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**U.S. STRATEGY FOR SYRIA AND IRAQ AND
ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE REGION**

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ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC, Tuesday, December 1, 2015.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:02 a.m., in room 2118, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. William M. “Mac” Thornberry (chairman of the committee) presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. WILLIAM M. “MAC” THORN- BERRY, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM TEXAS, CHAIRMAN, COM- MITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The CHAIRMAN. The hearing will come to order.

The committee meets today to hear testimony from the Secretary and Chairman on our strategy against ISIS [Islamic State of Iraq and Syria] and the implications for the Middle East. Today is the first hearing we have had with Secretary Carter and Chairman Dunford together in their current roles, and I think it is appropriate for it to be on this topic, which is foremost in the minds of the American people.

I want to thank you both for being here and also to take this opportunity to thank each of you for your service to the country in a variety of roles. It is my view that we are fortunate to have you here.

In all that has been written and said about ISIS since the Paris attacks, there seems to be widespread consensus on at least three points. One is that ISIS presents a significant threat to the United States. Two, the approach we have used to degrade and destroy ISIS is inadequate to meet that threat. And, three, a different approach, a greater effort is required.

While in many ways ISIS is more capable than Al Qaeda, it is certainly not invincible. Yet when we tie our own hands and use half measures against them, it enhances their prestige and aids their cause. As Dr. Henry Kissinger wrote 6 weeks ago, “The current inconclusive U.S. military effort risks serving as a recruitment vehicle for ISIS as having stood up to American might.” And David Ignatius wrote more recently, “But the halfway measures taken by the U.S. thus far have only helped the jihadists.”

The other consequence of such half measures is that it adds to the doubts that allies or potential allies have about our commitment and about our willingness to see the mission through. Hank Crumpton, who led CIA’s [Central Intelligence Agency’s] Afghanistan campaign after 9/11, wrote about ISIS earlier this year, “Many have lost faith in U.S. leadership. The perception of U.S. weakness

and lack of strategic direction dissuades allies from policy and intelligence cooperation.”

I believe that a greater military effort must be run by the military. And I have got to say, Secretary Carter, all three of your Obama administration predecessors have complained openly about White House aides micromanaging military operations. I myself have heard some of these instances from commanders in the field, instances that I don't think would have happened at any other time in our history.

If we are going to be serious about ISIS, the President needs to assign the military a clear mission and then allow the military to carry it out. I believe there should be a four-star headquarters in the region that is fully empowered to take the steps necessary to degrade ISIS now. Former Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence Mike Vickers made good sense to me when he wrote about 10 days ago, quote, “Whatever we would do if ISIL [Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant] made good on its threat to attack Washington and New York, we should do it now, before the attack occurred.”

Well, maybe Kissinger, Ignatius, Crumpton, and Vickers are all wrong and the President has things contained and well in hand, but I don't think so. And we are looking to you two gentlemen not to repeat White House talking points, but to give us your best professional military judgment on what is required to actually degrade and defeat this enemy and protect our people.

Mr. Smith.

STATEMENT OF HON. ADAM SMITH, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM WASHINGTON, RANKING MEMBER, COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, Secretary Carter and General Dunford, for being here today to talk about this incredibly important topic. And I agree with the chairman, there is no question that ISIS is a clear threat that need to be confronted. They are, I think without question, the greatest national security threat that we face right now. It is important to keep in context that that threat is not just ISIS. It was Al Qaeda, now it is ISIS. It is part of a broader ideology that we need to confront that we have seen spread throughout the Middle East and North Africa and South Asia in many different forms, Ansar al-Sharia in Libya, Al Shabaab in Somalia, Boko Haram in Nigeria. We need to figure out how to confront and defeat that threat. And there is no question that ISIS remains a grave threat to Western targets as well as to stability in the Middle East.

That said, I don't think the picture is quite as bleak as the chairman portrayed it. In fact, there was just an article yesterday about how ISIS is beginning to lose some of their supporters because their momentum has been stopped in terms of gathering territory. One of the biggest things, selling points that they had from the very beginning was, unlike Al Qaeda, they held territory, and they were growing at one time in terms of the territory they held. So they could recruit people saying, we are truly going to build an Islamic state.

Well, they have not gained any territory; they have lost actually a few towns. And the bombing campaign that we have committed, and primarily the work of the Kurds, has rolled them back in certain places and has undermined that confidence in the jihadists that they are in fact just going to roll forward and take everything. That is a positive.

However, the chairman is absolutely correct, it is not enough. It is not enough to contain ISIS, because as we have seen in Paris, in Beirut, and elsewhere, as long as they exist, they can launch attacks. We must put together a clear strategy to defeat them.

And that is the other thing that I will agree with the chairman on, perhaps not quite as strongly, but the administration does need to be clearer in saying what that strategy is and that they are absolutely committed to it. I actually think they have a better strategy and a more comprehensive strategy than at times they have said. Let us not forget that the President said I think less than a year ago, we don't yet have a strategy. That is the kind of thing that doesn't need to be said. We need a much clearer message about what that strategy is.

But I think we have it, and that strategy is that we are going to use our military force, in combination with as many allies as possible, to try and help our allies in the region. But that is the key point. We could send 50,000 U.S. troops into Iraq and Syria and in short order, I am sure, clear out a good portion of what is now ISIS. But what we also know from experience in Iraq and Afghanistan is if a Western force came in and tried to pacify or mollify this part of the world, another terrorist organization would grow up in a heartbeat or ISIS would reconstitute itself and present itself as the alternative to—as the only people defending Muslims against Western aggression.

So I hope we don't overreact, because what we need, the only way we win this fight is if we find Sunni allies in the region who are willing to lead that fight. That is what we have to do.

And also part of this is removing Assad from power, because as long as Assad is in power that is another rallying call for ISIS to fight against a brutal dictator who is oppressing their people. So that is the trick that we have. ISIS is fighting Assad, but we need to defeat both Assad and ISIS.

And, again, I think this notion that U.S. military might is simply going to show up and fix the problem has been disproven by what has happened. Understand what gives these groups their greatest force. What gives them their greatest force is when they can stand up and say, we are defending Islam against Western aggression. If all we have is Western aggression, we will never win.

We have to use our force, we have to work with our allies in the region, but at the end of the day what we need is Sunni allies to carry this fight. And that means that we have to continue to put pressure on the Baghdad government to bring Sunnis in. I mean, is the biggest thing that created ISIS, was Prime Minister Maliki, now Abadi, have both decided to run a sectarian Shia government. So the Sunnis may not like ISIS, but as between that and being allied with a Shiite Iran-backed government, they choose ISIS.

So that is what I think we need to do. Yes, we need to have a clearer strategy, we need to state it more clearly and rally our al-

lies. But I hope we don't fall into the trap of thinking that U.S. military might is what is going to solve this problem. It is a far more complicated problem than that.

And with that, I look forward to the testimony from the witnesses and the questions. I thank the chairman. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Secretary, Chairman Dunford, again, thank you for being here, but more importantly, thank you for the service that you are providing the Nation in very difficult jobs in very difficult times. And I don't think any of us underestimate the challenge that is before you.

Mr. Secretary, you are recognized.

**STATEMENT OF HON. ASHTON B. CARTER, SECRETARY
OF DEFENSE**

Secretary CARTER. Thank you very much, Chairman Thornberry, Ranking Member Smith, all the members of this committee. Thank you for inviting me to discuss, with Chairman Joe Dunford, our counter-military strategy and its execution.

And, Chairman, I agree with you. We do need greater effort. We are applying greater effort. I am going to try to describe some of the ways that we are doing that.

And, Mr. Smith, the underlying strategy and its clarity, I will try to provide that clarity today.

Now, ISIL's attacks in Paris, like those they have perpetrated elsewhere, were barbaric and they were an assault on the civilization we defend. ISIL requires, and it will receive, a lasting defeat. The President had directed us to intensify and adapt the military campaign before the Paris attacks, and we will describe those new actions today.

We continue to accelerate our efforts in the wake of Paris and we are urging others to do the same, because those attacks further highlighted the stakes that not just the United States, but the world has in this fight.

As I have discussed with you in the past, the United States strategy requires leveraging all of the components of our Nation's might to destroy ISIL. Every instrument of national power—diplomatic, military, intelligence, law enforcement, homeland security, economic, informational—is engaged, and every national security agency is contributing to one of the strategy's lines of efforts. We are defending the homeland, acting to defeat ISIL in its core, its core in Syria and Iraq, and taking appropriate action wherever else in the world this evil organization metastasizes.

Now, the Defense Department contributes to nearly all the lines of effort, but protecting the homeland is among our highest priorities. We are adapting to meet ISIL's threat, including assuring the security of Defense Department installations and personnel. And just last week I hosted some of the top national security and law enforcement leaders at the Pentagon to discuss efforts to cut off the flow of foreign fighters.

But we at the Defense Department, of course, are also centrally responsible for the military campaign, which will be the focus of my statement to this committee. Through our own action and those of our coalition partners, the military campaign will destroy ISIL's

leadership and forces, deprive it of resources and safe haven and mobility, all the while we seek to identify and then enable motivated local forces on the ground to expel ISIL from its territory, hold and govern it, and ensure that victory sticks.

That is the right strategic approach for two principal reasons. First, it emphasizes the necessity of capable, motivated local forces as the only force that can assure a lasting victory. Such forces are hard to find, but they do exist, and we are enabling them, and we are constantly looking for and finding effective ways to expand doing so, and I will describe some of them, but we cannot substitute for such forces. And second, this strategic approach sets the conditions for a political solution to the civil war in Syria and to crippling sectarianism in Iraq, which are the only durable ways to prevent a future ISIL-like organization from reemerging. And that is why the diplomatic work led by Secretary Kerry and the State Department is the first and absolutely critical line of effort in our strategy.

We are gathering momentum on the battlefield in Syria and Iraq, and today I will describe how the U.S. is continuing to accelerate the military campaign against ISIL and what more we are asking of our global partners. While I can't describe everything in this unclassified setting, I do want to take a few extra minutes this morning to give as much detail as possible about the new things we are doing to accelerate ISIL's defeat.

We are at war. We are using the might of the finest fighting force the world has ever known. Tens of thousands of U.S. personnel are operating in the broader Middle East region; more are on the way. We have some of our most advanced air and naval forces attacking ISIL. U.S. troops are advising and assisting ground operations in Syria and Iraq. I will briefly describe some of these efforts and how we are accelerating them.

First, in northern Syria, local forces, with our support, are fighting along the Mara line, engaging ISIL in the last remaining pocket of access into Turkey. Meanwhile, a coalition of Syrian Arabs that we helped equip in northeastern Syria, with statutory authorizations and funds provided by Congress, for which we are grateful, are fighting alongside Kurdish forces and have recaptured important terrain, most recently pushing ISIL out of the town of Al-Hawl and at least 900 square kilometers of surrounding territory. They are now focused on moving south to isolate ISIL's nominal capital of Raqqa, with the ultimate objective of collapsing its control over that city.

This momentum on the ground in northern Syria has been enabled by increased coalition air strikes as well as support on the ground. In early November, we deployed additional strike aircraft to Incirlik Air Base in Turkey. These and other aircraft in the region, combined with improved intelligence, allowed us in November to significantly increase our air strikes against ISIL to the highest level since the start of operations in August of 2014.

To build on that momentum, we are sending, on President Obama's orders and the Chairman's and my advice, special operations forces [SOF] personnel to Syria to support the fight against ISIL. American special operators bring a unique suite of capabilities that make them force multipliers. They will help us garner val-

uable ground intelligence, further enhance our air campaign, and above all, enable local forces that can regain and then hold territory occupied by ISIL. Where we find further opportunity to leverage such capability we are prepared to expand it.

Next, in the south of Syria we are also taking advantage of opportunities to open a southern front on ISIL by enabling fighters, trained and equipped by us and other coalition partners, to conduct strikes inside Syria. We are also enhancing the border control and defenses of a key ally, Jordan, with additional military assets and assistance.

In northern Iraq, Peshmerga units, with the help of U.S. air power and advisers, have retaken the town of Sinjar, cutting the main line of communication between Raqqa and Mosul, the two largest cities under ISIL's control. To move people and supplies, ISIL must now rely on back roads, where we locate and destroy them.

Elsewhere in Iraq, we have about 3,500 troops at 6 locations in Iraq in support of Iraqi Security Forces, the ISF. There, we have been providing increased lethal fire and augmenting the existing training, advising, and assisting program, and we are prepared to do more as Iraq shows capability and motivation in the counter-ISIL fight and in resolving its political divisions.

Now, the progress in the Sunni portions of Iraq, as mentioned by Mr. Smith, as the campaign to recapture Ramadi shows, has been slow, much to our and Prime Minister Abadi's frustration. Despite his efforts, sectarian politics and Iranian influence have made building a multisectarian Iraqi Security Force difficult, with some notable exceptions, such as the effective U.S.-trained counterterrorism [CT] forces. We continue to offer additional U.S. support of all kinds and urge Baghdad to enroll, train, arm, and pay Sunni Arab fighters, as well as local Sunni Arab police forces, to hold territory recaptured from ISIL.

All these efforts, from northern Syria through Iraq, have shrunk the ISIL-controlled territory in both. Importantly, we now have an opportunity to divide ISIL's presence in Iraq from that in Syria. This could be important, because while both countries are plagued by ISIL, each, as I said earlier, has different political pathologies that provide the opportunity for extremism, and they ultimately require different kinds of political progress to ensure lasting victory.

Next, in full coordination with the Government of Iraq, we are deploying a specialized expeditionary targeting force to assist Iraqi and Kurdish Peshmerga forces and put even more pressure on ISIL. These special operators will over time be able to conduct raids, free hostages, gather intelligence, and capture ISIL leaders. This force will also be in a position to conduct unilateral operations in Syria. That creates a virtuous cycle of better intelligence, which generates more targets, more raids, more momentum. The raids in Iraq will be done at the invitation of the Iraqi Government and focused on defending its borders and building the ISF's own capability.

Next, we are also significantly expanding U.S. attacks on ISIL's infrastructure and sources of revenue, particularly its oil revenue. Over the past several weeks, because of improved intelligence and understanding of ISIL's financial operations, we have intensified

the air campaign against ISIL's war-sustaining oil enterprise, a critical pillar of ISIL's financial infrastructure. In addition to destroying fixed facilities, like wells and processing facilities, we have destroyed nearly 400 of ISIL's oil tanker trucks, reducing a major source of its daily revenues. There is more to come, too.

And we are improving our capability to eliminate ISIL's leadership by conducting raids using the expeditionary target force I discussed a moment ago and also targeted air strikes. Since I last appeared before this committee in June, we have removed some key ISIL figures from the battlefield: Hajji Mutaz, ISIL's second in command; Junaid Hussein, a key external operative actively plotting against our service members; Jihadi John, an ISIL executioner; and Abu Nabil, ISIL's leader in Libya. Like previous actions, these strikes serve notice to ISIL that no target is beyond our reach.

Finally, even as we work to defeat ISIL in Syria and Iraq, where its parent tumor has grown, we also recognize ISIL has metastasized elsewhere. The threat posed by ISIL and groups like it can span regions in our own combatant commands. That is why the Defense Department is organizing a new way to leverage infrastructure we have already established in Afghanistan, the Levant, East Africa, and southern Europe into a unified capability to counter transnational and transregional threats like ISIL. An example of this network in action was our recent strike on Abu Nabil, where assets from several locations converged to successfully kill this ISIL leader in Libya.

As that strike shows, there is a lot of potential here, but to do more, we need to be creative and to consider changes to how the Defense Department works and is structured. This could be an important focus of any new Goldwater-Nichols-type reforms, which I know this committee and particularly Chairman Thornberry is exploring. I welcome this timely review and look forward to working with you on it as we complete our own ongoing reform initiatives in the Department.

These are eight areas, just eight, of the adaptations we have made over the past 6 weeks to accelerate this campaign, and we have seen momentum build.

Chairman Dunford, if I can compliment him for a moment, has been a tremendous source of actionable ideas. We have also seen real ingenuity from our team at CENTCOM [Central Command] and many of the other combatant commands involved in this fight. And President Obama is committed to doing what it takes, as opportunities arise, as we see what works, as the enemy adapts, and until ISIL is defeated in a lasting way.

As I just explained, we are constantly looking to do more in this fight, but the world must do the same. The international community, including our allies and partners, has to step up before another attack like Paris. France has been galvanized by the attacks on its capital and the French have intensified their role. Britain is debating expanded air strikes. Italy has made important contributions in Iraq. And Germany is making additional contributions.

But we all, let me repeat, all must do more. Turkey must do more to control its often porous border. Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states joined the air campaign in the early days, but have since

been preoccupied by the conflict in Yemen. Meanwhile, Russia, which is publicly committed to defeating ISIL, has instead largely attacked opposition forces, not ISIL. It is time for Russia to focus on the right side of this fight.

American leadership is essential, but the more contributions we receive from other nations, the greater combat power we can achieve using our own force. Just as importantly, we also need to leverage our allies' and partners' relationships and capabilities to effectively work with Syrians and Iraqis, who in the end must expel ISIL and restore effective governance in those countries.

The President, Secretary Kerry, and I have spoken to many of our counterparts, and the Chairman has as well, and we are encouraging them to provide additional strike and support aircraft, special operations personnel, deeper and more effective intelligence sharing, additional train, advise, and assist personnel and resources, combat search and rescue capabilities, combat support and combat service support, base security forces, and additional economic aid and humanitarian assistance.

As I conclude, I want to commend this committee on last month's budget deal, which is the kind of deal I called for back in March before this committee. It was a consequential agreement for the Nation's security, and we are grateful for it. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Secretary Carter can be found in the Appendix on page 69.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.
General Dunford.

**STATEMENT OF GEN JOSEPH F. DUNFORD, JR., USMC,
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF**

General DUNFORD. Chairman Thornberry, Ranking Member Smith, distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to address the military dimension of our counter-ISIL strategy.

Secretary Carter just provided a brief campaign update and an overview of our strategic approach. Before taking your questions, I would like to share my perspective on the fundamentals of our counter-ISIL campaign in Iraq and Syria and what I believe you should expect as we move forward.

ISIL's primary sources of strength are its claim to be a caliphate, its narrative, and its manpower. To be successful, the coalition's military campaign must reduce ISIL's territorial control, undermine its brand and aura of invincibility, and destroy its warfighting capability.

There are two critical elements in a military campaign to achieve those ends. The first is to conduct strikes against ISIL targets. The strikes are intended to kill leadership and fighters, interdict their lines of communication, and deny them their sources of revenue.

The second critical element in the military campaign is to develop and support effective partners on the ground to seize and secure ISIL-held terrain. The basic framework for the campaign is the same for Iraq and Syria, but the conditions on the ground present unique challenges and opportunities. Without a partner on the ground, Syria has clearly presented the most difficult challenge. Success in Syria requires working with our Turkish partners

to secure the northern border of Syria; enabled, vetted Syrian opposition forces that are willing to fight ISIL; and conducting strikes to attack core ISIL's command and control and sources of revenue.

In Iraq we have a partner, and success requires supporting the development of Iraqi and Kurdish security forces in enabling their operations with intelligence, advisers, logistics, and combined armed support.

Having quickly outlined what we must do in the military campaign, let me provide my initial assessment of how we are doing. As with any campaign, we are continuously examining ways to enhance the effectiveness of our operations. Many weeks ago, even before I became the Chairman, the leadership across the Department recognized that we needed to increase pressure on ISIL by improving the effectiveness of our strikes and accelerating our efforts to development and support effective partners on the ground. In short, we were not satisfied that we were doing everything possible to defeat the enemy.

While recognizing that ISIL is a transregional threat requiring a broader strategy, our immediate focus was to bear down on core ISIL across Iraq and Syria simultaneously. After a lot of hard work by commanders and staffs at every level, we went to the President in early October with a number of recommendations designed to generate momentum in the campaign. The President approved our initial recommendations, and we are currently in the process of implementing his decisions.

Secretary Carter provided the details of the initiative in his testimony and described where we are starting to see some positive developments and where we may see additional progress in the days ahead. While very mindful of the complex challenges that we face in this campaign, we are encouraged by the recent developments in places like Beyji, Sinjar, and Al-Hawl. To me, those operations indicate what is possible.

We also believe we are having a greater effect in our strikes against ISIL's leadership and resources. In the days ahead, we will be aggressive in looking for ways to reinforce success and we will seize every opportunity to increase the tempo and the effectiveness of our operations.

The Secretary and the President have made it clear that they expect me to deliver all of the options that may contribute to our winning the fight against ISIL. I made a commitment to them that I would do that and I will reaffirm that commitment to you here this morning.

In closing, as I complete my initial assessment of the campaign, I believe we have started to identify and implement a number of initiatives to move the campaign forward. We are not satisfied or complacent about where we are, and we won't be until ISIL is defeated.

Thank you again for the opportunity to join you. I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, sir.

As we move into questions, we need to make the most of the limited time we have with the Secretary and General Dunford. So just as a warning, we are going to have to be strict on the time. If you want to make a 4-minute speech, you are not going to get much

of an answer. So let's be respectful of the time. And I want to instruct the staff to put me on the clock starting now.

Mr. Secretary, I want to go back to the point that Mike Vickers made in that article. You know him, worked with him a lot in the Obama administration, and he was in the previous administration too. His point is whatever we would do if they really were successful in attacking New York and Washington we should do now before the attack occurs, which makes a lot of sense to me. So you outlined eight areas of adaptation, you said, of greater effort. Why weren't we doing that before?

Secretary CARTER. The principal reason why we now have opportunities we haven't had in the past is twofold, Mr. Chairman. The first is the identification of ground forces, starting with Kurds in northern Syria, which I mentioned, the Syrian Arab Coalition [SAC], Peshmerga and other forces, and forces in the south of Syria that are willing to fight ISIL. They have been hard to find. We have been looking for them. We have identified a number of them.

By the way, we are looking for more, and we hope that the Syrian Arab Coalition, as it rolls south toward Raqqa, is like a snowball that continues to gather people who are tired of ISIL's rule, who are willing to fight ISIL, and have them join, with us enabling them and accompanying them as appropriate, all the way down to Raqqa. So that is one ingredient.

The other ingredient is our intelligence, which was not so great at the beginning of this, as you know, because we were surprised again and again and again, has improved tremendously—and by the way, some of that as a result of Secretary Vickers' own work. That has given us opportunities both in air strikes and ground operations, like raids and so forth, that we didn't otherwise have.

So those are two of the things that have contributed to our being able to do more. And I just want to repeat something that Chairman Dunford just said, which is we are looking for and finding new opportunities for actionable effort every day. And to your core point, and I guess Secretary Vickers' core point, I think that is absolutely right. We are doing everything that we possibly can to defeat this enemy.

I described our strategy, I described those efforts. And we are doing everything, I should say, that will be effective; that we judge will be effective, we are doing now. And I think to answer your question directly; we should do everything that we can. But Chairman Dunford is also right. I have asked him, the President asked me and him, to continue to provide him with opportunities, and he, in addition to the two other factors I named, has been a great source of actionable ideas, in part based upon his terrific service in Afghanistan.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, the defense authorization bill the President signed into law last week gives some additional opportunities and says basically if you find the Government of Iraq is not inclusive, that arms can be provided directly to the Kurds, to Sunni tribes, and others. Is that an option that you would consider recommending?

Secretary CARTER. We are sending arms directly to the Kurds. The mechanism by which that works is that there is customs approval by the Iraqi Government—I will come back to why we stipu-

late that—but there is no delay, and a large number of arms and other kinds of equipment have reached the Iraqi Kurds from us—and by the way, I should say, I think more than 12 other countries, a rich source.

We do that in this way through the Government of Iraq and, likewise, much more slowly, and as I said, frustratingly, Sunnis, through the Government of Iraq, because we continue to believe that supporting a multisectarian approach to governance in Iraq is ultimately the most effective approach.

We have considered the alternatives. I know there are other people who have considered the—but it is a considered judgment to try to pursue these through the government of Prime Minister Abadi. He has indicated a willingness to do that. Baghdad politics is complicated, we don't always get what we want, and that is particularly the case, as I think Representative Smith indicated in, the matter of arming, training, and equipping Sunnis.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Smith.

Mr. SMITH. Just following up on that, I think that is the clearest—well, two big problems, two questions. One, what do we do in Iraq to find a legitimate fighting force to counter ISIL? Because it is not really coming out of Baghdad. I mean, what we were able to do during the surge some 7, 8 years ago was to get the Sunni tribes to turn on Al Qaeda at the time. And it seems to me that is the kind of thing that we are going to need to do again, is to reach out to those tribes, take advantage of overactions by ISIS groups with Baghdad. But I am not getting a clear picture here other than what we have heard over and over and over again, which is we hope that at some point the Baghdad government actually stops persecuting Sunnis and starts including them. But there doesn't seem to be any possibility of that, and as the cliché goes, hope is not a strategy.

So what is our strategy for getting Sunnis in Iraq to be willing to fight ISIL? What is just the concrete, clear plan to make that happen?

Secretary CARTER. The concrete, clear plan has four streams by which we are trying to get Sunnis included in the fight there, and let me just go through them. The first is through the Iraqi Security Forces themselves, which are now, in sectarian terms, about 20 percent Sunni. That is one of the seeds of this whole problem from the beginning in the collapse the Iraqi Security Forces. At our training sites, we have trained Iraqi Security Forces, including Sunnis, and they are joining the fight, notably in the area of Ramadi. We would like more. Our training sites are turning them out every month. That is the first stream.

The second stream is the tribal fighters, as you indicated. And they are, first of all, the Popular Mobilization Force [PMF], which is a kind of militia-type force, not independent of the Iraqi Government. And the Iraqi government, and this is where we have a problem, has authorized many more Shia than Sunni PMF. We need them to authorize more Sunni PMF, then we are prepared to train them. Those are the so-called tribal fighters that you indicated.

Third is the Iraqi Counterterrorism Service, which we have trained and is the most effective force in the fight. And finally,

there is Peshmerga in the north, who have been extremely effective.

And the last thing I will say, and I know I am going on a bit, but this is complicated, is we are also working with Sunni police. This is important, because, remember, ISIL is in Sunni territory, so it is not going to work for Shia forces to participate in holding and governing those. We need Sunni police forces—and, again, we are working on them too—so that when Ramadi is recaptured and ultimately when Mosul is recaptured, the peace can be kept there by people who are local Sunni and recognizable to local personnel.

Mr. SMITH. Okay. In Syria, the big challenge there is, like I said, we are fighting both ISIS and Assad. And I don't think we really succeed against ISIS until we remove Assad. And I know we are talking with our allies and working on that. Russia is a huge problem, because despite what they say, their plan is simple, they are going to try to keep Assad no matter what. Iran, same story. And that just, you know, perpetuates the fight.

What is the hope and the plan for getting us—because I think the key here is to get Russia and Iran to realize that Assad is not going to be able to protect their interests. I mean, he can't right now, because he can't control his country. How do we get to the point where we get a replacement for Assad to sort of take that wind out of ISIS' sails and present a more representative coalition government?

Secretary CARTER. Well, you are right, a political transition in Syria is essential to ultimately resolving the civil war there. It is the civil war that fuels ISIL, that fuels al-Nusra, that fuels all this extremism, it has been the civil war there. And there is a political transition in which moderate opposition and some of the structures of the Syrian Government, not Bashar Assad, but constitute a new Government of Syria that can restore some decency and some governance to the territory of Syria. That is the transition we are looking for.

Now, you ask about the Russians. The Russians have a lot of influence with Assad. They are using it in the wrong way.

Mr. SMITH. Yes.

Secretary CARTER. And I have said this repeatedly, the Russians are wrongheaded in their strategy. They are going at it backwards. They had said they were going to go in to fight ISIL and promote a political transition. They have backed Assad and targeted people who are part of the opposition that needs to be part of Syria's future. So they are off on the wrong foot. And for us to associate ourselves with what they are doing, they would have to get on the wrong foot—the right foot, rather.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Jones.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

And, Mr. Secretary, General Dunford, thank you so much for being here today, your leadership.

I listened to your testimony, I have read in the papers, and we have had classified briefings. You all have got an unbelievable complex task in behalf of the American people, and certainly our military, thank you.

We, a few of us, back when Mr. Boehner was the Speaker, asked for a debate on the floor of the House for a new AUMF, Authorization [for Use] of Military Force. In fact, while he was still Speaker of the House, he related to the President that you need to send us a new AUMF, which President Obama did in February of this year, 2015.

Since becoming the new Speaker of the House, 22 Republicans and Democrats wrote to Mr. Ryan, and I just want to read one sentence and then I am going to get to my question, and we wrote this on November 6th. "Taken all together, these represent a significant escalation of United States military operations in the region and place U.S. military personnel on the front lines of combat operation." We hear from the Senate that they say we need to put boots on the ground. We continue to not meet our constitutional responsibility.

And before I get to the question, I want to remind the American people what James Madison said: The power to declare war, including the power of judging the causes of war, is fully and exclusively vested in the legislature, not the executive branch, but the legislature.

I would like to ask you and General Dunford in this undertaking of trying to defeat this evil group known as ISIL, would it help your cause if the Congress met its constitutional responsibility of debating a new AUMF? Would it give strength to what you are trying to do, especially with these other countries who are our allies? Would it help you in this fight to defeat ISIL if the Congress would meet its constitutional responsibility? And I would appreciate a statement from each one of you. Thank you.

Secretary CARTER. Okay. Well, I will go first. The President has submitted an AUMF. I looked at it carefully. This was some months ago. I testified about it, and I said I asked myself two questions. The first was whether the AUMF as the President proposed it would give us the authority to conduct the campaign that is necessary to defeat ISIL. And without going into the details, my answer to that was yes, the one he submitted did, not every one that everyone else has proposed would. That one did.

But the second thing I asked myself was, would this show to our troops that their country is behind them? I think they know we are behind them. I think they know you are behind them. Would this show that the country was behind them in their effort? I think they deserve to know that, and for that reason, I think it is desirable to have an AUMF.

The only thing I would say is the lawyers tell me that we don't technically need one, so I will just add that. We can conduct what we need to do within the law. But I think it would be helpful, principally because I think you can't do enough to show the troops that we are behind them and that this is a big deal and it is serious and the country is behind them.

Chairman.

General DUNFORD. Sir, I have a similar answer. It is my understanding that we currently have all the authorities that we need to prosecute the campaign against ISIL, but I absolutely believe that a clear and unequivocal statement of support for the men and

women that are prosecuting the campaign and our allies from their elected officials would be absolutely helpful.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Chairman, since I took all of my time less, I want you to know I can do it under 5 minutes, so therefore, I yield back 51 seconds. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thanks for being a good example.

Ms. Sanchez.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, gentlemen, once again for being before us. I had several questions, some of which have already been answered, but let me add a couple and see what you are thinking of.

You said that we are now arming the Kurds. The last time I talked to [President of Iraqi Kurdistan Masoud] Barzani he suggested that they needed heavier duty weapons versus light arms. And so my question, my first question would be, what are we arming them with? I mean, is it really for the battlefield that they find?

Secondly, I would like you to address this whole issue with respect to the Iraqi Army and the inability for us to really get it integrated or for Iraq's government to get it integrated. I remember back in—under the constitution and under the deal, the whole issue of, for example, having a vote on the Kurd area being an independent entity, for example. That was something that I continued to ask our military leaders at the time who were overseeing Iraq, and the reality was they kept saying that is the hardest part, that is the hardest part, we are going to get to it. We never got to it, and we left. So now we see the fruits of that in the sense that we still are not able to have a military or police force that is very integrated. So what do we do about that?

So we have been taking back territory in Iraq, and one of the issues that we had is we have—I mean, it always takes additional—we need to leave troops there or we need to leave somebody there in order to hold onto it, otherwise we end up losing that territory. So what is our strategy to do that?

And the recruitment effort, I would like, and I am sure that it would be not within the public realm, but I would love to get a brief on the cyber issues and how we are countering the recruitment effort with respect to ISIS, ISIL, whatever you want to call them these days, from a global perspective, but in particular are we doing anything that you can talk about in this setting with respect to the recruitment effort in the region itself?

And lastly, DIME, diplomacy, intelligence, military, economic, you know, it is not just military that we need here. So, Secretary, if you could speak a little to what are some of the other efforts that we are doing to counteract what is really something we need to eliminate, which is ISIS.

Thank you.

Secretary CARTER. Congresswoman Sanchez, I will touch on a few of the points and ask the Chairman, especially with respect to arming the Kurds, if you don't mind, Mr. Chairman, and generally the Iraqi Security Forces.

You talk about DIME. Absolutely it is essential that we recognize that even though we, I believe this is absolutely true, are the center of the campaign, because there must be a military defeat of

ISIL, and I also believe that Iraq and Syria, since it is the heart of ISIL, we have to defeat it there.

That said, this is a global fight, it is a multidimensional fight, it is in the intelligence sphere, it is in the homeland security sphere, it is in the law enforcement sphere. And I won't go into much more to say about that except that I have begun to convene, with Secretary Kerry, and I appreciate his cooperation in this regard, all of the agencies and going through what we are all doing and making sure the right hand knows what the left is. So, for example, in cyber, you are right, I can't talk about it here, I am happy to come give you a classified briefing, but we are linked up, and that is very important, the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation], Jim Comey, Homeland Security, the intelligence community, and our DOD [Department of Defense] people.

Last thing I will say is you ask have we thought about a hold force. The necessity for a hold force is at the root of our strategy. Our strategy is to find, identify, and enable forces that can not only take territory, but hold territory, because we know from the last 14 years that that is the tricky part. The hard part about getting victory to stick is to find people who can hold territory and govern it decently so that the likes of ISIL don't come back. And as I said, they are hard to find. They do exist, but they are hard to find, and we are going to try to make a snowball and get more.

Chairman.

General DUNFORD. Congresswoman, with regard to the Kurds, the Kurds have, as you know, you have been there many times, a full range of heavy weapons, heavy vehicles, and our assessment is they have the capability to take the fight to ISIL, and, in fact, their recent success in Sinjar demonstrates that.

I was over in October and I did speak to President Barzani. He identified some additional support that he wanted, some specific ammunition types that he felt like he didn't have in sufficient quantities, and we were working immediately to address that shortfall.

So my assessment is they have the military capability to do what must be done, and we are additionally providing aviation support and other combined arms capabilities.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Chairman, General, if you would like to amplify, please feel free, but try to keep us close to on time.

Mr. Forbes.

Mr. FORBES. General Dunford, you heard the chairman's admonishment of staying within 5 minutes, so I am going to ask you to have your answers as succinct as possible, and if you want to elaborate, you can do that in writing.

You heard the Secretary of Defense today say both in writing and verbally that we are at war. Who declared that war?

General DUNFORD. Representative Forbes, I think what the Secretary was saying, because we have discussed this, is we view the fight against ISIL as a threat to the United States and we are mobilizing all of the military capabilities that are necessary—

Mr. FORBES. Who would have actually made that declaration? Is that something you would make, the Secretary would make—

General DUNFORD. If it was a technical declaration of war, it would be the Congress.

Mr. FORBES. But has that declaration been made?

General DUNFORD. No, it has not.

Mr. FORBES. So then how does the Secretary say we are at war?

Secretary CARTER. Well, why doesn't the Secretary say for himself?

Mr. FORBES. I understand, but I only have 5 minutes.

Secretary CARTER. Well, I am just going to tell you, by doing that I am not——

Mr. FORBES. Chairman, I would ask the Secretary, if he wants to elaborate, he can do it in writing. He is taking my 5 minutes.

General Dunford, can you tell me, as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, if you know?

General DUNFORD. We are technically not at war, Representative Forbes.

Mr. FORBES. So if we are effectively not at war, let me ask you this——

General DUNFORD. A declared war.

Mr. FORBES [continuing]. Have we currently contained ISIL?

General DUNFORD. We have not contained ISIL——

Mr. FORBES. Have they been contained at any time since 2010?

General DUNFORD. Tactically in areas they have been. Strategically they have spread since 2010.

Mr. FORBES. Can you ask me if our current strategy, in your best personal and professional military judgment, that we have currently implemented, do we have a strategy that will defeat and destroy ISIL?

General DUNFORD. I think the right components of a strategy are in place, Representative Forbes.

Mr. FORBES. Is that the strategy that was recommended by the Joint Chiefs?

General DUNFORD. The current strategy, and particularly the military dimension of the strategy, is the strategy that was recommended by the Joint Chiefs.

Mr. FORBES. Do you have any knowledge of whether your predecessor was ever consulted from 2010 until he left office regarding the appropriate strategy for dealing with ISIL in his best personal and professional military judgment or the best personal military judgment of the Joint Chiefs?

General DUNFORD. I am confident that he was routinely consulted.

Mr. FORBES. Do you have any knowledge as to whether he was consulted?

General DUNFORD. I do. I was a member of the Joint Chiefs at the same time.

Mr. FORBES. Was the strategies implemented since 2010 the strategies that were recommended by the Joint Chiefs?

General DUNFORD. I can't speak to all the way back to 2010, Congressman Forbes.

Mr. FORBES. How long were you on the Joint Chiefs?

General DUNFORD. Eleven months before assuming my current position.

Mr. FORBES. All right. During that 11 months, were the strategies implemented at that time the strategies that were recommended by the Joint Chiefs?

General DUNFORD. We didn't make a recommendation on the strategy during those 11 months. The only recommendations we made happened subsequent to that time, which is when I was the Chairman.

Mr. FORBES. And, General, in your best personal and professional military judgment, do you believe our strategies since 2010 were the appropriate military strategies to defeat and destroy ISIL?

General DUNFORD. Congressman Forbes, I think we have the right elements of the strategy in place today.

Mr. FORBES. Did we have them since 2010?

General DUNFORD. I don't believe the campaign was fully resourced since 2010.

Mr. FORBES. Good.

Mr. Chairman, with that, I yield back.

Thank you, General. And feel free to elaborate on any of that you want to in writing.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 79.]

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Secretary, if there is something you want—

Mr. FORBES. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN [continuing].to say about the comments about—

Secretary CARTER. No, I just want to be candid. I am not using this in some technical sense. But this is serious business, and so I believe—

Mr. FORBES. And Mr. Secretary—

Secretary CARTER [continuing]. That is what I mean by war. It feels like that to our people who are engaged in it and it has that kind of gravity. So it is not a technical thing, it is a descriptive.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Chairman, since I have 60 seconds left, in all due respect to the Secretary, the word "war" is not just some light term. When we use "war" it is a technical word and it needs to be used very, very carefully, I think, whether we use it in this committee or use it elsewhere. And with that, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. Mrs. Davis.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you to both of you, of course, for being here and the challenges that you are facing.

I wanted to go back to the AUMF for a second, because I know that you have said that you have whatever you need basically in terms of the authorities, and yet I have an understanding that in Afghanistan, for example, that in fact we have had some inability to act preemptively. Would that be the case in any way?

Secretary CARTER. Since General Dunford was our commander there, I think he is probably in the best position to—I will let him answer that.

General DUNFORD. Congresswoman Davis, Afghanistan is a declared area of hostilities, and certainly as the commander there I didn't have any restrictions on my ability to act when there was a threat to U.S. forces or to the mission.

Mrs. DAVIS. And, again, preemptively, that was not a problem?

General DUNFORD. Absolutely. I mean, if we had actionable intelligence that there was a threat to the force or a threat to the mis-

sion or, frankly, during my time in Afghanistan, a threat to Afghan Security Forces, we were authorized to act against individuals or groups designated as hostile.

Mrs. DAVIS. All right. Thank you. I appreciate that. There seemed to be some misunderstanding at some point.

I also wanted to just go back. You talked about the oil infrastructure campaign, and I am wondering whether there was some decision not to act as quickly in that regard as perhaps we could have while there was—could be considered a longer way to do that, and what the impacts of that actually are in terms of impact on the pocketbook, of course, of ISIL, on the oil trade, and what impact that might have on the future, actually, of the region itself, of the Sunni region.

General DUNFORD. Congresswoman Davis, I will start with that. Back in the spring a detailed analysis was done in conjunction with the State Department on the oil infrastructure in Syria and Iraq, but in Syria, to identify the critical nodes that if targeted would have the greatest impact against the revenue stream of ISIL. And so over the course of a couple of months that was heavily studied and then brought to Secretary Carter and Secretary Kerry about 4 weeks ago.

We had been striking oil infrastructure, but we were able to do it in a much more sophisticated, much more effective way subsequent to that study being completed. So that is why you have seen a significant increase in the tempo of our strikes over the past couple of weeks. We estimate that approximately 43 percent of the revenue stream that ISIL derives from oil has been affected over the past 30 days, and we are continuing now to aggressively pursue not only strikes against their oil revenue, but also their cement and other industries from which they draw their primary funds.

Mrs. DAVIS. Anything else? And in terms of the cooperation with allies in that regard as well.

General DUNFORD. The coalition, we have what is called an air tasking order, so the coalition is integrated into that air tasking order, they conduct strikes. And the coalition is also supporting the strikes that we are conducting against the infrastructure.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you. And I want to shift just quickly. What are your concerns about Pakistan's commitment to eliminating terrorist organizations?

Secretary CARTER. Well, we hosted Pakistani leaders here in Washington, the Chairman and I, of course the President, just in recent weeks, and we do press them on the need to fight terrorists and to recognize that terrorism is a threat to Pakistan as well as to its neighbors, and by the way, I should add, to U.S. forces in the region. So we are concerned about it, we do press them on that and urge them to recognize what we think is true, which is that that is in fact the principal threat to the Pakistani state today, comes from terrorist organizations within.

Chairman.

General DUNFORD. Congresswoman Davis, I mean, we are never satisfied with the level of cooperation and support that we have from Pakistan, but we do have open lines of communication. As Secretary Carter said, we recently had the Pakistanis here. I met with my counterpart, General Raheel, about 10 days ago.

Mrs. DAVIS. Yes, and I know. And the chairman also hosted, yes.
 General DUNFORD. And what I do believe is that over the past 18 to 24 months in particular the Pakistanis realize that violent extremism presents an existential threat to the state of Pakistan. And I think as a result, the level of cooperation has improved over the past year and a half or two years. It is not today, in my assessment, what it needs to be in order for us to be effective, and we will continue to work with our Pakistani partners to make sure that it gets better.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you. Are there any tools that we could be using, should be using to gain more support?

The CHAIRMAN. If you all would submit those in written form, I would appreciate it.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 79.]

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Miller.

Mr. MILLER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, who does it feel like we are at war with?

Secretary CARTER. ISIL and its accompanying. And by the way, I wasn't speaking of myself. And I don't use this word lightly. I am talking of the troops who are involved in it, Congressman. So I think that is who feels that they are at war—

Mr. MILLER. I understand, but who is the enemy?

Secretary CARTER. The enemy is ISIL and associated groups, extremists.

Mr. MILLER. Have you ever heard any Member of Congress say we are at war with Muslims?

Secretary CARTER. No.

Mr. MILLER. Why would the President on foreign soil last week say that, quote, "GOP's rhetoric has become the most potent recruitment tool for the militant group." Why would he say that?

Secretary CARTER. I can't say. I am not familiar with that quote by the President. What I do know the President has said in the past, which is obviously true, is that we recognize that this is not Islam, per se, that stands behind the Islamic State, it is a particular group of very radical extremists. And that is an important distinction to make. I don't know, I have always heard the President make that distinction—

Mr. MILLER. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. I don't even think he uses the word "radical extremists." But I think it is pretty disingenuous when he makes this into a political football using language on foreign soil, that has never been said, for political purposes. This committee tries not to do that, and I think the President should do the exact same thing.

He also said that we are gaining—and you did as well—that we are gaining back ground that ISIS has taken and that it is diminishing their recruiting capacity, implying that it is harder for them to recruit fighters.

So my question is, is it a bigger recruiting tool for attacks like Paris or expanding their territory? Because the President has said and others have implied that as the area shrinks it is harder for them to recruit and they are losing fighters.

Secretary CARTER. I will start, and then the Chairman can pitch in.

I do think that attacks like Paris are aimed at and probably have some effect on recruiting to the cause people worldwide who observed that; young radicals, we have had some in our own country who have watched the television, been on the Internet. Within Syria and Iraq, recruiting for fighters on the ground there, we are trying to dry up that supply of recruits, both by making it harder to get into Syria and by destroying them when they are there, as well as the ultimate, which is to create local forces and a local system of governance that is more attractive to people than joining these violent extremists.

Chairman.

General DUNFORD. Congressman, I believe that what ISIL is trying to do is, again, advance a narrative of inevitable success and invincibility. And so I would expect that they will do two things: One, continue to grab territory and establish the caliphate, and also conduct external operations that will incentivize others to join the movement and also attract resources to the movement.

Mr. MILLER. General, which do you think they will focus on or will they do it simultaneously, regaining territory or increasing broader attacks here and other places?

General DUNFORD. Congressman, I think they are the ultimate opportunists and they will take advantage of all of the above whenever the opportunity presents itself.

Mr. MILLER. Thank you. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Langevin.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Thank you.

Mr. Secretary, and General, thank you for your testimony today.

I would like to turn my attention first to your statement, page 3, when you talked about the expeditionary targeting force. And in particular it says, "The special operators will over time be able to conduct raids, free hostages, gather intelligence, and capture ISIL leaders. That creates a virtuous cycle of better intelligence, which generates more targets, more raids, and more momentum."

The line that was in the statement but you didn't mention in your oral testimony was that, "This force will also be in a position to conduct unilateral operations into Syria." I thought that was significant. I just wanted to explore that a bit. Exactly what does that mean and what will those—how extensive will those types of raids be?

Secretary CARTER. That is true. That is in the statement. It is very important. We have obviously conducted such raids already. If you remember the raid that led to the killing of Abu Sayyaf and the capture of his wife and a young Yazidi woman who was being held as a slave, a raid into Syria in which we freed 70 prisoners who were going to be executed and actually lost an American service member heroically in that action.

And this is an important capability because it takes advantage of what we are good at. We are good at intelligence. We are good at mobility. We are good at surprise. We have the long reach that no one else has. And it puts everybody on notice in Syria that you don't know at night who is going to be coming in the window. And that is the sensation that we want all of ISIL's leadership and followers to have. So it is an important capability.

Let me ask the Chairman if he wants to elaborate on that.

General DUNFORD. I think the one point that you have highlighted, Mr. Secretary, is the intelligence piece, and I think that is the most important thing.

Our effectiveness is, obviously, inextricably linked to the quality of intelligence we have, and our assessment is that this force and the operations this force will conduct will provide us additional intelligence that will make our operations much more effective. And I think that is what the Secretary refers to when he talks about the virtuous cycle.

Mr. LANGEVIN. So do you expect that these raids, this use of special forces going into Syria are going to increase exponentially or will the primary focus be within Iraq itself?

General DUNFORD. Congressman, our operations will be intel driven. The enemy doesn't respect boundaries; neither do we. We are fighting a campaign across Iraq and Syria, so we are going to go where the enemy is and we are going to conduct operations where they most effectively degrade the capabilities of the enemy.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Okay. To what extent are the financial flows behind each of the bad actors present in Syria, including ISIL, vulnerable to interdiction, and to what extent are we, our allies, and our partners disrupting those flows?

Secretary CARTER. I will start. The Chairman spoke of the oil infrastructure previously. And as we learn more, we are better able to target that part of critical infrastructure like oil. The Chairman mentioned cement also, which turns out to be a big source of revenue for ISIL. And also that precision allows us to strike those parts of the oil infrastructure that are fueling the revenues of ISIL.

We don't wish to destroy the entire oil revenue infrastructure of Syria or Iraq because someday those countries are going to need to be restored to decent governance, but we have to destroy that which fuels ISIL, and we are getting better at distinguishing those two. And that better intelligence, that better insight is what has allowed us to take this next step. And I think it is going to be pretty effective. We are looking to do more.

General DUNFORD. Just a quick follow-up, Congressman. Just to be clear, we do assess today that the majority of the revenue that core ISIL has is generated from within Iraq and Syria in the ways that the Secretary outlined, the oil industry primarily, other industries like cement, and then taxes on local people. And some of those taxes are actually taxes on resources paid by the Government of Iraq and Syria, so we have been able to kind of stop that as well.

So I do think that we are in a position and have over the past several weeks had a pretty significant impact on the revenue source of core ISIL.

Mr. LANGEVIN. So my last question. We have talked this morning about nations, surrounding nations in the region being more on the same page and going after, targeting ISIL, particularly the Sunni states in the area. How do we get them to be make this their first priority given the fact that Saudi Arabia, for example, their primary concern is Iran and expansion?

Secretary CARTER. In view of the time, it is a very important question. Why don't I take it for the record and we will get back to you in written form. It is a very important question.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Thank you.

[The information referred to was not available at the time of printing.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Wilson.

Mr. WILSON. Mr. Secretary and General, thank you for being here.

And General Dunford, I have had the opportunity to represent Parris Island, and so I know firsthand how working with young people, you transform them into extraordinary people with the highest level of fulfillment that they could ever achieve. And so it is just awesome what the Marine Corps does.

I appreciate both of you making recommendations to the President to protect American families from further attacks, but the President has established a legacy of failure, not accepting commonsense proposals to promote peace. This was cited last week by The Washington Post editorial page editor Fred Hiatt, who courageously confirmed, quote, "He withdrew all U.S. troops from Iraq when experts advised that a residual force of 15,000 would help keep a fragile peace. He bombed Libya to overthrow its dictator, but opposed a small NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] training force that might have stabilized the new government."

With the President not accepting your recommendations, Mr. Secretary, there are plans for the deployment of approximately 50 special operations soldiers to northern Syria to advise and assist Kurdish and Arab fighters fighting ISIS or Daesh. The White House press secretary has said these special operations forces will be able to assess the situation on the ground and help local fighters with operational planning, tactics, and logistics.

Given the complicated sociopolitical divide between the Kurds and the local Syrian forces, do you believe that this will be successful? And what are the decision points for the strategy?

Secretary CARTER. Well, we do believe it has every chance of being successful. But this is a transactional relationship with these forces wherein we provide them some support, we provide them some equipment, and we see how they do. In fact, that is what we are doing all over. So far, they have shown a willingness to take territory, made good use of our equipment, and that is the reason why we are prepared to do more with them.

And by the way, as I said, this I hope will be like a snowball. If they do well, we will do more. That will gather more fighters into their movement. And, of course, where we would like them to go down is to Raqqa and reclaim this so-called capital of the so-called caliphate. But it is very transactional because we have to see how they are doing and what their level of motivation and effectiveness is.

Mr. WILSON. And, of course, it is bipartisan. We want you to be successful.

Mr. Secretary, the basis of this hearing is to determine the suitable strategy to deal with ISIS in Iraq and Syria. Most recently, we have seen ISIS spread terror beyond the region. The President has stated on a number of occasions that ISIS is contained. Senator Dianne Feinstein, Democrat of California, the ranking member of the Senate Intelligence Committee, has expressed a sense of urgency. Recently she said, quote, "We have to be prepared for an

ISIS attack on the U.S. homeland. I have never been more concerned.”

Senator Feinstein said, quote, “I read the intelligence faithfully.” And then she added, “ISIL is not contained. ISIL is expanding.”

Her comments serve as a direct rebuttal to the President’s statement, just hours before the mass murders in Paris, we had, quote, “From the start, our goal has been to contain ISIS and keep them contained,” end of quote.

What specifically does containment of ISIS mean to you? And in practical terms, what is DOD doing that it should do to contain ISIS?

Secretary CARTER. Well, our strategy is to destroy ISIL in Syria and Iraq and anywhere else it arises. And with respect to the homeland, while we don’t have any credible imminent threats that I can relate to you today, fortunately, we do take homeland security very seriously. And we particularly take the protection of our own personnel seriously for, among other reasons, the fact that they were—many of them were singled out by these guys like Junaid Hussein, who were trying to recruit Americans.

A few months ago I went to Chattanooga on a Sunday afternoon. There was a ceremony for six of our service members gunned down by somebody who had been radicalized basically online, born and raised in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

So this is serious business, the violent extremist tendencies, and while we need to get its heart in Syria and Iraq, we need to recognize that this metastasizes elsewhere and protect ourselves and protect our people.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Bordallo.

Ms. BORDALLO. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Carter and General Dunford, thank you very much for being at the hearing this morning.

Gentlemen, having just returned last week from a congressional trip to Afghanistan, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia, with our mission being—our main mission being the influence of ISIL in this region, I came back—and this is a personal observation—with the idea that we have to step up or accelerate our strategies, with the assistance of our allies, of course. Air power. Sea power. Boots on the ground.

And one thing that was brought out in all of the country briefings in these countries was the sharing of intelligence information. It is not up to par. And if we can accelerate with all of this power, with our allies, I think it would be one way to wipe out this barbarian group once and for all.

Gentlemen, the entire world is on alert. The American people are on edge. There are ISIL cells in our States here in America. So I am just wondering what your ideas are on accelerating this mission that we have to wipe out ISIL, and what about the intelligence information sharing?

General DUNFORD. Thank you, Congresswoman. I will come to the intel piece first.

First of all, I think your observation is actually exactly right on the mark and is a fact. And in the wake of Paris that has been one of the things that was identified.

We have a reasonably good information sharing within the United States across the interagency; certainly not perfect, but we work that pretty hard every day. As you saw in the wake of Paris, other nations not only have a challenge sharing information with other countries, but they have difficulty sharing information with other agencies within the same country. That has been recognized as an issue.

Certainly, as Secretary Carter and I work on one of the more fundamental issues, the foreign fighter issue, that has been identified as probably the single biggest thing that inhibits our ability to stop the flow of foreign fighters, is information and intelligence sharing across all the countries that are affected. And we think there is at least 100, maybe 120 countries that have individuals who have actually gone to Syria and Iraq to fight and presumably will return home at some point. And so there is a strong imperative to do that.

With regard to accelerating the campaign, you know, Secretary Carter and I have talked about what we are doing inside of Iraq and Syria, but also recognize that this is a transregional threat that requires a global strategy. And as we are conducting operations in Syria and Iraq, and as we are trying to create pressure simultaneously across ISIL in Iraq and Syria, we are trying to do the same thing in all of the other locations where ISIL exists. And we assess today there is certainly a number of branches that are sanctioned by ISIL and a number of other groups that are striving to become part of ISIL.

Ms. BORDALLO. Thank you very much, General.

I do agree with much of what was said today, and I do know that I understand the difficulties and challenges in dealing with different cultures and different countries. But I really think that, you know, it is going beyond what we ever expected. And now we are just all up in the air about whether this is going to hit our own country. So I just hope that we can work together and try to beef up.

We have been with our allies now for a long time. Many of them we train their troops. So I do think we are ready to step it up and once and for all wipe out this barbarian group.

And I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentlelady.

Mr. Turner.

Mr. TURNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, I know you are aware of the fact that there have been allegations that intelligence officials at CENTCOM have skewed findings on the ISIS war to please their superiors and to please those in Washington. I am holding a Daily Beast article from November 23. It says, "Analysts Accuse CENTCOM of Covering Up Cooked ISIS Intelligence." The article goes on to say that the inspector general is looking into CENTCOM's perhaps cooking the intelligence to make the picture more rosy than what is occurring. And it goes on to have a concern that, in fact, emails and documents may have been deleted before they were turned over to investigators concerning the CENTCOM doctoring or making a more rosy appearance. In fact, the chairman and I sit on the Intelligence Committee also. The chairman of the Intelligence Committee has

sent to the inspector general a letter inquiring about the allegations of those documents having been deleted.

Now, I said I sit on the Intelligence Committee. I have also attended the classified portions of briefings at this committee, and you have said you can only go into so far in this hearing. In your written testimony you say, some of this, I can only tell you what is unclassified. But you say, "We are gathering momentum on the battlefield in Syria and Iraq." You say, "All of these efforts from northern Syria through Iraq have shrunk the ISIL-controlled territory in both."

Mr. Secretary, you can understand my concern that while we have allegations that CENTCOM is doctoring intelligence to make things a rosy picture and while you sit before us and say we are gathering momentum and their footprint has shrunk, well, General Dunford sitting next to you has admitted that ISIL is not contained, that we are all a little concerned that you are giving us a rosy picture. And I personally believe, I think as many do, that not only do we not really have a strategy, but you can't have a strategy unless it is based on an accurate picture of what is happening and the threat that we have.

Mr. Secretary, how do you respond to the allegations that the Department of Defense, CENTCOM, perhaps even your own testimony today is painting a much rosier picture than what we are facing?

Secretary CARTER. First of all, with respect to intelligence, and I insist upon accurate, candid advice from the intelligence community and I don't rely upon just one source.

Mr. TURNER. I appreciate that commitment, Mr. Secretary, but the question is about ISIL and Syria and Iraq. You have made statements here in your written statement that their footprint is shrinking, has been shrunk. General Dunford is saying they are not contained. You say that we are gathering momentum. I know everybody has been in the classified briefings that we have had here. No one has ever said that to us before. And when you put that in the same context of CENTCOM having allegations that they have doctored intelligence as to what the circumstances are, I think you have somewhat of a high bar to pass to be able to sit in front of us and tell us that the battlefield is—it is turning in our direction. How do you justify that?

Secretary CARTER. Well, let's just be clear about what I said. The territory under ISIL's control has shrunk. That is a fact. And that is not a fact that I would suggest is the end of the story. I tell you we need more momentum. We need to keep that up. So I am very careful.

Mr. TURNER. Who controls the territory where it has shrunk in Syria?

Secretary CARTER. Well, Kurds, for example.

Mr. TURNER. And in Iraq?

Secretary CARTER. Kurds, also, for example.

Mr. TURNER. And was that part—

Secretary CARTER. That is a fact. Is there still a lot farther to go? You bet there is. And I am committed, and I will be, and I have been absolutely candid with you, I expect intelligence officials to be

candid with me. I can't comment on an inspector general investigation.

Mr. TURNER. So, Mr. Secretary—

Secretary CARTER. But I will tell you—

Mr. TURNER. It is my time. So it is your testimony here today, because the Kurds have made advances, that we have momentum and that ISIL is shrinking?

Secretary CARTER. For that and a number of other reasons we are gathering momentum and it is a fact that the territory under ISIL's control has shrunk. That is not a declaration of victory. It is a—

Mr. TURNER. You have indicated that it is war. Are we winning, Mr. Secretary?

Secretary CARTER. We will win.

Mr. TURNER. Are we winning now?

Secretary CARTER. We are going to win.

Mr. TURNER. Well, Mr. Secretary, you know, most of us on both sides of the aisle do not have confidence that you have a strategy and that you do not have a strategy based on an accurate assessment. I think your presentation here today shows a disconnect between what all the information that we are receiving and really what is being placed into the United States effort.

I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Courtney.

Mr. COURTNEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank both witnesses for their testimony today, particularly the, in my opinion, very powerful statement that both of you articulated about the fact that it is Congress—if we want to do something on our side of the witness table, we need to act. We need to move forward on an Authorization of Use of Force and the general's comments in terms of the impact that would have on those wearing the uniform that are out there taking the fight.

Frankly, I just hope people will take that to heart. The finger-pointing and chest-thumping that goes on up here sometimes at the same time that we have been sitting since February when the President sent over language for an Authorization of Use of Force and have done nothing is just totally inexcusable and unacceptable.

I wanted, though, to point or just focus for a moment on the fact that we did actually in 2014 move forward on title 10 authorization, which was incorporated into the NDAA [National Defense Authorization Act], that gave authority for train-and-equip operations. You alluded to it, Mr. Secretary, in terms of that program. Again, the out-of-country training seemed to have sort of fizzled out. I guess the question I want to ask is, is that a dead letter now or are you using it in other ways to, again, take the fight to ISIL?

Secretary CARTER. Well, we are continuing to train and equip forces. We are doing it in different ways as we learn more. And we are now, particularly in Syria, we have found groups that already exist and are fighting and which we can enable with special capabilities and train people specially to accompany them or send Americans to accompany them. That is preferable to trying to create entirely new units by taking individuals out of the country and trying to put them together.

We are still—we will continue—we are going to try everything that works. So we are doing some of the latter down in southern Syria and having some success at doing that, at forming units to fight ISIL. But we also continue to look and to find forces that are willing to fight ISIL and to give them the equipment, the training, and the enabling that will allow them to be successful. And we are doing that all over Syria and all over Iraq, and that is the key to getting a continued momentum.

Chairman, do you have anything to add to that?

General DUNFORD. Congressman, I think the thing that is important is that we are going to need indigenous ground forces and regional ground forces to be successful. So it really is a question, as the Secretary outlined, we have changed the method of developing those indigenous ground forces, but the end state has remained consistent, and the authorities that we have in the NDAA are exactly the ones we need to continue to progress.

I will give you an example. We were training individuals. We brought them into Turkey. We tried to send them back into the fight in Syria. We didn't believe that that was going to get us to where we needed to be as fast as we needed to get there. So we decided to go with vetted groups and we are currently supporting the Syrian Arab Coalition, which is actually one of the groups that has had some success in Al-Hawl and is moving now down towards Raqqa, which is where core ISIL resides. That authority is what we are using to support those forces right now.

Mr. COURTNEY. And I appreciate you mentioning that specific scenario because, again, I think it shows that, you know, there are tangible results when we moved as a Congress on a bipartisan basis to give you the tools to succeed. And that is why it is really not just, you know, a cable news debating topic here in terms of authorization. I mean, there is real value in terms of helping us accomplish the goal here, is as Congress, you know, listening to the military needs and moving forward and giving people the tools to succeed.

And the taking of Al-Hawl is a perfect example of that, which, again, there is no intelligence question about whether that happened. I mean, it has been reported in every sort of international media out there. It succeeded. And we should be looking for those opportunities on our side of the witness table in terms of giving you the tools to move forward.

And with that I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Kline.

Mr. KLINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, gentlemen, for being here today. I want to take a few seconds to weigh in on the "are we at war?" question, which was so busily discussed up here on the top row.

If you go back to the 9/11 Commission Report, they very clearly stated that we are at war, that we have an enemy, it is Islamic terrorists, and that they are waging war against us. And I would argue they are continuing to wage war against us. So whether we like it or not, we are in a war.

Having said that, I think it would be very, very useful if we would indeed debate and pass a new Authorization for the Use of Military Force to clear up this kind of esoteric discussion.

General Dunford, when I was in Baghdad a few months ago I was talking to American troops, and even though we theoretically don't have troops on the ground, there were some 3,500 American troops on the ground. But I was told we can't have any more than that, we are at a limit.

So my question is, is that true? Are we limited in what we do by a number, whether it is 3,500 or maybe now it is 3,550, if we are sending some special operating forces over there? Are we limited to a number?

General DUNFORD. Congressman, thanks for asking that question. I have had that conversation with our commanders on the ground as well.

I do not believe we are limited by the number 3,500. We are managing 3,500 because that is the number of troops that the President has approved to date. But I can assure that you I don't feel at all inhibited about making recommendations that would cause us to grow greater than 3,500 were I to believe it would help us defeat ISIL. And I have told our commanders, to include General MacFarland as recently as 10 days ago, to not be inhibited at all in identifying to me the capabilities he needs on the ground, regardless of the force management level, which is really what you are referring to, that 3,500, and that I will bring those options to the Secretary and the President.

Mr. KLINE. Well, I am only somewhat relieved to hear that because I hate to think that we are down to managing a number where we have to go to President of the United States to go from 3,500 to 3,600, or to 3,700, or 3,800. And right now it is my understanding, for example, you, if you needed to, you couldn't move in a battalion of attack helicopters or combat search and rescue or something to be stationed in or around Baghdad.

And I just—you and I, frankly, have had this discussion before, including about Afghanistan—and I just think it is a terrible imposition on the military campaign to complete a strategy which I, like others, am not at all convinced we really have at this point. But presumably you have got a strategy to fight and win.

If you need the forces to do it, it seems to me you ought to be able to move those forces without having to go to the President of the United States and say, "I need another 25 people." And I would make the same argument about Afghanistan. I don't know how we got—actually, I do know how we got a number that is below 10,000.

But my point is, is that we are getting numbers. You, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, the Joint Chiefs, the Secretary of Defense, and others are being asked to wage a campaign based on a cap of numbers in a country. And if that is not true—now you say you feel comfortable in going to the President of the United States and saying we need some more numbers. But right now General Austin or anybody else can't send in a battalion, a company, if he feels he needs it in Baghdad. Is that correct?

General DUNFORD. Congressman, if I could just quickly respond. I view my responsibility to identify to the President and the Secretary the capabilities that the commanders need to accomplish the mission. And I can assure you that I will not be at all inhibited in bringing those recommendations forward to the President and

Secretary, regardless of what the force management levels or the numbers may have been articulated as in the past. I will not feel at all constrained in bringing forward recommendations for additional capabilities if that is what it takes us to defeat the enemy.

Mr. KLINE. Well, the way you put that is exactly correct. It is additional capabilities. It is not numbers. If you need the capability to conduct combat search and rescue in a reasonable amount of time and fly them from Kuwait to western Iraq, to me is not a reasonable amount of time if you have to go and rescue a downed pilot. If you need that capability, it seems to me, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, that needs to be recommended. If you don't think so I am a little bit surprised, because from what I hear in visits there and talking to others is there is a sense on the ground that they need some more capability.

So please, please, please, please do not hesitate to make the recommendation to get the capability we need, whether it is in Afghanistan or whether it is in Iraq and Syria, and let's get out of managing by the dag-burn numbers.

I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Tsongas.

Ms. TSONGAS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you both for being here.

And, General Dunford, I am not sure that that isn't the first time since you have become Chairman and as a son of Massachusetts, I particularly want to welcome you. It is proud for all of us that you are in the position that you are today. So thank you both for being here.

And I think the discussion we have had today really does reinforce the complexity of the challenge that we face, and we have heard a number of those here today saying it really, I think, underscores the idea that we really need to have a robust debate that involves all of Congress, not just the committees that really need to focus on this, because it is a complex situation. We need to better understand the role of our allies, both Sunni and otherwise, what the costs are going to be over time, what it is going to require of those serving in our behalf. And so I would really like to underscore those who have called for the need to have a new Authorization for the Use of Military Force.

But given the complexities, I just wanted to get to a couple of them. The administration often talks about the 65 countries that are participating in the coalition against ISIL. But roughly 50 of them have never been directly involved in the air campaign and while many who were participating at the beginning have ceased their military involvement.

Can you tell me more about what is behind these countries' hesitations, and in particular, as we are focusing on what we should be sending to the fight, whether or not there is a need for more combat troops, boots on the ground? What is the willingness of this coalition, particularly our Sunni allies, to lend their forces to the fight?

So I will start with you, Secretary Carter.

Secretary CARTER. Well, you are right, we do need them to do more. In Europe, as I said, the attacks in Paris have galvanized the French. The French are coming in very strongly in Syria, which

they hadn't done before, and now are very willing to do so. The British are debating it, as I said. The Germans appear—they are certainly capable of doing more. We want them to do more. And so I would characterize for Europe, I hope that the Paris attacks galvanize all of Europe to do more, because they need to do more.

In Syria and Iraq, elsewhere around the world, and, of course, in their own homelands, where, to get back to an earlier point made, we share intelligence on homeland security, we depend to some extent upon their homeland security structures when it comes—when people visit from Europe to the United States, and so forth, for our own security. And then you mentioned the Gulf states as well.

Ms. TSONGAS. And that is really where my question I think is very important.

Secretary CARTER. This is something that we began to discuss with the Gulf states back at Camp David in the spring, the President did. A natural force, in particularly the Sunni areas of Syria and Iraq, would be Sunni Arabs, and a more effective and insightful kind of force. They have been unwilling to field such forces—

Ms. TSONGAS. And what are your challenges in confronting that unwillingness? What is this? Can you talk more about the why?

Secretary CARTER. I am going to be very candid with you and I have said this before. Many of the Gulf states weight air capabilities, air forces, and so forth, over ground forces and special operations forces. And I think that if they want to, as we would wish them to, wield more influence in the Middle East and do more to secure this part of the world in which they live too, they are going to need to do more of that on the ground.

And buying our airplanes is fine, we provide them, but when it comes to ground forces and special operations forces there is no question that they need to build those forces and wield them. They frequently complain to me, for example, about how capable the Iranians are, to which I say, yes, and you are not in the same game, an effective game on the ground.

Ms. TSONGAS. It goes to Ranking Member Smith's statement that in the end the Sunni part of the Muslim world has to take this on in order for it to be long-term effective.

General Dunford, I am running out of time, 5 seconds' worth.

General DUNFORD. Not only will we not be successful without our coalition partners, I don't see any way that we can be successful without our coalition partners.

Ms. TSONGAS. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Rogers.

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank both of you for being here and for your service to our country.

In June of this year, Chairman Thornberry held a nuclear deterrence oversight week, and we had a series of hearings and briefings. In one of those hearings we had Deputy Secretary Bob Work and Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Sandy Winnefeld testify. They both did a great job. Both of them emphasized that in their opinion nuclear deterrence was the highest priority of DOD and they reflected on Secretary Hagel's 2014 statement to the force to that effect.

Secretary Carter, you now have that job. Do you share Secretary Hagel's view, as well as Bob Work's and Sandy Winnefeld's, that nuclear deterrence is the highest priority for the DOD, and if so, why?

Secretary CARTER. I sure do, and I actually on Thanksgiving was calling service members around the world, and one of the folks I called was a missileer who was spending his Christmas in a silo in North Dakota and I told him exactly that. I said, what you are doing is the single most important thing in the U.S. military. It is not in the news every day, and God help us if it is, but it is the bedrock of our security, and in the final analysis that it is the ultimate undergirder of American security. And that is why having an effective, modern, safe, secure nuclear deterrent is absolutely critical.

Mr. ROGERS. Great. Well, I appreciate you doing that, because I share that view, and I appreciate the fact that Secretary James is putting a renewed emphasis on that area. It is my hope that you will also do your own statement to the force and be as clear on that issue as your predecessor was.

But either one of you, Secretary Work, as well as Vice Chairman Winnefeld, Admiral Haney, Secretary Kendall, have all made the statement that they believe the Long-Range Stand-off weapon [LRSO] should be pursued to replace the current air launch cruise missiles. Do you all share that view, and do you see that progressing at a pace that you find acceptable?

Secretary CARTER. I do. I do definitely support it.

Chairman.

General DUNFORD. I do as well, Congressman. I think it is important. We talked a minute ago about the threats to our Nation, and I think it is all about flexibility and options. And I think that capability reflects an important option that we ought to have were we to be engaged in a high-intensity conflict.

Mr. ROGERS. Do you see the progress toward that LRSO slipping in funding in any way?

General DUNFORD. Congressman, I would personally like to take that for the record. I am not tracking the profile at this time.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 79.]

Mr. ROGERS. Do you believe that it should be allowed to slip or be canceled?

General DUNFORD. Well, I know that there is a timeline along which it needs to be met because of the obsolescence of the weapon system it is replacing. So we ought to have it fielded in time to meet the operational requirement, but I don't know what that is right now.

Mr. ROGERS. Secretary, do you have anything else to say?

Secretary CARTER. Exactly to echo, and we can get back to you in more detail. There is a schedule to complete it. It, like a lot of our nuclear modernization programs, need adequate funding. That is not an entirely Department of Defense matter. It is a Department of Energy matter as well. So we watch it closely. But it is an important system and we need to manage it with our colleagues in the Department of Energy appropriately. We will get back to you

with some more detail on that. The important point is we support it.

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you both very much.

That is all I have, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Johnson.

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, gentlemen, for your service.

This committee has a responsibility to conduct oversight of the administration's strategy for prosecuting the U.S. counter-ISIL campaign, and it is quite appropriate for members of this committee to express their disagreement and disapproval of the administration's strategy.

However, the tone of the disagreement, disapproval, is important. Politicians know that relentless personal attacks on the President himself provoke a visceral reaction by the American people against the President, and that is a part of our campaign process.

But what effect does the unprecedented level of attack on our Commander in Chief have on our relationships with our allies, for instance? What impact does it have on our ability to galvanize our regional and nation supporters to participate in the strategy that we are leading? What impact does it have on the enemies of America who we are leading the strategy against?

If I might start by asking that question of you, Secretary Carter, and next of you, General Dunford.

Secretary CARTER. Well, you can ask the question, but I am not going to respond to it, and I will tell you why. I serve at the pleasure of President Obama and obviously support his policies. We are coming into an electoral season now in the United States, which I respect very much. However, I also very much respect the tradition and necessity of Defense to be out of the political swirl, and I intend to conduct myself in that manner over the next year-and-a-quarter or so of my service as Secretary of Defense.

And I especially consider it one of my responsibilities to shield our military from that swirl. Their job is to do—give their professional military advice in a candid manner no matter what the politics say and to conduct the Nation's operations to protect our people.

So with great respect, I understand where you are coming from in terms of your question, but I would prefer not to answer it because of its connection with the electoral cycle.

Mr. JOHNSON. Well, thank you. I respect that answer.

And General Dunford.

General DUNFORD. Sir, I think it is even more important for me in uniform to have the same position.

Mr. JOHNSON. Well, thank you.

And I assume that it probably does have some impact on our relationship with our allies and all of the other components that we have to work with to successfully prosecute this mission.

I have another question. How many ISIL forces are there in Iraq and Syria?

Secretary CARTER. The estimates are in the—and I want to emphasize these are estimates—so the Chairman and I are conferring on notes here—estimates in the neighborhood of 30,000. I hesitate to give numbers like that for the reason that I don't think our in-

telligence information is perfect in that regard and because they may involve people with varying levels of responsibility or actual adherence to ISIL.

Let me see if the Chairman wants to add anything to that, but I would just ask everyone to take with a grain of salt numbers like that because we do our best, or our intelligence community does their very best to be accurate, but I at least look with caution upon those estimates.

Chairman.

General DUNFORD. I think that is exactly right, Mr. Secretary.

And the estimates have been consistently between 20- and 30,000, Congressman. But I have the same caution in sharing those numbers or actually, you know, confirming the veracity of those numbers.

Mr. JOHNSON. All right. Thank you. And I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Franks.

Mr. FRANKS. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I thank both of you for being here.

Secretary Carter, I remember that you and I had a conversation here many months ago related to the Kurds and the Peshmerga efforts, and to your credit I think you strongly agreed that they had stood out as an effective force against ISIS. One of the Peshmerga commanders recently voiced a hopeful view of defeating ISIS, in my mind the most hopeful to date. He said, for the last 15 months that I have been fighting Daesh, I have never seen them so weak. They were literally running away. Now, that, as you know, is probably a general's effort to try to improve his morale of his soldiers and keep going.

But it is clear that they have done a marvelous job. And before ISIS brings a Paris or an Ankara or a Beirut-like attack to the United States, I think it is very important that we really get on the ball here. And as you know, this administration, ambassadors, two secretaries, they pushed back quite a lot related to the amendment that this committee passed to directly arm and support the Kurds. There was a tremendous amount of pushback and resistance to that. And I quite honestly can't fathom the reason for that.

But now I guess my question to you is, is everybody on the same page now? Is there support now for both the Senate amendment—it is in the NDAA—is there support to try to animate that amendment in a way that would make it most effective? I am talking about the amendment to support the Kurds now.

Secretary CARTER. Well, we definitely want to support the Kurds, and we want to support Sunni tribes as well. I think the gist of your question is, will we continue to do that with, by, and through the government in Baghdad now. And our preference is to do that because our preference is to support a multisectarian, albeit decentralized government of Iraq because the alternative is sectarianism and down that road we know what lies there.

So we continue to support Baghdad in that regard. And, therefore, when we arm the Kurds, as I indicated in my testimony, the Baghdad government gets to look at the shipments and so forth. It doesn't delay them materially. And so it is not a problem from—

Mr. FRANKS. But isn't it true—not to interrupt you, sir—but isn't it true that CJCS has been arming the Kurds and helping them directly?

Secretary CARTER. I am sorry, I don't recognize the acronym—I mean, I recognize the acronym, but it is for the Chairman.†

Mr. FRANKS. General Dunford.

General DUNFORD. When you say CJCS, Congressman—

Mr. FRANKS. I understand that the Kurds have been armed directly by this group. So I am just wondering is that—what I hear you, I hear you saying two different things. I hear you saying that we should support the amendment that we had here that called for arming the Kurds directly, but that we are still letting the Government of Iraq be sort of the referee of it all to make sure that we don't upset them in some way.

Secretary CARTER. What I am saying is that we do arm the Kurds. By the way, others do as well. I don't know what organization you are referring to. But other countries are arming the Kurds also. We do that with—through, in this nominal manner, the government of Baghdad, for the larger reason that we support multi-sectarian governance in Iraq. That is simply the reason why we do it.

Mr. FRANKS. But at this point, not to belabor the point here, but at this point there is a consensus that the administration is now on board with the amendments that we had or the provisions we had in this NDAA to step up our support for the Kurds.

Secretary CARTER. I don't think it is necessary for us to have language that allows us to directly support the Kurds, because we are able to support the Kurds in the way we are doing it now, so we don't need any additional authority. But I hear your basic thinking, which is that the Kurds are an effective fighting force, it is important to back them up.

Mr. FRANKS. Well, the point is, 6 months ago, if we had had this kind of support, the landscape might looked a lot differently. And, you know, I don't like to do the "I told you so thing" at all, but I just am astonished sometimes at this administration's lackadaisical approach to a very dangerous enemy. And I have, unfortunately, run out of time.

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Speier.

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

And thank you both for your leadership and service.

And, you know, Monday morning quarterbacking is always a whole lot easier. And I know that you are, you know, very committed to eradicating ISIS. I would like to know how many troops you are intending to add to the special ops in Syria? You mentioned, Secretary, that you were intending to do that. How many more are you intending to offer?

Secretary CARTER. There are two ways of answering that question. One is the particular operations that we are preparing to conduct now, I am sorry, in Syria, with our special operations forces, are intended to enable capable local ground forces. I would rather—I really can't go into what their operations are going to be here.

† Editor Note: The widely recognized definition of "CJCS" is "Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff." It is unclear to whom Mr. Franks was referring.

Ms. SPEIER. No, I understand. You have about 50 now.

Secretary CARTER. And they have indicated a number around 50.

And the second thing I want to say is that is for starters. If we find more forces that we can enable in this way, we are prepared to do more. I think the Chairman and I have repeatedly said that. We are prepared to do more. I have every reason to believe the President will allow us to do more and authorize us to do more when we have more opportunities. We are looking for those opportunities to do more. So we are actually eager to do more because that will accelerate the defeat of ISIL, but it hinges upon us finding the capable local forces that we can enable in this way. And that is what we are looking for. And every time we find them we will enable them.

So I would hope and expect—this gets back to the whole question of numbers. The point isn't numbers. The point is capabilities and the ability to enable capable and motivated local forces. The more we find them, the more we will do.

Ms. SPEIER. One other question. You referenced earlier that ISIS is metastasizing. I thought that was a very appropriate word and also a frightening word. And we know based on The New York Times article, certainly, that they have become somewhat entrenched in Libya. I presume, without wanting to, you know, signal to ISIS that we are recognizing that and taking steps to address that, that you have a plan that you are putting in place to deal with that?

Secretary CARTER. It can't be any secret to ISIL because we killed their leader in Libya a few weeks ago. So it shouldn't come as any surprise that we are determined to get them wherever they arise. And metastasis is a good word because these radical cells pop up and multiply fueled by the Internet. This is the first Internet terrorist organization—I mean, social media, I guess, fueled terrorist organization. So it is a serious and new kind of thing. It does spring up everywhere. And we have to strike it everywhere that we find it, including Libya, and we already have.

Ms. SPEIER. You mentioned social media, and their effectiveness on social media has left us somewhat flatfooted, I would suggest. There is some effort to grant you authorization that would allow you to conduct offensive cyberspace operations at the speed in which ISIL threats are coming in. Is that going to make a huge difference in our approach to attack them in cyberspace?

Secretary CARTER. We are looking at, along with law enforcement and Homeland Security, ways of countering them on the Internet, I mean, and I will let the law enforcement community speak for itself. But there is a very strong effort on the part of the FBI to identify self-radicalizing individuals in the United States. They do exist, as we know from Chattanooga.

And I might want to add, by the way, just by way clarification, earlier on you were asking about special operations forces in Syria. I was speaking of those that accompany and enable ground forces. I want to say in addition to that we are forming and have the expeditionary targeting force. That is a force that wouldn't be on the ground all the time in Syria. It would go in, conduct raids, and go out. I just want to emphasize that is a larger number of people.

Ms. SPEIER. And how many troops are included in that number?

Secretary CARTER. A larger number. I would rather give that to you in a classified setting, but a larger number.

Ms. SPEIER. All right. Finally, the executive order that is required in order for you to—I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentlelady.

Mr. Conaway.

Mr. CONAWAY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I am having, based on what you have said this morning, having a difficult time getting to the scope of what needs to get done in Syria and Iraq. I know you used some anecdotes that we are making progress and we are gaining momentum. If I am trying to climb Mount Everest, I can walk 5 or 6 feet up, look you in the eye with a straight face, and tell you I am making progress. And if I run the next 15 feet, I can tell you I am gaining momentum.

Can you tell me, not specifics, but can you tell me the Department of Defense has a game plan that says this is how many motivated local forces we need, this is, you know, everything we have got to go, so that you can share with the committee so we could see the scope of what has to get done in this effort? Is that laid out in your—not for public dissemination, but for our point being able to see what have you done, what needs to get done in the scope of this issue?

Secretary CARTER. Well, I think the outlines of that are very clear. That is what the strategy is about.

Mr. CONAWAY. I have got the strategy. I got that, Ash. But, I mean, how many local forces and how many X, Ys? Do you guys know that yet?

General Dunford.

Secretary CARTER. Go ahead, General, if you want.

General DUNFORD. We do, Congressman. We have got the specific numbers of brigades that we think that need to be trained in order to have successful Iraqi Security Forces. So we have a number of objectives.

Mr. CONAWAY. I am talking about Syria as well. This is a whole fight. We have got both countries.

General DUNFORD. Right. In Syria, to be honest with you, Congressman, I think the military campaign in Syria is designed right now to put pressure on core ISIL, while the political reconciliation process takes place. There is not a military solution in Syria.

Mr. CONAWAY. Got you. At some point in time I think it would be helpful if we had a sense of what this beast looked like.

You also mentioned that we spent some period of time studying the oil infrastructure. And I know you weren't there, and you are a Marine, that is not how you would do it necessarily. But taking out the tankers and how they move oil from point A to point B, why is it that we just got to doing that the last week as opposed to why weren't they the first? I mean, I understand the production facilities and all of that kind of good stuff, but the movement itself, why did we wait so long to do that?

General DUNFORD. Congressman, you know, again, I don't know what the thought process was 6 or 8 months ago. I do know that we have a much better appreciation for the revenue sources of ISIL, even—I will just share this with you.

In August I went around to all of the region as I was in transition to try to get a sense—a better sense of ISIL. At that time, there wasn't a clear understanding of how ISIL was generating revenue. Even in the weeks subsequent to August we started to have a much better appreciation for the source of ISIL revenue, and so started to go after the oil infrastructure and the tankers because we then appreciated how much of an impact that would have.

Mr. CONAWAY. I guess in the same vein, it looked like the French targets, the first targets they hit seemed to be targets that we should have hit right off the bat. Has all of that changed now? Are we in a new paradigm? I got the Monday morning quarterbacking nonsense, but going forward, when we see things to hit, are we in a position now to hit everything that makes sense from a military standpoint?

General DUNFORD. The simple answer is, Congressman, I can assure you the answer to that question is yes.

Mr. CONAWAY. Okay.

The Russians are purported to be introducing significant upgraded air defense capability. What impact will that have on our operations and our ability to do what we want to do?

General DUNFORD. We have watched that development very carefully. That is a very capable air defense system that has been brought in. We have a memorandum of understanding to ensure safety of flight with the Russians. I, as recently as yesterday, spoke to my counterpart, the Russian Chief of Defense, to ensure that they would be compliant with that memorandum of understanding. They have been over the past 30 to 45 days. And I assess today that we have the capability to prosecute the campaign against ISIL, the campaign that we envision, with Russia's presence.

Mr. CONAWAY. Do our pilots have the right rules of engagement if they are engaged?

General DUNFORD. They do. They do, Congressman.

Mr. CONAWAY. Okay. Yield back. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Duckworth.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, thank you for being here today. And, Chairman Dunford, I know you are no stranger to the committee, but welcome in your new capacity as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs.

Before I get into my line of questioning, I just want to point out my support for my colleague's earlier discussion on the need for Congress to do our job to actually take some action on a new AUMF. I understand the President did submit a draft AUMF earlier this year. We, in fact, had several hearings on it. Secretary Carter, you mentioned that also. But I think that it is vital that we get this right, and the AUMF is part of that.

I think the men and women who deploy into harm's way, some of whom may not come back, as is the case of Master Sergeant Wheeler, deserve to know that not only do they have the moral support, but the legal backing of our Nation. So I would hope that we here in Congress would devote equal effort to having this debate and talking about the true costs in terms of resources and sacrifices required as we get into the deeper discussion of one strategy over another.

So, gentlemen, what I am concerned with and my line of questioning is really going to focus on the global strategy against ISIL. And I think that we have not really discussed in this committee so far other regions where ISIL is established outside of the Middle East that I believe pose just as big of a threat, perhaps even more, and I am thinking in particular of Libya. Patrick Pryor, the DIA's [Defense Intelligence Agency's] top counterterrorism official, was recently quoted as saying about ISIL that Libya is the affiliate that we are most worried about, and that it is the hub from which they project across all of North Africa.

While we have a clear and present danger in Syria and Iraq, Mr. Secretary, please explain what the larger military strategy is to confront a global threat and how we are leveraging the different elements of American power, not just our military, and specifically, as much as you can in an unclassified setting, about our efforts to combat ISIL in Libya.

Secretary CARTER. Well, it is a—it is, as it must be, a global strategy. It has to be in all media, to go back to the earlier question about messaging and cyber. And while I believe we play a central and essential role, it is not purely a military campaign, it involves all the other instruments. But we are absolutely necessary; we are not by ourselves sufficient.

With respect to Libya, we have taken action there in recognition of the fact that because of the continuing political discord in Libya, which has not been resolved—obviously we are in favor of a political resolution in Libya which would lead to decent governance there and therefore not a fertile ground for the growth of ISIL—that political settlement has not occurred and therefore it is fertile ground for the spread of ISIL, and therefore we are having to take military action there. And I gave you an indication of that already, striking their leadership there. So it is a focus of ours.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Where else, other than Libya, do you see a real threat from ISIL and their forces? And, you know, I am concerned that—I see the general nodding—I am concerned that we are—you know, there is this training, these areas where there are failed states where ISIL is using as a staging base.

General DUNFORD. Some of the areas that immediately come to mind, obviously Egypt is one of the areas where we are concerned. That is where the Russian aircraft was taken down. The Boko Haram group has sworn allegiance and been accepted as a part of the ISIL movement in Nigeria. We have seen ISIL in the Afghanistan-Pakistan region. We have seen ISIL in Yemen. We have seen elements of ISIL in Lebanon and Jordan. So it is absolutely a global dynamic.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Thank you.

I would like to return to the discussion earlier about the hold force, Mr. Secretary, in Iraq. You know, looking at our vision for the future of Iraq and Syria, what political outcomes in Iraq do you envision and what is your assessment of Prime Minister Abadi and whether he is making the necessary reforms and whether those are going to be enough for this hold force? It is hard to find these folks and when you do, you have got to be able to try to keep them, you know, at their stations. But if they are not buying into what they

need politically, if they are not getting that, they are going to abandon that role.

So what is the political consequences that we need to happen in Iraq in order to maintain the hold force and to gain more folks to become hold forces?

Secretary CARTER. The political future that we are supporting in Iraq and that Prime Minister Abadi says he supports, I have spoken to him and I believe that he supports, but it is difficult to accomplish, is a multisectarian but decentralized Iraqi state in which Kurds, Shia, and Sunni can live together under one state, have a reasonable amount of self-governance, not by ISIL in Sunni territory, but by people who can do a civilized job of governance in Sunni territory, and Kurds and Shia all living together under one state, reasonable decentralization and self-governance as appropriate, but under one state and at peace. That is what we are seeking.

The alternative to that is a sectarian disintegration of Iraq. We know what that looks like. And we are hoping that Prime Minister Abadi can pursue that road, that he has enough support to do it. We are trying to help him do that. But Baghdad politics, no question about it, are complicated, and his predecessor was not on that road.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. I am out of time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Hunter.

Mr. HUNTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, thank you for being here and answering questions. I guess the first thing I would ask is, how can you reassure this body that the same administration that left in 2010, no one had the forethought to see ISIS coming, nobody thought it was important that we stay on the Iraqi-Syria border—I served with General Dunford when he was a colonel working with General Mattis writing op orders and executing the op orders on the Syrian border in 2003. What has changed? Why should we think that you guys, that the administration is on the right path now, they had a “come to Jesus” moment and they have changed and now they understand the significance in this region, whereas they did not before?

And you said yourself one reason you are building momentum now is because you lacked the intelligence capability, HUMINT [human intelligence] and otherwise, since 2010, which you are now regaining, but it wouldn’t have been lost in the first place if this administration didn’t squander the infrastructure that we had set up in 2010. Why should we trust you? I guess that is the question.

Secretary CARTER. Congressman, one of the reasons that I changed the structure of our command in Iraq over the last year is because I wanted—precisely because I wanted us to have the strength and the insight and the presence of a single senior American military officer in Baghdad.

That is now Lieutenant General Sean McFarland. And he is now connected each and every day to the front, literally to the front in Ramadi, to our various areas where we are training Iraqi Security Forces. He can talk directly to Prime Minister Abadi, he can talk directly to everybody else who is in Baghdad, and has complete command over all of our forces in the fight—and by the way, in Iraq and Syria.

Mr. HUNTER. I have got a bunch of questions, and I am going to be out of time.

Secretary CARTER. Well, I am just saying that is incredible.

Mr. HUNTER. Well, I am asking you, what has changed? You? The answer is you, you have changed, and that was the dynamic that changed?

Secretary CARTER. Well, I think the ability to have people on the ground in Iraq is essential to effectiveness there and to have unity of command. We now have that again, and I think that is a good thing. And it does harken back to another era when we—

Mr. HUNTER. We do have it now?

Secretary CARTER [continuing]. Where we once again had it, as General Dunford had it in Afghanistan. It is really critical. We now have that.

Mr. HUNTER. Okay. Second question. If you were to declare—or not declare war, but we had an Authorization of Use of Military Force, would it be against an autonomous state or would it be against terror worldwide, ISIS flavor?

Secretary CARTER. I kind of like the language in the AUMF that President Obama submitted, and I will tell you why, because as I told you, my first question when I was asked to review that, was does it give us what we need to defeat ISIS.

Mr. HUNTER. And let me ask a different way. Militarily, tactically, are you fighting a state? So I don't really care about—they were talking AUMF like philosophy class. What I mean, General Dunford, are you attacking a state or are you attacking war—I mean, terrorism in the region?

General DUNFORD. We are fighting extremists who have used—who use violence to advance their political goals in the form of terrorism.

Mr. HUNTER. What is different between that and Al Qaeda?

General DUNFORD. In terms of the basic nature of ISIL and Al Qaeda, there is not a difference, from my perspective, Congressman.

Mr. HUNTER. So the fact that they hold territory and that there are battle lines in this war in Syria and Iraq, there is a behind enemy lines area, there are lines of departure that you would cross if you were to go fight them, that is different than Al Qaeda, would you say?

General DUNFORD. It is. What I was referring to is the nature and the movement, in other words, ISIL and Al Qaeda. In terms of where ISIL is right now, they do in fact hold ground, they have declared a caliphate. I think that was an aspirational goal of Al Qaeda and something that ISIL has actually done today. So that does make it a bit different in the fact that they are currently holding ground and declared a caliphate.

Mr. HUNTER. Okay. And in terms of them actually having and holding ground, does that make it harder or easier in that area in Iraq and Syria where they actually hold ground, does that make it easier or harder to fight them compared to an Al Qaeda-type enemy?

General DUNFORD. Yeah. I think in this particular case, ISIL is particularly difficult because they are actually using humans as shields in places like Raqqa, Mosul, and Ramadi.

Mr. HUNTER. Which is no different than Al Qaeda in previous wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

General DUNFORD. Correct, but ISIL's location—we know where ISIL is. In the case of Al Qaeda, they blended into the country in a much different way than ISIL is.

Mr. HUNTER. Gotcha. With my last 6 seconds, we are still trying to get the Jordanians drones, been unable to do so because the State Department has stopped us. Now they are using Israeli Herons and Chinese Reaper equivalents instead of ours. I think we ought to fix that, Mr. Secretary, if we can.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Ashford.

Mr. ASHFORD. Thank you.

And thank you, Mr. Secretary, and thank you, General Dunford.

I have asked this before, and I was in the Middle East in February and we were briefed on these various topics, the intelligence mission, General Nagata's efforts to form up a Sunni force, and some of the Internet issues, the forming up of an Internet combative force there in Baghdad, I believe, at that time.

And, you know, the home of the 55th Air Wing is in Omaha, near Omaha at Offutt, and has a significant role in this effort. And I too support the AUMF issue. I think you are absolutely right. I think you have mentioned that before. I think it is clear that Congress needs to act as quickly as possible in this effort.

Here is my question, because I was there and was able to talk to King Abdullah, and he talked about, you know, putting the flag in the ground and getting ISIS out of the cities and all that sort of thing, and we talked about the intelligence collaborative efforts that were ongoing, and it was impressive to hear those efforts. Would you say that now, 9 months later, there is, I hate to put it—summarize it, but is there a significant change today from where we were 9 months ago in our readiness to achieve these goals that were announced 9 months ago? Would that phrase be accurate, Mr. Secretary?

Secretary CARTER. Well, we are constantly looking for opportunities to do more and doing more. So we are doing more than we were 9 months ago. I hope 9 months from now we are doing yet more, because we are looking for opportunities.

You mentioned Jordan. We are, with King Abdullah and his people, working once again to identify, and we have found some, people in southern Syria who want to recapture their territory from ISIL, and we are supporting and enabling them.

So we are looking to do more. And we are looking for proposals. I look to General Dunford for them, the President looks to me and General Dunford for proposals for how we can do more, and we have found them. And I have given you a number of indications of ways that we have accelerated the campaign over the last few months, and we will continue to do that.

Mr. ASHFORD. Thank you. I don't believe, at least 9 months ago, I don't know if the question was asked on our group, but I don't believe anybody was talking about being at war in a sense. We are in a war footing. I don't think those words were used then. They are now being used. I mean, at least to me and maybe to my constituents back in Nebraska, that being on a war footing is a more

significant effort than not. And I guess that would be my—would you agree with that?

Secretary CARTER. I used the words in the simple sense as a reflection of the necessity and the seriousness of this business.

Mr. ASHFORD. Thanks. And I would again just say, I think most everyone has said it here today, but the AUMF does seem to be the right way to go. So thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Coffman.

Mr. COFFMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, gentlemen, for your service to our country.

I think one question I had when—maybe we are slow to initiate it, but I am very glad right now that we are focused on their—the infrastructure of the country, whether the oil industry, I think the cement industry was mentioned, those sources of revenue that support the regime. But one of the things that was talked about was that we don't want to do this sort of catastrophic destruction of particularly, say, the oil industry, because it would be difficult to reconstitute in the future when ISIS is gone.

However, as a Gulf War veteran, I sort of remember what Saddam Hussein did to the oil industry in Kuwait, and yet they were able to reconstitute that after the war. And so could you address to me why we simply don't do that sort of catastrophic destruction of the oil industry to completely cut off their revenue, that revenue source, Mr. Secretary?

Secretary CARTER. Sure. I will start and then the Chairman can pitch in.

Well, there is a balance to be struck there, but the critical thing is intelligence. And there we have had gained the insight that allows us to distinguish to a very large extent that part of the energy infrastructure which is being directly exploited from ISIL from that part which is benefiting the population at large. That is a distinction that is based upon intelligence and underlies our striking.

You may remember an early period, and this does precede the time when Chairman Dunford took over, but we were striking parts of the energy infrastructure which were largely small scale, we thought, ISIL-operated refining facilities. That proved not to be very effective. But in the course of continuing to study this infrastructure, we have learned which parts directly affect them, and we are striking them, and we think that is going to have an effect on their revenue stream.

Let me ask Chairman Dunford.

General DUNFORD. Congressman, I think we can have it both ways. With the right intelligence and precision munitions, we can conduct destruction that will deny ISIL the use of these—of this infrastructure and yet leave it in a condition that at some point in the future it can be regenerated.

Mr. COFFMAN. Okay. Well, I would suggest to you that part of the strength of ISIS is their ability to govern these territories, and part of that is their ability to sustain the economy. And so a collapse of the economy, I think, hurts their ability to govern and further degrades them.

Let me ask a question about the Syrian refugee issue, and that last July, Turkey and the United States agreed in general terms on a plan that would provide a safe zone along a 60-mile strip of

northern Syria along the Turkish border. The United States would provide the air power component of that, and Turkish and possibly Syrian insurgent forces would work together in terms of ground security.

Where are we at with this? Because it would seem to me that a lot of the Syrian refugees would like to stay in Syria, and if we could create safe zones for them, that would obviously give them the ability to do that. Mr. Secretary.

Secretary CARTER. Thank you, Congressman. The idea of humanitarian zones, safe zones—by the way, no-fly zones—zones of various kinds are concepts that we have studied over time, and I will start with some of the considerations that have gone into that and why we have judged the costs of doing so greater than the benefits.

But let me start with the benefits of a safe zone. The benefit for a safe zone would be a place where people who wished to move there could move there and be protected. Now, one has to be careful about who might wish to move there, because people might want to live where they live, and also we wouldn't want to create a situation in which people were expelled from countries to which they had moved into a safe zone by countries that didn't want them. That is an undesirable outcome.

From a military point of view, and I will let General Dunford elaborate on this, one would need to anticipate that such a zone in Syria would be contested. It would certainly be contested by ISIL, who would want to prove that it wasn't safe, and possibly elements of the regime who would want to prove it is not safe if it is on Syrian territory. So it ends up being a substantial military operation.

The Turks, we have discussed things like that with the Turks. They have not offered a force of the size that would do that.

So let me stop there and ask General Dunford if he wants to elaborate on that. We have definitely considered those possibilities.

The CHAIRMAN. General, if you have a brief additional comment.

General DUNFORD. Nothing.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay.

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Chairman, I would like that for the record, please, if they—

[The information referred to was not available at the time of printing.]

The CHAIRMAN. Yeah. Well, it is a complex subject that would definitely take more time.

Mr. Moulton.

Mr. MOULTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And, gentlemen, I want to thank you for your service, your patriotism, and your wisdom, and appreciate all that you do for us in our national defense. I particularly feel confident to have a leader of marines at the helm with the new Chairman.

As a recent Iraq veteran, I am concerned about the fact that 5 years after we left we now have go to back, and in my new role on this committee I want to make sure that we get it right this time and after we do militarily defeat ISIS we don't find ourselves putting troops back into Iraq again for a third or fourth time.

So, Mr. Secretary, can you just tell us, what is the mission statement right now for the operation in Iraq?

Secretary CARTER. Well, Congressman Moulton, you are getting to the heart of our strategy, and this is not only the part that is essential, but also the part that makes it difficult to achieve, and that is that we want a victory over ISIL that sticks. And that means forces that participate in the recapture of territory and thereafter govern it in a decent manner so that we don't have a new wave of ISIL or ISIL coming back.

That is necessary in both Iraq and Syria. Those are two different cases. But that is why we pursue multisectarian governance, decentralized multisectarian governance in the state of Iraq and why we are trying to find a political solution to the Syrian civil war, because while it is important to defeat ISIL, it is important to defeat them in a lasting way. And that is a critical part of the strategy and the reason why we are so intent upon identifying and enabling capable and motivated local forces.

Mr. MOULTON. Chairman Dunford, can you just answer that question? What is General McFarland's mission statement?

General DUNFORD. To disrupt, to degrade, and to defeat ISIL.

Mr. MOULTON. And so my concern is that we haven't seen enough integration of the political side here, that we don't have a political plan that really underlies what our military mission is. And we have heard that from—the need for that from General Petraeus, General McChrystal, Ambassador Crocker, people on the left and the right who have testified before the committee and written about this problem in the press.

Can you speak a bit to that coordination, that planning, and your confidence that General McFarland and others on the ground can see a political end state that will stick and make all their military efforts worthwhile?

General DUNFORD. Yeah, Congressman, it is a great question. And, frankly, what you said a minute ago about not wanting to go back in 5 years is something that we all feel strongly about, which is why right now, as difficult as it would be, I do support the objective of a multisectarian unified Baghdad, because I see that as the best prospect for a stable, secure Iraq that would not be a sanctuary for violent extremism in the future. So as difficult as it is, I think that is a fair objective.

Clearly, there are many difficulties in pursuing that, not the least of which is the Iranian influence. But General McFarland is working very closely with Ambassador Jones—you have probably been over to visit them—to enable the Abadi government to stand up on its own, to provide the kind of support it needs to be independent, independent of influence from outside actors, particularly the malign influence of Iran.

So the overall objective to me is clear, but the path to getting there is difficult at best. But, again, I don't personally have a better idea than to enable the current Government of Iraq to be successful, to provide the kind of stability and security within which we won't see organizations like ISIL. And if at any point in the future, Congressman, I believe that that assumption that we can get there no longer obtains, then I would recommend a completely different campaign plan to get after ISIL inside of Iraq.

Mr. MOULTON. Are you receiving the support and involvement of the State Department necessary to achieve those political ends?

General DUNFORD. I believe we are. In fact, since I have been in the job now we have had two separate meetings with Department of Defense leadership and Secretary Kerry, and we meet about every 3 or 4 weeks on specific issues in the campaign.

I think it is fair to say that there was a recognition, Secretary Carter and Secretary Kerry recognized that we weren't as integrated across the government as we should be. And so about 2 months ago we began to meet on a periodic basis to attack specific issues. So far, the oil issue is actually an outcome of the first meeting that we had, and the most recent meeting was on foreign fighters, because that clearly requires a whole of government.

But, again, I would tell you, am I satisfied with the level of integration? No. We are working on that. Am I satisfied that it is going to be easy to get after the desired political end state in Iraq? No, I don't think so. I think it is going to be a hard slog. But the cardinal direction to me is clear.

Mr. MOULTON. General, I just have a couple seconds left. If we had retained that level of integration after 2009, would we be in the mess we are today in Iraq?

General DUNFORD. It is fair to say that conditions would be much different.

Mr. MOULTON. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Gibson.

Mr. GIBSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I appreciate the witnesses being here today. Thank you for your leadership.

I am going to be moving in a direction actually similar to Mr. Moulton. Let me just state up front, strategy, ends, ways and means, the administration has been under fire in the media to some degree because there is the claim that the strategy is the same. Well, ends may be similar. I am hoping that I get clarification that ways and means are changing, because if we are just doing the same thing, you know, I don't see how the end result is going to be any different.

The vantage point, I had multiple tours in Iraq myself, including the culminating one as the G3 of Multinational Division-North, so I am very keenly aware of the challenges in many regards, including the political-military challenges in Iraq. But let me say this, that I associate myself, I think, many of the opening remarks that you made, Mr. Secretary, I can attest to. You know, you talked about how there needs to be more Sunni inclusion in this state. I was very frustrated that in the period when Iraq was unraveling, Mr. Maliki certainly leading in a very corrupt and sectarian way, I didn't feel that we were using the leverage, the ways and means, I didn't think that we were using our leverage, I thought was fairly significant, given the fact that Iraq gets a vote, but we still had leverage I didn't think that we had used in the political-military sphere.

Now, my question has to do with this interagency process, which I recognize you are only a part of, but you are a major player in that process. So I would like to know about three different areas, Iraq first. What is different in terms of our leverage so that we can

bring it to bear, especially given this period where we have a new leader in Iraq where I think we can shape this relationship so that we will see some of the things that you laid out in your initial testimony, that it would actually come to fruition?

On Syria, I completely concur that a political transition is necessary. I am interested to know, we had Geneva I, Geneva II, what vehicles are we going to use, might we create, so that we can get some compellance on that score?

And then thirdly, worldwide, I, again, agree that the long-term issue is cutting off the ability to recruit and fundraise for this enemy, who really is fraudulent, says they advance the cause of Muslims. Nothing could be further from the truth. No one kills more Muslims than the Islamic State. So, again, in terms of ways and means, what is different in this strategy that we think that we are going to make progress?

Secretary CARTER. I will start, Congressman, then maybe if the Chairman wants to.

First of all, thank you for your own service. Appreciate that.

And to your next point about reconstituting our leverage in Iraq, that is precisely the point I was making earlier, and I think General McFarland is doing that. That is important both to have insight and to wield our political-military leverage in Baghdad. That is important.

And as to also agree with you, Prime Minister Abadi, as against—as opposed to Prime Minister Maliki, gives us more opportunities to do that. And so that is very important. And we do try to leverage that both in our military ways and in our political, our assistance, our marshalling of international assistance. So we do have leverage in Baghdad.

Mr. GIBSON. Mr. Secretary, if I could just for one second. I appreciate the comment. What I am looking at is are we using metrics? So that, you know, we are sitting side by side with them and being very clear in our communication that the funding that they are getting by the good will of the American taxpayer is at risk and they will lose it if they don't show progress on these metrics. That is the kind of leverage I am talking about.

Secretary CARTER. Well, that is the kind of leverage I am talking about too, and the answer is yes.

And let's start with Iraq. And then, Chairman.

General DUNFORD. Congressman, you asked about ways, so just some of the ways that are different in metrics. I will just answer the metrics one quickly. One example is the specific number of Sunni that we think need to be integrated and trained is a metric, and we are working that with the Iraqi Government. That is a recognized objective, and they know our support is contingent upon them meeting certain conditions.

In terms of ways, just to recapture some of the things we spoke about today, special operations forces in Syria is a different way. The expeditionary targeting force that will be deployed to Iraq is a different way. The foreign fighter initiative that has taken place over the past couple of weeks between the State Department, the Department of Defense, the CIA, the FBI, Homeland Security, and so forth is a different way to approach the foreign fighter challenge, and that is something that over the last 3 or 4 weeks where I have

seen a much more concerted effort and a will to start to work that issue, recognizing how important it is.

And probably the last one is the more comprehensive approach that we are taking to go after the revenue sources is another way that is different from the past.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Gallego.

Mr. GALLEGO. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Secretary Carter, I am trying to piece together what it actually means to have an expeditionary targeting force. You know, without going obviously into too much detail and violating OPSEC [operational security], what does this mean? Is this a constituted group of Iraqi soldiers? Are we talking special forces? What exactly is this? Tac [tactical] teams? This is kind of just thrown on us today, so I think we would like to know a little more what we can, what is this, what are you envisioning here?

Secretary CARTER. I will. I want to avoid some detail. But this is a force that is either American only, but more likely a mixed force. And to give you two examples, so this doesn't tell you anything about our plans going forward, but the two examples I gave were the rescue of the individuals who were about to be hostages, or prisoners really, who were about to be executed by ISIL. That was accomplished with Kurdish forces, a mixture of U.S. and Kurdish, and achieved its objectives, although it required the sacrifice of one heroic American to do that. Another example is the killing of Abu Sayyaf and the capture of his wife. So those are two examples that have been disclosed of exactly that kind of capability.

Now, imagine that on a standing basis, being able when occasions arise, and that really means intelligence fed, to conduct raids like that anywhere in the territory of Syria and Iraq. That is what we are talking about. And that is, as the Chairman says, a new way of achieving our objective there, one of several, and there will be more.

Mr. GALLEGO. Okay. And a follow-up question: What is the status on Ramadi and Mosul? We have been hearing about the Iraqis and Kurds surrounding and then for months working on surrounding and getting closer and closer to Ramadi, but still, you know, we are waiting for them to move.

And, you know, I worked with Iraqi soldiers too in the ING [Iraqi National Guard], and they are just as good as their leadership is. And to see them dilly-dallying to take these two major cities I think is very frustrating for many of us, including a lot in the public. So I would love to have a status of what is going on besides the usual they are working at it.

General DUNFORD. Congressman, I think I share your frustration, as do the commanders on the ground. They would tell you today, and this is something we get an update on every day, that over the past several weeks, I mean, real progress in terms of on the ground, real progress in kind of tightening the noose around Ramadi has taken place. But it has certainly not moved at the pace that we would want to see it move. And we are prepared, frankly, to provide more support to reinforce the success that the Iraqi Security Forces have in Ramadi, but they haven't moved as fast as we want it to move. And so, you know, the progress that has been

made over the last several weeks, while real, is not necessarily significant.

And Mosul is a future operation for Iraqi Security Forces. Right now the focus is on Ramadi, once Ramadi is taken. Recently, as the Secretary outlined, if you start thinking north of Baghdad, Baiji has fallen, the Peshmerga have been successful up in Sinjar area, so you are starting to close the noose. We have cut the lines of communication at Sinjar between Mosul and Raqqa.

So Mosul is a future operation. Probably—I wouldn't affix a date to it—but probably sometime months from now as opposed to weeks from now we would start to see operations in Mosul.

Mr. GALLEGO. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Scott.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, thank you for being here and thank you for your service to our country, and I certainly respect you and trust you. If you tell me something, I believe it is true. And I know there were some frustrations expressed earlier.

I guess as just kind of a simple thing, just a couple of weeks ago this committee was in classified briefings. The next day the Obama administration came out and announced what they considered a strategy of sending 60 troops, 60 special operators into Syria, but they did not have the opportunity to discuss that with Congress, because Congress was on vacation. That was an absolute lie from the administration. We had been in meetings the day before, and they withheld that from us.

And so when it comes to those types of issues, it would be helpful if other people in the administration would be honest with this committee. We take this job very seriously, just as I know you two do as well.

With regard to ISIS, ISIL, Daesh, whatever we want to call them, Secretary Carter, you made it very clear we are at war, Secretary Hagel said we are at war well over a year ago with them. The President disagreed with that assessment at that time. I do think he has come around to that now. But it seems that our military lines are conflicting with the goals of the Secretary of State, who wants a political solution. Political solutions can take decades, and I would respectfully submit that the longer we allow ISIS to grow while we are waiting on that political solution, the harder it is going to be to defeat them militarily.

So Secretary Kerry testified before this committee that they had been working for years to undermine Assad and to move him out. Has Secretary Kerry indicated to you who he would like to replace Assad, since they have been working to move him out?

Secretary CARTER. I don't want to speak for Secretary Kerry, but I do know that in those negotiations, dating back now years, the United States and Secretary Kerry, among others, has discussed with the other parties that have a stake and a voice how Syria would be governed post-Assad. That involves both the naming of names, and I can't repeat them for you, but most importantly that the structures of the state of Syria that have not been associated with the oppression of their people but that can be part of responsible governance in Syria going forward are preserved under new leadership. That is the key to the political transition.

And to your point about the difficulty of that, you bet it is difficult, because that is why a civil war has been raging there for several years. But in order to have an end to ISIL in the territory of Syria that sticks there needs to be that political transition. That is why the military and the political—

Mr. SCOTT. If I could interrupt. I am sorry. Well, so there is no plan for who would replace Assad, just that they want to replace Assad. But it would be just as complex, would you not agree, as finding leadership in Iraq that would be accepting of religious minorities?

Secretary CARTER. Again, I don't want to speak for Secretary Kerry, but these are exactly the kind of talks that he is having with the Russians, the Iranians, and others so that there can be something that replaces Assad that provides decent governance for the state of Syria, which, Lord knows, really deserves it.

Anything you want to add to that?

Mr. SCOTT. I think it would certainly be wise for us to at least engage in honest dialogue with the Russians. If there is going to be an effort to remove Assad, they certainly—that dialogue should be occurring at the highest levels among our countries.

Secretary CARTER. It is.

Mr. SCOTT. I want to switch gears for just a second and talk about the recapitalization program. Obviously we are involved in a tremendous number of countries, tremendous need for intel, the recapitalizations and the importance of the JSTARS [Joint Surveillance and Target Attack Radar System]. I just wanted to mention that because of the—if we wait much longer on that, Mr. Secretary, we are going to end up with a gap in that capability because of the major depot maintenance that the current units are going to be going through. So I know our combatant commanders need the JSTARS, and I just—I hope that we can move forward with that recapitalization sooner rather than later.

Secretary CARTER. It is an important issue in our budget discussions going on right now looking forward to the submission of our fiscal year 2017 budget, absolutely.

Mr. SCOTT. Well, thank both for being here, and I respect both of you. I would ask that you use your credibility with the administration and encourage them to be more open and honest with us.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. O'Rourke.

Mr. O'ROURKE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, to go back to some comments and questions that you answered earlier, if we are in fact at war how will we know when we have won?

Secretary CARTER. The destruction of ISIL entails their expulsion from any territory they claim to occupy and their destruction elsewhere around the world, including their various branches and so forth. That is what is needed.

Mr. O'ROURKE. So as long as ISIL is in Iraq or Syria or Libya or Afghanistan or anywhere else in the world, we will still be at war?

Secretary CARTER. I believe that in today's world these threats are difficult to confine to one place, and that is the reason why we have to go there and why we have to go to Syria and Iraq and strike at it and strike at other places where it is. It is in the nature

of today's world, mobility among peoples, you see that underlying this, and above all, mobility of information, which can radicalize people who have never gone anywhere except on their keyboard.

Mr. O'ROURKE. I think it is important if we are at war to define in the clearest, most precise terms what victory looks like. With 14 years of Afghanistan in mind, with the fact that we have been in Iraq off and on since 2003, or you can take it all the way back to 1991, to keep us out of perpetual war, I think it is really important that we explicitly define the objectives and the outcomes for which we are fighting. I think we owe that to our service members. I think we owe that to ourselves. And I would hope that we could come up with a better definition of victory and success.

I appreciate that you acknowledge the importance of political and diplomatic components of a solution in Iraq or in Syria, but I am interested in your response to a question asked by Mr. Gibson in terms of conditionality. There is so much in those countries, we will just use Iraq as an example, that we do not control and cannot control and will not be able to predict when it comes to the political outcomes. And so when we say that we are going to set conditions on our aid, when we say that we are going to set conditions on our military presence, do we really mean that? Is that a viable threat? Will we really walk away from Iraq if the government there doesn't meet those conditions?

And I think that is an important question, because if, in fact, we will not, then I wonder what the motivation is for the Iraqi Government to take the very important and very difficult steps to integrate these other minorities, whether they be Kurds or whether they be Sunnis, into a functioning government, decentralized or otherwise.

Secretary CARTER. First of all, with respect to the first part of your question, your point exactly gets back to the military and political going together, because in addition to the—the only end state that involves the lasting defeat of ISIL is one in which there—where there is local governance that cannot be once again supplanted by ISIL. That is why the political and the military go together, that is at the heart of the strategy, and that is why enabling capable and motivated forces who can make victory stick is the other part of the definition of victory critical to the strategy.

With respect to the leverage, I will start there in Baghdad. But the leverage involves offering to do more for those who are pursuing the same objectives and withholding our support from those who are taking a different path or not going down the path they are supposed to. So we find alternatives, we find people who will act if the people that we are dealing with are not capable of that, because we have to act, and we will find such forces that are capable.

Mr. O'ROURKE. Very quickly for General Dunford, what does ISIS want us to do and how does that factor into our strategy in confronting them?

General DUNFORD. ISIS wants us to be impetuous right now as opposed to be aggressive, and they would love nothing more than a large presence of U.S. forces on the ground in Iraq and Syria so they could have a call to jihad.

Mr. O'ROURKE. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.
Mr. Nugent.

Mr. NUGENT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I want to thank Secretary Carter and General Dunford for being here today.

You obviously have a tremendous task, from everything you have said, the diversity of what you are trying to accomplish. I think what you heard from members here is that we have some concern about whether or not we have the right strategy in total.

But, needless to say, Russia just added a different dimension by putting forward their advanced surface-to-air missiles. How does that change, if we are talking about a no-fly zone along Turkey, how would that change that dimension for us? Do they gain a higher ground on us at this point?

Secretary CARTER. Congressman, in view of the fact that the Chairman just spoke yesterday to his counterpart in Russia, let me ask him to answer that.

General DUNFORD. Congressman, under the current conditions, we have a memorandum of understanding with the Russians that ensures our safety of flight. And, again, we are not complacent, we don't take it for granted, but it has been in place now for over a month, and the Russians have complied with it. And as I mentioned earlier, I spoke to my counterpart as recently as yesterday to ensure that the Russians reaffirmed their commitment to the memorandum of understanding.

But you are asking a hypothetical scenario, for example, were we to have a no-fly zone and were we then by having a no-fly zone to have declared war against Syria, because that is what we would be doing if we declared a no-fly zone, particularly with accompanying ground forces to protect refugees, as has been suggested, then we could expect that that would complicate then the situation inside of Syria.

That is a hypothetical. I mean, today I am confident that we can prosecute the campaign against ISIL. If we were at war against Syria and Russia was supporting Syria, the presence of the SA-21 clearly complicates the situation. It doesn't mean we can't deal with it, but it complicates it.

Mr. NUGENT. I appreciate that.

Going back on November 7 at the Reagan National Defense Forum, former Under Secretary of Defense [for] Policy Michèle Flournoy argued that putting cards in our hand, in that Syria, so the outcome of any political negotiations support U.S. interests. Condoleezza Rice and Robert Gates argued in The Wall Street Journal that we must create a better military balance of power on the ground if we are to seek a political solution acceptable to us and our allies.

And, General Dunford, you testified in front of SASC [Senate Armed Services Committee] on October of 2015 and you said, "I think that the balance of forces right now are in Assad's advantage." So my question is, does that still hold true, and if that is so, what steps should we take to change that advantage into our advantage?

General DUNFORD. When I testified in October, Congressman, we didn't have any capable ground forces to prosecute the campaign inside of Syria. Since that time, we have developed a relationship with the Syrian Arab Coalition. When I say we didn't have any effective ground forces, the YPG[†] was there. We provided some limited support to them. We had other small number of forces that had gone through our original train and equip. But we didn't have a credible force that could actually conduct offensive operations.

Since that time, we do have now a force that has conducted successful offensive operations, most recently in a location called Al-Hawl. That is an organization, the Syrian Arab Coalition, of some 3- to 5,000, but part of a broader relationship with the YPG that probably runs north of 15- or 20,000 forces. So we have sufficient forces to conduct offensive operations in Syria.

Mr. NUGENT. So does that change the balance, then, that you had referred to?

General DUNFORD. It changes the balance. It changes the balance. But I would not say today that we have—you know, the correlation of forces is in anything other than Assad's favor in terms of protecting what he holds dear, which is the west part of the country, in his regime. He has the capability to do that with the support provided by Russia and Iran.

Mr. NUGENT. As we move forward, and I think most of us are concerned, and I am, particularly as a father of three service members, is, you know, are we going to be in the same position, and I think you have heard this echoed before, if we pull out of Iraq again? You know, are we going to be in the same position that we find ourselves today or are we going to actually keep a residual force in Iraq to assist with the train and equip mission of the Iraqi forces? Do we see us doing that, keeping additional forces in Iraq, if we defeat ISIL?

General DUNFORD. Congressman, all I can talk to you about is the recommendations that I would make at the time. And certainly I think we have enduring interests in the region, we have an enduring interest in the stability and security of Iraq, and any recommendations I make subsequent to the defeat of ISIL would reflect those interests.

Mr. NUGENT. I appreciate that, General. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. I think we have five more members. Hopefully not everybody will take 5 minutes. Are you all okay with that? Mr. Secretary, does that work with your—

Secretary CARTER. Excuse me. Let me just check, because I know I am traveling somewhere and have a—I am sorry, Mr. Chairman. It is just that there is another thing I need to do, a flight I need to take.

The CHAIRMAN. No, I know. That is why I am asking.

Secretary CARTER. But let's keep going, and if I need to leave, Chairman Dunford just indicated he would be willing to stay a little bit longer.

The CHAIRMAN. Man, that is taking one for the team.

Ms. Gabbard.

[†]The YPG, People's Protection Units, is a primarily ethnic Kurdish militia force based in northern Syria.

Ms. GABBARD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you both for your service.

Since our policy to overthrow the Syrian government of Assad has brought us really into a potential direct head-to-head military conflict with Russia, I have some important questions along this line. Approximately how many nuclear warheads does Russia have aimed at the U.S. and the U.S. have aimed at Russia?

Secretary CARTER. Congresswoman, I will get you those precise numbers as best we know them.

[The information referred to was not available at the time of printing.]

Secretary CARTER. Let me just summarize it by the fact that we have, I am confident, a strong, safe, secure, and reliable deterrent, but it is also true that Russia, like the Soviet Union that precedes it, has a massive nuclear arsenal.

Ms. GABBARD. Right. And it would be accurate to say that both of our countries have the capacity to launch these nuclear weapons within minutes?

Secretary CARTER. We do.

Ms. GABBARD. I have seen pictures, films, and images from Nagasaki and Hiroshima, I know you have as well. And I presume you would agree with me that nuclear war would be devastating to the American people. The amount of suffering that it would cause and devastation to our families, our children, our communities, our planet, our future generations is difficult to imagine. So I am wondering if there has been an assessment on how many lives would be lost and the damage that would be done if this nuclear war between our two countries were to occur?

Secretary CARTER. Congresswoman, I have been doing this for a long time, including during the Cold War, and working on nuclear weapons since the beginning of my career. And to answer your question, there have been estimates made right along, when there was a Soviet Union, then a Russia, and it is a very simple story. It is, as you say, nuclear war would be an absolutely unprecedented and catastrophic—result in catastrophic destruction. That is why deterrence is so important. That is why prudence in the field of nuclear matters by leaders all over the world is so essential.

Ms. GABBARD. So the fact that we now have our F-15s patrolling the Turkey-Syria border with a primary air-to-air combat operation, there is no air-to-air combat against ISIS, they don't have any air assets, so I can only presume that the purpose of these planes would be to target Russian planes. Is that accurate?

Secretary CARTER. Congresswoman, let me answer your larger—the point you began with, which is we have a different view, a very different view from Russia about what would be constructive for them to do in Syria. We have that disagreement. We can't align ourselves with what they are doing. We are opposing and want them to change what they are doing in Syria.

That is not the same as the United States and Russia clashing. I think that the Chairman and his counterpart in Russia just talked yesterday about making sure that we didn't by accident have any incident involving U.S. and Russian forces.

So we have a sharp disagreement there, but that is not the same as blundering into an armed situation with one another—

Ms. GABBARD. But that sharp disagreement—I only have a minute here—that sharp disagreement with two diametrically opposed objectives—one, the U.S. seeking to overthrow the Syrian government of Assad, Russia seeking to uphold the Syrian government of Assad—creates that potential, that strong potential and strong likelihood for that head-to-head combat or that head-to-head military conflict. And Russia’s installation of their anti-aircraft missile defense system increases that possibility of, whether it is intentional or even an accidental event, where one side may shoot down the other side’s plane. And that is really where the potential is for this devastating nuclear war, for something that could blow up into something much larger.

Secretary CARTER. I have to correct something, Congresswoman, that you said, which is that I would characterize Russia’s perspective differently. And, by the way, what they say and what they do are two different things. What they said they were going to do was fight ISIL and pursue a political transition and not support Assad endlessly, but instead try to pursue a political solution. What they have done militarily has had the effect of supporting Assad, no question about it, and they haven’t gone after ISIL, they have gone after moderate—that is our source of disagreement.

We are having that disagreement and trying to get them to come around, that is what Secretary Kerry is doing, to a more reasonable and constructive position, but at the same time, as the Chairman’s efforts indicate, we are, and the Russians agree with this, intent upon avoiding an accidental situation in the air over Syria.

The CHAIRMAN. Dr. Wenstrup.

Dr. WENSTRUP. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I thank you gentlemen both, not only you, but your families, for the sacrifices you make to help defend this country, and it is appreciated.

Mr. Secretary, you said that, you know, we will win, we will defeat ISIS. You said that here today. So I want to ask General Dunford, in that strategy, what is our center of gravity really here in this fight to defeat ISIL?

General DUNFORD. The center of gravity for ISIL?

Dr. WENSTRUP. Yes, sir.

General DUNFORD. The center of gravity for ISIL, in my assessment, is the existence of a caliphate. Critical capabilities include their narrative and also the manpower that they have. So those are the three primary sources of strength, if you will, and the existence of the caliphate is there.

But to define defeat, what I would say, because there was discussion earlier, what we want to ensure is that ISIL does not have the capability to conduct external operations that present a risk to the American people or our allies.

Dr. WENSTRUP. So you feel we are going after those factors that make up the center of gravity?

General DUNFORD. We are going after their critical capabilities to include their center of gravity, which is, again, the existence of the caliphate, the fact that they have a narrative. And when I talked about foreign fighters, that is a piece of this manpower issue, meaning we are keeping them from having the manpower necessary to fight.

Dr. WENSTRUP. I understand. We talked about the coalition, and it was mentioned before we have, like, 60-some nations as part of the coalition. France has been part of this coalition, but obviously they have stepped up. Sixty nations, I imagine some of them may be just contributing a box of pencils or something, because we really don't hear much of what they are doing.

Do you feel like we are doing enough diplomatically to get these 60 nations fully engaged in this battle of good versus evil that we are engaged in, because we would really like to see these other nations engaged, especially our Middle Eastern allies, if we are going to see victory in this.

Secretary CARTER. We need more contributions from the members of the coalition. You are right, it is good to have political support. It is good to have such widespread political support. Just about everybody in the world recognizes that ISIL is an evil thing and ultimately a threat to them.

But they are not backing up, as we are trying to back up, our words with deeds. And we are in there swinging. And we need more who are in there swinging with us. And that, in my mind, applies particularly to those countries that reside in the region itself. We are a long way away, and we are concerned, and we are doing our part, and they are right there.

Dr. WENSTRUP. I know it is not totally your lane for that component of the fight, but I do think that we need to put more pressure on State Department, or whoever, to gain more support physically from our allies.

A quick question, if I can, General Dunford. As far as congressional notifications of Guantanamo detainee transfer decisions, have you or General Dempsey before you not concurred with any of those?

General DUNFORD. I have not. I have only had two cases since I have been the Chairman, and I concurred with both.

Dr. WENSTRUP. Did General Dempsey, do you know?

General DUNFORD. I believe that he may have. I wasn't there, Congressman.

Dr. WENSTRUP. So I would have to ask him.

And we have been waiting for a plan on that. Does the delay in the plan have anything to do with the cost of closing Guantanamo, of transferring patients to the United States? Do you know if Office of Management and Budget [OMB] have had anything to say on that, what their estimates have been?

Secretary CARTER. Well, cost is one of the considerations in the proposal. Just to relate the whole story, we are working to put together a proposal which we would submit to the Congress.

Dr. WENSTRUP. Has OMB done one at this point? Have they done one at all?

Secretary CARTER. They have worked with us on the cost estimates.

Dr. WENSTRUP. What did they come up with?

Secretary CARTER. Well, there is a range depending upon where the permanent detention facility would be and what its nature would be. So there is a lot of work needs to be done on that.

Dr. WENSTRUP. Some idea? They did one.

Secretary CARTER. Well, the objective is to—I mean, let me just start from the beginning, which is that you talked about transfers. But there are people in the Guantanamo Bay detention facility who will not be transferred. It is not safe to transfer them. And those are the people that we are talking about detaining under Law of War detention. Now, we would like to do it in a way that costs less and takes fewer of our people to—

Dr. WENSTRUP. I guess what I am asking, I am trying to determine—

Secretary CARTER. And OMB has been helping with that, yes.

Dr. WENSTRUP [continuing]. Trying to determine what the cost is of holding them in the U.S. versus at Guantanamo.

Secretary CARTER. Exactly.

Dr. WENSTRUP. I believe they have done a study. I was curious what they—

Secretary CARTER. Exactly they have, and that will be part of the proposal that is brought to you.

Dr. WENSTRUP. Thank you. I yield back. I appreciate it.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Byrne.

Mr. BYRNE. Thank you very much, gentlemen, for your patience. I know you have sat through here for a lot of questions.

Mr. Secretary, you said in your comments that President Obama is committed to doing what it takes as opportunities arise, as we see what works, as the enemy adapts, until ISIL is defeated in a lasting way.

The President is the only Commander in Chief that we have got. We can't be the Commander in Chief. Under our constitutional form of government, you have to report to him. But this President has said that ISIL is a JV [junior varsity] team. The day before the Paris attacks, he said they were contained.

You are an honorable man. You believe every word that you are telling us, I understand that. When I go to the Middle East, when others of us go to the Middle East and talk to leaders there, they say there is a lack of American leadership and that is a problem. I don't think that lets them off the hook, by the way. I think that they have a role that they should play and they need to step up.

But you made those comments, and to people like me who doubt the President is committed—and I have a lot of constituents that doubt it, I think some of our friends in the Middle East doubt it—what would you say to me and to people like me that have doubts that he truly is committed?

Secretary CARTER. Congressman, the only thing I can say is to repeat what I have said before, which is President Obama has given his approval to all of the acceleration steps that I described to you today, many of which were devised by, let alone recommended by, the Chairman, CENTCOM, our military leadership. So every time we have turned over a new way of attacking ISIL, we have gotten the President's approval. That I can tell you.

And to your point about American leadership, I agree with you. I think American leadership is critical. On the other hand, we need followers too, and we need to insist upon that. But American leadership is still important, very important. It is critical. We not only have the finest fighting force the world has ever known, but we have values that people find attractive. That is why we have

so many friends and allies. But we need them to do more alongside our excellent men and women who are in the fight.

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Secretary, let me ask you another question. You were talking in response to some other questions about a possible new AUMF. When your predecessor Secretary Hagel was here we had a discussion then, and he had his lawyer with him. So this may be a question that you want to refer to your lawyer.

I have looked at the two AUMFs that are out there. I am not a military person, but I am a lawyer, so I think I can look at them and understand them. But I don't think you have to be a lawyer to understand them. Now that you are telling us that we are sending special operations forces into Syria, can you tell me where in any one of those AUMFs there is the authorization to do that?

Secretary CARTER. Well, I am not a lawyer, but I read them too, so I can tell you the commonsense meaning of the provision and the only one that I am familiar with, which is the one the President submitted. And I was asked earlier one of the reasons why I thought it was—it was important to me that it allow what I thought was essential to defeat ISIL.

Mr. BYRNE. But that is the one we haven't adopted. I am talking about the ones that have actually been passed by Congress and signed by the President. Do they give you that authorization?

Secretary CARTER. I apologize. I can't speak to them. I don't know all of the other ones. I have studied the one that the President submitted.

Mr. BYRNE. Could you get your lawyers to respond to me on that? I am not asking you to give a legal opinion.

Secretary CARTER. Yeah.

Mr. BYRNE. But they have got some basis for thinking that. And I would say that the plain wording of those two AUMFs that have been passed by Congress and signed by the President don't. Now, I would like to give you that authorization. I want to make sure we give you whatever you need to do that.

Secretary CARTER. Happy to get back to you.

[The information referred to was not available at the time of printing.]

Mr. BYRNE. The last question I have is about—and I completely agree with you. We need local forces, we need help from the region, and we shouldn't let anybody off the hook. Are you getting the sort of support that you feel—are we getting the support we should be getting from Turkey?

Secretary CARTER. I have been urging, actually since I came into this job, Turkey to do more. We need Turkey to do more. We need it to do more within its own territory so it controls its border, which it has not done effectively since ISIL first arose; that it goes after the facilitators, the enablers, and the other tentacles of ISIL that intrude into Turkey.

We would like them to operate more both in the air and on the ground. Most of their air operations are not directed at ISIL. They are directed at the PKK [Kurdistan Workers' Party], which we understand their concern about. It is a terrorist organization within their borders. But we would like to see them do more against ISIL.

Now, I know the President has spoken to President Erdogan about this as recently as in the last few days. So it is very much at the top of our list, and we would like them to do more.

Their geography, I mean, they are right there next to Iraq and Syria, so they can be a potent source of enablement for us. At the same time, if they are not doing enough, it is a serious matter. And that is why the President is talking to President Erdogan.

Mr. BYRNE. Well, my time is up. But I want to thank you, both of you, for your service and for being here today.

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. McSally.

Ms. MCSALLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, gentlemen, for your service and your time today.

Secretary Carter, we talked in June about, as an airman, my concerns about not using air power for all that it brings to the fight; my concern about doing that in a weak way. We sort of disagreed on that. But it seems like there has been a slight change since then. You know, ISIS' strength is that they are a state; their weakness is also that they are a state, as you mentioned General Dunford.

I feel like part of our challenge is we are stuck in a counterinsurgency mindset, and although we need to have a force on the ground afterwards, we need to take them out as a state, not as a counterinsurgency.

And the discussion of how you have been studying the oil infrastructure, I mean, this reminds me of air campaign planning I went through when I was a young officer. You identify their center of gravity, their critical capabilities or vulnerabilities, and then you unleash American air power in a way that overwhelmingly goes after them to defeat them in a way that takes away their capability.

So I don't understand why that study wasn't done—it was done this spring—why that wasn't done 17 months ago when they declared a caliphate, or 15 months ago, or 10 months ago. I mean, we are just now realizing oil trucks are moving, and I mean, it has been reported since the very beginning. It has been a million dollars a day funding their terrorism. By my math, that is about half a billion dollars that potentially they have been put into their coffers to fund and export terror.

So I am deeply concerned about the lack of using American air power for all it brings to the fight. We have averaged about 15 strikes a day. We have heard about cumbersome approval processes, unnecessarily high rules of engagement where, you know, pilots are going home and not hitting legitimate targets because we want no civilian casualties, as opposed to the Law of Armed Conflict, which is very clear, to hit those targets, hit them hard, and destroy and defeat them where they are.

The concern and the problem is, I hear you are saying something has changed, but you mentioned a snowball effect. The snowball has been going in their direction for the last 17 months. I serve on Homeland Security as well. We have got 30,000 foreign fighters. We have got 200,000 pro-ISIS social media posts a day. We have 900 cases in all 50 States right now for homegrown extremists.

It looks like they are taking on American air power and they are winning, and that has added to their propaganda, it has added to

their metastasizing, it has added to the sort of romantic approach of recruiting people to join the fight. The only thing worse than not engaging is to engage weekly, and I really feel weekly—w-e-e-k—and I really feel that we have added to that by being weak on the military side.

It sounds like you are saying things have changed, but in addition to the changes you mentioned, are we changing the cumbersome approval process? Can we feel a confidence that we are going to unleash and unshackle American air power and not just be in this limited sort of impotent mindset?

General DUNFORD. Congresswoman, I think to the extent that you are asking are we going to unleash air power, we will. In terms of cumbersome approval processes, where we find those kinds of things, I can tell you and I can assure you, you know, I will help personally to try to cut through it. That is not what I am getting now.

With regard to collateral damage, though, I don't think in this fight we should apologize for bringing our values to the fight in terms of collateral damage. So while we should absolutely be aggressive in attacking the ISIL, taking down their command and control, taking away their resources, taking away their fighters, at the same time I don't think we should be killing innocent people, which would merely feed the narrative of ISIL at the same time.

So I think the strategic approach is exactly right, which is we go after all of those targets, but we do it in a uniquely American way, bringing our values to the fight with us. And I am not saying you are suggesting we would do otherwise.

Ms. MCSALLY. Of course, you always minimize collateral damage. I mean, that is what we do.

General DUNFORD. So I think today we have the right balance between collateral damage and destruction to the enemy. And I will tell you, our threshold for collateral damage increases with the value of the target we are going after. And, you know, I can assure you, if we are going after Baghdadi's command and control network or some other critical node, then we will go after it as aggressively as necessary to make sure we are succeeding in the campaign.

Ms. MCSALLY. But it was also reported that we weren't striking the oil trucks because you didn't want to hurt the truck drivers and that we actually dropped leaflets on them to warn them before we hit them. If that is true, I just want to be clear, I mean, I have been involved in the targeting process at all levels, if you are driving a truck for a terrorist organization that is fueling them, you are a combatant. Can you just clarify what that is all about?

General DUNFORD. Well, I think, Congresswoman, we did do that. We did because we assessed that the majority of the truck drivers were, in fact, just people trying to make a living in the region, a little bit different than an enemy combatant from our perspective.

Ms. MCSALLY. So you don't consider them combatants?

General DUNFORD. We don't. What we are able to do is separate them from their vehicles and destroy the trucks, which is what we wanted to do.

Ms. MCSALLY. Okay. Last question is, is it your assessment, General Dunford, that the A-10 has been critical to the fight when

it comes to these strikes, as reported with the AC-130, especially on the trucks, and also their combat search and rescue capability? Is it your assessment they are critical to this fight?

General DUNFORD. The A-10 has been a valuable platform in the fight.

Ms. MCSALLY. Great. And do you consider this fight is going to go on for a while?

General DUNFORD. I do.

Ms. MCSALLY. Great. Thank you.

I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Bridenstine.

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary, and thank you, General, for being here.

I want to echo, I have a lot of the same concerns as my colleague, Ms. McSally, and certainly I was involved in the war in Iraq from the beginning, Operation Enduring Freedom. That was, of course, in Afghanistan, but then Southern Watch, and then Iraqi Freedom, "shock and awe," all of those things.

I would like to follow up on this question about the drivers of these trucks and the leaflets that were dropped. I presume the leaflets told them how to surrender. Is that correct? Because those were the leaflets that we dropped in Iraq the first time around.

General DUNFORD. The leaflets—first of all, we did a couple of things. We dropped ordnance in the front of a column, in the back of a column, and then dropped leaflets that said if you don't get away from your vehicle, basically you are going to be bombed. And so that was the message that was sent.

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. So there was no effort to capture any of the truck drivers or get any kind of intelligence from their operation?

General DUNFORD. We don't have any forces on the ground that could capture those truck drivers.

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. Is that a problem?

General DUNFORD. Well, if you want to capture—Congressman, I am not trying to be flippant, but if you want to capture them, you would have to have someone on the ground to capture them and we don't.

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. Is it a problem that we don't have somebody on the ground to capture them?

General DUNFORD. The lack of human intelligence inhibits our campaign, for sure.

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. I can image. So is that going to be part of what we do going forward, is try to—let me ask this, because I am just ignorant on this issue. How many ISIS combatants have we captured?

General DUNFORD. I would have to get back to you, Congressman. I don't know.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 79.]

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. Is that not a very critical part of trying to win this war.

General DUNFORD. It is, but we don't—I don't have a number.

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. Can you give me an estimate? Is it a couple of hundred, a couple thousand?

General DUNFORD. It is probably a handful.

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. One or two?

General DUNFORD. It is a handful.

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. A handful? Like five or less?

General DUNFORD. Again, I would like to get back to you, Congressman, to talk about that. We have not been involved in combat operations, we, the United States. So we haven't been in a position to capture ISIL.

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. Now, on these—

Secretary CARTER. Can I just add something?

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. Sure.

Secretary CARTER. That one of the reasons for the expeditionary targeting force is precisely to gain intelligence, and one of the ways you do that is by capturing people. So I can tell you one person we captured, and that was the wife of Abu Sayyaf.

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. Where is she now?

Secretary CARTER. She is being detained.

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. By whom?

Secretary CARTER. By the Government of Iraq.

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. Of course. So what kind of intelligence are we getting now from that?

Secretary CARTER. We got considerable intelligence. I don't want to go into it any further.

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. And does that not demonstrate the value of human intelligence?

Secretary CARTER. Of course it does.

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. So is this something that we are going to change? Are we going to start capturing these folks?

Secretary CARTER. I just said one of the reasons for the expeditionary targeting force is precisely that, that is what I have said earlier, and I think it will be a very valuable source of intelligence. And as the Chairman said, that is critical to effective employment of air power, to the effective identification of forces that we can enable on the ground—

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. Let me ask you this. How long were these trucks—how long did we know about them before we destroyed them? Because The New York Times was reporting—actually it was the Treasury Department, I believe, that reported \$10 million a month to fund ISIS through the smuggling of oil operations. Is that correct? \$10 million a month. How long did we know that these trucks were being used to fund ISIS before we did anything about it?

Secretary CARTER. Well, we knew there were oil trucks in Iraq from the beginning, of course. What we could not do is distinguish those that were being directly used to finance ISIL. We now have the intelligence to do that, which allows us to effectively isolate them and target them. That is what we are trying to do. We are using the tactic, and we may change our tactics. We are using the tactics—

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. Let me ask you, the truck drivers that ran away, Mr. Secretary, the truck drivers that ran away because we told them to run away, where are they now? Are they now farmers in Syria? I am just asking the question because this is critically im-

portant to trying to win a war, which you are telling us we are trying to do.

Secretary CARTER. I am sorry. I am not understanding why—
Mr. BRIDENSTINE. The truck drivers.

Secretary CARTER [continuing]. Knowing what the truck drivers are doing now is essential to knowing how to win the war.

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. So the idea is that you believe these people did not know that they were involved in funding ISIS? That is what you are telling us?

Secretary CARTER. Well, they probably—if they didn't realize it before—

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. So they knew they were funding ISIS and they are not enemy combatants? Can you explain that?

Secretary CARTER. I think the Chairman already did. These were people who were making a buck, and so we gave them every opportunity to survive the strike.

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. Mr. Chairman, I am astonished. We need to learn more about why we didn't destroy these trucks a long time ago, where these enemy combatants are now, why we are dropping leaflets telling them to run away and not surrender. It is quite frankly astonishing if we are trying to win.

The CHAIRMAN. I think that is a vote.

Mr. Zinke, do you have a question right quick?

Mr. ZINKE. I do.

And thank you, gentlemen, for your service and dedication. It is not easy.

I guess I am somewhat concerned about, in my experience, about but putting forces on the ground, particularly the SF50 [50 special forces operators]. And my concern is, is that whenever we put forces on the ground we want to make sure that we have adequate support for them, particularly medevac [medical evacuation]. My experience with northern Iraq, you can't rely on air all the time. So a ground QRF [quick reaction force] with some armor would be a good idea.

Do you concur that having—I guess, General, for you—that having a sufficient force package would incorporate an in-theater, in-country medevac, QRF, and force security?

General DUNFORD. Congressman, I can assure you that the kind of package that you are referring to, that you are personally familiar with, is and will be in place.

Mr. ZINKE. Thank you.

And I guess the last question is, I look at the threats. We have ISIS, Hezbollah, and Al Qaeda and North Korea and an emerging China and Russia. Mr. Secretary, where would you rack and stack global warming with that list?

Secretary CARTER. Well, I think when you think about strategy, you need to think about overall timeframes and overall of geography. And so you mentioned China, you mentioned Russia, they haven't been the subject of today's hearing. They were—I had the privilege of speaking before the Simi Valley conference that Chairman Thornberry organized, and my focus there was China and Russia, because we can't forget—and nuclear deterrence has been raised. There are lots of different aspects to this world. And one does need to think in the long term.

And I think you asked about global warming or climate change as in a military threat. It does change some of our military conditions. We try to be a Department that looks ahead.

Mr. ZINKE. But would you agree—

Secretary CARTER. So we are looking ahead at the Arctic and that kind of thing and how it will change our operations.

Mr. ZINKE. But would you agree that the imminent threat, the imminent threat, the 5-year, 5-meter threat, the most damaging threat facing us today would be ISIS, Al Qaeda, Hezbollah, and the non-nation-state terrorist activities?

Secretary CARTER. That is certainly the one that is the most imminent. They are trying to attack us right now. There is nothing distant in time or probability about it.

Mr. ZINKE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you gentlemen for your service. And I greatly appreciate it. And God bless.

The CHAIRMAN. Much more we could talk about, but you all have been very patient. Thank you for answering our questions. And I am just going to warn you, next time you all come up here we are probably going to—I am going to suggest to Mr. Smith we start on the bottom two rows with our questions, because I think some of the best questions come from our more junior members.

With that, the hearing stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 1:22 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

DECEMBER 1, 2015

PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

DECEMBER 1, 2015

AS PREPARED – EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY

**SECRETARY OF DEFENSE ASH CARTER
OPENING STATEMENT ON COUNTER-ISIL
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2015**

Chairman Thornberry, Ranking Member Smith, Members of the Committee: Thank you for inviting me to discuss with Chairman Joe Dunford, the U.S. counter-ISIL military campaign.

ISIL's attacks in Paris, like those it has perpetrated elsewhere, were barbaric...they were an assault on the civilization we defend. ISIL requires, and it will receive, a lasting defeat. The President had directed us to intensify and adapt the military campaign before the Paris attacks, and we will describe those new actions today. We continue to accelerate our efforts in the wake of Paris, and we are urging others to do the same, because those attacks further highlighted the stakes that not just the United States but the world has in this fight.

As I've discussed with you in the past, the United States' strategy requires leveraging all the components of our nation's might to destroy ISIL. Every instrument of national power – diplomatic, military, law enforcement, homeland security, economic, informational – is engaged and every national security agency is contributing to one of the strategy's nine lines of effort. We're defending the homeland, acting to defeat ISIL in its core in Syria and Iraq, and taking appropriate action wherever else in the world this evil organization metastasizes.

The Defense Department contributes to nearly all the lines of effort, but protecting the homeland is among our highest priorities. We're adapting to meet ISIL's threat, including assuring the security of Defense Department installations and personnel. And, just last week, I hosted some of the top national security and law enforcement leaders at the Pentagon to discuss efforts to cut off the flow of foreign fighters.

We at the Defense Department, of course, are also centrally responsible for the military campaign, which will be the focus of my statement to this Committee. Through our own action and those of our coalition partners, the military campaign will destroy ISIL's leadership and forces, and deprive it of resources, safe haven, and mobility – all while we seek to identify and then enable capable, motivated local forces on the ground to expel ISIL from its territory, hold and govern it, and ensure that victory sticks.

That's the right strategic approach for two principal reasons. First, it emphasizes the necessity of capable, motivated local forces – as the only force that can assure a lasting victory. Such forces are hard to find, but they do exist. And we can enable them – and we are constantly looking for effective ways to expand doing so – but we cannot substitute for them.

And, second, this strategic approach sets the conditions for a political solution to the civil war in Syria and to crippling sectarianism in Iraq, which are the only durable ways to prevent a future ISIL-like organization from re-emerging. And that's why the diplomatic work, led by Secretary Kerry and the State Department, is the first and most critical line of effort in our strategy.

We are gathering momentum on the battlefield in Syria and Iraq. And today, I will describe how the U.S. is continuing to accelerate the military campaign against ISIL, and what more we're asking of our global partners. While I cannot describe everything in this unclassified setting, I do want to take a few extra minutes this morning to give as much detail as possible about the new things we are doing to accelerate ISIL's defeat.

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We're at war. We are using the might of the finest fighting force the world has ever known. Tens of thousands of U.S. personnel are operating in the broader Middle East region, and more are on the way. We have some of our most advanced air and naval forces attacking ISIL. U.S. troops are advising and assisting ground operations in Syria and Iraq. I will describe briefly some of these efforts and how we can accelerate them.

In northern Syria, local forces, with our support, are fighting along the Ma'ra line, engaging ISIL in the last remaining pocket of access into Turkey. Meanwhile, a coalition of Syrian Arabs that we helped equip in Northeastern Syria – with statutory authorizations and funds provided by Congress – are fighting alongside Kurdish forces and have recaptured important terrain, most recently pushing ISIL out of the town of Al Hawl and at least 900 square kilometers of surrounding territory. They are now focused on moving south to isolate ISIL's nominal capital of Raqqa, with the ultimate objective of collapsing its control over the city.

This momentum on the ground in northern Syria has been enabled by increased coalition airstrikes. In early November, we deployed additional strike aircraft to Incirlik Air Base in Turkey. Those and other aircraft in the region combined with improved intelligence allowed us, in November, to significantly increase our airstrikes against ISIL, to the highest level since the start of our operations in August 2014.

To build on that momentum, we're sending – on President Obama's orders and the Chairman's and my advice – Special Operations forces personnel to Syria to support the fight against ISIL. American special operators bring a unique suite of capabilities that make them force multipliers: they will help us garner valuable ground intelligence, further enhance our air campaign, and enable local forces that can regain and then hold territory occupied by ISIL. Where we find further opportunity to leverage such capability, we will be prepared to expand it.

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Next, in the south of Syria, we are also taking advantage of opportunities to open a southern front on ISIL, by enabling fighters, trained and equipped by us and other Coalition partners, to conduct strikes inside Syria. We are also enhancing the border control and defenses of a key ally, Jordan, with additional military assets and planning assistance.

In northern Iraq, Peshmerga units, with the help of U.S. air power and advisers, have retaken the town of Sinjar, cutting the main line of communication between Raqqa and Mosul, the two largest cities under ISIL's control. To move people and supplies, ISIL now must rely on backroads, where we will locate and destroy them.

Elsewhere in Iraq, we have about 3,500 troops at six locations in Iraq in support of Iraqi Security Forces, or ISF. There, we've been providing increased lethal fire and augmenting the existing training, advising, and assisting program. And we're prepared to do more as Iraq shows capability and motivation in the counter-ISIL fight and in resolving its political divisions.

The progress in the Sunni portions of Iraq – as the campaign to recapture Ramadi shows – has been slow, much to our and Prime Minister Abadi's frustration. Despite his efforts, sectarian politics and Iranian influence have made building a multi-sectarian ISF difficult, with some notable exceptions, such as the effective U.S.-trained counter-terrorism forces. We continue to offer additional U.S. support of all kinds and urge Baghdad to enroll, train, arm, and pay Sunni Arab fighters, as well as local Sunni Arab police forces, to hold territory recaptured from ISIL.

All these efforts – from northern Syria through Iraq – have shrunk the ISIL-controlled territory in both. Importantly, we now have an opportunity to divide ISIL's presence in Iraq from that in Syria. This could be important because, while both countries are plagued by ISIL, each, as I said earlier, has different political pathologies that provide the opportunity for extremism, and they ultimately require different kinds of political progress to assure lasting victory.

Next, in full coordination with the Government of Iraq, we're deploying a specialized expeditionary targeting force to assist Iraqi and Kurdish Peshmerga forces and to put even more pressure on ISIL. These special operators will over time be able to conduct raids, free hostages, gather intelligence, and capture ISIL leaders. That creates a virtuous cycle of better intelligence, which generates more targets, more raids, and more momentum. The raids in Iraq will be done at the invitation of the Iraqi government and focused on defending its borders and building the ISF's own capacity. This force will also be in a position to conduct unilateral operations into Syria.

Next, we are also significantly expanding U.S. attacks on ISIL's infrastructure and sources of revenue, particularly its oil revenue. Over the past several weeks, because of improved intelligence and understanding of ISIL's operations, we've intensified the air campaign against ISIL's war-sustaining oil enterprise, a critical pillar of ISIL's financial infrastructure. In addition to destroying fixed facilities like wells and processing facilities, we've destroyed nearly 400 of ISIL's oil tanker trucks, reducing a major source of its daily revenues. There's more to come too.

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And we're improving our capability to eliminate ISIL's leadership, by conducting raids using the expeditionary targeting force I discussed a moment ago and targeted airstrikes. Since I last appeared before this committee in June, we have removed some key ISIL figures from the battlefield – Hajji Mutaz, ISIL's second in command; Junaid Hussein, a key external operative actively plotting against our servicemembers; Mohammed Emwazi, a.k.a "Jihadi John," an ISIL executioner; and Abu Nabil, ISIL's leader in Libya. Like previous actions, these strikes serve notice to ISIL that no target is beyond our reach.

Finally, even as we work to defeat ISIL in Syria and Iraq, where its parent tumor has grown, we also recognize ISIL has metastasized elsewhere. The threat posed by ISIL, and groups like it, can span regions and our own combatant commands. That's why the Defense Department is organizing a new way to leverage infrastructure we've already established in Afghanistan, the Levant, East Africa, and Southern Europe into a unified capability to counter transnational and transregional threats like ISIL.

An example of this network in action was our recent strike on Abu Nabil, where assets from several locations converged to successfully kill this ISIL leader in Libya.

As that strike shows, there's a lot of potential here, but to do more, we need to be creative, and consider changes to how the Defense Department works and is structured. This could be an important focus of any new Goldwater-Nichols-type reforms, which I know this committee, and particularly Chairman Thornberry, is exploring. I welcome this timely review and look forward to working with you on it, as we complete our own ongoing reform initiatives in the Department.

These are just eight areas of the adaptations we've made over the past six weeks to accelerate this campaign, and we've seen momentum build. Chairman Dunford, if I can compliment him for a moment, has been a tremendous source of actionable ideas. We've also seen real ingenuity from our team at CENTCOM, and many of the other combatant commands involved in this fight. And President Obama is committed to doing what it takes...as opportunities arise, as we see what works, and as the enemy adapts...until ISIL is defeated in a lasting way.

As I just explained, we're constantly looking to do more in this fight, but the world must do the same. The international community – including our allies and partners – has to step up before another attack like Paris.

France has been galvanized by the attacks in its capital, and the French have intensified their role. Britain is debating expanded airstrikes. Italy has made important contributions in Iraq. And Germany is making additional contributions.

But we all, let me repeat that, we all must do more. Turkey must do more to control its often porous border. Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states joined the air campaign in the early days, but have since been pre-occupied by the conflict in Yemen.

Meanwhile, Russia, which has publicly committed to defeating ISIL, has instead largely attacked opposition forces, not ISIL. It is time for Russia to focus on the right side of this fight.

American leadership is essential, but the more contributions we receive from other nations, the greater combat power we can achieve using our own force. Just as importantly, we also need to leverage our allies and partners' relationships and capabilities to effectively work with Syrians and Iraqis, who in the end must expel ISIL and restore effective governance.

The President, Secretary Kerry, and I have spoken to many of our counterparts. And we're encouraging them to provide additional strike and support aircraft, as well as Special Operations personnel; deeper and more effective intelligence sharing; additional train, advise,

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and assist personnel and resources; combat search and rescue capabilities; combat support and combat service support; base security forces; and additional economic aid and humanitarian assistance.

As I conclude, I want to commend this committee on last month's budget deal, which is the kind of deal I called for back in March before this committee. It was a consequential agreement for the nation's security.

Thank you.

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Ashton B. Carter is the 25th Secretary of Defense.

Secretary Carter has spent more than three decades leveraging his knowledge of science and technology, global strategy and policy as well as his deep dedication to the men and women of the Department of Defense to make our nation and the world a safer place. He has done so in direct and indirect service of eleven secretaries of defense in both Democratic and Republican Administrations. Whether in government, academia, or the private sector, Secretary Carter has been guided by pragmatism and his belief in the boundless opportunities of the United States and has worked tirelessly to contribute to the ideas, policies, and innovations that assure our global leadership.

Secretary Carter was Deputy Secretary of Defense from 2011 to 2013, serving as DoD's chief operating officer, overseeing the department's annual budget and its over three million civilian and military personnel, steering strategy and budget through the turmoil of sequester and ensuring the future of the force and institutional best practices. From 2009 to 2011, he was Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics (ATL) with responsibility for DoD's procurement reform and innovation agenda and successful completion of key procurements like the KC-46 tanker. In this capacity, Secretary Carter also led the development and production of thousands of mine-resistant ambush protected (MRAP) vehicles and other rapid acquisitions that saved countless service members' lives. Determined to get the most for both the warfighters and the taxpayer, Secretary Carter instituted "Better Buying Power" for the first time guiding the department acquisition workforce to smarter and leaner purchasing. And from 1993-1996, he served as Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy, where he was responsible for – among other issues – strategic affairs, nuclear weapons policy, and the Nunn-Lugar program that removed nuclear weapons from Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Belarus. Secretary Carter also served on the Defense Policy Board, the Defense Science Board, and the Secretary of State's International Security Advisory Board.

Outside of his government service, Secretary Carter was most recently a distinguished visiting fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution and a lecturer at Stanford's Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies. He also was a Senior Executive at the Markle Foundation, helping its Economic Future Initiative advance technology strategies to enable Americans to flourish in a networked global economy. Previously Secretary Carter served as a Senior Partner of Global Technology Partners focused on advising major investment firms in technology, and an advisor on global affairs to Goldman Sachs. At Harvard's Kennedy School, he was Professor of Science and International Affairs and Chair of the International & Global Affairs faculty. He served on the boards of the MITRE Corporation, Mitretek Systems, and Lincoln Laboratories at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M.I.T.) and as a member of the Draper Laboratory Corporation. He was elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the Aspen Strategy Group.

Secretary Carter earned his bachelor's degrees in physics and in medieval history, summa cum laude, at Yale University, where he was also awarded Phi Beta Kappa; and he received his doctorate in theoretical physics from Oxford University, where he was a Rhodes Scholar. He was a physics instructor at Oxford, a postdoctoral fellow at Rockefeller University and M.I.T., and an experimental research associate at Brookhaven and Fermilab National Laboratories.

For his government service, Secretary Carter has been awarded the Department of Defense Distinguished Service Medal, DoD's highest, on five separate occasions. He received the Defense Intelligence Medal for his contributions to intelligence and the Joint Distinguished Service Medal from the Chairman and Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Secretary Carter is author or co-author of 11 books and more than 100 articles on physics, technology, national security, and management.

A native of Philadelphia, he is married to Stephanie Carter and has two grown children

General Joseph F. Dunford, Jr.
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs

General Joseph F. Dunford, Jr. is the 19th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the nation's highest-ranking military officer, and the principal military advisor to the President, Secretary of Defense, and National Security Council. Prior to becoming Chairman on October 1, 2015, General Dunford served as the 36th Commandant of the Marine Corps. He previously served as the Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps from 2010 to 2012 and was Commander, International Security Assistance Force and United States Forces-Afghanistan from February 2013 to August 2014.

A native of Boston, Massachusetts, General Dunford graduated from Saint Michael's College and was commissioned in 1977. He has served as an infantry officer at all levels, to include command of 2nd Battalion, 6th Marines, and command of the 5th Marine Regiment during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM.

General Dunford also served as the Assistant Division Commander of the 1st Marine Division, Marine Corps Director of Operations, and Marine Corps Deputy Commandant for Plans, Policies and Operations. He commanded I Marine Expeditionary Force and served as the Commander, Marine Forces U.S. Central Command. His Joint assignments include duty as the Executive Assistant to the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Chief of the Global and Multilateral Affairs Division (J-5), and Vice Director for Operations on the Joint Staff (J-3).

A graduate of the U.S. Army Ranger School, Marine Corps Amphibious Warfare School, and the U.S. Army War College, General Dunford also earned master's degrees in Government from Georgetown University and in International Relations from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy.

**WITNESS RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ASKED DURING
THE HEARING**

DECEMBER 1, 2015

RESPONSE TO QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MR. FORBES

General DUNFORD. I have nothing more to contribute than what was said in the hearing. [See page 17.]

RESPONSE TO QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MRS. DAVIS

General DUNFORD. We continue to work closely with Pakistan to address security issues of mutual interest and to seek support for our strategic objectives in the region. Our security assistance programs continue to improve Pakistan's capacity to combat terrorist organizations, while our engagement efforts at all levels reinforce our mutual goals for the region. High-level engagements such as the recent Defense Resourcing Conference in early March provide an opportunity for senior leaders from both sides to discuss concerns and determine the way ahead in our relationship. These forums provide key opportunities to communicate our expectations for Pakistan to address the threat from terrorist organizations. Pakistan recognizes the danger posed by these groups, and they have taken some positive steps forward in recent years to counter that threat. As Pakistan completes major military operations in the tribal areas, our countries have the opportunity to support future stability operations to improve security, education, and employment. Finally, we must continue to support the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program, which provides opportunities for Pakistani military personnel to learn about our culture and values and to develop lasting relationships with our own military leaders. [See page 19.]

RESPONSE TO QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MR. ROGERS

General DUNFORD. Not at this time. The Long Range Standoff Weapon's (LRSO) Tech Maturation & Risk Reduction (TMRR) is fully funded for FY17 and through the FYDP. Requested funding levels in PB17 ensure the LRSO replaces the ALCM according to current strategic plans. [See page 31.]

RESPONSE TO QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MR. BRIDENSTINE

General DUNFORD. U.S. forces captured one ISIS combatant prior to December 1, 2015. Since that time, U.S. forces have captured one additional ISIS combatant. Both detainees remained in U.S. custody for intelligence screening purposes prior to being transferred to the Government of Iraq for prosecution. In addition to U.S. unilateral captures, as of 25 March, our forces have enabled and facilitated Kurdish partners in the capture of 49 ISIS detainees who remain in Kurdish custody. [See page 60.]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING

DECEMBER 1, 2015

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. SHUSTER

Mr. SHUSTER. The recent attacks in Paris demonstrate the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) ability to carry out large-scale, coordinated attacks outside the Middle East making them a significant global threat. Evidence has shown that several of the Paris attackers previously traveled to Syria for training. The U.S. Special Presidential Envoy to the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL, Brett McGurk, stated in an interview on November 22, 2015, that the United States would work with local forces in northern Syria to close a 98-kilometer border area along the Syria-Turkish border. Given the critical need to secure these areas, can you detail the level of U.S. involvement and forecasted timeline to secure the largest gap in Syria's border?

Secretary CARTER. [No answer was available at the time of printing.]

Mr. SHUSTER. It has been estimated that 9 million Syrians have fled their homes since 2011. In your opinion, what are the top three objectives the U.S. must achieve in Syria to create an environment safe and stable enough to reverse this growing refugee crisis? What actions must be taken, regardless of agency, to obtain these objectives?

Secretary CARTER. [No answer was available at the time of printing.]

Mr. SHUSTER. Many experts, and numerous former administration officials have expressed their concern that the current strategy and airstrikes in Syria are not achieving the goal of defeating ISIL. Former Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta said, "I think that the resources applied to that mission, frankly, have not been sufficient." Dr. Michael G. Vickers, the former Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence, writes, "We conducted as many airstrikes in two months in Afghanistan in 2001 as we have in 16 months in Iraq and Syria." Even former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has said we need "a more effective coalition air campaign, with more allies' planes, more strikes, and a broader target set." Do you believe their criticisms are valid?

Secretary CARTER. [No answer was available at the time of printing.]

Mr. SHUSTER. A short time before terrorists struck in Paris, President Obama said that ISIL has "not gained ground in Iraq" and that they had not established control of additional territory in Syria. Despite those statements, in May, ISIL captured the strategic city of Ramadi in Western Iraq and that same month, it also captured the Syrian city of Palmyra. ISIL continued to control wide swaths of strategic territory and has now demonstrated its ability to conduct attacks abroad like the one in Paris. General Dunford, do you believe we are winning the war against ISIL?

General DUNFORD. Yes. We continue to make steady progress militarily in our efforts to degrade, dismantle, and ultimately defeat ISIL, as demonstrated by recent progress in Hit and Ramadi in Iraq and the Tishrin Dam and Shaddadi in Syria. As of May 3rd Iraqi Security Forces have retaken more than 45% of the territory in Iraq that ISIL held when the Coalition first began airstrikes in August 2014. The counter ISIL operations have restricted their freedom of movement along key communication and transportation routes in both Iraq and Syria. Furthermore, these activities have helped to secure key border crossings between Syria and Turkey, constraining ISIL's ability to send reinforcements and much needed supplies.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. HUNTER

Mr. HUNTER. Several organizations within the Department of Defense are seeking a handheld diagnostic device to bring lab-based molecular diagnostics into the field to serve the warfighter, which would bring lab-quality results to the Point of Need, at a fraction of the cost. It's my understanding that—among others—the Naval Health Research Center (NHRC), the Special Operations Command (SOCOM) and the Marines are currently seeking handheld diagnostic devices to address respiratory health, remote/battlefield warfighter healthcare, and biodefense. And I'm aware that Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) funded a 3-year contract with over \$11 million of funding to deliver such a device. That contract has reached its initial end date without success. And DTRA recently extended that contract for an

additional 2 years. Further, private industry is currently developing such a Point of Need device. And there are proposals in front of DTRA to bring such devices into the field in 12 to 18 months.

1. Why is DTRA continuing to invest in an expensive project that is not yielding positive results? 2. Why is DTRA not considering the adaptation of a currently viable technology to provide handheld Point of Need diagnostics to serve the warfighter? 3. While long-term research and development (R&D) is important to develop the technologies that will lead to future generations of products, why are we not supporting initiatives that can yield results in the near term, utilizing currently proven technologies and product platforms?

Secretary CARTER. [No answer was available at the time of printing.]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. WALZ

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Secretary, what is this administration's vision for the future of Iraq and Syria? What is the specific outcome that is envisioned?

Secretary CARTER. [No answer was available at the time of printing.]

Mr. WALZ. How does this vision nest with the strategy for the region? For the globe?

Secretary CARTER. [No answer was available at the time of printing.]

Mr. WALZ. Tell me about coordination efforts with the Department of Defense, the State, Department, and other agencies. What are we doing well? What aren't we doing well? What help do you need from Congress?

Secretary CARTER. [No answer was available at the time of printing.]

Mr. WALZ. Have we too narrowly focused on counterterrorism at the expense of other methods for addressing threats to our interests in Syria and Iraq? What other policy objectives should the United States pursue?

Secretary CARTER. [No answer was available at the time of printing.]

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Secretary, is de facto partitioning of Syria and Iraq in our interest or that of our allies? Does U.S. policy and strategy assume de facto partitioning in these countries? Do you consider de facto partitioning of either Syria or Iraq avoidable?

Secretary CARTER. [No answer was available at the time of printing.]

Mr. WALZ. General Dunford, former senior governmental officials, Ambassador Ryan Crocker and Director John McLaughlin, have advocated for no-fly zones in Syria. What is the Administration's view on such a no-fly zone in Syria? Do you agree with Ambassador Crocker and Director McLaughlin that a no-fly zone in Syria would be appropriate at this time? What is the benefit of a no-fly zone or a safe zone, and what resources would be required to implement either of these?

General DUNFORD. The Administration does not support establishing no-fly zones in Syria. I do not believe establishing a no-fly zone is appropriate at this time. Establishing a no-fly zone would divert Coalition resources away from defeating ISIL and would require a legal basis under domestic and international law, neither of which currently exist. In addition to requiring a significant number of aircraft to enforce, establishing no-fly or safe zones would require ground forces. We would be required to protect the zone from both violent extremists and Syrian forces, rockets, missiles and artillery. We likely would be required to provide humanitarian assistance and assist with governance. Forces committed to a zone could be required until the conflict ends and conditions are suitable for civilians to return to their homes.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. MOULTON

Mr. MOULTON. Mr. Chairman: In your testimony, you mentioned coordination between the State Department and Defense Department has increased since you became Chairman and there have been two meetings to coordinate political and military strategy. How frequently are such meetings planned to occur in the future? Are more frequent coordination meetings occurring at a working level? In your view, is this level of coordination sufficient to ensure military operations are well coordinated with political efforts?

General DUNFORD. Yes, I believe the level of coordination is sufficient. My staff is in routine contact with the Department of State, as well as many of the other Departments and Agencies. My regional and functional staffs conduct planning and working-group sessions, from the action officer to the senior leader level, on a weekly basis. Furthermore, these working relationships extend beyond normally sched-

uled meetings into routine correspondence to properly coordinate political and military strategy as we focus on putting ISIL on a path to defeat.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. RUSSELL

Mr. RUSSELL. What is the comprehensive plan with regard to ISIL loss of territory in Syria? Has there been any discussion or consideration of zones of influence and governorship? As Russia is in the Alawite sphere, the United States in the Kurdish Sphere and Jordan in the Sunni-Arab sphere, what is the comprehensive plan to reduce ISIL in these areas of influence?

Secretary CARTER. [No answer was available at the time of printing.]

Mr. RUSSELL. What efforts are being made to unite a Sunni-Arab league to resolve the question of Sunni Arabs in Iraq and Syria for self-determination? Do you believe there can be any solutions without the prospect of Sunni-Arab self-determination?

Secretary CARTER. [No answer was available at the time of printing.]

Mr. RUSSELL. We've received reports from special operators and air forces that targeting approval can take weeks, causing once valuable intelligence to become useless. Why is this happening and what is the process for targeting approval? Is it true that plans are not "approved" by the Secretary of Defense, merely "endorsed," leaving the military forces the impression they are on their own should difficulty arise?

Secretary CARTER. [No answer was available at the time of printing.]

Mr. RUSSELL. With ISIL in Afghanistan, what measures are being taken to lift restriction on their targeting, currently hurdled by a force-protection only rules of engagement in that theater?

Secretary CARTER. [No answer was available at the time of printing.]

Mr. RUSSELL. What is the comprehensive plan with regard to ISIL loss of territory in Syria? Has there been any discussion or consideration of zones of influence and governorship? As Russia is in the Alawite sphere, the United States in the Kurdish Sphere and Jordan in the Sunni-Arab sphere, what is the comprehensive plan to reduce ISIL in these areas of influence?

General DUNFORD. U.S. strategy to counter the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) relies on capable and willing partnered ground forces to combat ISIL in both Iraq and Syria. The President has authorized U.S. Central Command to train and equip select individuals in key capabilities to better enable groups fighting ISIL in this region. Working by, with, and through indigenous counter-ISIL forces on the ground is a key component in our comprehensive plan to place ISIL on a path to defeat.

Mr. RUSSELL. What efforts are being made to make a Sunni-Arab, Sunni-Kurd coalition in Iraq? As the Kurds now have adequate arms, how will the Sunni-Arab tribesmen in the Tikrit/Allam to Beji area are equip thousands given little to no support from anything sent to Bagdad?

General DUNFORD. Our efforts in Iraq are designed to create Iraqi Security Forces that can defend Iraq on behalf of the Government of Iraq. Accounting for the ethnic and sectarian makeup of the force is but one component of this effort. Iraq's Popular Mobilization (PMF) Program has created Iraqi formations that represent the sectarian makeup of the areas from which they are recruited. The Government of Iraq continues to fund, train, and equip these forces, and has expanded its outreach in the majority Sunni Anbar and Ninawa Provinces. A Sunni PMF has been recruited from Sunni Arab tribes, and the Iraqi Government has fully supported the effort. U.S. and Coalition forces are training, equipping, and providing operational advice to both the GOI and to the Sunni PMF in support of this effort.

Mr. RUSSELL. What efforts are being made to unite a Sunni-Arab league to resolve the question of Sunni Arabs in Iraq and Syria for self-determination? Do you believe there can be any solutions without the prospect of Sunni-Arab self-determination?

General DUNFORD. The C-ISIL Coalition includes several Sunni Arab partners; their contributions to the Coalition are invaluable. We have not made any additional effort to unite a Sunni-Arab league to resolve the question of Sunni self-determination. The military dimension of our C-ISIL strategy supports creating sovereign, inclusive and representative governance in both Iraq and Syria. Including Sunni Arabs in the governments of Iraq and Syria will be required to prevent the grievances that helped spawn ISIL from recurring.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has organized an Islamic coalition of 41 Sunni nations to counter Sunni extremism. This effort includes religious and cultural compo-

nents best addressed by Sunni authorities. Coalition and Saudi planners are working to ensure Saudi efforts complement those of the C–ISIL coalition

Mr. RUSSELL. We’ve received reports from special operators and air forces that targeting approval can take weeks, causing once valuable intelligence to become useless. Why is this happening and what is the process for targeting approval? Is it true that plans are not “approved” by the Secretary of Defense, merely “endorsed,” leaving the military forces the impression they are on their own should difficulty arise?

General DUNFORD. The Secretary of Defense has given full authority to CDRUSCENTCOM to conduct military operations against ISIL forces. Authority to conduct operations has been delegated to subordinate commanders to decrease the timeline for approval. Many factors impact the targeting process to include the need for positive identification, the risk to friendly and non-combatant personnel and infrastructure, and synchronization requirements with ongoing tactical, operational and strategic activity. The main factor is risk management. When CDRUSCENTCOM determines the level of risk associated with a specific strike rises to a given threshold, he may elect to seek higher echelon approval for the execution of that strike.

Mr. RUSSELL. With ISIL in Afghanistan, what measures are being taken to lift restriction on their targeting, currently hurdled by a force-protection only rules of engagement in that theater?

General DUNFORD. U.S. forces may take action against any individuals or groups who pose a threat to U.S. or coalition forces in Afghanistan. Those authorities include actions against all groups associated with ISIL, to include the Islamic State–Khorasan Province (ISKP). Commander, U.S. Forces-Afghanistan will continue to assess the sufficiency of his authorities and will request new or expanded authorities through the chain of command when he determines they are necessary.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. JOHNSON

Mr. JOHNSON. In the interest of ensuring every nation is bearing their share of the costs and responsibilities in defeating the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), what unique capabilities do our allies and regional partners have and how can we best enable those capabilities?

Secretary CARTER. [No answer was available at the time of printing.]

Mr. JOHNSON. What are we doing to ensure any Russian action does not detract from our aims in a post-ISIS Syria and Iraq but rather complements our own objectives?

Secretary CARTER. [No answer was available at the time of printing.]

Mr. JOHNSON. Do you believe as Secretary of Defense that we have adequate human intelligence in the region? What can we do to improve it?

Secretary CARTER. [No answer was available at the time of printing.]

Mr. JOHNSON. In the interest of ensuring every nation is bearing their share of the costs and responsibilities in defeating ISIS, what unique capabilities do our allies and regional partners have and how can we best enable those capabilities?

General DUNFORD. Following a deliberate engagement plan by Secretary Carter and Secretary Kerry, our partners are contributing nearly half of the forces in Iraq and Syria and their commitments and contributions continue to grow. USCENTCOM has developed a strategy to better utilize partner contributions, which includes partners taking on key leadership roles at locations such as Erbil and Al Asad. The DoD, in partnership with the State Department, has developed a comprehensive engagement strategy to support USCENTCOMs initiative.

Mr. JOHNSON. It was recently reported that the Libyan port city of Sirte has been transformed from a minor outpost to an “actively managed colony of the central Islamic State, crowded with foreign fighters from around the region.” There have also been reports of ISIS attacks in Bangladesh. How extensive is ISIS’ control in Libya and have you seen evidence of attempts at aggressive expansion beyond the immediate region?

General DUNFORD. [The information referred to is classified and retained in the committee files.]

Mr. JOHNSON. What are we doing to ensure any Russian action does not detract from our aims in a post-ISIS Syria and Iraq but rather complements our own objectives?

General DUNFORD. Since 2012, the U.S. and Russia have been part of a United Nations effort to bring peace to Syria. The U.S. and Russia co-chair two task forces under the UN’s International Syria Support Group (ISSG)—a Ceasefire Task Force and a Humanitarian Task Force. Through these task forces, in bilateral sessions of the task force co-chairs, and in multilateral forums with regional and international

partners, we engage Russia. These engagements provide opportunities to ensure Russian actions complement the objectives for a post-ISIL Syria. In Iraq, the U.S. works by, with, and through the Iraqi government on issues of significance to our two countries; Russia has its own diplomatic channel with the Government of Iraq.

