

Stenographic Transcript
Before the

COMMITTEE ON
ARMED SERVICES

UNITED STATES SENATE

HEARING TO CONSIDER THE NOMINATIONS OF:
GENERAL TOD D. WOLTERS, USAF
FOR REAPPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE OF GENERAL AND
TO BE COMMANDER, UNITED STATES EUROPEAN COMMAND
AND
SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER EUROPE; AND
GENERAL STEPHEN J. TOWNSEND, USA
FOR REAPPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE OF GENERAL AND
TO BE COMMANDER, UNITED STATES AFRICA COMMAND

Tuesday, April 2, 2019

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9
10 Tuesday, April 2, 2019

11
12 U.S. Senate
13 Committee on Armed Services
14 Washington, D.C.
15

16 The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:30 a.m. in
17 Room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. James M.
18 Inhofe, chairman of the committee, presiding.

19 Committee Members Present: Senators Inhofe
20 [presiding], Wicker, Fischer, Cotton, Rounds, Ernst, Tillis,
21 Cramer, Scott, Blackburn, Hawley, Reed, Shaheen, Gillibrand,
22 Blumenthal, Hirono, Kaine, King, Heinrich, Warren, Peters,
23 Manchin, and Jones.
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1 OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES M. INHOFE, U.S.

2 SENATOR FROM OKLAHOMA

3 Chairman Inhofe: Good morning. The committee meets
4 today to consider the nominations of General Tod Wolters and
5 General Stephen Townsend to be the Commander of U.S. Africa
6 Command and Wolters to be the Commander of the United States
7 European Command and Supreme Allied Commander in Europe.

8 We thank the witnesses for all the years and sacrifices
9 they have made. And I have been able to meet both the
10 wives. So I will give you the opportunity to introduce them
11 when your time comes. You better not forget it. That is
12 one of the big mistakes people make. They bring their wives
13 and then they forget to introduce them.

14 General Wolters, if confirmed, we will be counting on
15 you to push EUCOM and NATO to adjust to the reality of
16 strategic competition with Russia. Vladimir Putin will do
17 everything he can to undermine and divide the West. That
18 includes everything from military forces to cyber attacks to
19 election meddling. We need a new and stronger deterrent
20 that recognizes this range of challenges.

21 We have made a lot of progress in strengthening the
22 deterrence against Russia, including through the European
23 Deterrence Initiative, but as General Scaparrotti testified
24 before this committee last month, we have still got a lot of
25 work to do in improving our posture and capabilities in

1 Europe.

2 We will also be counting on your leadership in NATO,
3 which remains critical for America's national security. 70
4 years after its creation, the American commitment to article
5 5 is ironclad. Now we need our allies to honor their pledge
6 to reach the 2 percent and invest that money in the
7 capabilities and readiness needed to fight and win. I am
8 glad we have seen progress on this front, but not enough
9 progress.

10 General Townsend, if confirmed, you will confront the
11 increased complex set of challenges across Africa from the
12 continuing threat posed by terrorist groups like ISIS and al
13 Qaeda to great power competition with China and Russia.
14 While the challenges of Africa are on the rise, AFRICOM
15 continues to suffer from the shortfalls. You know, I was
16 somewhat involved in that when we started AFRICOM. AFRICOM
17 used to be a part of three different -- or Africa used to be
18 a part of three different commands, EUCOM, CENTCOM, and
19 PACOM. And we got our own COM, but we did not get the
20 resources to go with it. So we want to talk about that just
21 a little bit.

22 So we thank the nominees for their willingness to
23 continue service, and recognize Senator Reed.

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

3 Senator Reed: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.
4 Let me join you in welcoming our nominees this morning. I
5 want to thank you for your decades of military service and
6 your willingness to continue to serve our nation. I also
7 want to welcome your families and thank them for their
8 support. I deeply appreciate the effort and know it is a
9 family effort not just an individual effort.

10 General Wolters, if confirmed, you will face a complex
11 security environment, arising in large part from the
12 reemergence of a revanchist Russia that seeks to advance its
13 strategic interests by undermining the international order
14 that has kept the peace in Europe for decades. Russia is
15 willing to use military force to coerce and intimidate its
16 neighbors and is actively and persistently engaged in hybrid
17 aggression against the United States, our allies, and our
18 partners, using every tool of national power to attack our
19 democracy and to weaken our alliances. In addition,
20 Russia's nuclear modernization program and its violations of
21 arms control obligations serve to undermine strategic
22 stability.

23 The National Defense Strategy, or NDS, prioritizes the
24 strategic competition with Russia. EUCOM has the challenge
25 of turning that strategy into a military posture and program

1 in Europe that can credibly deter Russian aggression and,
2 should deterrence fail, prevail in a military conflict. At
3 the EUCOM posture hearing last month, General Scaparrotti
4 indicated that more work remains to be done to ensure
5 credible deterrent posture in support of the NDS. And I am
6 interested in hearing your plans to continue that work in
7 EUCOM.

8 The transatlantic relationship with Europe remains a
9 cornerstone of U.S. national security. As former Secretary
10 of Defense Mattis has emphasized, the United States'
11 strength is inextricably linked to the strength of our
12 alliances, and we cannot effectively lead without
13 maintaining those alliances. As Congress has made clear,
14 there should be no doubt about the U.S. commitment to NATO
15 and our resolve to come to the defense of our European
16 allies in a conflict. I am concerned, however, that when we
17 risk delaying or terminating critical military construction
18 in Europe for the sake of, in my view, an unnecessary border
19 wall, we undermine alliance cohesion and cause our European
20 partners to question whether the United States is a reliable
21 partner. General Wolters, I am interested in your ideas
22 about reassuring our partners to ensure a strong deterrent
23 to Russian aggression.

24 Numerous other security challenges are also within the
25 EUCOM Commander's responsibility. These include:

1 continuing bilateral and multilateral efforts to counter
2 violent extremism; assisting in the defense of Israel,
3 including through our missile defense presence in the
4 region; managing our security relationship with Turkey, at a
5 time when President Erdogan's decision to acquire the
6 Russian S400 air defense system has triggered suspension of
7 Turkey's participation in the F-35 fighter program; and
8 providing logistical and other support to global operations,
9 particularly in support of U.S. Central Command and U.S.
10 Africa Command.

11 Turning to AFRICOM, implementation of the NDS will mean
12 something very different from the EUCOM AOR. The
13 administration has stated that they are seeking to
14 prioritize low-cost, resource-sustainable, and innovative
15 security solutions in Africa, and efforts are currently
16 underway to reduce military personnel and equipment within
17 your AOR, General Townsend. At the same time, China is
18 pursuing a strategy of robust economic engagement throughout
19 the AOR, gaining influence and building access to key
20 economies and infrastructure across the continent. Russia
21 is also building upon historic alliances in places like
22 Libya to ensure access to the southern Mediterranean and
23 forging new partnerships in places like the Central African
24 Republic in order to extract resources and gain new allies.

25 General Townsend, I would like to hear your thoughts on

1 how the NDS directive to counter China and Russia should be
2 implemented in Africa, particularly how such activities
3 should be balanced against the ongoing efforts to reduce our
4 presence and investments in the AOR as called for in the
5 NDS.

6 In Africa, the U.S. military relies on a network of
7 partners and allies across the continent, working by, with,
8 and through to achieve shared security goals. In fact,
9 AFRICOM often plays a supporting role to other U.S. and
10 international agencies and partners in pursuit of a
11 comprehensive approach to security challenges. General
12 Townsend, we would appreciate your views on how best to
13 ensure that diplomatic and developmental efforts occur in
14 concert with military efforts in order to further our long-
15 term security and stability goals in Africa. This is
16 particularly important given that China and Russia seem to
17 be strengthening their hand in Africa primarily through
18 economics and diplomacy rather than militarily.

19 Thank you again to our nominees. Particularly, General
20 Townsend, let me thank you for your service in Iraq. I
21 think you, among many, but particularly you, set the
22 foundation for the degradation of ISIS in both Iraq and
23 Syria. For those efforts, I want to applaud you.

24 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

25 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Reed.

1 We will have the nine required questions. And I would
2 ask each one of you to audibly respond to each one.

3 Have you adhered to applicable laws and regulations
4 governing conflicts of interest?

5 General Wolters: Yes.

6 Chairman Inhofe: I only heard one.

7 General Wolters: Yes.

8 General Townsend: Yes.

9 Chairman Inhofe: Have you assumed any duties or taken
10 any actions that would appear to presume the outcome of the
11 confirmation process?

12 General Wolters: No.

13 General Townsend: No.

14 Chairman Inhofe: Exercising our legislative and
15 oversight responsibilities makes it important that this
16 committee, its subcommittee, and other appropriate
17 committees of Congress receive testimony, briefings,
18 reports, records, and other information from the executive
19 branch on a timely basis.

20 Do you agree, if confirmed, to appear and testify
21 before this committee when requested?

22 General Wolters: Yes.

23 General Townsend: Yes.

24 Chairman Inhofe: Do you agree, when asked before this
25 committee, to give your personal views even if your views

1 differ that of the administration?

2 General Wolters: Yes.

3 General Townsend: Yes.

4 Chairman Inhofe: Do you agree to provide records,
5 documents, and electronic communications in a timely manner
6 when requested by this committee, its subcommittees, or
7 other appropriate committees of Congress, and to consult
8 with the requester regarding the basis for any good faith
9 delay or denial in providing such records?

10 General Wolters: Yes.

11 General Townsend: Yes.

12 Chairman Inhofe: Will you ensure that your staff
13 complies with deadlines established by this committee for
14 the production of reports, records, and other information,
15 including timely responses responding to hearing questions
16 for the record?

17 General Wolters: Yes.

18 General Townsend: Yes.

19 Chairman Inhofe: And the last two. Will you cooperate
20 in providing witnesses and briefers in response to
21 congressional requests?

22 General Wolters: Yes.

23 General Townsend: Yes.

24 Chairman Inhofe: And lastly, will those witnesses and
25 briefers be protected from reprisal for their testimony or

1 briefings?

2 General Wolters: Yes.

3 General Townsend: Yes.

4 Chairman Inhofe: Good.

5 So we will start now with opening statements. Your
6 entire statement will be made a part of the record. But if
7 you can confine it, we have good attendance. We need to get
8 to the questions of the members of this committee. So we
9 will start with you, General Wolters.

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1 STATEMENT OF GENERAL TOD D. WOLTERS, USAF, FOR
2 REAPPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE OF GENERAL AND TO BE COMMANDER,
3 UNITED STATES EUROPEAN COMMAND AND SUPREME COMMANDER EUROPE

4 General Wolters: Good morning, Chairman Inhofe,
5 Ranking Member Reed, distinguished members of this
6 committee, it is an honor to appear before you as the
7 President's nominee for USEUCOM. I am grateful for the
8 trust extended by President Trump, Acting Secretary
9 Shanahan, and General Dunford. If confirmed, I look forward
10 to serving alongside the men and women of USEUCOM.

11 I would like to take just a couple of quick seconds and
12 introduce my family. At my right 5 o'clock is my best
13 friend and my wife, Charlene. For all of our years of
14 service, she has quietly but relentlessly supported our
15 family and all the men and women of the joint force. She
16 makes us very, very proud, and she constantly inspires.

17 Unfortunately, our two children could not make it
18 today. They are fulfilling military duty. Our daughter
19 Sandra is married to James, and I am convinced that James is
20 the finest infantry officer in the United States Army,
21 present company excluded.

22 [Laughter.]

23 General Wolters: They and their four children just
24 completed battalion duty at Fort Campbell, and our daughter
25 Sandra is the epitome of a 21st century U.S. Army spouse.

1 She is truly a warfighting machine.

2 Our son Tommy, his adorable bride Natalie, and their
3 daughter are currently stationed at Vance Air Force Base in
4 Oklahoma.

5 Chairman Inhofe: Good for them.

6 [Laughter.]

7 General Wolters: Tommy is a former U.S. infantry
8 soldier and a U.S. Air Force combat controller. He recently
9 completed officer training school, and as we speak, he is a
10 second lieutenant student in pilot training.

11 We are very proud of our family's commitment to the
12 military.

13 I would like to take a moment to comment on my table-
14 mate. Our nation could not have nominated a better officer
15 than General Steve Townsend. His talent and strategic-
16 mindedness have no equal. If confirmed, I look forward to
17 serving at his side in Stuttgart and throughout our
18 theaters.

19 I would also like to pay tribute to General Mike
20 Scaparrotti, the current Commander of USEUCOM. As this
21 committee well knows, he is one of the greatest generals
22 this nation has ever produced. Simply put, he is as fine a
23 human being as I have ever met.

24 The nations that make up USEUCOM are as diverse and
25 united as any in the world. We possess vital strategic

1 interests in our European area of responsibility, and we
2 embrace engagement to address collective issues. Under
3 General Scaparrotti, USEUCOM has fostered outstanding
4 relationships with a myriad of senior civilian and military
5 leaders. He has also worked tirelessly with our whole of
6 U.S. Government and has done the same with our allies and
7 partners. If confirmed, I will support this process and
8 interaction. It dramatically enhances our transparency and
9 alignment.

10 Leading and coaching a new generation of EUCOM
11 professionals and carrying on in winning fashion are high
12 priorities. EUCOM remains a theater of intense competition
13 and more. I am ever mindful of this challenge and eager to
14 engage. I vow to this committee to faithfully pursue the
15 policies and orders of the President and the Secretary of
16 Defense within the authorities you have provided combatant
17 commanders. Moreover, I will be open and transparent with
18 you and the rest of Congress.

19 It is an honor to serve, and I look forward to
20 answering your questions.

21 [The prepared statement of General Wolters follows:]

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1 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, General.

2 General Townsend?

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1 STATEMENT OF GENERAL STEPHEN J. TOWNSEND, USA, FOR
2 REAPPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE OF GENERAL AND TO BE COMMANDER,
3 UNITED STATES AFRICA COMMAND

4 General Townsend: Chairman Inhofe, Ranking Member
5 Reed, and distinguished members of the committee, good
6 morning, and thank you for the opportunity to appear today.

7 I am honored and grateful for the trust and confidence
8 of the President, the Secretary of Defense, and the Chairman
9 of the Joint Chiefs, as their nominee to serve as the
10 Commander of U.S. Africa Command.

11 I would like to recognize General Tom Waldhauser, the
12 current AFRICOM Commander, and his wife Gail for their many
13 years of dedicated and superb service to our nation.

14 I am accompanied today by my wife Melissa, who has
15 actively supported me, our service men and women and their
16 family members for the 36 years that we have been married,
17 while raising our own two children. They could not be here
18 today, but I would like to recognize our sons Taylor, an
19 Army captain currently in Afghanistan, and Evan, also an
20 Army combat veteran, and their spouses Alex and Katie. We
21 also have one granddaughter Faye and a new grandbaby on the
22 way this fall.

23 I am here this morning with my battle buddy, wingman,
24 and friend, General Tod Wolters, to discuss shared
25 challenges and opportunities in both the AFRICOM and EUCOM

1 areas of responsibility. If confirmed, I look forward to
2 working with General Wolters and my fellow combatant
3 commanders to address common trans-regional issues, while
4 sustaining joint force readiness and our ability to fight
5 tonight across the globe.

6 Since the standup of AFRICOM over a decade ago, the
7 command has made significant contributions to our national
8 security interests across the African continent and in
9 protecting our homeland.

10 There remain, however, numerous and complex challenges,
11 including rapid population growth, poor governance, and
12 insufficient opportunity. These challenges are long-term,
13 multi-dimensional, and require a whole-of-government
14 approach. If confirmed, I stand ready to work by, with, and
15 through our interagency, multinational and African partners
16 to address these challenges.

17 As General Waldhauser stated in front of this committee
18 in February, Africa will be shaped by the increased presence
19 of external actors over the next decade. Russia and China
20 are increasingly active using economic and military means to
21 expand their access and influence across Africa.

22 While we must up our game in great power competition,
23 we also cannot take pressure off the terrorist groups like
24 ISIS and al Qaeda. Despite significant setbacks, these
25 transnational terrorist organizations still pose a

1 significant threat to U.S. interests and our partners. If
2 confirmed, I will further the campaign that General
3 Waldhauser and the leaders of AFRICOM have crafted, and as
4 any new commander would, I will make my own assessment on
5 the way forward.

6 I believe that Africa must remain an enduring interest
7 of the United States, as we protect the homeland from
8 threats abroad and compete with Russia and China as the
9 central challenge to future U.S. security, prosperity, and
10 access.

11 Finally, it is an honor and privilege to lead America's
12 finest men and women at AFRICOM. If confirmed, I pledge to
13 give them and our nation my very best every day.

14 Again, thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the
15 committee, for your continued support to our armed forces.

16 I look forward to your questions.

17 [The prepared statement of General Townsend follows:]

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1 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you. We are very proud of both
2 of you. It says so much about our officers that bring their
3 families in and making that same commitment to defending
4 America. It says so much for all of you.

5 The top priorities of this committee is implementation
6 of the NDS, which prioritizes strategic competition with
7 Russia.

8 General Wolters, you mentioned General Scaparrotti, and
9 we all hold him in the same regard as you do. Do you agree
10 with his assessment that -- he mentioned last month --
11 actually at this committee he mentioned that -- that we do
12 not have the right posture and capabilities in EUCOM for a
13 credible deterrence against Russia. What are your biggest
14 needs in Russia? What do you think they are?

15 General Wolters: Chairman, I concur with General
16 Scaparrotti's assessment. As you well know, the NDS points
17 out that our competitive advantage is eroding. I want to
18 thank this committee for your assistance by delivering a
19 predictable, sustainable, adequate budget that has afforded
20 us the opportunity on the European continent to be able to
21 improve our readiness. I am able to make that observation
22 as the current U.S. Air Force's Commander in Europe. And
23 what we see from 2016 to 2019 is an improvement in
24 readiness. We are still not to the point to where we have
25 increased our competitive advantage to where we bought down

1 enough risk, and I think that is exactly what General
2 Scaparrotti was alluding to and I concur with his
3 assessment. If we continue on the campaign of readiness
4 that we are currently on, we will be in a position as we
5 start to approach the mid-2020s to where I think we will be
6 in a place where we are comfortable with our competitive
7 advantage.

8 Chairman Inhofe: That is good. We agree with that.

9 There is some confusion right now with what is going on
10 in Turkey, the fact that if they were to entertain using the
11 S400 from Russia, that we would have to have a second
12 thought in terms of what we are going to do with our F-35's.
13 And I think that yesterday a decision was made that we are
14 going to withhold the training activity at Luke for these
15 that were going to be training for the Turks. They have not
16 said that they are going to use the 400, but they have not
17 said that they are not going to.

18 I would like to have your opinion as to if this action
19 is probably an appropriate action and then what your feeling
20 is in terms of what their intentions are, even though they
21 are unstated at this time.

22 General Wolters: Chairman, I concur with this
23 committee's belief that the S400 and the F-35 are not
24 compatible. And if Turkey proceeds down a path to procure
25 and operate the S400, they should not get the F-35. And I

1 believe that is the sense of this committee, and I concur
2 with that decision. The system itself, the S400, is
3 incompatible from a standpoint because it speaks a different
4 language than NATO English, and it certainly is not
5 interoperable. I would contend that we all understand that
6 Turkey is an important ally in the region, but it is
7 absolutely unsustainable to support collocation of an F-35
8 and S400.

9 Chairman Inhofe: Yes, I would agree with that.

10 General Townsend, you and I talked at some length about
11 some of the problems in Africa. We were recently in
12 Djibouti where we are not real sure what all China is doing.
13 We do know, though, this is the first out-of-the-city-limits
14 base that they have, and it is my understanding that they
15 may even be going as far south as Tanzania. That is not
16 confirmed.

17 The time that we were there -- and this was just a few
18 weeks ago -- we actually flew over the area. There is some
19 debate as to what China is doing in Djibouti. What is your
20 opinion in terms of -- have they gone underground? Do they
21 have activities? Do they have resources there? I am sure
22 yours might be a better guess than mine.

23 General Townsend: Senator, thank you.

24 You are absolutely right that China is choosing to
25 compete in Africa, and they are competing hard there. You

1 have rightfully pointed out their first overseas base
2 outside the immediate confines of the first island chain is
3 in Djibouti and only a few kilometers from our base there.

4 I do not know what is beneath their base, but I will
5 make it a point to find out and probably report back in a
6 closed setting once I know that.

7 Chairman Inhofe: Yes, and that would be perfectly
8 acceptable. You got to keep in mind China is pretty good at
9 going underground. We were not long ago in the South China
10 Sea. Of course, they have seven islands there that they
11 have -- well, our allies over there in that area have said
12 it looks like they are preparing for World War III. You
13 have to wonder what they are up to in Djibouti also.

14 General Townsend: Well, certainly you know, they have
15 some open activities. They are trying to further their
16 economy, further their diplomatic efforts. They are also
17 trying to protect those efforts with their military forces
18 just as we would, but I also think they have some activities
19 that are not quite as open and I have concerns about that.
20 I pledge that, if confirmed, I will certainly look into that
21 because I think competition with China is something that
22 AFRICOM --

23 Chairman Inhofe: And we on this committee can assist
24 you in getting the type of classified briefing that I think
25 it probably deserves at this time.

1 Senator Reed?

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

3 Again, thank you, gentlemen, for your service to the
4 nation.

5 General Wolters, you rightfully identified the
6 readiness of being militarily prepared as a deterrence
7 against Russia in Europe. One of the things that General
8 Scaparrotti also mentioned is his concern about effective
9 unification across the interagency and his assessment also
10 that we have yet to develop a multifaceted strategy to
11 counter Russia. And this is in the face of a Russian sort
12 of approach that is famously described as hybrid,
13 incorporating a whole range from conventional military
14 forces to special operations forces to disinformation to
15 little green men to a host of things.

16 Where do you think we are with respect to this
17 effective unification across the interagencies in a whole-
18 of-government strategy vis-a-vis Russia?

19 General Wolters: Senator, I think we are improving.
20 We have to continue to wake up and embrace the campaign
21 every second every day, every week, every month to improve
22 our overall strategic transparency and alignment with a
23 whole-of-nation, whole-of-government approach. And as you
24 well know, Senator, Russia is keen to apply indirect
25 activity where they apply a whole-of-nation approach with a

1 proxy force.

2 With each passing day, as a result of a predictable,
3 sustainable, adequate budget, I have seen improvement in our
4 ability to use resources to improve our transparency and
5 alignment from a whole-of-government approach. And I think
6 we have to continue on the trajectory that General
7 Scaparrotti has us on and we will see success.

8 Senator Reed: In terms of an adequate budget, that in
9 your view, I presume -- I will ask you -- would also
10 incorporate adequate budgets for the State Department,
11 adequate budgets for other agencies like the FBI who
12 conducts some activities in our embassies. Is that fair?

13 General Wolters: Yes, Senator.

14 Senator Reed: Thank you very much.

15 One other area of specific concern to all of us
16 constantly is cyber. Do you feel that you need more
17 resources from Cyber Command?

18 General Wolters: Senator, we do. We have a request
19 in. We currently have 81 vacated billets, and as the months
20 and the years go by, we have received support from the
21 services and we are continuing to fill those billets.

22 Senator Reed: Thank you very much, General.

23 General Townsend, once again, thank you for your
24 distinguished service and likewise, General Wolters, for
25 your great service.

1 Africa presents an interesting sort of situation. You
2 have been told to do more with less effectively in the
3 National Defense Strategy. And as my chairman has pointed
4 out, China and Russia are making significant inroads. A lot
5 of what the Chinese are doing is not with the exception --
6 and it is a large exception, their base in Djibouti. A lot
7 of it is economic, the Belt and Road. And you are going to
8 be in a position of trying to counter that. Once again, it
9 raises a question of sort of whole-of-government approach,
10 including economic development, capacity building for nation
11 states in Africa that have weak governments.

12 Can you give us an idea of how you are going to
13 approach that, particularly when you have been told to cut
14 back?

15 General Townsend: Senator, I think that we do have to
16 compete with China on the African continent. I think you
17 have rightfully pointed out that it is going to be a whole-
18 of-government approach and I think probably not mainly a
19 military approach. I think there is certainly a military
20 aspect to that competition.

21 Part of the optimization that you are referring to is
22 really to reset our counterterrorism posture to a more
23 sustainable basis and to allow us the room and the breathing
24 space to compete in the military dimension. I think that
25 our nation will compete diplomatically and economically

1 probably on a greater scale than militarily. But your point
2 about it being a whole-of-government approach, just like in
3 Europe, is exactly right.

4 Senator Reed: We are seeing now, as reported in the
5 press, the Russians have moved into the Central African
6 Republic. They are advising them, which seems to be an
7 attempt by Putin to return to the great power influence that
8 they enjoyed under the Soviet Union.

9 In your view, that is a new and emerging threat on the
10 continent. Is that an accurate assessment?

11 General Townsend: Senator, I think just like China,
12 Russia is also competing on the African continent. In my
13 view, their efforts in the Central African Republic are more
14 exploitative than anything else. They are offering some
15 training. They are providing some security and some arms,
16 and they are also extracting gold, diamonds, and a lot of
17 other minerals out of there for a song I think. So I think
18 they are very much doing that in their interest, and it is
19 exploitative in intent.

20 Senator Reed: Thank you. Thank you, gentlemen.

21 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

22 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Reed.

23 Senator Wicker?

24 Senator Wicker: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

25 Gentlemen, thank you for your testimony and your

1 service.

2 Let me just say how reassuring it is to hear the
3 chairman and the ranking Democrat on this committee stress
4 our strong support for NATO, for the article 5 commitment of
5 all the members, and it is good to see that done on a
6 bipartisan basis.

7 I will not ask another question about Turkey except to
8 say that I am glad that the chairman brought it up early. I
9 will echo that the acquisition by a NATO ally of the S400 is
10 not the action that one would expect from an ally, and it
11 calls a lot of things into question. And I am glad to hear
12 the chairman announce a decision to withhold training of
13 Turkish pilots at Luke Air Force Base. I do not know how
14 that will turn out, but it is troubling and it calls into
15 question a lot of things that we have assumed from our long-
16 time ally Turkey.

17 Let me ask, General Wolters, about sea power. The USS
18 forward destroyers based in Rota -- they perform ballistic
19 missile defense missions, carry out strikes into Syria,
20 boost NATO's presence in the Black Sea, and monitor Russia
21 naval activities in the eastern Mediterranean. Some are
22 proposing adding two destroyers at Rota.

23 I asked General Scaparrotti about this a few weeks ago
24 when he was here, and he supported the idea of two
25 additional destroyers at Rota. Do you agree with General

1 Scaparrotti's assessment about stationing additional
2 destroyers in Rota?

3 General Wolters: Senator, I do.

4 Senator Wicker: Are we going to need a larger or
5 smaller fleet in EUCOM going forward?

6 General Wolters: Senator, it is my belief that we will
7 need a fleet that possesses the capability to cover more
8 time and cover more distance. I suspect that is going to
9 require two additional destroyers per the conversation I
10 have had with General Scaparrotti in my current position as
11 the Air Force's Commander in Europe.

12 Senator Wicker: Thank you very much.

13 Now, let me move then to our allies in Poland. As you
14 know, they have actually requested that the United States
15 establish a permanent base in Poland. So I want to ask you
16 what you think about that. There are at least two schools
17 of thought. One would be potential stationing of a
18 permanent U.S. base in Poland. Another would be a permanent
19 rotational basis there.

20 What is your initial assessment, and what are the
21 factors that we need to consider in making that decision
22 here at the congressional level?

23 General Wolters: Senator, I think the first factor has
24 to be mission. As you are very familiar with, Poland is
25 currently hosting a rotational brigade combat team, a

1 rotational combat aviation brigade, and a small
2 headquarters-like entity. The offers that are on the table
3 in negotiation between the minister of defense and our
4 Secretary of Defense Office with respect to what we could
5 bring into the country for the price of approximately 2
6 billion euros is an organization that could look like an
7 aviation dep, an organization that could like an aerial
8 port, an organization that could look like remotely piloted
9 aircraft mission control elements, or an organization that
10 could look like a headquarters-like staff.

11 I believe because of the propensity that Poland has
12 displayed in hosting the brigade combat teams and the combat
13 aviation brigades on a rotational basis would put us down
14 the path that we would be very comfortable with the offer
15 that is on the table to go ahead and select the rotational
16 brand just because of the demonstrated capability that we
17 have seen up to this point for the nation of Poland to host
18 rotational assets from the United States.

19 Senator Wicker: Thank you.

20 And one other thing, General Wolters. You and I
21 discussed this when you came by the office. The statute, as
22 it currently exists, calls for a return to sequestration. I
23 do not know if our listeners and viewers out there in the
24 general public understand that unless the statute is
25 changed, we go back to sequestration not only in DOD but the

1 State Department, as Senator Reed pointed that out. Is
2 "disaster" a strong enough word to describe what that would
3 mean if we do not take action and actually change the law to
4 prevent this?

5 General Wolters: Senator, sequestration would
6 dramatically impair our readiness.

7 Senator Wicker: And with regard to Senator Reed's
8 question about this, does that apply with regard to not only
9 to the DOD budget but to the State Department budget, which
10 he asked you about?

11 General Wolters: Senator, I believe that it does
12 because it is a whole-of-nation, whole-of-government
13 approach, and all those entities use the capabilities of
14 their sister departments. So it would impact our capability
15 to properly deter on continent.

16 Senator Wicker: Thank you, sir.

17 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Wicker, for
18 bringing that up.

19 Senator Peters?

20 Senator Peters: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

21 To our witnesses, thank you for your service to our
22 country.

23 General Townsend, I want to follow up on a question
24 that was asked about central Africa from Senator Reed.
25 Basically building on what we heard from General Waldhauser

1 when he appeared before our committee back in February and
2 talked about Russian influence in Africa specifically, and
3 he mentioned the Wagner Group, which is a Russian mercenary
4 organization I understand operating heavily in the region.
5 He talked about having trainers in central Africa and that a
6 Russian is now serving as the national security advisor to
7 the president of that country as well. I think it was also
8 highlighted in a "New York Times" story just last week.

9 So my question to you is what risk do these mercenary
10 groups pose to the United States? How concerned are you?

11 General Townsend: Senator, I have some experience with
12 these groups and specifically the Wagner Group from my time
13 in Syria. I think they concern me greatly. I am sure they
14 concern General Waldhauser as well. They are a quasi-
15 military, and as we saw play out in Crimea and Ukraine,
16 little green men running around not necessarily following
17 rules of behavior we would expect from proper armies. So I
18 have a pretty significant concern for the use of these kinds
19 of forces in a way that the Russians are using them on the
20 continent. And if confirmed, this is something I will
21 certainly be looking into in greater detail.

22 Senator Peters: So you say they are quasi-military,
23 but they are closely tied to the Russian Government?

24 General Townsend: They are. In fact, they train right
25 alongside the Russian armed forces.

1 Senator Peters: So when you say you will look into
2 their operations, what sort of things will be the subject of
3 that inquiry?

4 General Townsend: Well, it will be an endeavor to try
5 to figure out exactly what they are doing with them. As you
6 mentioned, they are using them to guard the head of state.
7 They are using them to train some of the local armed forces.
8 Some of that could be benign. Some of that is probably less
9 than benign.

10 Senator Peters: We have talked quite a bit about
11 whole-of-government and how the United States needs to be a
12 counterforce to both the Russians and the China. Could you
13 give us some understanding of what you think the long-term
14 ramifications will be for African countries that are working
15 closely with Russia and China in supposed economic
16 development and security cooperation projects? What
17 concerns you about that?

18 General Townsend: Senator, I think for our African
19 partners, they probably have their eyes open about what the
20 Russians and Chinese are about. I think that they are
21 offering a lot of military assistance and a lot of economic
22 assistance, but there is a whole lot of strings attached to
23 that assistance and the potential for their debt to increase
24 significantly to countries like China. I think, as we have
25 seen play out in some other places in the world, if they

1 cannot make good on their debt, then they wind up
2 surrendering more of their sovereignty and more of their
3 resources to the Chinese and the Russians. So I think that
4 is problematic. And for the United States, I think it is a
5 concern to all of us because of the potential impacts on our
6 access on the continent and our influence.

7 Senator Peters: General Wolters, when General Milley
8 was here last week, he talked about why he supports having
9 rotational forces in Europe, specifically Poland, as you
10 have discussed already. But one of the benefits that he
11 mentioned was the ability to exercise the strategic muscle
12 memory of TRANSCOM, making sure that we are dealing with
13 some of the logistical challenges in Europe, including
14 difficulties with rail, heading the use of public roads and
15 others to actually move men and material to the fight.

16 My question for you, sir, is what logistical challenges
17 do you foresee in Europe as you take this position, and how
18 can we improve that infrastructure? What should Congress be
19 thinking about?

20 General Wolters: Senator, the support with the
21 predictable, sustainable, adequate budget has certainly
22 helped. And as you are probably familiar with, NATO has
23 recently stood up Joint Support Enabling Command. That is
24 one three-star NATO that is focused on improving road and
25 rail access from Germany eastward all the way to the Russian

1 border. That is an area of challenge as a result of the
2 conditions on the ground over the last 15 years. And if
3 confirmed, I will place heavy emphasis, as General
4 Scaparrotti does, on logistics throughput to ensure that we
5 can close on the enemy at a faster pace.

6 Senator Peters: Thank you.

7 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Peters.

8 Senator Ernst?

9 Senator Ernst: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

10 Gentlemen, thank you very much for being here today and
11 to your families as well. Thank you for joining us.

12 General Wolters, I would like to start with you, and I
13 appreciate your taking time last week to stop in and sit
14 down and visit with me. We did have a very good discussion,
15 I believe, about our NATO allies and how beneficial the mil-
16 to-mil relationships are. And so I would like to visit a
17 little bit about that.

18 We do have, of course, the 70th anniversary coming up
19 of NATO, and this truly has been one of the most successful
20 alliances that this country has seen.

21 So let us talk a little bit about NATO's evolving role
22 as we move forward working together against our mutual
23 adversaries. Can you really describe for those of us on
24 this panel but then also for the greater public what are the
25 tangible benefits that we get from having those NATO

1 alliances? What can we see and feel as a public?

2 General Wolters: Senator, 70 years of continual peace
3 on the European continent has afford young kids to grow up
4 and have the opportunity to serve in positions like yours
5 and positions like mine. So the ability of nations in NATO
6 to embrace our Western democratic values is good for all.

7 Senator Ernst: It is fantastic.

8 And how do you see their role evolving then as we move
9 forward into the 21st century to counter not only Russia, as
10 they seem to be resurgng, but also China. And as China is
11 making economic inroads into Europe, how do we see NATO
12 being involved in that?

13 General Wolters: NATO obviously promotes Western
14 democratic values, and what has been very positive to see
15 over the course of the last 3 years in my current capacity
16 is NATO's willingness to transition missions. And they have
17 done so through NATO command structure adaptation to where
18 we have endeavored to participate in exercises in the
19 Pacific to continue to promote the NATO values.

20 Senator Ernst: Thank you very much for that.

21 And, gentlemen, for both of you, I chair the
22 Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities. And one
23 of the areas that we focus on is making sure that we are
24 adequately equipping our special operations forces to face
25 evolving asymmetrical threats.

1 And, General Townsend, I will start with you. This is
2 an area you are intimately familiar with. Can you describe
3 how you would work with Special Operations Command to employ
4 our SOF operators both to counter violent extremist
5 organizations and to counter the rising threat of China and
6 Russia and how you would balance that?

7 General Townsend: Senator, as you know, our special
8 operating forces in all services bring incredible
9 capabilities to the fight. And General Rich Clark and I
10 have a long relationship, and I know that we will work very
11 well together. That is one of the first things I am going
12 to do, if I am confirmed, is to seek his advice on how to
13 best employ special operating forces on the African
14 continent. I think that they are being employed by AFRICOM
15 there in a remarkably effective and efficient fashion. I
16 think that as we go forward and I think more of our effort
17 will turn towards great power competition, I will seek the
18 advice of our best special operations leaders as to how best
19 to employ those forces.

20 Senator Ernst: Thank you. And they have a very small
21 footprint. We enable them to do very much with very little.
22 So I appreciate that, and I know that you and General Clark
23 will have a very, very good working relationship. So thank
24 you very much.

25 And, General Wolters, with Russia threatening European

1 countries like Ukraine and the Baltics -- and I just
2 returned from Ukraine not all that long ago -- what do you
3 see as the most effective method of employing SOF to counter
4 some of what we call the gray zone activities?

5 General Wolters: Senator, thank you again for your
6 visit to the hot war. Your commitment and your engagements
7 improve the trust between our forces and certainly those of
8 Ukraine. I think it is absolutely imperative that we bake
9 SOF forces into all aspects of the campaign, start to
10 finish, and certainly in all components, air, land, sea,
11 space, and cyber. And I think over the years as the United
12 States, we have done a better job of doing so. And as you
13 are familiar with, we had plans in place that use SOF forces
14 in all elements that I just alluded to to increase our
15 overall deterrence capability.

16 Senator Ernst: Well, gentlemen, thank you. My time is
17 expiring. So I will yield back. But, again, thank you very
18 much for stepping up into these positions, and certainly I
19 look forward to supporting you. And thank you to the
20 families as well.

21 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Ernst.

22 Senator King?

23 Senator King: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

24 General Wolters, you mentioned in your prepared
25 testimony -- and I think we have discussed this -- the

1 importance of exercises in Europe and particularly
2 coordination and exercises with our NATO allies. How do we
3 ensure that exercises do not trigger a response or a
4 miscalculation or a misunderstanding, a kind of "Guns of
5 August" situation? Can you discuss the precautions that may
6 be in place to obviate that concern?

7 General Wolters: Yes, Senator. As part of our basics
8 for military defense planning and military decision-making,
9 escalation management is a key assumption that we have to
10 square away from the beginning. And I can tell you that for
11 all operations that I have been involved with as the air
12 component commander in serving General Scaparrotti for the
13 last 3 years, escalation management is continually
14 addressed. Whether it is a small military training team, a
15 small exercise or a large exercise, in 100 percent of the
16 events that we embrace, we take a look at any of the
17 ramifications on the periphery with respect to Russia and we
18 ensure that we have our escalation management under control.

19 Senator King: Is there any communication with the
20 Russians to the extent of, hey, this is an exercise?

21 General Wolters: Senator, the only communications that
22 I have with the Russians have to do with safety
23 deconfliction, and the way I communicate is through General
24 Scaparrotti, and General Scaparrotti will make that call
25 only for safety deconfliction. We do not share the

1 specifics of operational movement prior to activities.

2 Senator King: But the question of miscalculation and
3 misunderstanding is one that you are conscious of and have
4 contingencies to deal with.

5 General Wolters: Yes, Senator.

6 Senator King: Thank you.

7 Changing geography a bit, the Arctic, a huge area of
8 potential cooperation or conflict particularly with Russia.
9 How do you see developments in the Arctic during your
10 administration, if you will, and how do we push those
11 developments toward cooperation rather than conflict?

12 General Wolters: A smooth, fusing in of exercises, and
13 Senator, as you well know, we just completed a Trident
14 Juncture exercise, very large, with 50,000 U.S. military
15 members that were involved. And escalation management at
16 the start of the exercise was a huge consideration to make
17 sure that we were not doing things that would improperly
18 cause a conflict. But those exercises bring soldiers that
19 start to understand the environment. They bring with them a
20 higher degree of confidence and expertise to where they can
21 operate in that environment. And as you well know, at the
22 strategic level, there are ongoing discussions between
23 combatant commanders to ensure that we have the appropriate
24 transparency and alignment.

25 We are very excited, and if confirmed at USEUCOM, I am

1 very excited to have the opportunity to work with General
2 O'Shaugnessy on the specifics of what we can do from a
3 NORTHCOM and EUCOM perspective to better improve our
4 transparency and alignment with activities in the Arctic.

5 Senator King: Well, the data that I have seen is that
6 the Russians are significantly increasing their presence
7 there, military presence, along their shore of the Arctic.
8 It is hard to know which is south and north and east and
9 west when you are the North Pole. But is that a concern,
10 and how do we respond to that? And again, to go back to the
11 beginning, how do we move back toward cooperation rather
12 than confrontation?

13 General Wolters: Senator, that is a concern, and I
14 think we need to respond as we have by increasing the
15 activity via exercise and training events in the vicinity of
16 the Arctic.

17 Senator King: Thank you.

18 General Townsend, it is interesting, as I think through
19 these hearings, you all are coming into this position and we
20 are asking you questions as if you have been there for 10
21 years. But bearing that in mind, do you have a view on what
22 Russia and China are after in Africa? Is it natural
23 resources? Is it neocolonialism? What are their goals on
24 the African continent?

25 General Townsend: Senator, I think it is a lot of the

1 things that you just stated. I think primarily they are
2 after economic benefit, but right behind that I think they
3 are after some of the same things that the United States is
4 concerned with, access and influence. And I think that they
5 are after access and influence to our detriment. I think
6 that in the opening comments by the chairman and the ranking
7 member, they talked about the return of Russia to the
8 international scene, the rise of China, and some of that is
9 to be expected I think. But I think we have to keep in mind
10 a clear eye that their goals are to our detriment.

11 I think also it is simply extractive in some cases. I
12 mentioned the Russians in the Central African Republic.
13 They are just trying to get some of those minerals out as
14 cheaply as they can I think.

15 Senator King: And the Chinese seem to be inventing a
16 new form of colonialism, debt colonialism, where they are
17 putting people in debt and then pulling the strings back.

18 I would suggest that your first line of effort,
19 strengthening partner networks, is incredibly important
20 because those relationships, whether it is mil-to-mil or
21 country-to-country, are going to be important to resisting
22 pressure from those countries.

23 General Townsend: I agree, Senator.

24 Senator King: Thank you. Thank you very much,
25 gentlemen.

1 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

2 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator King.

3 Senator Hawley?

4 Senator Hawley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

5 General Wolters, General Townsend, thank you for being
6 here today. Congratulations on your nomination and I look
7 forward to supporting both of you.

8 General Wolters, I enjoyed sitting down with you last
9 week. Thank you for the time. I enjoyed our discussion.

10 I want to return to a subject that you and I talked
11 about there, which is the future of the NATO alliance and
12 also the steps that we need to take in order to optimally
13 posture our forces to account for the return of great power
14 competition and our needs vis-a-vis Russia.

15 Let me just ask you. Besides the two additional
16 destroyers, which you have mentioned in today's testimony,
17 what other steps, be it manpower, equipment, operational
18 changes -- what else do we need to do from your point of
19 view in order to have our forces optimally postured to
20 prevent a fait accompli scenario in the Baltics?

21 General Wolters: Senator, the predictable,
22 sustainable, adequate budget has afforded us the opportunity
23 through the European Deterrence Initiative to continue to
24 rotate forces in and continue to increase our presence. And
25 we have been able to do so. And I think in the future,

1 rotating in headquarters that appear to do the same things
2 as armored division headquarters do in the continual
3 rotation of fourth and fifth generation aviation assets will
4 be very helpful.

5 Senator Hawley: Very good. Thank you for that.

6 Let me ask you about our NATO allies. I will not lie
7 to you. I am very concerned, as I expressed to you when we
8 met, about Germany's decision recently to decrease rather
9 than increase their defense spending.

10 But let us talk about the practical things that we need
11 our allies to do on the ground when it comes to preventing a
12 fait accompli scenario in the Baltics. From a posturing
13 point of view, can you give us some ideas about what would
14 be optimal for our NATO allies? Again, from a force posture
15 perspective, what do we need them to do to act as that
16 blunting layer that will blunt any aggression by the
17 Russians, which would, of course, enable us the time
18 necessary to respond?

19 General Wolters: Senator, I would ask our NATO allies
20 to continue on the trajectory of contributions that they are
21 currently on. As you are very familiar with, we have four
22 battalion-sized battle groups in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania,
23 and Poland. Over the course of the last 2 and a half years,
24 I have had the opportunity to see the additive forces from
25 the NATO nations that have contributed to those battle

1 groups' ability to connect in all domains. So with each
2 passing day, based off the current trajectory of the
3 contributions, we are improving our ability in air, land,
4 sea, space, and cyber to better deter in the Baltics.

5 Senator Hawley: Let me ask you about Italy. When you
6 and I sat down, Italy had just accepted the invitation to
7 join China's Belt and Road Initiative. We have also heard
8 some European leaders describe China as a potential
9 strategic partner.

10 What do you make of this? I mean, what is your
11 reaction to this? Does Italy's joining of the Belt and Road
12 Initiative, does the view of some of our European partners
13 that China is a strategic ally, does that make accomplishing
14 our own military objectives more or less difficult?

15 General Wolters: Senator, it concerns me, and I think
16 we have to remain vigilant. As you probably know, China has
17 invested on the European continent heavily in ports in
18 Sweden and also in Iceland, and they have recently discussed
19 with Denmark the opportunity to conduct site surveys on air
20 strips in Greenland. Those give us great pause. We need to
21 remain vigilant. China does not embrace the same Western
22 democratic values that we do in the United States or that we
23 do in NATO. So we must remain concerned.

24 Senator Hawley: Thank you, General.

25 General Townsend, let me ask you about the balancing of

1 priorities that you would be asked to pursue as AFRICOM
2 Commander. The NDS, of course, prioritizes DOD efforts vis-
3 a-vis China and Russia and calls for -- and now I am quoting
4 -- a more resource-sustainable approach to counterterrorism
5 efforts across Africa and the Middle East.

6 Give us your thoughts on how we are to pursue that
7 resource-sustainable approach to VEOs while also shifting
8 our attention toward near-peer competition in your new AOR.

9 General Townsend: Senator, as you know, predominantly
10 over the last 17 years or so, we have been very focused on
11 countering violent extremist organizations around the world,
12 mostly in the Middle East but not exclusively there. And
13 that has been a lot of AFRICOM's work over the last decade
14 is countering violent extremists on the African continent.

15 As we realign our efforts to support the National
16 Security Strategy, the National Defense Strategy, I believe
17 it is right that we have to rebalance our efforts. It is
18 not a binary choice, though. We have to do more in the
19 great power competition arena, but at the same time, we
20 cannot let off the gas on these violent extremists. I think
21 that our efforts, AFRICOM's efforts, on the African
22 continent have been successful over the last decade or so,
23 and there is a lot of violent extremist organizations
24 operating there. We have not seen a successful attack on
25 this homeland coming from Africa.

1 So I think we have to maintain that kind of pressure
2 and disrupt and degrade those organizations and keep them a
3 local threat, a regional threat at worst. And I think you
4 can then rebalance your special operating forces and other
5 efforts that have been dedicated to CT towards great power
6 competition.

7 Senator Hawley: Thank you, General.

8 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

9 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Hawley.

10 Senator Kaine?

11 Senator Kaine: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

12 And thank you to the witnesses for your service and
13 your testimony.

14 General Townsend, I would like to sort of continue
15 along the same line as Senator Hawley with respect to
16 AFRICOM. Pursuant to the National Defense Strategy, AFRICOM
17 has recently started to look at plans for reducing special
18 forces in Africa. I do believe that our building partner
19 capacity efforts with African militaries have been a pretty
20 strong part, and I know that that continues to be a focus of
21 the AFRICOM work.

22 Is there still the same appetite for the U.S.
23 engagement in building partner capacity among African
24 nations? A few years ago, it really seemed like we were the
25 partner of choice for many of the African nations. As they

1 looked at training, they either wanted to send people here
2 or have our troops involved in partnership capacity. Do you
3 see the same appetite for the U.S.'s involvement in Africa?

4 General Townsend: Senator, I do. I believe that there
5 is a very strong appetite to partner with the United States.
6 I think there is an attractiveness sometimes to what
7 competitors like the Chinese and the Russians offer because
8 they will offer arms with very few strings attached and on a
9 very --

10 Senator Kaine: Not asking questions about human rights
11 issues, et cetera, et cetera.

12 General Townsend: Exactly right. And we ask those
13 questions, and we are a little bit more deliberate in our
14 provision of that kind of support.

15 There is certainly, I think, no change in the appetite
16 to engage with our forces and to attend our courses and that
17 kind of thing. So I think that is a hopeful sign for the
18 future.

19 Senator Kaine: Well, we always hear that our efforts
20 abroad are by, with, and through partner nations, and I
21 think as long as we can, I think building partner capacity
22 efforts and training foreign military in IMET programs, one
23 of the most cost effective things we do -- it is not a big
24 part of the Pentagon budget. I am glad to hear that you see
25 that appetite still there, and I hope it is something we can

1 provide. I have not visited partner capacity building
2 efforts in Africa but I have in the Middle East and in South
3 America. And watching our troops work with troops in other
4 nations, training them on laws of war, on rule of law, as
5 well as effective military tactics, I mean you really see
6 the value add that we can provide to nations in their own
7 defense, but also building strong relationships that are
8 helpful to us. I hope we will continue that.

9 General Wolters, I know there has been a question asked
10 earlier about Turkey with respect to the purchase of Russian
11 systems and the sale of F-35's. So I am not going to repeat
12 that. But the Turkish issue is a challenging one. There
13 are so many equities involved, the use of the Incirlik base
14 at Adana has been really important to us in battling against
15 ISIS.

16 Talk a little bit about how you want to approach the
17 Turkey question, especially given other challenges in the
18 relationship, the U.S. support for the Kurds in northern
19 Syria, who have been effective fighting partners, which
20 caused challenges for Turkey. Some of these questions are
21 for the Secretary of State, but I also think EUCOM and
22 CENTCOM are very involved in these questions. And just talk
23 a little bit about how you might approach that big picture.

24 General Wolters: Senator, I have had the opportunity
25 to work for General Scaparrotti as his Air Component

1 Commander for the last 3 years, and he probably spends 65
2 percent of his time focused on Turkey. His heavy, heavy
3 engagement in all aspects of U.S. and Turkey relations and
4 NATO and Turkey relations has been very, very helpful. And
5 if confirmed, Senator, that is exactly the glide path that I
6 will follow.

7 Senator Kaine: Again, Senator King said we ask you
8 questions sort of assuming you are doing the job rather than
9 you are being nominated for the job. But since you have
10 worked with General Scaparrotti, what is your sense of the
11 status quo right now or the state of progress right now in
12 U.S.-Turkish dialogue over the Kurds in northern Syria?
13 Have we worked out kind of a working arrangement with how
14 the U.S. will continue to be partners with those who
15 partnered with us without alienating Turkey? What is the
16 status of that right now?

17 General Wolters: Senator, the negotiations are ongoing
18 with General Scaparrotti's staff and their counterparts on
19 the Turkish general staff. And I do not know what the final
20 outcome is, but I have had the opportunity to address this
21 with General Scaparrotti. And we are having productive
22 dialogue, and we suspect that this productive dialogue will
23 continue, and as you well know, it specifically has to do
24 with the Turkish-Syrian border. So more to follow, but
25 negotiations are ongoing and they are traversing in a

1 positive direction.

2 Senator Kaine: What my impression is generally the
3 tensions in the relationship tend to be sort of at the
4 political level, but the mil-to-mil both communication and
5 cooperation between the U.S. and Turkey on the military side
6 tends to be pretty strong. Am I accurate in saying that?

7 General Wolters: You are accurate, Senator.

8 Senator Kaine: Okay. Thank you so much.

9 Thanks, Mr. Chair.

10 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Kaine.

11 Senator Warren?

12 Senator Warren: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

13 The unclassified worldwide threat assessment by the
14 Director of National Intelligence said -- and I am going to
15 quote it -- global environmental and ecological degradation,
16 as well as climate change, are likely to fuel competition
17 for resources, economic distress, and social discontent
18 through 2019 and beyond. End quote.

19 That assessment also said, quote, damage to
20 communication, energy, and transportation infrastructure
21 could affect low-lying military bases, inflict economic
22 costs, and cause human displacement and loss of life.

23 Now, I have asked this question to other senior
24 military officers. So I want to be sure I get it on the
25 record here. General Townsend and General Wolters, do you

1 agree with the intelligence community's assessment of
2 climate change threat?

3 General Townsend: Senator, I am not a climate
4 scientist, but as a warfighter, I pay attention to
5 conditions on the ground, and here is what I see in Africa.

6 Senator Warren: Do you agree with their assessment?

7 General Townsend: I see that there is climate change
8 in Africa.

9 Senator Warren: Okay. So do you agree with their
10 assessment? They assess it as a threat. They do not just
11 observe that it is happening. They do not just say the sky
12 is blue. They assess it as a threat. I just want to know.
13 Do you agree with their assessment?

14 General Townsend: Senator, I see those conditions as
15 causing the threat.

16 Senator Warren: So you do see the threat then. You
17 agree with their assessment.

18 General Townsend: Generally, yes.

19 Senator Warren: General Wolters?

20 General Wolters: Senator, I do, and I also know it is
21 a military imperative to plan for weather change and weather
22 change as a result of exactly what this report is referring
23 to -- alludes to.

24 Senator Warren: Good. So let me ask you, will you
25 commit to working with this committee to ensure that your

1 commands are prepared to deal with the threat of climate
2 change to operations in your areas of responsibility?
3 General Townsend?

4 General Townsend: Yes, Senator.

5 Senator Warren: Yes.

6 General Wolters?

7 General Wolters: Yes, Senator.

8 Senator Warren: Good. Thank you. Adapting to climate
9 change impacts our military readiness, and I am glad that
10 you both take this seriously.

11 I have another question I want to ask about. Since
12 declaring Somalia an area of active hostilities in March
13 2017, the Trump administration has significantly increased
14 the number of air strikes against al Shabaab militants
15 compared with those carried out under the Obama
16 administration. In 2018, there were more air strikes in
17 Somalia than Libya and Yemen combined, and Defense
18 Department data for disclosed air strikes shows 47 strikes,
19 killing 326 individuals.

20 General Townsend, are we at war with Somalia?

21 General Townsend: No, Senator, we are not at war with
22 Somalia, but we are carrying out our operations against
23 violent extremist organizations in Somalia. It is a
24 designated active area of hostilities.

25 Senator Warren: So if I ask families of civilians that

1 have been killed or injured in these air strikes, do you
2 think they would say we are at war, the U.S. is at war with
3 Somalia?

4 General Townsend: I imagine, Senator, that they might
5 say that, but I do not know that.

6 Senator Warren: As best I can tell, the strategy in
7 Somalia, as it is in so many of the countries that the U.S.
8 is bombing, is to keep killing terrorists and militants and
9 hope that one day there are magically no more terrorists or
10 militants to kill. I know that we are working, quote, by,
11 with, and through, close quote, our Somali partners because
12 this is our playbook everywhere. And I agree that fewer
13 terrorists is a good thing. But I just want to broaden this
14 discussion a little bit in the time left.

15 General Townsend, do you think that military force
16 alone is enough to beat al Shabaab and address the root
17 causes of terrorism and instability in Somalia?

18 General Townsend: Senator, I do not.

19 Senator Warren: Are we adequately resourcing the non-
20 military side of our strategy?

21 General Townsend: I am not really sure. That is
22 something I am going to have to look into if confirmed for
23 the job.

24 Senator Warren: Okay.

25 What is our strategy for Somalia, and more important,

1 what is the measure of success in Somalia?

2 General Townsend: Well, I think what we are trying to
3 do is create capacity there for the local Somalis to secure
4 the nation themselves. And I think there has been some
5 progress on that front.

6 Senator Warren: So how do you measure that? What is
7 the adequate measure here? What is our metric?

8 General Townsend: I would say there is probably a
9 range of metrics, but probably one on the military front
10 would be a decrease in violent extremist attacks in Somalia
11 over time, an increase in the capacity of their military
12 forces to secure themselves, and a resulting decrease in the
13 need for partners such as us to assist them.

14 Senator Warren: All right. So good. So we will look
15 forward to seeing more information about this.

16 I just want to say -- make no mistake -- we are at war
17 with Somalia, and there is remarkably little debate about
18 that fight and about whether we are having success in
19 reaching our objectives. I think we need to rethink our
20 Somali strategy.

21 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Warren.

22 Senator Tillis?

23 Senator Tillis: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

24 And thank you, gentlemen, for being here and your wives
25 and your family for serving our country.

1 General Wolters, I want to start with you. Senator
2 Shaheen and I are co-chairs of the Senate NATO Observer
3 Group. I think that in my discussions with General
4 Scaparrotti, we are in this position where, on the one hand,
5 we want them to step up their involvement to increase their
6 readiness, their investment, and innovation, but on the
7 other hand, we want to send a very clear message that NATO
8 is the most important alliance I think that has ever
9 existed.

10 What kinds of steps are you going to take? What kind
11 of work do you think we need to do to make sure that they
12 understand that the President's rightful request for them to
13 step up is in their best interests and in our mutual best
14 interests?

15 General Wolters: Senator, I think we need to continue
16 to look at burden sharing in the form of cash contributions
17 and capabilities. And I would contend that in my
18 conversations in my current posting on the European
19 continent, as I discuss this subject with my mil-to-mil
20 partners, they completely understand the 2 and 20 percent
21 metrics and they think they are valid to remind all of us to
22 continue with the cash portion of burden sharing. But
23 contributions and capabilities are also a large part of it,
24 and as you well know, Senator, many of the nations do a
25 wonderful job of assisting all around the globe to

1 neutralize external ops planners against the United States
2 and we need to bring that into account. Those kinds of
3 discussions certainly increase the trust that we have
4 amongst each other.

5 Senator Tillis: Thank you.

6 I want to also turn to Turkey. I know that the chair
7 mentioned that and it is an area that I have personal
8 concern with. The first step for those of us who have
9 followed it, we know we last year allowed or was ramping up
10 the process to allow Turkish pilots to train on the Joint
11 Strike Fighter. Now there is some question whether or not
12 we can do that with the current uncertainty with the S400.
13 And then we have another date, which is just post 2020, that
14 would actually be the transfer of planes into Turkey with
15 the S400 decision looming out there.

16 But we also have another thing that I think is very
17 important. Turkey is a partner in the supply chain for the
18 Joint Strike Fighter production. So I think not only do we
19 have to look at whether or not we can transfer those assets
20 to Turkey, but we also, as a part of that process, have to
21 determine what, if any, role Turkey could play long-term as
22 a critical link in the supply chain. Do you agree with that
23 assessment?

24 General Wolters: Yes, Senator, I do.

25 Senator Tillis: Thank you.

1 General Townsend, it is great to see you again.

2 I want to talk a little bit about Africa and what you
3 consider to be the ordinal ranking of threats there. We
4 know what China is doing in terms of their economic
5 investment and some of their increased military presence.
6 Russia I am less studied on. And then we also see it as a
7 haven for ISIS, al Qaeda, and other malign organizations.

8 But as you are going into this job, what would you just
9 rank right now as the key threats, either those or other
10 threats, that you will be focused on when you assume
11 command?

12 General Townsend: Senator, when I think of threats, I
13 think of threats in two groups, today's threats and
14 tomorrow's threats. And when I look at today's threats, I
15 would probably rank violent extremist organizations and
16 their intent against America number one; number two,
17 probably the Russians and what they are up to with their
18 private military companies. Then number three is probably
19 China. In the long term, I think that calculation probably
20 changes. I will be very interested to see what China is
21 really up to, but I think in the long term, they rise above
22 Russia for sure.

23 Senator Tillis: With the constant pressure on budgets
24 and some cuts that I think were appropriate, none, by the
25 way, I think in your lanes, what priority do you put on or

1 what message would you send Congress with respect to foreign
2 aid in Africa and how it makes your job easier?

3 General Townsend: Well, Senator, when we talk about a
4 whole-of-government approach, you know, those are the
5 bullets of my wingmen and battle buddies at the State
6 Department and USAID. So I think they have to have
7 ammunition to do their job just like the military has to
8 have ammunition to do our job.

9 Senator Tillis: Well, both of you, I want to thank you
10 for being here. I am going to keep on time so we can get to
11 Senator Blackburn. But I look forward to supporting your
12 confirmation. I hope that it is quick.

13 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

14 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Tillis.

15 Senator Blackburn?

16 Senator Blackburn: Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman.

17 And I thank each of you for being here and for your
18 service to our country and to your families for their
19 service to our country.

20 As we have done our hearings this year, I have put a
21 good bit of focus on what is happening in the virtual space
22 and what is happening with cyber. And I will tell you,
23 General Townsend, Africa's telecommunications system, the
24 way it is interwoven with Huawei, ZTE, is something that is
25 of concern to me.

1 And in my service in the House, I had the opportunity
2 to represent Fort Campbell and the men and women that live
3 there. And, General Wolters, I am pleased to know that you
4 have family that just finished service in that wonderful
5 community.

6 And also, I was just recently in the Ukraine and Poland
7 with the 278th from the Tennessee National Guard and their
8 deployment there.

9 And in these visits, whether I am with the 5th Division
10 or the 160th there at Campbell or I am out with the Guard,
11 they talk regularly about the importance of 5G, the
12 deployment of 5G, the imperative of addressing
13 interoperability -- it is an imperative -- how that is going
14 to play into AI and how we equip and work with them for 21st
15 century warfare.

16 So, General Townsend, I want to come to you first. As
17 we talk about Africa's telecom structure and that
18 infrastructure that is in existence today and talk to me, as
19 you take on this new position and you look at how our men
20 and women are equipped and how you are going to work in that
21 space, a little bit about your view on that great power
22 competition, 5G, AI, hypersonics, the utilization, how that
23 is going to affect Africa. And then the last minute,
24 General Wolters, coming to you, if you will talk about it
25 with EUCOM.

1 General Townsend: Thanks, Senator.

2 It is imperative of any U.S. commander to protect our
3 network and protect our information. In all of our
4 operations around the world, only a very small percentage of
5 our data and communications flows across an entirely U.S.
6 network. The great bulk of our data and communications in
7 the military and on the diplomatic side and economic side
8 flow across what is out there.

9 Senator Blackburn: And that is a problem.

10 General Townsend: Well, it certainly can be. As you
11 have rightfully pointed out, the Chinese are laying track
12 all over Africa. And I do not mean railroad track. I am
13 talking about communications infrastructure that you are
14 referring to. And their intent I think is -- on one side,
15 it is purely commercial. They are providing a service and
16 making a buck. On another side --

17 Senator Blackburn: What is your game plan for
18 addressing it?

19 General Townsend: Well, that is a harder one.

20 Senator Blackburn: And how will you communicate that
21 message? Because as you were there in host countries, how
22 are you going to communicate that this is a problem? Huawei
23 is a problem.

24 General Townsend: Yes. Senator, certainly I will
25 communicate that message because if our data is traveling

1 across a network installed by the Chinese, we cannot be
2 certain of its security.

3 Senator Blackburn: No, we cannot.

4 General Wolters?

5 General Wolters: Senator, I agree with everything that
6 General Townsend said. I would harken back to our focus on
7 cyber operations. With the assistance of this committee, we
8 were able to establish in the U.S. a unified combatant
9 command, USCYBERCOM, led by one commander who gives clear
10 direction and guidance to the field. And what we have seen
11 for the last 2 years from the guidance of General Nakasone
12 is a dramatic improvement in the disposition of our
13 defensive cyber operations force, better hygiene on the
14 network, better ability to detect intrusions. Those are the
15 blocking and tackling skills that we all need to embrace to
16 ensure that we secure ourselves, not to be culpable to
17 miscreants getting inside of our network. And I would work
18 very, very hard to continue, as General Scaparrotti has, to
19 promote the advances in cyber and to certainly promote the
20 hygiene that is helping us secure our networks.

21 Senator Blackburn: Thank you.

22 I yield back.

23 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Blackburn.

24 Senator Shaheen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

25 And thank you, gentlemen, both for your service in the

1 past and for your willingness to take on these critical
2 commands.

3 General Wolters, NATO announced that it is creating a
4 cyber operations center and that that center is expected to
5 be fully staffed and analyzing threats and attacks by 2023.
6 I wonder if you could give us an update on what you know
7 about the status of the center and also speak to, given the
8 cyber threats, what it is taking so long to get that set up.

9 General Wolters: As you know, Senator, cyber is a
10 manmade network and very, very complicated. I am very proud
11 to report that NATO and the United States have both elevated
12 their strategic headquarters: ours, USCYBERCOM under the
13 lead of General Nakasone. And certainly the Secretary-
14 General Stoltenberg has pushed NATO to embrace cyber. And
15 we have taken many of the tactics, techniques, and
16 procedures that we have witnessed from the Estonia Cyber
17 Center of Excellence because they have been very, very busy
18 in improving the defense of their network, and we are
19 imparting those tactics, techniques, and procedures to the
20 headquarters at NATO.

21 I wish we could go faster. I am certain that nobody
22 wants it to go faster than Secretary-General Stoltenberg and
23 General Scaparrotti. And if confirmed, my commitment to you
24 is this will be a high emphasis area.

25 Senator Shaheen: So is the challenge that we are

1 dealing with so many different individual countries? Is the
2 challenge resources? Is the challenge getting the people to
3 staff the command?

4 General Wolters: Senator, I think it is all of those.
5 And I would say that your first challenge is probably the
6 one that is most important, that is getting the policies in
7 alignment across national boundaries to ensure that we have
8 the overall national alliance and the overall NATO alignment
9 to ensure that we could deliver the best security
10 disposition for our cyber networks.

11 Senator Shaheen: Thank you.

12 General Townsend, earlier this year, General
13 Waldhauser, when he was here, talked about his efforts to
14 implement the Women Peace and Security legislation. It is
15 legislation that I co-sponsored with Senator Capito, and it
16 is something that I believe, looking at the data, makes a
17 huge difference as we are thinking about having women at the
18 table in conflict areas and in difficult situations.

19 So can you talk about what your thoughts are on
20 continuing the implementation of that legislation, how you
21 see that playing out, and what your commitment is to making
22 sure that happens?

23 General Townsend: Senator, I have admired General
24 Waldhauser and AFRICOM's implementation of that legislation.
25 They are very active with bringing women to the table, and I

1 think their thought is the same one you just described, that
2 if you bring more women into governance, if you bring more
3 women into military affairs, things seem to smooth out. So
4 I intend to continue and further the efforts -- if
5 confirmed, I will further the efforts that AFRICOM has done
6 on that front.

7 Senator Shaheen: Well, thank you. I appreciate that.
8 As you know, AFRICOM has been commended as a leader on
9 addressing the implementation of Women Peace and Security.
10 So I am pleased to hear you say you will continue to do
11 that.

12 One of the other issues that I had a chance to speak
13 with General Waldhauser about was what we are doing to try
14 and address the threat from Boko Haram and the young women
15 who are still being kidnapped across Nigeria and the work
16 with the Nigerian forces to try and train them and the joint
17 effort to address this.

18 Can you talk about what you think our commitment should
19 be and what we might be able to do to help deal with Boko
20 Haram?

21 General Townsend: Senator, they are one of a number of
22 serious violent extremist organizations that are a threat to
23 U.S. interests and locally and regionally. I think our
24 first priority has to be those that threaten the U.S.
25 homeland and United States interests, then second, the ones

1 that threaten our partners. Boko Haram seems to fall
2 somewhere right in the middle there. So I know they are
3 high on AFRICOM's list, and if confirmed, I will continue to
4 press that.

5 Senator Shaheen: And can you specifically talk about
6 the whole issue of kidnapping of young women and girls there
7 and what specific activities we might be working on with the
8 Nigerians to address that?

9 General Townsend: Well, speaking to the situation of
10 kidnapping women and girls, kidnapping of anyone is
11 horrible, whatever their gender or their age.

12 Senator Shaheen: But they seem to be more focused on
13 young girls.

14 General Townsend: I think Boko Haram certainly does.

15 Senator Shaheen: Right.

16 General Townsend: So I will find out. I do not know
17 exactly what AFRICOM is doing specifically with the
18 government or the armed forces of Nigeria in that particular
19 realm, but that is something I will look into, Senator.

20 Senator Shaheen: Thank you. I really appreciate that.
21 If you could let the committee know when you learn that, I
22 would appreciate it.

23 General Townsend: I will.

24 Senator Shaheen: Thank you.

25 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

1 And we thank both of you. We appreciate very much your
2 participation and your patience and that of your families.
3 I am so proud that you have -- I am not saying that I have
4 not done as good a job, but I do not have all my kids in the
5 service. And so I just think it is really great that you
6 have done that and what you have done. I am very proud of
7 them and proud of you.

8 With that, we are adjourned.

9 [Whereupon, at 10:53 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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