for our
support and for what our mission is, it's adequate ISR now
as we utilize our partners, and how we train and how we
assist the Nigerian forces, as well.

Senator Blumenthal: Would you say, Admiral Faller,
that that's true in your command, as well, that you're
satisfied that there are sufficient ISR -- intelligence,
surveillance, and reconnaissance -- resources devoted?

Admiral Faller: Senator, we're constantly looking at
this. I think we do have gaps. We mitigate those gaps with
different sources of intelligence. We are deficient in our
ISR for the counternarcotics mission.

Senator Blumenthal: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator Reed [presiding]: On behalf of Chairman
Inhofe, Senator Blackburn, please.

Senator Blackburn: Thank you for being here today.
And we look forward to a closed session with you.

I want to come back to something each of you have
mentioned but we've really not talked that much about, and
that is the telcom issues that are in each of your AOR, and
the participation of China -- Huawei, ZTE -- and their
relationship with the Russians. And the Chairman mentioned,
earlier, his concern about how China is putting their
fingers into every area when it comes to not only the ISR,
but the communications component, building out these networks. And he mentioned he didn't know where the money came from. And, General, I'd be interested from -- to hear from you. When you talk about China and how they are advancing, how much of the bankrolling of this comes from Russia? Or do you all know?

General Waldhauser: Well, ma'am, the best way to answer that is, I think that when the Chinese come to a country with a plan, whether it's to build railroad, infrastructure, bridges, and the like, they come with a full plan. They come with the charts to do it, they come with the money to do it, they'll bring the workers to do it. And it's just kind of a one-stop-one--

Senator Blackburn: Does the money come from Russia, primarily?

General Waldhauser: This is Chinese, now. I would -- in fact, how I would answer that is, in kind of a -- not to be -- in a kind of anecdotal way, but recently in the elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where Joseph Kabila just was -- went out of office, one of his opponents said that the Chinese bring the money, and the Russians bring the muscle.

Senator Blackburn: Got it.

General Waldhauser: So, I think that's a good way to try to illustrate, kind of, where these two different
countries are when it comes to their engagement.

Senator Blackburn: Okay.

Let me ask you this. When we look at what has happened with the Chinese and with their access into the telcom area, and as we look at artificial intelligence and 5G, how do you see Huawei and their participation? And how is that going to affect the buildout in your AORs?

And, Admiral, if you want to go at it first, and then the General.

Admiral Faller: It's concerning. The extent to which China would own the IT infrastructure of a country, their intelligence or fusion centers would affect our relationship and our ability to --

Senator Blackburn: Do they understand that you will not share information with them if it is going over Huawei or ZTE? Or --

Admiral Faller: We've had frank discussions --

Senator Blackburn: Very frank discussions.

Admiral Faller: -- Senator, about this.

Senator Blackburn: Okay.

General Waldhauser: Senator, the way I would answer that is, we obviously have some unique challenges in Djibouti. I mean, the Chinese bases have several miles away from where we're located. The Djibouti base services not only AFRICOM, but it does CENTCOM and SOCOM, I believe, as
General Votel testified the other day. We'd -- but, we'd be
naive to think that the counterintelligence and the
communication issues, and the fact that they have actually
built the system inside Djibouti, they're not trying to get
after what we're trying to do.

Senator Blackburn: Okay. How do you make certain --
what is your best effort in making certain that we remain
the partner of choice?

General Waldhauser: Well, again, as I said several
times this morning, from the -- from our military
perspective, we want to be sincere in our efforts, we want
to deliver what we say we can do, we want to be role models
when our troops train with African troops, we want our
equipment to be quality equipment, and we just -- we,
especially, want to be good partners. And I think that,
when you bring in the agencies that we talked about --
USAID, Millennium Challenge Corporation, and so forth, their
projects -- I mean, we've got to make sure we elevate those,
because, in places like Senegal, for example, they're -- the
Chinese will build a wrestling stadium, but, at the same
time, we have all kind of compacts ongoing that don't get
the publicity that some of these things do. So, it's --
bottom line for us is, we have to make sure that we're
really doing an -- a government -- overall whole-of-
government approach, and we're synchronizing our efforts,
and we make sure that the -- we take credit for some of
these programs that may not get the visibility that a brand-
new infrastructure would.

Senator Blackburn: Thank you for the comments. And we
hope that that whole-of-government approach continues to
include making certain that we're paying attention to those
telcom and wireless networks.

Yield back.

Chairman Inhofe [presiding]: Thank you, Senator.

Let me just announce -- it looks like we're down to the
most important one, of course -- last, we say for -- we are
going to have -- I say to the staff of those who are not
here right now, we're going to have a closed session
immediately following this, in S- -- in Visitors Center,
217, for those who would like to come and ask some of the
questions that were not appropriate to be asked in an open
session.

Senator King.

Senator King: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Admiral Faller, you're not going to be surprised by
this question. The question is, Interdiction of drug
shipments -- and I understand it's already been discussed,
to some extent -- what do you need? If you were given a
blank sheet of paper -- or not a -- what do you -- what does
the Coast Guard need? What do you need? What do we need to
do a better job of interdicting those drug shipments that we know about? I just -- it just is in -- it's so frustrating that we are only interdicting about 25 percent of what we know about. So, do we need 18 more cutters, 12 more Zodiacs? What -- what's on your list of assets?

Admiral Faller: It's all of our responsibility, and we got to -- we've got to start at the source. So, very encouraged by the Colombian government getting back into -- seriously back into the eradication game. And they've met their goals for '18, and we're seeing progress in '19. So, record cocaine is going to mean record drug flows, and we've got to stop it along the way. That requires ISR, intelligence and surveillance assets, maritime patrol aircraft, helicopters --

Senator King: No, I understand that, but I'm asking you for some specifics. Do we need eight more Global Hawks? Do we need 14 more cutters? What is it we need?

Admiral Faller: We need more Navy ships.

Senator King: Okay.

Admiral Faller: More U.S. Navy --

Senator King: Of what nature?

Admiral Faller: Sir, the littoral combat ship is fit for purpose for this type a mission, Senator. We need multiple force packages. We need the Coast Guard, a sustained presence. They've stepped up in a big way, from
five to eight cutters over the holiday. And then we need
the partners in the game. We're seeing improvements in some
of the partners. I'll credit El Salvador, Guatemala. We
need others to step up. And that requires pressure from our
government and myself to get that to happen. So, a lot of
work to be done, Senator.

Senator King: But, do you feel we are moving the
needle? Are we moving forward on these multiple fronts?

Admiral Faller: We had record interdiction in '17, '18, but it's insufficient. We're nudging, but we're not
moving the needle enough, Senator. And one of the areas you
asked me to look at previously, I need to get back to you
on, is the authority piece and whether we have artificial
seams between the air-land boundary, and how we can better
utilize and work across that boundary. We've stepped up our
partnership, within the last year, with Drug Enforcement
Agency and fusion centers here in the United States. Again,
more needs to be done to stay ahead of the threat.

Senator King: I just hope, if there are assets, in
terms of either budgetary resources, authorities, you will
let us know, because this is -- these drugs are killing our
people, and -- one a day, in Maine. And this is a -- it
seems to me, a high-return opportunity, here, given the fact
that we know of the shipments that we can't interdict.

Admiral Faller: Senator, I agree 100 percent. It's a
threat to our Nation, killing our citizens. It's killing citizens of our partner nations, as well. And the money from this is fueling those drug and criminal organizations, which is driving instability, it's contributing to the other factors we see, like the illegal migration. So, it's important, for many reasons, that we have to get after this.

Senator King: Well, keep -- stay with us on this, Admiral. Thank you.

On the issue of -- and you mentioned in your testimony, I think, in answer to Senator Kaine, about progress you're seeing in the northern triangle countries based upon American investments. I would point out that there was a huge refugee problem in the world in 1945. There were about 10 million refugees in western Europe after World War II. One of the responses of this country was the Marshall Plan, which was designed to stabilize the economies of those of that region. It was very controversial at the time, but it -- I think all would agree now, it was immensely successful. I think we need a similar kind of approach to stabilizing those countries so people don't have to flee. The best way to stop someone coming to our border is that they never start on the journey. And that means -- I believe you agree that that means work, AID, agriculture, all of those programs in those countries, again, dealing with the issue of corruption, but to try to do that effectively. Do you
agree that that's a -- should be a priority?

Admiral Faller: Senator, I agree. That should be a priority.

Senator King: Thank you.

Quick question, General. By the way, these graphics are terrific on the -- on Chinese and Russian influence in Latin America. I compliment your staff, whoever presented them. They're very dramatic and sobering.

General, in Africa, China's doing similar kinds of things: investing, blending, developing infrastructure, all those things. Is there a concern that this is a precursor to a military presence? I mean, is Djibouti a beginning of a militarization process that presents a kind of global threat or an expansion of a threat from China?

General Waldhauser: Senator, I think, at this point in time, it's too early to make that leap at this point. I mean, they obviously want to -- one of the reasons for their engagement there is, they've got, you know, 2,000 or so peacekeepers, they've got 300,000 or so civilians there. They want to be able to protect their interests in their projects that they're working on. So, whether that leads to a militarization of the continent, it's still early to tell. But, I would say that one of the areas of concern that we have there is, in the Djibouti -- the Straits of Bab al-Mandab area, where the Red Sea comes down, where we've had
really open access for quite some time, that is an area of
concern, because not only the Chinese, but the Russians, the
Emiratis, the Saudis are all interested in real estate on
the Red Sea, on the African side -- Sudan, Eritrea --
Senator King: And they're using an interesting
technique of lending money and then calling it. It's a kind
of debt colonialism.
General Waldhauser: Well, they have leverage in some
-- in many of their situations. And, as I said, I mean, the
-- these are decisions these governments have to make, but
Djibouti's a -- really a classic example, where the Chinese
own over 80 percent of their overseas debt. And this is a
-- certainly a concern.
Senator King: Thank you.
Thank you, gentlemen.
Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator King.
Before Senator Perdue is recognized, I want to repeat
to the staff that's here that there will a closed session
after this. Hate to ask you to go over, because there may
be nobody there when you get there. But, nonetheless, there
will be this opportunity. All right?
Senator Perdue.
Senator Perdue: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
And thank you both for your careers and for being here
today.
I want to beat a dead horse, because I don't think we've gotten to the essence of the issue yet. We're all concerned about what China and Russia are doing in your AORs. General Votel was in this week. We had the same conversation about China's Belt-Road Initiative in harbors like Hambantota, in Sri Lanka, Gwadar, in Pakistan. We've just seen the first foreclosure in Sri Lanka, obviously, but what Russia is also doing in Kaliningrad and Sebastopol and Latakia and Tartus -- Americans have always projected power based on our Navy and based on our allies, who allow us to service our military through their geography. Russia and China are both now -- because we have such an advantage on -- in the sea, it seems to me that they are setting the stage across three continents that are of tremendous strategic importance. I'd like us to talk about what the NDS does or doesn't do, and what you both need in your AORs to deal with what we naturally have to assume is an effort that is an economic, if not military, involvement that is beyond anybody's expectation 5 years ago. And when I look at what Huawei is doing in some of these Latin American cities, I'm very concerned. So, I'd love both of you to address the question specifically.

Before I ask you both -- General, first of all, in Africa, we know now -- Admiral, you've just told us -- there are 56 port investments in South America. In Africa,
General, do we have a similar estimate of the ports that they've made these -- what I call "debt-trap diplomacy loans" in the specific port infrastructure?

General Waldhauser: Senator, I'm not an expert in that area, and we can take that for the record.

[The information referred to follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]
General Waldhauser: But, what I will say, the Chinese are involved in port operations all around the world.

Senator Perdue: Yeah.

General Waldhauser: So, it's not unique that perhaps you have a Chinese company that has equities in a port on the African continent.

Senator Perdue: Right. So, what we saw in the South China Sea, though, is where they had, quote, "nonmilitary interests" have now -- we've got plenty of evidence that they've converted those to military bases. I have no doubt that they're going to have some of the same interests in -- particularly in Hambantota, right there. That's such a strategic thing -- location.

The question I have is -- I don't think the NDS actually addresses this growing potential threat, because we haven't been able to confirm it, as you just said, General. So, my concern is -- in these two AORs, you and General Votel are three guys that sit right in the middle of what China and Russia are both doing. And I'm worried, because of the effort and the focus we have on the current crisis today around the world, where we're taking our assets and spreading them very, very thinly, what are we doing now to preclude the potential that we won't be able to show up, it'll be too late once we recognize that they've actually done what we were worried they were going to do? Would you
both address that in -- as it relates to the NDS?

General Waldhauser: Well, Senator, let me just kind of clarify. You know, I don't have a crystal ball to predict what the Chinese will do militarily on --

Senator Perdue: Understood.

General Waldhauser: -- African continent. But, what I do know is that they've made a conscious decision to put their military on the world stage in an area where the United States is not necessarily engaged to a large degree.

Senator Perdue: Yes, sir.

General Waldhauser: So, they work in areas where they don't really have any competition from us. We're not in countries where they are. We're not at places where ports on the western side of Africa, which is my big concern, by the way -- on the western side of Africa, we're not really located there. So, there's no doubt about the fact that they have long- -- a long-term vision, and, by 2049, the 100-year anniversary, part of this Belt and Road Initiative, this is not -- Djibouti is not the first, and it won't be the last port. And the growth of their military on the continent, I don't know what it'll turn out to be, but I do know that the Chinese -- they made a conscious decision to start there, and they're not going to get smaller.

Senator Perdue: Other than Djibouti, do we have any other access ports in Africa?
General Waldhauser: Well, I think I would say Capo Verde, Senegal. These are places that we've talked about before that are -- you know, they're good locations for the Chinese. They want to have a government that's relatively stable. They don't want to have to deal with problems and so forth. You look where you -- where the military geography -- meaning deepwater ports are there. So, I mean, they certainly want other ports on the eastern -- and I could -- you know, there's all kind of speculation about what those other ports might be on the eastern side. But, I do know they're looking on the western side, and that's a concern for us, because --

Senator Perdue: Yes.

General Waldhauser: -- they can be in the Atlantic Ocean rather quickly.

Senator Perdue: Admiral, the Ambassador in El Salvador actually warned, last August, about what the military is -- Chinese military is planning to do in La Union, that commercial port, where they do have a proprietary loan there. Can you speak to how the NDS will affect this in your AOR?

Admiral Faller: Senator, I think the NDS rightly shined a light on this as a biggest challenge that will confront us perhaps in the next generation --

Senator Perdue: But, we haven't resourced it yet.
Admiral Faller: We're working on the resourcing. It's not -- as I've mentioned in previous questions, we need that consistent level of resourcing in this AOR. In addition to the ports you mentioned, I will also point out the space stations that the Chinese are investing in and partnering in in this AOR. And they -- and again, back to the education, some of the basic military building blocks, they're taking a page from our playbook. The Peace Ark deployed to South America and the Caribbean this past year, they're trying to replicate our playbook to win both access and influence, and our counter has to be to remain present. We have the ability to have the winning hand, based on our values, our democratic principles, and the shared interests that we have in this hemisphere.

Senator Perdue: Thank you both.

Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Perdue.

All right. It seems this has come to a conclusion.

We appreciate your attention very much. It has been very significant. And also appreciate the time both of you have spent with me and other members of this committee.

If it's not an inconvenience to do so, we will now go to the Senate Visitors, number 217, and we'll see how many people want to conclude this with some questions that may not have been appropriate for open session.

So, with that, we are adjourned.
[Whereupon, at 12:09 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]