

Stenographic Transcript
Before the

COMMITTEE ON
ARMED SERVICES

UNITED STATES SENATE

HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY
ON UNITED STATES AFRICA COMMAND
AND UNITED STATES SOUTHERN COMMAND
IN REVIEW OF THE DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST
FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021
AND THE FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM

Thursday, January 30, 2020

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10 U.S. Senate
11 Committee on Armed Services
12 Washington, D.C.
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14 The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 8:59 a.m. in
15 Room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. James M.
16 Inhofe, presiding.

17 Committee Members Present: Senators Inhofe, Fischer,
18 Cotton, Rounds, Ernst, Sullivan, Perdue, Cramer, McSally,
19 Blackburn, Hawley, Reed, Shaheen, Gillibrand, Blumenthal,
20 Kaine, King, Peters, Manchin, and Jones.
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1 OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES M. INHOFE, U.S.
2 SENATOR FROM OKLAHOMA

3 Chairman Inhofe: Senator Rounds says it is time we
4 start, and so we are going to start.

5 Good morning. The committee today has received
6 testimony from SOUTHCOM and AFRICOM. This is a very
7 significant meeting because in my narrow view we have the
8 two comms that never were adequately resourced -- I really
9 believe that -- compared to the threat that we are facing.

10 We have two great heroes here. We have General Steve
11 Townsend, Commander of the USAFRICOM and Admiral Craig
12 Faller, Commander of SOUTHCOM.

13 This committee's top priority is to ensure the
14 effective implementation of the National Defense Strategy.
15 That is this. And we have been adhering to this to the
16 letter in a very bipartisan way.

17 We identified the competition with China and Russia.
18 That is where the problem is. That is something that people
19 were not really sensitive to until we came out with this
20 document. China's and Russia's growing influence is not
21 limited to Europe and the Indo-Pacific, and both countries
22 clearly view Africa and Latin America as critical
23 battlefields to fulfill their global ambitions and challenge
24 the United States.

25 This is particularly evident in Africa. Over the last

1 20 years, I have conducted -- I think we are over about 160
2 African country visits working with that continent. I can
3 tell you that it is no coincidence that China established
4 the first overseas military base in Djibouti. You know,
5 that is the first time. They have always done it in their
6 own city limits before, but now it is Djibouti. Now they
7 are as far south in Africa as Tanzania and all over the
8 country. I visited Djibouti last February and saw firsthand
9 what they are doing there, and they are active there.

10 Elsewhere China is using cash and debt to trap the
11 countries and to force them to put their infrastructure and
12 potentially their sovereignty on sale.

13 At the same time, Russia is using its military,
14 mercenaries, and weapons sales to buy influence, exploit
15 Africa's natural resources, and to prop up leaders
16 sympathetic to Russian interests and hostile to the United
17 States.

18 While the NDS states that competition with Russia and
19 China should be DOD's top priority, it makes clear that we
20 must maintain pressure on radical terrorist groups like al
21 Qaeda and ISIS.

22 Today more than a dozen terrorist groups with ties to
23 al Qaeda and ISIS are operating across Africa. Many of
24 these groups have ambition to attack Americans and our
25 partners. Without sustained pressure, the threat posed by

1 these groups will grow.

2 In SOUTHCOM's area of responsibility, China and Russia
3 are pursuing a similar strategy by using economic and
4 military means to expand their access and influence right
5 here in our own hemisphere.

6 China has increased its naval deployments to the region
7 by 70 percent over the last 5 years, and Chinese companies
8 currently have over 50 active port projects in this region
9 and there are more on the planning board.

10 Russia props up oppressive regimes in places like Cuba,
11 Venezuela, and Nicaragua that are hostile to the United
12 States. They are also deploying advanced military assets to
13 the region, including strategic bombers and warships.

14 At the same time, much of the drugs that are poisoning
15 the American cities are coming from Latin America. These
16 drugs are trafficked by illicit networks.

17 And I would say in my opening statement that in both of
18 these comms, I have been pretty outspoken as a conservative
19 but one who has really been concerned because they do not
20 seem to get the attention that some of the other comms do.
21 I mean, you know, if you look at Africa, you have a total of
22 6,000 people there, but how much are you going to get
23 accomplished with 6,000 people? You look at CENTCOM. What
24 is that? 75,000. And PACOM is even bigger than that.

25 So if the object here and people are talking about on

1 the subject that is taking place is to reduce and to
2 reposition people, you are talking about the two areas where
3 there are not enough people to reposition. And that is a
4 narrow view, but that is mine.

5 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 And I welcome our witnesses.

5 But first let me extend my condolences to the families
6 of the brave Americans who were killed in action in the
7 attack on the Kenyan airbase earlier this month, as well as
8 those who are recovering from those wounds, and also extend
9 my condolences to the families of the two airmen who were
10 recently killed in Afghanistan.

11 Again, thank you to the witnesses for appearing here
12 today. Both of you are leading commands during challenging
13 times, and we thank you for your continued service. Please
14 also extend our gratitude to the service men and women who
15 under your command continue their outstanding service to the
16 nation.

17 There is currently an effort underway to review U.S.
18 force posture around the globe in an effort to ensure the
19 Department of Defense funding and forces are allocated in
20 line with the National Defense Strategy. We understand that
21 AFRICOM is the first combatant command to go through the
22 review process and that SOUTHCOM will shortly follow.

23 While it is wise and in fact necessary to take a hard
24 look and methodological look at our investments in military
25 activities around the globe, it would be strategically

1 unwise to disengage from either Africa or Latin America in
2 an effort to generate small, near-term budgetary gains.
3 Given the relatively small number of forces under
4 consideration, such a move would not generate the type of
5 savings necessary for meaningful NDS investments and would
6 likely come at a much higher cost in terms of increased
7 long-term security risks.

8 Our competitors recognize that investing in Africa and
9 Latin America is in their long-term interests, as evidenced
10 by Chinese and Russian military and economic activity that
11 continues to grow across these continents year by year.
12 General Townsend and Admiral Faller, I look forward to
13 hearing your assessments regarding where and how U.S.
14 interests are best served in the AFRICOM and SOUTHCOM areas
15 of operation, including where we may be able to gain
16 efficiencies without undue risk to the U.S. interests, and
17 where you believe it would be strategically responsible to
18 do so.

19 As you both note in your testimony, Latin America and
20 Africa are beset by a vicious cycle of challenges that our
21 competitors are seeking to leverage to their advantage.
22 Countries with weak democratic institutions and rampant
23 corruption are being overtly wooed by Chinese and Russian
24 investments and covertly manipulated through information
25 operations and a flood of disinformation. We are not only

1 competing globally for influence and access, we must also
2 work to ensure that new forms of military and economic
3 colonialism do not take root in those regions. I am
4 especially concerned about Chinese economic intentions and
5 whether our partner countries are positioned to defend
6 themselves against China's predatory lending practices.

7 As you well know, the problems we face and the security
8 solutions required are multidimensional. They do not lend
9 themselves to geographic or bureaucratic boundaries and
10 require well-resourced and well-integrated whole-of-
11 government solutions. Continuing to restrict development
12 aid, rebuff partners and allies, and constrain multilateral
13 efforts, as the administration has repeatedly endeavored to
14 do, all but ensures that present challenges in places like
15 Latin America and Africa will continue to expand and travel
16 to America's doorstep. I will be interested in your views
17 on the importance of investing in diplomacy and development
18 to foster long-term stability in these regions, as well as
19 your assessment of the impact of significant force
20 reductions on the interagency and international partners we
21 coordinate with and depend upon to advance our objectives.

22 Gentlemen, thank you for your service and thank you for
23 your testimony.

24 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Reed.

25 We will go ahead and start with opening statements, and

1 we will start with you, General Townsend. Your statement
2 will be made a part of the record. You may proceed.

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1 STATEMENT OF GENERAL STEPHEN J. TOWNSEND, USA,
2 COMMANDER, UNITED STATES AFRICA COMMAND

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

7 It is a privilege to be a part of and to lead America's
8 finest men and women at U.S. Africa Command, an exceptional
9 team dedicated to protecting America and advancing her
10 interests on the African continent.

11 I would like to take a moment to honor the memories of
12 three exceptional Americans, U.S. Army Specialist Henry
13 Mayfield, Jr.; Mr. Bruce Triplet; and Mr. Dustin Harrison
14 who lost their lives in the service of our nation on January
15 5th in Manda Bay, Kenya. To their families, our thoughts
16 and prayers are with you. Your loved ones died while
17 protecting the American people from the very real threat of
18 al Qaeda and al Shabaab terrorist groups.

19 I am here this morning with my battle buddy, shipmate,
20 and friend, Admiral Craig Faller, to discuss shared
21 challenges and opportunities in both our areas of
22 responsibility while we further readiness of the joint force
23 and our ability to fight across the globe.

24 AFRICOM is critical to maintaining this ability as
25 Africa overwatches a global crossroads with strategic

1 chokepoints and sea lines of communication that are
2 essential to global commerce and critical to U.S. operations
3 in the world. Our future security and prosperity rest on
4 this strategic access in times of crisis and ensuring these
5 waters remain free, open, and secure.

6 USAFRICOM is engaged in an ongoing blank slate review.
7 In concert with the Department of Defense, we have developed
8 a prioritized list of objectives and actions to protect the
9 homeland and secure our strategic interests in Africa while
10 ensuring the American taxpayers' investments are in the
11 right areas.

12 Africa is key terrain for competition with China and
13 Russia who are aggressively using economic and military
14 means to expand their access and influence. I believe
15 Africa offers America a competitive edge over China and
16 Russia, and we should take advantage of it.

17 We will grow more efficient to contribute to higher
18 defense priorities and refocus resources to global power
19 competition, but we cannot take pressure off major terrorist
20 groups like al Qaeda and ISIS. These groups and many others
21 remain an inconvenient reality in Africa. While we should
22 not try to confront each one, we should remain resolute in
23 confronting those who threaten Americans and the American
24 homeland like al Shabaab, the largest and most violent of al
25 Qaeda's branches. Today AFRICOM does that with a light and

1 relatively low cost footprint by supporting African and
2 international partners who are leading these efforts.

3 In my first 6 months of command, I learned that small
4 investments, a few troops, and a few bucks can go a long way
5 and make a real difference in Africa. Our whole-of-
6 government and partner-centric approach acts as a force
7 multiplier to address Africa's many complex challenges.
8 What AFRICOM accomplishes with a few people and a few
9 dollars on a continent three and a half times the size of
10 the continental United States is a bargain for the American
11 taxpayer and low cost insurance for America in that region.

12 A secure and stable Africa remains an enduring American
13 interest. USAFRICOM stands ready to protect and advance
14 American interests and respond to crises in Africa.

15 Again, thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the
16 committee, for your continued support to our armed forces.
17 I look forward to your questions.

18 [The prepared statement of General Townsend follows:]
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1 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, General Townsend.
2 Admiral Faller?

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1 STATEMENT OF ADMIRAL CRAIG S. FALLER, USN, COMMANDER,
2 UNITED STATES SOUTHERN COMMAND

3 Admiral Faller: Chairman Inhofe, Ranking Member Reed,
4 Senators, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I
5 am honored to be here with my shipmate and good friend,
6 General Steve Townsend.

7 We also thank you for the steadfast support you provide
8 to our men and women every day at SOUTHCOM, and I am truly
9 grateful for the honor and opportunity to lead them.

10 I am with Ambassador Jean Manes, our civilian deputy
11 commander, former U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador; and
12 Sergeant Major Zickefoose, Command Sergeant Major for
13 SOUTHCOM, two of the eyes and ears of our command.

14 The western hemisphere is our shared home. It is our
15 neighborhood and we are connected to the nations there in
16 every domain, sea, air, space, land, cyber, and most
17 importantly, culturally and with values. Over the last
18 year, I have had the opportunity to visit our partners and
19 see firsthand the opportunities and challenges that directly
20 impact the security of our hemisphere.

21 I have come to describe the challenges of a vicious
22 circle of threats that deliberately erodes the security and
23 stability of this region and the United States of America.
24 This vicious circle is framed by systemic issues of young
25 democracies, with weak institutions, rampant corruption,

1 exploited by transnational criminal organizations often
2 better funded than the security organizations they face,
3 external state actors that do not share those values, China,
4 Russia, and Iran, and violent extremist organizations. They
5 are trying to advance their interests at the expense of U.S.
6 and partner nation security.

7 In fact, the aha for me over the last year is the
8 extent to which China is aggressively pursuing its interests
9 right here in our neighborhood. This vicious circle can be
10 seen most acutely in the tragedy that is Venezuela. The
11 human suffering of this once thriving democracy has driven 5
12 million people to flee to neighboring countries like
13 Colombia, Brazil, Peru, Ecuador, Argentina, Chile, and more.
14 These countries are dealing with this and the strains to
15 their health care, education, and social services are
16 palatable. Colombia alone spent \$2.5 billion, a significant
17 part of their GDP, over the last 2 years just to support the
18 migrants. While Russia, Cuba, and China prop up this
19 illegitimate Maduro dictatorship, the democracies of the
20 world look for a way to get the Venezuelan people what they
21 deserve, a free and prosperous Venezuela.

22 The only way to attack this vicious circle is as a
23 team. In this neighborhood, a little goes a long way, and
24 our partners are willing to contribute. But we need the
25 right and focused, persistent military presence which might

1 take the form of security force assisted brigades or small
2 teams of special operation forces or marines to conduct
3 specialized training or our National Guard forces forging
4 long-term relations via the State Partnership Program or our
5 maritime forces where presence at sea establishes sea
6 control and attacks these transnational criminal
7 organizations, as we have recently done with the deployment
8 of littoral combat ship USS Detroit.

9 Deployments like the United States naval ship Comfort
10 show the best outstretched hand of America, and that mission
11 treated over 70,000 patients and extended our enduring
12 promise as a trusted partner to the neighborhood.

13 Security cooperation is a critical tool in a region
14 with willing partners who thrive given the opportunity.
15 International military education and training, IMET, as a
16 small investment, yields long-term returns. It builds
17 lasting trusted relationships. As I speak, half of our
18 nation's chiefs of defense are graduates of IMET programs.

19 Finally, our people, our greatest asset. Joint
20 Interagency Task Force South, JIATF-South in Key West, our
21 southernmost base in the continental United States, holds
22 significant strategic value in defending against a wide
23 range of threats to U.S. national security. We are taking
24 steps to improve the resiliencies of that headquarters
25 building and to improve the quality of life of our military

1 and civilian personnel who struggle in one of the country's
2 most expensive economies.

3 At our headquarters in Miami, we are also working to
4 address the cost of living and housing concerns that create
5 hardships for our families.

6 Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Reed, thank you again for
7 the opportunity to testify today. The SOUTHCOM team
8 appreciates the support of Congress, and you continue to
9 place trust and honor in us and we will not let you down.

10 I look forward to your questions.

11 [The prepared statement of Admiral Faller follows:]
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1 Chairman Inhofe: Well, thank you, Admiral Faller.

2 The comments I made in an opening statement I am very
3 sincere about because a lot of people do not realize, when
4 they look at all of the comms that we have around, did we
5 ever have the right resources relative to the threats that
6 are posed. And so I am going to ask you each the same
7 question, which I have worded very carefully because we hear
8 from so many people who are not aware of the threat to our
9 national security that you would find in SOUTHCOM and in
10 Africa. Why does it really matter in terms of our national
11 security?

12 And I am going to start with you, Admiral Faller. You
13 have touched on it. I know you believe in it, but the
14 question would be, why should the American people care what
15 China and Russia are doing in Africa and Latin America? And
16 specifically, how does what they are doing threaten our
17 national security? I know the President is very interested
18 in this. He wants to make sure that we do not have
19 resources in places that do not have a direct threat on our
20 national security. I would like to have you restate what
21 the direct threat is out there to our national security.

22 Admiral Faller: Senator, this region matters. It is
23 the cultural values. It is the extensive interaction we
24 have in trade. We have a positive trade balance with the
25 region, but that is eroding. And we are the number one

1 trading partner. China is fast catching us in that regard.

2 Panama Canal, strategic access. Two-thirds of the
3 traffic that goes through that has an economic direct tie to
4 the United States.

5 I look around the region and I see China working on
6 multiple port deals, IT infrastructure, dams, mining,
7 logging, fishing, including significant illegal fishing,
8 illegal mining and illegal logging. And I look at the port
9 access that they are pursuing in El Salvador, Jamaica,
10 Bahamas. I ask myself the question why would China want to
11 buy an island and lock up a 99-year lease for most of the
12 coast of El Salvador, right here within a 2-hour flight of
13 the continental United States. They are trying to achieve
14 positional advantage right here in our neighborhood and that
15 is alarming and concerning to me. It drives a sense of
16 urgency with which I look at this competition.

17 Chairman Inhofe: You know, the terrorists that are out
18 there -- we are not really talking about just locally there,
19 even in El Salvador and the rest. You are the door to this
20 country, right through your area, and I think you have
21 stated that very well.

22 And the same thing to you, General Townsend. I may not
23 have mentioned this in the opening statement, but if you are
24 looking for places to save, I cannot see that you would find
25 it there. I mean, you have a total of what? 6,000-6,500

1 people in the whole continent. Of that, most of those,
2 4,000 of those, are in Djibouti. Of course, they have other
3 missions outside of the continent of Africa.

4 But when you go to West Africa, you have only got what?
5 1,200-1,300 people. So it is not like the other comms with
6 75,000, 80,000, and 100,000 people if what you are trying to
7 accomplish is to reduce our footprint around the world.

8 So specifically in Africa, talking about how that
9 directly affects our national security.

10 General Townsend: Thank you, Chairman.

11 So you asked why should America care about Africa. For
12 a lot of the same reasons that Admiral Faller talked about
13 America caring about South America, although it is a little
14 bit more geographically distant.

15 The strategic access that America needs to the African
16 continent rests on the fact that it is that global
17 crossroads I talked about in my opening statement. There
18 are also tremendous natural resources there, to include rare
19 earth minerals that America needs. There is also a
20 burgeoning population there, and there is good and bad news
21 with that. It is a tremendous potential opportunity for the
22 future, also significant risk. I think that in the past
23 maybe we have been able to pay less attention to Africa and
24 it would be okay for America. I do not believe that is the
25 case for the future.

1 As far as the threats go that you asked about, China
2 and Russia are every bit as busy in Africa today and for the
3 same reasons that Admiral Faller talked about them being
4 busy in South America. They are acting on their own behalf
5 for positional advantage and Russia, in particular, pursuing
6 extractive ventures. So China and Russia are seeking to
7 counter the strategic access that we need for American
8 security and American prosperity.

9 Secondly, the violent extremist organizations that are
10 on the continent both in the east and in the west. Some of
11 those groups threaten the American homeland today. Some of
12 them will potentially be a threat in the future years.

13 Chairman Inhofe: I appreciate that. And I am glad you
14 mentioned in your opening statement the IMET program because
15 China realizes what we have done with that program, how well
16 that has served us. And so they are now emulating that.
17 They actually had a meeting in Beijing with -- I think they
18 had all 52 countries represented there, talking about how
19 they were going to expand that program, put more money in
20 it. You are watching that, I am sure, very carefully
21 throughout your whole area.

22 General Townsend: Yes, Chairman.

23 Chairman Inhofe: Okay, good.

24 Senator Reed?

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

1 And thank you again, General Townsend and Admiral
2 Faller.

3 I think it could be safely said that both of your
4 COCOMs are conducting economy of force operations. Is that
5 right, General Townsend?

6 General Townsend: That is what we are doing, both of
7 us.

8 Senator Reed: Admiral Faller?

9 Admiral Faller: We are at a very low level of force.
10 Yes, sir.

11 Senator Reed: And we have to do that, but we have to
12 do it smartly and wisely and that means cooperation and
13 collaboration across our government and also collaboration
14 with other governments.

15 And, General Townsend, the French are now conducting
16 significant operations in the Sahel part of Africa. If we
17 drew down, what signal would that send and what practical
18 consequences might that have for their cooperation in the
19 fight?

20 General Townsend: Senator Reed, so as you pointed out,
21 the French are the lead international partner in the Sahel
22 region of West Africa. They have about 4,500 troops there
23 that are engaged in active operations every day to counter
24 the threat that is there. The threat comes from both al
25 Qaeda groups and ISIS groups there. That threat is very

1 serious and that threat is on the advance, and I think the
2 French would say -- in fact, they have said publicly
3 recently -- that their efforts are not having the desired
4 effect that they need. We are supporting both the French
5 and the larger international effort there.

6 There is a significant European effort there. Our
7 position, the position of the Department of Defense, is that
8 the Europeans need to step up and do more in the Sahel to
9 help the French. The French are calling on Europe to step
10 up and do more. I absolutely think that is the right thing
11 to do. But as we see the violent extremists advancing, if
12 we were to withdraw support from the French precipitously,
13 then that would not go in a good direction. So I think what
14 we have to do is we have got to synchronize our support and
15 the removal of support, if we decide to do that, with the
16 arrival of European support. But there is a chance there
17 that the French can offset that.

18 Senator Reed: What you are saying is it would not be
19 particularly coherent if we are telling the EU to step up
20 support of France as we reduce our support.

21 General Townsend: I think there is certainly a timing
22 issue there, Senator, absolutely.

23 Senator Reed: And, Admiral Faller, following up the
24 point that the chairman made, which I think is an excellent
25 point, programs like IMET are just absolutely critical, and

1 in your AO, China is aggressively pursuing these IMET
2 options. You indicated that in certain countries -- I think
3 it was El Salvador -- there is one IMET slot that the U.S.
4 offers and 50 that the Chinese offer. Is that --

5 Admiral Faller: Recently an example was provided along
6 those lines where they have come in analyzing how many folks
7 we were sending to Carlisle, and they were going five times
8 over that to their war college in China, which they have
9 copied from our program and translated it into Spanish. We
10 talked to the students that come back from that to get a
11 sense for the quality and the approach. It is all based off
12 of the U.S. doctrine.

13 Senator Reed: It has to be pointed out that the IMET
14 program is funded by the Department of State. So one of the
15 critical programs we are talking about is not within DOD,
16 which again suggests that this whole-of-government approach
17 -- we have to look not just at funding for your COCOM but
18 are we putting the money in the State Department? Are we
19 putting money into AID? Are we putting money into various
20 programs that will allow you to conduct a much more
21 efficient economy of force operation? Is that fair?

22 Admiral Faller: That is an accurate statement. We
23 really depend on that IMET, Senator.

24 Senator Reed: And going back to Africa, General
25 Townsend, you indicated that the extremist threat is all

1 through the continent, but my sense is that al Shabaab and
2 others are still contemplating projecting power outside of
3 Africa, which is a much more critical threat to the United
4 States. Is that fair?

5 General Townsend: Senator, that is accurate.

6 Senator Reed: And so we are going to continue to focus
7 on that threat to the United States particularly.

8 General Townsend: I believe we should.

9 Senator Reed: Finally, I think again the issue here is
10 maintaining appropriate force and also maintaining the
11 coordination with our government and with our allies. You
12 are pursuing that, and I think you should continue to do so.
13 Thank you.

14 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Reed.

15 Senator Rounds?

16 Senator Rounds: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

17 Gentlemen, first of all, thank you for your service to
18 our country.

19 I would like to begin by just talking a little bit
20 about the disinformation and influence operations which
21 Russia has used successfully in a number of different
22 instances, but specifically what plans and actions that you
23 have and your team have created to address the technological
24 advances and the changing character of war to assure that
25 America maintains a strategic advantage in your areas of

1 operation.

2 Admiral Faller: The disinformation campaign that
3 Russia has been on is truly about, in all instances,
4 painting the United States in an inaccurate light. One
5 example is reporting that I was on the border of Venezuela
6 about to lead an invasion force. Another example was they
7 twisted it just enough in an article in RT to say that I had
8 said something that was at odds with the Vice President of
9 the United States, which was complete baloney. Their
10 largest by volume, outside of the Russian language, effort
11 in social media is in Spanish. And you have to ask what is
12 the national interest of Russia in that disinformation here
13 in our neighborhood and around the world, and it is
14 concerning to us.

15 We have countered within our means in information
16 operations, military information, and support a strong
17 relationship with the State Department and alignment in
18 messaging, information with some increased authorities in
19 cyber to go after them and put the truth out and try to make
20 a dent in that space. But more needs to be done clearly,
21 and more should be done to take advantage of machine
22 learning and those types of skills that the Department has
23 embarked on to really get after to thwart their
24 disinformation campaigns.

25 Senator Rounds: General Townsend?

1 General Townsend: Senator, not unlike SOUTHCOM, we see
2 the same kind of disinformation campaigns and not just from
3 Russia but from other actors such as Iran. Recently Iran
4 announced that I was killed at the engagement at Manda Bay.
5 I am glad to hear that is exaggerated.

6 There is fairly low-tech warfare in Africa overall, but
7 we do see armed UAVs, unmanned vehicles armed, now being
8 provided by multiple actors, China, Turkey, et cetera. We
9 also see sophisticated air defense systems. We also see
10 technologies that have I think even greater impacts like the
11 Chinese smart city technologies where they are coming in
12 and, in the interest of public safety and security, they are
13 offering to equip African cities with camera systems,
14 surveillance systems all over, facial recognition
15 technologies. And of course, we know that all of those
16 systems are reporting back to China first before they report
17 to the African country where they are established. So I
18 think that the growth of high-tech is a concern certainly in
19 Africa.

20 Senator Rounds: Thank you.

21 I think part of the challenge we have is sharing that,
22 look, the propaganda has never really quit from our
23 adversaries. They understand its value. They are very good
24 at it. They simply advance to using social media and other
25 means in which to really bend things their direction. In

1 doing so, they influence individuals who really in many
2 cases share the same values that we share in this country.

3 The IMET program has been mentioned several times here,
4 and I think it is critical that we continue to be able to
5 have communications and relationships with what is in many
6 cases perhaps one of the most stable parts of any one of
7 these nations' governments and that is their military.
8 While their civilian leaders come and go, in many cases they
9 have a stable force of professionals. And the question is,
10 do they find and do they understand the way that we do
11 business to be appropriate and a better way than what our
12 adversaries offer them?

13 I would just like to once again offer each of you the
14 opportunity to talk a little bit about IMET at this time in
15 which I think some people question whether or not it is a
16 valid program and how critical it is and how inexpensive it
17 is for us to continue to have that relationship with the
18 militaries from the different countries.

19 Admiral Faller: The value is in the building of trust.
20 You get to know your shipmate, your battle buddy. You share
21 experience and doctrine. A recent example. In El Salvador,
22 the new president came in, favorable connections to the
23 United States, appointed a new chief of defense and minister
24 of defense. The minister of defense is a Naval War College
25 grad. The chief of defense is an Army War College grad.

1 You can sit down around a roundtable and have a serious
2 conversation without stilted talking points about the real
3 challenges and opportunities and the complexity of making
4 progress. That is just one of many examples I could cite,
5 Senator.

6 Senator Rounds: Thank you.

7 General Townsend: Senator, just like Admiral Faller
8 has explained, IMET is invaluable to us. I think it is a
9 long-term way to influence a government and a military by
10 training those people who grew up to be the chief of
11 defense, and that same kind of thing is found in Africa as
12 well.

13 I think they seek out -- the United States is their
14 preferred partner for a number of reasons, not the least of
15 which is our competence and capability but also our values.
16 That is part of that. And I think that is a strong thing
17 that is imparted through IMET.

18 Senator Rounds: Thank you.

19 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

20 Chairman Inhofe: Senator Shaheen?

21 Senator Shaheen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

22 General Townsend, Admiral Faller, let me begin by
23 adding my condolences to those that have been expressed
24 already for the service members lost in the month of
25 January. I want to particularly call out Captain Ryan

1 Phanouf from Hudson, New Hampshire who was an airman lost in
2 Afghanistan earlier this week. I know that all of New
3 Hampshire mourns his loss and the loss of everyone and sends
4 condolences to all of the families. So thank you.

5 I want to begin, Admiral Faller, with where we are with
6 drug interdiction. When you were here last year, we talked
7 about the drug interdiction efforts which are still so
8 important to States like New Hampshire where we have a huge
9 opioid epidemic still and are seeing heroin now coming into
10 the country. So can you talk about what progress has been
11 made and the role that the USS Detroit has played in
12 improving interdiction efforts?

13 Admiral Faller: Senator, as we have discussed, the
14 deaths due to the narcotics overdoses, drugs -- it is too
15 many and it is a national security challenge. And those
16 pathways that they come through just as easily are used by
17 terrorists and other illicit materials. And we cannot do
18 enough to get after that challenge right here in our
19 neighborhood and how it erodes communities across the
20 country.

21 Over the past year, we have focused on building our
22 partners to get them more into the game. 50 percent of our
23 interdictions last year were partner-enabled, and nations
24 like Colombia have stepped up to lead their own exercises
25 and operations, recently an Orion operation where we had

1 many metric tons which was lives saved here. 18 nations
2 participated, Colombian led, and all we did with the U.S.
3 was participate. That is a key effort, and we have got to
4 do more there.

5 In our own efforts, intelligence sharing is key --
6 human intelligence and intelligence, surveillance,
7 reconnaissance from platforms. We need more intelligence,
8 surveillance, and reconnaissance. And our human efforts
9 were funded, but they were funded above our core budget in
10 an unfunded requirement. So a key area to look at and how
11 do we get more efficient, but also apply leverage there.

12 And then finally in our platforms, we depend on ships.
13 At the end of the day, it has got to be a Coast Guard
14 cutter. And our Coast Guard performed brilliantly,
15 supplying more ships than they had even promised through the
16 allocation process. And our Navy stepped up this year with
17 the USS Detroit. We need more ships. We think the number
18 of Navy ships would be about three to sustain the presence
19 and pressure. The pressure matters on these nations, and
20 that pressure has got to be at the source in coca
21 eradication and at the street here in the U.S. Colombia has
22 made progress at that source site, eradicated cocaine with
23 the Colombian chief of defense on the Ecuador border. They
24 have made progress, and the result has been that deaths are
25 down but still too many. And we had almost a record year in

1 interdiction but still not enough.

2 Senator Shaheen: Good. Well, thank you for those
3 efforts, and we hope that we can continue to do more to
4 support them.

5 This question is really for both of you. We have now,
6 for the last 2 and a half years, had the Women, Peace, and
7 Security Act in effect. DOD has made significant progress
8 in implementing that. We just put \$4 million for gender
9 advisors into the 2020 defense budget.

10 Can you talk about the successes that you have seen
11 both in SOUTHCOM and AFRICOM because of the effort to better
12 integrate women and be able to appeal to those women in
13 Africa, the women in Latin America who we need to address if
14 we are going to be successful?

15 General Townsend: Thanks, Senator. So you asked me
16 about Women, Peace, and Security at my confirmation hearing
17 6 months ago, and I told you I did not know much about it
18 but I would look into it. And I was able to actually attend
19 one of these forums.

20 So at AFRICOM, Women, Peace, and Security is integrated
21 into every event that we do. And we see some advantages
22 here. It is not just about promoting the role of women in
23 the armed forces, but it has an impact across their
24 societies as well. So it is integral to everything we do,
25 and we have had a communications symposium, which I was

1 fortunate enough to attend. We have a female intel officer
2 training program. And there is a seminar that is about to
3 kick off in a Flintlock exercise that we are about to start.
4 Those are just some examples. And we try to integrate some
5 of that into every event.

6 Senator Shaheen: Good. Thank you.

7 Admiral Faller: Similarly we integrate it in every
8 event, Senator. Recently Ambassador Manes and I were in
9 Colombia. We did a roundtable with some key women warriors
10 from the Colombian Army. We had the chief of defense from
11 Colombia, their chief of their army, their chief of the air
12 force. In that audience of women -- there were about 50 of
13 them -- were nine command sergeant majors. And I will tell
14 you what. They were getting after it, and it was
15 motivating. Afterwards, the chief of the Colombian Army
16 came and said, hey, can you do some more of that with us
17 because it really brings out the competitive spirit. The
18 reason why? We are better when we are integrated and stronger
19 when we are integrated.

20 Senator Shaheen: Well, thank you both very much. I
21 think it is a very important model for us to show to the
22 rest of the world, particularly in developing countries in
23 Africa and Latin America.

24 Chairman Inhofe: Senator Ernst?

25 Senator Ernst: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

1 And I would second that. Thank you, Senator Shaheen
2 for those words.

3 Gentlemen, thank you very much for being here today.
4 We truly appreciate your efforts in some challenging regions
5 that often are not hitting the headlines of our newspapers
6 every day. So thanks to you, thanks for your teams.

7 Sergeant Major, good luck to you on retirement. I
8 still think Nebraska or Iowa is a great place to go.

9 Admiral Faller, thank you for sitting down with me the
10 other day. I really do appreciate that. We had a great
11 discussion.

12 And I would like to go a little more into IMET. You
13 have heard a number of my colleagues just talking about how
14 important it is. We had an Emerging Threats and
15 Capabilities Subcommittee hearing just a while back, and you
16 were able to visit with us about the importance of IMET at
17 that particular subcommittee meeting. And it has been in
18 the press a lot lately. We all acknowledge that we can do
19 better in vetting. But strategically can you talk to what
20 that means for our partners strategically and what it does
21 to assist not only those countries but the United States as
22 well?

23 Admiral Faller: The United States military education
24 system is our strength. Like the education system in our
25 country, our training education is sought after and valued,

1 and it builds stronger partners that know and trust us, and
2 the relationships that go with that last a lifetime.

3 Just an example of that comes up time and time again.
4 I have a Colombian brigadier general who is a full director
5 of our exercise division at headquarters. He is a graduate
6 of Leavenworth, Carlisle, the PathFinder School, the
7 Advanced Army Armor School, and the Ranger School. He is an
8 honor grad at Ranger School. And the Colombians value that
9 as do our partner nations.

10 And so we can use more IMET. Our budget is about \$10
11 million a year for 28 democratic countries. Secretary of
12 Defense Esper visited SOUTHCOM last week. A priority of his
13 is to seek more money. He is seeking a 50 percent increase
14 in the IMET budget. We could spend that 50 percent increase
15 in IMET next year in our schoolhouses at the Western
16 Hemisphere Institute for security at Fort Benning, game-
17 changer, the Inter-American Air Force Academy in Texas.
18 These are schoolhouses that we do not think a lot about, in
19 addition to Carlisle and Newport, Maxwell with the Air Force
20 and the Marine Corps university. But all these schoolhouses
21 work together to make a difference in strengthening the
22 hemispheric security.

23 Senator Ernst: Thank you.

24 Yes, General Townsend.

25 General Townsend: Senator, I could not say it any

1 better than Admiral Faller just did.

2 Senator Ernst: Thank you. No, I do appreciate that.

3 And of course, our State Partnership Programs as well. Iowa
4 is partnered with Kosovo, and I know a number of those
5 officers that I worked with a decade ago -- I have seen them
6 rise through the ranks and we continue to stay in close
7 contact. But those partnerships are very, very valuable.
8 So thank you.

9 Admiral Faller, I want to talk a little bit about the
10 integration of missions that we see between SOUTHCOM and
11 NORTHCOM. Obviously, there has been a lot of attention on
12 our southern border and what has continued to happen with
13 drug cartels. Whether it is weapons crossing the border,
14 whether it is the drugs that Senator Shaheen just talked
15 about, all of that is very concerning.

16 But what I would like to focus on in just the minute
17 and a half that I have left is also the issue of human
18 trafficking. So not only do we have illegal drug trade
19 wreaking havoc across Iowa, a lot of our rural communities,
20 but Iowa wrestles a lot with the serious problem of human
21 trafficking. And the Polaris Project in 2016 dubbed Des
22 Moines, Iowa as one of the top 100 human trafficking sites
23 in the United States. And that is not something we are
24 proud of.

25 So could you describe the resourcing and coordination

1 challenges that exist when you are trying to address the
2 threat between these different areas of responsibility
3 between SOUTHCOM and NORTHCOM?

4 Admiral Faller: SOUTHCOM and NORTHCOM work very
5 closely together. General O'Shaughnessy and I traveled to
6 Mexico City. We sat down with the head of their army and
7 their navy to talk about how do we improve information
8 sharing, how do we get after these ungoverned spaces that
9 are spawning instability into North America and beyond and
10 South America, Latin America, the Caribbean, and how do we
11 help the Mexicans share information with Guatemala. It was
12 a very productive meeting. We came up with tangible steps
13 to do that.

14 Then we went to Guatemala City the next day and had
15 that same level of conversation with those nations to try to
16 forge more coordination. At the heart of getting after
17 these wicked problems that create instability here,
18 including the human trafficking, is sharing intelligence,
19 building trust, breaking down barriers, understanding and
20 then ensuring that the right agency, law enforcement agency,
21 other agencies, have the information they need to make an
22 impact. And so that is a key element of what we are doing
23 as we move ahead. Then we take that into exercise program
24 which is also a similar element.

25 We are adequately resourced to do this, but we are

1 carefully looking at how we can become more efficient as we
2 move forward.

3 Senator Ernst: Very good. Well, please let us know if
4 there is anything additional that we as Congress can help
5 with.

6 Gentlemen, thank you very, very much for your service
7 to our country. Thank you.

8 Chairman Inhofe: Senator Kaine?

9 Senator Kaine: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to
10 our witnesses.

11 I want to add my comments of support for the families
12 of Colonel Voss and Captain Phanouf. Colonel Voss, though a
13 Guam resident, was based out of Joint Base Langley in
14 Virginia. And thinking about his family and all those that
15 you mentioned.

16 Admiral Faller, I want to start with you on Venezuela.
17 There is an article that was in the "Wall Street Journal" a
18 couple of days ago that I would like to put into the record.

19 [The information follows:]

20 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

21

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25

1 Senator Kaine: And the title of it is unnecessarily
2 provocative. The title is "How Putin Outfoxed Trump in
3 Venezuela." I do not think the title is a fair
4 characterization. I think the article, though, is very,
5 very good.

6 And basically if I were going to title the article, I
7 would title it how the U.S. underestimated the difficulty of
8 what we were trying to do in Venezuela. I think the U.S.
9 has done a number of good things. I think the Trump
10 administration has. I could pick a few faults, but
11 generally done good. But the core of the article is how we
12 really underestimated how hard it would be.

13 And I just remember this last year when we were talking
14 about it here and in the Foreign Relations Committee, there
15 were sort of some real blue skies scenarios that were being
16 painted by the administration about how Maduro is about to
17 collapse. And I went to Colombia and visited in Colombia,
18 then went to the border in Cucuta in March, and everything I
19 was hearing from the Colombians and everybody down there is
20 this is not easy. It is going to be really, really hard.
21 They were exactly right about how difficult it was going to
22 be. And here on Capitol Hill we were getting blue skies
23 scenarios from the administration about the imminent
24 collapse of the Maduro government. And we just got it
25 wrong. On the intel side, we just got it wrong.

1 And one of the things that is galling in the article is
2 one of the reasons it is so hard is not just our
3 adversaries. Venezuela is propped up by Iran and Cuba and
4 China and Russia. The UAE, Turkey, India, allies of ours
5 have helped them evade U.S. sanctions and have helped
6 propped them up, and they are one of the reasons why the
7 Maduro government has had some lasting power.

8 And so I guess I just want to caution all of us on
9 matters like this. These are tough situations, and we can
10 do everything right and still find it very hard to
11 accomplish what we want. And that is not our fault. But we
12 need to be very wary of blue skies scenarios and being told
13 we will support this person and things are likely to work
14 out our way. We are in for the long haul in these
15 situations.

16 And I will tell, Admiral Faller, I would love to talk
17 to you further. We have done European Reassurance
18 Initiatives and Asian Reassurance Initiatives. It might be
19 time to do an Americas Reassurance Initiative. I do not
20 really like the title because "reassurance" already sounds
21 defensive like no, no, no, we are really interested in you.
22 I do not know that we have to be defensive about it. But we
23 need to have a comprehensive, whole-of-government diplomacy
24 and military and economic trade focus on the Americas
25 because while we are focusing elsewhere, I know where our

1 adversaries are focused. They are focusing on our own back
2 yard.

3 General Townsend, I want to ask you a question. There
4 was a recent study of some challenges within the special
5 operations community, and while it was special operations
6 focused, a number of the areas of the study dealt with items
7 in AFRICOM. There is a comprehensive review that SOCOM put
8 out last week looking at a variety of cultural and ethical
9 challenges in the special operations forces, including some
10 that led to scandals. And many took place in AFRICOM.

11 One of the themes was extremely high operational tempos
12 caused problems. And here was the finding, quote, a trend
13 of disaggregation at the individual and small team levels
14 risks employing forces where operational requirements
15 misalign with the four gen validation standards. I have
16 been on the committee 7 years. I think what that means is
17 we had forces deployed in teams and sizes that lacked the
18 oversight or the ability to do the missions they were
19 assigned.

20 Now, I think the recommendations are largely for SOCOM,
21 but because SOCOM operates within combatant commands, what
22 responsibility do you think that the COCOMs have in making
23 sure that the forces that are provided to you are
24 appropriately resourced and led?

25 General Townsend: Thanks, Senator.

1 I am familiar with the study, and I am familiar with
2 the conclusions of it. And I agree with what that study
3 talks about. And as you are aware, most of the forces
4 operating on the African continent these days are special
5 operating forces, not exclusively but a lot of them.

6 This phenomenon you mentioned correctly does not just
7 apply to special operating forces. Over the course of this
8 war, we have disaggregated formations time and time again
9 and separated small teams from their higher echelons of
10 command and leadership.

11 Senator Kaine: Some of the recommendations here or
12 findings are a little bit like the study about the McCain
13 and Fitzgerald instances in the Pacific. I mean, there are
14 some similar challenges about high OPSTEMPO and other things
15 leading to the problems.

16 General Townsend: Right. So I think at the COCOM
17 level, we absolutely need to do whatever we can to keep
18 teams together and not disaggregate them. I am a firm
19 believer in this. I have been in a command that has had my
20 team disaggregated and scattered all over. So I am believer
21 in keeping team integrity in every task that we can.

22 Also, actually part of our blank slate review process
23 that we are undergoing with the Department of Defense is to
24 look at how we can reduce the operational tempo,
25 particularly of SOF forces, but all forces, reduce their

1 operational tempo so it is not just about trying to redirect
2 resources but it is to return some resources to home
3 station. The SOF operational tempo is still stretched.
4 Even though it is now reaching a dwell of about 1 year
5 deployed for 2 years at home, the goal is 1 to 3, and there
6 is still some work to be done there.

7 Senator Kaine: Thank you very much.

8 Thanks, Mr. Chair.

9 Chairman Inhofe: Senator McSally?

10 Senator McSally: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

11 General Townsend, I represent Arizona, and on January
12 5th Dustin Harrison from Tucson was killed by al Shabaab
13 terrorists at Manda Bay in Kenya. His wife Hope and his 2-
14 year-old daughter Heaven are back home in Tucson grieving
15 the loss of her husband and father.

16 Now, I was a part of the team to stand up AFRICOM as my
17 last assignment in the military, one of the more challenging
18 assignments I had. So I am aware of the challenges you have
19 on the continent.

20 But some articles about the situation there was that it
21 was a woefully undefended perimeter or surprisingly sparse
22 security, given the level of assets, air assets and others,
23 that you have there.

24 And I know an investigation is ongoing, and I do not
25 want to put any more of our service men and women into harm's

1 way. But what can you share about what is happening today
2 to make sure an attack like that is not happening or the
3 risk is not going to happen now and in the future? And what
4 can I share with Heaven and Hope to make sure that others
5 are not going to be in a similar risk?

6 General Townsend: Thanks, Senator.

7 As I mentioned in my opening statement, I also offer
8 our condolences. Those family members are in our thoughts
9 and prayers for our fallen comrades.

10 Also, thank you for pointing out there is an
11 investigation going on, so I do not want to get in front of
12 that. You know, you have worn a uniform so you know that
13 frequently what we think we know at the start of an event is
14 not what actually we discover after we have thoroughly
15 investigated it.

16 But there are some early conclusions. And I think it
17 is self-obvious we were not as prepared there in Manda Bay
18 as we needed to be. Al Shabaab managed to penetrate onto
19 that airfield. A lot of people do not know but the base
20 where our troops live is not where the airfield is. But
21 they were able to get access to that airfield, kill three
22 Americans, and destroy six aircraft there. So we were not
23 as prepared, and we are digging into that to find out why
24 that is the case.

25 But since that event, there are about 120 infantrymen

1 there on the ground now who are securing that place, and
2 they have been working hard since 6 January to put in the
3 appropriate level of defenses. So I am confident that by
4 the time they are done, Manda Bay will be much more properly
5 defended.

6 We are not just stopping there, though. We are looking
7 across the continent because I think that we viewed and the
8 Kenyans viewed Manda Bay as a safe area. The Kenyans have
9 family housing there for their military. It is a resort
10 area. So al Shabaab has shown their reach and the danger
11 that they pose, and I think we need to take that seriously.
12 And so I am looking with a clear eye at every location in
13 Africa now.

14 Senator McSally: Great. Thank you.

15 I was at J-33 in that assignment running our
16 counterterrorism operations. One of the challenges we had
17 at the time -- this was back in 2007 to 2010 -- we saw al
18 Shabaab growing. We saw the training camps. We were
19 watching hundreds, thousands of fighters being trained. At
20 the time, they were a lawful legitimate target, but the
21 Obama administration felt like they were not a real problem
22 or risk. So we could not take them out.

23 Last year, I think there were 67 strikes conducted in
24 Somalia. Can you share what the impact of those strikes
25 are, and is it whack-a-mole or what is the strategy here

1 going forward in order to address this growing terrorist
2 threat in East Africa?

3 General Townsend: So there is an international effort
4 there that supports the Somali Government.

5 Senator McSally: I know. We have been talking about
6 that for a very long time.

7 General Townsend: Yes. And the Somali national army.
8 And so our role is in support of that. So the two major
9 tasks that we are doing is helping to train a specific part
10 of the Somali national army, the Danab or special light
11 infantry units, and we are also doing our counterterrorism
12 strikes. They are meant to help the international effort
13 and the Somali effort, but they are also meant to protect
14 America.

15 I do not believe that it is whack-a-mole. What we do
16 is we keep an eye on al Shabaab every day, and we are
17 looking for ways to reduce their capacity wherever we can.
18 And so that effort to disrupt and degrade al Shabaab and
19 their leadership and their mid-level leadership and higher-
20 level leadership is a critical part of what we are doing.

21 Senator McSally: Great. Thanks.

22 Admiral Faller, I am out of time, but I will submit
23 some questions for the record specifically about the drug
24 flow coming up from your AOR to our country through my
25 State, Arizona, and the latest tactics that the cartels are

1 using and how we are countering them. But I will have to
2 submit those for the record. Thanks.

3 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

4 Chairman Inhofe: Senator King?

5 Senator King: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6 I want to talk in a few minutes about China and Russia
7 and their activities both in Latin America and in Africa.

8 But, Admiral Faller, since we have been sitting here,
9 eight Americans have died of drug overdoses in the last
10 hour, 67,000 people a year, one person a day in Maine.

11 What is going on with China and Russia are threats.
12 They are indirect threats. They are important. But we are
13 talking about Americans dying. And you and I have talked
14 about this in the past. I have heard from you and from
15 other national security officials that we are picking up --
16 we are interdicting about 25 percent of the drug shipments
17 through the ocean to North America that we know of. 25
18 percent of what we know of. To me, we are talking about
19 allocating resources around the world for all kinds of
20 threats. This is a direct threat killing Americans that we
21 do not have enough ships. I do not get it. When do we get
22 to interdicting the ships that we know are carrying drugs
23 into this country to kill our people?

24 Admiral Faller: It is a national security crisis.

25 Senator King: Absolutely.

1 Admiral Faller: It is actually worse statistics than
2 you mentioned. We detect 25 percent. We are only
3 interdicting 9 percent. And to interdict, we need greater
4 partner capacity, as I mentioned in the answer to Senator
5 Shaheen. We also need assets. At the end of the day, you
6 have got to be on the field to compete. When the playing
7 field is twice the size --

8 Senator King: Well, who do we need to talk to to get
9 those assets? The Secretary of Defense, President, the Vice
10 President, who? Where do we go? It is infuriating that we
11 know what is coming. We know it out there, and the phrase I
12 got was we have far more targets than we can action. That
13 is a euphemism for we are woefully falling down on this
14 responsibility.

15 Admiral Faller: The Coast Guard stepped up in a big
16 way. Our U.S. Navy used to have readiness challenges that
17 has them stretched globally, and that has impacted their
18 force allocation to us.

19 Senator King: Is it people or ships? Do we just need
20 more ships?

21 Admiral Faller: It is not just ships, Senator. We
22 need the intelligence, so we need the intelligence,
23 surveillance, reconnaissance assets. We have about 20
24 percent of what our need is there. And then that then turns
25 into the ability to interdict. We also need our steady

1 funding and our security cooperation so we can help our
2 partner nations help themselves. So it is pulling this
3 together in a full court press beyond ships that we can work
4 together with partners and in our interagency and get the
5 "W" back in front of whole-of-government, Senator.

6 Senator King: I appreciate that. And I know that you
7 are working on this, but I just hope you will keep pressing.
8 If you have to say there is this really obnoxious Senator
9 that is on my back and I have got to do something, that is
10 fine. I can fulfill that responsibility quite adequately.

11 Let us talk about China for a minute. By the way,
12 these charts to both of you are very helpful. It really
13 graphically indicates what is going on.

14 It seems to me China is following sort of a two-track
15 strategy in both Africa and South America. One is what I
16 call debt imperialism. They are getting these small
17 countries in debt to them, and then they have got their
18 hooks into them. General, is that part of what you are
19 seeing happening in Africa?

20 General Townsend: That is exactly what we are seeing.
21 We are also seeing a new, more sophisticated development in
22 that. So the debt trap diplomacy has now become known on
23 the continent. Most African leaders are wise to it.
24 Actually I would commend our State Department for helping
25 get African leaders more savvy about what the Chinese are

1 doing with some of these debt trap loans. The Chinese are
2 adapting, though, and evolving their presentation, and they
3 are becoming more sophisticated about it. So I am a little
4 bit worried because they are getting smarter about it.

5 Senator King: Well, that is a concern. But the other
6 thing is sort of more direct. I think, Admiral Faller, you
7 used the word positional advantage. Just looking at your
8 chart, Jamaica, El Salvador, Ecuador, Chile, Belize ports.
9 Ports. I mean, that is a strategic advantage. Whatever
10 happened to the Monroe Doctrine? We are allowing an
11 adversary -- I will not say an enemy but an adversary -- to
12 establish significant positional advantage within our
13 hemisphere. Admiral?

14 Admiral Faller: Senator, it is not just the ports. It
15 is IT infrastructure. It is space stations. It is cyber.
16 It is safe cities, as General Townsend mentioned. And China
17 has figured out that the nations in Latin America and the
18 Caribbean are cash strapped, so instead of trying to do arms
19 sales, they are coming in with significant gifts. I could
20 cite \$17 million in one country in South America, \$20
21 million in a Caribbean nation. These are 1-year gifts of
22 trucks and boats and IT infrastructure, well beyond uniforms
23 and PME. And that is alarming to me as they build not just
24 debt but dependency, and we are trying to build trust and
25 teams.

1 Senator King: Maybe our motto should be beware of
2 Chinese bearing gifts and telecommunications equipment.

3 Thank you very much, gentlemen. I appreciate your
4 testimony.

5 Chairman Inhofe: Senator Cramer?

6 Senator Cramer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

7 And thank both of you, both for your service and you
8 being here today.

9 I am going to ask each of you to elaborate on the topic
10 that Admiral Faller just brought up in response to Senator
11 King's first question because each of you and/or your
12 predecessors have commented of the challenge, given the mass
13 geography that you are responsible for, each of you, the
14 challenges in ISR, Admiral, that you just raised. Are you
15 getting the assets that you have asked for? Are you getting
16 the assets you need? If not, why not, if you know?

17 And then to putting a finer point perhaps or an
18 additional point on that broader discussion that I want you
19 to have with me. On December 20th with the signing of the
20 NDAA, of course, we began the process of standing up the
21 sixth military branch in Space Force. And whether in ISR or
22 whatever, but Space Force seems to me to fit right into
23 this. And what I am wondering about is -- I know it is
24 early, but time is short -- have you been invited into the
25 discussion or inserted yourself into the discussion of how

1 to best man, train, equip a Space Force to assist you? And
2 then maybe you can elaborate a little bit on your partner
3 countries and what role, if any, they could play. And I
4 would ask, Admiral, to go first and then General Townsend.

5 Admiral Faller: Intelligence, surveillance, and
6 reconnaissance is a key part of our intelligence picture,
7 and there is a global demand and we are short in this
8 hemisphere. I mentioned we were meeting 20 percent of our
9 goal. A good chunk of that 20 percent is using the
10 Department of Homeland Security Customs Protection and
11 Border -- CBP assets. So it is a team effort. The DOD
12 portion of that is probably closer to about 8 percent. And
13 so it is key. We recognize the global challenges and we do
14 the best we can with what we have. I think there are some
15 advances in machine learning and artificial intelligence
16 that we can use and should pursue, and we are going to work
17 that.

18 With respect to Space Force, we have excellent
19 coordination with General Raymond and his team. And it is a
20 key interest like cyber in every nation that we deal with.
21 Fundamental to this is information sharing into the space
22 realm and space agreements that we are working with nations
23 like Brazil, Chile, and other countries that will help
24 counter China's efforts in that realm and continue to ensure
25 that we have positional advantage. We cannot work fast

1 enough in that arena, Senator, but we are working on it as
2 hard as we can.

3 Senator Cramer: Thank you.

4 General Townsend: Senator, on your question about
5 resources, I would say that my command, with one exception,
6 is pretty adequately resourced for the tasks we are given to
7 do today. As small as those resources are, I think it is
8 adequate with the exception of ISR that you mentioned, and I
9 know that every combatant commander that sits here in front
10 of you will say the exact same thing. Admiral Faller
11 briefed his level of resourcing. We are at about 25 percent
12 of our known validated requirement for ISR.

13 You mentioned the Space Force. So interestingly
14 enough, I just met with General Raymond yesterday. We were
15 discussing about the development of his new force. And we
16 are in constant contact with Space Force and Space Command.
17 They have recently deployed some folks to our headquarters
18 to assist us with space.

19 Everything we do, of course, on the continent has ties
20 to space, and not only on our side but on our adversaries'
21 side as well. I recently got a briefing the Chinese have
22 somewhere between 13 and 16 pieces, facilities, space
23 facilities on the African continent and the Russians have
24 five or six. So they are also investing heavily in space
25 infrastructure on the African continent.

1 Senator Cramer: Thank you both, and with that, I yield
2 my time.

3 Chairman Inhofe: Senator Peters?

4 Senator Peters: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

5 And, gentlemen, thank you for your ongoing service as
6 well.

7 You both highlighted in your written testimony the
8 National Guard State Partnership Program and how that works
9 to ensure bonds both at junior levels and senior levels with
10 militaries in your region. In the last 4 years, the
11 Michigan National Guard has completed 19 events with
12 Liberia, one of their State Partnership counterparts, and
13 they have also planned another 20 events coming up in this
14 next fiscal year.

15 I had the opportunity to see some of that firsthand in
16 2017 when I was in Liberia, and I know that the partnership
17 certainly helps build relationships in West Africa as well
18 as other places around the world.

19 So my question to both of you is, how are you
20 leveraging State Partnership Programs in your area of
21 responsibility? And when I look at the amount of money we
22 are spending, roughly \$3 million in each of your areas,
23 maybe you can give us a sense of what you are doing. Is
24 that adequate resourcing? And if not, what would be
25 adequate and what would you do with it? General Townsend?

1 General Townsend: Thanks, Senator.

2 The State Partnership Program is a fantastic resource
3 for us, and I did not have a good appreciation for it until
4 I took this job. And one of the first conferences I went
5 to, all of the -- at the time -- 14 partnerships were
6 present with their National Guard partners from the United
7 States. It is very responsive. It is very flexible. What
8 I like about it is the States and the countries do a lot of
9 things sort of below the radar, and it is a constant kind of
10 presence.

11 We now have 15 partnerships in Africa. We have just
12 added Rwanda and Nebraska. That is the new one, and the
13 next one in the queue we are working up towards is Ethiopia.
14 These countries want these partnerships. They talk to their
15 counterparts on the continent that have them, and they
16 realize the value of it. So I cannot say enough good about
17 the State Partnership Program.

18 Senator Peters: Are they resourced enough?

19 General Townsend: You mentioned we have \$2.9 million,
20 about \$3 million that you mentioned. I think they are
21 probably adequate right now. What I have not done is I have
22 not done an analysis to see if we add Ethiopia, do we get
23 more money, or is that another mouth to feed from the same
24 \$2.9 million. I got to look into that. I do not know the
25 answer to that, and I will get back to you on that.

1 Senator Peters: Great. Thank you.

2 Admiral Faller?

3 Admiral Faller: Similar extremely positive experience.
4 It is a habitual relationship that aligns itself very well,
5 and the year and after year builds friendships. The
6 training that is provided, the equipment. Most of our
7 exercise support for our major exercises comes from State
8 Partnerships, and that is something that we depend on as our
9 force provider. So it is a game-changer for us. We added
10 Brazil and New York this year, and it was a big deal for the
11 Brazilians and the New York National Guard.

12 In terms of the funding levels, we are seeking to get
13 guard partner reps established in every embassy as part of
14 our embassy country teams. And we are working through the
15 funding with respect to that. We think there is an
16 opportunity for some additional State partners within our
17 headquarters to augment our force and to increase the
18 understanding of how we can leverage partner expertise.
19 Cyber is a particular area where some States are excellent
20 in cyber. How do we better leverage that? So I would have
21 to get back to you on a level of funding, and so I will take
22 that for the record.

23 But the authorities piece is also an area too. So we
24 can use the flexible authorities.

25 One quick story. Recently in Colombia and we have

1 Oklahoma. It is not a State partner of Colombia, but the
2 Oklahoma Guard has surged ISR support for 6 months to help
3 augment Colombia in getting after FARC dissidents, ELN, and
4 narcotraffickers. Some tremendous successes with their
5 MC-12's with just 30 guardsmen and one contractor support.
6 Lost cost, high payoff.

7 Senator Peters: Thank you.

8 I have a very limited time. So it will be just a quick
9 answer from each of you.

10 We understand that climate change will have a
11 significant impact on security issues across the planet.
12 The Army War College just recently put out a report
13 suggesting the challenges of climate change. In the brief
14 time we have left, is there one specific concern related to
15 climate change in your area that you think we should be
16 focusing on. General, do you want to start?

17 General Townsend: Yes. I think probably the
18 desertification that we see expanding south from the Sahara
19 into the Sahel and water management I think. Water is going
20 to be huge point of friction on the African continent in the
21 future.

22 Admiral Faller: Recently in Central America -- and we
23 look at the impact on changes in weather to the coffee and
24 the white corn and things like that. So we are really
25 focused on how do we work with whole-of-government to

1 support that stability necessary so people can stay home and
2 find jobs.

3 Senator Peters: Thank you.

4 Chairman Inhofe: Senator Tillis?

5 Senator Tillis: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6 Thank you, gentlemen, for being here.

7 I was struck by some of your comments. I think even
8 Senator King's comments led me to kind of aggregate. You
9 accomplish so much with few people and few dollars. Admiral
10 Faller, you said we do the best we can with what we have. I
11 have heard "adequate" used several times and "probably
12 adequate" used one time.

13 So when we have this discussion about why are you not
14 doing more, I always wonder whether or not you all should
15 just put a mirror down there and say because you are not
16 giving us the resources to say "more than adequate,"
17 thinking strategically, doing more, anticipating threats.

18 To a large extent, the graphics were great, but what we
19 are trying to do is catch up with a pace in China and
20 against China and in Africa and South America where it looks
21 like we are losing. The gap is narrowing and some points we
22 are trying to catch up. Is that an adequate statement?

23 Admiral Faller: We see our competitive advantage
24 narrowing in this hemisphere, and we have got to maintain
25 that competitive advantage and across all the elements of

1 national power focused in the military. So what does it
2 take to do that? Certainly more efficient use of resources
3 we have, leveraging other things. I mentioned artificial
4 intelligence a couple times. But at the end of the day, any
5 athletic competition I have ever been in or anything I have
6 ever done takes a person to compete. So zero in any math
7 equation is either zero or unsolvable. So we got to be
8 present to make a difference.

9 Senator Tillis: General Townsend?

10 General Townsend: Senator, I think that our
11 competitive advantage is not eroding. In some cases, they
12 have an advantage. So there are some areas we are just not
13 going to out-compete China in. One example is spending
14 money in large amounts on the African continent to build
15 infrastructure. We are not going to build bridges and dams
16 and railroads and stadiums and palaces like they are doing.
17 So we have to rely on our strengths. And I think our
18 interagency and our military have a lot of those strengths.
19 So I think that we also do not have to compete everywhere in
20 Africa. We have to pick and choose where we are going to
21 out-compete.

22 Senator Tillis: And if I have time, I am going to ask
23 a little bit about that.

24 We all have to take a look at what is happening around
25 the globe. When all of a sudden we see the threat of Iran

1 in the Middle East, we have to redeploy assets there. It
2 has got to come from somewhere.

3 ISR is something that is desperately needed across the
4 board. I have had several discussions with your
5 predecessors, Admiral, and they say the thing that is most
6 frustrating to them is they have enough intelligence to know
7 there is a lot of stuff moving across the border killing
8 American citizens and there is not a damn thing they can do
9 about it. You just do not have the resources on the water,
10 on the ground to do it.

11 And I really do believe if you take a look at the
12 number of people who are dying from narcoterrorism, it is
13 remarkable to me, the hundreds of people who die every day
14 in this country. If that was a terrorist organization doing
15 that anywhere in the world, we would stand up a capability
16 and rain down hell on them. But it is happening every
17 single day.

18 I want to ask you a question because I will run out of
19 time. As you are looking north of your area of
20 responsibility and then to the southern border of Mexico,
21 how much better are we getting at securing that border so
22 you are limiting the pathways that these drugs, guns, and
23 victims of human trafficking? Are we starting to tighten
24 and make any progress there within your area of
25 responsibility? And any comments you can give on Mexico's

1 contribution will be appreciated.

2 Admiral Faller: We certainly look at the security as a
3 required zone defense. So border security is almost like a
4 goal line stand. You need your linebackers and your
5 halfbacks as you move down. So I think the pressure has
6 worked. We have seen some positive indication.

7 But clearly, given the migrant caravans that have
8 recently come up, the connection between those caravans and
9 transnational criminal organizations and narcotrafficking
10 and the political instability, clearly more needs to be
11 done. And it is got to be those nations stepping up. The
12 partners have to step up and our whole-of-government efforts
13 sustained in a way. To get after sustainable security, it
14 takes time to get some of these efforts up. We saw
15 Ambassador Manes make progress in El Salvador, but it was
16 sustained, whole-of-government efforts.

17 Senator Tillis: And finally, General Townsend, you
18 wake up in the morning. What are the top three things that
19 worry you most about your job?

20 General Townsend: I think the first one is another
21 event like a Manda Bay, an attack where we are just not
22 looking for it.

23 Then I think what al Shabaab might do next that we are
24 not tracking on out of East Africa.

25 And then just making sure I can do right by the

1 soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines of AFRICOM.

2 Chairman Inhofe: Senator Manchin?

3 Senator Manchin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

4 Thank you all especially for your service, but thanks
5 for being here to bring us up to speed.

6 Admiral Faller, I want to talk about Guantanamo just a
7 little bit because we talked about the efficiencies and the
8 things that you are trying to do there to get more
9 accountability. My goodness, when it is costing \$13 million
10 per inmate -- \$13 million -- what type of efficiencies do
11 you think you can do to cut into that? And how can we
12 better operate? And do you not think it is time we look at
13 repositioning these prisoners that would be more cost
14 effective to the American taxpayers? West Virginians could
15 do a lot with that \$13 million. I can assure you on that
16 one. So any thoughts you might have on Guantanamo, what
17 direction we should go, policy for the long term, and then
18 short-term efficiencies?

19 Admiral Faller: Senator, the safe, humane, legal
20 treatment of those detainees is a top mission of ours. We
21 have got a significant guard force aligned to that mission
22 set, some 1,800. As part of this combatant command zero
23 slate review, we are going to take a hard look at if there
24 is a better way, more efficient way to conduct that mission
25 set. That review is ongoing. I will report out to the

1 Secretary of Defense soon.

2 Senator Manchin: Let me just ask this question, and I
3 am sorry to interrupt you, sir.

4 But have you all looked to see if we are capable and
5 able? I understand we have quite a few detainees in the
6 United States prisons in some of our hardened facilities
7 that would be more effective and efficient. The
8 geopolitical ramifications of this thing -- we just got to
9 get more cost effective here and do the common sense thing.
10 I cannot explain this back home.

11 Admiral Faller: As we look at our review, we are
12 looking at different models on what we can learn from. As
13 to whether we would move that detention facility, that is a
14 policy decision --

15 Senator Manchin: I understand. I understand that.

16 Admiral Faller: I just want to note, Senator, that we
17 remind our team every day that the USS Cole, 9/11, and I
18 know we are all deeply committed to ensuring that we do
19 right by that. And the United States needs the capability
20 to deal with --

21 Senator Manchin: How many new prisoners have you
22 brought into Guantanamo this last year? How many new
23 prisoners have you brought to Guantanamo?

24 Admiral Faller: Sir, we have currently 40 and that
25 number has remained steady.

1 Senator Manchin: So we have not put any more there.

2 Admiral Faller: We are not increasing it.

3 Senator Manchin: We are not increasing at all. Where
4 are we putting them, our combatants? When we capture these
5 combatants, where do we put them?

6 Admiral Faller: The detainees that are being taken off
7 the battlefield in other areas are being dealt with by
8 separate different --

9 Senator Manchin: It is not \$13 million a person you do
10 not think. Do you?

11 Admiral Faller: I do not know the cost in other areas,
12 sir.

13 Senator Manchin: I am sorry, sir, on that.

14 General Townsend, if I can go to you. Just give me a
15 comparison of basically of where we are. Troop-wise I think
16 we are up to 80,000 in the Middle East. Deployment -- we
17 are up to 80,000.

18 General Townsend: I do not know the exact number.

19 Senator Manchin: Okay. In AFRICOM, where are you in
20 AFRICOM?

21 General Townsend: Today on the continent we have about
22 5,100 U.S. service members and about 1,000 DOD civilians and
23 contractors.

24 Senator Manchin: We can say it is quite
25 disproportionate. Right? There is a difference. Extreme

1 organizations, Boko Haram, al Shabaab, al Qaeda, and many
2 more. And basically the amount of manpower you have dealing
3 with the influence of China now, you have got your hands
4 full there and it looks like we are spread pretty darned
5 thin not being able to stop this in Africa with what we see
6 coming because it is not getting any less intense there and
7 less violent and less threat to the United States of
8 America, but most of everything we have is going towards the
9 Middle East and also on fighting the drugs that are coming
10 to this country, money going for different things besides
11 the front line of defense so far as stopping the drugs
12 coming into our country. Are you being hampered by the
13 amount of resources you are able to call on?

14 General Townsend: Senator, as I mentioned previously,
15 I think that the tasks we are given today -- we are
16 adequately resourced with the exception of ISR. And I think
17 that the defense-wide review that all of the combatant
18 commands are participating --

19 Senator Manchin: So in order to do the mission, you
20 think at 5,100-plus you are in good shape.

21 General Townsend: To do the tasks that we are assigned
22 today. That is right. And I think the defense-wide review
23 will potentially decrease the tasks that we have to do.

24 Senator Manchin: You think the tasks will change? It
25 is very mobile what is happening --

1 General Townsend: The tasks we are assigned will
2 change.

3 Senator Manchin: Yes. And by that, it could change as
4 far as the demand on resources. Right? Thank you, sir.

5 Chairman Inhofe: Senator Perdue?

6 Senator Perdue: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

7 Thank you both for your career and for your willingness
8 to hang in there and take up these responsibilities.

9 As I see it, the world right now has four naval pinch
10 points. You guys own two of them, Suez Canal and Panama
11 Canal. The Malaccan Strait I would argue is one and now the
12 South China Sea.

13 Let us talk about Suez just a minute. If you look at
14 what Russia has done in Syria with Latakia and Tortus and
15 now what they are talking about in Berbera down near
16 Djibouti where we have a base and now the Chinese have a
17 base there, it is pretty obvious that Russia is increasing
18 their operational tempo in Africa.

19 General, tell me a little bit because one of the things
20 I worry about most -- I have been listening to this stuff
21 for a while here, and the thing that I see beginning to
22 develop is the opportunity that Russia and China join
23 together in an area where we are under-deployed and it
24 creates a real strategic challenge for us. Russia and China
25 are members of the Shanghai Cooperative Organization, along

1 with India and Pakistan, four nuclear powers. But Africa is
2 one of the few places where I can see, other than the
3 Arctic, that they have the potential to really come together
4 and create a real headache for us.

5 Would you share what Russia is doing in your AOR and
6 how we should be thinking about it as we look toward the
7 NDAA this next year?

8 General Townsend: Yes, Senator.

9 So we provided some handouts there --

10 Senator Perdue: They are very helpful.

11 General Townsend: -- to kind of lay out graphically
12 what Russia is doing, and you can see it is quite a bit.

13 Senator Perdue: Yes, sir. Dramatically increased
14 would you not say over the last 3 years?

15 General Townsend: They have.

16 So I think Russia's goals are predominantly for their
17 benefit for resource extraction. They also want to position
18 particularly in northern Africa, particularly in Libya.
19 They want a position on NATO's southern flank there. They
20 also I think want to thwart what we are trying to do and
21 present themselves as a great power alternative to the
22 United States.

23 What I see them doing with China, though, we are not
24 really seeing a great level of cooperation with one recent
25 exception. There was an exercise a couple of months ago in

1 South Africa called Exercise Mosi where the South Africans,
2 the Russians, and Chinese navies conducted an exercise on
3 the very southern tip of the continent. That is the first
4 visible sign of cooperation that we have seen. We are not
5 seeing that in a great measure, but they are all over the
6 continent and they are doing mostly resource extraction.

7 Senator Perdue: One of the things we do not talk about
8 here -- and it is a follow-up real quick, and I need to get
9 to Admiral Faller about South America with a couple of
10 questions. But what are our NATO allies doing in Africa to
11 help us stand up to the requirements that we are trying to
12 fulfill in your AOR?

13 General Townsend: Senator, as you are aware, NATO
14 itself is not greatly active, but --

15 Senator Perdue: I should have said the members of
16 NATO.

17 General Townsend: Members of NATO are very involved.
18 In fact, in West Africa, we are a tertiary supporter of the
19 French, buttressed by several other European countries
20 there. In East Africa in Somalia, it is the European Union
21 that is keeping the AMISOM African forces in the field by
22 paying for their sustainment in the field. So the European
23 partners are doing quite a bit. I believe there is room for
24 them to do more, and I think our government has recently
25 called on the Europeans to do more. So has France by the

1 way.

2 Senator Perdue: I am really concerned. Your charts
3 are great. \$145 billion already invested in Africa and a
4 plan to get to \$250 billion in South America within the next
5 5 years by China alone. I think these numbers are correct.
6 We put in \$8 billion of aid into something called Power
7 Africa, and I am making a point with this. And we attracted
8 something like \$46 billion of foreign direct investment to
9 back that up. So we have employed over \$50 billion with
10 only \$8 billion of our seed money in there. Leverage is a
11 big part of this with our allies, and we have got to
12 continue to do that. And you guys are right in the middle
13 of that.

14 Admiral, with regard to South America, 56 ports they
15 have already invested in. I am worried about two things
16 right now directly. In Argentina, the Georgia National
17 Guard is a partner down there, and you in our meeting
18 yesterday talked about this a little bit. But tell us a
19 little bit about China's PLA managing that space station in
20 Argentina. And then secondarily, what does the up-tempo
21 mean in the Panama Canal Zone that China has really
22 undertaken just in the last -- since you have taken over in
23 that AOR?

24 Admiral Faller: As you state, beyond economic, China
25 seeks to take their soft aims and turn them into hard power

1 targets. And it is in space. It is in cyber. It is in
2 port access. It is in access -- generally, they signed into
3 the previous Panama administration some 40 agreements for
4 access, influence, including IT in Panama. Fortunately for
5 us, the current team in Panama, the administration there,
6 has changed policy and has recognized the threat that that
7 could have on their sovereignty.

8 We look up into the Caribbean. In one Caribbean
9 nation, China has built a road across the country, 1,200
10 acres of access granted for Chinese use. The equipment was
11 brought in under dubious circumstances. They parked it
12 right next to the embassy so we could be reminded of that.
13 And now they get to collect the tolls for 50 years on that
14 road.

15 And those are just three quick examples of what we see
16 with Chinese influence.

17 I pivot and look into Venezuela where China, Russia,
18 Cuba working alongside each other to block the forces and
19 voices of democracy particularly in cyber.

20 Senator Perdue: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

21 Chairman Inhofe: Senator Jones?

22 Senator Jones: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

23 Thank you, General and Admiral, for being here. I
24 apologize for being late. Demands on our time these days
25 are a little bit overwhelming.

1 General Townsend, first let me just say that I join my
2 colleagues in sending condolences to you and the families of
3 those killed and injured in the attack on Manda Bay. I
4 especially want to point out and send our condolences to the
5 family of Army Specialist Mitch Mayfield who was a valued
6 soldier in the 1st battalion of the 58th Aviation Regiment
7 out of Fort Rucker, Alabama. It is an amazing group down
8 there, and he was certainly part of that amazing group.

9 Admiral, I want to go back to something that I think
10 you may have touched on briefly with Senator Shaheen
11 concerning the USS Detroit and the littoral combat ships
12 that are being used around. That ship was not made in
13 Alabama, but we have a lot of the LCSs made down at Austal
14 down in Mobile that are employed around the world. And I
15 would like, if you could, tell me a little bit more about
16 how the LCS has been helpful in the operations in your area.
17 Is it possible to use or would you want additional LCSs or
18 other vessels like the EBF to help in your area of
19 expertise?

20 Admiral Faller: So our counternarcotics mission
21 demands platforms for end game work and with law enforcement
22 to take both the detainees we gain intel from and the drugs
23 off the streets here in the U.S. Detroit has had success in
24 that endeavor. They have an unmanned aerial vehicle Fire
25 Scout embarked along with a helicopter. That is a great

1 force package.

2 We have also used the Detroit in a freedom of
3 navigation operation off the coast of Venezuela in waters
4 that Venezuela claims that international law does not
5 recognize. Detroit did a magnificent job sailing close to
6 the coast of Venezuela and providing that intelligence and
7 reporting back to us.

8 So the ships are multi-mission. The ships are capable.
9 Unfortunately, we had a rocky start. I think the kinks are
10 being worked out. The Detroit's performance since November
11 has been above standards in all manners of reliability, and
12 we welcome the deployment of the next littoral combat ship
13 to the region. We could use more of these ships. They are
14 well suited for the kind of missions in this hemisphere.

15 Senator Jones: Great. Well, thank you very much.

16 And as a former U.S. attorney, I am acutely aware of
17 the drug problem that we have in this country and the
18 importation of drugs, and I would like to do all we can. I
19 have been concerned about the administration's diverting of
20 some resources to what I think would be more appropriate for
21 interdiction. But that is for another case, another
22 discussion.

23 I believe Senator Kaine mentioned an American
24 reassurance initiative, and I want to give you a chance to
25 talk about that a little bit more, Admiral. There has been

1 discussion for years about developing a western hemisphere
2 security initiative, but so far we have just not been able
3 to get it down.

4 Can you tell us what the status of those conversations
5 is and what impact that may or may not have on the future in
6 your area?

7 Admiral Faller: Senator, proximity matters, and this
8 is our neighborhood. And when you can fly to Central
9 America shorter flights than Washington, D.C. from Miami, it
10 is telling of how closely connected we are. And there have
11 been doctrines over the years. We had the Good Neighbor
12 Policy for FDR. We have had the Monroe Doctrine. I think
13 there has been discussion by others, the think tanks, and
14 Senator Kaine has mentioned it. I think there might be a
15 big idea for this hemisphere where we pull together the
16 whole-of-government efforts necessary to recognize that
17 these interior lines, in military speak, this neighborhood
18 matters. China and Russia certainly recognize that.

19 And to the extent that it takes resources, some of that
20 resources is just our time and attention, and a little goes
21 a long way. If it was a stock, it would have a great P/E
22 ratio and you would want to invest in it for the future.
23 And the investments we have made are sound. I think we need
24 to stay the course and look to where we can smartly increase
25 and focus those investments. And a big idea associated with

1 something like, as you mentioned, a western hemisphere
2 initiative might be a great way to start.

3 Senator Jones: Great. Well, thank you, sir.

4 Now, I would like to encourage you to stay in touch
5 with my office about it. We are right there in Alabama,
6 right there on the Gulf of Mexico. So it is closer to us
7 than a lot of folks. And my office is more than willing to
8 help initiate those discussions or help develop those. So
9 stay in touch and let us know.

10 So thank you very much to both of you for your service
11 and for being here today.

12 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

13 Chairman Inhofe: Senator Hawley?

14 Senator Hawley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

15 Admiral, General, thank you for your service. Thank
16 you for being here today.

17 Admiral, let me start with you. My State of Missouri
18 has been deeply affected by the drugs coming into this
19 country from Latin America. Your testimony has provided
20 examples of certain Latin American countries who are
21 stepping up their effort on the counternarcotics front.

22 I am interested in who is maybe not pulling their
23 weight. Can you give us some examples of places where
24 countries could be doing more but are not doing so, have
25 refused to do so, whether that is the result of corruption

1 or other reasons?

2 Admiral Faller: These transnational criminal
3 organizations -- \$90 billion they took in last year to fuel
4 instability across the region. They have ungoverned
5 territory in countries across the region, and that bridges
6 over into the NORTHCOM AOR. It is something we look at to
7 the extent we influence and leverage and put pressure on our
8 partners to do more.

9 Unfortunately, the worst offender of the whole lot is
10 not a country that we can cooperate with right now, and that
11 is Venezuela. And we look at Venezuela where the Maduro
12 regime is being propped up by Cuba, Russia, and China and we
13 see the narcotrafficking that has increased substantially in
14 the air and over land from Colombia into Venezuela, and then
15 it becomes extremely difficult to track as it leaves in
16 commercial privatized shipping, private airplanes. And so
17 we look at countries stepping up, and I think the
18 international effort on pressure on Maduro and that
19 illegitimate regime is a focus area where we can do more.

20 Within the Central American countries, I would call out
21 Panama, the relationship the Missouri Guard has with them.
22 They have stepped up. Costa Rica has stepped up. You have
23 got another blight of no democracy in Nicaragua which is
24 another problem site. El Salvador has done more. Guatemala
25 has done more. Some others can do more. They are working

1 on it, but there is certainly more effect that we can have
2 from some of our partners.

3 Senator Hawley: Thank you very much. That is very
4 helpful.

5 General, let me turn to you. Secretary Esper has
6 called on our European allies to do more in the Sahel, and
7 he has said recently that additional contributions by
8 European allies -- I am quoting him here -- could offset
9 whatever changes we make as we consider next steps in
10 Africa.

11 I am wondering if you agree with that first, and then I
12 am going to ask you to elaborate. But do you agree with
13 that statement from the Secretary?

14 General Townsend: I do agree with the statement that
15 European contributions could in many ways offset what we are
16 doing there.

17 Senator Hawley: Could you give us just on that point,
18 General, some specific examples of ways that you think our
19 NATO allies could contribute more in the Sahel than they
20 currently are doing?

21 General Townsend: Well, sure. The French have called
22 on their European neighbors to contribute more forces to the
23 effort there trying to directly confront the violent
24 extremist groups there in the Sahel, specifically Mali and
25 Niger, Burkina Faso. And I think that is something they can

1 do and should do.

2 Also, we are providing some support that European
3 countries have, specifically NATO allies, a capacity to do.
4 Airlift is one thing we are supporting the French forces
5 with. Air refueling for French fighter aircraft is another
6 thing. And these are capacities that are resident in many
7 European countries that they could provide. And I think our
8 Department is going to lead an effort to try to get some
9 European partners to do some of those things and offset the
10 support we are providing right now.

11 I think they do not have the capacity to do some of the
12 more technical types of support. We do some technical
13 intelligence type of support that is fairly exquisite, and
14 there are not a lot of countries that can do that at that
15 same level. But they can mitigate a lot of the support that
16 we provide.

17 Senator Hawley: Thank you very much.

18 General, let me ask you about China. I am very
19 concerned by the PLA's presence in Djibouti. Do you worry
20 that the PLA could use its forces there to contest our
21 ability to transit the Bab al Mandeb or adjacent waterways
22 in a future crisis?

23 General Townsend: On a daily basis, I do not worry a
24 great deal about the Chinese presence in Djibouti at their
25 base, but the potential is there. So we keep an eye on it.

1 We are not blind to that. But there is a potential there in
2 some future crisis that they could potentially use that base
3 there to cause problems.

4 Senator Hawley: Let me just ask you, in your
5 assessment what should we be doing now to assure our access
6 to that maritime chokepoint in a future scenario?

7 General Townsend: I think we are doing that to a great
8 extent and that is competing, making sure that those
9 countries that are there, Djibouti being one of them,
10 Somalia being another one -- those countries prefer the
11 United States as a strategic partner. I am not saying that
12 they should not interact with China or Russia at all, but
13 what I want is at 2 o'clock in the morning when the
14 Secretary of State calls a head of state in Africa and says
15 America needs to come in tonight, they yes to us and they do
16 not say yes to the Chinese or the Russians.

17 Senator Hawley: My time has expired.

18 Admiral, I want to ask you a few questions about the
19 Chinese activity in your AOR. I will submit those for the
20 record.

21 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

22 Chairman Inhofe: Senator Gillibrand?

23 Senator Gillibrand: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

24 General Townsend, General Esmail Qaani, who assumed the
25 position as the head of Iran's Qods Force after Soleimani's

1 killing, has vowed to strike back at the United States and
2 called on Hezbollah to exact further revenge. The Voice of
3 America reported earlier this month that Iran may seek to
4 strike back in Africa, citing the rise of Iranian military
5 influence on the continent and the potential of softer
6 targets.

7 What have you been doing to ensure the safety of our
8 service members and American citizens in Africa? And
9 second, how have plans to reduce U.S. forces in Africa
10 accounted for the possible increase in future terrorist
11 activity? How well equipped and trained are local forces in
12 Africa?

13 General Townsend: Senator, to your first question, we
14 are following those reports. There is intelligence
15 reporting that comports with that. Both the Qods Force and
16 Lebanese Hezbollah I think are looking for opportunities to
17 strike back at America wherever, and we think one of those
18 places is certainly Africa. We are watching and listening
19 carefully for that. We are not taking any specific measures
20 yet. We do not really have a good enough picture to take
21 actions, but we are watching and listening for that.

22 Then on your second question, the quality of African
23 security forces varies widely depending on where we are
24 talking about in Africa. So some are exceptionally good and
25 others are not so good. And the partners that we work with

1 -- we are trying to get them all to a level where they can
2 at least be self-sufficient would be the ideal, if they
3 could handle their own security threats on their own.

4 Senator Gillibrand: I took a CODEL a few years ago and
5 we did stop in Chad to assess our support and how well they
6 were doing to support Nigeria. Do you have any thoughts
7 about how that relationship is developing? Is it moving
8 forward or has it retreated?

9 General Townsend: I think that relationship is pretty
10 sound. There is a multinational joint task force that
11 operates there. All of those countries around the Lake Chad
12 basin are operating there. Chad has recently redeployed
13 some forces from Nigeria, but that was part of a scheduled
14 move, not some sort of breakdown in the relationship or the
15 partnership there in the joint task force. So I think that
16 that group is functioning.

17 Senator Gillibrand: Okay.

18 Earlier this month, the al Shabaab launch an attack on
19 Manda airfield, killing an American service member and two
20 contractors. The "New York Times" reported that al Shabaab
21 used the attacks as a message to African forces that
22 American troops would abandon them just as they did with the
23 Syrian Kurds. At the same time, an African Center for
24 Strategic Studies report stated that the activity of
25 Africa's extremist groups has doubled since 2013.

1 How has the decision to withdraw support from Syria
2 impacted the resolve and trust of our African partners?

3 General Townsend: I do not know that our decision to
4 withdraw from Syria has affected their calculus. That has
5 not come up in any discussions I have had with African
6 leaders. But the thing that they are always looking for is
7 can we count on you as a partner. But I have not heard that
8 they are looking towards our withdrawal from Syria as some
9 indication.

10 Senator Gillibrand: Do you have any plans at this
11 point or any strategies to reduce our forces in Africa? And
12 what do you think the impact of those reductions could be on
13 our counterterrorism efforts?

14 General Townsend: So we are engaged in this blank
15 slate review process with the Department of Defense, and I
16 think that is a necessary and a good process to do to make
17 sure that our resources are always pointed at our highest
18 priorities. We have made some presentations and
19 recommendations to the Secretary of Defense. He is still in
20 a decision cycle, and I do not want to get in front of his
21 decision about what may happen with our troop presence on
22 the continent.

23 I will say that there are threats to America that will
24 emanate from the African continent, both global power and
25 great power threats, as well as violent extremist

1 organizations.

2 Senator Gillibrand: A quick question in my remaining
3 time on China. Both China and Russia have been making large
4 economic investments in both Africa and Latin America in
5 order to expand their influence around the globe. When we
6 were in Africa, they were investing in Djibouti and doing a
7 huge investment in the airfield there. This is yet another
8 example of how the battle for world leadership in this
9 century cannot be fought by just spending more money on
10 weapons. Instead, we have to learn lessons from the
11 failures in Iraq and Afghanistan and build lasting
12 relationships and partnerships.

13 What role do your COCOMs play in any whole-of-
14 government coordination aimed at aligning all of our levers
15 of power towards a common goal in your respective AORs?

16 Admiral Faller: What you cited about China and Russia
17 is so key, Senator. We are seeing it in Cuba, 90 miles from
18 Key West where China and Russia are working alongside
19 certainly not for U.S. national interests or for any
20 partnerships in the hemisphere.

21 But our partnerships, our mil-to-mil partnerships, are
22 key, and working with our partners to build strong
23 institutions. It is these institutions that do the right
24 thing and have trust and respect the rule of law and human
25 rights. And we have a human rights office in SOUTHCOM that

1 we staff to work on these sorts of things that are part of
2 professionalism and part of trust building.

3 General Townsend: Senator, I would just say our level
4 of resourcing is such that if we want to get anything done
5 for America on the African continent, we have to do it as a
6 whole-of-government working with the Department of State and
7 USAID. That is just in our DNA at AFRICOM how we operate
8 every day.

9 Senator Gillibrand: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

10 Chairman Inhofe: Senator Cotton?

11 Senator Cotton: I want to talk about the biggest and
12 the most important story in the world, the Wuhan
13 coronavirus. This coronavirus is a catastrophe on the scale
14 of Chernobyl for China, but actually it is probably worse
15 than Chernobyl which was localized in its effect. The
16 coronavirus could result in a global pandemic.

17 While you were all sleeping overnight, the number of
18 diagnosed cases in China increased by 30 percent. Let me be
19 clear. That is not new cases. That is just newly admitted
20 cases. It is probably several orders of magnitude higher
21 than that.

22 Also while you were sleeping, China now has its entire
23 border with Russia closed, 2,600 miles. Russia has closed
24 that border. El Al has shut down travel between Israel and
25 China. Air France has shut down travel between China and

1 France, and that is in addition to all the other countries
2 that have already shut down travel.

3 From what we know so far -- and there are still many
4 unknowns -- this virus could have both a long incubation
5 period, as much as 14 days, and individuals could be
6 contagious while asymptomatic, which was not the case with
7 SARS in 2003.

8 Furthermore, from some cases, it appears that the virus
9 could be aerosolized, which means it does not require the
10 kind of contact that you have with, say, a married couple
11 kissing each other or a family living in close quarters in a
12 hotel or apartment, but rather the distances we are all
13 sitting apart right now.

14 Yet, China is still lying about all of this. They have
15 been lying about it from the very beginning, and you do not
16 need their history of lying about SARS in 2003, though it is
17 relevant here. You just have to see what has happened over
18 the last 2 months. We now know that the first case
19 manifested no later than -- no later than -- December 1,
20 even though China did not reveal it to the WHO until a
21 month later on December 31st when they continued to hide it
22 from their own citizens and they continued to say that it
23 had been contained inside Wuhan. Today it is in every
24 single province in China.

25 They also claimed for almost 2 months until earlier

1 this week that it had originated in a seafood market in
2 Wuhan, that locals had contracted it from animals in, say,
3 bat soup or snake tartare. That is not the case.

4 The Lancet published a study last weekend demonstrating
5 that of the original 40 cases, 14 of them had no contact
6 with the seafood market, including patient 0. As one
7 epidemiologist said, that virus went into the seafood market
8 before it came out of the seafood market.

9 We still do not know where it originated. It could
10 have been another seafood market. It could have been a
11 farm. It could have been a food processing company.

12 I would note that Wuhan also has China's only biosafety
13 level 4 super laboratory that works with the world's most
14 deadly pathogens to include, yes, coronavirus.

15 Now, look at China's own actions. They have
16 quarantined 60 million people -- 60 million -- more than the
17 entire population of our west coast. They have shut down
18 schools indefinitely. Classes canceled nationwide
19 indefinitely. Hong Kong, a part of China, has basically
20 shut down all travel from the mainland.

21 That is why it is essential that we immediately stop
22 all travel on commercial aircraft between China and the
23 United States, making exceptions, of course, for American
24 citizens to come back as we just brought back yesterday,
25 allowing a central trade to flow as long as crews on ships

1 and aircraft are not allowed to go into the general
2 population in America, and making exceptions, of course, for
3 medical personnel to go into China to try to get a handle on
4 this. It is essential that we take those steps and
5 essential that we get to the bottom of China's deceit and
6 incompetence on this measure.

7 And, gentlemen, I raise this with you because you are
8 responsible in your combatant commands for some countries
9 that have the most fragile public institutions, to include
10 the most fragile public health institutions, in the world.
11 So I ask, even though as of this morning there are not yet
12 confirmed cases of coronavirus in your combatant commands,
13 though I suspect there will be soon, what is your assessment
14 about the ability of the governments in your combatant
15 commands to handle a potential global pandemic like this.
16 General Townsend?

17 General Townsend: Thanks, Senator.

18 So there are not that I am aware of any confirmed cases
19 as you mentioned, but there are some suspected cases. The
20 first report of a suspected case I heard of is in Djibouti,
21 which you would imagine with the significant Chinese
22 presence there.

23 So the capacity of African nations to deal with this
24 problem varies widely. For example, in eastern Africa,
25 central east Africa, they have been dealing with Ebola and

1 they have been dealing with Ebola largely on their own and
2 doing a pretty good job of it. So I think capacity there,
3 but anywhere else in Africa is probably not to that degree.

4 Senator Cotton: Admiral Faller?

5 Admiral Faller: The Venezuela crisis has already
6 strained the social services of many of the nations. As you
7 are aware, Senator, we had deployed the hospital ship
8 Comfort twice in 1 year to 12 different nations. In one 5-
9 day span, it can do the equivalent of a whole month for a
10 region of some of the major countries. So I would be
11 extremely concerned. Like General Townsend, the capacities
12 vary widely, but in many cases they are strained and to the
13 limit. I would be very concerned if we saw this spread.

14 Senator Cotton: Thank you.

15 As a defensive measure, I would just say again it is
16 essential that we shut down all commercial air travel
17 immediately between the United States and China. As an
18 offensive measure, because that probably will not stop it
19 entirely and because if it becomes a global pandemic, we
20 have to deal with countries with very limited capabilities
21 here, we need a Manhattan Project level effort to work with
22 our best research scientists and laboratories in this
23 country to develop a vaccine as quickly as possible.

24 [Whereupon, at 10:51 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

25

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