

Stenographic Transcript  
Before the

Subcommittee on  
Readiness and Management Support

COMMITTEE ON  
ARMED SERVICES

## **UNITED STATES SENATE**

HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY  
ON THE CURRENT STATE OF READINESS OF U.S. FORCES  
IN REVIEW OF THE DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST  
FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016  
AND THE FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM

Wednesday, March 25, 2015

Washington, D.C.

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1 HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON THE  
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8  
9 U.S. Senate  
10 Subcommittee on Readiness and  
11 Management Support  
12 Committee on Armed Services  
13 Washington, D.C.

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15 The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:34 p.m.  
16 in Room SR-232A, Russell Senate Office Building, Hon. Kelly  
17 Ayotte, chairman of the subcommittee, presiding.

18 Committee Members Present: Senators Ayotte  
19 [presiding], Rounds, Kaine and Shaheen.

1           OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. KELLY AYOTTE, U.S. SENATOR  
2 FROM NEW HAMPSHIRE

3           Senator Ayotte: I'm going to call this hearing to  
4 order.

5           Very much want to thank our distinguished witnesses who  
6 are here before us today who have so admirably served our  
7 Nation.

8           This hearing of the Subcommittee on Readiness and  
9 Management Support will be the second hearing of the year to  
10 receive testimony on the current readiness of our military  
11 forces.

12          I want to thank my Ranking Member, Senator Kaine, for  
13 his continued leadership on defense issues and his eagerness  
14 to work together in a bipartisan manner for the sake of our  
15 national security.

16          We are joined this afternoon with a very distinguished  
17 panel. We are here with General Daniel Allyn, Vice Chief of  
18 Staff of the Army; Admiral Michelle Howard, Vice Chief of  
19 Staff of Naval Operations; General John Paxton, Vice  
20 Commandant of the Marine Corps; and General Larry Spencer,  
21 Vice Chief of Staff for the Air Force.

22          Again, I don't think we can say enough about what a  
23 tremendous group of leaders that we have testifying before  
24 this committee today. And I cannot think of a more  
25 important hearing topic for this committee than the

1 readiness of our Armed Forces.

2       The preeminent responsibility of the Federal Government  
3 is to provide for the common defense. And in order to  
4 fulfill this foundational responsibility of our Government,  
5 Congress has been explicitly charged, in Article 1, Section  
6 8, of the Constitution, with the authority and  
7 responsibility to raise and support armies, and provide and  
8 maintain the Navy. We have to begin with an objective  
9 assessment of our national security interests and the  
10 threats that we're facing around the world. We then should  
11 determine what defense capabilities and capacities we need  
12 in order to protect our interests against likely threats.  
13 That is how you develop a defense budget that keeps America  
14 safe.

15       Unfortunately, that's not what we have been seeing with  
16 the impact of sequester in Washington. Rather than a --  
17 reality-based, strategy-based defense budgets, we are seeing  
18 that the impact of sequester is deeply disconnected from the  
19 many threats that we face around the world right now. In  
20 fact, in testimony before the Armed Services Committee  
21 earlier this year, the Director of National Intelligence,  
22 James Clapper, I think summed up the current situation very  
23 well. He said, "In my 50-plus years in the intelligence  
24 business, I don't know of a time that has been more beset by  
25 challenges and crises around the world. As these threats

1 have grown in complexity and severity, the defense budget  
2 cuts have created a growing and troubling gap between the  
3 military we need and the military our national security  
4 interests require. And the consequences of failing to  
5 address this are grave."

6 It's easy for us in Washington to lose sight of the  
7 real-world consequences of our decisions. And we all know  
8 that the readiness of our forces is something that we don't  
9 often see, but we'll know right away if it's not there,  
10 given what we ask of our men and women of uniform.

11 When we send our fellow citizens into harm way, they --  
12 harm's way, they rely on us to provide them with the best  
13 possible training and equipment so that they can accomplish  
14 their missions and return home safely. I think not only do  
15 we have a constitutional obligation to do so, we have a  
16 moral obligation to do so. And I know the witnesses before  
17 me appreciate that better than anyone.

18 That's why I look forward to continuing to work across  
19 the aisle with people like my Ranking Member to address the  
20 sequestration, because we do need to come up with a  
21 bipartisan solution to this in the long term so that we can  
22 make the right decisions today by our men and women in  
23 uniform and to ensure that we are prepared to face the grave  
24 threats that, unfortunately, are unfolding around the world.

25 And, before I go to my Ranking Member, you know, I know

1 that many of my colleagues right now are having a meeting  
2 with President Ghani, the President of Afghanistan, who just  
3 finished a joint address to the Congress. And having been  
4 present for that address, I think that he, the President,  
5 first of all, made very clear the gratitude that the leader  
6 of Afghanistan has for the sacrifices that our men and women  
7 in uniform have made to help ensure the security of  
8 Afghanistan. But, what we also heard is what a difference  
9 our men and women in uniform have made in Afghanistan, and  
10 appreciate the difference we have made throughout the world,  
11 and particularly when he talked about the freedom with which  
12 he believes women should have in Afghanistan and the fact  
13 that, before our presence in Afghanistan, not one girl went  
14 to school.

15 And so, I want to bring this up, because we need to  
16 understand there is no other leader in the world like the  
17 United States of America. And if we do not continue to  
18 invest in the best military in the world, then we will not  
19 be prepared for the challenges we face, but also the world  
20 will be a much worse place and a much more dangerous place  
21 without our assistance.

22 And I want to -- in that regard, I wanted to mention,  
23 since we have the President of Afghanistan here, that there  
24 has been a report, unfortunately, that there -- that today  
25 there were six people killed and more than 30 wounded in a

1 suicide bombing in Kabul, right near the presidential  
2 palace. And so, I think it reminds us that dangers still  
3 remain there, and that they remain many places around the  
4 world. So, your testimony today is so important.

5           And I would like to turn this over to my Ranking  
6 Member.

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1           STATEMENT OF HON. TIM KAINE, U.S. SENATOR FROM  
2 VIRGINIA

3           Senator Kaine: Great. Thank you, Madam Chair.

4           And I echo your comments. It's good to work together  
5 on these issues. We have a bipartisan working relationship  
6 and, I think, a common understanding of the dangers of  
7 sequester.

8           Could they just give us the budget for 15 minutes, just  
9 the two of us, and -- we can hammer this out.

10          Senator Ayotte: We could do it.

11          [Laughter.]

12          Senator Ayotte: We really could work this out.

13          Senator Kaine: Let me start with the thank you that  
14 Chairman Ayotte was talking about with respect to the speech  
15 from the Afghan President this morning. If you were -- I  
16 wish you were there. I hope you watched it. It should make  
17 you feel really proud. You know, it made me feel proud on  
18 your behalf, but you should feel proud, and you should feel  
19 proud for your folks, because the notion of a country --  
20 I'll just pick one statistic -- that's gone from a 44-year-  
21 old life expectancy to a 61- or 62-year-old life expectancy  
22 in 15 years, I mean, it -- there's just no precedent in  
23 human history for that. And I have been doing my back-of-  
24 the-envelope calculation. Seventeen years of human life  
25 multiplied by 30 million Afghans is 510 million years of



1 human life. That's what the U.S. has enabled them to  
2 achieve, because they didn't have a functioning health  
3 system, and it was a whole lot of NGOs who came in and  
4 helped set it up, but they couldn't set it up if the  
5 security situation didn't enable them to. So, the U.S. and  
6 partners, working together with the Afghan people, have  
7 created a situation where, violence notwithstanding,  
8 challenges notwithstanding, kids are in school, there's a  
9 new sense of optimism and hope, people are living longer.  
10 And, as the President said, for the kids that are in school,  
11 their parents thank you. For the people who are living  
12 longer, their children thank you. He did that in a very  
13 poetic way that was really special.

14 So, look, but it also means that the work doesn't end.  
15 You can't stop the investment. We've got to continue the  
16 partnership. That partnership demands a military that's  
17 ready.

18 We've had a series of hearings -- this is the second  
19 one of this subcommittee, but others -- where we've talked  
20 about sequester. Madam Chair, we had one this morning in  
21 Seapower, where this was the testimony. The Seapower  
22 hearing this morning, chaired by Senator Wicker and Ranking  
23 Member Hirono, dealt with the naval and marine aviation  
24 platforms. That's -- was the hearing. But, they were  
25 talking about the triple whammy of sequester. So, here's

1 the triple whammy of sequester on this kind of component of  
2 readiness. Sequester and budget caps slows down the ability  
3 to purchase new platforms. So, since we can't purchase the  
4 new platforms we need, let's extend the life of existing  
5 platforms, let's take planes that were meant to fly 6,000  
6 hours and make them fly 10,000 hours. Well, to do that,  
7 you've got to do a lot of maintenance. And, since the  
8 planes weren't supposed to fly after 6,000 hours, you find a  
9 whole lot of challenging maintenance problems with planes  
10 that have been in saltwater environments, corrosion because  
11 of saltwater, or have been in desert environments, corrosion  
12 because -- so then there's a whole lot of extra depot and  
13 maintenance demand that we didn't necessarily plan for.  
14 And, oh, by the way, because we furloughed a whole lot of  
15 employees and stuff, and great aviation mechanics can get  
16 jobs elsewhere, we're down about 10 percent of what we need  
17 in the workforce.

18 So, sequester stopped us on the -- slowed us on the new  
19 purchases. Sequester is imposing significant extra demands  
20 on the maintenance of these aircraft. Sequester is driving  
21 away some of our workforce. And yet, we are supposed to,  
22 nevertheless, do the mission that the Nation demands. And  
23 then you add to it the Chairwoman's comment from DNI  
24 Clapper, "This is the most complex strategic set of  
25 challenges we see," readiness is not happening in a vacuum.

1 Readiness is happening after our military has been at Ops  
2 Tempo for 15 years. That, in and of itself -- forget about  
3 sequester -- that has a readiness challenge to it.

4 So, you combine 15 years of Ops Tempo and a complex  
5 strategic environment and the budgetary challenges of caps  
6 and across-the-board cuts and furloughs and then sort of the  
7 uncertainty, "Is Congress going to fix it, or not?" and you  
8 can see why we have such a huge budgetary challenge that we  
9 have to resolve.

10 Retired General Mattis, at a hearing earlier this year,  
11 said, "No foe could wreak such havoc on our security as  
12 mindless sequestration is achieving." No foe could wreak  
13 such havoc on our security as mindless sequestration is  
14 achieving.

15 If a large-scale conflict were to occur in the near  
16 future, Armed Forces would not have enough ready forces to  
17 respond to the COCOM requirements, we'd likely suffer  
18 additional casualties as a result. We've had that  
19 testimony.

20 So, this has been like an alarm bell that's just been  
21 ringing, you know, on our table next to us. Your testimony,  
22 combined testimony, has been like the alarm bell's been  
23 ringing, ringing, ringing, ringing, ringing. And there just  
24 has to be a moment where we take a step to turn off the  
25 alarm and adjust to a better path. In the fiscal year '14

1 and '15 budget, we were able to find a way to reduce the  
2 impact of sequester -- not eliminate it, cut it in half.  
3 And it may be pie in the sky to think we could eliminate it.  
4 But, we ought to be finding significant sequester relief,  
5 whether it's depot maintenance or extra plane hours or the  
6 effect on the workforce that furloughs create, in terms of  
7 morale for people who have other opportunities. All these  
8 are significant.

9       That's what we'll be hearing about during the testimony  
10 today. And I look forward to working with my colleagues  
11 trying to find, based on your testimony, and based on your  
12 -- you know, giving us the stories and the anecdotes we need  
13 to convince our colleagues, I look forward to trying to find  
14 a better path.

15       And, with that, thank you, Madam Chair.

16       Senator Ayotte: Thank you, Senator Kaine.

17       I would like to first call on General Allyn, the Vice  
18 Chief of Staff for the Army.

19       Thank you, General.

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1           STATEMENT OF GENERAL DANIEL B. ALLYN, USA, VICE CHIEF  
2 OF STAFF, UNITED STATES ARMY

3           General Allyn: Thank you, Chairman Ayotte, Ranking  
4 Member Kaine, Senator Rounds, distinguished members of the  
5 subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on  
6 the readiness of your United States Army.

7           On behalf of our Secretary, The Honorable John McHugh,  
8 and our Chief of Staff, General Ray Odierno, I thank you for  
9 your support and demonstrated commitment to our soldiers,  
10 Army civilians, families, and veterans.

11           There are over 140,000 soldiers committed around the  
12 globe, partnered with our allies, in response to increasing  
13 instability across Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and the  
14 Pacific, continuing the mission in Afghanistan, and reacting  
15 to humanitarian crises. The velocity of instability is  
16 increasing, as you have all stated; and now is not the time  
17 to drastically reduce our capability or capacity. The Army  
18 needs Congress to provide adequate, consistent, and  
19 predictable funding.

20           Today, only 33 percent of our brigades are ready, when  
21 our sustained readiness rate should be closer to 70 percent.  
22 The fiscal year '15 enacted funding for our Army is \$5.1  
23 billion less than what we had in fiscal year '14 and  
24 challenges commanders and leaders across our Army to sustain  
25 hard-fought gains in our readiness. We are funded to

1 achieve just enough readiness for immediate consumption, but  
2 are unable to generate the readiness required to respond to  
3 an unknown contingency.

4 While the fiscal year '15 budget constraints --  
5 constrains training, we remain committed to our Combat  
6 Training Center rotations to develop leaders and build unit  
7 readiness. We accept risk in home-station training to  
8 conserve resources for these Combat Training Center  
9 rotations. The result of this approach is that we expect  
10 our units to arrive at our Combat Training Centers not fully  
11 ready for these complex training scenarios and, therefore,  
12 unable to derive the full benefit of this training.

13 Under the President's budget in fiscal year '16, our  
14 goal is to increase regular Army brigade combat team  
15 readiness closer to 70 percent, allowing us to balance force  
16 requirements while maintaining surge capability. But, we  
17 need consistent resources to get there.

18 Sequestration will undermine readiness, ultimately  
19 putting soldiers' lives and our mission success at risk, and  
20 it will increase significantly the involuntary separation of  
21 officer and noncommissioned officer leaders who have  
22 steadfastly served their country through the last 13 years  
23 of war. Sequestration will also severely impact our ability  
24 to maintain our installation readiness and protect the  
25 industrial base, both key components to maintaining a

1 readiness -- a ready force. It will cut essential funds  
2 from military construction, sustainment, restoration, and  
3 modernization on our installations. Sequestration will  
4 degrade the industrial base's ability to sustain the life-  
5 cycle readiness of warfighting equipment while also  
6 maintaining the capability to surge to meet future demands.

7 To achieve our required readiness level in fiscal year  
8 '16, we need Congress to support all the cost-saving  
9 measures the Army has proposed. These include compensation  
10 reform, a new round of Base Realignment and Closure, and the  
11 Aviation Restructure Initiative. Aviation restructure  
12 eliminates 700 aircraft from the Active component and 111  
13 from the Guard and Reserve, but increases our readiness and  
14 saves \$12 billion. If the Army does not execute ARI, we  
15 will incur additional costs buying aircraft and performing  
16 maintenance, at the expense of modernizing our systems and  
17 maintaining readiness for our heroic aviators.

18 The Army remains committed to protecting our most  
19 important resource: our soldiers, civilians, and families.  
20 We build leaders of character and trusted professionals who  
21 provide an environment where every member of our great Army  
22 is treated with dignity and respect, supported by essential  
23 soldier and family programs. We will protect our most vital  
24 programs, but sequestration-driven budget cuts affect every  
25 facet of our Army.

1 I thank you again for your steadfast support of the  
2 outstanding men and women of the United States Army. And I  
3 look forward to your questions.

4 Thank you.

5 [The prepared statement of General Allyn follows:]

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1           Senator Ayotte: Thank you, General Allyn.

2           We're now going to hear testimony from Admiral Michelle  
3 Howard, who's the Vice Chief of Staff for Naval Operations.

4           Thank you, Admiral Howard.

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1           STATEMENT OF ADMIRAL MICHELLE J. HOWARD, USN, VICE  
2 CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS, UNITED STATES NAVY

3           Admiral Howard: Chairwoman Ayotte, Senator Kaine, and  
4 Senator Rounds, distinguished members of the committee,  
5 thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

6           It is my honor to represent the Navy's Active and  
7 Reserve sailors and civilians, and particularly the 41,000  
8 sailors who are underway and deployed around the world  
9 today. They're standing watch right now, and ready to meet  
10 today's security challenges. The citizens of this Nation  
11 can take great pride in the daily contributions of their  
12 sons and daughters who fulfill our Navy's longstanding  
13 mandate to be where it matters when it matters.

14           Recent events exemplify the benefit of forward  
15 presence. Last August, the George Herbert Walker Bush  
16 Carrier Strike Group relocated 750 nautical miles from the  
17 Arabian Sea to the Arabian Gulf in less than 30 hours. They  
18 executed 20 to 30 combat sorties per day. And for 54 days,  
19 they were the only coalition strike option to project power  
20 against ISIS. Then there's the U.S.S. Truxton, a destroyer  
21 that arrived in the Black Sea within a week after Russia  
22 invaded Crimea, to help reassure our allies in the area.  
23 Another destroyer, U.S.S. Sampson, and littoral combat ship  
24 U.S.S. Fort Worth were among the first vessels to support  
25 the search effort for Air Asia Flight 8501 in the Java Sea.

1 Our forward presence truly allows us to be where it matters  
2 when it matters.

3 Effectively operating forward around the globe requires  
4 a high state of readiness of our people and platforms. We  
5 are still recovering from a degraded readiness as a result  
6 of over a decade of combat operations. Sequestration in  
7 2013 exasperated our circumstances and created maintenance  
8 backlogs that have prevented us from getting ships back to  
9 the fleet on time and aircraft back on the flight line.  
10 Since 2013, many ships have been on deployment for 8 to 10  
11 months or longer, negatively impacting the morale of our  
12 people and readiness of our ships.

13 Our Navy fiscal year '16 budget is designed to continue  
14 our readiness recovery, restoring our required contingency  
15 operations capacity by the 2018-to-2020 timeframe, while  
16 continuing to provide a sustainable forward presence. It  
17 also includes credible and survivable sea-based strategic  
18 deterrence. With continued overseas operation funding, our  
19 fiscal year '16 budget meets the requirements of the global  
20 force management allocation plan. This includes at least  
21 two carrier strike groups and two amphibious ready groups  
22 operating forward, fully mission capable and certified for  
23 deployment.

24 Recovery of readiness also requires a commitment to  
25 protect the time it takes to properly maintain and modernize

1 our capital-intensive force and to conduct full-spectrum  
2 training. Achieving full readiness entails the restoration  
3 of shipyard capacity and aviation depots primarily through  
4 hiring and workforce development, and PB-16 puts us on a  
5 path to address these challenges.

6 I want to make it clear. The Navy fiscal year '16  
7 budget is the minimum funding required to execute the  
8 Nation's defense strategy. In other words, if we return to  
9 a sequestered budget, we will not be able to execute the  
10 defense strategic guidance. Past budget shortfalls have  
11 forced us to accept significant risks in two important  
12 mission areas. The first mission at risk is "deter and  
13 defeat aggression," which means to win a war in one theater  
14 while deterring another adversary in a different theater.  
15 And assuming risk in this mission leads to loss of  
16 credibility and ability to assure our allies of our support.  
17 The second mission at risk is "project power despite anti-  
18 access aerial-denial challenges." This brings risk in our  
19 ability to win a war. Some of our people and platforms will  
20 arrive late to the fight and inadequately prepared. They  
21 will arrive with insufficient ordnance and without the  
22 modern combat systems and sensors and networks required to  
23 win. Ultimately, this means more ships and aircraft out of  
24 action, more sailors, marines, and merchant marines killed.

25 As we look to the future, the Navy will continue to be

1 globally deployed to provide a credible and survivable  
2 strategic deterrent and to support the mission requirements  
3 of the regional combatant commanders. The Navy is  
4 fundamentally multi-mission and will rapidly adjust to meet  
5 new challenges that might require U.S. presence and the --  
6 and projecting power.

7 Our Navy will continue to ensure the security of the  
8 maritime domain by sustaining its forward presence,  
9 warfighting focus, and readiness preparations. Since there  
10 is no foreseeable reduction to global maritime requirements,  
11 we have focused our fiscal year Navy budget to address the  
12 challenges to achieving the necessary readiness to execute  
13 our missions. Any funding below this submission requires a  
14 revision of the defense strategy. To put it simply,  
15 sequestration will gravely damage the national security of  
16 this country. Despite these future challenges, we are  
17 fortunate to have the highest quality, the most diverse  
18 force in my Navy's history. These outstanding men and women  
19 who serve our Nation at sea make us the finest navy in the  
20 world.

21 So, on behalf of all our Active and Reserve sailors,  
22 our civilians, and their families, I extend our appreciation  
23 to this committee for your efforts and continued support to  
24 keep our Navy ready to defend this Nation.

25 Thank you.

1 [The prepared statement of Admiral Howard follows:]  
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1           Senator Ayotte: Thank you, Admiral Howard.

2           I would like to now receive testimony from General  
3 Paxton, the Assistant Commandant of the United States Marine  
4 Corps.

5           Thank you, General Paxton.

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1           STATEMENT OF GENERAL JOHN M. PAXTON, JR., USMC,  
2 ASSISTANT COMMANDANT, UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

3           General Paxton: Thank you, Chairman Ayotte, Ranking  
4 Member Kaine, Senator Rounds, and distinguished members of  
5 the Readiness Subcommittee. I appreciate the opportunity to  
6 appear before you today and to report on the readiness of  
7 your United States Marine Corps.

8           Today, as always, your Marine Corps is committed to  
9 remaining our Nation's ready force, a force that's truly  
10 capable of responding to a crisis anywhere around the globe  
11 at a moment's notice. I know that this committee and the  
12 American people have high expectations of your marines. You  
13 expect your marines to operate forward, to stay engaged with  
14 our partners, to deter potential adversaries, and to respond  
15 to crises. And when we fight, you expect us to always win.  
16 You expect a lot of your marines. And you should.

17           As we gather today, more than 31,000 marines are  
18 forward deployed and engaged, doing just what you expect and  
19 we expect them to be doing. Our role as the Nation's ready  
20 force continues to inform how we man, train, and equip the  
21 Marine Corps. It also prioritizes the allocation of  
22 resources which we receive from Congress. And I can assure  
23 you that your forward-deployed marines are well trained,  
24 well led, and well equipped.

25           In fact, our readiness was proven last year, as your



1 Marine Corps supported recent evacuations of United States  
2 citizens in South Sudan and then Libya and then Yemen.  
3 Those ready forces are also currently engaged in the Middle  
4 East, conducting strikes against Syria and Iraq, training  
5 Iraqi army units, and protecting our Embassy in Baghdad.  
6 They also routinely deploy and exercise across the Asia-  
7 Pacific region, where over 21,000 are west of the  
8 International Dateline.

9       These events demonstrate the reality and the necessity  
10 of maintaining a combat-ready force that's capable of  
11 handling today's crisis today. Such an investment is  
12 essential to maintaining our Nation's security and the  
13 prosperity for the future.

14       We will work hard with you in order to maintain the  
15 readiness of our all -- of our forward-deployed forces.  
16 And, while we do that, we have not sufficiently invested in  
17 our home-station readiness and in our next-to-deploy forces.  
18 We have also underfunded or delayed the full funding for our  
19 modernization, for our infrastructure sustainment, and some  
20 of our quality-of-life programs. As a result, approximately  
21 half of our non deployed units are suffering personnel,  
22 equipment, or training shortfalls. Ultimately, this has  
23 created an imbalance in our institutional readiness. At the  
24 foundation of our readiness, we emphasize that all marines  
25 and all marine units are physically and mentally ready, are

1 fully equipped, and have sufficient time to train with  
2 quality small-unit leaders at the helm. They are, thus,  
3 ready to move out whenever they're called.

4 As we continue to face the possibility of full  
5 implementation of the Budget Control Act, our future  
6 capacity for crisis response, as well as our capacity for  
7 major contingency response, is likely to be significantly  
8 reduced. Quite simply, if our home-station units are not  
9 ready due to a lack of training, a lack of equipment or  
10 manning, it could mean a delayed response to resolve a  
11 contingency or to execute an operational plan, both of which  
12 would create unacceptable risk for our national defense  
13 strategy as well as risk to the limits of mission  
14 accomplishment or the physical risk to the force, itself.

15 The readiness challenge we already see today provide  
16 context for our messages this morning. Your United States  
17 Marine Corps can, indeed, meet the requirements of the  
18 defense strategic guidance with the President's budget, but,  
19 unfortunately, there is no margin. As our Chairman stated,  
20 even under PB-16, we are already at the ragged lower edge  
21 for readiness.

22 I thank each of you for your faithfulness to our  
23 Nation, for your support of the Department and all four of  
24 our services.

25 I request that my written testimony be accepted for the

1 record.

2 I thank you for the opportunity to appear before you  
3 this afternoon, and I look forward to your questions.

4 Thank you.

5 [The prepared statement of General Paxton follows:]

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1           Senator Ayotte: Thank you, General Paxton.

2           We'll now receive testimony from General Spencer, who  
3 is the Vice Chief of Staff for the United States Air Force.

4           Thank you, General Spencer.

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1           STATEMENT OF GENERAL LARRY O. SPENCER, USAF, VICE  
2 CHIEF OF STAFF, UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

3           General Spencer: Thank you, Madam Chair, Ranking Member  
4 Kaine, and Senator Rounds, and distinguished members of the  
5 subcommittee. Thank you for your continued support of  
6 America's airmen and their families, and for the opportunity  
7 to share the Air Force's current readiness posture.

8           The United States Air Force is the most globally  
9 engaged air force on the planet, and our airmen are  
10 defending the Nation through a wide spectrum of activities,  
11 from dropping bombs and flying space assets to delivering  
12 humanitarian relief and protecting the homeland. We remain  
13 the best air force in the world. But, recent budget cuts,  
14 coupled with 24 years of combat operations, has taken its  
15 toll.

16           Our airmen, your airmen, have always been, and will  
17 always be, the cornerstone of the Air Force. And combatant  
18 commanders tell us that our airmen continue to perform  
19 exceptionally well across the globe. However, we are the  
20 smallest and oldest air force we have ever been, while  
21 demand for air power continues to grow. This is not a  
22 complaint. We're happy that what we bring to the table is  
23 recognized as indispensable when it comes to meeting the  
24 Nation's objectives. But, I am concerned. In fact, I'm  
25 more concerned than I -- today than I was when I testified

1 last year.

2 We have tankers that are, on average, 52 years old;  
3 bombers that are over 50 years old; and fourth-generation  
4 fighters that are, on average, 25 years old. In 1991, if we  
5 had used the B-17 bomber to strike targets in Baghdad during  
6 the first Gulf War, it would have been younger than the B-  
7 52, the KC-135, and the U-2 are today. We have to modernize  
8 to maintain our technological advantage, and this is  
9 something that we've set aside, the last few years. Our  
10 potential adversaries have been watching us and now know  
11 what it takes to create the best air force in the world.  
12 They are investing in technologies and doing everything they  
13 can to reduce our current airpower advantage.

14 Because we have the smallest and oldest air force in  
15 history, we need all of our airmen to be proficient in every  
16 aspect of their mission. Unfortunately, our high operations  
17 tempo has caused our airmen to only be proficient in the  
18 jobs they perform when they deploy. We simply do not have  
19 the time and the resources to train airmen across the full  
20 range of Air Force missions. I'm confident that, with your  
21 help, we can reverse this trend and regain our readiness.  
22 But, we will have to make some difficult choices to balance  
23 capacity, capability, and readiness, all of which have  
24 already been cut to the bone.

25 Our fiscal year '16 President's budget submission aims

1 to balance critical operational training and modernization  
2 commitments, but, even at this level, it will take years to  
3 recover lost readiness. We have already delayed major  
4 modernization efforts, cut manpower, and reduced training  
5 dollars.

6 One final point. The capability gap that separates us  
7 from other air forces is narrowing. That gap will close  
8 even faster under BCA levels of funding. When sequestration  
9 first hit in 2013, we saw the dominate -- the domino effect  
10 it had on our pilots, maintainers, weapons loaders, air  
11 traffic controllers, and our fighters and bomber squadrons.  
12 Readiness levels of those central to combat operations  
13 plummeted. In short, we were not fully ready. And we  
14 cannot afford to let that happen again.

15 To quote a young C-17 instructor pilot, "I am committed  
16 to defending this Nation anytime and anyplace, but I need  
17 the training and equipment to be ready to perform at my  
18 best." This is critical to answering the Nation's call to  
19 fly, fight, and win.

20 I'd like to thank you all for the opportunity to be  
21 here today, and for your continued support of your Air  
22 Force. I'm now happy to take your questions.

23 Thank you.

24 [The prepared statement of General Spencer follows:]

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1           Senator Ayotte: Thank you, General Spencer.

2           In light of the fact that we've had President Ghani  
3 here, I wanted to, in particular, ask General Allyn and  
4 General Paxton about what is happening on the ground in  
5 Afghanistan. In -- you know,, in particular, I was pleased  
6 to hear the President's announcement this week that he has  
7 decided to leave 9800 troops in Afghanistan until the end of  
8 the year. However, it seems to me that, as we look forward,  
9 having spoken to General Campbell and others about the  
10 situation in Afghanistan, that, even after this year, the  
11 most prudent course forward would be a ground -- a  
12 conditions-based determination of what we do with those 9800  
13 troops. And so, could you speak to that issue for me, in  
14 terms of where we are in Afghanistan and the needs we will  
15 have, going forward? You know, and I think one of the  
16 things all of us took from the President's speech today is,  
17 we actually have a partner that we can work with. That is  
18 refreshing.

19           So, General Allyn?

20           General Allyn: Thank you, Madam Chair.

21           I was fortunate to be in Afghanistan with General  
22 Campbell the first week of February, and I had an  
23 opportunity to deploy down to be with both of our divisions  
24 that are forward, providing mission command -- one from  
25 Kandahar, at Regional Command South, TAC-South, and the



1 other one in TAC-East, from the 3rd Infantry Division  
2 stationed at Bagram. And what was very clear to me as they  
3 were posturing for the potential to have to draw down to the  
4 directed numbers by the end of the year was that we had  
5 increased the ratio of our soldiers to contractors to a  
6 level that was what I would call the "razor's edge of risk."  
7 We had contractors doing that which soldiers need to do to  
8 assure the security of our forces. And it was really driven  
9 by the force manning levels that General Campbell was  
10 posturing for to accomplish the mission.

11 I also had an opportunity to meet with two of the  
12 senior commanders from the Afghan Security Forces that I had  
13 served with in 2011 to 2012 in Regional Command East, and I  
14 asked for their assessment of where they thought the Afghan  
15 Security Forces were and what gave them concern. And they  
16 were, overall, very optimistic, very determined, and very  
17 confident that they could weather the battle against the  
18 Taliban if they had the critical enabling capability that  
19 they required from -- you know, from the United States --  
20 and, in specific, some of the -- closing the gap for them,  
21 in terms of their aviation and their close air support  
22 capability that is not yet fully developed, and to continue  
23 to mature their sustainment capacity. Both efforts are well  
24 underway by the joint team that is there on the ground in  
25 Bagram under General Campbell's leadership. And I concur

1 with you that the ground that we have been able to regain  
2 with the partnership between General Campbell and President  
3 Ghani is very, very inspiring, certainly to us, who have not  
4 had that experience in the last couple of years, but it's  
5 also very inspiring to the Afghan Security Forces. Because  
6 President Ghani has personally gone down to spend time with  
7 his forces and communicate his intent to enable them to  
8 fight and win. So, I think it bodes well as we look  
9 forward, ma'am.

10 General Paxton: Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. I, too,  
11 have had the opportunity on many occasions to be over in  
12 Afghanistan and, just several months ago, with our MEB  
13 Alpha, who was down in Helmand Province before they pulled  
14 out. I'd echo what General Allyn said a moment ago, in that  
15 the conditions for success in Afghanistan have been set,  
16 both at the tactical level as well as at the strategic  
17 level. Making events on the ground and the commitment to  
18 continue there be more conditions-based than time-based is  
19 always a good thing. I feel good for General Campbell and  
20 our national leadership that, by making things condition-  
21 based, we have set ourselves on a path for success over  
22 there, and set the government -- the JROA as well as the  
23 Afghan National Security Force on the conditions for  
24 success.

25 And President Ghani committed as much to the Department

1 of Defense and the Armed Forces when he was over at the  
2 Pentagon the other day. So, I think we're in a good  
3 trajectory now, ma'am.

4 Senator Ayotte: Thank you both.

5 And I wanted to follow up with General Spencer and  
6 Admiral Howard on the issue of -- we're engaged with,  
7 obviously, still the mission against ISIS, which has  
8 involved significant use of our fighters that, if we had met  
9 probably a year ago, we wouldn't have been talking about  
10 some of the additional use of our fighter force in regard to  
11 this fight that we face and challenge that we face there.  
12 Can you help update the -- both of you update me on where --  
13 what are our challenges, in terms of having enough fighters,  
14 given that this is sort of a situation that we're, on the  
15 air, really helping the Kurds and the Iraqis on the ground  
16 fight the fight? And, you know, where do you see that, in  
17 terms of extra push on the force? And as we do the  
18 authorization, what would you like us to think about that,  
19 just in terms of the current situation on the ground in Iraq  
20 and Syria?

21 Admiral Howard: Thank you, Senator.

22 So, as I mentioned in my opening statement, as we  
23 maintain carriers about -- the George Herbert Walker Bush  
24 was there, and first the fighter size started to fly  
25 nontraditional ISR, but then quickly went into strike

1 missions. As we stay committed in these endeavors, we will  
2 most likely maintain carrier presence over there. And what  
3 we're finding is, we're flying the aircraft at a higher  
4 operational tempo. So, as we move forward and we continue  
5 staying engaged in support to the land components, we end up  
6 flying these aircraft much longer, longer distances, and  
7 then we end up consuming their readiness. And we're seeing  
8 that play out as we try and extend the life of these  
9 fighters, particularly the legacy Hornets, from 6,000 hours  
10 to 10,000 hours.

11 And then, as we go through and we do maintenance on  
12 them, we're finding that the additional flight time has  
13 created deterioration problems that we just weren't  
14 expecting. So, as Senator Kaine pointed out, it would have  
15 been this morning's testimony, the more -- the higher the  
16 OPTEMPO and the more we're engaged, the more we're flying,  
17 and then the more hours we put on these aircraft, and then  
18 the longer it is to return them back to a flyable status.  
19 So, we're clearly committed to the -- any -- the support  
20 that we're tasked to provide, but it does consume readiness.

21 Senator Ayotte: General Spencer?

22 General Spencer: Yes. Madam Chair, first of all, I  
23 echo everything that Admiral Howard had -- Admiral Howard  
24 said. I'd like to -- but, let me add a couple of things to  
25 give you some context.

1           Back during Desert Storm, in the Air Force, we had 133  
2 combat aircraft squadrons -- 133. We -- during Desert  
3 Storm, we deployed 33 forward, so we had a lot of squadrons  
4 left to do something else if something came up in the world.  
5 Today, we have 54 fighter squadrons -- 54 total. And so, I  
6 would ask you to think back, if we were in Desert Storm  
7 today and we deployed 33 forward. So, that's problem number  
8 one.

9           The other issue is -- and that we've -- I assume we'll  
10 get into, here -- is readiness, because a lot of folks  
11 assume you deploy folks to war and they are as ready as they  
12 can get. But, that's not the case in a COIN fight, because  
13 their getting a lot of training, flying and dropping smart  
14 munitions, but they don't have the sophisticated surface-to-  
15 air threat that they would have in a more -- in a higher-  
16 level fight. So, part of our challenge is, we are  
17 continually deploying folks to the current war. We don't  
18 keep them back home long enough to go out and train on these  
19 higher-level threats.

20           The final challenge I would mention is, we are using up  
21 a lot of smart munitions, and -- which are expensive -- and  
22 the interesting thing about the OCO budget is, OCO allows us  
23 to replace smart munitions that have already been expended.  
24 It doesn't let us project ahead.

25           Senator Ayotte: Really?

1           General Spencer:  So, we -- we're always chasing  
2 ourselves, getting behind in the amount of munitions we  
3 have.

4           So, to add a couple with Admiral Howard's comments, I  
5 couldn't agree with you more.

6           Senator Ayotte:  Thank you.

7           I'd like to turn it over to Senator Kaine.

8           Senator Kaine:  Thank you, Madam Chair.

9           And thanks, to the witnesses, for your testimony.

10          General Allyn, you said something -- I tried to write  
11 it down fast, and I'm having a hard time reading my  
12 handwriting, during your testimony, but I think it was, "We  
13 have enough readiness for immediate consumption, but not  
14 enough for a contingency."  Is that basically the thought  
15 you were expressing?

16          General Allyn:  Yes, it is, Senator Kaine.  We -- for  
17 the past, you know, in -- about 6 months after  
18 sequestration, our readiness had degraded to about 10  
19 percent of our brigades being ready for a global  
20 contingency.  The next 18 months, we rebuilt that to just  
21 above 30 percent.  But, we have been holding steady at 30  
22 percent now for about 4 months, because, as fast as we  
23 generate the readiness, it's being consumed.

24          As an example, when the ebola crisis hit --

25          Senator Kaine:  Yeah.

1           General Allyn:  -- you know, within days, we deployed  
2     the 101st Airborne Division, that was a force training and  
3     ready to go to Afghanistan, to divert in and provide  
4     essential support to the USAID to fight and abate the ebola  
5     crisis.  We also deployed a Brigade Combat Team of the 82  
6     Airborne Division into Iraq to provide the plus-up and  
7     advise-and-assist capability that was required in Iraq.  
8     Their readiness was, you know, absolutely at the top,  
9     because they had just handed off the Global Response Force  
10    mission to the 2nd Brigade of the 82nd.  And we had sort of  
11    counted on that brigade coming off to provide some surge  
12    capacity for a number of months, but, instead, you know, a  
13    requirement emerged, and we met it, just as we always will.

14           And so, as we've been, you know, being good stewards of  
15    the resources you are giving us to generate readiness, we  
16    are also responding to emergent requirements.

17           Senator Kaine:  Right.

18           General Allyn:  In 2014, about 87 percent of the  
19    emergent requirements, we met as an Army, as we will  
20    continue to do, but it does speak to the -- really, the  
21    twofold challenge of building readiness.  You know, we can  
22    generate additional readiness, but we can't control the  
23    demand.

24           Senator Kaine:  Right.  Right.  And is that just basic,  
25    kind of, phraseology, "We have readiness for immediate

1 consumption, but not for a contingency"? Would that be kind  
2 of a fair statement that all of you from your respective  
3 branches would agree with?

4 Admiral Howard: So, in particular for the Navy, we  
5 look at the readiness of the units that we deploy and then  
6 the forward-deployed units, and then we've always kept a  
7 level of readiness for the units in order to surge, those  
8 that respond to a contingency, just as General Allyn  
9 described. And right now we're at our lowest surge capacity  
10 that we've been at in years, and -- so, we're able to have  
11 two carriers out and about, but we've only got one in  
12 backup. And the same with the ARG. We've got two out and  
13 about and one in backup.

14 Our goal is to -- with this budget, to get us back and  
15 increase that readiness and meet our own goals of two --  
16 having two carriers deployed and three ready to surge,  
17 approximately half the force.

18 So, yes, as time has gone on, we have literally  
19 consumed the readiness, and then the readiness of the forces  
20 that are next in the wicket.

21 Senator Kaine: Great, thank you.

22 General Paxton?

23 General Paxton: Thank you, Senator Kaine.

24 And I guess the short answer is, absolutely, we  
25 generate readiness, but we consume it as fast as we generate



1 it. We, as a Corps, are focused primarily on crisis  
2 response. And, as we do that, we are mortgaging our future  
3 for sustainment and for modernization, and we're also  
4 reducing the at-home or home-station training and  
5 availability of units.

6 I can give you two examples, if I may, Senator. One is  
7 in the AFRICOM area, and one is in the Central Command area.  
8 In both of those geographic combatant commanders today, we  
9 have a Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force. We  
10 would like to say that is kind of like a MEU, a Marine  
11 Expeditionary Unit. It is not as sustainable and  
12 expeditionary ashore, and it certainly doesn't have the  
13 power projection and sovereign capability that we would like  
14 to have coming off of an amphibious platform, a ship. But,  
15 we generated those two capabilities in immediate response to  
16 combatant commander requests. In the case of AFRICOM, it  
17 was to help with some security-force arrangements at some  
18 embassies, to work some train, advise, and assist missions  
19 and develop partnership capacity. And then, in the Central  
20 Command AOR, it was because of specific risks at two  
21 embassies, and then also to start working on train, advise,  
22 and assist missions with the Iraqi Security Forces.

23 But, in both of those cases, that has now consumed what  
24 would have been home-station readiness, because it's now  
25 forward deployed. It has brought us closer to a one-to-two

1 depth-to-dwell, which creates stress on the force. It  
2 further exacerbates the age and the maintenance of our  
3 equipment. And, despite the good work of my shipmate and  
4 where the Navy's trying to go with capital investment, it  
5 highlights the fact that we already have a paucity of  
6 amphibious ships by inventory, and that's also exacerbated  
7 by the fact that they have maintenance challenges keeping  
8 them in the yard. So, we can't generate enough sovereign  
9 launch-and-recovery capability for the Nation that we have  
10 to do these things with a smaller unit and go what we call  
11 "feet dry" ashore. So, we consume it as soon as we generate  
12 it, yes, sir.

13 Senator Kaine: General Spencer?

14 General Spencer: Yes, sir. The -- first of all, a  
15 similar story from -- for the Air Force. The combat air  
16 forces that we have right now, less than 50 percent are  
17 fully spectrum ready -- less than 50 percent. And let me  
18 give you a couple of examples, because, again, we're --  
19 right now we're just talking about combat air forces. We  
20 haven't talked about nuclear, we haven't talked about ISR,  
21 we haven't talked about space. But, let's talk about ISR  
22 for a second.

23 I mean, right now we have been in a position of surge  
24 in our ISR caps since 2007. That does not define a surge.  
25 And so, we are essentially --

1 Senator Kaine: Because nobody ever asks for less ISR.

2 General Spencer: That's exactly right.

3 Senator Kaine: It just continue -- it continues to --

4 General Spencer: It continues --

5 Senator Kaine: Yeah.

6 General Spencer: -- it has exploded -- the demand has  
7 exploded. And so, we have been staffed, if you will, for 55  
8 cap since 2007, flying 65. We've -- we surged, that entire  
9 time. So, we have essentially at our wits' end at the --  
10 where we are now, because we've got -- RPA pilots are that  
11 we have just worked to the point where we are worried that  
12 we -- whether we can retain them, or not, and whether they  
13 will stay.

14 Now -- so, when we first started ISR, as you know, we  
15 did a combination of things. We brought in pilots from  
16 other airplanes, other weapon systems, brought them in,  
17 taught them how to fly RPAs, and we also created a  
18 schoolhouse to train new RPA pilots.

19 We've now reached the point where the new RPA pilots  
20 are coming up to the point where they can separate. We have  
21 asked them all, in a survey, "Are you going to take the  
22 bonus and stay?" Roughly 30 percent say they'll stay. And  
23 we've already reached a point where our pilots can go back  
24 and fly other weapon systems, and we're telling them they  
25 can't go back. So, we're asking for volunteers to come back

1 in, we're increasing their bonuses. We're asking for Guard,  
2 you know, to volunteer. We're -- we have a series of things  
3 we're doing to try to make that enterprise healthier, but  
4 it's just an indication of what the current Ops Tempo has  
5 done. And I can't -- I want to footstop that, because  
6 General Paxton mentioned it. The Ops Tempo that we're under  
7 now has now allowed us to bring the -- where we are down low  
8 enough so we can --

9 Senator Kaine: Yeah.

10 General Spencer: -- train and get ready to go again.

11 Senator Kaine: Right. Well, I'm over time, but just  
12 to say, you know, if we have, essentially, a force that's  
13 ready for immediate consumption, but we don't really have  
14 the contingency ability, you've just got to look at the  
15 world and say, "So, are we in a world without contingencies,  
16 or are we in a world that is likely to throw some  
17 contingencies?" And the answer to that is just as plain as  
18 everyday's front page. We are in a contingency-rich world  
19 right now.

20 So, thank you, Madam Chair.

21 Senator Ayotte: Senator Rounds.

22 Senator Rounds: Thank you, Madam Chair.

23 Thank you for your service.

24 Admiral Howard, a week ago today we had a group of  
25 South Dakotans in for a meet-and-greet. And one of the guys

1 was about my age, brought in and was very proud of the fact  
2 that in his wallet he was carrying a picture that his son  
3 had taken at his first solo flight in an F/A-18. And, in  
4 doing so, we could see the pride. But, he said something  
5 that was concerning to me, and that was that it was just  
6 unfortunate that it was taking approximately 18 months for  
7 them to reach a certain level of readiness, where, if they  
8 would have had the parts to keep the aircraft in the air, it  
9 would have taken normally about 12 months. It seems to me  
10 that, if that anecdotal information being shared is  
11 accurate, that you're going to have a tough time coming up  
12 with the pilots, in a regular order of operation, just to  
13 replace and keep up with the readiness necessary for the  
14 folks that are working right now in combat areas.

15       Could you visit a little bit about -- number one, is my  
16 estimate -- or is my information accurate, in terms of the  
17 challenges you've got right now with keeping aircraft in the  
18 air and operational? And, second of all, with OCO funding  
19 the way that it's set up right now -- and I'm going to ask  
20 this of all of the members here -- is there something that  
21 we can do, with regards to the limitations that we've got,  
22 to where we can modify OCO somehow so that you can access  
23 funds that might otherwise be there, but not available for  
24 what your immediate needs are?

25       Admiral Howard: Thank you, Senator.

1           Perhaps a slightly different perspective. And this  
2 gets down to that 2013, when we sequestered, we furloughed  
3 some of our artisans and engineers, and then we created a  
4 backlog in our aviation depots. And so, when we're looking  
5 at the throughput of those aviation depots, coupled with the  
6 aging aircraft, and then as we open up those older F/A-18s  
7 and discover that, by flying them longer, there's more  
8 corrosion, that backlog just increased. And so, we already  
9 had the -- have and are living with the impact of that short  
10 period of sequester. We now are in the timeframe where we  
11 are hiring the artisans as quickly as we can, several  
12 hundred this year, to help get us to being able to assess  
13 those aircraft quickly and then repair them as quickly as we  
14 can.

15           And this is where OCO has been very helpful. So, we  
16 have our fundamental aviation maintenance account, and then  
17 we've plussed-up that maintenance account to help get that  
18 throughput up to where it needs to be, and to decrease that  
19 backlog.

20           So, for us, right now the limitations for the depot is  
21 not the money. The limitation is literally getting the  
22 people hired and in place; for the people who are new,  
23 getting them trained. But, there's also another piece to  
24 it. I think there's a trust factor there, that, when we  
25 want to bring people -- proud civilians in to do all the

1 support for our aircraft, or whether it's ships, they have  
2 to trust that the work's going to be there, that they can  
3 live their lives, pay their mortgages, and not worry about  
4 being furloughed, so that they want to have a job with the  
5 government.

6         So, we know we have a backlog, and we expect to be able  
7 to clear that up in 18 months. But, all bets will be off if  
8 we sequester again. And then, you're right, then it gets  
9 down to, not just, "Do we have the aircraft for our pilots  
10 to train in?" -- but, when we sequestered last time, I was  
11 the Deputy Commander of Fleet, and I had the very unhappy  
12 job of going down and talking to a cruiser CO and his chiefs  
13 and his crew, because we weren't going to be able to get  
14 that ship underway. And we talked about what it meant for  
15 their qualifications, what it meant for the -- their ability  
16 to serve at sea. If people can't do their jobs, it's a  
17 immense dissatisfier.

18         Thank you.

19         General Allyn: Senator Rounds, in terms of the OCO  
20 flexibility that's required, clearly OCO has been critical  
21 for us to meet the readiness and the equipment recovery,  
22 replenishment for our forces that have been deployed in  
23 support of the countless operational requirements, both  
24 emerging and known. And we've been thankful for that  
25 funding. But, as you talk about a wider application of OCO

1 in the future, it needs to be more flexible. It must be  
2 more flexible. Because, otherwise, we cannot use it for all  
3 the readiness requirements that we have, and certainly the  
4 year-to-year application of it --

5 Senator Rounds: Sir, if I could, would you get us a  
6 list of what you need the flexibility on that we may be able  
7 to look at, in terms of OCO funding available?

8 General Allyn: Yes, sir, we will.

9 [The information referred to follows:]

10 [SUBCOMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 Senator Rounds: Thank you.

2 General Paxton: Yeah, thank you, Senator Rounds.

3 If I may, two things. Number one, to follow up on Vice  
4 CNO's comments, when we have a challenge with our  
5 maintenance and the dollars for maintenance -- and you used  
6 F-18s as an example. We call it RBA, Ready Basic Aircraft.  
7 And those are the ones that are through the upgrades,  
8 modernization, and they're ready on the flight line to take  
9 off. When those aircraft are delayed, either because we  
10 don't have money for parts, money for engineers, or money to  
11 actually move the aircraft to the depot, we still have  
12 pilots who are waiting to fly. So, now we have more pilots  
13 than we have aircraft. Sometimes, if we have a higher  
14 demand signal, those pilots may actually go forward. So,  
15 the time they have available to train to them when they get  
16 back is shorter. So, you can see the downward spiral that  
17 happens, because then you have more pilots with a shorter-  
18 term time, with less aircraft to train on, and then you get  
19 in this training readiness spiral that goes down.

20 If you exacerbate that by the fact that some of those  
21 flight requirements actually have to come from the deck of  
22 the ship that you need bounces on carrier calls or that you  
23 need night vision goggle ops, the minute you perturb the  
24 availability of a ship or an aircraft, the spiral starts,  
25 and it's really hard to regain.

1           To your second question, on OCO dollars, always  
2 helpful. We'll all work together to get you examples of how  
3 that would help. But, I'd just like to be on the record,  
4 sir, that the OCO dollars are insufficient to the problem we  
5 have right now. I mean, they are single-year dollars. It's  
6 a short planning horizon. And it's actually the BCA caps  
7 and it's the ability to forecast across the FYDP to start  
8 long-term modernization programs and sustainment and upgrade  
9 programs that will eventually allow us to not only handle  
10 the crisis, but to handle the contingency we need because we  
11 have enough readiness at home station.

12           Thank you, sir.

13           General Spencer: And, Senator, in terms of OCO  
14 specifically, flexibilities of where you may -- might be  
15 able to help, I already mentioned one. So, there are  
16 certain things, like munitions, that are after-the-fact.  
17 So, we put, in our OCO submission, munitions that we used  
18 last year, but we can't put in OCO submission what we plan  
19 to use this year. So, again, we're always a year behind.

20           Timing is really critical, because if the OCO budget  
21 comes late in the year, that does a lot of things to us.  
22 One, we are trying to plan, hoping on the come, not exactly  
23 sure what we'll get passed. There is actually a law that  
24 says you have to obligate 80 percent of our own end money by  
25 July. And so, if the money comes late, we've got a problem

1 there that we have to work through.

2 We're all afraid to death one of these days, if OCO  
3 goes away, and a lot of the things that are being funded in  
4 OCO, quite frankly, will end up in our base, How is that  
5 going to work? You know, in the Air Force, for example, we  
6 have several bases in the theater right now that we've been  
7 told are going to be, quote/unquote, "enduring," which means  
8 we'll probably hang onto those bases. They're being funded  
9 by OCO. What happens when OCO goes away? How do we get  
10 that money into the base?

11 And finally, as General Paxton mentioned, planning is a  
12 really big deal, because -- particularly in a procurement  
13 account. So, if we're going to buy a weapon system, if  
14 we're going to pay for F-35s or do a multiyear for C-130s,  
15 it -- that's really difficult to do if you're trying to do  
16 that one year at a time, because you don't know what's going  
17 to come in the next few years. So, to the extent that those  
18 type of purchases can -- you know, I've been told that  
19 there's a -- there is -- that we have had a multiyear OCO in  
20 the past, or a supplemental. I don't know if that's under  
21 consideration. But, the real answer for us is if we can get  
22 that money in the base, that would really be helpful.

23 Senator Rounds: Thank you, Madam Chair.

24 Senator Ayotte: Thank you.

25 It would be really helpful to us, especially those of

1 us that serve jointly on the Budget and Armed Services  
2 Committee, if all of you could submit to us what you think,  
3 in terms of flexibility for OCO, because we don't know how  
4 this story ends, this year, and just -- you know, you're,  
5 I'm sure, aware of things that happen on the floor on the  
6 budget and all that. And it would be helpful for us to  
7 understand that. If the plus-up ends up being in the OCO  
8 line versus the base budget, what do you really need, to do  
9 what needs to be done? And I know it's not ideal. And,  
10 frankly, there are many of us that want to deal with the  
11 overall BCA in solving it. And I'm still committed to doing  
12 that. But, you know, we've got to do what we've got to do  
13 around here. So, just -- if you can get that to us, it  
14 would be helpful -- all of the branches -- to understand  
15 what you really need.

16 [The information referred to follows:]

17 [SUBCOMMITTEE INSERT]

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1           Senator Ayotte: And I wanted to ask, General Allyn,  
2 can you give us an update on end strength and where we are,  
3 in terms of numbers, on end strength? How many people have  
4 we had to use involuntary terminations for in 2014? What's  
5 been the status of those individuals? You know, are they --  
6 are there people that we have in combat that we're giving  
7 involuntary terminations to? And then, you know, one thing  
8 I think that's fairly powerful as we look at -- if we go to  
9 sequester, where does that put our end strength? I know  
10 we've talked about it in the larger committee. But, also,  
11 what does that mean, in terms of involuntary terminations?

12           And I really want people to understand. I think this  
13 committee understands very well. In some ways, when we talk  
14 about sequester, when you talk to the Armed Services  
15 Committee, a little bit like preaching to the choir, but we  
16 want to get this word out also to the broader Senate. And  
17 so, if you could comment on the involuntary termination  
18 issue, end-strength numbers. And I would also then ask  
19 General Paxton to follow up the same with the Marine Corps.

20           General Allyn: Yes, Madam Chair. The bottom line is,  
21 we are at about 498,000 today in the United States Army,  
22 headed toward a end-of-fiscal-year number of 490,000 and  
23 budgeted in the POM to go down to 450,000. To give you the  
24 broader answer first, to get to 450,000 soldiers, as has  
25 been directed by our current budget, that will require the

1 involuntary separation of 14,000 soldiers. On average --  
2 that's officers and noncommissioned officers -- on average,  
3 it's about 2,000 per year. Okay? So, fiscal year '14 was  
4 about 2100 soldiers. Just over 50 percent of those soldiers  
5 served over two or more combat tours. So, these are  
6 soldiers that answered the call multiple times to meet the  
7 requirements that the Nation had. They were --

8 Senator Ayotte: Two or more combat tours.

9 General Allyn: Two or more combat tours for 50 percent  
10 of that -- those that we were asking to leave involuntarily.  
11 Now, first and foremost, this is not a choice the United  
12 States Army took. This is a budget-driven requirement. And  
13 so --

14 Senator Ayotte: I assume that, if you've done two  
15 tours, you're not terminating these people because they  
16 aren't capable of fighting.

17 General Allyn: You are absolutely accurate. And you  
18 asked a question, were we really having to separate some  
19 soldiers that were forward deployed? The answer is yes.

20 Let me first let you understand that treating those  
21 veterans of multiple combat tours with dignity and respect  
22 is our absolute number-one commitment. Every single officer  
23 or noncommissioned officer that we asked to involuntarily  
24 separate was briefed, before the board was held, by a  
25 general officer -- first general officer in the chain of

1 command, and then, when the board completed its process and  
2 identified those for separation, they were briefed again,  
3 face to face, as much as possible. In a couple of cases,  
4 they had to have the general officer contact by phone or VTC  
5 with the immediate commander present to ensure that we  
6 treated these, you know, people who had served so  
7 courageously with the absolute utmost dignity and respect.

8         And our objective in notifying people that were forward  
9 deployed was to give them the maximum time possible to  
10 transition effectively to the next phase of their life. The  
11 minimum that we wanted to provide them was 10 months, at  
12 least, so that they would have an opportunity to take the  
13 benefit of all of the transition, education, plug them into  
14 employment advisors through programs like our Soldier for  
15 Life Initiative, and ensure that we set them up for success,  
16 to include providing opportunities for mentors from  
17 industries around their communities that they intend to go  
18 back to.

19         So, not a choice that we took willingly or voluntarily,  
20 but we have taken it on, we have ensured the appropriate  
21 care of every one of our soldiers, and are committed to do  
22 so as we go forward.

23         Senator Ayotte: General Paxton?

24         General Paxton: Yeah, thank you, Senator Ayotte.

25         Your Marine Corps today is 184,000. We had grown to

1 202,000 by some special appropriations and authorizations.  
2 That was temporary. We knew we were not going to be able to  
3 sustain that. And so, we had started our downward growth,  
4 if you will, before BCA kicked in.

5 Under BCA, we have to be at 182,000 by the end of  
6 fiscal year '17. We expect, if full BCA continues, we could  
7 very well have to go to 175,000.

8 To date, we have deliberately not broken faith with  
9 marines. Almost all of our separations have been voluntary.  
10 We have had low double digits of majors who were not  
11 selected to lieutenant colonel, and staff sergeants who were  
12 not selected to gunnery sergeant, who we did not continue.  
13 But, they were afforded other venues for separation at that  
14 time.

15 We do have a concern that if the BCA caps come back and  
16 we have to go to 175,000, that at some point we could be  
17 forced to do larger numbers of involuntary termination.

18 Senator Ayotte: I don't know if -- you know, Admiral  
19 Howard, I'm not trying to exclude the Navy and the Air Force  
20 on this. Anything you want to report on this end?

21 General Spencer: I would only add that we've -- we  
22 were on a steady decline in manpower, and finally have --  
23 we've drawn a red line at around 317,000 for active duty,  
24 because we just can't go any lower. Based on our -- the  
25 levels of maintenance folks we have on our flight lines,



1 fixing our airplanes, launching satellites, we've sort drawn  
2 a red line and said we can't go any further.

3 Admiral Howard: So, along with General Spencer, I  
4 think the Navy and Air Force were on a different journey  
5 these last 15 years. And I recall, in December of 2000,  
6 when I reported to the Joint Staff and then 9/11 happened  
7 the following year, literally I -- we were a Navy of about  
8 14 carriers, 383,000 people, and I think it was close to 312  
9 ships. We're -- we've downsized about 67,000 people, and  
10 we're about 279 ships today

11 The budget we've submitted continues to acquire ships,  
12 build ships, and we would be looking at being back to 304  
13 ships in 2020. But, because we're a capital-intensive  
14 force, our manning is matched to those ships. And so, we  
15 would expect to be at 329,000, and about 57,000 Reserve.  
16 But, we took -- we reduced our force over the last 14 years.  
17 And so, along with the Air Force, we're not trying to get  
18 any smaller.

19 Senator Ayotte: Thank you.

20 Senator Kaine?

21 Senator Kaine: On the issue of OCO and flexibility,  
22 I'm maybe a little bit like a former Governor. We're all  
23 into flexibility. I like giving folks flexibility.

24 But, I would guess that, as long as we're talking about  
25 readiness, even putting flexibility doesn't necessarily -- I

1 think, General, you said, it's the caps, not the  
2 flexibility. Flexibility would be helpful. But, won't  
3 there always be a tendency, if you have to choose between  
4 priorities, to kind of short readiness? I mean, you're  
5 always going to -- you're always going to do the day's  
6 mission and try to have people as well deployed as you can  
7 for doing a deployed mission. And if you don't have enough  
8 to choose from, you'll always pick that, and probably try to  
9 save on the readiness side. It seems like that's one of the  
10 challenges. So, even if you allow for flexibility, it would  
11 seem that readiness is always going to be somewhat at risk  
12 in a capped environment when there aren't sufficient  
13 resources, "Well, we can't -- we don't want to short the  
14 folks who are forward deployed during these missions, so  
15 we'll probably -- you know, if we have to save it somewhere,  
16 we're going to save on the readiness side."

17 So, flexibility, I don't view that as the real  
18 solution. I mean, it could be helpful, but it's not really  
19 going to solve the readiness challenge we have, in my view.  
20 Am I wrong to look at it that way?

21 General Paxton: Senator, if I may, I'll start, only  
22 because we've just had this discussion this morning in the  
23 building. And, although there are some common terminologies  
24 and lexicon, each of the services has to look --

25 Senator Kaine: Yeah.

1           General Paxton:  -- at this in a little different way.

2           So, on the part of the Marine Corps, we truly envision  
3 ourselves as the 9-1-1 force that you -- that the American  
4 public, the American Congress, the taxpayer, they expect us  
5 to be most ready when everybody else is least ready.  We  
6 don't have a big role or mission in the nuclear triad and  
7 things like that.  We're a rather conventional force, we're  
8 a rather small-unit force, and we're supposed to be forward  
9 deployed, forward engaged.  So, we fully expect that we're  
10 going to generate readiness and consume readiness, and, at  
11 some point, we will take risk in some modernization and  
12 we'll take risk in some home-station readiness.  We think  
13 we're at that ragged edge right now.

14           For example, our aircraft are old, too, anywhere from  
15 22 to 29 years, and growing.  Our amphibious vehicle  
16 capability is 42 years old.  So, we're at the point, as  
17 General Spencer said earlier, that we have to modernize.  
18 And we, early on, after OIF and OEF, went into this bathtub,  
19 and we had to go all in to modernize, because the gear was  
20 too old.

21           So, we feel at risk now for modernization and  
22 sustainment.  But, we're going to continue to give you  
23 fight-tonight forces, ready forces for the crisis that's at  
24 hand, even if we know, later on, we may eventually get to  
25 the point of, "Yes, but," that we'll give you several

1 companies, but not a whole battalion, we'll give you a  
2 squadron with eight aircraft instead of 12 aircraft.

3 But, each of the other services, at some point, looks  
4 at it just a little differently. So, that's where the  
5 Marine Corps is, sir.

6 General Spencer: Yes, Senator. You put your finger on  
7 really what our challenge is, quite frankly, because you  
8 said, in most cases, we would go to readiness if we had a  
9 budget issue, a budget concern. The reason we do that is  
10 because we don't have a lot of choice. We've only got three  
11 pots of money. We have people, procurement, and readiness.  
12 People, you can't just send people home. I mean, you know,  
13 you -- even if -- people -- actually, our military folks  
14 were exempt from sequestration, but, even if they weren't,  
15 that's a long process to reduce. And, quite frankly, we  
16 can't reduce any more. Similarly with procurement, those  
17 are multiyear purchases that are stretched out over many  
18 years, involve a lot of money. If you start cutting those,  
19 your unit cost goes up.

20 Senator Kaine: Yeah, you can slow down the next one,  
21 but you can't --

22 General Spencer: That's --

23 Senator Kaine: -- break the one that you're --

24 General Spencer: That's exactly right.

25 Senator Kaine: -- in the middle of. Right.

1           General Spencer:  So, then -- so, a lot of times, we  
2 don't have any choice, if we have to find fast money, but to  
3 go to readiness, because it's essentially O&M money.  But,  
4 that's the dilemma, because we -- that's where our readiness  
5 is.  And so, that's the box we're put in.

6           Senator Kaine:  Yeah.

7           General Spencer:  We don't want to do that.  And we're  
8 -- all the services are obviously a little bit different,  
9 but, at least in the Air Force's case, as you know, you  
10 know, if we get called upon, I mean, we've got to be there  
11 in hours, not days, weeks, or months.  And so, it's -- we  
12 have to -- it's -- readiness is critical for us, yet  
13 readiness is the only account we can go reach out and take  
14 money quickly.  And so, that's the sort of dichotomy we're  
15 in.

16          Senator Kaine:  Indeed.

17          Other comments?  General Allyn, Admiral Howard?

18          General Allyn:  I was just going to just reinforce my  
19 teammates' points, here.  But, it really does come down to  
20 trying to balance concurrent priorities.  And, as has been  
21 stated, the Army's budget, over 50 percent of it is  
22 committed to our national treasure, our people, you know,  
23 both the military and civilian.  So, we've got 50 percent of  
24 the budget with which we wrestle with the dual priorities of  
25 readiness and modernization.  We, in the Army, have actually

1 erred on the side of delivering the readiness that's  
2 required for the known and emerging missions, and taking  
3 risk in the mid- to long-term with modernization. But, that  
4 is a -- that's a hard choice, and it's a choice that our  
5 Chief and our Secretary take, fully analyzing, you know, the  
6 opportunity costs of doing that.

7 And it's just a very, very difficult position to be in,  
8 and one -- with the capacity that this Nation has, we  
9 shouldn't be in that position.

10 Senator Kaine: Yeah.

11 General Allyn: You know, our soldiers should expect  
12 that, when they go up against an adversary, that adversary  
13 faces an unfair fight whenever they come up against the  
14 United States of America. And we are putting that at risk.

15 Senator Kaine: Admiral Howard?

16 Admiral Howard: Senator, thank you. I just wanted to  
17 share that, when I was at fleet, when we sequestered last  
18 time, as General Spencer pointed out, that was the only  
19 intermediate choices we had.

20 Senator Kaine: Yeah.

21 Admiral Howard: When you talk about readiness, we had  
22 to cancel deployments of ships. Now you're not where you  
23 need to be, and you're not giving the COCOM any forces, let  
24 alone ready forces.

25 And then we had to reduce steaming hours and flying

1 hours, which is the training of the piece Senator Rounds  
2 brought up. We had to take some of the air wings down to  
3 tactical hard deck to generate the savings to hit that lower  
4 target budget -- budget target. So, there is, in the  
5 immediate aftermath of sequestration, an impact on the  
6 forces and -- in the O&M account and in operations and in  
7 training dollars.

8 Thank you.

9 Senator Kaine: Last -- just a comment. You had -- you  
10 mentioned the COCOM, and that reminded me of one other  
11 thought. We have the hearings with the COCOMs, you know,  
12 the status hearings, during the spring. And one of the  
13 things I'm really always impressed by, and most recently a  
14 conversation with General Kelly at SOUTHCOM, is the degree  
15 to which the COCOMs really approach their mission with kind  
16 of a whole-of-government approach. They're relying on the  
17 intelligence community, they're relying on the State  
18 Department, they're relying on Department of Justice,  
19 they're relying on DHS -- especially in the SOUTHCOM, that's  
20 really important. All these agencies are affected by  
21 sequester, too, the partners that our COCOMs rely on. They  
22 may not be -- you know, it may not be defense sequester, but  
23 they're sequestered on the nondefense side, and they have a  
24 direct impact on the security mission. So, again, there's a  
25 lot of compounding effects here, and your testimony is good

1     tribute to that.

2             Thank you, Madam Chair.

3             Senator Ayotte:   Senator Rounds.

4             Senator Rounds:   Thank you, Madam Chair.

5             I think it's becoming obvious in the discussion that,  
6     as you listen to us, we talk about trying to make it --  
7     we're trying to set it up so that there is a way to skin  
8     this cat that's out there right now with BCA basically there  
9     and in front of us.  And part of it is to give you as many  
10    options as possible in order to be able to utilize the funds  
11    that we are able to allocate, either through the budget and  
12    then through the appropriations process.  I want to make  
13    sure that, if we do take a particular approach, that it is  
14    as readily available to you as possible without other  
15    strings attached to it.  And so, you know, we're not exactly  
16    sure how we skin this cat that's in front of us, but we want  
17    your help in doing so, and that's the reason for the  
18    discussion.

19            I just wanted to go directly to General Spencer with  
20    something that you said earlier that I think is just so  
21    impactful, and that is that, if we would have been going to  
22    war in 1991, we would have been in the same position as we  
23    are today with the age of our aircraft; we'd be flying B-  
24    17s.  And, you know, in fact, if my information is correct,  
25    DOD currently operates a bomber force that is half the size



1 of the cold war force recommended by its 1993 bottom-up  
2 review.

3 Now, if it's true that advances in sensor technologies  
4 and precision-guided weapons have helped to offset cuts  
5 driven by budget reductions, but -- in other words, they  
6 have the effect, though, of acting as a force multiplier --  
7 but, that being said, reduced readiness levels -- and that's  
8 what we've been talking about here, are the readiness levels  
9 -- the readiness levels have an opposite effect.

10 I'd just like to talk a little bit, and I want to give  
11 you an opportunity to visit a little bit, about the -- what  
12 happens with the -- has the combination of reduced readiness  
13 and smaller force size eroded our global strike advantage?  
14 And right now we're talking about aircraft that are very,  
15 very old, and you've got an F-35 that's available right now  
16 that you're still trying to procure, you've got a tanker  
17 that's necessary to be set up and operational, but you also  
18 have a need to replace, or at least to supplement, the B-1  
19 and the B-2. And right now you've got B-52s that are doing  
20 some of that work, but the LRSB has clearly got to be  
21 maintained, as well, or at least you've got to be able to  
22 procure that in the future. Can you talk a little bit about  
23 what that is and what's going on right now within the Air  
24 Force to try to maintain all of those goals, and procure and  
25 still maintain readiness?

1           General Spencer: No, thank you, Senator.

2           And again, you've put your finger right on the issues,  
3 here. You know, the -- we've only got 20 B-2s, and if --  
4 so, if we have to have a long-range penetrating bomber that  
5 can get through a lot of the -- you know, back when the B-52  
6 and the B-1 was built, they aren't stealthy, they don't --  
7 they won't penetrate some of the systems that are out there  
8 now, so we have to have that capability. Similarly, for our  
9 other platforms, as well. The F-35, for example, along with  
10 the F-22, you know, some of -- there are other fighters  
11 being introduced into the market now, so-called 4.5  
12 generation, if you will, that would beat our -- I mean, the  
13 advantage that we have always had, and I think we still  
14 have, is, our pilots are better trained. But, if you give  
15 the adversary a better airplane, then that's a real problem.  
16           So, the faster and the more efficiently we can get to  
17 fifth generation, the better.

18           Senator Rounds: Do you want to talk just a little bit  
19 in -- you made the remark, and then you moved on rather  
20 quickly, but you're talking about a 4.5, which is out there,  
21 which is going to, basically, be in a position to where --  
22 we don't ever want to be in a fair fight, but we want to the  
23 advantage to be on our side all the time. Do you want to  
24 talk about that just a little bit?

25           General Spencer: Sure, yes. So, the -- they are being

1 produced, as we speak, developed and produced, a -- an -- a  
2 fighter that is ahead of our fourth-generation -- the F-15,  
3 F-16s -- it is ahead. And so, based on the systems they  
4 have, we -- they would -- as our Chief said, 4.5 kills a  
5 fourth-generation airplane. And so, that's why it's -- and  
6 the sense of -- we have to modernize our fleet, is what I'm  
7 saying. The age of our fleet that we have now won't -- is  
8 not sufficient for us in the high-end threats and the high-  
9 end fights that we are -- that we could be involved in. And  
10 so, we -- so, if nothing else, to maintain, first,  
11 deterrence, but then to be able to win if deterrence fails.  
12 We want to go in -- as General Allyn said, we don't want a  
13 fair fight. We want the best equipment, with the best  
14 technology, with the best-trained both -- maintenance folks,  
15 pilots, you name it, space operators -- we need the absolute  
16 best that we can have. And so, that's really imperative for  
17 us to stay on track with our modernization.

18 Senator Rounds: Thank you, Madam Chair.

19 And, unless one of the other --

20 Sir?

21 General Paxton: Thank you, Senator Rounds.

22 And, if I may -- I had made the point earlier about how  
23 we all need a planning horizon. We had aging aircraft in  
24 both our F-18s, our AV-8Bs and our EA-6s. And we knew we  
25 were going to have to replace them, so we put -- we went all

1 in on the F-35, and we're in that bathtub right now. So,  
2 the monies and the planning that is available to us to bring  
3 the F-35 to fruition are critical for the fight in the  
4 future. And if we don't -- if the BCA kicks in and we buy  
5 fewer, then you lose the economies of scale, you delay the  
6 production line, and then our fight-tonight force and our  
7 fight-tomorrow force are both jeopardized.

8 Thank you.

9 Senator Rounds: Thank you.

10 General Allyn: And I would just add, for the Army, the  
11 same application that General Paxton just talked about for  
12 our -- modernization of our aviation fleet is absolutely the  
13 exact same dynamic. And so, we will not procure the more  
14 modern UH-60 aircraft that our total force needs, we will  
15 not modernize the AH-64 to the level that it needs to, and  
16 our CH-47 modernization will stop after fiscal year '16.  
17 And so, it is absolutely critical that we stay on this path.

18 Admiral Howard: So, we have often used a technological  
19 edge as a warfighting edge. And so, as we've had to meet  
20 budget targets, we've had to slow modernization down. But,  
21 really what that gets to is our ability to win in a anti-  
22 access aerial-denial fight. And so, as we slow down our  
23 ability to modernize weapon systems on ships or on aircraft  
24 or the physical platforms themselves, it's given potential  
25 adversaries an opportunity to get closer to us and to start

1 -- and that gap in the technological edge is starting to  
2 diminish.

3 Senator Rounds: Thank you.

4 Thank you, Madam Chair.

5 Senator Ayotte: So, I wanted to -- we have -- Senator  
6 Shaheen is on her way for some questions -- but when --  
7 Admiral Howard, when we met in my office, one of the issues  
8 that you raised, we saw, recently, the attempt by ISIS to  
9 expose our men and women in uniform in the cyber domain.  
10 And so, I wanted to get your thoughts on, you know, What are  
11 the cyber challenges that our forces face, and how does all  
12 this relate to readiness and our posture?

13 Admiral Howard, I'd start with you.

14 Admiral Howard: Thank you. So, there's two issues.  
15 All of us -- one is the force, writ large -- our civilians,  
16 our Active, and our Reserve. We all actually live and  
17 operate in this domain. We're in it for our workday, and  
18 then, for our sailors and Reserve, they're in it when  
19 they're off duty. And so, for us, we have to continue to  
20 develop and train our workforce to understand that as much  
21 innovation and excitement and fun as you can have on liberty  
22 in this domain, there's vulnerabilities in this domain.  
23 And, because of the robustness of knowledge exchange in this  
24 domain, the vulnerabilities translate to potential  
25 operational security issues, which is some of what we saw

1 this week.

2 So, as -- whether they're sailors, Reserves, or  
3 civilian, if they are out and about on social networks, and  
4 identify themselves or identify units, that they have to be  
5 trained to understand operational security in this virtual  
6 domain, just as they understand operational security in the  
7 physical domain.

8 And the next piece is, there is a more professional  
9 cohort when you look at the -- for us, the information  
10 dominance community, you look at our enlisted, our IT, and  
11 then, for officer, informational professionals,  
12 cryptologists, intelligence officers, and then they are  
13 really the heart of our cyber warriors and the workforce  
14 that we're developing to not only defend our networks, but  
15 also develop both offensive cyber capability, as well. And  
16 then, that's -- for us, those are the components, those are  
17 the folks we put together, and then they are the ones that  
18 work underneath U.S. Cyber Command in whatever mission sets  
19 they're required to provide.

20 General Allyn: Madam Chair, I would just add that, you  
21 know, in 2013, we had no Army cyber mission teams. And  
22 today we have 24 that are supporting combatant commanders at  
23 the initial operating capability, building to over 40, you  
24 know, by the end of next year. And their training and  
25 development is absolutely critical.

1           But, you highlighted a very critical point, and that  
2 is, we should be trying to accelerate the elimination of our  
3 vulnerabilities. And, unfortunately, all of us are faced  
4 with the reality of having to take a multiyear approach to  
5 this, because of funding limitations. And my belief is,  
6 this cyber risk is accelerating very, very fast.

7           General Paxton: Senator, if I may, the -- it also  
8 shows -- to General Allyn's point, it shows the dynamic here  
9 -- I'm sorry -- it shows the dynamic of the pressure we're  
10 under. As the money gets tighter -- BCA cap, if you will --  
11 and as the pressure on end strength goes down, we're -- we  
12 all spend over 50 cents of our dollar on our people, the  
13 most important weapon system that we have. In the Marine  
14 Corps, it happens to be about 61 cents on the dollar. We  
15 have also stood up cyber mission teams and cyber support  
16 teams, both for the service and for some of the geographic  
17 combatant commanders -- in our particular case, Special  
18 Operations Command. And so, then you get into the tension  
19 about providing conventional force capability and providing  
20 cyber capability. And it really shouldn't be a tension.  
21 You should provide both. But, when you're under an end-  
22 strength reduction and a fiscal reduction, that's hard to  
23 do.

24           General Spencer: Yes, Senator, and we're similar.  
25 We've got 20 cyber teams, growing to 40, as General Allyn

1 mentioned. Because of funding, we've had to stretch that  
2 out longer than we would -- we're comfortable with.

3 You know, I was raised, you know, to keep my personal  
4 business to myself. You know, my daughter puts all of her  
5 business out on Facebook. I don't really get that.

6 [Laughter.]

7 General Spencer: But, that's kind of the generation of  
8 folks that are coming in the military now, that everything  
9 they do and everywhere they go and everything they eat and  
10 everybody they talk to is on Facebook. You know, we're  
11 realizing now, that's a vulnerability. And so, all of us  
12 have -- you know, all of the names that were listed by ISIL  
13 on their list, we've contacted them all and talked to them  
14 specifically about these sort of social networks, if you  
15 will, that they put your -- you know, your access out there.  
16 Unfortunately for us, I mean, you can Google any of us, and  
17 our whole life history is out there, whether we like it or  
18 not. But, for a lot of our troops that deploy, again,  
19 those, you know, Twitter or Facebook, all those -- they're  
20 great social tools, but they also make us all vulnerable,  
21 and they expose our personal -- some of our personal  
22 information.

23 Senator Ayotte: Thank you, I think all three of us can  
24 relate to that, certainly.

25 And I wanted to call on Senator Rounds for a brief



1 follow-up question, and then I'm going to turn it over to  
2 Senator Shaheen.

3 Senator Rounds: Thank you, and I'll try to make this  
4 brief. It's just a followup to what the Chairman was asking  
5 about a little bit.

6 In terms of your overseas operation or your downrange  
7 operations, particularly with regard to ISR, have you seen  
8 any kind of a degradation with either regard to the cyber  
9 capabilities or your space capabilities? Anything, in terms  
10 of the items there that you would like to address or that  
11 you see as threats to our capabilities, that we should be  
12 aware of, in terms of things that impact your ability to  
13 deliver?

14 General Allyn: Well, I think we have to be careful, in  
15 terms of, you know, just how much we can talk about, there  
16 is --

17 Senator Rounds: If a simple "yes" is there, then --

18 General Allyn: There is risk out there in that domain.

19 Admiral Howard: Senator, I'm sure you're aware, for  
20 the Navy, we had, a year and a half ago, multiple  
21 simultaneous intrusions into our network. And so, that  
22 really, I think, raised our awareness and our focus on  
23 defending our networks and making sure we mitigate risk in  
24 this domain.

25 Senator Rounds: Impacted you overseas.

1           Admiral Howard: It was simultaneous, and several  
2 different organizations.

3           Senator Rounds: Thank you.

4           General Paxton: Yes, sir, there is risk. There has  
5 been intrusion and threat. And we need both the policies  
6 and the monies to do the training to combat that, sir.

7           Senator Rounds: Thank you.

8           General Spencer: And, Senator, I agree, and would  
9 offer that we could -- any of us, certainly the Air Force,  
10 would like to come and brief you, sort of, one on one, if we  
11 could.

12          Senator Rounds: Thank you.

13          Senator Ayotte: Senator Shaheen.

14          Senator Shaheen: Thank you, Madam Chair.

15          And thank you all very much for your service and for  
16 being here today.

17          I know this -- I don't think the Chair has asked this  
18 question, though I know she's very interested in it, as  
19 well. One of the things that I have heard from folks at the  
20 Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, which, of course, is one of the  
21 shipyards that we're very interested in, is that if  
22 sequestration returns, the ability to attract the workers  
23 that we need for the shipyard is going to be compromised.  
24 Right now, they're in the process of hiring 700 people.  
25 We're seeing a whole generation of engineers, technicians,

1 people who have real expertise at the shipyard who are  
2 retiring. And if -- can you just talk about what the  
3 potential challenges are, if sequestration returns in 2016,  
4 to being able to attract the workforce we need to fill our  
5 public shipyards?

6 Admiral Howard: Yes, ma'am. So, when I was down at  
7 fleet -- this is anecdotal, but -- as we sequestered and  
8 then we had a hiring freeze, and then we ended up  
9 furloughing different folks, we found, in some areas, that  
10 folks who had sufficient years decided to retire early, that  
11 the potential of not having a full year of employment, year  
12 to year, was enough for them to rethink.

13 And so, for us, if that happens again and then we have  
14 to reduce maintenance contracts or make similar tough  
15 choices, in particular for our shipyards, we have that -- a  
16 demographic, where we have an older cohort that's a  
17 substantial part of the workforce that might make that  
18 decision.

19 The next thing is, for the folks who stay, there  
20 becomes doubt as to -- and a lack of trust as to whether  
21 they are going to have a full year's worth of employment.  
22 And it's not just the pay. There is that component, because  
23 they have to support their families.

24 Senator Shaheen: Right.

25 Admiral Howard: But, it's also, they take a lot of

1 pride in who they are and what they do as helping generate  
2 forces for our Navy or as public servants in other areas.

3 Senator Shaheen: And is this something that the rest  
4 of you are seeing in a different way as you're trying to  
5 recruit folks?

6 General Allyn: Well, I think, ma'am, the impact of the  
7 furlough across our civilian workers was devastating. It  
8 gets at this issue of erosion of trust. And we've got  
9 incredibly dedicated workforce, in uniform and in civilian  
10 workforce. But, there is a limit to, you know, how many  
11 times we can keep going back and asking them to hang in  
12 there with us. And we have seen a similar case, where some  
13 of them that were retirement-eligible or could take an early  
14 retirement option decided, "You know, this has been a great  
15 run. I love serving in the Army, but I'm not sure the Army  
16 loves me as much as I love it." And that's a terrible  
17 feeling for us, who take this on as a profession.

18 General Paxton: Senator Shaheen, if I may, just as a  
19 overview of our civilian workforce, most of us are pretty  
20 lean in the civilian workforce. Between mil-to-civ  
21 conversions and then outsourcing and contractors, our  
22 civilian workforce has been getting smaller and smaller.  
23 The furlough and the BCA caps had a disproportionate effect  
24 on our civilian workforce. So, there is a sense of an  
25 erosion of trust and confidence, and they're really valuable

1 members of the team. When the Commandant testified in front  
2 of the full committee several weeks ago, he said that, in  
3 the Marine Corps' case, only 1 in 10 in civilian workers,  
4 civilian in military is the workforce -- over 90 percent of  
5 them work outside of the national capital region. So,  
6 there's this perception there that maybe the headquarters  
7 are bloated and there's a lot in Washington. Now, they're  
8 actually tooth and not tail, and they're actually out there  
9 doing important things for the service and for the Nation.

10         And the anecdotal story that I bring up is, I went down  
11 our depot in Albany, Georgia, about a year ago, and this was  
12 in the aftermath of the furlough. And we had worked very  
13 hard to keep folks there. Some of these folks are working  
14 in a very small county, a very rural county. And the other  
15 two or three industries in the county, a rubber and tire  
16 plant and a golf plant, had left. So, the only viable  
17 workforce in -- major in the area now, is -- there's one  
18 health system and then there's the Marine Logistics Depot.  
19 When we started to furlough people, there was no other place  
20 for them to go. Many of them were working on equipment  
21 where they needed a security clearance. And, as they went  
22 from payday to payday without a security clearance, they  
23 were deathly worried that the creditors would come after  
24 them; and then, the minute the creditor came after them,  
25 even if it was a delayed payment in a home mortgage, that

1 would affect their clearance, so that, even when the  
2 furlough was relieved, we couldn't hire them back because  
3 then they'd be flagged as a security risk. So, there's this  
4 horrible downward spiral when that happens.

5 Thank you.

6 Senator Shaheen: Thank you.

7 General Spencer: And, Senator, we have a similar  
8 story. We also have 96 percent of our civilians that work  
9 outside of the national capital region, so at our training  
10 bases, for example, where we train pilots to fly, the entire  
11 flight-line maintenance operation are civilians, the whole  
12 unit. And so, if you think about the Air Force -- as an  
13 example, when we sequestered, last -- or a year and a half  
14 or so ago, we stopped flying airplanes, we actually put  
15 airplanes down, which meant now pilots can't train, so they  
16 lose their certification over time, maintenance folks have  
17 nothing to work on, and airplanes -- I happen to have a '72  
18 Monte Carlo at home, and if you don't start that thing about  
19 once a week and drive it, it's not any good. Airplane --  
20 you have to fly airplanes to have them efficient.

21 So, we had airplanes sitting down. Now they're not  
22 going to the depot. And now you've got this stackup.  
23 You've got -- don't have airplanes available. And, as you  
24 know, it's going to take X number of days to get an airplane  
25 through the depot. So, now they back up. And so, it's not

1 like if sequestration is suddenly lifted, you know,  
2 everything works well. No. You've got this backlog that  
3 you have to now push through a funnel.

4 The final thing I'll mentioned, that General Paxton  
5 touched on, is my son, who works for the government -- he's  
6 a computer science guy -- he -- when we furloughed him, he  
7 -- and this is similar to what I heard from a lot of other  
8 civilians -- he was really frustrated, because- he said, "I  
9 can go work somewhere else and make more money. I want to  
10 be a part of the government." But, he said, "If they're  
11 going to -- I've got a family. And I" -- you know, two of  
12 my grandkids -- "and if every time there's budget dispute,  
13 they lay me off," he said, "I don't know if I could do that  
14 for the long term." So, it had -- it took a real toll.

15 Senator Shaheen: I very much appreciate what you all  
16 are saying. And I think it's an important reminder for  
17 those who say, "Well, you know, we exempted uniformed  
18 personnel, and so it didn't have the kind of impact" that  
19 all of you are pointing out that it really did. And  
20 hopefully, we will act with more sanity in this budget  
21 cycle.

22 Thank you all very much.

23 Senator Ayotte: I just have a couple of follow-ups,  
24 but, since I have my colleague, Senator Shaheen, here, I  
25 know she'd want me to follow this one up with General

1 Spencer.

2 Just wanted to check in on the KC-46As delivery to  
3 Pease in 2018. I know there were a couple of testing  
4 delays, but are things looking pretty good, on track?

5 General Spencer: Yes, Madam Chair. We're on track.  
6 As you know, we had a couple of concerns, but we are still  
7 on track. We had some slack built in. Some of -- a lot of  
8 that slack's been taken up now. But, as we stand today,  
9 we're still on track. We still feel good about the  
10 schedule.

11 Senator Ayotte: Excellent. Appreciate that. And we  
12 appreciated General Welsh's recent visit to Pease, as well.  
13 That was terrific, and I know it meant a lot to those in our  
14 Guard and those that are part of the 157th Air Refueling  
15 Wing. So, please pass our gratitude on.

16 Senator Shaheen: Thank you, Madam Chair. We like to  
17 tag team on this issue whenever possible.

18 [Laughter.]

19 Senator Ayotte: And I just have a couple of follow-up  
20 questions.

21 One, General Spencer, I had a question about JTAC  
22 training, because recently it was brought to our attention,  
23 a memo that was dated February 25th, 2014, signed by the  
24 Commander of the 18th Air Support Operations Group, ASOG,  
25 Commander. And the memo relates to JTAC training. And the



1 issue raised in the memo are problems with ground force  
2 commander coordination, airspace deconfliction, and nine  
3 line errors. And the Commander also writes that an  
4 increasing lack of live-fly CAS training opportunities and  
5 funds for TDYs have eroded overall JTAC proficiency across  
6 the 18 ASOG. The Commander notes that continued decrease in  
7 the amount of live-fly CAS controls available to unit JTACs;  
8 and to the credit of the Commander, he intends to offset  
9 that decline with using simulators. So, can you give me a  
10 sense of what's happening with the JTAC training, and  
11 especially live-fly CAS training, and where we are with  
12 that, and just an update on how the JTAC training is going?

13 General Spencer: Yeah. First, Madam Chair, I have to  
14 apologize. I haven't seen that letter, so I would like to  
15 go back and take a look at it and give you a more -- give  
16 you a better response --

17 Senator Ayotte: Sure.

18 General Spencer: -- so I can get the specifics. And  
19 I'm actually going down to Pope Air Force Base on Monday to  
20 talk to some of our --

21 Senator Ayotte: Okay. Well --

22 General Spencer: -- JTACs --

23 Senator Ayotte: -- we're happy to get it for you, and  
24 we'll be happy --

25 General Spencer: Okay. So, if --

1           Senator Ayotte:  -- if you want to take it for the  
2 record and get back --

3           General Spencer:  So, if I could, I would like to give  
4 you --

5           Senator Ayotte:  Absolutely.

6           General Spencer:  -- make sure I give you a good  
7 response on that.

8           [The information referred to follows:]

9           [SUBCOMMITTEE INSERT]

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1           Senator Ayotte: No problem. Appreciate that very  
2 much.

3           The other question that I had for you was, you know,  
4 about what's happening at Nellis. And can you confirm for  
5 me whether the Air Force has made a decision to close the A-  
6 10 Division at 422 Test and Evaluation Squadron at Nellis?  
7 And if so -- I mean, yes or no. I don't know if you're  
8 making that decision or where things are.

9           General Spencer: Yeah, that -- again, I'm a deer in  
10 the headlights on that one, as well. You -- close the  
11 squadron?

12          Senator Ayotte: Yes.

13          General Spencer: No, I -- again, I'll have to follow  
14 up with that, because I --

15          Senator Ayotte: Then why don't I give you a follow-up  
16 question --

17          General Spencer: Okay.

18          Senator Ayotte: -- on that one, too.

19          General Spencer: Okay.

20          Senator Ayotte: That's pretty specific.

21          [The information referred to follows:]

22                 [SUBCOMMITTEE INSERT]

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1           Senator Ayotte:  And I wanted to thank you, Admiral  
2           Howard.  You and I talked about this when we met in person,  
3           and that is on the maintenance projects at the Portsmouth  
4           Naval Shipyard.  And, frankly, you know, I want to commend  
5           the Navy for meeting and exceeding its capital investment  
6           requirements across all the shipyards.  And the thing that  
7           you and I talked about was the P-266 project at Portsmouth.  
8           And I know I was very happy with your answer, and you're  
9           very focused on seeing that go forward.  So, thank you for  
10          that.

11          Admiral Howard:  Yes, ma'am.  Thank you.

12          Senator Ayotte:  Terrific.

13          And, not to keep you all too much longer, but there was  
14          one question that I just wanted to follow up since I had you  
15          all here, because I think it's important.  You know, we  
16          spent a lot of last year talking about how are we going to  
17          address sexual assaults in the military.  And having all of  
18          you here today, I think I'd be remiss if I didn't ask you  
19          how things were going, where is the status of -- what's the  
20          status of the legislation that we passed, and how do you  
21          perceive the implementation of that legislation in your  
22          branches, and -- give us an update on how things are going  
23          and where you see we can help some more.

24          General Allyn:  I'll start, Madam Chair.

25          First of all, we have made significant headway in

1 eliminating the threat and the presence of sexual assault  
2 and sexual harassment in the military. Most promising is  
3 that reporting is up. Our soldiers are reporting over 90-  
4 percent confidence that, if they report an incident, that  
5 the chain of command is going to take the right actions,  
6 both to protect the person that is -- has been assaulted, as  
7 well as to ensure accountability of those who perpetrate the  
8 alleged assault.

9         So, we are continuing a rising level of reporting. We  
10 are seeing a reduction in the incidences of assaults. Both  
11 promising. But, we still have work to do, particularly in  
12 eliminating the risk and the perception of retaliation by  
13 our soldiers inside our formations. And so, our sergeant  
14 major of the Army has initiated an effort called "Not in My  
15 Squad," because the confidence level that we see at the  
16 battalion level and above is very high, but the incidents  
17 are occurring at the company level and below. So, he is  
18 bringing forward a group of staff sergeants from across our  
19 total force to get their input on how do we improve both  
20 ownership of resolving this threat to our trust and our  
21 dignity and respect in our formation, and accountability to  
22 ensure that every soldier, every leader, is doing everything  
23 they can, not only to prevent these acts, but to prevent  
24 even the perception of any -- retaliation of any type.

25         We talked a bit ago about social media and the impact

1 that that has. And what we're seeing is, the most  
2 significant level, and the hardest to defeat, is the  
3 retaliation -- the social retaliation by peers and others  
4 that's occurring in social media. So, we are arming our  
5 leaders with the tools that they need and the training to  
6 understand how to attack this part of the spectrum that is  
7 somewhat new to most of us, but, unfortunately, not new to  
8 our soldiers.

9 Admiral Howard: Thank you, Senator.

10 I'd like to, if I may, refer some of this to the  
11 report, but some of it to the conversations I've had with  
12 our sailors as I've traveled as Vice Chief. And so, when I  
13 do my all-hands calls, I talk about this issue, about the  
14 RAND survey, and then ask them for their thoughts. And  
15 then, in particular, in San Diego, I was able to sit down  
16 with a group of 40 women who represent all the different  
17 communities on our ships, from commanding officers to the  
18 medical officers to engineers.

19 The -- from the RAND survey, we understand that  
20 prevalence has decreased for both men and women. But, you  
21 asked, more specifically, what changes have we made, some of  
22 it based on law, that really has made a difference. The  
23 feedback I'm getting, which seems to be buttressed by the  
24 results of the survey, is, first of all, having NCIS be the  
25 first one on scene to investigate sexual assault seems to be

1 bring an objectivity to the whole process. And so, that is  
2 an important change that -- you know, I think all of the  
3 services are committed to professional investigation when  
4 there's an incident.

5 The -- in our case, bringing in victim legal counsel --  
6 this is the person who's the -- who helps the victim through  
7 the process -- that person is making a big difference for  
8 our sailors and their trust in the --

9 Senator Ayotte: That's music to my ear, because that  
10 was my piece, and I'm glad to hear that.

11 Admiral Howard: And I actually just sat down with one  
12 of our first victim legal counsels. She's in Rota, Spain.  
13 And she talked a lot about both her and the SARC and what  
14 their presence meant to the victims throughout the process.

15 The other is, for the -- for us -- for the training,  
16 the bystander intervention. I've heard from our sailors,  
17 both men and women, and then it bears out in the metrics,  
18 that this training that we put together, the scenario-based  
19 training, really felt -- empowered them to be able to take  
20 care of their shipmates. And then, when you look at the  
21 results of the RAND survey, that when our sailors saw  
22 something, nine out of ten of them took action. The  
23 training works. They understand the importance of taking  
24 care of shipmates, whether, when you see something, you go  
25 to help your shipmate, you help your shipmate make a report

1 through another process, or you report it yourself. And  
2 when I've spoken, particularly to the women, they say the  
3 training is very effective, but that the results are even  
4 more impressive. So, thank you for all of that.

5 General Paxton: Thank you, Madam Chair.

6 I would echo -- and I think the Secretary of Defense  
7 was on record as saying -- in the subject of SAPR, we have  
8 had almost unprecedented focus and significant success and  
9 accomplishments. We're not, as General Allyn said, anywhere  
10 near where we want to be, need to be, should be, but we're  
11 going to continue the focus. In the case of the Marine  
12 Corps, we've had almost 1,000 fewer documented cases of  
13 unwanted sexual contact. And that's about a 30-percent  
14 reduction, so pretty significant.

15 The two pieces to your specific question that I'd like  
16 to highlight, if I may, Senator -- number one is, there's  
17 over 70 pieces of legislation that have either been enacted  
18 or proposed, and it's going to take us a while to work with  
19 them. I would echo what the VCNO said. We have several  
20 documented cases where the victim's legal counsel office --  
21 or officer was a big help, both in comfort to the potential  
22 victim and then in the adjudication and the defense. But,  
23 we have also had cases, too, where we have now introduced a  
24 fourth lawyer into what was a three-lawyer equation, where  
25 you had a prosecutor, a defender, and a judge. And you know



1 much better than I, ma'am. But, we're going to have to work  
2 through that, because some of these cases will be  
3 challenged, and you would hate for the one out or the one  
4 each to perturb the goodness of the whole system.

5 And the last piece, if I may, Senator, is just to  
6 highlight the centrality and the criticality of the  
7 commander in all this. And we're very appreciative of the  
8 work by the committee to keep the commander involved.  
9 Because whether it comes to bystander intervention, NCO  
10 leadership, legal accountability, you have to have the  
11 commander there.

12 So, thank you.

13 General Spencer: Madam Chair, similarly, we -- because  
14 we all work together on this problem to share lessons  
15 learned, and working together to try to solve this problem.  
16 It's similar, the Air Force. Our prevalence is down by 25  
17 percent, our reporting is up by 61 percent. So, we think  
18 that's all in the right direction. We've done a lot of  
19 work, as you know, through special victim's counsel, things  
20 to make sure victims are taken care of, make sure that  
21 commanders have the tools they need to prosecute if someone  
22 is found guilty.

23 Our big push right now is on prevention, preventing  
24 this from happening in the first place. So, we've done  
25 several things. About a month ago, we had a Sexual Assault

1 Prevention Summit. We brought in everyone from E1 all the  
2 way up to wing commanders. We brought in experts around the  
3 country, brought in the Center for Disease Control. We  
4 spent a whole week diving into this issue. And the good  
5 news was, the answer was yes, you can prevent it, but it  
6 takes a lot of study, a lot of understanding the crime and  
7 to have things that specifically get at it.

8         Just 2 weeks ago, I was down in North Carolina, in the  
9 Research Triangle. I met with folks from University of  
10 North Carolina and from Duke who are also working on this  
11 crime in their colleges -- local colleges -- have a lot of  
12 great ideas. We're partnering with them. In fact, they're  
13 on their way now to Sheppard Air Force Base to work with  
14 some of our trainees there. So, we're -- this is something  
15 -- I can promise you, this is something I -- we all work on.  
16 I know I work on it every day. And we're not going to stop  
17 until this is fixed.

18         Senator Ayotte: Thank you. We're not going to stop,  
19 either. And so, you know, I think this is something we --  
20 we did tremendous pieces of legislation and worked on this  
21 collectively in a bipartisan fashion in the last Congress.  
22 And now you've got, as General Paxton really pointed out, a  
23 lot of implementation of -- you know, to get this right.  
24 And I really appreciate what I hear most from all four of  
25 you, which is understanding the importance of this and the

1 commitment that we need, you know, every day to get this  
2 right, and to work together on it. So, I appreciate your  
3 giving me an update on that. And I look forward to  
4 continuing to work with you, all of you, on this issue.

5 And thank you all for being here today and for what you  
6 do for the country.

7 [Whereupon, at 4:21 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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