

**HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON U.S.
SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND AND U.S.
CENTRAL COMMAND IN REVIEW OF THE
DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST FOR
FISCAL YEAR 2012 AND THE FUTURE YEARS
DEFENSE PROGRAM**

TUESDAY, MARCH 1, 2011

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:34 a.m., in room SD-106, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Senator Carl Levin (chairman) presiding.

Committee members present: Senators Levin (presiding), Lieberman, Nelson, Webb, Udall, Hagan, Manchin, Shaheen, Blumenthal, McCain, Inhofe, Wicker, Portman, Ayotte, and Cornyn.

Committee staff members present: Richard D. DeBobes, staff director; and Leah C. Brewer, nominations and hearings clerk.

Majority staff members present: Jonathan D. Clark, counsel; Jessica L. Kingston, research assistant; Michael J. Kuiken, professional staff member; Jason W. Maroney, Counsel; William G.P. Monahan, counsel; Michael J. Noblet, professional staff member; and William K. Sutey, professional staff member.

Minority staff members present: David M. Morriss, minority staff director; Adam J. Barker, professional staff member; Christian D. Brose, professional staff member; and Lucien L. Niemeyer, professional staff member.

Staff assistants present: Christine G. Lang, Hannah I. Lloyd, and Brian F. Sebold.

Committee members' assistants present: Vance Serchuk, assistant to Senator Lieberman; Carolyn Chuhta, assistant to Senator Reed; Ann Premer, assistant to Senator Nelson; Gordon Peterson, assistant to Senator Webb; Jennifer Barrett and Casey Howard, assistants to Senator Udall; Roger Pena, assistant to Senator Hagan; Lindsay Kavanaugh, assistant to Senator Begich; Joanne McLaughlin, assistant to Senator Manchin; Ethan Saxon, assistant to Senator Blumenthal; Anthony Lazarski, assistant to Senator Inhofe; Lenwood Landrum, assistant to Senator Sessions; Clyde Taylor IV, assistant to Senator Chambliss; Joseph Lai, assistant to Senator Wicker; Charles Prosch, assistant to Senator Brown; Gordon Gray, assistant to Senator Portman; Adam Hechavarria, assist-

ant to Senator Ayotte; Ryan Kaldahl, assistant to Senator Collins; and Dave Hanke, assistant to Senator Cornyn.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR CARL LEVIN, CHAIRMAN

Chairman LEVIN. Good morning, everybody.

The committee meets this morning to receive testimony from Admiral Eric Olson, Commander, U.S. Special Operations Command, and General James Mattis, Commander, U.S. Central Command.

Today's hearing continues the committee's review of the missions and operational requirements of our combatant commanders in light of the priorities set out in the President's fiscal year 2012 budget request.

Nowhere will the President's budget priorities have a greater impact than with the soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines in the CENTCOM area of responsibility. The men and women of CENTCOM and SOCOM have been engaged in major military operations for nearly a decade. Yet, in Afghanistan and Iraq, our troops' morale is high. They are dedicated to their mission and serving with courage and distinction.

We have asked so much of them. They have done everything we have asked and more. And that includes not just the servicemembers themselves, but the families who have served our Nation at home while their loved ones serve overseas. Admiral Olson and General Mattis, on behalf of this committee, please pass along our gratitude to the troops serving under your commands.

Admiral Olson, it is my understanding that you plan to retire this year after an exceptional career in which, among other things, you became the first Navy SEAL to attain the rank of four-star admiral, and you have led SOCOM with great distinction. Thank you for your outstanding service and that of your family.

The Department of Defense, as are all Federal agencies, is currently operating under a continuing resolution that expires in a few days. Last week, Secretary Gates described this as a crisis on his doorstep.

I hope that we will soon be in a position to enact a full-year appropriation at an appropriate level. And I hope, General Mattis and Admiral Olson, that you will help the committee better understand the impact of proceeding by continuing resolution on the forces operating under your command.

In Iraq, CENTCOM is continuing to oversee the drawdown of U.S. forces, as agreed upon by President Bush and Prime Minister Maliki in the 2008 security agreement, which requires all U.S. forces to be withdrawn from Iraq by December 31st of this year. Because of the ongoing reduction of our general-purpose forces in Iraq, the importance of the role performed by our Special Operations Forces as a force multiplier, continuing to build the capacity of Iraqi counterterrorism forces and enabling their operations against al Qaeda in Iraq and other terrorist groups, is even more important.

As we reduce our presence, we must make sure that our special operators receive adequate support, including intelligence, medical evacuation, and quick-reaction forces. The transition in Iraq also means that the State Department will take over the lead for nu-

merous activities in Iraq previously implemented by the Defense Department, including training the Iraqi police.

We would be interested in hearing from our witnesses this morning your views on the importance of providing adequate resources to the State Department and other civilian agencies to the success of that transition.

In Afghanistan, it is essential that President Obama holds to his decision to set July 2011 as the date for the beginning of reductions in U.S. forces in Afghanistan.

Secretary Gates told this committee a few weeks ago that he supported the decision to set the July 2011 date because it was necessary to “grab the attention of the Afghan leadership and bring a sense of urgency to them of the need for them to step up to the plate to take ownership of the war and to recruit their own young men to fight.”

Admiral Mullen said at the same hearing that the date, that that July 2011 date “has given the Afghans a sense of urgency that they didn’t have before the decision was made.”

The Afghan army and police have added 70,000 Afghan security forces over the last year and will meet the current target of 305,000 Afghan security forces by October of this year. A large, capable, effective Afghan security presence is what the Taliban fears the most because it would demonstrate that—contrary to the Taliban’s propaganda, that the war against the Taliban and al Qaeda is a war the Afghan people believe in and it is being fought by an Afghan security force that they believe in, rather than a war waged by foreign occupiers, as Taliban propaganda would have it.

The administration is now considering a request to grow the Afghan army and police by between 45,000 and 70,000 people, which could bring the total—or would bring the total Afghan security force levels to a range of 352,000 to 378,000 by the end of 2012. And I have twice recently urged President Obama to approve this request for additional Afghan troops.

It is a key to the success of our mission and to faster reductions of U.S. troops. It is also far less costly in terms of U.S. casualties and taxpayer dollars than keeping large numbers of U.S. forces in Afghanistan. I hope our witnesses this morning will tell us whether they support the request to build the Afghan security forces by up to an additional 70,000 personnel.

The presence of safe havens for terrorists across the Afghanistan border in Pakistan continues to pose a security threat to Afghanistan and to the region. While U.S.- Pakistan military cooperation has improved in some respects, the Pakistani army has not yet gone after the sanctuaries for the Haqqani network in North Waziristan or the Afghan Taliban in and around Quetta, Pakistan.

Over the past month, the status quo in the CENTCOM AOR has changed dramatically, and this change appears to be ongoing. The protests in Egypt, Bahrain, Jordan, Iran, Yemen, and other countries are examples of what President Obama has correctly called a “hunger for freedom.”

Many in the Middle East have been denied their democratic and human rights for too long, and the past month is a clear demonstration of the people there demanding those rights. The United States needs to make constantly clear it supports those seeking to

exercise their fundamental rights in the Middle East and around the world.

The committee looks forward to hearing from General Mattis on his assessment and views on these protest movements, how our security, how our counterterrorism operations, and how our strategic goals are impacted by the events in the Middle East, and how, if at all, the nature of our military-to-military relationships might change in the region as a result of these events.

In the waters off the coast of Somalia, the flow of international commerce continues to be impacted by the threat of increasingly aggressive pirates. Just last week, four Americans were murdered at the hands of more than a dozen pirates bent on extracting ransoms in exchange for their lives. The committee looks forward to hearing from our witnesses about their assessment of this threat and about ongoing U.S. anti-piracy operations.

Iran provides the greatest challenge to the United States and the international community. While continuing to profess that its nuclear activities are for peaceful purposes, its actions indicate otherwise. The sanctions that have been imposed by the United States and most of the international community under the U.N. sanctions resolutions as well as domestic laws seem to be having some effect, but they need to be maintained and ratcheted up.

Admiral Mullen's guidance for 2011, which states that the Department of Defense would "continue to plan for a broad range of military options should the President decide to use force to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear arms," needs to be reiterated. While not the preferred option, it is important that Iran understand that military actions remain on the table.

I am concerned about the fraying of our Special Operations Forces, as you have put it, Admiral Olson. While our Special Operations Forces have seen rapid growth over the past decade, the demand for such forces and their unique skills will continue to outpace supply for the foreseeable future.

This committee stands prepared to support SOCOM's efforts to provide the best-trained and best-equipped special operators to our combatant commands, and we look forward to hearing from you on this matter.

Thank you again, both of you, for your testimony today.
And let me now turn this over to Senator McCain.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR JOHN McCAIN

Senator McCAIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And let me thank our witnesses for joining us this morning.

Admiral Olson, thank you for your many years of courageous and outstanding service to the United States Navy and to the Nation.

General Mattis, as always, we look forward to your straight talk and candid views on the issues that are so important to us.

This hearing couldn't come at a more important time. Senator Lieberman and I have spent the past several days visiting some key countries within the CENTCOM area of responsibility, including Lebanon, Jordan, and Egypt, as well as some equally critical countries that influence events within the AOR, such as Morocco, Tunisia, and Israel.

In addition, we are all, obviously, focused on the tectonic changes that are shaking countries and governments in Yemen, Bahrain, Iran, and, of course, Libya. And that is to say nothing of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, which remain the focus of our military and diplomatic efforts.

Not since the fall of the Soviet Union have we seen a wave of change destabilize more critical countries all at once than we are now witnessing. Indeed, the old bargains that have defined regional order in the Middle East for the past several decades are now collapsing in front of us.

This is, of course, deeply unsettling, but it is also an unprecedented opportunity to support the people of the Middle East in shaping a new regional order that is all at once reflective of their aspirations, conducive to our interests, and consistent with our values. The people of the Middle East are playing the leading role in this historic endeavor, but America's armed forces are playing an indispensable role, strengthening and defending our friends while deterring and defeating our enemies.

2011 will be a consequential year for CENTCOM and SOCOM. Among the vital strategic issues that were in play this year, we face the beginning of NATO's transition of responsibility for security in Afghanistan to local and national Afghan forces amid strained and even deteriorating U.S.-Pakistani relations.

We face hard choices about the future of U.S. defense assistance to Lebanon after Hezbollah's use of coercion to become the dominant actor in the government. We face the Iranian regime's desires to develop a nuclear weapons capability and to exploit the current regional instability to expand its hegemonic ambitions.

We face the destabilization of critical counterterrorism partners like Egypt, Jordan, Yemen, and Bahrain, where the headquarters of U.S. Fifth Fleet is now caught up in the broader debate over the people of Bahrain's political future. And of course, we face the prospect of a complete withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Iraq by the end of the year, despite increasing evidence and recent testimony by the Secretary of Defense suggesting that such a plan is not consistent with Iraq's continuing security needs or our enduring interests at this time.

Amid these and other challenges, this year will also require increased vigilance on the part of our Special Operations Command, for the changes sweeping across North Africa, the Middle East, and South and Central Asia may open up new ungoverned spaces that could be exploited by our enemies. While our special operators continue to perform with remarkable resilience and success, the effects of nearly 10 years of sustained operations and repeated deployments appear to be straining this elite force.

Admiral Olson, as the chairman has said, we are concerned by your recent comment that our Special Operations Forces are showing signs of "fraying around the edges." It is important that you lay out today what steps are being taken or need to be taken to mitigate this strain. We are also interested in SOCOM's progress in meeting growth targets mandated by the QDR, as well as any associated issues, such as training or facility constraints that you are facing.

We continue to see al Qaeda and affiliated movements attempting to expand their reach through the Maghreb, the Horn of Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, Central Asia, and beyond. And we are all eager for the assessments of both our distinguished witnesses about the capabilities of these groups to threaten America's friends, allies, interests, and homeland.

What is critical to note is that the historic changes now reshaping the broader Middle East are a direct repudiation of al Qaeda and its terrorist allies. The people of this dynamic and crucial region are rising up to change the character of their governments, but the revolutions they are making are largely defined not by violence, but by peaceful protests.

They are inspired not by intolerant and extremist ideologies, but rather by demands for greater freedom, democracy, opportunity, and justice. More than any weapon of war with which this committee must concern itself, it is these principles and the changes they are inspiring that will ultimately defeat our terrorist enemies.

And if only for that reason alone, these universal values and those now struggling for them deserve our full support.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator McCain.

Admiral Olson, let us start with you.

STATEMENT OF ADM ERIC T. OLSON, USN, COMMANDER, U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

Admiral OLSON. Good morning, Chairman Levin, Senator McCain, and other distinguished members of the committee.

I do thank you for this opportunity to appear before you to present the current posture of the U.S. Special Operations Command.

We, at the U.S. Special Operations Command, recognize that we were created by Congress and that our ability to meet our Nation's high expectations is due, in large part, to this committee's continued strong support.

I am especially pleased to share this hearing with my friend and teammate, General Jim Mattis. General Mattis' headquarters and mine are coincidentally located on the same base in Tampa, and we and our staffs work together quite closely.

And so, with your permission, I will submit my written posture statement for the record and open with some brief remarks.

Chairman LEVIN. It will be made part of the record in full.

Admiral OLSON. So the lingering threat of violence in Iraq, the fragility of the progress in Afghanistan, the complexity of our relations with Pakistan, the decentralization of al Qaeda's network, the revolutionary activity across the Maghreb and into the Middle East, the various destabilizing elements in Latin America, Africa, and Southeast Asia, the increased intertwining of violent extremism and criminality, and the persistence of piracy are all among the many daily reminders that we live in a world that poses many security challenges and some opportunities.

The United States Special Operations Forces are universally recognized as key to our Nation's ability to address all of these and others. As the commander of the United States Special Operations Command, I am responsible and accountable for the readiness of

all Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps Special Operations Forces.

With a dedicated budget and through my component commanders, I select, organize, train, equip, and deploy these forces to serve all of the Geographic Combatant Commanders. Though with 85 percent of our deployed forces currently in the Central Command area of operations, my colleague to my left is, by far, the largest customer of our product.

We include many forces of legend: Green Berets, SEALs, Rangers, Air Force Air Commandos, Army Night Stalker Aviators, Combat Controllers, Pararescue Jumpers, Combatant-craft Crewmen—today's version of Marine Raiders—and others. The active duty practitioners of civil military operations and military information support operations are also in our ranks. These are special operations careerists.

But they are backed by a magnificent assortment of administrative, intelligence, communications, engineering, logistics, and other specialists who serve in special operations units on a less permanent basis. At our various headquarters, we also include over 300 representatives from at least 15 other agencies within and beyond the Department of Defense, providing a senior-level counsel and staff-level expertise that significantly broadens and deepens us.

I am convinced that the forces we provide to the Geographic Combatant Commanders are the most culturally attuned partners, most lethal hunter/killers, and most responsive, agile, innovative, and efficiently effective advisers, trainers, problemsolvers, and warriors that any nation has to offer. In fact, we have become the model for many others.

Our value comes from both our high level of skills and our non-traditional methods of applying them, which is to say that our principal asset is the quality of our people. Whether they are conducting a precision raid, organizing a village police force, arranging for a new school or clinic, or partnering with counterpart forces, they do so in a manner that has impressive effects.

And in Afghanistan and Iraq especially, it is undeniable that they have had impact far above their relatively small numbers. They are in dozens of other countries every day, contributing to regional stability by training and advising counterpart forces. This balance of direct and indirect operations must be carefully managed. But because Special Operations Forces live in both of these worlds, we become the force of first choice for many missions. As Admiral Mullen said a couple of weeks ago, Special Operations Forces are typically first in and last out.

I am very proud of these forces, as we all should be. But I also acknowledge there are challenges. Key among them is how to meet the increasing global requirement for their capabilities.

We can't grow them more than a very few percent per year, but the demand is outpacing the supply. Since September 11, our manpower has roughly doubled. Our budget has roughly tripled. And our overseas deployments have quadrupled.

I have said that this great force is beginning to fray around the edges. The fabric is strong. The weave is tight. It is not unraveling, but it is showing signs of wear.

Partial solutions include finding a process that will habitually assign units from the services to train and deploy with Special Operations Forces, ensuring that our needs for local training ranges are fully met, providing buildings and facilities at the standard that our force needs and deserves, investing more broadly in the types of enabling capabilities that will relieve Special Operations Forces from sending our own people to perform functions that could be performed by others, and expanding the services inventory of specific assets that are so essential to today's complex and irregular warfare.

We must ensure that our force has the specialized equipment and advanced training that they need to survive and succeed in the complex, ambiguous, and often violent environments in which we ask them to serve.

And underlying all of it is the need to look after our people and their families. We must rehabilitate and return to duty those of our wounded who can, care for those of our wounded who can't, along with their families and caregivers, and provide enduring support to the families of those who have died in action.

I ask for your action to approve a defense budget for fiscal year 2011 and for your support for the fiscal year 2012 budget proposal. I also ask that you fully fund the special operations budget, particularly as conventional forces begin to draw down from major operations, because our forces will most likely be reallocated at the same levels to areas with pent-up demand for our unique capabilities.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. You have reason to take great pride in what the men and women of Special Operations Forces are accomplishing around the world, today and every day.

I remain humbled by my opportunity to command this formidable force and to provide it to answer our Nation's most daunting security needs. And as I appear before you in this capacity for the fourth and very likely the last time, I thank you for affording me the profound honor of serving my country in this way.

I stand ready for your questions.

[The prepared statement of Admiral Olson follows:]

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you so much, Admiral.

We, again, are grateful to you, the men and women you command, for all that you and they do. We have that pride, which you made reference to at the end of your statement, in them and in you.

General Mattis?

**STATEMENT OF GEN. JAMES N. MATTIS, USMC, COMMANDER,
U.S. CENTRAL COMMAND**

General MATTIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Senator McCain, distinguished members of the committee.

I appreciate the opportunity to discuss the posture and priorities of U.S. Central Command, testifying alongside a friend and shipmate of many years, Admiral Eric Olson, Commander of U.S. Special Operations Command.

I have submitted a written statement and request it be accepted into the record.

Chairman LEVIN. It will be made part of the record.

General MATTIS. Thank you for supporting our troops and their families who carry the brunt of the physical and the emotional burden in this 10th year of war. Our forces today are among the most dedicated and skilled professionals I have served alongside in my 39 years in uniform, and they constitute a national treasure.

I also recognize the commitment and sacrifices of our international partners, who operate with us from the waters off Somalia to the mountains of Afghanistan, where the largest warfighting coalition in recent history is engaged with troops from 49 nations united in the fight against our common enemy.

The strategic landscape of the broader Middle East has been altered by recent events in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and elsewhere. We see pressure on government institutions from the aspirations of people seeking improved economic and social conditions. Young people born in the information age are exchanging ideas in real time.

While the long-term impact of this unrest is unknown, it presents as many opportunities as it does challenges. The changes that we are seeing will manifest differently in each country. People are seeking their rights and, for the most part, doing so peacefully and bravely.

It is too early to say how it will all turn out. It is important that we work today with the people and the governments throughout the region. We don't want to see this change slide into a new form of authoritarianism.

So while there is both opportunity and danger, it requires unrelenting engagement by our Nation. The central challenge for us, I believe, is how to make common cause with our friends throughout the region.

There is one clear lesson we can draw from the dramatic changes underway. Now, more than ever, we must remain relentlessly engaged with our military partners in this region. While we know each country is different, we remain committed to strengthening our military bonds and advancing our mutual interests in peace and opportunity for all.

Notably in Egypt, we have clearly seen the benefit of mature military-to-military relationships. The Egyptian armed forces continue to demonstrate exceptional discipline and restraint under trying circumstances.

As Admiral Mullen recently noted, our assistance has helped the Egyptian military become the force, the professional force, that it is today, just as our military has learned a great deal from our Egyptian counterparts, who have contributed a stabilizing influence in this time of transition.

Of course, we cannot achieve our broader objectives in the region through military means alone. Our efforts require coordination and a spirit of collaboration between highly integrated civilian military teams. Our civilian colleagues need your full support, even in this difficult fiscal environment, to undertake their essential role in today's complex environment.

Robust resourcing for the State Department's mission is one of the best investments for reducing the need for military forces to be employed. Together, our military leaders and our diplomats not

only represent a symbol of America's enduring commitment to the region, but they also build trust through partnerships that have an important stabilizing effect when trouble looms.

CENTCOM's main effort is in Afghanistan, where, along with our Afghan and coalition partners, we are making undeniable progress, though some of our gains at this time remain fragile and yet reversible. Al Qaeda in the border region between Afghanistan and Pakistan is under the most pressure they have experienced since 2001. Over the past year, our enemies have lost leaders, battle space, maneuver room, and the initiative.

And the enemy's strategy has been undercut by the clear commitment of the international community and the Afghan government to begin this summer a process of fully transiting responsibility to Afghan lead by 2014. I support the ongoing analysis for further growth for the Afghan National Security Forces, the greatest success of our last year their quantifiable and qualifiable growth in capability.

The range of growth being considered is from 45,000 to 70,000. With the improving quality in combat performance by the Afghan National Security Forces, we are seeing the enemy's worst nightmare coming of age.

The transition process will start with a limited conditions-based withdrawal this year. Our overall campaign is on track in Afghanistan. Our successes, as General Petraeus has stated, entailed hard fighting and tough losses. And I am sure that there will be tough fighting ahead as the enemy tries to regain the initiative.

Finally, we must also redouble our efforts to address challenges in the areas of governance and development in Afghanistan.

Turning now to Pakistan, we are strengthening and deepening our security partnership with Islamabad, even as we work to overcome years of mistrust and misunderstanding on both sides. The Pakistanis have shifted a quarter of their army, 140,000 troops, to their western border, and we are now conducting hammer and anvil operations in close coordination with them on opposite sides of the border.

Pakistan's military has conducted significant counterinsurgency operations in the past decade and especially the past 2 years, and they have suffered 2,757 troops killed and 8,549 wounded while also responding to urgent humanitarian needs following devastating floods in 2010.

In Iraq, we are helping a new, more stable country emerge in a turbulent region. Our commitment there is transitioning from a military to a civilian-led effort. I will note that the transition underway in Iraq has been enabled in large part thanks to the vital commitment and support of Congress for our troops on the ground, and I want to personally offer my thanks to you.

As we transition to civilian lead in Iraq, it is essential that the State Department be sufficiently resourced to solidify relationships between the United States and Iraq for the future. At Central Command, we need congressional authorities that enable us to continue advising, training, and equipping our Iraqi partners through the new Office of Security Cooperation-Iraq.

Looking ahead, we will redeploy our military forces from Iraq this year, unless asked to stay by the Iraqi government and the

U.S. Government concurs. I anticipate al Qaeda in Iraq and Iranian-sponsored proxies will attempt to attack us and detract from this milestone by executing sensational attacks in the coming months.

Next, Iran. The greatest threat to long-term regional security is a defiant Iran in its current state. We are countering the malign activities of the regime while bolstering relationships with our partners.

Iran continues to rebuff international efforts for engagement. It continues to coerce its own population and pursue activities disruptive to regional peace and stability, including supplying arms to militant proxies in Iraq and Afghanistan and supporting Hezbollah in Lebanon.

But for the vibrant people of Iran, the regime is no giant. The regime's actions have thrown the economy into disarray, destroyed rapport with the bulk of the world, and spread hate and discontent across the region, steadily eroding any international support the regime could once muster.

Despite the shrinking nature of the regime, I have no reason for optimism about Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons capability, its growing ballistic missile arsenal, and present destabilizing course.

Across the region, we are disrupting al Qaeda and other violent extremist organizations. We are actively focused on the threat of extremism in Yemen, especially al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, the group that has twice attempted to attack our homeland in recent years.

With our international partners, our Special Operations Forces are putting our most violent enemies and related networks under increasingly intense pressure. At the same time, the populist-inspired changes that are taking place across the region undercut the message of al-Qaeda and other extremist groups, highlighting the bankrupt philosophies of terrorists who use violence and contribute nothing but mayhem to the innocent.

As Senator McCain just noted, this is a direct repudiation—the populist-inspired changes are a direct repudiation of the violent extremists because these young folks today have achieved more change in 10 weeks than 10 years of al Qaeda's murderous campaign.

So that is a snapshot of our major ongoing operations. We are focused on a number of other important mission areas to include countering piracy. There can be no more stark reminder about the need for more proactive diplomatic, legal, and military efforts against pirates than the brutal murder of four Americans by pirates last week.

This is a defining moment for the people of the region and, by extension, a critical moment for Central Command to remain engaged with our partners and to clear away obstacles to peace and prosperity. On that note, while Israel and the Palestinian territories are not in my assigned theater, lack of progress toward a comprehensive Middle East peace affects U.S. and CENTCOM security interests in the region.

I believe the only reliable path to lasting peace in this region is a viable two-state solution between Israel and Palestine. This issue

is one of many that is exploited by our adversaries in the region, and it is used as a recruiting tool for extremist groups.

The lack of progress also creates friction with regional partners and creates political challenges for advancing our interests by marginalizing moderate voices in the region. By contrast, substantive progress on the peace process would improve CENTCOM's opportunity to work with our regional partners and to support multilateral security efforts.

We recognize you face tough decisions in this constrained fiscal environment. In all of our activities at Central Command, we honor the obligation to be the best stewards possible of our Nation's monetary resources. CENTCOM has established stringent control mechanisms to execute our fiscal authorities and to apply increasingly effective oversight of all programs.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, Senators, we must never forget the families of those who gave their last full measure in defense of liberty.

Thank you once again for your support of our men and women serving in the CENTCOM AOR. And I am prepared to answer questions.

[The prepared statement of General Mattis follows:]

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, General Mattis.

We will try a 7-minute first round here.

General, you made reference to Pakistan and noted that they, indeed, have gone after some terrorist groups, and they have suffered losses in that process. What you did not make reference to, though, is what troubles us a great deal. It troubles you, I am sure, too, and our leadership, and that is the failure of the Pakistanis to go after terrorist groups in North Waziristan and in Quetta, and those are the groups that cross the border and attack our force, coalition forces, and the Afghan people.

Why is it, in your judgment, that Pakistan is not going after those terrorist groups, including the Haqqani network in North Waziristan and the Quetta Shura?

General MATTIS. Mr. Chairman, there have been disconnects where we have not always seen eye-to-eye with Pakistan. Part of the reason these groups exist is, together with Pakistan, we helped create some of them.

Any attempt to look at Pakistan's security interests must include their relationship, their difficult relationship, with India. And over the years, I believe that Pakistan got into a position where the very groups that, in some cases, we helped to give birth to were—became part of the landscape, the Kalashnikov culture, for example.

In many cases, they have moved against these areas, and not all of it has been cost-free. As I noted, they have lost thousands of troops killed and wounded. Especially telling is the number of junior officers they have lost, indicating an aggressive effort against these areas.

But I think, too, it is the most difficult terrain I have ever operated in, in my 39 years in uniform. And the Pakistan military's movement against these folks is continuing. We are now into our 24th month of unrelenting campaign against them.

Chairman LEVIN. But the Pakistanis have not gone after the two groups that are giving us the most trouble in Afghanistan. Have

you pressed on the Pakistan military the importance of going after those groups?

General MATTIS. Yes, sir, I have.

Chairman LEVIN. There has been a request, as you have indicated, to increase the size of the Afghan National Security Forces. You made a reference to the request that is under consideration to be an increase between 45,000 to 70,000 above the goal set for October of this year, which will be met. That target of 305,000 is already met or will be met easily by October.

Now when you made reference, when you say you support further growth of Afghan forces, did I understand you then to support the growth beyond the October 2011 target of 305,000 and somewhere between 45,000 and 70,000 personnel is the target that you support?

General MATTIS. I do support the growth—

Chairman LEVIN. Beyond October of this year's goal?

General MATTIS. Yes, sir, I do. I think, though, we have to look at whether or not we can sustain it. I believe that President Karzai last week came out of his National Security Council and said that he now supports it, and that recommendation, of course, will have to be considered by the NATO Council.

Chairman LEVIN. Right. Now I made reference to repeatedly the importance of the July 2011 date for the beginning of reductions of American forces in Afghanistan. And we heard, as I indicated in my opening remarks, from Secretary Gates and Admiral Mullen a week or two ago that they support the reduction beginning in July of 2011 of U.S. forces with the pace to be determined by conditions on the ground.

General Mattis, do you support the decision to set the July 2011 date as the beginning point of reductions in U.S. forces in Afghanistan?

General MATTIS. Mr. Chairman, I do support it. I would like to say that I support it because it undercuts the enemy's narrative. When they say we are there to occupy Afghanistan, this helps to deny the enemy that moral victory. I think, too, that because it is a conditions-based drawdown that begins this year, I am comfortable with it from a military point of view.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you.

Admiral Olson, do you support that date as the beginning of U.S. reductions?

Admiral OLSON. Mr. Chairman, I do. As a beginning to thin out the force in order to accomplish a full transition eventually.

Chairman LEVIN. Admiral, what has been the effect of the Afghan local police effort that the special ops folks are so deeply involved in, in the villages of Afghanistan where you, working with the Afghans' military and police, are working at the local village level to create these local police units? Can you tell us about these programs?

How successful are they? And what the partnership arrangement is with the Afghans in the operations between our special ops people and the Afghan local police?

Admiral OLSON. Mr. Chairman, that is a matter, of course, under General Mattis's operational control, but I was just able to visit a couple of these Afghan local police sites last week, and my sense

is that this is having real value at a micro regional level. This is an Afghan government program that is administered by the—within the Ministry of the Interior. It is at the local level under the district governors, and it is local leaders who recruit, select those who will be members of the Afghan local police forces.

The role of Special Operations Forces in this is to move to these remote regions in small numbers, establish the personal relationships that are so important to gain credibility as an advising force, and then provide some training and mentorship to these Afghan local police as they gain the ability to defend their villages.

In my opinion, this has had quite a powerful effect locally. These are not roaming armies by any means. These are certainly locals who have organized themselves under local leadership to protect their own neighborhoods.

Chairman LEVIN. And the partnering issue?

Admiral OLSON. Sir, the partnering is in that there is a small team of U.S. forces in a village that is then the naturally partnered force with the Afghan local police in that village. They stay for months at a time there, and so this becomes a very strong partnership. But again, it is an Afghan Government-administered program with the U.S. forces strongly supporting it.

Chairman LEVIN. And are Afghans with us in any operation that we are involved in?

Admiral OLSON. Sir, in all of the operations that are conducted in Afghanistan, there are Afghans involved.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much.

Senator McCain.

Senator MCCAIN. Well, thank you Mr. Chairman.

And a follow-up to the chairman's question, does it concern you, General Mattis, that the defense ministers of various ones of our allies who have troops and commitments in Afghanistan have said to me that, "Well, if you are going to begin to withdraw, we will begin to withdraw as well." Is that of concern to you?

General MATTIS. It would be, sir. It is why we have to engage with them, make certain they understand that we are not—

Senator MCCAIN. So we expect them to stay, while we withdraw?

General MATTIS. I think what we want them to do is, as we look at the transition process, Senator McCain, we make certain in their area that we follow the transition guidelines, and in some cases, that may mean withdrawal. In some, it may mean that they reinvest the people that they have achieved some success with into another area. Maybe that they go into training, that sort of thing.

But there is no misunderstanding that the Americans are carrying the bulk of this fight, over 100,000 troops, and I think that our commitment is pretty straightforward, both fiscally and troop wise.

Senator MCCAIN. I know Libya is not within your area of responsibility, but would you venture an opinion as to the difficulty of establishing a no-fly zone?

General MATTIS. My military opinion is, sir, it would be challenging. You would have to remove the air defense capability in order to establish the no-fly zone.

So no illusions here. It would be a military operation. It wouldn't simply be telling people not to fly airplanes.

Senator MCCAIN. Declaration of a no-fly zone to the enemy would have a significant deterring effect on their desire to fly. I think we know that to be the case.

General MATTIS. Yes, sir.

Senator MCCAIN. Obviously, the events in Bahrain are of great concern to you and all of us. How much Iranian involvement have you seen in these—I fully understand this is a popular uprising, but isn't it into some respects a proxy conflict between Saudi Arabia and Iran?

General MATTIS. I think the current Tehran regime is incapable of trying to let other nations just take care of their own issues. They have got to meddle and create mischief.

The Bahrain situation I think is a legitimate popular effort. But I am under no illusions that the Iranians would not try to take advantage of this issue or any other, whether it be in Lebanon or anywhere else in the region.

Senator MCCAIN. And the loss of the Fifth Fleet headquarters would be a significant setback?

General MATTIS. It would be. But right now, sir, from even the opposition, our sailors who live out in town, driving to and from work, have encountered zero anti-Americanism. And I was just there about a week ago, and there is no hostility directed towards Americans right now from—obviously not from the government with whom we have been very good friends for 40, 50, 60 years, but not from the opposition either.

It has been heartening, actually. The DOD school has been open every day. We are on about the 12th day with no violence. So it is not right now something that concerns me.

Senator MCCAIN. Given the long-term needs of Iraq, how are the deficiencies of the Iraqi security forces—such as maintenance, readiness, intelligence fusion, and particularly the building of an air force—going to be addressed absent U.S. troops?

General MATTIS. You hit the three points that we are concerned with. Under logistics, it is maintenance as well, how they keep their gear going. The intelligence fusion and the air sovereignty are critical.

I think right now there are going to be loose ends unless the Iraqis ask us to stay and work on these issues. And those loose ends would be difficult for them to overcome on their own, sir.

Senator MCCAIN. As you know, Hezbollah is now the dominant actor in the government of Lebanon. Do you think the United States should continue providing military assistance to the Lebanese air forces, armed forces, or is it something we should wait and see? Or is it—in other words, what is your view of that situation?

General MATTIS. Well, we saw Hezbollah use threats of violence to undercut the government. We are all very much aware of that. The new government is still in formation, and we will have to take a very close look at how it is organized and how it is formed to deal with Lebanon's future.

I think that an inclusive government is the only option that works with the various confessional groups that try to share power there. But I believe right now, if we look at the example of Egypt, and we look at what happened where we were able to maintain, under some criticism that the Congress came under for giving us

the amount of money that we gave to the Egyptian military, but we were able to maintain a relationship there that paid off, I think, when it came time to see them either ethically use their position to help the people of the country or what we see in Libya.

So as we look at Lebanon, where they have never lost track of any of the equipment that we have given to them yet—the equipment given to the Lebanese armed forces, I think we should look at the quality of the government as it is put together, recognize that the military can actually be a bulwark against malign influence, and act in our best interest once we have made that analysis.

Senator MCCAIN. Have you seen the news reports that a number of people were arrested in Iraq as a result of demonstrations?

General MATTIS. I have. Yes, sir. The ones on, I think, the 26th? Yes, sir.

Senator MCCAIN. So it is of concern that they would be arresting demonstrators in a country we expect them to allow demonstrations?

General MATTIS. Sir, the demonstrations were not as large as we expected, but they were spread all over the country. The demonstrations, by and large, were peaceful. The Iraqi security forces were out, and al Qaeda did not take advantage. I don't think they could take advantage of this opportunity to kill more innocent people.

So, in the midst of that, there were some people who did things like stone troops. There were about as many people injured on the Iraqi security force side, around 50, as there were injured total and killed, unfortunately, on the demonstrators' side. Those appear to be contained in each case where government buildings were stormed. And Prime Minister Maliki has said that he will investigate each death, each injury, and make certain they know what happened in each case.

So I think right now what we saw was, by and large, a very restrained use of force by the Iraqi security forces in regards to the demonstrators. There was no opening fire on them. It was a much more restrained effort. So I don't know what all the investigations are going to show yet, Senator, but I would like to get back to you once I see what we can find through our intel sources.

Senator MCCAIN. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator McCain.

Senator Lieberman.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

Thanks to both of you. General Mattis, thanks for your service. Admiral Olson, also let me join those who are thanking you for your extraordinary career of service to our country and the time particularly in which you have been the leader of the Special Operations Command, and through you really to thank everyone who serves under you in that command.

This is a remarkable group of Americans who I have had the privilege to meet as I have traveled around, particularly to battle zones. And honestly, every day they are performing critical and dangerous missions with a remarkable degree of skill, bravery, and I would say patriotism, and also, of course, effect.

So a lot of that has grown and developed under your watch. And I can't thank you enough for that, and thank all of them.

Let me just give you an opportunity to develop a little more your metaphor that the fabric is strong, but around the edges there may be a little fraying of the Special Operations Forces. What are the specific shortfalls that you would like to see us address to make sure that the whole fabric is as strong as you and we want it to be?

Admiral OLSON. Thank you, sir.

I got an email not too long ago from an operational commander forward who said, "Sir, the good news is that the demand for Special Operations Forces is higher than ever. The bad news is the demand is higher than ever."

As 100,000 U.S. troops came out of Iraq, only fewer than 1,000 were from Special Operations Forces. And at the same time, we saw a requirement to move more than 1,500 into Afghanistan. This is the force that, as you said, has earned its way to real importance in terms of executing strategies in those conflicts.

It is at the point where for some elements of our force, time at home with their families has become the abnormal condition. They have to adjust to being home rather than adjust to being away. It is those elements of the force that I am seeking to provide some relief for in terms of 1,000 programs.

There is no magic answer to this. It is gaining a greater understanding of what the real issues are. It is shaving where we can the number of days that they are away from home for training when they are not forward deployed. It is putting more predictability into their lives. It is relieving every special operations member of any job that can be performed by anybody else.

I do believe that the services—Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps—could invest in capabilities that would provide more habitual, more timely support to Special Operations Forces. We are in those discussions with each of the services.

And I do believe that the quality of the training, the equipment, and the facilities that we provide them is certainly a factor in ensuring that this force, in which we have invested so heavily for 10 years, will still be with us 10 years hence.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Well, I appreciate that answer, and I am sure the members of the committee look forward to working with you and your staff to see if we can help you with some of those.

General Mattis, as Senator McCain said, we had the opportunity to travel through some of the Arab world last week where these remarkable changes are occurring. My own feeling is that while you are right, there is both opportunity and challenge, that the opportunity here is greater.

It is really remarkable to see these peaceful revolutions occur, which are the—which have got to make both the leaders of al Qaeda up in the mountains feel that history may be passing them by, but also represent a real direct threat to Iran, which I think you correctly and characteristically bluntly identify as our greatest threat, long-term threat in the region is Iran.

I want to just come back to Libya briefly because I was interested that in some of our visits with young people and others in Tunisia, Egypt, where these revolutions have succeeded, they are

watching how the world responds to Gaddafi's brutality to his own people. Because they are taking it as a sign of if Gaddafi can survive, they worry that other leaders in the Arab world will similarly try to repress revolutions.

And I know the administration is considering a range of options now with regard to Gaddafi. I am just curious. I know Senator McCain asked you about the no-fly zone. Have you, in your CENTCOM role, been asked to prepare for any activities relating to Libya, including, for instance, the provision of humanitarian assistance, medical supplies, food, to people in the liberated areas of Libya?

General MATTIS. Senator, as you understand, this comes under African Command's area.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Yes, sir.

General MATTIS. I have dispatched ships under the order of the Secretary of Defense that could provide options to the President. Yes, sir.

Senator LIEBERMAN. That is reassuring to hear. I know it is the African Command. But obviously, you have got a lot of assets in the region, and I am encouraged to hear that they are moving to be available.

Going back to Iran, for some period of time, as you know, there was a certain uncertainty, if I can put it that way, about the extent to which the Iranians were assisting the terrorists, extremists in Afghanistan against us. It was clear that they were assisting the Shia extremists in Iraq and, unfortunately, have a lot of American blood on their hand as a result.

Could you tell us a little more now about the state of our conclusions about what the Iranians are doing to help the Taliban or other anti-government, anti-American forces in Afghanistan?

General MATTIS. I can give you an incomplete answer, Senator. They have given low levels of ammunition, money, that sort of support, IED components, to our enemies in Afghanistan. As you know, at one point, the Taliban and Iran were very much at odds with each other, to include the Taliban killing a number of Iranian diplomats there in northern Afghanistan.

But the reason I say I am giving you an incomplete answer is we are keeping a very sharp eye on some recent information we have to see if they are, in fact, elevating their support, which would be very, very unwise for them to do.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Thank you, sir. My time is up.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Lieberman.

Senator Inhofe.

Senator INHOFE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And again, we would all echo the remarks about your service, Admiral Olson. Certainly will be missed.

When we are talking about the—a lot of discussion about the withdrawal of troops in Afghanistan, I will say this. That occasionally when the President talks about that, he talks about conditions on the ground. So I am not sure just what is going to happen, what these timetables are.

But I would say this. I have had the opportunity, going all the way back to the fall of 2003 when it happened to be the Oklahoma 45th was over in Afghanistan helping the ANA to train themselves,

and they were doing really a great job. But each year when, we go back and see it, we see this improvement in training. And I think this really has to be recognized.

Because the last time is when - I don't see Senator Hagan there now, but she and I were there spending New Year's Eve in Afghanistan and had a chance to go down to the Kabul military training center. And it is almost like looking at a training center here in the United States. I am talking about the separation between artillery and infantry, how they are doing it.

We had individual interviews, with interpreters, where just at random we would select people, and the enthusiasm they have for their quality of training. So I see just really great improvements in the quality of training over there, and that was just my personal observation.

General Mattis, are you as excited about that as I am?

General MATTIS. Sir, the success of this last year, especially as we see the Afghan forces coming of age, very much is depending upon the training, the superb training, and it is going exactly as you say. We now have metrics in place where we measure them. And then we are seeing the improved capability in the field. But it has got to be the enemy's worst nightmare.

Senator INHOFE. Yes, I would say that is true. And when we talk to these individuals, they want to be career and all of that.

I looked at the—when I saw the position that the Egyptian military is going to be in this new transition or whatever we are going into right now, I was somewhat pleased with it. And one reason is that I have been a staunch supporter up here, probably the most staunch supporter, of the IMET program and what it has meant. Well, with Egypt, it even goes further because we are talking about three decades now that they have done this.

And so, my feeling was that one of the great benefits of the IMET program is that it develops a relationship between the military of other countries. And I have seen this throughout Africa and elsewhere. And that is why we have been wanting to expand it. So I felt pretty good about that.

And I would like to—you know, I noticed that in 2010, our Egypt IMET program was at about \$2 million and dropped down to about \$1.5 million in 2011. I am trying to get the figure now as to what is requested for 2012.

But I would like just to get you on the record on your feelings about that program—and both of you, actually—the IMET program and how much that has benefited us, particularly with the situation right now as it is in Egypt.

General MATTIS. Senator, I think the IMET program is a strategic asset to us, where we bring those officers to our country. They go through training and education here. We then go on joint exchanges with them back in their country, exercises and all, and we see it pay off there.

But there is a longer-term payoff, and that payoff is when I walk into a room as a brigadier general back in 2001, and the first discussion I have with a half dozen officers is them telling me the best year of their life was in Maxwell Air Force Base or in Leavenworth—Fort Leavenworth—and we immediately start from a posi-

tion of common understanding. I think this is a strategic asset to us that we should certainly maintain full support for.

Senator INHOFE. All right. I appreciate that.

Do you echo those sentiments, Admiral Olson?

Admiral OLSON. Absolutely, sir. You can sign me up as a member of the IMET fan club. I was in a position long ago, a part of the implementation team of IMET in Tunisia, and that country was particularly well served by IMET.

Senator INHOFE. Yes. You know, we were just a couple of days ago with Prime Minister Netanyahu. He was referring to the earthquake that is taking place right now. And when Senator Lieberman was talking about the commands, it occurred to me that when we were in Stuttgart, we were with EUCOM and AFRICOM, and yet CENTCOM—you have got three COMs, really, right now that are dealing with this problem.

Are you guys all talking to each other? And do you feel there is no problem in that you are dealing with an earthquake that has taken place in three commands?

General MATTIS. Sir, we have a very close working relationship, and there is strong collaboration between us.

Senator INHOFE. Yes.

Admiral Olson, we also had the opportunity of spending some time in Djibouti, and Admiral Losey, I guess it was, spent quite a bit of time with us. And I was certainly impressed with what they are doing there.

And then, when I look at your statement and that you talk about—I am reading now—it says, “We now total close to 60,000, about a third of whom are career members of Special Operations Forces, meaning that they have been selected, trained, and qualified to earn the military occupational specialty or skill code identifier of the SOF.”

Now that would be a third of the 60,000. Tell me a little bit about the other two-thirds that are not included in this category.

Admiral OLSON. Yes, sir. They are the full range of enabling, technical, supportive capabilities—engineers, logisticians, administrators, intelligence analysts, maintenance crews, and the like—that make the rest of it all possible. We are a broadly capable force. We do have our own airplanes, our own helicopters, our own boats, our own mini submarines. And so, this requires a supporting crew that has to be quite expert as well.

Senator INHOFE. Well, we are concerned about your resources, that you have them, because we know what your mission is and what you have been able to do. And is everything going all right in terms of retention and recruiting?

Admiral OLSON. Sir, the recruiting is good. The recruiting has been pretty consistent over the last decade, even consistent across the 9/11 attacks. Retention has been pretty good. It has been above the service averages in almost every category.

Senator INHOFE. Which is very good, too.

Admiral OLSON. Yes, sir.

Senator INHOFE. Yes.

Admiral OLSON. We are beginning to see at the mid-grade level, sort of the 8 to 10 years of service point, a slight leveling off of the retention.

Senator INHOFE. All right. Thank you.

My time has expired. But if you, maybe for the record, could elaborate a little bit on your numbers that you have right now as you look into the future and how this—whether the 60,000 is going to be—increasing it, if that is going to be adequate, for the record.

Admiral OLSON. Sir, for the record, in my opinion, it is adequate. I believe that the key to special operations capability beyond our current numbers is mostly in terms of supporting special operations from the much broader range of capabilities within the department, with habitually assigned units that are timely in their response, that understand what special operations is and how to support special operations requirements.

I am calling this the “special operations force generation concept” and working with each of the services on how they can contribute to that and how we can contribute to their force generation cycles, as that is appropriate.

The specific answer to your numbers question is that - - and I am on record before this committee now in three previous years as saying we should not, we ought not grow more than 3 to 5 percent per year in our manpower because of the quality that we need to maintain as we do that. And we are projected to do that for the next 3 or 4 years.

Senator INHOFE. That is good. Thank you.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Inhofe.

Senator Nelson.

Senator NELSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And also let me add my appreciation, Admiral Olson, for your service and best wishes for your future.

The International Military Education and Training, IMET, is a very important part of what I would hope to be our outreach to the world in a way that makes good sense. I have had military officials from Egypt in my office before who have been here getting the IMET training, and I have been impressed with their appreciation and their understanding of what kind of military—or what the military should do in connection with government.

My question would be do you think that the difference between the way the military has behaved in Libya and the military behaved in Egypt is, at least in part, due to their IMET training?

General Mattis?

General MATTIS. I think there is no doubt it has contributed, sir. Each nation has its own history, its own culture. But I think the ethical performance by the Egyptian military was impacted by their time spent in our schools over these last decades.

Senator NELSON. And the same would be true in the case of Tunisia as well?

General MATTIS. Yes, sir.

Senator NELSON. Do we have any plans to try to expand the program? I know resources are tight right now. But one of the best ways of avoiding future expenditures is to have ethical military operatives in other countries. And so, are there any plans that you are aware of to expand this to perhaps some other countries where there is an interest?

General MATTIS. I am not aware of plans to expand it. Of course, the Secretary of Defense can open the door to different countries

at different times, give them more school seats, that sort of thing. I think it would be a resourcing issue. You would have to have more instructors, more classrooms, this sort of thing. But I think it is worth looking at, but I am not aware of any plans right now to do so, Senator.

Senator NELSON. Well, we will try to take this up with the Secretary. I appreciate, though, your response.

And General Mattis, I have been a strong proponent of benchmarks with metric measurements for Afghanistan and Pakistan. I had support for those in Iraq as well. And I am interested in your evaluation of the benchmarks.

The last report was in November of last year, and it is my understanding the next report will be provided in April of this year. So perhaps I am a little ahead of the report progress. But I guess I would like to know whether or not the report in November stated that the assessment of governance in focus districts showed that 38 percent of the population lived in the areas rated as having emerging or full-authority Afghan governance.

It reflects no change through March of 2010. I wonder are we trending up, or are we flat-lined, or are we trending down at this point? And I am talking about both Pakistan and Afghanistan. There may be a difference in each of the countries.

General MATTIS. Oh, there is significant difference, sir. Let me address Afghanistan, where General Petraeus and Ambassador Eikenberry lead our effort in supporting the Afghan governance. I will tell you that this is receiving a lot of attention. We are making progress.

I believe it is lagging behind the security effort. I think that is somewhat understandable. You don't get governance in until you get enough security that people can without concern carry out the governmental functions.

But at the same time, we are dealing with a country that probably took several hundred billion dollars' worth of damage during decades of war, according to the IMF. And when you translate that into the human damage and the damage to the people, the education system, this sort of thing, it is a long, hard slog to create the kind of governmental organizations and the right people who can then create the kind of progress that will reflect in those metrics, sir.

Pakistan—the Pakistan military is where I have most of my connections. But from what I read, I have concerns about Pakistan's governance and their ability to meet the needs of their people. I believe right now that President Karzai may actually be in a better position on this than the leadership, political leadership in Pakistan.

Senator NELSON. And both Afghanistan and we depend on the Pakistani military and the Pakistani government to be able to take care of those largely isolated areas—I guess Swat and the particular areas there—where there are safe havens for al Qaeda and other—Taliban and other hostile operatives. And that makes it much more difficult for us to be able to contain and degrade and defeat that enemy. Is that fair?

General MATTIS. It is very fair, sir. Again, it is the federally Administered Tribal Area, the FATA, which constitutionally is under a different sort of governance even within Pakistan.

Further, I think the impact of the floods this year—we served alongside the Pakistan military that performed very well providing relief and life-saving efforts. But those floods, which were enormous in their impact—the worst in a hundred years—I don't know that once the Pakistan military had done what they could do in terms of saving the people from those floods, that there was a sufficiently robust governmental response then to help those people put their lives back together.

Senator NELSON. So the attitude towards the government may not be as strong as it could be if the government had a strong follow-up response?

General MATTIS. I believe you are right. I don't have the data. I haven't looked at it specifically. But I believe you are correct, Senator.

Senator NELSON. Okay. My final question, General, is that as we trend out of Iraq and we come upon December 31st, there is some concern that maybe the Iraqi government will say—will ask us to remain. I don't have any indication of that, but just a general concern that perhaps their security is not sufficient for them to be able to self-govern.

If that is the case—and I asked this of Secretary Gates recently. If that is the case and we are in a position where we might make the decision to stay, I would hope that we would do so, recognizing that from that point forward, that we would expect the Iraqi government to pick up a bigger share of the cost that we would incur.

It is my understanding they are dealing with a deficit there, just as we are here. But it only adds to our deficit. And if I have to choose between mine and theirs, you know how I am going—what I am going to choose. So I would hope that we would be thinking about, if that happens, how we can make certain that the Iraqi government picks up a bigger share of any costs that we would incur going forward.

That is less a question more than a wish. And in that regard, I hope that you will keep that in mind because, obviously, it will come under your—indirectly under your jurisdiction. Have you had any thoughts about that, should we be asked to stay?

General MATTIS. I haven't looked specifically at your point. However, there is clearly an increasing sense of responsibility by the Iraqi government toward their own security forces, resourcing them. And so, I think that would be a natural part of the negotiations between the two governments if we were asked to stay.

Senator NELSON. Yes, I would hope that we would make that a part of the negotiations because that is what we would have to do. We can't just assess it. We would have to have a common agreement.

General MATTIS. I have got it, sir. Thank you.

Senator NELSON. Well, thank you, General Mattis, and thank you for your service and all the men and women under your command. We appreciate their continued sacrifice and service, and their families as well. Thanks.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Nelson.

Senator Ayotte.

Senator AYOTTE. Thank you, Chairman.

I also want to commend Admiral Olson and General Mattis for your distinguished service to our country. And please express our gratitude to all the troops that serve underneath you and for that they are doing to protect our country.

In recent hearings, Secretary Gates as well as Secretary Vickers have testified that approximately one out of four detainees who have been released from Guantanamo have gotten back into the fight. Could either Admiral Olson or General Mattis, could you tell us a little more about what are the details regarding some of these detainees who are joining the fight?

And have there been examples where some of these detainees have actually injured or killed American troops that have been returned back into the fight?

General MATTIS. Senator, the best data we have would show approximately 25 percent have either returned, and we can confirm it, or we strongly suspect they have returned.

Twenty-five percent is a concern to all of us involved in this war because it reinforces the enemy. It gives people a credibility, some degree of credibility because they have been in our hands. They have gotten out.

So, yes, ma'am, it is a big concern.

Senator AYOTTE. And have there been examples where some of these detainees who have returned to the fight have actually injured our soldiers or killed our soldiers?

General MATTIS. I don't have a specific example of that. However, for example, we know one of them is the number two person in al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. Clearly, he is engaged in trying to do so. If he hasn't, it is just because he hasn't been successful yet. So his intent is exactly what you are suggesting.

Senator AYOTTE. Well, if he himself—he is obviously directing members of al Qaeda to kill American troops. And that is a deep concern, given that we released him from our detention facility.

I am deeply concerned about our policy toward detainees and release back into theater, and I think that the least we can do for our troops is to hold those who are dangerous and not allow them to get back into theater to harm our troops. And it is certainly something that I look forward to continuing to work with others in the Senate to make sure that we have a sensible detention policy that doesn't allow these terrorists to get back into theater.

I know that, General Mattis, that, again, we have emphasized that, of course, Libya is not directly in your responsibility. However, I did want to ask you, you mentioned that recently you have dispatched ships to provide options and assets in the region itself.

Last week, there were many nations who were sending military aircraft and ships to Libya in order to evacuate their own citizens that were in Libya. As I understand it, that we sent and chartered a civilian ferry to try to take the civilians that were in Libya, United States citizens, to get them out of Libya. Yet that ferry actually couldn't depart port for 2 days due to high winds and waves.

Are you aware whether certain nations, including the Germans and British, actually sent military assets to be able to get its citizens out of Libya?

General MATTIS. Senator, I am not aware of the details, the specifics here. As you will understand, I have been a little busy in my own theater. But I think what you are saying is about right. But I can't confirm it.

Senator AYOTTE. Mm-hmm. Do you know whether there was—if we had wanted to, whether we could have sent military assets to be able to get our civilians out of Libya, as other countries did?

General MATTIS. Ma'am, again, I don't keep the Mediterranean picture. I am not current on it. So I don't know what ships or aircraft were available at what time and where they were and what airfields were open. I really can't give you a good answer on that.

Senator AYOTTE. Okay. But you are now, of course, sending some of our CENTCOM assets over to assist in that area, as you testified earlier?

General MATTIS. Yes, ma'am. We have. And those were to give whether it be humanitarian or whatever options the President may want. Those assets have been sent through the Suez Canal. Yes, ma'am.

Senator AYOTTE. So had you been asked to do that last week, is that something you would have been able to do earlier last week, as opposed to where we are now?

General MATTIS. Yes. Well, ma'am, the way it comes to me is not as a request, frankly. I get orders. But, yes, ma'am, we can do it on order. You know, obviously, I have my own requirements in the theater. And it is always a balancing act that the Secretary has to go through between different combatant commanders.

Senator AYOTTE. But, General, you would have certainly had the capability of doing it last week, as opposed to where we are right now?

General MATTIS. Yes, ma'am.

Senator AYOTTE. Thank you very much. I appreciate both of you testifying before the committee today.

And again, Admiral Olson, thank you so much for your distinguished service to our country. And General Mattis, as well.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Ayotte.

Senator Webb.

Senator WEBB. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, Admiral, greetings. I am hoping that you can help provide us a little bit of focus in terms of how we are going to approach similar situations in the future.

Not long after September 11, a coalition of Afghani forces, assisted by a handful of special operators, Forward Air Controllers, kicked out the Taliban in a matter of a few weeks. We were the enablers, for lack of a better term, not the instruments or the creators, of societal change in that evolution.

We took a different approach in Iraq. We are taking a different approach today in Afghanistan. We have undertaken a duty, I understand, what I would call the concept of negligence in the law. Once you undertake a duty, if you don't see it all the way through, you are guilty of negligence. At the same time, we need to really

start looking at the future in terms of how we are going to use our military.

Secretary Gates made a speech—I am sure you are well aware of it—at West Point recently, indicating that, in his view, this troop-heavy concept is not a model—troop-heavy concept read pretty much nation building—is not a model that should be applied in the future with respect to issues of international terrorism. At the same time, General Casey, over the past day or two, mentioned that he wouldn't be surprised to see 100,000 Army soldiers deployed in these types of operations 10 years from now.

So I would like to hear your thoughts on where should we be moving here in terms of the use of our ground troops in issues of combating international terrorism? General?

General MATTIS. Senator, I think, as we look toward the future, I have been a horrible prophet. I have never fought anywhere I expected to in all my years.

I believe that we have to take each situation on its own, and we have to define the problem to a Jesuit's level of acceptability. It has got to be defined to a point that the solution is very clear in terms of what is the strategy we must adopt. And the strategy, of course, is what is the ends, and what are the means to get there?

The one caution I would give, having studied this problem, is that we cannot marry one preclusive view of war and preclude other types and say we just won't do that because the very nature of war is the enemy will gravitate toward our perceived weakness. So we are going to have to have a force that has a built-in shock absorber, basically can go anywhere and do anything, at the same time have a moderating impact on our own strategy, so we don't try to go anywhere and do everything.

It has got to be vital national interest, and we have got to make sure we have a force that is a general-purpose force that does not allow the enemy to think that we are leaving some form of warfare uncovered and then works against us in that direction.

Senator WEBB. I wouldn't disagree with you on that at all. At the same time, I can recall having written a piece the day after September 11, discussing how to deal with international terrorism, and two of the concepts in that—you build your strategy off of operational concepts and the enemy that you are facing.

And two of the clear concepts in that was, number one, you have to maintain your maneuverability, and, number two, when you are fighting a mobile enemy, you are at risk whenever you occupy territory and then have to defend the territory that you are occupying. And I think that is the—those are the decision points moving toward the future.

Admiral, do you have any thoughts on that?

Admiral OLSON. Sir, I think when the enemy is a ponderous, state-sponsored, uniformed, organized fighting force, it may require a similar force to defeat it. But I think that is less likely in the future. I agree with Secretary Gates on that.

We are much more likely to see the less regular kinds of warfare—the cyber warfare, the terrorist warfare, the non-state sponsored warfare—to which the best solution is often enabling another country's forces to deal with it in that region and being, as you said, the supporting force, not the supported force in that fight.

Senator WEBB. Again, clearly, in terms of international terrorism, the whole operational concept is to not align themselves with a state.

And by the way, I would not in any way disagree with what General Mattis just said about keeping all your options on the table. But it just seems to me with the variety of threats that face us right now, the type of response that we have made over the past 8 or 9 years is not a workable model. It concerns me a good bit.

General, I want to ask you a question about Pakistan. I have raised a number of questions over the past 2 years about the transparency of our funding in terms of assistance to Pakistan. Are you comfortable with the transparency of the money that is going into Pakistan, that you know where it is going?

General MATTIS. I am, Senator. I have actually—they don't do it by computer. So it is all written out by hand. So we track it right down to the end user.

But I have got some of the most aggressive colonels and majors you can imagine in Islamabad working under my vice admiral there who track this. And routinely, we reject requests from them for reimbursement.

So I know it is not where they just walk in with a bill and we pay it. And sometimes the ones we want more evidence of outweigh the numbers that we just accept and say, "Yes, we know you did these things. So we are going to pay you." For example, fuel for our forces and that sort of thing that comes in.

So, yes, I think we do have a very good feel for whether or not we are reimbursing real costs vice any fraudulent costs.

Senator WEBB. We have seen news reports that Pakistan has doubled its nuclear arsenal in recent years, as we have been providing assistance in other areas. Do you have any worries that our assistance to Pakistan has allowed them to fund programs such as their nuclear program?

General MATTIS. I am confident there is no direct funding going to their nuclear program because of my confidence in tracking the costs we are reimbursing them for now. Obviously, they have their own funding, and whether or not they would spend some of that elsewhere, if we weren't reimbursing—

Senator WEBB. Right. I understand that direct money would not be going over there. The concern that I have is that if we are funding programs that they otherwise would be funding and they are able to take that money in order to increase their nuclear arsenal, it is not a healthy situation for the region and for us, in my view.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator Webb.

Senator WICKER.

Senator WICKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, gentlemen.

General Mattis, let me follow up on a line of questioning Senator McCain began. I was not in the room at the time, but I understand that he got a brief answer to this so-called day of rage in Iraq.

So let me see if I could explore this a little further. And in particular, I would point out a Washington Post Foreign Service story that appeared on Saturday, February 26, in which it is reported that Iraqi security forces detained hundreds of people, including

prominent journalists, artists, and intellectuals, in demonstrations that brought thousands of Iraqis to the streets and ended with soldiers shooting into crowds.

It goes on to say that this involved more than a dozen demonstrations across the country that killed at least 29 people, as crowds stormed provincial buildings, forced local officials to resign, freed prisoners, and otherwise demanded more from a government they only recently had a chance to elect.

Is this, in your judgment, General, an isolated incident? Or is it an example of the contagion that is sweeping the entire region? And what does it say about the popular support of a government which recently was subject to election?

And I understand the complications after the elections of the government being formed in a very fragile manner without a clear consensus. But how accurate is this depiction? And how worried should we be that this country, where we have invested so much of our blood and treasure, might be just as unstable as some other regimes?

General MATTIS. Senator, I can't comment directly on the accuracy of the story because the word that I have is there were dozens of demonstrations. But I take that as a sign of—a positive sign. Those did not happen 15 years ago under Saddam.

It is a nascent democracy. It is the one that has been through a very violent era. And part of our—a critical part of our training of the Iraqi security forces has been the ethical use of force. They are also still operating against a very capable enemy, terrorist enemy.

For example, the minister of defense of Iraq al Qaeda, al Qaeda in Iraq, was killed on that day—I believe it was on that day—by Iraqi security forces. It was a very—very good—good event for us.

Senator WICKER. Was he part of the protests?

General MATTIS. He was not. He was not.

Senator WICKER. So this was separate and apart—

General MATTIS. But my point is that the enemy operates in this country, even as the people are trying to exercise their freedom to protest. I believe, from what I am told, that the number of Iraqi security forces injured and the number of demonstrators injured and killed is about the same.

And the reason I say that—bring that up is that that is often-times an indicator of whether or not a military just opened fire on a crowd. You open fire on a crowd with an automatic weapon, and the casualties are going to be significantly higher than the ones reported either by the government or by the newspaper article.

But I think overall—and I need to check on this. Frankly, I wasn't ready for your question. I need to go back and check and see if I missed something in our assessment of what happened that day. And I need to get back to you, Senator, because the numbers you are citing are higher than what I was told.

Senator WICKER. I see.

General MATTIS. In most cases, it was when a government building was attacked, and most of the injured soldiers were in place, were injured by rock throwing. So that is the kind of the framework I am looking at it through.

Senator WICKER. So I can expect you to supplement your answer on the record, and I appreciate that.

As to the larger question, though, sir, of whether we need to be concerned about this government falling, much as governments in the region have toppled and are toppling one by one, what is your informed judgment as to the larger question?

General MATTIS. Well, as you know, the election was very close. It took months—I think 8, 9 months—to actually get a government formed. In close elections in a parliamentary system, that is understandable. I think it is still a work in progress.

The performance of the Iraqi security forces during that long period, when there was just basically a caretaker government at work, gives me some degree of confidence that the security forces can protect this nascent democracy as it grows its roots. But one or two elections doesn't make a democracy, as we all know, and there is a lot of work that still has to be done. Right now, I do not think that it is in danger of falling.

Senator WICKER. To what extent are the supporters of Mr. Allawi supportive of the government as it finally emerged?

General MATTIS. I think that is still a work in progress as well, as we see where Mr. Allawi falls out in the organization of the government. I spoke with him about 2 months ago in Baghdad, and he was still relatively positive at that time that he was going to have a meaningful role. And that would bring the people you are referring to onboard with him.

Since then, it has been difficult to see progress, but I think it is always slower than we want to see. But I think there is still progress along those lines. But I don't know where it is going to fall out right now. I think they are still—it is still too early to say.

Senator WICKER. And finally, to what extent do we need to be concerned about Iran attempting to influence the foreign policy of Iraq?

General MATTIS. I have no doubt that Iran will attempt to influence the foreign policy and domestic policy as well of Iraq.

Senator WICKER. Is this a serious problem or simply one of the many concerns that we have?

General MATTIS. I think Iran is going to be left behind by this contagion, as you described it, sweeping across the region, as they find that people are not interested in exchanging one authoritarian for one like in Tehran. So I think they have as much to worry about from this contagion.

And actually, I think, in many cases, the Iraqi people are quite capable of making up their own mind without Iranian help, and that will continue to manifest. But I am not—I am not naive about Iran's intent here.

Senator WICKER. I hope you are correct. Thank you.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Wicker.

Senator Hagan.

Senator HAGAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I certainly want to thank Admiral Olson and General Mattis for your excellent service to our country. Thank you so much.

As you know, the Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command, or MARSOC, was established in 2005 and is headquartered at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina. Some have suggested that

MARSOC personnel should be special operations for life, rather than rotating through the command on a rotational basis as they are currently.

And they argue that this would help SOCOM create and retain personnel within the special cultural and language skills that are critical for success in irregular warfare and the foreign internal defense missions.

Admiral Olson, what is your assessment of the progress made in standing up and growing MARSOC, and how are they unique within the Special Operations Forces? And also, could you give me your thoughts on whether the Marine operators should be special operations just for life, just as in the Army?

Admiral OLSON. Thank you, ma'am.

First, I would say we can be very, very proud of the way that the Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command has been established. It is just—it did just celebrate its fifth birthday last month, and they have made tremendous progress.

They have been deployed at the battalion level now for over a year with tremendous effects in western Afghanistan and earning an awful lot of respect from the forces with which they serve. And it is been a very close partnership between United States Special Operations Command and the United States Marine Corps in building the MARSOC to the extent that it has so far.

The Commandant has recently approved a military occupation specialty for those who have been through selection and advanced training to be members of the MARSOC, which will help us track and retain selected members of that community. I do believe that SOF for life is a concept with—that ought to be limited, that there is great value to circulation, that it is good for Special Operations Command to circulate people through its community back out into the big services and to bring people from the big services into our community so that we don't—we are not guilty of spinning a cocoon too tightly around ourselves in the special operations community.

I am quite comfortable with the way it is going now. And even those who are in for sort of one tour in the MARSOC, that is now at least a 4-year tour and in some cases 5 years, which goes beyond some of the other services in many cases.

Senator HAGAN. Thank you.

On February 17th, Secretary Gates indicated during his testimony before this committee that it is unsustainable for the U.S. to fund a sizable Afghan National Security Force indefinitely. He suggested that perhaps the U.S. could temporarily fund the ANSF as a sort of surge in security assistance and then reduce that as conditions in Afghanistan improve and as the ANSF becomes more capable.

General Mattis, can you elaborate on what Secretary Gates discussed on February 17th?

General MATTIS. I can, Senator. If you look at what has happened with the Taliban, beaten down badly in 2001, was able to regain its balance and come back strongly, and then we have reversed—over this last year or two, we have reversed their successes.

So we have surged our own military. NATO has surged. The troop-contributing nations have—about 100,000 U.S., about 50,000

non-U.S. coalition. We have about double that on the part of the Afghans.

What you are seeing is we are going into a critical time, and we are going to have to fight it out. As the enemy loses—and they will lose—we will succeed. Then there is going to come a point where you don't need as many international troops and eventually, perhaps, not as many Afghan troops and police because the enemy has been taken down. So the idea that Secretary Gates explained about a surge right now shows the normal ebb and flow that could result as a result of this kind of war, as the enemy's fortunes start going backwards.

Senator HAGAN. And you said that you thought the ANSF could also, at some point, reduce its numbers?

General MATTIS. Well, I believe that at some point after the country gets more mature, it has got more opportunity for young people. So there is not the breeding ground there for young guys to go join the extremists. Then the demand, the requirement for the size of those forces could well drop off.

Senator HAGAN. Thank you.

Admiral Mullen has indicated that the longstanding U.S. military-to-military relationship has contributed to the professionalism of the Egyptian military. And experts have indicated that it is important to sustain Egypt's annual military aid because regardless of how events unfold in Egypt, the military will likely preserve its unique position within the governing system.

They have also argued that freezing military aid to Egypt undermines the leverage that our Government has to promote an effective transition and to persuade the Egyptian armed forces to abide by the peace treaty with Israel.

General Mattis, what is your position on the future of the U.S.-Egyptian military-to-military relationship? And how might restructuring the foreign military financing allocation to Egypt impact our strategic objectives in the country, as well as the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty?

General MATTIS. Senator, I believe that we should remain relentlessly engaged with the region. This is not the time to pull back.

I am on the phone, for example, with General Anan, the chief of defense of the—excuse me, of the Egyptian military, on a routine basis. I have seen him in Egypt. There is a degree of professional respect there that allows us to have very candid discussions.

He has been very proud of the fact that they are a caretaker military government. They are going to move quickly toward elections. I don't think you can disconnect that from the experiences of his officers, who have spent years in our country going through schools. And I think that right now the mil-to-mil relationship and the ethical performance of the Egyptian military are very tightly tied together.

This has to do with regional peace. This has to do with Middle East peace, as you know so well from decades of peace between Egypt and Israel. And I endorse what we are doing right now, and I think we should continue.

Senator HAGAN. And as far as the treaties, do you feel confident that they will abide by these treaties?

General MATTIS. Yes, ma'am, I do. It is in Egypt's best interest as well. But I am hesitant to get into the political arena and start forecasting things.

But without a doubt, our military-to-military relationship, I think, is helpful in terms of being a stabilizing force and, I might add, with a force that used its authority in an ethical manner when a crisis came.

Senator HAGAN. They did. Thank you.

My time has expired.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Hagan.

Senator Blumenthal.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I join in thanking both of you, Admiral Olson and General Mattis, for your service and the service of the courageous and dedicated men and women under your command. And I want to ask a couple of questions about those men and women who are serving and sacrificing so courageously.

Admiral Olson, last year, I believe you testified that the Special Operations Command's Care Coalition was supporting 2,800 wounded Special Operations Force officers through a clearinghouse that works to increase the likelihood of their returning to service or having lives afterward. And I think that clearinghouse exemplifies one of the Special Operations Forces truths, which is that humans are more valuable than hardware, an emphasis that I certainly appreciate.

And I wonder if you could share with the committee an update on what is being done, what the Special Operations Command is doing to manage the kind of care, medical care, counseling, other kinds of care that are necessary for these wounded warriors?

Admiral OLSON. Thank you, Senator.

The Care Coalition—and I thank you for highlighting it—was actually mentioned by Admiral Mullen as the gold standard for the Department of Defense, and we are quite proud of it.

Part of the true value of the Care Coalition is that the population with which it works is small enough that the relationships are personal. So that when somebody calls the Care Coalition for some help, a wounded or a family member, there is—they are known to the Care Coalition. So it is difficult to scale this up too much, but so far, it is within a manageable level that has been quite effective.

What they do is serve as advocates for the wounded and their families. And they connect those who have need with those who are willing to provide for needs. So your term “brokering” and “broker house” is an accurate one.

In addition to that, we are investing more heavily than in the past in rehabilitation facilities, in physical therapy experts and technicians at the unit level so that those who need that frequent assistance have access to it on a daily basis. And that has been hugely effective in accelerating the ability of our people to return to duty.

And it is reality that the first—the instinct of virtually all of our wounded is—you know, their first comment is, “How soon can I get back to my unit?” And so, providing them accelerated opportunity to do that has become very important.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. You know, Admiral Mullen testified not long ago before this committee about the difficulty of identifying some of the wounds, particularly when they involve traumatic brain injury or post traumatic stress. And I wonder whether you could give the committee your assessment of how adequate, how effective the means are to diagnose and identify those kinds of problems.

Admiral OLSON. Senator, frankly, I think we are very inadequate. I think the data does not collect in a meaningful way the information that we need to not only be responsive but, perhaps more importantly, to be proactive and preventive in dealing with those who have suffered psychological trauma as well as physical trauma.

I have established what I call the “pressure on the force task force.” This is a tiger team that is going from unit to unit now. I will get a report back from them I think in about 90 days. And what I have asked them to do is ignore the data and do sensing. Rely on leaders, intuition, on the experience of teammates. And spend real time with the families, to include the children, to gain an understanding of what really is happening in the force.

I don’t want to get out ahead of that because I don’t want to taint the responses to the surveys. But I do look forward very much to receiving the recommendations from that team.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. And your testimony speaks very powerfully to the potential of new developments actually on the battlefield as well as afterward in medical advances, potential R&D, and technology and so forth. I wonder if you could elaborate on that and also give us your assessment on whether the resources in the 2012 budget are adequate for that purpose?

Admiral OLSON. Sir, I would ask that the 2012 budget be supported. I don’t have a strong sense of the adequacy precisely, but I believe that there is enough request in the budget to give us room to move with respect to that.

In terms of medical advances, I do believe that biomedical research is a very important undertaking for the military, that we have experiences that are unlike civilian medicine and that any investment in military biomedical research is a good investment.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you.

Just one question, General Mattis, if I could ask you, sir? In light of what we are seeing in the world today, the recent transit through the Suez Canal of Iranian naval vessels, the ongoing attacks by Somali pirates, and other developments that affect our lines of communication and transport at sea, I wonder if you could share your views on the adequacy of the Navy’s funding request with respect to submarine operations and undersea warfare for this fiscal year and the next.

General MATTIS. Senator, I have not looked at the Navy’s request because, as a combatant commander, I only look at whether or not they are filling my requests with those ships they have today. I am somewhat in the current fight. I will tell you that I get what I need when I ask for it.

But clearly—I will speak to Central Command’s future—it will be an increasingly naval future. It will not be one in which we have significant numbers of ground troops on the ground in various loca-

tions. And so, how do we maintain a Navy that has the reach and can sustain our influence, reassure our friends, and temper any mischief by our enemies, make certain that they realize there is a cost? I think that is critical in the Central Command future.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you very much. My time has expired, but I just want to thank both of you.

Thank you.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Blumenthal.

Senator Manchin.

Senator MANCHIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I want to thank both of you. I just returned back from Afghanistan and Pakistan. I can't tell you how impressed I was at the quality of people that we have—our men and women, all of you who are leading them, and the job they are doing.

With that being said, I am going to ask some questions. And we will try to keep the answers as brief as possible to try to get through these.

First of all, I will ask both of you, are we fighting a war on terror, or are we nation building? And I will start, Admiral, with you.

Admiral OLSON. So my responsibility is in both arenas. We present the Special Operations Forces in two flavors. One is simply the strike flavor, the man hunting, thing hunting aspect of counterterrorism. But at the same time, we are out in the villages and remote areas, working with locals to develop their own resources and look after their own neighborhoods.

Senator MANCHIN. General?

General MATTIS. Sir, we are fighting a war that is unlike conventional war. It requires both counterterrorism and counterinsurgency efforts. Part of that would be seen as nation building, but you have seen it in action over there. And whatever it is called, it checkmates the enemy's designs.

Senator MANCHIN. The other thing I would ask is the size. Can you all identify the size of our enemy and how much our enemy is being funded by—their cost of their operation against us?

General MATTIS. Identify the size of the enemy?

Senator MANCHIN. Is there 10,000 of them versus 100,000 of us? Are they getting \$100 million, and we are spending \$100 billion?

General MATTIS. I will have to take the question for the record, sir. There is a syndicate of organizations. Al Qaeda has been—pretty much been pushed down, beaten down. They are in a just kind of hang on up in the FATA right now.

Haqqani network is still robust, kind of their special forces. They are linked to the Taliban in Afghanistan, who are also linked to the Taliban in Pakistan. It is a syndicate. It comes together. It goes apart. It fights each other. It fights us. It is hard to get an exact count. And it will take me a little time, but I will get you our best estimate on each of those groups in that syndicate.

As far as the cost, I think it is very difficult to evaluate the cost. But clearly, I think we have got to look in the future to how do we become cost imposing, use cost-imposing strategies on an enemy, rather than being in the position that you just described.

Senator MANCHIN. Let me just say, if I can, the best I could decipher from what we were getting information is I think it is fair to say that we have about 10 to 1 of the troops superior. We have

about 10 troops for their 1 identified. And we spend about \$10 for their \$1. And it looks like money is not going to win this war. Is that a fair statement, Admiral?

Admiral OLSON. Sir, I would have to take, for the record, your numbers to confirm or deny that. I do believe that the presence in a variety of capacities and the whole of nation approach to Afghanistan is very important. I do believe that it is less expensive to fund an insurgency than a counterinsurgency, certainly.

Senator MANCHIN. And if I may ask this question, and this will be to you, Admiral. I was so impressed with special ops. Just we were privileged to go through a briefing and watch how they operate.

With that being said, the Pakistanis, do you believe that with—that you all are able to identify the Haqqanis and Quetta Shura tribes, if you will, and their location within Pakistan and your inability to go get them or them to assist you in getting them? Is there any break in that whatsoever?

Admiral OLSON. Sir, I would say that Pakistan is a sovereign nation and will, as sovereign nations do, act in its own best interests first. It does not see itself as threatened by those groups, as our forces feel they are threatened by those troops. We are willing to assist Pakistan at the rate that they are willing to accept our assistance, sir.

Senator MANCHIN. So, basically, we can't do a thing without their—I mean, we have an ally who truly is not acting as an ally. And this is just from an outsider's opinion and looking at the operation of our people being at risk, knowing where the enemy is, and we can't do anything about it.

Admiral OLSON. Sir, I would say in many ways Pakistan is behaving as a great ally and taking much risk upon themselves. But there is perhaps more that can be done. I think that the senior-level dialogues that are taking place are very productive in this regard.

Senator MANCHIN. And to both of you, do you know if the literacy rate in Afghanistan has improved at all over 10 years?

General MATTIS. Yes, it has. I would have to get you the numbers, sir. It is also one of the primary recruiting tools for the Afghan army. But today, we have significantly higher education. And I will get you the numbers that can verify this.

Senator MANCHIN. We still have—the numbers that I received show that literacy in Afghanistan is still only 28 percent.

General MATTIS. Sir, well, considering that during the Taliban's control, they didn't build a single school and they have been trying to blow up the ones we are building, it has been difficult. But we are making progress, sir. I will get you the numbers.

Senator MANCHIN. And I would ask both of you this question, too. Do you believe that al Qaeda still poses a threat to the United States of America? And if that is still correct, since they are not a presence in Afghanistan, with all of our resources and so much of our money has been dedicated to that arena, where are they now, and what are we doing to be able—are we capable of taking the fight to them, wherever it may be?

Admiral OLSON. Sir, I think al Qaeda is struggling. I think that its leadership is less experienced. I think its ranks are more frac-

tured than any time in the last decade, and they certainly have distributed. There is al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, al Qaeda in the Maghreb, al Qaeda in Iraq, and other al Qaeda associated groups in the region. So there is a requirement to continue taking the fight to where they are, sir.

Senator MANCHIN. General?

General MATTIS. They are a threat. They are under terrible pressure right now. They have gone to ground in the epicenter of this effort, which is up in the FATA, but they have also distributed down into al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. They have been hit hard in Iraq, but they are still a threat to the Iraqi government. And we see links going down into Somalia with al-Shabaab.

Senator MANCHIN. And one last—my time is up. If I may ask one more question?

If with the tremendous budget concerns we have within our own nation, if changes are made or adjustments are made to the operation as we know it in Afghanistan today, do you think it will affect the outcome at all, if we reduce the funding?

General MATTIS. Absolutely, it will, sir. It must. I mean, right now, we have, just in the last year and a half, gotten the resources, personnel, training, CERP funds, that sort of thing correct. And we are right now approaching the time when we are going to see the results of all that.

We are already seeing the results, but they are going to be very telling shortly.

Senator MANCHIN. Admiral?

Admiral OLSON. Sir, Afghanistan Special Operations Forces are operating at the edge of their people and at the edge of their budget. Any reduction in either would be detrimental to the effect, sir.

Senator MANCHIN. Thank you.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Manchin.

Senator Udall.

Senator UDALL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good morning, gentlemen. Thank you for your patience and, of course, for your service.

I would like to pursue further discussion about the sanctuaries in Pakistan with this lead-in. I, General Mattis, was in Malajet last fall in October. And I know you spoke to, in your testimony, what had happened there and the positive developments. Fort Carson troops were there from my home State of Colorado. So it was particularly special to be there, and it was very impressive.

But my fear is that it is only a matter of time before insurgents reappear. Their refuge in that part of Pakistan is only about 4 hours from Kandahar. And it is just my sense is as long as the enemy has sanctuaries, we are fighting with an arm tied behind our back.

General, you have spoken to why Pakistan isn't doing more to eliminate the sanctuaries. And if they can't or won't address them, do you believe that the ISAF and Afghan forces working together can make enough progress on the security front to overcome the challenges presented by the sanctuaries?

And Admiral Olson, I would welcome your thoughts as well after the General has spoken to this.

General MATTIS. Sir, the area your troops—the troops from your State were operating in is, obviously, close to the border area. It is subject to impact—being impacted by the enemy coming out of safe havens.

But it is not that the Pakistanis have done nothing here. They have lost thousands of troops. They have had almost 30,000 of their civilians murdered by these enemies. And they are probably in a position of saying, “I don’t want to create more enemies right now than I already have.” I mean, they are engaged in years of the longest campaign and the most costly campaign that they have faced.

And I think that, while it is not perfect, we have to remind ourselves that the only thing more difficult than fighting with allies is fighting without allies. And thank God, we have the 50 nations alongside us, 49 nations alongside us, fighting in Afghanistan right now.

And Pakistan, I think we have to look at both what they are doing and continue to try and close the gap in our understanding with what they are not doing. And we are very candid in our discussions with the Pakistani leadership about this, and we will continue to work it.

However, in the area that you are referring to, that open, kind of open ground coming from Kandahar over towards the border, General Petraeus, thanks to the increase that the President authorized, now has a surveillance brigade from the Army that is watching over that area.

In other words, it is not just a thoroughfare. The enemy is going to have a very difficult time come spring when they try to reintroduce their troops back into the area—Helmand, Kandahar—where they have lost the initiative.

So we are aware of the situation. We are adapting to it. And the Pakistanis are doing a lot. There is more they could do, but there is more we could be doing as well. This is the normal give-and-take of war, sir.

Senator UDALL. Admiral Olson?

Admiral OLSON. Sir, we wish they would do more. Perhaps they could do more. But I don’t pretend to understand the internal dynamics within Pakistan, certainly the strategic implications of their decision-making process, to be too critical of them.

Senator UDALL. Yes, they do have their hands full. I do know there is a school of thought that counterinsurgencies have never been successfully completed if the insurgents have sanctuaries, and we need to continue to worry that concept.

If I might, General, Admiral, I would like to talk about some of the, again, analysis that right now we are in a strategic stalemate in Afghanistan. And that is a better situation, some would argue, than we had a year or two or three ago. And by that, I mean neither side can achieve its aims through the use of arms alone.

And a follow-on thought is that we will have difficulty preserving our gains just because we are visitors, if you will, to the area, without entering into some sort of negotiations. And I know there are still disagreement among many in Afghanistan, both in the Afghan community and in ISAF, what those negotiations look like, how quickly they should happen, what they might accomplish.

My opinion is—and I have heard this from the military leadership in our country and the civilian leadership—that the way home is through a political process and political solution, ultimately. How do we incentivize the process further and make reconciliation and reintegration move more quickly?

General MATTIS. Senator, I think we are not in a strategic stalemate right now. If I was before you a year ago, I probably would have accepted that.

Senator UDALL. Mm-hmm.

General MATTIS. I think that the enemy is now in a worsening situation. And what we are doing is our strategy is that we have a military component. You have seen that. Everyone knows what that is—reinforced, well-trained troops, better strategy. I can go on. Then you have a civilian component. And those two are married together into a combined civilian-military effort.

Additionally, there is a diplomatic effort to end the war. Taliban are going to have to say we will abide by the constitution, break with al Qaeda and stop using violence. And they are welcome back in.

The reconciliation process has got to be a process that is owned by the Afghans because they are the ones who have got to reconcile. We can support it. We should support it. The international community is supporting it.

Reintegration is the bottom up, reconciliation being the top down. Reintegration is where we are getting young fellows to come over to our side, and there is a process to bring them onboard.

So you are seeing right now a strategy of how do you incentivize it? First point, make certain the enemy doesn't think they are going to win. That is what we have had to reverse in the last year. Then the diplomats have more of a chance to get these other efforts—reconciliation, reintegration—going. I hope that answers your question.

Senator UDALL. Admiral Olson, do you have any additional thoughts?

Admiral OLSON. Sir, I certainly agree with what General Mattis said. I would say that I do think we are on a path to being able to negotiate from a position of strength. I do believe that negotiation can accelerate the termination of a conflict, but you have got to be able to do it from a position of strength.

Senator UDALL. Speaking of negotiations, General, India and Pakistan are reportedly negotiating again over such tough topics as Kashmir and economic integration. I assume you and Admiral Willard share perspectives and are working together.

Would you comment on the opportunity there? My opinion, if India and Pakistan could reach the point at which they had a little warmer relationship, it would help our efforts in Afghanistan.

General MATTIS. I completely concur with you. Admiral Willard and I are in routine contact with one another, as we make certain that seam between the two combatant commands does not become a gap in our efforts to work together.

At the same time, this India-Pakistan reconciliation has got to be something that they take responsibility for. So we are more in a mode of making certain that what we are doing militarily is never seen as contrary to that trend.

Senator UDALL. My time has expired. Two brief comments. I met with some returning both civilian and military leaders from Afghanistan. Interesting ideas taking shape, which is that the Afghan civilian sector ought to surge into the Afghan rural communities. And that is not a new idea to you, but I wanted to continue to acknowledge. I know the chairman has really pushed on that front as well.

And then, second, listening to you, I was reminded of President Lincoln's great comment that it always seemed like in war the best generals were working for the newspapers. And listening to you two today, I think the best generals and admirals are working for the American people. So, thank you.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator Udall.

I just have a couple questions for a second round, and then we are going to adjourn over to the Visitor Center, Room 217, for a closed session. There has been a request by at least one Senator for that. And we should start there, hopefully, 5 minutes to 12:00, if no one else has any additional questions here.

I just have two questions. One, General, is the question of whether or not you expect that President Karzai will be announcing later this month the first phase of provinces and districts for transition to Afghan security responsibility based on the joint recommendations of ISAF and Afghan officials. That is what Defense Minister Wardak told me was likely to happen, when he met with me in my office. Is that your understanding?

General MATTIS. It is, Mr. Chairman. I believe it will be on the 21st of March.

Chairman LEVIN. All right. The other question relates to the camp in Iraq, Camp Ashraf, where there are Iranian dissidents who are being continually harassed by various forms—in various forms by agents of Iran and also by some of Maliki's people as well.

Now, one of the issues there are the loudspeakers, apparently large numbers of loudspeakers, which blare propaganda into that area. I am wondering whether you have taken this issue up, General, with Prime Minister Maliki and whether we are pressing this issue because that kind of psychological abuse is unacceptable. Have you raised this with Prime Minister Maliki?

General MATTIS. I will raise it with him, sir.

Chairman LEVIN. Has it been raised before, do you know?

General MATTIS. I don't know.

Chairman LEVIN. Okay. Will you make sure that it is raised?

General MATTIS. I will.

Chairman LEVIN. Any other questions? If not, we are going to adjourn right away to that classified session.

And we thank both of you again for your service. We will see you over at the Visitor Center.

[Whereupon, at 11:47 a.m., the committee adjourned.]