

Stenographic Transcript
Before the

COMMITTEE ON
ARMED SERVICES

UNITED STATES SENATE

HEARING TO CONSIDER THE NOMINATION OF:
VICE ADMIRAL CHARLES A. RICHARD, USN
TO BE ADMIRAL AND COMMANDER,
UNITED STATES STRATEGIC COMMAND

Thursday, October 24, 2019

Washington, D.C.

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7
8 U.S. Senate

9 Committee on Armed Services

10 Washington, D.C.

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12 The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:01 a.m. in
13 Room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. James M.
14 Inhofe, presiding.

15 Committee Members Present: Senators Inhofe, Wicker,
16 Fischer, Cotton, Rounds, Ernst, Sullivan, Perdue, McSally,
17 Scott, Blackburn, Hawley, Reed, Shaheen, Blumenthal, Kaine,
18 King, Heinrich, Peters, Manchin, Duckworth, and Jones.

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

3 Chairman Inhofe: Our meeting will come to order.

4 Today we are meeting to consider the nomination of Vice
5 Admiral Charles Richard with the appointment of the grade of
6 Admiral and to be Commander of the United States Strategic
7 Command.

8 I appreciate your being here, and I just really enjoyed
9 meeting your beautiful family and hearing -- even though I
10 do not agree with a couple of things that they are pursuing.
11 But that is all right.

12 [Laughter.]

13 Chairman Inhofe: No. I think that is really great,
14 and we appreciate very much your bringing them. Be sure you
15 introduce them to the committee.

16 We have the required questions. Let me get these over
17 with first.

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

20 Admiral Richard: I have.

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

25 Admiral Richard: I will.

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

4 Admiral Richard: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

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

7 Admiral Richard: They will.

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

10 Admiral Richard: I do.

11 Chairman Inhofe: And do you agree to provide
12 documents, including copies of electronic forms of
13 communication, in a timely manner when requested by a duly
14 constituted committee or to consult with the committee
15 regarding the basis for any good faith delay or denial?

16 Admiral Richard: I will.

17 Chairman Inhofe: Lastly, have you assumed any duties
18 or undertaken any actions which would appear to presume the
19 outcome of your confirmation or the confirmation process?

20 Admiral Richard: I have not.

21 Chairman Inhofe: All right.

22 Well, the National Defense Strategy, which is this
23 document that we have proudly been using -- it is a good
24 document. This is one that was put together by Democrats
25 and Republicans. Everyone was in agreement with it, and we

1 have been using it all throughout our defense
2 reauthorization process. And it directs our nation's
3 military to prepare for the return to strategic competition,
4 and that is also in the Nuclear Posture Review.

5 If confirmed, you will be the most prominent advocate
6 for the requirements for our nuclear forces. We will expect
7 you to monitor the Navy and Air Force programs to modernize
8 the nuclear triad.

9 We say that. We are sincere about that because we
10 neglected to modernize for a long period of time when we
11 should have been doing it. And a lot of people, even to
12 this day, look at the triad and they consider that to be
13 somewhat redundant just because it is three approaches. But
14 I know you will confirm your dedication to that system.

15 As a member of the council, we also expect to keep a
16 watchful eye on the Department of Energy's contribution to
17 our nuclear modernization goals. Without strong support and
18 continued full funding for the DOE's warhead and the
19 infrastructure programs, STRATCOM will be unable to field a
20 capable and survivable nuclear system in the decades to
21 come.

22 In early 2018, the Nuclear Posture Review recommended a
23 low-yield warhead for some of the Navy's ballistic missiles.
24 The program was authorized and funded. The requirements
25 were set, and the Department of Energy completed production

1 of all units in less than a year. This was an excellent
2 example of the agility and the collaboration that will be
3 required to compete with the Russians and the Chinese.

4 You know, that was a great job that folks were able to
5 get done in that period of time. I think that is a good
6 example for some of the other efforts that we have around
7 here.

8 STRATCOM has recently been given more responsibility
9 for modernizing the nuclear command, control, and
10 communications. That is the NC3. This is one of the most
11 complex engineering problems the Department faces at this
12 time, and I look forward to hearing your thoughts on the
13 best way to approach it.

14 You will also be involved in driving requirements for
15 missile defense, particularly the homeland. Given recent
16 setbacks in modernization of our homeland defense
17 capability, I am interested in your thoughts on whether we
18 can afford to wait another decade to modernize the ground-
19 based interceptors in Alaska. And I am sure we will get
20 some other comments and questions about that from Senator
21 Sullivan.

22 Lastly, despite the creation of the new Space Command,
23 STRATCOM will still rely on space systems every day. I am
24 interested in your plan to ensure STRATCOM priorities like
25 missile warning are still supported in space.

1 So I thank you for your willingness to serve in this
2 capacity and look forward to serving with you.

3 Senator Reed?

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

3 Senator Reed: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.
4 I would like to join you in welcoming our nominee.

5 Vice Admiral Richard, thank you for your decades of
6 service to our nation. I also want to recognize and thank
7 your family, who are here today, your wife Lisa and your
8 daughters, Allison and Emily. I know they have served and
9 sacrificed right along with you for many, many years, except
10 for that one delightful year in Jamestown, Rhode Island,
11 which was a vacation.

12 Admiral Richard, you have an impressive record of
13 service to our nation, and I believe you are well qualified
14 for this nomination with your experience as the Deputy
15 Commander at U.S. Strategic Command and also commanding our
16 fleet of ballistic missile submarines.

17 The Commander of U.S. Strategic Command serves as the
18 principal military officer who advises the President, the
19 Secretary of Defense, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs
20 of Staff on our nuclear deterrent and our global missile
21 defense requirements. As is often said, our nuclear
22 deterrent must be safe, secure, and reliable. You will be
23 responsible for articulating the requirement for and
24 managing the readiness of our nuclear triad and its command
25 and control protocols to deter threats that are existential

1 to our nation.

2 Integral to the readiness of our nuclear force is the
3 ongoing modernization of our triad. We are well into
4 modernizing the sea and air legs of the triad, and we will
5 soon begin modernization of the ground-based ICBM leg. At
6 this time, the programs appear to be on track, but I am
7 deeply concerned about the potential risk of this
8 simultaneous modernization of all three legs on the
9 workforce and industrial base. The chances of a delay in
10 one or more programs is high, and we need a clear plan of
11 how we will respond. I am interested in your initial
12 thinking on this issue and will be watching this
13 modernization process very closely.

14 U.S. Strategic Command is undergoing a number of
15 organizational changes. 3 years ago, the command had
16 responsibility for nuclear, space, and cyber operations, but
17 now space and cyber operations have been shifted to other
18 combatant commands. And one of the consequences of these
19 shifts is the gray areas around which command will be
20 responsible for specific programs that have strong
21 connections to both commands. For example, our missile
22 warning satellites, which are integral to our nuclear
23 command and control architecture, are very important and
24 must not be subject to any ambiguity in managing or
25 sustaining them. While these reorganizations are necessary

1 for our long-term strategy, they must be made slowly and
2 carefully to avoid costly mistakes.

3 In the area of missile defense, I will be interested to
4 hear your views on the status of our homeland defenses and
5 the steps we are taking to address this increasingly
6 complicated threat from new technologies, particularly
7 hypersonic missiles.

8 Admiral Richard, I again thank you for your service and
9 look forward to the hearing.

10 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

11 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Reed.

12 Admiral Richard, we would like to recognize you for an
13 opening statement. Your entire statement will be made a
14 part of the record. So you are recognized.

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1 STATEMENT OF VICE ADMIRAL CHARLES A. RICHARD, USN, TO
2 BE ADMIRAL AND COMMANDER, UNITED STATES STRATEGIC COMMAND

3 Admiral Richard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

4 Chairman Inhofe, Ranking Member Reed, distinguished
5 members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to
6 come before you today. It is an honor to be nominated by
7 the President to lead U.S. Strategic Command.

8 Mr. Chairman, in particular, thank you for the
9 opportunity to introduce my family. I would not be able to
10 serve if it were not for them. Lisa to my left, my wife of
11 nearly 31 years, is herself a former Senate staffer who
12 worked on the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, among
13 other, and I just have to imagine she is getting a bit of a
14 kick from viewing from a hearing from a new, unique vantage
15 point.

16 Also here with me today are our two daughters, Allison
17 and Emily. Both of our girls graduated this past summer,
18 Allie receiving her master's in physician assistant studies,
19 and Emil an undergraduate degree in biology.

20 Our son Chase recently moved to Atlanta and began a new
21 job and unfortunately is not with us today. So it has been
22 a very exciting time for our family.

23 If confirmed, this will be our 10th move in the last 12
24 years and the 21st overall. And maybe said a different way,
25 my son went to four high schools. My daughters went to

1 three each. So I very much appreciate my family's patience
2 and support to allow me to continue to serve.

3 My mother and father-in-law, Pat and Tom Moore; my
4 sister-in-law Trish Moore and her partner, Mary Hughes, are
5 also here and I appreciate that.

6 I would like to thank the President and Secretary of
7 Defense for nominating me, and thanks to the Chairman of the
8 Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Milley, for expressing his
9 confidence that I could serve as a combatant commander.

10 If confirmed, I will work very closely with this
11 committee and with Congress more generally to address the
12 strategic challenges that face this nation. I firmly
13 believe that open, honest, and timely communications will be
14 necessary to address these challenges.

15 And with the return to great power competition, as both
16 the chairman and ranking member have noted, we must never
17 lose sight of the fundamental nature and importance of our
18 nation's strategic forces. A powerful, ready triad remains
19 the most effective way to deter adversaries from conducting
20 attacks against the United States and our allies. We should
21 be reminded its credibility backstops all U.S. military
22 operations and diplomacy around the globe and ensures that
23 tensions, regardless of where or how they arise, do not
24 escalate in a large scale war. As Admiral John Richardson,
25 the former Chief of Naval Operations, said, it is

1 foundational to our survival as a nation.

2 Our nation's nuclear deterrent forces must always be
3 safe, secure, reliable, and effective. Our adversaries
4 began upgrading their own capabilities many years ago, a
5 decade. And it is now imperative that we modernize all
6 elements of our triad to include nuclear command and control
7 and the weapons infrastructure, as well as add the modest
8 supplements called for in the 2018 Nuclear Posture Review.
9 We must also ensure that our plans are globally integrated
10 with the other combatant commands.

11 But nuclear threats are not the only threats we face.
12 In both the space and the cyber domains, among others, we
13 face a myriad of threats that could have strategic
14 implications. If confirmed, I will work hard with General
15 Raymond at U.S. Space Command to ensure that he can execute
16 the significant responsibilities he has been assigned. I
17 will also work closely with General Nakasone at Cyber
18 Command, as well as all of the other combatant commanders to
19 ensure we look at strategic threats globally and execute
20 strategies in accordance with the National Defense Strategy
21 to use all of the nation's capability to deter our
22 adversaries and, if necessary, defend the nation.

23 In addition to strategic deterrence, U.S. Strategic
24 Command has many other significant responsibilities:
25 missile defense, joint electronic warfare, global strike,

1 just to name a few. If confirmed, I pledge my best efforts
2 from STRATCOM to implement the National Defense Strategy in
3 all areas of responsibility.

4 I will live up to the expectations of the men and women
5 of U.S. Strategic Command. I have served there twice. It
6 is truly a special place. I like to think of it as Rickover
7 meets Lemay and as one of the last officers on active duty
8 who interviewed with Admiral Rickover to join the Navy
9 nuclear propulsion program, I think he and General Lemay
10 would be quite proud of the legacy that carries on to this
11 day in Omaha. The command's motto is "Peace is our
12 profession," and if confirmed, I will live up to that motto.

13 I will also live up to the standards set by the
14 previous commanders. I have served for three of them, and
15 in particular, the current commander, General John Hyten.
16 He is truly a remarkable leader and commander and in large
17 part responsible for my development as an admiral. It is
18 incredibly humbling to even be considered for a position
19 that has such an amazing legacy. And if confirmed, I look
20 forward to working with General Hyten as he takes on his new
21 responsibilities as the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of
22 Staff.

23 Chairman Inhofe, Ranking Member Reed, and members of
24 the committee, I thank you again for the opportunity to
25 appear before you, and I look forward to your questions.

1 [The prepared statement of Admiral Richard follows:]

2 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you very much, Admiral.

2 I have a couple of things I want to be sure that we get
3 out of the way early. One is a problem, and now and then
4 you hear about it. I have not heard recently and I do not
5 know of anyone around here who has any real interest in any
6 kind of a "no first use" policy. But it has always bothered
7 me because it seems like no one talks about it, and yet it
8 always does appear. And there are people out there. And I
9 would just like to ask you some questions about that.

10 I assume that you would agree that that would limit our
11 ability to deter an extremely dangerous non-nuclear attack.
12 So we are talking about something like chemical or
13 biological, maybe a cyber attack. Would you agree with
14 that?

15 Admiral Richard: Senator, yes. My best military
16 advice would be to not adopt a "no first use" policy.

17 Chairman Inhofe: Yes, and I appreciate that. But I
18 also want to mention a couple other things about that
19 because I want to get that into the record.

20 One would be our allies. Would our allies not be
21 concerned as to whether or not we would have the capability
22 and desire to do the things that we are doing for our allies
23 if we had such a policy?

24 Admiral Richard: Senator, yes. I think adoption of a
25 "no first use" policy would have a significant negative

1 effect on our commitments to our allies.

2 Chairman Inhofe: So I think you have pretty strong
3 feelings about that.

4 Well, the other thing that they talk about is the de-
5 alerting. To me the whole idea of de-alerting something --
6 the whole idea on responding is to respond quickly and you
7 do not have the luxury of time, but to deliberately de-
8 alert, I would assume you would agree that is something that
9 we should not be concerned about or we should be concerned
10 about it if someone starts bringing this up.

11 Admiral Richard: Again, Mr. Chairman, I would not
12 recommend that. It would diminish one of the key attributes
13 that the intercontinental ballistic missile leg adds, and
14 also in a crisis situation, a potential race to re-alert
15 would be destabilizing probably when we need it the least.

16 Chairman Inhofe: I appreciate that.

17 Now, in my opening statement, I mentioned that we
18 recently canceled a program for modernization of ground-
19 based interceptors in Alaska, and I am sure our Senator from
20 Alaska is going to be bringing this up. But according to
21 the initial plans, the proposed replacement program, the
22 NextGen interceptor will likely not be fielded until 2030.

23 What are we going to be doing between now and 2030 in
24 that field? What capabilities do we have, even though we
25 have been a little disappointed in what has happened in

1 Alaska?

2 Admiral Richard: Mr. Chairman, the capabilities that
3 we have fielded today are quite effective against the
4 threats that we face today. General Dickinson, the
5 responsible commander, recently discussed his confidence --
6 and I share that confidence -- in the ability of the fielded
7 system today to defend us. Any delay, of course, is of
8 concern. I have great confidence, though, the Missile
9 Defense Agency and the services will be able to work through
10 the challenges represented and be able to pace the threat.

11 Chairman Inhofe: I am sure that is right.

12 And lastly, I mentioned in my opening statement this
13 document that I am very impressed with. Do you support the
14 recommendations of the Nuclear Posture Review, as well as
15 the recommendations in this document, including the low-
16 yield, submarine-launched ballistic missile?

17 Admiral Richard: Mr. Chairman, I do. I think they are
18 both well written documents.

19 Chairman Inhofe: Very good.

20 Senator Reed?

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

22 Admiral, again thank you for your service and your
23 dedication.

24 Our nuclear posture is in the context also of decades
25 and decades of arms control agreements. The most

1 significant one is the New START agreement which, if nothing
2 is done, will expire in January of 2021. There is the
3 option to renew it for 5 years with agreement between
4 ourselves and the Russians. It caps the number of strategic
5 missiles to 800 so we are not in a race to produce more and
6 more missiles and warheads at 1,550.

7 Do you think there is a significant value in
8 maintaining this agreement in place?

9 Admiral Richard: Senator, I support any arms control
10 agreement that enhances the security of this nation. And
11 there are many historical examples that go to that.

12 Your are quite correct. The New START treaty has
13 provided us with valuable insight into Russian, in this
14 case, capabilities. It gives us a feel for their size,
15 capacity, capability.

16 But it also does not address large categories of
17 weapons that are not treaty-constrained. It is only with
18 Russia, and they are developing new systems. I would
19 provide my best military advice, if confirmed, into the pros
20 and cons of any future agreement, including this one.

21 Senator Reed: There is a possibility. We are hearing
22 very disturbing comments coming out of Turkey that President
23 Erdogan wants nuclear capabilities. He is not I think,
24 unfortunately, alone in that. If the New START agreement is
25 dispensed with, we will find ourselves for the first time

1 since the 1970s I believe where we do not have an arms
2 control regime in place at all, which could give rise to
3 people like Erdogan thinking they have a free ride.

4 Is that a concern you have?

5 Admiral Richard: Senator, any effort at proliferation
6 of nuclear weapons is of concern. And so I would support
7 any efforts to maximize this nation's longstanding goal of
8 minimizing proliferation of nuclear weapons.

9 Senator Reed: Thank you very much, Admiral.

10 One of the key initiatives in Secretary Mattis' Nuclear
11 Posture Review in 2018 was reorganizing nuclear command,
12 control, and communications. And Strategic Command is now
13 in the process of standing up a new NC3 Center.

14 Could you give us a notion of the key issues you see in
15 this process?

16 Admiral Richard: Senator, one, I applaud this
17 committee's leadership and the Department's actions to stand
18 up the NC3 Center that you just described. And by bringing
19 this under a single responsible commander, providing
20 visibility across a large and complex enterprise with the
21 focus on the acquisition and sustainment pieces of this by
22 the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and
23 Sustainment, I think we are on a good trajectory to
24 understand the system we have today, which is very reliable
25 and ready to go, understand the threats that the system will

1 face in the future, and then recapitalize and, in fact,
2 redesign, reconceive the NC3 system. So I am very pleased
3 with the direction that we are headed in that.

4 I think the number one issue between -- two issues
5 would be sufficient intellectual capital to think our way
6 through that, to achieve the same results that our
7 predecessors did in the system we have today. And then
8 adequate resourcing, stable, timely, adequate, predictable
9 is the number one thing under our control to ensure that we
10 are able to do that.

11 Senator Reed: I think the point about intellectual
12 resources -- we discussed this in the office. But in the
13 good old days, it was more of a government-led, government
14 think tank, government approach, and now a lot of
15 particularly cyber and sophisticated computer technology and
16 intellectual property is outside. And that is something you
17 are going to have to bring under the tent, if you will. I
18 think you concur.

19 Admiral Richard: Senator, I agree.

20 Senator Reed: Just a quick question here, less of a
21 question because my time is expiring. I did indicate
22 concerns about the potential for delay in our triad
23 modernization. This is the first time we have really tried
24 to do everything at once. We have already seen the
25 submarine fields -- they are the lead-off hitter, if you

1 will -- problems with nuclear tubes and welding. This goes
2 to the whole issue of the industrial base. And again, I
3 know you will do this, but you have to be very, very
4 diligent and vigilant watching the nuclear base, both the
5 submarines, the air, and ICBMs. And hopefully, you will
6 keep us informed of any significant trends, particularly
7 unfortunate trends you see developing.

8 Admiral Richard: Senator, I absolutely agree.

9 Senator Reed: Thank you very much, Admiral.

10 Chairman Inhofe: Senator Fischer?

11 Senator Fischer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

12 Welcome, Admiral. Nice to see you.

13 You touched on this with Senator Inhofe, but I would
14 like maybe a clearer answer. Do you support the deployment
15 of the supplemental systems called for in the Nuclear
16 Posture Review? And do you believe these enhancements are
17 truly necessary if we are going to maintain deterrence?

18 Admiral Richard: Senator, I absolutely do. I think
19 the Nuclear Posture Review got it right. These modest
20 supplements add to the flexibility and capability in the
21 triad, and that is what necessary to deter the threats we
22 face today.

23 Senator Fischer: Thank you.

24 Your predecessors have strongly recommended against any
25 unilateral reductions in our nuclear forces. You talked

1 about that somewhat with Senator Reed. What impact do you
2 believe any kind of unilateral reduction would have on our
3 ability to deter threats?

4 Admiral Richard: Senator, I think it would have a
5 negative effect. It would be harmful for our ability to
6 deter. And I am reminded this nation has led the world in
7 unilateral reductions in nuclear weapons throughout our
8 history and no one else has matched us with that. Every one
9 else has gone in the other direction.

10 Senator Fischer: As you aware, in the past year a
11 number of critics have argued that the ICBM force is not
12 necessary for deterrence, and many have sought to reduce the
13 funding for its replacement, which is the GBSD program.

14 What are your views on the deterrent value of the ICBM
15 force, and how important is it in the recapitalization
16 effort to proceed without delay?

17 Admiral Richard: Senator, the intercontinental
18 ballistic missile leg, GBSD, is an essential component of
19 the triad. It adds special unique capabilities that we have
20 from no other leg. It is essential in achieving our
21 nation's deterrence objectives.

22 Senator Fischer: Following on that point, you and I
23 discussed a couple days ago the larger problem of our
24 nuclear modernization schedule and that there really is no
25 margin for delay in that schedule.

1 Can you talk a little bit more about that and how we
2 simply cannot extend the life of our current systems? You
3 and I focused on an area that you are truly an expert on,
4 and that would be our submarines. Can you talk to us a
5 little bit about what we are facing with the Ohio class?

6 Admiral Richard: Yes, Senator. We have delayed and
7 life-extended the current triad systems to the maximum
8 extent possible. What I mean by that is we are bumping into
9 physics and engineering limits. As the Senator alluded to,
10 I am a submariner. So, one, the Ohio class was designed for
11 30 years. It went for 42, a great credit to the people that
12 put it together. But there are only so many times that you
13 can take a high strength piece of steel tubing, subject it
14 to the great pressures of submergence, cycle it by taking
15 that off to the point you just do not want to get in the
16 tube anymore. We do not have confidence in the strength,
17 corrosion, and others. That is the type of thing we are
18 bumping into with all the triad systems. It is just not
19 feasible to life-extend them anymore.

20 Senator Fischer: And staying on our schedule, when
21 would we see the first Columbia class?

22 Admiral Richard: It would be in 2031, ma'am.

23 Senator Fischer: It is a long ways away still.

24 Admiral Richard: Yes, ma'am.

25 Senator Fischer: Thank you, sir. I look forward to

1 your confirmation. You have my support.

2 Admiral Richard: Thanks.

3 Chairman Inhofe: Senator Blumenthal?

4 Senator Blumenthal: Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

5 I represent the State that is home to the Columbia
6 class program, as you know. And we would be very happy to
7 host you there, as we did Secretary Esper just very recently
8 in August. I do not know when the last time is that you
9 visited Electric Boat and the shipyard there.

10 Admiral Richard: Senator, that was the last time up
11 with Secretary Esper.

12 Senator Blumenthal: Right. Well, we welcome you back.

13 As you know, then and now one of the major hurdles to
14 that shipbuilding program is in fact the industrial
15 workforce, development of the skills and training that are
16 necessary for the thousands of new employees Electric Boat
17 and the supply chain that is essential to build those
18 submarines by the date that we need to do it. And I would
19 like your commitment that you will continue to support those
20 training and apprenticeship and other programs that are
21 necessary for that program.

22 Admiral Richard: Senator, absolutely. And again, I
23 applaud the States of Connecticut and Rhode Island for their
24 efforts to also contribute to the development of that
25 workforce.

1 Senator Blumenthal: We have no margin of error in the
2 Columbia class program. As you know, China is rapidly
3 developing its submarine capability. Russia has long been
4 pacing our nuclear threat in the undersea environment. Last
5 week, from October 15th to the 17th, Russia conducted a
6 military exercise called Thunder 2019. They actually
7 launched one ballistic missile, submarine-launched ballistic
8 missile. Another apparently failed.

9 Could you give us your assessment of both that threat
10 and the North Korean threat? That country also recently
11 launched a submarine-launched ballistic missile.

12 Admiral Richard: Senator, thank you for reminding us
13 of that. Both of those are graphic, real-world
14 demonstrations of the capabilities that both those nations
15 possess. And I cannot think of a better way to demonstrate
16 what the threat is to this nation from those countries and
17 what we have to do to defend and deter against it.

18 Senator Blumenthal: Are you confident that we can
19 track the Russian and North Korean and Chinese submarines?
20 The North Korean submarine, according to my understanding,
21 was a diesel electric powered submarine that is pretty
22 noisy, but I do not know about the Russian and Chinese.

23 Admiral Richard: Senator, as you know, I am the
24 submarine force commander now. I have great confidence in
25 our ability to address any threat, including the ones that

1 you mentioned. And we are not static. So it is a
2 competition. And the U.S. Navy has made great strides in
3 recent years and is poised to make some really great strides
4 in the near future to address that threat.

5 Senator Blumenthal: Do you believe, as I do, that
6 these recent tests also emphasize the importance, highlight
7 the critical significance of continuing the Virginia class
8 fast attack program?

9 Admiral Richard: Senator, this nation's military
10 advantage in the undersea is one of the last remaining
11 places that it is unquestioned that we have the advantage.
12 And continuing the Virginia program is an essential piece of
13 making sure that we maintain that advantage into the future.

14 Senator Blumenthal: And are you familiar with the
15 issues that have arisen with respect to the coating on the
16 stealth or the adhesive that is used to attach the stealth
17 coating to submarines? I do not know whether you can
18 address it in this setting, but are you familiar with those
19 issues?

20 Admiral Richard: Senator, I am. I am confident that
21 the Navy's engineering ability will work through that issue.

22 Senator Blumenthal: It has been a longstanding issue.
23 Has it not been?

24 Admiral Richard: Senator, that is correct.

25 Senator Blumenthal: And are you confident that we will

1 develop new technology or new manufacturing expertise to
2 address it?

3 Admiral Richard: Senator, it is actually both, but it
4 is more in the adhesion process where we expect to make the
5 best gains.

6 Senator Blumenthal: I would like to ask you to -- my
7 time has expired, but if I could ask you to or your staff to
8 brief me in my office on these issues, I would appreciate
9 it.

10 Admiral Richard: Senator, I appreciate that
11 opportunity.

12 Senator Blumenthal: Thank you.

13 Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

14 Chairman Inhofe: Senator Scott?

15 Senator Scott: Thank you, Admiral Richard, and your
16 family for your service and their support.

17 When you look at the threats of China, Russia, Iran,
18 North Korea, what is your biggest concern about what the
19 United States needs to do that we might not be doing or that
20 you are concerned that we might not do in the future?

21 Admiral Richard: Senator, I could give you a pretty
22 long list of technologies and capabilities that have my
23 attention in terms of threats to the United States. But I
24 would start the list that both of those nations do not view
25 the world the same way that we do. They do not necessarily

1 agree with us on rule of law, market-based economic
2 competition, free and open order. And I look forward to
3 diplomatic efforts to attempt to resolve that.

4 But in the meantime, we are going to need to defend
5 ourselves, and then that will get to a number of
6 capabilities, hypersonics, quantum, AI, on top of the
7 capabilities that we have today that we are going to have to
8 think through and be ready to defend.

9 Senator Scott: Do you think that we are allocating
10 enough resources to be able to do that when you look at the
11 budgets that we are passing?

12 Admiral Richard: Senator, specifically in my areas of
13 responsibility, yes. For the larger defense budget, also
14 yes. But I would add that in addition to being adequate,
15 stable, timely, predictable enables us. That is a
16 fundamental assumption in the National Defense Strategy and
17 the recapitalization of the triad. Things like a continuing
18 resolution do not help with that.

19 Senator Scott: So that what we are going through now
20 with the continuing resolution, how much will that impact
21 your ability to do your job?

22 Admiral Richard: Senator, it results in multiple tens
23 of billions of the Department's loss of buying capability.
24 It inhibits our ability to pivot the funding into areas that
25 we need to move faster on specifically in research and

1 development. It will lose in excess of \$10 billion in terms
2 of readiness accounts to lock in the readiness gains we have
3 achieved over the years. So across the board, it keeps us
4 from moving fast to be able to pace a rapidly changing
5 threat.

6 Senator Scott: When you look at the amount of money
7 that China is committing and just the overall resources they
8 are committing to their nuclear ability, do you believe the
9 path we are going down will be enough to deter them?

10 Admiral Richard: Senator, if we recapitalize the triad
11 on schedule, we will be able to maintain sufficient
12 capability to address China's actions. But you are quite
13 correct. She is modernizing and increasing every aspect of
14 her strategic forces.

15 Senator Scott: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

16 Chairman Inhofe: Senator Heinrich?

17 Senator Heinrich: Thank you, Chairman.

18 Admiral Richard, congratulations on your nomination.

19 I know you have been out to both Sandia and Los Alamos
20 in the past, and if you are confirmed, I would certainly
21 like to welcome you back to those facilities.

22 With that in mind, as you know, DOD set an initial
23 requirement to produce 30 plutonium pits per year at Los
24 Alamos Labs by 2026. How important is that milestone?

25 Admiral Richard: Senator, that is critical to our

1 ability to maintain the strategic plan and the
2 recapitalization on our weapons complex.

3 Senator Heinrich: The secondary goal is for 80 pits
4 per year by 2030. How confident are you that NNSA will meet
5 that requirement?

6 Admiral Richard: Senator, one, I applaud the
7 committee's leadership in establishing the Nuclear Weapons
8 Council which gives the Commander of U.S. Strategic Command
9 a direct opportunity to go address that. That requirement
10 is sound. And, yes, I recognize that there are issues in
11 terms of DOE's ability to meet that, and I would pledge to
12 look very closely at that if I was confirmed.

13 Senator Heinrich: STRATCOM took over the modernization
14 of our nation's nuclear command, control, and communications
15 systems from the Air Force Global Strike Command just over a
16 year ago now. And I am encouraged to see that the SACC
17 system, which is a system used to send emergency action
18 messages from nuclear command forces in the field, recently
19 retired these. Some of my colleagues may recognize these.
20 Some may be too young to recognize these.

21 [Laughter.]

22 Senator Heinrich: So one of the things that concerns
23 me is just the timeline for the rest of that architecture,
24 much of which was developed in the 1960s and 1970s and
25 currently is still expected to remain in service for a few

1 years.

2 Talk to me about the timeline for that transition.

3 Admiral Richard: Well, Senator, one, I applaud your
4 depth of interest inside this subject.

5 Senator Heinrich: I think this was retired in June.

6 Admiral Richard: Senator, the first step, which
7 General Hyten has a good plan, is making sure that we
8 reconceive the CONOPs, the concept of operations, that we
9 are operating on, and then to make sure that we put together
10 a system not because it is the way we used to do it, but the
11 way we ought to do it in the future, particularly pacing the
12 threat.

13 There are several nearer-term decisions that we have to
14 go make with some urgency to recapitalize pieces of the
15 nuclear command and control system. So the bottom line on
16 the timeline is we must move with urgency to go redo the
17 system.

18 Senator Heinrich: My understanding is that NC3
19 modernization is largely being handled by the individual
20 military services in part because STRATCOM does not have
21 acquisition authority. Is that the best arrangement? Is
22 that working well in your view? Are there changes we need
23 to make in terms of authorities for STRATCOM?

24 Admiral Richard: Senator, what I am encouraged by the
25 Department's decision to stand up the NC3 center is a stack

1 of authorities that is held by the Under Secretary of
2 Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment and all the services
3 report back to the secretary. That is the mechanism I think
4 that will be effective in addressing the issues that you
5 mentioned.

6 Senator Heinrich: So you do not have concerns about
7 that.

8 Admiral Richard: Not today. I would pledge to look at
9 it in the future to make sure it maintains the effectiveness
10 we expect.

11 Senator Heinrich: Talk to me a little bit about the
12 situation with regard to the ground-based strategic
13 deterrent program and the development that we may only have
14 one final bid. Do you have concerns about that? What
15 issues do you foresee if that does become the situation as
16 we move forward?

17 Admiral Richard: Senator, I have great confidence in
18 the Air Force's ability to execute this acquisition program
19 in a timely fashion. I am responsible, if confirmed, for
20 the requirement and would be willing to engage with the Air
21 Force to make sure that we are trading requirements against
22 our technical ability to achieve them to the best benefit
23 for the nation.

24 Senator Heinrich: Getting back to pit production for
25 just a moment, you mentioned the Nuclear Weapons Council, of

1 which you would be a member, if confirmed. The chair of the
2 council is required to certify each year that NNSA is on
3 track to meet the military's requirements. Under Secretary
4 Lord's last certification was in April of this year.

5 If you are confirmed, will you commit to a review of
6 NNSA's status and plans and then provide that feedback back
7 to both the council and this committee?

8 Admiral Richard: Senator, I will.

9 Senator Heinrich: Thank you.

10 Thanks, Chairman.

11 Chairman Inhofe: Senator Cotton?

12 Senator Cotton: Admiral Richard, thank you for your
13 service. Thank you for your family's long record of service
14 as well and being willing to answer the call of service
15 again.

16 I want to speak about the Open Skies Treaty, a treaty
17 that allows overflight surveillance of the United States and
18 Russia, in addition to many other partners, but those are
19 the two main partners.

20 In 2017, the United States Government determined that
21 Russia had violated the Open Skies Treaty specifically by
22 limiting overflight of Kaliningrad, Russia's vital strategic
23 enclave in northern Europe between Poland and Lithuania, as
24 well as limiting flights in the vicinity of South Ossetia
25 and Abkhazia in the Republic of Georgia. That was

1 reiterated last year and by some of your predecessors and
2 colleagues.

3 Here is what Admiral Haney said in 2015. The treaty
4 has become a critical component of Russia's intelligence
5 collection capability directed at the United States.

6 Here is what General Stewart, the Director of the DIA,
7 said in 2016. The things that you can see, the amount of
8 data you can collect, the things you can do with post-
9 processing allows Russia in my opinion to get incredible
10 foundational intelligence on critical infrastructure, bases,
11 ports, all of our facilities. So from my perspective, it
12 gives them a significant advantage.

13 And then 2 years ago, General Joe Dunford, then
14 Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, said we believe that on
15 balance it would be best if the treaty continue to be in
16 place, but we do not believe the treaty should be in place
17 if the Russians are not compliant. So there is a decidedly
18 aggressive diplomatic effort right now to bring the Russians
19 back into compliance, which we think would be the best
20 outcome.

21 That was more than 2 years. That diplomatic effort has
22 continued apace to no avail. Russia remains in violation of
23 this treaty while the United States continues to adhere to
24 it. I would submit that perhaps rather than calling this
25 the Open Skies Treaty, maybe it should be called the Open

1 Skies Over America and the Closed Skies Over Russia Treaty.

2 Admiral, do you see value in remaining in a treaty
3 where only one side is following the rules?

4 Admiral Richard: Senator, one, I will support any arms
5 control or treaty that enhances the security of this nation.
6 Your analysis is quite correct on the Open Skies Treaty. We
7 do derive some benefit from it particularly with our allies.
8 We would need to make the appropriate resource and
9 operational commitments to utilize the full provisions of
10 the treaty if we were to remain. And I would just offer my
11 best military advice, if confirmed, if a decision were to be
12 reached.

13 Senator Cotton: Do we have the best satellite
14 constellation in the world?

15 Admiral Richard: Senator, we do.

16 Senator Cotton: Superior to Russia's?

17 Admiral Richard: Senator, it is not directly in my
18 area of expertise, but yes, I think so.

19 Senator Cotton: So it would stand to reason then that
20 Russia gains more from this treaty, which they are
21 violating, by gaining the overhead imagery from these
22 flights since they have an inferior satellite constellation
23 system.

24 Admiral Richard: Senator, again, you are getting into
25 an area that I pledge to look closely at, if confirmed. I

1 do not have direct expertise in that. But you are hitting
2 on the factors that have to be considered whether or not we
3 stay in the treaty.

4 Senator Cotton: And would it be to a signatory
5 country's advantage if they also had on-the-ground
6 intelligence officers coordinating with their overflights of
7 another party's territory to collect intelligence on
8 military bases or other critical infrastructure?

9 Admiral Richard: Senator, it is important in any
10 treaty or agreement for all parties to comply.

11 Senator Cotton: The Air Force has sent up a long
12 unfunded priority list to reach the growing force of 386
13 squadrons, more spare parts for F-35's, more additional
14 tanker capacity, supply inventories. We also propose to
15 spend \$250 million on Open Skies aircraft and operations.
16 Perhaps if Russia is not complying with the Open Skies
17 Treaty, that money might be better spent on some of these
18 urgent priorities for the Air Force?

19 Admiral Richard: Senator, again, you are getting at
20 the actual elements of a decision.

21 Senator Cotton: All right. Thank you, Admiral. I
22 appreciate that.

23 I just have to say I think this is a lot like the
24 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. Everyone agrees
25 that Russia is not complying with it. Everyone agrees it

1 would be best if we brought Russia back into compliance.
2 Everyone agrees it would be great if everyone had a pony as
3 well. But we have spent years trying to get Russia into
4 compliance with this treaty, and in the meantime, Russia has
5 continued to gain significant intelligence advantage over
6 the United States, a situation which because we have our
7 superior constellation would be advantaged if Russia was not
8 taking these advantages of the Open Skies Treaty.

9 Congratulations again on your nomination.

10 Chairman Inhofe: Senator King?

11 Senator King: Admiral, it is 2:00 a.m. on a Monday
12 morning in July. You receive credible evidence that there
13 are incoming missiles from Russia. The GPS is out. The
14 satellite system is out. The phone system is down. Can you
15 communicate to the President and can the President
16 communicate to our triad?

17 Admiral Richard: Senator, yes.

18 Senator King: And you are confident of that. I think
19 command and control is an essential part of the deterrent.

20 Admiral Richard: Senator, one, I could not agree with
21 you more that command and control is an essential element to
22 the deterrent. That mission set is practiced every day at
23 U.S. Strategic Command to allow people like me to be able to
24 say that.

25 Senator King: Without satellites, without the

1 telephone network.

2 Admiral Richard: Senator, we have thought through all
3 of that. Obviously, satellites are a critical component to
4 our NC3 capability, but we have capabilities beyond that.

5 Senator King: That is reassuring, but I want your
6 commitment to keep on this issue. And interestingly, it
7 seems to me it has to be more or less public. I mean, we do
8 not want to advertise to our adversaries our techniques, but
9 we do need for our adversaries to know that we have a
10 credible deterrent because we can continue to communicate.
11 Otherwise, the deterrent effect goes away.

12 Admiral Richard: Senator, you are absolutely correct.
13 You absolutely have that commitment, and I have that
14 responsibility in writing from the Secretary of Defense.

15 Senator King: Thank you.

16 Let us talk again about deterrence. Deterrence has
17 worked as a strategy for 70 years, but it is based upon a
18 principle of a kind of mutual rationality in effect that
19 neither side wants to incinerate their country and their
20 countrymen.

21 What worries me is the theory of deterrence does not
22 work if non-state actors get a hold of nuclear weapons
23 because the normal -- what happens if, A, it is not a
24 country and, B, the people do not care about dying? I think
25 we need deterrence 2.0 to be thinking about that eventuality

1 because I see that as not as a probability but at least a
2 possibility and a very frightening one.

3 Admiral Richard: Senator, I agree with you.
4 Deterrence is based in the eye of the opponent. Can I deny
5 your aim? Can I impose a cost on you that is unacceptable
6 to you, and do you believe me based on your value and how
7 you judge things?

8 A terrorist scenario is a very challenging one. The
9 value systems are very different. Denying them the ability
10 to have the weapon, deterring them, again their value
11 system. The efforts this nation has been after for many
12 decades will be essential to ensure that what you described
13 does not happen.

14 Senator King: It seems to me that part of the key to
15 that in that scenario is intelligence. We have to know that
16 such a threat is imminent or possible and how to deal with
17 it in a different way than the traditional deterrence
18 because, obviously, to somebody who is willing to give up
19 their life instantaneously, that is not an effective
20 control.

21 Let me change the subject entirely from these very
22 serious matters we are talking about and go back to the
23 beginning of your testimony. This is a more general
24 question.

25 You talked about having redeployed I think 10 times in

1 20 years, every 2 years. Does that make sense in terms of
2 both national policy and wear and tear on your family and
3 their furniture? It worries me that a person of your
4 expertise and knowledge gets set in a job, gains some
5 expertise and knowledge, whether it is a commander of a
6 submarine or of all the submarines or our commander in
7 Afghanistan. I worry that the churn undermines the
8 continuity of information and knowledge and experience that
9 would be beneficial if the tours were longer. I want your
10 personal reflections --

11 Admiral Richard: Senator, one, I may not be the best
12 example of the military writ large. Also, if you go earlier
13 in my career, I tended to stay longer.

14 Senator King: Could you not get along with the people
15 where you went to all these places?

16 Admiral Richard: I was appreciative of the opportunity
17 to broaden my experience base that the Department gave me,
18 and so there is a difference between particularly after
19 making flag rank and what happens before. The military very
20 much values exactly what you are talking about. It is a
21 policy, for example, in the submarine force. We do not turn
22 over commanding officers of submarines except about every 3
23 years to make sure we have the continuity that you are
24 talking about.

25 Senator King: Is 3 years the right number? How about

1 5 years?

2 Admiral Richard: I think 3 years. We have actually
3 moved that around. No, 3 years is very demanding. You have
4 to go all in for those 3 years. So 3 years is about the
5 right amount of time. Endurance, stamina, commitment,
6 refresh with new leadership. 3 years is about the right
7 time.

8 Senator King: Well, I appreciate those comments. But
9 I remain concerned about this general policy and whether 2
10 and 3 years is the right amount of time. There is also
11 enormous cost to the taxpayers in terms of retraining and
12 moving people. But I appreciate your comments.

13 And thank you for your commitment. I understand the
14 knowledge and experience you bring to this, and I think it
15 will be a great benefit to the country.

16 Admiral Richard: Thank you, Senator.

17 Chairman Inhofe: Senator Hawley?

18 Senator Hawley: Admiral Richard, thank you for being
19 here today. Congratulations again on your nomination. I
20 enjoyed visiting with you the other day.

21 When you and I met in my office, you offered what I
22 thought was a very compelling argument to how to think about
23 the cost of nuclear modernization relative to the size of
24 the defense budget as a whole, and I wondered if you might
25 just share that today for the record for the committee

1 because I think it is a great perspective.

2 Admiral Richard: Senator, thank you. We were
3 discussing the large numbers that are sometimes used to
4 describe the cost of the recapitalization. For example,
5 there was a recent CBO number. That is a 10-year overall
6 cost and by itself looks very large. But that is only 3.5
7 percent of the defense budget on top of the 3.5 percent that
8 we spend to maintain the system that we have. That defense
9 budget is itself a fraction of the discretionary budget of
10 this nation which is also a subset of the overall things
11 that this nation chooses to spend its resources on.

12 So if you do that math, the recapitalization is a
13 fraction of a percent of all the things that this nation
14 chooses to apply its resources to, and that is what buys our
15 deterrence and defense against the only existential threat
16 this nation faces. I think that is a good investment, and
17 in the words of former Secretary of Defense Mattis, this
18 nation can afford survival.

19 Senator Hawley: Thank you for that. I think that is
20 very compelling.

21 Let me ask you about the Nuclear Posture Review which
22 stresses the need to integrate conventional and nuclear
23 forces. Could you define for us conventional-nuclear
24 integration and maybe give us a sense of why it is so
25 important and why it actually strengthens conventional

1 deterrence?

2 Admiral Richard: Senator, both of those are
3 capabilities that this nation has and our ability to think
4 through use of both conventional, non-kinetic space, cyber
5 in an integrated way worldwide in a synchronized and
6 integrated fashion across combatant commands is the best way
7 to address the threats that we face in the 21st century
8 which are global in nature.

9 Senator Hawley: Let me ask you this. The Director of
10 the DIA said earlier this year that like Russia, China is
11 working to field nuclear theater range precision strike
12 systems. Is it possible in your judgment that Beijing would
13 use limited nuclear strikes or at least threaten them to
14 compel the United States to surrender if we found ourselves
15 losing a conventional war or if they found themselves,
16 rather, losing -- China did -- a conventional war with us
17 over a Taiwan fait accompli scenario?

18 Admiral Richard: Senator, unlike Russia, China is very
19 opaque in terms of what her doctrine and strategies are.
20 She does that I believe intentionally. I think she believes
21 that she derives benefit from that. They certainly possess
22 capabilities that would allow them to adopt that type of
23 strategy if they so chose.

24 Senator Hawley: Let me ask you this. For some time,
25 the disarmament community has argued that the U.S. could

1 maintain nuclear deterrence while dropping to a nuclear
2 dyad, say, or even just sea-based nuclear platforms. In
3 your view, can you tell us how do the different legs of the
4 nuclear triad reinforce one another and why are they each so
5 important?

6 Admiral Richard: Senator, the Nuclear Posture Review I
7 think wisely has us on a strategy that tailors our deterrent
8 response to each individual adversary. This is not the Cold
9 War. We face multiple threats from multiple actors, and the
10 complementary nature of the attributes of the triad enables
11 us to be able to tailor our deterrent strategies.

12 We could go into a lot of detail, but the ballistic
13 missile leg, the submarine leg is the survivable leg. The
14 intercontinental ballistic missile has a promptness that is
15 not achieved by any other system. The bombers provide a
16 signaling and man-in-the-loop opportunity that the other
17 systems do not have. That is just a very high level wave at
18 the tremendous wisdom of the initial designers of the triad.

19 Senator Hawley: Let me ask you about the ICBM leg,
20 since you mentioned it. How would you respond to the
21 argument that we could cut the ICBM leg of the triad and
22 offset that capacity by uploading additional weapons to our
23 SSBN force, for instance?

24 Admiral Richard: The ICBMs provide unique attributes
25 that cannot be provided by the other legs of the triad.

1 Senator Hawley: Thank you very much, Admiral.

2 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

3 Chairman Inhofe: Senator Kaine?

4 Senator Kaine: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

5 Admiral Richard, I enjoyed our visit yesterday and have
6 two topics I want to ask you about.

7 The value of the nuclear triad in deterrence is very
8 clear. A concern about the nuclear posture of this and
9 other nations is the risk of miscalculations. And so you
10 are balancing off the deterrent value and trying to minimize
11 risk of miscalculations. And I am, along with many,
12 increasingly worried about risks of miscalculations in the
13 world for a variety of reasons.

14 In January of 2018 in the same week, there were two
15 kind of shocking instances of emergency alerts being sent
16 out, one in Hawaii and one in Japan, about North Korean
17 incoming missiles. The Hawaii instance was sent out by a
18 State emergency response department that was countermanded
19 about 40 minutes later after a call to INDOPACOM and the
20 Hawaii officials realized there was no incoming missile.
21 The Japanese missile alarm was sounded by a broadcaster and
22 then was retracted.

23 Offer the committee and the country some reassurance
24 that we have mechanisms in place to reduce the risks of
25 miscalculation.

1 Admiral Richard: One, Senator, I agree with you. And
2 that drives back to the need for as much transparency as we
3 can provide between us and other nations to minimize that
4 possibility of miscalculation. Transparency adds to
5 strategic stability.

6 The nation has a great capability to understand the
7 threats that it faces. The Department of Defense does
8 inform other elements of the Federal Government who have
9 responsibility for the warning functions that you describe
10 and we take those responsibilities very seriously.

11 Senator Kaine: In the aftermath of the Hawaii
12 incident, which is one that we needed to grapple with here,
13 the FCC did an investigation and imposed some additional
14 requirements with respect to the early alert systems that
15 are often managed by State departments of emergency
16 management. I think NORAD was involved in after-action
17 analysis as well.

18 But this is something that I think we are going to have
19 to continue to really focus on and give our public the
20 confidence that there will not be an accidental use of these
21 or other weapons.

22 You and I talked yesterday in the office, and I was
23 impressed with your thought about how the Space Command
24 could pertain to our strategic deterrent strategy. You had
25 mentioned the importance of the work this committee and the

1 administration has done to elevate Space Command as a
2 combatant command. Talk a little bit about why you think
3 that new structure is going to be important to our strategic
4 deterrence and how you would foresee STRATCOM and the Space
5 Command interacting going forward.

6 Admiral Richard: Senator, thank you. And you are
7 referring to some advance policy questions that I received
8 prior to this hearing.

9 So I had been asked in those am I concerned about the
10 effect on STRATCOM's missions with the elevation of Space
11 Command. In fact, it is quite the opposite. I am
12 encouraged by both this committee's leadership and the
13 Department's direction to establish a separate Space
14 Command. That is one of the most direct and immediate steps
15 that we can do to ensure nuclear command and control
16 capability, adequate warning. And I am particularly
17 encouraged about General Raymond's assignment as the
18 sensor commander. And so this is the beginnings of us
19 starting to think across individual mission areas and think
20 more broadly, in this case, missile warning, a missile
21 defense, and space situational awareness to optimize this
22 nation's ability to achieve all of those missions and also
23 do so with an effective use of our resources.

24 Senator Kaine: This is going to be a hard question to
25 answer specifically, but I just want to sort of get your

1 general sense of it. Obviously, the triad that we have is
2 more effective because we have been able to forward-deploy
3 some of our assets around the world, and that increases the
4 effectiveness of the triad.

5 There has been a recent concern in the press about the
6 U.S.-Turkey relationship, for example. Should you be
7 confirmed as STRATCOM Commander, how will you approach the
8 question of where we should forward-deploy assets to
9 continue to maximize the deterrent value of our triad?

10 Admiral Richard: Senator, as you know, I can neither
11 confirm nor deny the presence of any U.S. nuclear weapon
12 anywhere in the world. But all U.S. nuclear weapons, no
13 matter where they are, are under responsible U.S.
14 commanders, and I have great confidence that they maintain
15 the safety and security of those weapons or take steps, if
16 necessary, to achieve that objective.

17 I would like to remind the committee -- I would love to
18 find the person that came up with our extended deterrence
19 and assurance policies, including the forward-deployed
20 weapons. I can think of no other single thing that has been
21 more effective at achieving this nation's nonproliferation
22 goals than our extended deterrence and assurance policies,
23 and it is an example of why the United States is the
24 security partner of choice and there are advantages to
25 allying with us.

1 Senator Kaine: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

2 Chairman Inhofe: Senator Perdue?

3 Senator Perdue: Thank you, sir, and thank you,
4 Admiral.

5 You know, it gives me great confidence in our future
6 when American institutions like the Department of Defense
7 and our Navy can produce leaders like you and families like
8 yours. And I want to thank you for stepping up again. You
9 have my full support for this nomination. I hope you get it
10 soon and get out there and do what you know how to do.

11 I want to talk about two things very quickly.

12 When you and I visited in Norfolk on my way out to
13 visit the USS Truman, you made probably the greatest quote
14 of any individual since I have been in the United States
15 Senate. Now, I am going to give you a full opportunity to
16 deny this quote today, but I remember this very well. You
17 said give me a boomer, an air command post, a President, and
18 I guarantee you we will never say "I surrender."

19 Today Secretary Spencer has assured us that the
20 Columbia class is a top priority procurement item in the
21 U.S. Navy. We have a President. And I want to talk about
22 the air command post.

23 First of all, I have been aboard the NAOC, the E4-B.
24 They were gracious enough to take me up and demonstrate its
25 capabilities and so forth. I understand that there is a

1 NEAT program that we are looking to update several different
2 aircraft, including the C-32A and the E-6B. The Navy has
3 the Airborne Ops Center. If you are confirmed, tell us how
4 important this is and what are your thoughts regarding the
5 updating of particularly the E-4B since it is very long in
6 the tooth?

7 Admiral Richard: Senator, one, I thank you for your
8 interest in this vital segment of nuclear command and
9 control, the airborne piece. I have over 160 hours of
10 mission crew time in the Airborne Command post, the Navy
11 element of that, and it is absolutely critical. And this is
12 our ability to provide command and control no matter what
13 threat faces the nation.

14 So you are quite correct. There is an analysis of
15 alternatives going on to determine how to recapitalize that.
16 The capacity may have to be adjusted based on the threat.
17 It is worth remembering we used to operate the Looking Glass
18 aircraft, which was a much larger aircraft, up airborne 24/7
19 based on the threat environment that we have.

20 But, Senator, I would also commit to you the goal is
21 survivability. Airborne Command post provides that
22 survivability today. It is important for us to look to see
23 is that still the best way to provide that survivability in
24 the future. And the NC3 Center is on a trajectory to go
25 answer that question.

1 Senator Perdue: Thank you, sir. I would love to have
2 a deeper conversation in a classified environment about that
3 to be comforted about that. Thank you.

4 I want to talk about the missile development that China
5 has been under over the last 30 years really and the fact
6 that many people in the Navy say that we are clearly "out-
7 sticked." That is their term today.

8 In early August, the United States formally withdrew
9 from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. We have
10 talked enough about that today. I am not going to go there.
11 But I want to talk about what China has been doing in those
12 32 years to where now they have developed the foremost
13 conventional missile force in the world with ranges from 500
14 to 5,500 kilometers, as I understand it.

15 Admiral Harris in 2017 testified when he was then
16 commander of PACOM -- and I quote -- Beijing controls the
17 largest most diverse missile force in the world with an
18 inventory of more than 2,000 ballistic and cruise missiles.
19 And 95 percent of those, according to Admiral Harris,
20 violated the INF Treaty, which implies that we obviously do
21 not have that capability since we complied with the INF.

22 Now unshackled from the INF, what are your thoughts and
23 what can and should the U.S. do to level this playing field?

24 Admiral Richard: Senator, one, you are quite correct
25 on the analysis of the situation in the Pacific. And now

1 that we are not under the INF Treaty, I think it is
2 important for us to accelerate our research and development
3 into competing systems. And also as your submarine force
4 commander, I would offer that the submarines have an ability
5 to counter that, and that is also an important capability to
6 make sure that Admiral Davidson and INDOPACOM have those
7 capabilities to address that threat.

8 Senator Perdue: One last question. I am almost out of
9 time.

10 The Navy was gracious enough to expose me to their
11 FONOP capability in the South China Sea, and I participated
12 in one with a great crew out there. What are your thoughts
13 on the importance of the FONOP efforts out there and the
14 frequency in which we are doing those? And are those a
15 continuing necessary part of the deterrence strategy vis-a-
16 vis our friends in China?

17 Admiral Richard: Senator, they are. As you well, the
18 freedom of navigation operations have been going on for
19 many, many decades, and it is a part of the way the United
20 States asserts freedom of the seas in compliance with
21 international norms, even more important today given the
22 actions that China has taken in the South China Sea.

23 Senator Perdue: Well, thank you, sir, for being
24 willing to do this. Thank you for your career and your
25 service.

1 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

2 Senator Reed [presiding]: On behalf of the chairman,
3 let me recognize Senator Shaheen.

4 Senator Shaheen: Thank you.

5 Admiral Richard, thank you very much to you and your
6 family for your service and for all those moves. And
7 congratulations on your nomination to be Commander at
8 STRATCOM and for taking time to sit down with me yesterday
9 to talk about some of the challenges.

10 One of the things we discussed is the lawful versus
11 unlawful orders in terms of a decision to use nuclear
12 weapons. In November of 2017 at the Halifax International
13 Security Forum, then STRATCOM Commander General Hyten said
14 during a panel discussion that he would push back if the
15 President asked him to carry out an illegal order. He
16 further went on to say that we think a lot about these
17 things, and when you have this responsibility, how do you
18 not think about it?

19 Now, if confirmed as Commander of STRATCOM, you would
20 be responsible for providing strike options if a nuclear
21 launch was ordered. Have you talked about what you would do
22 in that situation, and if you believe an order to be
23 unlawful, how you would respond to that? And can you walk
24 me through the process on what is determined to be a lawful
25 versus an unlawful order?

1 Admiral Richard: Well, Senator, one, General Hyten
2 gave a textbook definition of what a lawful order is in that
3 interview that you referred to back in Halifax.

4 What I will say is, one, not addressing hypothetical
5 situations, but I want to make it very clear I will execute
6 all lawful orders that I receive and I will not execute any
7 that are not.

8 Senator Shaheen: And again, can you describe for us
9 the difference? I understand that General Hyten referenced
10 that, but can you describe the difference between lawful and
11 unlawful?

12 Admiral Richard: Ma'am, it has a very strict
13 definition. We are all trained in it. We have staff judge
14 advocates that advise us on that.

15 But the bottom line here is for me to say anything
16 other than I will follow a lawful order that I am given
17 starts to call into question civilian control of the
18 military. This is an ideal that is a long-cherished
19 American ideal. I strongly support that, and that would be
20 the basis of my decision.

21 Senator Shaheen: Well, and I am sure everybody on this
22 committee agrees with that, that it is a very important
23 aspect of our democracy. I think what I am still trying to
24 understand is what is the difference between a lawful and
25 unlawful order, and that I think is not clear to the public.

1 Admiral Richard: Yes, ma'am.

2 Senator Shaheen: So maybe you could direct me on where
3 to get further insight into that or maybe we can have that
4 discussion in a classified setting?

5 Admiral Richard: Senator, I would be happy to do that.

6 Senator Shaheen: Which? Which answer?

7 Admiral Richard: I will be happy to come back in a
8 classified -- whichever one suits you best, ma'am. I can
9 come back in a classified setting. I can certainly give you
10 the definition of a lawful order. Happy to do both.

11 Senator Shaheen: Okay. I appreciate that. We will
12 follow up with a question for the record on that so that you
13 can give us the definition of the lawful order.

14 Admiral Richard: Yes, ma'am.

15 Senator Shaheen: I want to follow up a little bit on
16 what we do next now that we are no longer part of an INF
17 Treaty. And I know that or at least I understand that we
18 are looking into options to deploy our own ground-based
19 system.

20 Can you comment on the political realities in Europe
21 and whether our allies in Europe would work with us on
22 deploying such a system?

23 Admiral Richard: Senator, my current responsibilities
24 do not afford me any particular insight on the current
25 political dynamics in Europe. I would pledge, if confirmed,

1 to provide my best military advice and understand that
2 situation very carefully.

3 We have historical precedent there where we were able
4 to deploy those systems, but there was a large amount of
5 political effort that had to be thought through to enable
6 that in a way that it was acceptable to those nations.

7 Senator Shaheen: And as we look at future disarmament
8 and the effort to try and bring China under an umbrella that
9 would include their limiting or getting rid of nuclear
10 weapons, do you think there is a role for NATO to play in
11 that? Or is there an international initiative that might
12 help get that done as we are thinking about how we might
13 make overtures to China to participate with us in any future
14 negotiations?

15 Admiral Richard: Ma'am, there very well could be. And
16 again, I would welcome any effort by any mechanism that
17 would provide greater transparency into China's capabilities
18 and intentions.

19 Senator Shaheen: And do you think NATO has any
20 potential role in that?

21 Admiral Richard: NATO potentially could, yes, ma'am.

22 Senator Shaheen: Thank you.

23 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

24 Chairman Inhofe [presiding]: Senator Blackburn?

25 Senator Blackburn: Thank you so much. And thank you

1 for the visit yesterday. I appreciated the conversation and
2 talking with you a little bit about spectrum and spectrum
3 utilization.

4 I think it is fair to say that the EMS has been treated
5 as a permissive environment, and I would like for you, for
6 the record, to talk a little bit about how we regrow the
7 expertise that is necessary to operate in a contested EW
8 environment and then how we conduct our modeling and testing
9 without revealing our expertise to our adversaries. And you
10 and I spoke a bit about this yesterday. And as we look at
11 moving forward with your confirmation, which we hope will be
12 swift, I would like for you to just expand on that for a few
13 minutes.

14 Admiral Richard: Senator, one, I thank you for the
15 question today, as well as the conversation yesterday. This
16 is an area that deserves more attention and conversation.

17 You are quite correct that our military's ability to
18 operate in an electromagnetic spectrum is being contested in
19 a way that we have not seen in a long time. It is no longer
20 a permissive environment. I could draw parallels to what is
21 happening in the cyber domain and the space domain. So we
22 have work to do.

23 STRATCOM has a very specific unified command plan
24 responsibilities in terms of -- for joint electronic
25 warfare. And a lot of that starts with building the

1 expertise. The services are doing this. I did not give you
2 this example yesterday, but I have just reorganized the
3 submarine force to bring electronic warfare into a principal
4 warfare area on its own and regrow a series of specialists
5 that will put that on par with cyber and communications in
6 terms of a certain number of sailors dedicating their
7 careers to expertise in that area.

8 Beyond that, we have to get more agile in the spectrum.
9 We have to be able to dynamically maneuver. You are quite
10 correct that our ability to do modeling and simulation will
11 enable us to train better without revealing what our
12 capabilities are.

13 Senator Blackburn: Do you have the simulation
14 capabilities that are necessary?

15 Admiral Richard: We have some but we do not have
16 sufficient ones. We have work to do.

17 Senator Blackburn: And quantify that a little bit, if
18 you can, the amount of work that is necessary to bring us to
19 par.

20 Admiral Richard: It is, one, an intellectual
21 challenge. There is a resource challenge to it. Models are
22 not accurate enough yet for us to be high fidelity. There
23 is a joint nature to this that we need to bring it together.
24 The services are doing individual things, and we are just in
25 the beginnings of putting the joint interoperability pieces

1 on this to the level that we need to do.

2 Senator Blackburn: Do we have a concept of operations
3 plan or not?

4 Admiral Richard: Senator, we have multiple individual
5 service concepts of operation.

6 Senator Blackburn: But nothing cohesive.

7 Admiral Richard: We have not pulled those together in
8 a more current, total joint look across all services.

9 Senator Blackburn: Okay. Would that aid us in being
10 more intentional with our spectrum use? As you and I talked
11 yesterday, I think that inventory and analysis on our
12 spectrum utilization and especially looking at the mid-bands
13 is something that we probably should do. So talk a little
14 bit about that.

15 Admiral Richard: No, Senator, you are again quite
16 correct in that, one, spectrum is essential for military
17 operations, our ability to access, and it is not only in the
18 mid-bands, but this gets up into ultraviolet and infrared.
19 So it is a scarce resource. Static allocation, while
20 effective in a permissive environment, will not work in a
21 dynamic environment. There are competing commercial demands
22 that need to be addressed in peacetime. And so there is
23 work across the board in our understanding to dynamically
24 use and operate inside the spectrum.

25 Senator Blackburn: With that, Mr. Chairman, I am going

1 to yield back.

2 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you.

3 Senator Peters?

4 Senator Peters: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

5 Admiral Richard, thank you for your service and your
6 commitment to our country, as well as your family's
7 commitment to our country. We appreciate all of you.

8 Admiral, Russia has been developing an unmanned nuclear
9 autonomous underwater vehicle known as Poseidon, which some
10 have described as a doomsday weapon. Last April, "Newsweek"
11 published a story detailing the Poseidon's capability and
12 quoted Russian President Vladimir Putin as saying -- and
13 this is a quote from Mr. Putin -- they are quiet, highly
14 maneuverable, and have hardly any vulnerabilities for the
15 enemy to exploit. There is simply nothing in the world
16 capable of withstanding them. End of quote.

17 Putin himself, during the March 2018 state of the union
18 address, confirmed Russia's development of a -- again I
19 quote -- unmanned submersible vehicle that can move at great
20 depths, I would say extreme depths, intercontinentally at a
21 speed multiple times higher than the speed of submarines,
22 cutting edge torpedoes and all kinds of surface vessels,
23 including some of the fastest.

24 So my question to you, Admiral, is how would a
25 strategic competitor with an unmanned autonomous underwater

1 vehicle that is capable of carrying nuclear weapons change
2 or alter any of your thinking in regards to deterrence?

3 Admiral Richard: Well, Senator, one, so I would point
4 to that as a vivid example of the threat that this nation
5 faces in a way that we have not seen in many decades. You
6 are correct. That would not be constrained by New START, by
7 the way.

8 In the end, Senator, it comes back to the basic
9 deterrence equation. Right? Can I deny you your aim or
10 impose a cost on you that is intolerable to you such that
11 you do not take the action? So this nation certainly
12 possesses the capability to impose a cost greater than what
13 they seek to gain by the use of that weapon.

14 Senator Peters: Admiral, in your advance policy
15 question response, when asked if the Department of Defense
16 leadership has leaders with the training, academic degrees,
17 and expertise in the scientific and technical skills
18 discipline to lead the STRATCOM future joint force, you
19 stated -- and I am going to quote your statement here. You
20 are concerned about our ability to continue to attract and
21 retain the highest quality talent necessary to achieve the
22 National Defense Strategy. To that end, we must compete
23 with the public and private sectors for talent and further
24 establish the Department as an employer of choice was your
25 quote.

1 The Bureau of Labor Statistics job outlook shows that
2 the nuclear engineer career field has 50 percent less growth
3 over the next 7 years compared to all other engineering
4 fields and 3 percent less than other occupations. And
5 certainly as the United States shifts its energy sources
6 away from nuclear power and turns to renewable energy to
7 protect our nation from threats associated with climate
8 change, we need to maintain a pipeline of future talent to
9 support the defense industry, particularly in nuclear
10 engineers.

11 So my question is, how should we work with universities
12 to ensure that we are cultivating this talent in this
13 sector?

14 Admiral Richard: Senator, so one, I applaud your
15 interest in this area. It is very important.

16 There are a number of things the Department can do, but
17 one I would point to specifically is U.S. Strategic Command
18 has an academic alliance with over 70 universities and
19 colleges designed to solicit, encourage, and develop the
20 talent that we need. It is not quite as focused on the
21 nuclear propulsion side of the house that you refer to. It
22 is more in strategic deterrence theory. But it is
23 mechanisms like that that the Department can use to
24 encourage us to develop the intellectual capital, both
25 capability and capacity, inside this nation to address our

1 challenges.

2 Senator Peters: I appreciate that answer.

3 Do you have some specific proposals on how the
4 Department can market itself to the limited number of
5 nuclear engineers that are in that field as to why they
6 would choose to come to work with the Department of Defense
7 as opposed to other options that are out there?

8 Admiral Richard: Senator, in addition to -- I mean, I
9 look at this, for example, as the submarine force commander.
10 I was just in a meeting last week changing the nuclear bonus
11 structure to attract and retain more talent to your direct
12 point.

13 We should not forget that the other thing that happens
14 if you are wearing the uniform that I am wearing is that you
15 are given a license to do organized violence on behalf of
16 this nation. You get a chance to defend this nation in a
17 way that no other occupation or no other person can do. We
18 should remind people that is a unique attribute of being in
19 the military, and I think that is something that is worth
20 some people choosing to come join us.

21 Senator Peters: Thank you, Admiral.

22 Chairman Inhofe: Senator Sullivan?

23 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

24 And, Admiral, congratulations to you and your family,
25 and thank you for your decades of service, all of you,

1 including your family. I know it is not always easy.

2 As the chairman mentioned, I certainly want to focus a
3 little bit more on missile defense. It is a really
4 important element of what your job is going to be, and it
5 has actually been a really, I think, a good news story
6 coming out of this committee. There has been bipartisan
7 legislation in the last three NDAA's on this. The President
8 launched the Missile Defense Review at the Pentagon earlier
9 this year. In March, you may have seen MDA successfully
10 completed its first-ever salvo test, which was really
11 remarkable. It did not get a lot of news but very
12 successful. Certainly our adversaries took notice.

13 I have a particular interest authoring a lot of this
14 legislation, but as you probably know, Alaska is the
15 cornerstone of our nation's missile defense with the radar
16 sites out in the Aleutians, the long-range discrimination
17 radar site being built at Fort Greely, testing at Kodiak.
18 So that is the good news.

19 But then I will tell you I and I think a number of the
20 members of this committee were surprised in August when the
21 under secretary over at the Pentagon abruptly cancelled the
22 redesigned kill vehicle. And first of all, very little
23 notice. I was not given any notice. And I focus on this
24 issue as much as anyone in the Congress.

25 So can I first get your commitment? Any kind of major

1 policy decisions that, to be honest, this body has been
2 driving, not the Pentagon -- the Congress has been driving
3 missile defense the last 5 years. If there is going to be
4 major abrupt changes, I need your commitment to make sure
5 you reach out to the chairman, the committee, other members
6 to make sure we know what is happening, make sure we know
7 what the reasoning is, maybe even to seek our advice on it.
8 We sometimes have a little wisdom over here too. Can I get
9 your commitment on that?

10 Admiral Richard: Absolutely, Senator.

11 Senator Sullivan: So the explanations for this abrupt
12 cancellation were all over the place. I was actually in
13 Alaska when this happened. First, it was about hypersonics.
14 As you know, the GBIs are not even focused on hypersonics.
15 They are focused on rogue missile, like North Korea, Iran.

16 The estimates for the next interceptor, again, are all
17 over the map, that we would develop 5 to 10 years. I know
18 the number is classified, but to be honest, nobody really
19 knows.

20 Are you aware of this? And if we are not going to be
21 testing the new RKV over the next several years, how do we
22 show deterrence?

23 Admiral Richard: Senator, one, my current
24 responsibilities do not afford me any particular insight. I
25 am generally aware of what you are referring to.

1 Senator Sullivan: Well, if you are confirmed, which I
2 think you should be, we will need to sit down and go into
3 this in a lot of depth. There is a number of members on
4 both sides of the aisle who were quite surprised by this
5 announcement. And I think it leaves us open. I think it
6 leaves us vulnerable to be perfectly honest.

7 Do you have a view on that?

8 Admiral Richard: Well, Senator, one, I will absolutely
9 commit to that. I will look very closely at this issue.

10 But I have confidence today that the system that we
11 have fielded will defend us against the threats we face
12 today. You are quite correct. In the future, it is
13 something we need to go look at.

14 Senator Sullivan: But there is a continuing threat --
15 right -- from North Korea, from Iran. These are the rogue
16 states. Again, our GBI system is meant primarily for rogue
17 states not deterrence against --

18 Admiral Richard: That is our policy, yes, sir.

19 Senator Sullivan: It does seem to me a little bit
20 again -- and I know you have not been fully briefed into it
21 -- but in search for the perfect, which is what I think
22 Under Secretary Griffin was looking for, we are leaving
23 ourselves a bit vulnerable, particularly given that the
24 system that was being developed, as was demonstrated in this
25 March salvo test, seemed like it was coming along quite

1 well.

2 Do you have a view on that?

3 Admiral Richard: Sir, I agree with you that we need to
4 be very careful about setting too high a bar in our effort
5 to develop any system such that it delays us. We used to
6 move faster in history, being willing accept some failure
7 and learning along the way. And I would support our ability
8 to get back to that pace.

9 Senator Sullivan: One of the things that we had in our
10 legislation that passed was -- and this was MDA's request to
11 us -- to encourage more testing even if we, quote/unquote,
12 fail because as you know, Admiral, when you fail, you are
13 not really failing. You are still learning. I am sure you
14 have seen that in your career.

15 Again, do you think that -- I would like to work with
16 you on looking at it to make sure this cancellation of the
17 RKV program does not undermine the ability for us to conduct
18 -- we had pressed for, in legislation, at least yearly
19 testing. Can I get your commitment on that as well?

20 Admiral Richard: Absolutely, Senator.

21 Senator Sullivan: And finally, do you have any views
22 on -- and again, this is a different topic. It is certainly
23 an emerging threat. The chairman has certainly talked about
24 it a lot. But it is not the threat that is being addressed
25 by our GBI system -- what we should be doing and how we

1 should be looking at the hypersonics threat.

2 Admiral Richard: Sir, one, the nation has some limited
3 capability against hypersonics today. I agree with you we
4 need to accelerate our ability to address that threat. And
5 it starts with the ability to track. Right? If I have the
6 ability to track and warn against hypersonics, it opens up a
7 number of responses, including direct defense.

8 Senator Sullivan: Thank you.

9 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

10 Chairman Inhofe: Senator Duckworth?

11 Senator Duckworth: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

12 Thank you, Admiral Richard, for your service to our
13 nation. And I could not agree with you more, being able to
14 serve in uniform is truly a privilege that not everyone gets
15 to enjoy. And I also want to thank your family for their
16 dedicated service as well.

17 Today I would like to examine how, if confirmed, you
18 would leverage your previous experience as Deputy Commander
19 of STRATCOM to effectively transition into this top
20 position. Specifically, I would like to sort of plumb your
21 background and experience. How will you make sure the
22 Department successfully modernizes all three legs of the
23 triad?

24 And I want to get a little bit more detailed. I do not
25 need to tell you how important avoiding schedule slippage is

1 in the B-21, the Columbia class submarine, and ground-based
2 strategic deterrent programs. Unlike most procurements,
3 delays in the schedule for these programs are guaranteed to
4 result in a gap in the capabilities. And yet, like any
5 procurement, there will be failures and schedule slippages.
6 So how are you planning to mitigate the impact of such
7 inevitable problems?

8 Admiral Richard: Senator, as the chairman noted in the
9 opening statement, one of the responsibilities of the
10 Commander of Strategic Command is to be the leading advocate
11 for the recapitalization of the triad. So it will be my
12 responsibility, one, to follow these closely to be able to
13 describe concisely what the impacts of potential delays are.

14 And, Senator, the way we will go mitigate this is on
15 the acquisition side of the house. We have pulled the
16 operational rheostat about as far back as it can go. That
17 is what enabled us to get to the delays we have already had
18 in the recapitalization. It is a specific operational
19 mitigation. The systems are a ways off. It will depend on
20 the threat environment at the time. We will address that if
21 necessary.

22 Senator Duckworth: Thank you.

23 While I do support the modernization of the triad, I do
24 want to note that Presidents of both parties have committed
25 to lessening our dependence on the use of weapons of mass

1 destruction in our National Defense Strategy. As we return
2 to great power competition, what is your vision for how
3 STRATCOM can effectively balance the need to advance our
4 nuclear nonproliferation goals while also preserving our
5 capability to deter our adversaries?

6 For example, based on your experience, can we employ
7 cyber attacks, conventional prompt global strike weapons,
8 and other non-nuclear weapons to achieve the same deterrent
9 effect as low-yield nuclear weapons?

10 Admiral Richard: Senator, let me answer that in two
11 pieces.

12 So, first, I do not see the nation's nonproliferation
13 goal's in tension with our strategic deterrence objectives.
14 Actually I see them complementary. The less proliferation
15 we have, the easier the burden it is to accomplish a
16 strategic deterrent. And I go back to our extended
17 deterrence and assurance guarantees as one of the most
18 effective mechanisms that we have available to us to lessen
19 the threat that we face and therefore make it easier to
20 accomplish strategic deterrence.

21 To your second point about space and cyber, I think the
22 2018 Nuclear Posture Review was very wise in acknowledging
23 the possibility that strategic attacks could be other than
24 nuclear and start to set a policy for us to address those.

25 But to answer your question today, no, not today.

1 There is no cyber or space attack that could have the same
2 strategic effect as a nuclear weapon, including a low-yield
3 nuclear weapon. Will that be true into the future? I do
4 not know. Probably not. But today there is no threat on
5 par with what nuclear can do.

6 Senator Duckworth: Which again goes back to my first
7 question. It really stresses the importance of not having
8 schedule slippages and making sure that we stay on track
9 with the modernization of the triad.

10 Switching topics, I would like to get your best
11 military advice on treaties and the role they serve in our
12 national defense. Recently there have been signals that the
13 United States may refuse to renew the New START and the Open
14 Skies Treaties. Without commenting on the merits of a
15 hypothetical policy action, can you please expand on what
16 you believe would be the projected real world impacts for
17 STRATCOM if we were to exit both treaties?

18 Admiral Richard: Again, ma'am, I will support any arms
19 control or other treaty that enhances the security of this
20 nation.

21 You had mentioned New START specifically in there. New
22 START has provided us valuable insight in terms of the
23 character and composition of Russian strategic forces in
24 exchange for the Russians having that visibility into ours.
25 That provided a level of strategic stability. But there are

1 a large number of capabilities, weapons that the Russians
2 have that are not covered under New START and there are a
3 number of novel capabilities. We were just discussing one
4 earlier that is also covered.

5 If confirmed, I will provide my best military advice in
6 terms of the pros and cons of a decision such as that.

7 Senator Duckworth: What are the cons of us leaving
8 Open Skies?

9 Admiral Richard: The primary negative to that, ma'am,
10 I would put in the category of the assurance of our allies.
11 We are not the only signatory to that treaty. It provides
12 valuable insight and partnership opportunities with our
13 allies, but it does require us to -- like the capital and
14 resource investments to fully use the provisions inside that
15 treaty and it does come at a counterintelligence cost to the
16 United States.

17 Senator Duckworth: Thank you, Admiral.

18 I yield back.

19 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Duckworth.

20 We are at the conclusion of your remarks. We are not
21 going to entertain any others in the hearing. I think we
22 are aware that right now we are in the Senate chamber. We
23 have the group that is going to be attending Elijah Cummings
24 lying in state.

25 Senator Manchin: Mr. Chairman, can I just have --

1 Chairman Inhofe: Of course. You will have all the
2 time you need.

3 Senator Manchin: Okay. Thank you very much, Mr.
4 Chairman.

5 First of all, Admiral Richard, let me just say thank
6 you for your service, but more thank you to your family.
7 They have moved 10 times in 12 years?

8 Admiral Richard: Yes.

9 Senator Manchin: They have got battle scars. God
10 bless them all.

11 And next of all, I wanted you to know that I have the
12 utmost appreciation and respect for the submarine class.
13 And I will tell you why. USS West Virginia. As a governor,
14 I would spend 2 or 3 days with them. They took me out, and
15 I have a deep appreciation of the commitment that they make
16 and what you have done.

17 Admiral Richard: A great ship.

18 Senator Manchin: A great ship. And we have a blue and
19 gold crew, and they are great crews and we love them.

20 Next of all, I know you are a proud Roll Tide, Alabama,
21 and Nick Saban is my dearest friend. We grew up together in
22 coal mining towns 4 miles apart. So I will be going down to
23 visit him and I will give him your best. I know you are
24 still rooting for him.

25 I just got back from the Middle East, and I was on the

1 USS Abraham Lincoln, and then I went over to the Ramage to
2 see the operations of our sailors and what they are doing to
3 keep us safe and keep those open lanes, if you will.

4 How many carriers do we have in the fleet right now?

5 Admiral Richard: Senator, I think the number is 11.

6 Senator Manchin: How many are operational, sir?

7 Admiral Richard: Sir, I do not have the number right
8 off the top of my head. It is a fraction of that.

9 Senator Manchin: I am just going by what I was told
10 that we only have three operational out of 11. And I do not
11 know the status of the other eight, how soon they will get
12 back, how much of a retrofit is going on.

13 Admiral Richard: Senator, we have more than three that
14 are operationally available. That is I think the number
15 that are currently deployed.

16 Senator Manchin: Well, here is what else I was told,
17 which is concerning to me, Admiral. I was told that the
18 Harry S. Truman cannot get out of port because of electrical
19 problems. So it is in right now. It was totally
20 retrofitted the same as Abraham Lincoln.

21 The reason I am saying this is my question would be,
22 very quickly, what is the greatest threat that the United
23 States of America faces or who is the greatest threat we
24 face?

25 Admiral Richard: The greatest threat, Senator, is that

1 we cannot move fast enough to pace the threats that face us,
2 whether they come from Russia or China. We have lost a
3 level of agility that we used to have that we need to get
4 back.

5 Senator Manchin: Well, my observation was this. When
6 I was in the Arabian Sea -- you know, we are not even in the
7 Gulf anymore. We moved down to protect our carriers because
8 it is not that safe in the Gulf, and that is why we have our
9 destroyers there. But in the South China Sea, if we are
10 that thin, do we have any carriers in the South China Sea
11 trying to keep that --

12 Admiral Richard: Senator, I am not current on the
13 force laydowns in the Pacific. I would be happy to
14 provide --

15 Senator Manchin: Maybe we can do that at a later time,
16 sit down and go through --

17 Admiral Richard: I will offer, though, that we have a
18 substantial undersea presence that is able to execute
19 missions in the Pacific AOR.

20 Senator Manchin: The concern I have is the same
21 concern. You mentioned China, and you mentioned Russia.
22 The Middle East is where we seem to be bogged down no matter
23 what. It has taken all of our sources and our inventory, if
24 you will, as sparse as it is. And it seems to me the South
25 China Sea is going to have a greater threat to us

1 economically than what we are bogged down where we are right
2 now. Probably in a classified hearing, I would have to get
3 in deeper in some of this with you, and maybe you could help
4 me on it to understand it better and how we give the support
5 that we need.

6 Admiral Richard: I would be happy to do that.

7 Senator Manchin: And you could on the aircraft
8 carriers, sir. I am really concerned about that because I
9 talked to some of our captains and commanders on those, and
10 there were some concerns they were sharing with us. I am
11 sure you will be on top of that pretty quick.

12 Admiral Richard: I am happy to offer you a follow-up.

13 Senator Manchin: Okay. Well, thank you so much. I
14 know every question has been asked that could possibly be
15 asked, and I was anxious to hear your answers. And it is
16 very informative. But I will look forward to meeting with
17 you and sitting down in a classified setting in the SCIF and
18 maybe getting more information.

19 Admiral Richard: Certainly, Senator.

20 Senator Manchin: Thank you very much.

21 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Manchin. It was
22 not my intention to rush you in this. I was only saying
23 that other members will not be recognized because of the
24 event that is taking place.

25 Senator Manchin: I know that, sir, and I appreciate it

1 very much. I wanted to be very quick.

2 Chairman Inhofe: Thanks so much. We really appreciate
3 your responses and your willingness to meet with I guess
4 each one of us prior to this meeting.

5 And I would like to tell you there was a reason I
6 wanted to pursue your thoughts on the "no first use" because
7 while we were starting this meeting, there was a meeting
8 taking place with a group that is very supportive of the "no
9 first use." And I did not know whether or not you were
10 aware of that. That was taking place today.

11 Admiral Richard: Senator, I was not.

12 Chairman Inhofe: Well, we appreciate it very much.
13 Your family -- I would say to Allison and Lisa -- is it --
14 would you not like to be able to do this every day? That
15 would be great.

16 So thanks for your patience. We appreciate that very
17 much. We look forward to serving with you in this new
18 capacity.

19 Admiral Richard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

20 Chairman Inhofe: And we are adjourned.

21 [Whereupon, at 10:35 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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