

Stenographic Transcript  
Before the

COMMITTEE ON  
ARMED SERVICES

## **UNITED STATES SENATE**

HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON THE UNITED STATES  
INDO-PACIFIC COMMAND AND UNITED STATES FORCES  
KOREA IN REVIEW OF THE DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION  
REQUEST FOR FISCAL YEAR 2020 AND THE FUTURE YEARS  
DEFENSE PROGRAM

Tuesday, February 12, 2019

Washington, D.C.

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1 HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON THE UNITED STATES  
2 INDO-PACIFIC COMMAND AND UNITED STATES FORCES KOREA IN  
3 REVIEW OF THE DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST FOR  
4 FISCAL YEAR 2020 AND THE FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM  
5

6 Tuesday, February 12, 2019  
7

8 U.S. Senate

9 Committee on Armed Services

10 Washington, D.C.  
11

12 The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:29 a.m. in  
13 Room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. James M.  
14 Inhofe, chairman of the committee, presiding.

15 Committee Members Present: Senators Inhofe  
16 [presiding], Wicker, Fischer, Cotton, Rounds, Ernst, Tillis,  
17 Sullivan, Perdue, Cramer, McSally, Scott, Blackburn, Hawley,  
18 Reed, Shaheen, Gillibrand, Blumenthal, Hirono, Kaine, King,  
19 Warren, Manchin, Duckworth, and Jones.  
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1           OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES M. INHOFE, U.S.  
2 SENATOR FROM OKLAHOMA

3           Chairman Inhofe: The committee meets today to receive  
4 testimony on the posture of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command and  
5 U.S. Forces Korea. I'd like to welcome our witnesses,  
6 Admiral Phil Davidson and General Robert Abrams.

7           The Senate Armed Services Committee's top priority is  
8 to ensure the effective implementation of the National  
9 Defense Strategy. That means we need urgent change at a  
10 significant scale to address the challenges of strategic  
11 competition with China. Our military advantage and  
12 deterrent edge in the Indo-Pacific is eroding. The Chinese  
13 Communist Party leadership in Beijing senses weaknesses.  
14 They are testing our resolve, and if we do not act urgently,  
15 they may soon conclude that they can achieve their goals  
16 through force. We can't take peace for granted.

17          Admiral Davidson, I look forward to hearing from you  
18 about the strengthening of the deterrence in the Indo-  
19 Pacific; in other words, how we and our allies can achieve  
20 the capabilities, capacity, and posture necessary to prevent  
21 a war by convincing Beijing that it cannot win.

22          General Abrams, as another U.S.-North Korea summit  
23 approaches, I look forward to hearing from you on how we  
24 ensure that our military is prepared to add strength to our  
25 diplomacy to deter conflict and when, if necessary.

1           Finally, I hope today's hearing will serve as a  
2 reminder that one of the greatest sources of American power  
3 are our alliances and our partnerships. Whether it's  
4 strategic competition with China or addressing the threat  
5 posed by North Korea, America cannot do this alone.  
6 Strategic success in the Indo-Pacific simply is not possible  
7 without allies who share our values and our interests and  
8 who share our burden of our common security. And I think  
9 those of us that are together in the South China Sea know  
10 exactly what this means.

11           Senator Reed.

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

3           Senator Reed: Well, thanks very much, Mr. Chairman.  
4 Let me join you in welcoming our witnesses today and thank  
5 them for their distinguished service to the nation. You are  
6 both leading commands during very challenging times. We  
7 thank you for your continued service, and also, we would ask  
8 that you'd extend our thanks and gratitude to the men and  
9 women under your commands who each day sacrifice and serve  
10 the nation, and their families, also.

11          I'd first like to address the current situation on the  
12 Korean Peninsula. General Abrams, you've been in command  
13 now for approximately 90 days. I look forward to hearing  
14 from you about the readiness of our forces and how you are  
15 mitigating the effects of the modification and suspension  
16 and cancellation of our joint exercises with the Republic of  
17 Korea's forces. I am concerned that if we continue in this  
18 vein, we will begin to experience a serious deterioration of  
19 the readiness of the joint forces. While I acknowledge the  
20 suspension of exercises has created diplomatic space for  
21 negotiations with North Korea, I do not believe there has  
22 been sufficient progress on the denuclearization front to  
23 justify the reduction in readiness.

24          I'm also not optimistic that the upcoming second summit  
25 between President Trump and Kim Jong-un will yield

1 substantial gains in the denuclearization of North Korea.  
2 For example, without a declaration of all nuclear and  
3 missile sites and programs, I do not think there will be a  
4 sufficient roadmap to move toward complete and verifiable,  
5 irreversible denuclearization.

6 I'm also concerned that President Trump may consider  
7 withdrawing troops on the Korean Peninsula as a result of  
8 some agreement he reaches with North Korea. That action  
9 would significantly undermine regional security and our  
10 ability to fulfill our treaty obligations to South Korea.

11 United States and South Korea recently concluded  
12 negotiations on the Special Measures Agreement in which  
13 South Korea agreed to substantially increase its financial  
14 support for our troops. The Special Measures Agreement  
15 reflects how much of a share South Korea pays for the burden  
16 of housing our troops on the peninsula. In addition to the  
17 Special Measures Agreement, South Korea has also spent  
18 approximately \$10 billion to build Camp Humphreys, the  
19 largest overseas U.S. military base. We need to acknowledge  
20 the extraordinary financial support South Korea provides to  
21 the alliance and continue to recognize that our alliances  
22 with Japan and South Korea are the cornerstone of regional  
23 security in the INDOPACOM region. At the end of the day,  
24 the preservation of our alliances is critical in countering  
25 the very real threats that we face from North Korea and to

1 counter Chinese coercive activities in the region.

2 Now, Admiral Davidson, while North Korea presents the  
3 immediate challenge to our forces in the region, China  
4 presents the most significant long-term strategic threat  
5 that this country has faced in many, many years. China's  
6 Belt and Road Initiative has left several countries, notably  
7 Sri Lanka and Malaysia, severely indebted to China. Beijing  
8 often targets corrupt local governments that personally  
9 profit from inflated loans but leave their state treasuries  
10 bankrupt and beholden to President Xi's administration. It  
11 is an economic initiative with significant national security  
12 implications for the United States.

13 Countering Chinese aggression globally will require us  
14 to rely on our partners and allies to a greater degree in  
15 the decades to come. Funding for programs like  
16 International Military Education and Training, or IMET, and  
17 Foreign Military Finance, or FMF, are crucial in the  
18 INDOPACOM area. Bolstering the ability of team partners  
19 like Vietnam and the Philippines to monitor and defend their  
20 territorial waters through funding from the Indo-Pacific  
21 Maritime Security Initiative will create more regional  
22 security and stability and protect freedom of navigation for  
23 all nations in the region, regardless of size.

24 The United States needs to recognize the work of allies  
25 like Australia who are enabling small Pacific nation states

1 in Oceania so they can counter China's predatory economic  
2 behavior. United States must also continue its support of  
3 the states represented in the Compact of Free Association  
4 between United States and Micronesia, Palau, and the  
5 Marshall Islands. It's clear that China is targeting these  
6 Pacific islands in an effort to increase its influence and  
7 diminish ours.

8       Admiral Davidson, we have not yet seen the President's  
9 budget request, but I hope that it will align with the  
10 National Defense Strategy and reflect real DOD investments  
11 in the Indo-Pacific region. I also hope it reflects the  
12 resources needed for the whole-of-government approach that  
13 we need to counter China in the long run. As the Commission  
14 on the National Defense Strategy noted, if we don't ensure  
15 adequate funding for critical national security functions  
16 beyond the Department of Defense, the -- in their words --  
17 "United States will be at a competitive disadvantage and  
18 will remain ill-equipped to preserve its security and its  
19 global interests amid intensifying challenges."

20       One other point I'd like to make is that we're all, I  
21 think, alarmed by President Xi's brutal crackdown on the  
22 Uighurs in the west and the bellicose statements about  
23 Taiwan. These present serious human rights problems for the  
24 international community, and as a global leader for human  
25 rights, we have to call out China on these issues. We must



1 also never lose focus on the fact that it is our values,  
2 especially our devotion to human rights and democratic  
3 principles, that resonates so well around the globe and  
4 enhances our military power.

5       Again, thank you to our witnesses for their service. I  
6 look forward to your testimony.

7       Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Reed.

8       Admiral Davidson, we'll start with you for an opening  
9 statement. Your entire statement will be made a part of the  
10 record, but give us your overview.

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1 STATEMENT OF ADMIRAL PHILIP S. DAVIDSON, USN

2 COMMANDER, UNITED STATES INDO-PACIFIC COMMAND

3 Admiral Davidson: Good morning, Chairman Inhofe,  
4 Ranking Member Reed, and distinguished members of the  
5 committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear with  
6 General Abrams before you today to discuss the Indo-Pacific  
7 region. I am joined by Sergeant Major Anthony Spadaro, my  
8 senior enlisted advisor who represents the Soldiers,  
9 Sailors, Airmen, and Marines in the Indo-Pacific area of  
10 operations. I'm most grateful for his service in the  
11 headquarters.

12 First, let me say thank you for the significant support  
13 we have received from Congress over the last two years. The  
14 temporary relief from the Budget Control Act and an on-time  
15 Fiscal Year 2019 budget has helped to relieve pressure to  
16 military readiness and has added to the lethality necessary  
17 to safeguard U.S. vital national interests in the Indo-  
18 Pacific. But there is indeed more work to do.

19 When I took command of INDOPACOM nearly nine months  
20 ago, I said that for more than 70 years the Indo-Pacific has  
21 been largely peaceful. This was made possible by two  
22 things: the willingness and commitment of free nations to  
23 work together for a free and open Indo-Pacific and the  
24 credibility of the combat power within U.S. Indo-Pacific  
25 Command. This commitment and this credibility have worked

1 to liberate hundreds of millions of people and lift billions  
2 out of poverty in those seven decades, all to a level of  
3 prosperity previously unseen in human history. Today, the  
4 concept of a free and open Indo-Pacific resonates with our  
5 allies and partners across the region and includes economic,  
6 political, and security dimensions, and it demonstrates our  
7 commitment to a safe, secure, and prosperous region that  
8 benefits all nations, large and small.

9       As the primary military component of the United States'  
10 efforts to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific, USINDOPACOM  
11 works with the rest of the U.S. government and a  
12 constellation of like-minded allies and partners to advance  
13 our shared vision. When we say "free," we mean free both in  
14 terms of security -- free from coercion by other nations and  
15 in terms of values and political systems. Free to choose  
16 trading partners. Free to exercise sovereignty.

17       An open Indo-Pacific means we believe all nations  
18 should enjoy unfettered access to the seas and airways upon  
19 which all nations' economies depend. Open includes open  
20 investment environments, transparent agreements between  
21 nations, protection of intellectual property rights, and  
22 fair and reciprocal trade, all of which are essential for  
23 people, goods, and capital to move across borders for the  
24 benefit of all.

25       While the term "free and open Indo-Pacific" is new, the

1 underlying values and principles to which the vision speaks  
2 to are not. In fact, this is how the United States has  
3 approached the region throughout our 240-plus-year history.  
4 But there are indeed challenges to this shared vision of a  
5 free and open Indo-Pacific. There are five key challenges  
6 that I believe challenge our national interest and the  
7 rules-based international order.

8 While we have made significant progress over the past  
9 year, North Korea remains the most immediate challenge. I'm  
10 optimistic about the upcoming U.S.-North Korea summit later  
11 this month as we work toward identifying the path to final,  
12 fully-verifiable denuclearization as agreed upon by  
13 President Trump and Chairman Kim at their 2018 Singapore  
14 summit.

15 Our military combat readiness and combined lethality  
16 are the best deterrents against any threat from North Korea,  
17 so I will continue to emphasize military readiness while  
18 simultaneously supporting the U.S. Department of State-led  
19 pressure campaign. I should add, the U.S. and Republic of  
20 Korea alliance has become the linchpin of peace and security  
21 in Northeast Asia and for the long-term in the Pacific  
22 region and demonstrates what great democracies can  
23 accomplish when we work together.

24 Back to our challenges. China represents our greatest  
25 long-term strategic threat to a free and open Indo-Pacific

1 and to the United States. Those who believe this is  
2 reflective of an intensifying competition between an  
3 established power in the United States and a rising power in  
4 China are not seeing the whole picture. Rather, I believe  
5 we are facing something even more serious: a fundamental  
6 divergence in values that leads to two incompatible visions  
7 of the future. Through fear and coercion, Beijing is  
8 working to expand its form of ideology in order to bend,  
9 break, and replace the existing rules-based international  
10 order. In its place, Beijing seeks to create a new order,  
11 one with Chinese characteristics, led by China, an outcome  
12 that displaces the stability and peace of the Indo-Pacific  
13 that has endured for over 70 years.

14 I'm also concerned about the growing malign influence  
15 of Russia throughout the region. Moscow regularly plays the  
16 role of spoiler, seeking to undermine U.S. interests and  
17 impose additional costs on the United States and our allies  
18 whenever and wherever possible. Terrorism and other non-  
19 state actors also pose threats to our vision of a free and  
20 open Indo-Pacific as they seek to impose their views and  
21 radicalize people across the region, as evidenced in 2017  
22 when ISIS captured the southern Philippine city of Marawi, a  
23 city of more than 200,000 people.

24 Lastly, the Indo-Pacific remains the most disaster-  
25 prone region in the world. It contains 75 percent of the

1 Earth's volcanoes, and 90 percent of earthquakes occur in  
2 the Ring of Fire that surround the Pacific Basin. The UN  
3 estimates economic losses in the region due to disasters  
4 could exceed \$160 billion annually by 2030, and many  
5 countries across the region lack sufficient capability and  
6 the capacity to manage natural and man-made disasters.

7 To address all of the challenges I mentioned,  
8 USINDOPACOM is focused on regaining our competitive military  
9 advantage over the short- and long-term. We must field and  
10 sustain a joint force that is postured for two distinct  
11 security rules: to win before fighting and, if necessary, to  
12 be ready to fight and win. USINDOPACOM's ability to prevail  
13 in armed conflict is the foundation of combat-credible  
14 deterrence. By fielding and maintaining a joint force ready  
15 to fight and win, we reduce the likelihood that any  
16 adversary will resort to military aggression to challenge or  
17 undermine the rules-based international order.

18 This deterrence is absolutely necessary to prevent  
19 conflict, but deterrence alone cannot insure a free and open  
20 Indo-Pacific. Our adversaries are pursuing their objectives  
21 in the space between peace and war, using fear and coercive  
22 actions across all of their instruments of national power to  
23 revise the rules-based international order without resorting  
24 to armed conflict. Alongside like-minded allies and  
25 partners, USINDOPACOM, and the whole of the U.S. government,

1 we must compete in the gray zone between peace and war to  
2 win before fighting. These deliberate actions will ensure a  
3 free and open Indo-Pacific against those malign actors that  
4 seek to accomplish their political objectives short of armed  
5 conflict.

6 I want to thank this committee for your continued  
7 support of the men and women of USINDOPACOM and for your  
8 efforts in helping us ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific.  
9 Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

10 [The prepared statement of Admiral Davidson follows:]

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1 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Admiral Davidson.  
2 General Abrams.  
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1           STATEMENT OF GENERAL ROBERT B. ABRAMS, USA COMMANDER,  
2 UNITED NATIONS COMMAND/COMBINED FORCES COMMAND/UNITED STATES  
3 FORCES KOREA

4           General Abrams: Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Reed, and  
5 distinguished members of the committee, thank you for this  
6 opportunity to appear before you today.

7           I've had the privilege to serve in this position for  
8 just over 90 days. In that short time, I have assessed the  
9 ROK-U.S. military alliance to be stronger than ever. Our  
10 combined force is a strategic deterrent, postured to respond  
11 to potential crisis or provocation and, if called upon,  
12 ready to defend the Republic of Korea and our allies in the  
13 region.

14           Today in Korea, we have tremendous opportunities before  
15 us as well as some great challenges. Ongoing diplomatic  
16 engagement between the Republic of Korea, the DPRK, and the  
17 United States has led to a significant reduction in tension  
18 compared to the recent past marked by missile launches and  
19 nuclear tests. Diplomacy is creating the opportunity for  
20 North Korea to choose the path of denuclearization, forge a  
21 lasting peace, and build a better future for its people.

22           The first steps towards realizing that future have  
23 already begun. We have witnessed multiple presidential  
24 summits, inter-Korean dialogue, and international support to  
25 sanctions. The steps agreed to at Panmunjom and specified

1 in the Comprehensive Military Agreement, combined with the  
2 aforementioned diplomatic efforts, have all contributed to a  
3 marked reduction in tensions on the peninsula and created  
4 mechanisms for the development of cooperation and confidence  
5 building, central ingredients to the incremental process of  
6 making history on the peninsula.

7         Still, I remain clear-eyed about the fact that, despite  
8 a reduction in tensions along the DMZ and a cessation of  
9 strategic provocations, coupled with public statements of  
10 intent to denuclearize, little to no verifiable change has  
11 occurred in North Korea's military capabilities.

12         For instance, we are watching the ongoing Korean  
13 People's Army Winter Training Cycle, including a slate of  
14 full-spectrum exercises, which is progressing along at  
15 historic norms, meaning that we have observed no significant  
16 changes to size, scope, or timing of their ongoing exercises  
17 compared to the same time period over the last four years.  
18 Further, North Korea's conventional and asymmetric military  
19 capabilities, along with their continued development of  
20 advanced conventional systems, remains unchecked. These  
21 capabilities continue to hold the United States, the  
22 Republic of Korea, and our regional allies at risk. As  
23 such, I believe it is necessary to maintain a postured and  
24 ready force to deter any possible aggressive actions.

25         Fielding our force in Korea requires a foundation of

1 support and sustainment to meet our war-fighters' needs.  
2 Today, that foundation is sound. It serves as the bedrock  
3 from which we deter aggression and ensure stability, not  
4 only on the Korean Peninsula, but in Northeast Asia. Our  
5 posture allows our diplomats to speak from a position of  
6 unquestioned strength as they work to achieve enduring peace  
7 and final full denuclearization of the DPRK.

8 I want to thank you for the support we have received  
9 from the Congress over the last two years, as we have  
10 significantly improved the posture and readiness of our  
11 forces on the peninsula, from munition stocks to additional  
12 ballistic missile defense capabilities and more. I can't  
13 underscore enough the importance of the on-time  
14 appropriation in 2019, as it has enabled us for the first  
15 time in many years to make smarter investments, improve our  
16 planning, and provide predictability to our commanders in  
17 the field so they can sustain the hard-earned readiness that  
18 is essential to being a fight tonight force.

19 The readiness required to be a credible deterrent is  
20 perishable. We must continue to exercise the core  
21 competencies necessary to the planning and execution of  
22 joint and combined operations under the strain of crisis.  
23 However, we must also strike a balance between the need to  
24 train and the requirement to create space for diplomacy to  
25 flourish. As such, we are innovating our approach to

1 training and exercises by tuning four dials that modify  
2 exercise design and conduct: size, scope, volume, and  
3 timing. Adjustments to these dials enable us to remain in  
4 harmony with diplomatic and political requirements without  
5 sacrificing war-fighting readiness to unacceptable levels.

6 Our combined forces, ROK and U.S., continue to train  
7 using this new construct so they can be ready should the  
8 call come for them to respond to crisis, defend the Republic  
9 of Korea, and prevail against any threat. The ROK-U.S.  
10 alliance remains ironclad. It has been tested multiple  
11 times over the last 65 years and has only become stronger.  
12 Our military partnership continues to deepen and broaden the  
13 long-standing relationships that exist at every echelon.  
14 On behalf of the servicemembers, civilians, contractors, and  
15 their families on the peninsula, we thank you for your  
16 unwavering support. I am extremely proud to be their  
17 commander and to work hand-in-hand with the Republic of  
18 Korea to protect our great nations. I look forward to  
19 answering your questions.

20 [The prepared statement of General Abrams follows:]

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1 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, General. Let me first of  
2 all mention something that's always been a little bit --  
3 we've talked about quite a bit of times.

4 You know, the American people are not really aware of  
5 the threats that we're faced. I think we all understand  
6 that. And the problem with this is for us to have the  
7 proper priorities for our military, I think it's necessary  
8 for the American people to understand why we're having to do  
9 all of this. And you still see things that are happening,  
10 that they still believe that we have the best of everything  
11 and nothing to worry about because that's how it's always  
12 been and so forth, but they don't realize how fast China has  
13 modernized and the problems that we're facing out there.

14 Admiral Davidson, what do you think can be done? Our  
15 military has come forth -- General Dunford, when he said,  
16 "We have lost our qualitative and quantitative edge over the  
17 adversaries." Milley said, "In terms of artillery, the Army  
18 is outranged and outgunned by our adversaries."

19 Same thing was true with Moran in talking about the  
20 Hornet Fleet. And you know, I've been on the Senate and the  
21 House Armed Services Committee for many, many years. I  
22 don't ever remember a time when the military has come forth  
23 with the shot of realism like they have recently. And I'd  
24 like to know, you know, what can you guys do more to make  
25 the American people more aware of the threats that we face?

1           Admiral Davidson: Thank you very much, Senator, for  
2 your question. The advances made by China, especially, but  
3 the other threats I articulated in the region, Russia  
4 specifically in the 21st century, has really been profound.  
5 While our nation has been focused on the efforts of land  
6 wars in Southeast Asia, these advances have been basically  
7 unchecked with the economic power that China has brought to  
8 bear, and they have greatly advanced their capability truly  
9 in all domains.

10           You mentioned space. What was essentially a handful of  
11 satellites at the turn of the century has now become  
12 hundreds of satellites -- capabilities and communications  
13 and surveillance and reconnaissance and other capabilities  
14 in space. If I move it all the way down through air,  
15 they've now got fourth- and fifth-generation fighters, which  
16 were not there at the beginning of the century, and they  
17 have now advanced surface and submarine assets that they  
18 also did not enjoy at the turn of the century.

19           The time to invest in these things is now. I'm quite  
20 encouraged by all the concepts that you've seen come forward  
21 from the services, from Multi-Domain Task Force to the  
22 distributed maritime operations, as well as the commitments  
23 and the profiles that the services have begun to make and  
24 being able to operate in these multi-domains where these  
25 advances have taken place.

1 Chairman Inhofe: Yeah, I think you're right on that,  
2 but also, we're also seeing them rubbing our noses in it.  
3 You know, we've not seen this before. Admiral Greenert  
4 wrote a recent paper that his Chinese counterpart, the head  
5 of the PLA Navy, was surprised that "the United States did  
6 not have a more" -- and I'm quoting now -- "a more forceful  
7 reaction" when China began its island building in 2013.

8 And so they're actually talking about us. And where  
9 this is reflected is with our allies. Several of us on this  
10 committee were in the South China Seas just a short while  
11 ago, and our allies, you know, they're almost looking at  
12 what's happening in the South China Seas, with the island  
13 building and all of that, as the Chinese preparing for World  
14 War III and, you know, which side are we going to be on?

15 So that's something that does bother me. I think,  
16 also, it's affecting a lot of the attitudes. I know that Xi  
17 Jinping said that he would not -- and this is his quote --  
18 "abandon the use of force as a potential means of achieving  
19 the unification of Taiwan."

20 Now, what more can we do to try to overcome this  
21 attitude that's out there and is having an adverse effect on  
22 our allies? Any thoughts on that?

23 Admiral Davidson: In the operational space, one of the  
24 things we've been able to do in just the last five months,  
25 Senator, is get our allies and partners to join us in the

1 South China Sea. Not all of their operations are defined as  
2 freedom of navigation operations as we would define them,  
3 but their willingness to sail independently in there, to  
4 work with us on exercises demonstrates the international  
5 commitment to maintaining the freedom of those seas and  
6 airways. And I think it's critically important to messaging  
7 China that it's not just the United States that is concerned  
8 about the freedom of the South China Seas, but indeed all  
9 nations. And I expect allies and partners to continue to  
10 help here in the months ahead, both with some combined  
11 operations that we'll be executing, as well as some  
12 individual operations as well.

13 One of the other factors that we're working on in the  
14 diplomatic space is to help ASEAN in this discussion about  
15 Code of Conduct negotiations with China. China has  
16 essentially delivered a draft that dictates to those ASEAN  
17 nations when and where and who they would sail with in the  
18 South China Sea. Helping them protect the international  
19 freedoms of the seas and airspace that have been long  
20 established in maritime law that the United States and  
21 others have fought for over the centuries is quite  
22 important.

23 Chairman Inhofe: Yeah, well that's good.

24 And my time is expired, General Abrams, but I will have  
25 a question for the record having to do with South Korea and



1 what's going on.

2 Senator Reed.

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

4 General Abrams, there's been discussions about the cost  
5 of our forces on the Korean Peninsula. President Trump  
6 suggested a few times that it's expensive. These  
7 negotiations with the Special Measures Agreement seem to be  
8 more controversial than previous years and, interestingly  
9 enough, it's just for a term of one year, where typically  
10 it's a five-year term, so we're going to be right back in  
11 the saddle of talking about supporting forces and the South  
12 Korean support for our forces on the peninsula.

13 Can you talk about the significance of maintaining our  
14 force presence there? Is it critical or can we afford to  
15 draw down?

16 General Abrams: Senator, our presence and our posture  
17 is appropriate in terms of providing an adequate deterrent  
18 against the DPRK. It provides a force structure in numbers  
19 and capability that's capable of responding to hostilities  
20 and provocations and prepared to defend the Republic of  
21 Korea if they are called upon. It also serves -- our  
22 posture there also serves as a stabilizing factor, stability  
23 in Northeast Asia. It provides reassurance to not only the  
24 Republic of Korea, but for Japan and other partners in the  
25 region, and serves as a bulwark against the expansion of

1 China, as Admiral Davidson just outlined. So our presence  
2 there serves multiple purposes.

3 Senator Reed: And one purpose I suspect also, too, is  
4 to give confidence to our allies, the South Koreans and the  
5 Japanese particularly. Would they be concerned if we drew  
6 down our forces in any way?

7 General Abrams: Senator, I hesitate to speak on behalf  
8 of the Republic of Korea or Japan, but in my dealings with  
9 both of them I would say yes, they would be concerned if we  
10 were to do that.

11 Senator Reed: One of the other aspects in this  
12 relationship between the South Koreans and Japanese is there  
13 is a long, long history there. And there are some at times  
14 difficulties between that relationship. Can you  
15 characterize the relationship? I think many people assume  
16 it's just completely harmonious, but I've observed comments  
17 and issues in which there was some friction. Is that still  
18 the case?

19 General Abrams: Senator, as you stated, there are  
20 long-term items of friction between those two countries. In  
21 my experience, it's difficult for Westerners to appreciate  
22 the breadth and depth of some of that tension as these are  
23 very old countries, ancient societies, and many of their  
24 tensions go back hundreds and hundreds of years. And  
25 occasionally, it flares up with misunderstandings between

1 the two that are exacerbated by, you know, topics of the  
2 current day. And those only serve to sort of re-inflame  
3 those old grievances.

4 Having said that, militarily we continue to see  
5 cooperation and commitment on both sides because they both  
6 understand that there are much bigger concerns for them to  
7 worry about than some of their long-term friction points.  
8 They've got some mutual goals that they've got to work  
9 together on.

10 Senator Reed: Thank you, sir.

11 Admiral Davidson, again, thank you for your service,  
12 too. And one of the proposals consistent with the National  
13 Defense Strategy that the Marine Corps is advancing is to  
14 occupy islands forward of their present position and use  
15 them not only to protect them from seizure by anyone, but  
16 also to help defend the fleets and our air forces operating  
17 in the region. Is that a concept that you support?

18 Admiral Davidson: Sir, all the services have put forth  
19 expeditionary concepts like that. They all have slightly  
20 different names -- the EABO concept, the Multi-Domain Task  
21 Force -- but those are capabilities that I think serve a  
22 deterrent basis in the region and they're also fight-and-win  
23 capabilities that we may have to utilize in the future.

24 Senator Reed: Let me just, in general, are you  
25 satisfied in terms of the weapons systems that you have

1 available given what the Chinese, in particular, are  
2 developing so quickly? You alluded to them in your comments  
3 repeatedly -- new generations of fighters, long-range  
4 precision missiles that threaten our carriers that 10, 15  
5 years ago were not even on the -- certainly not deployed.  
6 Are you satisfied you're getting kind of the weapons that  
7 can counter those weapons?

8       Admiral Davidson: Sir, we speak frequently about the  
9 erosion of our advantage in the theater, which is really the  
10 case here. China has seriously eroded that quantitative  
11 advantage -- the number of assets that they have -- but  
12 they're also eroding that qualitative advantage is what I'm  
13 talking to you about fourth- and fifth-gen. Are we now  
14 making progress, I think, in that budget? Yes. We do have  
15 the roots of some capabilities, many capabilities, that  
16 would be applicable in any warfare scenario as I see the  
17 future play out. But the investments, I think, need to come  
18 more rapidly, and we need to be willing to innovate to get  
19 there as well.

20       There is much to be done in this space. I don't want  
21 to give the impression that last year's budget necessarily  
22 is putting us on the track to regain that advantage. On-  
23 time budgets and the kind of investments that we've been  
24 talking about in the Department for the '20 and '21 budget  
25 to come, which I haven't seen the final '20 budget, I think

1 are critically important to regaining that advantage.

2 Senator Reed: Just a final comment. If there is a  
3 particular system that is being developed that you think  
4 that would be very applicable, but it's not being adapted by  
5 the services from your standpoint, both of you as combat  
6 commanders/field commanders, please let us know. Thank you.

7 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Reed.

8 During the course of this hearing, we are going to have  
9 some subjects come up that would be better addressed in a  
10 closed session. There will be a closed session at 2:30 this  
11 afternoon.

12 Senator Wicker.

13 Senator Wicker: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

14 Senator Reed has touched on an issue that is surprising  
15 to many of us and I believe that needs some more attention.  
16 He asked General Abrams about the worsening relations  
17 between two of our great allies, the Republic of Korea --  
18 South Korea, and Japan. I would submit for the record, Mr.  
19 Chairman, two articles; one from the February 9th Washington  
20 Post entitled "Japan-South Korea ties worst in five decades  
21 as U.S. leaves alliance untended" and also a February 10  
22 article from The Nelson Report entitled "Japan, ROK crisis  
23 gets worse."

24 Admiral Davidson, I don't want to spend the whole time  
25 on this, but General Abrams commented on it. This is a

1 serious problem which potentially affects our ability to  
2 gain cooperation between our allies; is that correct?

3 Admiral Davidson: I think both nations recognize,  
4 Senator, that the future in the Indo-Pacific is going to  
5 require great democracies like Korea, Japan, the United  
6 States and others to work together here for the very long  
7 term.

8 I can tell you, to the point about whether the alliance  
9 is being tended to, I've spoken to both the chiefs of  
10 defense in Korea and Japan in the last week. I will return  
11 a call to the chief of defense in Korea later this week.  
12 I've talked to both our ambassadors in the last week there,  
13 met with one of them -- both of them, actually --  
14 personally. Much is going on to help facilitate our mutual  
15 concerns in the region and our alliances.

16 Senator Wicker: Does State and DOD, do they both  
17 understand the seriousness of this deterioration, and are  
18 they both tending to it?

19 Admiral Davidson: I would say the answer to that is  
20 yes, sir.

21 Senator Wicker: Thank you. Very good. That's, I  
22 think, surprising to hear and good to know there are efforts  
23 made.

24 Now, after the USS Fitzgerald and McCain, tragic  
25 collisions resulting in fatalities and the loss of hundreds

1 of millions of dollars, there were two investigations.  
2 Senator McCain and I introduced the Surface Warfare  
3 Enhancement Act asking that many of the recommendations of  
4 these investigations be implemented. This led to inclusion  
5 of most of our legislation in the FY19 NDAA.

6 So are we on track to fully implement the Surface  
7 Warfare Enhancement Act? And the reviews that caused so  
8 much concern were that demand for naval power was far  
9 outstripping the supply of ships and submarines. That was  
10 what led to these -- in part -- led to these collisions and  
11 tragedies. So what's the state of that imbalance today,

12 Admiral Davidson, and what do you need compared to what  
13 you have now?

14 Admiral Davidson: Thank you, Senator. I have been  
15 quite pleased with the progress that Navy has made on the  
16 recommendations that I made in the Comprehensive Review.  
17 I'll be watching the '20 budget when it comes together.  
18 There are a couple of items in there, investment in  
19 schoolhouses, that I want to make sure are followed through  
20 on.

21 I'm quite confident in Admiral Aquilino's approach to  
22 the OPTEMPO out in Seventh Fleet right now. We've had the  
23 good fortune of being able to relieve some of the  
24 responsiveness based on the easing of some of the tensions  
25 on the peninsula, as well as reshuffling some of the

1 priorities there in the region. He continues remediation  
2 efforts of the Seventh Fleet in terms of training and  
3 maintenance there in Yokosuka, particularly in the Cruiser-  
4 Destroyer Force, and so I'm quite pleased with how he's  
5 managing that force.

6 Senator Wicker: And just to make sure, the previous  
7 NDAA placed a 355-ship requirement that the Navy had  
8 established as a statutory policy of the United States. Are  
9 you still committed to that 355-ship Navy and do you still  
10 view it as the statutory law of the land?

11 Admiral Davidson: Sir, in the Indo-Pacific region, I  
12 think we need more capacity in the maritime, to be sure.  
13 The Navy is undergoing another force structure review I  
14 think to look at that number again and affirm that for the  
15 Department.

16 Senator Wicker: Thank you, sir.

17 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Wicker.

18 Senator Shaheen.

19 Senator Shaheen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank  
20 you both for being here today and for your service to our  
21 country.

22 General Abrams, North Korea transferred 55 boxes of  
23 remains of missing U.S. servicemen from the Korean War after  
24 the last summit between the President and Kim Jong-un. Can  
25 you tell me if we're still cooperating with the North



1 Koreans on trying to return more missing servicemen? My  
2 understanding is we think about 5300 of the 7700 soldiers  
3 who are missing are believed to have died someplace in North  
4 Korea.

5 General Abrams: Senator, the short answer is yes, we  
6 are. I am aware of the DPAA's efforts to continue dialogue  
7 with North Korea to move forward in execution of our solemn  
8 responsibility to do everything that we can to bring home  
9 our missing in action.

10 Senator Shaheen: And do you know if that's on the  
11 agenda for the President's upcoming summit?

12 General Abrams: Senator, I'm not aware specifically.  
13 I am aware that there is a commitment to continuing that  
14 dialogue that came out of the June summit, but I have not  
15 seen the specific agenda for this upcoming summit yet.

16 Senator Shaheen: Thank you.

17 Admiral Davidson, our office was contacted by several  
18 U.S. employees who had been stationed at our embassy in  
19 China who have medical documentation to indicate that they  
20 are suffering from traumatic brain injury and the same  
21 symptoms that we saw from embassy personnel who were  
22 evacuated from Havana, Cuba.

23 Are you aware of any Americans in China who have been  
24 affected by those same symptoms, and are you aware of any  
25 DOD personnel who have experienced the symptoms?

1 Admiral Davidson: No, Senator, I am not.

2 Senator Shaheen: Thank you.

3 General Abrams, you talked about the DPRK currently  
4 engaging in very extensive military exercises and also about  
5 what we continue to do to train with the Republic of Korea.  
6 Do you believe it would be helpful to resume military  
7 exercises with the Republic of Korea?

8 General Abrams: Senator, to be clear, there have been  
9 cancellations of some exercises that have been well  
10 publicized. But as I mentioned in my opening statement, at  
11 least since I've been there in November, we are continuing  
12 to train, conducting combined training and exercise, with  
13 our ROK counterparts. That is continuing unabated. But  
14 it's adjusted in accordance with some innovative things that  
15 we've done by adjusting size, scope, volume, and the timing  
16 so that we can continue to preserve space for Mr. Biegun and  
17 the Department of State to do their job.

18 Senator Shaheen: And, again, do you believe it would  
19 be helpful, in terms of our readiness, to resume the  
20 previous kinds of exercises?

21 General Abrams: Senator, I have been given authority  
22 to continue planning for those type exercises typically  
23 characterized as large-scale exercises. Historically, we've  
24 conducted one in the spring and one in the summer, and I  
25 have continued planning for execution of one in the spring.

1 I worked very closely with the ROK JCS and the ROK chairman  
2 himself in that new construct and have forwarded that up to  
3 the Department of Defense and received full support to  
4 continue with our planning.

5 Senator Shaheen: Thank you.

6 Admiral Davidson, you talked about Russian influence in  
7 the Indo-Pacific area in your testimony, and you lay out  
8 some pretty extensive activities that the Russians are doing  
9 in your written testimony. Are we seeing the kind of cyber  
10 intrusions and disinformation from Russia in this area of  
11 operation that we've seen in Europe?

12 Admiral Davidson: They are on the same scale, yes,  
13 ma'am. I would say though that their conventional  
14 activities, their air and maritime activities especially,  
15 are a little less than what's been going on in Europe.

16 Senator Shaheen: And are we seeing any kind of an  
17 effort to destabilize the democracies, some of which are  
18 fragile, in that region?

19 Admiral Davidson: Using cyber means?

20 Senator Shaheen: Or disinformation, using whatever  
21 means they have available. Do we expect any kind of gray  
22 zone issues like we've seen in Ukraine and other parts of  
23 Eastern Europe?

24 Admiral Davidson: Russia is maneuvering in the region,  
25 and I think globally, using information to subvert the

1 international rules-based order and our objectives in the  
2 region.

3 Senator Shaheen: and do we have a response to that in  
4 the same way that we have a response to what's going on in  
5 Europe?

6 Admiral Davidson: I think, ma'am, that when we talk  
7 about an information campaign that's global, it is a global  
8 response that it takes, and the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command is  
9 a part of that global response, yes.

10 Senator Shaheen: Thank you.

11 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

12 Senator Cotton.

13 Senator Cotton: Thank you, gentlemen, for your  
14 appearance and your continued service.

15 General Abrams, let's dig down a little bit deeper into  
16 this training question. At what level would your troopers  
17 recognize a difference from what was happening, say, a year  
18 ago, to what's happening now? Would a new rifleman in his  
19 first tour on the Korean Peninsula notice a difference in  
20 his training level or the training exercises he conducts?

21 General Abrams: No.

22 Senator Cotton: A squad leader?

23 General Abrams: No.

24 Senator Cotton: Platoon leader?

25 General Abrams: No.

1 Senator Cotton: Company commander?

2 General Abrams: No.

3 Senator Cotton: Battalion commander?

4 General Abrams: Senator, he has not noticed a  
5 difference yet, but he might in the upcoming months.

6 Senator Cotton: And then, presumably, the command  
7 levels above battalion might notice a difference in the kind  
8 of exercises they conduct?

9 General Abrams: Yes, within those four dials. They  
10 would -- at that echelon, they would notice it.

11 Senator Cotton: Is it fair to say that the commanders  
12 at that level, the full bird colonel level up to the General  
13 Abrams level, are pretty well versed in the demands of their  
14 job from their previous levels of command?

15 Admiral Davidson: Absolutely.

16 Senator Cotton: That's good to know.

17 Admiral Davidson, the INDOPACOM is characterized by the  
18 longest distances in any of our combatant commands. I  
19 presume that places a premium on long-range precision strike  
20 for you and your forces?

21 Admiral Davidson: It does, absolutely. Yes, sir.

22 Senator Cotton: And, currently, those are  
23 predominantly maritime and air based systems?

24 Admiral Davidson: That's correct.

25 Senator Cotton: There's been a lot of news coverage

1 recently about the President's decision -- long overdue, in  
2 my opinion -- to withdraw from the Intermediate-Range  
3 Nuclear Forces Treaty, and it's focused, understandably, on  
4 what it means for Europe and Russia since that was a treaty  
5 between the United States and Russia back, when it was the  
6 Soviet Union. But what does it mean for you and your  
7 theater to have the prospect of intermediate-range missiles  
8 available for ground basing.

9 Admiral Davidson: China has been -- since they are not  
10 party to the INF Treaty -- has been investing in the kind of  
11 weapons that create a serious challenge to us. Over 95  
12 percent of their ballistic missiles would not be permitted  
13 under the INF Treaty. For us to have a land-based component  
14 with that kind of capability restores maneuver to the force,  
15 meaning it'll make the air, the maritime, and the land  
16 component much more viable in any warfare scenario and  
17 present a much greater challenge for our adversaries to  
18 threaten.

19 Senator Cotton: And all those land-based systems are  
20 presumably cheaper, easier to operate since they just sit  
21 there on land, they don't have to move around on a ship or  
22 an aircraft all the time?

23 Admiral Davidson: Well, one of the things that will be  
24 required, Senator, is mobility out of those assets. I think  
25 land-based assets will be that way. In this day and age, if

1 it is fixed on the planet, it is dead. You don't even need  
2 space assets to support that. The globe has been mapped and  
3 a ballistic missile can find its way there based on its own  
4 internal targeting. We would have to have some mobility in  
5 those land-based assets.

6 Senator Cotton: Your counterparts sitting in the  
7 People's Liberation Army, do you think it makes them happy  
8 that you may soon have land-based missiles that can reach  
9 intermediate ranges?

10 Admiral Davidson: No, I think it makes them unhappy.

11 Senator Cotton: General Abrams, what about your  
12 counterparts in North Korea; do you think they're happy or  
13 unhappy that they may soon face land-based intermediate-  
14 range missiles?

15 General Abrams: I can't characterize whether they're  
16 happy or not, but I'm certain that it makes them very  
17 nervous and it is certainly changing their calculus.

18 Senator Cotton: Complicates their planning.

19 General Abrams: Absolutely.

20 Senator Cotton: Okay. Gentlemen -- well, I'll address  
21 this to Admiral Davidson. And you can reserve specific  
22 details for our closed session, but one point of criticism  
23 we've heard is that we may not have places to base these  
24 systems. As you point out, they're mobile, they're not  
25 often much bigger than a tractor-trailer. Do you think

1 we'll be able to identify places in the INDOPACOM where we  
2 can base land-based intermediate-range missiles?

3 Admiral Davidson: Yes, sir, I think they'll be viable  
4 assets for us, but it's probably a conversation better to  
5 have in closed session.

6 Senator Cotton: We'll talk about that in greater  
7 detail this afternoon. Thank you, gentlemen.

8 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Cotton.

9 Senator Kaine.

10 Senator Kaine: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thanks to the  
11 witnesses.

12 I want to ask a question about North Korea and then  
13 about China. On North Korea, I'm struck by the fact that as  
14 a member of the Foreign Relations and Armed Services  
15 Committees, we have still not had a briefing about any  
16 details about commitments that were made in the Singapore  
17 summit, which was nearly a year ago, in either of the  
18 committees.

19 And I note, General Abrams, your testimony, and I just  
20 want to read it, "I am clear-eyed about the fact that little  
21 to no verifiable change has occurred in North Korea's  
22 conventional and asymmetric capabilities that continue to  
23 hold the United States, South Korea, and our regional allies  
24 at risk."

25 So what I'm looking for is what real evidence is there



1 of any changed trajectory on behalf of North Korea? I  
2 applaud the President, actually, for having the dialogue  
3 with North Korea leadership. Dialogue guarantees nothing,  
4 but the absence of dialogue often guarantees a bad outcome.  
5 So I appreciate dialogue. But what I'm looking for is what  
6 is the evidence that we would want to see to determine that  
7 North Korea is serious about denuclearization?

8 In the Foreign Relations Committee, the testimony we've  
9 received pretty consistently is the evidence that shows  
10 they're serious is if they agree to provide some kind of  
11 inventory of their nuclear assets. Until there is  
12 transparency and disclosure, we have no reason to believe  
13 they're serious. If there is transparency and disclosure,  
14 they might be serious. That would be sort of the first step  
15 to show they're serious; more work to be done, obviously.

16 Are you aware -- to this point, February 12, 2019 --  
17 are you aware of any commitment that North Korea has made to  
18 provide an inventory of nuclear infrastructure or assets  
19 that they have?

20 General Abrams: Senator, I am not aware of that.

21 Senator Kaine: Admiral Davidson, are you aware of any?

22 Admiral Davidson: No, I'm not.

23 Senator Kaine: That's what we really need to see  
24 coming out of a next summit in Vietnam, or hopefully soon.  
25 And until we see it, I think this issue about no verifiable

1 progress, we have to be skeptical. North Korea has made  
2 promises in the past, they've been willing to talk in the  
3 past, but the question of what shows progress, we've got to  
4 see some willingness to disclose.

5 Let me move to China.

6 Admiral Davidson, you talked a little bit about, in  
7 your testimony and in response to some of the questions,  
8 that some nations are starting to realize that China may  
9 seem friendly up front, they may have assets and resources  
10 to offer up front, but the terms kind of overly debt-  
11 burdening. Nations like Sri Lanka and others have started  
12 to appear very onerous. Malaysia has canceled projects and  
13 basically has criticized China's way of dealing with them as  
14 sort of a new form of colonialism.

15 And we hear this all over the world, not just in Asia  
16 -- we hear it in South America, we hear it in Africa --  
17 that the strings attached to Chinese assistance, up front  
18 they may seem fine, but they start to really chafe, and  
19 nations are starting to be wary. But you can't fight  
20 something with nothing. So if China is there promising  
21 resources, a lot of the military posture of the United  
22 States does also involve what soft power we bring to the  
23 table to try to encourage nations to not accept the sugar-  
24 high promise up front only to regret it later.

25 What would your advice to us be, not just as Armed

1 Services members, but we're on all kinds of other committees  
2 as well, what would your advice to us be in terms of the  
3 kinds of additional focus the United States should be  
4 offering in the INDOPACOM area to try to wean nations away  
5 from over-reliance on this dangerous Chinese strategy of  
6 kind of getting claws in other nations?

7 Admiral Davidson: Sir, I think when we look back in  
8 history, I think it will look very kindly on the passage of  
9 the BUILD Act here last fall. The transition from OPIC to  
10 the Development Finance Corporation, the consolidation of  
11 some independent foreign financing mechanisms in the  
12 country, the doubling of the investment, the freeing of  
13 private investment, these are critically important efforts.  
14 And when we talk about whole of government, that's the kind  
15 of thing that we're talking about.

16 The other key factor is --

17 Senator Kaine: And just, BUILD Act, if anybody wonders  
18 if Congress can do things bipartisan, very bipartisan,  
19 really was to try to amass the governmental resources but  
20 also enable them to better attract private resources so if  
21 we go into nations in your or any part of the world, we have  
22 more to offer to counter the Chinese strategy.

23 Admiral Davidson: Absolutely. We're also working  
24 quite closely with allies and partners in the region --  
25 Australia, New Zealand, Japan, especially -- particularly in

1 some of the areas that are in key competition with China.  
2 Leveraging their investments and their interests, I think,  
3 on this will be critically important for the free and open  
4 Indo-Pacific as well.

5 And then I'd say lastly, right now, the Indo-Pacific  
6 Command gets just a small portion of the foreign military  
7 financing; really, less than five percent of that overall.  
8 We need to take a look at where we can better port that  
9 money in the region to help compete in this whole-of-  
10 government environs that we're talking about.

11 Senator Kaine: Thank you, gentlemen. Thank you, Mr.  
12 Chair.

13 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Kaine.

14 Senator Rounds.

15 Senator Rounds: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

16 Gentlemen, thank you both for your service to our  
17 country.

18 Admiral Davidson, you indicated in your opening  
19 statement that there was not just China as a threat or the  
20 Republic of North Korea, but you also indicated that Russia  
21 was playing a role. Could you expand on that just a little  
22 bit and explain to us where you see them and what their role  
23 is today and how they make an impact?

24 Admiral Davidson: It's not unlike what's happening in  
25 the Atlantic in Europe. They're certainly engaging in the

1 region diplomatically and in the information space to act as  
2 a spoiler, really to undermine the rules-based international  
3 order. They're doing almost nothing to help sanctions with  
4 North Korea. I can't say that they're specifically opposed  
5 to them in this forum, I mean actively opposing them, but  
6 they are doing little to help there.

7         And you know, one of the key things that occurred last  
8 fall is they ran a combined portion of their very major  
9 exercise, Vostok, in 2018. They invited the Chinese to  
10 attend that as well, which I think is also problematic in  
11 signaling to the region.

12         Senator Rounds: If you were to look at their activity  
13 within the cyber realm, within the domain, are they active  
14 with regard to cyber activity, actively involved in cyber  
15 activity in the Indo-Pacific region?

16         Admiral Davidson: You know, that capability that  
17 Russia has is a global threat, sir.

18         Senator Rounds: With regard to ISR, you have some  
19 resources. I would assume, as all commanders would suggest,  
20 you could use a lot more. Do you see any activity or  
21 improvements, and can you expand a little bit on the  
22 discussion of ISR threats to our well-being and to the  
23 safety and security of our forces in your region by all  
24 three -- Korea, China, and Russia?

25         Admiral Davidson: ISR is a critical need in the

1 region, sir. Less than half of my requirements are served  
2 by the ISR that's available the region. Some of that will  
3 be investment over time. Some of it is the balance globally  
4 between the combatant commanders, what's required to  
5 facilitate our overall interests in those regions. I'm  
6 thankful for some of the tools that Congress has given.  
7 There is a contracting tool that was activated last year and  
8 I'm in conversation with the Department of Defense to see if  
9 I can gain some of those assets, and I'm grateful for that.

10 Senator Rounds: General Abrams, same question with  
11 regard to ISR. How do you see your ISR capabilities as  
12 compared with that of the anticipated adversary in this  
13 particular case?

14 General Abrams: Senator, our ISR capability -- well  
15 first off, it outpaces the DPRK's. But that should not  
16 change our own commitment in terms of calculus because our  
17 ISR is what gives us not just intelligence, but really,  
18 early warning. It provides us clarity so that we can begin  
19 to see early and with some clarity and conciseness so we can  
20 prevent miscalculation on either our part or their part.  
21 And that's really the importance behind the ISR requirements  
22 that we have on the peninsula.

23 Senator Rounds: Thank you.

24 And Admiral Davidson, with regard to our allies in the  
25 region, and we have a number of them there, could you sum up

1 for us, if they were expressing concerns to you about our  
2 commitment to the region, could you share with us what you  
3 believe their thoughts are with regard to our commitment to  
4 the Indo-Pacific region?

5 Admiral Davidson: I think certainly in conversations  
6 with my counterparts, sir, there's been a general  
7 convergence around the idea that a free and open Indo-  
8 Pacific is going to take all of our efforts working  
9 together. I think the United States' commitment in a  
10 variety of operations, whether it's our freedom of  
11 navigation operations in the South China Sea, our total  
12 totality of the exercise program in the United States, the  
13 assistance that we provide to partners in addition to  
14 allies, and then the commitment that our allies understand  
15 in the basis of our treaty alliances and our support to  
16 those treaties, I think, is unquestioned.

17 Senator Rounds: Thank you.

18 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

19 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Rounds.

20 Senator Manchin.

21 Senator Manchin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank  
22 you all for your service.

23 General Abrams, the U.S.-Republic of Korea military  
24 exercises, they've been scaled back or canceled as part of a  
25 wider diplomatic effort to ease tensions with North Korea

1 and push them towards denuclearization. What is your  
2 confidence level that the talks with North Koreans over  
3 denuclearization will make any improvements?

4 General Abrams: Senator, a couple of data points.

5 First off, today is day 440 since the last strategic  
6 provocation from the DPRK, the last time since we've had a  
7 missile flight test or a nuclear weapons test. As I  
8 mentioned in my opening statement, the reduction in the  
9 tension on the peninsula, it's palpable. If you have not  
10 been on the peninsula in a while, along the DMZ there has  
11 been significant reduction that has enabled nation  
12 confidence-building measures, it has increased prevention --  
13 I should say it's decreased the chance of mistakes,  
14 miscalculation, and it's continued to preserve space for the  
15 main effort, the Department of State to continue along this  
16 road of negotiations and discussion with the DPRK.

17 I think my personal opinion is the announcement of a  
18 second summit between President Trump and the supreme leader  
19 Kim is a positive sign of continued dialogue because it  
20 certainly beats the alternative of what we were living with  
21 in 2017.

22 Senator Manchin: Thank you, sir.

23 Admiral Davidson, you stated in your confirmation  
24 hearing that China is already capable of controlling the  
25 South China Sea in any scenario short of war with the U.S.



1 So my question would be what's stopping them right now from  
2 exercising this capability whenever they feel like it, and  
3 what are we as the U.S. or our allies in the region doing to  
4 continually discourage them from exercising this power?

5 Admiral Davidson: One of the things that I think has  
6 set them back was the international community coming  
7 together in the South China Sea here in about the beginning  
8 of September time frame. We've had allies and partners in  
9 the region, the UK, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Canada,  
10 France, all in one form or another step up their operations  
11 in the South China Sea, and I think that shows the  
12 international community's willingness to push back.

13 Senator Manchin: Sir, do we currently have the  
14 logistical capability to surge necessary combat power to the  
15 Indo-Pacific region if needed to combat Chinese aggression?

16 Admiral Davidson: Any discussion of the logistics and  
17 sustainment that's required depends on the total scale and  
18 scope of what might be happening. And that's true both in  
19 our ability to defend it from sabotage, special operations  
20 attacks, you know, conventional maritime and air attacks, as  
21 well as cyber attacks that might disrupt our logistics  
22 networks and prevent all those assets from arriving.

23 One of the other key needs for the region, sir, is --  
24 and you're hearing this from other combat commanders as well  
25 as the services -- is the need to recapitalize our sealift

1 fleet. It is decades old now and needs to be replaced  
2 nearly desperately.

3 Senator Manchin: And also, according to the World  
4 Economic Forum, by 2030, your AOR will be home to many of  
5 the world's mega-cities. This will continue to present vast  
6 complicated governance issues, and my fear is that these  
7 governments will look to an authoritarian China as a model  
8 over the United States.

9 The question would be, from the military perspective,  
10 what are some meaningful steps that can be taken to help  
11 leaders in India, Indonesia, Japan, and the Philippines so  
12 that they don't start looking at authoritarianism as the way  
13 to go?

14 Admiral Davidson: Well, I think one of the things that  
15 we can do is to continue our whole-of-government approach on  
16 a free and open Indo-Pacific. We have a burgeoning  
17 relationship with India. We've made significant defense  
18 progress on that relationship just in the last year with the  
19 cosigning of the COMCASA. We are working to operationalize  
20 that -- it's essentially an IT-sharing agreement -- in a way  
21 that shows India the power of being able to link with us in  
22 a tactical sense and an operational sense as well.

23 Committing to that rules-based international order and  
24 working to that free and open Indo-Pacific ends will attract  
25 these nations along with us. I can't imagine any country

1 would be willing to have an international order led by a  
2 nation that has a closed and authoritarian internal order.  
3 It's just not to the benefit of any of us.

4 Senator Manchin: Thank you.

5 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Manchin.

7 Senator Ernst.

8 Senator Ernst: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And thank you,  
9 gentlemen, for being here today.

10 We've seen a lot of discussion about China, North  
11 Korea, a revisionist China, and a nuclear North Korea. We  
12 also have extremist groups that exist within your regions,  
13 as well, with ties to ISIS and other types of terrorist  
14 groups.

15 Admiral Davidson, I'd like to start with you. I  
16 understand that there are a couple of countries or a few  
17 countries out there, like Micronesia and the Marshall  
18 Islands, that operate under Compacts of Free Association.  
19 And we have financial assistance that's provided through  
20 that, and we've talked about a number of different ways that  
21 we're cooperating with various countries, allies in the  
22 region.

23 These Compacts of Free Association, some of them will  
24 be expiring in four to five years. Can you maybe talk us  
25 through why those are so important? What do we realize out

1 of those types of compacts and should they be funded or  
2 should we allow them to expire?

3       Admiral Davidson: In short, Senator, those compacts  
4 are the connective tissue between the United States and the  
5 physical air and maritime and terrestrial space to 60  
6 percent of the world's economy. The compacts obligate us to  
7 defend those nations as we would defend ourselves. It also  
8 gives them some financial assurances and the ability to  
9 participate and work in our countries without immigrant  
10 classifications.

11       I can tell you that these nations contribute way out of  
12 proportion to their population in our defense. I meet  
13 servicemembers from Palau and the Marshall Islands, all over  
14 the Indo-Pacific, and they have served quite bravely and  
15 honorably in the last 35 years -- excuse me, in the last 15  
16 years -- in Southwest Asia.

17       Those compact agreements are going to expire in -- at  
18 least the financial mechanism is going to expire in 2023,  
19 and 2024 for Palau. I think the need for us to sustain  
20 those obligations is important because of the freedoms that  
21 it gives us. It allows us to keep any third-party nation  
22 from taking military, from occupying it, from them making a  
23 military agreement with them. It gives us the strategic  
24 flexibility to block that.

25       The financial mechanisms are going to expire in the

1 2023/2024 time frame. But the fact of the matter is these  
2 nations are at risk from the very pernicious approach that  
3 China has taken with their economic vehicles in the region.  
4 And to prevent that from happening, we should look at the  
5 long-term need on those COFA states, what the financial  
6 mechanisms are that retain this strategic alliance for us  
7 and the benefits that it accrues to the United States  
8 military and, truly, the defense to the United States.  
9 Without those three countries and our strategic alliance,  
10 the logistics and sustainment of our operations in the  
11 Western Pacific would be severed.

12 Senator Ernst: So bottom line, those agreements are  
13 very important, correct?

14 Admiral Davidson: Absolutely, ma'am.

15 Senator Ernst: Outstanding. And that's a great  
16 explanation. I appreciate that very much.

17 General Abrams, in looking at the threat that's been  
18 talked about with North Korea, I also want to talk about  
19 North Korea's special forces, their special operations  
20 forces. They presented a tactical operational threat to  
21 South Korea and the role of our own special operators in  
22 countering that threat. So could you maybe just briefly  
23 describe the threat that is being posed by North Korean  
24 special operators?

25 General Abrams: Senator, thank you. In this

1 unclassified setting, here's what I can say. Since Kim  
2 Jong-un assumed responsibility for leading his regime, this  
3 has been one of his specific investments in terms of  
4 increasing the size and capability of his special operations  
5 forces, and secondly, they spend a considerable amount of  
6 time doing training. And I'm happy to give you more detail  
7 in the classified session.

8         Senator Ernst: We can talk about that later, and I  
9 appreciate that very much. And are we integrating our own  
10 special operators to specifically train to push back on the  
11 North Korean special operators?

12         General Abrams: Senator, we are. We have a very small  
13 Special Operations Command Korea, but extraordinarily  
14 capable. They punch way above their weight class. We're  
15 lucky; we're fortunate enough to have a rotational U.S. Army  
16 Special Forces ODB. So for instance, today on the  
17 peninsula, we have five ODAs' persistent presence embedded  
18 with ROK-SOF training and partnering every single day.

19         Senator Ernst: That's outstanding. My time has  
20 expired.

21         Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, gentlemen.

22         Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Ernst.

23         Senator Warren.

24         Senator Warren: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

25         So we hear a lot of testimony in this committee about

1 the threats posed by China, Russia, rogue states,  
2 transnational terrorist groups. And a strong military is  
3 critical to addressing those challenges, but there's some  
4 threats that can't be solved by traditional military power  
5 at all. And one of those is climate change.

6 The unclassified Worldwide Threat Assessment by the  
7 director of national intelligence said, and I'm going to  
8 quote here, "Global environmental and ecological  
9 degradation, as well as climate change, are likely to fuel  
10 competition for resources, economic distress, and social  
11 discontent through 2019 and beyond." That assessment also  
12 said, "Damage to communication, energy, and transportation  
13 infrastructure could affect low-lying military bases,  
14 inflict economic costs, and cause human displacement and  
15 loss of life."

16 Admiral Davidson, do you agree with the intelligence  
17 community's assessment of the climate change threat?

18 Admiral Davidson: Yes, ma'am.

19 Senator Warren: So how does climate change impact  
20 operations in your area of responsibility and what are you  
21 doing to prepare for climate change?

22 Admiral Davidson: Well, the immediate manifestation,  
23 ma'am, is the number of ecological disaster events that are  
24 happening. I've just wrapped up after some four months --  
25 excuse me, three and a half months -- of assistance in

1 Tinian and Saipan, a contribution of Title 10 forces in  
2 significant numbers, to help clear debris, to help fix  
3 roofs, to help restore the infrastructure there writ large.

4 I've also been called to respond and assist in  
5 Indonesia in the wake of the earthquake and the tsunami that  
6 happened last year. A little separate from climate change.  
7 But our assistance in terms of humanitarian assistance and  
8 disaster relief, our ability to command and control, to  
9 marshal troops, to deliver logistics is important training  
10 for the region and something that they all need. And one of  
11 the things that my headquarters does is we run a center for  
12 excellence in disaster management. That training is  
13 available not just to the Title 10 folks but also our  
14 interagency here in the United States, and we export those  
15 courses, as well, to countries throughout the Indo-Pacific  
16 and, really, globally, to help assist them in these matters.

17 Senator Warren: Thank you. You know, adapting to  
18 climate change impacts our military readiness. And I'm glad  
19 that our military commanders take the threat of climate  
20 change seriously. I think we, your civilian leaders, owe it  
21 to you to enact policies here in Congress that recognize  
22 that climate change is happening and that we need to do more  
23 to stop it. So thank you. I appreciate it, Admiral.

24 I want to, in my remaining time, ask about one other  
25 area. In this committee, we also talk a lot about strategic



1 competition between the United States, China, and Russia.

2 And I want to focus on China for just a minute.

3       China is challenging the United States and our  
4 interests in a variety of domains. Our intelligence  
5 community's unclassified Worldwide Threat Assessment said,  
6 and I'm going to quote again, "China's leaders will try to  
7 extend the country's global, economic, political, and  
8 military reach while using China's military capabilities and  
9 overseas infrastructure and energy investments to diminish  
10 U.S. influence."

11       Admiral Davidson, do you agree with the intelligence  
12 community's assessment on this?

13       Admiral Davidson: Yes, ma'am, I do.

14       Senator Warren: Well, in a recent hearing, a former  
15 deputy of national security advisor and State Department  
16 official responsible for China policy, Ely Ratner, told this  
17 committee that regardless of whether we're talking about  
18 Chinese economic coercion, human rights, or the South China  
19 Sea, the U.S. needs a comprehensive strategy that enhances  
20 all aspects of our competitiveness. We can't pick just one  
21 strategy -- military or economics or technology or diplomacy  
22 -- and hope that that's going to be the silver bullet.

23       Admiral Davidson, do you agree with that?

24       Admiral Davidson: Yes, I do. It's going to take a  
25 whole-of-government approach.

1           Senator Warren: And can you just say a word more about  
2 that quickly -- we're about to run out of time -- about why  
3 it's important to use all of our tools of national power and  
4 not just military power?

5           Admiral Davidson: I speak quite frequently in the  
6 region about this, madam, and one of the things that  
7 competes so strongly for the United States in the region is  
8 our values. And whether they're allies, partners, or  
9 nations that merely aspire to have the values that we have,  
10 they compete in a more pronounced manner than any handful of  
11 dollars ever could. But it has to be proactive, and we have  
12 to move out in the diplomatic and the information space, as  
13 well as the economic space, quite briskly because China is  
14 spreading dollars around very perniciously through  
15 corruption, through the mechanisms that you talked about  
16 earlier, and we've got to be willing to work in these other  
17 realms.

18          Senator Warren: Yeah. And to project our power  
19 abroad, we have to be strong here at home. Military power  
20 is important, but we need strong, sustained investments in  
21 education, in research, and other domestic priorities if we  
22 are going to maintain a competitive advantage.

23          Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

24          Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Warren.

25          Senator Scott.

1           Senator Scott:  Could each of you give us your thoughts  
2 on what the Congress could do to help you better fulfill  
3 your missions?  What do you need from us?

4           Admiral Davidson:  Sir, the on-time -- the support  
5 we've had the last two years have been incredible.  Having  
6 those budgets administered on the first of October so they  
7 can be executed is critically important to the efficiency of  
8 the Department of Defense and the execution of all the  
9 things that we do, from contracting to steaming on a day-to-  
10 day basis, to use my Navy parlance.

11           The other thing we can do is lift the BCA caps.  The  
12 threats that are out there challenge the sovereignty of the  
13 United States in a way that has not existed since the Cold  
14 War.  And the investments that are going to be required to  
15 do that, I think, are going to be significant.

16           General Abrams:  Senator, I'd like the opportunity to  
17 foot-stomp.  In my view, the single most important thing is  
18 a timely appropriation.  In my previous assignment as the  
19 Army's force provider for three years, I can't overstate the  
20 impact of a continuing resolution at every level.  And most  
21 importantly, those that should have to worry about it least,  
22 we put it on their backs, and that's on soldiers and  
23 families, because we did not have a timely, on-time  
24 appropriation.  So that would be point number one.

25           Point number two, I'd say for those programs that we

1 have that have reached furthest along in their development  
2 and we have committed to them, that we have worked on for  
3 multiple years and are testing shows that it is capable and  
4 it's meeting those key requirements, continued support of  
5 those so that we can see them through. One in particular  
6 for me is in the missile-defense business, and this is one  
7 we are keen to. It's a key capability. We're grateful for  
8 the support of this committee and the Congress. We just  
9 need to see it through.

10 Senator Scott: Thank you.

11 Admiral Davidson, China has been a big supporter and a  
12 big, I guess lender, to Venezuela. Why is Venezuela of any  
13 strategic interest to China, and how is that helping them?

14 Admiral Davidson: China is challenging and threatening  
15 the rules-based international order. It's not a regional  
16 thing for China; it's a global approach. Anywhere that they  
17 can make inroads on that international order, they will take  
18 it. And they've been moving quite rapidly. I think as  
19 Admiral Faller indicated last week, in Southern Command as  
20 well.

21 Senator Scott: Do you anticipate that they would use  
22 any military resources in Venezuela?

23 Admiral Davidson: In the very near term, I don't think  
24 China would, no.

25 Senator Scott: How reliable a partner do most of the

1 democracies in Asia perceive America right now?

2 Admiral Davidson: I think in our alliances, I think  
3 they're quite confident in those five treaty allies that we  
4 have there in the region. This is another area, though,  
5 that's under threat from China. China maneuvers in the  
6 information space in a way that undermines everything we do;  
7 factually, informationally, everywhere.

8 Sir, when we all used to read newspapers every Sunday,  
9 you used to get up and you used to have the Parade magazine  
10 as a Sunday insert. Throughout the region, there is a China  
11 daily insert which is Chinese propaganda appearing in  
12 newspapers, over more than half the population of the globe.  
13 It's quite pernicious.

14 Senator Scott: Are we doing anything to counteract  
15 that?

16 Admiral Davidson: I would say in the information space  
17 we do more. We've talked about the BUILD Act, what we are  
18 doing in the military space. And one of the key factors  
19 here is the fact that we're working with allies and partners  
20 in key areas of the region.

21 You've seen Australia step up, and Papua-New Guinea  
22 recently, Fiji. New Zealand has made it clear that their  
23 very near-abroad is going to take some investment. We are  
24 working on an Indo-Pacific strategy with Japan and looking  
25 for opportunities of where our economic investments can

1 cooperate and collaborate. And in just my space alone, just  
2 last week we had a trilateral at the planning level between  
3 Japan, the Philippines, and the United States. These are  
4 all constructs that will help combat China's influence.

5 Senator Scott: Thank you, and thanks for your service.

6 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

7 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Scott.

8 Senator Jones.

9 Senator Jones: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you,  
10 gentlemen, both for being here today and for your service.

11 Admiral Davidson, I'd like to ask you a little bit  
12 about the freedom of navigation operations that we have in  
13 the South China Sea. I know that there were some that  
14 occurred back in January and even, if I'm not mistaken, this  
15 past Sunday there was a couple of our fleet near the Spratly  
16 Islands. And in response, the Chinese foreign minister has  
17 accused the United States of trespassing, infringing on  
18 China's sovereignty, and damaging regional peace, security,  
19 and order, even though it is my understanding these  
20 operations are going on in international waters.

21 So, with that, I think it's important that we continue  
22 these. But what's not clear to me is how we're resolving  
23 the conflict between China's stance on these, on our  
24 operations, and the international community. So are you  
25 aware of any conversations or discussions that are taking

1 place on this specific issue, and, you know, can you talk  
2 about contingency plans? Obviously a lot of saber rattling  
3 can lead to some bad consequences. Are there contingency  
4 plans if the impasse continues this way?

5 Admiral Davidson: Sir, to your last point about  
6 contingency plans, I'd rather hold that for the closed  
7 hearing, if I could.

8 Senator Jones: Certainly.

9 Admiral Davidson: To be clear, not all our freedom of  
10 operation navigations happen in international waters.  
11 Sometimes they happen in disputed waters, which was the case  
12 this past weekend -- I won't comment on every one -- but was  
13 the case this past weekend. Other nations lay claim to  
14 those waters. And then the legal construct of what those  
15 features are dictate as to whether we can operate and how  
16 close we can operate them and in what mode, whether it's  
17 solely innocent passage, which is the way any ship would  
18 move through the region, or whether normal operations that  
19 military assets could use would be effective.

20 I'd also like to hold off on a discussion about the  
21 rhetoric that China responds with in the wake of these  
22 operations. But I will say this. The vast, vast majority  
23 of interactions in the South China Sea, that China responds  
24 professionally and safely.

25 These operations are critically important, not for the

1 United States, and they're not about two destroyers passing  
2 safely in this region. This is about the free flow of  
3 communications. That's oil. That's trade. That's economic  
4 means. It means the cyber connectivities on the cables that  
5 travel under the South China Sea, which are deep and  
6 profound, coming out of Singapore. And it includes the free  
7 passage of citizens between all the great nations of the  
8 world.

9       If you're taking a flight from Singapore to San  
10 Francisco, from Sydney to Seoul, from Manila to Tokyo, you  
11 are flying over the South China Sea. And each time that  
12 happens, there is somebody with a surface-to-air missile and  
13 a Chinese soldier evaluating whether that traffic can go on  
14 a day-to-day basis. It's quite hazardous to the global  
15 security, and I think it's quite pernicious that China would  
16 take such action.

17       Senator Jones: Thank you, Admiral.

18       General Abrams, let me ask you about, there's been a  
19 lot of discussion over the years and more recently about the  
20 transfer of the Combined Forces Command to the ROK. That's  
21 been discussed a lot. There are conditions, I think, that  
22 are out there. Can you talk a little bit about the transfer  
23 of command, what it might mean to the United States presence  
24 on the peninsula, and specifically, what it would mean to  
25 the forces, the manning levels that we have on the



1 peninsula?

2           General Abrams: Senator, we refer to it as conditions-  
3 based OPCON transition. It was most recently ratified again  
4 in 2015 with the specific conditions that you outlined --  
5 there's three key areas. And the Republic of Korea is  
6 making good progress towards meeting those conditions.

7           This last set of consultative meetings that we had in  
8 October, there was a reaffirmation from then-Secretary  
9 Mattis and our brand new minister of defense for the  
10 Republic of Korea to look for opportunities to accelerate  
11 the conditions-based OPCON transition. And so I'm working  
12 very closely with the ROK chairman, General Park Han-ki, to  
13 do just that, look for opportunities, understanding that the  
14 conditions will have to be met. And we're working on ways  
15 to ensure that we have a shared vision as to the way ahead.

16           To your specific question about what is the potential  
17 impact to troop presence, that is not part of the equation  
18 for conditions-based OPCON transition. This is merely about  
19 putting a ROK commander, a Republic of Korea commander, in  
20 command of Combined Forces Command, that position that I  
21 currently serve in in one of my three positions on the  
22 peninsula.

23           Senator Jones: Great. Thank you.

24           Back to you, Admiral Davidson. You mentioned in your  
25 testimony some sanctions against North Korea, and there's

1 some ongoing ship-to-ship transfers that take place  
2 primarily in the East China Sea. Can you tell me what's the  
3 biggest challenge that you have in investigating these ship-  
4 to-ship transfers, what have we done to maybe stop these,  
5 and particularly, is China involved? What role might China  
6 be playing in these transfers?

7 Admiral Davidson: I should say to your last point,  
8 Senator, that China is neither helping nor hurting the  
9 effort at least in the maritime space.

10 We have an ongoing multinational ISR and ship effort to  
11 disrupt refined oil that's going in by sea into North Korea.  
12 This requires a significant amount of network work to cut it  
13 off at the supply. The fact of the matter is that you're  
14 not going to deter the DPRK from pursuing fuel. They have  
15 to have it. And they've been adapting their tactics as  
16 we've been adapting ours -- adding ships, doing transfers in  
17 their own territorial waters or near their own shores and,  
18 occasionally, there have been some transfers in Chinese  
19 territorial waters.

20 So we are going to have to go after these things at the  
21 source. I've got partnership across the DOD, with cyber  
22 command, especially, to make sure that we understand what's  
23 happening so that we can disrupt these things at the source,  
24 refer providers, whether it's shippers, whether it's oil  
25 brokers, whether it's the oil companies themselves, notify

1 the United Nations of those contributions, and then have  
2 them pursued both by State demarche and Treasury action to  
3 prevent their future transfers.

4 Senator Jones: Great. Well, thank you both.

5 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Jones.

7 Senator Hawley.

8 Senator Hawley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

9 Thank you, gentlemen, for being here. Thank you for  
10 your exemplary service and for the service under your  
11 command. Admiral, it's a particular privilege to welcome  
12 you here as a native Missourian. We're very proud of you  
13 and very proud of your service. Thank you for what you do.

14 You have a tough job, Admiral, as the commander of what  
15 the National Defense Strategy tells us is perhaps the  
16 decisive theater in our current set of priorities that we  
17 have, strategic priorities as a nation. I want to ask about  
18 some of the challenges that we're facing. Help us think, if  
19 you could, about the forward defense posture that the NDS  
20 tells us is absolutely critical for this AOR, and, if you  
21 could, tell us what you need from this committee in order to  
22 ensure that we have the forward defense posture that is  
23 necessary in order to prevent a fait accompli in the South  
24 China Sea or in Taiwan.

25 And I just want to pick up on -- Senator Manchin

1 mentioned a little earlier about surging into the region,  
2 but of course we know from the NDS that our ability to surge  
3 into the region after aggression by China is difficult given  
4 China's A2/AD capacities and capabilities. So could you  
5 tell us what is our progress in adopting that offense  
6 posture that we need in order to prevent a fait accompli and  
7 what you need from us to ensure that we get there?

8 Admiral Davidson: Thank you very much, Senator.

9 Some of what we need to talk about I'd like to do in  
10 the closed hearing this afternoon. But in an unclassified  
11 sense, the NDS really asked me to lift my eyes and take a  
12 longer view of the region and how it's evolving. So much of  
13 our basing and rotation has been focused on what's been  
14 transpiring in Northeast Asia, not just in the last couple  
15 of years, but really over the last several decades.

16 This is going to require us to revisit some of the  
17 places in which we operate and rotate forces, absolutely.  
18 It's going to require us to think about some places, if not  
19 bases in areas. And we are in conversations with partners  
20 and allies about what some of the opportunities might be  
21 there. But it also speaks to concepts, the kind of  
22 capabilities that we can bring forth, and what you're  
23 seeing, new concepts from the services, Multi-Domain Task  
24 Force operations, distributed maritime operations, and the  
25 logistics that are going to be required to supply that.

1 There is going to be requirements for investments across all  
2 domains, from the bottom of the sea to space. And we have  
3 to accept the fact that the environment is changing so  
4 drastically in the South China Sea that it's going to  
5 require new approaches in many cases and not just iterative  
6 ones.

7 Senator Hawley: Just to be clear, the level of  
8 investment that we have seen in these force capabilities and  
9 technologies over the past five years has not been adequate  
10 to the challenges that we face; is that fair to say?

11 Admiral Davidson: I think that's correct.

12 Senator Hawley: Let me ask you in the time I have  
13 remaining, and I want to come back to the subject, the  
14 subject we were just talking about, in a closed session, but  
15 let me ask about the Philippines, if I could. And given,  
16 again, our unique strategic challenges in your AOR and the  
17 significance of the Philippines to us in order to meet those  
18 strategic challenges, let me ask you just about your sense  
19 of our relationship there.

20 I know that last fall, I think it was, we announced a  
21 new agreement to hold an increased number of exercises this  
22 year in 2019 instead of 2018, but President Duterte has also  
23 announced plans for joint oil and gas exploration with China  
24 and has made other entrees to China. Can you give us an  
25 assessment of the state of the bilateral relationship and

1 what direction you think it's heading for this critical ally  
2 in this region?

3 Admiral Davidson: Sir, I think the relationship is  
4 trending in a positive direction. I can tell you in the  
5 military space, since 2017 when we were able to manifest  
6 some of our indirect assistance to their fight in Marawi, it  
7 has restored the military relationship in a way we haven't  
8 seen in a couple of decades. It has led, in fact, to things  
9 like the EDCA Agreement as well as the advancement in the  
10 exercises here in 2018 and 2019.

11 There is no doubt that at the political level, some of  
12 the relationship has been politically fractious. But I take  
13 as a positive sign the vagueness of the agreements that  
14 President Duterte signed with President Xi last fall. And I  
15 think we should take a little bit of comfort in that, that  
16 we can continue to advance this relationship moving forward.

17 Senator Hawley: Let me just ask you one other question  
18 about that in my time remaining. The 1951 Mutual Defense  
19 Treaty is a flashpoint, as it has been for some time, but  
20 political leadership in the Philippines has been talking  
21 about it a lot more it seems recently, including saying that  
22 they may need to review it and consider leaving it if the  
23 United States does not make various security commitments  
24 related to the South China Sea.

25 Can I just ask you what a review by the Philippines and

1 potential departure of the MDT might mean for us and our  
2 relationship with them and our strategic posture in your  
3 AOR?

4 Admiral Davidson: Thank you, Senator. That's been  
5 reported pretty widely. I think what's been absent from  
6 that discussion is some of the context in which the  
7 Philippine defense minister responded to some questions.  
8 But to me, the Mutual Defense Treaty is quite clear. It  
9 says that an armed attack on either of us, on the  
10 metropolitan territory or on the island territories under  
11 Philippine jurisdiction in the Pacific, where it's armed  
12 forces, our public vessels, or our aircraft, activates  
13 Article 5 of that treaty.

14 I think the Philippines should be quite confident in  
15 our support and our alliance. And I'll tell you, I'm quite  
16 confident in Philippine support, which -- and frankly, in  
17 our defense, that support begins in the Philippines.

18 Senator Hawley: Thank you very much.

19 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

20 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Hawley.

21 Senator Blumenthal.

22 Senator Blumenthal: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

23 Thank you both for your service and also to the men and  
24 women under your command, and thank you for your clear-eyed  
25 testimony today, if I may use the word that you did, General

1 Abrams, in describing what I view to be a stark and stunning  
2 lack of any action, any progress, any steps to slow or  
3 suspend the North Korean nuclear program. Would you agree  
4 with me that they are proceeding full pace with their  
5 nuclear program?

6 General Abrams: Sir, I'd say two things. First, as I  
7 said earlier, it's been 440 days since the last strategic  
8 provocation from the DPRK, so since a missile test or a  
9 nuclear weapons explosion or test. And the reduction in  
10 tensions and nascent confidence-building measures along the  
11 demilitarized zone and across that part of the Korean  
12 Peninsula, those reductions are palpable, they're real, and  
13 they are having a significant positive effect to begin to  
14 prevent additional low-level -- additional confidence-  
15 building measures.

16 Senator Blumenthal: But do you --

17 General Abrams: Having said all that, we have not  
18 observed activity that's consistent with a full-court press  
19 on denuclearization.

20 Senator Blumenthal: Or any slowing of the nuclear  
21 program. You said no verifiable progress, I believe.

22 General Abrams: I'd say the activity we see is  
23 inconsistent with that. And Senator, we should probably --  
24 we can talk about that in detail during the closed session.

25 Senator Blumenthal: Well, let me ask you this.



1 Because Admiral Davidson, you state, "North Korea is  
2 continuing efforts to mitigate the effects of international  
3 sanctions and the U.S.-led pressure campaign."

4 I assume you would agree that sanctions are important  
5 in bringing pressure to bear on North Korea?

6 Admiral Davidson: Absolutely.

7 Senator Blumenthal: Has there been a reduction in the  
8 effect of those sanctions so far as you know?

9 Admiral Davidson: In many aspects, yes.

10 Senator Blumenthal: And why is that?

11 Admiral Davidson: I'm sorry, can you restate your  
12 question?

13 Senator Blumenthal: Yeah, I apologize for  
14 interrupting.

15 Admiral Davidson: I want to make sure I understand the  
16 question you're asking me. Have sanctions taken some  
17 effect? Yes.

18 Senator Blumenthal: That's a good question.

19 Admiral Davidson: I'm sorry, sir. It has. We do  
20 observe raised fuel prices in Korea. That's been evident  
21 really since before sanctions. The prices have gone up.  
22 There has been some restrictions on luxury goods and some  
23 other things in there. The impact and its ability to force  
24 them to denuclearize, it's tough to say whether that's  
25 making any progress.

1           Senator Blumenthal:   And has there been a reduction in  
2 the effects of sanctions because of lack of consistent  
3 application of them, either by ourselves or by our allies or  
4 others?

5           Admiral Davidson:   No, we're on a sustained level of  
6 effort just on the ship-to-ship transfers realm.  I stepped  
7 it up in the September time frame and expanded the concept  
8 of operations.  We've had a number of allies come alongside  
9 to help -- Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Korea.  
10 Japan and Korea are sitting side-by-side with us in Yokosuka  
11 right now, working on this effort.  And I'm quite grateful  
12 for all the contributions they've made.  And I should add  
13 that UK has been there as well.

14          Senator Blumenthal:   Thank you.  In terms of our  
15 capabilities in that part of the world, I note that your  
16 testimony focuses on our undersea warfare advantages.  Do  
17 you see those advantages are eroding, and how important is  
18 it that we continue to build submarines?

19          Admiral Davidson:   I think continuing to build  
20 submarines is critically important, sir.  It is our most  
21 significant advantage in all domains right now, is in the  
22 subsurface.  But some of those diversions I'd rather discuss  
23 in closed hearing, if you don't mind.

24          Senator Blumenthal:   Sure.  And again, maybe more  
25 appropriately for a closed setting, although I think,

1 really, the American people need to know answers to a lot of  
2 these questions. Our adversaries know the answers. We know  
3 the answers after we're briefed in closed sessions. The  
4 only ones who don't know the answers to many of these  
5 questions are the American people.

6 So I regret that so much has been kept from public  
7 view. Not to be critical at all of you or the Pentagon in  
8 that respect. I recognize that you operate under rules that  
9 may constrain you from talking publicly. But I hope we'll  
10 have an opportunity to explore in greater detail these  
11 questions and also the vulnerability of our aircraft  
12 carriers.

13 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

14 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Blumenthal.

15 Senator Sullivan.

16 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and General  
17 -- gentlemen. General, Admiral, good to see you. Thanks  
18 for your great service and thanks for being here today.

19 Admiral Davidson, I wanted to begin just kind of making  
20 sure we have very, very clear understanding of what's going  
21 on in the South China Sea. I think it's pretty obvious, but  
22 just having you stating this to the American people, to our  
23 allies in the Asia-Pacific.

24 Standing next to President Obama in the Rose Garden in  
25 2015, President Xi Jinping said, "China does not intend to

1 pursue militarization of the South China Sea." That was a  
2 quote from the president of China next to the president of  
3 the United States.

4 Just a few months ago in January, China's major state-  
5 run newspaper, the People's Daily, stated, "As China's  
6 military size and quality improve, so does its control of  
7 the South China Sea. China is able to send more naval  
8 vessels as a response and can take steps like militarizing  
9 the islands." So this is the mouthpiece of the Communist  
10 Party.

11 So President Xi, he obviously he didn't keep his word  
12 when he made that statement in the Rose Garden next to  
13 President Obama; is that correct?

14 Admiral Davidson: That's correct, sir. In the most  
15 liberal interpretation of militarizing those islands, China  
16 in April of 2018 populated those islands with antiship  
17 cruise missiles, with surface-to-air missiles, and  
18 electronic jammers.

19 Senator Sullivan: Ten-thousand-foot runways?

20 Admiral Davidson: Those were already there. But now  
21 they have the weapons, they've got sufficient military  
22 cadre, and they've stepped up their operations both in the  
23 maritime and with bomber sorties and fighter sorties in a  
24 way that makes it clear that those islands are to support  
25 them militarily.

1           Senator Sullivan: So, just to be clear, 2015, two  
2 presidents, Rose Garden, and President Xi obviously didn't  
3 keep his word on that issue.

4           Admiral Davidson: I agree with that. Yes, sir.

5           Senator Sullivan: Well, I appreciate what you're doing  
6 in terms of regular FONOPs with our allies. The more we can  
7 do, the more regular -- the previous administration seemed  
8 to be a little reluctant to do these. I think you guys are  
9 doing a much better job, so I commend you for continuing to  
10 do that. And the more we can bring our allies -- a lot of  
11 talk about allies here -- with regard to those FONOPs or  
12 some of the operations you described, the better.

13           General Abrams, I wanted to turn to the issue that  
14 Senator Reed raised and just get your professional military  
15 views on what would be the tactical effects of removing a  
16 large portion, or all, of U.S. forces from the Korean  
17 Peninsula?

18           General Abrams: Senator, just for clarity, under the  
19 current set by the DPRK?

20           Senator Sullivan: I'm talking about our forces --

21           General Abrams: No, I understand. But nothing's  
22 changed on the North side of the MDL?

23           Senator Sullivan: Correct. Correct.

24           General Abrams: It would impose significant tactical  
25 and operational risk if there's no change on the other side

1 of the MDL.

2 Senator Sullivan: And strategically, hasn't Russia and  
3 China sought the removal of U.S. forces from the Korean  
4 Peninsula for decades as a core strategic goal of theirs?

5 General Abrams: Yes.

6 Senator Sullivan: So China and Russia and North Korea  
7 would be pleased by such a withdrawal?

8 General Abrams: Again --

9 Senator Sullivan: If, say, it happened tomorrow?

10 General Abrams: There's actually some debate. You  
11 know --

12 Senator Sullivan: Really?

13 General Abrams: Yeah.

14 Senator Sullivan: There's debate?

15 General Abrams: There is some debate --

16 Senator Sullivan: China wouldn't be happy that --

17 General Abrams: No, sir; it's on the DPRK. There's  
18 some mixed views on whether the DPRK really wants us down.

19 Senator Sullivan: How about China and Russia?

20 General Abrams: Absolutely.

21 Senator Sullivan: You might recall we passed a law,  
22 the NDAA last year, that actually states that the  
23 significant removal of United States military forces from  
24 the Korean Peninsula will not be supported in terms of  
25 authorized appropriated funds by the Congress below 22,000

1 troops unless the secretary of defense first certifies to  
2 this committee that it would be in the national interest of  
3 the United States to do so.

4 So I just want you to remind everybody who's working on  
5 that that that's actually in the law right now.

6 Senator Sullivan: Finally, Admiral, I just wanted to  
7 touch base, and I think we can do it in a better sense in a  
8 classified setting this afternoon, but there is, I think, a  
9 lot of concern, and a lot of concern on this committee, on  
10 the force posture of how our forces are deployed throughout  
11 the region to be ready for what is really kind of the big  
12 strategic challenge facing the United States, which is the  
13 rise of China over the next 50 to 100 years.

14 I'll be interested in going into a lot more detail on  
15 the force posture issues, but I think there's a lot of good  
16 work that's been going on, but some of it seems to get stuck  
17 in the Pentagon. And I would welcome your views on that.  
18 But I think we need to be a little bit more creative on how  
19 we're looking at force posture.

20 And I would want to remind you, and I know you know it,  
21 but Alaska is not necessarily in your AOR, but the forces  
22 there, which are significant, your reserve forces, for  
23 example, General, on the Korean Peninsula, our OPCON to  
24 PACOM, and a lot of those forces are actually closer to the  
25 Korean Peninsula and other places than forces, say, in

1 Australia. So thank you very much.

2 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Sullivan.

3 Senator King.

4 Senator King: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

5 Admiral Davidson, are you familiar with the ProPublica  
6 publication this past week on the analysis of the  
7 accountability for the collisions with the McCain and the  
8 Fitzgerald?

9 Admiral Davidson: I saw the first article, Senator.

10 Senator King: There's, I believe, a second one. I  
11 commend it to you. It's one of the most sobering analyses  
12 of a disaster that I've ever seen. And it takes  
13 responsibility all the way up through the very top of the  
14 Navy to this Congress, I should say. Sequestration in 2013  
15 was one of the contributors.

16 But I would like, if you could -- and perhaps I'll  
17 prepare a question for the record -- I would like to see  
18 specific data on where we stand with issues like  
19 certification of sailors and personnel on the ships,  
20 maintenance status of the ships, training rules, staffing  
21 levels. And I want real numbers. I don't want general  
22 "we're working on staffing" or "we're working on more  
23 training." Because these were avoidable tragedies. And I  
24 would like to drill down on the specific data points that  
25 indicate the level of readiness for these, for our fleet



1 generally, the Seventh Fleet and other naval assets in the  
2 region.

3       So is that something that you can do? And you're the  
4 handiest, highest naval officer I have here today. I don't  
5 mean to say that you have to be the specific one to respond,  
6 but I would like to see specific responses from the Navy,  
7 not promises and not good feelings. This was a -- this  
8 story is terrible.

9       Admiral Davidson: Sir, if I could, a couple of points.  
10 One, there's a quarterly review that was provided over here  
11 to the professional staff members by the vice chief, Admiral  
12 Moran. All those numbers are available.

13       The idea that there's not transparency in this  
14 readiness I think is appalling, or that it was some kind of  
15 secret or that only a few knew about it in the Navy is  
16 incorrect. I personally testified before the House Seapower  
17 and Personnel Subcommittees with Chairman Thornberry there  
18 in '16 on the kind of things that it took, you know, to keep  
19 the fleet going.

20       And we can't forget one other thing. These two  
21 collisions were a tragedy. There's no doubt about it. And  
22 all the senior leadership of the Navy feels an immense  
23 amount of accountability for that, and I'll come back to it.  
24 But the fact of the matter is 280-odd other ships weren't  
25 having collisions. More than a dozen of those ships were

1 performing exceptionally well --

2 Senator King: I'm sorry, that doesn't --

3 Admiral Davidson: Excuse me, Senator.

4 Senator King: Airplanes are landing all over America,  
5 and just because they aren't all crashing doesn't mean they  
6 don't need a high level of maintenance. To tell me that  
7 isn't very convincing. These were the -- I think it was 40  
8 years since we've had collisions of this nature. Are you  
9 saying that there were no failures that led to these  
10 collisions because there were 280 ships that didn't have  
11 collisions? Isn't that the standard, no collisions?

12 Admiral Davidson: Yes, sir. No collisions is the  
13 standard. It's not fair to say it's been -- certainly it's  
14 been 40 years since we had lost life to that extent, but  
15 there had been collisions in the recent past.

16 The other thing that we have to remark upon is the  
17 combat performance. We've had ships in the Red Sea shooting  
18 down antiship cruise missiles, we've had extraordinary  
19 Tomahawk performance in this time frame, we had aviation  
20 squadrons shoot down a MiG aircraft from Syria. You know,  
21 these units have been tested in combat and doing quite well.

22 Senator King: And I'm not suggesting otherwise. What  
23 I'm suggesting is -- and I urge you to read that study --  
24 I'm suggesting that we had a preventable problem; there were  
25 multiple warnings, it wasn't acted upon, and I want to be

1 reassured that it is being acted upon, and I'll be glad to  
2 review those reports.

3       Admiral Davidson: But sir, this is why I'm saying the  
4 Navy feels a huge amount of accountability for this. They  
5 tasked me to review those two collisions, I produced a 170-  
6 page report with 58 recommendations, and the Navy has been  
7 moving out on those recommendations to provide the kind of  
8 unit personnel training, to provide advice and resources to  
9 the type commanders, the fleet commanders, the Naval Systems  
10 Command, all with recommendations to improve this situation  
11 in a way that eliminates the variance that I'm talking  
12 about.

13       Senator King: And I'm delighted to know that, and I've  
14 heard that before. I just want to see the data that backs  
15 up the fact that these recommendations are in fact being  
16 executed.

17       Admiral Davidson: Okay. All right. I'll be sure to  
18 do it. And I mentioned earlier in testimony, there are some  
19 recommendations in the Comprehensive Review that I made that  
20 I'm watching closely for the '20 budget to make sure that  
21 they're accommodated as well.

22       Senator King: And I don't mean to imply -- I said in  
23 my opening that the responsibility goes all the way up to  
24 this Congress. Continuing resolutions, which you talked  
25 about, are pointed out to be part of the problem, and the

1 sequester was part of the problem. So there's  
2 responsibility to go around. But I just, as I say, want to  
3 see where we are in terms of the data on executing on those  
4 recommendations. Thank you, Admiral. I appreciate it.

5 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator King.

7 Senator Blackburn.

8 Senator Blackburn: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank  
9 you to each of you for being here today, for your service to  
10 our country, for the testimony that you've prepared and  
11 presented to us, and for taking the time to take our  
12 questions here and again as we go into a closed session this  
13 afternoon.

14 I thought it was so interesting this morning reading  
15 Wall Street Journal; there is a book review in the opinion  
16 section and it's on the future of Asia: "The Future is  
17 Asian." And it made me think a little bit about something  
18 we talked some about in this committee. And it is how the  
19 commercial complex and the military complex in China have a  
20 tendency to be one and the same. And you see this reflected  
21 in their Belt and Road Initiative, the Thousand Talents  
22 Program, things of that. And they even talk a little bit  
23 about building that dual-use sectors. And this is something  
24 that is going to have an impact on their power in the coming  
25 years.

1           And there will be some of this that you can answer now  
2 and some we'll need to take up in a closed session, but one  
3 of the things, Admiral Davidson, that I think as you look at  
4 this from where you sit and you hear the term "expanding the  
5 competitive space" for China, how do you interpret that to  
6 your mission? I know Senator Hawley asked what your needs  
7 are going to be, what changes you need to see in the force.

8           And then for you, and also, General Abrams, for you,  
9 when you look at the cyber capabilities that they are using  
10 to push themselves to information dominance, which would be  
11 a goal for them, how do you see that slowing our warfare  
12 activities and how would they use that as a force-multiplier  
13 for their conventional capabilities and use it to target the  
14 links and nodes in our mobility system?

15          So, with that, I will give you the time, and thank you  
16 for your --

17          Admiral Davidson: Quickly, ma'am, it is going to take  
18 a whole-of-government approach on our behalf as well. We  
19 talked a little bit earlier today about the kind of tools  
20 like the BUILD Act provides in this whole-of-government  
21 approach. I'm quite encouraged by all the concepts that are  
22 coming forth from those services. It's our obligation to  
23 knit that together in a war-fighting concept out there in  
24 the Indo-Pacific.

25          It's going to require some investments and some

1 capabilities that are, I would say, nascent in our country  
2 right now, and it's also going to require us to invest in a  
3 way across the region, the posture of how we are situated,  
4 and then some of the capabilities from the training  
5 apparatus and how that might support all this new capability  
6 that's coming online, as well as the way in which we share  
7 and collaborate with information with our allies and  
8 partners in the region to make this whole. But some of the  
9 specifics of all of this is better discussed in closed  
10 hearing.

11 Senator Blackburn: Correct.

12 Admiral Davidson: Thank you.

13 General Abrams: Senator, I'd just like to talk a  
14 little bit specifics about cyber. As you mentioned, it's  
15 one of the key components for -- in our interest of  
16 achieving information dominance.

17 So first and foremost, I'll tell you that the creation  
18 of U.S. Cyber Command has given us now the right level of  
19 command integration. He is a supporting commander to all of  
20 the combatant commands, and General Nakasone's done a  
21 fantastic job and I'm personally appreciative of all the  
22 efforts that he's done to support our efforts to integrate  
23 cyber as part of our holistic campaign on the peninsula.

24 It is a critical capability. We're still working on  
25 getting the appropriate authorities delegated to the right

1 level should we need them in a period of hostilities, and we  
2 can probably talk about that in greater detail during the  
3 closed session.

4 Senator Blackburn: Thank you. I yield back.

5 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Blackburn.

6 Senator Hirono.

7 Senator Hirono: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you  
8 to both of you. General Abrams, good to see you again.

9 Just as a mention, Senator Wicker asked you, Admiral,  
10 about the 355-ship Navy, and as you undergo a review of the  
11 appropriate number of ships for our Navy, I hope that that  
12 will be a continuing commitment for that number of ships at  
13 least, and also that we have the resources necessary to  
14 repair and maintain the ships we already have.

15 The Defense Department recently released a 2019 Missile  
16 Defense Review, which, among other items, noted the  
17 installation of a Homeland Defense Radar in Hawaii, very  
18 important to us as a way to improve the performance of our  
19 current missile defense system and increase the protection  
20 of Hawaii.

21 Admiral Davidson, are you satisfied that with the  
22 installation of the Homeland Defense Radar in Hawaii, the  
23 defense of Hawaii is optimized for the current and near-term  
24 threats?

25 Admiral Davidson: Yes, ma'am. It fills in a gap in

1 our detectability that I think is critically important not  
2 only to the defense of Hawaii, but really, the defense of  
3 all the continental United States as well, and Alaska.

4 Senator Hirono: And of course I'd ask you to continue  
5 to pay attention to the timing of when the installation will  
6 occur. I think it's set for 2023 or somewhere in there.

7 Admiral Davidson: Yes, ma'am. That's correct.

8 Senator Hirono: General Abrams, do you believe that  
9 our current missile defense system in place in and around  
10 the Korean Peninsula serves as an effective deterrent  
11 against North Korean ballistic missile threat?

12 General Abrams: Yes, I do.

13 Senator Hirono: Admiral Davidson, you noted in the  
14 testimony that your command only gets five percent of  
15 foreign military funds. What command gets the largest  
16 percentage of these funds?

17 Admiral Davidson: I would say Central Command.

18 Senator Hirono: Central Command?

19 Admiral Davidson: Yes, ma'am.

20 Senator Hirono: So, when you get only five percent of  
21 these funds, how do you prioritize with the small amount of  
22 funding, how do you prioritize where the funding goes in a  
23 region as large as your AOR?

24 Admiral Davidson: My own approach is to make sure that  
25 where we're investing is complementary to our capability and



1 also advances the capability of the countries in which we're  
2 providing this assistance.

3 Senator Hirono: So getting only five percent of these  
4 funds in an area as large as yours seems like an  
5 underinvestment to me. Does this kind of underinvestment in  
6 a partner or potential partner with these funds provide an  
7 opportunity for China to increase its influence in these  
8 nations?

9 Admiral Davidson: Yes, ma'am. Both China and Russia.

10 Senator Hirono: So who makes the decision as to the  
11 percentage of these funds that goes to all of our commands?

12 Admiral Davidson: It's an interagency decision the way  
13 all these things come together, between Defense  
14 recommendations, State disbursements at the end of the day.  
15 And I think as you examine the budgets that will be coming  
16 in the next few years, you'll see a shift in priority for  
17 Pacific Command.

18 Senator Hirono: That's good news. Thank you.

19 I'm glad that Senator Ernst asked you, Admiral  
20 Davidson, about the importance of our COFA and the fact that  
21 China is very much in these nations, Oceanic nations, to  
22 widen their influence and certainly their economic  
23 activities in this area. So what more can we do as a whole-  
24 of-government approach to counter China's influence in  
25 Oceania?

1           Admiral Davidson: We're continuing to work along those  
2 ends already, ma'am. I can tell you we're partnered with  
3 Australia, New Zealand, certainly on what I would call their  
4 very nearest-abroad. And I think the United States feels an  
5 immense amount of responsibility for the COFA states  
6 themselves. And you know, Japan has done a lot across  
7 Oceania. And in just the last three months, France has made  
8 it clear that their interests -- New Caledonia to Polynesia,  
9 the two bookends there, they want to be part of this  
10 conversation to make sure that our efforts are all working  
11 collaboratively and cooperatively.

12           We've also stepped up our engagements, not just from  
13 Indo-Pacific Command, my own visits to the region, but we've  
14 helped to facilitate visits by the Department of Interior  
15 and attended some forums like the Pacific Island Forum on  
16 providing some assistance to make sure that the security in  
17 Palau for the Oceans Conference in 2020 is going to be sound  
18 as well. We have to step those things up additionally.

19           Senator Hirono: I agree, because these are very small  
20 nation states. And as you mentioned that the citizens of  
21 these compact nations can travel to our country to any state  
22 without a visa requirement, and they mainly come to Hawaii  
23 and they go to Guam. So whatever we can do to provide the  
24 kind of support for these citizens I think will be very much  
25 appreciated because I know they feel that we have not done

1 quite what we should be doing with regard to their needs.

2 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

3 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Hirono.

4 Senator Tillis.

5 Senator Tillis: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6 Gentlemen, thank you for being here. General Abrams,  
7 it's great to see you again. I appreciated all your  
8 hospitality and time that we spent together back when you  
9 were down at Fort Bragg.

10 Admiral Davidson, I'll start with you because the  
11 subject of the 355-ship Navy has come up. And to be honest  
12 with you, I'm not obsessed with a set number. In fact, I  
13 think it could be dangerous for us to say you've just got to  
14 check off until you get to 355 because I'm more concerned  
15 with capabilities. And it would seem to me that over time,  
16 you're going to determine that we need more or less,  
17 depending upon how we match up against the increasing  
18 capabilities.

19 So could you talk a little bit about how you could get  
20 to a point where you start describing the aggregate capacity  
21 of a 355-ship Navy and that that may ultimately manifest  
22 itself in a very different footprint over the period of time  
23 that you could actually get to 355?

24 Admiral Davidson: As I mentioned earlier, Senator, the  
25 chief of naval operations and the Navy, they've undertaken

1 another force structure assessment, I think to get after  
2 precisely what you're talking about, make sure that they  
3 understand not only the capability mix of platforms  
4 themselves, but what the opportunity is for autonomous and  
5 unmanned vehicles as they come into this as well, and then  
6 how that might adjust those numbers going forward.

7       Senator Tillis: Well I would think so, because I think  
8 if you take a look at the inherent cost and survivability  
9 with manned vessels versus unmanned vessels, the multiplier  
10 that you could get through relying on different platforms is  
11 something we should all look at. I get that there are  
12 supply chain issues and there are shipyards across the  
13 country that can see and touch and feel a target number for  
14 the number of ships that are going to be built in a given  
15 place, but I don't care about that. What I care about is  
16 projecting the maximum capabilities for the minimum cost  
17 based on what the experts believe is the best way to match  
18 up against the adversary.

19       And one other question for you. It has to do with the  
20 58 recommendations and the exchange that you had with  
21 Senator King. I'd be very curious when you respond to that,  
22 in terms of progress, the ones that require statutory  
23 action. I'd also be very curious to see, of the 58  
24 recommendations, maybe why they were necessary based on a  
25 lack of funding or other factors that are clearly the

1 responsibility of Congress at the end of the day, I believe  
2 rooted, and much of the problems are really congressional  
3 inaction or inconsistency with funding, being able to do  
4 something I know is very important to General Abrams,  
5 readiness, and I don't know how many times you chanted the  
6 mantra of readiness when you were down at Forces Com. But  
7 most of that's rooted in inaction or inconsistency on our  
8 part. So we need to put a mirror down there when we're  
9 looking at those recommendations and recognizing the folks  
10 in suits caused a lot of those problems.

11       General Abrams, you mentioned 440 days with respect to  
12 Korea in terms of any -- we were at a point to where it  
13 seemed like every week we were watching a missile get  
14 launched or some sort of test being executed. And on the  
15 one hand, we'll say that they're moving at the current pace  
16 and speed, but isn't it fair to say that if they're no  
17 longer launching missiles, some of which failed and they  
18 learn a lot from failed tests, they can accelerate their  
19 program; isn't it fair to say that just that lack of  
20 activity has had some impact on their rate of growth?

21       And I know we'll go in the closed session for  
22 specifics, but it just seems logical from the outside  
23 observer, not something we would discuss in the closed  
24 hearing, that that lack of outward activity, that data  
25 collection that comes from missile launches and tests, has

1 to have some dampening effect on their rate of growth unless  
2 they've figured out how to do something in a test tube  
3 versus these "when we test, it has to be perfect, we don't  
4 like to test and learn from failure, we want all of our  
5 tests to succeed."

6 And there's an inherent cost in that. But it would  
7 seem to me that some of the benefit that North Korea was  
8 getting from that pace that they had up until about 440 days  
9 ago has diminished now that they're changing their approach.  
10 Would you agree with that?

11 General Abrams: Senator, I'm by far -- I'm not the  
12 expert on missile flight tests nor on nuclear weapons  
13 testing, but I have spoken to a number of them. It gets to  
14 a point in programs, and we can talk more about it this  
15 afternoon, that when you get to a certain point in that  
16 volume of testing that they did, and it's that point where  
17 the mature programs, if they are mature, then they can  
18 transition to simulation and modeling.

19 Senator Tillis: So they've captured enough to actually  
20 go to simulation.

21 General Abrams: There's potential of that, Senator,  
22 and we can talk more about it this afternoon.

23 Senator Tillis: Fair enough.

24 Last thing. If you could tell me the progress you're  
25 making, we're talking about more extended deployments in

1 Korea to create a work-life balance versus the one-year  
2 iterations that we typically have. Have you made any  
3 progress on that?

4 General Abrams: Senator, we have, and we're working  
5 very closely with the services to find the right balance so  
6 that we can do just that. We're looking at different force  
7 mixes as a possibility in the future to do exactly what  
8 you're talking about.

9 Senator Tillis: Thank you.

10 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

11 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator.

12 Senator Duckworth.

13 Senator Duckworth: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

14 Gentlemen, we've already discussed throughout this  
15 hearing today the tyranny of distance in the Pacific and  
16 some of the challenges that we face. I myself grew up in  
17 Southeast Asia, living in Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, so  
18 I am personally familiar with the tyranny of distances.

19 And you talked a little bit to, Admiral, the need for  
20 increasing our sealift capabilities. Could you discuss a  
21 little bit other requirements, such as airlift, heavy lift  
22 aircraft, that sort of thing, that we might need to plus up  
23 in order for you to be able to more efficiently and able to  
24 react more quickly to any type of changes in the situation  
25 in the Pacific?

1           Admiral Davidson: Thank you, ma'am. I would just add,  
2 you know, one of the key areas we need to do is better cyber  
3 defenses of our logistics networks, which touch commercial  
4 industry so profoundly, both in terms that the people that  
5 we help contract for their support both in the United  
6 States, but overseas as well. Some of the inroads with ZTE  
7 and Huawei in some of these other countries are going to  
8 challenge our ability to use our existing logistics network  
9 without adapting it in a cyber sense moving forward.

10           Senator Duckworth: So are you speaking to upgrading  
11 and improving the capabilities of organizations like  
12 TRANSCOM in addition to the cyber capabilities itself?

13           Admiral Davidson: Absolutely. TRANSCOM bears some  
14 responsibility for those networks that support their  
15 logistics operations; that's absolutely one of them. And as  
16 you mentioned earlier, airlift is going to be critically  
17 important out there in the Indo-Pacific region.

18           Senator Duckworth: Thank you.

19           General Abrams, can you expand a little bit on the work  
20 we've done and the work that still needs to be done to  
21 ensure we have the necessary logistical tail to support U.S.  
22 Forces Korea in any contingency?

23           General Abrams: Senator, there's been extensive  
24 investment by the services over the last couple years under  
25 the leadership of Chairman Dunford and then-Secretary Mattis



1 to properly not only posture the force to improve our  
2 posture in terms of munitions and other key supplies to  
3 appropriate levels based on where we were in 2017, but also  
4 made the right investments now in the supply chains to be  
5 able to sustain that if we ever had to get to a point of  
6 hostilities.

7 Senator Duckworth: Thank you.

8 Can both of you give me your brief assessments of how  
9 the recently-passed Asia Reassurance Initiative Act will  
10 affect our relationship in the region and what more needs to  
11 be done to make sure it's effectively implemented?

12 Admiral Davidson: I'm sorry, Senator, could you repeat  
13 that? I apologize.

14 Senator Duckworth: Sure, no worries. I'm the last  
15 questioner, so totally understandable.

16 Can you speak a little bit about the recently-passed  
17 Asia Reassurance Initiative Act and how that will affect our  
18 relationships within the region? You know, the importance  
19 of our alliances in INDOPACOM, particularly Republic of  
20 Korea and Japan. I don't think it's something we stress  
21 enough.

22 I think that the successes that we're having in the  
23 region diplomatically and politically really also stems from  
24 the fact that we have a solid alliance militarily between  
25 U.S., Korea, and Japan, and that must remain strong in order

1 for us to move forward on the other fronts.

2 Admiral Davidson: I couldn't agree more, ma'am. We've  
3 talked frequently about the whole-of-government approach in  
4 the region, it can't just be in the military space, that  
5 we're competing out there. And the ARIA, the ARIA Act is  
6 going to be one of the key vehicles in which to advance  
7 these relationships going forward.

8 Senator Duckworth: Thank you. General?

9 General Abrams: Senator, the only thing I'd add to  
10 that, specifically in Northeast Asia: no stronger allies  
11 than the Republic of Korea and Japan. And so I absolutely  
12 agree with what Admiral Davidson said in terms of it's a  
13 whole-of-government approach that can only serve to  
14 strengthen those two great democracies as well as our own.

15 Senator Duckworth: Thank you.

16 And finally, my last question. Admiral, could you  
17 speak a little bit to the role of the State Partnership  
18 Programs in terms of the forces and the work that you do in  
19 countries like the Philippines and the like and the  
20 availability of those troops to augment your active duty  
21 forces?

22 Admiral Davidson: The State Partnership Programs not  
23 only in the Indo-Pacific Command region, but speaking for  
24 the other combatant commanders --

25 Chairman Inhofe: Excuse me, Admiral. Before you

1 answer, Senator Reed presiding. Go ahead.

2 Admiral Davidson: Have been quite important to us  
3 building military-to-military relationships. The frequency  
4 at which those State Partnership Programs can touch some of  
5 these other nations is quite good, and we've been able in  
6 just the last few months to expand one of those State  
7 Partnership Programs in the Oceania region. I don't want to  
8 say where and who just yet because we haven't announced the  
9 final selection of who the State partner will be. But it's  
10 an area in which I'm looking to expand some relationships in  
11 the region as well.

12 Senator Duckworth: Thank you. Thank you, gentlemen.

13 Senator Reed: [Presiding] Chairman Inhofe indicated  
14 that Senator King requested another question.

15 Senator King: Thank you.

16 General Abrams, in thinking about Korea and the  
17 history, we're currently focused on the nuclear threat of  
18 course, but we had troops there, a substantial troop  
19 commitment, for 50 years before the nuclear threat became  
20 what it is today. What I'm getting at is will we  
21 necessarily be able to remove those troops if the nuclear  
22 threat is reduced or eliminated given the conventional power  
23 that the North Koreans have, the array of artillery along  
24 the border, the threat to Seoul, and all of that? I want to  
25 try to put this discussion into some historical perspective.

1           Admiral Davidson:  Senator, no, you're absolutely  
2 right.  Our troop posture --

3           Senator King:  Could you say that again?  I like  
4 hearing that.

5           [Laughter.]

6           Senator King:  I'm just teasing.

7           Admiral Davidson:  Our troop posture, you know, it's --  
8 by the way, it's been modulated since the armistice in July  
9 of 1953, and it's been modulated based on that conventional  
10 threat that you're talking about as well as other  
11 commitments that we had.  For instance, we had a reduction  
12 in forces on the peninsula during the Vietnam area, and in  
13 fact, the Republic of Korea, really as a sign of solidarity  
14 to the United States committed two ROK divisions to South  
15 Vietnam in that conflict.

16           So it has, but our conventional capability on the  
17 peninsula is essentially, as I said earlier, the deterrent  
18 against the DPRK's conventional threat and their asymmetric  
19 threat.

20           Senator King:  Which may well be necessary even with  
21 the elimination of the nuclear threat or the reduction of  
22 the nuclear threat unless there is a concomitant reduction  
23 in the conventional threat.

24           Admiral Davidson:  Yes, Senator, and until there is a  
25 peace treaty.  Because we still remain in a state of

1 armistice, a cessation of hostilities, until such time that  
2 there is a peace treaty between all the parties.

3 Senator King: Thank you. Thank you, Admiral.

4 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

5 Senator Reed: Thank you very much, gentlemen, and  
6 thank you for your testimony.

7 On behalf of Chairman Inhofe, I will adjourn the  
8 hearing and see you later at the closed session.

9 Thank you, gentlemen.

10 [Whereupon, at 11:44 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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