

**HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON U.S.  
SOUTHERN COMMAND AND U.S. NORTHERN  
COMMAND IN REVIEW OF THE DEFENSE  
AUTHORIZATION REQUEST FOR FISCAL  
YEAR 2009 AND THE FUTURE YEARS DE-  
FENSE PROGRAM**

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**Thursday, March 6, 2008**

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:36 a.m. in Room SH-216, Hart Senate Office Building, Hon. Carl Levin, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Committee Members Present: Levin [presiding], Lieberman, Reed, Bill Nelson, McCaskill, Warner, Inhofe, Collins, Thune, and Martinez.

Committee staff members present: Richard D. DeBobes, Staff Director, and Leah C. Brewer, Nominations and Hearings Clerk.

Majority staff members present: Evelyn N. Farkas, Professional Staff Member, Richard W. Fieldhouse, Professional Staff Member, Gerald J. Leeling, Counsel, Thomas K. McConnell, Professional Staff Member, Michael J. McCord, Professional Staff Member, William G.P. Monahan, Counsel, and William K. Sutey, Professional Staff Member.

Minority staff members present: Michael V. Kostiw, Republican Staff Director, William M. Caniano, Professional Staff Member, Robert M. Soofer, Professional Staff Member, Richard F. Walsh, Minority Counsel, and Dana W. White, Professional Staff Member.

Staff assistants present: Fletcher L. Cork, Jessica L. Kingston, and Benjamin L. Rubin.

Committee members' assistants present: Frederick M. Downey, assistant to Senator Lieberman, Elizabeth King, assistant to Senator Reed, Richard Kessler, assistant to Senator Akaka, Christopher Caple, assistant to Senator Bill Nelson, M. Bradford Foley, assistant to Senator Pryor, Gordon I. Peterson, assistant to Senator Webb, Sandra Luff, assistant to Senator Warner, Anthony J. Lazarski, assistant to Senator Inhofe, Mark J. Winter, assistant to Senator Collins, Jason Van Beek, assistant to Senator Thune, and John L. Goetchius, assistant to Senator Martinez.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. CARL LEVIN, U.S. SENATOR  
FROM MICHIGAN**

Chairman LEVIN. Good morning, everybody. The committee meets this morning to hear from two regional combatant commanders with responsibility for the Western Hemisphere, General Gene Renuart, Commander, U.S. Northern Command and of the North American Aerospace Command; and Admiral James Stavridis, Commander of the U.S. Southern Command. We thank you both for your service, your personal service, your family support. We're particularly grateful, as we hopefully never miss saying, to the men and women who you lead for their commitment and service to this Nation, and also to their families, and we would appreciate your extending our gratitude, this committee's gratitude, to those men and women.

The Northern Command, or NORTHCOM, was established in October of 2002 after the terrorist attacks of 9-11, so it's a relatively new command. It has the missions of homeland defense and providing military support to civil authorities for response to domestic disasters, whether natural or manmade, including a terrorist attack using conventional weapons or weapons of mass destruction.

North American Aerospace Defense Command, or NORAD, is a binational command with Canada, responsible for protecting the approaches to the North American continent. General Renuart assumed command of Northern Command and NORAD 1 year ago. We look forward to hearing his report on what has happened during the last year and what is planned for the future with this dual command.

Last month we received the report of the Commission on National Guard and the Reserves. It contained a number of findings recommendations relative to Northern Command and the role of the National Guard in domestic disaster response. Some of these findings and recommendations were controversial and some were critical of NORTHCOM. For example, the commission recommended that the governors of our States should be able to direct active duty military forces in their States to respond to emergencies. The commission also recommended that NORTHCOM be required to have a majority of its headquarters personnel with National Guard or Reserve qualifications. The commission also suggested that NORTHCOM's planning and capabilities to support a Federal response to a domestic attack involving WMD are inadequate. We look forward to hearing General Renuart's views on the findings and recommendations of the commission's report.

The committee also welcomes Admiral Stavridis, Commander of the U.S. Southern Command, who's responsible for an area including Latin America south of Mexico, the countries and territories of the Caribbean, as well as the surrounding waters, ocean, and sea. The greatest challenges here include state stability and illicit drug trafficking.

We're now entering the eighth year of U.S. assistance to Colombia in its fight against narcoterrorists. The Colombian government has made great strides, regaining territory and establishing a government presence in local municipalities. Over 30,000 paramilitaries have been demobilized and the FARC numbers about 9,000 fighters, down from an estimated 12 to 18,000.

The FARC, which is the captor of about 750 hostages, including three Americans, remains a threat to Colombian society and to human rights. President Uribe has again instituted a one-time wealth tax to raise money for the fight against the narcoterrorists and has committed his government to local development and to improving Colombia's human rights record.

Our government is working with Bogota to assist them in economic development, judicial reform, and human rights, and we will continue to push for implementation of those aspects of Colombia's plan.

The illicit drug problem that Colombia is fighting is one that threatens the entire hemisphere. Colombia's neighbor Venezuela, according to the State Department's 2008 international narcotics control strategy report that was released last year—last week, excuse me—according to that report “is a major drug transit country, with rampant high-level corruption and a weak judicial system.”

Recent increases in the price of cocaine in the United States have apparently been the result of the Mexican government's crackdown on drug cartels, not, for example, a result of the millions of dollars that we have poured into eradication into Colombia. In light of this, the committee will want to hear what we can do to forge a counterdrug strategy for the Western Hemisphere that applies U.S. assistance most effectively.

We also hope to hear the Southern Command's perspective regarding the leadership change in Cuba and UN peacekeeping operations in Haiti. With the direct responsibility of the command, Admiral Stavridis, we would also like to have your assessment of the ongoing detention and interrogation operations at Guantanamo Bay.

Senator Warner?

**STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN WARNER, U.S. SENATOR FROM VIRGINIA**

Senator WARNER. Mr. Chairman, I take note that we have a vote at 10:30. Therefore I'll ask—10:50—I'll ask to have my statement placed in the record so that the committee can receive the testimony. [The prepared statement of Senator Warner follows:] [COMMITTEE INSERT]

Chairman LEVIN. We appreciate that.

Senator WARNER. I'd like to make just one—General Renuart, in our discussions yesterday I raised the issue of the Commission on National Guard and Reserve, headed by Major General Arnold Punaro. I said you'd be given an opportunity this morning to reply to some of their observations. That is a committee that this committee established, a commission, and I think on the whole they did some very constructive work. This happens to be one of the more controversial elements and we welcome to hear your testimony.

Admiral, I'm interested in how you have stressed the need to include economic, political, and social developments as part of your overall approach, just not heavy—well, heavy emphasis on, the needed emphasis on the military, but you recognize that in your AOR that is a very heavy component of what you achieve.

Your thoughts on Plan Colombia—that was a bipartisan achievement of this committee some several years ago, that seems to have worked.

Mr. Chairman, I felt your statement was very comprehensive, so I'll just put mine in. But I also join you in expressing our appreciation to our witnesses today and their families and the men and women under their command for doing such an outstanding job. Thank you.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Warner.  
General Renuart?

**STATEMENT OF GENERAL VICTOR E. RENUART, JR., U.S. AIR FORCE, COMMANDER, NORTH AMERICAN AEROSPACE DEFENSE COMMAND AND U.S. NORTHERN COMMAND**

General Renuart: Good morning. Thank you. Chairman Levin, Senator Warner, members of the committee: It is really a privilege to be here this morning representing the men and women of United States Northern Command and North American Aerospace Defense Command and truly, most especially, to sit here with my very close friend Jim Stavridis. Not only is our personal relationship strong, but our professional relationships between the two commands grows stronger every day, and I think we do have the ability to answer some of the questions that you have, both of you have mentioned with respect to drug trafficking and mutual interest areas in the Caribbean.

I also want to take a moment to introduce and make note of two members of my team that are critical to our success every day. Major General Steve Villacorta is my advisor from the Army National Guard. He serves in a key position within my staff. We're also pleased to have with us a member of the National Guard Bureau team, Brigadier General Fick, who is here again to demonstrate the partnership that we have. Finally, to represent the young men and women who wear the cloth of our Nation every day in harm's way, Command Sergeant Major Dan Wood. I appreciate them being here to witness the proceedings.

Chairman LEVIN. We welcome them and thank them.

General Renuart: Sir, you talked about the relationship of these two commands in the hemisphere, and we have worked very hard over the last couple years with Southern Command, with Admiral Stavridis's joint inter-agency task force, to begin to close the seams that may be there as we move from one area combatant commander to another. I'm pleased to say that that collaboration is continuing to strengthen. We're finding new ways to collaborate, and I know Jim and I are happy to talk about those in the course of the day.

As Commander, U.S. NORTHCOM, I'm assigned two distinct and critical missions: to defend our homeland from attack, whether it is an attack of a conventional nature or one of unconventional nature, and then to support the Nation with unique DOD capabilities during time of crisis, the natural or manmade disaster.

We really can't prioritize one or the other of those because they move across the spectrum almost simultaneously. So we put a great deal of effort each day to both our homeland defense and to our support civil authorities mission. As we move into the hurri-

cane season, for example, that mission of civil support becomes very significant in terms of the weight of effort, but those mission sets can move back and forth.

Our missions we believe are especially meaningful because nothing is really more important than keeping our citizens, our families, all safe. This requires a culture of anticipation. We understand all too well that failure is not an option. In fact, we rewrote our mission statement soon after I arrived and added the key word “anticipate” to emphasize this new standard of preparedness. Over the past year we have substantially increased our focus on planning, training, exercising, and readiness.

We updated our homeland defense and civil support plans. We ensured our plans are consistent with the National response framework and DHS support plans for those 15 national planning scenarios. All of this is done in close partnership with the Department of Homeland Security’s Incident Management Planning Team. In fact, we carry the lead DOD role for concept planning across the Department.

We have successfully completed the Maritime Domain Awareness Concept of Operation and the investment, the inter-agency investment strategy to go along with that. These developments improve situational awareness and provide a way ahead to rapidly assess and respond to maritime threats. We have made historic progress in both military and civil response collaboration with our friends in Canada. On our southern border, the United States and Mexico work more closely every day to confront the threat of narcotics trafficking and we are hopeful Congress will continue its support of the Marita initiative as it provides a real opportunity for meaningful progress in this area.

We train with over 50 Federal, State, and local partners at all operational levels. As an example, we exercised our chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and high-yield explosives consequence management response force during Exercise Ardent Sentry and Northern Edge not quite a year ago and exercised a portion of that again this past fall in the State of Oregon.

We have assisted the National Inter-Agency Firefighting Center in battling wildfires in the Northwest and the Southwest, prepared for the worst when Hurricane Dean threatened Puerto Rico and Texas, and we provided a broad range of DOD capabilities to a lot of events around the country, such as the I-35 bridge collapse, the Utah mine tragedy, and Midwest ice storms.

Supporting DHS and the government of Canada during special national security events has also been one of our principal tasks over the last year. We provide military support to Federal law enforcement partners along the borders as they continue to counter transnational threats.

At the same time, we provide civil assistance and continually watch intelligence indicators, early warning information, and the operational picture. Specifically, we monitor, assess, and evaluate 12 to 20 potentially dangerous events affecting the homeland every day, every day. This includes such things as vessels of interest, suspicious aircraft activity, missile launches around the world, and a myriad of manmade and natural disasters.

As an example, we worked closely hand in hand with the State of Florida during the recent power losses to ensure that if there was a requirement that could be met by DOD we were ready.

Every day we see the benefits of this collaboration in so many ways. Our officers sit side by side with the FBI in the Joint Terrorism Task Force and the National Counterterrorism Center, all to ensure that we have the same threat picture. This allows us to routinely collaborate and assess information. We've built a high degree of confidence with our partners and I'm happy with that.

We also rely on the information expertise provided by our Joint Inter-Agency Coordinating Group. This group synchronizes and integrates the activities of over 40 Federal and regional support agencies, including a private sector cell which allows us to tap into the private sector for areas of homeland response.

We recognize there's plenty to do. There's still more improvements that can be made. But we spend a great deal of our effort trying to anticipate the threats to our security, to improve the homeland defense and our global support plans, and strengthen the relations with our mission partners both at home and abroad.

Mr. Chairman, before I close I'd like to briefly comment on the final report of the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves. It is clear that a great deal of effort went into the report. In conjunction with the Department of Defense, we are continuing our review to provide Congress a thorough assessment of each of the recommendations on that report.

I agree with the commission that we need to increase support to our Nation's active and Reserve Forces, to build and enhance the Nation's capability to provide chemical, radiological, biological, nuclear incident consequence management capabilities. I am leading the DOD charge to do just that and have received strong support from both the Chairman and the Secretary.

My integrated priority list to the Secretary of Defense supports recapitalizing and equipping our National Guard to support domestic missions. I firmly believe that our Nation needs a strong and well-equipped guard and Reserve Force. That said, some of the findings in the final report I believe are incomplete and can be misleading. I disagree with the commission's assessment of a so-called "appalling gap" in our capabilities to respond to a WMD attack. Let me assure you there are plans in place and there are forces available and a range of capabilities across the government to respond to these events, and we are ready to respond today.

The commission also suggests that the governors should have complete command and control of Title 10 forces in certain circumstances within their State. I disagree. I believe current command provisions all the governors, in fact expect that the governors, will have the authority they need to direct all efforts within their States. Upon taking command, I made relationship-building with each of these governors a high priority. I'm pleased to say that I've visited now over 30 States and in those visits I've met now with 19 governors and lieutenant governors, every State adjutant general, and most of their emergency management directors.

My message is clear and consistent: NORTHCOM is here to support you. These governors and lieutenant governors with whom I have spoken are confident in their adjutant generals and their abil-

ity to lead State efforts in times of crisis, and they know they can count on NORTHCOM for the support when it is requested.

I believe it's more important to ask the governors, are they receiving the support they need, than to have a struggle over the lines of command and control. They are the supported elements in their State and our role is to make sure that they have all they need.

Finally, let me make—set the record straight on the commission's comments regarding the need for State-level experience within NORTHCOM. Today 46 percent of my staff has guard and Reserve experience and, as you see General Villacorta here, 6 of my 13 general and flag officers, my key advisors, are guardsmen and reservists. I rely on them daily and they are integral members of my team. We're also doubling the number of full-time positions within our headquarters. I believe these statistics stand on their own two feet and provide the right kind of experience in our command.

In closing, our mission is to protect our fellow citizens and the freedoms that uphold our way of life. We are proud to be part of a combined Federal, State, and local team. Coordination with international, Federal, State partners, governors, and the National Guard is paramount. General Steve Blum, the Chief of the National Guard Bureau, said just recently: "The coordination and cooperation between our two agencies has never been better," and I do agree.

By anticipating threats, exercising our capabilities, and increasing information-sharing with our partners, we strengthen our ability to protect each of you, your families, our families, and our homeland.

Chairman, thank you very much for the opportunity to be here and I look forward to your questions. [The prepared statement of General Renuart follows:]

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, General.  
Admiral Stavridis?

**STATEMENT OF ADMIRAL JAMES G. STAVRIDIS, U.S. NAVY,  
COMMANDER, U.S. SOUTHERN COMMAND**

Admiral Stavridis: Good morning, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, Senators of this truly bipartisan committee. I thank you so much for the opportunity to appear today. I thank you also for the great support this committee has given to the men and women not only of Southern Command, but of the entire armed forces.

I'd echo what Gene said, that he and I are close friends and I'm very proud to sit next to him. It's not just a personal relationship. There's a deep professional relationship between NORTHCOM and SOUTHCOM that has to exist to address the security issues that we face together in this region.

I know we want to get right to questions, so I'll be very brief. I would like to have my statement entered in the record, Mr. Chairman, if I could.

I would make the comment, sir, that as I go about my business at Southern Command people often say to me: You know, Admiral, what you do is so important; you know, that's America's back yard. I think that's the wrong expression. This is America's home that

we share together in the Americas. So our mission at Southern Command is to approach the security challenges in this home we share together in a way that brings to bear international cooperation, inter-agency partnership, and partnerships within the military, like working with our brothers and sisters north of us in Northern Command.

It's an area of the world with extraordinary promise, but it is burdened by poverty and, Mr. Chairman, as you said, it is burdened by narcotics, and it is burdened by instability. It's our home and I think we need to address the challenges in it seriously, and we should move forward in a variety of programs that do so.

I put two photos up here today. I just want to mention what they are. On the right—Mr. Chairman, you spoke about the drug threat. On the right, this is a self-propelled semi-submersible submarine. It was captured off the coast of Guatemala between Colombia and Mexico. It was moving more than five tons of cocaine to the United States. It was captured in August of 2007.

It is indicative of the magnitude of the threat of narcotics flowing north and also indicative of the challenges of facing up to this threat. [The prepared statement of Admiral Stavridis follows:]

Senator Inhofe: Mr. Chairman, could he explain the position of this? I don't understand what we're looking at here.

Admiral Stavridis: Sir, it's a semi-submersible submarine. It floats just below the surface of the ocean, and it was caught carrying five tons of cocaine from Colombia bound for Mexico and transshipment to the United States.

It's again indicative of the drug threat. Mr. Chairman, the drug threat is a big national threat. There's a demand side in the United States, there's a supply side that you alluded to in Colombia and other parts of the Andean Ridge, and there's an interdiction challenge. Our part of the mission at NORTHCOM and SOUTHCOM is the interdiction portion of it. I put this graphic up to show that this is a significant threat and we are addressing it hard every day.

Second, on my left is a photograph of something very good. It's the Hospital Ship COMFORT. The Department of Defense with inter-agency partnership and with international partners deployed this ship to the Caribbean and South America last summer. We did 400,000 patient encounters, 100,000 individual patient treatments, 25,000 pairs of eyeglasses. I could go on and on. It was a tremendous demonstration of positive U.S. engagement in the region.

So I put those two pictures up to simply make the point that there are challenges in this region, many of them stem from narcotics, instability, gangs, corruption, and drugs, but there are also solution sets that we need to think about applying, as we did last summer, and I hope we'll talk about some of those.

In closing in my oral statement, sir, again thank you for taking the time. I look forward to your questions about current events in the region, which are certainly bubbling. Again, I want to close by thanking the committee for all the support over the years. Thank you, sir.

Chairman LEVIN. Admiral, thank you very much.  
Let's have a 6-minute round for our first round.

Admiral, in June of 2006 the President declared that he “would like to close Guantanamo.” Have there been any directions to you relative to that policy?

Admiral Stavridis: No, sir. Since that time I believe the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs have both spoken to the subject. They have also indicated a desire to close Guantanamo Bay. At this moment I’m unaware of any direction to me to do so.

I will make the point that since the high point of 800 detainees we’re down to about 270. I know the administration in cooperation with other international partners is seeking to reduce that number.

Chairman LEVIN. How many of the 270 detainees have had status determination hearings?

Admiral Stavridis: Sir, I’ll take that one for the record, because I don’t at SOUTHCOM—I’m not involved in any of the judicial side of this. That is a totally separate part of the command. Our mission at Guantanamo is the humane transport and treatment of the detainees, and I’m very satisfied we’re living up to our part of it at SOUTHCOM. [The information referred to follows:] [COMMITTEE INSERT]

Chairman LEVIN. Well, give us that number for the record.

Admiral Stavridis: Yes, sir, I will.

Chairman LEVIN. Relative to Cuba, what changes, if any, do you expect in Cuba’s approach to security in the hemisphere and to the U.S. under Raul Castro?

Admiral Stavridis: Sir, unfortunately I do not expect significant change under Raul Castro. As you know, sir, he was elected on a Sunday and, as I’ve said to people, Cuba on Monday looked a lot like Cuba on Friday. The change was the first name of the president, from Fidel to Raul.

Raul quickly consolidated his power by bringing into his immediate organizations his senior vice presidents, a group of men who are in their 70s by and large and also very much reflect the Castro view of how power ought to be consolidated. This is a national assembly with 614 seats and 614 candidates ran for office. It’s not a vibrant democracy, to say the least.

So as I look at the future of Cuba under Raul, sir, I do not see significant change in the offing.

Chairman LEVIN. Do we have any military contacts with the Cuban military?

Admiral Stavridis: Sir, there is one set of routine contact that occurs between the commander of the Guantanamo Naval Station and a senior Cuban colonel, and those are the so-called Fenceline Talks. They happen about once a month and they are to discuss routine issues of the management of the air space and the water space over Guantanamo Bay. Beyond that, I’m not aware of any military to military contacts.

Chairman LEVIN. Are they professional?

Admiral Stavridis: Yes, sir, they are, very professional, very courteous. There is absolutely no problems between those two.

Chairman LEVIN. Do you welcome increased military to military contacts with the Cubans?

Admiral Stavridis: Sir, that's clearly a national policy decision that would have to be taken by the administration in concert with the Congress. I don't think that's mine to address.

Chairman LEVIN. General, you talked about coordination with governors and with the TAGs, the State TAGs. You have indicated that coordination and cooperation is very close. You've given us your statistics in terms of the number of reservists and guardsmen that are on your staff. So I think I'll ask you about some different aspects of your work, even though that is a critically important subject.

Your prepared statement mentions a U.S.-Canada surveillance gap and a strategy to fill that gap. I gather this is the number one unfunded priority. Could you describe that program briefly and why is it your highest priority, your highest unfunded priority?

General Renuart: Mr. Chairman, thank you for that question. Today the surveillance network that we use—and it's important to note that this is both a NORAD and a NORTHCOM-related program—those surveillance tools that we use, the network that is created is aging rapidly. Congress and the Department have funded a service life extension program, and again these are predominantly for older style radars that allow us to maintain visibility on aircraft working in our National air space system of both countries.

I also am tasked to provide maritime warning for both countries and as the NORTHCOM commander response to maritime threats for the United States. We have a gap in the ability to maintain situational awareness on vessels in the maritime domain. So this initiative allows us first to look at advanced technologies that can replace the fixed radar sites that we use around the country today with a combination of other sensors, both active like a radar and passive, that might be available.

So it is a program, a project, that will allow us to look at the advanced technologies available and be prepared for the time in the vicinity of 2015 to 2020 where these radar systems truly will be at the end of their capable life cycle, and to have an integrated set of sensors available to us that can continue to carry that load.

As an example, the Federal Aviation Agency is moving towards a more compliant system based on global positioning systems and the like. The challenge for us in our homeland mission, of course, is that threat-based capabilities aren't necessarily compliant. So we need a means of identifying those.

We are working closely with the government of Canada and with their defense department on technologies. We've looked at places like Australia who have done some great work in over-the-horizon radar and we're trying to find the best sweet spot, if you will, for a smart investment strategy, but capable sensors for the future.

Chairman LEVIN. Senator Warner?

Senator WARNER. General, I'd like to go back to the question of the commission's report, which was critical of our current national state of preparedness or lack of preparedness for natural and man-made disasters. That was a very substantive criticism directed, not to you personally, but to your command and the work of your predecessor. Secretary McHale came up and talked to the Congress.

I want to make certain that the record that is before the Congress, before this committee and perhaps other committees, really

has a reply from your command which addresses each one of the points that they raise, because should they have the misfortune of an incident in this country people will turn to determine what was the problem and, if there is a problem which Congress, as opposed to the Executive Branch, has some responsibility, I and others on this committee would like to know what it is that you think should be done. Is it a shortage of appropriations, is it a shortage of authority? Or how would you summarize—and I'll ask you to put the rest of it into the record, we're so short on time this morning—but summarize.

Say, for example, is it your professional judgment we're prepared today, the United States and our several States, to react to a weapon of mass destruction? I suppose there's a whole spectrum of them out there, but just take the logical one, a dirty bomb type situation or something of that nature.

General Renuart: Senator, thanks for that question. Actually, I do take the report somewhat personally because I sat with Secretary Gates before taking command and listened to the interim briefing from the committee. Frankly, I agreed with the—

Senator WARNER. From the commission or the committee?

General Renuart: From the commission, I'm sorry. From the commission.

And I agreed with the number of those early recommendations and took those on, with the Secretary's support, a personal mandate as we arrived at NORTHCOM. But having said that, I think that, first, your question is do I have the authority necessary from Congress to conduct our mission. The answer absolutely is yes. I believe that the gaps in our National capability that we saw post-Katrina, we have worked aggressively to ensure those gaps no longer exist. We have a relationship with the National Guard Bureau, with the States, all through the country now that has created through this idea of anticipation a sense of what bad could happen and then how are we prepared to respond to that.

With respect to a weapon of mass destruction, the capabilities are available to me today. I would ask the Secretary for them to be deployed and have them made available to me. In the future, I would like forces assigned to me that I have every day, that I can exercise and train and evaluate their readiness every day. We're on the road to creating that force. By early this fall, we will have a dedicated force fully trained, fully equipped, fully funded, and then exercised and certified that will allow us a near-immediate response to a catastrophic event, whereas today it may take a few days in order to have that force available.

Senator WARNER. Now, should an incident occur—let's talk about the command and control. With due respect to the sovereignty of our several States, and very proud, and hard-charging governors presumably in each, is there a clear chain of command to who takes charge, particularly when it's a multi-state?

General Renuart: Senator, I think each event begins as a local response, obviously. So that local first set of first responders, supported by State responders, clearly are the right people to be the first ones on the scene. And the governor in many cases—

Senator WARNER. And our units which we establish nationwide, the name has changed now. They're responders. They could be first responders.

General Renuart: They could be, but again it would depend on the size of the event and the circumstances surrounding it. If we use the concept of a catastrophic event as sort of the test case of this, I think you would still have various State governors beginning to respond. The President would clearly make a decision on the Federal nature of this response. But our forces would be in a position to be on the ground within hours and to begin to assist.

In terms of the command and control, if the President's decision is to allow governors to continue to manage for their State and have a regional Federal military capability that can go across lines, we have processes agreed to with our National Guard friends, that are understood by the States, that can allow—

Senator WARNER. I'm going to stop at that because I've got just a few minutes.

General Renuart: I'm sorry.

Senator WARNER. Please finish, put it in the record.

General Renuart: I will put that in the record. [The information referred to follows:] [COMMITTEE INSERT]

Senator WARNER. You give us the assurance it is in place, it is understood, and it will work?

General Renuart: Senator, I will give you that personal assurance and I will put that in the record.

Senator WARNER. Thank you.

Admiral, as you look back over your long, distinguished career, I dare say the chapter when you had a mere three stripes and was the commander of a destroyer was one of your greatest. As a matter of fact, you're working on a new book to cover that.

That is an interesting vehicle right there. The first question is, was it homemade in a garage or is there somebody making these, and how many of them are out there now? That's a destroyer's job together with air assets.

Admiral Stavridis: It is a combined job of surface ships, of aviation. It certainly is an intelligence function. It's an inter-agency.

Senator WARNER. It's everything.

Admiral Stavridis: It is everything.

Senator WARNER. How many of them are out there?

Admiral Stavridis: Sir, well, we don't know how many of them are out there. Let me give you a set of numbers, though. In 2006 we were tracking either via intelligence or capturing around three of these, in the year 2006. In the year 2007, it jumped to about 30. This year so far, in 3 months we've seen about 30. So we are seeing more and more of these.

We don't know how many there are that we are not seeing.

Senator WARNER. Have you captured one?

Admiral Stavridis: Yes, sir, we've captured several and we are exploiting them. Typically what happens—

Senator WARNER. Reverse engineered it?

Admiral Stavridis: Yes, we are doing all of that. And at the moment we have a prosecution that we have just completed. What normally happens with these guys is they scuttle them and they go to the bottom, and we're lucky to recover the drugs and get the peo-

ple off. We have captured several. We are reverse engineering them and we are very aggressively pursuing this.

Senator WARNER. Are they made in a shipyard somewhere?

Admiral Stavridis: No, sir, I don't think they're made in shipyards. They really are essentially garage-level technology. It's just a diesel engine, a fiberglass hull, a snorkel, a primitive periscope, seating in a crude sense for two to four personnel.

We are working very hard on the intelligence front to find out where they are coming from.

Senator WARNER. And they're able to traverse quite a long—

Admiral Stavridis: They can go hundreds of miles. They have diesel engines, which are very economical. And then the drug cartels will come out and do a refueling at sea, if you will, and then they'll continue on.

Senator WARNER. That's quite interesting. My time's up.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you so much, Senator Warner.

Senator Lieberman?

Senator LIEBERMAN. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

Thanks, General and Admiral. You're really two impressive people and we're lucky to have you working for us. I appreciate it very much.

I do want to ask on this first round, Admiral Stavridis, a few questions. But before I do that, General, following up on the earlier questions on the commission report, I just want to reflect from my point of view wearing my other hat as Chairman of the Homeland Security Committee that we are a lot better prepared to respond today than we were on 9-11-01 or during Katrina. I think you'd be the first to agree. We've got a ways to go.

But I just want to ask you very briefly. I've been impressed with the development of the Consequence Management Response Teams.

General Renuart: Yes, sir.

Senator LIEBERMAN. And I say this for my colleagues and for the public insofar as anybody's watching. Just spend a moment. Your goal is to have three almost brigade-sized units, 4,000, ready with the unique and targeted purpose of responding to homeland disasters, terrorist or natural.

General Renuart: Senator, thank you. That is exactly right. As you know, today there are elements of that in place in our States, 53 CSTs, 17 smaller units.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Right.

General Renuart: But these forces in particular are substantial in size and in capability. They're trained and equipped with the technical skills necessary to respond to an all-threat catastrophic event. And we do intend, the Secretary's intent is to grow these incrementally over the coming couple of years so that we would have three of those forces in place very soon. As I said, the first one will be full up this fall.

Senator LIEBERMAN. This fall. And of course, none of that existed on 9-11-01.

General Renuart: No, sir, that did not.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Or at the time of Katrina.

General Renuart: It did not.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Thank you.

Admiral, I wanted to ask you a couple of questions about the current crisis around Colombia, Venezuela, and Ecuador. It certainly seems to me, and I'm going to ask you what your position and understanding is and what our government's is, that the Colombian government had the right to take action against the terrorists who were striking at them from a camp in Ecuador. Is that your position and the position of our government?

Admiral Stavridis: Sir, I can't speak for the U.S. Government. My understanding, reading the President's remarks yesterday and listening to what I can at the policy level, is that that would be an accurate representation. But I would not speak for the U.S. Government position.

I can tell you that from a U.S. SOUTHCOM position we are monitoring events closely. We are talking to our interlocutors. I agree with what Secretary Gates said yesterday, that I personally see a very low likelihood, very low, of actual shooting conflict here. I think there is some level of troop movement. We're watching that on the Venezuelan-Colombian border, and a lesser movement on the Ecuadoran-Colombian border.

I'm encouraged over the last couple of days by the OAS, the Organization of American States, which has held meetings on this and is providing a forum. Certainly this is a diplomatic issue that needs to be worked between the three countries.

I'm also encouraged to see significant actors in the region, like President Lula of Brazil and President Bachelet of Chile, making offerings of the ability to hold talks and help the three countries through this.

The good news in this region is that there is not a strong history of prolonged warfare, and so again I think there's a low likelihood of conflict and I'm encouraged over the last day or so by what I've seen in that regard.

Senator LIEBERMAN. I appreciate that answer.

Have you been privy to any review of the information that's led I guess the Colombian government to conclude that the Chavez government in Venezuela has made substantial monetary contributions to the FARC, the narcoterrorists in Colombia?

Admiral Stavridis: Sir, we have not seen those actual computer hard drives at SOUTHCOM. I don't know whether anyone else in the U.S. Government has seen them yet. But we are certainly following very closely the open source reporting on that. I would comment that, even if a fraction of what is reported in the laptop revelations that are being reported is true, that, as Ambassador Tom Shannon said yesterday from the State Department, extremely worrisome, to say the least.

Senator LIEBERMAN. I agree.

Let me ask you, because in your position at Southern Command you have a really unique overview of what's happening, and I like what you said. It's not our back yard; it's our home. We're all part of the same region.

Admiral Stavridis: Yes, sir.

Senator LIEBERMAN. A critical part of your work it's always seemed to me has been the partner to partner, military to military relationships. I want you to talk a little bit, because we get information that there are other countries from around the world who

have been moving into Latin America to develop similar relations, weapons sales, even military to military, on the most threatening level Iran, less threatening but worth following, China. Give us your sense of what you see from other nations to the south of us, from elsewhere in the world; and two, how are you doing in your partner to partner relations, and do you need anything else from us to improve those relations?

Admiral Stavridis: Sir, thank you. That is a terrific question. First of all, the good news is the United States remains the partner of choice to I would say the majority of nations in the region, including almost everywhere in Central America, most of the Caribbean, and most of South America. We have close military to military relations with almost every state, with the exception of Cuba and Venezuela. Even in countries where we have differences at the government to government level like Nicaragua or Bolivia, Ecuador at times, we continue to have strong military to military relations. So that's a good thing.

In terms of the competition, if you will—and we are, in this part of the world we are in the competitive marketplace. We the United States need to be engaged, show that we should be the partner of choice. So the competition, if you will—I worry, just as you mention, I worry a lot about Iran.

Senator LIEBERMAN. What do you see?

Admiral Stavridis: What I'm seeing from the Iranian side is the president of Iran making frequent trips to the region. I see Iranian embassies opening all over the region. Iran is a state sponsor of terrorism. I am concerned as I see Iran move into the region.

On the other nation you mentioned, the Chinese, I think it's more of an economic interest that they have. There is some military to military contact, but I would not categorize it as large or rising at this point.

Finally, Russia is involved I think almost strictly on a commercial sales basis, most notably to Venezuela. The Russians have recently sold 25 advanced fighter aircraft, 50 attack helicopters, 100,000 AK-103 rifles with a license to produce 25,000 more, 3 diesel submarines. There are three more on contract. There's a large component of Russian arms sales to Venezuela that is of concern.

So that's a bit of an overview, but I would close by saying again that I think the United States remains the partner of choice and we're working hard at SOUTHCOM to make sure that stays that way.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Thanks, Admiral. I appreciate that.

My time is up. At some point I'd like to ask you, not now, whether you have enough in the way of authority and resources to meet that competition in the interest of American security. Thank you.

Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Lieberman.

Senator Inhofe?

Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

These are 6-minute rounds, so I'm going to ask for very brief answers to several questions here. First of all, General, I think you outlined very well the OPTEMPO, the problems that we're having right now with the Guard. I'm very proud of the 45th from Oklahoma. They're in Iraq now. I'll be with them in a week or 2. I was

there when they were in Afghanistan. They actually were participating in the training of the ANA to train themselves and they've done a great job. So the performance is wonderful.

The OPTEMPO is not. It's a serious problem. So I'd like to have you get on record here. My feeling is—well, Operation Jump Start. It was a good idea, it worked very well. It's going to sunset in I think '08. There is legislation now that would leave that open, that would provide and mandate 6,000 of our Guard on the borders, Southwest borders, until the borders were secure. So that means it's open-ended.

I need to ask you, number one with the OPTEMPO, do you agree that this is a good policy? I guess that would be the main question. Would you like to address that for us?

General Renuart: I would, Senator. Thank you. First, you're right, the Guard has been asked to do a great deal for the Nation and they have served selflessly every time we've asked. As you know, this Operation Jump Start was designed to be a gap-filling capability for a period of time, and the Secretary extended the numbers of that for an additional period and that will expire this July. The Secretary has been very clear that he believes that's the right time to draw that mission down.

I would tell you from both a NORTHCOM perspective and having watched the Guard that I think that makes sense. I think there are other—

Senator Inhofe: Correct me if I'm wrong, but in the event there's a reason that they have to have more down there they can still make application after this expires.

General Renuart: Absolutely.

Senator Inhofe: And you can then evaluate where it's needed the most.

General Renuart: Senator, absolutely, either in State active duty or in a Title 32 status that could be done.

Senator Inhofe: Now the question I always ask every group that comes in, and just for a very, very brief response. My three favorite programs are: number one, train and equip, that's 1206, 1207, 1208, which is due to expire next year and we were trying to extend it, but we just didn't have time to do it before, and there's not really opposition to it; second, the CERP program, to take it out of its position now and include—make it global; and then third, the IMET program.

Those three, I'd like to know from each one of you real quickly just how a priority do you put on these three programs?

General Renuart: Senator, from my CENTCOM days, my PACOM days and now, those are critical to our ability to generate coalition support in their own countries. I think it would be—I'm very much supportive of each of those and would look forward to their continuing.

Senator Inhofe: Admiral?

Admiral Stavridis: I completely associate myself with General Renuart in every regard. I would add just as a quick example 1206-type moneys are how we equip partner nations to go after things like these self-propelled semi- submersibles. We have used them to provide our partners with high-speed boats, command and control,

the ability to control the area around them. So all of those programs are excellent and critical in every way.

Senator Inhofe: Yesterday or the day before when we had the Special Ops people in here they were talking about 1208 being the same thing.

Admiral Stavridis: Yes, sir.

Senator Inhofe: Okay, that's good.

Now let me ask you, Admiral. I saw that—I think there are two of them. There's the COMFORT and the MERCY, is that right?

Admiral Stavridis: Yes, sir. They are sister ships.

Senator Inhofe: Did I see one in the west, the west side of Africa?

Admiral Stavridis: Yes, sir.

Senator Inhofe: I saw one there, but I'm not sure it was one of ours.

Admiral Stavridis: No, sir. The COMFORT is on the east coast and comes periodically into my area and it has been to Africa. On the west coast, the MERCY went after the tsunami, for example, and two years ago went through the Philippines. They are powerful, powerful statements.

Senator Inhofe: I'm very much impressed. I think that was the one I saw on the west coast. I think it was the MERCY.

Admiral Stavridis: Yes, sir.

Senator Inhofe: Now, probably the only area where you and I disagree is in the Law of the Sea Treaty. What I'd like to do, rather than just start any kind of a debate here, because I consider you an expert—I've opposed this since the Reagan Administration and I haven't seen a lot of changes in it. But I have four things I'd like for the record you to respond to specifically, four things.

One is, one of my objections is, the international seabed authority and the fact that it has regulatory powers over some 70 percent of the Earth. I'm concerned about the sovereignty issue.

Second would be, the way I read it—and we've had several hearings for this committee about 3 years ago and then also the other committee that I'm on, the Environment and Public Works Committee—that it has the power to level a global tax. I just would like to know, if you disagree with that, specifically what precludes that from happening.

Thirdly, there are only four circumstances under which they can be stopped on the high seas, which are listed as human trafficking, drug trafficking, piracy, and then unauthorized broadcasting. I'm not sure what that is. I'd like to see, have you comment on that.

Then lastly, they always argue that military actions are exempt, but it doesn't define military actions.

So if you would do that for the record so that I would be able to have that, I would appreciate it. [The information referred to follows:] [COMMITTEE INSERT]

Admiral Stavridis: Yes, sir.

Senator Inhofe: Now, General Renuart, one of the things, a presentation that I make quite often on the missile defense system, which I've been concerned with for many, many years, is the boost phase, midcourse phase, and terminal phase. Now, on the boost phase what I'd like to have you do, and either comment now in whatever time I have left or, if I run out of time, then do it for the record—it's my understanding we really don't—we're kind of naked

on the boost phase. We're working on these things, the Airborne Laser, the Kinetic Booster, but they aren't to a position to do us much good.

We've seen on the midcourse phase the performance of Aegis. We're very, very pleased with that, and also some 23 or 24 ground-based systems that are working as far as the Multiple Kill Vehicle, that's still in design.

Then thirdly, on the terminal defense segment, the High Altitude Area Defense. I think that's going to come up in '09 or '10. I'm not sure. Then of course, the PAC- 3, which is already very capable.

So any of those that you could comment on. Where do we need to do the most the quickest in these phases? [The information referred to follows:] [COMMITTEE INSERT]

General Renuart: Senator, I'll try to be very quick, but our principal role is in the ground-based midcourse interceptor mission for defense of our homeland. We've been involved in a series of both spiral development tests as well as—

Senator Inhofe: In case you have to write it for the record, I understand that for the homeland, but I'm talking about for the overall system, which goes beyond that. I know you're familiar with that.

General Renuart: Well, let me do this. Let me provide you a little bit more detail for the record if I might, in the interest of time. But I think there are some real capabilities that we need to continue to pursue, both in the boost and in the terminal phase.

Senator Inhofe: And for homeland, what would be the weakest link?

General Renuart: For homeland, I think maybe the least—the one of least applicability right now is the capability in the boost phase. We really don't have something there that is immediately available.

Senator Inhofe: When you answer this for the record, if you don't mind, have it go beyond just homeland, and also get as many dates. We're getting conflicting information sometimes, and then of course this requires legislation every year.

General Renuart: Absolutely.

Senator Inhofe: And we just need to know just where the greatest needs are in your opinion.

General Renuart: Senator, I'll be happy to do that.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Inhofe.

Senator Collins?

Senator Collins: Thank you.

General, welcome—

Chairman LEVIN. Senator Collins, would you forgive this interruption.

I didn't have a chance to ask Senator Warner if he agreed with this. Because there's at least a chance that we may be able to finish by 11:00, which would be about 10 minutes after the vote starts, could we ask our staffs to find out if any of the Senators that are not here now are expected to come back after that vote, so if we do vote and finish by 11:00 o'clock we'd be able to agree to adjourn, unless there are Senators that we don't know of who are going to come back after that vote expecting that we will still be in session.

Thank you, Senator Collins. Excuse the interruption.

Senator Collins: Sure. Thank you.

General, you testified this morning that you disagree with the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves' assessment of an appalling gap in our ability to respond to an attack with a weapon of mass destruction. And you and I had a good discussion about this in my office. I want to put aside what may be overblown rhetoric and look very directly at our capabilities.

If you read before that term of "appalling gap," the assertion of the commission is that we do not have sufficiently trained and ready forces available. And the commission says that they're not fully budgeted for, sourced, manned, trained, and equipped, which is a very specific indictment.

Clearly we've made tremendous progress since the attacks on our country and since Hurricane Katrina, as my friend and colleague Senator Lieberman points out. But aren't there in fact still gaps in our ability to respond effectively? You've talked about troops coming on line, but if there were an attack tomorrow would you be able to marshal sufficiently trained and equipped troops to respond quickly?

General Renuart: Senator, I think the best answer to that is yes, I would. Are they the best available? We clearly would have to take those forces from what is at home today. We certainly have those forces available who have the skill sets necessary. But as I mentioned to you, they have not trained together on a routine basis. So we would, if you will, create the integrated team on the scene.

Would it be as effective? It's not as effective as I would like, and that's the reason why we're pushing for this dedicated force that I mentioned to Senator Lieberman. But they would be capable within a matter of days to respond to the scene and provide credible capability to respond.

Senator Collins: Right now, however, the system is pretty ad hoc.

General Renuart: It is.

Senator Collins: You're bringing units from here and there. You've talked about the new team that will come on line, I think you said this fall will be the first one.

General Renuart: Yes, ma'am.

Senator Collins: But don't we need three such teams? Isn't that the plan?

General Renuart: Yes, ma'am.

Senator Collins: And when will we have three such teams in place?

General Renuart: Right now the plan is to in each subsequent year add a second team, again budgeted for, equipped, trained, and evaluated. So at the embarrassment of doing public math, I would say that would get us out to about fiscal year '11 with three full capable teams. So I think that's the plan that we currently have. If there's an ability to accelerate that, we'll continue to look at that.

But I'm comfortable that that gives me the ability to respond with the right forces and I think we're on the right track.

Senator Collins: I am skeptical about the commission's recommendation of giving governors operational control of Title 10 forces in the event of a catastrophe. At the same time, however, I know from the Homeland Security's intensive investigation into the

failed response to Hurricane Katrina that there were enormous coordination problems involving the National Guard units and the active duty troops. Indeed, Admiral Keating, your predecessor, testified very frankly that he was unaware that the levies had been breached until he read it in the paper or saw it on television. He did not have visibility into the whereabouts of National Guard units that were coming under the EMAC agreements from all over the country to assist. And there was an appalling—I use that word in this case because I think it's appropriate. There was an appalling lack of coordination.

I know you're concerned about that. I know you don't dispute that. What have you done to improve the coordination with our States, our emergency managers, the TAGs, our governors? Is this more of a problem of inadequate planning and exercising, rather than truly a problem of command?

General Renuart: Senator, thanks. What I'd like to do, twofold. I'd like to put a very detailed answer in the record if I might. [The information referred to follows:] [COMMITTEE INSERT]

Senator Collins: Yes.

General Renuart: Let me summarize just very quickly. I think your last statement actually is really the key. If you plan ahead, if you exercise routinely, and if you train together, then there is no gap in so-called command and control. We each know what each other brings to the fight. We each know what capabilities are needed and we then exercise and execute them when called for.

I would just use the example of our two national level exercises. I think Senator Lieberman mentioned the dirty bomb scenario. We trained with our Federal, State, and local responders on that this past October, three events across the country simultaneously. We planned and exercised against a nuclear detonation in Indianapolis last May. And those allowed us to see the synergies that can be created when you work together. That has become part of our culture every day, that plus the relationships, as I talked about earlier, that we are building with State and local responders, as well as our Federal partners, have put us in a significantly better position than we were during Katrina, and I'm comfortable that there will not be a dispute of command and control, but rather the understanding of how we support a State or a Federal agency in a large response.

Senator Collins: Thank you.

I know my time has expired. I'm going to submit for the record a question for you, Admiral, on Venezuela.

Admiral Stavridis: Thank you. [The information referred to follows:] [COMMITTEE INSERT]

Senator Collins: And I know we'll have that opportunity.

Thank you.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Collins.

Senator Martinez?

Senator Martinez: Mr. Chairman, thank you very much.

Gentlemen, thank you for being here with us. We appreciate your service.

Admiral, I want to go back to Venezuela. Actually, it's really the Colombian-Ecuadoran situation. I saw you say the three countries. The fact is from my understanding this was an action by the Co-

Colombians that apparently did violate territorial integrity of Ecuador, but Venezuela had nothing to do with it.

Admiral Stavridis: Not that I can see.

Senator Martinez: And in fact the only thing Venezuela may have to do with it is what was found on the computer files of this rebel leader Reyes, correct?

Admiral Stavridis: Yes, sir.

Senator Martinez: There's an apparent indication of maybe \$300 million transferred to the Colombian narcoterrorists from the Venezuelan government?

Admiral Stavridis: That has been reported in the open press. I have not seen that myself, nor do I know that's verified yet. But that is what has been reported repeatedly in the open press.

Senator Martinez: This fellow Reyes that was killed in action is reported to be the number two person in the FARC.

Admiral Stavridis: Yes, sir.

Senator Martinez: My understanding is that this was also an international criminal, on the FBI Most Wanted List and Interpol's Most Wanted List, with a long string of kidnappings and murders in addition to narco-trafficking to his credit, correct?

Admiral Stavridis: Yes, sir. And I would underline that he was the number two leader of the FARC, who are holding, as the chairman said, at least 750 hostages, including three U.S. citizens: Tom House, Mark Gonsalvez, and Keith Stansel.

Senator Martinez: And those hostages—by the way, also some Venezuelans are held as hostage.

Admiral Stavridis: That's correct also.

Senator Martinez: And to this date I've not heard the government of Venezuela express any concern about the Venezuelan hostages that are kept.

But the conditions of hostages kept by the FARC, would you describe what you know about that to be and how they're kept?

Admiral Stavridis: I will. Sir, we have we think good visibility on that because some hostages have escaped, some have been rescued, and some have been released in international negotiations. The conditions are, to use a word we've used several times this morning, the conditions are appalling. They really are appalling.

These individuals are kept either chained or in cages. They are not well fed. Their medical condition is reportedly very bad. We have first eye—first-hand reports on that from other released hostages. We are deeply concerned about, we SOUTHCOM are deeply concerned, about all the hostages, and we focus a great deal of our attention and effort on the search for our three U.S. hostages in cooperation with our Colombian partners.

Senator Martinez: Presidential candidate Betancourt of Colombia is one of those hostages—

Admiral Stavridis: Yes, sir.

Senator Martinez:—as well as over time several members of the Colombian parliament—

Admiral Stavridis: Yes, sir.

Senator Martinez: And the current serving foreign minister of Colombia is a former hostage.

Admiral Stavridis: He is an escaped hostage.

Senator Martinez: Escaped hostage. I talked to him and—

Admiral Stavridis: He's an extraordinary man.

Senator Martinez: He is. It's gripping to hear his tale.

There was some report of a dirty bomb interest. What do you know about that?

Admiral Stavridis: Well, again—

Senator Martinez: By the FARC.

Admiral Stavridis: Yes. I hasten to say this is strictly what is being reported in the open press, so I would hesitate to categorize it at all as a dirty bomb. What I have seen reported is that there was allegations of interest on the part of the FARC in obtaining uranium. There was no mention to my knowledge that I read in the press about a dirty bomb, but there was interest on the part of the FARC in obtaining uranium and that's as far as it has been reported in the press. Obviously, very worrisome and we are working hard from an international perspective to learn all we can about that.

Senator Martinez: Admiral, I know for some time I have suspected that the FARC were receiving aid and comfort and sanctuary by the country of Venezuela. This evidence now suggests that that may in fact be the case. Venezuela is increasing its armaments purchases beyond their national defense needs in my view and they do maintain a close level of cooperation with the Cuban dictatorship.

What can you tell us about the influence that Venezuela is creating for the region in terms of the stability of the region and the military needs of Venezuela and Cuba and their cooperation?

Admiral Stavridis: Well, I would start by observing that historically the United States and Venezuela have had very close relations, and it is unfortunate that at the moment we do not enjoy that at a government to government level. And at a military to military level, Senator, we have no relationship, unfortunately. We have tried to reach out to the Venezuelan military. We've invited them to conferences. We want to have some level of understanding and dialogue with them. But they have rejected that.

They have also—they the government of Venezuela has not been cooperative in the narcotics fight, and we are very concerned about transshipment of cocaine through Venezuela.

Finally, I would say from a political perspective it is clear that the current government of Venezuela espouses positions that are very contrary to those of the United States and they seek to influence others. They have a very close relationship in particular, as you mentioned, with Cuba and that is all of concern to us at Southern Command.

Senator Martinez: Would you speak for a minute about the COMFORT? I know you spoke about what it does, but I'd love for you to tell the committee about the journey of the COMFORT and the ports of call and some about the tour.

Admiral Stavridis: I will, very quickly. COMFORT, a large hospital ship. It's essentially a big hospital that floats. It's manned up by about a thousand people. We put a crew on it that was both military and loaded up with nongovernmental charitable organizations, volunteers. We had some international partners who came with us, notably the Canadians.

We sent it on a 4-month voyage through 12 different ports throughout South America and Central America and the Caribbean. It was extremely well received—400,000 patient encounters, 25,000 sets of eyeglasses, thousands of surgeries. A very visible, prominent and compassionate signal from our country to the region.

Thank you for that opportunity.

Senator Martinez: My time is up, but I want to close by saying to you that I have visited Guantanamo on more than one occasion. When I have I had the opportunity to see the care and treatment of the detainees there by our forces and, as having been a former Mayor of Orange County, Florida, I assure you that their conditions are far in excess of what Orange County provides common prisoners in the Orange County Jail. They're well cared for. They seem well fed, with sensitivity to their religious needs and all of that and more.

I would say that, as compared to the way that our three Americans are being kept by the FARC in the jungle or the way that many Cubans are kept in Cuban prisons by the mere expression of a political view different from that oppressive government, that we're doing pretty well by the detainees in Guantanamo.

Thank you very much.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Martinez.

Senator Reed?

Senator Reed: Thank you very much.

Admiral Stavridis, I think when General Craddock was here in April of '06 he indicated that we would be able to draw down some of our military forces in Colombia within at that time 18 months. We're bumping up against that proposed deadline. What's your comment on the forces in Colombia?

Admiral Stavridis: I'm optimistic, sir. Colombia has made enormous progress as a result of Plan Colombia, which came out of the Clinton Administration, was followed in the Bush Administration. Murders down 80 percent, kidnappings down 60 percent, terrorist incidents down 60 percent. Police presence throughout the country. It's a much safer country.

As the chairman indicated, the Colombians have just self-financed with a wealth tax \$3.5 billion. I fully expect over the next 24 months we should be able to move toward a reduction in our very small forces that are there. As you know, Senator, we have a cap of 600 U.S. military. We typically average well below that, in the 500 range. I'm very confident that Colombia can handle herself, as Secretary Gates said yesterday in reference to this Venezuela issue.

Senator Reed: Thank you, Admiral.

General, Mexico is within your responsibilities.

General Renuart: Yes, sir.

Senator Reed: And for many times my understanding was it was outside of anyone's responsibility, that it was sui generis. But now you have essentially operational responsibility. There is a proposal to significantly increase aid to the Mexican security forces. But of more imminent concern to me is the repeated reports in the press of open gun battles along the border of the United States, as Mexican security forces try to interdict drug operations.

Can you give me a sense of how you're supporting Mexico and your outlook as to what's happening on the border? That's a startling revelation when you read about these open gun battles.

General Renuart: Senator, I'd be happy to. Thank you for the question. I would say first that the Mexican government under President Calderon's leadership has really made a commitment to take on the counternarcotics—the mission of counternarcotics and the narcoterrorism efforts and events that occur.

In doing so, he has given a clear mandate to both of his senior military leaders that they would engage actively, and they have. We've seen, as was mentioned by the chairman, the price of narcotics in our country rise significantly, due in substantial part to the efforts of the Mexicans to interdict. As Admiral Stavridis mentioned, these boats are trying to get their products into Mexico to then move overland into the U.S.

We have been involved with our partners in the Federal agencies—DEA, ATF, ICE, and others—in a support role along the border to help identify and interdict cross-border transit. We've been substantial partners to our friends in CPB in terms of providing them logistical support, surveillance capabilities, and the like. And I think that has made good progress.

With respect to Mexico, we are strong supporters of the Marita initiative. That will begin to provide funding for the Mexican counternarcotics missions. As you may know, in Mexico a good deal of that is done by the military. Both of the senior leaders of their military forces are working hard on eliminating corruption within their own militaries and in the local police forces.

Having said all of that, the cartels are beginning to feel that pressure and are lashing out in more violent ways, and I think that as we begin to see more pressure from the Mexican military and their counternarcotics agencies you may see some more violence, but I think they're making good progress with good training to begin to—

Senator Reed: In general, how would you categorize your assistance to Mexican authorities? Is it training, logistical support, advice, or joint planning?

General Renuart: Well, I think joint planning in a collaboration, with information-sharing, and then feeding as much as we can to our Federal law enforcement partners who work with their components. I would also say that Admiral Stavridis and I are connected both with JIATF-South and my Joint Task Force North to have a transparent flow of information, and the Mexicans are eager participants with both of us.

Senator Reed: Thank you sir.

General Renuart, shifting gears a bit, do you—the National Guard and Reserve units which you include in your plans for emergencies within the United States, they would report to you on a regular basis their readiness?

General Renuart: Senator, I would tell you 2 years ago I couldn't say this. Today I'm comfortable that, in collaboration with the National Guard Bureau, we monitor the readiness of all of those forces that we would take advantage of in a response. That information is transparent to both the Guard Bureau and to us and I'm

comfortable that I can—I have a much better picture on their readiness today.

Senator Reed: I know these readiness numbers are classified, but what percent roughly are C-1, both in training, equipment, and personnel, of these Reserve and National Guard units?

General Renuart: Senator, I think you've had—General Blum has been out in public with some numbers. Let me get the specific numbers for the record if I might. [The information referred to follows:] [COMMITTEE INSERT]

Senator Reed: All right. But just in general, because we don't want to cross the line here, but in general my impression is that the majority, the vast majority of the units that are reporting to you, are not reporting C-1 in these categories.

General Renuart: I think that's a fair approximation, yes, sir.

Senator Reed: What's your estimate of how that affects your ability to carry out your plans, which is the bottom line about readiness numbers?

General Renuart: Senator, as you know, each of those units are reporting against a whole variety of plans. So from my perspective, I watch the things that are unique to the homeland, and I think our concerns are maybe less acute than the overall warfighting. I would see our numbers for our mission being up in the 75 or so percent equipment rate and so a higher C status. But again, that's reported against that broader question.

Senator Reed: Let me ask another question in this regard, final question. That is, one of the problems I think particularly with land forces is that they've been so preoccupied with missions in and out of Iraq that their whole training focus has been oriented on a very limited set of important skill, basically urban counter-guerrilla warfare. To what extent are your units because of this demand, if they're doing any training at all, it's so Iraq-specific and so Afghan-specific that your missions, your training missions, are neglected?

General Renuart: Senator, I'd say actually I am not in a problem—I do not have a problem in that regard, because each of those guard units has a State mission and those are very compatible with the roles that I have. So they maintain a good training level for their State missions.

Senator Reed: The only other question I ask, and that is to the effect that you have to call on an asset—and I'll ask this of the Admiral—regular forces as part of your contingency planning, the fact that those forces are committed almost entirely, the land forces that is, what effect does that have on your ability to carry out contingencies, Admiral?

Admiral Stavridis: Very minor in the context of Latin America and the Caribbean, for the obvious reasons. It's very unlikely we'd use a large standing army down there.

Senator Reed: General?

General Renuart: Sir, I'd just say that we do have the ability, if needed, to go into our home bases and get forces should we need them. So right now we're sensitive to that OPTEMPO, but it has not had a dramatic effect on our operations.

Senator Reed: Thank you very much, gentlemen.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Reed.

Now I'm going to call on Senator Nelson and I'm going to ask him to turn this over to the next in line, that the staff will identify for you. And we'll be back. We are not going to finish this. There's a vote that should start any minute.

Senator Nelson?

Senator Bill Nelson [presiding]: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Admiral, General, thank you both for your public service. Admiral, the CNO told us the other day that he is making a recommendation to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and I understand Admiral Mullen also is going to make that recommendation to the Secretary of the Navy, and then to go on up to the Secretary of Defense, about reactivating the Fourth Fleet, which would give you additional capability that you need to project your force in the Western Hemisphere. Do you want to share with the committee your thoughts on that?

Admiral Stavridis: I will, Senator. Thank you for asking that. As we just talked about, this part of the world is not a place where I could foresee using large standing land forces. On the other hand, naval and air forces are very helpful in the kinds of missions that we do, from drug interdiction to medical types of missions to disaster response to counterterrorism. So all of those kinds of mission sets require a strong naval presence.

So the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Gary Roughead, good friend, Admiral Mike Mullen, his predecessor as CNO, have both been very supportive of our request to activate the Fourth Fleet. It gives us a fleet presence that is focused on this region. It gives us real command and control capability. It is the right answer to also show the region that we want to engage, we want to continue the kinds of efforts and missions that we've done successfully and can do much better if we have a Fourth Fleet in place.

Senator Bill Nelson: Tell us what you think the timing on this is going to be?

Admiral Stavridis: Certainly as you said, sir, it's got to go up through the Department, but I think it's going to be soon. I'm very hopeful that it will be soon. The sooner the better from where I sit, because as the combatant commander who would use the capabilities of a Fourth Fleet, that would be very helpful, to have that input this year if at all possible.

Senator Bill Nelson: And it would be a headquarters for a Fourth Fleet and then you would reach out, pick and choose the assets that you needed to tailor it to the particular threat that you see?

Admiral Stavridis: Exactly, yes, sir. And it would give us the ability to do that in real time in ways that would allow a much better and more concerted response to problem sets that range from hurricanes to medical diplomacy to counternarcotics moving through the region to the nascent counterterrorism kinds of operations. Speed is very important in all those scenarios.

Senator Bill Nelson: And there is precedent for this kind of arrangement, both in the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean?

Admiral Stavridis: Yes, sir. In the Persian Gulf we have the Fifth Fleet. In the Mediterranean we have the Sixth Fleet. This would be the Fourth Fleet and would focus on the Caribbean and the waters of South America.

Senator Bill Nelson: General, the question at some point in the future if a European national missile defense system is set up—and that's still a question now; particularly that's a question in light of the CIA report that was made public that said that Iran has stopped their weapons program as of 2001, because the initial idea for a national missile defense system in Eastern Europe was to protect U.S. assets and also European assets from the threat of a nuclear-tipped Iranian rocket.

Now, assuming that we were to proceed with such a European-based two-stage instead of national missile defense three-stage rocket which we have, the question is is it controlled by the European commander or the Northern Commander? Do you want to weigh in on that?

General Renuart: Senator, I think we have to—we have to proceed really on a couple avenues in this regard. First, the mission to protect the homeland is clearly one that Northern Command has the responsibility for and should exercise that, and we do that every day.

As we see capabilities, for example with Iran, to reach out at the intercontinental range, I think we have to have some serious discussions between the two commanders and make recommendations to the Secretary on how to manage the resources for both potentially a European threat and a homeland threat.

If the threat is limited just to Europe with a certain capability, then I think clearly the commander of European Command has that role and responsibility. Most importantly in all of this is that we have a common integrated operating picture, so that any of the combatant commands can understand the threats to their area and respond if needed. I think STRATCOM is working very hard on that and we're a big supporter of their efforts.

Senator Bill Nelson: In our last defense authorization bill we were allowing the negotiations to proceed with regard to the acquisition of real estate in Eastern Europe. But all of those seem to have come to a halt because it has neither approved—it has not approved, been approved, by the host countries one where there would have to be the radar and the other that would actually be the launch site.

Do you have any update? Of course, I can ask this when the National missile defense team comes in and I will. But do you want to share any of that timetable with us?

General Renuart: Senator, I'm really not—I don't have that information, so it would be unfair of me to comment on that. I'm sure that General Obering can be more specific.

Senator Bill Nelson: Okay.

Senator McCaskill?

Senator Martinez: Thank you, Senator Nelson.

I know there has been other questioning about the commission's report on the National Guard and Reserve, but I don't think we have touched upon one of the recommendations that talks about how we have changed basically the use of our Guard and Reserves into an operational Reserve and Guard, as opposed to a strategic. That is, pardon the expression, a sea change as to what we have typically done in our military, and it presents many, many challenges.

We can boil it down to the pragmatic everyday challenge, and that is when I was the prosecutor in Kansas City I looked on a resume for that entry of being in the Reserve or the Guard because it said something to me about that person in terms of me wanting to hire them as an assistant prosecutor in my office. And I know that now if I was looking at that I think I would still, hopefully, feel the same way, but as an employer you have to go: Wait a minute, this is really hard to put someone in a key position in your operation knowing that they're going to be called on operationally consistently and, frankly, unfortunately, constantly in this particular contingency that we're engaged in.

So I thought the recommendation that the commission made about separating out a strategic and an operational Reserve certainly makes sense. I understand that it would be a big stressor right now in terms of what pressure it would put on our need for activation of those men and women with what we have committed—well, frankly, what we are kind of in for the long haul whether some of us think it needs to be quite as long as it's been or not.

I would like you all to speak to that, about should we, shouldn't we, be working towards a goal to have a—and frankly, the strategic Reserve is something we've always had in our back pocket for a national catastrophe, for the kinds of things that we traditionally always thought of particularly the Guard for, and I know that's been touched upon by other Senators in terms of drug control and all the other things that we had relied on them for.

If you would briefly—I know we're going to have to vote here and I have another quick question before we go. So if you would briefly address that, so I don't miss the vote.

General Renuart: Sure, Senator. Thanks. First I will say as just a bit of context, I spoke to a number of members of the Delaware National Guard just a few weeks ago and I asked the question, why are you here, why do you wear this uniform? And a young lady stood up, a young lieutenant, and she said: Sir, my father served in the Guard and my brother is an active duty person, and serving the Nation and wearing this uniform and making a difference is important to me.

I think we have to be careful not to lose that belief among our young men and women who are citizen soldiers. They are critical to our Nation. Having an operational Reserve makes good sense in many, many ways and I think the recommendation of the committee is sound in that regard. I think there is a need for some strategic Reserve. How you mix that I think is something we have to continue to study.

Finally, I'd say there is no doubt that the effect on employers as well as on those guardsmen and their families is profound, and I think we have to look at ways to find a balance between operational and strategic, and we have to continue to thank and remind those employers of the importance of those citizen soldiers we use every day.

Senator McCaskill: I couldn't agree with you more. And it seems to me that there would be—I know we're trying to keep people in. It seems to me that once you have been in an operational Reserve or in the operational guard it would be realistic, I think, to say to

those men and women: We would now like you to re-up and stay with us, but if you would like we would give you the choice of being in the strategic Reserve, which would obviously have a different connotation in terms of how likely it is that they would be called upon to spend extended periods of time, a year or more, every 2 or 3 years or, frankly, even more frequently than that, as we have witnessed.

It seems to me that would be good for maintaining some of that experience that we have, that we may be losing.

General Renuart: Senator, I think there are both practical and potentially even legal ramifications of the differentiation. That will take some study to come up with a good recommendation. But I think Secretary Gates and the Chairman both have said that we are moving towards a more predictable OPTEMPO for our guardsmen and reservists, with 1 year sort of, if you will, active or in the hopper to be used and then 5 years, 4 or 5 years as a target, not to be. And that allows employers a more predictable timetable.

I think we have to work all of those simultaneously.

Senator McCaskill: I agree, but I want to make sure that we don't make the mistake of thinking that because we can be more predictable now we might not be right back in this place, because, by the way, I've heard "deja vu all over again" several times since I've been on this committee. If we don't learn from what has happened in terms of the stressors on our active forces and this kind of contingency, then shame on us.

Let me just ask you this question. I'm confident, based on some answers previously given, you may not have the answer, and I've got to run now or I'm not going to make this vote. If you would get to me the answer: How many of the detainees at Guantanamo have been transferred to Bagram? There has been a huge increase in the number of people at Bagram and I want to make sure that we're not just rerouting folks, and if we are I would like to understand why. So the numbers at Bagram have gone from several hundred to over 600, while the numbers at Guantanamo have dropped, and I would like to know the percentage of people who have left Guantanamo and how many have gone back to their home countries, and then obviously a percentage if any of them have been transferred to Bagram.

Admiral Stavridis: I think that would be mine. I'm sort of the Guantanamo end of it. I know nothing about Bagram and neither does General Renuart. But, ma'am, I will take that question for the record and get you an answer to it from the Department. [The information referred to follows:] [COMMITTEE INSERT]

Senator McCaskill: Thank you so much. Thank you.

Now what should I do? We're going to recess, but they should stay. But you should stay. The voice of Carl Levin is being channeled to me, and the voice of Chairman Levin says you must stay, and I always do what Chairman Levin says.

General Renuart: Yes, ma'am.

Senator McCaskill: Thank you. [Recess.]

Chairman Levin [presiding]: General, I'd like to ask a couple questions of you about ballistic missile testing. You and I have spoken about this in my office.

General Renuart: Yes, sir.

Chairman LEVIN. Do you agree that we need robust and operationally realistic testing, in other words testing our missile defense system the way it was intended to be used in an operational mission, to demonstrate its operational capabilities?

General Renuart: Yes, sir, I do, absolutely.

Chairman LEVIN. Should such testing include salvo launches and multiple target test, as well as tests with countermeasures and decoys?

General Renuart: Senator, I do, and I believe those are built into the test program.

Chairman LEVIN. The independent director of operational test and evaluation, who is the Pentagon's independent director, reported in December that "The GMD flight testing to date is not sufficient to provide a high level of statistical confidence in its limited capabilities." Do you agree with that?

General Renuart: Senator, I would only say that the tests that I've been a part of have been very successful within the parameters of that particular test, and that I'm comfortable that the test development program over the coming days will expand both the types of tests and the degree of difficulty, if you will, of the test objectives.

Chairman LEVIN. Are you able—why are you not able to comment on whether you agree with the director of operational test and evaluation that overall the flight testing to date has not been sufficient to provide yet a high level of statistical confidence in its limited capabilities?

General Renuart: Senator—

Chairman LEVIN. Are you not in a position to give an opinion?

General Renuart: Well, I can only—I don't know what the previous test probabilities have been. I can tell you that the tests that I've been a part of since taking command have been absolutely successful. So I guess I would disagree to the degree of my observations. Those two tests have been very, very successful that I've observed, and so I have every reason to believe they would continue to be successful.

Chairman LEVIN. The key I think for all of this is whether or not there's sufficient, has been sufficient testing. Do you believe that we have to conduct more than one operationally realistic test per year to demonstrate consistent operational capability?

General Renuart: Sir, I think we do, yes.

Chairman LEVIN. On the—we placed some provisions in the National Guard Empowerment Act of 2007, which was part of the defense authorization bill, the 2008 fiscal defense authorization bill, which affect Northern Command, and I'd like to ask you whether or not the requirements which are now in law create problems for the Northern Command. First, establishing in the functions of the National Guard Bureau the duty to assist the Secretary of Defense in coordinating with the Northern Command on the use of National Guard personnel and resources. Does that create a problem?

General Renuart: No, Senator, it does not. In fact, we're working that daily.

Chairman LEVIN. We require a review of the civilian and military positions, job descriptions, and assignments within the Northern Command, with the goal of determining the feasibility of sig-

nificantly increasing the number of members of the Reserve components and civilians in the Northern Command. Does that review create a problem?

General Renuart: It does not, Senator, and that's ongoing as we speak.

Chairman LEVIN. Admiral, I think that you have addressed this question. If you have, I'll read your answer for the record. I believe that Senator Reed asked you this, but let me make sure. I believe we were told originally that the military support for Colombia at the current level was going to be lasting about 18 months. This was extended after that first 18-month period elapsed. Were you asked when you believe we can start to draw down U.S. forces?

Admiral Stavridis: Sir, I was.

Chairman LEVIN. And the short answer to that?

Admiral Stavridis: The short answer is let's say 24 months from now I think would be a good window. I would add to what I said earlier if I could, Mr. Chairman. I think signing a free trade agreement with Colombia would be helpful in that regard, strictly speaking from a national security perspective.

Chairman LEVIN. You may have also in your answers, I believe to Senator Martinez, but perhaps others, about the Venezuela and Ecuador and Colombia border, that border issue with Ecuador and Colombia—I understand the Colombian government has apologized to Ecuador; is that correct, that it expressed regrets?

Admiral Stavridis: Sir, I've read in the open press that they have, I believe, expressed regrets. But I would not attest to that.

Chairman LEVIN. All right. Is there a danger that Venezuela or Ecuador would take military action against Colombia, do you believe?

Admiral Stavridis: Sir, I personally find that highly unlikely.

Chairman LEVIN. Senator Warner?

Senator WARNER. I'd like to follow on the chairman's very important line of questioning about missile defense. He talked about the testing features and so forth. I want to go to a broader question to you, General. What is your assessment of the current readiness as of today of the GMD system now deployed in Alaska to intercept a long-range ballistic missile fired against the United States?

General Renuart: Senator, I believe on a limited basis—and by that I mean not multiple missiles all being fired, but on a single event like the one we saw with the Taepodong in North Korea—I monitor that readiness every day and I believe it to be capable of providing us that limited defense that we seek against that threat.

I do believe that we have to continue to expand our test program. We will have a series of tests this year that will add the full suite of sensors, the sea-based X-band, for example, the forward-based X-band radar, that will give us a much more end-to-end realistic test, and we will begin to look at both decoys and multiple vehicles as we get further into the test program. So I'm comfortable that we're continuing to expand.

In terms of the readiness of the systems, I monitor them every day. Today they are on a—they are in the test process. We work back and forth with the Missile Defense Agency to move missiles in and out of the test phase so that they can conduct the work they

need to do and yet I have the forces available to respond should that be necessary.

Senator WARNER. Well, that's quite reassuring then.

Now, the most recent activity where we had to as a matter of safety bring down that crippled system using naval capabilities, what interrelationship did that event in terms of the use of our existing capabilities, both sea-borne and the missile itself, what relationship does that—what lessons do we learn from that that relate to the question of our missile defense?

General Renuart: Senator, first, that was, as Secretary Gates has mentioned, was a one-time event to protect human life.

Senator WARNER. Yes, but it worked.

General Renuart: It did work.

Senator WARNER. And it was to the commendation of the services that it did work.

General Renuart: The Department of the Navy and their engineers were fantastic in essentially reengineering the capability of that particular system. It was—

Senator WARNER. And I'd throw in the contractors. You know, everybody kicks them around like a football.

General Renuart: Yes, sir, absolutely. They really did a magnificent job.

Senator WARNER. They really did.

General Renuart: It was coordinated among all of the players: Commander of PACOM, Admiral Keating, myself, certainly General Chilton at U.S. Strategic Command. General Chilton was the supported commander for that. But we maintained full visibility on the process. Importantly, NORTHCOM was in a position to provide consequence management if that satellite had fallen into territory where we could be of assistance.

Senator WARNER. But did it add some credibility to our missile defense system?

General Renuart: Senator, I think it would be unfair to characterize that, because it really was done for a very unique set of circumstances. And missile defense has a very different set of parameters there. So while we learned a lot about the process, I would be careful not to equate that event with developments in missile defense.

Senator WARNER. Well, maybe to the extent that the seaborne platform concept worked.

General Renuart: Well, Senator, as you know, every day our naval vessels carrying the SM-3 missile are used in a missile defense role, and they are exquisite in the performance of that role.

Senator WARNER. I just wanted to get a little naval plug in, you know, Admiral.

Admiral Stavridis: Sir, I want to associate myself with the word "exquisite" as it was just used there. [Laughter.]

Senator WARNER. The chairman asked questions about what Congress has done and what it hasn't done on the question of your department, General. The commission recommended—that's the famous Punaro Commission—that Congress codify the Department of Defense's responsibility to provide support for civil authorities.

However, it would appear that the Constitution of the United States, existing laws such as the Stafford Act and the Insurrection

Act, as well as DOD policy, the reference being DOD's strategy for homeland defense and support to civil authorities, all of this taken together would seem to us at this time—I'm not going to render judgment; maybe I should say it would seem to me; I can't speak for my colleagues—provide ample, sufficient authorities for DOD to provide support for civil authorities.

So what's your view about the need for review and a possible new Federal statute for the mission of supporting our State and civil authorities?

General Renuart: Senator, I believe that today I have the authorities I need to provide that kind of support to the American people, and they deserve it, and I think existing policies within DOD allow me to do that. I think that—and we're working, by the way, closely with our Department, with the Department of Homeland Security, to ensure that we look at the kinds of support that may be needed in the future and that we're positioned to help in that.

I include in my commander's integrated priority list and to my inputs to the programs, the budget development programs in the Department, those unique capabilities that are required by the Guard to help us respond. So it is an integrated effort in this regard.

So I think today the existing authorities are more than sufficient and it is really the relationships and the planning and integration and exercising that will win the day for us.

Senator WARNER. Can I get two more quick questions?

Chairman LEVIN. Senator Thune, are you happy to yield to your ranking member?

Senator WARNER. I didn't realize we had—someone came.

Senator Thune: No, please.

Chairman LEVIN. Senator Warner?

Senator WARNER. Usually we sit here together and rattle on back and forth. [Laughter.]

Senator WARNER. We'll need for this important hearing, Admiral, from you a submission for the record about the status of issues on the Panama Canal.

Admiral Stavridis: Yesterday, sir.

Senator WARNER. I follow that very closely.

Admiral Stavridis: Yes, sir, I know.

Senator WARNER. I want you to describe the current counterterrorism cooperation that we now have with Panama. I understand Panama, we have a very strong cooperative relationship.

Admiral Stavridis: Sir, it is excellent.

Senator WARNER. But you do see that Panama has recognized Taiwan. How do you sort that out with some Chinese interests at both ends of the Canal which were the subject of a lot of discussion here years ago?

Admiral Stavridis: Yes, sir. Yes, sir, I will.

Senator WARNER. Then of course, we've got under way this referendum which authorized the Panamanian government to go ahead and do a major upgrade of the Canal. What's your degree of confidence in their ability to achieve this?

Admiral Stavridis: Yes, sir. I can address all those for the record for you, sir.

Senator WARNER. For the record.

Admiral Stavridis: Yes, sir, if that's your preference. [The information referred to follows:] [COMMITTEE INSERT]

Senator WARNER. Then I think you should address the alleged quantities of narcotics or other illicit materials that are transitting the Canal.

Admiral Stavridis: Aye-aye, sir. [The information referred to follows:] [COMMITTEE INSERT]

Senator WARNER. Lastly, the ship over here. I was greatly impressed with that. Through the years, somehow I've had something to do with that ship. I can't remember exactly when she was made and launched. But I guess somebody ought to run an analysis of—you recited all the wonderful things that it's done.

Admiral Stavridis: Right.

Senator WARNER. 25,000 pairs of eyeglasses?

Admiral Stavridis: Yes, sir.

Senator WARNER. Has anybody done sort of a cost analysis of how that goodwill by the United States and medical help to these people translates into lessening the burdens that you have on your military for performing the needed military missions? If so, should we think about urging the Department to commission another one of these ships?

In other words, is it a cost effective way to achieve our goals in that region, and should we begin to step up this?

Admiral Stavridis: Yes, sir, I would welcome the chance to provide some of that analysis—

Senator WARNER. Would you?

Admiral Stavridis:—which has been—excuse me. Which has been done.

I think the short answer to the question is that we can demonstrate effectiveness in attitudes toward the United States, which then turns toward helping solve other problems. I will put the answer in the record. [The information referred to follows:] [COMMITTEE INSERT]

Senator WARNER. Because the region is just frightfully turbulent.

Admiral Stavridis: Yes, sir.

Senator WARNER. The more that we can convince them that our mission there is simply to provide for their own, protect their own individual sovereignty and achieve some democratic form of governments for their people, this can do it.

Well, so if you want to get behind it, slip me a little piece of paper and I'll see if I can talk to my chairman and maybe get some long-range planning for a new ship or something.

Admiral Stavridis: Sir, I'll be glad to submit that for the record.

Senator WARNER. All right. Thank you very much.

I thank the chair and I thank my colleague.

Senator WARNER. Thank you, Senator Warner.

Just adding one request in support of that, if you could give us for the record any—not any, but some examples of clippings from newspapers in ports.

Admiral Stavridis: Yes, sir.

Chairman LEVIN. And if you could translate them for us, too, if you would.

Admiral Stavridis: Yes, sir.

Chairman LEVIN. Kind of the public, what the public reads about and knows about in these countries.

Senator Thune?

Senator Thune: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, Admiral, thank you for your service. Be sure do express our appreciation to those who serve under your command for the great work that they do in protecting freedom, protecting our country.

General, this is probably somewhat of a theoretical question, but I'd like to get your thoughts on the intersection, on the role of law enforcement in the military. On both ends of the spectrum I think it's clear what those roles are; they're fairly well defined. But it seems like the middle is becoming increasingly grey.

Do you see a change from using law enforcement resources to military resources for threats against the homeland?

General Renuart: Senator, I think, as you say, the bounds are very clear. I think we have approached the law enforcement aspect of our role in the homeland as a supporting agency, and I think that's the prudent way to do that. In other words, we have great capabilities within our law enforcement agencies to respond both locally and nationally to threats, whether they be threats to the border or natural threats that just require, if you will, the law of order in a particular county or city, etcetera.

I'm comfortable that the provisions that we have in the Constitution provide the appropriate bounds for active duty military in their use to respond in a role that is more active in law enforcement, and I don't think that's something that we need to change at this point. And I'm comfortable that the National Guard, who has more of those authorities, is available and trained to support the governors in that respect.

I think our key enabler, if you will, is to find more ways that we can assist our law enforcement agencies with information-sharing and with logistical support to enable them to do their role, and the Secretary has asked us to continue things like our work along the southern border with the El Paso Information—Intelligence Center, and their support to law enforcement agencies. So I think that's the appropriate level for us.

Senator Thune: General, our military forces started flying Operation Noble Eagle right after September 11. Do you still see that operation as vital to national security?

General Renuart: Senator, I do. To date we've flown about 48,000 missions or sorties, predominantly by the National Guard, but not exclusively. And we've flown those in a variety of missions to support security of our National air space system. I think there was some press even yesterday of an aircraft who entered the restricted area around the National Capital Region and was intercepted by our fighters and diverted to an air base where they could question the pilot on the reasons for that. Fortunately, it was a benign event.

But I think we do need to have a capability to respond in that regard. I think we are—the systems that we use to identify traffic in our National air space system are aging. We are working on some advanced technologies to allow us to perform that via a

broader means. In fact, that's my number one unfunded requirement today.

So in the mean time, the ability to put eyes and, if you will, radars on an air threat is critical to us. I think also we have to be cognizant of low observable and cruise missiles and again the air defense mission, the Noble Eagle Mission, has a key role to play in that.

So for the future I see that role continuing. I see it to be vital to our National defense and I would continue to recommend to the Secretary that we keep that force available to us.

Senator Thune: Your testimony details how important it is to anticipate threats against the homeland, and I guess I'm wondering maybe what you think is the most lethal threat and maybe what is the most probable threat that we might come up against.

General Renuart: Senator, I think this anticipation this concept of integrating our intelligence resources with the National Counterterrorism Center and others, is a great way to go in that regard. Clearly, the most lethal threat that we might see would be the acquisition of a weapon of mass destruction, primarily—or as an example, a nuclear weapon—and having that detonated somewhere in our country. The impact of that would be substantial, obviously. The loss of life would be huge, as well as the injury and the long-term effect. So that is what I would say is the most lethal threat that we face out there.

I don't believe that is the most likely, because I believe that the integrated effort of all of our agencies of government is focused on those and we are being successful at reaching out and deterring or defeating some of those threats as they try to develop.

I think the most likely threat that we have frankly comes from Mother Nature, because she does not work on our time schedule. So a Katrina-like event or a large-scale earthquake, something like the historic New Madrid Fault earthquakes that occurred back in the 1800s. Those things will have a broad effect on the civilians across the country, and we need to be prepared for that. I call it a threat because, if you will, that is another enemy force out there that we have to deal with.

Senator Thune: Admiral, in your prepared statement you said you believe "Members, facilitators, and sympathizers of Islamic terrorist organizations are indeed present in our hemisphere." I think most Americans are probably unaware of the increasing activities undertaken by Hezbollah and Hamas in the tri-border area of Argentina, Paraguay, and Brazil. To the extent that you can talk about that in open forum, could you describe what you're observing in the tri-border area, as well as commenting on what efforts you're making to counter this threat to our National security?

Admiral Stavridis: Yes, sir. Within the constraints of classification, I will say that I continue to be concerned about the tri-border area. It is in my view principally Hezbollah activity. There is clearly fundraising, money laundering, drug trafficking, and certainly a portion of the funds that are raised in that are making their way back to the Middle East. I'll be glad to submit a more thorough report for the record at the appropriate level of classification.

We are receiving good cooperation from the Nations in that region. We are actively pursuing both military to military conversa-

tions, but principally this is a law enforcement effort, and our law enforcement branches here in the United States are talking to their counterparts in the entire range of instruments that one would take against those kinds of things, both drug enforcement activities, following the money, and a variety of other things that I can report appropriately to the committee in writing.

Senator Thune: Thank you both very much for your service.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Thune.

Any additional questions? [No response.]

Chairman LEVIN. In that case, we will stand adjourned, with our thanks again to you, your people who work with you, your families, for the great job you all do.

[Whereupon, at 11:49 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]