HEARING TO CONSIDER THE NOMINATION OF:

GENERAL JOHN E. HYTEN, USAF

FOR REAPPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE OF GENERAL AND

TO BE VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

Tuesday, July 30, 2019

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:00 a.m. in Room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. James M. Inhofe, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Committee Members Present: Senators Inhofe [presiding], Wicker, Fischer, Cotton, Rounds, Ernst, Tillis, Sullivan, Cramer, McSally, Scott, Blackburn, Hawley, Reed, Shaheen, Blumenthal, Hirono, Kaine, King, Heinrich, Peters, Manchin, Duckworth, and Jones.
OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES M. INHOFE, U.S. SENATOR FROM OKLAHOMA

Chairman Inhofe: The meeting will come to order.

What we are going to do is have our opening statements of Senator Reed and myself, and then we will recognize Dr. Wilson for a very important introduction.

The committee meets today for the nomination of General John E. Hyten to be Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. We thank you for being here today. We welcome your family who is here and your friends, Dr. Hyten. They can introduced at the time that you are recognized for your opening statement.

And we have our boring 7-8 questions you have to respond to first.

Have you adhered to applicable laws and regulations governing conflicts of interest?

General Hyten: Yes, sir.

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

General Hyten: Yes, sir.

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

Chairman Inhofe: Do you agree, when asked, to give your personal views even if those differ from the administration in power?

General Hyten: I do, sir.

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

General Hyten: We will, sir.

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

General Hyten: Yes, sir.

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

General Hyten: Yes, sir.

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

General Hyten: I have not, sir.

Chairman Inhofe: The world is more dangerous now than it has been in my lifetime. I honestly believe that. I have talked to you about that. And after years of sustained armed conflict, under-funding, and budget uncertainty, our
military has fallen behind competitors in readiness and key capabilities.

Without adequate, sustained, and predictable funding, all of the work we do on this committee to implement the National Defense Strategy would be for nothing.

And that is why I thank President Trump and the congressional leaders for reaching a bipartisan budget agreement. It is critical to support our military and veterans and their families.

While I would have liked to see more funding for defense, at the end of the day, this budget agreement provides minimal growth to give our military what it needs and will allow the Department of Defense to plan strategically in the future.

I need to tell you where I stand on the allegations that have been levied against you, General Hyten, allegations that have been bandied about in the press with little regard to the truth. This committee has held five executive sessions, studied over 1,000 pages of investigative records, and reviewed statements of more than 50 witnesses. The members of the committee have devoted countless hours reviewing General Hyten’s service and his nomination through a fair, thorough, and methodical process. We have done this with respect for the privacy of all involved.
Each Senator was able to ask questions, receive answers, review documents, and other material, listen to testimony, conduct analysis, and express their opinions. Today’s hearing is the next logical step in the deliberate, disciplined, and detailed process this committee uses to determine the suitability of a nominated candidate.

Addressing these allegations is critical, not just for you, General Hyten, but for every nominee going forward. This committee takes allegations of sexual assault very seriously. It is unacceptable, but this committee will not act on unproven allegations, allegations that do not withstand the close scrutiny of the committee’s process.

General Hyten, you have been leading STRATCOM with discipline and integrity for the last 2 and a half years, and you served honorably in the top leadership positions of the Air Force Space Command in the 4 years before that. I commend the willingness of you and your family to continue your outstanding service to our military and to our country.

As we form a new United States Space Force, we need your strategic insights and guidance to move the key initiative forward, including how to improve space acquisition.

British Army Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery said, quote, if we lose the war in the air, we lose the war and we lost it quickly. And we can say the same thing about space
now.

When I say the world is in the most dangerous position than it has been in my lifetime, one of the areas I am talking about is the proliferation of ballistic missiles and cruise missiles capability. Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea use missiles as strategic leverage, and we need strategic imagination and strong leadership to counter this growth.

As the former Secretary of Defense Mattis said, we need urgent change at significant scale to implement the National Defense Strategy. And I could not agree more.

Senator Reed?
STATEMENT OF HON. JACK REED, U.S. SENATOR FROM RHODE ISLAND

Senator Reed: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Let me join you in welcoming General Hyten, his wife Laura, and his children, Chris and Katie, to this morning’s hearing.

The purpose of this hearing is to focus on the duties of the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and to closely scrutinize whether General Hyten’s previous service and experience qualify him to serve as the Vice Chairman.

General Hyten, over the past few weeks, a number of media outlets, including “The New York Times” and “The Washington Post,” have reported allegations that you sexually assaulted a subordinate under your command as the Commander U.S. Strategic Command. These are serious allegations, and therefore, consistent with the committee’s longstanding practices, we have held five executive sessions related to your nomination, totaling over 15 hours of testimony and deliberation. During those sessions, members received sworn testimony on extremely sensitive matters and were able to ask questions and review documents and background material. Members have been afforded the opportunity to request additional information from the Department, which we have done.

These executive sessions were the appropriate forum to consider this information, which enabled the committee to
utilize longstanding procedures that have served it and the Senate well for decades. The sessions allowed each member to hear the viewpoint of our colleagues, even if that perspective was different from our own. Ultimately, that dialogue helped inform our committee, and I appreciate the thoughtful consideration of every member during this process.

Finally, I want to thank the chairman for ensuring that the committee had sufficient time to conduct our review of these matters. Senator Inhofe has been extremely cooperative in this regard, and I appreciate it. Nevertheless, we must recognize the public nature of these allegations will likely raise questions today that are appropriate to an open session of this committee.

Last week, the Senate confirmed General Mark Milley to be Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. As General Milley testified, the international order established by the United States following World War II is under threat by authoritarian regimes seeking to challenge our country and our global interests. The new National Defense Strategy, or NDS, which the Department is currently implementing, will help posture the U.S. to compete with a near-peer competitor like China or Russia. As the Department pursues this new strategic direction, Iran and North Korea remain dangerous, and the threat posed by violent extremist organizations is
not diminishing. Furthermore, the Department must continue
to recruit and retain high caliber individuals, while
restoring readiness and pursuing new high-end capabilities
for the force.

General Hyten, if confirmed as the Vice Chairman, you
will be working closely with General Milley to address each
of these issues, and I hope you will share your views with
this committee on those issues.

In addition, if confirmed as the Vice Chairman, you
will serve a key role in the interagency process that often
requires working closely with senior policymakers within the
Department and at the National Security Council on critical
national security issues. In light of the strategic
challenges I referenced earlier, the committee looks forward
to hearing from you on the effectiveness of the current
interagency process.

Finally, the Vice Chairman is assigned a number of
specific responsibilities within the Department. First, the
Vice Chairman oversees the Joint Requirements Oversight
Council, which is a critical aspect in our acquisition
process. Second, as a senior member of the Nuclear Weapons
Council, the Vice Chairman plays a central role ensuring the
safety of our nuclear arsenal. And finally, given your
recent service as Commander of U.S. Strategic Command, if
confirmed, I would expect that you would play an integral
role in how the Department of Defense will address the
threats posed by near-peer adversaries in space.

We look forward to hearing your testimony, General
Hyten, and how you will prioritize these duties if you are
confirmed as the Vice Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Reed,
And thank you, Dr. Wilson, for being here. Your
service to our country has been exemplary. We hope you
enjoy your next chapter. And you are recognized now for an
introduction.
STATEMENT OF DR. HEATHER WILSON, FORMER SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE

Dr. Wilson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I am here to introduce General John Hyten, the nominee to be the next Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

I graduated from the Air Force Academy in the third class to include women and served for 7 years as a junior officer.

As a former member of the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services in the 1990s and as a former member of the House Armed Services Committee, I know well that sexual harassment and sexual assault happened in the military. It must be confronted, investigated, and punished.

While I have now left the Defense Department, I was the Secretary of the Air Force and directed the investigation of allegations made against General Hyten by a former subordinate. That investigation was overseen by the Air Force Inspector General and was peer reviewed. The task was to conduct an exhaustive investigation and to find the truth.

During my time as Secretary of the Air Force, I have come before you with great success stories, and I have been here when the Air Force missed the mark. I have taken responsibility and been straight with you when we got it wrong.
This investigation was thorough, and the allegations were taken seriously, and it was handled appropriately. A team of 53 investigators interviewed 63 people in three countries and 14 States. They reviewed over 196,000 emails and 4,000 pages of documents. They reviewed 152 travel records and portions of phone records dating back to 2015. They interviewed members of the General’s staff at Strategic Command, as well as members of his staff when he was at Space Command.

General Hyten is one of the most closely guarded officers in the military because he commands the nuclear deterrent. The Inspector General also interviewed his personal security team. The result is a final report of over 1,400 pages.

The military does not automatically suspend the people’s clearances or remove them from command when there is an allegation of impropriety. If the initial facts gathered justify it, we can, and I have done so in other cases. This committee also has handled this matter with respect for the accuser and for General Hyten with discretion and sensitivity.

After all of this, I believe the Senate will come to the same conclusion I did. General Hyten was falsely accused, and this matter should be set aside as you consider his nomination.
I accept that it is entirely possible that his accuser is a wounded soldier who believes what she is saying is true, even if it is not. That possibility makes this whole situation very sad.

We all know that sexual assault is a highly charged issue, more so today than perhaps at any time in our history, difficult in any environment. It is even more so when your decisions as Senators are public, but not all of the information will be public. None of us want to appear as leaders to be breaking faith with victims of sexual assault. All of us want to encourage victims to come forward, but we have to do the right thing in this case with these facts, maintaining the credibility of this committee and this body, aligned with the American people’s deeply rooted sense of justice.

I hope you will agree with me that General John Hyten is worth all of the time that you have taken to consider his nomination. He is the right leader to be the next Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. There is no other active duty officer today who combines the intellect and breadth of experience of John Hyten when it comes to three areas of vital importance to our national security: space, cyber, and the nuclear deterrent. John has the credibility and experience of a combatant commander, yet he began his career in acquisition. He has experience setting
requirements for complex weapons systems, which is a process he will lead as the Vice Chairman. As Commander of STRATCOM, General Hyten has stewarded the development of requirements for nuclear command and control and has been a driving force behind the need to modernize the nuclear deterrent. He is an exceptionally good complement to General Milley’s skills as the Chairman.

More than his expertise, John Hyten has a well earned reputation for speaking truth to power. He gives frank military advice without much sugar coating. I know that from personal experience. Like it or not, he will tell you what he thinks and what you need to know, not what you want to hear. He is passionate about the security of this country, and I encourage you to support his confirmation.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Wilson follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]
Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Dr. Wilson, very much for that excellent introduction.

With that, General Hyten, we will recognize you for an opening statement.
STATEMENT OF GENERAL JOHN E. HYTEN, USAF, FOR
REAPPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE OF GENERAL AND TO BE VICE
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

General Hyten: Chairman Inhofe, Ranking Member Reed,
distinguished committee members, it is a privilege to appear
before you today as the President’s nominee to become the
11th Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

I want to recognize Secretary Wilson, as you did,
Chairman, for her long and devoted service to this nation.
And it means everything to Laura and me that she came all
this way to speak on our behalf. I thank her for that
introduction.

To begin, I would like to introduce my wife Laura to
the committee. So thank you for that opportunity. Laura
and I met when I was stationed in Los Angeles, and we have
been married now for almost 32 years. When we met, my long-
term aspirations did not include a lifetime of service to
the United States Air Force, but over and over again,
opportunities continued to come along to do what I love, and
Laura always encouraged me. During this time, her own
passion for the men and women of our nation’s military has
grown. Today she is an advocate in our communities and
works to empower and care for our military families. She is
an amazing woman, the best person I know. She is ready to
fight for this country alongside me one more time.
And together we also had the joy of raising two
incredible children, Katie and Chris, both successful in
their own right, each with weddings this year. Katie is
here with us today from Boston, but Chris could not make it
all the way from Colorado on such short notice. But sitting
next to them is my brother Scott, representing my mom, dad,
and my sister in Alabama, and I have been lucky to have them
by my side every step of the way.

This last Christmas, I was asked to talk over with my
family whether or not I would consider serving in another
position if it were offered. I was not sure what I would
say, but this was clearly a family decision. That is when
Katie made it quite simple, asking me if you love this
country and you love the people you work with and you still
feel you can make a difference, then why stop. Period.

Simple.

So that is why I am here. I still love what I do, and
if confirmed, I look forward to continuing my advocacy for
the soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines and civilians of
the Department of Defense. When the nation provides them
the right tools, they have proven time and time again they
are our greatest advantage over any adversary.

But as I sit here today, as has been discussed, I am
intensely aware of the allegations made against me
concerning one of the most serious problems we have in the
military, sexual assault. It has been a painful time for me
and my family. But I want to state to you and to the
American people in the strongest possible terms that these
allegations are false. There was a very extensive, thorough
investigation that Dr. Wilson described, which revealed the
truth. Nothing happened ever.

And I am also thankful to this committee for all the
time you took individually and together in executive session
to study and understand the facts. I really think the
integrity of both the investigation and the nomination
process are critical not only for everybody involved but for
our nation’s citizens as well. So I stand by the truth.
And I thank the committee for its unwavering commitment and
support to our national defense, as well as the men and
women who serve.

If confirmed, I look forward to working across the
Department of Defense with our friends and allies, the
interagency, Members of Congress to address an ever-widening
spectrum of challenges confronting our nation. While we
have not yet ceded our advantage, we are facing direct
challenges across all domains and particularly in areas of
long-held superiority like space and cyberspace. We are in
a position where we must address resurgent peers who have
long-term strategies to supplant the global influence of the
United States and our allies. Finally, the threats from
violent extremists and transnational groups will persist, and so we cannot lose focus on this asymmetric challenge and the challenge they represent.

In order to address these myriad challenges, the Department must continue to field the best in the world force. No son or daughter of ours should ever go into combat with second-best equipment. We do not ever want a fair fight. We must be prepared to meet the threats directly head on in order to deter and dissuade adversary aggression and, if necessary, fight and win our nation’s conflicts. To do this, we must maintain our ready and lethal force, and we cannot break the bank doing it.

So, if confirmed, I commit to you that I will work to find effective and efficient solutions to these challenges, leveraging the best of American ingenuity and know-how.

So, Chairman Inhofe, Ranking Member Reed, members of the committee, thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today. I thank the President and the Secretary of Defense for their confidence in me.

I also wish Chairman and Mrs. Dunford and Vice Chairman and Mrs. Silva Godspeed on their pending retirements. They will be missed. And if confirmed, I will work hard every day to carry on their legacy, maintaining the highest standards of the Joint Staff, the Department of Defense, and of our nation.
Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of General Hyten follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]
Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, General Hyten.

We are going to begin with 5-minute questions a round.

I am going to do something a little bit differently. In my case, there is one among us here who has spent more time than anyone else looking into allegations against you, General Hyten, and I am going to use a small part of my time and then yield the rest of my time to that individual when her time is appropriate.

So, first of all, let me just hold this up here. This is something we have talked about a lot. You are very familiar with this. I am sure you have read it over many times. This is something that we have used as a blueprint for our actions, and I would like to get from you, number one, do you agree with me in terms of the significance of this document? And secondly, would you agree that you would use this also as a blueprint for your activities?

General Hyten: Just to make sure, Senator, you are holding up the report of the Commission on the Review of the National Defense Strategy?

Chairman Inhofe: That is correct.

General Hyten: Yes, sir. I have looked at that. And I think the National Defense Strategy is an important document, and I think the commission did a great job in walking through exactly what our challenges are. Clearly our challenges are the reemergence of Russia and China, and
we have to be prepared for that. But it goes through all
the other things we have to be worried about as well:
emerging technologies, challenges that we have. That is a
very good document -- and I think you used the word
“blueprint” -- a good blueprint and something we need to
continue to follow.

Chairman Inhofe: That is good. And I would remind you
that this is put together by an equal number of Democrats
and Republicans, but all of whom were experts in this field.

And the second thing is -- really I do not need an
answer for this, but I do need to make sure that we get an
answer for the record. And that is, it is a little
different from what we are doing now. We have China and we
have Russia in situations where they actually have some
things better than us. We have a gap that is out there, a
credibility gap against these two countries and for the
record, I would like to have you outline in detail where
that gap is. All right?

General Hyten: Senator, I would be glad to do that.

And with that, I am going to yield the rest of my time
to Senator McSally at the appropriate time.

Senator Reed?

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

And thank you, General.

You stated in your opening comments that you
categorically deny all of these allegations and you have
done so under oath. Is that correct?

General Hyten: Yes, sir.

Senator Reed: There is, regardless of the outcome of
our proceedings, issues that surround you now that were not
surrounding you months ago. And if you are confirmed and
you assume the responsibilities of Vice Chairman, how will
you deal with these issues, correctly or incorrectly, but
they will be there?

General Hyten: Senator, I have thought about that a
lot, and I thought about that a lot with my family. My wife
and I talked about that for the last couple months. Laura
actually says it best. She says this is the United States
of America. The truth has to matter. And we believe that
the truth will come out, and the truth will tell the story.
And we will be able to then continue to serve and do the
things we need to to continue to defend this country. So,
Senator, it has been a difficult time, but we fundamentally
hold to the truth.

Senator Reed: One of the aspects of this case that has
involved you has been problems within your headquarters,
frankly. Some have described them as toxic, et cetera, and
this is in your immediate headquarters, which raises I think
the question which a leader must address. Why were they not
identified sooner? Why were they not corrected more, I
guess, expeditiously, but also less disruptively might be
the word to describe it? And do you think you took the
appropriate both action and responsibility for what happened
in your headquarters?

General Hyten: So, Senator, as the Commander, I assume
responsibility for everything that happens in my command.
That is the nature of a command. And we had a toxic
leadership problem inside the command, and I did not
recognize it for a significant period of time. The Army has
had that problem for a while, and they published a
regulation in 2017 to help train the Army leadership to help
identify toxic leadership because the problem with toxic
leaders is they look absolutely brilliant to the leadership,
but it is not that way below. And so it took me a long time
to understand that.

When I did identify it, I acted quickly, decisively.
Investigations were thorough, and we did the right thing
through that entire process.

Senator Reed: As both my opening statement and the
Secretary’s comments indicated, as the Chairman of the JROC,
the Joint Requirements Committee, you have an absolutely
critical role particularly as we find ourselves with
programs that grow in cost remarkably so and schedules slow
down. Can you give us just a small inkling of what you
would like to do to accelerate the schedule and to decrease
costs?

General Hyten: Senator, that is 38 years of experience I got to cram into 30 seconds. So I will just say that I have thought a lot because I have watched the JROC for a long time. And I think General Silva has moved the ball forward. I think this committee and the Congress as a whole has moved the ball forward in terms of acquisition reform, looking at the right things to do.

I think what we have to do on the requirements side is always make sure we are focused on the requirements being the capability not the widget, not the solution. In the past, the JROC has got into very, very specific system-level requirements. General Silva has worked to pull that up I think. The leadership of the Department has worked to pull that up. If confirmed, I will continue to drive that forward and make sure that the JROC looks on capabilities and what capabilities we have to have and make sure that they are real, achievable, rational, but not specifying a solution.

Senator Reed: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Reed.

Senator Wicker?

Senator Wicker: Mr. Chairman, I yield my entire time

Senator McSally, and I understand that I may be recognized
for 5 minutes in her place later on in the hearing.

   Chairman Inhofe: You will be recognized for 5 minutes
   in her place.

   You are recognized, Senator McSally, for your 5 minutes
   plus my 4.

   Senator McSally: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Senator
   Wicker.

   When I disclosed in a hearing earlier this year that I
too was a survivor of military sexual assault, I never saw
myself in this position. As a 26-year veteran and member of
this committee charged with oversight of our military and
confirmation of nominees for senior military positions, I do
not take the allegations made against General Hyten lightly.
I take them extremely seriously and I treated them as such.

   Over the past 3 weeks, I focused nearly solely on this
issue in an effort to seek the truth. I am grateful that
the chairman, the ranking member, and this committee took a
methodical, objective approach, and conducted a thorough
review.

   As a result of the exhaustive process and extreme due
diligence, I have full confidence in General Hyten’s ability
to be the next Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.
He is the right leader at the right time for this important
position, and I am confident he will continue to serve in
uniform with honor, humility, and integrity.
I look forward to working with General Hyten on critical national security and military issues, and I will also value his partnership, along with other military leaders, on efforts to prevent and improve the response to military sexual assault, including support to survivors and due process for the accused.

I have and always will support these serious issues being worked out through thorough and due process and not in the court of public opinion where all the information, evidence, and testimony are not fully known. I am confident in the outcome.

To be clear, this was not just a jump ball, not a he said/she said, not a situation where we just could not prove what allegedly happened. I too believe that truth still matters in this country, and the full truth was revealed in this process. The truth is that General Hyten is innocent of these charges. Sexual assault happens in the military. It just did not happen in this case. I pray the accuser gets the help she needs and finds the peace she is searching for, but it cannot be by destroying General Hyten with these false allegations.

I did not take coming to this conclusion lightly. I knew the message it could send to sexual assault survivors who have not seen all the information on the case that I have. To them, I am honored to continue to be a voice for
you. Do not take the wrong message from how this is being
played out publicly. The process I just witnessed was
strong, fair, and investigators turned over every rock to
seek justice. I will continue to fight to ensure the best
possible outcomes and to fight for real victims.

All sexual assault allegations should be treated
seriously and investigated fully. All alleged victims
should be treated respectfully. All accused should be
assumed innocent and afforded due process. All of that
occurred in this case.

False allegations like these are not without collateral
damage. Male military leaders may avoid choosing females
for key positions, ultimately hurting service women’s
opportunities for career-enhancing jobs. Male commanders
may think twice about disciplining female subordinates for
fear of sexual assault allegations in retribution. This
precedent could act like a cancer on our good order and
discipline. Male senior military leaders may choose to
retire instead of accepting higher positions.

And finally, General Hyten and his family were unfairly
put through this terrible ordeal. General Hyten, I am sorry
that you, Laura, and your family had to endure this trial,
but I am grateful you did not back down. You continue to
carry yourself with integrity, humility, and respect through
this process, something many of us would struggle to do.
Sadly, it has become increasingly common in Washington for people to try to destroy each other for their own political benefit or some other selfish purpose with no regard for the truth or the lives damaged in the process. This committee has traditionally tried to stay above that fray, focusing on the national good and our collective duty.

And we each have a choice now. That choice will determine whether we further encourage and incentive politics of destruction or whether we make a clear stand for the principles of justice, decency, and truth. I implore each of my colleagues. Let us rise above the pressure of the moment and do the right thing for the country, our military, sexual assault survivors, this institution, our values, and General Hyten and his family. If it were you or a loved one falsely accused of these crimes, you would hope that those of us called to serve would find the strength and courage to do what is right and what is just. The decision that we make here hopefully this week will reverberate for a long time to come.

General Hyten, I look forward to supporting you and working with you as the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. And I encourage all my colleagues to join me.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator McSally.

Senator Shaheen?
Senator Shaheen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, General Hyten, for being here today and to your family as well.

Senator Reed outlined some of the responsibilities of the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. If confirmed, you would be the second highest individual in the military.

We have heard from Dr. Wilson, who was the Secretary of the Air Force who oversaw the investigation into the allegations of sexual assault. She reported that the investigation cleared you of any wrongdoing. But the allegations come at a time of increased instances of sexual assault in our military, a 50 percent increase in assaults on women in the survey that was released in May by the Department of Defense. And despite the conclusion of the investigation, I am sure -- and I am sure you would agree with me -- that there will be those in the public and those in the military who will say that your clearance was just the Department of Defense and the top military brass coming together behind one of their own over the survivors of sexual assault.

So how do you reassure those who are concerned about sexual assault in the military that you are committed to addressing this issue and will do everything you can, if you are confirmed, to address this issue?
General Hyten: So, Senator, one of my fundamental precepts of my life and career -- it is actually one of my redlines that I announce at every change of command I have ever taken all the way back to 1996 when I became a squadron commander -- is that everybody that raises their right hand and swears to support and defend the Constitution of the United States of America deserves to be treated with respect. And I will continue to push for that.

I know we have a serious problem with sexual assault. It became emotionally powerful for me when the problems at basic military training at Lackland happened about a decade ago. That is when I knew that we had a real problem, and we have been trying to get after that ever since. And we have not done a good job. It has not gone the right direction. It is a scourge on our military.

I did read this last week the 17 initiatives Senator McSally has in the National Defense Authorization Act. I fully support those. I think that is a good start.

I think we have to work together to try to figure out how to do better with this. I think there is a role for the Congress, a role for the Department of Defense, a role for the executive branch. We all have to get after this problem, and I pledge that I will do that and I will do everything in my power to always do the right thing so that everybody knows that we are watching that issue closely and
doing everything we can.

Senator Shaheen: Well, given that that has been a consistent response from the leadership of our military now for several decades and we still see the numbers going in the wrong direction, should we be thinking about taking this issue outside of the chain of command of the military and dealing with it in a different way?

General Hyten: So I do not believe that the chain of command can be removed from any problem in the military and solve it. I think there are other things that can be brought to bear, but I have seen big problems.

And when I came into the military, I came in from Alabama into Alabama and racism was a huge problem in the military -- overt racism. It is still a systemic problem in our society, but I watched commander after commander after commander take charge, own that, and anytime they saw it, eliminated it from the formation. When that happens, a huge improvement happens. Now when I am in uniform, I feel colorblind, which is amazing.

That has not happened with sexual assault yet. It has not. But the chain of command has to be involved for this problem to be fixed. Every commander has to embrace it. If they do with support from the Congress, support from laws, support from all those kind of pieces, we can get after this, but we have to do it together.
Senator Shaheen: Well, clearly we need to do a much better job of holding people accountable.

General Hyten: Yes, ma'am.

Senator Shaheen: I want to switch topics to Afghanistan because recent reports have indicated that the Taliban and the U.S. have agreed to a road map for peace, and the statement calls for an end to civilian casualties and the protection of women’s rights within an Islamic framework. And yet, when I visited Afghanistan in April, I met with Afghan women who were very concerned about being left out.

So what do you think we should be doing to ensure that any peace in Afghanistan continues to provide the human rights that all Afghans were guaranteed under the constitution that was adopted after the fall of the Taliban?

General Hyten: So, Senator, I have not been in Afghanistan since I was deployed in 2006. So I am not as current as I will be if I am confirmed as Vice Chairman. But I certainly have watched that issue. I read the news of the meeting on 9 July. I read all the things that you talked about.

The one thing I know is that the military right now is in a very important position of establishing the conditions for a diplomatic solution between the Taliban and the Government of Afghanistan. That has to be the solution.
And I think we have to continue to support the process and understand and make sure that terrorism does not raise its head again where in Afghanistan our country could be attacked again. So those are the things that we have to balance as we go through. I think we can. But we are clearly now supporting the diplomatic process and trying to encourage a proper solution that will take care of all the rights you discussed.

Senator Shaheen: Thank you.

Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

Senator Fischer?

Senator Fischer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good morning, General Hyten. Good to see you. Welcome to your wife Laura, your daughter Katie, and your family that is here with you today.

General Hyten: Thank you.

Senator Fischer: I think that you are especially well qualified for this role, and your experience as STRATCOM Commander for the last 3 years will be particularly valuable since the Vice Chair of the Joint Chiefs sits on the Nuclear Weapons Council and usually functions as the joint staff senior subject-matter expert on nuclear deterrence.

You and I have spoken a lot about the low-yield submarine-launched warhead on several occasions, and as we prepare for the NDAA conference with the House, I think it
is important that we revisit this issue since a number of what I say are misleading arguments have been put out there.

First, do you believe deploying the warhead or any of the potential employment scenarios would put our submarines at greater risk?

General Hyten: I do not, ma’am.

Senator Fischer: Second, do you believe our current arsenal of low-yield is sufficient and this additional capability is not needed?

General Hyten: I strongly believe the capability is needed, in particular to deter Russia.

Senator Fischer: And third, can you give us a sense of the importance you attach to this program?

General Hyten: So when you have an adversary -- and I think we have to look at Russia as an adversary. General Milley did the other day in his hearing -- you have to look at what they say and what they do and watch them very closely. You do not want them to become an enemy. So when you look at what Russia has said and done, they have stated that they will reserve the right to employ a low-yield nuclear weapon on the battlefield some day if their national security requires it.

Right now, we have low-yield nuclear weapons in our air leg of our triad, which is the most flexible leg of the triad, but nonetheless takes a while to get to the target.
When we looked at our Nuclear Posture Review, I made a recommendation, and the recommendation was discussed broadly amongst the national security community and agreed that we should have a very small number of low-yield nuclear weapons on our submarines that can respond quickly to that kind of scenario by Russia. That will deter Russia, and I think it is doing that. I am confident in that because President Putin does not like it.

It is also important to note that we will deploy that under the New START treaty. Russia’s low-yield nuclear weapons are not inside the New START treaty. We will still have 1,550 deployed strategic weapons. Some of them, a very small number, will be low-yield nuclear weapons. I think that is important to understand too.

Senator Fischer: Turning to pit production, somehow this notion has developed that we should focus solely on achieving a 30 pit per year production capability and not undertake any effort to develop additional capacity until that goal is accomplished. And it has been my understanding that due to the scale and also the complexity of these projects, we need to be doing everything we can to reach that 80 pits per year production, and we need to do it right now in order to meet that 2030 deadline.

So if we decide to defer action on any additional capacity until we have achieved that 30 pits per year
production level, do we have any hope of meeting that
requirement of 80?

General Hyten: So it will be a challenge. It is
something that I worked closely with the Department of
Energy, the National Nuclear Security Administration. As
the STRATCOM Commander, that has been a high priority of
mine. I have been to Los Alamos. I have been to Savannah
River in Carolina. I understand the challenges that are
faced there, but I think the Department of Energy has put
together the best plan we have to get to 30 by 2026 at Los
Alamos and 80 by 2030 across the entire enterprise.

The one thing I know, though, is that we have to get
Los Alamos right. We have to get to 30 in 2026 because if
we cannot do that, there is no chance we can get to 80. And
the requirement is 80 by 2030. We have done that analysis.

Senator Fischer: We have seen some renewed discussion
on whether we even need to have pit production capacity at
all, and it is my understanding that this longstanding goal
has been repeatedly validated. And it was certainly the
position of the Obama administration, as well as that of the
current administration.

Can you speak to that?

General Hyten: I think one of the sobering things I
have ever done in my life is hold a plutonium pit in my
hands. When you look at what that is, that is the nuclear
weapon, and you think of what that small sphere can do when imploding. And then you think that we already have some of those pits that are 50, 60, and 70 years old, and we do not know exactly what is going to happen. Now, we watch that closely. I look at it every year. I have to certify it. But when we look at those numbers, I do not want to get to the point where we are counting on 100-year-old plutonium pits as the backbone. That is why we have gone through the detailed analysis as we have to get to 30 by 2026. We have to get 80 by 2030. Critically important for our security as a nation.

Senator Fischer: Thank you, sir.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Fischer.

Senator Hirono?

Senator Hirono: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As part of my responsibility as a member of this committee and to ensure the fitness of nominees, I ask nominees the following two initial questions.

First, since you became a legal adult, have you ever made unwanted requests for sexual favors or committed any verbal or physical harassment or assault of a sexual nature?

General Hyten: I have not, Senator.

Senator Hirono: Second question. Have you ever faced discipline or entered into a settlement related to this kind
of conduct?

General Hyten: I have not faced any discipline or entered into any settlement on this kind of conduct. We have discussed the issue that I faced the last 4 months here today.

Senator Hirono: So, General Hyten, although your answers to my standard questions are no, you have been accused of serious sexual misconduct, and you have given your reactions already this morning. And for me, this has been, as for so many of us -- I would say everyone on this committee -- a very difficult process. The allegations against you are serious, and while we have not been presented with any corroborating evidence, the lack of it does not necessarily mean that the accusations are untrue. Women are assaulted all the time and do not tell anyone. Men assault women all the time and do not leave behind any evidence.

Of course, you have denied the allegations, and between the military and this committee, it appears that some very rigorous investigation has been done. And women do sometimes make false accusations, although I would say it is rare. Each of us has to weigh all of the evidence and testimony and make our own judgment about whether or not you should get this promotion.

So in light of all of this, is there anything else you
would like to tell us that could help us make this decision regarding you?

General Hyten: I think, Senator, that the executive sessions you had with me last week is a very important piece to continue to look at. I stand by my testimony in the executive session, much of which was very difficult to talk about, but I spoke openly, candidly, and I shared all the information that is applicable to this case. I would encourage the committee, if you have questions, to go back and look at that, to look at the evidence that is there, to look at the information I provided to the committee, and make your judgment based on the evidence that you see.

Senator Hirono: The fear that many command or men in positions will be subjected to false accusations because of a fear that women spend time basically sitting around accusing men falsely is a dangerous view in my opinion because the fact is women who are sexually assaulted more often do not report.

Now, you testified this morning that it took you a significant amount of time to recognize that there was a toxic leadership issue in your command. Why did it take you so long to recognize this with regard to the lieutenant?

General Hyten: To be clear, I take full responsibility for everything in my command.

The nature of a toxic leader is that they are brilliant
to the boss. They absolutely are. That is how many toxic leaders have made it all the way to the general officer ranks and the flag officer ranks because the bosses do not see those kind of things. You have to have people that come to you, and when people started coming to me, because she was so brilliant in her work, I thought that there was an issue with rough edges around an Army officer. We talked about that. Rough issues about language -- we talked about that. But it took me to do an actual inquiry not into that specific behavior but into the entire climate of my headquarters before I actually saw the evidence that there was a toxic leader there. Once I saw that, I took quick action.

Senator Hirono: General, when you indicated that it took a significant amount of time to recognize that there was a toxic leadership situation, it sounds as though that you had gotten some indications that there were concerns. And so it is not as though everyone came to you and said this person is a toxic leader. So would you say that perhaps you had a blind spot with regard to the colonel because you considered her to be brilliant and you kept giving her good reviews even during the course of the investigation, her 15-6 process?

General Hyten: So I had a small number of people come to me and people that I trust, and I talked about those in
detail in executive session, so I will not share their names and what they told me in the open hearing. But I think that, again, toxic leadership is a very difficult thing to identify, and once I did identify it, I moved quickly in order to deal with that. But it still took me a while to do that. I do not deny that.

General Hyten: General, you have been asked questions regarding the scourge, and you yourself used the word "scourge" I believe, of sexual trauma in the military. And most of the time, everyone who comes before us says they will do something about it. I would be very interested to know what specifically would you do to really end the scourge of sexual assault both in the military, as well as in our service academies. Do you have something specific that you would do?

General Hyten: If I am confirmed as the Vice Chairman, that is something I will have to look at very closely. We have only had a small number of those incidents in STRATCOM since the time I have been there, two issues of sexual harassment. We dealt with those quickly. I talk about those up front. I published my policies on how to deal with that, but clearly that has not been sufficient.

So I am going to have to get with people that know about this than I do. I think that is actually one of the challenges, is that I have had experiences with people close
to me that have been victims. I mean, it is just a horrible, horrible thing. But I really do not feel like I am an expert in that area and that I can tell you exactly what is should do. So we have to speak to the experts that know these issues, that know what to do, and then listen to them and implement improvements in order to make the process work. And then all commanders have to be educated on that and then make changes. That is when change will happen.

Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Hirono.

Senator Hirono: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Inhofe: Senator Cotton?

Senator Cotton: General Hyten, thank you for your appearance today.

I would associate myself with the comments about the threats we face that Senator Inhofe said or our nuclear deterrent forces of Senator Fischer.

But I think we all know this hearing would not be nearly so widely covered. In fact, it would have happened weeks ago and you would already be confirmed if it was not for the nature of the allegations against you. So on those I want to associate myself with Secretary Wilson -- former Secretary Wilson who has resigned from the administration and returned to the academy and who was under no compunction to appear here today -- and Senator McSally who recognized that sexual assault and sexual harassment, sexual misconduct
of any kind have no place in our military. But the facts do
matter, and we should judge every case on its facts.

This committee has spent dozens of hours, weeks really,
reviewing your case. And as Senator Hirono said, there has
been no corroborating evidence of the allegations against
you. As Secretary Wilson said, you have been falsely
accused.

So I just want to touch on a few of these details that
I know are in your personal knowledge. As the Commander of
Strategic Command, you are in the nuclear chain of command.
Correct?

General Hyten: Yes, Senator, I am.

Senator Cotton: If Russia decided to go for the
jugular and launch an all-out nuclear strike on the United
States, how long from the time you warn the President of the
United States of that strike to his decision to launch or
lose our missiles would the President have?

General Hyten: In the worst case, it is a small number
of minutes. In most cases, though, the President has a
significant period of time. However, because the worst case
is only a small number of minutes, we have to be connected
all the time.

Senator Cotton: Minutes not hours to be sure.

General Hyten: Minutes.

Senator Cotton: So at no time can you be off the grid.
General Hyten: I cannot be off the grid.

Senator Cotton: In fact, I bet that you are prepared at this very moment in this hearing to step out to advise the President under such a contingency. Is that right?

General Hyten: If something happened, my communications team is right there with the communications I have to have, and I would step out and get on the phone.

Senator Cotton: So you are guarded and attended to by your security detail and communications detail 24 hours a day.

General Hyten: Unless I am on leave.

Senator Cotton: In which case, you have signed that authority over to another person.

General Hyten: I delegate that authority -- it is called the Balfour authority -- to my Deputy Commander.

Senator Cotton: As Secretary Wilson said, your details were interviewed in the process of this investigation. Are you aware of them giving any corroborating testimony to your accuser’s allegations?

General Hyten: No. I read all their testimony. I only got a copy of the investigation a week ago. I have only had a chance to go through it once. But every member of the security detail that was interviewed saw nothing like that.

Senator Cotton: Second, as the Commander of Strategic
Command, you are a pretty juicy target for a cyber attack and for hacking by countries like China and Russia. Do you have a phone besides a government cell phone?

General Hyten: I do not have anything besides a government cell phone.

Senator Cotton: Was that cell phone searched as a part of this investigation?

General Hyten: It was searched.

Senator Cotton: To your knowledge, did it include any corroborating evidence of the accusations against you?

General Hyten: None.

Senator Cotton: Third, there have been some who have claimed the Air Force mishandled this investigation, that you should have been temporarily removed from your job or had your security clearance temporarily revoked. Would you temporarily remove from their job or revoke the security clearance of any subordinate who was accused of misconduct with no corroborating evidence in the interim?

General Hyten: So there is a two-part answer to that question. Number one, I would not take any action unless the information was corroborated because I think that presumes guilt. But I would take action to remove an individual if they are in the same office space temporarily until we got to that point.

Senator Cotton: The nature of the sexual misconduct
allegations against you have been widely reported in the media. I will not rehearse them. Has your accuser ever accused you of other kinds of nonsexual misconduct?

General Hyten: Yes, sir.

Senator Cotton: What was the nature of those accusations?

General Hyten: Since she was relieved, against my command and me, before this investigation, I think there were 34 different accusations, 24 against my chief of staff, 6 against me, 2 against my Deputy Commander, 2 against the investigating officer of the investigation.

Senator Cotton: Were any of those accusations of a nonsexual nature against you or others in your command corroborated or substantiated?

General Hyten: None were substantiated.

Senator Cotton: Thank you.

My time is almost up. I will say again I want to commend in particular Senator Inofe, Senator Reed for the way they have conducted this review. We have, I said, spent dozens of hours, weeks really, reviewing the 1,400-page report, hearing for hours from your accuser and General Hyten, yet there is zero -- zero -- corroborating evidence of these accusations as Senator Hirono acknowledged. In fact, every bit of evidence, just some of which we have touched upon today, more of which I hope will be released
soon in a redacted fashion, as appropriate, tends to credit your denials. And I think it is very important that we confirm you because I think you will be great for the job. But I think it is also very important that we maintain the basic American standard that the facts do matter. And when someone faces an accusation, whether it is General Hyten or the thousands of Lieutenant and Sergeant Hytens out there who are watching this hearing today, they understand that the facts do matter.

Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Cotton.

Senator King?

Senator King: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Wilson touched on this in her introduction. You have got a lot of responsibilities or will, would have were you to be confirmed as Vice Chair. But there is no more solemn responsibility than when you are in the Oval Office with the Chair talking about the military situation and the results of taking military action.

Will you commit to this Senator, to this committee, and to the American people unequivocally that in that situation, you will give nothing but your unvarnished, truthful analysis based upon your 38 years of experience and based upon your wisdom and knowledge of the circumstances that would result from military action?

General Hyten: I have the last 2 and a half years,
Senator, with the President in some uncomfortable
discussions, and I commit that if I am confirmed as the Vice
Chairman, I will continue to provide best military advice as
you describe.

Senator King: Thank you. I think that is the most
important responsibility that you have aside from all those
others. The Oval Office can be an intimidating place, and
it is human nature to tell the boss what he or she wants to
hear. But your willingness to tell the truth, under
whatever the circumstances are, is at the heart of your
responsibility to this President and to this country.

A completely different topic. Do you believe that it
would be in the national interests of the United States to
acceded to the UN Law of the Sea Treaty?

General Hyten: I am not a legal expert on the Law of
the Sea Treaty, so I do not know the pros and cons, Senator
of the benefits of that. I do know that the Law of the Sea
is an appropriate standard that nations look at, including
the United States when they consider freedom of navigation,
when they consider borders, when they consider all those
kind of pieces. But I do not have enough legal knowledge to
talk about the issue about that treaty. I have not looked
at that, Senator.

Senator King: Thank you.

How do you define the national security interests of
the United States in the Arctic, which is one of the most
strategic areas in the world?

General Hyten: I think the national security interests
of the Arctic have always been critical to North America. I
have been a member of NORAD, the North American Aerospace
Defense Command. I have watched General O’Shaughnessy talk
about it this year in particular, and I think he talks about
it very well as the Commander of NORTHCOM and NORAD.

As the climate changes that that part of the world does
open up to navigation, the threats up there will be much
more significant. But you go all the way back to the 1950s
when we built the Distant Early Warning Line all the way up
north in order to watch the threats from the Soviet Union at
the time to make sure we could see the threats in time to
respond. That has always been a critical piece. It is
going to become more critical, though, as the sea lanes open
up.

Senator King: I agree.

I have friends in Maine who say why are we paying all
this money to upgrade the nuclear forces. We have missiles.
We have bombs. We have airplanes. We have submarines. Why
are we spending money to talk about upgrading them? Give me
the argument to take home.

General Hyten: So in 2029, it is going to become very,
very difficult to maintain the Minuteman force in its
current configuration just because of the nature of rockets. And I will not go into the details there.

Senator King: You mean just because of their age?

General Hyten: Just because of their age. The same is going to happen with the B-2. Because of the stealth characteristics of the B-2, it is going to have to be replaced. It is interesting because at a certain date in the future -- and I will not go into that here -- the Ohio class submarine that we currently operate will not be able to go into the water anymore. And therefore, we have to have a new submarine to replace that.

Senator King: But what is behind all of that? Why do we need all those things?

General Hyten: Because we have adversaries who are building a triad to challenge us. And in order for us to effectively deter them -- because remember, the primary use of our nuclear arsenal is to prevent the use of nuclear weapons on the United States of America.

Senator King: The purpose of having the weapons is to never use them. Is that not correct?

General Hyten: It is, and it is a dichotomy. It also has to be ready to use them, and we have to have ready forces. And our adversaries have to know that.

Senator King: Because if they are not ready, if they are not capable, then they are not an effective deterrent.
General Hyten: They are not an effective deterrent.

That is exactly right.

Senator King: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator King.

Senator Rounds?

Senator Rounds: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Hyten, first I want to thank you and your family for 38 years of service to this nation. I know that the events of the last few months have been hard on you and on your family. But I also am certain that you understand the reason why you need to move forward.

I just want to say, first of all, thank you to Chairman Inhofe and Ranking Member Reed for conducting a very thorough and a very fair inquiry. And I have appreciated the hours which a lot of the members of this committee have put in. And I appreciated your testimony as well before us in executive session.

I would like to focus right now on some issues that I think we do not talk enough about, and that is with regard to the readiness of the armed forces today and what needs to be done about it. I am just going to describe a couple of issues that I am aware of that I think have to be resolved in the near future. Let me just give some examples.

We have B-1B bombers. This is the workhorse of the Air
Force today. Right now, of all of our B-1 bombers, we have six of them that are fully mission-capable, five split between Ellsworth Air Force Base and Dyess Air Force Base. One is a test aircraft. 15 B-1’s are in depot. The remaining 39 of 44 B-1’s at Ellsworth and at Dyess are down for a variety of discrepancies and inspections. That is the workhorse of the Air Force.

When it comes to the Navy, we have F/A-18’s, which at one point only 40 percent of them were mission-capable, 60 percent were not. We have moved up from that. We are perhaps closing in on the 60 percent range now. We are making progress but certainly sequestration was devastating.

Within the Navy itself just on nuclear attack submarines, the USS Boise is an example of what happens when you do not have the resources or the capabilities. The Boise, a attack submarine, a nuclear-powered submarine, paid for by taxpayers was at dock not even in dry dock for a period of years. It will have been at dry dock or at dock not even capable of submerging for 6 years. Three other nuclear attack submarines we find in exactly the same predicament. It means that our depots simply are not ready for them.

When it comes to the F-15’s, we have F-15’s that have been held down because they have not met structural requirements. We have got F-22’s right now that are the
premier fighter aircraft in the world today, and yet their age is showing. Time and again it has not just been sequestration, but it is a matter of depot and the capability to put equipment into depot and get it out in a timely fashion.

We are going to look at a -- this year, our committee is recommending or at least we are prepared to vote on a $738 billion defense budget. I would like you to just very-- if you could in two different areas. Number one, what do we got to do to get the depot systems so that they actually work the way they are supposed to?

And second of all, can you imagine a scenario in which we could do any justice to all to these men and women who wear the uniform and need absolutely good equipment if we end up with a $576 billion defense budget rather than a $738 billion defense budget as required by sequestration if we are not able to move the existing defense proposal forward found in the BBA this year?

General Hyten: So actually I think the answer to your question, Senator, is the same for both questions, and that is stable funding. When you look at the challenges with the depot and you look at our readiness problems, many of the readiness problems date back to the first year of sequestration. That is when we impacted readiness across the board. That, combined with continuous at-war
capabilities for the last 18 years -- you put those things
together and it puts a huge stress on the force.

So having stable funding is critical. That is why when
I saw the agreement on the $738 billion in the Bipartisan
Budget Act -- because my biggest fear was a return to
continuing sequestration or a long-term continuing
resolution. Both those scared me first from a readiness
perspective, certainly from a modernization, but readiness
because we are just now starting to come out.

You raised the B-1 issues. That is in my portfolio.

My air component watches that close. We took a hard look at
that after the problem with the Fitzgerald and the John S.
McCain in the Pacific to see if across our force we saw
anything. We saw issues in the B-1 because we were just
beating the heck out of them, deploying them, deploying
them. And so we had to pull back a little bit and get after
fixing those issues. And the depots can do that if they
have stable funding.

So this is a critical issue, Senator, and I appreciate
you raising it.

Senator Rounds: Thank you, General.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Rounds.

Senator Heinrich?

Senator Heinrich: General Hyten, as you know, I am
concerned about the risks that NNSA is taking by splitting
the production of plutonium pits between Los Alamos and the
MOX facility, the mixed oxide fuel facility, in South
Carolina. I want to ask you if you are concerned about that
risk, especially with respect to meeting the timelines for
LAP, which you have touched on, but also with respect to the
potential for splitting the expertise and potentially
creating a brain drain between the Center for Excellence at
Los Alamos and a facility that has yet to be stood up at
MOX.

General Hyten: So one of the things that Administrator
Lisa Gordon-Hagerty and I have discussed is that it is the
STRATCOM position, my position, that we cannot split the
expertise from Los Alamos. We have to focus on Los Alamos,
get to 30 at Los Alamos.

When you looked at the long-term plan, however, it was
going to be difficult at Los Alamos to get to 80. It would
still be difficult to get to 80 at Los Alamos. But the key
to everything is getting to 30, and what we cannot do, in
order to get to 30, is pull people out of Los Alamos and
send them to Savannah River in order to build up that
capability. We cannot do that.

And so as the STRATCOM Commander, I have had my staff
continually go out there. And I am sure that bugs the DOE
folks a little bit, but I just want to make sure we are
watching that and understand what that is. I think I have a
great relationship with the Administrator, a great
relationship with the Secretary of Energy. We are not going
to make that mistake, and we are going to watch it closely.
So if I am confirmed as the Vice Chairman, I will still get
to watch it from the Nuclear Weapons Council perspective.

Senator Heinrich: I appreciate your bugging. I think
that is my concern exactly, and I appreciate your focus on
that.

We have had some conversations in the past about the
modernization of our space assets and, in particular, on the
importance of preserving our successful investments, the
things that are working well, and not reinventing the wheel
as we stand up new capabilities. So as you well know, the
Space Rapid Capabilities Office, Space Vehicles Directorate,
Advanced System Directorate all play a critical role in
researching and developing our nation’s space systems.

I just want to ask you if I have your commitment that
you will push for the full utilization of those existing
assets even as we modernize our overall space capabilities.

General Hyten: I commit to that, Senator. They are an
important piece of the answer.

Senator Heinrich: One of the things I was pleased with
this year is the growing interest and investment in
hypersonic R&D. Over the last several months, the Pentagon
actually requested a transfer of $50 million to cover the
cost of the design and development of a prototype mobile
launcher for a long-range hypersonic weapon.

Can you talk a little bit from your perspective about
this reprogramming and, more broadly, where you see the
future of hypersonic development going for DOD?

General Hyten: Yes, sir. As a combatant commander, I
am not involved in the details of moving the money around,
but I am a huge advocate for pursuing hypersonic technology.
I am also a huge advocate for looking at hypersonic defenses
and hypersonic sensing. That is what I can do as the
combatant commander because this is critical to our nation’s
future. We have adversaries that are going extremely
rapidly in this area, and we have had fits and starts over
the years on that hypersonic technology which I believe is a
mistake. We should have been going after that technology
consistently and rapidly over the years, and we have not.

So if I am confirmed as Vice Chairman, I guarantee you that
we will advocate inside the Joint Requirements Oversight
Council, the JROC, and other places in order to ensure we
continue to focus on hypersonics.

Senator Heinrich: It seems to me that there are a
handful of these capabilities like hypersonics, like
directed energy that really are going to define the nature
of the relationship between us and our near-peer adversaries
in the coming years.

   Another one of them is artificial intelligence.

Secretary Esper explained his belief that artificial intelligence will likely change the character of warfare and whoever masters it first will dominate on the battlefield for many, many, many years. I tend to agree with that estimation and would just like your thoughts on the importance of AI.

General Hyten: I have got to speak on that a few times in the past in public, once in Halifax with Eric Schmidt of Alphabet Google talking about that impact. It is going to be significant. There is no doubt. I believe the United States has got to have a leadership position in that area. But we also have to have a leadership position in understanding how you integrate that capability into our concept of operations, and we have not really done that yet. And if we do not get that right, we could make some big mistakes in terms of giving command authority to a computer, those kind of things. We cannot let that happen. The way I look at it is artificial intelligence has got to help us do the job better, but it cannot tell us what to do.

Senator Heinrich: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Heinrich.

Senator Ernst?

Senator Ernst: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
General Hyten, you have been nominated to be the second-highest ranking military officer in the United States armed forces. This position demands the highest levels of trust and responsibility, of course, sound judgment, and an impeccable moral compass.

You have been accused of sexual misconduct by a subordinate officer. I have reviewed the evidence, as well as your performance while serving as the STRATCOM Commander. We have heard numerous times -- members of this committee have stated -- to focus on the facts. And yet, the facts have left me with concerns regarding your judgment, leadership, and fitness to serve as the next Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. So I do have several questions for you. If you would just answer yes or no or keep your answers very brief.

A recent investigation revealed that several subordinates reported their concerns directly to you regarding the alleged toxic leadership style of the Commander Action Group Director who was an officer under your command. Now, you stated that a small number of people had brought concerns to you. About how many people brought concerns to you?

General Hyten: I would say approximately less than half a dozen.

Senator Ernst: Less than half a dozen. What were the
ranks of those individuals?

General Hyten: Civilian, major, Navy captain.

Senator Ernst: Would you say they are fairly high ranking, experienced?

General Hyten: I would say that. Pretty much the entire STRATCOM headquarters is a very senior group of people.

Senator Ernst: Absolutely.

And how many people serve in the Commander Action Group?

General Hyten: None.

Senator Ernst: You only have one CAG --

General Hyten: How many people serve in the Commander Action -- I am sorry.

Senator Ernst: Yes.

General Hyten: I missed your specific question.

Approximately eight.

Senator Ernst: So you said about a half dozen folks brought forward concerns, and you have eight people that serve. So it sounds like a large number of the CAG brought concerns to you, and these are leaders that are fairly experienced and have a good number of years at service.

General Hyten: Nobody on the CAG brought me those --

Senator Ernst: So these are outside folks bringing concerns to you. Okay. Thank you for that clarification.
General Hyten: Now, just to clarify, if you go back to the executive session, you will see I described one individual who came to me to speak for people on the CAG, and that was the one that was the instigator for me to take action.

Senator Ernst: And despite the fact that you recited numerous times throughout the investigation as enabling this alleged toxic leader within your command, you did not take the inquiry outside of STRATCOM for an impartial commander to review or adjudicate. Correct?

General Hyten: No, ma'am, I did not.

Senator Ernst: About a month before the start of this investigation on November 14th, 2017, you gave the CAG Director a phenomenal officer evaluation report, rating her number one of 71 colonels within your command and evaluated her as having multi-star potential. Is that correct?

General Hyten: Yes, ma'am, it is.

Senator Ernst: Yet, about 90 days later after the investigation was completed, you approved a written reprimand of Colonel Spletstoser. Correct?

General Hyten: I was aware of the written reprimand. That came from the Army element commander, but I was certainly aware of it.

Senator Ernst: Okay.

During the time that the CAG Director was under your
command, did you ever formally counsel her in writing about
the deficiencies in her leadership or performance?

General Hyten: I only counseled her verbally about her
language.

Senator Ernst: Okay.

Even though other members had brought forward
allegations of a toxic leadership.

General Hyten: And I translated that to the language
that she was using.

Senator Ernst: Okay, but never for any other actions.

General Hyten: No, ma’am.

Senator Ernst: After the 15-6 investigation had been
initiated, you actively advocated for her by emailing and
calling several other general officers to secure a follow-on
position for her. Is it safe to assume that at this time
you still thought highly of her as an officer?

General Hyten: So I had questions about her
capabilities then, but when the Army element commander and I
sat her down to inform her of the 15-6 investigation, and we
walked through all of the events -- and I talked about those
in executive session significantly -- I told her that I
would allow the process to play out before I did anything
else. And I asked her if these allegations were true. She
told me clearly, specifically, concisely that they were
false, that they were not true. She would be found
innocent. And I committed to her that I would not treat her
any different until I had firm evidence to the contrary.

Senator Ernst: I am very concerned that during the
process of your time as the STRATCOM Commander, there had
been this CAG Director within our command that other people
multiple times went to you, voiced their concerns about the
toxic leadership, but you did not acknowledge that. You did
not do written counseling statements. You did not advise
her any differently. You serve in one of the most important
positions within our United States military overseeing our
nuclear arsenal. However, you could not bring yourself to
admit or recognize toxic leadership within your command.
You did nothing to change that course until a 15-6
investigation was brought forward. And you continued to
endorse her. You only did something about it when concerns
were raised about your own leadership. And the
investigation was not forwarded on to your higher echelon
command, which I see as a clear conflict of interest.

So all of this suggests a conflict between your
personal inclinations and your professional
responsibilities. There are professional responsibilities
associated with being such a high-ranking leader, and that
is to make sure that those within your command are following
your directive and not -- not -- engaging in toxic
leadership. So this leaves me with concerns about your
judgment and ability to lead in one of the highest positions in the U.S. military.

I will listen to the rest of the confirmation process, but I do want to share those concerns today.

So thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Chairman Inhofe: Thank you. Senator Ernst.

Senator Manchin?

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

And thank you, General Hyten, and your family for the services you have given to our great country.

If I could ask the first question is what do you consider the greatest threat the United States of America faces today and in the near future.

General Hyten: From my perspective, the greatest long-range challenge is China because they have the economic power and they are building the military power to challenge us regionally and ultimately globally.

Well, back in 2010, I will never forget we had at that time Admiral Mullen, and we asked him the question, and he says the debt of our nation is the greatest threat we face. We are going over a trillion dollars again, and the reason I say that the good people of West Virginia ask me how we are spending the money for the military. And we have -- I am going to use round figures -- around $700 billion is what our budget is, give or take over and under. And then you
look at China, about $250 billion. And then you look at
Russia, about $60 billion-$65 billion. And we try to
justify why we are so more costly.

Then we look at basically the people that we have in
uniform. I think in the military, we have in the U.S. 1.3
active, another 860,000 reserves. China has 2.2 million
active, 510,000 reserves. And Russia has a million active
and 2 and a half million in reserve.

But we use probably more contractors at higher cost
than any country, all countries put together. And I look at
basically National Guard, Reserves, and things that we have
specialties in that we could utilize a lot greater. Have
you all identified that and looked at ways that we could
justify and maybe have a little better control of the costs
that we are spending right now?

General Hyten: So I will give you a specific example,
Senator, because I think the point you raise is a really
good one. But we have to work together with the Congress to
balance the number of people we have in uniform versus how
we are going to use contractors in particular.

But in the next generation ICBM, for example, twice in
my career we basically said we do not need engineers in that
program anymore in the military, and we will just hire it
out to contractors. Two things happened with that. Number
one, you lose the expertise inside the military, and number
two, I will just say you end up with the fox guarding the
henhouse. And I am very concerned about that. I am
concerned about the way we had to put that program in place.
We had to structure that program because we did not have the
expertise.

We need to continue to build that technical engineering
support inside our military and continue to work that
forward because that is critical to our ability to do that.
But I have seen twice in my career where everything is fine.
We will just get rid of the engineers. We do not need that.

Now, you apply that to the guard and reserve. Holy cow,
there are things we can do with the guard and reserve. We
have not even scratched the surface of it because --

Senator Manchin: That would be a high priority of
yours then, looking at how we basically utilize what we have
and the potential we have to use it better?

General Hyten: Yes, Senator, absolutely.

Senator Manchin: I appreciate that.

Just in overview, it seems like we are reluctant to
really support Taiwan and to sell the F-16’s because we are
afraid it might cause a rumble with China. But yet we have
said and done nothing with China’s aggression in the South
China Sea, aggression in moving further out on the Pacific
Rim. What are we concerned about? If we do not show
strength to them -- and I know Russia and how sometimes that
they will react when they do not understand that we are
going to be resolved in showing strength against them. What
is your evaluation there?

General Hyten: I am a big believer in President
Reagan’s peace through strength structure. I believe we
have to show strength. My command in the last few years has
had bombers deployed in the Pacific and we send bombers from
the United States into the Pacific to the Korean Peninsula
in support of Japan, Korea, a number of our allies there.
We have to continue to show strength because we want peace,
and the only way to guarantee that peace is to make sure
that our adversaries understand that we will not allow
certain behaviors.

Senator Manchin: And the other thing I want to talk
about is the Space Force and I think just directly asking
you, do you believe that that general in charge of Space
Force should be elevated to the Joint Chiefs of Staff?

General Hyten: I do believe that.

I really appreciate the work the Senate has done and
the House in terms of defining that future. I think I am a
little concerned about the level of responsibility we are
going to give General Raymond here shortly if he becomes the
head of the Space Force, as well as the head of the new
Space Command. I think there is a good transition in the
Senate plan, but I think we are going to have to work
together. And I hope, if I am confirmed as the Vice Chairman, you reach out to me and ask me to help you work through that because that is going to be a complicated arrangement. But I think we are in a very good place now across the legislation that is proposed.

Senator Manchin: And you believe as far as breaking out from the Air Force, the space program is the right thing to do?

General Hyten: I think it has to be under the Air Force. I think the Space Force should be under the Air Force. It is not big enough to bring out --

Senator Manchin: Sir, that is exactly my point. I just cannot get there. I cannot get there with the Joint Chiefs of Staff. If it is going to be under the Air Force and the Air Force has done one heck of a good job all these years, why can we not continue that type of support and command under that?

General Hyten: I think it is going to be a similar model to the Marine Corps where the Commandant of the Marine Corps is a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, but the Marine Corps is under the Department of the Navy. I think the head of the Space Force is going to be a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff at some point, but under the Department of the Air Force. I think that is how you keep that small. That is how you keep the bureaucracy from going
crazy. That is why you do not have all the replication of support you would have to have across the board.

Senator Manchin: Thank you, again, General Hyten. I appreciate you being here.

General Hyten: Thank you, sir.

Chairman Inhofe: Thank you.

Senator Tillis?

Senator Tillis: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member, for the process that we have played out here.

And, General Hyten, thank you for being here.

Congratulations to your family for your nomination.

I want to get an idea of your headquarters staff. How big is it? How many direct reports do you have?

General Hyten: The headquarters staff is about 3,500 people. Direct reports is a fairly small number. I would say roughly 10 to 20.

Senator Tillis: Okay. And 10 to 20 direct reports.

Over the course of a day, how much time do you spend with your direct reports, and how much time would you spend with your CAG?

General Hyten: So over the course of a day, I would spend more time with the J directors, the joint staff of my staff, than I would the CAG. But when we do travel, I spend more time with the CAG Director than I spend with the joint staff. That would be the balance.
Senator Tillis: You responded to a prior question that you had five or six people come to you expressing a concern with a toxic environment on the part of the CAG, and you said all of them were outside of the CAG, so it was not the eight people working for the colonel. And then one of them came to you and expressed their concerns on behalf of people who report to the CAG.

Can you give me an idea of a timeline? When did that discussion -- was that the last discussion that you had before you ordered the 15-6?

General Hyten: No. The last discussion was in the late fall of 2017, and it is when I ordered a preliminary inquiry into the overall climate of the front office, not just the Commander’s Action Group but my office, the Deputy’s office, the chief of staff’s office, the lawyer, the public affairs protocol, everybody that was in the front office because, to be honest, I was still looking at the issue from this might be an Air Force, Army, Navy issue because Army officers tend to be a little more aggressive, a little more rough around the edges. And you need to understand. She is brilliant. She was doing spectacular work.

Senator Tillis: It is true that you gave a very strong evaluation, but based on your knowledge of the past history, has that been typically true of other assignments that the
colonel had?

     General Hyten: She had up and down in her background.

I do not know much about her time as an earlier officer, but
I know that there were up and down times in her background.

     Senator Tillis: I should have started by saying I want
to fully associate myself with Senator McSally’s comments.

The work that she has done here, I mean, literally the
public needs to understand the hours of research that have
gone in ahead of this committee, the nearly 1,300-page
report that we have reviewed, every allegation that has been
studied, pinned down and proven to not have any
corroborating testimony. I think all that information will
continue as we move forward and hopefully vote on your
confirmation this week.

     I want to shift to some local issues in North Carolina
and really the housing situation across the country. Are
you aware of some of the military housing problems that we
have, and can you give me a quick thumbnail on what we need
to do to improve it?

     General Hyten: I am fully aware of those problems. I
have seen those problems. We actually have very good
housing at Offutt Air Force Base where I live now and a
great support set. But that is not the case in a large
number of bases across the country. When we started down
this privatized housing path, I really did not like the
model we were putting in place. We were putting in a low-cost model, looking for low bidders to provide the housing that will take care of our families.

Senator Tillis: Can I get your commitment to make sure this is a priority to get it right this time?

General Hyten: Yes, sir, absolutely.

Senator Tillis: You know, we are going through the discussion right now on the budget caps deal. And if I am China, I am hoping that we fail to get this approved. Right? If we move into a 3-month sort of a scenario on funding and they are into decades-long scenarios on funding, what does that do to your ability to actually achieve any of the goals that are in the National Defense Strategy?

General Hyten: It impacts -- I mean, the National Defense Strategy has an assumption of stable budgets.

Senator Tillis: Would it be fair to say it would be devastating?

General Hyten: It would be devastating. Even a CR that goes for a few months is going to be impactful. A yearlong CR would be devastating. Sequestration would be even beyond that.

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

General Hyten: Thank you, Senator.

Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Tillis.
The next one to be recognized will be Senator Duckworth. However, we have three votes that are starting. I am going to go down and catch the first one, come back, and Senator Reed will be following. So you are recognized and Senator Fischer is presiding.

Senator Duckworth: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Hyten, I would like to talk a little bit about the NDS and looking at force projection. We have spent money on F-35’s. We have spent money on new capabilities. We are talking about the nuclear fleet. But I do think that we have overlooked the logistics capability or lack thereof within our military. I do not think we have the sealift hulls, the capability, or the heavy lift airlift capabilities in order to project and sustain our forces abroad for any extended period of time.

Do you agree with that assessment, and can you give us your opinion on that?

General Hyten: So I do, Senator. I think if you look across the entire Transportation Command portfolio, I think you will find some of the biggest challenges we have in the military. And it is not just the lift side, not the sealift side, the airlift side, ground. It is the tanker piece as well.

If you look at what we have to do in order to move around the world, we are tied to the logistics train. If we
cannot effectively move quickly, reliably, and effectively, we cannot do what the National Defense Strategy says we need to do. And we are slowly coming on with the KC-46. We have challenges on the lift side. If you look across their entire portfolio, there are big issues there that need to be worked.

Senator Duckworth: Will you commit to working those issues?

General Hyten: If I am confirmed as the Vice Chairman— I guarantee that General Milley is fully aware of them too. General Dunford is. If I am confirmed as the Vice Chairman, I guarantee we will look at that close.

Senator Duckworth: Thank you.

Looking to the Indo-Pacific region, if confirmed as Vice Chair, would you make sure that our day-to-day relationships with partners and allies are strong enough to withstand friction with China? One of the things I learned when I went to Singapore with the Defense Forum, the Shangri-La Summit, recently was that many of our not necessarily allies but friends in the region feel very much that they are unable to stand up to China because we are not there. And just having our presence in the Indo-Pacific region allowed them to say, hey, we cannot do everything you want us to do, China, because the Americans are here not necessarily forcing them to choose but really just being a
presence and increasing that presence.

Would you agree with the assessment that we need to improve that presence in the region?

General Hyten: Senator, when you read the National Defense Strategy, it is clear that China is a priority, and we have to treat it as a priority, which means we have to be present, present in the right places. We have to partner with the right nations and build those partnerships over the years, and you cannot build partnerships if you are not there.

Senator Duckworth: Thank you.

I do want to touch on the allegations against you. Is it true that your official cell phone that was reviewed for text messages, that you turned over very willingly, was wiped in an upgrade process?

General Hyten: I read that in the investigation. I was not aware that it was wiped. I guess it was part of a normal update. So I have an official phone. I use the official phone. It gets software updates and other updates all the time. To me it is just the unclassified phone.

Senator Duckworth: What I learned from the investigation and the report was that, indeed, both yours and the colonel’s phones were wiped and that they were only actually able to review a couple months worth of text. So there were quite a few text messages that were not able to
be reviewed.

In your answer previously to my colleagues about what will you do to demonstrate leadership in the area of sexual assault in the military in solving this problem, your answer was really vague. I really wanted to hear so much more, and for you to say I do not know enough and I am going to wait and talk to the experts really bothers me because you have had such precise answers on everything else. And, yes, this is a cancer within our military. This is a cancer within our own ranks.

And you said you have been concerned about this since Lackland. So you had over 10-plus years while you have been in leadership to talk about this, and you cannot tell us that when you become Vice Chair, one of the first things you are going to do would be, say, appoint someone to your personal staff whose job it is to deal with this, create a panel that is going to look at this, go out to the Air Force Academy and personally figure out what is going on. You cannot come up with any ideas like that after 10 years of concern? I worry about your leadership on this issue.

General Hyten: So, as the Vice Chairman, I will need to work with the Chairman and the services. Most of these issues have to be handled in the services. But as the Vice Chairman, I will have a significant role in reaching out to work those issues. There is no doubt.
In the United States Air Force, we have gone through multiple programs, Green Dot programs, respect programs, a number of different programs.

Senator Duckworth: And they have not worked.

General Hyten: And they have not worked.

So clearly from my background and perspective and the reason I said what I did earlier is that I have thought about it a lot. I have worked with people close to me asking what should we do. It is a very vexing problem for me because every time I see the numbers, they seem to be worse. They do not seem to be better. And we are taking all these actions. I think those are all good programs too. I think those programs are effective, and I have got good feedback from them. But the numbers do not change. So it is a vexing problem, Senator.

And I can commit to you that I will do everything with General Dunford, General Milley, if I am confirmed, to put the right people in place, a team in place. I will support working with the Congress, working with those issues to get after that issue. We have tried so many things in the military, and I have been part of the leadership team that tried all those things and implemented them. Well, the numbers say they are not working.

Senator Duckworth: Thank you.

I yield back.
Senator Fischer [presiding]: Senator Cramer?

Senator Cramer: Thank you, Senator Fischer.

Let me add my voice to the chorus of praise for you, Senator Reed, and for Chairman Inhofe for conducting an incredible process for all of us. I have prayed that God would give you both wisdom, and I have prayed to thank him that he has. And so I express that to you.

And thank you, General Hyten, for your service and to your family for your incredible sacrifice and service for all these years and your willingness to continue to do it.

I want to follow up on couple of the things that have been brought up here. In fact, real quickly with regard to Senator Duckworth’s questions about text messages, that same technology of wiping the phone clean does not apply to emails. Is that correct? In other words, all of the emails that were referenced were available. I think we have looked at 195,000 -- the inspectors have. I have not.

General Hyten: All the emails are available.

Senator Cramer: All right. I just wanted to make sure that is clear.

With regard to Senator Ernst’s issue of judgment and the toxic leadership issue, I am just going to bring up a few things and then just let you respond to that.

First of all, she referenced a conflict of interest that I do not believe you had time to respond to, but the
distinction that the 15-6 was an Army channel inspection or
investigation -- you are Air Force. Maybe you could help
clarify that a little bit with regard again to the conflict
of interest claim.

And then if you could also tell me is there -- did
anyone else provide the glowing reviews of the colonel that
you are being now somehow chastised for? I want to make
sure that it is not just you with some infatuation.

And thirdly, maybe just to round it all off, is it
unusual for toxic leadership to be more easily identified by
subordinates than by superiors? In other words, maybe that
clarifies it simply enough.

I just throw things out and let you respond to that and
then maybe save a minute for a question about GBSD.

General Hyten: So, she was a White House fellow. Very
few people in the military ever make it to be a White House
fellow. That is one of the highest accolades across the
entire executive branch of government, to be a White House
fellow. That is significant. That shows you the power of
her intellect. And she had four-star commanders in the past
that pushed her to be a White House fellow. So my
predecessor, when I took command, had nothing but great
things to say about her.

When I look at a White House fellow and my predecessor
is one of the finest gentlemen I never met, say nothing but
glowing things about her, I am assuming that this is a spectacular officer. I saw that and then I saw the continuing great work and all of those pieces coming forward. And that is how the situation started and that is how we walked down that path. And I assumed that the Army had sent me this spectacular officer, and I saw that in her performance. That is how it worked.

Senator Cramer: So is it unusual for a boss to view a subordinate through a different perspective than a subordinate’s subordinate?

General Hyten: This was difficult for me to understand as a commander because I let that happen in my organization. So the Army regulation 600-100 that became part of the 15-6 investigation became very important for me to understand. And I read it in detail. It was published in 2017 because commanders were having just this problem. They were having problems identifying toxic leaders. And I had never read that before, but when I went through the documentation, I saw exactly what was happening in my organization but I did not recognize it at first.

Senator Cramer: Then just shifting gears to the one main issue that I have raised in the last couple weeks with both General Milley and Secretary Esper. You and I have talked about it in the past, but there has been a new development and that relates to the timeline and the
importance of the timeline of the ground-based strategic
deterrent and the replacement for the Minuteman III, which
we have, of course, at Minot, as you know. And there are
some that, of course, think that we are going too fast, that
the whole thing should be delayed, that the Air Force is
moving too quickly with the RFP.

But now with the back-out of Boeing from the process,
does that raise concerns for you, and is there any reason
that that should deter us, if you excuse the expression,
from continuing on the path that we are on?

General Hyten: Well, I always get concerned when
competition disappears from America. Anytime we are in a
competitive environment, that puts pressure on schedule,
pressure on costs, and we have a higher likelihood of
getting delivery of the capability. That is why I was so
disappointed when Boeing decided not to compete for GBSD.

I am not in the acquisition world, though, and I have
not talked to the Air Force acquisition or the DOD
acquisition leadership about the impacts of that. I know
that we have many programs that are well run with a single
contractor at this point in the competition. I think that
the remaining competitor could be that person, but I have
not looked at it in detail. But if I am confirmed as the
Vice Chairman, I will look at that in detail, Senator.

Senator Cramer: Thank you. Thank you for your
willingness to continue in this process. I look forward to supporting your confirmation.

General Hyten: Thank you.

Senator Fischer: Thank you, Senator Cramer.

Senator Jones?

Senator Jones: Thank you, Madam Chairman.

And, General, thank you for being here. Thank you for your service. Thank you to your family for the service and all that you have been going through.

And I especially want to, well, one, thank Chairman Inhofe and Senator Reed also for the way that this has been handled throughout the investigation.

But I also want to thank Dr. Wilson for being here. I will tell you that Dr. Wilson’s opening introduction pretty much encapsulated my feelings about all that we have heard, all the we have seen. I do not think there is any better summary and reaching the same conclusions.

And I especially talk about the investigation a little bit because for 38 years I practiced law, and I was both a prosecutor that sat with victims and sat with witnesses and tried to assess not only credibility but also build investigations around what they said because that is really where you lead. And in terms of future sexual assault cases and all, you have to think about that. And I think that is exactly what happened here. But I have also sat with people
who have been accused and have done the same thing for my own investigations.

So the fact that this has been such an exhaustive, extensive, professional investigation speaks volumes to where we are today and what we have got to assess.

So I thank Dr. Wilson for giving that summary. I thank the chairman and ranking member for allowing us whatever time was needed as members of this committee.

So having said that, let us talk, move on to some of the things that are pressing that you will find in this job, should you be confirmed.

General, China, Russia, North Korea, Iran -- they are all becoming more and more confident in challenging the United States just below the level of military conflict, what many refer to as the gray zone. And they are doing it with various tools. It includes cyber, information operations, proxy support, political coercion, and just other means.

So my question is, do you believe that the United States has a clear and comprehensive strategy for gray zone competition? And by competition, I do not mean just reacting when something in the world happens. I mean anticipating and deterring that gray zone competition as well.

General Hyten: Senator, I do not believe the nation
has a clear strategy for dealing with that gray zone
competition right now. I think it is a very complicated
issue because it is a whole-of-government issue. It is not
just a military issue. It is not something that the
military can sit down and say, okay, how do we deal with the
gray zone conflict because it impacts commerce. It impacts
homeland security. It impacts almost every element of our
society. And so we have to figure out how to do that
together as a whole of government. And it is a different
world that we live in. And the way our country is
structured, it becomes a little bit problematic to move
quickly there, whereas adversaries can move quickly in there
because there is a single decision-maker that moves down
that path.

So we have to sit down and figure this out. I know
that we teams doing that right now. I have asked a team at
STRATCOM to look at what the STRATCOM role in a gray zone
conflict should be because it is a learning experience right
now. The Department is looking at that, but it is a whole-
of-government issue.

Senator Jones: Thank you.

And I take it from your answer, though, that that is
being done as a priority that you think that we need to do
for the future?

General Hyten: It absolutely is a priority because it
is going to be part of our world for as far as I can see into the future.

Senator Jones: The last thing I want to just ask. I saw where Secretary Pompeo announced this week that the President has said that we need to draw down troops in Afghanistan by election day 2020, which quite frankly I find a little bit disturbing that it was based on election as opposed to some military decisions.

I was in Afghanistan with Senator Reed, Senator Shaheen recently. Do you see a drawdown that will completely remove all troops out of Afghanistan? And the reason I say that is because -- I asked the question because it seems pretty clear to me that ISIS is still a serious, serious threat over there, and we cannot take our foot off of their neck while at the same time dealing with China and Russia and their influence over there. How do you see the troop drawdown that the President wants playing out in the next few months?

General Hyten: So, again, Senator, that is not the STRATCOM area of expertise, but I have talked about that a lot inside the senior leadership of the Department, and I have been in those discussions.

There will be a drawdown of troops in the future. I do not think there is any doubt of that, but I think it has to be conditions-based, not necessarily just a specific date.
It has got to be the conditions are right on that specific date, and then we can get there from here. I have not talked to the President or Secretary Pompeo, but the conditions have to be set in Afghanistan before I think we can fully leave because otherwise the challenge will be the Taliban, the ISIS threat, the various terrorist threats can raise themselves up again. We cannot let that happen.

Senator Jones: Thank you, General. That is precisely the answer I was hoping to get. So thank you very much for your testimony.

Chairman Inhofe [presiding]: Thank you, Senator Jones.

Senator Blackburn?

Senator Blackburn: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And, General, thank you so much.

And, Secretary Wilson, we appreciate that you are here, and we like having you back in D.C. So thank you for being here.

And to your family, I want to say welcome. We appreciate that you all are here, and we are thankful for your time and your willingness to work this.

I want to stay right where Senator Jones was looking at what I call the new axis of evil, which is Russia and China and Iran and North Korea. And when we talk about Russia and China, they are putting quite an emphasis on their strategic and non-nuclear weapons, one of which is cyber. And I want
to encourage you, as you take on the new role, to help end
this perception that they are going to have the opportunity
to be a player in this great power competition. And I think
you are exactly right to say this is a strategy that is in
need of talking this out and developing a strategy and
having a game plan for how we move forward there. So I
thank you for your emphasis on that.

I want to talk for just a moment about the Republic of
Korea and have you comment for the record a little bit about
the value of that relationship, the importance of our joint
exercises as we look at that region and readiness of U.S.
forces and also just a little bit about the negotiation of
the new special measures agreement for 2020 and the
importance that that has to us.

General Hyten: So, Senator, when I look at the
Republic of Korea, I see one of the most important allies
that we have in the Indo-Pacific region. In STRATCOM
headquarters, we have a liaison officer from the Republic of
Korea because of the unique nature of the Republic of Korea
and the United States’ relationship.

In terms of readiness, General Abrams has stated
recently that with the level of exercises he has been able
to do, unit level exercises that he is fully ready to handle
any support, I think you should also know that STRATCOM is
ready to handle any kind of threat that might come from
North Korea as well.

So I think when you look at Korea, you have to make sure that we are always fully ready. But I can tell you 2017 was kind of a scary time at STRATCOM with what was going on in North Korea, so many missiles flying, nuclear tests. We were not sure whether they were going to pair nuclear weapons on top of that. We had to posture our forces. STRATCOM has not done that in a long time.

And when the political leadership started having talks, it got a whole lot better, and 2018 was a whole lot better, and 2019 has been good. And so I think everybody in the military hopes that the diplomatic process actually works. But we also understand that we have to be ready if it does not. And so our forces have to stay ready. The forces in the Indo-Pacific under Admiral Davidson and in Korea under General Abrams, the STRATCOM forces all have to be ready to respond if diplomacy does not work. But we are here in support of diplomacy right now.

Senator Blackburn: Thank you. I look forward to supporting your nomination and seeing you in the leadership role.

I yield back.

Chaiman Inhofe: Thank you.

Senator Kaine?

Senator Kaine: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
General Hyten, welcome. I want to applaud, as others have, the full process this committee has undertaken to explore the sexual assault allegations that have been leveled against you. And I believe that the hearing last week -- I also applaud your thorough answers, your answers to follow-up questions.

And I especially want to applaud your demeanor which we, as committee members, got to see. You firmly denied the allegations against you, but you did not speak in any way disrespectfully toward your accuser. That was not easy. Nor did you speak disrespectfully to the committee. You did not say we were engaging in a witch hunt or criticize us for asking you questions that we needed to ask you. And your demeanor today continues that pattern of recognizing that this is important and that you are here to answer all the questions that we ask, and that goes a long way with me.

I want to just ask you one question before moving on.

You would agree with me, would you not, that if the allegations of sexual assault leveled against you were true, they would be disqualifying?

General Hyten: Yes, Senator, absolutely.

Senator Kaine: Let me move and ask another question.

Advance policy questions were submitted to you and the answers to those questions were delivered to the committee I believe on Saturday, the 27th. Did you review the answers
to those questions?

General Hyten: I worked all of those answers. That was a significant effort for me and my staff because of the timing that was involved with this hearing.

Senator Kaine: Let me read you one of the questions and one of the answers.

Do you support United States’ accession to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea?

Here is your answer. Yes. Like my predecessors, I support joining the convention. Being a party to the convention enhances the United States’ security posture by reinforcing freedom of the seas and rights vital to ensuring our global force posture. The convention provides legal certainty in the world’s largest maneuver space.

My colleague, Senator King, asked you the question about whether you supported the United States joining the Convention on the Law of the Sea. And you said I am not a lawyer and I do not have an opinion about that.

Has anyone at the Department or the administration encouraged you to soften your support for the convention between the time you reviewed and submitted that answer on Saturday and your testimony today?

General Hyten: They have not, sir.

Senator Kaine: How would you explain to me the difference between your unequivocal support for the
convention in your written answer and your statement today that as somebody who is not a legal expert, you would not have an opinion about the question?

General Hyten: All I can say, Senator, is we were going too fast over the weekend. We were just going too fast, and I blew by that one. I read through them all. I looked at them to make sure I understood what they were. But I blew by that.

Senator Kaine: My belief is that that answer has sort of been a boiler plate position of the Department of Defense for many years that every current and past Secretary of Defense and Secretary of State has said that they support the Convention on the Law of the Sea, and the only time I have ever heard anyone sort of suggest maybe backing away from it is you today. And I just wanted to make sure that we are not seeing either an administration or a Department that is changing the position.

General Hyten: No. That is not true, Senator. Like I said in my answer to Senator King, I support all the elements that are in there.

Senator Kaine: Right. You support it in -- we should practically abide by it whether or not we join the convention.

General Hyten: Absolutely. So I agree with everything that is in there. I just -- I clearly went too fast on my
1 APQs.

2 Senator Kaine: It is relevant because I was worried if
3 somebody had suggested that you might take a different
4 position today, it would be relevant to another question
5 that Senator King asked, which is are you going to give your
6 unvarnished advice to the boss whether or not they are going
7 to agree with you.
8
9 General Hyten: I will always give my unvarnished
10 advice. And when I screw up, I am going to tell you I
11 screwed up too. So I will just say I screwed up.
12
13 Senator Kaine: I hope I will follow that same
14 standard.
15
16 Let me ask you a question about China, and you talked
17 about it a little bit. When General Milley was here, he
18 said, for his confirmation hearing, that in his view the
19 most important relationship in the world in the 21st century
20 is going to be the relationship between the United States
21 and China. And when the history of the century is written,
22 that relationship is going to be critical to how things go.
23 Do you agree with that?
24
25 General Hyten: I agree with that completely.
26
27 Senator Kaine: And would you agree that because of the
28 need to focus on China, not only their military capacity,
29 but they are also competitors in diplomacy, economically,
30 humanitarian aid, otherwise, that if we engage in
questionably necessary military activities or focus our
attentions elsewhere, we could do so at the risk of allowing
China to catch up and exceed us in their capacities,
military and otherwise?

General Hyten: I think we have to always watch closely
exactly where China is, understand what there is. I hope we
continue to have a closer military-to-military relationship
with China so we can understand each other. I think
transparency in those areas is very important, building
stability as we go into the future. We have tried to do
that with the Soviet Union, tried to do that with Russia. I
think China is a big piece of that, and I hope we work that
in the future.

Senator Kaine: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Kaine.

Senator Hawley?

Senator Hawley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, thank you for being here today.

I have been part of all five of the executive sessions
that this committee has held related to your nomination. I
have heard you testify at quite some length in executive
session. I heard the colonel, your accuser, testify at
quite some length in executive session. I have reviewed the
very extensive report on these allegations. I have also
reviewed some of the transcripts of your testimony and the
colonel’s from our executive sessions just to make sure that
I understood exactly what your answers were.

I want to give you an opportunity to respond now to
some of the allegations very specifically that have been
made in public. I understand, by the way, that you deny all
of these allegations, but let me just give you the
opportunity to respond specifically.

“The New York Times” reported on July the 26th that the
colonel alleges that on December the 2nd, 2017, the evening
of that day, you came to her room. This is while you were
came to her room and sexually assaulted her. On that
specific allegation, December 2nd, 2017, did that incident
happen, General?

General Hyten: That never happened.

Senator Hawley: Did you go to her room that night?

General Hyten: I have never been to her room, Senator.

Senator Hawley: So I just want to clarify that. Your
testimony is that you have never been to her room not only
on December the 2nd, but ever. Period.

General Hyten: Never, sir.

Senator Hawley: On any trip that you ever took.

General Hyten: On any trip ever.

Senator Hawley: “The New York Times” reports that the
military itinerary which they say the reporters say they
reviewed for that day said that during the relevant time,
your movement was accounted for as just executive time. How
would we verify, General? You say I did not go to her room
that night. I have never been to her room. How we might
know that that is true? How might we verify that?

General Hyten: I think you have to look in the
evidence that was submitted and look at the interviews with
the personal security detail, and look at the interviews
with the communication team. The only location of people
when I am traveling that I know about is my personal
security details, which is always right next to me, and the
communications suite because, as we talked about earlier, I
have to be able to get to certain communications at a
moment’s notice, and so I know where those people are. I
have no idea where anybody else on the team is at any one
time. They could be close by. They could be spread out
across the hotel. They could be in a different hotel.

Senator Hawley: But everybody knows where you are --

General Hyten: Everybody knows where I am. And my
security detail -- their job is to have eyes on me all the
time. Now, they have gone through their procedures with me.
They did that with Laura and myself from the earliest times,
the first day at STRATCOM. This is how we are going to do
that. Realize we will always have a key to your room. We
will always be able to access you, always be able to access your room. We will do the following things to have eyes on you all the time. It will be a little bit overwhelming, but notice that that is just our job. We are going to do it.

Senator Hawley: Let me ask you about one other thing because it has been reported in “The New York Times.” That article also alleges that there may have been some physical evidence that could have been subject to DNA testing related to that incident on December the 2nd. Do you know? Was there any DNA testing done that you are aware of?

General Hyten: That is in the investigation. I know that it was, and I know that there was nothing found.

Senator Hawley: And your understanding is, just on the last point, the DNA test found that there was nothing related to you. Is that your understanding? Is that what you just said?

General Hyten: That is correct. When I was interrogated by the investigators, I had to give a DNA sample. So I know they had the current DNA sample, and there was nothing there.

Senator Hawley: Let me just ask you finally, a different subject, on the NDS, which you have testified to today, which I think is so important. The need for new operational concepts under the NDS. Something the NDS Commission wrote was that the U.S. urgently requires new
operational concepts that expand U.S. options and constrain those of China, Russia, and other actors.

Of course, many of our existing joint warfighting operational concepts were developed before the NDS was written and issued. If you are confirmed, will you update those concepts, work on updating those, and will you brief us about your progress there so that we can appropriately budget?

General Hyten: Absolutely, Senator. I think the thing to realize is that the joint staff, the Chairman, the Vice Chairman today, the combatant commanders -- we have already recognized that that is an issue. And one of the things that we are building now is what we call globally integrated base plans because when you look at these challenges, it is not just my plan, the Indo-Pacific plan, the EUCOM plan. The key is how do all those plans come together in unity, and how do we fight in multiple domains at the same time with different commanders with different authorities, and how do we integrate the timing and tempo of operations. So this is going to be a significant challenge going forward, but we have started down that process and we are looking at it.

Senator Hawley: That just seems like such significant work, General. I am glad that you have begun this, and what you have outlined I think is so important. I will have some
more questions for you on this and nuclear deterrence, other
important matters.

But thank you for being here today and thank you for
your willingness to serve.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Inhofe: Thank you.

Senator McSally, you do have 3 and a half minutes
remaining if you would desire it.

Senator McSally: I have said my piece, Mr. Chairman.

I appreciate it.

Chairman Inhofe: Very good.

Senator Blumenthal is supposedly 1 minute away, and I
am about to miss the second vote. So you tell me. We are
going to wait a minute here because he has not had his
first. I anticipate we will have some other members who
have voted who will want to come back here. I will run down
and vote when Senator Blumenthal gets here and come right
back.

Okay. Senator McSally presiding.

Senator McSally: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We will wait for Senator Blumenthal.

[Pause.]

Senator McSally: Senator Blumenthal, you are
recognized.

Senator Blumenthal: Thank you. Thank you, Madam
Chair.

Thank you, General Hyten, for your patience, for your service to our nation, and for your family and you being here today.

I am probably the last to ask you questions, and I just want to say for myself that I appreciate your willingness to cooperate with this committee and to answer the questions that you have. Many of us, I think, feel there remain serious, unresolved questions and factual issues that have not been completely answered on the record. We will be submitting questions for the record. I know you will be responding promptly. And out of respect for the courageous men and women who serve in our military and who will answer to you, if you are confirmed, we need to seek those answers and make them public as much as possible.

A number of my colleagues have made reference to the truth that has been revealed to the committee in the course of the serious work that we have done and the hours that we spent and the documents we have reviewed, and all of it has been serious. And I want to say that I admire the work that my colleagues have done, but the public has no access to a lot of this information. And I am hopeful that you will support our making public, as much as we can, the proceedings of this committee that will show the public what has been done to seek the truth. And I hope you will
support.

General Hyten: And I support that.

Senator Blumenthal: And the men and women who serve our country in the military, as well as the public, will be watching the committee closely and will be looking to see as to how we treat survivors and how seriously we take this issue of sexual assault.

I know you have been asked what you think should be done, and you have declined to give specifics. I understand it is not your direct area of expertise, but you have been at a very high level of the military for a substantial period of time. And I would like to ask you now or in the responses that you give to those written questions to be more specific about what can and should be done. We have asked General Milley about it, and I know he is very attentive to this issue. But I would like your commitment that you will be more specific in response to these questions about what can be done by way of programs and efforts to value and respect survivors, to take action promptly and fairly in response to complaints about sexual assault, what can be done throughout the military because you will now have a position of trust. And if you want to be more specific now, I would welcome it, but if not, I hope in your questions for the record you will be.

General Hyten: I will respond in detail in the follow-
on questions. But let me just say a couple things, Senator.

I think, first of all, the most important thing I can
do as the STRATCOM Commander, as the Space Command
Commander, as the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs is to
always hold people accountable. I think that has to be the
fundamental precept. When we have issues, we have to hold
people accountable. And I strongly, strongly believe that.
I have to state clearly that it is unacceptable behavior,
and everybody has to know that, and it is. And I have to
make sure that victims understand that they can come forward
and they will be treated with respect and dignity. They
will have special victims advocates that will help them
through the process. And their accusations will be treated
seriously. And I can tell you, having lived through the
last few months, that any victims should be confident in
coming forward that their accusations will be treated
seriously by the investigators because these were very, very
serious allegations and treated very seriously.

Now as for specific programs, I do not have plans for
specific programs as I sit here today. I know we need to
develop those programs. I think there are people in this
building that actually know more about this issue than I do.
I know a lot about space and cyber and nuclear, and I know a
lot about leadership and I understand a lot about the
structure. I understand I have strengths and weaknesses,
but I am not an expert in sexual assault. I have to find those people and I pledge to you that I will do that.

Senator Blumenthal: Well, I hope we will see the answers in the questions for the record that I will be submitting and others, I am sure, will as well.

My time has expired. Thank you.

Senator McSally: Thank you.

And Senator Scott will be here shortly.

Senator Blumenthal: And I am sure you know, General, we are in the middle of votes. So thanks for your patience.

General Hyten: Senator, I understand completely.

Senator McSally: Senator Scott?

Senator Scott: First, I want to thank General Hyten and Laura and Katie and his whole family for being here and thank you for all your testimony. And I had to preside, otherwise I would have been here the whole time. So I apologize for that.

I want to be clear that sexual harassment can never be tolerated, not in our military or anywhere else in this country. And I am proud to be working with Senator McSally to end sexual harassment in our military. And I want to thank Senator McSally for all of her efforts during all the committee hearings we have had to make sure the truth comes out.

The claims made against General Hyten are very serious.
I cannot understate that. And it is so important that we listen and hear every side. We have a process in place here to thoroughly investigate and review any misconduct, and I am glad we followed that process. The Air Force did an investigation and concluded that there was no evidence to support these claims. Former Air Force Secretary Heather Wilson said this weekend that the Air Force left no stone unturned in this investigation, and the Senate has been thorough as well. Based on what I know of the complete investigation, I believe General Hyten was falsely accused. That is what Secretary Wilson said.

This committee has heard firsthand from both General Hyten and his accuser, and we reviewed all of the available information. We have to focus on the merits of the nominees that come before us, and we have to focus on evidence when accusations are made. And in this case, General Hyten’s record of service and the lack of evidence to support accusations are compelling. I hope we can find a way to work together, moving forward, to reject the heightened partisanship of our current political environment.

Now, General Hyten, I want to focus on a few areas that impact our State. The biggest is why is Russia doing what they are doing in Cuba and especially in Venezuela, and what do you think the end result is going to be? And what should we be doing that we are not doing right now?
General Hyten: So I think, Senator, the thing you have to look at from what Russia is doing is it is not just a regional strategy about Cuba and Venezuela. This is a global strategy about influence. And Russia honestly does not have many friends in the world, and the friends they do have tend to be trouble. But they tend to reach out to try to influence nations and to partner with nations that can counter the United States and NATO in particular for Russia and the influence and the global structure that we have developed since World War II. So everything that Russia is doing is in line with that. If you look at what they are doing in Europe, it is in line with that. So this is just a natural part of the strategy that they are pursuing.

Senator Scott: So with regard to this hemisphere, especially again Cuba and Venezuela, what should we be doing to counteract what Russia is doing and even what China is doing because China is involved not, as far as I know, in Cuba, but clearly involved in Venezuela?

General Hyten: I think that we have to work with our partners. It is really a question for U.S. Southern Command and Admiral Faller. But we have certainly looked at it as all the combatant commands looking at Russia. And I certainly spend a lot of my time looking at Russia.

I think we have to do is always reach out to our partners and build that partnership. We have to have a good
partnership with Colombia, a good partnership with the other
countries down there. Admiral Faller is working hard to build
those partnerships.

And then we have to just point out what is happening,
point out the truth, point out Venezuela is a disaster,
Cuba, because of the partnership with the Soviet Union and
Russia, is a struggling, struggling nation. If you partner
with Russia, it usually does not turn out very well for you.
So we just have to point this out. I think we have to be
patient.

We understand this is an area where the military is in
a support role of that structure. We do not want conflict
in our back yard. We do not want that going forward. But
we have a role to play to make sure we are always there.

Senator Scott: I took a trip. I went to Panama, twice
to Colombia this year, and to Argentina, and clearly China
is making investments down there, big investments in Panama
and in Argentina. Does that concern you?

General Hyten: Again, that is the Chinese strategy.
An interesting thing is that Chinese strategy seems to be
new on the world stage, and people are surprised by it. But
they announced that strategy in the 1990s, and they have
been going down that path for a while. They are using their
economic power as international influence. They are
building those connections. They are building ports in
Djibouti. They are changing the structure of the way the world has been for a long time. And we have to be cognizant of that, aware of that. Again, they are our strategic adversary, but they do not have to be an enemy. So we have to work with that. The military has a huge role to play. We always have to be ready. We always have to be present, but the last thing in the world we would ever want would be war with China.

Senator Scott: Thank you.

Senator McSally: Senator Sullivan?

Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Madam Chair.

General, I want to thank you for your service and your family’s service as well. I know this has not been an easy process for you.

I do want to ask just at the outset -- I know you have already been asked in the closed hearings as well, but can you just state publicly whether you categorically deny all the allegations that have been levied against you with regard to the improper conduct and sexual assault by a subordinate?

General Hyten: All the allegations are completely false.

Senator Sullivan: And you made that same statement under oath in a closed hearing to this committee. Correct?

General Hyten: I have. I have made that statement to
the Air Force investigators. I have made that statement to
the committee. They are categorically untrue.

Senator Sullivan: And have you, throughout your very
distinguished career, ever been accused of that previously?

General Hyten: Never.

Senator Sullivan: Thank you.

I want to talk about missile defense. I know you are
certainly one of our nation’s experts. You may have seen
the news. I actually just got off a plane from Alaska. So
I apologize for being a little bit late. But as you know,
my State is the cornerstone of our nation’s missile defense,
but also an increasingly important testing ground for our
nation’s missile defense and those of our allies. We had a
reported, very successful missile defense testing that was
out of Kodiak, Alaska that was reported over the weekend.

Can you talk a little bit about that and how you think
that plays to the strengths, but also protecting not just
the United States but our allies, particularly Israel?

General Hyten: That was the Israeli aerotest on
Kodiak, the southern part of Alaska, a very successful test,
very important from a missile defense perspective. In
general, any successful test is good. Actually any test is
good because you always learn from testing. But it also
builds our partnership with the Israeli defense force and
that structure.
Missile defense needs to be an international capability. We need to be able to partner with our allies in terms of how we defend ourselves too. Missile defense requires a spectrum of capabilities, and it requires sensors. It requires command and control. It requires interceptors. It requires directed energy, new technologies. We need to be pursuing that because we are going to have significant missile threats and emerging missile threats that we are actually not dealing with yet in the very near future.

Senator Sullivan: Well, one piece of, I think, good news that has come out of this committee over the last 3 or 4 years is the bipartisan advancements that our country has made with regard to missile defense, both as reflected in the NDAA and also the Trump administration’s focus on this. You might recall the President unveiled the Pentagon’s Missile Defense Review with the Vice President, with the Secretary. I believe you were there a couple months ago.

If confirmed, will you commit to continuing to work with this committee and the Congress on continuing to advance missile defense, whether it is more capability, as we have at Fort Greely in terms of fields or radar sites or spaced-based sensors?

General Hyten: I pledge to do that, Senator, absolutely.
Senator Sullivan: Let me ask another issue. I have raised it with General Milley and now Secretary Esper, but I want to get a commitment from you to come back to Alaska and tour what Billy Mitchell referred to as the most strategic place in the world. Can I get that commitment?

General Hyten: Sir, if I could go to Alaska tomorrow, I would be there.

Senator Sullivan: Good. Well, we will take you up on that.

But I see Secretary Wilson here smiling.

But one issue I do want to mention is we will have, by the end of next year, over 100 fifth generation fighters, F-22’s and F-35’s. The Air Force is looking at the OCONUS deployment of KC-46’s. So we have very old tankers in Alaska, 50-year-old tankers. When I asked Secretary Esper during his confirmation hearing what kind of signal that could send to our potential adversaries and adversaries, North Korea, Russia, China, to have over 100 fifth gen fighters and a new generation of tankers, the KC-46, he said that would show extreme strategic reach.

Can I get your commitment to work with me and this committee and the Air Force, if confirmed, on the OCONUS deployment of KC-46’s? I think that pairing KC-46’s with 100 fifth gen fighters in the most strategic place in the world would be an important signal. Can you comment on that?
and then get your commitment as well?

General Hyten: I think that presence is unbelievably important. And I will commit to work with you on that in the future as we go forward. I think we have to have some mix of those capabilities in Alaska, and if I am confirmed, I will continue to work those forward.

Alaska is an interesting place, though. The next time we are in a classified hearing, I will just talk about some classified exercises we play in Europe where Alaska can be a very, very interesting game changer in how people look at the United States’ posture because of the unique location it is on the planet, both to the west of Alaska and to the north of Alaska. It is just an unbelievably strategic location. So we have to figure out how to effectively do that. There is always going to be a force balance that we have to work through. That will be a challenge, but there is no doubt that Alaska is an unbelievably important strategic asset for the United States.

Senator Sullivan: Thank you, General.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Inhofe [presiding]: Thank you.

And thank you, General. Thank you, Laura, your whole family.

We are adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:23 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]