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**THE ADMINISTRATION'S STRATEGY AND
MILITARY CAMPAIGN AGAINST ISLAMIC
STATE IN IRAQ AND THE LEVANT**

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

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ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

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THE ADMINISTRATION'S STRATEGY AND MILITARY CAMPAIGN AGAINST ISLAMIC STATE IN IRAQ AND THE LEVANT

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**THE ADMINISTRATION'S STRATEGY AND MILITARY
CAMPAIGN AGAINST ISLAMIC STATE IN IRAQ AND
THE LEVANT**

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC, Thursday, November 13, 2014.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:10 a.m., in room 2118, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Howard P. "Buck" McKeon (chairman of the committee) presiding.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. HOWARD P. "BUCK" MCKEON,
A REPRESENTATIVE FROM CALIFORNIA, CHAIRMAN, COM-
MITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES**

The CHAIRMAN. The committee will come to order.

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Before we begin, I would like to state up front that I will not tolerate disturbances of these proceedings, including verbal disruptions, photography, standing, or holding signs. I want to thank you at the outset for your cooperation.

We have a hard stop at 1 p.m. today because of a House organizational meeting. Therefore, after consultation with Mr. Smith, I ask unanimous consent that each member shall not have more than 4 minutes, rather than the usual 5, to question the panel of witnesses so that we can get to as many members as possible. Thank you.

The committee meets to receive testimony on the administration's military campaign and strategy for Syria and Iraq. I would like to welcome Secretary Hagel and General Dempsey. We appreciate you being here to address these very consequential issues.

When we last saw you in September, the Congress had just passed an authority to train and equip [moderate] Syrian rebels after a lengthy debate. The air campaign in Iraq had been underway for a few weeks and strikes in Syria had not yet begun. I stated then that I did not believe the President's minimalist strategy was sufficient to achieve his objectives of degrading and destroying ISIL [Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant]. This hearing is critical to our understanding of the progress made by the President's strategy and to hear from our military leaders on what else may be needed.

The OCO [Overseas Contingency Operations] budget amendment that we received Monday afternoon pays for the air campaign and adds more advisors, but it does not appear to reflect any changes in strategy. However, we know that targeting and air strikes are getting harder as ISIL changes tactics, and limiting our advisors to headquarters buildings will not help newly trained Iraqi and

Syrian opposition, their forces, to hold terrain, much less defeat ISIL in the field. Yet the President has doubled down on his policy of no boots on the ground despite any advice you have given him.

So my fundamental question is, how can you successfully execute the mission you have been given to degrade and ultimately destroy ISIL when some of your best options are taken off the table? Mr. Secretary, both of your predecessors, Bob Gates and Leon Panetta, have stated that we need boots on the ground if there is to be any hope of success in the strategy. Even Coach K, a West Point graduate and very successful basketball coach at Duke, told an Army conference last month that declaring we won't use ground forces is like telling your opponent you are not going to play your best players.

We may very well be considering a new AUMF [Authorization for Use of Military Force] in the future, but I would offer a warning that should the AUMF proposed by the President contain such limitations, it will be DOA [dead on arrival] in Congress. I will not support sending our military into harm's way with their arms tied behind their backs.

Lastly, the risk to our forces increases even more with terrorist detainees returning to the battlefield. ISIL's leader, al-Baghdadi, is chief among them. There are reports of former GTMO [Guantanamo Bay Naval Base] detainees returning to the fight and recruiting militants for ISIL. Despite these disturbing trends, we have seen an increase in notifications regarding detainee transfers from GTMO.

Mr. Secretary and General Dempsey, you shoulder an immense responsibility each time you sign off on or concur on these releases. I understand you are under pressure to release even more. But the roughly 150 detainees that are left are the worst of the worst. To continue these releases just as we have had to open a new front in the war on terror is unwise.

Mr. Secretary and General Dempsey, again, thank you for being here today. This is likely the last hearing that we will have together, and all of the issues that bring us together are never easy. I have always appreciated your friendship and candid conversations, and your service, and your dedication to this Nation. And for those of us who will not be here in the 114th Congress, let me express our gratitude to you for your leadership, your service, and above all your devotion to our troops.

Ms. Sanchez.

**STATEMENT OF HON. LORETTA SANCHEZ, A REPRESENTATIVE
FROM CALIFORNIA, COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES**

Ms. SANCHEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And, gentlemen, thank you again for being before us.

Mr. Smith could not be here this morning, and so I will be reading his statement if it so pleases, and I hope the chairman. So, again, these are not my words, because, as you know, Mr. Chairman, I am probably very different than a lot of the thought that is going on in this committee in many ways. But these will be Mr. Smith's words.

He would like to thank the witnesses for appearing here today. Just 3 months ago, the President notified Congress that he had au-

thorized the commander of Central Command to undertake air strikes in Iraq against ISIL.

Just 2 short months ago, on September 23, the administration provided a War Powers notification of strikes in Syria against ISIL. And since that time, the U.S. has taken hundreds of strikes in Iraq and Syria, killing hundreds of ISIL fighters, eliminating their freedom to move in convoys, substantially impacting their ability to sell oil to fund their operations, and driving their leadership underground, which complicated their ability to command and control their forces.

The DOD [Department of Defense] has deployed about 1,400 troops to Iraq to protect the embassy and to advise and assist Iraqi security forces [ISF], including the Iraqi Army, counterterrorism services, the Kurdish Peshmerga, and the President has announced that another 1,500 would go. We have also airlifted substantial stocks of weapons and ammunition to ISF and to the Syrian Kurds fighting ISIL, and the administration has enlisted somewhere around 60 countries to fight against ISIL. And a number of them have undertaken strikes in either Iraq or Syria, and some have volunteered to send special forces to Iraq to help. And of course Congress approved a temporary authority for the DOD to begin training and equipping elements of the Syrian opposition to fight ISIL.

In other words, Mr. Smith says, we have come a long way in a fairly short amount of time. And thank you to the two of you for leadership in arriving at most of what I just mentioned. And even though we have made substantial progress, more remains to be done to combat the threat of ISIL. An ISIL able to control territory in Iraq and Syria will, without question, plot and plan attacks about the West. I think we all agree, as we have seen what they have been doing to the people that they have taken, the beheadings, the executions, et cetera. I am paraphrasing here in order to make this short, Mr. Chairman.

But going forward, we have many decisions to make about combating the threat of ISIL. The President, for example, has requested that Congress authorize the use of military force against the group rather than relying on the 2001 AUMF to combat Al Qaeda. I agree that Congress should debate and pass an AUMF, but I am skeptical that we can assemble a majority to do so. The President has also requested \$1.6 billion to train the Iraqi security forces, and we in Congress need to reauthorize the Syrian train-and-equip authority. And, again, these are the words of Mr. Smith.

I will end, and I would like unanimous consent to put the entire statement into, let me end with just this last paragraph, Mr. Chairman, to make it much shorter.

Going forward, prosecuting the campaign against ISIL in either Iraq or Syria will be extremely complex and challenging. We must not delude ourselves about this. Both Iraq and Syria are complex, messy situations where perfect outcomes are extremely unlikely. Whatever course of action we undertake will take years and dedicated effort. We will have major disagreements with our allies and partners about desired outcomes.

Russia's role in Syria will be challenging. And while we seem to have overlapping interests with Iran and Iraq, our desired outcomes do not clearly align, and we certainly do not have the same

overlapping interest in Syria. All of which is to say that these situations are going to be messy and require constant attention and management.

Fortunately, managed correctly, we have a real path towards the goal of degrading ISIL, denying them safe haven, eliminating their leadership, and curtailing their ability to strike at our allies and at us. And I hope our panelists here will help to explain to us and the American people the strategy.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I ask unanimous consent to put it forward into the record.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection, so ordered.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Smith can be found in the Appendix on page 51.]

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Smith 10 days ago had surgery on his hip, and he is recovering. I want to let you know he is fully engaged. Yesterday we had our Big Four meeting working on the bill, and he was telecommuting it. Technology made it possible that he was in the room with us and fully, totally engaged.

One other thing I would like to mention at the outset. Several of our members will not be with us next year, some retired, some lost their election. Let me thank each of you for your service to this Nation, to your service on this committee. It is much appreciated. This committee has always tried to work in a bipartisan manner. Anyway, I think enough said. Thank you. Thank you for your service.

Mr. Secretary.

**STATEMENT OF HON. CHUCK HAGEL, SECRETARY OF
DEFENSE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**

Secretary HAGEL. Chairman McKeon, Congresswoman Sanchez, members of the committee, thank you.

[Disturbance in hearing room.]

The CHAIRMAN. The Chair notes that there is a disturbance in the committee's proceedings. The committee will be in order. I would like to formally request that those in the audience causing this disruption cease their actions immediately.

Thank you very much. Thank you to the Capitol Police for restoring order.

Mr. Secretary.

Secretary HAGEL. Chairman, obviously your last hearing is not going unnoticed and unrecognized. So we shall proceed.

As I was saying, I very much appreciate, and I know General Dempsey does, an opportunity to come back after a couple of months and update this committee on what we are doing and how we are doing it, why we are doing it. I know that this has not been, as you all know, the only communication we have had with this committee. We have had many, many briefings with your staff. Many of you I have spoken to directly, as well as General Dempsey and many of our military leaders. So to have this opportunity to bring together in some convergence of explanation of what we are doing and why and how, I very much appreciate.

Mr. Chairman, your leadership and your service to this committee, to this Congress, to this country over many years has been recognized many times, appropriately, over the last few months. It

will continue to be recognized. It should be recognized. I want to thank you personally for your support, your friendship. I have valued that over the last 2 years I have had the privilege of holding this job. I will miss you personally, and I know this committee will, but there are so many very able and capable and dedicated people that are right next to you that will carry on.

So I didn't want this opportunity to go without me expressing my thanks and best wishes to you and to your family and to the next chapter in your life and your many new adventures that lie ahead.

As I noted, I am joined this morning by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Martin Dempsey, who I too have, like you, have appreciated his wise counsel and his partnership as we have dealt with some of the most complex and difficult issues that I think this country has faced in a long time, and I know General Dempsey appreciates all of your service as well.

General Dempsey has played a critical role over the last 6 months especially in shaping and developing our strategy, along with our CENTCOM [U.S. Central Command] commander, who you all know, General Lloyd Austin. To General Austin and his commanders and to our men and women, I want to thank them.

Mr. Chairman, President Obama, Chairman Dempsey, General Austin, all of our leaders and I have been very clear that our campaign against ISIL will be long and will be difficult. We are 3 months into a multiyear effort. As we enter a new phase of this effort working to train and equip more counter-ISIL forces in both Iraq and Syria, we will succeed only with the strong support of Congress and the strong support of this committee.

Since I testified before this committee 2 months ago our campaign against ISIL has made progress. ISIL's advance in parts of Iraq has stalled, and in some cases been reversed, by Iraqi, Kurdish, and tribal forces supported by U.S. and coalition air strikes. But ISIL continues to represent a serious threat to American interests, our allies in the Middle East, and wields still influence over a broad swath of territory in western and northern Iraq and eastern Syria.

But as President Obama has said, ISIL will not be defeated through military force alone. Our comprehensive strategy is focused on supporting inclusive governance, sustaining a broad-based regional and global coalition, and strengthening local forces on the ground. It also includes undercutting ISIL's flow of resources, countering ISIL's messaging, constricting the flow of foreign fighters, providing humanitarian assistance, and our intensive regional and global diplomatic effort.

In Iraq, much more needs to be done to achieve political reform, but we are seeing steps in the right direction. In the wake of years of polarizing leadership, Iraqi Prime Minister Abadi is leaning forward by engaging all of Iraqis' diverse communities. He has appointed a Sunni defense minister after that post was left vacant for more than 4 years, and he is moving to create an Iraqi national guard which would empower local forces, especially in Sunni tribal areas of Anbar Province, while aligning them with the central government.

And you may have noticed that yesterday it was announced that he replaced 36 of his most senior commanders, integrating the

Iraqi security forces with more senior Sunni leaders. This is essential to strengthening not only the Iraqi security forces, but strengthening a central government, a government in Iraq that in fact can build trust and confidence of the Iraqi people.

Thanks to intensive diplomacy, America is not supporting this effort alone. We have built a global coalition to support local forces in both Iraq and Syria, a coalition of over 60 nations that are contributing assistance ranging from air support to training to humanitarian assistance. Since I testified here, 16 nations have joined the military campaign against ISIL.

The first coalition air strikes in Syria involved Bahrain, Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, a tremendous demonstration of unity among our Middle East Arab partners. Coalition partners have carried out 130 air strikes against ISIL in both Iraq and Syria. Last week, Canada launched its first air strikes in Iraq, bringing the total to 12 nations participating in strike operations in Iraq and Syria, as additional partners provide tanker, command and control, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance aircraft.

Coalition nations have also pledged hundreds of personnel to support our mission to train, advise, assist, and help build the capacity of Iraqi forces. Our global coalition is also helping shape the burden of the campaign, with nearly all our coalition partners funding their own contributions. With the President's special envoy for our counter-ISIL coalition, General John Allen, General Allen is in the lead as he coordinates the coalition's strategy and contributions across all our lines of effort with our coalition partners.

As a coalition and as a nation, we must prepare for a long and difficult struggle. There will be setbacks, but we are seeing steady and sustainable progress. And, Mr. Chairman, I think that is an important part of answering the questions we have, the questions we have about our own strategy that we ask ourselves, the questions you have about our strategy. Can we sustain it? Can it be sustained after, at some point, we leave? That is a critical component of our strategy, asking that question and answering that question.

We are seeing steady and sustainable progress along DOD's two main lines of effort. First, we are seeing progress in degrading and destroying ISIL's warfighting capacity and in denying safe haven to its fighters. Directly and through support of Iraqi forces, coalition air strikes have hit ISIL's command and control, its leadership, its revenue sources, its supply lines and logistics, and impaired its ability to mass forces.

In recent weeks, these strikes helped Peshmerga forces press ISIL out of Zumar in northern Iraq and helped Iraqi security forces begin retaking areas around the major oil refinery at Baiji. Last weekend, air strikes hit a gathering of ISIL battlefield commanders near Mosul. ISIL fighters have been forced to alter their tactics. We knew they would. They will adapt, they will adjust, maneuvering in smaller groups, sometimes making it more difficult to identify targets, hiding large equipment, and changing their communications methods.

Sustaining this pressure on ISIL will help provide time and space, time and space for Iraq to reconstitute its forces and con-

tinue going on the offense. This pressure is having an effect on potential ISIL recruits and collaborators, striking a blow to morale and recruitment. We know that. Our intelligence is very clear on that. And as Iraqi forces build strength, the tempo and intensity of our coalition's air campaign will accelerate in tandem.

We need to continue to help build partner capacity so that local forces can take the fight to ISIL and ultimately defeat it. Today, many of the approximately 1,400 U.S. troops in Iraq are engaged in advise-and-assist programs with Iraqi and Kurdish forces.

As you know, last week the Defense Department announced that we will expand the support to Iraqi forces by deploying up to 1,500 additional military personnel, including 2 new advise-and-assist centers at locations beyond Baghdad and Erbil, as well as 4 new training centers in northern, western, and central Iraq.

I recommended this deployment to the President based on the request of the Government of Iraq, U.S. Central Command's assessment of Iraqi units, General Dempsey's recommendation, and the strength of the Iraqi and coalition's campaign plan. These additional troops and facilities will help strengthen and reconstitute Iraqi forces, expanding the geography of our mission but not the mission itself. U.S. military personnel will not be engaged in a ground combat mission.

Our phased plan to help strengthen Iraqi security forces has three major components.

First, our advise-and-assist mission that is partnering coalition advisors with Iraqi forces at the headquarters level. U.S. and coalition advisors are already helping plan current and future operations. And, as noted, we will expand this mission with two new advise-and-assist centers that we have announced.

Second, we will support the regeneration of Iraqi forces so that they are better equipped to launch offensive operations over the coming year. CENTCOM's new training sites in northern, western, and central Iraq will help train 12 Iraqi brigades, and more than a dozen coalition nations have expressed their intent to send trainers and advisors to help build the capacity of Iraqi forces.

Third, we will concentrate on broader security sector reform to help transform Iraqi forces into a more coherent and capable unified force. This includes Prime Minister Abadi's initiative to develop provincially based national guard units, which I mentioned earlier.

Coalition partners are playing an important role in all of these efforts by providing advisors and trainers to help regenerate Iraqi combat brigades. Together, we are also providing more arms and equipment to Iraqi security forces. This year, the United States alone has shipped more than \$685 million in critical equipment and supplies to Iraq, ranging from grenades and small arms to tank ammunition, helicopter rockets, and Hellfire missiles, hundreds of which will be arriving this month. U.S. and coalition partners together have delivered over 2.7 million pounds of supplies, including 33 million rounds of ammunition to Peshmerga forces alone.

Mr. Chairman, in Syria our actions against ISIL are focused on shaping the dynamic in Iraq, which remains the priority of our counter-ISIL strategy. But we are sober about the challenges we

face as ISIL exploits the complicated, long-running Syrian conflict. Because we do not have a partner government to work with in Syria or regular military partners to work with as we do in Iraq, in the near term our military aims in Syria are limited to isolating and destroying ISIL's safe havens.

Coalition air strikes in Syria are accomplishing this by containing or continuing to target significant ISIL assets, which has impaired ISIL's ability to move fighters and equipment into Iraq, disrupted their command and control, damaged their training bases, and significantly limited their financial revenue by hitting captured oil fields and disrupting their crude oil distribution and collection sites.

The Defense Department's longer-term effort is to train and equip credible moderate Syrian opposition forces, especially from areas most threatened by ISIL. This will require at least 8 to 12 months to begin making a difference on the ground. We know the opposition will continue to face intense pressure in a multi-front battlespace, and we are considering options for how U.S. and coalition forces can further support these forces once they are trained and equipped.

These forces are being trained in units, not as individuals. Our strategy in Syria will demand time, patience, perseverance to deliver results. We cannot accomplish our objectives in Syria all at once. The position of the United States remains that Assad has lost the legitimacy to govern.

But there is no purely military solution to the conflict in Syria. Alongside our efforts to isolate and sanction the Assad regime, our strategy is to strengthen the moderate opposition to the point where they, where they can first defend and control their local areas. Next, go on the offense and take back areas that have been lost to ISIL. And ultimately, as their capability and leverage develop, to create conditions for a political settlement in Syria.

Thanks to the broad bipartisan support in Congress, Mr. Chairman, including majorities in both parties, preparations for our Syria train-and-equip mission are now complete. We have established a combined joint interagency task force to coordinate the coalition's train-and-equip program for Syria. Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and other partner nations have agreed to host training sites. Development of those sites, recruiting, and vetting will begin once Congress has authorized the actual funding, but we are still moving forward doing what we must do to prepare for that vetting process and that training.

We are still at the front end of our campaign against ISIL. As President Obama told leaders of both Houses of Congress last week during a session which I attended with General Austin, congressional support, your support is vital for the campaign to succeed. As you all know, the administration is requesting \$5.6 billion in additional Overseas Contingency Operations funding for fiscal year 2015 to help execute our comprehensive strategy in Iraq and Syria, \$5 billion of it for the Department of Defense; \$3.4 billion would support ongoing U.S. military actions against ISIL under Operation Inherent Resolve; \$1.6 billion would go toward a new Iraqi train-and-equip fund devoted to helping reconstitute Iraq's security forces.

This fund will be critical for enabling Iraqi security forces, including Kurdish and tribal forces, to go on the offense in 2015, and it will require the Iraqi Government and coalition members to make significant contributions as well. Over 60 percent or \$1 billion of the \$1.6 billion fund would be available initially. The remaining \$600 million would not be released until the Government of Iraq and coalition partners have provided at least \$600 million of their own contributions because the Iraqi Government must invest in its own security and its own future.

As the President said last week, the administration will be engaging the Congress to support the effort against ISIL by enacting a new and specific authorization for the use of military force, one that reflects the scope and the challenges of our campaign against ISIL. DOD will work closely with the Congress on each component of this effort. As this mission continues to progress, we will continue to evaluate and reevaluate each element of our strategy.

Having just marked Veterans Day earlier this week, let me again thank this committee for what you do every day to support all our men and women in uniform and their families serving this country across the world.

Mr. Chairman, thank you.

[The prepared statement of Secretary Hagel can be found in the Appendix on page 53.]

The CHAIRMAN. General Dempsey.

STATEMENT OF GEN MARTIN E. DEMPSEY, CHAIRMAN, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

General DEMPSEY. Thank you, Chairman. I want to add my deep appreciation to you on behalf of the Joint Chiefs for your leadership and all you have done for the defense of our Nation. Your devotion to the men and women of the joint force, and, importantly, to their families, will continue to resonate throughout our ranks.

I too appreciate the opportunity to appear before this committee this morning to discuss our strategy against ISIL. Secretary Hagel has already detailed the elements and the progress of our comprehensive approach against ISIL. Broadly, our strategy is to reinforce a credible partner in the Iraqi Government and assist regional stakeholders to address the 20 million disenfranchised Sunnis who live between Damascus and Baghdad. They have to reject the ISIL ideology from within.

We are implementing an Iraq-first strategy enabled by the coalition, but as I have said before, it is not an Iraq-only strategy. It will evolve through the coalition and with multiple lines of effort and over time. We need to squeeze ISIL from multiple directions. We need to deny them safe haven and disrupt their activities in Syria. We need to build up a Syrian opposition to confront them. And we need to take a long view. Achieving the outcome we desire requires that the multiple lines of effort all have to move apace of each other.

These lines of effort include counter-financing, counter-foreign fighter flow, counter-messaging, humanitarian aid, economic progress, the air campaign, restoring an offensive capability to the Iraqi security forces, and a ground campaign managed by the Iraqi security forces with the ISF from Baghdad and the Peshmerga

from the north, with contribution from the tribes, and in particular, in Al Anbar Province and in Nineveh Province.

In ongoing dialogue with my coalition counterparts there is a consensus across the coalition about our common vision and the objectives across those lines of effort, and there is a strong commitment to work together closely in this complex and long-term undertaking. Progress will be uneven at times, but with strategic patience, the trend lines favor the coalition over the long term.

We are alert that the assumptions that underpin our campaign will be challenged. Most notably, we don't yet know to what degree the new government of Iraq will be able to convince the Kurds and the Sunnis that it intends to have a government of national unity, one that gives the people of Iraq confidence that they have a future other than through ISIL's radical ideology, and we don't know how sectarianism will ultimately affect the region and our campaign. We will continue to revisit and review our assumptions as the campaign evolves, and we will adapt.

Which brings me to resources. Our commitments across the globe, as you well know, are up. Resources are down. And to add to that, sequestration is only months away. Every day that we don't have budget certainty, flexibility, and time means that we will continue to erode our readiness, and over time I will have fewer military options to offer.

The Joint Chiefs and I appreciate your support to help us work our way through not only our national security challenges, but also the resources and the flexibility necessary to meet them. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

General Dempsey, in September you testified to our colleagues in the Senate that, I quote, "If we reach the point where I believe our advisors should accompany Iraqi troops on attacks against specific ISIL targets, I will recommend that to the President," end quote.

However, during a recent interview on "Frontline," Deputy National Security Advisor Ben Rhodes stated that the President will not reconsider his boots-on-the-ground limitation regardless of any recommendation you might provide. Furthermore, the President seems to equate boots on the ground to a 150,000-person U.S. invasion force. I haven't heard anyone talk about sending in divisions. So please help us understand the circumstances where you would envision the need to introduce U.S. military troops into combat situations and the size and types of forces or capabilities that these would be.

General DEMPSEY. Thanks, Chairman.

First, I want to make sure that I mention, I have never been limited in my ability to make a recommendation of any size or sort to the President of the United States.

As we look ahead to the campaign as it evolves, there are certain operations that could be more complex than the ones in which the Iraqi security forces are currently involved. They are doing a better job, and I think soon we would be able to describe it as a good job in Al Anbar and up moving north out of Baghdad, the Pesh[merga] moving south out of the KRG [Kurdistan Regional Government]. But there are some places along the path that I think will be fairly complex terrain for them, including, for example, Mosul, and even-

tually as they need to restore the border between Iraq and Syria. I am not predicting at this point that I would recommend that those forces in Mosul and along the border would need to be accompanied by U.S. forces, but we are certainly considering it.

The CHAIRMAN. The size and types?

General DEMPSEY. Well, back to your point, it is probably worth mentioning, there are two ways we could go about this strategy to defeat ISIL. We could take ownership of it entirely and then gradually over time transition it back to Iraqi security forces, Peshmerga, tribes, Sunni opposition; or from the beginning we could enable them and then hold them accountable for the outcomes, because, after all, it is their country that is most threatened by this threat. Obviously we have taken the latter course.

In taking that latter course, we have established a modest footprint, one that is focused on the development of the security forces, assisting them with planning, integration of fires, and advising and assisting them from higher headquarters. Any expansion of that, I think, would be equally modest. I just don't foresee a circumstance when it would be in our interest to take this fight on ourselves with a large military contingent.

Could there be an exception? I mentioned assumptions in my prepared statement. One of our assumptions is that the Government of Iraq will be inclusive. One of the assumptions is that the Iraqi security forces will be willing to take back Al Anbar Province and Nineveh Province. If those assumptions are rendered invalid, I will have to adjust my recommendations.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

The U.S. and our allies are facing an increased terrorist threat from ISIL, and former U.S. detainees, in part, make up the leadership of ISIL and also are fighting alongside ISIL.

Secretary Hagel, how can the administration continue to press ahead with transfers from Guantanamo at this time? Isn't this in conflict with your policy of stemming the flow of foreign fighters?

Secretary HAGEL. Mr. Chairman, as you know, the Congress delegated the responsibility and the authority to make that ultimate decision based on the risk, security risk to the United States and our allies, of whether we would release any and which detainees from Guantanamo. I have, as I have noted in testimony before this committee, taken that responsibility very seriously, and every time I certify and send up documentation to this committee, I am saying to this committee, with my name and reputation, that I believe that the assurances substantially mitigate the risk to this country and to our allies of certain detainee releases.

Now, in September, this committee may be aware of this number, the Intelligence Community released a percentage, based on their intelligence, on those who have returned to violent extremism since their release from Guantanamo in this administration, and I am dealing with what I have right now.

And over the course of this administration's detainee release—I think there are over 80 total, I believe over 600 during the Bush and Obama administrations—the Intelligence Community assessed that more than 90 percent of those detainees had not intended to or had in fact, we had no evidence of returning to the battlefield.

Overall, you know what the President's position and policy is on closing Guantanamo—Department of Defense supports that, I support that—but not at any cost, not at any cost. So every certification that I make, bottom line, with all the other requirements by law that I have to comply with, and I do comply with every part of the law, in my best judgment, the best judgment of our Intelligence Community, of our Joint Chiefs, of the interagency, of our Secretary of State, Homeland Security, has to be unanimous before I will seriously entertain it. I believe then, if I can get the assurances required by the host governments and the mechanisms, and I go into detail, that it substantially mitigates the risk, then I will sign it, and I have.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Ms. Sanchez.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to ask a little about what has changed with respect to working and training these Iraqi troops in order to make them effective. And I say it with all due respect because you gentlemen weren't necessarily involved in this, but I have been here for 18 years, so I have been clearly on this side asking some of these questions, because in Afghan, of course, we saw that, you know, we had ghost people in the Afghan Army meaning they didn't really exist. We had 63-year-old men, illiterate people, you know, and that is one of reasons why I think we have been so ineffective with respect to the training and bringing up of the Afghan forces.

But I am particularly very interested in the Iraq situation. This goes all the way back to the Bush administration where they were throwing out hundreds of thousands of numbers of who was being trained and who wasn't, and of course they were completely and totally off and wrong. And so then what we saw was the Iraqi Army either run away from the fight with respect to ISIL or fall in with respect to ISIL. And some have said that it was the leadership, that Malaki, you know, wasn't doing the 60/20/20 thing, et cetera, et cetera.

But my question is, what has changed or what needs to change in order for us to continue what I see as your strategy in part, what I call the "Iraqification" of that army, of having Iraqis actually fight the battle so that our people don't come in as boots on the ground? What is it that has changed or what did you learn from the fact that we haven't gotten it right in Afghanistan and we then haven't gotten it right in Iraq? What are you doing to change that so that these men actually do take the fight to ISIL and our men and women don't have boots on the ground?

Secretary HAGEL. Congresswoman, I will give you an answer, but I am going to also ask Chairman Dempsey to answer this because, as you all know, Chairman Dempsey spent a lot of time in Iraq, and there are few military leaders that we have today in this country who know as much about Iraq based on personal experience than General Dempsey. So I will give you my brief response, and then I think this committee will want to hear from General Dempsey on this.

What has changed? Well, a number of things have changed. Let's start with ISIL and the threat of ISIL and what it represents. I have said before this committee, I have said in other places and be-

lieve it absolutely, we have never seen a threat like ISIL before. The comprehensive threat that ISIL represents, the sophistication, the armaments, the strategic knowledge, the funding, the capacity, the ideology, it is new. The threat is significantly worse than we have seen ever before, not just in Iraq but in the Middle East, what ISIL represents, certainly to the future of Iraq.

Second, you have a—

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Secretary, I understand the threat of ISIL. I am asking what is the difference in the Iraqi men that we have in the forces there in making a difference, not running away from the battle—

Secretary HAGEL. Well, I am going to—

Ms. SANCHEZ [continuing]. Being trained correctly, being led correctly?

Secretary HAGEL. I am going to get to that. But I think it is important, you ask what is the difference. There are a lot of differences, like I said, starting with ISIL.

Second, a national unity government by a new Prime Minister, who in fact, as I said in my testimony, for the first time has designated, picked a minister of defense. We haven't had a minister of defense in Iraq for more than 4 years. Prime Minister Maliki took that job unto himself, as he did the minister of interior. This new minister of defense and this new government are reconstituting the leadership of the Iraqi security forces. As I have noted in my testimony, 36 new commanders were switched, starting at the top, across the top.

Men and women will not fight if they do not have confidence in their leaders, if they do not have confidence in their country, in their government, if their government won't support them. Those are fundamental changes.

Now, let me hand this off to General Dempsey, and I think get to more of the specific points.

Ms. SANCHEZ. And with respect to that second point, maybe, General Dempsey, you can clarify whether those 36 new commanders are a 60/20/20 split or the same as before.

General DEMPSEY. Well, I am hoping we will find out. We don't know yet. We have got some who have been retired, some of who have been relieved, some of who have been moved, we are not yet familiar with who is taking their place. And I hope it is not actually some artificial 60/20/20 ratio because what you really want to get into the ISF is somebody who can actually lead and fight and inspire and be inclusive. But we will see. We will see here very shortly actually who takes the place of those who have been changed.

This is a very brief answer to a very complex question. We left Iraq, and we left it with some things undone. We hadn't fully established a logistics architecture, an intelligence architecture. They did not have close air support and the capability to integrate fires. And we left there with a Ministry of Defense that was largely dysfunctional in the way that it would assign leadership. And they knew that, they knew we knew that. But it was not a completed work. It remained a work in progress.

And then to couple that back to the Secretary's comments, what creates courage on the battlefield is confidence that you have got

somebody at the central government that actually will care for you and your family. I mean, look, you don't think we would be out there swinging and fighting if we didn't have the support of the Congress of the United States and the kind of support that the American public provide to our men and women in uniform. So we really can't hold the Iraqis to a higher standard that just simply didn't exist.

That is why I have said that one of the important assumptions about this campaign is that the Iraqi Government does establish its intent to create a government of national unity. I can predict for you right now, if that doesn't happen, then the Iraqi security forces will not hold together.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Thornberry.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you both for being here.

Mr. Secretary, you mentioned that the President said that he would be engaging Congress to support a new, updated, revised authorization for the use of military force. My understanding is in every previous instance an administration has proposed language and sent it up to the Congress. Is this administration going to propose language and send it up to us, and if so, when?

Secretary HAGEL. Congressman, I don't know specifically what they are going to propose. I don't know specifically if they are going to send it up as a legislative proposal. I do know that conversations are being held right now, have been with various Members and their staffs about the right approach. The President said, as you know, last week, that he intends to engage Congress on this. I know the President has had specific conversations with specific Members of both the House and Senate on this.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Well, I would just comment that having conversations is one thing, but as we learned with the authorization to train and equip the folks in Syria, until you get words on paper, it is kind of hard to make progress.

Let me follow up a little bit with some of your comments that you made to Ms. Sanchez, and I noted, never before seen a threat like ISIS [Islamic State in Iraq and Syria], or ISIL, worse than we have ever seen before. One of the key questions underlying all of this is to what extent we can ultimately be successful against ISIS without dealing with Assad. And what is your view of that? Some people believe, some of our closest allies involved in this effort believe that we can only be successful against ISIS if we become involved in the effort against Assad.

Secretary HAGEL. Congressman, it is a fundamental question you ask, and I will answer it this way. First, let me just make a brief comment about my assessment about ISIL. I make that assessment—and by the way, it is not only mine—but when you look at the brutality, the slaughter, the indiscriminate brutality and slaughter of what ISIL is doing and has been doing, killing, slaughtering, murdering women and children, Sunni, Shi'a, Kurd, minorities of any kind, completely indiscriminate, and the sophistication of that, and again, when you add all that up, represents a pretty clear and different kind of threat.

Now, how does that relate to your question about Syria? I think it is also clear that Assad, because of how he has governed, has brought this astounding instability on himself, on his people, on his country, and it has allowed groups like ISIL, Al-Nusra, Al Qaeda is still there, other terrorist organizations, to be strengthened for obvious reasons. But just alone dealing with Assad where we are now, maybe 2 years ago, 3 years ago, that is not going to put ISIL back in the box or defeat, beginning with degrading or defeating ISIL.

Assad is part of the equation, of course, but when you look at what ISIL dominates now, the swath of the control they have, eastern Syria, much of northern and western Iraq, you could change Assad today and that is not going to change all the dynamics quickly, certainly in Syria. But who are you going to replace Assad with, and what kind of an Army would take on ISIL?

So, yes, Assad is part of it. Yes, it is the longer term part of this. To find a stable government, leaders in Syria, to be able to bring some stability to that country is part of it. But ISIL is right now, and ISIL is threatening the country of Iraq and the Government of Iraq. And so that is why we are dealing with that component first, because we must. They are a threat to our allies. They are a threat to us.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Larsen.

Mr. LARSEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Hagel, you have my first 2 minutes, and, General Dempsey, you get the next 2.

So for Secretary Hagel, there has been no discussion yet of the OCO request for 2015, which is \$5.6 billion, and I am wondering not what is in it. We have some information on that. But what do you know about the current 2014 OCO request through the end of the CR [continuing resolution], what is in that, and why do you need an additional 5.6 in the 2015 given that there is authority for you, at least through the CR, for out of 2014 money?

Secretary HAGEL. Well, the quick answer to your question as to why do we need additional. As I have noted in my testimony, part of that new additional money, the \$5 billion for defense, is for a new train-and-equip program in Iraq. When we had the budget hearings, when the original OCO submissions were made months and months ago, that wasn't the case. So it is a new and sustaining effort.

The other dollars are for the continuation, which we didn't have 6 months ago either, of our efforts in Syria and Iraq, air strikes, train and assist, train and equip, will be in the 1.6, but the continued assistance and other assistance that we are giving Iraq.

So it is separate, it is new, it is different, and particularly the sustainability of us being able to do that and carry it out. And we thought too it was the most honest way to do it, set up a fund, let everybody know the accounting and how we are doing it and why. So that is essentially the bottom line of why we presented it the way we did.

Mr. LARSEN. All right. Two minutes. Good job. Thanks.

General Dempsey, somewhat related. The defense has requested a broad waiver of existing laws in this request for the Iraq train

and equip, and I understand there is a discussion about requesting a similar waiver for the Syria train and equip. Why does the Department need such a waiver and what would the impacts be if you didn't get waivers and you, for example, had to follow existing acquisition laws in order to implement?

General DEMPSEY. Yeah, the issue is pace, I think, is probably the short answer to your question, Congressman. We think that a national security waiver in the hands of the Secretary of Defense allows us to move with the pace we believe we need to move in an environment that where—you know, it is interesting, one of the realities of this campaign is kind of the conflict between progress and patience, you know what I mean. And so I have mentioned that strategic patience is actually a virtue in this kind of conflict. I think progress purchases patience, and in that context the waiver would allow us to move at a pace that would allow us to produce that kind of progress that would, as a result, result in patience.

Mr. LARSEN. All right. That is fine. Thank you both for giving me some food for thought. I appreciate it. I appreciate you coming in. Yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Jones.

Mr. JONES. Thank you.

Mr. Secretary, it is kind of ironic, the last time that I heard before today a Secretary of Defense talk about military involvement in Iraq was Secretary Donald Rumsfeld that got us into a war that was unnecessary.

I know ISIL is evil. There is no question about it. They need to be taken out. But I looked at some of your statements from 2002 when you were a Senator and how you felt about the obligation of a Member of Congress to make a decision to send a young man or woman to die. I also looked at your statements in 2007 when, like myself, you came out against the surge in Iraq.

Now we are possibly going to be asked by the President of the United States, like we were by George Bush, to authorize an AUMF. This is nothing but an abdication of our constitutional responsibility to give any President an AUMF. We tried this past year in June when we had the NDAA [National Defense Authorization Act] bill, Adam Schiff tried to sunset out the AUMF that we gave to President Bush, which has been used by President Obama, and I do not understand how we in Congress can continue to abdicate what the Constitution says is our responsibility.

Before I get to a brief question, James Madison once said, “the power to declare war, including the power of judging the causes of war, is fully and exclusively vested in the legislature.” And I do not believe, sincerely, because when this happens to be President Obama, he wants to have another AUMF or an extension of what we have, I hope that the Congress, both parties will look seriously at what is our responsibility.

Because it is not going to be but so long. You have sent more and more troops to Iraq to train. Many of these are former Saddam Hussein loyalists, and now they are fighting with ISIL, and then some are still now fighting with the other side. It is very complex, I understand that, and I agree with that. But for goodness sakes,

why in the world should we make such a commitment and we don't have an end point to it?

I would like for you or General Dempsey, I have great respect for both of you, to submit for the record two things very quickly.

Mr. JONES. How does this new war end, in your opinion?

And I realize it is just your opinion, but that is very important because of who you are.

What is the end state of what we are trying to accomplish? The American people—over 50 percent of the American people do not want our personnel in Syria or in Iraq. And I will be honest with you, I don't know how we can convince the American people that a nation that is financially broke—you sat right here, General Dempsey—and you are exactly right—sequestration and all the budget problems coming your way and yet you are asking for \$5 or \$6 billion to drop more armaments in Iraq and Syria. Where is it coming from?

Please explain to the American people and to this Congress how this war is going to end someday, whether we are advisors or we are fighting. And I hope to God we are not fighting, and I hope we do not give the President a new AUMF.

So if you will get those into the committee for written form, then, you won't have to answer the questions.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 61.]

Mr. JONES. But this, again, it looks like we are going down the same road that Secretary Donald Rumsfeld told us we had to do, we had to do, and yet we had no end point to that as well.

So thank you very much.

Secretary HAGEL. Congressman Jones, if I might just respond very briefly.

You very accurately described my position when I was in the United States Senate. But it is basic, as you have noted, to the responsibilities of Congress. And an AUMF comes out of Congress. The authority of military force for a President, that authority comes from the Congress of the United States. And I too hope that Congress will engage in this. And I have great confidence the Congress will. They need to. They must. It is a responsibility of the Congress.

So I am right with you in that point, and I will give you my best thoughts on your other question as well.

Thank you.

General DEMPSEY. Thank you.

Ms. Bordallo.

Ms. BORDALLO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this important hearing. Secretary Hagel, and, General Dempsey, thank you for your time today.

As I have stated before, I believe that ISIL could become a direct threat to the United States or our allies in Europe, and we must make efforts to avoid that threat. While I believe that we must keep all our options open, it must be a joint effort with our coalition and allies to stop ISIL.

Secretary Hagel, what additional U.S. or allied military support do you believe it will take for the Iraqis, the Kurds, or the Syrian

rebels to hold their current position and eventually advance to retake areas now controlled by ISIL?

Secretary HAGEL. Congresswoman, as I noted in my statement, that is a very important part of what we are doing to assist Iraqi security forces as they strengthen their capacity, capabilities. That is obviously a big part of the train-and-equip effort as our coalition partners are with us on this, as well as a reinstatement of the Iraqi security forces at the top with confidence, with trust of the men and women in uniform and a unity government that they, in fact, believe is worth fighting for, as General Dempsey said, that they have some confidence in, not just for themselves, but their families.

And so, as I have noted, it is a comprehensive strategy. I believe it can be done, but this is an Iraqi fight. It is their future. And we can help. We are helping. We are doing everything we can. And we will continue to support them as we will with our coalition partners. But that is the way I would just very briefly respond to the question.

Ms. BORDALLO. Thank you.

General Dempsey, in testimony before the Senate back in October, you mentioned that OCO is not the solution to funding. And I have stated before that I agreed that the OCO credit card is going to come to an end sometime very soon. However, as the ranking member on Readiness, I am deeply concerned about the impact of the loss of OCO on readiness.

When will you have a better sense of what this is going to cost, both monetarily and in manpower to continue operations against ISIL? What is the Department doing to plan and budget for this and other activities into the base budget?

General DEMPSEY. Yeah thanks, Congresswoman. I did say that. In fact, I think I went on to say that OCO or the Overseas Contingency Operations fund was gas money and that the service chiefs actually also need the base to support the recruiting, training, organizing, and equipping of the force over time. You can't sustain the force with OCO. You can use it, and that is why I described it as gas money.

To your question, we actually have a pretty good idea of what it is costing right now. And given that we think that our level of commitment is about what it will be for the foreseeable future, it is approximately \$8 million a day. And the funding requests that the Secretary mentioned accounts for that.

We are well aware of the desire to rely less on OCO and more on base. That is a debate—you know, from a military perspective, I can just tell you what I need. And you all have to guide how to provide what I need.

But the base budget is an important component of readiness because it is the foundation on which we build.

Ms. BORDALLO. Thank you very much.

And I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. FORBES. Gentlelady yields back the balance of time.

Mr. Secretary, we understand that you recently had to postpone your trip to Vietnam and Burma to prepare for this hearing and others on Capitol Hill. And I know our allies and partners in the region are concerned with senior administration officials postponing important travel to the region, and I share their concern.

But I hope they can understand that our government has the ability to walk and chew gum at the same time.

While we are focused in this hearing on the ISIL challenge, we remain as committed as ever to America's enduring interests in the Indo-Pacific area, and I appreciate your attendance here on this important topic and the accommodations you have made to the hearing.

But, also, I hope you will reschedule your trip and continue your strong record of engagement in Asia. And thank you for being here.

The last time you were here, we asked a question about a strategy to cut off the finances for ISIL. And I think you were kind enough to acknowledge then that we needed to develop that, and I was just wondering if you could outline for us a little bit about the strategy that we have now in trying to cut off the finances of ISIL.

Secretary HAGEL. Congressman, thank you for your thoughts on the Asia-Pacific emphasis in rebalance.

As you have accurately noted, I unfortunately had to make a decision and I didn't want to have to do that for the reasons you mentioned. As you probably know, since I have been Secretary of Defense, I have had six major trips to the Asia-Pacific. This would have been my seventh. I will reschedule. We are planning on that rescheduling. I talked to all of our Asian partners—Pacific partners, explained to them why I was having to reschedule. And I get the emphasis. I agree with you completely.

But at the same time, to your point about the administration being able to walk and chew gum at the same time, as you know, the President is there now and will be in that area for a few more days in different countries. We will have other follow-up visits as well. But I am rescheduling. It is important. There is no less emphasis on the importance of the rebalance.

On your question about financing on ISIL, I alluded to a couple of things in my statement. When I talked about cutting off their more obvious oil sales as they have, as you know, taken control of some of the oil fields in eastern Syria as—and they did have some in western Iraq. We have been able to take back some of that, the Iraqis have, in most all of it, Baiji oil refinery and so on.

But that is one thing that we are doing and have been pretty effective. Have been able to not only disrupt that, but stop that oil flow out of there that gets into the borders. And they were getting a few million dollars a day from that.

Now, other things, our Treasury Department is taking a lead on this, with partners all over the world, United Nations, European partners, Middle Eastern partners. We are trying to shut those money markets off, any way of funding and resourcing ISIL has, continues to have. We have made a global effort that we lead.

As you know, they also get funds from contributions inside. We try to stop that through our intelligence communities. So this is as much of a focus as it was when I was here 2 months ago. It has to be for the reasons that I mentioned. And as I also said in our comprehensive strategy, cutting off those funds is a very big part of what we are doing and what we are attempting to do and will continue to do.

Mr. FORBES. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

My time has expired.

The gentleman from Connecticut, Mr. Courtney, is recognized for 4 minutes.

Mr. COURTNEY. Thank you, Mr. Forbes.

Earlier Secretary Hagel, some of your predecessors were cited as sort of some grounds or authority for the notion of boots on the ground, larger presence of boots on the ground in Iraq and, I suppose, in Syria.

I want to just, for the record, again remind people that Secretary Gates in his farewell address to the West Point stated, I think, correctly that any Secretary of Defense who advises the President to engage in a ground invasion in the Middle East ought to have their head examined. And I think the approach that you have described here today, which is to strengthen local forces to provide assistance as we have seen unfold in Kobani is really the right approach to adhere to Secretary Gates' good advice, I think, which is that, you know, we are not going down that path again.

And as someone who voted for the title 10 authorization, I just want to share with you: A mother from London, Connecticut, of a Marine came up to me and said, you know, I am with you to this you know, to this extent; but, you know, I am counting on you not to, again, open the door to just—a redux visit of what this country went through over the last 8 years or so. So I just want to share that input with you.

Your request for additional resources obviously is in the middle of a lame duck where it is not clear where we are going yet in terms of whether it is going to be an omnibus with an additional amount as you have requested. There has been talk that the majority is actually, at least, discussing the notion of a continuing resolution into the next Congress.

And I am just wondering if you could share your thoughts about what a CR would mean in terms of being able to, again, implement the operations that Congress authorized.

Secretary HAGEL. Well, recognizing the purview of the Congress on appropriations, I will answer your question this way because you have asked me for my thinking on it. I will begin with what Chairman Dempsey said. Any enterprise must have the flexibility and essentially the authority to plan, as best we can, every business, every nonprofit.

And to take away that critical management tool for the Pentagon where we cannot plan, based on a continuing resolution every few months—maybe this will happen. Maybe this will happen, or maybe it won't happen, is really disastrous. And it does damage to our institution. It does damage to the confidence of our men and women that we ask to go out and serve. It does huge damage to our future investments.

You know, people don't recognize sometimes that our defense enterprise has to be thinking years and years down the road. The platforms that we have today, the sophistication of our technology and our platforms far superior to anything since World War II or anybody else's. This just didn't happen. It didn't happen a year ago, 2 years ago, 2 years ago.

These planning stages and investments in having some certainty that you have got to budget and you know what you are going to

have in that budget is critical to planning. So continuing resolutions are not good for the Department of Defense.

Mr. COURTNEY. And in terms of the specific operations that we are discussing today, I mean, again, is that just sort of, again, make it difficult for you to figure out what, you know, extent of operations you can conduct?

Secretary HAGEL. Well, you factor that in. That is exactly right. And when you take away—those are hugely important management tools, but we are talking about our national security here. We are not talking about putting out a new product or a new colored shoe or overcoat or automobile. We are talking about the national security of our country.

So as much ability, flexibility that we have to have some certainty as to what is ahead, also, to retain a force that these young men and women, smart, they have got other options. And these young enlisted and officers think about what is ahead. Am I financing or are we going to continue to drawdown? What is the future? I understand it is an uncertain world, unpredictable world, but we all do.

But you can't run institutions—especially the Department of Defense—responsibly on continuing resolutions.

Mr. FORBES. The gentleman's time has expired.

The gentleman from South Carolina, Mr. Wilson, is recognized 4 minutes.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

And, Mr. Secretary, General, thank you very much for being here today.

The American people are counting on you to provide information, counsel to our President. And you have indicated, Secretary, national defense is your priority. And I am just so concerned that the President has an odd world view.

It is inconceivable to me the release of trained mass murderers as detainees from Guantanamo builds goodwill anywhere. But it does put the American people at risk. It puts our military at risk.

And I have a personal interest. Two of my sons served in Iraq. They developed a great appreciation of the people of Iraq who do want to live in a democratic society, not a totalitarian or authoritarian. Additionally, I have got four sons now serving in the military. And I believe in peace through strength. I am counting on you, and so are my constituents, the American people.

In this regard, Mr. Secretary, the Islamic State, does it still pose an imminent threat to the people of the United States and is it an imminent threat to our allies?

Secretary HAGEL. Well, I—thank you, Congressman, and thank you sons. Again, I am well aware of their service and what your family has done for our country, continues to do.

As I said in my statement and, I think, in some of the comments I have made here this morning, it is a threat. It continues to be a threat, a significant threat to the United States, to our interests, to our allies. And we have seen every dimension of that play out. So, yes.

Mr. WILSON. And, in such a threat, would the capabilities—say, the seizure of an extraordinary city, Mosul, that enhances the threat, doesn't it?

Secretary HAGEL. It does. And we are very honest about that. As I said in my statements, I think that there is good progress being made by the Iraqi security forces, Peshmerga, as we—just to give you one example. Over the weekend—you may be aware of this—there was a ceremony in Anbar Province. And about 2,000 Sunni tribesmen were there and are preparing to be sworn in to the Iraqi security forces. This is in the province, the general area of Mosul and the area that will have to be taken back.

The ISIS—ISF forces have taken much of that back, not Mosul yet. They will. But the Mosul dam, Haditha dam—I mentioned in my comments Zumar, Baiji oil field, a lot of good news there.

But, yes, of course, any time they hold significant, identifiable cities or pieces of geography, it makes it more difficult.

Mr. WILSON. And we should remember that, indeed, Osama bin Laden operated from a cave, a safe haven in the middle of Afghanistan and was able to conduct mass murder in this country and around the world.

And in regard to achieving a stable, self-reliant Iraq, can this be done with the personnel that you have sent or what do you anticipate?

Secretary HAGEL. Well, first, we, the United States, cannot assure a stable Iraq. The Iraqi people will have to do that. As I have said, we are supporting them. We are doing the things that we think are most important, the things they have asked us for, they have requested from us and that is a significant difference from recent years. They have invited us in. They have invited us with our coalition partners in to help them.

But I believe Prime Minister Abadi and others understand the seriousness of this. It is imperfect, but they have to do it. And we will help them do it, but they have to do it.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you.

Mr. FORBES. The Chair recognizes Ms. Tsongas from Massachusetts for 4 minutes.

Ms. TSONGAS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you—both of you for being here.

I, like my colleagues, remain greatly concerned with recent developments in both Iraq and Syria. But given the long-term consequences of U.S. operations in the region, I think we have to be sure that the administration's overarching strategy and objectives are fully discussed and robustly debated here in Congress. This is especially important, given the lessons of the last decade when, despite 7 years of conflict in Iraq, 4,500 American lives lost and more than \$1.5 trillion spent, our military efforts did not resolve the sectarian conflict we are now confronted with.

Given these harsh lessons and because a full-throated debate has not occurred, I have voted against a short-term authorization to train and equip the moderate Syrian forces. Before we move forward, we need to be clear on what we are asking and will ask of our brave service men and women, what the costs might be, how we are going to pay for any operations against ISIL, what the exit strategy is, what we are asking of our regional partners, their willingness and capability to meaningfully engage in this effort, and what our ultimate goal might be. But it seems to me the horse is ever more out of the barn.

While I have appreciated the President's current commitment to not send U.S. ground troops into combat, I am troubled by the recent tasking of an additional 1,500 troops to Iraq and President Obama's statement that he has not ruled out deploying more troops.

General Dempsey, I appreciate your candor. I think you are very forthcoming when you describe a complex, multifaceted, long-term effort that requires strategic patience in a situation that will continue to evolve. And you have said in the past and are clear about today saying that there are situations in which you could consider recommending ground troops.

You also just described the very important role of the Iraqi security forces and the deep investment that we are making in bringing their capability back to par so that they can take on this task.

But what if they are not up to the task? Could you talk about some scenarios you might envision? As you said, you only make recommendations. I would like you to talk, if you could, about some of the recommendations you might make if it becomes clear that the Iraqi security forces cannot take this on.

General DEMPSEY. Yeah. What I would like to do, Congresswoman, is give you kind of an unclassified answer, but promise you that, in a classified session next week, we can talk about contingency planning.

So if—I mentioned earlier, if some of the assumptions we have made are rendered invalid, of course, we will have to have a branch, as we call it in military terms, to our campaign plan.

There are other—look, we absolutely need a credible partner to provide ground forces in that region so that we don't have to provide the ground combat power to accomplish the task. If the Government of Iraq fails to reach the kind of national unity agenda that we think they need, which would empower and encourage the Iraqi security forces, then, we will have to look for other partners in the region to assist us or build other partners in the region. But, again, I would defer to a classified setting anything more than that.

I will say that since we—I think we agree that this is a long-term commitment. You mentioned end state. It is—the end state is defined as the—ultimately, the defeat of ISIL. I have actually said, including in my opening statement, that will occur when the 20 million disenfranchised Sunnis that live between Damascus and Baghdad reject that ideology and we see some indication, just, again, a glimmer of indication that that is beginning.

ISIL has to continue to advance to succeed. It has to maintain momentum. And we have begun to break that momentum. And, then, I think we will have a clearer picture in answer to your question.

One last point: This campaign will be marked or characterized—I have described it this way—three steps forward, two steps back and, at every step forward or back, we will debate about the size of the step.

Ms. TSONGAS. I look forward to your classified briefing.

Mr. FORBES. Gentlelady's time has expired.

The Chair recognizes the chairman of the Tactical Air and Land Subcommittee, Mr. Turner from Ohio.

Mr. TURNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Hagel, I want to personally thank you for your support for a provision that is in the National Defense Authorization Act that protects the custody rights of our service men and women.

As you know, the House, on a bipartisan basis, has in the past 6 years taken action to provide a national standard to protect men and women in uniform custody rights.

I appreciate your letter of October 30th where you both affirm the DOD support for that provision, but also go further in to say that this legislation does not affect other State custody laws and precludes Federal court jurisdiction.

Thank you for the time you spent with me and for your thoughtfulness in this matter.

General Dempsey, you said that you have never been limited in your recommendations to the President. We are also aware that he has never been limited in his ability to reject them. Our inquiry to you is not whether or not you have been forthcoming in your recommendations, but in the gap that might exist between your recommendations and the President's proposal that is before us. We all have concerns about how effective the air strikes have been as they have both been intermittent and in—and dispersed.

Also, the issue, as Loretta Sanchez has raised, as to how—having the—you know, the diversity of populations participate in being able to take Iraq, how, the Kurdish and other forces might be able to be armed and your assurances that that will be able to be accomplished, working with the Iraqi regime.

So our question to you is: Is in evaluating our support for the President's proposal, we would like to know what is missing in your recommendations versus what we are receiving from the President?

General DEMPSEY. Before I actually answer the question, you have described the air campaign as—I think you described it as erratic or episodic.

Mr. TURNER. Intermittent.

General DEMPSEY. Intermittent. I knew there was a word.

Mr. TURNER. I would never say “erratic” because I have such regard for you.

General DEMPSEY. Thanks for the opportunity.

But the word I want to add is “precise.” And, you know, look, the thing that will cause the Sunni population to actually take heart and begin to reject ISIL is if we are very careful not to create circumstances of civilian casualties or to, in some way, impact on other groups, tribes, for example.

So we have got to be very, very deliberate and very precise in our air campaign. And I think we are accomplishing that. In just over 800 strikes to date, I think we have been both successful and careful.

To your point about whether there is a gap? I can say to you today there is no gap. Both General Austin and I have made recommendations, and those recommendations have been accepted. Any recommendation is made with a risk assessment. You know there is high-risk options, moderate-risk options, and low-risk options.

A low-risk option to the campaign would probably include the introduction of U.S. ground forces to take control of the fight. Neither General Austin nor I and certainly the Secretary of Defense believe that is the right thing to do at this point. So our—there is no gap right now.

Mr. TURNER. You know that we will continue, obviously, to provide oversight and inquiry in that. And we hope that you will certainly share with this committee, to the extent that that gap evolves, because we are very concerned about the success of what the President's goal is to defeat and degrade ISIS. And we look to your leadership for that.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. FORBES. The gentleman from Iowa, Mr. Loeb sack, is recognized for 4 minutes.

Mr. LOEBSACK. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thanks to both of you for being here.

I was writing down lots of questions while you were talking because I think I probably reflect my constituents' concerns about what we are doing there and the number of questions that they have. This doesn't even begin to get at what I have been hearing over the course of the past several months in my district in Iowa, at least. And I may be repeating some things. I had to step out for about half an hour, so I apologize if I am.

But if you could, first, explain in, at least, some detail, what is the ISIS threat regionally or otherwise? Can you lay that out? What is the threat?

Secretary HAGEL. Well, the threat—you started, I think, with regionally or otherwise, is the extent of the brutality and the inhumanity of what they have been doing, what they continue to do as they have expanded their base up until—most recently until we, the United States and our coalition partners, got into this about 3 months ago. They are a threat to the Iraqi Government. As was noted here in an earlier question about, they still control the second largest city in Iraq, Mosul.

As they—if they would be allowed to continue, they would not only, as they already have, to a great extent, inflame a sectarian war and continue to gather momentum with their ideology, which brings in their successes and momentum foreign fighters who hold passports from the United States, from European nations. That starts to extend the threat to not just the region and to Iraq and countries there, but to Europe, to the United States. And I could continue, but I think you get the picture.

Mr. LOESBACK. Yeah. Thank you.

We have not heard the word “counterinsurgency” in this debate, I don't think, because that was obviously our approach to Iraq and Afghanistan earlier on. And then, correct me if I am wrong, but it seems, though, we kind of then transformed whatever military operations we have been doing in this regions to counterterrorism perhaps.

Where would this fall? What you are trying to do, where would this fall if there was a contingency as such—maybe there isn't. Explain to me if there isn't—but between counterterrorism and counterinsurgency?

Because, in fact, ISIS or ISIL is creating a state if they are actually creating governments. And if they are consolidating their control, might counterinsurgency be really the way to go as far as responding to them?

Secretary HAGEL. Well, I think our—

Mr. LOEBSACK. I am not advocating that. I am just asking from an analytical standpoint.

Secretary HAGEL. No. I think our strategy—and it is a good question—is pretty clear on this point because you have really, I think, hit the centerpiece.

Our strategy is counter-ISIL. And if you were here for my testimony, I walk through a number of those points. General Dempsey has further refined those points as to how we are countering ISIL, what are we doing about that.

And one of the points that I noted, it is a comprehensive strategy. It has to be. Many of the questions here this morning have gotten into that, one, being their funding, cutting off their funding, coalition partners, all the partners of the region involvement—involved strengthening the Iraqi security forces, doing everything we can to support a new Iraqi unity government that reaches out to everybody, the Sunni, the Shi'a, the Kurds, all the minorities, giving everyone some participatory power in their government, which elicits confidence and trust in their government. So that is our strategy.

Now, we can frame it up by however way you want. But it is counter-ISIL. It is a strategy that is focused on this particular issue, this particular threat. And the world is dynamic and changes, and we are not going back to what worked in—12, 10 years ago. We learn from mistakes. We learn from things that worked. But this is a unique threat.

Mr. FORBES. The gentleman's time has expired.

The gentleman—

General DEMPSEY. May I, Chairman? I can do this in 30 seconds.

Mr. FORBES. Thank you.

General DEMPSEY. Clearly, we are alert to any threats that could emanate from Iraq and Syria with planning and operational activities that could threaten the homeland. And you have seen us take some actions here of late that clearly align with a counterterrorism strategy.

I would suggest to you that Iraq is actually conducting a counterinsurgency. And we are enabling it with our air power, our planning, and our assistance. Because they do have an insurgency on their hands. And, actually, it allows them to think about, not just the military component. So as they clear an area, whether it is up to Baiji or out to al Assad, they have got to follow it up with governance, economic development, humanitarian assistance. Otherwise, that insurgency will persist.

Mr. LOEBSACK. All right. Thank you.

General DEMPSEY. Thank you.

Mr. FORBES. The gentleman from Minnesota, Mr. Kline, is recognized.

Mr. KLINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, gentlemen.

Just following up on this discussion here the last minute or two, I think it is important for all of us in this committee, all of us in

America for that matter and certainly you gentlemen to keep the focus on what the policy is. The policy is to defeat ISIS, our enemy. Whatever we do with Iraq is a tool in achieving that policy.

It is not—our ultimate goal here isn't to protect Iraq and build a stable Iraq. We just need that tool to affect our policy of defeating ISIS.

And sometimes I think we forget. We start talking about how many wars we are in or what are we doing, can the Iraqis defend their own country and so forth. All useful discussion. But the policy is to defeat ISIS.

General Dempsey, are Americans flying helicopters now in Iraq?

General DEMPSEY. Yes.

Mr. KLINE. Thank you.

And in a classified session, I would like to get some more information about what that force looks like.

But it reminds me that, while we may have forces in compounds doing various intelligence and logistics and so forth, we actually have Americans out and about in harm's way. And that makes me think that I hope, and, again, this is probably a discussion for another day—that we have good American medical support for those soon to be 3,000 or so American forces there. We don't want Americans in harm's being reliant on, in this case, Iraqi medical support. So, again, probably a discussion for another day.

And then my question, General Dempsey, is: You said in an earlier answer to a question, as you were talking about turning over to Iraqi security forces some responsibility to do some fighting, that, if they can't do it, we would, quote, "hold them accountable." I can't understand what that means, "hold them accountable." What would—how would we do such a thing, hold them accountable?

General DEMPSEY. Yeah. I actually think, Congressman, maybe there is two answers that have been—that have been pulled together into one to create that confusion.

What I said was that, among the tenets of our strategy is that, as we assist the ISF and the Peshmerga, that the Government of Iraq has to be held accountable for progress that matches the military progress.

Mr. KLINE. But what does that mean?

General DEMPSEY. Well, what that means is, if they do not form and actually manifest this national unity agenda, then, frankly, it will be among—I will be among those that recommend that we do not support them to the degree we are supporting them. Because that has got to—there has to be some conditionality to our support, it seems to me.

Mr. KLINE. Well, I—clearly, I mean, I agree with you. I am just not sure that we know yet what that "hold accountable" means. We don't give them any more money? What? I don't know what that means.

But I do think that is important that we all—and certainly the two of you—think about—and the President and so forth, what does that mean, hold them accountable? Again, keeping in mind what our policy is and what your job is, is to defeat ISIS.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. FORBES. The gentleman yields back.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California, Mr. Garamendi, for 4 minutes.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Dempsey, thank you very much for your service and, Mr. Secretary, the same. We appreciate all that you are attempting to do.

My question, General Dempsey: Are we at war in Iraq and Syria?
General DEMPSEY. We are at war against ISIL, yes, sir.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Since that is the case, would you, Secretary, please provide in writing the most recent legal authority for the United States to conduct such a war. We know that, previously, there was talk of the War Powers Act. But, apparently, that is no longer the case since 90 days has passed and we are still at war.

Perhaps there is the Iraq or the Afghanistan authorization to use military force, but I would like to have the most recent legal justification, if you would please, for the record.

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

Mr. GARAMENDI. Also, we heard the chairman in his opening remarks say that any authorization to use military force that is not unlimited is dead on arrival. Since the chairman is not here, perhaps his staff could tell the chairman that, at least, this member of this committee would love to see his proposed authorization to use military force as broad as he might like to do. Bottom line here—this is more for us than for you two gentlemen—is the obligation that we have under the Constitution to declare war.

Now, there may be some legal justification in the past that could be stretched for this war. I don't think so. So we have an obligation here, and we should be about that. We ought not wait until the next Congress. You have said, the President has said, to conduct a war successfully, we all need to be supporting it. We are not at the moment.

Now, my questions to you two gentlemen have to go with two issues that have not yet been discussed. You have mentioned the coalition, but you have not specifically mentioned Turkey or Iran. Would you please do so. What are they doing? What is their role now? And what do you see it in the future?

Secretary HAGEL. Well, Iran is not a member of the coalition. As you know, historically, Iran and Iraq have had cultural, religious, economic ties. That doesn't stop. It hasn't stopped. We are not coordinating with the Government of Iran. We are not working with the Government of Iran.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Is the Government of Iran involved in any of the military activities in Iraq?

Secretary HAGEL. They are not involved in anything that the United States or the coalition is involved in.

Mr. GARAMENDI. That is not my question. Are they involved in any military activities in Iraq?

Secretary HAGEL. As far as I know, the Iranian army is not engaged in Iraq. There may be other components, Shi'a militia, those kinds of groups that have been there that have—over the years, we have dealt with over the years. But as far as an official Iranian Government military presence in Iraq, I am not aware of any.

Mr. GARAMENDI. And now Turkey.

Secretary HAGEL. Turkey, as I noted in my comments, has agreed to be one of the training sites for the train and equip of the Syrian moderate opposition. They, as you know, worked with us opening up the airspace to get in supplies into Kobani for the Peshmerga to resupply their forces. They continue to work with us on other areas of common interest that are important to our efforts there and, of course, their own border. They, as you know, are hosting one and a half million refugees coming out of Syria.

So, no. They are part of the coalition, an active part. And we continue to work with them on those areas.

Mr. FORBES. The gentleman's time has expired.

The gentleman from Texas—

Mr. CONAWAY. Thank you.

Mr. FORBES [continuing]. Mr. Conaway, is recognized for 4 minutes.

Mr. CONAWAY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to yield my time to Dr. Heck, Chairman of the O&I [Oversight and Investigations] committee—subcommittee.

Mr. FORBES. Dr. Heck is recognized, then, for 4 minutes.

Dr. HECK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I thank the gentleman for yielding. Mr. Secretary, General Dempsey, thanks for being here today.

Mr. Secretary, I appreciated your general comments regarding GTMO detainees earlier in the hearing. As you know, since early June, this committee has undertaken an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the transfer of the five Taliban detainees from GTMO to Qatar. The committee appreciates the Department's cooperation in this very important matter.

In addition to previous requests, the committee recently sent two letters to you requesting additional material and support. Just ask if the committee will continue to have your commitment for the Department's cooperation with the items noted in these letters and with other aspects of the committee's ongoing work?

Secretary HAGEL. Yes. Of course. And we will continue to cooperate as we have been.

Dr. HECK. Okay. And, Secretary, I am curious as to whether or not you are being kept up to date regarding the Qatar Government's compliance with the terms of the memorandum of understanding [MOU] for the prisoner exchange? And, if so, who in the Department is specifically responsible for keeping you updated? And are you satisfied with the terms of the MOU being met?

Secretary HAGEL. Yes. Every 2 weeks, I receive a report. We have a special envoy in the Department that we work with, along with the General Counsel's office. I talk with the General Counsel every 2 weeks about this. Steve Preston.

I am continually assured that the Qatari Government is fulfilling its commitments that it made to us in exercising the operations that they said that they would in order to maintain the security of these five individuals. But, yes, every 2 weeks—sometimes more often than not. But every 2 weeks, I get a readout.

Dr. HECK. I would ask. You know, there has been some report in open source media about some of the visitors that the detainees have received and whether or not they are having access to commu-

nication systems that are outside of what is permitted through the MOU. Any concerns from us in regards to that type of activity?

Secretary HAGEL. I—within the limits of an open hearing here, I am aware of those reports. And I—nothing that I have seen so far concerns me more than what we are doing now, and it is within the boundaries of the assurances that we received and—and the agreement that we have from the Qatari Government.

Dr. HECK. Thank you. And I appreciate the Department's continued support as the subcommittee continues its investigation.

Secretary HAGEL. And we will.

Dr. HECK. Thank you.

I yield back, Mr. Chair.

Mr. FORBES. The gentleman yields back.

The gentelady from California, Ms. Speier, is recognized for 4 minutes.

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Thank you, Secretary Hagel, General Dempsey, for your leadership.

The Chair early on spoke about Guantanamo detainees joining the fight with ISIL. He has repeated that on a number of occasions.

Is there any evidence that detainees from Guantanamo have joined the fight with ISIL?

Secretary HAGEL. Not that I am aware of.

Ms. SPEIER. General Dempsey?

General DEMPSEY. The Secretary, in his comment, referred to approximately—of the 89 or so released, that 90 percent of them we have clear evidence that there has been no recidivism. The other 10 percent are largely unaccounted for.

ISIL, of course, is a recent manifestation, within about the last 9 months. But, if I could, we will take that one for the record.

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

Ms. SPEIER. All right. Thank you.

You know, sometimes I feel like we are in a time warp. As we have been sitting here talking about ISIL, CNN has been reporting that there is a change in strategy by the administration. And it is now going to potentially refocus its effort on toppling Assad. So while we are focused here on ISIL, it appears that yet another strategy is being undertaken by the administration.

Can either of you respond to that, please?

Secretary HAGEL. Well, I believe the administration has addressed that last night and again this morning, as well as the State Department, as well as the Defense Department.

No, there is no change in the strategy. And, again, the National Security Council has addressed it. The State Department has. We have. So—

Ms. SPEIER. Well, let me ask you—

Secretary HAGEL [continuing]. That is all I can tell you. There is—there is no change, and there is no different direction.

Ms. SPEIER. Let me ask you this question, then. Our presumption has been that we would train the Free Syrian Army and that they would, as trainees, then fight ISIL. There have been many reports that suggest that they are not willing to fight ISIL. They want to first topple the Assad regime.

So what confidence do we have that, by training them, they are going to be fighting ISIL and not Assad?

Secretary HAGEL. Well, that is the essence of the training and the purpose of the training. And this is, also, part of the vetting process, a clear understanding of what they would be doing.

But let me get to a more basic point. One of the points that I made in my statement as to why moderate Syrian opposition would be part of this training effort, and I noted that their homes and their families are in jeopardy from ISIL, from the brutality and the slaughter and the murder of ISIL. That is their first issue. Yes, they want to see Assad go. Yes, there is no question. Yes, there are other forces and interests, yes.

But the most absolute immediate threat to most of these people is ISIL and what ISIL is doing to their villages and to their families and their homes. So it is clearly in their own interest. But this is also part of the—the vetting process.

Ms. SPEIER. I only have 19 seconds, so maybe you can provide this answer in writing. I continue to be concerned about how we shut off ISIL's revenue stream, and I want to know what we are doing to try and shut down their revenues by closing down the oil refineries that they appear to have taken control of.

And I yield back.

Secretary HAGEL. I will do that in the interest of time. Thank you.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 61.]

Mr. FORBES. Thank you.

The Chair recognizes the chairman of the Readiness Subcommittee, the gentleman from Virginia, Mr. Wittman, for 4 minutes.

Mr. WITTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Hagel and General Dempsey, thank you for joining us today and thanks so much for your service.

Each of our service branches, I think, has a significant challenge in front of them.

Today, there are haves and the have-nots, those units that are trained, those units that are not current in training. I think a significant challenge for them, it affects not only today's mission, but future missions as to what our capability might be.

Each of our service branch chiefs have talked about this concept of tiered readiness and what that means for their force, the risk it places upon their force, how it affects morale and retention.

And now today, my question to you is: How do we address that current situation? And, then, how do we integrate into that the challenges that we are now facing in Syria, in Iraq with ISIL in accomplishing that mission in addition to missions around the world that we want to continue to try to be successful at?

It seems like, to me, that we are a mile wide and an inch deep. So I want to get your perspective on that, too. And how do we get to a point where we are returning to full-spectrum training and making sure that we have a continued full complement of readiness across our force structure?

General DEMPSEY. Let me take a shot at this, Congressman. It is a very, very profound question, meaning intricate.

But I will say this: You are correct that we are generally consuming readiness as soon as it is built. You know, if we would have had this hearing 6 months ago, we wouldn't be talking about the necessity of reassuring our European allies, we wouldn't be talking about ISIL, we wouldn't be talking about Ebola, all of which have had a—have pressurized our readiness.

On the other hand, that is why we exist. I mean, you know, to one of the earlier questions, you know, when will this all end? You know, personally, I believe that the current state of security affairs is about what it will be for about the next generation.

Stated another way, peace is probably not the norm, as you look back at history, and it is certainly not the norm today. So the military has to respond or—to whether it is a security threat or a threat of infectious disease.

To answer your question, it is why I mentioned in my opening remarks that we really need budget certainty, flexibility, and time. And I will say, to your question, I think that we will need additional funding to account for new requirements. I mentioned the three of them that were new just over the last 6 months.

I also think we are going to need to gain your support for some of the reforms we have recommended: pay compensation, health care, weapons systems, and BRAC [Base Closure and Realignment]. Because that will allow us to be more predictable and sustainable over time.

And I think we have absolutely got to get rid of this—this horrible shadow of sequestration because it places such a—both a physical, but also a psychological shadow over the defense budget that it has very bad, long-term effects.

Mr. WITTMAN. Thank you.

Gentlemen, let me ask this question. Specifically, today, as we speak, if sequester comes back in 2015 and we have the reduction in OCO funding that is projected to go from \$60 billion to \$30 billion, give me a one-sentence assessment of where you believe our military will be.

General DEMPSEY. We will be less ready than at any time in my 40-year career.

Mr. WITTMAN. Okay.

Secretary HAGEL.

Secretary HAGEL. Well, I haven't had a 40-year career in the military. But I would completely agree with the Chairman, and I have been on the record on this point. It will put the military and our national security enterprise in a very, very deep hole.

Mr. WITTMAN. Very good.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. PALAZZO [presiding]. The Chair now recognizes Mrs. Davis from California.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you both for your leadership, Secretary Hagel, and Chairman Dempsey.

I wanted to ask about the level of expertise that would give us confidence in the troops that we are training right now in order to pull out of our activity. And I know that we are not talking about boots on the ground here, but in an advisory capacity. Because I think Americans are well aware of the fact that, in order for us to

do our job, we need highly trained professionals like our SEALs [Sea, Air, Land teams], like our special operations.

And I would like to know whether we are in any position to see that level of expertise and really hair-triggered preparedness that is required of SEALs and of those who go into special operations like that. I would have to believe that the possibility of something occurring that would require that kind of professionalism is something that we must be planning for. And how do we respond to people that are wondering if they are having that level of expertise.

Which wouldn't require only consulting, but clearly boots on the ground and, again, whether or not there are those who would be on the ground who could order air strikes effectively in order to make that happen.

General DEMPSEY. Well, Congresswoman, I can absolutely assure you I would never come to the Secretary of Defense and suggest that he send anyone into any mission unless they are, in our judgment, the Joint Chiefs, the best trained, best led, best equipped force on the planet. And so we—there is no shortage of skills and expertise whether it is in the conventional forces or the special operation forces. And by the way—

Mrs. DAVIS. I am talking about our Iraqi partners or the Syrians as well.

General DEMPSEY. Well, what—of course, the—there is always a gap between our level of expertise and theirs that we try to close to the extent we can.

I guess maybe the only thing I am suggesting, it is conventional. It is special operating forces. It is air, sea, and ground. And, you know, we kind of gloss over—not you—but we tend to focus on what are we doing on the ground. But we have been flying, for 8 weeks now, a very—an extraordinary air campaign. And those young men and women are executing that, frankly, exceeding expectations in my view.

So I am not sure how to address your question about the expertise issue. If you could elaborate a bit more, I would—I will give it a shot.

Mrs. DAVIS. Yeah. Thank you.

Is there a metric? Do we need to have a certain level of expertise and a quantity of those who were trained?

General DEMPSEY. On their part? On the part of the—

Mrs. DAVIS. On their part.

General DEMPSEY. Yes. Absolutely.

Mrs. DAVIS. Do we know that our—our team will not be required to go in—

General DEMPSEY. Yes.

Mrs. DAVIS [continuing]. That kind of an operation.

General DEMPSEY. Yeah, and I will give you this briefly. So there is—the Iraqi security forces have an organization called the CTS, Counter-Terrorism Service. They are absolutely capable. In fact, if anything, they have been overused because they are the best of the Iraqi security forces.

So what we are trying to do with them is reconstitute them. They are also very well led, by the way, which means they have both capability and leadership.

On the other side of it, we believe we need three capable divisions. A division is roughly 9 brigades, which is to say we are going to need about 80,000 competent Iraqi security forces to recapture the territory lost and, eventually the city of Mosul, to restore the border.

And we are on path to conduct that training. It is why we are setting up these training centers in the locations the Secretary mentioned.

Mrs. DAVIS. So we didn't necessarily see a lack of response on their part in the latest—when we were looking at the Iraqi forces and they basically—

General DEMPSEY. When we did our assessment?

Mrs. DAVIS. When we did the assessment, but just in terms of what happened.

General DEMPSEY. Oh, what happened when they collapsed?

Mrs. DAVIS. Yeah.

General DEMPSEY. Two divisions and a few more brigades collapsed in northern Iraq. They collapsed because of corrupt leadership.

There was a period of time just a couple of years ago when a man could purchase his command of an Iraqi division. That was a terrible outcome, as we saw, for Iraq in general.

Anyway, they collapsed because of poor leadership, no confidence in the central government, and a kind of mythology that it built up around ISIL that it was unstoppable. ISIL has now been stopped.

Some of the forces that have—that abandoned their post have been reintegrated into the military, which is a very positive sign, I think. And the assessment that we have been making suggests that we can recover from the shortcomings they exhibited. So—but that is all part of this campaign.

Mrs. DAVIS. Okay. Thank you, both of you.

Mr. PALAZZO. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Hunter from California.

Mr. HUNTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, gentlemen, for being here.

I guess, the—the first question I have I am going to lead with a quote from you, Secretary Hagel: “I disagreed with President Obama, his decision to surge in Afghanistan, as I did with President Bush on the surge in Iraq. It wasn't a matter if we could win at the moment. Of course, no force in the world can stand with the sophisticated power of the American military. Nobody could stay on the field with you, but that is not the issue. That never was the question. The question is, then, what happens next? Where is this going? What is the end game?”

So where is this going? What is next? And what is the endgame? The Iranians are training more Iraqis than we are. They are getting more influence in Iraq right now. You have no plan for Syria. You don't know what you are going to do with Assad. You don't really want to take him out because you don't know who is going to take his place.

And both of you right now work for an administration that had Iraq finished, completed, and handed to it on a silver platter. And you talk about the long view, General. The long view would have been we wouldn't be here right now if we had stayed in Iraq in the

first place. And we are talking about this like we weren't there for 10 years and that this administration didn't give it up.

I don't get it. I am completely confounded and, frankly, I guess I would question the administration's credibility on this and their ability to even do anything, based on the fact that you didn't see this coming, you didn't react quick enough, you got in way late in the game, and we literally wouldn't be where we are right now if the administration had made the right decisions in the first place.

Do we even have a status of forces agreement now with Iraq? Do we have a status of forces agreement now with Iraq?

Secretary HAGEL. Well, we have a diplomatic note.

Mr. HUNTER. So we don't even have a status of forces agreement now, which was the reason we left in the first place, is because we lacked that?

Secretary HAGEL. We have privileges and immunities that we believe satisfy our requirements to protect our troops.

Congressman, I will respond to some of your points.

Mr. HUNTER. Secretary, let me give you one of your quotes, if I could too: "The plan to revive the Iraq war by sending a surge of 30,000 troops"—obviously this was then—"is the most dangerous foreign policy blunder in this country since Vietnam. If it is carried out, I will resist it."

You were adamantly against and consistently against the Iraq war as a Senator, and now you are basically the second-highest ranking military officer in a civilian capacity in the country in charge now of leading our forces in a strategy in Iraq again. I am really confounded on how the American people are looking at our team right now, at your team, and saying, how do we do this? You are now in charge of what we lost because of decisions made outright and forthright by the administration.

Secretary HAGEL. Well, let me see if I can pull some of this apart. My past record and statements stand, and that was a situation that is different from today. I can't go back and replay 2011 or 2012 or why did the United States leave or not leave. We will let history decide that.

Mr. HUNTER. But we didn't leave, because we are there now, right?

Secretary HAGEL. Well, we never left. We have the largest diplomatic compound in the world. Our embassy there is the largest in the world. So we have never left. But regardless, we are where we are. My responsibility today, Congressman, is not back in 2007 or 2002 or 2003. I have a new responsibility, new set of threats and challenges, new dynamics. That is what I am dealing with.

Now, I said earlier this morning, sustainability. We had 150,000 troops in Iraq. Yes, we are the most powerful military in the world, but we are trying to build and help the Iraqis build—not us, them, it is their country, their interest—a sustainable—

Mr. HUNTER. I was there.

Secretary HAGEL. I know, and we appreciate your service. A sustainable government force where they can protect themselves, they can support themselves, they can do all the things that sovereign governments must do.

Mr. HUNTER. Right.

I am out of time, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary HAGEL. My role today is the threat that ISIL poses against the Government of Iraq, against us, and against our allies. That is my threat responsibility today.

Mr. PALAZZO. The gentleman's time has expired.

The Chair now recognizes Ms. Gabbard for 4 minutes.

Ms. GABBARD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, gentlemen, for being here.

As both of you walked through your testimony, I couldn't help but think that it does sound very familiar to other testimonies we have heard in the past about training and arming Iraqi security forces, of training and arming a local security force, now called a national guard. And overall, I am wondering how we can be walking down this same path that we have walked down over the last decade or more and hope for a different outcome.

You have outlined your intentions to train and arm 12 Iraqi security forces, brigades, to include arming them with Hellfire missiles, and I have got a few questions with regards to that. How many Kurdish Peshmerga brigades will you be training, and will you be arming them directly and not funneling those weapons through the central Iraqi Government as we have seen, very recently, has been very resistant to passing on any of those weapons or arms, ammunition that we have provided through that central government.

Secretary HAGEL. Well, I will take a couple of the specific questions you asked. One, I noted the 12 brigades that we will be training. You asked how many of those are Peshmerga. Three of those 12 brigades are Peshmerga brigades. You ask about the request that the Peshmerga has made for armaments and for the materiel. That is all being funneled through the Iraqi Government.

Ms. GABBARD. How can you be assured that they are getting any of that? Because publicly their ministers of defense and others are saying that they are not receiving those arms.

Secretary HAGEL. They are being given the armaments. All of the requests are ongoing. So just as I said in any statement, all of the requests from the Iraqi security forces aren't there yet. As I said in my statement, a good deal of this is still coming. I mean, you just don't produce large inventories of armaments in weeks or in a month. All of that is being worked through the Iraqi security force, through the Iraqi Government.

And I also noted, by the way, in my statement, Congresswoman, there were very specific amounts, significant amounts of armaments given directly to the Peshmerga from coalition partners over the last few months.

Ms. GABBARD. So up until this date, as well as with the funding request that you will have before Congress, none of those arms will be provided directly to the Kurds and the Peshmerga from the U.S. Government?

Secretary HAGEL. The Kurds' request will be worked through the Iraqi Government.

Ms. GABBARD. Has the Iraqi Government stated publicly that they will provide those arms to the Kurds?

Secretary HAGEL. Well, that is an Iraqi Government issue. I can't sit here and—

Ms. GABBARD. But they have stated publicly that they will not in the past.

Secretary HAGEL. It is clear that the Iraqi security forces want a strong and viable and armed and trained Peshmerga. It is in the interest of the country of Iraq. So whether the Peshmerga is given every item on that list—and by the way, I have seen some of the list, their pretty spectacular list.

Ms. GABBARD. Well, understandably, but they are also the trusted fighting force on the ground that has been most effective against fighting ISIS—

Secretary HAGEL. We appreciate that.

Ms. GABBARD [continuing]. And with very limited resources.

I guess my last question—we are running out of time here—is how can we have the confidence that this Iraqi security forces at this early stage of this government will not end up with the same outcome of units deserting and leaving weapons in the hands of ISIS?

Secretary HAGEL. Well, again, I think we have covered some of these questions before this morning, but I will say, first, there is risk in everything, there is no guarantee of anything. But we believe what we are doing now to help rebuild the Iraqi security forces, as the Abadi government is changing their leadership, so it will instill, we believe, a new level of trust and confidence and support in Sunni forces and the Sunni tribes. I noted an example over the weekend of 2,000 Sunni tribesmen in a ceremony this weekend preparing to go into the Iraqi security forces being sworn in. All those different things we are doing now we believe can lead to the kind of strong Iraqi security forces that will be required to take back their country, but also that must reside within an inclusive, unity, strong participatory government in Iraq.

Mr. PALAZZO. The gentlelady's time has expired.

The Chair now recognizes Mr. Franks for 4 minutes.

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

Mr. Secretary, let me begin by saying that I think you have very accurately described ISIS. I think that your description there is well considered and very accurate, and I appreciate it. You have kind of told it like it was.

I remember that George Bush said almost verbatim: If we leave Iraq before our commanders say that we are ready we will be risking the future of Iraq. We will see mass killings on a horrific scale, and we will be increasing the chances of American troops having to return and face an even more dangerous enemy.

And I have to say to you, Mr. Secretary, in all due respect to you, I think that this President owes Mr. Bush, Mr. Hunter, and thousands like him an apology for standing by as ISIS entered Iraq and essentially made this Bush prediction come almost precisely true. And the concern I have, of course, is that I am afraid that it is the same ideology or the same approach is being borne out in other fronts.

As dangerous as ISIS is, as again you have so accurately described, the greater danger is if some of the core elements of that insidious ideology, which is in some of the leadership of Iran right now, gets their finger on the nuclear button. And this President seems equally oblivious to that as he has been to ISIS entering

Iraq. And my concern is that their latest funding request includes a significant portion that would go to ISF that we will be fighting along beside Quds and Iranian Shi'a militia, and that has a way of elevating Iran's credibility or increasing their credibility to some extent, and I think increasing the chances and hastening the day when they will gain access to nuclear weapons, and this administration seems oblivious to all of that.

And I know that this is a contentious issue, but do you think that we are doing enough to prevent Iran from gaining nuclear weapons?

Secretary HAGEL. Congressman, I am going to answer that, but also let me lead into that answer by the first comments and questions you ask about whether we are oblivious to the ISIS threat.

Mr. FRANKS. Certainly the President was. We wrote. Certainly he did nothing to stop them. A very small force could have prevented them from coming in, very small force, and it could have prevented them from gaining the base of operation that they have gained. We wrote letters. They were ignored. This is for over a period of months.

Secretary HAGEL. Yeah. Let me just remind all of us that, first of all, our Defense National Intelligence Agency earlier this year had noted the threat of ISIS, specifically ISIL. We were all aware of it. We were talking to the Iraqi Government about it. This was the government of Prime Minister Malaki.

Now, let's also remember Iraq is a sovereign nation. We have to be invited into Iraq to help. We were telling Prime Minister Malaki he had a problem he was going to have to deal with. We couldn't have just arbitrarily—I suppose we could have—invaded Iraq without the sovereign country and the elected Government of Iraq inviting us in. We were not. We were not asked to help, even though we were talking to the Iraqi Government. So I think it is important we just set the stage.

This also was at the time, if you recall, Congressman, Iraq was at the front end of changing governments. And a new government didn't take over, if you recall, until September of this year. But even then, we were invited in, in late summer, and we did get involved in it in late summer, but we had to be invited in. And so that is first.

On Iran, this administration is very aware of the dangers of Iran, and the President has said again that his policy is the same as President Bush's policy that Iran—

Mr. FRANKS. It is not the same as President Bush's policy, but continue.

Secretary HAGEL. On Iran, it is, that Iran will not, cannot have a nuclear weapon. That hasn't changed.

Mr. FRANKS. In all due respect, the Bush policy was in keeping with the U.N. [United Nations] Security Council, which was we would dismantle and make sure that they didn't have the ability to enrich uranium or produce plutonium. And this administration has written an agreement that allows that protocol to be a protected policy.

Secretary HAGEL. That is what this administration has been doing, working with IAEA [International Atomic Energy Agency]. What the talks are about, as you know, Congressman, which we

may see something come out of it, we may not, the P5+1 [United States, Russia, China, United Kingdom, France, and Germany], through the United Nations, the five members of the Security Council of the United Nations plus Germany in those talks is to dismantle, is to do all the things that we want to do to move Iran away from the capacity, capability of building a nuclear weapon. This Department has the responsibility to continue to provide the President with all the options on the table. We have and we will.

Mr. PALAZZO. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. FRANKS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. PALAZZO. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Johnson from Georgia for 4 minutes.

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you. I am prompted to ask you, Secretary Hagel, to set the record straight as to what factors led the U.S. to withdraw all of its troops from Iraq because of the inability to attain a status of forces agreement. Can you remind us of what major factor precipitated our inability to enter into an agreement with the Iraqis?

Secretary HAGEL. Well, without going into the long history, and I think everybody recalls it, I was not in this job at the time, but the United States could not get the assurances that it required, that it always requires when we have troops in a country, assurances to protect our troops. That is normally done through a status of forces agreement, but in the case of Iraq now we have privileges and immunities. But the fact is we were not invited to stay. Malaki had said that he couldn't get it through the parliament.

Mr. JOHNSON. That is the point that I want to make. Thank you.

I also would like for you to explain what interests the U.S. and Iran have jointly with respect to this ISIL issue? What are some of the things that we have joint interest about?

Secretary HAGEL. ISIL, as it has demonstrated through its indiscriminate brutality of killing all groups and sectors of people, Sunni, Shi'a, Kurds, minorities, Christians, that ISIL is a threat to Iran. It is a threat to the entire region. It is a threat, as we have said all morning, a clear threat to Iraq because it now controls large swaths of the country of Iraq. But at the same time, we, the United States, are not coordinating with Iran. We are not working with Iran.

Mr. JOHNSON. Are there any areas where the U.S. and Iran can cooperate with respect to this ISIL threat?

Secretary HAGEL. Well, each sovereign country in the Middle East must protect its own interests, as Iran certainly is doing, will do, as Iraq is doing, as Jordan is doing, Turkey is doing, but that is an independent effort that the—

Mr. JOHNSON. Are there any areas where we can have joint concerns?

Secretary HAGEL. Well, we have joint concerns, but not joint cooperation.

Mr. JOHNSON. Do you see joint cooperation being a possibility?

Secretary HAGEL. Well, that is not our policy, and it may some day be possible.

Mr. JOHNSON. It wouldn't be a bad thing, would it?

Secretary HAGEL. Well, I am all for cooperation and getting along in the world in peace, but the realities of the fact that Iran is a

state sponsor of terror, they have continued on a path of trying to nuclearize weapons and make those efforts, so it is hard to be unmindful of that.

Mr. JOHNSON. It is good to be mindful that dialogue can help to create better conditions also. But let me ask you this about Mr. Baghdadi. Is he alive? Is he injured? Was he involved in the situation that occurred, the air strike that occurred last weekend?

Secretary HAGEL. Well, those are areas that we probably should get into in a classified hearing.

Mr. JOHNSON. All right. Thank you, sir.

Secretary HAGEL. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN [presiding]. We will have a classified follow-up next week.

Dr. Fleming.

Dr. FLEMING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Dempsey, what is the current strength of ISIL? We have heard reports, 30,000. I have heard reports of 50,000. Can you clue us in as to what that current strength is?

General DEMPSEY. The Intel Community does put kind of a band around it. At one point, 21,000 to 31,000. Frankly, I think that includes groups that they may have scooped up along the way, former Baathists, for example. So I would suggest to you that the core group of ideological ISIL, probably about two-thirds of them are in Syria, about a third of them in Iraq, and in total it is probably 15,000 to 18,000.

Dr. FLEMING. 15,000 to 18,000 core, but then maybe another 20,000 or so that may be cooperative with, fight alongside is, I think, what you are saying, 30,000 to—

General DEMPSEY. I think that is where the number 31,000 comes from, the affiliates, if you will.

Dr. FLEMING. Now, I get your strategy in Iraq, which is to go back and undo the things that went wrong in Iraq. We have got better leadership. Certainly we are helping them stand up their military so they can go on the offensive. Eventually restoring the border. But I think we can assume that most of those ISIL members will end up in Syria if we move them out of Iraq.

So what about the Syrian piece, the Free Syrian Army, how long will it take and how many strong will we be at when they become an effective force?

General DEMPSEY. I think we have testified previously that in the first year we think we can produce about 5,400, that we think the total required in order to put enough pressure on the ISIL forces in eastern and northern Syria would probably need to number about 15,000.

Dr. FLEMING. 15,000. So would that be an offensive force where they could actually march into Syria and actually attack, take out, degrade, destroy?

General DEMPSEY. No, let me describe it this way. It will be a force large enough to defend initially so that it can actually hold territory that heretofore is more fluid, and then it should have the capability over time to become offensive.

Dr. FLEMING. And at what point do we get to 15,000, at what point, I am talking timeline here, do we get to an offensive force?

General DEMPSEY. Those details are actually part of what is happening at CENTCOM this week. There is about a 30-nation, 190-planner contingent down there that is talking about ISIL both as it exists in Iraq and in Syria. And so the question is, where along the way will there be enough of a critical mass to employ it, and that is a conversation that is ongoing right now.

Dr. FLEMING. Okay. Will we be able to get more details tomorrow?

General DEMPSEY. Sure. I don't know about tomorrow, but you will be able to get more details, yes, sir.

Dr. FLEMING. Okay. Thank you. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Scott.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, thanks for being here. I know you have got a lot on your plate with budgets and other things and big decisions on our national security, the different things that are going on in the world, and I certainly respect you, and I will try to be brief about this.

Secretary Kerry was before this committee. I believe the two of you were with him a couple of months ago when he was asking for the ability to move into Syria, and I asked Secretary Kerry at that point what were the principles of war under which the Obama administration operated. He could not give them to us. He promised to get them to us within 24 hours. He has not responded, nor has his staff responded in any way when we have again asked for those principles.

But I quoted at that point Colin Powell's doctrine. Is there a plausible exit strategy? Do we have a clear obtainable objective? And then I go and I look, you know, again at where Colin Powell has expanded on that, and when a nation is engaging in war, every resource and tool should be used to achieve decisive force against the enemy, minimizing U.S. casualties, and ending the conflict quickly by forcing the weaker force to capitulate.

Why should we approve an authorization that doesn't give you, General Dempsey, and you, Secretary Hagel, the ability to do what it takes to win the war?

General DEMPSEY. Congressman, that is a great question, and you are obviously a student of warfare. Let me answer it this way. The use of the military instrument in state-on-state conflicts does comport better to General Powell's principles than the use of military instrument against something like ISIL. And so as we have looked at mass, which is one of the principles of war, as we looked at mass, mass has a coherence and a quality all its own when it is applied against the mass of another force, notably a state. But when you are applying mass against something like ISIL, you can have a particular kinetic effect against it, but you can also generate antibodies within the population that could actually be counterproductive to what you are trying to achieve.

I would like to unpack this a bit in a longer conversation with you or a paper, but I will tell you this. In terms of what we are doing in Iraq and what we are doing in Syria, I referred to a command sergeant major that I had as a young lieutenant colonel, and I was trying to figure out, of these five or six or seven things that we really had to get done, how would I possibly prioritize them.

And he said to me simply—his name was named Don Stockton, he has passed away since—he said, look, Colonel, just make sure that you keep the main thing the main thing.

And so ISIL is the main thing, and our priority is in Iraq, and then we will figure out, while disrupting it in Syria, what to do about it in Syria.

Mr. SCOTT. General, I am certainly not a student of war, but I have a tremendous amount of respect for both of you. I guess my problem with this administration, as respectfully as I know how to say this, I believe that the indecisiveness at the White House has led to a lot of the problems and the challenges that we are facing today. And when we first saw ISIL, we knew that no good was going to come from that.

And the indecisiveness is what bothers me. I don't feel like you have that indecisiveness. I feel like it is the President of the United States' indecisiveness that, quite honestly, puts our men and women in uniform and our American citizens at risk because he is not willing to make the decision to turn it over to somebody who will go do what it takes to protect this country.

And so I respect you, and I would love to have one that just gave you the authority to do what our military leaders think it takes to protect Americans.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Mr. Palazzo.

Mr. PALAZZO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Dempsey, Secretary, thank you all for being here. Happy Veterans Day. Happy Veterans Day to the veterans behind you. Happy birthday, Marine. There is cake downstairs if you haven't had enough. Very important topic. Thank you all for being here.

Previous hearings, we have discussed how ISIS is self-financing and how that is kind of unique compared to some other Islamic extremist organizations in Syria and other places. They are self-financing through smuggling, extortion, murder, you name it, I mean, these are bad people. I think, General Dempsey, you mentioned some of the things that we are doing. Have we been able to truly disrupt their financing source that will lead us to helping, I guess, break up their logistics?

General DEMPSEY. We have certainly disrupted it. There are some things that I would be more willing to share with you in a classified setting where we have reflections of the impact of some of the things we have done against their oil revenue, for example. But again, some of that is probably best described in a classified setting.

Mr. PALAZZO. Okay.

General DEMPSEY. But I will tell you, the answer is, yes, we have significantly disrupted their financial support.

Mr. PALAZZO. Because, after all, if we can dry up the ability to buy beans, bullets, and Band-Aids, I mean, hopefully another way to break their will to fight.

Secretary HAGEL. Congressman, I would just add to that a couple of points we made this morning on this. It is your point, question, observation is part of the comprehensive effort that we are using to stop them, and it isn't just force. Yes, that is a big part of it, but all the other pieces. And just as you said, you don't cut off that

funding source, they will keep coming. And so it is a priority piece of the overall strategy, and we are making progress.

Mr. PALAZZO. Earlier, the status of forces agreement was brought up, and it was said that we have more of a diplomatic note, and you all said you feel like that is enough to protect our men and women in uniform from any form of prosecution in Iraq, which led me to believe, usually when there is a military force there is a civilian contractor force. Is there currently a civilian contractor force providing LOGCAP-type [Logistics Civil Augmentation Program] services to our men and women in uniform, and what kind of protections do they have, and how many do you think may be over there?

General DEMPSEY. We intentionally have approached this mission in an expeditionary way, so we are not dragging in a big LOGCAP to provide life support for our forces. We are dealing with it as a military.

Now, that said, as you know, there is an Office of Security Cooperation in Iraq that deals with the FMS [foreign military sales] case. It is the part that the Secretary referred to as the part that never left Iraq, where these 200 military men and women who are helping procure weapon systems and then provide them to the Iraqis over time. That is supported by a contract, whether it is with a particular weapon system dealer or in some cases trainers, and they have, as part of the contract, they have protections and immunities under the contract.

Mr. PALAZZO. Okay.

Secretary Hagel, I think this week you were quoted as saying—you were actually at a Veterans Day speech at the Vietnam War Memorial, and you publicly stated, we must openly acknowledge past mistakes and learn from them because that is how we avoid repeating them. I would have to agree with you. I mean, Congress, I think, has been honest and saying that sequestration and placing those devastating defense cuts on top of our men and women in uniform was a mistake. There is a huge appetite to, you know, remove those defense caps.

But also I think a lot of people look at this administration and see that they made some mistakes in how we have handled ISIL, how we have handled Iraq, the 2011 withdrawal. And I hope that through your comments alone, that this administration and others will be honest and not glossing over the past, but looking at it honestly so we can avoid making these mistakes, because our men and women in uniform, their lives depend on it. So thank you all.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Mr. Nugent.

Mr. NUGENT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I really want to thank both of you for your service to the country. Belated happy Veterans Day to you. You both deserve our congratulations and our respect.

You are responsible for the lives of our service men and women, and I appreciate both of your positions. And Secretary Hagel, I appreciate your past comments in regards to putting our sons and daughters at risk. I have three sons that are currently serving, and so that hits a point for myself and my wife.

But as we move forward, and two of my sons were in the draw-down in Iraq in 2011, I just wonder, and I know you weren't re-

sponsible because you weren't in that position as it relates to the status of forces agreement, but also an enduring presence in Iraq, do you think, as we move forward, as this starts to—and you mentioned it is going to take years—but shouldn't we have a status of forces agreement? Would that be preferable as we move forward that we have an enduring presence in Iraq instead of walking away like we did? And then because it is so unstable there, who knows what it looks like again after we stabilize it, would it be a good idea that we have a status of forces agreement that allows us to have an enduring presence there?

Secretary HAGEL. Well, Congressman, first, thank you for your sons' contributions and service and for your family's sacrifice and service.

As to your question, I think good question, and it is something we are thinking through, but these are the kinds of things you continually think through, but they evolve. What that place looks like, what the world looks like in 6 months, I can't predict. I can do what I can do now with knowing what I know now, anticipating.

Mr. NUGENT. I think we have talked about strategically looking forward. I mean, that should be part of our strategic plan.

Secretary HAGEL. Well, it always is, but, again, we are not intending to stay there in an indefinite way in the same capacity that we are now at the invitation of the Iraqi Government to come back in to help them, training and equipping and so on. I mean, that is not an indefinite mission. And our air strikes, that is not indefinite.

So we think through what we need now and what the coalition requires, and then what we are going to need as we go along. And we get wiser as we go, too. So you adjust. You have to adjust.

Mr. NUGENT. Okay. And I understand. You know, I am not trying to—I guess I am trying to pin you down.

Would you recommend to the President at some point in time, and I know things change, would it be in our best interest to have a status of forces agreement with Iraq and have an enduring presence of some type within Iraq?

Secretary HAGEL. Well, what I have recommended to the President, what General Dempsey has recommended and our leaders, first, protection of our forces. That is it. Whether you call it a status of forces agreement or whatever it is, whatever the piece of paper or document, it has to mean something. The privileges immunity document that we have now, the diplomatic note, our commanders—I—feel that it is adequate to protect our forces and what we need now.

Now, into the future, we adjust, we have to adjust, and we may want something different. We are looking at this. We will continue to look at it. But right now what we have now is essential and it is adequate for what we require to protect our troops.

Mr. NUGENT. General.

General DEMPSEY. I was the Chief of Staff of the Army at that time. The reason that we believed the status of forces agreement was the right instrument to achieve, to seek to achieve, was the scale, the size of the residual force, which was going to be approximately 10,000.

Secondly, the nation of Iraq was a stable platform. There was no ongoing conflict within its borders. And so we thought that requir-

ing a status of forces agreement from a responsible government as an expression of a shared commitment was the appropriate instrument. We couldn't get it.

The difference? We reentered Iraq in an extremis situation with a brand new government that actually hadn't even named all of its ministers, and so we accepted the diplomatic note as adequate to the task because of the scale and also because we don't have these men and women traveling all over Iraq. At some point in the future, as the Secretary says, when this platform is more stable, I think—

Mr. NUGENT. I would think that because it was important to have an enduring force back in 2011 when talks broke down, I would think that would remain the same today and maybe even be—the reason to have that is what we are facing today in Iraq with ISIL, just as observation.

General DEMPSEY. Yeah. Maybe.

Mr. NUGENT. Thank you, sir, and I thank both of you.

The CHAIRMAN. That concludes our questions from the members of the committee. I want to thank you again both for your service for being here and—boy, oh boy. You just made it. Mr. Bridenstine.

General DEMPSEY. Only if it is an easy one, Congressman.

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. Well, I appreciate that, Mr. Chairman. I am down to 4 minutes now? Okay.

Mr. NUGENT. Three.

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. Three minutes.

Well, first of all, thank you guys both for being here, Mr. Secretary and Mr. Chairman. Our country is facing a major challenge in the Middle East, and I am sometimes deeply troubled by the way things are going. And today we are here to talk about a \$5.6 billion ask, and it seems as though we are in the middle of replanning or changing our strategy, changing our tactics. There are 30 nations that are meeting to talk about the next steps.

It seems to me that we are actually in a position where we are getting ready to allocate \$5.6 billion and not fully understanding ultimately what our approach is going to be. Could you guys each take a few seconds and respond to that so that I can go back to my constituents and say we are not just giving \$5.6 billion but we are actually taking a serious approach at this?

Secretary HAGEL. Congressman, thank you. It is a pretty important and basic question, so I get it.

I tried to lay at least the general parameters of that out, that question in my statement as to the general breakdown of where would it be used, why, and why we think it is important. Also, the dimension that you mentioned and others had this morning, well, what are others doing, what are the other coalition partners doing. And as you just noted, one of the reasons that General Austin has over 30 of our coalition partners in Florida this week is working through where their contributions specific, money, planes, people, logistics, so on, are going to come from. And you know we have conditioned in our request, actually the Congress does this, that we can only draw down so much of that train-and-equip part, the \$1.6 million, until others have put their money in.

But the specifics of how all that is broken down, the timeframe, I mean, we have all that, and we would, in briefings that we will

start, and we have generally started, we will continue to have with staff and explaining why we have asked for this much money, we are prepared to do that.

General DEMPSEY. I would like to take about 30 seconds and swing at this myself because you asked what are we doing. Well, we have a counter-ISIL strategy. It is not an Iraq strategy. It is not a Syria strategy. It is a counter-ISIL strategy.

Secondly, the strategy is built around what I think is a remarkable coalition. If you look at the countries in that coalition, and if you had told me a year ago you could draw these countries into that coalition, I would have said probably not. So the coalition is on board. And the campaign is built around the principle of by, with, and through allies, to include the Iraqis, the Peshmerga, and eventually a moderate Syrian opposition, so that we don't own this problem, we enable it.

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. One last question with my 41 seconds. I have got a study here from the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, and they make a case that when you look at the seriousness of the campaign regarding air strikes, they make the case that in Kosovo we were doing 86 air strikes a day, which was another campaign where there were no troops on the ground, and in this campaign we are doing 7 air strikes per day. Can you guys shed any light on what the discrepancy there is?

General DEMPSEY. Sure. Very different enemy. It is not a nation-state. It is a terrorist organization. They have adapted their tactics to our strengths. And so they are just not sitting around waiting to be bombed, frankly, in a way that a traditional military might have to because you can't hide it. These are individuals in pickup trucks that can hide in and among the population.

Actually, we ought to be taking credit for this, not being criticized for it, because we are being so precise and deliberate, limiting civilian casualties in order to disrupt but not create additional problems for the coalition.

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. Might it be a challenge with gathering intelligence?

General DEMPSEY. Well, I mean, look, any military leader worth his salt would always say, oh, I need more intelligence. Of course, intelligence is a challenge, but we have got our assets focused like a laser beam on learning more about this enemy.

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Will the audience please remain seated while the Secretary and General leave and their party? Thank you.

Thank you. The hearing is now adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:54 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

NOVEMBER 13, 2014

PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

NOVEMBER 13, 2014

Statement of Ranking Member Adam Smith

HEARING ON

The Administration's Strategy and Military Campaign Against Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant

November 13, 2014

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I too would like to thank our witnesses for appearing here today.

Just three months ago, the President notified Congress that he had authorized the Commander of Central Command to undertake airstrikes in Iraq against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Just two short months ago, on September 23rd, the Administration provided a War Powers Notification of strikes in Syria against ISIL and the Khorasan Group, a part of the Al Qaeda affiliate in Syria, the al Nusra Front.

Since that time, the United States has taken hundreds of strikes in Iraq and Syria, killing hundreds of ISIL fighters, eliminating their freedom to move in convoys, substantially impacting their ability to sell oil to fund their operations, and driving their leadership underground which complicated their ability to command and control their forces. DOD has deployed about 1400 troops to Iraq to protect the embassy and to begin to advise and assist the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), including the Iraqi Army, Counter Terrorism Services, and Kurdish Peshmerga, and the President has announced another 1500 would be deployed for this mission.

We have also airlifted substantial stocks of weapons and ammunition to the ISF and to the Syrian Kurds fighting ISIL in Kobane. The Administration has enlisted somewhere around 60 countries in the fight against ISIL, and a number of them have undertaken strikes in either Iraq or Syria and some have volunteered to send Special Forces to Iraq to help. Congress approved a temporary authority for the Department of Defense to begin training and equipping elements of the moderate Syrian opposition to fight ISIL and the Department has identified a number of training sites, partner nations who will help, and submitted a reprogramming request to begin funding this effort. In other words, we have come a long way in a fairly short time.

While we have made substantial progress, more remains to be done to combat the threat of ISIL. An ISIL able to control territory in Iraq and Syria will, without question, plot and plan attacks against the West. They have already said that is their plan, and that is exactly what happened when al Qaeda had safe haven in Afghanistan. Arguably, the threat of such attacks by ISIL is potentially greater, as they have access to literally thousands of foreign fighters, including many who could enter the United States without a visa. So denying ISIL safe haven is clearly in the United States' interests. I think a humanitarian aspect of this is also worth stating. As was noted by some speakers on the debate earlier this week, you cannot imagine a more violent and dangerous group of people. The number of folks that they have brutally murdered in Iraq and Syria solely because they refused to pledge allegiance to ISIS and their twisted view of their religion is staggering. This is a group that must be stopped.

Going forward, we have many decisions to make about combatting the threat of ISIL. The President, for example, has requested that Congress authorize the use of military force against the group, rather than relying on the 2001 AUMF to combat al Qaeda. I agree that Congress should debate and pass an AUMF, but I am skeptical that we can assemble a majority to do so. The President has also requested \$1.6 billion to train the Iraqi Security Forces and we

in Congress need to reauthorize the Syria Train and Equip authority. While I support each of these requests, the totality has left many of my colleagues, and many of the American people, concerned that we are signing up for the War in Iraq all over again.

We should be clear that what we are doing is not a repeat of the Iraq War. We are not, and should not, be deploying large numbers of troops to undertake ground combat in Iraq. Doing so is unnecessary and would likely be highly counterproductive. The Iraqi Security Forces, with sufficient advice, assistance, and retraining, are likely to be able to take the fight to ISIL on the ground with our support from the air. The Iraqis will need to sufficiently reform their politics to be more inclusive and provide the Sunnis with a real role in their system, but U.S. combat troops do not help with that. In fact, deploying large numbers of U.S. combat troops to Iraq might be counterproductive—the Iraqi people are unlikely to welcome us back with open arms and certainly some elements among both the Sunni and Shi'a do not remember our role fondly.

As complicated as Syria is, the situation does not lend itself to a large U.S. ground combat force. Without a question, we need an effective ground element, but that role is best played by Syrian moderate elements that we train and support. U.S. forces could certainly do great damage to ISIL on the ground, but they are unlikely to be able to build the local political and security institutions that will eventually be required to keep ISIL out in the long run and the introduction of U.S. forces may actually attract more attacks from Sunni extremists, foreign jihadists, and even Iranian-sponsored militias. We have an important, even vital, role to play in training, equipping, and supporting those elements while other U.S. forces degrade ISIL and eliminate their leadership and command and control. But I do not see a U.S. ground element as wise or even necessary at the moment.

Going forward, prosecuting the campaign against ISIL in either Iraq or Syria will be extremely complex and challenging. We must not delude ourselves about this. Both Iraq and Syria are complex, messy situations where perfect outcomes are extremely unlikely. Whatever courses of action we undertake will take years and dedicated effort. We will have major disagreements with our allies and partners about desired outcomes. Russia's role in Syria will be challenging. And while we seem to have overlapping interests with Iran in Iraq, our desired outcomes do not clearly align, and we certainly do not have those same overlapping interests in Syria. All of which to say is that these situations are going to be messy and require constant attention and management.

Fortunately, managed correctly, we have a real path toward the goal of degrading ISIL, denying them safe haven, eliminating their leadership, and curtailing their ability to strike at us or our allies. And I hope our panelists here today can help explain to us, and the American people, that strategy.

Thank you Mr. Chairman, I yield back my time.

EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY – AS PREPARED

**STATEMENT BY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE CHUCK HAGEL
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE HEARING ON
THE ADMINISTRATION'S STRATEGY AND MILITARY CAMPAIGN AGAINST ISIL
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2014**

Chairman McKeon, Congresswoman Sanchez, Members of the Committee:

I appreciate the opportunity to update you on the progress of our nation's comprehensive strategy to degrade and ultimately defeat ISIL.

I especially want to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your partnership and friendship over these last two years. On behalf of all the men and women of the Department of Defense, I wish you and your family all the best as you retire from a career of distinguished public service. Your contributions to America's security and strength are recognized everywhere – and greatly appreciated.

I am joined this morning by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Dempsey, who, together with our CENTCOM Commander, General Austin, has played a critical role in not only helping develop and execute our campaign against ISIL, but also in helping assemble a broad, global coalition.

President Obama, Chairman Dempsey, General Austin, and I have all been clear that our campaign against ISIL will be a long and difficult struggle. We are three months into a multi-year effort.

As we enter a new phase of this effort – working to train and equip more counter-ISIL forces in both Iraq and Syria – we will succeed only with the strong support of Congress...and the strong support of this committee.

Since I testified before this committee two months ago, our campaign against ISIL has made progress. ISIL's advance in parts of Iraq has stalled, and in some cases been reversed, by Iraqi, Kurdish, and tribal forces supported by U.S. and coalition airstrikes.

But ISIL continues to represent a serious threat to American interests, our allies, and the Middle East...and wields influence over a broad swath of territory in western and northern Iraq and eastern Syria.

As President Obama has said, ISIL will not be defeated through military force alone.

Our comprehensive strategy is focused on supporting inclusive governance, sustaining a broad-based regional and global coalition, and strengthening local forces on the ground. It also includes undercutting ISIL's flow of resources; countering ISIL's messaging; constricting the flow of foreign fighters; providing humanitarian assistance; and our intensive regional and global diplomatic effort.

In Iraq, much more needs to be done to achieve political reform, but we are seeing steps in the right direction. In the wake of years of polarizing leadership, Iraqi Prime Minister Abadi is leaning forward by engaging all of Iraq's diverse communities. He has appointed a Sunni defense minister after that post was left vacant for four years. And he is moving to create an Iraqi National Guard, which would empower local forces, especially in Sunni tribal areas of Anbar Province, while aligning them with the central government.

Thanks to intensive diplomacy, America is not supporting this effort alone. We have built a global coalition to support local forces in both Iraq and Syria...a coalition of over 60 nations that are contributing assistance ranging from air support to training to humanitarian assistance.

Since I testified here in September, 16 nations have joined the military campaign against ISIL.

The first coalition air strikes in Syria involved Bahrain, Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates – a tremendous demonstration of unity among Arab nations.

Coalition partners have carried out more than 130 air strikes against ISIL in both Iraq and Syria. Last week, Canada launched its first air strikes in Iraq, bringing the total to 12 nations participating in strike operations in Iraq and Syria, as additional partners provide tanker, command and control, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance aircraft.

Coalition nations have also pledged hundreds of personnel to support our mission to train, advise, assist, and help build the capacity of Iraqi forces.

EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY – AS PREPARED

Our global coalition is also helping share the burden of the campaign...with nearly all our coalition partners funding their own contributions.

With the President's Special Envoy for our counter-ISIL coalition – General John Allen – in the lead, we are coordinating the coalition's strategy and contributions across all our lines of effort.

As a coalition, and as a nation, we must prepare for a long and difficult struggle. There will be setbacks. But we are seeing steady and sustainable progress along DoD's two main lines of effort.

First, we are seeing progress in degrading and destroying ISIL's warfighting capacity – and in denying safe haven to its fighters.

Directly and through support of Iraqi forces, coalition air strikes have hit ISIL's command and control, its leadership, its revenue sources, its supply lines and logistics, and impaired its ability to mass forces. In recent weeks, these strikes helped Peshmerga forces push ISIL out of Zumar, in northern Iraq, and helped Iraqi Security Forces begin re-taking areas around the major oil refinery at Baiji. Last weekend, air strikes hit a gathering of ISIL battlefield commanders near Mosul.

ISIL fighters have been forced to alter their tactics – maneuvering in smaller groups, hiding large equipment, and changing their communications methods.

Sustaining this pressure on ISIL will help provide time and space for Iraq to reconstitute its forces and continue going on the offense. This pressure is having an effect on potential ISIL recruits and collaborators...striking a blow to morale and recruitment. And as Iraqi forces build strength, the tempo and intensity of our coalition's air campaign will accelerate in tandem.

We need to continue to help build partner capacity – so that local forces can take the fight to ISIL...and ultimately defeat it.

Today, many of the approximately 1,400 U.S. troops in Iraq are engaged in advise-and-assist programs with Iraqi and Kurdish forces. As you know, last week, the Defense Department announced that we will expand this support to Iraqi forces by deploying up to 1,500 additional military personnel, including two new advise-and-assist centers at locations beyond Baghdad and Erbil, as well as four new training centers in northern, western, and central Iraq. I recommended this deployment based on the request of the Government of Iraq, U.S. Central Command's assessment of Iraqi units, and the strength of the Iraqi and coalition's campaign plan.

These additional troops and facilities will help strengthen and reconstitute Iraqi forces...expanding the geography of our mission, but not the mission itself. U.S. military personnel will not be engaged in a ground combat mission.

Our phased plan to help strengthen Iraqi security forces has three major components: first, our advise-and-assist mission that is partnering coalition advisers with Iraqi forces at the headquarters level. U.S. and coalition advisers are already helping plan current and future operations, and, as noted, we will expand this mission with two new advise-and-assist centers.

Second, we will support the regeneration of Iraqi forces so that they are better equipped to launch offensive operations over the coming year. CENTCOM's new training sites in northern, western, and central Iraq will help train 12 Iraqi brigades, and more than a dozen coalition nations have expressed their intent to send trainers and advisers to help build the capacity of Iraqi forces.

Third, we will concentrate on broader security sector reform...to help transform Iraqi forces into a more coherent and capable unified force. This includes Prime Minister Abadi's initiative to develop provincially-based National Guard units, which I mentioned earlier.

Coalition partners are playing an important role in all these efforts by providing advisers and trainers to help regenerate Iraqi combat brigades.

Together, we are also providing more arms and equipment to Iraqi Security Forces. This year, the United States alone has shipped more than \$685 million in critical equipment and supplies to Iraq, ranging from grenades and small arms to tank ammunition, helicopter rockets, and Hellfire missiles – hundreds of which will

EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY – AS PREPARED

be arriving this month. U.S. and coalition partners together have delivered over 2.7 million pounds of supplies, including 33 million rounds of ammunition, to Peshmerga forces alone.

In Syria, our actions against ISIL are focused on shaping the dynamic in Iraq, which remains the priority of our counter-ISIL strategy. But we are sober about the challenges we face as ISIL exploits the complicated, long-running Syrian conflict.

Because we do not have a partner government to work with, or regular military partners as we do in Iraq, in the near term, our military aims in Syria are limited to isolating and destroying ISIL's safe havens.

Coalition air strikes in Syria are accomplishing this by continuing to target significant ISIL assets, which has impaired ISIL's ability to move fighters and equipment into Iraq, disrupted their command and control, damaged their training bases, and significantly limited their financial revenue by hitting captured oil fields and disrupting their crude oil distribution and collection sites.

The Defense Department's longer-term effort is to train and equip credible, moderate Syrian opposition forces, especially from areas most threatened by ISIL. This will require at least 8-12 months to begin making a difference on the ground. We know the opposition will continue to face intense pressure in a multi-front battle space, and we are considering options for how U.S. and coalition forces can further support these forces once they are trained and equipped.

Our strategy in Syria will demand time, patience, and perseverance to deliver results. We cannot accomplish our objectives in Syria all at once.

The position of the United States remains: Assad has lost the legitimacy to govern. But there is no purely military solution to the conflict in Syria. Alongside our efforts to isolate and sanction the Assad regime, our strategy is to strengthen the moderate opposition to the point where they can, first, defend and control their local areas; next, go on the offense and take back areas that have been lost to ISIL; and ultimately, as their capabilities and leverage develop, to create conditions for a political settlement in Syria.

Thanks to broad bipartisan support in Congress – including majorities in both parties – preparations for our Syria train-and-equip mission are now complete. We have established a Combined Joint Interagency Task Force to coordinate the coalition's train-and-equip program for Syria. Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and other partner nations have agreed to host training sites. Development of those sites, recruiting, and vetting will begin once Congress has authorized funding.

We are still at the front end of our campaign against ISIL.

As President Obama told leaders of both houses of Congress last week, Congressional support – your support – is vital for this campaign to succeed.

As you all know, the administration is requesting \$5.6 billion in additional Overseas Contingency Operations Funding for Fiscal Year 2015 to help execute our comprehensive strategy in Iraq and Syria – \$5 billion of it for the Department of Defense.

\$3.4 billion would support ongoing U.S. military actions against ISIL under Operation Inherent Resolve.

\$1.6 billion would go toward a new Iraq Train & Equip Fund devoted to helping reconstitute Iraq's security forces. This fund will be critical for enabling Iraqi Security Forces, including Kurdish and tribal forces, to go on the offensive in 2015, and it will require the Iraqi government and coalition members to make significant contributions as well. Only 60%, or \$1 billion, of the \$1.6 billion fund would be available initially. The remaining \$600 million would not be released until the Government of Iraq and coalition partners have provided at least \$600 million of their own contributions...because the Iraqi government must invest in its own security, and its own future.

As the President said last week, the administration will be engaging the Congress to support the effort against ISIL by enacting a new and specific Authorization for the Use of Military Force – one that reflects the scope and challenges of our campaign against ISIL.

DoD will work closely with the Congress on each component of this effort.

As this mission continues to progress, we will continue to evaluate...and reevaluate each element of our strategy.

EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY – AS PREPARED

Having marked Veterans Day earlier this week, let me again thank this committee for what you do every day to support all our men and women in uniform, serving around the world.
Thank you, Mr. Chairman. ###

Chuck Hagel

Secretary of Defense

Chuck Hagel served as the 24th Secretary of Defense from February 2013 to February 2015. During his tenure, he directed significant steps to modernize America's partnerships and alliances, advance the rebalance in Asia-Pacific, bolster support for European allies, and enhance defense cooperation in the Middle East while overseeing the end of America's combat mission in Afghanistan. In addition, he led major initiatives for service members and their families, including increasing resources for suicide prevention, combating sexual assault, and accounting for missing personnel. Further, Secretary Hagel improved partnerships with the Department of Veterans Affairs, to include health record interoperability, service treatment record transferability, and continuity of mental health services and support. Secretary Hagel launched the Defense Innovation Initiative to better prepare the Pentagon for future threats, and enacted comprehensive reforms to the Nuclear Enterprise and Military Health system. He is the only Vietnam veteran and the first enlisted combat veteran to serve as Secretary of Defense.



Hagel served two terms in the United States Senate (1997-2009) representing the state of Nebraska. Hagel was a senior member of the Senate Foreign Relations; Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs; and Intelligence Committees. He Chaired the Foreign Relations International Economic Policy, Export and Trade Promotion Subcommittee; and the Banking Committee's International Trade and Finance, and Securities Subcommittees. Hagel also served as the Chairman of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China and the Senate Climate Change Observer Group.

Previously, Secretary Hagel was a Distinguished Professor at Georgetown University, Co-Chairman of the President's Intelligence Advisory Board, Chairman of the Atlantic Council, Chairman of the United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration Advisory Committee, and Co-Chairman of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund Corporate Council. He served as a member of the Secretary of Defense's Policy Board, Secretary of Energy's Blue Ribbon Commission on the Future of Nuclear Power, the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) Board of Directors and Systemic Risk Council; as a Senior Advisor to Gallup; and on the Advisory Boards of Corsair Capital, Deutsche Bank America, M.I.C. Industries, Bread for the World, Bonnie J. Addario Lung Cancer Foundation, Center for the Study of the Presidency, Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial Commission, George C. Marshall Foundation, Georgetown's Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, Global Strategy Forum, Global Zero, Hamilton Project, Initiative for Global Development, Lung Cancer Alliance, International Center for the Study Of Radicalization and Political Violence, National Bureau of Asian Research's Next Generation Leadership Board, Ploughshares Fund, U.S. Global Leadership Coalition, U.S. Institute of Peace Middle East Senior Working Group, U.S. Middle East Project, America Abroad Media, American Security Project, and The Washington Center.

Prior to his election to the U.S. Senate, Hagel was president of McCarthy & Company, an investment banking firm in Omaha, Nebraska. In the mid-1980's, Hagel co-founded VANGUARD Cellular Systems, Inc., a publicly traded corporation. He was President and CEO of the World USO, Private Sector Council (PSC), and Chief Operating Officer of the 1990 Economic Summit of Industrialized Nations (G-7 Summit). Hagel also served as Deputy Administrator of the Veterans Administration under President Ronald Reagan and Deputy Commissioner General of the 1982 World's Fair.

He is the author of the book, *America: Our Next Chapter* and was the subject of a 2006 book by Charlyne Berens entitled, *Chuck Hagel: Moving Forward*.

A graduate of the University of Nebraska at Omaha, Hagel and his wife, Lilibet, have a daughter (Allyn) and son (Ziller).



General Martin E. Dempsey
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff



General Martin E. Dempsey becomes the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff after serving most recently as the Army's 37th Chief of Staff from 11 April 2011 through 7 September 2011.

Past assignments have taken him and his family across the globe during both peace and war from Platoon Leader to Combatant Commander. He is a 1974 graduate of the United States Military Academy and a career armor officer.

As a company grade officer, he served with the 2nd Cavalry in United States Army Europe and with the 10th Cavalry at Fort Carson. Following troop command he earned his Masters of Arts in English from Duke University and was assigned to the English Department at West Point. In 1991, GEN Dempsey deployed with the Third Armored Division in support of OPERATION DESERT STORM. Following DESERT STORM, he commanded 4th Battalion 67th Armor (Bandits) in Germany for two years and then departed to become Armor Branch Chief in US Army Personnel Command. From 1996-1998 he served as the 67th Colonel of the Third Armored Cavalry Regiment. Following this assignment as the Army's "senior scout" he served on the Joint Staff as an Assistant Deputy Director in J-5 and as Special Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. From September 2001 to June 2003, General Dempsey served in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia training and advising the Saudi Arabian National Guard. In June of 2003, General Dempsey took command of the 1st Armored Division in Baghdad, Iraq. After 14 months in Iraq, General Dempsey redeployed the division to Germany and completed his command tour in July of 2005. He then returned to Iraq for two years in August of 2005 to train and equip the Iraqi Security Forces as Commanding General of MNSTC-I. From August 2007 through October 2008, GEN Dempsey served as the Deputy Commander and then Acting Commander of U.S. Central Command. Before becoming Chief of Staff of the Army, he commanded US Army Training and Doctrine Command from December 2008-March 2011.



General Dempsey's awards and decorations include the Defense Distinguished Service Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Distinguished Service Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters, the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit with two Oak Leaf Clusters, the Bronze Star with "V" Device and Oak Leaf Cluster, the Combat Action Badge, and the Parachutist Badge. In addition to his Masters' Degree in English, he holds Masters' Degrees in Military Art and in National Security Studies.

General Dempsey and his high school sweetheart Deanie have three children: Chris, Megan, and Caitlin. Each has served in the United States Army. Chris remains on active duty. They have five wonderful grandchildren: Kayla and Mackenna by Chris and daughter-in-law Julie, Luke by Caitlin and son-in-law Shane, and Alexander and Hunter by Megan and son-in-law Kory. Chris and Julie are expecting their third child this fall.

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

NOVEMBER 13, 2014

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. JONES

Secretary HAGEL. As the President articulated on September 10, 2014, the objective of the counter-ISIL campaign is to “degrade, and ultimately defeat, ISIL through a comprehensive and sustained counter terrorism strategy so that it’s no longer a threat to Iraq, the region, the United States, and our partners.” [See page 17.]

General DEMPSEY. The goal of our strategy is to defeat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL): to halt its progress, destroy it as an organization, and help local forces liberate the territories it now controls. Our effort seeks to degrade, dismantle, and ultimately defeat ISIL so that it no longer threatens the region and the national security of the U.S. and our allies. It ends when the Sunni population rejects it. The U.S. military line of effort will enable that to occur, but the military cannot do it alone. [See page 17.]

RESPONSE TO QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MS. SPEIER

Secretary HAGEL. The U.S. Government is working to target the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant’s (ISIL) revenue across multiple lines of interagency effort. According to the Department of the Treasury, until recently, ISIL was earning several million dollars per month through diverse efforts, including oil sales, ransom payments, extortion and crime, and support from foreign donations. Coalition airstrikes are impeding ISIL’s freedom of movement and ability to pump, refine, and sell oil, reducing its revenue stream. In addition to physically impairing ISIL’s ability to sell oil, the Treasury Department also prioritizes disrupting the market for oil derived from ISIL-controlled fields by targeting with financial sanctions anyone who trades in ISIL’s stolen oil or refined product, among other efforts. [See page 31.]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING

NOVEMBER 13, 2014

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. LANGEVIN

Mr. LANGEVIN. The Department of Defense has requested a broad waiver of existing laws in the request for the Iraq Train and Equip Program (ITEP) and I understand there is discussion about requesting a similar waiver for the Syria Train and Equip program. Why does the Department need such a waiver? What would the impacts be if you didn't get such waivers and you, for example, had to follow all the acquisition laws?

Secretary HAGEL. The Department requested a broad waiver authority that could be exercised by the Secretary of Defense in the draft Iraq Train and Equip Program (ITEP) provision for flexibility and to hedge against unforeseen circumstances. The waiver request was not intended to encompass the Department's responsibilities in the Leahy provision. Leahy vetting of Iraqi security force units intended to be trained is ongoing. The ITEP waivers that are in the recently enacted fiscal year 2015 appropriations and authorizations acts are more narrow than requested, and authorize the Secretary of Defense to waive statutes relating to the acquisition of items and support services if he makes the specified determinations. This more specific waiver addresses our core concerns regarding flexible and timely acquisition to facilitate training and equipping the security forces of Iraq.

The Syria Train and Equip program waiver as enacted authorizes the President to waive any provision of law if he makes the specified determinations, but provides that such waiver will not take effect until 30 days after congressional notification. This waiver will allow waiver of provisions that would otherwise prohibit financial or other assistance to the country of Syria (which would preclude assistance even to groups within Syria that are in conflict with the Government of Syria). In addition, provisions regarding acquisitions may be waived to enable contracting overseas or expedited contracting in order to facilitate the Syria train and equip effort. The possible effects of having to follow all acquisition laws are less flexibility and longer lead times, which could severely affect the Department's ability to meet emergent requirements.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Secretary, after U.S. airstrikes in Syria last week, Charles Lister, with the Brookings Doha Center in Qatar, was quoted in the Washington Post as saying "the U.S. may now have lost Syria." While I do not yet share Mr. Lister's pessimism, I am very concerned that we may have ceded the space that really matters in this fight—the economic, political, and cultural battles that will ultimately be what decides this conflict. If there's one lesson that we've learned in the last 13 years, it's that we need to be realistic about what military force alone can and cannot do. With so many factions engaged in Syria, who have multiple competing objectives and who are unfriendly to U.S. interests or are terrorist organizations outright, what is the United States' strategy to win the information campaign, and do we have the institutional and organizational capability to manage that campaign?

Secretary HAGEL. [The information referred to is classified and retained in the committee files.]

Mr. LANGEVIN. Much reference has been made to the longer-term problems of U.S. and Western persons currently fighting with ISIL eventually returning home. These individuals may well have violent intentions and the training and capabilities to carry them out. Keeping tabs on these threats, in the numbers that we are talking about, is going to, at the very least, severely tax the abilities of many of our allies, if not overwhelm them, and pose a huge challenge here domestically. How can we act now to ameliorate the worst of this coming problem—for example, with intelligence or law enforcement cooperation?

Secretary HAGEL. The Department of Defense remains concerned with the threat posed by Westerners who travel to fight in Syria and Iraq and who may return home to carry out attacks. Constricting the flow of foreign fighters is an essential element of the U.S. Government's comprehensive strategy to degrade and defeat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant. The Department of Defense is acting through a coordinated, whole-of-government effort, engaging with international partners to highlight the threat, urging international partners to interdict the flow of foreign fighters, and disrupting those who facilitate the travel, related fundraising, or other

support wherever possible. This involves sharing information and intelligence with our partners and encouraging them to collect and share information on suspected foreign fighters and facilitators as well. Other elements of the U.S. Government are working to build law enforcement and counterterrorism capacities to address this threat.

The Department of Defense also recognizes certain common factors that contribute both to the challenges posed by homegrown violent extremists (HVEs) and to the phenomenon of westerners traveling to join extremist organizations abroad. As we recently saw in the case of the attack on the Canadian Parliament, an individual motivated to engage in violence, but not able to travel abroad to fight may become a domestic threat. Recognizing the history of HVE targeting of Department of Defense personnel and facilities within the homeland, the Department of Defense is working in close coordination with both the intelligence and law enforcement communities, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, to protect Department of Defense personnel and facilities.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Secretary, in your (Senate-side) testimony in September you said “we believe that Iraq’s new Prime Minister, Haider al-Abadi, is committed to bringing all Iraqis together against ISIL.” I’m confident we’d all agree that a military solution alone will not quell the rise of radical Islamic extremism in the Middle East. Could you expound upon why you have such confidence in Prime Minister al-Abadi’s intention and ability to be inclusive and more successful in efforts towards a political solution, particularly after Mr. Maliki, who once held our confidence, failed so miserably? Will the new government prove more capable at reconciling with alienated Sunni tribes?

Secretary HAGEL. Our confidence to date in Prime Minister Abadi is based on the early signals of his commitment to building an inclusive government—a commitment that distinguishes him from his predecessor. Prime Minister Abadi is facilitating cooperation among Kurds, Sunnis, and Shia. For example, he has named a Sunni Minister of Defense and directed outreach to Sunni tribes in an effort to incorporate tribal fighters into Iraq’s security forces. The Iraqi government is also working on legislation to establish a National Guard that would incorporate Sunni tribesmen, devolve local control, and help build trust in the central government. At the same time, much work remains to be done and Prime Minister Abadi faces many competing pressures. Although the State Department leads on U.S. Government engagement with the tribes, the Department of Defense will continue to work through the Iraq government to support Sunni fighters and establishing an Iraq National Guard.

Mr. LANGEVIN. As you stated in your testimony, our comprehensive strategy to combat ISIL includes undercutting their flow of resources. Shutting down access to revenue, and closing the means by which funds flow to and from ISIL is a critical component of that strategy. To what extent were coordinated efforts made between the Department of Defense, the Department of State, the Department of the Treasury, the Department of Justice, and other intelligence and national security agencies to identify and restrict ISIL’s access to revenue, restrict revenue flow, including through Hawala networks, and restrict access to international financial systems prior to August 7, 2014 (President’s authorization of airstrikes); prior to June 2014 (ISIL’s seizure of Mosul); prior to January 2014 (ISIL’s seizure of Fallujah and Ramadi), and currently?

Secretary HAGEL. The Department of Defense coordinates routinely with other U.S. Government departments and agencies to identify and disrupt the finances of terrorist groups. Even prior to January 2014, the Department of Defense was reviewing threat assessments and supporting interagency planning efforts against ISIL. Between January and August 2014, these efforts evolved through increased interagency collaboration to identify non-kinetic disruption priorities. In May, U.S. Central Command issued a theater directive tasking components to pursue counter-threat finance activities with interagency counterparts. U.S. Special Operations Command compiled information on ISIL foreign fighter facilitators and proposed disruption options through military, law enforcement, and diplomatic levers of power. Defense Department elements also participated in interagency exploitation of documents seized from ISIL, including exploitation for financial-related information, the results of which were included in finished intelligence disseminated widely across the U.S. government. Currently, the Department of Defense is coordinating with interagency partners to degrade the financial health of ISIL, capitalizing on lessons learned during recent conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. Inter-agency partners coordinate directly on the military’s targeting process against financial nodes, including pre-strike and post-strike planning and assessments. Additionally, the Department of Defense is reviewing data sets developed during Operation Iraqi Freedom to identify options to disrupt ISIL’s illicit networks and financial facilitators.

Defense components continue to examine ISIL financial resources and vulnerabilities in order to contribute to the whole-of-government campaign to degrade, dismantle, and ultimately defeat ISIL.

Mr. LANGEVIN. To the extent possible, please describe the policy concerning when, and to what degree, actions are taken with respect to terrorist financing, and what role the DOD plays in identifying networks and informing those decisions. What is the threshold for an organization to receive our attention with respect to terrorist financing action, and given the current environment, is that strategy and threshold being revisited? Finally, how effective have our economic pressures been to date, and how can our military leverage past progress in their role as advisors to ground forces?

Secretary HAGEL. The Department of Defense in coordination with the Department of State, the Department of Treasury, and other interagency stakeholders, assists in the determination process of a foreign terrorist organization (FTO) designation. These FTOs have engaged in terrorist activity and retain the capability or intent to conduct future terrorist acts, which threaten the security interests of the United States. Once a group has been identified as an FTO, the U.S. Government's counter-threat finance community will take action against it. Department of Defense counter threat finance policy states DOD will work with other U.S. Government departments and agencies and with partner nations to deny, disrupt, or defeat and degrade adversaries' ability to use global licit and illicit financial networks to negatively affect U.S. interests.

Internal to the Department of Defense, the counter threat finance (CTF) mission is often driven by intelligence assessments on a terrorist group's attack plans, Geographic Combatant Commander priorities and resources, and also, requests for support from other U.S. Government agencies and international partners. The Department of Defense prioritizes its CTF efforts by those terrorist organizations and networks that pose the most significant threat to U.S. national security and Department of Defense personnel worldwide.

The Department of Defense continues to disseminate within the Department of Defense and among the interagency the Department's lessons learned from supporting the Iraq Threat Finance Cell and Afghanistan Threat Finance Cell. Those cells yielded many successful investigations and operations, such as the takedown of the New Ansari Money Exchange in Afghanistan. Earlier this year, the Department of Defense initiated a multi-year effort to improve the integration of counter threat finance principles and programs into military doctrine, training, and education as another key component of the U.S. Government's counterterrorism strategy.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. SHUSTER

Mr. SHUSTER. Given that the administration has already opened lines of communication with Iran, an enemy that holds "Death to America" parades and regularly expresses its desire to destroy our ally Israel, do you envision any scenario where you would work with Iran in the fight against ISIL? Is the administration currently in regular communication with the government of Iran regarding ISIL?

Secretary HAGEL. No, the United States is not in regular communication with the Government of Iran regarding the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). We do not coordinate our activities with Iran.

Mr. SHUSTER. In your estimation, how effective have coalition airstrikes been in countering ISIL on the ground? Given the nature of the threat and the current state of ISIL forces, by what metrics would you define "success" in the air campaign?

Secretary HAGEL. Airstrikes have been effective by disrupting ISIL's offensive, killing multiple senior ISIL leaders, and forcing them to change their tactics to avoid our strikes. We have achieved a 95% accuracy rate on kinetic targeting. Success for the air campaign in Iraq, however, is to actively enable Iraqi and Kurdish Ground forces in making steady advances and retaking ground as recently demonstrated in Beiji. Air power is a critical component of our overall strategy, but it is complimentary to the main effort, Iraqis retaking, controlling, and governing their own soil. In Syria we continue to use airstrikes to successfully target ISIL leaders, disrupt their lines of communication, and means of finance by targeting sources of oil revenue.

Mr. SHUSTER. How involved are you and the rest of DOD with the President's strategic decisionmaking in the campaign against ISIL? Have you been in regular consultation with the President during the formulation of this strategy, and is the President consulting military leaders as new developments arise on the ground? In what areas do you feel there needs to be better communication?

Secretary HAGEL. Both the civilian and military leadership of the Department actively participate in National Security Council meetings with the President. The Department has been represented at all interagency meetings about the counter-ISIL strategy convened by the National Security Council Staff.

Mr. SHUSTER. Given that the administration has already opened lines of communication with Iran, an enemy that holds “Death to America” parades and regularly expresses its desire to destroy our ally Israel, do you envision any scenario where you would work with Iran in the fight against ISIL? Is the administration currently in regular communication with the government of Iran regarding ISIL?

General DEMPSEY. We did not envision a scenario by which we would collaborate with Iran in our effort to defeat ISIL. While U.S. Forces are working with coalition partners to train, advise, and assist Iraqi and Peshmerga forces, they are not in communication, collaboration, or cooperation with Iranian forces which may be operating in proximate areas.

Mr. SHUSTER. In your estimation, how effective have coalition airstrikes been in countering ISIL on the ground? Given the nature of the threat and the current state of ISIL forces, by what metrics would you define “success” in the air campaign?

General DEMPSEY. Airstrikes have been effective by disrupting ISIL’s offensive, killing multiple senior ISIL leaders, and forcing them to change their tactics to avoid our strikes. We have achieved a 95% accuracy rate on kinetic targeting. Success for the air campaign in Iraq, however, is to actively enable Iraqi and Kurdish Ground forces in making steady advances and retaking ground as recently demonstrated in Beiji. Air power is a critical component of our overall strategy, but it is complimentary to the main effort, Iraqis retaking, controlling, and governing their own soil. In Syria we continue to use airstrikes to successfully target ISIL leaders, disrupt their lines of communication, and means of finance by targeting sources of oil revenue.

Mr. SHUSTER. How involved are you and the rest of DOD with the President’s strategic decisionmaking in the campaign against ISIL? Have you been in regular consultation with the President during the formulation of this strategy, and is the President consulting military leaders as new developments arise on the ground? In what areas do you feel there needs to be better communication?

General DEMPSEY. The Secretary of Defense and I personally consult with the President regarding the campaign and the broader strategy. At each of these engagements, we have in depth strategic discussions where I offer my best military advice. From the very beginning, the Department of Defense participated in the formulation of the counter-ISIL strategy. Communication between the White House and the Pentagon is open and frank, and the President remains advised of all new developments on the related to the campaign.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. BARBER

Mr. BARBER. We must prevent ISIL from gaining a safe haven from which to attack Americans, abroad or here at home. As you have said, a critical piece of our fight is to train and equip moderate Syrian opposition groups. However, in a recent Newsweek article, one former CIA vetting expert declared that the U.S. and CIA was “completely out of its league.”

Can you give us any indication as to how the vetting process is working? How can we make sure that we are not arming the enemy with training, aid and weapons that may be used against us?

Secretary HAGEL and General DEMPSEY. The Department of Defense will follow a layer vetting approach that uses long-standing and well developed U.S. military procedures and practices for vetting international forces. This approach applies processes from the U.S. Intelligence Community and interagency partners, while also soliciting sustained assistance from regional and international partners. Further, the Department of Defense will assess trainees and monitor recipients of assistance and training when they return to Syria. It will be a challenge to ensure certainty that the weapons and training will not be misused. The Department of Defense will discontinue support to any person, unit, or commander associated with credible evidence of end use violations.

Mr. BARBER. The Indiana Air National Guard’s 122nd Fighter Wing has been deployed to the CENTCOM area of operation with a number of A-10s. It seems logical to me to use the A-10 in our fight against ISIL, especially since we are operating in contested territory mostly without the help of forward air controllers. The A-10 is one of the best airframes at a low altitude and can see the total battlefield much better than high-flying, high speed aircraft

You have both testified to this committee that the Pentagon is preparing for a multi-year campaign against ISIL. Have you considered a role for the Warthog in the fight? Is there a reason we would not use one of our best tools, particularly one that is already deployed to the area?

Secretary HAGEL and General DEMPSEY. A-10s deployed to the U.S. Central Command area of operation are supporting the counter-ISIL air campaign.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MS. DUCKWORTH

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Can you explain the current vetting process for training and equipping opposition fighters and what mitigation measures are in place to ensure that those we train and equip are fighting in accordance with U.S. strategic objectives? Furthermore, who will be doing the training and who will be providing the long-term logistical support? For example: where and how will they get U.S. caliber ammunition for the U.S.-made rifles and machine guns we are supplying? Will all of these logistical requirements be the responsibility of American forces, or of contractors, our allies, etc.?

Secretary HAGEL and General DEMPSEY. The Department of Defense will follow a layered vetting approach that uses long-standing and well developed U.S. military procedures and practices for vetting international forces. This approach applies processes from the U.S. Intelligence Community and interagency partners. The approach also solicits sustained assistance from regional and international partners. Further, the Department of Defense will assess trainees and monitor recipients of assistance and training when they return to Syria. U.S. special operation forces and partner nation personnel will conduct the required training. Existing U.S. and partner nations will provide necessary supply and logistics, to include initial and periodic re-supply.

