

TESTIMONY FROM OUTSIDE EXPERTS ON  
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A FUTURE  
NATIONAL DEFENSE STRATEGY

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HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2017

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Printed for the use of the Committee on Armed Services



Available via the World Wide Web: <http://www.fdsys.gov/>

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U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

30-020 PDF

WASHINGTON : 2018

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# **TESTIMONY FROM OUTSIDE EXPERTS ON RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A FUTURE NATIONAL DEFENSE STRATEGY**

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2017**

U.S. SENATE,  
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,  
*Washington, DC.*

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:32 a.m. in Room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Senator John McCain (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Senators McCain, Inhofe, Wicker, Fischer, Rounds, Ernst, Tillis, Sullivan, Perdue, Sasse, Reed, Nelson, McCaskill, Shaheen, Gillibrand, Blumenthal, Donnelly, Hirono, Kaine, King, Heinrich, Warren, and Peters.

## **OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN, CHAIRMAN**

Chairman MCCAIN. Good morning. The Senate Armed Services Committee meets today to receive testimony from outside experts on recommendations for a future National Defense Strategy.

We welcome our witnesses: Thomas Mahnken, president and CEO of the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments; David Ochmanek, senior defense research analyst at the RAND Corporation; Thomas Spoehr, director at the Heritage Foundation; Mara E. Karlin, associate professor at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies; and Mackenzie Eaglen, resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute.

Last year, this committee wrote into the National Defense Authorization Act a requirement for the Secretary of Defense to develop and implement a National Defense Strategy. The intent of this document was to prioritize a set of goals and articulate a strategy for the U.S. military to achieve warfighting superiority over our adversaries. The National Defense Strategy is part of this committee's broader effort to help guide the Pentagon to develop a more strategic approach in response to an increasingly dangerous world.

Today's hearing will afford us the opportunity to hear recommendations from our distinguished panel of defense experts on how the Secretary should rise to the challenge of crafting a National Defense Strategy. We will look to you for advice on how the department should best allocate its resources to enhance the capacity and capability of the U.S. military in the era of great-power competition.

To that end, we must begin by explicitly recognizing that great-power competition is not a thing of the past. The post-Cold War era is over.

Russia and China's rapid military modernization programs present real challenges for the American way of the war. Because of decisions we have made, and those we have failed to make, our military advantages are eroding. Congress is far from blameless, as we have, for years, prioritized politics over strategy when it comes to our budgeting decisions.

Next, we must recognize that the window of opportunity to reverse the erosion of our military advantage is rapidly closing. Just as Congress has been part of this problem, so, too, do we have an obligation to be part of the solution. We must start doing our job again—pass budgets; go through the normal appropriations process; and provide our military with adequate, predictable funding.

As the negotiations on the budget deal to increase the spending caps proceed, I know that members of this committee will be advocates for a defense budget at the level that an overwhelming bipartisan majority of Congress voted to authorize in the NDAA, nearly \$700 billion for the current fiscal year.

But we must be clear. We cannot buy our way out of our current strategic problem. Even after Congress appropriates adequate funds, the department will have a tough road to reverse current trendlines. Restoring readiness, modernizing the force, and reforming acquisition will all be necessary to renew American power.

But ultimately, all of these efforts will be in vain without clear strategic direction.

The Secretary of Defense and his civilian leadership team must exercise real leadership when it comes to strategy, planning, and force development. They will have to make difficult choices and set clear priorities about the threats we face and the missions we assign to our military. That is what we have asked the department to do in the National Defense Strategy.

As Secretary James Mattis and the rest of the Department of Defense make those hard choices, and especially as they identify necessary tradeoffs, they will find allies in this chairman and this committee.

We ask our witnesses to help this committee and the department think through these tough questions: How should the National Defense Strategy focus on building an effective force to counter threats from near-peer competitors, such as Russia and China, as well as midlevel powers such as Iran and North Korea? How should the NDS address the challenges of counterterrorism and articulate a strategy for sustainable security in the Middle East region? Even as we advocate for increased defense spending, how do we realistically confront hard choices about tradeoffs? Simply put, what must we do to restore or enhance our ability to deter and defeat any adversary in any scenario and across the spectrum of military competition? How should we devote our finite taxpayer dollars wisely to accomplish these goals?

Our global challenges have never been greater. Our strategic environment has not been this competitive since the Cold War. Without the margins of power we once enjoyed, we cannot expect to do everything we want everywhere around the globe. We must choose.

We must prioritize. That is what the National Defense Strategy must do.

I thank our witnesses for their attention to these important issues and look forward to their testimony.

Senator Reed?

#### **STATEMENT OF SENATOR JACK REED**

Senator REED. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for holding the National Defense Strategy hearing. This strategy is currently being developed by the Department of Defense, so this is a crucial moment.

Let me welcome the witnesses. Your work has been important to guide us in the past and will be very important as we move through this process.

The Department of Defense faces many complicated and rapidly evolving challenges. This is not the first time in our Nation's history we have had to confront multiple threats from abroad, but it is an incredibly dangerous and uncertain time.

Russia remains determined to reassert its influence around the world, most recently by using malign influence and active measures activities to undermine America's faith in our electoral process, as well as other Western countries. North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile efforts are an immediate and grave national security threat, and the U.S. continues to grapple with the fact that there are no quick and certain options. China continues to threaten the rules-based order in the Asia-Pacific region by economic coercion of its smaller, more vulnerable neighbors, and by undermining the freedom of navigation. Iran continues their aggressive weapons development activities, including ballistic missile development efforts, while pursuing other destabilizing activities in the region.

Likewise, countering the security threat from the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in Iraq and Syria, and its spread beyond the Middle East, must remain a high priority, while at the same time we must build the capabilities of the Afghan National Security Forces and deny any safe haven for extremism.

Crafting a defense strategy that provides guidance to policymakers on how to most effectively confront the aforementioned challenges, and I would add challenges that are emerging through artificial intelligence, autonomous vehicles, and cyber innovations, is not a simple task.

In fact, during the fall of 2015 when this committee held a series of hearings to evaluate potential revisions to the Goldwater-Nichols Act, one of the predominant themes was that the department suffered from a tyranny of consensus when crafting defense strategy. In other words, too often, the department is consumed by the need to foster agreement among all interested parties regarding strategic policy goals rather than focusing on the most critical and pressing threats facing our country, along with the strategies necessary to thwart those threats.

While consensus should not be discounted, crafting a strategy that focuses on the lowest common denominator often means difficult strategic choices and alternative policy decisions are deferred.

To address this imbalance, this committee carefully reviewed how the department crafts and generates strategy documents. The

fiscal year 2017 National Defense Authorization Act included a provision mandating a new National Defense Strategy intended to address the highest priority missions of the department, the enduring threats facing our country and our allies, and the strategies that the department will employ in order to address those threats.

The committee understands that the department is working diligently to finalize the National Defense Strategy by early 2018. To help inform the department's mission, I hope our witnesses today will give their assessment of the threats facing our country; the anticipated force posture required to address those threats; the challenges confronting military readiness and modernization; and, finally, the investments necessary for the U.S. to retain overmatch capability against near-peer competitors.

Finally, I believe the effectiveness of the National Defense Strategy may be adversely impacted by circumstances outside the control of senior civilian and military leadership within the Department of Defense. While it does not fall within the purview of this committee, I am deeply concerned about the Department of State and the health of our Foreign Service. Robust international alliances are critical to keeping our country safe.

That requires a diplomatic corps ready and able to coordinate closely with allies and partners. It is also critical that they have the tools necessary to help partner nations proactively across political and social challenges that give rise to conflict and extremism. Rather than prioritize the State Department's mission, the current administration has sought draconian budget cuts that have devastated morale and created a mass exodus of seasoned diplomats.

Let me be clear. Weakening the State Department makes the Defense Department's mission that much more difficult. This should be a concern for every member of the committee.

In addition, President Donald Trump has consistently shown a fondness for foreign leaders who have been dismissive of core American values like human rights and the rule of law. At the same time, the President has discounted the importance of long-time allies and the global order the United States helped establish following World War II. As I have stated previously, such actions tend to isolate the United States and weaken our influence in the world, ultimately leading to uncertainty and risk of miscalculation.

Therefore, I would be interested in the views of our witnesses on these issues, as well as the current interagency process for developing national security policy.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MCCAIN. Thank you.

We will begin with you, Ms. Eaglen.

**STATEMENT OF MACKENZIE EAGLEN, RESIDENT FELLOW OF  
THE MARILYN WARE CENTER FOR SECURITY STUDIES, THE  
AMERICAN ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE**

Ms. EAGLEN. Thank you, Chairman McCain, Ranking member.

Chairman MCCAIN. Not with those jerks on your right.

[Laughter.]

Ms. EAGLEN. Thanks for the chance to be here this morning and to talk about the crisis of confidence in defense strategy-making.



We can point to both parties, both administrations, both branches of government, as you already outlined this morning, Mr. Chairman, in your remarks. But the outcome today is that we have a problem, and this is the last best chance to fix it.

So as the Pentagon has been slowly dialing down strategy over the years and dialing up strategic risk, the pace of operational tempo has remained largely the same, and there is a disconnect between the reality as it is in the world and what U.S. forces are told that they should be doing on paper.

Chairman MCCAIN. Can you give us an example of that disconnect?

Ms. EAGLEN. Sure, Mr. Chairman. So, for example, in the last administration [the Obama Administration], at the tail end, there was strategic guidance that U.S. military commitments in the Middle East would significantly lessen. The administration spent the last 3 years focused, frankly, on mostly fights in the Middle East, in Syria and Iraq and elsewhere. But it is not limited to the last administration either, I should say, this challenge.

The truth is that the reality as it is, Mr. Chairman, is as you have outlined, both of you, the committee as a whole, in this year's NDAA. It is that the Pentagon planning and the force posture around the world is one of three theaters. It is not about X wars or X-plus-one or one-plus-some-other-number. But the truth is that the U.S. military focus and emphasis is going to remain constant in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. That is not going to change in the foreseeable future.

Chairman MCCAIN. In the last year, would you say things have improved or deteriorated?

Ms. EAGLEN. Around the world?

Chairman MCCAIN. Especially the Middle East.

Ms. EAGLEN. I would say they have deteriorated, and the challenge here, of course, is that we still have this gap in strategy. It is okay, because it is the first year of the Trump Administration, and so they are getting their bearings and crafting it.

I think we will see more continuity than change, and a more muscular status quo in the defense strategy. But that is what concerns me, because we have a combination of a deteriorating security situation and increased difficulty in our ability to deal with it here in Washington, both at the Pentagon and up here on Capitol Hill.

Chairman MCCAIN. You saw the announcement that we were going to stop arming the Kurds?

Ms. EAGLEN. Yes.

Chairman MCCAIN. What is that all about?

Ms. EAGLEN. I do not know, Senator. I wish I was in the mind of the administration on that question. It seems like it warrants more public debate up here on Capitol Hill, for certain, as a key ally.

Chairman MCCAIN. Thank you. We can save time for question-and-answer, but what do you think the impact of that is on the Kurds?

Ms. EAGLEN. Well, I think there are a variety of impacts that could happen here that are all worrisome, all troublesome. The

first is, of course, who they will make their bets with, who they will get in bed with that is not the United States or our key allies.

So if they need to hedge their bets or cut their losses, that is not in the favor of the interests that we are looking for in the region. That is number one.

Number two is our credibility. We saw this with the redline, but we have seen it in other presidential decisions, again, spanning both parties. When we say we are going to do one thing and we turn around and do something different, we lose credibility. When we lose credibility, we cannot call upon our friends and allies to help us when the next crisis happens. I think it feeds into the narrative in the region that Russia and Iran are gaining power and the United States is losing it.

Chairman MCCAIN. The impact psychologically of 305 Egyptians getting killed in one raid?

Ms. EAGLEN. It is really devastating. I think that, in terms of Pentagon planning, this is one of the key challenges. It is the balance between these ongoing, metastasizing terror threats and all the other challenges that they have to face, and putting what emphasis where, how much to push down on the pedal or not, regarding counterterror efforts.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Eaglen follows:]

#### PREPARED STATEMENT BY MACKENZIE EAGLEN

Thank you, Chairman McCain, Ranking Member Reed, and distinguished members of the Committee on Armed Services for the opportunity to evaluate how the Department of Defense should effectively develop and implement a new National Defense Strategy.

#### STOP REPEATING PAST MISTAKES

It's long past time for a new National Defense Strategy that seeks to break the mold in honesty, clarity, conciseness, and fresh thinking. Since the end of the Cold War, these documents have repeatedly served as opportunities to redefine American force structure and interests globally. Unfortunately, the most recent generation of strategies has become increasingly unmoored from the strategic reality the country faces. Since the end of the Cold War, the Pentagon's force-sizing construct has gradually become muddled and watered down at each iteration—from the aspirational objective of fighting two wars at once to the declinist “defeat-and-deny” approach—without enough substantive debate over the wisdom of the progressive abandonment of the two-war standard.

Even before debt reduction became a Washington priority in 2011, defense planning became increasingly divorced from global strategic realities. American experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan exposed the limited utility of a force-sizing construct based on wars. The challenge in prosecuting two large stabilization and counter-insurgency campaigns during the past decade-and-a-half laid bare the discrepancy between our stated defense capabilities and our actual strength. The wars that planners envisioned were not the ones the military was called upon to fight.

A lack of definitional clarity and policy consensus about terms like “war,” “defeat,” “deny” and even now “deter” is far from the only problem with previous strategies. A combination of shrinking global posture, force reductions, overly optimistic predictions about the future, and a deteriorating security environment have led to a crisis of confidence in defense strategy making. The Budget Control Act further compounded the difficulty of aligning resources with strategy through clear and thoughtful prioritization and adjudication between tradeoffs. The need to build a defense program to fit declining spending caps accelerated the reduction in relevance and scope of Pentagon strategy documents.

Even with declining force-sizing constructs, U.S. forces have largely continued to do all that they have done under previous super-sized strategies. Consequentially, there is now a general dismissal of strategy because the reductions in force structure proposed in each iteration have not resulted in substantive changes in operations of the force. Instead, the armed forces have been asked to do more with less

and continue to plan campaigns, conduct global counterterrorism, reassure allies, and provide deterrence as operational tempos remain unwaveringly high.

Meanwhile various missions and efforts are being shortchanged, ignored or dropped altogether as the supply of American military power is consistently outstripped by its demand. Some uniformed leaders would argue that the challenge is broader, and that the real issue is a military endstate-policy outcome incongruity that exists where policymakers expect military power to achieve outcomes beyond its scope. Both interpretations are correct, and each contributes to the lack of credibility in new strategic guidance in the minds of its consumers. This lack of faith in defense strategy making and planning has contributed to America's global retreat and the worsening international security situation.

#### CRAFTING AN IMPACTFUL NEW DEFENSE STRATEGY

The writers of the newest strategy need to face some hard truths.

- Policymakers cannot wish away the need for strong American presence in Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. This includes assuming America's commitments in the Middle East will go away, get easier or eventually become a lesser burden on the military.
- Constructing budgets and then divining strategies, as the Budget Control Act has encouraged, is putting the cart before the horse.
- Pentagon reforms and efficiencies are noble goals and should become standard operating procedure to encourage good governance. But the belief that ongoing organizational changes will result in tens of billions in potential savings that can be reinvested elsewhere within the defense budget has yet to be proven.
- An obsessive hunt for technological silver bullets could be our military's ruin, not its salvation—if it comes at the expense of medium-term needs.

To endure as a global power, the United States must never be in the position— as it is now in danger of finding itself—of committing its last reserves of military power to any single theater. Instead, force planners need to grow the size of the armed forces using the capabilities on hand. American forces must commit to permanent forward presence where they can effectively deter threats before they rise to the level of hostilities.

To facilitate these goals, the strategy should focus not only on the need to decisively defeat our enemies, but also to support the steady-state operations American forces undertake each day to deter our adversaries and reassure our allies in priority theaters abroad.

What follows are various thoughts on how to break from a status quo in defense planning that has failed policymakers and military leaders alike, in order to construct a National Defense Strategy that is both useful and able to be executed by our nation's armed forces:

**The National Defense Strategy must answer what missions the military should prioritize—by extension, it must clearly delineate what it can stop doing.** In the last decade, the United States military outsourced airlifting of troops to Iraq to Russian companies, NASA hitched rides into space also from Russia, Marines embarked on allied ships for missions patrolling the African coast, cargo shipments to Afghanistan were delayed due to inadequate lift during hurricane relief efforts, a private contractor evacuated United States and Nigerian troops after the recent ISIS ambush in Niger, and the Air Force has outsourced “red air” adversary training aircraft to contractors. This is just a sample of tasks that are being curtailed as the military struggles with fewer resources and finds it cannot actually do “more with less.”

Yet not all of these capabilities need to be restored—in some instances, it may be more efficient to continue to outsource ancillary assignments that don't necessarily require military forces to prosecute. Instead of papering over these realities, the new strategy should spell out explicitly what sacrifices the force could make, and signal to allies and partners where they could be most helpful, in order to allow the Department of Defense to concentrate on its most critical missions.

**Rosy assumptions need to go.** Assumptions about international affairs that underpinned the last administration's force planning—that Europe would remain peaceful, that the United States was dangerously overcommitted across the Middle East, and that a “rebalance” to East Asia could be accomplished without a substantial increase in forces—have all proven incorrect.

The new strategy also has to combat unrealistic assumptions about the Department of Defense—such as the belief that reforms and efficiencies will generate significant savings that can be reinvested elsewhere in the defense budget, and that the Pentagon will certainly become more innovative when money is tight.

**Global force management is not a substitute for strategy.** Because campaigns can now occur across geographic boundaries and within multiple domains of warfare at the same time, the default strategy-in-motion has become global force management. Despite the flexibility it generates, centrally-overseen crisis management is not a substitute for strategy. The world is not one global combatant command, nor does any one leader, commander, or service have the ability to manage complex contingencies as if it were. The forthcoming strategy must restore classic force planning and development to Pentagon processes and build up a new generation of policymakers and uniformed leaders used to operating within these constructs.

**Claiming the “five challenges” of China, Russia, Iran, North Korea, and persistent counterterrorism operations are all equally important is not strategy—it is the absence of one.** Former Defense Secretary Ash Carter’s list of five challenges—synonymous with the Joint Chiefs’ “four-plus-one” list—has persisted into this administration. This construct identifies threats, but it needs to rank their relative severity in order to have strategic meaning. Given the finite supply of American defense capacity, not all of these threats can receive the same amount of attention or bandwidth—nor should they. Our force deployments must be rationalized to prevent the use of capabilities intended for high-end wars or deterrence being worn down in the long grind of ongoing anti-terror operations. Stealth aircraft should not be performing fire support missions against the Taliban that could be handled by robust army artillery, for example.

**The Pentagon is bigger than a Department of War; it is a Department of Defense.** Fighting and winning the nation’s wars is an essential core mission of America’s military. Preventing them is equally important. Daily, the U.S. military is active in maintaining a regular presence around the globe, cooperating with allies, and checking potential aggression. These “peacetime” presence and steady state activities are the most effective—and certainly the cheapest—use of military power. The Pentagon must more accurately size the military to not only fight and win multiple contingencies at once, but also to conduct the multitude of routine missions, deployments, and forward presence that advance and protect American interests overseas.

**It’s getting harder to differentiate between war and peace. The force-sizing construct should reflect this reality.** The dangers of assuming Europe is a net producer of security became apparent the moment Russia annexed Ukrainian sovereign territory. In a single stroke, the Pentagon’s last strategy was rendered moot. The rise of ISIS further showcased the perils of American withdrawal from the Middle East. Coupled with increasing Chinese and North Korean bellicosity, three theaters are obviously vital considerations for United States military planning, even if active hostilities involving American troops are not underway in all of them simultaneously.

Each of the five challenges to American security is unique and requires tailored responses to mitigate, even in peacetime. Ballistic missile defenses have immense use against North Korea, but little utility against ISIS. As each of our competitors focus on a particular suite of niche capabilities—from Chinese maritime capabilities to Russian land power and electronic warfare—America is in the unenviable position of needing to respond to all of them. To manage the expense of this endeavor, efficiencies must be found to deter and mitigate certain threats within an acceptable margin of risk in order to concentrate additional resources on more pressing ones.

The clearest example is terrorism, which is a relative threat and not an existential one. The National Defense Strategy must recognize that countering terrorism will be a generational struggle that can be managed more gradually and cheaply than efforts to counter immediate and monumental threats, such as North Korean ICBMs.

**Organize for three theaters, not two wars.** The degradation of the two-war standard since the end of the Cold War has left the nation with a one-plus-something strategy that is neither well understood nor universally accepted by policymakers or service leaders. Planners should size forces to maintain robust conventional and strategic deterrents in Asia, Europe, and the Middle East, and equip a force for decision in the event deterrence fails.<sup>1</sup> The National Defense Strategy must make a clear distinction between the forces, capabilities and posture required to prevent a war against a near-peer state versus those needed to win one should it break out.

<sup>1</sup>Thomas Donnelly, Gary Schmitt, Mackenzie Eaglen et al., To Rebuild America’s Military, American Enterprise Institute, 2015, <http://www.aei.org/publication/to-rebuild-americas-military/>.

While deterring further Russian and Chinese aggression requires advanced aerospace capabilities, the principal presence missions would fall on maritime forces in the Pacific and land forces in Europe. In the Middle East, the situation is quite different; there is no favorable status quo to defend. Securing our regional interest requires not just presence, but an active effort to reverse the rising tide of adversaries: Iran, ISIS, al Qaeda and its associates, and now Russia. If we hope to remain safe and prosperous, America cannot swing among these theaters, nor can we retreat to the continental United States. This does not mean each theater requires the same amount of assets; forces can and should be tailored to the needs of each.

### Goals for the Three-Theater Force



**Conventional military deterrence is changing.** The calculus of deterrence is never certain as success is measured in the mindset of the adversary, not by a simple count of troops, planes, or ships. Thus as situations change, the U.S. military must possess both ample and heavy operational reserves and the logistical ability to rapidly deploy large and fully joint forces in times of crisis or conflict. This force for decision would supplement forward forces to either bolster deterrence or successfully prosecute a major conflict if it fails.

These forces must be of a size and quality to be operationally decisive. Given the global interests of the United States and complex and divergent terrains of Asia, Europe, and the Middle East, this reinforcing force for decision must possess a wide array of capabilities across the air, land, sea, space, and cyber domains. Such a balanced “capacity of capabilities” is necessary to provide the widest possible set of options to campaign planners (and the president). Although the forward deployed forces in any given theater can be more readily tailored to steady-state missions, in times of crisis or conflict the need for effectiveness and overmatch supplants the need for efficiency. In order to maintain the ability to intervene both quickly and decisively, defense planners should favor maintain active-duty, highly trained units in both the forward-deployed forces and the force for decision based in the continental United States.

**Development of new capabilities should concentrate on securing tactical overmatch.** Presence missions and train-and-advise efforts are crucial to support our allies, but firepower is ultimately what deters our foes. The new defense strategy should concisely outline the core competencies required of each service by region and threat, and over varying time horizons and levels of risk. It should concentrate development of new capabilities to restore as much technological overmatch as is possible. Planners should also seek opportunities to generate efficiencies when possible. For example, introducing a series of Armored Cavalry Regiments permanently stationed in Eastern Europe comprised of combined arms units would not only provide a powerful United States presence to counter Russia, but would allow regional

partners to better develop their domestic capabilities through increased opportunities for bilateral training and exercises.

**The American military needs more inter-service competition, not less.** In some respects, the individual services have become too dependent on one another. Having the entire military rely on an individual service as the sole provider of a given capability can introduce risks and decrease the efficiency of U.S. forces. One obvious example is the degradation of U.S. Army short range air defense (SHORAD) and an overreliance on increasingly scant air force interceptors to maintain air superiority. Competition among the services—for missions and for resources, for example—is the key to innovation. Beyond the advantage of having redundant tactical and operational tools at hand in the event one fails or proves to be easily countered, competition fosters a richer and more diverse discussion of the nature of war and serves as a check on the American propensity to rely too heavily on technological solutions to military problems. As much as the new administration needs to put more forces in the field and modernize weapons systems, its most important task may be to rebuild the service's institutional capacities that are essential for sustaining the breadth and depth of military leadership that global power demands.

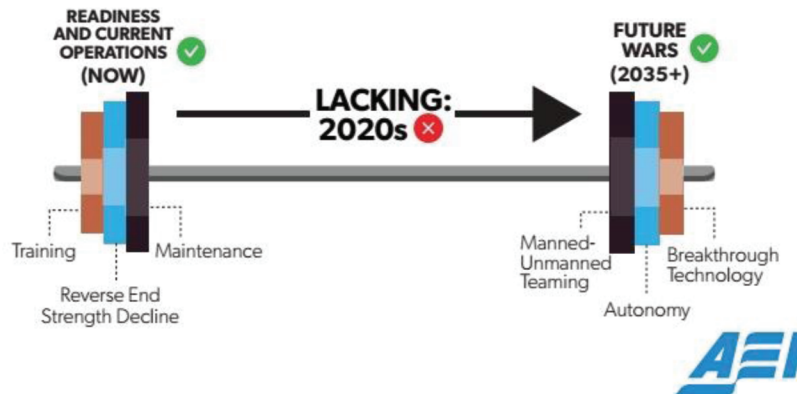
**The Budget Control Act must no longer be the scapegoat.** By attributing most or all of the current force's problems to sequestration and ignoring their historical context, policymakers wrongly assume that solutions are simple (e.g., higher defense topline alone will solve the military's woes). The next National Defense Strategy will need to account for two compounding problems. First, the international situation is deteriorating. Second, our fiscal ability to support all instruments of national power is declining. Higher spending can alleviate the latter challenge, but new investments will need to be tied to clear strategic goals in order to address the former. We cannot repeat the mistakes of the early 2000s where billions were squandered on cancelled research and development programs that fielded little to nothing because they were not tied to the threats America faced.

## Funding for Canceled Programs, FY02-12

Service	Program	Sunk Cost	Future Funding	
			Deferred	Follow-On
Army	Future Combat Systems	\$20,334	\$158,819	Numerous
Army	RAH-66 helicopter	\$10,013	\$50,678	ARH helicopter
MDA	Airborne Laser	\$5,020	\$2,921	N/A
Air Force	TSAT satellites	\$3,916	\$23,857	AEHF/WGS comms satellites
Navy	Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle	\$3,690	\$13,746	Amphibious Combat Vehicle 2.0
Army	MEADS missile defense	\$3,444	\$20,320	PAC-3 missile modification
Air Force	DWSS weather satellites	\$3,407	\$9,006	JPSS weather satellites
Navy	VH-71 presidential helo	\$3,033	\$4,657	VH-72A presidential helicopter
Army	Crusader artillery	\$2,903	\$12,029	N/A
Army	JLENS radar blimp	\$2,590	\$6,034	N/A
Air Force	C-130 AMP avionics	\$2,394	\$4,461	AMP Inc-1 avionics
Army	ATACMS BAT missile upgrade	\$1,884	\$5,382	N/A
Army	JTRS GMR radios	\$1,799	\$19,000	JTRS (Harris) radios
Army	Inc-1 E-IBCT brigade upgrades	\$1,382	\$1,679	N/A
Air Force	ECSS planning software	\$1,065	-	TBD
Joint	DIMHRS HR software	\$934	-	Multiple
Navy	ASDS minisub	\$904	\$1,591	JMMS, DCS minisubs
Air Force	B-1 CMUP upgrades	\$854	\$1,229	N/A
Army	Land Warrior soldier enhancements	\$781	\$9,849	Nett Warrior soldier enhancements
Navy	RMS mine hunter	\$770	\$816	TBD
MDA	KEI/MKV kill vehicle upgrades	\$763	\$5,879	RKV/MOKV kill vehicle upgrades
Air Force	E-10 radar plane	\$728	-	JSTARS recapitalization
Navy	ADS surveillance system	\$630	\$1,053	N/A
Army	ARH helicopter	\$612	\$5,414	Future Vertical Lift
Navy	ERM naval gun shell	\$465	\$1,269	TBD
MDA	PTSS radar satellites	\$426	\$1,256	N/A
Army	Joint Common Missile	\$369	\$9,895	Joint Air-Ground Missile
Navy	CG(X) cruiser	\$166	-	Future Surface Combatant
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$75,275</b>	<b>\$370,840</b>	

**Investments must balance between the immediate needs of today, the medium term, and wars of the 2030s.** To alleviate strain on the current force, it will need to grow. This expansion of capacity should be undertaken immediately and with currently available equipment and technology rather than forestalled in pursuit of tomorrow's super weapons. Overly investing in near-term readiness and speculative capabilities not only introduces a large amount of acquisition risk, it also creates a dangerous situation where adversaries know we are weak today and will be strong tomorrow. Facing this scenario, they would see that it's better to strike now than later. In this way, more investment in our military could worsen American security unless it is properly managed to alleviate any potential gap in American readiness to deter and, if necessary, defeat our foes. Policymakers must avoid a "barbell" investment strategy that deemphasizes the medium-term needs of the 2020s.

## A “Barbell” Investment Strategy is Flawed



### REPAIRING AND REBUILDING THE ARMED FORCES BY 2023

In my new report, *Repair and Rebuild*, I present a Future Years Defense Program (FYDP) highlighting the needs of our Armed Forces over the next five years in addition to the last official FYDP conducted by the Obama Administration in 2017.<sup>2</sup> While that report contains my complete recommendations for a force sized for three theaters, the top five programmatic priorities emphasized in the report can be summarized as follows:

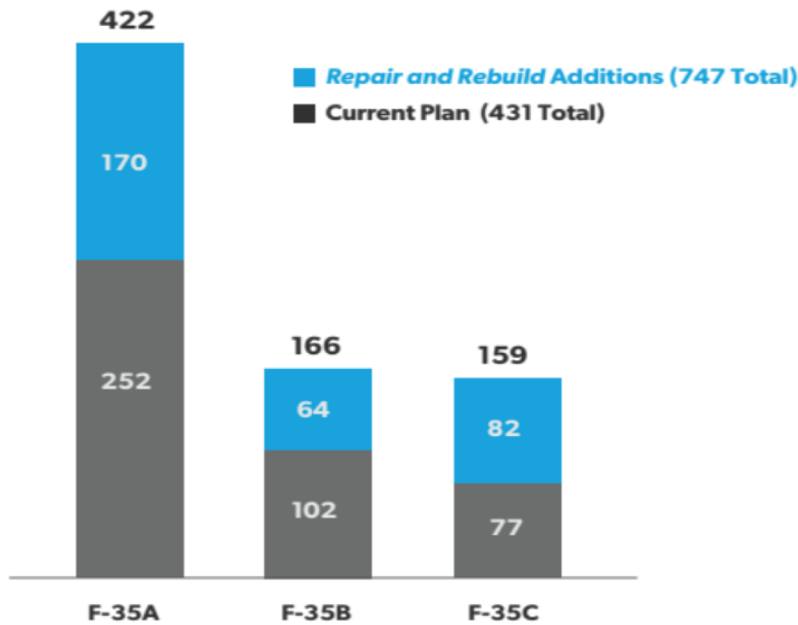
#### 1. Embrace stealth and sensor fusion en masse.

- Purchase an additional 316 F-35As above the 431 aircraft planned over the FYDP, accelerate crucial F-22 upgrades, provide extra funding for the B-21 Raider, and expand that program of record beyond 100 bombers.

<sup>2</sup>Mackenzie Eaglen, *Repair and Rebuild: Balancing New Military Spending for a Three-Theater Strategy*, American Enterprise Institute, 2017, <http://www.aei.org/publication/repair-and-rebuild-balancing-new-military-spending-for-a-three-theater-strategy/>.



### Proposed F-35 Purchases, FY18-22



#### 2. Disperse power projection.

- Procure an additional 64 F-35Bs above the 102 planned, accelerate aviation-focused America-class production instead of developing a light carrier, expand KC-130J procurement, and buy five extra ESBs.

#### 3. Allow the Navy to focus on sea control.

- Free up destroyers and attack subs to focus on sea control while accelerating new large surface combatant development.
- Heavily invest in small surface combatants (with unmanned craft) to conduct lower-end naval missions.
- Expand ground-based ballistic missile defense capacity to lessen burden on Navy surface combatants.

### Proposed Shipbuilding Plan, FY18-22

● Current Plan    ● Repair and Rebuild Additions

SHIP CLASS	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	TOTAL
CVN	●				●	2
LHA			●			1
LCS	● ● ●	● ● ●	● ● ●	● ● ●	● ● ●	12
FFG			● ●	● ●	● ●	6
LXR	●	●	●	●	●	5
ESB	●	●	●	●	●	5
TAO	● ●	● ●	● ●	● ●	● ●	10
SSN	● ●	● ●	● ●	● ●	● ● ●	11
DDG	● ●	● ●	● ●	● ●	● ●	10
ATS	●	●	●	●	●	5
SSBN				●		1
AGOS					●	1
AEGIS BASELINE 9 UPGRADE	● ● ●	● ● ●	● ● ●	● ● ●	● ● ●	26

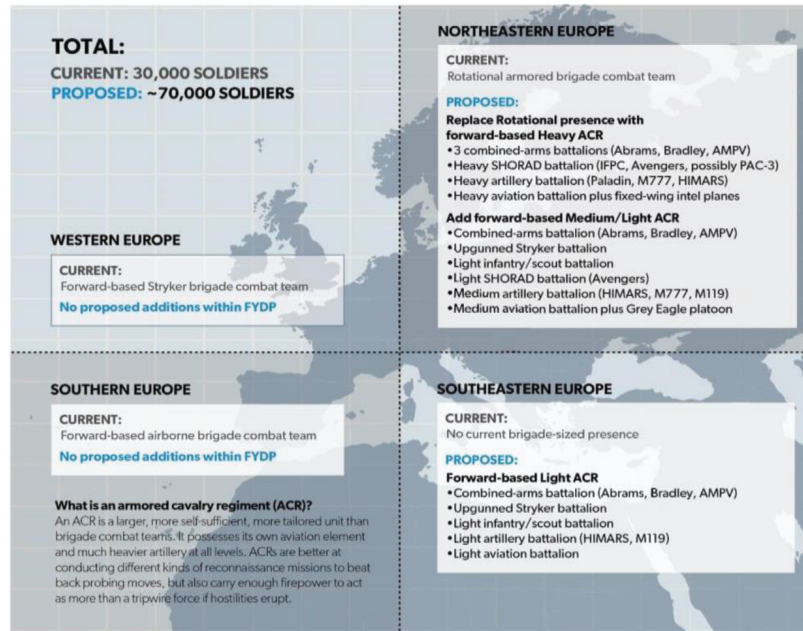
#### 4. Build sustainable long-term fire support capacity.

- Move away from using expensive, high-demand assets (e.g. carriers, fourth-generation fighters, bombers) for fire support.
- Expand and upgrade Army tube and rocket artillery to improve organic fire support.
- Expand Reaper buy and procure two wings of light attack fighters for air support in permissive environments.

#### 5. Increase Army lethality.

- Upgrade Abrams, Bradley, Stryker, and Paladin at scale; ensure LRPf fields on time; rapidly invest in electronic warfare; and accelerate FVL helicopter replacements.
- Expand United States Army Europe presence to incorporate heavier units prepared to act as more than a tripwire in the event of hostilities with Russia and otherwise capable of boosting regional capabilities of partners through increased opportunities for training and exercises.

## Proposed New US Army Europe Presence by 2023



Chairman MCCAIN. Thank you.

If you will allow me to interrupt, since a quorum is now present, I ask the committee to consider the nominations of John Rood to be Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Randall Schriver to be Assistant Secretary of Defense for Asian and Pacific Affairs, and a list of 275 pending military nominations.

All these nominations have been before the committee the required length of time.

Is there a motion to favorably report these two civilian nominations and list?

Senator REED. So moved.

Chairman MCCAIN. Is there a second?

All in favor, say aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

The information referred to follows:

MILITARY NOMINATIONS PENDING WITH THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE WHICH ARE PROPOSED FOR THE COMMITTEE'S CONSIDERATION ON NOVEMBER 30, 2017.

1. In the Air Force there are 14 appointments to the grade of colonel (list begins with Dane V. Campbell) (Reference No. 951)
2. In the Army there is 1 appointment to the grade of major (Ashley R. Sellers) (Reference No. 956)
3. In the Army there is 1 appointment to the grade of major (Elias M. Chelala) (Reference No. 958)
4. **In the Army there is 1 appointment to the grade of brigadier general (Douglas F. Stitt) (Reference No. 1116-2)**

5. **Capt. Michael E. Boyle, USN to be rear admiral (lower half)** (Reference No. 1124)
6. In the Army Reserve there is 1 appointment to the grade of colonel (Cathleen A. Labate) (Reference No. 1144)
7. In the Army there are 2 appointments to the grade of major (list begins with Rebecca J. Cooper) (Reference No. 1147)
8. **RADM Lisa M. Franchetti, USN to be vice admiral and Commander, SIXTH Fleet/Commander, Task Force SIX/Commander, Striking and Support Forces NATO/Deputy Commander, US Naval Forces Europe/Deputy Commander, US Naval Forces Africa/Joint Force Maritime Component Commander Europe** (Reference No. 1192)
9. **BG Arthur E. Jackman, Jr., USAFR to be major general** (Reference No. 1218)
10. **BG Josef F. Schmid III, USAFR to be major general** (Reference No. 1219)
11. **In the Air Force Reserve there are 12 appointments to the grade of brigadier general (list begins with John M. Breazeale)** (Reference No. 1222)
12. **Col. Darlow G. Botha, Jr., ANG to be brigadier general** (Reference No. 1225)
13. **In the Air Force Reserve there are 2 appointments to the grade of brigadier general (list begins with Steven J. deMilliano)** (Reference No. 1226)
14. **In the Air Force Reserve there are 2 appointments to the grade of brigadier general (list begins with Michele K. LaMontagne)** (Reference No. 1227)
15. **In the Air Force Reserve there are 25 appointments to the grade of brigadier general (list begins with Travis K. Acheson)** (Reference No. 1229)
16. **In the Air Force Reserve there are 12 appointments to the grade of major general (list begins with Ondra L. Berry)** (Reference No. 1230)
17. **In the Air Force Reserve there are 8 appointments to the grade of major general (list begins with George M. Degnon)** (Reference No. 1231)
18. **In the Air Force Reserve there are 2 appointments to the grade of major general (list begins with Douglas A. Farnham)** (Reference No. 1232)
19. In the Air Force there are 69 appointments to the grade of major (list begins with Joseph Benjamin Ahlers) (Reference No. 1234)
20. In the Air Force there is 1 appointment to the grade of major (Erika R. Woodson) (Reference No. 1236)
21. In the Air Force there is 1 appointment to the grade of major (Michael S. Stroud) (Reference No. 1237)
22. In the Air Force there are 17 appointments to the grade of colonel (list begins with Lance A. Aiumopas) (Reference No. 1238)
23. In the Air Force Reserve there is 1 appointment to the grade of colonel (Robert Sarlay, Jr.) (Reference No. 1239)
24. In the Army there is 1 appointment to the grade of lieutenant colonel (Brantley J. Combs) (Reference No. 1240)
25. In the Army there are 2 appointments to the grade of major (list begins with Mark E. Query) (Reference No. 1241)
26. In the Army there is 1 appointment to the grade of lieutenant colonel (Victor A. Pachecofowler) (Reference No. 1242)
27. In the Army there is 1 appointment to the grade of colonel (James M. Brumit) (Reference No. 1243)
28. In the Air Force Reserve there are 88 appointments to the grade of colonel (list begins with Richard G. Adams) (Reference No. 1253)
29. In the Army there is 1 appointment to the grade of colonel (Melvin J. Nickell) (Reference No. 1254)
30. In the Army Reserve there is 1 appointment to the grade of colonel (Erica L. Herzog) (Reference No. 1255)

31. In the Army there is 1 appointment to the grade of colonel (Adam W. Vanek) (Reference No. 1256)
32. In the Army there is 1 appointment to the grade of major (Jason Park) (Reference No. 1257)
33. In the Army there is 1 appointment to the grade of major (John T. Huckabay) (Reference No. 1258)

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TOTAL: 275

Chairman MCCAIN. The motion carries.  
Dr. Karlin, you are up.

**STATEMENT OF MARA E. KARLIN, Ph.D., ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF THE PRACTICE OF STRATEGIC STUDIES, JOHNS HOPKINS SCHOOL OF ADVANCED INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**

Dr. KARLIN. Thank you, sir. Thank you, Chairman McCain and Ranking Member Reed and members of the committee. It is a real opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the National Defense Strategy [NDS].

I have three points to make that cover the 2018 National Defense Strategy, how the committee can shape future strategies, and reconciling the last 15-plus years of war.

The 2018 National Defense Strategy should prioritize preparing the future force for conflict with China and Russia while limiting the stressors of countering violent nonstate actors. To be sure, the U.S. military must be able to credibly confront challenges across the spectrum of conflict, including nuclear, high-end conventional, gray zone, and counterterrorism.

While the United States military remains preeminent, the imbalance is worsening. China and Russia are making it harder for the United States to project power.

Our military generally operates under two principles: fighting away games and maintaining unfair advantages. Both are growing harder.

Steps like enhancing forward posture in Asia and Europe will have real operational benefits, as will investments in undersea; long-range strike; combat Air Force, particularly modernizing fourth-generation aircraft and balancing the portfolio more broadly; Counter Unmanned Autonomous Systems; short-range air defenses; and munitions.

The U.S. military must lean forward to exploit the benefits of emerging technologies, particularly artificial intelligence and autonomy, but it must do so consonant with the American way of war. Technology is changing how the U.S. military fights, but not why it fights nor what it fights for.

As you read the next NDS, I urge you to consider the following. Everybody, every service, every combatant command cannot be a winner, and a classified strategy should be clear about that tally.

The committee and those of us involved in defense strategy and budgeting in recent years know sequestration's pernicious damage. We have a special responsibility to ensure it is not a partisan issue, but instead a bipartisan effort.

Second, the committee can shape future national defense strategies in a few important ways regarding coherence, assessment, and roles and missions. Changing the name of the Quadrennial Defense Review to the National Defense Strategy was a crucial first step for

coherence. It will mitigate the cacophony of guidance, which resulted in confusion over strategic direction.

As a next step, the committee should consider codifying a vision of the department's hierarchy of strategic guidance documents, which includes a singular, overarching strategy broken into classified documents for force development and force employment.

Legislating an annual assessment of the defense strategy was a critical step for this committee. Strategies will always be flawed. Recognizing in which ways they require adjustment is essential.

As a next step, the committee should consider codifying who is involved in the assessment and how it is conducted to ensure a broad, deep, and meaningful review.

The committee has, in its laudable exploration of Goldwater-Nichols, begun an important conversation about roles and missions. Broadening the chairman of the Joint Chiefs' role to become a global integrator, and striking the right balance between Defense Department, civilians, and military leaders in producing and implementing strategy, can have profound consequences for mil-mil and civil-mil relations.

These issues require serious debate, consideration, and active congressional involvement.

Finally, as the committee looks to the future, I urge you to consider the recent past. Simply put, we all must reconcile the inheritance of the last 15-plus years of war. The opportunity costs are profound. They include a force whose predominant experience has been countering terrorists and insurgents; frayed equipment; a readiness crisis; a bias for ground forces; muddled accountability; a disinterested American public; a nadir of civil-military relations; and, above all, neuralgia over the conflicts' loss of blood, treasure, and inconclusive results.

I fear that all of our successors will look askance if we do not meaningfully examine this inheritance.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Karlin follows:]

#### PREPARED STATEMENT BY MARA KARLIN, PH.D.

Chairman McCain, Ranking Member Reed, and Members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to appear before you today to discuss recommendations for a future National Defense Strategy. The Committee's leadership on this topic is essential, and I am grateful for the opportunity to share my expertise and assist with your mission.

Today's global security landscape is littered with national security challenges spanning the continuum of conflict. I would characterize it as chaotic and competitive with power increasingly dynamic and distributed. The nature of national security challenges is diversifying considerably, and the technological landscape is evolving in ways that diminish traditional U.S. strengths. While the U.S. military generally operates under two key principles—fighting “away” games and maintaining unfair advantages—both are growing harder. Of course, domestic disarray works to the advantage of those who seek to harm America.

#### DEFENSE DILEMMAS:

As the Defense Department pulls together the 2018 National Defense Strategy in an effort to outline the ambition and contours of the future U.S. military, it is wrestling with the following dilemmas, many of which will remain relevant for years to come:

- **Conflict Spectrum:** The United States military must be able to credibly confront challenges across the spectrum of conflict, including nuclear, high-end con-

ventional, gray zone, and counter-terrorism. These potential challengers include China, Russia, North Korea, Iran, and violent non-state actors (e.g.; ISIL 2.0; Hizballah). It should prioritize countering the former while limiting the stressors of the latter.

- **Regional Focus:** The Asia-Pacific and Europe are the priority theaters for the United States military as it competes with rivals; however, the United States cannot remain a global power if it dismisses other regions. China is the long-term challenge for the United States given its consequential military modernization over two decades. While the U.S. military remains preeminent, the imbalance is worsening. China is making it harder for the United States military to project power across Asia, and neither time nor geography work to the United States advantage.<sup>1</sup> Russia is a medium-term challenge for the United States. Moscow's use of force in Europe and the Middle East has been rotten, but more worrying is its military's modernization over the last decade and its dangerous doctrine euphemistically known as "escalate to deescalate." In reality, its doctrine is "escalate to escalate" as no clear-eyed observer would consider limited nuclear use de-escalatory. Moreover, the Russian way of war considers society and military fair game, blurs the line between conflict and peace, and wields cyber tools to sow doubt and faith in United States institutions. In the wake of the 2011 uprisings, the Middle East will remain fragile for decades to come. The counter-terrorism fight there and in Africa will continue, degrading readiness. Containing the regional chaos when and where possible, and limiting the toll it takes on the military, should be a priority.
- **Today vs. Tomorrow:** The U.S. military must be able to counter near-term threats and exert U.S. presence globally while also preserving readiness and modernizing the future force to effectively fight and win future wars. It should prioritize the latter.
- **Nuclear vs. Conventional Investments:** The U.S. military must maintain a credible nuclear deterrent while not allowing it to overwhelm investment in conventional capabilities. Nuclear weapons must not be hived off in budget, strategy, or future force discussions; trade space between the nuclear and conventional portfolios requires meaningful adjudication.
- **Reliance on Allies/Partners:** Allies and partners are the United States' comparative global advantage. The U.S. military will always fight alongside allies and key partners; however, some will be more capable than others and the United States will perennially face an expectations mismatch between our needs and capabilities, and theirs.
- **Inheritance from 15+ Years of War:** The U.S. military must reconcile all it has inherited from the longest period of war in United States history, particularly given the inconclusive nature of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. The opportunity costs of this inheritance are profound. They include a force whose predominant experience has been countering terrorists and insurgents; frayed equipment; a readiness crisis; a bias for ground forces; muddled accountability, a disinterested American public, a nadir of civil-military relations; and, above all, neuralgia over the conflicts' loss of blood, treasure, and limited results.

There is no binary answer to these dilemmas. Instead, the National Defense Strategy (NDS) will invariably bet and hedge across them. I urge the Committee to review the National Defense Strategy with an eye toward efforts to make meaningful, not marginal, change. Everybody—every service, every combatant command—cannot be a winner, and the classified version of the NDS should be clear about that tally. The U.S. military is facing serious modernization shortfalls that will only grow uglier and it has spent 15+ years in conflicts that look dramatically different from the future. It needs to catch up—fast.<sup>2</sup>

To be sure, the resource picture has exacerbated these dilemmas. This Committee and those of us involved in defense strategy and budgeting in recent years know the pernicious damage that sequestration has done. We have a special responsibility to ensure it is not a partisan issue, but instead a bipartisan effort to rebuild the nation's defenses in a prudent and practical manner.

<sup>1</sup> RAND's Scorecards is the preeminent unclassified study of Chinese military modernization. Heginbotham, Eric, et. al. The United States-China Military Scorecard: Forces, Geography, and the Evolving Balance of Power, 1996–2017. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2015. <https://www.rand.org/pubs/research-reports/RR392.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Excerpted from author's quote in Tony Bertuca, "Pentagon team working National Defense Strategy sizing up return to 'two-war' paradigm," **Inside Defense**, August 30, 2017.

## FORCE SIZING AND SHAPING CONSIDERATIONS

The Committee should engage in a classified dialogue with the Department to ensure it fully understands the future force's abilities. The Committee should consider the following:

- **Scenario Selection.** While the scenarios used to size and shape the force are illustrative—not exhaustive—their contours are crucial. They should align with U.S. national security interests and an appropriate level of American strategic ambition, incorporating varying challenges across the conflict spectrum while balancing between likelihood and consequence.
- **Scenario Pairing:** The U.S. military must be able to fight and win multiple conflicts. Anything short of that is reckless. A force that can only wage one conflict is effectively a zero-conflict force since employing it would require the president to preclude any other meaningful global engagement. In considering scenario pairing, their separation in time and distance should be realistic (not least because the theory behind preparing for simultaneous conflicts hasn't borne fruit: an opportunistic aggressor has not taken advantage of U.S. distraction to attack—indeed, the period since 2001 would have been an ideal opportunity).
- **Scenario Execution:** Scenario analysis must focus on how the military will fight and win a conflict—jointly. Risk should be delineated as specifically as possible, and underscore when and where the force will face “heart burn” (an uglier conflict with higher losses in blood and treasure) and “heart attack” (losing the conflict).
- **Posture:** The United States—thankfully—is generally far from the conflicts it wages. Maintaining this distance requires the U.S. military to be much closer, however. Forward posture enables a rapid response when conflict erupts, can deter rivals or adversaries from launching a conflict, and magnifies the force's capacity, capability, and readiness. In the near-term, modest improvements in forward posture in Asia and Europe will have significant operational benefits. The United States military must be able to get anywhere around the globe at any time, which in these regions increasingly involves poking holes in Chinese and Russian attempts to impede United States power projection.
- **Investments:** Technology is changing how the U.S. military fights, but not why it fights nor what it fights for. The U.S. military must lean forward to exploit the benefits of emerging technologies, particularly artificial intelligence and autonomy, but it must do so responsibly by developing a shared understanding of its prospects and how to field such systems consonant with the American way of war. Key areas of investment for the future force should include undersea, long-range strike, combat air force (particularly modernizing 4th generation aircraft and balancing the portfolio more broadly), counter-unmanned autonomous systems, short range air defenses, munitions, cyber resilience, and technology that facilitates operations in contested environments with degraded communications.

## STRATEGIC GUIDANCE COHERENCE AND ASSESSMENT

I commend the Committee for changing the name of the Quadrennial Defense Review to the National Defense Strategy, thereby making clear to the entire national security apparatus that it represents the governing guidance for the Defense Department. This crucial step will mitigate the cacophony of strategies across the Department's guidance landscape, which has resulted in confusion over strategic direction, cherry-picking for parochial agendas, and discordant dialogue on the strategy's implementation and efficacy.<sup>3</sup> As a next step, the Committee should consider codifying a vision of the Department's hierarchy of strategic guidance documents along with which entity should lead them. That framework should include a singular overarching strategy broken into classified documents for force development and force employment.

I also commend the Committee for legislating a new requirement for the secretary of defense to annually assess the strategy and its implementation. Strategies will always be flawed; recognizing in which ways they require adjustment is crucial. As a next step, the Committee should consider codifying who is involved in this assessment and how it is conducted to ensure a broad, deep, and meaningful review. I recommend an inclusive approach at the senior level, potentially using the deputy secretary of defense and vice chairman of the joint chiefs' regular forum with the De-

<sup>3</sup>Mara Karlin and Christopher Skaluba, “Strategic Guidance for Countering the Proliferation of Strategic Guidance,” *War on the Rocks*, July 20, 2017, <https://warontherocks.com/2017/07/strategic-guidance-for-counteringthe-proliferation-of-strategic-guidance/>.



partment's leadership (the deputy's management action group). The assessment should be classified with unclassified portions released at the secretary of defense's discretion, and should diagnose the current state of affairs (and how it differs from earlier expectations), and outline in what ways the Department's trajectory will now shift.

#### ROLES AND MISSIONS

The Committee has, in its laudable exploration of Goldwater-Nichols, begun an important conversation about roles and missions. It should continue to do so, particularly as it takes steps to enhance the chairman of the joint chiefs of staff's role. Broadening his role to include global integration can have profound consequences for mil-mil and civil-mil relations. Similarly, the increasing resonance of the term "best military advice" across the military merits reflection about how its continued use is influencing defense strategy development and civil-mil relations.<sup>4</sup> These issues require serious debate and consideration, and active Congressional involvement.

#### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

As the Committee's Members review the next NDS and consider future iterations, I urge you to consider the following questions:

- 1) What are the primary areas of debate and disagreement in pulling together the NDS? Who are the winners and losers in the NDS?
- 2) In what ways does the NDS differ from the chairman of the joint chiefs' National Military Strategy, and why? What's the right balance between Defense Department civilians and military leaders in producing and implementing strategy?
- 3) How does the Department plan to implement the NDS? How does the Department plan to fulfill the Committee's annual requirement to assess it and make course corrections as necessary?
- 4) In what ways does the NDS influence roles and missions?
- 5) How is the Department assessing the last 15+ years of conflict and their impact on the force, including its biases, structures, and processes?

Chairman MCCAIN. Thank you.  
General?

#### **STATEMENT OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL THOMAS W. SPOEHR, U.S. ARMY, RET., DIRECTOR OF THE CENTER FOR NATIONAL DEFENSE, HERITAGE FOUNDATION**

General SPOEHR. Good morning, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Reed, distinguished members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity.

So, is the Pentagon on the cusp of producing a real defense strategy, or will the forthcoming National Defense Strategy be attractive, but no more than another coffee table book to put in your office?

A real defense strategy—

Chairman MCCAIN. How does it look?

General SPOEHR. Based on history, sir, it is not looking good. I am optimistic about the current leadership, and so I would like to remain optimistic at this point.

A real defense strategy will provide clear priorities, identify America's competitive advantages and how to capitalize them, and how to deal with the world and the enemies it offers as it is.

Since the 2014 Russian invasion of Ukraine and the Chinese militarization of islands in the South China Sea starting in 2015, America has been operating without a real defense strategy, thus

<sup>4</sup>James Golby and Mara Karlin, "Why 'Best Military Advice' is Bad for the Military—and Worse for Civilians," *Orbis*, Winter 2018 (forthcoming).

the need for a new defense strategy could not be more acute. But previous efforts have had decidedly mixed results.

So what would contribute to the creation of a seminal defense strategy that would guide our efforts for years to come? Above all else, the strategy must lay out clear choices. Strategies that articulate that we are going to do this and not do that. U.S. defense strategies often fail by endeavoring to be completely inclusive of all parties and valuing their contributions equally.

Assuming the Congress succeeds in appropriating additional, desperately needed defense funding in 2018 and beyond, the Pentagon will still not be able to afford everything on its vast wish list, as they must contend with crushing needs for facility repairs and maintenance backlogs. Some capabilities, some organizations, and some elements of infrastructure are not as important as others, and a strategy should not pull back from identifying those.

Turning to the contents of the strategy, as a prisoner of my education at the Army War College, we like to talk about strategy in terms of ends, ways, and means, so I will briefly lay out some thoughts on those.

First, the ends, or the objectives. The strategy should flow from a clear and understandable goal that the military needs to be ready and able to defend America's interests with decisive and overwhelming military strength.

The only logical and easily understood strategic construct for the United States is to maintain the capability to engage and win decisively in two major regional contingencies near simultaneously. The basis for that construct is, fundamentally, deterrence. If the adversaries know that America can engage in two major fights with confidence, they will be less inclined to take advantage of a United States committed elsewhere.

Now I would like to look at the ways, or the actions the strategy should describe.

First, the strategy should call for more forward presence for U.S. forces. The end of the Cold War led to massive reductions in forward presence, but forward-stationed forces demonstrate a resolve that no other action can make.

Second within the ways, the strategy should not propose approaches that contradict the very fundamental nature of war. The Obama Administration attempted this when they wishfully prescribed in the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review that our forces will no longer be sized to conduct large-scale, prolonged stability operations. United States history not confined to Iraq and Afghanistan reflects that wars have a way of drawing American forces into prolonged stability operations.

Simply put, it is foolhardy not to prepare and size our forces for a type of operation which history tells us American Presidents have repeatedly seen fit to engage the military, even when it is not specifically prepared for it.

Third, to support the objective to counter terrorist and violent extremist threats in the Middle East and elsewhere, America should maintain certain lower end capabilities, such as non-fifth-generation attack aircraft and advise-and-assist capabilities, such as the Army's new Security Force Assistance Brigades, which can allow us to conduct these operations at a much lower overall cost.

Then finally within the ways, you should be able to see the key competitive advantages that the United States brings to win. America's unmatched ability to fight as a joint team probably would rank as one of those. A well-nourished network of alliances and partners would be another. I, personally, hope not to see artificial intelligence, swarms of mini-drones, robots, railguns, and directed energy weapons proposed as the keys to our military's future success. That has become very fashionable in Washington, DC, but these advantages are transitory, and they cannot be relied upon to provide a long-term, enduring advantage to the United States.

So I have talked about the ends and the ways. I would like to close with the means, or the resources, if you will. Nothing will doom a strategy quicker than an imbalance between the ends, ways, and the means. That is exactly where we find ourselves today, with the smallest military we have ever had in 75 years, equipped with rapidly aging weapons, and employed at a very high operational pace, endeavoring to satisfy undiminished global defense requirements.

Tragically, due to overuse, underfunding, and inattention, American military capabilities have now markedly deteriorated to a dangerously low level.

For example, the Air Force is now short over 1,000 fighter pilots. Part of the reason for that crisis is dissatisfaction, stemming from the fact that fighter pilots now fly less sorties per week than they did during the hollow years of the Carter Administration.

I draw your attention to the chart that should be attached to my testimony. It shows the aircraft sorties per month between now and the Carter Administration. Recent pilot interviews with over 50 current fighter pilots confirm this trend continues to today.

Recent tragic ship mishaps—why they are not flying more, sir?

Chairman MCCAIN. Why they are not happy?

General SPOEHR. Most of the reason is they are not doing the job they signed up to do. They came in to fly. They love to fly. Now they are being told they will fly, but two times a week. The rest of the week is taken up with administrative duties, like the safety officer or the morale officer for their squadron. That is not what they want to do.

Chairman MCCAIN. So the answer is not money. It is ability to fly.

General SPOEHR. You are right, sir. But, of course, in some cases, money helps the ability to fly.

Chairman MCCAIN. Thank you.

General SPOEHR. Yes, sir.

Recent ship collisions, aircraft mishaps, submarine maintenance backlogs, and an anemic Army modernization program all reflect the results of what happens when a military tries to accomplish global objectives with only a fraction of the necessary resources.

Unfortunately, there are no shortcuts to rebuild the military. It took us years to get in this position, and it is going to take us years to get out of it.

I draw your attention to a second handout I provided, which reflects Heritage research on the number of forces needed to deal with two major regional contingencies compared to how the military stands today. You will note, although Heritage assesses that

the Army needs 50 active brigade combat teams, they only have 31. Of those 31, only 10 are ready, and out of those 10, only 3 are ready to fight tonight. That is a serious problem. It reflects a significant risk to America and its interests.

My most important point that I would like to stress is the strategy should be budget-informed and not budget-constrained. There is a big difference.

The strategy should take a realistic look at the national security threats facing the country and propose realistic solutions to those threats. While acknowledging that the U.S. cannot dedicate an infinite amount of resources to national defense, the strategy should not fall victim to accepting the views of the Office of Management and Budget or others as to what can or should be spent on national defense.

Already, some advance the notion that because of structural economic problems, the United States is unable to spend more on defense even though spending on the Armed Forces stands at a historic low percentage of the gross domestic product, 3.3 percent, and a historic low percentage of the Federal budget at 16 percent.

How many times, ladies and gentlemen, have you heard that the United States spends more than the next six or eight countries combined? Such arguments, however, fall apart very quickly upon examination. No other country in the world needs to accomplish as much as we do with our military. Second, a huge amount of the difference in defense spending can be traced down to purchasing power parity and other economic factors, such as it only costs China about \$300 million to build a ship that in the United States costs over \$1.5 billion.

Notwithstanding those facts, national interests and objectives must always drive America's military requirements and not cold financial calculations.

In summary, there is room for optimism about the opportunity the new defense strategy affords. Authoritatively defining how the U.S. military will protect America's interests and methods to be used is something that has not been done in recent memory. Done correctly, it has a great chance of having put the ends, ways, and means of our strategy back in balance.

Thank you, sir.

[The prepared statement of General Spoehr follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT BY LIEUTENANT GENERAL THOMAS W. SPOEHR

*Lieutenant General Thomas Spoehr, U.S. Army, retired, served for 36 years in the Army until 2016. As the Director for the Center for National Defense at The Heritage Foundation, Spoehr leads a team of defense experts responsible for researching and forming policy recommendations to promote a strong and enduring U.S. national defense. As part of their efforts, they publish the annual authoritative Index of U.S. Military Strength providing a comprehensive assessment of U.S. military power and are currently engaged in the Rebuilding America's Military Project (RAMP), designed to inform decisions regarding the future direction of the U.S. military. While in uniform, Spoehr was responsible for forming recommendations for the Army's annual fiscal program, equipment investments and strategies, and the Army's business strategy. In those roles, he participated in several Quadrennial Defense Reviews, the development of the DOD's Defense Strategic Guidance, and other strategies. In 2011 Spoehr served as Deputy Commanding General-Support for United States Forces Iraq with responsibilities for transition and logistics. The following is adapted from an October 3, 2017, article published in War on the Rocks, titled: "Rules for Getting Defense Strategy Right."*

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before this committee on this important subject.

So, is the Pentagon on the cusp of generating a real defense strategy? Or will the forthcoming National Defense Strategy (NDS) be like so many strategic documents of the past: attractive, but of little intrinsic value, like coffee-table books?

A real defense strategy would provide clear priorities, identify America's competitive advantages and how to capitalize on them, and deal with the world—and the enemies it offers as it is. Since the August 2014 Russian invasion of the Ukraine, and the Chinese militarization of man-made islands in the South China Sea in 2015–2016, the United States has been operating without a relevant defense strategy. Thus, the need for a new NDS could not be more acute, but previous efforts have had decidedly mixed results. Will this one succeed where others have failed? We are about to find out.

Done correctly, the NDS can put the United States on a sound strategic footing. But a couple of challenges loom.

First, the Pentagon is writing the NDS in parallel with the White House's development of the National Security Strategy (NSS). Even though the writing teams are closely collaborating, it would be better for them to be tackled sequentially.

The NSS should provide the framework for the NDS with sufficient intervening time for the NSS to be digested and analyzed. Congress should ensure that future national security and defense strategies are separated by time in their development.

Second, the Pentagon's senior policy leadership team is only just starting to arrive, with the Principal Deputy to the Under Secretary for Policy only arriving in the last couple of weeks and the appointed Under Secretary and relevant Assistant Secretary still not in place. There is a capable team in place developing the strategy, but their leaders missed the opportunity to weigh in on the strategy.

So, what would contribute to the creation of a seminal defense strategy that can guide our defense efforts for years to come?

Above all else, the NDS must lay out clear choices. As Harvard Business School professor Michael Porter puts it: "Strategy is about choices." Strategies articulate that we are going to "do this, and not this." American defense strategies often fail by endeavoring to be completely inclusive of all parties and valuing their contributions equally. The 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) fell in that category. Every "tribe" successfully inserted their organizations as a high priority into the document, which consequently was irrelevant the moment it was signed.

Assuming that Congress succeeds in appropriating additional desperately needed defense funding in 2018 and beyond, the Pentagon still will not be able to afford everything on its vast "wish lists," as the military must also contend with crushing needs for facility repairs and maintenance backlogs. Some capabilities, organizations, and elements of infrastructure are not as important as others, and the NDS should not pull back from identifying those that are less critical for success.

Turning to the contents of the NDS, I am a prisoner of my education at the Army War College which instills that good strategy is comprised of ends, ways, and means, each linked and in balance. Just to be clear, the "Ends" represent the objectives you seek to accomplish, "Ways" the actions you will employ in the pursuit of the objectives, and "Means" the resources you require to execute the strategy. I will therefore organize my comments in that manner.

#### FIRST, THE ENDS OR OBJECTIVES

The NDS should flow from a clear and understandable goal: The U.S. military needs to be ready and able to defend America's interests with decisive and overwhelming military strength.

*The only logical and easily understood strategic construct for the United States is to maintain the capability to engage and win decisively in two major regional conflicts near simultaneously.* America's force-sizing construct has changed over time. During the peak of the Cold War, the United States sought the ability to fight two and a half wars simultaneously against the Soviet Union, China, and another smaller adversary. Successive Administrations have modified this construct based on their assessments of threats, national interests, priorities, and perceptions of available resources. The real basis for the two-war construct is deterrence. If adversaries know that America can engage in two major fights with confidence, they will be less inclined to take advantage of the United States or an ally committed elsewhere.

Fortunately, the United States need not size its forces to take on an adversary the size of the Soviet Union but instead a smaller, albeit still very dangerous and capable, Russia. The bad news is that the United States also needs to stand ready to deter and defeat China, which is making massive investments in its military forces and has chosen belligerence in Asia.

The NDS must not overlook the need to continue to remain engaged to counter terrorist and violent extremist threats in the Middle East, Africa, and South and Southeast Asia, as well as confront rogue regimes such as North Korea and Iran.

#### WHEN CONSIDERING THE WAYS, OR THE ACTIONS AND METHODS TO BE EMPLOYED

*First, the NDS should call for more forward presence by U.S. forces.* The end of the Cold War led to massive reductions in the United States military posture in Europe and elsewhere. These reductions were not based on an empirical or strategic review of U.S. force requirements, but rather on two factors: the opportunity to save money and the politically less contentious choice to close overseas military installations, not ones at home. Then-European Command Commander General Philip Breedlove testified as much in 2015: “[P]ermanently stationed forces are a force multiplier that rotational deployments can never match.” If our goal is to deter war, we must demonstrate both our will and capability. Forward stationed forces demonstrate both to the degree that no other action can match. U.S. forces stationed abroad should be configured, trained, and equipped to provide a real, versus symbolic, warfighting capability.

*Secondly, the NDS should not propose approaches that contradict the very nature of war.* The Obama Administration attempted this when it wishfully prescribed in the 2014 QDR that “our forces will no longer be sized to conduct large-scale prolonged stability operations.” United States history, not confined to Iraq and Afghanistan, reflects the way wars have a way of drawing American forces into prolonged stability operations. Critics correctly argue that some of these stability operations were conducted by choice and that America should be more judicious in deciding whether to enter into future conflicts with the potential for stability operations. While appealing, such reasoned arguments ignore the reality that modern conflict usually presents either gradually, like Vietnam, or as crisis, such as Saddam’s invasion of Kuwait, and in neither case allowing for extended deliberation of questions like “How does this end?”

*To put it simply, it is foolhardy not to prepare or size our forces for a type of operation which history tells us American presidents have repeatedly seen fit to engage the military, even when not specifically prepared for it.*

*Third, to support the objective to counter terrorist and violent extremist elements in the Middle East and elsewhere, the United States should maintain certain “low-end” capabilities* such as non-fifth generation attack aircraft and Advise and Assist capabilities such as the Army’s new Security Force Assistance Brigades (SFAB) in order to conduct these type operations at lower cost.

*Finally, within the strategy, Washington should be able to see the key competitive advantages that the United States intends to employ to win.* America’s unmatched ability to fight as a joint team certainly would rank as one. A strong and well-nourished network of alliances and partners would certainly be another. I hope not to see artificial intelligence, swarms of drones, robots, railguns, and directed energy weapons proposed as the keys to our military’s future success—as has become fashionable—because the advantages those and other technologies convey are transitory. They are important, but are not key U.S. advantages for the long haul.

#### THE MEANS MUST BE IN BALANCE TO THE ENDS AND WAYS

Nothing will doom a strategy faster than an imbalance between the ends, ways, and means. This is the situation we find ourselves in today, with the smallest military we have had in seventy-five years, equipped with rapidly aging weapons, and employed at a very high operational pace endeavoring to satisfy our global defense objectives.

The NDS should chart the path to the development and maintenance of a strong military with the ability to dominate likely opponents in all domains: land, air, sea, space, and cyber. Tragically, due to overuse, underfunding, and inattention, American military capabilities have now markedly deteriorated to a dangerously low level. Fighter pilots now fly less sorties per week than they did during the “hollow” years of the Carter Administration. Recent tragic ship collisions, aircraft mishaps, fighter pilot shortages, and reports on dilapidated shipyards show what happens when a military tries to accomplish global objectives with only a fraction of the necessary resources.

The NDS should acknowledge the growing gap between the military’s needs and what the nation has seen fit to resource. There are no shortcuts to accomplish the rebuilding that is now necessary. The NDS should acknowledge the true state of the military as it relates to the broad requirements of protecting our national interests.

*In that regard, it is critical that the NDS should be budget-informed, not budget-constrained.* There is a big difference. The strategy should take a realistic view of

the national security threats facing the country and propose realistic ways and means to deter and defeat those threats. While acknowledging the United States cannot dedicate an infinite amount of resources to national defense, the strategy should not fall victim to the trap of accepting the Office of Management and Budget's views as the upper limit for what the country should or can spend on its defense.

Already some seek to advance the notion that because of our structural economic problems the United States will be unable to increase defense spending, even though the spending on its armed forces stands at a historically low percentage of both gross domestic product (3.3 percent) and overall federal spending (16 percent). Skeptics employ superficial spending comparisons between nations to argue the United States already spends enough on defense.

How many times, for example, have you heard that the United States spends more on its military than the next seven or eight countries combined? You might take from that observation that Washington is spending too much hard-earned taxpayer money on a bloated military, but you would be wrong. Such arguments fall apart quickly on examination. First, there is no other nation in the world that needs to accomplish as much with its military as the United States. Washington depends on a globally deployed force that upholds the pillars of the international order by defending access to the commons, protecting trade routes (that benefit the American people more than anyone else), and deterring those who seek to disrupt peace and security. Therefore, the U.S. military must be superior everywhere we are challenged. Second, some of the difference in spending among nations can be traced to purchasing power parity. For example, a ship that costs \$1.2 billion to produce in the United States may cost only \$300 million in China. Notwithstanding these factors, national interests and objectives must drive America's military requirements, not cold financial calculations.

The NDS should find the balance between identifying the resources that are required and acknowledging that tough resourcing choices are still inevitable.

#### SUMMARY

It is a military maxim that nothing happens until someone is told to do something. The NDS should therefore be directive, not just descriptive. Strategic objectives should lend themselves to tracking, and appropriate individuals should be held accountable. For example, if one objective is to increase readiness, the strategy should specify how much of a gain, by when, and who is responsible.

When Congress created the requirement for the NDS, it specified that it should be classified, with an unclassified summary. That direction is liberating, as the NDS can be more narrowly focused than if it were forced to serve as both strategy and public relations tool. Hopefully, the Pentagon embraces that aspect.

There is room for optimism about the opportunity the NDS affords. Authoritatively defining how the U.S. military will protect America's interests and the methods to be employed is something that has not been done in recent memory. Done correctly, it has a great chance of helping put the military back on a path to being a formidable force for the foreseeable future.

Chairman MCCAIN. Thank you.  
Mr. Ochmanek?

#### **STATEMENT OF DAVID A. OCHMANEK, SENIOR DEFENSE RESEARCH ANALYST, RAND CORPORATION**

Mr. OCHMANEK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Reed. I appreciate the opportunity to share with you insights about what my colleagues and I at RAND have been learning from our analyses and gaming.

DOD's development of a new defense strategy is an opportunity to reverse adverse trends in the national security environment and to develop a plan of action to reverse them. But even a perfectly formulated strategy and plan will do little to ameliorate our problems unless the department is given more resources soon and on a sustained and predictable basis.

Put simply, our forces today, and for some time, have been given too little money with which to prepare for the missions assigned to them.

You were all here when Chairman Martin Dempsey 4 years ago testified on his views of the Quadrennial Defense Review from 2014. This is what he said: In the next 10 years, I expect the risk of interstate conflict in East Asia to rise, the vulnerability of our platforms and basing to increase, our technology to erode, instability to persist in the Middle East, and threats posed by violent extremist organizations to endure.

That was not a very optimistic view of the future, but that was in January of 2014, before Russia had invaded Ukraine, before the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) had overrun large parts of Syria and Iraq, and before it was decided that we were going to leave large contingents of United States combat forces in Afghanistan.

So we were on the ragged edge in January 2014. The security environment has deteriorated since then. Yet our resources are still constrained by the Budget Control Act of 2011.

It should come as no surprise that, again and again, when we run war games against China and Russia, United States forces lack the capabilities they need to win. That is where we are today.

Chairman MCCAIN. The gap is widening.

Mr. OCHMANEK. The gap is widening, without question.

Your invitation letter to this hearing asked us to provide views on the new force-planning construct. That is easily done.

Top priority should be given to ensuring that United States forces have the capability to defeat any single adversary, including Russia and China. That probably sounds obvious, but it is not actually what we are doing today. We do not set that as a priority.

As resources permit, we should also have the capacity to defeat a second adversary elsewhere. But pretending that you can spread the peanut butter across all of these challenges and have an adequately modernized force for the future is, as we have seen, an illusion.

Again, the hard part, and the part that in the end will determine the success or failure of our defense strategy and program, will be generating the money needed to build a force that can meet these requirements, and then applying those resources in ways that do the most to move the needle against our most capable adversaries.

The challenges that our adversaries pose are serious, but they are not intractable. Just as our gaming shows that we lack important capabilities with the programmed force, it also shows that we have real opportunities to change that, not through investments in highly exotic things like artificial intelligence and robots, but here-and-now weapons that are either available for purchase or very far along in the development process. Let me give you some examples.

So to counter the anti-access/area denial threat, our forces really need to be able to do two things. One, from the outset of a war, reach into these contested land, maritime, and air areas and kill things. Right? Kill the amphibious fleet that could be invading Taiwan or the 30 battalion tactical groups that could be coming from Russia into the Baltic States.



We have options to do that. The Long-Range Anti-Ship Missile is one. Guided anti-armor weapons like the Sensor Fuzed Weapon, which existed 20 years ago but we are only buying in very small numbers, is another way to, again, move that needle.

Two, we need to strengthen our military posture in key theaters. I agree with what the general said. You cannot fight Russia and China with a purely expeditionary posture. You need more combat power for it, particularly heavy armored forces on NATO's eastern flank, but also stocks of advanced munitions, mature command-and-control and communications infrastructures, and more survivable bases.

Our bases could be subject to attack by hundreds of accurate ballistic and cruise missiles. We have techniques and investment priorities to address those threats, but we have not had the resources to actually put them into the field.

Number three is improve capabilities to rapidly suppress and destroy the enemy's air defenses. No one wants to fight in a battlefield where you do not have air superiority. Our forces in our games against Russia and China do not have that in the opening phases of these wars, and we need to reinvest in ways to kill the most sophisticated surface-to-air missiles, things we lack today.

Finally, our forces have to be equipped and trained to enable them to win the fight for information superiority. China and Russia are investing heavily in capabilities that can improve their understanding of the dynamic battlespace and to deny us that understanding. Our forces have to have more survivable sensor platforms, communication links, cyber defenses, and cyber offensive systems.

Again, plenty of options exist for meeting these needs. It is a question of investment.

The good news is that, for the most part, the additions to the defense program that are called for are not major platforms or new force structures, and they are not exotic, futuristic Third Offset technologies.

The greatest leverage comes from things like advanced munitions; more robust enablers, such as intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) systems and communication links; posture, which is about where we place our assets and how survivable our base infrastructures are. These sorts of things tend to cost a lot less than major platforms and increases in force structure.

To close, I believe we have it within our means, technically, operationally, and financially, to field forces that are capable of confronting even our most capable adversaries with the prospect of defeat, if they choose aggression. This is the gold standard of deterrence, and it is the standard to which we should aspire.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Ochmanek follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT BY DAVID OCHMANEK<sup>1</sup>, THE RAND CORPORATION<sup>2</sup>

Good morning Chairman McCain, Ranking Member Reed, members of the committee, and staff. I appreciate the opportunity to share with you insights that my colleagues and I have gained from our analyses of emerging threats to U.S. military operations. Nine months ago, I had the honor of appearing before this committee to testify on the state of the U.S. armed forces' ability to counter threats posed by the nation's adversaries. On that occasion, like others who joined me on that day, I pointed to some serious and growing gaps that war gaming and analysis have identified in the capabilities of U.S. forces, voicing concerns about the eroding credibility of U.S. security guarantees in the face of these unfavorable trends. In the intervening months, I have seen little to change my assessment of the situation.

The U.S. Department of Defense (DOD)'s efforts to develop a new National Defense Strategy (NDS) and accompanying guidance to components for force development are opportunities to reverse these trends, and it will be important that the Department get these right. But even a perfectly articulated NDS will do little to ameliorate the problem unless the Department is given more resources soon and on a sustained and predictable basis. Put simply, U.S. forces today and for some time have been given too little money with which to prepare for the missions assigned to them.

U.S. MILITARY CAPABILITIES: A SUMMARY ASSESSMENT<sup>3</sup>

The security environment in which U.S. forces are operating and for which they must prepare is, in important ways, more complex and more demanding than the familiar post-Cold War world in which most of us have formed our expectations about what constitutes an appropriate level of investment in military power.<sup>4</sup> To wit:

- United States force planning prior to Russia's attacks on Ukraine did not take account of the need to deter large-scale aggression against the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).
- DOD has not moved quickly enough to provide the capabilities and basing posture called for to meet the manifold challenges posed by China's rapidly modernizing armed forces.
- The prospect of nuclear weapons in the hands of North Korea and, potentially, Iran poses challenges for which United States forces do not currently have satisfactory answers.
- United States forces face the prospect of a geographically widespread campaign of indefinite duration against the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), Al Qaeda, and other violent extremist groups.

As these threats have emerged and U.S. forces have engaged in unremitting combat for 16 years, the nation has not committed the resources called for to build and sustain the capabilities that the forces need if they are to succeed in this more demanding environment. As a result, *the United States now fields forces that are, at once, larger than needed to fight a single major war, failing to keep pace with the modernizing forces of great-power adversaries, poorly postured to meet key challenges in Europe and East Asia, and insufficiently trained and ready to get the most operational utility from many of DOD's active component units.* Put more starkly, RAND's war games and simulations suggest that U.S. forces could, under plausible assumptions, lose the next war they are called upon to fight.<sup>5</sup> In light of this, it

<sup>1</sup>The opinions and conclusions expressed in this testimony are the author's alone and should not be interpreted as representing those of the RAND Corporation or any of the sponsors of its research.

<sup>2</sup>The RAND Corporation is a research organization that develops solutions to public policy challenges to help make communities throughout the world safer and more secure, healthier and more prosperous. RAND is nonprofit, nonpartisan, and committed to the public interest.

<sup>3</sup>Research and analysis upon which this testimony draws is documented, among other places, in David Ochmanek, Peter A. Wilson, Brenna Allen, John Speed Meyers, and Carter C. Price, *U.S. Military Capabilities and Forces for a Dangerous World: Rethinking the U.S. Approach to Force Planning*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR1782-IRD, Forthcoming.

<sup>4</sup>Research and analysis upon which this testimony draws is documented, among other places, in David Ochmanek, Peter A. Wilson, Brenna Allen, John Speed Meyers, and Carter C. Price, *U.S. Military Capabilities and Forces for a Dangerous World: Rethinking the U.S. Approach to Force Planning*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR1782-RC, forthcoming.

<sup>5</sup>For a succinct assessment of the military balance between Russia and NATO and the prospects for a defense of the Baltics, see David A. Shlapak and Michael W. Johnson, *Reinforcing Deterrence on NATO's Eastern Flank: Wargaming the Defense of the Baltics*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-1253-A, 2016. For an assessment of trends in China's armed forces and their implications for United States defense strategy and planning, see David

is a matter of increasing urgency that the nation invest in new military capabilities, posture, and operational concepts designed to meet the manifold challenges presented by U.S. adversaries.

*Peer Adversaries and A2/AD Threats*

The means that the United States' most capable adversaries—China and Russia—use to create those challenges (ballistic and cruise missiles, sophisticated air defenses, anti-satellite weapons, electro-magnetic and cyber attacks, and so forth) are well known and do not need to be repeated here. It is, however, important to understand how U.S. and allied forces can and should be evolving their capabilities, posture, and operational concepts to address these challenges.

Our research points to four independent but complementary lines of capability development:

1. **Damage, disrupt, and destroy the enemy's operational centers of gravity in contested domains.** Specifically, this means finding ways to "reach into" contested airspace and maritime zones to locate, identify, engage, and attack the surface ships that would be part of a Chinese invasion of Taiwan or the mechanized ground forces that would constitute the spearhead of a Russian invasion of the Baltic states. U.S. adversaries seek to use their anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) capabilities to create a window of opportunity during which they hold U.S. combat power at bay so that they can conduct campaigns of aggression. The United States must be able to deny them this sanctuary from the outset of a conflict, even before U.S. forces have suppressed the enemy's A2/AD threats. This approach differs in important ways from the joint operational concept that U.S. forces have used successfully against less capable adversaries since Operation Desert Storm in 1991, and implementing the approach will require new capabilities.
2. **Strengthen U.S. military posture in key theaters.** Since Operation Desert Storm, U.S. forces have become accustomed to relying heavily on an expeditionary approach to power projection, in which the vast bulk of U.S. combat power employed in a conflict is deployed forward following warning or the actual initiation of hostilities. This approach is less appropriate for theaters in which U.S. and allied forces face threats from highly capable adversaries, especially in NATO member countries in Europe, where heavy ground forces will play important roles in an effective defense. Strengthening posture also means investing in base infrastructure that is more resilient in the face of large-scale attacks by accurate ballistic and cruise missiles.
3. **Improve capabilities to suppress and destroy enemy air defenses.** In every conflict since Korea, United States forces have operated virtually without regard to the threat of enemy air attacks and have enjoyed freedom of maneuver in enemy airspace, allowing them to observe and attack targets of value to the enemy. Dense arrays of modern, mobile, surface-to-air missile systems and modern fighter aircraft give China and Russia the ability to deny United States forces this crucial advantage, at least during the critical opening phase of a conflict, and U.S. capabilities to counter these have not kept pace with the threat. Adversaries' heavy investments in these defenses reflect their fear of what modern air forces with precision weapons can do on the battlefield. Accordingly, fielding improved capabilities to suppress enemy air defenses should have outsized effects on deterrence of aggression.
4. **Win the fight for information superiority.** Recognizing the critical importance of accurate, timely information and agile command and control in modern military operations, U.S. adversaries are investing heavily in capabilities intended to improve their understanding of the battlefield and to deny the United States the same. These capabilities include space-based and airborne sensors, robust communication systems and command facilities, electronic jamming systems, anti-satellite weapons, and cyber weapons. This makes it imperative that DOD invest in more survivable sensor platforms and communication links, cyber defenses, and offensive systems. U.S. forces, which have become accustomed to operating in environments that pose no threats to their information superiority, must also find ways to operate effectively in disrupted, "low bandwidth" environments.

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Ochmanek, *Sustaining United States Leadership in the Asia-Pacific Region: Why a Strategy of Direct Defense Against Antiaccess and Area Denial Threats Is Desirable and Feasible*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, PE-142-OSD, 2015.

### *Nuclear-Armed Regional Adversaries*

Repeated war games consistently show that deterring a nuclear-armed regional adversary, such as North Korea, poses unique challenges that make it anything but a lesser-included case of deterring a more capable adversary, such as Russia or China. Ironically, the relative weakness of North Korea's conventional forces means that, in a conflict or deep crisis, a North Korean leader may perceive that he and his regime have little to lose in using nuclear weapons against military targets, making it difficult to deter such use through the threat of retaliation in-kind. This reality means that U.S. and allied forces are driven to find ways to improve capabilities to prevent nuclear-armed regional adversaries from effectively using their nuclear weapons.<sup>6</sup> Given the challenges associated with locating and destroying weapons in deep underground facilities, hunting and destroying dispersed mobile missiles, and intercepting ballistic missiles once launched, the United States should not have high confidence in its nuclear prevention capabilities today.

### *Salafist-Jihadis and Other Violent Extremist Groups*

Even as U.S. forces are faced with the need to quickly and significantly "raise their game" vis-à-vis peer and nuclear-armed regional adversaries, they must also continue with the ongoing fight against the most threatening violent extremist groups, including the Taliban in Afghanistan, ISIS in its various manifestations, and Al Qaeda. A central tenet of U.S. strategy against such groups has been to keep them under constant pressure over long periods of time, so as to keep them off-balance and to prevent them from effectively recruiting and expanding their influence and power. Extensive experience in battling such groups over the past 16 years has allowed U.S. and partner forces to devise increasingly effective approaches to defeating quasi-states, such as ISIS, and taking leadership cadres off of the battlefield through targeted capture or kill operations. Key capabilities in these fights going forward will be specialized forces (often from the special operations community) to train, advise, and assist partner forces; robust means for gathering and analyzing intelligence about adversary groups; and more-affordable precision attack capabilities that can dwell close to areas of ongoing operations and deliver on-call fires against emerging targets.<sup>7</sup>

### CRAFTING THE NATIONAL DEFENSE STRATEGY AND FORCES TO IMPLEMENT IT

Individually and in combination, the challenges outlined earlier constitute an extremely demanding set of requirements for this nation's armed forces. Those tasked with developing the new NDS and the forces to implement it surely understand that a "business as usual" approach to planning and resourcing U.S. forces will not suffice. New priorities must be chosen and additional resources, *focused on investments of greatest relevance to those priorities*, must be made available if the nation is to reverse the decline in the credibility of its conventional deterrent.

As a foundational step in this endeavor, DOD's leaders should consider directing each component to build its force so that it can, as part of a joint and combined operation, defeat any single adversary, including the most capable of them. This may seem an obvious requirement, but the fact is that, today, the United States should not have confidence that the joint force can meet it. For several years now, gaming and analysis of plausible future warfights have revealed serious and growing shortfalls in the capabilities of programmed U.S. forces. If not reversed, these adverse trends will have profound and unavoidable strategic consequences.

### *A Revised Force Planning Construct*

The following force planning construct would be consistent with the approach advocated here:

1. Defend the homeland.
2. Deter and, if necessary, defeat aggression by any single adversary state.
3. Sustain operations against selected violent extremist groups.
4. Deter opportunistic aggression by a second state adversary.

Inherent in the construct would be the requirement that DOD components resource each of the four elements in descending order of priority. That is, they would

<sup>6</sup>See David Ochmanek and Lowell H. Schwartz, *The Challenge of Nuclear-Armed Regional Adversaries*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-671-AF, 2008.

<sup>7</sup>David Ochmanek, Andrew R. Hoehn, James T. Quinlivan, Seth G. Jones, and Edward L. Warner III, *America's Security Deficit: Addressing the Imbalance Between Strategy and Resources in a Turbulent World: Strategic Rethink*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-1223-RC, 2015, pp. 26–27.

be directed to accept risk in elements 3 and 4 until it was judged that sufficient resources had been devoted to elements 1 and 2 to achieve a reasonable degree of confidence that those elements could be achieved.

The key to making this approach work is to size and equip each major force element—Army combat brigades, Air Force and Marine Corps fighter squadrons, Navy carrier strike groups, and so forth—so that it can meet the demands posed by the most stressing scenario *for that force* element. As examples, the Army's armored brigade combat teams would be sized to meet the demands of their biggest fight (a Korea scenario) but equipped to successfully combat their most sophisticated foe (Russian ground forces), USAF fighter squadrons would be sized and equipped to prevail against the largest and most capable threat they face (Chinese forces), and so on. This would have the effect of promoting force modernization as the highest priority for resourcing while ensuring adequate capacity for at least one war—something that has been lacking in U.S. force planning heretofore.

#### Investment Priorities

The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), the Strategic Capabilities Office, service labs, and industry are developing new capabilities that can address many, if not most, of the operational challenges facing U.S. forces today and in the future. Much can be done to reverse adverse trends by investing in near-term, here-and-now systems and adapting key aspects of established operational concepts. Attached at the end of this statement is a table summarizing the types of military capabilities that gaming and analysis suggest can do the most to strengthen the joint force's ability to defeat aggression by the four state adversaries of greatest concern and to support a sustained campaign against violent extremist organizations.<sup>8</sup> Highlights from that list, keyed to the four lines of capability development and the non-peer adversaries outlined earlier, are as follows:

- **Damage, disrupt, destroy the enemy's operational centers of gravity in contested domains.** Develop and field sensors that can survive and operate in the A2/AD environment. Examples include unattended ground- and sea-based sensors; small, swarming unmanned aerial vehicles; and stealthy air vehicles. Accelerate and expand procurement of standoff weapons, such as the Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile—Extended Range (JASSM-ER), the Long-Range Anti-Ship Missile (LRASM), and powered dispensers with guided anti-armor munitions so that long-range bombers can effectively and survivably attack key enemy targets from the outset of a conflict. Aggressively explore options for lower-cost weapon delivery from undersea (e.g., large unmanned underwater vehicles). Defer plans to retire selected cluster weapons until cost-effective replacements are available in sufficient numbers.
- **Strengthen U.S. military posture in key theaters.** Station more U.S. heavy armored forces and artillery along NATO's northeastern flank. Increase forward-based stocks of preferred munitions in both the U.S. Pacific Command and U.S. European Command areas of responsibility. Improve the resiliency of air bases with investments in low-cost shelters, fuel bladders, and other passive protection measures, decoys, and modern cruise missile defenses (e.g., Indirect Fire Protection Capability Increment 2).
- **Improve capabilities to suppress and destroy enemy air defenses.** Accelerate development and fielding of a longer-range, fast-flying, anti-radiation missile and a longer-range air-to-air missile. Explore new concepts for disposable, stand-in jamming systems and swarming, autonomous weapons.
- **Win the fight for information superiority.** Continue to explore ways to use civil-sector communications and imaging satellite constellations in military operations. Continue to develop and test, and begin to field, new systems that can enhance the resiliency of selected military satellites, including through improved situational awareness, maneuver, stealth, active defense, redundancy, and responsive launch. Invest selectively in airborne and terrestrial backups to key space-based capabilities. Expand anti-satellite capacity, especially in systems (such as jammers and lasers) that can disrupt or disable adversary satellites without creating debris. Added investments in both defensive and offensive cyber capabilities can help here. However, the gaming and analysis that I have seen provide little hope that cyber alone can be decisive in defeating conventional military aggression if deterrence fails.

<sup>8</sup>The research on which this testimony is drawn focused on understanding and countering the threats posed by state adversaries (such as China, Russia, North Korea, and Iran) and Salafist-Jihadi groups. My work has not delved deeply into issues of the readiness of U.S. forces or the stresses that high operational tempos may be imposing on people and units. I have also not addressed the need to recapitalize U.S. nuclear forces. The absence of recommendations in these areas should not be taken as implying that investments there are not warranted.

- **Prevent nuclear use.** Develop or adapt an air-to-air missile and associated sensor suite for intercepting theater ballistic missiles in boost-phase. Continue to explore options for improved discovery and tracking of nuclear weapons and mobile delivery vehicles. Continue investments to improve the reliability of ground-based interceptors to protect the United States.
- **Defeat Salafist-Jihadis and other violent extremist groups.** Continue to expand intelligence collection and analysis capacity. Acquire two to three wings of light reconnaissance-attack aircraft for more cost-effective air operations in permissive and semi-permissive air defense environments. Continue to grow the end strength of special operations forces (SOF) at a deliberate pace to ease the tempo of operations experienced by these warriors.

## CONTRIBUTIONS OF ALLIES AND PARTNERS

Obviously, countering the threats that potential adversary states pose is not solely a problem for the United States. In fact, it would be unwise and infeasible for the United States to attempt to address these challenges unilaterally. Allies and partners, particularly those directly or indirectly threatened by adversary activities or in the same region, have a strong interest in ensuring that their forces can impose a high price on an aggressor and contribute effectively to combined regional operations that the United States might lead.

A host of options—many of them rather low-cost and low-tech—are available to allies and partners seeking to increase their contributions to the common defense. Taiwan, for example, could significantly strengthen its defenses against an invasion by investing in short-range unmanned aerial vehicles, anti-ship cruise missiles, shallow water mines, rocket artillery, mobile short-range air defenses, and communications jamming gear.<sup>9</sup> The government of the Philippines could help U.S. forces to increase the resiliency of its base structure by granting access to air bases on its territory and providing host nation support services to deployed forces. The Baltic states could invest in border monitoring and secure communication systems, while other NATO allies could raise the readiness levels of their armored maneuver forces.<sup>10</sup> U.S. force planners should work closely with allies and partners to identify ways in which their planned investments and those of the United States can maximize complementarity and interoperability.

I will also note that the additions to the defense program described here are not, by and large, major platforms or new force structures. Rather, what emerges from our gaming and analysis is the value of investments in such things as advanced munitions; more-robust enablers (such as intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) systems; communication links; and command and control nodes); posture, which is about the placement of assets and the resiliency of base infrastructures; and novel operating concepts. This is not to say that adding force structure in some areas would not have value. Surely, many elements of the force (not only SOF) have experienced excessively high operations tempos. But, in general, investing in new ways to equip, enable, and employ U.S. forces seems to offer the greatest leverage in restoring credible conventional deterrence.

It is also worth noting that most of the force enhancements highlighted here are not high-tech. Many, such as fuel bladders and expedient aircraft shelters, are quite low-tech. Others (e.g., JASSM-ER, guided anti-armor munitions, stationing additional ground forces on NATO's eastern flank) are here-and-now capabilities in which investments could be increased. Still others (e.g., longer-range anti-radiation and air-to-air missiles, better exploitation of civil sector satellites) involve adapting or integrating existing technologies into new systems or new ways of operating. In short, *we need not and should not wait for the maturation of exotic new technologies in the Third Offset or other long-term research and development initiatives before investing in things that can make major differences in the ability of U.S. forces to deter and defeat aggression by even the most capable adversaries.*

## CONCLUSION

The adverse trends in the relative military capabilities of U.S. and adversary forces outlined here have been known to the defense analytic community for some years now. Gaming and analysis have yielded growing insight into promising ap-

<sup>9</sup>Michael J. Lostumbo, "A New Taiwan Strategy to Adapt to PLA Precision Strike Capabilities," in Roger Cliff, Phillip C. Saunders, and Scott Harold, eds., *New Opportunities and Challenges for Taiwan's Security*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, CF-279-OSD, 2011, pp. 127–136.

<sup>10</sup>Andrew Radin, *Hybrid Warfare in the Baltics: Threats and Potential Responses*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-1577-AF, 2017, pp. 33–34.

proaches to addressing many of the resulting challenges. The two things that are needed now are money and focus—in particular, additional money to allow the Department to move swiftly to develop, acquire, and field new systems and postures and a focus on fielding capabilities that can make the greatest and most enduring contributions to a robust defensive posture vis-à-vis China, Russia, and other adversaries. The Trump Administration and the 115th Congress have the opportunity to rectify the strategy-forces mismatch that has arisen over the past several years and put the United States back on a path toward fielding forces that can defeat any adversary.

One note of caution: Fielding the sorts of capabilities I have highlighted here should not, in most cases, be expected to restore to U.S. forces the degree of overmatch that they enjoyed against regional adversaries of the past, such as Iraq and Serbia. Any major conflict involving China, Russia, or North Korea is bound to be a costly and bloody affair. But I believe that it is within the United States' means—technologically, operationally, and fiscally—to field forces capable of confronting even the most capable adversaries with the prospect of defeat if they choose aggression. That is the gold standard of deterrence, and it is the standard to which I believe the United States should aspire.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to appear before this committee. I look forward to answering your questions.

Table. Priority Enhancements to U.S. Forces and Posture

<b>China</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accelerated development and fielding of a longer-range, fast-flying, radar-homing air-to-surface missile* and a longer-range air-to-air missile*</li> <li>• Forward-based stocks of air-delivered munitions, including cruise missiles (e.g., JASSM and JASSM-ER, LRASM)*, surface-to-air missile suppression missiles (e.g., homing anti-radiation missile, miniature air launched decoy)*, and air-to-air missiles (e.g., AIM-9X and AIM-120)*</li> <li>• Prepositioned equipment and sustainment for ten to 15 platoons of modern short-range air defense systems (SHORADS) for cruise missile defense</li> <li>• Additional base resiliency investments, including airfield damage repair assets and expedient aircraft shelters, and personnel and equipment to support highly dispersed operations</li> <li>• Accelerated development of the Next-Generation Jammer* . A high-altitude, low-observable unmanned aerial vehicle system*</li> <li>• More-resilient space-based capabilities (achieved by dispersing functions across increased numbers of satellites and increasing the maneuverability, stealth, and “hardness” of selected assets)*</li> <li>• Counter-space systems, including kinetic and nonkinetic (e.g., lasers, jammers) weapons*</li> </ul>
<b>Russia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• *Items listed under “China” marked with an asterisk</li> <li>• Three heavy brigade combat teams and their sustainment and support elements forward based or rotationally deployed in or near the Baltic states</li> <li>• One Army fires brigade permanently stationed in Poland, with 30-day stock of artillery rounds, and one additional fires brigade set prepositioned</li> <li>• Forward-based stocks of artillery and multiple launch rocket system rounds, plus anti-tank guided missiles</li> <li>• Forward-based stocks of air-delivered anti-armor munitions (e.g., SFW/P31)</li> <li>• Eight to 12 platoons of SHORADS forces stationed or rotationally deployed in NATO Europe</li> <li>• Increased readiness and employability of mechanized ground forces of key NATO allies</li> </ul>
<b>Iran</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved, forward-deployed mine countermeasures</li> <li>• High-capacity close-in defenses for surface vessels</li> </ul>
<b>North Korea</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved ISR systems for tracking nuclear weapons and delivery systems</li> <li>• Exploratory development of boost-phase ballistic missile intercept systems</li> <li>• Continued investments to improve the reliability and effectiveness of the ground-based intercept system to protect the United States</li> </ul>
<b>Salafist-Jihadi Groups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved intelligence collection and analysis capabilities and capacity</li> <li>• Light reconnaissance and attack aircraft</li> <li>• Gradually expanded SOF end strength toward a goal of 75,000–80,000</li> <li>• Powered exoskeleton, also known as the Talon Project</li> <li>• Swarming and autonomous unmanned vehicles</li> </ul>

SOURCE: Ochmanek et al., forthcoming.

Chairman MCCAIN. Thank you.  
Dr. Mahnken?

**STATEMENT OF THOMAS G. MAHNKEN, Ph.D., PRESIDENT AND  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, CENTER FOR STRATEGIC  
BUDGETARY ASSESSMENTS**

Dr. MAHNKEN. Chairman McCain, Ranking Member Reed, distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the invitation to appear before you today to discuss the National Defense Strategy (NDS).

The National Defense Strategy can serve as a powerful tool to focus and organize the Department of Defense to ensure that the United States maintains and bolsters its competitive advantages in an increasingly challenging environment. In the brief time I have, I would like to touch on six topics that the NDS should address and then conclude with one topic that undergirds them all.

First, the NDS should address the threats and challenges the United States faces and determine the priority for addressing them.

As has previously been mentioned, we find ourselves today, once again, in a period of great-power competition with an increasing possibility of great-power war. It is the most consequential threat that we face, and failure to deter, failure to prepare adequately for it, would have dire consequences for the United States, our allies, and global order. Because of that, I believe that preparing for great-power competition and conflict should have the highest priority.

At the same time, we face increasingly capable regional foes, to include North Korea and Iran. So while great-power competition and conflict should have the highest place, we also need to stress test our forces against these regional threats.

Finally, now and for the foreseeable future, we will need to wage a global counterinsurgency campaign against jihadist terrorist groups. We need to acknowledge that reality and plan accordingly.

Second, the NDS should provide both a global and a regional look at U.S. defense strategy and set priorities there.

The reality is that the United States is a global power with interests that span the world. Moreover, we face competitors who are active not only in their backyards, in their home regions, but also far beyond them. China is building up its military not only in the Western Pacific but also is active in the Middle East and Africa. Russia is not only using force in Ukraine but also in Syria.

That having been said, not all regions carry the same strategic weight.

Asia's strategic weight continues to grow, and it is increasingly the locus of economic, military, and political activity for the world. In my view, it is the most consequential region.

Europe is also extremely important. Its strategic salience has grown as threats to it and to American interests there have increased.

The United States cannot afford to ignore the Middle East, however much some may want to. History shows vividly that failure to address terrorism and instability far from our shores will eventually lead to those very same problems being visited on us at home.

Third, the NDS should provide focus on spending priorities, on readiness, force size, and modernization. The readiness deficiencies of the U.S. Armed Forces are on stark display on an all too regular



basis, and Secretary of Defense Mattis justifiably made improving readiness his first priority.

However, it has also become obvious that the Navy and the Air Force are smaller than is prudent in an increasingly competitive environment. Our forces, as has previously been noted, are also in dire need of modernization after a long hiatus.

While the United States was focused on defeating insurgents in Iraq and Afghanistan, Russia and China were focused on acquiring capabilities to defeat us. As a result, we find ourselves a step behind in a number of key warfighting areas. I would agree with what Dave Ochmanek said just before me.

Fourth, the NDS should balance the need to fight and win wars with the need to deter and compete in peacetime. We must prepare for both the reality of great-power competition and the increasing possibility of great-power war.

One manifestation of the former is the development and refinement by China and Russia of approaches to compete with us below the threshold that they calculate will draw a major U.S. response. We need to develop strategies to compete and win in peacetime. Just as our competitors are using many tools to do so, to include political warfare, information, economic incentives, and so forth, so do we have many available to us. What has all too often been lacking on our side, however, has been the political will to use them, to incur risk, to demonstrate our resolve, and, thus, to deter.

Fifth, the NDS should speak to how the United States can work more effectively with our allies. Our allies represent a long-term competitive advantage for the United States. We need to devise ways to work more closely with them, to develop and share capabilities more effectively with them, and to increase interoperability.

Sixth, the NDS should put forward a force plan and construct to guide and shape the size of U.S. forces. Here, I would commend to you CSBA's recent Force Planning for the Era of Great Power Competition, which explores the topic in depth.

But in my view, the force-planning construct should focus on the need to both compete in peacetime with great powers but also to fight and win a great-power war, if only to bolster deterrence. The United States should also be able to do these things while deterring or fighting a regional foe. The force-planning construct should acknowledge the reality that the United States will be engaged in a global counterinsurgency campaign for the foreseeable future.

One of the keys to doing these things is likely to be innovative operational concepts and capabilities, and here, there is room for considerable creative thought and action.

Now, I have outlined six considerations for the NDS, and the answers that the NDS provides to these six questions will help answer one that is much greater and far more consequential. And that is this: What role will the United States play in coming decades? Will we continue to lead and defend the international order, an order that has benefited us greatly? Or will we retreat into a diminished role? Will we compete? Or will we sit on the sidelines as states who seek to reshape the world to their benefit and to our detriment take the field?

If we answer in the affirmative, then we need to acknowledge the magnitude of the task ahead. It will take time. It will take resources, and it will take political will.

I, for one, hope the answer is in the affirmative and that we muster what is needed for the competition that lies ahead of us.

Thank you, and I await your questions.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Mahnken follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT BY THOMAS G. MAHNKEN

Chairman McCain, Ranking Member Reed, and distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for your invitation to appear before you today to discuss the National Defense Strategy.

This is a vitally important topic. In recent years, it has become apparent that we are living in a world characterized by the reality of great-power competition and the growing possibility of great-power war. At the same time, the United States faces increasingly capable regional rogues, such as North Korea and Iran, which possess or are developing nuclear weapons and the ability to deliver them to great distances. We also face the need, today and into the future, to wage a global counterinsurgency campaign against jihadist terrorist groups. At the same time, it has become painfully obvious that the United States possesses limited resources—or more accurately limited political will to muster the resources—to meet this increasingly competitive environment.

The National Defense Strategy can serve as a powerful tool to focus and organize the Department of Defense to ensure that the United States maintains and bolsters its competitive advantages in an increasingly challenging environment.

I would first like to discuss six topics that the NDS should address, and conclude with one topic that undergirds them all.

*First, the NDS should address the threats and challenges that the United States faces and determine the priority for addressing them.*

As I noted at the outset, we find ourselves today once again in a period of great-power competition with an increasing possibility of great-power war. It is the most consequential threat that we face, and failure to deter and prepare adequately for it would have dire consequences for the United States, our allies, and the global order. Because of that, I believe that preparing for great-power competition and conflict should have the highest priority.

At the same time, we face increasingly capable regional foes, to include North Korea and Iran. We need to stress test our forces against these threats.

Finally, now and for the foreseeable future, we will need to wage a global counterinsurgency campaign against jihadist terrorist groups. We need to acknowledge that reality and plan accordingly.

*Second, the NDS should provide both a global and regional look at U.S. defense strategy and set priorities there.*

The United States is a global power, with interests that span the world. Moreover, we face competitors who are active not only in their home regions, but also far beyond them as well. China is not only building up its military in the Western Pacific, but is also active in the Middle East and Africa. Russia is not only using force in Ukraine, but also in Syria. That having been said, not all regions carry the same strategic weight. Asia's strategic weight continues to grow, and it is increasingly the locus of global economic, military, and political activity. In my view, it is the most consequential region. Europe is also extremely important. Its strategic salience has grown as threats to it, and to American interests there, have increased. The United States cannot afford to ignore the Middle East, however much some may want to. History shows vividly that failure to address terrorism and instability far from our shores will eventually lead to those very same problems being visited on us at home.

*Third, the NDS should provide focus on spending priorities on readiness, force size, and modernization.*

The readiness deficiencies of the U.S. armed forces are on stark display on an all-too-regular basis, and Secretary of Defense Mattis justifiably made improving readiness his first priority. However, it has also become obvious that the Navy and Air Force are also smaller than is prudent in an increasingly competitive environment. Our forces are also in dire need of modernization after a long hiatus. While the United States was focused on defeating insurgents in Iraq and Afghanistan, Russia and China were focused on acquiring capabilities to defeat us. As a result, we find ourselves a step behind in a number of key warfighting areas.

*Fourth, the NDS should balance the need to fight and win wars with the need to deter and compete in peacetime.*

We must prepare for both the reality of great-power competition and the increasing possibility of great-power war. One manifestation of the former is the development and refinement by China and Russia of approaches to compete with us below the threshold that they calculate will draw a major U.S. response. We need to develop strategies to compete and win in peacetime. Just as our competitors are using many tools to do so, so do we have many available to us. What has all too often been lacking on our side, however, has the political will to use them, to incur risk, to demonstrate our resolve, and thus to deter.

*Fifth, the NDS should speak to how the United States can work more effectively with our allies.*

America's allies represent a long-term competitive advantage. We need to devise ways to work more closely with them, to develop and share capabilities more effectively with them, and to increase interoperability.

*Sixth, the NDS should put forward a force planning construct to guide the shape and size of U.S. forces.*

Here I would commend to you CSBA's recent *Force Planning for the Era of Great Power Competition*, which explores the topic in depth.

In my view, this force planning construct should focus on the need to both compete in peacetime with great powers, but also to fight and win a great-power war, if only to bolster deterrence. The United States should also be able to do these things while deterring or fighting a regional foe. The force planning construct should acknowledge the reality that the United States will be engaged in a global counter-insurgency campaign for the foreseeable future. One of the keys to doing these things is likely to be innovative operational concepts and capabilities, and here there is room for considerable creative thought and action.

In conclusion, the answers the NDS provides to these six questions will help answer one that is much greater and more consequential, and that is this: *What role will the United States play in coming decades?* Will we continue to lead and defend the international order—an order that has benefited us greatly—or will we retreat into a diminished role? Will we compete, or will we sit on the sidelines as states who seek to reshape the world to their benefit and our detriment take the field? If we answer in the affirmative, then we need to acknowledge the magnitude of the task ahead. It will take time, resources, and political will.

I, for one, hope that we answer in the affirmative, and that we muster what is needed for the competition that lies ahead of us.

#### **About the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments**

The Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments (CSBA) is an independent, nonpartisan policy research institute established to promote innovative thinking and debate about national security strategy and investment options. CSBA's analysis focuses on key questions related to existing and emerging threats to U.S. national security, and its goal is to enable policymakers to make informed decisions on matters of strategy, security policy, and resource allocation.

Chairman MCCAIN. Thank you, Doctor. This has been very helpful to the committee, and I think we can discuss it in light of the events of the last couple days, and I am talking about North Korea's missile launch.

I know of no expert who believed that it would happen this quickly and this high.

So we will begin with you, Ms. Eaglen.

Ms. EAGLEN. So I think from the testimony here this morning, there is a consensus that, actually, everyone up here and on the committee actually knows what the Defense Department needs to do. It is only if they will do it, whether or not they will answer the questions honestly that we have outlined.

Of course, that includes North Korea, one of the big five challenges, as coined by the last administration [the Obama Administration] and endorsed by this one, which includes North Korea.

Chairman MCCAIN. Wouldn't you agree this is the first time that there is a capability of hitting the United States of America?

Ms. EAGLEN. I would agree. I think the Air Force a couple years ago may have been the only service that predicted something along this timeline in classified reports.

But it has clearly shown its capability. As you mentioned, Mr. Chairman, the trajectory, in particular, is what is important. It is a wakeup call to remind the American people and Congress, again, what we already know.

Every time we think it is going to take longer than it does, it usually happens faster and more quickly.

So what can we do about it now? Some of the solutions that we have talked about up here already, about basing and posture and infrastructure, more missile defense in the region, and other recommendations in detail are also in my testimony.

But the core assumption that things will take longer, that others will mature slower than we hope because that is what is in our plan and in our strategy, should be thrown out the window.

Chairman MCCAIN. So if you and I had been having this discussion 2 years ago, you would not have predicted this?

Ms. EAGLEN. I would say our track record as a country, as a Defense Department, and as an intelligence community is dismal in predicting what will happen and how quickly, not just the occurrence of events like the Arab Spring, which was completely not predicted at all, but also the timeline of capability development by enemies and potential foes.

We have been wrong almost every single time, and it is usually because it has been faster than we have predicted.

Chairman MCCAIN. Dr. Karlin?

Dr. KARLIN. Unfortunately, our options vis-a-vis North Korea are terrible, and anyone who tells you differently is a foolish optimist.

So what we need to do in the near term is we need to rebuild our defenses, we need to——

Chairman MCCAIN. You are talking about antimissile capabilities?

Dr. KARLIN. Writ large, absolutely, anti-missile capabilities. We need to rebuild our readiness. We need to improve our base posture, but also our resilience and dispersal across Asia. Because if there is a conflict, we will see U.S. bases in places like Guam, in places like South Korea, and in places like Japan under heavy, heavy fire. We need to do all we can to get close to our allies like Japan and South Korea.

Chairman MCCAIN. I know you have seen the RAND study that shows closure between their capabilities and ours. That is of concern?

Dr. KARLIN. Absolutely.

We need to find a way to minimize the toll that the Middle East chaos will continue to take on our force. It is sucking away readiness. It is prioritizing capacity over meaningful capability. It is also not going away.

Chairman MCCAIN. We are asking our servicemembers to work 100-hour workweeks.

General?

General SPOEHR. Exactly right. I think 100 is probably a low estimate for some of them, sir.

But I would concur with the panelists here. We need to increase, as this committee and the House did, missile defense, global mid-course defense interceptors in Alaska and California, Aegis destroyers and cruisers.

We need to ensure that our stocks of precision-guided munitions are where they need to be, in case we do have to do one of those options, which would be unthinkable. But we need to make sure we have enough Joint Direct Attack Munitions (JDAMs) and small-diameter bombs to prosecute the war. Today, I am not entirely certain that we have that.

We just need to ensure the fundamental readiness of our Armed Forces. We need to make sure that our forces are ready, if the President calls on them, to do what needs to be done, sir.

Chairman MCCAIN. One of the aspects of this that is so frustrating to us is that, as predicted, the workweeks are longer, the readiness suffers, the availability of aircraft suffers, because that is the easy part. To ask any servicemember to work a 100-hour workweek is sooner or later going to have a significant effect on retention.

General SPOEHR. Recruiting as well, sir, I would add. It is a tough year, I think, for the Army and other services for recruiting. If people see what we are asking of our servicemembers, I think they will be less likely to join our service.

Chairman MCCAIN. Thank you.

Mr. OCHMANEK. Sir, without doubt, an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) capability in the hands of the likes of Kim Jong Un is a big deal. But the capability to hold at risk U.S. forces, allied forces, and the populations of our allies in South Korea and Japan with a nuclear weapon already was a game-changer in that scenario. It drives us to—

Chairman MCCAIN. Were you surprised at the capability that Kim Jong Un has developed?

Mr. OCHMANEK. No, sir. We started gaming the consequences of a potentially nuclear-armed North Korea in 2001. We learned a lot about the options available to him and the behavior of a leader like that under the stress of conflict. We are not optimistic about the ability to deter nuclear use once conflict breaks out on the Korean Peninsula.

So it drives us to want capabilities to actually prevent him from using those weapons, shooting down the missiles before they leave North Korean airspace, killing them on the ground before they can be launched. That is going to require some investment and some new capabilities.

Chairman MCCAIN. Dr. Mahnken?

Dr. MAHNKEN. Mr. Chairman, the situation with North Korea, to my mind, just is the most recent demonstration of the allure of wishful thinking. So I would agree with David Ochmanek. I mean, it should not be a surprise that North Korea is where it is now. But we have spent decades first imagining that North Korea was just going to collapse on its own, then imagining that they would not be able to master nuclear weapons, then imagining that they would not be able to master the ability to deliver them over longer ranges.

We are where we are, but I think we need to pay attention to this allure, which still exists, of wishful thinking, to imagine a world as we wish it was, not the world as it is.

As far as North Korea is concerned, I think we are going to have to be more active in deterring North Korea. We are also going to need to be more active in reassuring our allies. In the end, that may prove to be the more difficult of the two tasks. As we go about it——

Chairman MCCAIN. After yesterday's news, I would agree.

Dr. MAHNKEN. Yes. No, we need to talk to them very forthrightly about what their concerns are, what would reassure them, and what we can do to help.

But all through this, I want to go back to priorities and focus. We shouldn't let ourselves get distracted overly by this. North Korea is a concern. It is a threat. But it is a less consequential threat than the challenges we face from China and from Russia.

So my view is, again, we start with the biggest threats, and then we look. We stress test dealing with North Korea and others in that context.

Chairman MCCAIN. But you would agree that this test has proven that they can hit the United States of America.

Dr. MAHNKEN. They will seek to derive every benefit from that. So the talk of negotiations with the North Koreans now is coming more and more onto the table. I could expect all sorts of fallout from that.

They are competing with us. Historically, they have done a pretty good job of it. We need to be aware of that.

Chairman MCCAIN. I am taking way too much time, but how can a country with the 125th largest economy be able to acquire this capability and pose a direct threat to the United States of America?

Dr. MAHNKEN. They are focused, right? Their economy is not focused on the well-being of their people. It is focused on the military.

North Korea has derived a lot of benefits, historically, from being able to threaten its neighbors. It has derived economic benefits, food aid, and so forth. So they have every motivation to continue this type of behavior, because it is paid off for them in the past.

Chairman MCCAIN. Jack?

Senator REED. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you all for your very, very thoughtful and insightful comments.

One of the issues, I think, that resonates in everything you said is a perennial question in Washington: Do budgets drive strategy, or does strategy drive budgets? Most times, budgets drive strategy. So let's talk about budgets.

Dr. Mahnken, stepping back and looking at the unavoidable costs, as I like to call them, we are talking about renovating the triad. We have to do that. It is not an option. We want to build a 355-ship Navy. We have to increase end-strength, because otherwise we are going to have sailors working 100 hours a week and other things like that.

What is the cost of that over a 10-year period, in your view?

Dr. MAHNKEN. There are various estimates out there, right? But I think it is going to—well, there is the cost if we go back to doing

business as we should, not ruling by continuing resolution, but actually passing budgets. I would say that the American taxpayer's dollar will actually get substantially more——

Senator REED. I concur, but what is the rough cost? Let's say we get our act together and we do this.

Dr. MAHNKEN. It is going to require a sustained commitment, sustained increases over——

Senator REED. Over a trillion dollars over 10 years?

Dr. MAHNKEN. I would want to take a closer look at it. But the cost is substantial. The cost is substantial.

We are digging out of a long period of underinvestment. That is why I concluded the way I did. It will require the political will. It is not an economic issue. It is ultimately an issue of——

Senator REED. I concur with you.

Mr. Ochmanek, what is your estimate for these unavoidable costs over a decade?

Mr. OCHMANEK. Senator Reed, in the Pentagon, planners talked about the capability-capacity-readiness triangle. You have to pay attention to all three of those things. My colleagues and I at RAND have been focused on the capability side, so I cannot talk authoritatively to the bills that need to be paid in readiness and about capacity.

But on the capability side, to buy the sorts of preferred munitions, ISR platforms, base resiliency, communications sets, et cetera, we are talking on the order of \$20 to \$30 billion a year above what we are spending now sustained through the 10 years, 12 years——

Senator REED. So, roughly, just for the portion of capabilities you describe, that is \$300 billion, roughly?

Mr. OCHMANEK. Yes, sir. That order of magnitude.

Senator REED. Then you add readiness, and you add something else. So we are bumping up pretty quickly to around \$1 trillion, perhaps.

Mr. OCHMANEK. It is conceivable. If you want to buy a bigger force as well as——

Senator REED. Well, I think based on General Spoehr's comments about the readiness issue, recruiting issue, operational issue, I think we need a bigger force.

So what is your ballpark figure, General?

General SPOEHR. It is absolutely over \$1 trillion for the nuclear triad plus to get to the 355-ship Navy, sir.

The only thing I would balance that against is the cost to rebuild a city like Kansas City, or something like that, recovering from a nuclear strike.

Then I would echo what General Milley often says, and that is that it is a huge cost to fight a war. The only thing more costly than that is to fight and to lose.

Senator REED. So we are talking roughly \$1 trillion to get ready, and even that might not prevent an enemy from inflicting damage upon us.

Dr. Karlin, quickly, and Ms. Eaglen.

Dr. KARLIN. I would agree with my fellow panelists. But I might urge you to question if we do want to build a bigger force in the near term, because of the opportunity costs. A 355-ship Navy would

be terrific if it is a 355-ship Navy that can fight and win wars. If it is very capacity-heavy, can only exert presence, and will not be helpful if we have a conflict with China, with Russia, with North Korea, I, perhaps, might not prioritize it in the near term.

Senator REED. Ma'am?

Ms. EAGLEN. I would agree with the budget assessments and yours, Senator, that it is roughly \$1 trillion to restore all three legs of the stool, readiness, capacity, capability. If you have to trim those costs, the most likely one is people.

Senator REED. That was good neighborly advice. We are former neighbors.

My rough sense, too, is that if we really are serious about this, and we want strategy to drive our policy, it is about \$1 trillion over 10 years. We cannot avoid it.

That is why I find it, let me say, ironic that in the next few days we might contemplate borrowing \$1.5 trillion to provide tax cuts rather than investing—we have to borrow it; we do not have the money—\$1 trillion for the defense of the United States. Because after we put ourselves \$1.5 trillion further in the hole, the ability of this country and the willingness of people to go again to the ATM is going to be severely constrained.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Ernst?

Senator ERNST. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to our panelists for being here today. This has been a very enlightening conversation.

Mr. Ochmanek, I would like to start with you please, sir. Your focus is military force planning and through a traditional defense lens. Most analysts have viewed Europe as primarily land-centric and the Asia-Pacific as more maritime-centric. However, in recent meetings, I had an Army general that told me about the importance of land forces in Asia, as well as a maritime expert discussing naval deficiencies in Europe.

So in light of that observation, how do we properly posture the joint force in these two regions to make sure that our adversaries are forced to reckon with us as a multidomain force?

Mr. OCHMANEK. Senator Ernst, I spent the early part of my career in the Air Force. So if I may, I would offer the view that a fight against China is primarily an air-maritime fight; a fight against Russia in defending NATO would be an air-land fight. But, absolutely, there are roles for naval forces in Europe and roles for ground forces in the Pacific.

Our priorities for posture are as follows. In Europe, you want more U.S. heavy forces on the ground near the eastern flank of the NATO alliance every day. We have taken some steps in that regard with our allies to do that, but more is required. Something like three heavy brigades available all the time, as well as artillery in place to counter the Russian land forces, would be very appropriate.

In both theaters, Europe and Asia, we need to pay attention to the fact that our air bases and sea bases will be under attack from the outset of the conflict. When we fight Iraq, when we fight Serbia, we are used to having our air bases and rear areas in sanctuary. Russia and China will ensure that that is not the case.



So buying cruise missile defenses, for example, should be a high priority for both theaters. Buying fairly prosaic things like runway repair assets; shelters for airplanes that are transportable, they are called expedient shelters; fuel bladders, so that if they attack our fuel tanks, we still have fuel to put in our jets; and positioning preferred munitions forward in hardened storage bunkers. These things, again, are not high-tech, but they can make a big difference in the survivability and effectiveness of our force in conflict.

Senator ERNST. Very good. I appreciate that.

Going back to that eastern flank in Europe, then, I have had conflicting opinions on whether the rotational force that we have there now is adequate or whether we need to have a more permanent force structure. What would your opinion be?

Mr. OCHMANEK. Forward-stationing versus rotation is basically a question of efficiency. If you forward-base the force permanently, you only need to pay for that force, although you have to build some infrastructure for it. Rotating the force means having probably two units in reserve to sustain the rotation.

So on an efficiency basis, generally, if the politics of the region permit, and in NATO they do, forward-stationing would be more cost-effective.

Senator ERNST. Okay. Thank you for that opinion.

Then, Mr. Ochmanek, as well, as chair of the Emerging Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee, I have oversight of unconventional warfare, and I am particularly concerned about Russia's activity in the gray zone, especially against Ukraine and other allies in Europe's eastern flank.

What is your assessment of the United States' current strategy to counter unconventional warfare and the growing security challenges in the gray zone posed by our adversaries like Russia and perhaps other near-peer competitors?

Mr. OCHMANEK. Senator, we are doing a lot with our NATO allies to beef up their, if I can call it that, resilience to gray zone and subversion kinds of threats.

Our special forces work a lot with the special forces of the three Baltic States, for example. We have created special cyber units to help our allies and partners do a better job of detecting and attributing cyberattacks, and defending against those.

There is a lot more that can be done, but I know the department is cognizant of this sort of threat and is working on a variety of ways to counter it.

Senator ERNST. Absolutely.

My time is expiring. Thank you very much for being here today.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator King?

Senator KING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to follow up on the point that Senator Reed made.

Each of you testified that the cost over and above the current budget to modernize the military and to get us to a place where we should be, and we all agree around this table that we should be, is around \$1 trillion or something over \$1 trillion.

The Senator used the word "ironic." I use the word "preposterous" that later today or tomorrow, we are going to pass a bill that is going to take between a minimum of \$1.5 trillion and prob-

ably more like \$2.2 trillion once the cuts are extended, which everyone knows they will be, out of the budget, which I believe will make it flat impossible to do the work that you are suggesting is necessary for us to do. The implications of what we are doing today or tomorrow to try to achieve the level of defense of this country that you all have told us is absolutely necessary, it just cannot happen.

So that is not a question. That is an observation.

I want to move now to the question. I am somewhat astonished and disappointed that not a single one of you talked about anything other than military hardware. Defending the national security of the United States involves a continuum, it seems to me, that goes from diplomacy to war. War is the most expensive and least desirable of those outcomes.

I think of Afghanistan. Our success there will ultimately depend upon the success of the government in Afghanistan to gain the confidence of its people.

In Iraq, the relationship between the Government of Iraq and the Kurds and the Sunni population is going to determine whether Iraq, ultimately, is a successful state.

North Korea, the solution to North Korea lies through diplomacy with China. I think everyone appreciates and understands that.

The reason Iran is not North Korea today is because of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) that was passed 2 years ago. Otherwise we would be, according to the intelligence services, we would be dealing with an Iran with a nuclear weapon today, about 2 years from when we passed that bill.

Israel, Palestine, a major flashpoint in terms of conflict in the Middle East, is all about diplomacy.

Don't we have to talk about that as part of a National Defense Strategy? This is the tyranny—we are the Armed Services Committee, and we have a Foreign Affairs, Foreign Relations Committee. But that is part of the strategy. I am very disappointed that that is not part of the discussion.

Dr. Karlin, talk to me about this.

Right now, by the way, under the current dispensation, this part of the strategy—that is, diplomacy—is being drastically downgraded. Budgets cut at the State Department. We do not have an Ambassador to South Korea, for example, or even a nominee.

Dr. Karlin, talk to me about this problem.

Dr. KARLIN. Sir, unfortunately, you are spot on.

When you look at the senior diplomats who have left the State Department in the last year, it is almost equal to about 30 percent of the U.S. general officer or flag officer corps. I suspect if about 30 percent of the general officers or flag officers left, this committee would be having a set of really serious hearings. Unfortunately, that is not just a today problem. That is a real future problem.

I also suspect that if you asked most of us, as much as we want more money for defense, we would be delighted if that could go to the State Department. What will probably keep happening is that we will see an increased neutering of the State Department and of diplomacy more broadly.

Senator KING. By the way, what is going on now with people leaving and being driven out, I understand it is already reflecting itself in people who are applying for the Foreign Service.

Dr. KARLIN. Yes.

Senator KING. Applications are down something like 30 percent.

Dr. KARLIN. Indeed. I think it was actually about 50 percent. It is pretty substantial. So this has really long-ranging consequences for the future of American national security.

As you know, no one takes these jobs for the money. They take these jobs because they want to help make the world better. If they do not see that opportunity, they will go do something else.

So it is really profoundly worrying across-the-board. I think a lot of us are not really terribly sure what to do about it.

But what will likely happen is, you will see the State Department get increasingly neutered. Everyone will turn to the Pentagon and ask the military to fill those roles. The military will salute, and they will try to fill those roles. But they are not as capable to do so.

Moreover, there will be a real opportunity cost. Because they will not actually be focused on fighting and winning wars or preparing for the future. They will be trying to be pseudo-diplomats.

Senator KING. Dr. Mahnken, do you have a thought on this point?

Dr. MAHNKEN. Diplomacy is undoubtedly important.

Senator KING. It is not undoubtedly important. It is important.

Dr. MAHNKEN. I had the pleasure of working for a Secretary of Defense who worked very hard to increase the size of the State Department.

However, diplomacy is much more effective when it is backed by credible military power. Nor can diplomacy be a substitute for the military.

Senator KING. I am certainly not asserting that.

Dr. MAHNKEN. Yes.

Senator KING. But what I am asserting is that, if you have two pieces here, we are talking about strengthening one while the other is atrophying before our eyes. I think that is a serious national security concern.

Dr. MAHNKEN. I would agree. I think, unfortunately, it has been a long-term trend across administrations, both in terms of funding of the State Department and attracting the best and the brightest. I think it is an issue that needs to be addressed.

Senator KING. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Peters?

Senator PETERS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you to each of our witnesses today.

Again, really thoughtful testimony. I appreciate the discussion. I want to get into a little more discussion on an area that I think there is some disagreement on the panel.

But before I do that, I want to concur with my colleagues who have already spoken about the cost of doing what is going to be necessary to secure the future of this country. I hope that every one of the members of the Armed Services Committee really takes to heart what he or she heard today, that we may be talking about

a \$1 trillion additional investment. A vote taken later today or tomorrow that cuts \$1.4 trillion or more, depending on what number you look at, is fundamentally inconsistent with what we heard today.

So I am hoping every member of this committee, in particular, will understand where we are.

We obviously face significant current threats, which all of you have articulated very clearly. But there are also future threats that are going to evolve. One thing that really stuck with me in talking with Secretary Mattis was he was very clear that he believed his success on the battlefield was really as a result of decisions that were made 10 years prior to when he was engaged in that role. We need to be thinking forward as to what that world is going to look like in 10 years.

We know that we are probably on the cusp of one of the most exciting and perhaps frightening both times of human history in terms of technological advances that are coming very, very rapidly.

In my home State with automation and self-driving cars, a couple years ago, people thought it was fantasy. It is going to be reality very soon, which will transform the auto industry in every way as big as when the first car came off the assembly line. It is going to have implications, through artificial intelligence (AI), of every single industry you can possibly imagine.

You have nanotechnology. We have synthetic biology. We have additive manufacturing.

The only thing we know for sure is, 10 years from now, this world will look dramatically different than it does today. That means the future of warfare is likely to also look dramatically different than it does today.

So I have heard a couple folks say that we shouldn't be looking at AI and some of these other technologies, so I am going to want some clarification on that because, as Ms. Eaglen said, everything seems to happen quicker than people anticipate.

We had AI recently beat the international Go champion. That sounds kind of trivial, but it is a game that was thought to be uniquely human, and it would be at least a decade before AI would have the capability of doing that. It did it.

AI systems are now creating encryption systems on their own.

I mean, this is incredibly fascinating. But it is certainly one that we have to be ahead of the curve, because other countries are doing it.

So, Ms. Karlin, my first question to you, because you brought up how we have to be particularly leaning forward when it comes to exploiting these technologies and concerned about our adversaries, will you tell me why it is important that we lean in, in AI and these technologies, and we have to be thinking about that, too?

Dr. KARLIN. Absolutely, sir. We should lean in because there will be opportunities in that field, but above all, our adversaries and competitors are also pursuing them rigorously. So we need to know, if we engage in a potential conflict in the future with countries like Russia or China, they are going full steam ahead in the AI field.

In fact, there was a piece in the New York Times recently about how China is really planning to dominate that field in about 10

years. So if we are not thinking about the opportunities it offers us, we need to know what challenges it will also present.

Senator PETERS. Thank you.

General and Mr. Ochmanek, I think you both mentioned in your testimony, correct me if I'm wrong, these kind of trends are a fad now to talk about. AI, we shouldn't be talking about that. If you would just tell me more about what your thinking is, that would be very helpful.

General SPOEHR. Yes, sir. I mean, I do not mean to imply that AI and things like that are not important, and they are, and we need to keep up with the technology. But they cannot substitute for a ready and capable force.

So for example, you can have all the artificial intelligence and swarms of mini-drones, but it does not replace, for example, a soldier on a street corner in a contested city or a destroyer on-station in the South China Sea. You cannot substitute high-end technology for presence and the ability to deter on-station.

Senator PETERS. I would say, I do not know if anyone is arguing that we have a substitute. It is an understanding that it leverages it. In fact, AI systems working with a soldier on that street corner can be incredibly powerful.

So we have to do both, is my understanding.

Mr. Ochmanek, I know you mentioned it as well in your testimony.

Mr. OCHMANEK. Yes. Thank you, Senator, for the opportunity to clarify that.

My point was that we need not and should not wait for the maturation of exotic Third Offset technologies to begin filling serious gaps in our capabilities today. We have to, of course, continue to invest in that Research and Development (R&D) and those future systems, but at the same time, there are mature technologies, available systems today, that can go a long way toward addressing the threats that we face.

I would hate to see us again delay needed investments now while we wait for this next generation of capability.

Thank you.

Senator PETERS. Thank you.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Shaheen?

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you to each of you for being here.

Let me just echo the concerns that have been raised by my colleagues about what passing this tax bill will do to our ability to deal with so many other priorities that we have in this country, particularly defense. I think it is a nonstarter to think we are going to pass a \$1.5 trillion tax bill and have another \$1 trillion in the next 10 years for defense. So I think several of you have said we are trying to define the world the way we want it to look. Well, I think that is a situation of defining the world the way we want it to look, as opposed to the way it is.

I very much appreciated you, Dr. Karlin, and I think it was, I am not sure, maybe Mr. Ochmanek, who talked about the need to prioritize what we are doing. Part of a strategy is saying there are some things we can do and some things that we cannot do.

I found it distressing to hear most of you continue to talk about, or as I understood your testimony, to talk about conflict in the future the way we have looked at conflict in the past. While you pointed out that there were going to be differences in terms of what you are suggesting we need to do through the Department of Defense, it did not sound like major differences in terms of what we ought to be thinking.

Mr. Ochmanek, I think you were the first person to talk about the importance of information and cyber. As I look at what we are facing in the future and think about how we have seen warfare change through Russia and China and Iran and the terrorist groups, our ability to compete on information and cyber has been woefully lacking. We do not seem to have, notwithstanding what is in the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) that we have passed, to begin to address that.

We do not seem to have a strategy in either of these areas that is comprehensive, that is cross-government, that has everybody pulling at the same rate.

So I wonder, Mr. Ochmanek, you talked about special cyber units. I am not aware that we have special cyber units. So maybe you could delineate that a little bit and tell us more about those special cyber units.

Mr. OCHMANEK. I would be happy to, Senator. I am not an expert in cyber, but I am aware that, some years ago, we started creating small teams of cyber experts that both work here in the United States and deploy abroad to work hand-in-glove with partners. This includes actual day-to-day operations on their nets, to monitor traffic coming in, teach techniques about how to attribute the source of attacks, which, of course, is very important to how you respond, and also how to use cyber as a tool to enable other military operations.

That is about as much as I can share with you in this forum. But there is a lot of activity going on here and with our allies abroad in that area.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, I appreciate that. But I will tell you, we have had people before this committee, and I have had the chance to ask the question about who is in charge of those operations, and I have not been able to get anybody so far to tell me who is in charge.

Do you know the answer to that?

Mr. OCHMANEK. I would not speculate on it.

Senator SHAHEEN. Does anybody else know the answer to that?

General SPOEHR. The commander of USCYBERCOM, Senator.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, in fact, I was told that is not where the center is. If you would look at, government-wide, how we are responding to cyber threats and disinformation, that is not where that command is placed.

General SPOEHR. I would agree. For the whole-of-government, U.S. Federal response, he is not in charge of that aspect.

Senator SHAHEEN. Do you know who is?

General SPOEHR. Other than the President, ma'am, I do not.

Senator SHAHEEN. I think that is exactly right. We do not have someone who is in charge. Yet we are dealing with, as you all point out, not just regional threats, terrorist groups, but nation-states

who are superpowers, again, where they have made a major focus in these two areas, and we are not on the playing field, at this point.

So I would hope, as you are making recommendations about what we need to be looking at in a National Defense Strategy, that they should be major pieces of that National Defense Strategy.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Warren?

Senator WARREN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you to our witnesses for being here today for this important topic.

There has been a lot of debate about the relationship between the budget and the strategy, whether we should have a budget-driven strategy or a strategy-driven budget. But I think it is not just about how much money we spend, but how we spend that money.

According to many estimates, the Russians spend about \$70 billion annually on their defense budget. That means they are spending about one-tenth of what this committee authorized for the Pentagon in 2018. But they have parlayed their investment into a whole lot of disruption all around the world, and one way they have done that is through leveraging asymmetric power. Things like gray zone warfare in the Crimea, cyberattacks on elections here in the United States.

Similarly, the Chinese have invested in areas where they believe they have a relative advantage, areas like space or anti-access/area denial.

So, Dr. Karlin, I want to ask, how should any new defense strategy take into account these kinds of asymmetric investments, both at the low end and the high end of the spectrum?

Dr. KARLIN. Thank you for that question.

If I might first start with your point on the Russians, one thing to recall is that the Russians do not have to think globally the way that the United States does. That is part of why things get a little more complicated.

Senator WARREN. Fair enough, but let me just point out, they are having an impact globally.

Dr. KARLIN. Quite profoundly, indeed. I mean, when we look at them going into Syria, I do not think that had been in anyone's paradigm, that a country would actually want to become involved militarily in what was occurring in Syria. As you know, ma'am, the options changed considerably the minute they started to do so.

So in terms of thinking about asymmetric warfare, I think the Defense Department has very much put it on the priority list in recent years.

The irony is, from a Russian and Chinese perspective, we actually conduct gray zone warfare all the time. What they see as our use of special operations forces, what they see as our use of drone strikes, what they see even as the U.S. free media is all considered gray zone warfare, which is, of course, ironic since I suspect none of us would actually put any of those efforts into that category.

So gray zone warfare as the Russian and as the Chinese think about it does not play to our comparative advantage. The U.S. military operates legally. The U.S. military will use its members in

uniform. We will not have them go out and become like little green men the way the Russians will. That is something we should be proud of, in terms of how we operate.

So as I think about how we can be more effective, it comes more down to how we are managing the force rather than developing the force. We do not need a whole lot of new whiz-bang gizmos to actually compete well. What we need to do is do more snap exercises. We need to take steps to show that, at any time, the U.S. military can get anywhere and anyplace, to remind countries like Russia and China that the U.S. military is preeminent.

Senator WARREN. So I am a little frustrated with this. Even if Congress provided a \$700 billion budget tomorrow, it would be several years before the Navy reached 355 ships or DOD could deploy 2,000 F-35 fighter jets. Let's face it, in the short term, the U.S. will be operating with something like our current size and structure.

This is important to acknowledge, because the services' readiness challenges, like the recent collisions in the Seventh Fleet, indicate that after 16 years of combat, we may currently be badly overstretched.

So, Dr. Karlin, in your previous role at the Pentagon, you were responsible for helping make the tradeoffs across the services among the geographic commands and between the near-term and long-term investments. So I do not want to just hear that we need to prioritize.

What I am trying to ask is a more systemic question. That is, how do we go about this process of prioritizing, of assessing risk, and making tradeoffs in a disciplined way?

Dr. KARLIN. Absolutely. I would urge the committee to have a classified hearing with those who are working on the National Defense Strategy about what the force-planning construct says, because that is exactly what the process is. What happens is the department tries to assess what the future looks like. Based on that, it looks at the conflicts that are most worrisome in that future, and you can imagine what those are.

Based on those conflicts, it says, across the entire department, "Combatant command services, how do you fight that conflict? What do we do?" Then it has to adjudicate, and that involves a lot of betting and hedging, because we will probably call it wrong, as we often do, and then try to put money toward that situation. That ends up being a rather significant negotiated process, where, to placate some corners, perhaps some will win, and some will not lose as much as they need to.

This is also, as I said earlier, I think the committee needs to have—you know, one of the great decisions of this committee recently was to make the National Defense Strategy classified. That will allow a serious conversation about who wins and who loses, and why those occurred.

Senator WARREN. I just have to say, when we are talking about words like "strategic decisions," hearing you answer with a word like "placate" makes me very uneasy.

I just want to underline that I think we need to be focused on not just the inputs, the number of ships or marines or aircraft, but also on the outputs, the goals we are trying to achieve with the force we have. I think that means thinking creatively and expand-



ing our own use of asymmetric tactics and leveraging our 21st century technologies here.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Inhofe?

Senator INHOFE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I had to be at another meeting, so I did not get in all the opening statements, and I did not hear all the questions.

But to me, I think we ought to, just in my narrow view, what we need to be talking about right now is what happened last Tuesday.

I think most people here know who James Woolsey is. You may not know. He is from my City of Tulsa, Oklahoma, and we have been good friends for a long time. He said way back in 1993, this is a quote that he made, he said, "We have slain a large dragon," the Soviet Union, "but we live now in a jungle with a bewildering variety of poisonous snakes." That was his quote.

He said, the most vexing of those poisonous snakes has proven to be North Korea—this is 1993—and despite China and Russia representing the greatest threats to military supremacy, many experts have agreed with me that North Korea is the most imminent threat.

I understand that Dr. Mahnken, perhaps, did not agree with this when this statement came out.

But David Wright said, and this was pretty well-publicized, on Tuesday afternoon—he is an analyst in the Union of Concerned Scientists. He wrote that Tuesday's test indicates that, "Such a missile would have more than enough

range to reach Washington, D.C., and, in fact, any part of the continental United States." Then, of course, you heard the statements by General Mattis.

So I consider this to be—it is going to have to really be addressed in a very heavy way. I would say, other than the statement that was made by Dr. Mahnken, the rest of you, do you pretty much agree that, in terms of imminent threat, [North Korea] would be the most imminent threat right now?

Is that yes for you guys? Okay, thank you.

Dr. MAHNKEN. Senator, I would actually also agree with that statement.

Senator INHOFE. Would you?

Dr. MAHNKEN. In terms of imminent, yes. The point that I made earlier was about most consequential over the long term.

Senator INHOFE. Okay, well, this is an imminent threat, and that is why I wanted to word it that way.

I would like to ask each one of you, should this be included in our strategic framework of the new National Defense Strategy? If so, how?

Let's go ahead and start with you.

Dr. MAHNKEN. In my view, we should really start by looking at the challenges that we face from great-power competitors, from Russia and China. We should figure out the force requirements there.

Senator INHOFE. Okay.

Dr. MAHNKEN. Then what we should do is stress test that force posture against threats like North Korea. It very well may be that

you would have some special requirements that would come out for having to deter North Korea that might not emerge from the previous case.

Senator INHOFE. Okay, I am running out of time here.

Just kind of a quick answer and ideas you might have.

Mr. OCHMANEK. Yes, sir. North Korea absolutely needs to be a consideration in our National Defense Strategy, and we should focus our efforts in dealing with it on improving our capabilities to actually prevent them from using and delivering a nuclear weapon, specifically with a ballistic missile.

Senator INHOFE. General?

General SPOEHR. Sir, I would say that the National Defense Strategy does not have the luxury of having a single threat like a great power. It is going to have to consider terrorism, rogue nations such as North Korea and Iran, and the smaller threats from terrorism. So, yes, I think you are right. It has to consider these threats.

Senator INHOFE. Yes. Any other comments?

Dr. KARLIN. Absolutely, sir. It has for years.

Senator INHOFE. Okay. Very good.

The other thing, and I might go just a little bit over here. It is no secret that our readiness has eroded over the past 8 years. Budget cuts, sequestration, we have had a lot of meetings on this of this committee, and the idea that our President had a policy that he did not want to put anything in that would take care of sequestration in the military unless you put an equal amount in other programs, which I disagreed with, a lot of people on this committee did agree with that.

But how would you prioritize the capability gaps confronting the military when compared to Russia and China? The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Dunford, said, in just a few years, if we do not change our trajectory, we will lose our qualitative and quantitative competitive advantage. That is a very disturbing statement.

Any comments, in this remaining time, that you would make concerning prioritizing that capability gap when we are looking at the somewhat starvation period we went through at the same time of the very ambitious programs of both Russia and China.

Senator INHOFE. Start with Ms. Eaglen.

Ms. EAGLEN. Yes, sir. I would step back for a moment and offer some principles, because there is no doubt we are depending on the capability set or even the domain. It is differing by service and domain. But I would just get back to Senator Warren's comments that mass and attrition are back as force-planning principles. I think we need to consider that when we are looking at our capability gaps against China and Russia, in particular.

Then we are on the wrong side of the cost exchange ratio. This is something Dr. Mahnken has written about with the NDS in 2008. It is something we have all thought about up here on the committee.

But those were two fundamental principles I would return to the defense strategy to address your question.

Senator INHOFE. Okay. Any other comments on that?

Dr. KARLIN. To the extent possible, we should double down on areas of strength like undersea. That is particularly valuable vis-a-vis China and Russia. Our ability to conduct long-range strike, our short-range air defenses, balancing our Air Force more broadly, being cognizant that we are not going to have all the F-35s one might want, instead being able to mature fourth-generation aircraft, missile defense also being critical.

But in particular, we do need to recognize that the conflicts of the future are going to be uglier than what we faced in the last 15 or so years. While we have thought about Iraq and Afghanistan as big conflicts in some way, they are really not, when we begin to envision what a potential war with Russia or China might look like.

Senator INHOFE. I cannot think of anything uglier than an ICBM coming.

My time has expired. But I want to compliment you, General, on a statement that you made. It is one sentence. I will read it. "This is the situation we find ourselves in today with the smallest military we have had in 75 years equipped with rapidly aging weapons and employed at a very high operational pace, endeavoring to satisfy our global defense objectives." Good statement.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Blumenthal?

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you all for being here today. Let me begin by joining a number of my colleagues in expressing regret, I guess is the understatement of the morning, about the tax

plan that the United States Senate may approve in the next 24 hours, which would increase our debt astronomically and probably undercut most of the very insightful suggestions that you have made.

I am reminded that a former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, I think it was Mike Mullen, said that the greatest threat to our national security is our national debt. The greatest threat to our national security is our national debt.

It has implications across the spectrum of American life that undermine our will to defend ourselves and to invest the kinds of resources that are necessary to build a national defense that is worthy of the greatest Nation in the history of the world.

The national debt is not about just numbers, it is about faces, General, the young men and women who we recruit to serve and sacrifice for our Nation. You know better than any of us who are in the room today, except perhaps for the chairman and the ranking member who have served with such distinction in our armed services. So to the extent that you have a voice in this process, I would urge you to use it and hope that you will.

There has been very little mention of the attack by Russia on the United States of America.

Is there anyone on this panel who questions that Russia attacked the United States, in fact, attacked our elections and our democracy in 2016?

I take it by your silence that you agree. In fact, of course, the intelligence community is unanimous on that point.

I would wonder whether anyone on this panel believes that we have responded sufficiently to make Russia pay a price for that aggression, a real attack on our democracy. Have we made Russia pay a price for that attack?

Again, I would take it that you all agree that the answer is no.

In fact, this administration, in my view, has failed to oppose, condemn, or hold Russian President Vladimir Putin accountable for that attack, or the invasion of Ukraine, or intervention in Syria.

The lack of an articulated, clear strategy on Russia belies the commitment of blood and treasure, as the United States is doing now in so many parts of the world without sufficient resources. In fact, General Waldhauser of AFRICOM came to testify before us in March of this year and said, "Only approximately 20 to 30 percent of Africa Command's ISR requirements are met," referring to intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance.

We are failing to support right now, not 10 years from now, but right now, the troops that we have deployed around the world.

In my view, the investment of cyber—Senator Shaheen referred to it in terms of the command. But is there anybody on this panel who feels that we are investing sufficiently in cyber right now?

Again, I take it that your silence indicates you agree, we are insufficiently investing in cyber where \$1 trillion is unnecessary to have an impact. Far less dollars are necessary to defend against the kinds of threats that we see in cyber, including most prominently from Russia, China, and North Korea, but all kinds of asymmetric threats as well.

So my time is expiring. But we have focused on the dollars necessary, the dollars versus the strategy. I would suggest that a much more focused and deliberate strategy is necessary in many parts of the world and in many parts of our defense.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MCCAIN. I thank the Senator. Could I just point out that when you are having your enlisted people working 100-hour workweeks, you cannot dismiss that, and I am sure that you are clearly aware of that.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. I am not only aware, Mr. Chairman, but I very much support the comments that you made about it.

Chairman MCCAIN. I thank you.

Anything else? Anyone would like to correct the record?

Well, this has been very helpful, this hearing. I thank all the witnesses.

This hearing is adjourned.

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

