

Stenographic Transcript
Before the

Subcommittee on Personnel

COMMITTEE ON
ARMED SERVICES

UNITED STATES SENATE

HEARING TO REVIEW TESTIMONY ON UNITED STATES
SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND AND UNITED STATES
CYBER COMMAND IN REVIEW OF THE DEFENSE
AUTHORIZATION REQUEST FOR FISCAL YEAR 2020 AND THE
FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM

Thursday, February 14, 2019

Washington, D.C.

ALDERSON COURT REPORTING
1111 14TH STREET NW
SUITE 1050
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005
(202) 289-2260
www.aldersonreporting.com

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

HEARING TO REVIEW TESTIMONY ON
UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND AND UNITED STATES
CYBER COMMAND IN REVIEW OF THE DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST
FOR FISCAL YEAR 2020 AND THE FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM

Thursday, February 14, 2019

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

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:30 a.m.
in Room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. James
M. Inhofe, chairman of the subcommittee, presiding.

Committee Members Present: Senators Inhofe
[presiding], Wicker, Fischer, Cotton, Rounds, Ernst, Tillis,
Sullivan, Perdue, Scott, Blackburn, Hawley, Reed, Shaheen,
Blumenthal, Kaine, King, Heinrich, Warren, Duckworth, and
Jones.

1 OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES M. INHOFE, U.S.
2 SENATOR FROM OKLAHOMA

3 Senator Inhofe: Our meeting will come to order.

4 The committee meets today to receive testimony on the
5 posture of the United States Special Ops Command and the
6 U.S. Cyber Command.

7 I'd like to welcome our witnesses: The Honorable Owen
8 West, whom I met for the first time today; General Tony
9 Thomas, who is planning to retire, somebody told me -- and I
10 think you're far too young to retire, but that's up to you,
11 and particularly, you have two sons that are West Point
12 graduates. You don't need to cut them loose that soon. And
13 then General Nakasone. I appreciate very much the fact
14 that, in the last couple of days, that we've had both open
15 and closed meetings because of the seriousness of the thing
16 we'll be addressing this morning.

17 So, the Senate Armed Service Committee's top priority
18 is to support the effective implementation of the National
19 Defense Strategy. Central to the NDS is a growing focus on
20 competition with China and Russia, our peer competitors.
21 And, of course, we also, at the same time, don't want to
22 forget about the threat that's posed to us from the
23 terrorist organizations.

24 Our Special Operations Forces have proven remarkably
25 effective in combating ISIS, al-Qaeda, and other terrorist

1 groups over the last 17 years. However, these groups remain
2 resilient and continue to pose a real threat to the United
3 States and our allies. At the same time, the military
4 advancements by China and Russia pose new and increasingly
5 complex challenges to our national security.

6 You know, when you talk to people out in the real world
7 in America, there's this assumption that we have the best of
8 everything. And it's hard to explain, sometimes, that we
9 don't. When we have our Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of
10 Staff talking about how we -- you know, we are actually
11 outranged and outgunned by -- in artillery, and we -- so,
12 anyway, that's -- they are advancing, and ahead of us in
13 some areas.

14 Another critical component of implementing the NDS is
15 developing robust capabilities to counter growing threats in
16 cyberspace. The Department of Defense is making important
17 progress, including the elevation of the Cyber Command to a
18 fully combatant command and the Cyber Mission Forces
19 achieving full operational capability. Additionally, DOD
20 released a new Cyber Strategy last year that provides a
21 roadmap over how we will operate in cyber domain. I look to
22 our witnesses to describe what investments will be needed to
23 meet these objectives.

24 Senator Reed.

25

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

3 Senator Reed: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.
4 And let me join you in welcoming our witnesses for this
5 update on the readiness and the posture of U.S. Special
6 Operations and -- Command and Cyber Command.

7 And, General Thomas, I'd also like to thank you in an
8 -- for your extraordinary service and your coming retirement
9 after 39 years in service. You've ably led SOCOM during
10 difficult times. You've done it with great energy, great
11 foresight, and great dedication to the men and women you
12 lead. And I thank you for that. Thank you. Also want to
13 thank your family, because they served alongside you, and
14 they continue to serve with you. And nice to see that your
15 sons got good educations, also. So, thank you.

16 General Nakasone, this is your first time to appear
17 before the committee since Cyber Command's been elevated to
18 a unified command. Congratulations on this. And also your
19 accomplishments, in partnership with NSA and other agencies
20 recently, in combating some of our adversaries in the cyber
21 sphere. Thank you very much, sir.

22 SOCOM is unique within the Department of Defense as the
23 only functional combatant command with service-like
24 responsibilities for the training, equipping, organizing,
25 and readiness of Special Operations Forces. For that

1 reason, it's appropriate that the Assistant Secretary of
2 Defense for Special Operations and Long-Intensity Conflict,
3 the ASD SOLIC, Owen West joins us today in his role as the
4 Service Secretary-like official responsible for oversight.
5 So, welcome, Mr. Secretary. Thank you.

6 Since passage of the ASD SOLIC reforms contained in the
7 2017 National Defense Authorization Act, DOD has made
8 important progress, including hiring additional personnel
9 and more effectively integrating the ASD SOLIC into
10 departmental processes related to budgeting, acquisition,
11 readiness, and personnel management. These efforts are
12 necessary, but not sufficient, to fulfill the intent of the
13 SOLIC reforms. Secretary West and General Thomas, I hope
14 you will provide your assessment of what more needs to be
15 done and how this committee can continue to support your
16 efforts.

17 SOCOM, as a microcosm of the broader Department and
18 Joint Force, continues to adjust the complex security
19 environment and the focus of the National Defense Strategy
20 on great-power competition. This change will have
21 implications for the Department's management of SOF forces,
22 their readiness, capabilities, and development, and the
23 operational authority that they have to undertake. As the
24 demand for SOF continues to grow, we must also keep in mind
25 that there are limits to the hardships we can ask Special

1 Operations Forces and their families to endure. The United
2 States, along with our allies and partners, face an urgent
3 and continuing threat from information warfare attacks by
4 Russia and other foreign adversaries. Russia attacked our
5 democracy in 2016, and we must view these attacks with the
6 same level of seriousness and resolve as a military attack.

7 While we appear to have had some success in countering
8 Russian interference in the 2018 midterm elections, we
9 should not take this as a sign that we can let our guard
10 down. We must do more to anticipate and counter these
11 increasingly sophisticated attacks, including by ensuring we
12 are properly organized across the U.S. Government and inside
13 the Department of Defense. General Thomas and General
14 Nakasone, your commands sit at the nexus of DOD efforts to
15 operate more effectively in the information environment, and
16 I hope you will give a full assessment of what has been
17 accomplished to integrate capabilities and authorities in
18 this arena, and what gaps remain.

19 With respect to CYBERCOM, while much progress has been
20 made in the last year, many serious challenges remain. DOD
21 has developed what appears to be a viable cyber strategy and
22 has conducted a serious cyber posture review. This posture
23 review identified gaps in capabilities across the
24 enterprise, and the principal cyber advisors cross-
25 functional team is defining objectives, specific tasks,

1 resources, and timetables to correct them. When completed,
2 these activities should greatly increase the Department's
3 cybersecurity and the effectiveness of Cyber Command.

4 The Fiscal Year 2019 NDAA explicitly established that
5 unacknowledged activities in cyberspace conducted below the
6 level of armed conflict are a legal form of so-called
7 traditional military activities. The NDAA also provided
8 authority to the President to take action against sustained
9 campaigns of specific adversaries against the United States,
10 including Russia's malign influence campaign. This
11 legislation, along with a recent presidential directive,
12 provided DOD and Cyber Command with the needed authority to
13 plan and conduct more vigorous actions in cyberspace to
14 defend the country.

15 To support such operations, Cyber Command has developed
16 an operational concept to employ so-called persistent
17 engagement, in line with the National Defense Strategy.
18 This is an important milestone, which I hope will be --
19 provide an even more effective model for engaging our
20 adversaries without undue risk of escalation. General
21 Nakasone, I look forward to hearing more about this
22 operational concept.

23 We have come a long way, but we have a long way to go
24 further. I know, with General Nakasone's leadership,
25 General Thomas's leadership, and soon-to-be-General Clark's

1 leadership, and with Secretary West, we'll continue forward.

2 Thank you very much, gentlemen.

3 Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Reed.

4 We'd now have opening statements. And we're going to
5 try to confine our remarks to 5 minutes.

6 And we'll start with you, General Thomas, and work
7 across to General Nakasone.

8 Okay. All right, I've just been corrected. We're
9 going to start with Secretary West.

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

1 STATEMENT OF HON. OWEN O. WEST, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF
2 DEFENSE, SPECIAL OPERATIONS AND LOW-INTENSITY CONFLICT

3 Mr. West: Thank you, Chairman.

4 Senator Inhofe: Everyone's pointing at you, anyway, so

5 --

6 [Laughter.]

7 Mr. West: Senator Reed, Chairman Inhofe, distinguished
8 members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to
9 testify alongside my partner, General Tony Thomas, on our
10 global posture for our Nation's Special Operations
11 enterprise. Tony's command of SOCOM has safeguarded the
12 Nation for 3 years. I look forward to continued progress,
13 working with Richard Clark, when he assumes command next
14 month.

15 We're honored today to team with General Paul Nakasone,
16 whose command defends the Nation at the leading edge of the
17 modern battlefield.

18 The breadth and capability of our Special Operations
19 Force is astonishing. In over 80 countries, this vanguard
20 force tackles our most pressing challenges in the most
21 hostile environments. In the past 2 years, 23 SOF personnel
22 have been killed in action, and many more have sustained
23 life-altering injuries. Representing just 3 percent of the
24 Joint Force, SOF have absorbed over 40 percent of U.S.
25 casualties in this time. This sacrifice serves as a

1 powerful reminder that special operators are in the risk
2 business. Their families carry the burden of individual
3 tragedy so that we might prevent a national tragedy.

4 This is a unique time to serve the SOF enterprise,
5 because it is an inflection point. First, the Section 922
6 legislation has reinvigorated the partnership between my
7 office and SOCOM. Second, the National Defense Strategy has
8 challenged all of DOD to increase focus on long-term
9 strategic competition with Russia and China.

10 The SOF enterprise is in the midst of transformation,
11 something special operators have always done very well. Any
12 transformation starts with people. In November, General
13 Thomas and I issued the first-ever joint vision for the SOF
14 enterprise, challenging professionals to innovate
15 relentlessly in pursuit of decisive competitive advantage.
16 Special Operations should be viewed as an integral point of
17 the Joint Force, designed to quickly and cost-effectively
18 solve risky problems that do not lend themselves to mass or
19 scale.

20 General Thomas has made tremendous progress in reducing
21 the strain caused by the high operational tempo and demand.
22 At the height of the wars, a large proportion of the force
23 was spending as much time overseas as in the United States.
24 This year, over 90 percent of the force will spend at least
25 twice as much time in the U.S. as they will on deployment.

1 I'm proud to report to you that our Special Operations Force
2 is neither overstretched nor breaking, but very healthy,
3 poised and eager to defend the Nation against increasingly
4 adaptive foes.

5 Despite this clear progress, General Thomas and I are
6 concerned about serious ethical failings by some members of
7 our SOF community. These incidents have our full attention.
8 They are totally unacceptable and do not reflect the true
9 nature of the SOF professional.

10 Finally, I would like to thank General Thomas for 39
11 years of service, much of it in combat. From 2001 to 2013,
12 he deployed to Afghanistan every year, except for one in
13 which he was wounded in Iraq. His relentless desire to
14 defend the Nation is an inspiration to us all. He
15 epitomizes quiet professionalism as a public official, but,
16 in leading his troops and behind Pentagon doors, he is not
17 shy. He consistently demonstrates blunt intellectual
18 integrity that has personally inspired me. Our Nation will
19 miss him. His wife, Barbara, less so now, and probably less
20 in a year.

21 Mr. Chairman, I am grateful for the opportunity to
22 testify today, and I look forward to your questions.

23 [The prepared statement of Mr. West follows:]

24

25

1 Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

2 Now General Thomas.

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

1 STATEMENT OF GENERAL RAYMOND A. THOMAS III, USA,
2 COMMANDER, UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

3 General Thomas: Chairman Inhofe, Senator Reed, and
4 distinguished members of the committee, I'm grateful for the
5 opportunity to speak to you today on the posture of United
6 States Special Operations Command.

7 I'm privileged to be here today with Assistant
8 Secretary Owen West as well as my friend and teammate,
9 General Paul Nakasone, from CYBERCOM. Since its inception,
10 we have enjoyed a tremendous relationship with the world-
11 class team at U.S. Cyber Command and have forged the type of
12 partnership, reinforced in combat, that ensures our absolute
13 collaboration and cooperation in our shared mission of
14 defending the Nation.

15 USSOCOM continues to field the world's most capable
16 Special Operations Forces. We are an integral part of the
17 Joint Force and integrated into every facet of the National
18 Defense Strategy. Our numerous successes over the past
19 years would not have been possible without the support and
20 resources provided by the Congress. And, for that, I thank
21 you.

22 For the last 18 years, our number-one priority has been
23 the effort against violent extremist organizations. As part
24 of the Joint Force, we continue to be the main effort, or
25 major supporting effort, in Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, Yemen,

1 Somalia, Libya, the Sahel, the Maghreb, Lake Chad Basin, and
2 the Philippines. Everywhere ISIS and al-Qaeda and
3 affiliated organizations are, we are relentlessly pursuing
4 them to ensure this country never, ever endures another
5 9/11. We remain focused on finishing this effort by, with,
6 and through our many coalition partners.

7 At the same time, again, as part of the Joint Force, we
8 are endeavoring to provide a more lethal and capable Special
9 Operations Force to confront peer competitors. USSOCOM is
10 already well oriented to the challenges of great-power
11 competition, particularly in the competition space short of
12 armed conflict. Our SOF network, integrated with
13 interagency and international partners, is focused on
14 producing unorthodox, yet complementary, capabilities and
15 solutions in support of U.S. policies and objectives. We
16 continue to maintain strong, enduring international
17 partnerships while leveraging authorities in core expertise
18 to convert indigenous mass into combat power to deter, deny,
19 disrupt, and ultimately defeat our adversaries.

20 To build a more lethal force, strengthen our alliances
21 and partnerships, and reform for greater performance and
22 efficiency, we are reshaping and focusing our current forces
23 and capabilities while simultaneously developing new
24 technological and tactical approaches to accomplish the
25 diverse missions that SOF will face in the future. The

1 joint SOLIC-USSOCOM SOF vision that Assistant Secretary West
2 mentioned is our guide to move us forward. The emerging
3 security challenges will require SOCOM to be an organization
4 of empowered SOF professionals, globally networked,
5 partnered, and integrated, and relentlessly seeking
6 advantage in every domain for the Joint Force and the
7 Nation.

8 In addition to our service-like responsibility to man,
9 train, and equip the world's most capable Special Operations
10 Forces, over the past few years USSOCOM has experienced
11 considerable development in our other legislative role as a
12 combatant command. We are currently assigned the role as
13 the coordinating authority for three major global mission
14 sets: counterterrorism, countering weapons of mass
15 destruction, and, recently, messaging/counter messaging.
16 These roles require us to lead planning efforts, continually
17 assess Joint Force progress towards campaign objectives, and
18 recommend improvements or modifications to our campaign
19 approach to the Secretary of Defense. In parallel, USSOCOM
20 has begun pursuing an aggressive partnership with the other
21 combatant commands with global portfolios -- CYBERCOM, here
22 today, STRATCOM, TRANSCOM, and U.S. SPACECOM -- designed to
23 leverage our respective capabilities towards providing more
24 agile solutions to the Department of Defense.

25 SOF has long -- has a long tradition of solving hard

1 problems, adapting to changing conditions, and fielding
2 innovative technology and tactics to give us the decisive
3 advantage in combat. We believe that this tradition will
4 continue to serve us well in the future. We are increasing
5 our investments in a wide spectrum of emerging technologies,
6 to include artificial intelligence and machine learning,
7 automated systems, advanced robotics, augmented reality,
8 biomedical monitoring, and advanced armor and munitions
9 development, just to name a few.

10 We are in the formative stages of establishing an
11 experimental force, which will more coherently focus and
12 integrate our future force development in the pursuit of the
13 required peer-competitor capabilities. Leveraging our
14 proven ability to rapidly develop and field cutting-edge
15 technology flowing from our focus on the tactical edge of
16 combat, this joint experimentation initiative will bring
17 together innovative efforts from across our Special
18 Operations Force tactical formations to ensure that
19 commanders' combat requirements are addressed with the most
20 advanced concepts and equipment available.

21 Finally, in 44 days, I'm scheduled to relinquish
22 command of the greatest Special Operations Force in history.
23 I know that sounds a bit haughty, but the men and women of
24 USSOCOM back that statement up every day. They represent
25 the best that America has to offer, an exceptionally

1 dedicated, effective, and resilient group of warriors and
2 problem-solvers. I'd like to publicly thank them for the
3 opportunity to be their teammate. It has been an incredible
4 privilege to serve with them over the course of 39 years of
5 service.

6 I'd like to also personally thank Command Sergeant
7 Major Pat McCauley, our SOCOM Senior Enlisted Advisor,
8 appearing with me again today, for his service as a critical
9 member of the SOCOM command team. Pat is the epitome of the
10 best that USSOF has to offer, and, in a few short months,
11 will conclude 30 years of faithful and devoted service to
12 the United States Army, United States Special Operations
13 Command, and the Nation. During his distinguished career,
14 he's inspired many by his personal courage on the
15 battlefield, his sage counsel to commanders and leaders at
16 every level of command, and his moral and physical
17 leadership. He represents everything that is great about
18 this Command -- most importantly, our people.

19 Thanks again for the opportunity to appear before you
20 today. I look forward to your questions.

21 [The prepared statement of General Thomas follows:]

22

23

24

25

1 Senator Inhofe: Thank you, General Thomas.

2 General Nakasone.

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

1 STATEMENT OF GENERAL PAUL M. NAKASONE, USA, COMMANDER,
2 UNITED STATES CYBER COMMAND; DIRECTOR, NATIONAL SECURITY
3 AGENCY; CHIEF, CENTRAL SECURITY SERVICE

4 General Nakasone: Chairman Inhofe, Ranking Member
5 Reed, and distinguished members of the committee, thank you
6 for your enduring support and the opportunity to testify
7 today about the hard-working men and women of United States
8 Cyber Command. I'm honored to lead them.

9 I'm also honored to sit alongside these great leaders,
10 Assistant Secretary of Defense West and General Tony Thomas.

11 For Tony, my congratulations to you and Barb for your
12 steadfast service to our Nation. It's been a tremendous
13 journey for you, and I've enjoyed our close partnership and
14 friendship. My personal best wishes to you, Tony, and your
15 family.

16 As the Commander of U.S. Cyber Command, I'm responsible
17 for conducting full-spectrum cyberspace operations
18 supporting three mission areas: defend the Nation against
19 cyberattacks, defend the Department of Defense Information
20 Networks, and enable our Joint Force commanders in pursuit
21 of their mission objectives.

22 In the cyber domain, we are in constant contact with
23 our adversaries, who continue to increase in sophistication,
24 magnitude, intensity, volume, and velocity, and remain a
25 threat to our national security interests and economic well-

1 being. The National Security Strategy and the National
2 Defense Strategy highlight the return of great-power
3 competition. Beyond near-peer competitors, China and
4 Russia, rogue regimes, like Iran and North Korea, continue
5 to grow their capabilities. Using aggressive methods to
6 conduct malicious cyberspace activities, adversaries have,
7 until recently, acted with little concern for consequences.

8 The Department of Defense Cyber Strategy identifies the
9 need to defend forward during day-to-day competition with
10 our adversaries. This strategy aims to maintain our
11 superiority in cyberspace through protection of our critical
12 infrastructure and networks. At U.S. Cyber Command, we
13 implement the DOD strategy by adopting an approach of
14 persistent engagement, persistent presence, and persistent
15 innovation. This past year witnessed the elevation of U.S.
16 Cyber Command to combatant command status, the opening of
17 our Integrated Cyber Center, and our shift from building the
18 force to the readiness of that force. This progress ensures
19 our ability to execute our mission requirements for the
20 Department in defense of our Nation.

21 The defense of the 2018 midterm elections posed a
22 significant strategic challenge to our Nation. Ensuring a
23 safe and secure election was our number-one priority and
24 drove me to establish a joint U.S. Cyber Command/National
25 Security Agency effort we called the Russia Small Group.

1 The Russia Small Group tested our new operational approach.
2 With the organization and direction from the President and
3 Secretary of Defense, the Russia Small Group enabled
4 partnerships and action across the government to counter a
5 strategic threat. Our response demonstrated the value of a
6 tightknit relationship between U.S. Cyber Command and the
7 National Security Agency, bringing together intelligence,
8 cyber capabilities, interagency partnerships, and the
9 willingness to act.

10 Through persistent engagement, we enabled critical
11 interagency partners to act with unparalleled coordination
12 and cooperation. Through persistent presence, U.S. Cyber
13 Command and the National Security Agency contested
14 adversarial actions, improving early warning and threat
15 identification, in support of the Department of Homeland
16 Security, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and others.

17 Beyond the interagency, we partnered and engaged with
18 allies and public and private sectors to build resiliency.
19 For the first time, we sent our cyberwarriors abroad to
20 secure networks outside the DOD Information Network. Our
21 operations allowed us to identify and counter threats as
22 they emerged to secure our own elections and prevent similar
23 threats interfering in those of our partners and allies.

24 The Russia Small Group effort demonstrated that
25 persistent engagement, persistent presence, and persistent

1 innovation enables success. Effective cyberdefense requires
2 a whole-of-nation effort. Information-sharing plays a vital
3 role in enabling everyone, including government agencies, to
4 defend their networks. Therefore, we are now sharing
5 computer malware we find during our routine operations with
6 the private sector and the broader cybersecurity community.
7 We have posted numerous malware samples for crowd-sourcing
8 analysis. We believe our actions will have a positive
9 impact on improving cybersecurity globally.

10 Our actions are impacting our adversaries. Our shift
11 in approach allows us to sustain key competitive advantages
12 while increasing our cybercapabilities. As we review
13 lessons learned from securing the midterm elections, we are
14 now focused on potential threats we could certainly face in
15 2020.

16 Looking forward, we need to continue building a warrior
17 ethos similar to our other warfighting domains.
18 Cyberwarriors are, and will continue to be, in constant
19 contact with our adversaries. There are no operational
20 pauses or sanctuaries. We must ensure sufficient capability
21 and capacity, people, technology, and infrastructure, which
22 we are decisively focused on now.

23 Through persistent presence, we are building a team of
24 partners that enable us and them to act more effectively.
25 The complex and rapid pace of change in this environment

1 requires us to leverage cyber expertise broadly across
2 public and private sectors, academia, and industry.
3 Therefore, we aspire to increase our effectiveness and
4 capabilities through persistent innovation across these
5 partnerships.

6 Cyberdefense is a team effort. Critical teammates,
7 such as the National Guard and Reserve, are integral parts
8 of our cyberforce. They provide strategic depth and provide
9 the Nation a reserve capacity of capable cyberwarriors.

10 Finally, improving readiness continues to be one of my
11 key focus areas. I continue to work with the services and
12 Department to actively measure and maintain readiness,
13 manning, training, and equipping, and certainly an ability
14 to perform the mission.

15 After a year of change and progress, we see 2019 as a
16 year of opportunity. We have much work ahead as CYBERCOM
17 matures. We assure you that our people merit the trust you
18 have placed in them and that, with your support, they will
19 accomplish the tasks that our Nation expects.

20 Thank you again for inviting me here today on behalf of
21 U.S. Cyber Command, and for your continued support. I look
22 forward to your questions.

23 [The prepared statement of General Nakasone follows:]

24

25

1 Senator Inhofe: Thank you, General Nakasone.

2 First of all, I think we've all pretty much decided
3 that this Commission, the National Defense Strategy
4 Commission, is kind of the blueprint that we are using in
5 this committee. And to start this off, let me address the
6 two levels of threats that we're talking about.

7 First, of course, the level of threat would be the peer
8 competition that we have out there; then the terrorist
9 element that's out there. It's very alive today.

10 So, starting off with, maybe, a response from both
11 Generals on the first one, How can SOCOM and CYBERCOM most
12 effectively support our efforts against China and Russia?
13 And talk a little bit about any deficiencies, in terms of
14 resources, that you would be suffering in order to carry out
15 these goals.

16 General Thomas?

17 General Thomas: Chairman, you highlight, at the
18 outset, the challenge is to maintain the focus on the
19 counter-violent-extremist effort while shifting to the focus
20 of the National Defense Strategy. I would tell you that
21 it's burdensome, in terms of resources, but something that
22 we can and will manage, going forward. I'm lucky, on two
23 accounts. One, my predecessors had already focused on
24 Russia and China as emerging threats, before the National
25 Defense Strategy, and had already committed resources to

1 that effort. So, I appreciate the investment that preceded
2 me. I also appreciate some new authorities that have
3 developed in this house which have enabled us to approach
4 this problem differently, but in a -- similarly, the way
5 that we approached the counterterrorism problem. So,
6 resources that enable some unique, unorthodox approaches to
7 peer competitors, especially in that space that we call
8 "competition short of conflict" -- a big arm wave, but a --
9 arguably, the most important phase of deterrence.

10 Senator Inhofe: Yes. Thank you.

11 General Nakasone.

12 General Nakasone: Chairman, I would offer -- in terms
13 of our ability for near-peer or peer competitors, our most
14 important thing right now is to be able to enable our
15 partners, whether or not those partners are Joint Force
16 commanders in cyberspace or those partners are other members
17 of the interagency. Our work with the Department of
18 Homeland Security and the Federal Bureau of Investigation is
19 a -- an exemplar, I think, of the enabling aspect that we
20 will do against near-peer competitors.

21 Senator Inhofe: Yeah.

22 General Nakasone: I would also offer that the FY19
23 National Defense Authorization Act was critical for us at
24 U.S. Cyber Command. It gave us capabilities and authorities
25 that were important for us as we look to further enable.

1 That included the ability for us to rapidly deploy elements
2 of our force to the Department of Homeland Security, the
3 ability for us to look at networks that are not part of the
4 Department of Defense network. And the other piece of it
5 that was critical, as Ranking Member Reed mentioned, is the
6 idea of cyber as a traditional military activity. I think
7 those are areas that are going to help us immensely with
8 near-peer competitors.

9 In terms of our shortfalls and our challenges, the
10 areas that we are very focused on is continuing to ensure
11 that the force that has been built, the force that is ready,
12 the force that will operate has the required infrastructure
13 -- the sensors, the locations, the capabilities -- to
14 address a number of different threats to our Nation.

15 Senator Inhofe: Appreciate that.

16 I'm going to read a quote from Dan Coats and ask for a
17 response, Secretary West and General Thomas. He said, "ISIS
18 still commands thousands of fighters in Iraq and Syria, and
19 it maintains eight branches, more than a dozen networks, and
20 thousands of dispersed supporters around the world, and will
21 exploit any reduction in CT pressure to rebuild key
22 capabilities, such as media production and external
23 operations." Do you agree with that? Let's start with you,
24 Mr. Secretary.

25 Mr. West: Mr. Chairman, I do.

1 Senator Inhofe: General Thomas?

2 General Thomas: Mr. Chairman, I do. But, I would add,
3 in context, we have crushed the physical caliphate, so the
4 terrain that ISIS formerly maintained it, they -- a
5 sanctuary and from where they drew their resources --
6 specifically, oil resources -- has been badly -- you know,
7 badly diminished, but they continue to be a threat. And I
8 agree with the -- the scope of the assessment, as provided
9 by the DNI.

10 Senator Inhofe: Well, and, you know, we get a variety
11 of reports, in terms of the effectiveness of the various
12 ISIS, al-Qaeda, the terrorist operations. And so, we want
13 to make sure that everyone understands, yes, that peer
14 competitors are important, but so is the other.

15 Senator Reed.

16 Senator Reed: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.
17 And, first, let me join General Thomas in thanking and
18 commending Command Sergeant Major McCauley for your service.
19 Thank you. We all recognize the noncommissioned officers in
20 every service are the backbone and the real -- I think, the
21 winning edge that we have. So, thank you.

22 Secretary West and General Thomas, if you could
23 elaborate on the challenges that still face you in
24 implementing 922, that would be very helpful to us and, if
25 anything that we can do to help make 922 the whole issue of

1 creating a service-like Secretary under the ADS SOLIC.

2 So, Secretary West, please.

3 Mr. West: Thank you, Senator Reed.

4 Well, 922 has certainly reinvigorated our relationship,
5 but it's also very timely, because our basic task is to help
6 institutionalize USSOCOM within the Joint Force and in the
7 Pentagon while keeping its unique attributes. But, it also
8 has come along the -- simultaneously with the National
9 Defense Strategy. And so, this year, General Thomas and I
10 have cosigned four separate letters, one of which was to
11 align SOCOM's fiscal strategy to achieve the NDS. This body
12 has been very supportive. I think we are very adequately
13 supported. I think the task is really left up to us to
14 slowly build this business and achieve our objectives.

15 Senator Reed: Thank you.

16 General Thomas, your comments.

17 General Thomas: Senator Reed, I noted at the outset
18 that Owen referred to me as his teammate, which I
19 appreciate, because, technically, he's my boss. In
20 legislation, as you know, affected by this last year, in --
21 with one of my hats on as -- for the man, train, and equip,
22 service-like responsibilities, he is literally in my chain
23 of command, and we have embraced that, going away. I think
24 that actually integrates us with the Department more
25 optimally. And so, conceptually, we've certainly been able

1 to drive the relationship, I think, to a much more
2 enlightened level. I hope that it continues to evolve. I
3 think ASD SOLIC provides a critical function for us, for
4 integration with the Department. And, again, it's been a
5 pleasure working with Owen as we've developed out what I
6 think your intent was.

7 Senator Reed: Thank you.

8 General Nakasone, again, thank you for your service,
9 particularly your great efforts with respect to the last
10 election and looking forward to the next one. One of the
11 areas is social media. And we've talked about it, and we've
12 talked about it also -- you've talked about it with the
13 Intelligence Committee. There were two independent reports
14 commissioned by the Senate Intelligence Committee that
15 looked at social media, not just particular platforms, but
16 the cross-movement of information on these platforms. Do
17 you think it would be helpful having studies like this for
18 your use? And should we contemplate trying to provide you
19 the authority to do that?

20 General Nakasone: So, certainly, Senator. What we
21 found with those reports is, it provided a window on the
22 adversary that we hadn't seen. As you know, our focus on
23 intelligence is outside the United States, where -- on
24 foreign intelligence, so that we were able to capture that.
25 But, having the reports that were done, in terms of what was

1 done within the United States, very, very helpful, in terms
2 of being able to understand exactly what our adversary was
3 trying to do to build dissent within our Nation.

4 Senator Reed: So, if we could somehow institutionalize
5 that -- maybe the proper format might be through the
6 Intelligence Committee, but those reports are useful to you
7 and complement your direct activities.

8 General Nakasone: Those reports certainly provided a
9 window on our adversary that was very telling.

10 Senator Reed: And one of the issues that -- too, that
11 came in the context of social media is the -- is that -- the
12 issue, "Will they voluntarily take steps that are
13 appropriate and necessary?" Now, my understanding is that
14 they do take down sites that have been identified. But, I
15 also don't think they identify to the consumer that these
16 sites were either fraudulent or malign. Is it something
17 that they should be doing, in your view?

18 General Nakasone: So, Senator, what we were able to do
19 was declassify information about our adversaries, and pass
20 that through the National Security Agency to the Federal
21 Bureau of Investigation. The FBI specifically worked with
22 those social media companies. And so, I would defer to the
23 Bureau, in terms of their ability in -- to do what you had
24 stated there.

25 Senator Reed: Fine.

1 Again, gentlemen, thank you for your service.

2 Thank you very much.

3 Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Reed.

4 Senator Fischer.

5 Senator Fischer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6 General Thomas, thank you for your service to this
7 country, and congratulations on your retirement.

8 General Nakasone, thank you for your service to the
9 country, as well.

10 Over the years, many have talked about deterring
11 adversaries in cyberspace, and the broader question of cyber
12 deterrence is often compared to nuclear deterrence. I've
13 said this before. I don't think that's good comparison at
14 all. You made a similar point in a recent article, where
15 you argued that deterrence in cyberspace results from the
16 employment of cybercapabilities, not the threat of employing
17 them, something you describe as persistent engagement. You
18 mentioned, earlier, that this committee and the White House
19 have provided CYBERCOM with additional authority in the past
20 year. Can you tell us what impact those changes have had?

21 General Nakasone: Senator, a year ago, I appeared
22 before this committee for my confirmation hearings. In that
23 year, let me just trace, I think, the major elements that
24 have helped our Command be able to be more effective.

25 First of all, our National Strategy on Cyberspace, the

1 Department's Strategy on Cyber Posture Review. And then, I
2 think, the key piece that I would offer is the FY19 National
3 Defense Authorization Act. That recognized cyber as a
4 traditional military activity, that provided us the baseline
5 of being able to operate outside of our Department networks
6 and the idea that we would enable other elements of our
7 interagency. Tremendously helpful. And then I would say
8 the last piece is the work of the President to bring a new
9 policy to bear, in terms of how we operated offensively in
10 cyberspace.

11 Senator Fischer: Have you been able to put your theory
12 of persistent engagement into action?

13 General Nakasone: Senator, we have. Our number-one
14 priority was the defense of the midterm elections. We
15 utilized all of those capabilities, those strategies, and
16 our new operational concept, persistent engagement, to
17 ensure a secure and safe election.

18 Senator Fischer: I appreciated your classified
19 briefing on that the other day. I think it was very helpful
20 for members to hear that.

21 Is it your view that imposing costs on adversaries
22 through persistent engagement -- is that going to have a
23 deterrence effect? And can you -- or do you think there is
24 any connection between a cyber deterrent and also a nuclear
25 deterrent? I saw you shake your head when I mentioned that

1 in my opening to your question.

2 General Nakasone: Senator, I would offer that my view
3 on nuclear deterrence is much different than on the idea of
4 cyber engagement and being able to prevent our adversaries
5 from accomplishing their goals. As I mentioned, in nuclear
6 deterrence, the power that a nation-state has is through the
7 threat of the use of the weapons. What we're seeing in
8 cyberspace is, our adversaries are operating below a level
9 of armed conflict every single day to steal our intellectual
10 property, to leverage our personally identifiable
11 information, to challenge our institutions. And this is
12 where I believe being able to operate either to enable other
13 elements of the interagency or operate outside of our
14 national borders against our adversaries is important.

15 Senator Fischer: I would say, from your comments, you
16 -- and you can correct me on this, but that you don't
17 believe, then, that cyber is a substitution for the
18 deterrence that we achieve through our nuclear enterprise.

19 General Nakasone: So, I believe that cyber is,
20 overall, one element that our Nation is going to use to
21 achieve deterrent effects against our adversaries, but there
22 are other elements, other powers of our Nation that we will
23 also bear on adversaries that attempt to operate below this
24 level of armed conflict.

25 Senator Fischer: Last year, I discussed the adequacy

1 of the size of the Cyber Mission Force with your
2 predecessor, and he testified that, quote, "We're probably
3 going to need some level of additional capacity over time.
4 And that's something I'll be talking to my successor about.
5 I think that it's going to be a key thing for him during his
6 time in command." So, how adequate do you believe the size
7 of the force is compared to the threat that we are seeing
8 today? And how do you measure force adequacy?

9 General Nakasone: Senator, we're looking at -- as we
10 measure our readiness against what we consider a number of
11 different adversaries, primarily both near-peer and rogue
12 states, we believe that the teams that we've created right
13 now is the building block for that. We are also, as you
14 know, building a series of defensive teams in the Army
15 Reserve and the National Guard that are going to be a
16 strategic depth for us.

17 My sense, as we continue to operate more, as our
18 adversaries continue to improve, that there will be
19 requirements that will probably be outside the 133 teams
20 that we have right now.

21 Senator Fischer: Thank you.

22 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

23 Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Fischer.

24 Senator King.

25 Senator King: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

1 General Thomas, when we had the new overall defense and
2 National Security Strategy that put more focus on near-peer
3 competitors or peer competitors, there was a implicit
4 hydraulic effect that efforts were going to go up on the
5 conventional peer competitor, and down on CT. Do you see
6 any reduction in the CT threat around the world, or should
7 it be -- I'd -- the hydraulic effect, it seems to me, is not
8 a good idea, because the -- we, maybe, feel good today, but
9 the CT threat is still there, is it not?

10 General Thomas: Senator, I think the CT threat is in
11 the throes of transformation. As I mentioned, this time
12 last year, we had just taken Raqqa, the capital of the
13 caliphate, but we still had substantial maneuver operations
14 and challenges to push through to the destruction and the
15 defeat of the physical caliphate. We're much closer now.
16 Somebody played it out to me the other day that if you
17 wanted to put a grasp on it in physical terms, it's twice
18 the size of the base on -- where I'm stationed, MacDill Air
19 Force Base, which is tiny. So, they are down to the last,
20 you know, dozens of square kilometers, in terms of physical
21 --

22 Senator King: But, the CT threat between 2001 and 2011
23 wasn't measured in territory, it was in --

24 General Thomas: Right.

25 Senator King: -- in terrorist threat. So, that's

1 still there, isn't it?

2 General Thomas: Well -- and you're correct. I would
3 offer that, in our efforts to defeat ISIS, we have also
4 greatly diminished their ability to export the threat to the
5 United States and to our Western allies. In, though, the
6 throes of this transformation right now, they still are very
7 dangerous, and they're -- and I could highlight the specific
8 groups that we consider to be external threats to the United
9 States and are truly the -- you know, the -- on it, in terms
10 of our focus. And we're staying on them.

11 Senator King: And there is a growing CT threat in
12 Afghanistan, is there not?

13 General Thomas: Sir, I wouldn't label it as growing.
14 In fact, we've made huge progress against ISIS-K, which is
15 the primary external threat in Afghanistan. More regional
16 -- I would offer, more regional instability in Afghanistan
17 of late, but not in the form of external threats.

18 Senator King: Thank you.

19 General Nakasone, you've described the progress that
20 you've made in this year. I'm on my way, from here, to a
21 hearing on the security of the electric grid in the Energy
22 and Natural Resources Committee. And it seems to me this is
23 a classic case of cross-jurisdiction. And I'd -- if you
24 could describe your relationship of CYBERCOM and NSA to FBI,
25 DHS, utilities. How do we be sure that what you know and

1 are able to do is protecting us? Because you don't have
2 jurisdiction within the United States.

3 General Nakasone: Senator, for the energy sector, the
4 lead for the securing of that critical infrastructure is the
5 Department of Homeland Security. They work very, very
6 closely with the sector-specific lead, which is the
7 Department of Energy. Where we tie in is, we tie in on the
8 U.S. Cyber Command side, providing enabling support to the
9 Department of Energy and the Department of Homeland
10 Security, if requested. Right now, what we are doing is
11 sharing information, sharing information very clearly about
12 what we know about foreign adversaries that may be
13 attempting to get --

14 Senator King: Do you share that information with the
15 utilities or --

16 General Nakasone: We share that with the Department of
17 Homeland Security and, specifically, Department of Energy.

18 Senator King: Let me ask about structure, sharing of
19 information. Is there a regular structure? Is there a --
20 an organizational chart of these relationships, where you
21 meet regularly, or is it sort of ad hoc?

22 General Nakasone: We have put into place within the
23 Department of Defense a pathfinder program to look at this
24 element. And so, we've established a regular meeting with
25 the sector security agent, which is the Department of

1 Energy, working with them and the Department of Homeland
2 Security to share that information regularly.

3 Senator King: And finally, you've talked with Senator
4 Fischer somewhat about deterrence, and you're talking about
5 a persistent engagement, which is, in effect, telling the
6 adversary we're there. And the question is, How do we
7 change their calculus? Does this -- does your theory of
8 persistent engagement -- I think you used the term
9 "engagement, presence, and pressure, or innovation." Does
10 that -- is that intended, and will it change an adversary's
11 calculus when they come to decide whether to launch a
12 cyberattack on our electric grid or a financial system or
13 elections?

14 General Nakasone: Senator, we think it will, through
15 two different means. One is through building resilience, in
16 terms of what we're able to provide to our partners and
17 their knowledge of our adversaries, but, two, also imposing
18 a cost on our adversary.

19 Senator King: That's the -- that's what I want to hear
20 about.

21 General Nakasone: Yes. So, the ability either to be
22 able to identify where they're operating from, the tools
23 that they're using, to be able to provide that cost that the
24 adversary has to think twice, in terms of, "Can they conduct
25 and exploit -- exploitation or attack against our critical

1 infrastructure?"

2 Senator King: But, you -- the calculus is, "Can they
3 do it?" But, is -- shouldn't there be a calculus, "If they
4 do it, they will be responded to in a forceful way"?

5 General Nakasone: Certainly, Senator. And I think
6 that comes not only with cyber, but also all the elements of
7 our Nation that can be brought to bear on that adversary.

8 Senator King: I think that's important. And it
9 doesn't have to be cyber-for-cyber.

10 General Nakasone: Right.

11 Senator King: It can be other elements of national
12 power.

13 Thank you very much, General.

14 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

15 Senator Inhofe: Senator Hawley.

16 Senator Hawley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

17 Assistant Secretary West, many of us on the committee
18 are working through the President's decision to withdraw
19 forces from Syria. It appears there's a fair amount of work
20 to be done there. I'd just like to know, from your
21 perspective and from an SOF perspective, how would you
22 characterize victory in Syria, winning in Syria? What does
23 that look like, and what do you need to get there?

24 Mr. West: Sir, I'd be cautious to use the word
25 "victory," but I think it's very important not to diminish

1 what has happened there. As General Thomas said, the
2 physical caliphate did, at one time, attract over 40,000
3 foreign fighters into that territory, from 100 different
4 countries. They can no longer do that. But, this will be a
5 very long war. ISIS is quite expansive, in terms of its
6 global territory, but it now becomes an insurgency.

7 Senator Hawley: General Thomas, let me just ask you
8 the same question. What do you -- what does winning look
9 like in Syria? And what -- are we -- have we won? I mean,
10 are we satisfied with where we are, in terms of SOF's
11 mission there and what you've -- what you feel that you've
12 been tasked to accomplish?

13 General Thomas: Senator, I'd -- again, I'd be hesitant
14 to use the term "winning," as opposed to the objective. I
15 think our reasonable objective is to reduce the threat in
16 that area, and to be able to maintain persistent capability
17 so that an external threat cannot emanate from that area in
18 the future.

19 Having said that, Syria is perhaps the most complex
20 battlespace that I've experienced in 40 years. My recent
21 trip out there had our forces operating in and around Syrian
22 regime forces, Russian forces, Turks and their surrogates,
23 Iranian Revolutionary Guard forces, Lebanese Hezbollah, and
24 ISIS. Again, an incredibly complex environment that I
25 think, again, the objective is to reduce the threat and be

1 able to maintain some sort of sustainable security there.

2 Senator Hawley: And just on that point about reaching
3 a point where the external threat can't emanate from that
4 region, are you satisfied, General, that we're at that
5 point, where an external threat from VEOs cannot emanate
6 from Syria? I mean, do you think we've accomplished that
7 objective?

8 General Thomas: I do not think we're there yet. We're
9 on the verge of diminishing the threat, and then in the --
10 in a -- in the process of determining what the residual
11 capability needs to remain in place in the region to ensure
12 that we're securing that -- you know, securing that
13 objective.

14 Senator Hawley: Let me ask you, General, about
15 recruiting and retention. You talk about this in your
16 prepared testimony. You talk a lot about the significant
17 strain on SOF over the doubling of the size of the force and
18 the significant deployment demands. Tell me about where you
19 think we are, in terms of recruitment, retention, what
20 additional tools or help that you need to make sure that
21 your force is ready, is rested, is healthy, and is getting
22 everything they need to be able to do the very significant
23 and demanding and dangerous work we ask them to do.

24 General Thomas: Senator, over the years, we have
25 aspired to grow the Special Operations Force that the Nation

1 needs, but have not dropped standards at all, so the -- it's
2 a little bit of a Catch 22 here. You know, part of our
3 mantra is, you can't create this in a hurry, and people are
4 our most important asset. We have had challenges, of late.
5 And I attribute it to a number of causes, as much the
6 downsizing of the Army, specifically, for recruiting Special
7 Forces, but there are some very good initiatives in place to
8 rectify that and to try and address our recruiting
9 shortcoming. So, I'm think -- I think we're trending in the
10 right direction, but it has been challenging over the last
11 year to 2 years, in terms of getting the numbers in that we
12 would like to have, but cognizant of the fact we're not
13 going to drop standards.

14 Senator Hawley: Is your -- is it your sense, General
15 -- and then I'll put the same question to you, Secretary
16 West -- but, starting with you, General, is it your sense
17 that, under the NDS and the new prioritization --
18 reprioritization of great-power conflict, that demands on
19 SOF will maintain -- will be the same, will increase? I
20 mean, what's your sense of it as you think about the -- your
21 posturing and your needs under the NDS? What do you see
22 about the demands for the forces that you command?

23 General Thomas: I think, departmentwide, we all can
24 take away that the NDS highlights there's not going to be a
25 respite, in terms of national security challenges. You

1 know, we've had an 18-year ongoing struggle, the longest
2 struggle in the history of the United States. That has not
3 come to a conclusion yet. And so, we have some work left to
4 do there. We've had the reemergence of peer competitors as
5 a priority, an existential threat and clearly the focus for
6 the Department. So, we share that across the Department. I
7 get pretty good guidance from the Department, in terms of
8 where they want me, in terms of priorities and effects as a
9 part of the Joint Force, and we manage that. Paul and I
10 share the same -- as a global combatant command that
11 provides forces to the six geographic combatant commands,
12 this is our daily challenge, but it's one we embrace.

13 Senator Hawley: Very good.

14 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

15 Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Hawley.

16 Senator Duckworth.

17 Senator Duckworth: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

18 Gentlemen, thank you so much for being here today.

19 You oversee a directorate and combatant commands that
20 operate not in just one geographic area of responsibility,
21 but also in the most austere environments around the world.
22 The men and women you lead are often the first in battle,
23 and the heroism and dedication is not fully understood by
24 elected leaders and the American public. So, I'm very
25 appreciative of the opportunity to hear from each of you

1 about the state of your Commands and the challenges and
2 opportunities you face.

3 So, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank General
4 Thomas for his 38 years of service as you come to the end of
5 your time in uniform. I really wish you the best of luck on
6 your next phase of your career.

7 Since the committee began hearing testimony from
8 military leadership this year, much of the conversation has
9 been about ensuring that our forces are lethal and agile so
10 that they provide a credible deterrent, reducing the
11 probability of armed conflict with our peer adversaries.
12 Yet, Special Operations and Cyber Forces are uniquely
13 tailored and trained to achieve effects against our
14 adversaries in a variety of situations that are just short
15 of war, itself. Could each of you briefly discuss,
16 conceptually, how Special Operations and Cyber Forces can
17 exact a toll for malign activities, short of supporting
18 armed conflict? And, in your opinion, what kind of
19 restructuring with the Special Operations and cyber
20 communities will they need to do in order to dominate these
21 gray-space conflicts?

22 Mr. West: Thank you, Senator. Certainly, you're
23 correct, in that the nature of war doesn't change, but its
24 character has changed radically in the last 15 years. I'll
25 let General Nakasone take on the cyber portion.

1 In terms of the Special Operations tactics, where SOF
2 traditionally thrives, we're also seeing the enemy employ
3 these. So, in my judgment -- and I'll let General Thomas
4 talk specifics on operations. But, when we talk about
5 competition short of armed conflict, dealing with partner
6 nations, problems that need to be quickly solved and the --
7 and agilely solved in a cheap manner, you're really talking
8 about SOF. So, there's a real role for that, that General
9 Thomas will be able to describe.

10 General Thomas: Thanks, Senator. And thanks for your
11 service, as well.

12 Senator, we're actually very excited about the
13 opportunity that the NDS and the specific subject of
14 competition short of conflict offers for us and in
15 conjunction with Paul and others, in terms of winning that
16 critical phase. And winning, in that case, is not a -- we
17 don't think it's a defeat moniker that applies. It's to
18 disrupt, deny, and really, you know, ensure that our United
19 States policies and objectives are pursued and successful.
20 We think it's a combination of information operations,
21 influence operations, partner capacity, cyber operations, in
22 conjunction with Paul, the whole array of, you know, some --
23 sometimes described nonkinetic activities that are really an
24 art form that we're excited employing in the future. And we
25 think we will -- we hope to play a substantial role there.

1 Senator Duckworth: Thank you.

2 General Nakasone, on Tuesday, Admiral Davidson
3 highlighted to this committee the need to enhance the cyber
4 defenses of our logistical networks, which touched the
5 commercial industry that we help contract for support, both
6 in the U.S. and overseas. Can you provide examples of what
7 might be affected and how we might be able to harden the
8 network when it comes to organizations such as TRANSCOM?
9 You know, we have this long logistical tail that must
10 support our forces, no matter where they're operate, and I
11 feel like they are sometimes the most vulnerable, and we
12 overlook that -- those organizations. And how does TRANSCOM
13 fit into your priority for cybersecurity?

14 General Nakasone: Senator, General Lyons and I have
15 not only had discussions about this at Transportation
16 Command, but I've also been out to visit him. We see the
17 ability for us to project our strategic elements in the
18 world as being something that's uniquely suited for our
19 Nation and a tremendous capacity. What we are doing at U.S.
20 Cyber Command is ensuring that we understand the networks
21 that he has to operate on, the platforms that he is
22 utilizing, and, most importantly, the data, because it's
23 that data that we want to make sure that we can secure.

24 The challenges you point out is making sure that we
25 have enabled our partners. And these partners are

1 oftentimes private-sector partners that we work with, the
2 Department of Homeland Security, and other sectors, to
3 ensure that they have the information upon which they
4 understand the threats to them and they can build more
5 resilient networks and protect their own data.

6 Senator Duckworth: Thank you, General.

7 I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

8 Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Duckworth.

9 Senator Cotton.

10 Senator Cotton: Thank you, gentlemen, for your
11 appearance here today.

12 General Thomas, let's start with Syria. We've talked a
13 little bit about the state of the fight there and the great
14 advances our troops have made, a little bit about what will
15 happen when our troops depart Syria. One thing that's been
16 on my mind is all the bad guys that are currently being
17 detained in Syria. Some of your colleagues have testified
18 before the committee that that number would go into the
19 hundreds. We don't have to be anything -- any more specific
20 here in that setting. They've also testified that, while
21 some of those detainees are front-line, untrained cannon
22 fodder, some of them are also external operation plotters
23 and master bombmakers and other really bad guys. Is that
24 your understanding, as well?

25 General Thomas: Senator, without getting into the

1 specifics on the numbers, it's actually closer to a thousand
2 than it is hundreds already in detention, with more to,
3 potentially, come. A huge area of concern for us,
4 especially because they're being maintained by the non-
5 nation-state that's otherwise known as the Syrian Democratic
6 Forces. So, how we resolve this foreign-fighter -- mostly
7 foreign-fighter detentions from, I think -- I lost count,
8 but it's in the dozens of countries that have contributed to
9 it -- but, how we reduce this, that threat, and have those
10 people properly detained and handled over time is of
11 paramount importance right now for the problem.

12 Senator Cotton: Yeah, how are we going to do that?

13 General Thomas: A pretty aggressive action right now,
14 Senator, ongoing with State Department and with other
15 partner nations to specifically reduce that threat. I'll
16 give kudos to some of the countries, a surprising number of
17 countries who have recently stepped up, some of the smaller
18 countries that had capacity challenges, but that have,
19 nonetheless, you know, assumed the burden -- or started to
20 assume the burden. And we, with State Department,
21 primarily, are trying to assist them in reducing this
22 problem.

23 Senator Cotton: I know it's not in your area of
24 operations, but we have empty beds at Guantanamo Bay, don't
25 we?

1 General Thomas: Yes, Senator, we still do.

2 Senator Cotton: Maybe we should consider that for some
3 of those really bad guys in Syria.

4 While we're talking about Syria, let's contrast Syria
5 and Afghanistan, or specifically Afghanistan against some of
6 the other places where we have a serious terrorism threat.
7 The President said, a couple of weeks ago, that we're going
8 to have troops in Iraq for a while, in part because we need
9 to watch the counterterrorism threat there, watch the threat
10 of Iran. That's right next to Syria, in places like Yemen
11 and Somalia. We obviously have freedom of action on the
12 seas for a lot of your troopers. Contrast the CT mission
13 that we have in Afghanistan, which is -- I think, is 800 or
14 900 miles from the nearest sea, and the challenge that we
15 would face there if we significantly drew down our troop
16 presence in the conventional forces, for your forces and
17 Special Operations.

18 General Thomas: Thanks, Senator. I'd -- truthfully,
19 we look at it in a global context. So, in Afghanistan, and,
20 as Senator King pursued earlier, the external threat
21 adversaries have been greatly diminished, and we're focused
22 on them specifically. There's a larger counterinsurgency
23 effort that you know is, you know, into its 18th year, but
24 with a specific focus to support Ambassador Khalilzad's
25 efforts to drive the -- you know, drive that into

1 reconciliation. So, you know, a distinctly different, as
2 you mentioned, problem, but correlated, in terms of the
3 global threat and their connectivity.

4 Senator Cotton: It would be hard to get after those
5 terrorist organizations, though, in Afghanistan, for your
6 troops, if we didn't have some kind of physical presence in
7 Afghanistan, isn't that right?

8 General Thomas: Senator, access and placement are key,
9 and, again, something you can't establish in a hurry,
10 necessarily, if you leave it. I probably failed to answer
11 Senator King's question earlier. The way we look at the
12 current context is very similar to 2011. So, the recent
13 annual assessment we did reflects on 2011, when al-Qaeda in
14 Iraq was badly down, but not out, and we pulled out of Iraq
15 at that point. And we know that, in less than 2-years'
16 time, they were ISIS, running the deck through Nineveh,
17 running the deck through Anbar. So, how we finish that
18 threat, and -- or at least contain it, going forward, is a
19 critical concern. But --

20 Senator Cotton: And what's true of our troops is true
21 of enemy forces, as well, right? It helps them to have a
22 safe, secure physical base from which they can carefully
23 plot attacks outside of that base?

24 General Thomas: Yes, Senator, they thrive on
25 sanctuary, and they're actively seeking sanctuary right now

1 if they lose their toehold in Syria and other places.

2 Senator Cotton: Thank you, General Thomas.

3 General Nakasone, a quick question about the 5G
4 network. We've discussed this many times before. What is
5 the status of your conversations with counterparts around
6 the world to the threat that Chinese companies, like Huawei
7 and ZTE, pose to our telecommunications networks?

8 General Nakasone: Senator, for fifth-generation
9 wireless, on U.S. Cyber Command, we have certainly talked
10 with our partners and our allies with that. In terms of the
11 Director of National Security Agency, of which I am, we have
12 also worked that to the Department of State as they've made
13 engagements with our allies throughout the world.

14 Senator Cotton: Thank you.

15 My time is expired.

16 General Thomas, I don't think you'll be appearing here
17 before us again. You are smiling at that, I can tell. I
18 want to thank you and thank your wife, Barbara, for many
19 years of carrying the rucksack of responsibility for our
20 Nation. You have more than earned the opportunity and the
21 privilege to pass it on to the next man.

22 Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Cotton.

23 Senator Kaine.

24 Senator Kaine: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

25 And thanks, to all of you.

1 General Thomas, I offer my congratulations, as well.

2 I want to ask you a question -- and the others may want
3 to chime in, too -- about an important aspect of our
4 military operations, which is building partner capacity. As
5 I've traveled in Armed Service CODELs, I've often been
6 struck very positively by the response of our allies to the
7 partner capacity we work -- work we do with them all over
8 the globe. There was a CRS study -- Congressional Research
9 Service study -- in 2016 that kind of analyzed about 20
10 instances of building partner capacity. And their
11 conclusion was that the results are sort of mixed, in terms
12 of effect. I've always viewed the partner-capacity issues,
13 whether we're doing work in the field in other nations, or
14 whether bringing foreign military leaders here to go to the
15 Army War College, or other -- you know, or other
16 institutions, as it's great to build strong relationships;
17 you know, you build them with young officers, and later they
18 might be a Minister of Defense or even a, you know, Prime
19 Minister or President. But, as you are finishing your time,
20 your lengthy career, what are the sort of metrics we should
21 be looking at in the build-partner-capacity investments we
22 make through DOD to see whether they're successful or not?
23 Just share, kind of, lessons learned on that, please.

24 General Thomas: Thanks, Senator. Great question.

25 I guess my first point of reflection is how drastically

1 different the approach to partner capacity and, really,
2 partners is from when I first started. It had very little
3 to any contact points. Established relationships were
4 checkered. Often, when -- you know, when countries were
5 deemed to have behaved badly, the first point of separation
6 was to separate IMET schooling --

7 Senator Kaine: Yeah.

8 General Thomas: -- and things like that. So, great
9 difficulty to -- you know, to keep them close and to work
10 their capacity if you don't have the point of contact.

11 Over the years, the establishment and the expansion of
12 our contacts and true partners has been extraordinary. And
13 I tell our younger officers, "You're in a period of time of
14 international relations and partners that I didn't grow up
15 in. Please don't -- you know, don't lose sight of the
16 potential."

17 To your point on success, though, it is -- you know, we
18 should assess, constantly, how -- you know, how worthwhile
19 -- what's the return on investment for these, you know,
20 various efforts. Again, I think the report card's better
21 than, probably, the American public knows, and it's both
22 with established nations -- you know, and the Russia
23 threat's a good case in point. We've had persistent
24 presence in countries -- every country in the European
25 landmass with Russia for the last 5 to 6 years, and are

1 thriving there. But, even with untraditional partners -- I
2 reflect back on the Syrian Defense, you know, Democratic
3 Forces, which started as, you know, seed corn of a couple
4 hundred people is now 60,000 strong, has done most of the
5 fighting and dying in Syria in support of that effort, have
6 lost thousands of people, but just an extraordinary force
7 that was cobbled together over time, you know, through a
8 partnering effort. So, I am more inclined to see the
9 potency and the results than some of the shortcomings on it.

10 Senator Kaine: Secretary West.

11 Mr. West: Senator, the National Defense Strategy
12 requires us to answer this question.

13 Senator Kaine: Yeah.

14 Mr. West: And an assessment --

15 Senator Kaine: Secretary Mattis always says, "by,
16 with, and through" -- anytime he was with us, "by, with, and
17 through other nations." I heard him say that many times,
18 and I know that's an important part of the Strategy.

19 Mr. West: Since there must be a resource allocation,
20 we must begin to look at, number one, the nature of the
21 threat. Local forces who do not demonstrate intent or
22 capability do not deserve the same resource allocation as do
23 those enemies with the capability and the public declaration
24 they'll strike us. Number two, what are -- as General
25 Thomas said, What are the odds of success of training this

1 force? How long will it take? And how well connected are
2 they to the people and to the government?

3 Senator Kaine: General Nakasone, how about in the
4 cyber realm? Talk a little bit about the partner-capacity
5 issue and activities that we're engaged in with them.

6 General Nakasone: So, I would add to the -- the
7 importance of building these partners, as our National
8 Defense Strategy has indicated. My perspective, in terms of
9 what I've seen within the cyberspace domain, is, it provides
10 us three critical elements. First of all, intelligence that
11 we may or may not have by ourselves. Secondly, capabilities
12 that our Nation may or may not have. And, third thing,
13 unique placement, placement around the world that is really
14 critical for us, that gives us greater reach as a Nation.

15 Senator Kaine: I will follow up with this in other
16 hearings, as well, because I think it's really important.
17 It is a significant investment. It's a part of the DOD
18 budget. It's not massive, but I think it has a massive
19 upside if we it right. And we just want to make sure we're
20 analyzing the metrics correctly.

21 I'm going to ask a question, just for the record,
22 General Nakasone, for you, but let me just preface it. I'm
23 on the Health, Education, Labor, Pension Committee. We are
24 reauthorizing the Higher Education Act this year. Part of
25 that is analyzing workforce and skills gaps and doing things

1 like public-service loan forgiveness and other programs to
2 fill gaps. And one of the areas that we're looking at
3 significantly is cyber professionals, whether it's in the
4 DOD side of the house, the DHS side of the house, or in the
5 private sector. So, the question I will ask is if you would
6 have any suggestions for us, as we work on Higher Ed
7 reauthorization, programs that you think are successful to
8 enable us to train and recruit and retain the cyber
9 professionals that we need. And I'll ask that question for
10 the record.

11 [The information referred to follows:]

12 [SUBCOMMITTEE INSERT]

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

1 General Nakasone: Thank you, Senator.

2 Senator Kaine: Thanks, Mr. Chair.

3 Senator Inhofe: Thank you.

4 Senator Rounds.

5 Senator Rounds: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6 Gentlemen, first of all, thank you for your service.

7 General Thomas, we most certainly appreciate all of the
8 hard work that you've put in, and your service to our
9 country.

10 I'm curious, with regard to the -- within the Middle
11 East. We've talked a lot about Syria and the challenges
12 that we have there. What about with regard to Iraq at this
13 point? And I know that we've talked about the fact that
14 we're going to have forces remaining in Iraq in the near
15 future. The President has indicated that there's the
16 capability to be able to move back into the Syrian areas.
17 But, within Iraq itself, what is the current state of play
18 with regard to ISIS, specifically within northern Iraq?

19 General Thomas: Senator, I would offer that we -- with
20 our Iraqi partners -- and they -- you know, we -- they have
21 embraced their sovereign responsibility, in terms of
22 defending their terrain. We're maintaining, you know,
23 persistent pressure on ISIS, both where they were and where
24 they are intending to try and have any sort of resurgence.
25 So, I -- it is -- it's -- it continues to be a work in

1 progress, but it's a -- you know, borne primarily through
2 the Iraqi forces, who we have, you know, rekindled our
3 relationship with.

4 Senator Rounds: Do you see evidence of their activity
5 in northern Iraq with regard to any incidences that they
6 appear to be responsible for?

7 General Thomas: In terms of the Iraqi forces, sir?

8 Senator Rounds: In terms of ISIS impacts within
9 northern Iraq. Are you seeing evidences of where they're
10 trying to impact local communities and so forth?

11 General Thomas: They are attempting to make a
12 resurgence in various locations. But, again, I'd -- I
13 believe our forces, with the Iraqis, are very aware of where
14 they are, and they're addressing them accordingly.

15 Senator Rounds: Thank you. Thank you.

16 General Nakasone, I appreciate the way in which you
17 laid out, today, a little bit about the activity that the
18 men and women of CYBERCOM, along with their associated
19 forces within the NSA and so forth, worked very hard. And I
20 -- with regard to previous election, the 2018 election.
21 Would it be fair to say that it is not a coincidence that
22 this election went off without a hitch, and the fact that
23 you were actively involved in the protection of the -- of
24 this very important infrastructure that we value?

25 General Nakasone: Senator, the security of the midterm

1 election was the number-one priority at U.S. Cyber Command
2 and the National Security Agency.

3 Senator Rounds: Would it be fair to suggest that one
4 of the bigger challenges you have in being able to share the
5 story of just exactly what occurs is the fact that, in the
6 future, there are -- every time -- can you share a little
7 bit about what the tools are, and the need to protect the
8 tools and the systems and the process that are used in order
9 to protect an election, as an example, and the different
10 types of threats that you see and that have to defend
11 against? Could you share a little bit about that?

12 General Nakasone: Senator, as part of a whole-of-
13 government effort, we were looking at three different areas.
14 We were looking to ensure that we prevented interference in
15 the election. Secondly was to disrupt any attempts by
16 adversaries to influence that election. And thirdly, to
17 impose cost on any adversary that decided that they would
18 attempt to interfere with our democratic processes.

19 Senator Rounds: Would it be fair to say that there's
20 been clear evidence in the past -- we've seen -- with regard
21 to Russia, in the past, they've done propaganda, they've
22 attempted to manipulate the American public, they've tried
23 to pit one side against the other, and so forth. In this
24 particular case, would it be fair to say that Russia has, in
25 the past, demonstrated a compatibility in the cyber realm to

1 use Internet activity, social media, and so forth, as a way
2 to do exactly the same thing with more sophistication than
3 perhaps in the past?

4 General Nakasone: Senator, the Russians are a very
5 sophisticated adversary in using influence operations that
6 you described.

7 Senator Rounds: Would it be fair also to say that
8 there have been concerns in the past and that the CYBERCOM
9 has worked very hard to make sure that the elections that
10 have been held in the United States have not been impact
11 directly, in terms of vote counts or anything like that?

12 General Nakasone: Certainly, Senator. Again, working
13 as part of a broad government team, that was our focus. And
14 I give great credit to Department of Homeland Security, the
15 Federal Bureau of Investigation, and other elements of our
16 government to work towards this. This was a team effort.

17 Senator Rounds: Very good. Thank you.

18 Sometimes when we talk about these items, we talk about
19 -- in terms of being able to impact social media, to be able
20 to impact and to make sure that folks outside of the United
21 States coming in are not able to influence public opinion by
22 providing misinformation. But, there's another piece of
23 this, as well, and that's to actually be able to defend and
24 protect the infrastructure, the physical infrastructure
25 within the United States. While I'm on a town -- would you

1 just simply explain to the public that there is more to it
2 than just simply stopping bad tweets from going out? It is
3 a matter of actually protecting critical infrastructure that
4 has a real impact on day-to-day lives of American citizens.

5 General Nakasone: Senator, one of the things that is
6 within our mission is certainly to protect that critical
7 infrastructure in the defense of the United States. You
8 accurately portray, obviously, both the opportunity and the
9 challenge that we have at our Command in doing that. I
10 would also offer that one of the things that is so important
11 here are the partnerships that you've formed. And if
12 there's anything that I've learned over the past several
13 months, these partnerships give us real strength in being
14 able to do that.

15 Senator Rounds: Thank you.

16 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

17 Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Rounds.

18 Senator Blumenthal.

19 Senator Blumenthal: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

20 And thank you all for being here today, and for your
21 service to our Nation.

22 General Nakasone, I was grateful to have the briefing
23 that we did -- classified briefing, very recently, which I
24 think was very illuminating as to the continued threats to
25 our Nation as a result of cyber, particularly meddling and

1 interference with our elections. The threat from Russia
2 continues unabated. Can you say that in public here today?

3 General Nakasone: Senator, Russia certainly provides a
4 very sophisticated threat to our Nation, and one that they
5 have done over several years.

6 Senator Blumenthal: And that threat ought to continue
7 to concern the American people, shouldn't it?

8 General Nakasone: Yes, Senator, it should.

9 Senator Blumenthal: And I said in that briefing, and
10 I've said it in numerous such classified briefings, that,
11 really, I wished that the American people could have heard
12 more of what you told us. In a sense, the enemies know what
13 they're doing; we know what they're doing, to some extent;
14 they know we know what they're doing; the only ones who are
15 in the dark, really, are the American people. And as we
16 enter this next election cycle, would you agree that we
17 ought to do everything we can to make the American people
18 aware of that threat?

19 General Nakasone: Senator, we will, at Cyber Command,
20 commit to working that. I think your point is a very
21 important one. Being able to educate the public is critical
22 for us. The success that we had in 2018, more of our Nation
23 should know about.

24 Senator Blumenthal: And it was success. I think very
25 few of the American public know about the successes. They

1 assume that the meddling and interference in our election
2 system, when it occurs, simply is undeterred or unstopped.
3 And I think -- again, without going into any of the details,
4 there are some successes that the American people should
5 know happen, but, at the same time, should know that the
6 threats do continue, not only from the Russians, but -- let
7 me ask you whether you've seen any indication that China has
8 sought to conduct activities similar to what we have seen
9 from Russia in 2016, 2018?

10 General Nakasone: Senator, given the forum that we're
11 in today, I would offer to broadly state -- what we're
12 seeing is that our adversaries understand how to operate,
13 again, below this level of armed conflict, and are taking
14 broad lessons learned, upon which they will attempt to
15 impact our Nation.

16 Senator Blumenthal: And would you agree that the
17 American people should know about the threats from, not only
18 Russia, but other countries, as well, because the tools and
19 means and techniques are highly asymmetric? That is, they
20 don't need to invest tens of billions of dollars to disrupt
21 our election system. Some of it is available with very
22 little such investment.

23 General Nakasone: I agree, Senator.

24 Senator Blumenthal: General Thomas and Mr. Secretary,
25 I know we have been over this issue, to some extent, but I

1 just want to be clear. From your standpoint, moving Special
2 Operators from Syria to Iraq -- in other words, withdrawing
3 from Syria and moving those forces to Iraq -- could you say,
4 again, what the impact is on our operational capability?

5 General Thomas: Senator, obviously, it's easier to do
6 our job with access and placement and proximity. And we've
7 thrived on that, being with the Syrian Democratic Forces and
8 enabling them to do the heavy lifting that I described
9 earlier. It'll certainly be harder to not have that
10 proximity, make it more challenging. But, we're working
11 alternate solutions to -- you know, to maintain some contact
12 and some level of support for them.

13 Senator Blumenthal: Would you agree, Mr. Secretary,
14 that it will make it harder, but you're trying to overcome
15 those challenges?

16 Mr. West: Militarily, it is more difficult, sir, but
17 we can remotely assist and advise. And, if Special
18 Operations does anything, this agile force has already
19 adapted.

20 Senator Blumenthal: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

21 General Thomas: Senator, I probably would point out,
22 too, that's how we started the first of it. We were not in
23 Syria for the first year. I was in the command that was
24 responsible for that, and we did everything from externally
25 to establish that force and provide --

1 Senator Blumenthal: But, there was a reason why you
2 went into Syria, which is that it enhanced your operational
3 capability, correct?

4 General Thomas: And it got us the return on
5 investment. I mean, they maneuvered and destroyed the
6 caliphate, or are on the verge of destroying the caliphate,
7 so that was -- you know, that subsequent phase to play.

8 Senator Blumenthal: thank you.

9 Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Blumenthal.

10 Senator Perdue.

11 Senator Perdue: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

12 Thank you, gentlemen, for appearing today.

13 China is -- it's public information that they're trying
14 to build a navy of about 425 ships, you know, within the
15 next decade or so. And they're accelerating that. It's
16 been reported, in just December, that Chinese hackers have
17 been breaching Navy contractors to steal pretty much
18 everything from maintenance data to missile plans. A
19 particularly egregious report came out later that one breach
20 was about a supersonic antiship missile that we were
21 building for our nuclear submarine force. If they're
22 successful, they'll -- by 2030, they'll have a navy that's
23 about 100 ships bigger than our Navy has today. And the
24 problem is, right now, that they're accelerating that
25 development through hacking, not the Navy network of

1 information, but our contractor network of information.

2 So, General Nakasone, how do you operate with our
3 contractors? Should this data be kept on DOD networks? How
4 do you interface with the FBI, when we get into these
5 commercial entities out there that seem to be less protected
6 than our military networks?

7 General Nakasone: Senator, the example that you cited
8 there is one that has driven the Department, and we're
9 certainly working with that Department as one of the lead
10 agents to ensure that contracts are written right, that --
11 ensure that our cleared defense contractors understand the
12 standards that have to be met, that we test those standards,
13 working with the services, ensuring that there are proper
14 safeguards in place that will guarantee that the information
15 that they have that's critical for our Nation is safeguarded
16 better.

17 Senator Perdue: Are you optimistic you have everything
18 you need, from an organization standpoint of funding and so
19 forth, to help accomplish that?

20 General Nakasone: Senator, I'm optimistic that if I
21 don't have what I need, I'm going to come back rapidly to
22 ask for it.

23 Senator Perdue: Yes, sir. You've done a good job of
24 that.

25 Let me move on to the organization. Right now -- in

1 August of 2017, it was announced that the Cyber Command
2 would be elevated to a unified command, if I'm correct.
3 Today, we're still operating in a dual-hat structure. And
4 it's been reported that one of the reasons we still have a
5 dual-hat responsibility is that there is a concern about the
6 lack of intelligence in a separate unified command, versus
7 NSA, that you're still getting a lot of your intelligence
8 through the NSA. How do you equate this, relative to the
9 long-term plan of having a unified command? Does that mean
10 we'll have a duplicate capability, in terms of intelligence,
11 both in the Cyber Command and also in NSA, or will there
12 always be a close relationship between the two?

13 General Nakasone: Senator, the decision on the dual
14 hat remains with the Secretary. I've commented I need it.
15 During my first 90 days, I provided my thoughts on it.
16 Whatever the ultimate decision is, there will always be a
17 very, very close partnership between NSA and Cyber Command.
18 And so, that's where I see it right now, Senator.

19 Senator Perdue: Thank you.

20 General Thomas, first of all, thank you for the
21 leadership, the -- you're at the tip of the spear.

22 When we have continuing resolutions, how does it affect
23 your operation in the field? I mean, you -- you've been at
24 war for 17 years, your troops. And I've been around some of
25 your troops around the world, and I would have to say, the

1 best and the very best of what we have in America is in your
2 uniform. But, when we do a continuing resolution here in
3 Congress, I get the feeling that it really impacts you guys
4 pretty directly. Is that true?

5 General Thomas: Senator, that's an accurate statement.
6 It's disruptive, in terms of programming and just normal
7 operations.

8 Senator Perdue: Can you just describe just a couple of
9 anecdotal examples of how that really impacts training,
10 refitting, rotations, all of the above?

11 General Thomas: Yes, sir. I'd be inclined, because
12 it's usually played to me, the biggest impact is in the
13 prescription for new starts. So, in a -- inside a fiscal
14 year, a -- the aspect of a continuing resolution inhibits
15 our agility to actually adjust to the problems. You know,
16 it's a fluid, you know, and dynamic environment that we live
17 in. So, it -- more broadly, it's the aspect that we're
18 stuck in a preceding paradigm and not able to move on to the
19 newer, better ways of solving problems.

20 Senator Perdue: Thank you, sir.

21 Mr. Chairman, I'll yield my time.

22 But, General Thomas, I do want to echo my colleagues'
23 comments about your storied career, but particularly your
24 time in the 75th Ranger Regiment in Georgia. God bless you.

25 Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Perdue.

1 Senator Shaheen.

2 Senator Shaheen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

3 And thank you, gentlemen, all of you, for your service.

4 And, General Thomas, we wish you well in whatever you
5 do next.

6 I want to pick up on Senator Perdue's questions about
7 how vulnerable we are to third-party products and software.
8 And so, I think this is for you, General Nakasone. In 2018,
9 the NDAA included a provision that would prohibit the use of
10 products and services developed or provided by Kaspersky Lab
11 in third-party products. And it required a report on DOD's
12 capacity to spot and address risks. So, can you tell me
13 what the status is of banning all of those Kaspersky
14 products from third-party contracts, and also what's the
15 status of the report on what risks might still be there?

16 General Nakasone: Senator, I know that we have
17 conducted the ban, but let me take that for the record to
18 make sure I have an accurate response to both parts of that
19 question.

20 [The information referred to follows:]

21 [SUBCOMMITTEE INSERT]

22

23

24

25

1 Senator Shaheen: Okay. Thank you very much.

2 General Thomas, I want to pick up on the questions
3 about Syria, and particularly on the detainees. As you are
4 probably aware, two of those detainees are suspected in the
5 murders of four Americans: James Foley, Steven Sotloff,
6 Peter Kassig, and Kayla Mueller. And I don't know if you
7 have anything that you can tell us today about what their
8 status is and what the potential is to make sure that they
9 can be brought back to the United States to be tried for
10 their crimes, but certainly that's what the families of
11 those murdered Americans would like to see happen.

12 General Thomas: Senator, I don't have an update on the
13 status, but I would express my appreciation for your
14 personal interest on the matter. Your visit out there, and
15 your very public commentary after that, actually helped
16 focus the world on the problem, and then specifically on the
17 U.S. problem. I -- but, I don't know the current status. I
18 just know it's in -- you know, in the legal wrangling of
19 considering how we handle the special cases like that.

20 Senator Shaheen: Well, thank you. I hope you and
21 Secretary West will both take back the interest that the
22 families have in making sure that they see justice in the
23 United States.

24 But, General Thomas, I also want to go back to the
25 question about, How confident are you that, given the

1 estimates on the number of ISIS fighters who have gone
2 underground, who may be operating out of Iraq or other
3 places in the Middle East, that we will be able to contain
4 that threat if we no longer have operations in Syria, given
5 the complexity there?

6 General Thomas: Senator, as I mentioned, this has been
7 one of the most complex challenges that our force has dealt
8 with in quite a while. I am concerned that we are not
9 overly restricted in the end state, and I don't honestly
10 know what that is. There are several planning efforts
11 ongoing, with a focus to maintaining what we've gained so
12 far, to focus to ensure that there is no external attack
13 capability coming from a morass of bad actors -- admittedly
14 bad actors, many of whom are just regional, local types.
15 So, we're in the throes of trying to do the right planning
16 and preparation to provide the Nation options to make sure
17 that that's not a shortcoming and we have a revisit to the
18 2011, you know, recurrence.

19 Senator Shaheen: And how much of a threat continues
20 from Turkey to the Syrian Democratic Forces and their
21 continued work on the ground?

22 General Thomas: Senator, there has been -- friction is
23 an understatement, right from the very beginning, in terms
24 of our choice of a partner force. It -- truthfully, it was
25 a necessary choice. It was the only force really available.

1 And their relationship with the Turkish government -- again,
2 I would, you know, commend both General Scaparotti, General
3 Votel, the senior leaders, who have been trying to work
4 through that friction and stay focused on the counter-ISIS
5 effort, which is why we're out there. But, it has been a
6 challenge, but the -- but, I think we are certainly
7 addressing Turkish sovereign interests and concerns as we
8 stay focused on ISIS.

9 Senator Shaheen: Well, I appreciate that. I hope
10 we're also continuing to support SDF, who have been such
11 good partners with us in the arena.

12 Secretary West, I understand that you're the point
13 person at DOD for implementing the Women, Peace, and
14 Security Act. Is that correct?

15 Mr. West: I'm certainly on point, Senator.

16 Senator Shaheen: Okay, good. I wonder if you could
17 give us an update. I understand that we are expecting the
18 plan, that it's going through final approvals. Can you tell
19 me when we might see the final plan for how that's going to
20 get implemented, and any thoughts you have about the
21 effectiveness of being able to implement that as we're
22 looking at all of our operations around the world?

23 Mr. West: Senator, we're certainly supporting the
24 interagency plan. As they say in the Green Berets, we're
25 trying to lead from the back of the front. But, this does

1 establish the United States as the world leader in ensuring
2 that women are part of the conflict resolution and
3 prevention process. And I want to thank you personally for
4 the appropriation we have this year, because the gender
5 advisors, which were already installed in come COCOMs, now
6 will be permanent.

7 Senator Shaheen: Well, thank you. I hope, as we're
8 looking at continued negotiations in Afghanistan, that we
9 will certainly make sure that women are at the table in any
10 negotiations.

11 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

12 Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

13 Senator Ernst.

14 Senator Ernst: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

15 Thank you, gentlemen, for being here today. And, on
16 behalf of the American public, I would like to say thank
17 you, because much of the work that is done within your
18 commands, the American public will never know about, nor
19 will they be able to appreciate. So, thank you very much
20 for that.

21 General Thomas, I'd like to start with you. And what I
22 would like to do is, basically, give you an open floor or a
23 moment to reflect upon your time in command. There have
24 been many innovations during your time in command that you
25 have brought forward for Special Operations Command, and I'd

1 like to give you the opportunity to talk about some of those
2 innovations, why they have been so important to our Special
3 Operators, and if there's anything that is not yet finished,
4 what you would like to see continue on in your absence.

5 Sir, please.

6 General Thomas: Thanks, Senator. Dangerous to give me
7 an open mic, here.

8 [Laughter.]

9 General Thomas: I'll try and stay focused.

10 I humorously -- I joke with contemporaries, whether
11 it's in the Armed Forces or in the private sector, that the
12 one problem we do not have in Special Operations Command is
13 to spur innovation. It's almost runaway innovation and
14 problem-solving every day. As you know, it's bottom-up-
15 driven. And so, the challenge for us, as a higher
16 headquarters, is to assess and bundle the -- you know, the
17 great ideas and the solutions that are being forwarded, and
18 put them into programs of record that drive budget
19 considerations and things like. Nice problem to have, I
20 would offer. All -- I can't recount, you know, the
21 extraordinary number of, you know, initiatives and solutions
22 that the forces provided over the last couple of years, and
23 I'm incredibly proud of it.

24 I'm more excited about where it's going in the future.
25 The Command is truly poised to be even more relevant, you

1 know, for the Department of Defense and for the Nation, in
2 terms of securing this country, and borne on the back of
3 just the best talent that the country has to offer, but with
4 the resourcing that you all provide and the ability to do
5 creative solutions.

6 The one area that you and I have discussed time and
7 again, that was probably the best innovation, that I would
8 ascribe to my predecessors, and addresses directly how we
9 sustain this force, despite -- you know, despite the pace
10 and -- the relentless pace of things, and that's the
11 initiative awkwardly named Preservation of the Force and
12 Family --

13 Senator Ernst: POTFF.

14 General Thomas: -- POTFF, but juxtaposed to our
15 ability to care for our people with the Care Coalition.
16 Right now, we have, I think, 15,000 wounded, ill, and
17 injured SOF members, both prior -- currently serving and
18 prior, that are part of our core -- you know, our core
19 focus, you know, to take care of the Command. But, the
20 POTFF effort has been just remarkable, in terms of building
21 in resilience to the Command. And again, I give all the
22 credit to my predecessors, who saw that as a needed
23 requirement, and this body, for giving us the resources to
24 get after it.

25 Senator Ernst: Well, General Thomas, I thank you so

1 much for your emphasis on POTFF. I've had the great
2 opportunity to travel and visit with a number of your
3 operators at Fort Bragg and Fort Benning, Hunter Army
4 Airfield, Coronado. We've covered the bases there, and not
5 only in supporting the operators, but their families, as
6 well, because they truly are such an important part of the
7 equation on why you are so successful. So, thank you for
8 addressing that.

9 We do have a closed hearing this afternoon, so I will
10 save some of my questions for that time period, but I do
11 want to take this opportunity to thank both of you, both
12 Generals. Thank you very much for the command structure
13 that you have provided, the leadership and guidance.

14 Secretary West, thanks for taking on this very
15 challenging position out there with DOD. We know that it's
16 a -- an ever-growing and -influencing part of the DOD. So,
17 thank you very much for that.

18 And, just in the very short time that I have remaining,
19 General Thomas, I want to thank you for your time and
20 service. To you and Barbara, my best wishes as you move on
21 to retirement. It is well earned and well deserved. You
22 will be missed. You will truly be missed. But, thank you
23 for your leadership.

24 Thank you very much. I'll yield back.

25 Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Ernst. And we all

1 agree with her comments.

2 Senator Warren.

3 Senator Warren: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

4 And also, I want to add my thank you, General Thomas,
5 for all of your work and for your leadership.

6 Last year's NDAA required the Secretary of Defense to
7 review whether members of the Armed Forces or coalition
8 partners of the U.S. abused or witnessed abuse of detainees
9 during operations in Yemen. And the unclassified summary of
10 DOD's report to Congress concluded, quote, "DOD has
11 determined that DOD personnel have neither observed nor been
12 complicit in any cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment of
13 detainees in Yemen," end quote. So, when I asked General
14 Votel about this last week, he said DOD's conclusion was
15 based on the discussions and reports from the people that
16 they have on the ground. General Thomas, is that your
17 understanding, as well?

18 General Thomas: Senator, I monitored your conversation
19 with General Votel, and that -- I am in agreement with that
20 assessment.

21 Senator Warren: Okay. So, the Associated Press, Human
22 Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and the United Nations,
23 all four, have all conducted their own investigations and
24 come to a very different conclusion. They determined that
25 our Emirati partners oversaw a network of detention centers

1 that regularly engaged in torture and abuse. General
2 Thomas, do you find these independent investigations
3 credible?

4 General Thomas: Again, Senator, I monitored General
5 Votel's answer to the same question, and you'll probably
6 hear some consistency. Every one of those allegations is
7 taken with the utmost, you know, interest, in terms of
8 poring into them and determining if they're factual. And we
9 have. And, in fact, I'm not aware of any outliers. But, if
10 we observe violations of the Law of Armed Conflict, it is a
11 break-contact standard along our force, to address it
12 specifically and/or to break contact with those partner
13 forces. So, again, I would reinforce how General Votel
14 answered it. It's a high standard.

15 Senator Warren: So, I appreciate that, and General
16 Votel said that -- exactly that there -- he was very careful
17 about what he said. He said he -- I asked him if he'd
18 reached any conclusions about whether or not our Emirati
19 partners are engaging in detainee abuse when DOD personnel
20 are not present, and he said he was not aware of that. The
21 question I was asking, though, General Thomas, Do you find
22 these independent investigations -- those four
23 investigations, do you find them credible?

24 General Thomas: Senator, I find them of sufficient
25 interest that it's actually been our -- a topic of

1 discussion back with our Emirati partners. So, the hard
2 part is -- hard for us to confirm or deny if it happened,
3 but not something we just take as something I can't -- I
4 approve or disprove. It's the subject of our discussion
5 with the Emiratis that, if we can prove this, or if there is
6 evidence, this could be a deal-breaker.

7 Senator Warren: Okay.

8 General Thomas: So, I -- again, we take it very
9 seriously.

10 Senator Warren: Good. I appreciate that, General
11 Thomas. I know you work hard to encourage our partner
12 forces to obey the Laws of Armed Conflict. But, when it
13 comes to whether or not our partner forces have engaged in
14 abuse of detainees, there seems to be a really serious
15 disconnect between what DOD understands to be true and
16 credible independent reports from journalists and human
17 rights organizations. So, I remain deeply concerned about
18 whether our partners in Yemen are treating detainees in ways
19 that are consistent with the Law of Armed Conflict. As you
20 know, turning a blind eye is not acceptable. So, I'm going
21 to keep asking questions about this. I appreciate your
22 answer on this.

23 If I can just ask one other area quickly in the time
24 left to me, General Thomas, I'm concerned about the
25 militarization of our foreign policy. And nowhere is that

1 more evident than in the use or overuse of our Special
2 Operations Forces. I think Senator Reed alluded to this
3 earlier. In 2017, Special Operations Command deployed
4 forces to 149 countries under your Command, and they launch
5 airstrikes, carry out raids, train foreign militaries, all
6 in the hope of removing terrorists from the battlefield.
7 Many of these countries have governance challenges that
8 allow violent extremist groups to grow. Instead of treating
9 the causes of violent extremism, we're treating the symptom.

10 So, let me just ask. General Thomas, do you think that
11 we can kill or capture our way out of this problem?

12 General Thomas: No, Senator, I definitely do not think
13 that's the solution to most of these problems.

14 Senator Warren: You know, I -- do you think that the
15 current pace of operations for your Command is sustainable?

16 General Thomas: I do, Senator. We had challenges on
17 specific parts of our formation and to specifically get to
18 the Department-directed standard of one-to-two dwell rate,
19 so for one -- a cycle of deployment downrange, two, you
20 know, parallel cycles back home -- but, we have gotten that
21 back into a new -- very healthy shape, with a few outliers,
22 and we're intent on getting them, you know, healthy, as
23 well, here.

24 Senator Warren: I appreciate it. Thank you, General
25 Thomas. I just want to say, we need to be thinking harder

1 about using our nonmilitary tools, here, as well. Thank
2 you.

3 Senator Inhofe: Thank you --

4 Senator Warren: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

5 Senator Inhofe: -- Senator Warren.

6 Senator Blackburn.

7 Senator Blackburn: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

8 And, to each of you, thank you for your service to our
9 country. We appreciate it.

10 General Thomas, we do wish you well. And we wish your
11 family well. And thank you for the service.

12 I will say, Senator Ernst mentioned some of the posts
13 she's visited. She also has visited Fort Campbell, and they
14 were, and still are, a big part of our Tennessee community.
15 And I represented that post during my time in the House, and
16 have enjoyed working with those military families and
17 looking at the challenges that are going to be necessary for
18 21st-century warfare.

19 And, General Nakasone, you know, cyber is a -- an
20 enormous part of that. And I think it's been really curious
21 to me this week, as we have looked at the different
22 geographic combatant commanders and those AORs, maybe a
23 hesitancy to engage in the discussion of how our adversaries
24 are using the cyber area to their advantage; namely China,
25 of course. And we've talked some about the great

1 competitive threat that is there.

2 So, my question to you, General Nakasone, would be, Do
3 you feel like that your Command, Cyber Command, is being
4 properly integrated into all of the other commands in those
5 missions?

6 General Nakasone: Senator, I do feel that Cyber
7 Command is being integrated properly into the other
8 combatant commands. We have undertaken a very aggressive
9 approach to engage with the combatant commands. General
10 Thomas and I have had a long association, and one of the
11 things that I think that we've been able to leverage is the
12 close partnership of ensuring that what we do in cyberspace
13 is supporting his end states and what he was trying to do,
14 whether in previous commands or at U.S. Special Operations
15 Commands. We are very, very appreciate of the work that has
16 been done and approved by this committee to build cyberspace
17 operational integrated planning elements at each of our
18 combatant commands. This will allow us to develop the
19 talent and the planning expertise to ensure that we get to
20 outcomes.

21 Senator Blackburn: Okay.

22 Let me -- let's talk about artificial intelligence for
23 just a moment, because I -- I think that that strategy --
24 and, of course, it's been released -- and the strategy
25 highlights a reality that we've known for some time. And I

1 want to quote from that, and then have you respond. And I'm
2 quoting, "Other nations, particularly China and Russia, are
3 making significant investments in AI for military purposes,
4 including applications that raise questions regarding
5 international norms and human rights. Failure to adopt AI
6 will result in legacy systems irrelevant to the defense of
7 our people eroding cohesion among allies and partners,
8 reduced access to markets that will contribute to a decline
9 in our prosperity and standard of living, and growing
10 challenges to societies that have been built upon individual
11 freedom." Now, that, in my opinion, is a pretty sobering
12 assessment. So, do each of you agree with that strategy's
13 assessment? And exactly how do you see the AI strategy
14 informing your Command as we move forward?

15 General Nakasone: I agree with the statement that you
16 read, Senator. I do see artificial intelligence, deep
17 learning, machine learning, as something that's a critical
18 enabler of what we're going to need to do at U.S. Cyber
19 Command. We have already seen the power, at the National
20 Security Agency, of what artificial intelligence can do for
21 our foreign intelligence mission, our cybersecurity
22 missions. This is where the world is headed, in terms of
23 innovation and capability. We, as the military fighting
24 force, have to ensure that we have that enabler. One of the
25 things that I do take great credit in is -- and pride in --

1 is that U.S. Special Operations Command really has led a lot
2 of the work in artificial intelligence, in integrating some
3 of the early thinking into how they become a more powerful
4 force.

5 Senator Blackburn: General Thomas?

6 General Thomas: Senator, great question. And we could
7 spend several hours talking about it. Unfortunately, we
8 don't have that kind of time. But, agree with the
9 assessment, in terms of threat. More importantly, am
10 incredibly enthusiastic about the opportunity.

11 Anecdotally, 3 years ago, Eric Schmidt visited our
12 Command as part of the Defense Innovation Group. Quick
13 assessment that he felt compelled to give me, he said,
14 "You've got tremendous people, you prototype pretty
15 effectively, and you're absolutely terrible" -- he had some
16 more colorful words than that -- "for machine learning,
17 applied artificial intelligence." Truthfully, it gave me a
18 spark 3 years ago, and turned me into a zealot on the
19 subject. But, more importantly, it has really kind of
20 reoriented our Command to embrace this phenomenon and apply
21 it. It -- relevance to everything we do, until it's proven
22 otherwise. And so, we're taking, you know, not-so-small
23 bites, but some pretty substantial bites into embracing
24 artificial -- applied artificial intelligence, and I'm
25 excited about where we're going in the future.

1 Senator Blackburn: Thank you for that. Thank you for
2 your service.

3 I yield back.

4 Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Blackburn.

5 Senator Tillis.

6 Senator Tillis: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

7 Gentlemen, I apologize for not being here for a lot of
8 the hearing. We have three committee hearings going on
9 simultaneously.

10 General Thomas, I want to thank you for your service
11 and the -- all the quality time you've spent in North
12 Carolina. I hope, in retirement, you continue to spend a
13 lot of quality time there.

14 I'm going to take, probably, the questions a different
15 direction in my capacity as Personnel Subcommittee chair,
16 because I know a lot of the other members have covered the
17 landscape on the extraordinary work you're doing. And I
18 thank -- General, thank you for the briefing earlier this
19 week. There are some real -- I got a real sense of progress
20 being made. And I think some of that stems from some of the
21 authorities that you've been granted. And you're doing
22 great work there, so thank you for your leadership.

23 But, I want to talk more about the personnel aspects.
24 Number one, when you look at, General Thomas, the very
25 challenging job of an operator -- and I -- a disturbing

1 percentage that are going to get injured in one way or
2 another -- what more do I need to be thinking about, in
3 terms of family support, for the members, and actually even
4 in dealing with the wounds of war -- what more should we be
5 looking at, as a function of the Personnel Subcommittee, to
6 send the very clear signal we understand the dangerous job
7 and the impact it's having on family?

8 General Thomas: Senator, thanks for that question, and
9 thanks for the concern expressed.

10 I would actually challenge the term "operator," because
11 that -- therein lies the -- you know, I think, the
12 opportunity for us to do better by our people in the future.
13 While you highlighted a -- particular career fields that are
14 inherently dangerous, in terms of jumping and fast-roping,
15 and things like that, we're as good as our weakest link.
16 We're as good as our support personnel. The enabler -- we
17 call -- you know, the term we use, "enablers," which is
18 broadbased, but it's the entire fabric of the force, and,
19 arguably, we didn't focus sufficiently on the entirety of
20 the force early on, when we talked about POTFF and how we
21 sustain it. We're -- I think we're much more focused on
22 that, and we have come to you to ask for additional
23 resources so that we can more thorough in the application
24 there. But, again, thanks for the support we've had so far.
25 Truthfully, the best comment we can get on it is, the sister

1 services are emulating what you've allowed us to do as the
2 way they could/should take care of their people, as well.

3 Senator Tillis: Thank you.

4 Something else that we'll be talking about -- I was
5 just briefly speaking with Senator King about progress that
6 we can make on procurement. We've taken some steps, in
7 recent NDAs, for acquisition reform, procurement. And I
8 think we can still take a few pages from you-all's book, in
9 terms of rapid prototyping and deployment. So, look forward
10 to that in subsequent hearings. Mr. Chair, hopefully we can
11 have that as a subject, some point in this Congress.

12 General Nakasone, you've got a challenge -- you
13 mentioned, in your opening statements -- I was here -- you
14 know, you're trying to find the resources. You're competing
15 with the private sector. Again, in the last NDA, we made
16 some progress, in terms of being able to get resources from
17 the private sector into positions. But, what more do we
18 need to do? I've got to believe you just don't have enough
19 of what you need, in terms of expertise. What more would
20 you suggest that we look at, as a matter of policies, going
21 into this NDA cycle?

22 General Nakasone: Senator, I think that we have to
23 come back to the committee and identify those critical
24 subsets. There are people within our force right now that I
25 call "10-or-20X" type of people. That means they're 10 or

1 20 times better than the people that they work with, better
2 coders, better malware analysts, better developers. And so,
3 how do we ensure that we keep those within our force? The
4 services do a wonderful job in recruiting. We get great
5 recruits. We do a very, very good job in training them.
6 Our challenge will be in retaining the very best -- not
7 everyone, but the very best. And this is where I think
8 identifying those categories, coming back to you to make
9 sure that we have the proper career paths and the proper
10 enumeration will be very helpful.

11 Senator Tillis: Well, Senator Rounds and I have talked
12 a lot about it in his capacity on Cyber, and we need that
13 information sooner. In the private sector, I led a practice
14 that had ethical testing in cybersecurity resources. And
15 they were very -- they were even scarce in the environment
16 where you could pretty much pay whatever the market rate is,
17 so I can't imagine what you're going to go through for
18 retention. We just need to think creatively and recognize
19 that these are hot skills. And you've got to have the SOF
20 equivalent of cyberwarriors out there. And we need to do
21 everything we can to provide you the authority to do that.
22 And -- but, you also have to differentiate -- as you just
23 said, you've got to differentiate between that person who
24 has a 20-time multiple on skills, and just say, "We're going
25 to treat you all fairly. We're not going to treat you

1 equally," because you've got to have those extraordinary
2 warriors in this domain.

3 I'm going to follow up with a couple of questions for
4 the record, but they happen to do with plumbing in business
5 matters, so I'm going to yield back my remaining 10 seconds.

6 Thank you all for being here.

7 Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Tillis.

8 Senator Sullivan.

9 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

10 And, gentlemen, thank you for your service.

11 General Thomas, I really wanted to thank you for all
12 you've done for our Nation. And I think I've had a bit of a
13 unique opportunity to not only get to know you from this
14 position, but also when I put my Reserve uniform on. As my
15 commander, he's, like, 17 levels above where I am in the org
16 chart. So, it's -- you've done a great job, and really
17 appreciate it.

18 Secretary West, appreciate the job you're doing. You
19 know, unfortunately, there's a very small number of Harvard
20 marines, and you're making us proud. Very few.

21 And, General Nakasone, I want to ask you, on this issue
22 of offensive operations -- I know you probably can't talk
23 too much, but you might recall a hearing we had in this
24 committee a couple of years ago, where Director Clapper and
25 some other leaders on the cyber and intelligence front

1 openly admitted that, after the Chinese hacked the OPM and
2 stole over 20 million SF-86 forms for all our top-secret
3 operators, including members of this committee, that he
4 openly admitted we didn't retaliate against them, which I
5 thought was kind of a stunning admission. And, to me, it
6 was part of the problem. Whether it was North Korea or Iran
7 -- I think, a couple of years ago, China, certainly Russia,
8 we were viewed as kind of the world's cyber punching bag.
9 Any of these countries could come and do what they wanted,
10 and we did not retaliate.

11 Can you tell me, without getting -- revealing anything
12 classified, do you feel you have the authorities to hit
13 back, or maybe even hit back harder, to make the costs of
14 those kind of operations against our country, against our
15 democracy, much more prohibitive? Particularly for a
16 country like North Korea, where I'm assuming we could just
17 drop their entire electrical grid and Internet system
18 overnight if we wanted to.

19 General Nakasone: Senator, if I might, 1 year ago I
20 appeared before the committee for my confirmation, and you
21 asked a similar question of me. And I think it's important
22 that we look at what's happened within this past year: a
23 National Cyber Strategy, signed; a DOD Cyber Strategy,
24 signed; the FY19 National Defense Authorization Act that
25 provided us greater capabilities and greater authorities

1 within the law was signed; a new presidential policy that
2 came out on offensive cyber; and finally, our ability to
3 have a new construct upon which we operate, which is
4 persistent presence. All of those provides a much different
5 environment for our adversaries today than it did 1 year
6 ago.

7 Senator Sullivan: So, can you publicly state, in this
8 hearing -- again, without getting in classified information
9 -- that you have -- do you have the authorities and you are
10 not unwilling to undertake offensive operations that can
11 help deter, whether it's Chinese stealing 20 million SF-86
12 forms or the North Koreans hacking our companies?

13 General Nakasone: Senator, I have the authorities to
14 accomplish my mission.

15 Senator Sullivan: Or the Russians attacking our
16 electrical -- or our election systems.

17 General Nakasone: I have the authorities that I need
18 to accomplish my mission, Senator.

19 Senator Sullivan: Good.

20 I want to ask Secretary West and General Thomas -- you
21 have taken the lead over the last 2 years on the counter-WMD
22 mission. SOCOM has that lead. And to me, there's probably
23 no more important mission for the survival of the entire
24 Nation, the entire republic. We might have, you know,
25 threats that, you know, rise -- ISIS or al-Qaeda, they might

1 rise and fall, but, as long as we have a republic to defend,
2 the counter-WMD mission is going to be, in my view, the most
3 important mission. How is that going? Do you need more
4 resources on that? And are there any things that we can do
5 to help you with the authorities, whether it's working with
6 allies, whether it's more resources to undertake that
7 mission, in terms of the leadership that you're -- that you
8 now have with regard to that mission?

9 General Thomas: Senator, one, we appreciated the
10 opportunity to perform this mission. It is a -- it's a
11 daunting, critically important mission, as you mentioned.
12 We actually had John Hyten, from STRATCOM, visiting, as well
13 as Paul Nakasone, this past week. And I would offer, his
14 mission is probably the -- you know, the true, primary
15 mission, and this one's connected just -- you know, just
16 underneath.

17 The level of cooperation and collaboration that we
18 enjoy with the community of action is extraordinary. We
19 just hosted our annual seminar, 2 weeks ago. We're about to
20 produce our Annual Assessment to the Secretary of Defense.
21 This mission set and space continues to move in the right
22 direction. I don't know on resources yet. I daresay we
23 will probably uncover some --

24 Senator Sullivan: Yeah.

25 General Thomas: -- gaps, in terms of collection

1 capabilities that we, the Nation, need, going forward,
2 whether it's Department of Defense or other entities. But,
3 the mission is going very well for us, and I'm appreciative
4 of some of the expertise that has been brought to bear on
5 it.

6 Senator Sullivan: Mr. Chairman, if I may, just one
7 final quick question.

8 The great -- the return of great-power competition is
9 spelled out in the NDS, the National Defense Strategy. How
10 are -- how is SOCOM aligning with regard to that mission?
11 And have we overutilized the SOF community on low-intensity
12 threats? And are we focused on the new NDS mission, on the
13 SOF side?

14 Mr. West: Senator, quickly, from my perspective, SOF
15 is perfectly well suited to take on this challenge, because
16 it's cheap, it provides the Nation real leverage. But, the
17 basic task is resource allocation. As you indicated, we are
18 at capacity, and demand signal is not shrinking. So, then
19 this, in turn, requires a new assessment of the threat in
20 counter-terror to repurpose forces.

21 Senator Sullivan: Thank you.

22 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

23 Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Sullivan.

24 Senator Wicker.

25 Senator Wicker: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

1 General Nakasone, in February, the Department of
2 Justice and the Department of Homeland Security sent a joint
3 report to Congress on 2018 election interference. You
4 testified before a classified session of this committee
5 yesterday. But, the public-specific conclusions of the
6 report of these two departments was as follows, quote,
7 "There is no evidence to date that any identified activities
8 of a foreign government or foreign agent had any material
9 impact on the integrity or security of election
10 infrastructure or political campaign infrastructure used in
11 the 2018 midterm elections." I appreciate your testimony
12 yesterday, and I realize they're not -- there are things
13 that you cannot get into today. But, what can you tell us,
14 in this public setting, this committee and the public, about
15 the -- whether or not, based on what you know, the
16 Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland
17 Security were correct in saying there was no such
18 interference?

19 General Nakasone: Senator, I agree with what you had
20 read with regards to that report. What I can say, in terms
21 of our role with that, was, within U.S. Cyber Command, and
22 specifically the National Security Agency, we took a look at
23 all the intelligence information we had on our adversaries.
24 We declassified as much of that information as we could. We
25 shared that with the Department of Homeland Security, who,

1 in turn, shared that with the State and local levels so that
2 they had a very, very good picture of what we knew about
3 adversaries that might be trying to interfere with our
4 elections.

5 Senator Wicker: So, to the extent that there were
6 concerns that a foreign government or agent had an impact on
7 the election, you concur with the public conclusion of the
8 Department of Homeland Security and the Department of
9 Justice that there was not such interference.

10 General Nakasone: I concur, Senator.

11 Senator Wicker: Thank you very much.

12 I appreciate it, Mr. Chairman.

13 Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Wicker and all the
14 other Senators, and certainly for the three witnesses. That
15 was a very eye-opening and a great presentation. Appreciate
16 your patience and your thoroughness. Thank you so much.

17 We're adjourned.

18 [Whereupon, at 11:27 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

19

20

21

22

23

24

25