HEARING TO CONSIDER THE NOMINATIONS OF GENERAL CURTIS M. SCAPARROTTI, USA FOR REAPPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE OF GENERAL AND TO BE COMMANDER, UNITED STATES EUROPEAN COMMAND AND SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER, EUROPE; AND GENERAL LORI J. ROBINSON, USAF FOR REAPPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE OF GENERAL AND TO BE COMMANDER, UNITED STATES NORTHERN COMMAND/COMMANDER, NORTH AMERICAN AEROSPACE DEFENSE COMMAND

Thursday, April 21, 2016

Washington, D.C.
HEARING TO CONSIDER THE NOMINATIONS OF GENERAL CURTIS M. SCAPARROTTI, USA FOR REAPPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE OF GENERAL AND TO BE COMMANDER, UNITED STATES EUROPEAN COMMAND AND SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER, EUROPE; AND GENERAL LORI J. ROBINSON, USAF FOR REAPPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE OF GENERAL AND TO BE COMMANDER, UNITED STATES NORTHERN COMMAND/COMMANDER, NORTH AMERICAN AEROSPACE DEFENSE COMMAND

Thursday, April 21, 2016

U.S. Senate
Committee on Armed Services
Washington, D.C.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:32 a.m. in Room SH-216, Hart Senate Office Building, Hon. John McCain, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Committee Members Present: Senators McCain [presiding], Inhofe, Wicker, Ayotte, Fischer, Cotton, Ernst, Tillis, Sullivan, Graham, Reed, Nelson, McCaskill, Manchin, Shaheen, Gillibrand, Blumenthal, Donnelly, Hirono, Kaine, King, and Heinrich.
OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN MCCAIN, U.S. SENATOR
FROM ARIZONA

Chairman McCain: Good morning.

The Senate Armed Services Committee meets this morning to consider the nominations of General Curtis Scaparrotti to be Commander of U.S. European Command and Supreme Allied Commander, Europe; and General Lori Robinson to be Commander of U.S. Northern Command and Commander of North American Aerospace Defense Command.

We congratulate both of you on your nominations. We thank you for your decades of distinguished service to our Nation and for your willingness to serve once again. Of course, we know today would not be possible without the support and sacrifice of your family and friends, some of whom are with us this morning. As is our tradition, we hope you will take the opportunity to introduce your family joining you today.

General Scaparrotti, you seek to lead a command very different from the one your predecessor, General Breedlove, inherited just 3 years ago. When Vladimir Putin invaded Ukraine and annexed Crimea, dismembering a sovereign nation in the heart of Europe for the first time in 7 decades, General Breedlove led with clarity and purpose. He pushed EUCOM and NATO to adjust the scope, scale, and seriousness of the new strategic reality we face in Europe. That will
be the urgent and unfinished task left to you, General Scaparrotti, if confirmed.

Over the past 2 years, Vladimir Putin has been learning from bloody experience in Ukraine and Syria that military adventurism pays, that diplomacy can be manipulated to serve his strategic ambitions, and that the worst refugee crisis since World War II can be weaponized to divide the West and weaken its resolve.

The only deterrence that we seem to be establishing is over ourselves. Indeed, 2 years after Russia invaded Ukraine and annexed Crimea, the administration has still not provided Ukrainian forces with the lethal assistance they need to defend themselves and which the Congress has authorized for fear of provoking Russia.

This fear of escalation only encourages the kind of aggressive and dangerous behavior we saw last week when Russian fighter jets conducted simulated attacks within 30 feet of a U.S. Navy destroyer in international waters and performed dangerous maneuvers within 50 feet of a U.S. surveillance aircraft in international airspace.

The European Reassurance Initiative is a positive first step to reestablishing deterrence in Europe. But it is just that, a first step. Russia is building an advanced anti-access, area denial network from Kaliningrad to Crimea to the Eastern Mediterranean. Russian submarine activity in
the North Atlantic and the Mediterranean is at the highest level since the Cold War. Russia’s military modernization and expanding operations demand a comprehensive review of U.S. force posture in Europe and the resources necessary to support it.

But a strong response to Vladimir Putin’s aggression cannot come from America alone. With a revanchist Russia on its doorstep and a flood of refugees pouring across its borders, NATO has to step up. Our NATO allies not only need to reverse declining defense budgets and honor their pledge to reach the 2 percent target within a decade, they must also invest in critical military capabilities that further alliance interoperability.

A strong NATO is in America’s national security interests. Nowhere has that been clearer than in Afghanistan. Our allies have sacrificed blood and treasure fighting alongside us for 15 years. Now the balance of our shared mission and, indeed, the fate of Afghanistan hangs in the balance.

The President has announced he intends to reduce U.S. forces in Afghanistan from the current level of 9,800 to 5,500 by the end of the year. Such a reduction will have profound consequences, especially the end of the U.S. train, advise, and assist mission at all but the highest levels of the Afghan military. This at the same time ISIL is now on
the battlefield, Al Qaeda is resurgent, and the Taliban is on the offensive. Just this week, the Taliban conducted a suicide bombing in Kabul that killed over 60 people and wounded more than 300, most of whom were civilians, including women and children.

The President has a decision to make: maintain or increase the current level of U.S. troops given conditions on the ground, or continue with a calendar-based withdrawal. The right answer is clear. But whatever his decision, the President needs to make it as soon as possible. The uncertainty surrounding America’s commitment to Afghanistan discourages our allies and encourages our enemies.

NATO’s force generation conference is in June and the NATO summit in Warsaw is in July. At stake is whether NATO forces will remain in western and northern Afghanistan or whether those areas will be ceded to the influence of Iran or criminal drug rings. Have no doubt: NATO will follow America’s lead on troops in Afghanistan. It is up to the President of the United States to show that leadership.

General Robinson, the committee looks forward to hearing your assessment of the threats to the U.S. homeland that NORTHCOM is tasked to defend, especially the development of advanced missiles capable of carrying nuclear payloads by Russia, Iran, and North Korea.

We will be interested to hear your views on the
importance of the U.S.-Mexico security relationship. Heroin, largely produced in Mexico, continues to ravage communities across our Nation and demands a renewed effort to combat this scourge both in our streets and at its source. We must reckon with the fundamental truth that the real driver of drug trafficking is demand for drugs here at home. And while it is clear the Mexican Government must do more within its borders, our government needs to finally get serious about border security. As former SOUTHCOM Commander General John Kelly recently testified about our southern border -- and I quote -- the border is, if not wide open, then certainly open enough to get what the demand requires inside of the country.

While border security is ultimately the responsibility of the Department of Homeland Security, I am deeply concerned about the lack of coordination between DOD and DHS along the border. During a recent visit that I made to Fort Huachuca Army Base in Sierra Vista, Arizona, I observed the Army conducting training missions with its UAV fleet. Despite these aircrews flying along the U.S.-Mexico border, the training missions were not being coordinated with the Department of Homeland Security to surveil the border for drug trafficking activities. This is unacceptable.

Not only does military training in areas along the border benefit military readiness by providing realistic
training in a real world, operationally relevant environment, it can also provide a vital secondary benefit to DHS counterdrug and border security operations by increasing situational awareness. DOD and DHS should be working to ensure training missions for UAV squadrons, ground sensor platoons, and other units are fully integrated. General Robinson, I look forward to hearing your views on how NORTHCOM can contribute to enhancing interagency cooperation along our borders.

Senator Reed?
STATEMENT OF HON. JACK REED, U.S. SENATOR FROM RHODE ISLAND

Senator Reed: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I want to welcome the nominees and thank both of them for their extraordinary service to the Nation and recognize your families that serve along with you. I have had the privilege of knowing Cindy Scaparrotti for many years. Thank you, Cindy. And, General Robinson, your father George was a career Air Force pilot. Thank you, sir. And your husband was born in Woonsocket, Rhode Island. So you have already got some momentum behind your nomination. Thank you.

[Laughter.]

Senator Reed: The nominees before us today, as I have indicated, have impressive records of service. General Scaparrotti is currently Commander of the United Nations Command, the Combined Forces Command, United States Forces, Korea, previously served as Director of the Joint Staff, Commander International Security Assistance Force, on and on, including Commander of the 82nd Airborne Division. So thank you, sir, for your distinguished service.

General Robinson has been Commander now of the Air Component for the U.S. Pacific Command. She has been Vice Commander of Air Combat Command and a list of other important assignments. So thank you.
General Scaparrotti, if confirmed, you will be dual-hatted as the Commander of U.S. European Command and NATO Supreme Allied Commander. You will be asked to consider a diverse array of challenges in the European security environment, including foreign fighter flows emanating from the conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa, the ongoing refugee crisis and its potential destabilizing effects, and the specter of continued aggressive behavior from Russia, which the chairman has very accurately and thoughtfully pointed out. You will oversee a shift in U.S. efforts in Europe. In addition to the ongoing assurance efforts of our NATO allies and partners, we will be adding strategic investments to deter further Russian activities. The committee looks forward to hearing your views on these and other complex issues.

You will also continue the important work EUCOM is doing with the Ukrainian Government to identify military and security shortfalls and strengthen Ukraine’s capacity to defend itself. The committee would benefit again from your views in this regard.

And, General Robinson, if confirmed, your responsibility as NORTHCOM Commander will comprise defending the homeland, which ultimately is the most important mission we have, including against such threats as cruise and ballistic missiles. You will have to support civilian
authorities in this mission not only in terms of potential
collision, but also natural disasters which affect the
country. And you will also have to maintain very close
security cooperation ties with our neighbors, again as the
chairman pointed out, Mexico in particular. And you will
also be dual-hatted as Commander of NORAD, our bi-national
command with Canada which is the mission to provide
aerospace warning, aerospace control, and maritime warning
at a time when the Arctic is becoming rapidly another area
of operational activities for the Russians and for ourselves
and for many others. So we look forward to hearing your
views on all these issues.

And thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman McCain: As is the custom of this committee,
we need to ask some formal questions for the witnesses, and
just respond by yes or no, if you choose to.

In order to exercise its legislative and oversight
responsibilities important to this committee and other
appropriate committees of the Congress, we are able to
receive testimony, briefings, and other communications of
information. Have you adhered to applicable laws and
regulations governing conflicts of interest?

General Robinson: Yes.

General Scaparrotti: I have.

Chairman McCain: Do you agree, when asked, to give
your personal views even if these views differ from the administration in power?

General Robinson: Yes.

General Scaparrotti: Yes.

Chairman McCain: Have you assumed any duties or undertaken any actions which would appear to presume the outcome of the confirmation process?

General Robinson: No.

General Scaparrotti: No.

Chairman McCain: Will you ensure your staff complies with deadlines established for requested communications, including questions for the record in hearings?

General Robinson: Yes.

General Scaparrotti: Yes, sir.

Chairman McCain: Will you cooperate in providing witnesses and briefers in response to congressional requests?

General Robinson: Yes.

General Scaparrotti: Yes.

Chairman McCain: Will those witnesses be protected from reprisal for their testimony or briefings?

General Robinson: Yes.

General Scaparrotti: Yes.

Chairman McCain: Do you agree, if confirmed, to appear and testify upon request before this committee?
General Robinson: Yes.

General Scaparrotti: Yes, I do.

Chairman McCain: Do you agree to provide documents, including copies of electronic forms of communications, in a timely manner when requested by a duly constituted committee or to consult with the committee regarding the basis for any good faith delay or denial in providing such documents?

General Robinson: Yes.

General Scaparrotti: Yes.

Chairman McCain: General Robinson, we will begin with you. Welcome.
STATEMENT OF GENERAL LORI J. ROBINSON, USAF, FOR
REAPPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE OF GENERAL AND TO BE COMMANDER,
UNITED STATES NORTHERN COMMAND/COMMANDER, NORTH AMERICAN
AEROSPACE DEFENSE COMMAND

General Robinson: Thank you, sir. Good morning,
Chairman McCain, Ranking Member Reed, and distinguished
members of the committee. I am honored to meet with you
today as the President’s nominee to be Commander of United
States Northern Command and North American Aerospace Defense
Command. I would like to thank President Obama for
nominating me, as well as Secretary Carter and Chairman
Dunford, for the trust they have placed in me.

It is my privilege to be sitting next to my dear friend
and colleague, Curt Scaparrotti, an incredible leader. It
has been an honor to work with him in the Pacific these last
18 months.

I also wish to thank my good friend, Admiral Bill
Gortney, for his outstanding leadership and 39 years of
dedicated service to our Nation. If confirmed, it would be
a tremendous honor to build on his efforts in this extremely
important position.

I would like to introduce my father, George Howard,
from Jackson, New Hampshire, a 30-year Air Force veteran and
R-4 pilot. He also flew RF-101’s in Vietnam. I have looked
up to my father my entire life.
Chairman McCain: I take it that his landings match the
number of takeoffs.

General Robinson: Sir, he is here.

[Laughter.]

General Robinson: Also my amazing sister Carol, an
incredible nurse, mother, and wife; my full-of-energy niece
Megan and her husband Brian is here. Megan works here on
the Hill. And finally, the love of my life, my husband
David, a retired two-star reservist, fighter pilot,
Thunderbird pilot, and a retired airline pilot. I can tell
this committee without hesitation that without his constant
love and support, I would not be sitting here before you
today.

Today we face a rapidly evolving and growing threat
environment, both in the number of those who wish to do us
harm and the complexity of tools at their disposal. Our
country faces many challenging threats from within and
abroad, ranging from threats such as homegrown violent
extremists, cyber attack, trafficking of drugs and other
illicit products by transnational criminal organizations to
threats posed by nation states such as Russia, North Korea,
and Iran.

In my experience as the Pacific Air Force’s Commander
and the Air Component for Admiral Harris, I am intimately
aware of the tenuous situation on the peninsula and
throughout the region and understand the potential threats posed to the security of our homeland. Defense of the homeland is a sacred responsibility, and the number one mission of the Department of Defense. If confirmed, I will work passionately to uphold the faith the American people have placed in these commands and ensure that we remain vigilant and postured to outpace any potential threat.

If confirmed, I will also continue to develop strong relationships with our homeland partners so that we are prepared to provide defense support to Federal, State, and local authorities, as requested, when the American people need it the most.

And if confirmed, I will further strengthen our outstanding friendship with Canada, as well as growing our partnerships with Mexico and the Bahamas. I am deeply honored and humbled to have been nominated for this position.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee to address the many challenges we face to defend our homeland and to provide defense support to civil authorities. I look forward to providing the committee with my candid views on issues and challenges and pledge to provide you my best military advice. I seek to establish a trusted relationship with each member of this committee.

In closing, I would like to thank the members of this
committee and your staff for the unyielding support you provide the men and women in uniform and civilian service who protect our Nation. These patriots are motivated by duty, honor, and call to service and deserve the very best our Nation has to offer. Thank you for supporting them and recognizing the invaluable role they play in safeguarding our Nation and our way of life.

Mr. Chairman, thank you again for the opportunity to be here and for the committee's consideration. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of General Robinson follows:]
Chairman McCain: Thank you. Welcome to your family.
General?
STATEMENT OF GENERAL CURTIS M. SCAPARROTTI, USA, FOR REAPPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE OF GENERAL AND TO BE COMMANDER, UNITED STATES EUROPEAN COMMAND AND SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER, EUROPE

General Scaparrotti: Chairman McCain, Senator Reed, and other distinguished members of the Senate Armed Services Committee, I thank you for the opportunity to appear here today, and I also want to thank you for the support that you have provided to our service members, our Department of Defense civilians, and their families who selflessly serve in the defense of our great Nation and in the defense of our way of life.

I would also like to thank the Secretary of Defense and the President for their trust and confidence and for nominating me to be the next Commander of United States European Command and Supreme Allied Commander of Europe.

In particular, I would like to introduce and thank my wife Cindy who is here with me today. She has been by my side for 37 years and has been an essential part of my service. Cindy has supported me during multiple deployments, cared actively for our service members and their families, and raised our children, Mike and Stephanie. Like so many other military families, they have given much so that we can serve.

I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to the
Republic of Korea and the United Nations Command contributing states for their steadfast cooperation and support in confronting a serious global threat in North Korea. Without doubt, my experiences leading and working within this great alliance in the midst of the critical security concerns have prepared me for this next command, if confirmed.

Finally, I would be remiss not to acknowledge General Phil Breedlove’s leadership as the present EUCOM Commander and SACEUR. His excellent leadership has been critical in meeting the many challenges in NATO and Europe and posturing the force for the future.

America’s closest allies reside in Europe and uphold our shared democratic values. Additionally, transatlantic trade with Europe constitutes over half of the world’s GDP. If confirmed, I will work diligently to preserve the transatlantic alliance and these vital American and allied interests.

This is a pivotal moment within the European Command area of responsibility as it faces numerous threats and strategic challenges. First, the resurgent Russia is contesting for power with increasingly aggressive behavior that challenges the international norms, often in violation of international law. Furthermore, terrorism poses an immediate threat as the world witnessed with the recent
tragedies in Brussels, Paris, and Ankara. Third, the significant influx of migrants and refugees has resulted in economic, demographic, and humanitarian crises that are testing the social fabric of Europe. And finally, Israel continues to confront threats from Iran and from extremists within and along its borders.

The common thread among these threats is the attempt to weaken our NATO alliance and our European partnerships. However, I am confident that our unity will prevail. If confirmed, I will do all that I can to leverage the full spectrum of military, political, and economic capabilities of our alliance to address these critical concerns.

If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with this committee, with Congress, with our civilian military leadership, and with our European allies to advance our national interests, defend the United States, and ensure a free and prosperous Europe.

If confirmed, I commit to service members and DOD personnel in EUCOM that I will do all that I can to ensure their readiness for the mission and to provide the support that they and their families deserve.

I look forward to working with this committee and with Congress to realize this commitment.

I am honored to appear before this committee with General Robinson. We have been serving together in the
Pacific for some time, and she is a great senior leader and friend who has supported me and our forces to maintain the security in the Republic of Korea.

I thank the committee again for the opportunity to appear today, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of General Scaparrotti follows:]

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
Chairman McCain: Thank you.

General Robinson, Senator Shaheen and Senator Ayotte, who are here today, will talk to you more at length about this issue of the epidemic of manufactured heroin that is an emergency in their State and in other States. The incidence of manufactured heroin, drug overdoses is, in the view of some, an epidemic. And that means that, obviously, our border is the transit point for much of this manufactured heroin from Mexico.

I was stunned down at Fort Huachuca that we are flying UAVs, but we are not flying them along the border. We are not coordinating with the Border Patrol. It is insane. So I hope that you will look at the whole situation of this border -- the whole challenge of this manufactured heroin that is coming across our border and killing Americans in larger numbers to the point where I believe the Governor of New Hampshire said it is an epidemic. Is that correct, Kelly?

Senator Ayotte: Absolutely.

Chairman McCain: So we have got to do a lot more on the border. We all understand posse comitatus, and we are not seeking military action on the part of our armed services, but there are so many ways that coordination can be implemented that is not being done today. I would like for you to send a written statement to the committee on what
actions you think need to be taken to try to stem this
epidemic which is killing so many Americans.

    General Robinson: Senator, yes, sir. I will commit to
you that I will do that, and I will also commit to you very
early, if confirmed, that I will go down and look at the
border so I understand it and put my eyes on it, just as you
have on several occasions. And I will send you a written
statement.

    Chairman McCain: I will be glad to escort you.

    General Robinson: Sir, I would be honored.

    Chairman McCain: General Scaparrotti, thank you for
your great work in Korea. We are proud of what you have
done, and we have every confidence in you in your new
assignment.

    There is a NATO force generation conference in June,
NATO summit in Warsaw in July. Should we not make a
decision as to what our troop strength level should be
before those two conferences?

    General Scaparrotti: Sir, I believe we should come to
terms with that before we enter those conferences, and if
confirmed, I will do my best to do an immediate review and
present my best military advice.

    Chairman McCain: In Afghanistan today -- I referred in
my opening statement about this latest attack in Kabul. In
your assessment, is the security situation getting better or
worse now that we have ISIS, we have Al Qaeda, and a
declaration by the Taliban that the fighting season has
begun?

General Scaparrotti: Sir, from what I have seen from
my vantage point, it appears to be getting worse. If
confirmed, I look forward to the opportunity to go back to
Afghanistan and talk to General Nicholson who is doing a
review as well and provide my advice.

Chairman McCain: I thank you for that.

So if we go down to 5,500, as is the present plan, will
there be no coalition presence in Herat and Mazar-al-Sharif?

General Scaparrotti: Chairman, I am not sure about
that plan at this point, but I know that at some point in
time that was a part of the plan, and I think that the lack
of our presence in those critical areas in the north and the
west that provide assistance and training to both the Army
Corps headquarters and the Afghan National Police are very
important.

Chairman McCain: Four of the most senior officers in
our military, General Neller, Milley, Selva, and Dunford,
tested Russia is the greatest threat to America. Do you
agree?

General Scaparrotti: Chairman, I do agree.

Chairman McCain: A "New York Times" story this
morning, Russian Submarine Threaten Mediterranean and North
Atlantic. Are you concerned about sea lines of
communications in the Atlantic and the Suez?

General Scaparrotti: Chairman, I am concerned.

Chairman McCain: Russian fighters made passes inside
of 50 feet. You heard my opening statement. What should be
our response to this gross violation of international law?

General Scaparrotti: Chairman, I believe that from a
military perspective, we should sail and fly wherever we are
allowed to by international law, and we should be strong,
clear, and consistent in our message in that regard.

Chairman McCain: This may sound a little tough, but
should we make an announcement to the Russians that if they
place the lives of our men and women onboard Navy ships in
danger, that we will take appropriate action?

General Scaparrotti: Sir, I believe that should be
known. Yes.

Chairman McCain: I thank you.

General Breedlove said in March that less than 10
percent of EUCOM’s intelligence, surveil, and -- ISR
requirements are being met. If Russia is our greatest
threat, does that make any sense?

General Scaparrotti: Sir, the actual allocation of
intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets is a
complex one looking at what is going on day to day. But I
would say that given the threat in Russia, it is obviously a
very high priority. And if confirmed, I will review that
and request the appropriate assets.

Chairman McCain: I thank you, General. These are very
interesting and challenging times. It is the view of this
member that you are obviously very well qualified, but I
hope that in your present position, you will demand that
decisions be made that enable you to carry out your mission,
which is not the case in my view today.

Senator Reed?

Senator Reed: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Let me begin by seconding the point that the chairman
made, that the decision with respect to the force structure
in Afghanistan should be made soon, not later simply because
there are operational considerations that will stretch over
many months once that decision is made. And based on my
visit in January, it seems that a stronger force rather than
a smaller force would be more appropriate. But that is a
view I think that you and General Nicholson will consider
and make a recommendation to the President.

The issue of Russia is obviously central, General
Scaparrotti. The Ukraine is an area of proxy conflict
between the two, and my position is that we have to succeed
there because if we succeed there, it will be the most
effective way to dissuade any further, we hope, aggression
or designs on other free nations in the area.
Your assessment of Ukraine right now, what we can do, what we should do, what we are not doing.

General Scaparrotti: Well, Senator, as you know, we have provided both training and assistance and the defensive means to Ukraine at this part. We have supported also our allies in doing the same. If confirmed, it will be my task to, one, review the situation there. But secondly, I believe that we should continue both assistance and aid in the kinds of assets that they need in order to defend their country, their sovereignty, and their territorial integrity, and that we ought to continue building partnership capacity to help them do that on their own.

Senator Reed: I think one of the other aspects that you are going to confront -- there are so many and the chairman touched on many of them -- is this evolving hybrid warfare, which is a combination of initial cyber activities from undisclosed or at least difficult to determine sources, together with irregular forces, together with, obviously, conventional weaponry and over the horizon, certainly traditional military forces.

I presume that as you enter your responsibilities, you are going to be able to begin to retool, if you will, NATO to be not only capable but superior in this hybrid warfare.

General Scaparrotti: Yes, Senator, I will. I think it is an important area, one that we are obviously challenged
in today not only in Ukraine but throughout three of the
four flanks basically within Europe and also globally.

Senator Reed: Thank you.

And, General Robinson, again you have many
responsibilities. One is you are responsible for the
operation on the ground-based midcourse defense, our
national missile defense effort. Admiral Syring was
testifying recently before the Appropriations Committee
very, very thoughtfully about the need to fly before you
buy, to test these vehicles, not simply to just put them up
and hope they work, also to invest in additional
capabilities to discern targets and the concentration being,
at least initially, on the west coast. Is that something
that you would support?

General Robinson: Yes, Senator, I would support his
priorities.

Senator Reed: Thank you very much.

The other issue too -- and it goes to so much of what
you do -- is the coordination with other Federal agencies,
particularly the Department of Homeland Security. And one
of the issues we all face will be trying to unwind
sequestration. But the effects, I would presume, on your
mission would be very difficult, if not only DOD but DHS was
not released from the bounds on sequestration. Is that
correct?
General Robinson: Sir, obviously, I appreciate the committee’s Bipartisan Act and having us be able to have a consistent budget. The effects of sequestration, if it came back, especially on the Department, for readiness and across the board would be concerning.

Senator Reed: One other of your responsibilities, since you are dual-hatted as the NORAD Commander, is the advanced warning and the readiness to protect ourselves from any type of missile, either a high altitude or increasingly low altitude. Can you give us any preliminary sort of notion of your sense of NORAD’s activities and what you intend to do to ensure that they can protect us?

General Robinson: Sir, as we defend with our Canadian partners to the north, I would go and continue to understand, if confirmed, where they are and what technologies and things we are thinking to the future so that we can ensure both air and maritime warning to defend the homeland.

Senator Reed: Thank you.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman McCain: Senator Ernst?

Senator Ernst: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

And thanks to both of you for being here today as well. And I want to thank your families for joining you and being supportive, and we appreciate your achievements as well. So
thank you for joining us today.

General Scaparrotti, I am glad to see an enhanced effort with ERI in the President’s budget request, as I do believe Russia is one of the greatest existential threats to our Nation. But I am concerned that rotating an armored brigade combat team through Europe instead of permanently stationing one there fails to show our optimum level of commitment to our allies and to Russia as well. And furthermore, as you know, the National Commission on the Future of the Army had suggested and made the recommendation that we include a forward armored BCT in Europe.

And I would like to know from you if you believe that rotating an armored brigade combat team through Europe is the right level of commitment, or do you believe that we should have one permanently stationed there? What are your thoughts on that, sir?

General Scaparrotti: Senator, I understand the service’s challenges in light of today’s resources to provide a permanently stationed brigade at this time, but I personally believe a permanently stationed armored brigade in Europe would be best.

Senator Ernst: We have heard some differing opinions on that, but I appreciate that.

Also, we did speak yesterday, and thank you for coming by the office. I do appreciate it.
In our meeting, I stated that I am concerned that Putin and the Assad regime has been weaponizing the migrants coming out of Syria. And they are being used to destabilize the European Union, and we have heard those comments from General Breedlove as well. And I admire him. I think he is on to something there.

And I am concerned that Turkey could do more to help stop the flow of refugees to Europe. As you know, over the past couple of years, it has been pretty easy for terrorists to negotiate. They have lines of communication through Turkey, who is a NATO partner, and to plan and conduct attacks in Europe, as well as in Iraq and Syria.

So I would like your take on if you think Turkey is doing enough to stem that flow and cut those lines of communication to refugees and terrorists into Europe? And can Turkey do more? And if so, what do you believe they should be doing?

General Scaparrotti: Senator, Turkey, as you stated, is an important ally, a NATO member that sits on the southeastern flank, really I think at the nexus of the challenges you talked about. You have an aggressive Russia. They have encountered the escalation personally. Counterterrorism, the ISIL threat, Syria, and the refugee challenge that you talked about. It is important that they work hard to secure their borders, that they take part in
the security operations that are ongoing to reduce the
refugee flow. And if confirmed, I will obviously make it
one of my priorities to understand their challenges and what
we can do to better help them in that regard.

Senator Ernst: Thank you, General.

And I have been told that if the Pentagon named
Operation Atlantic Resolve as an actual named operation, it
could potentially enhance and make more effective the
support and capabilities provided to EUCOM. And if you are
confirmed, then can you commit to me that you will look into
whether or not naming Operation Atlantic Resolve as an
actual named operation through the Joint Staff would allow
EUCOM to more effectively reassure our allies and deter
Russian aggression in the near and long term?

General Scaparrotti: Yes, Senator, I can commit to
that.

Senator Ernst: And can you also commit to me that, if
confirmed, you will provide feedback to us whether or not
the National Guard State Partnership Program, another one of
my favorite programs, could be expanded to more nations in
the EUCOM AOR to enhance our mil-to-mil cooperation and
partnership between the U.S. and our European allies?

General Scaparrotti: Yes, Senator. I am a great
supporter of the National Guard program, and I will report
back to you on that.
Senator Ernst: Thank you very much.

And finally, General Scaparrotti, do you think Russia’s use of hybrid tactics is making our life more challenging, especially through NATO? Just very briefly. I am running out of time.

General Scaparrotti: Yes, Senator, it is. They purposely keep it below the threshold that we would normally consider conflict.

Senator Ernst: Absolutely. Thank you, General. Thank you, General Robinson.

Chairman McCain: Senator Shaheen?

Senator Shaheen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you to both of you for your service and congratulations on your nomination.

And, General Robinson, I want to congratulate you this morning too for being named to Time’s 100 most influential people in the world actually. And we are very proud of you in New Hampshire for your nomination for being named to Time’s list, but mostly because you are a graduate of the University of New Hampshire. So congratulations.

And, General Scaparrotti, having had a chance to meet you in Afghanistan, I am not at all surprised to see that you have achieved what you have and very much appreciate that you are taking over at EUCOM at a very challenging time for Europe.
General Robinson, I want to begin with you. What do you think are the greatest threats that are facing the homeland right now?

General Robinson: Ma’am, as General Scaparrotti said, Russia is the greatest threat facing the homeland. But if you look inside the United States, the concern becomes with homegrown violent extremists. And so those would be the things that, if confirmed, I would continue to track closely.

Senator Shaheen: Thank you.

Senator McCain talked about the challenge from the heroin epidemic that we are facing in New Hampshire. I had a chance to visit the southern border last year, and talking to CBP agents about drugs coming across the southern border, they said those drugs are going up Interstate 35 to the middle of the country and Interstate 95 to New England.

I very much appreciate your agreeing to look at that firsthand and to make a written report to us. But can you talk about some of the things that NORTHCOM can do to address that heroine epidemic?

General Robinson: Yes, ma’am. The epidemic is absolutely heart-wrenching. And if confirmed, I know that NORTHCOM will support Federal agencies to provide military unique capabilities to support the drug problem. And as the chairman mentioned, take a look what is with Fort Huachuca
and the UAVs and can we partner there and look at that. So
those would be a couple of things that early on that I would
be looking at if confirmed.

Senator Shaheen: Thank you.

General Scaparrotti, I just want to make sure I
understood how you responded to Senator Ernst. You said
that you do believe it would be preferable to permanently
station troops in Eastern Europe. Did I understand that
correctly?

General Scaparrotti: Senator, if confirmed, I have got
to look at the service’s situation. If confirmed, I would
request a force like a brigade, and they determine how that
is provided. But I think if I had the option of that or a
rotational brigade, I would prefer a permanently stationed
brigade.

Senator Shaheen: I have had a chance to visit with
officials from the Baltics and from Eastern Europe a number
of times over the last year. And clearly, they are very
anxious to see a very strong United States and NATO presence
on the eastern border. So can you talk a little bit about
why you think a permanent brigade would be preferable to
what we are currently considering with respect to rotating
troops in and out?

General Scaparrotti: Yes, Senator. I think a
permanent brigade -- I am assuming in Europe that we have
the facilities that we could readily station those, care for families, et cetera. But a permanent brigade gives you a brigade that establishes relationships with the supporting elements of all forces for the United States, as well as a more permanent relationship and lasting relationship with all of our allies that they work with day to day. And that can be done over time better than a rotational force can potentially do it. It also develops relationships and operating procedures with all of those allies and with the forces that are in Europe. So primarily it is one that gives you a little more substance, a little more strength in relationship building and, obviously, a trained brigade with really less turbulence in terms of you can establish it there, assuming families are with them.

Senator Shaheen: Thanks. I appreciate that.

My time is almost over, but as both Senators McCain and Reed have pointed out and as you know very well and said in your testimony, this is a very challenging time in Europe. They have a number of threats from Russia to the migration crisis. Can you talk about what else EUCOM can do to help reassure the Europeans and help work with them to encourage stability there?

General Scaparrotti: Senator, I think that EUCOM is, under Phil Breedlove, on the right track. You know, he has emphasized very close relationships, collaboration,
developing better information and intelligence sharing, a
close partnership with our allies where we assist each other
in building capacity, building interoperability, and the
exercise of forces in training. Finally, he has begun the
proper planning that will reflect the change in the
environment there that has taken place in the last 2 years.
And I think, if confirmed, I will continue all of those
things.

Senator Shaheen: Thank you. Thank you very much.

Chairman McCain: Senator Wicker?

Senator Wicker: General Scaparrotti, in an interview
this month, Secretary-General Stoltenberg, NATO Secretary-
General, said that NATO has to be ready to deploy forces and
to intervene again if needed. Do you agree with that
statement? And how likely is it going to be necessary for
NATO forces to intervene? And what is your assessment of
the capability of NATO forces to do so?

General Scaparrotti: Well, I think, first of all,
Senator, the purpose of the alliance is to provide a
collective defense within Europe. And to do that today, it
has to be agile in its movement of forces. So I agree that
it has to be able to deploy forces throughout Europe both to
what is commonly seen today as the threat on the eastern
flank with Russia, but also, where necessary, to assist
allies in threats in the southern border to include
terrorist threats, et cetera.

I think NATO is in a position today where we have capability, but obviously since the Wales summit, the purpose has been to develop those capabilities because we realize that there has to be change in order to meet the new environment that we see in Europe today.

Senator Wicker: And we are not completely ready to meet that new environment as a NATO alliance. Are we?

General Scaparrotti: No, sir, we are not.

Senator Wicker: Let me also ask you. Secretary-General Stoltenberg said this with regard to Afghanistan. He said, we have been able to prevent that Afghanistan becomes a safe haven for international terrorists. Do you agree with that?

General Scaparrotti: Senator, I believe that we have changed the conditions in Afghanistan, but I also believe we have much work to do to realize our objective of a stable, democratic Afghanistan that is no longer a safe haven.

Senator Wicker: He said we have been able to build a national unity government. Do you agree with that?

General Scaparrotti: Senator, there is a national unity government. I believe personally there is much work to do there as well.

Senator Wicker: He said we have been able to build an Afghan national army and security forces of 350,000 soldiers
and personnel.

General Scaparrotti: Yes, Senator, 350,000 taking part in the establishment of that army. And I am proud of the services and the service that I have had in Afghanistan with the Afghan security forces.

Senator Wicker: And he said we have enabled them to take over the security in Afghanistan themselves. To what extent do you agree with that statement? And is that another area where there is work to be done?

General Scaparrotti: Senator, they are responsible for the security of their nation now. There is much work to do, particularly when it comes to enablers, C2, and logistics, and it is important that we continue that assistance to develop that capability.

Senator Wicker: So your testimony is that these accomplishments have, in fact, taken place, but there are still concerns and still real work to be done to solidify them. Is that correct?

General Scaparrotti: That is correct, sir.

Senator Wicker: And Chairman McCain and Senator Reed have touched on this in their statements and questions. But do we risk losing these accomplishments by a further drawdown in American troops in Afghanistan?

General Scaparrotti: Sir, I believe strongly in the conditions that have to be met in order to meet a drawdown.
So I believe in conditions being the driver not time.

Senator Wicker: And so are you prepared to say whether those conditions have been met? In other words, I am echoing I think what our chairman and ranking member have said. Does it make any sense with so much invested and so many accomplishments -- does it make any sense for us to risk that by drawing down troops?

General Scaparrotti: Senator, given my experience there, all of the sacrifices that we have made to realize our objectives, I think that we need to keep those objectives in mind and work hard to achieve them. And any drawdown should be set on conditions to achieve our end states.

Senator Wicker: Well, we want to work with you on that. It just seems to me that we risk tossing away hard-fought and hard-won gains.

So thank you very much. I look forward to your service.

Chairman McCain: Senator Donnelly?

Senator Donnelly: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I want to thank both of the witnesses and your families for all your sacrifice.

General Robinson, I want to recommend to you a book to read in your new job, and it is called "Dreamland." And it is about the heroin epidemic that is not only sweeping our
country but in particular this focuses a lot on Ohio. And
my home State of Indiana is right next door.

And I just want to tell you a little story. We have a
small county in southern Indiana, Scott County, and a small
town there, Austin, 4,200 people. In a town of 4,200
people, we had 190 HIV cases that came from dirty needles
that were passed around while using prescription drugs. And
this epidemic has basically hollowed out and destroyed all
of these families. It starts with the prescription drugs,
and then it goes to the heroin, the black tar heroin that
comes across from Mexico. And this book, "Dreamland," helps
to describe how destructive it is of these towns and of
these families.

In my hometown, we lost a 20-year-old and a 19-year-old
young man just from one of these parties that they were at.
Going to be a sophomore at IU, going to be a freshman at
Ball State. And it happens in town after town all across
New Hampshire, all across Cape Cod. People think of it as a
vacation place. Cape Cod has a heroin epidemic, and it is
coming up from Mexico. And we desperately need you to be
the point person in stopping this effort.

General Robinson: Senator, thank you for that advice,
and I commit to you that I will read "Dreamland" independent
of being confirmed.

Senator Donnelly: It is heartbreaking.
General Robinson: Yes, sir. It is heart-wrenching.

As Senator Shaheen mentioned, you know, the epidemic that is happening in New Hampshire, in my State of residence, I commit to you that I will do everything to understand it and to work with DHS to do just what you have asked.

Senator Donnelly: We see more than auto crashes now, more than car crashes, automobile-related deaths heroin and prescription drug-related deaths have rocketed past that. So we lose young person after young person. When I go to high school graduations and speak to them, I basically spend half my time begging them to keep an eye out for one another because there is so much black tar heroin coming across from Mexico.

General Robinson: Senator, I agree with you too, not only the heart-wrenching deaths, but as you mentioned, what it does to families. So, yes, sir.

Senator Donnelly: Thank you.

And, General Scaparrotti, it was a privilege to be with you in Korea, and you did such an extraordinary job there. You talked about Afghanistan, and the number 5,500 has been mentioned by the chairman. The last thing I would like to see -- and I know you would too -- is all the efforts for so many years just kind of be thrown away because of a number as opposed to what conditions require. I know you have said it will be conditions-based. We want to make sure you give
us your absolutely 100 percent unvarnished opinion of what actually needs to be done there as you take a look at it.

General Scaparrotti: Senator, I absolutely commit to you that, if confirmed, I will do just that.

Senator Donnelly: Thank you very much.

As we look to what just happened with the Russians recently, you know, doing a barrel roll over one of our ships there or over one of our planes there, is there a point where this has happened time after time after time where we tell them in advance enough? The next time it does not end well for you.

General Scaparrotti: Senator, I think it is important that we are, as I said, strong, clear, and consistent with them. And we should engage them to make clear what is acceptable operations of both of our forces in close proximity. And I think once we make that known, then we have to enforce it.

Senator Donnelly: General Robinson, what is your assessment, as you take a look, of the ballistic missile threat to our country posed by North Korea and Iran? And, obviously, you are going to be significantly involved in providing answers for that and in making sure we are safe.

General Robinson: Yes, sir. The North Korean threat is real. Right now, it is a medium range, but they are trying very hard to be able to hit the homeland. And Iran
continues to evolve its capability. And if confirmed, that
will be a threat that I will continue to monitor very, very
closely.

Senator Donnelly: Thank you both very, very much for
your service.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman McCain: Senator Ayotte?

Senator Ayotte: Thank you, Chairman.

I want to thank both of you for your distinguished
service to the country. And I have to say, General
Robinson, I echo Senator Shaheen’s comments. We are so very
proud of you in New Hampshire as a UNH grad and, obviously,
as your stated residency of New Hampshire. I want to thank
your family as well, and I want to thank certainly the
Colonel, Colonel Howard, for his service as well as a great
resident of the State of New Hampshire.

I wanted to ask you -- in the meeting that we had in my
office, one of the issues we talked about with your
responsibility for the southern border as a Commander of
NORTHCOM is this idea of the tunnels. In fact, this
morning, as I am looking at the news, we discovered that
there were reports that U.S. authorities discovered a half-
mile tunnel under the border with Mexico into San Diego used
to smuggle drugs. And as we think about this heroin and
also fentanyl issue, which is a very deadly synthetic drug
that is really killing people in New Hampshire -- I got an amendment in that focuses on cooperation with the Israelis because they have the tunnel issue with Hamas and Hezbollah. And Admiral Gortney had said that was a very helpful, cooperative effort.

So I would like to ask you, as you go to the southern border, will you look at this tunnel issue too and how we can develop better technologies to ensure that we are looking at not only how they are transporting the heroin and fentanyl over in traditional ways but also building these tunnels.

General Robinson: Yes, Senator, I will do that. I saw the article this morning, and it did remind me of our conversation and the conversation that we had about Israel and the technologies that they had. And as we discussed yesterday, when I understood that, it piqued my interest.

So two things. I will go down and look, understand the tunnels, see what they look like, understand the technologies that we have, and then understand the things that Israel is also teaching us what they have learned.

Senator Ayotte: Terrific.

And in terms of this fentanyl issue, this is the synthetic basically analgesic that is almost 50 times more powerful than heroin, and it is also being manufactured in Mexico. New Hampshire had last year 430 drug deaths.
Actually 160 of them are attributed to fentanyl. So in your role in addressing not only the border, but in dealing with Mexico, what I would like to also have you focus on is talking to the Mexican Government, obviously, in these military-to-military relationships of how we can have them step up more on this interdiction issue.

General Robinson: Yes, ma'am. Early on, I do want to meet with my military counterpart, understand what they are, and also provide an assessment, as I mentioned to the chairman, back to the committee and what we need to do together more to support them.

Senator Ayotte: Terrific.

General Robinson: Yes, ma'am.

Senator Ayotte: Thank you.

General Scaparrotti, I want to thank you for your distinguished service in Afghanistan. I would like to ask you, if confirmed for this important position, one of your roles not only serving as European Commander, you will also serve as the Supreme Allied Commander of Europe. And recently we met with the NATO Secretary-General. The committee did. And one of the issues he raised is that he believed that NATO countries and NATO as a whole should be more involved in the train, advise, and assist mission in Iraq to defeat ISIS. And so do you agree with the Secretary-General that we should seek to get NATO more
involved in the train, advise, and assist mission?

Obviously, we all have a part in defeating ISIS, given the threats that this group presents to not only the United States of America but also Europe with the recent attacks there.

General Scaparrotti: Senator, if confirmed, I will obviously discuss that with the Secretary-General. It is a matter of policy within NATO. But to give my personal opinion, I think we have very strong and capable allies, and the more allies that we have assisting us in Iraq and other places around the globe where we have the same challenges is important and we should pursue that.

Senator Ayotte: Terrific. Thank you.

And in terms of the Russian threat, one of the issues -- there was a recent article I think yesterday that talked about Russian attack submarines that I believe the chairman briefly touched on that are prowling the coastline of Scandinavia and Scotland and the Mediterranean Sea and the North Atlantic. I wanted to ask you about the importance of our attack submarine fleet in terms of having the capacity with this Russian threat, but also, obviously, we know that the Chinese are another issue in the South Pacific. But yet, our requirements for attack submarines -- we are not keeping up the pace of what we see the Russians doing. How important of an asset is this in terms of combating the
Russians in what they are doing right now?

General Scaparrotti: Senator, I believe that it is critical. We presently have dominance undersea. And I do not believe we should pace it. We should maintain that dominance, and it is critical to our security.

Senator Ayotte: Great.

I want to thank you both for your leadership and distinguished service and especially your families as well. We appreciate it.

Senator Cotton [presiding]: Senator Hirono?

Senator Hirono: Thank you very much.

I echo the sentiments of the members of this committee in thanking you, General Scaparrotti and General Robinson, for your service to our country and, of course, that of your families.

Of course, General Robinson, it is good to see you. Thank you for your years of service in Hawaii and leading the Pacific air forces. Of course, we are very proud of you as being one of the 100 most influential people in the world.

General Robinson, in response to a question, you noted that one of the biggest concerns that you have is with homegrown violent extremists. If confirmed, what would be the steps that you would take to protect our country against homegrown violent extremists, which I share with you?
General Robinson: Yes, ma’am. One of the things that is incredibly important in that is sharing of intelligence across all the agencies. So it would be important to understand that intelligence to share and support DHS and Federal law enforcement agencies as we watch that. It is a very difficult threat to find and pay attention to.

Senator Hirono: So any other steps that you would take to --

General Robinson: No, ma’am. If confirmed, that would be one of the things. It is one of my focus areas. As I look back into the southwest border and the defense of the homeland, that is one of the things that I, if confirmed, will start looking, what are some other things that NORTHCOM, Northern Command, can do in support of all the interagency in the whole-of-government approach.

Senator Hirono: And I think that when you are dealing in this area, the State and local law enforcement communities, as well as the larger communities --

General Robinson: Yes, ma’am.

Senator Hirono: -- have to be brought in.

General Robinson: Yes, ma’am, and supporting them.

Yes, ma’am.

Senator Hirono: I would to continue to work with you on addressing those issues.

General Robinson: Yes, ma’am.
Senator Hirono: General Scaparrotti, the capabilities of the European phased adaptive approach, or EPAA, deepen our missile defense partnerships and assurances with NATO. What do you assess are the benefits of the EPAA, and how does it project strength to our allies and, of course, our strength to our adversaries?

General Scaparrotti: Well, Senator, we have globally but particularly in Europe a serious threat from ballistic missiles. The phased adaptive approach is very supportive of the defense of not only our citizens and bases in Europe but also of our allies and partners in Europe. I think it is critical. And I think it is an important contribution then to our allies’ defense systems, and we should work for a layered interoperable defense of Europe. And I believe it is the appropriate step to get that done.

Senator Hirono: Thank you.

For General Robinson, Admiral Gortney mentioned in our last NORTHCOM hearing that China is in the process of operationalizing its first viable class of ballistic missile submarines. And you were asked some questions relating to what Russia is doing, but China is moving in this direction. And he testified that, if successful, they would be China’s first sea-based strategic nuclear deterrent. And in previous hearings, the submarine capabilities of our country have been highlighted as one of our country’s most valuable
assets.

What are the implications of a successful employment of this class of ballistic missile submarines by China, and for what you can talk about in this setting, how would this affect our capabilities especially in the Asia-Pacific region?

General Robinson: Yes, ma'am. China continues to evolve their capabilities, and they continue to be able to range further and further. So the more that they can range, then the more that it becomes a threat to the homeland, both Hawaii, Guam and then, if capable, further here to the homeland.

Senator Hirono: Do we need more submarines?

General Robinson: Ma'am, they are our asymmetric advantage, and they are an asymmetric advantage in the Pacific as we speak.

Senator Hirono: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator Cotton: Senator Graham?

Senator Graham: Thank you.

I thank both of you.

General Scaparrotti, some are saying in America that we need to get out of NATO or limit our participation. What is your response?

Senator Cotton: Turn your mike on, Senator Graham.
Senator Graham: It is on. We must not have paid the bill down here.

General Scaparrotti: Senator, I think you asked that some have said that either we need more participation or payment into NATO.

Senator Graham: That we need to get out of NATO, that it is obsolete.

General Scaparrotti: Senator, I personally believe that NATO is critical to our interest and our defense.

Senator Graham: In 30 seconds, why?

General Scaparrotti: Because we have very close ties. They are our longest allies, and we have 50 percent of the GDP that goes through there, one of our most important markets.

Senator Graham: You agree that other countries should contribute more to NATO’s overall budget.

General Scaparrotti: Yes, I do. They should meet the commitments.

Senator Graham: Do you believe that Russia is trying to basically fracture Europe?

General Scaparrotti: I do.

Senator Graham: Do you believe that Putin would love nothing more than the United States to withdraw from NATO?

General Scaparrotti: Yes, sir.

Senator Graham: Do you believe that everybody in the
Baltics -- that it would be a very dark day for them if America withdrew from NATO?

General Scaparrotti: Yes, sir.

Senator Graham: So Putin would be the biggest beneficiary of a breakup of NATO given the current construct?

General Scaparrotti: Yes, sir. I believe Putin is deliberately trying to split the alliance.

Senator Graham: Do you think ISIL would benefit from the breakup of NATO?

General Scaparrotti: Yes, sir.

Senator Graham: Do you think the Taliban would benefit from the breakup of NATO?

General Scaparrotti: Yes, sir.

Senator Graham: All right.

If the President goes down to 5,500 U.S. forces in Afghanistan, do you believe NATO countries will respond in kind by reducing their commitment?

General Scaparrotti: Sir, I think given my experience there that they most likely follow our lead.

Senator Graham: Have you known of one country to get to our right when it comes to Afghanistan?

General Scaparrotti: No, sir.

Senator Graham: So do you agree with me that any withdrawal in Afghanistan should be conditions-based?
1 General Scaparrotti: I do, sir.
2 Senator Graham: So I just want to say for the record to the President, you ignored sound military advice when it came to Iraq to keep a residual force. The rest is history. You turned down the advice of your entire national security team to help the Free Syrian Army when it would have mattered in Syria. You drew a red line against Assad. You did not follow up when Qaddafi was taken down by his people, along with NATO’s help. Please do not repeat these mistakes by reducing our forces in Afghanistan because you will get the same result, probably worse. That is just my editorial comment.

In terms of budgets, if we go back into sequestration mode, General, what would it mean to our presence in Europe?

General Scaparrotti: Sir, it would have an immediate impact on the forces that we have there today, and I believe it would potentially put at risk the forces that we plan to rotate today to reinforce our posture. And certainly it would impact the readiness of our remaining forces to come to Europe if deterrence should fail.

Senator Graham: Would it be an encouraging sign to Russia that we are less committed to Europe?

General Scaparrotti: It would, sir.

Senator Graham: General Robinson, what would sequestration do to your ability to defend the Nation’s
homeland?

General Robinson: Sir, it would definitely affect the readiness of the force and our ability to invest in capabilities to defend the homeland.

Senator Graham: Can you give me some examples of what we would lose in terms of capabilities?

General Robinson: Depending upon where we are with sensor development or hit-to-kill development, those would be two capabilities.

Senator Graham: Is the threat to the homeland declining or increasing?

General Robinson: Sir, the threat to the homeland is increasing.

Senator Graham: Is the threat to our partners in Europe and to our interests in Europe declining or increasing, General Scaparrotti?

General Scaparrotti: It is increasing, sir.

Senator Graham: Can you think of a worse time for the American Congress to cut the military’s budget to historic lows, given your time in service?

General Scaparrotti: No, sir. This is the most challenging time I have seen, and we need to reinforce our capabilities.

Senator Graham: Do you agree with that, General Robinson?
General Robinson: I do, sir.

Senator Graham: Thank you. Thank you both for your service.

Senator Cotton: Senator King?

Senator King: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A meteoric rise.

[Laughter.]

Senator King: I just want to associate myself with the comments of Senator Graham and the chairman and several others. Particularly as you go to this NATO meeting this summer that is going to be so important in Europe, it would be a grave mistake in my view to not maintain a level of force in Afghanistan that is necessary to support the Afghan security forces. And the problem is this decision has to be made reasonably soon because we are not going to go from 9,800 to 5,500 in a couple of days at the end of the year. The process has to start this summer. And I think it would be a mistake, particularly given the Taliban essentially served notice on us in the last few days that they do not view this struggle is over by any manner or means. So I hope that as you work with the NATO allies, the message will come back from them and to the President that we need to maintain a significant force with the authorities necessary to adequately support our NATO allies and the Afghan security forces.
Secondly, I just want to associate myself with the comments that were made about the border and the drug epidemic. Since this meeting started, six people have died in the United States of drug overdose, just since we sat down here an hour and 5 minutes ago. And that is a definite threat to the homeland. We do not want to militarize the border, but to the extent we can coordinate better, utilize the resources that you will have, General, in your capabilities to work with our civilian authorities, that is I think a very high priority.

General Scaparrotti, one of the things that is concerning me about Europe is that what we are seeing in Ukraine is a new kind of hybrid war with indigenous people, some Russian troops, no necessarily identifications. We are not talking about armies and tanks coming across the border in a conventional way. Are we developing a strategy and a doctrine for dealing with what is essentially a new kind of war? Because my concern is that what we are seeing is a practice for something similar, for example, in the Baltics.

General Scaparrotti: Yes, Senator. I know just from personal experience that EUCOM, SOCOM, as well as the other COCOMs have gathered, and we are studying hybrid warfare. It presents a problem because it is actually intended to be below the level that we would normally consider conflict. So it challenges the norms that we have been used to.
Senator King: What is an act of war?

General Scaparrotti: That is correct. It challenges those norms, and it challenges the authorities that our forces have in order to react. So we are working on how best to handle this, the authorities, the doctrine that we need and the capabilities in order to deal with this type of conflict.

Senator King: Let me ask a question of both of you. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs recently mentioned that he would like to see an update to Goldwater-Nichols to account for the real-time need for the COCOMs to be in communication with the President in the case of an emergency. We have been talking a lot about Goldwater-Nichols throughout this year in preparation for our National Defense Act coming up. What is your thought about the relationship of the COCOMs to the chain of command, to the presidency? What do you see, either or both of you, as potential improvements to the Goldwater-Nichols organizational structure? General? I guess “General” applies to both of you. General Scaparrotti.

General Scaparrotti: Senator, I would like to first say that Goldwater-Nichols has produced the officer that I am today and the magnificent military that we have today as well that works well as a joint force and is very capable. However, I do believe, given the change in our strategic
environment, particularly in the last 3 or 4 years, that it is time to do a review.

With reference to your specific question, I do not know that there is a need for the change. I report to the Secretary of Defense and, if confirmed, I will report to the Secretary of Defense and the President.

But I think what we need in this environment is we also -- and I think what General Dunford was suggesting is we need the ability to have agility in our decision-making and the deployment of assets. Very few of these challenges today are limited to one COCOM. They are multi-regional, multi-functional, multi-domain, and they challenge your structure that we have today and our ability to be as agile as our challenges are and our adversaries are.

Senator King: So we have to be sure that our organizational structure allows that agility.

General Scaparrotti: And the authorities as well.

Senator King: General Robinson, your comment?

General Robinson: Sir, I agree with General Scaparrotti 100 percent. It is a great time to look at it. The act is 30 years old and the strategic landscape has changed. And the most important part out of all of this is the agility and the ability to work with each other.

Senator King: My time is up, but I hope you will supply your thoughts perhaps in writing after the hearing.
because this is a topic of very active consideration by the
committee, and having people of your experience and wisdom
would be very helpful to us. Thank you.

    Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman McCain [presiding]: Senator Inhofe?

Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The questions I was going to ask were pretty much asked
by Senator Graham. And I would just ask you, General
Scaparrotti, in your memory, in your history, in your
service, have you ever seen a time when this country is more
threatened than they are today.

    General Scaparrotti: No, sir, I have not.

    Senator Inhofe: General Robinson, first of all, all
you have to do is repeat the performance that you gave us in
Tinker, and you are going to do a great job in this new
position.

    I want to mention a few things here just to make sure
since I was not here until just now in this committee. I
was at another committee -- to make sure they are in the
record.

    First of all, due to the proliferation of technology,
the number of countries possessing a ballistic missile
capability continues to increase with the weapons becoming
more complex with countermeasures, greater range and
accuracy. General Mann testified last week, quote, nearly
30 countries possess ballistic missile capability with approximately 50 different variants of ballistic missiles and currently 13 new intermediate range and 8 intercontinental ballistic missile ranges variants under development.

Since signing the Iran deal, which was a disaster, Iran has conducted at least three sets of tests of nuclear capability ballistic missiles. The latest test had, quote, Israel should be wiped off the earth, unquote, inscribed and had a range of up to 1,250 miles. General Votel, CENTCOM Commander, testified last month that Iran has been more aggressive since the nuclear deal. I think we all understand that.

On 9 February, James Clapper assessed, quote, that North Korea has already taken initial steps toward fielding the KN08 road-mobile ICBM.

Let me ask you, General Robinson. We talked about this before. Number one, do you think there should be a restructuring? Because there is some confusion as to who is in charge of homeland security. Do you think some changes should be made?

General Robinson: Sir, I know if confirmed as the Commander of NORTHCOM, that I work closely with the interagency, the Department of Homeland Security. If confirmed, that would be something --
Senator Inhofe: So you would be in constant contact with them.

General Robinson: Yes, sir. There is a constant coordination.

Senator Inhofe: In light of everything that I just said about the threat that is out there and then the comment by General Scaparrotti, are you confident in the intelligence that we are getting on North Korea’s and Iran’s ballistic missile capability?

General Robinson: Sir, given my recent experience and time that I have spent in the Pacific and focus on North Korea, I am confident and comfortable with the intelligence that we are getting. Sir, I would have to come back to you about Iran, because I have not been focused there, to give you an accurate answer, if confirmed.

Senator Inhofe: Yes. Well, I have never been all that confident. It is kind of a scary thing when we know all these things that I mentioned, the statements I made. That is reality. That is today.

General Scaparrotti, let me ask you a question. I have been concerned for some time about the capabilities. A lot of our friends who historically always have been at our side are now kind of in a position with Russia due to the fact that they control the -- Russia and Iran, between the two of them, control the capabilities, the energy capabilities,
that we have in this country. Now we have passed lifting the ban. Unfortunately, the ban was lifted at a time when the price of natural gas was down so low it did not have the results that we anticipated and we hoped would be there.

But what is your thinking right now about the capability that we are going to have? How is lifting this ban going to help us in some of these areas that would like to be working with us as opposed to Russia?

General Scaparrotti: Well, Senator, I think we have talked about the hybrid warfare that Russia practices. They use all the instruments of power to influence our allies and particularly the use of energy. And it is to our benefit, I believe, to assist our allies in any way that we can to relieve them of that dependence as much as possible on Russia and that ability of Russia to use that as a form of coercion.

Senator Inhofe: And do you believe that we should do everything we can -- I think you just said this in a different way to sum that up -- to correct the situation to be able to allow them to get their energy from us, that this is a great national security benefit we would have when that happens?

General Scaparrotti: Senator, I have not delved into this as a policy issue, but to me it is reasonable that if we could provide energy to them, it would both assist them
and us in our security.

Senator Inhofe: I appreciate it.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman McCain: Senator Kaine?

Senator Kaine: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

And thanks to the witnesses. Many of my questions have been answered, but sort of one topic for each of you.

General Scaparrotti, Senator Ernst asked you a question about Turkey and border control. I kind of want to get into a little bit of a different question. They are an important NATO ally, but I would like you to talk about the complexities of dealing with Turkey, given the internal politics of Turkey, especially concerns about the Kurds.

The Kurds have been wonderful partners for the U.S. in the anti-ISIL mission in Iraq, obviously, and Kurdistan in Iraq has traditionally had a pretty good relationship with Turkey.

But we have also found strong partners in the Kurds in northern Syria, and that has created significant tensions with Turkey. We cannot abandon a strong anti-ISIL partner that has been very, very valiant as the Kurds in northern Syria have been, but by the same token, we need to manage the relationship with Turkey so that they will step up on border control and help us in the anti-ISIL fight.

How do you see your role in EUCOM in trying to work
with the Turkish relationship so that we can keep up the
anti-ISIL fight, keep our partnership with the Kurds alive,
and yet manage that important relationship with our NATO
ally?

General Scaparrotti: Senator, I think you outlined the
challenges there very well. They are a very important ally.
If confirmed, obviously, I will build a close relationship
with their military leadership and with -- my intent --
their civilian leadership as well.

Thank you look at counterterrorism and they look at the
PKKs of the threat. When we talk counterterrorism,
primarily we think about ISIL. So it is those dynamics that
both of us have to realize our interests and find areas that
commonly we can work together. And I think in Turkey’s
case, there are areas where we can support them and
encourage them to help us in the overall effort within the
southeast flank of NATO.

Senator Kaine: General Robinson, you talked about the
agility and the ability to work together in response to
Senator King’s question on Goldwater-Nichols. I am really
interested in the seam between NORTHCOM and SOUTHCOM. We
talked about this a little bit in some of the other
questions about drug trafficking, et cetera. There is some
of that that originates in Mexico, but much of it originates
in South America, transits through the Northern Triangle
countries and through Mexico. And whether it is drug trafficking or human trafficking or the migrant flows that are driven by violence in Central America, that border between Mexico and the countries to the south is really important. Talk a little bit about the kind of working relationship that you would hope to form with Admiral Tidd on that border between NORTHCOM and SOUTHCOM.

General Robinson: Sir, that is an incredibly important border. The more that we can push everything down towards that border, Guatemala and Belize, the less the people will migrate across our southern border between us and Mexico.

Kurt Tidd and I are very good friends, and if confirmed, I know that he and I will dialogue on a very regular basis to work together to ensure that seam is as seamless as possible. It is incredibly important that we do that and that we work together to support the Mexican military in their efforts with that southern border.

Senator Kaine: Thank you very much.

Thanks, Mr. Chair.

Chairman McCain: Senator Tillis?

Senator Tillis: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

This has been a great confirmation hearing, and I appreciate both of you all’s service.

General Robinson, your service of 34 years. I know you are a resident of New Hampshire. I am not rushing you to
retire, but when you do, I hope you will consider North Carolina at least as winter home. I lived in New Hampshire. I guarantee you the winters are better.

But one quick question for you. I sometimes think that we lose sight of the fact of the number of victims that have been victims of narcoterrorism. So we are talking about the opioid epidemic today, but we have to recognize that hundreds of thousands of people have lost their lives because of the activities that are flowing between SOUTHCOM and NORTHCOM. So I am not going to go back and cover the landscape again except to say it would be very helpful for us to shed light on it.

If you were to equate this to what we are dealing with in the Middle East, we have a lot of specific targets that we could go after that we simply do not have the resources to go after. We know a lot of times where they are starting, where they are ending, and we simply do not have the resources to interdict as many as we could.

First, do you agree with that? And what kinds of things can we do to really step up our game there, not at the expense of other important priorities? But this is a critical priority. It is killing more Americans than just about any other terrorist activity going on today.

General Robinson: Sir, if confirmed, I think it is incredibly important for me to understand the border. I
think it is incredibly important for me to walk the
landscape. And also, if confirmed, very early on too, as I
work that, is to work with the agencies and interagency to
understand the problems that you were just talking about. I
know interdiction is important, and I know getting after the
networks is important. And so where is the interagency?
Where is DHS? Where are law enforcement agencies trying to
get after that? For me to understand that, and then if
confirmed, to be able to support their activities.

Senator Tillis: That is great. And within an area of
your purview, I am glad that you recognize that working with
the Mexican military and recognizing that much of the
pressure on the northern border of Mexico can be relieved by
taking care of the challenge on the southern border of
Mexico. And that can only come with good partner
cooporation. So I appreciate your commitment to looking at
that. To me it is one of the most pressing things we need
to do in this hemisphere.

General Scaparrotti, you mentioned earlier about
stepping up our partner relationships with Europe. Can you
give me just a brief synopsis of the state of our
partnerships in terms of our mil-to-mil relationship, in
terms of their countries’ specific efforts to budget and
fund the things that we need to do to make it very clear to
Russia this will not end well if they continue their
aggression?

And then thirdly, just the general messaging within the region. Are the words that the countries are conveying to their people and to the region consistent with what you think our objectives should be in that area?

General Scaparrotti: Well, Senator, first with respect to our partnerships, we have got very strong allies in Europe. I have served with many of them. And as you know, they provided about a third of the force in Afghanistan and suffered 1,000 casualties right alongside of us. So I think that is an indication of just how good they can be and what we share.

I do believe that as a part of the alliance and as partners, we should meet our commitments and provide our fair share of the defense because we are strong --

Senator Tillis: Do you feel like we have work to do there?

General Scaparrotti: We do have work to do there. As I understand it, out of the alliance of 28, there are five that have 2 percent or more of their GDP, and there are nine that have increased their spending. As you know from the Wales summit and looking forward to the Warsaw summit, that commitment is one of the things that we are focused on.

In terms of the communication, I feel confident to say that those that are on the eastern flank are communicating
very seriously about the need for strength in defense in
light of Russia.

Senator Tillis: Probably because of the imminent
threat.

General Scaparrotti: Because of the proximity. I
think that is true with the remainder of our allies as well.
However, to the south, you have got a different but just as
important a threat. And I think one of the important
things, if confirmed, that I need to do is to recognize all
of our threats and help our allies to be unified.

Senator Tillis: Thank you.

In closing, I want to associate myself with Senator
Graham’s comments and also just make the point, because
people watch these hearings and take a lot from them, I do
not think that there is any serious discussion among any
Member of Congress that would suggest that anyone thinks
that withdrawal from NATO makes sense. And the rhetoric in
the political circles now should not be confused with
anything that we would seriously consider. I find that
unimaginable.

Thank you all. I look forward to supporting your
confirmation.

Chairman McCain: Mr. Stoltenberg, the NATO Secretary,
pointed out to us in a meeting that 9/11 was an attack on
the United States of America, not a European country. And
they joined and over 1,000 of the young men and women that have come from those countries have been killed in action. When we talk about how much money that they have not spent and we should keep the pressure on, I do not think we should forget that over 1,000 of their young -- I think all young men -- have given their lives because of an action that was taken against the United States of America.

Senator Manchin?

Senator Manchin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

I want to follow up, General Scaparrotti, on Senator Kaine because I have been concerned also with the Kurds, our support of the Kurds. I know the Iraqi Kurds and now the northern Syrian Kurds seem to be valiant fighters. We do not seem to be second guessing are they going to turn on us, use our weapons, give our weapons to somebody else. We have not had that concern. That is the only group that I know that we have not had that concern with.

But with the concern that we have of the Turks, how they are looking at our relationship, are we not giving the support to the Kurds that we could even more? And basically do the Iraqi Kurds -- are they still satisfied with a one-state solution and having everything come through Baghdad, or are they still what we understood very frustrated with
that?

General Scaparrotti: Senator, I do not know the answer to that particular part of your question, the last part about their satisfaction. If I could take that for the record --

Senator Manchin: If you could take that for the record just to find out where we stand there.

[The information follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]
Senator Manchin: I mean, they have been very cooperative. You can only take so much. If they are not getting the support and basically if they rely on the dysfunction of Baghdad right now getting the goods that they need and the arms that they need to help us defend the terrorists, I think it would be a shame not for us to make sure they get it directly.

General Scaparrotti: To the first part of your question, I agree. They have been a reliant and probably one of the best combatants that we have allied with in our fight in ISIL and in Syria. And if confirmed, I will work closely with the combatant command, CENTCOM, and SOCOM in support of that.

Senator Manchin: General Robinson, I was recently -- well, a year ago -- down in Argentina. And at that time, I think the president was Cristina Kirchner, and she has been replaced now by President Mauricio Macri, who I understand is more pro-Western, pro-U.S. than she. And we were having trouble with a lot of meth, a lot of drugs coming from Argentina. Our officials were complaining that they got no cooperation. Do you know, has that been strengthened? Has new President Macri made a commitment to help us fight this drug trade?

General Robinson: Sir, I do not know the answer to that question right at the moment. But what I will commit
to you is my relationship with Kurt Tidd, as we work
together from SOUTHCOM and NORTHCOM, if confirmed, to watch
that and again to push things down as far as we can on the
southern border with Mexico.

Senator Manchin: You cannot go any further south than
Argentina.

General Robinson: Yes, sir.

Senator Manchin: If you can get that information, it
would be very helpful because our people were very
frustrated, were getting no help at all, and they were just
letting it come through.

General Robinson: Yes, sir.

Senator Manchin: General Scaparrotti, Senator Kaine
had asked you about NATO. I think the frustration -- I
think all of us agree that NATO -- we should all be a part
of NATO. The bottom line in frustration is that we know the
sacrifices they have made and they have come to the aid in
defending the United States, but they still have not made a
commitment of the 2 percent of their GDP. But there is no
quid pro quo. There is no penalty for that. Do you believe
that there is a way that we can hold them more accountable
if they are not coming up to the 2 percent?

General Scaparrotti: Well, sir, I think that is a
question for the alliance and North Atlantic Council to
wrestle with. Obviously, if confirmed, I will have the
ability to give best military advice to the Secretary-General and the Council. As I have said, I do believe that within the alliance, the commitments that we make are very important for the strength of the alliance.

Senator Manchin: General Robinson, on the ballistic missile defense, most importantly with Canada, I understand they are going to engage again being involved in the missile defense.

General Robinson: Sir, from what I read, they are in the process of talking about what they are going to do with that. If confirmed, early on I will engage with my Canadian counterparts and my Canadian chain of command and see where they are going.

Senator Manchin: If they do join our efforts, would that reduce our missile defense responsibilities to the north or would they only be reinforcing our current defenses? How would that play towards what we are doing right now?

General Robinson: Sir, I do not have that right now, but if confirmed, that is something I will look into early on.

Senator Manchin: I had one more I think real quick. Russia, the whole thing. I think Senator Donnelly talked to you about the Russia flyover. Were we in the right to shoot down, if we desired to do so, with their aggression?
General Scaparrotti: Sir, not knowing the complete circumstances, I really cannot answer that this morning.

Senator Manchin: So as far as the justification that we could have taken -- I know Turkey has taken action on Russia before, and I think Russia understands that Turkey will continue to take action. But I think there is a concern that we will not, and they were wanting to see how far we would go. I am not advocating that we should have shot the plane down, but I understood that Secretary Kerry described it as a reckless, provocative, and dangerous act. And he was not wrong in saying the U.S. ship would have been justified to shoot down the Russian plane.

General Scaparrotti: Yes, sir. I just do not have the detailed information to make that call. But I would say that it is absolutely reckless. It is unjustified, and it is very dangerous when you have got our operations going on as well as --

Senator Manchin: Was Russia basically just pushing the envelope and the limits of confrontation to test the Western resolve or the United States’ resolve?

General Scaparrotti: I think they are pushing the envelope in terms of our resolve. They are pushing the envelope in terms of international norms and international law purposely.

Senator Manchin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
Chairman McCain: Senator Sullivan?

Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me follow up on that line of questioning. General Scaparrotti, do you think that we need to establish, announce, and implement more robust ROEs particularly with regard to our Navy? This is not the first time that it seems that ROEs were very weak. Obviously, we had Navy sailors taken hostage by Iran in the Gulf. What do we need to do here to bolster this and send a message that we are going to act more forcefully?

General Scaparrotti: Well, sir -- and I am not sure the ROE that our forces are operating under at this present time, I mean, the exact rules of engagement. But if you look at our rules of engagement generally, Joint Staff rules of engagement, they always have the right of self-defense and to act in self-defense. So I am confident that they knew that, and if it was a security concern, then our commanders know they have that right and they can take that step.

I think more what I would say to you is they have to have the guidance of the chain of command in order to understand and fully have confidence that they can take steps in specific scenarios.

Senator Sullivan: Well, if confirmed, will you take a look at that issue, the issue of our ROEs that are leading
to some of these kind of aggressive behaviors both in the
Baltic Sea and the Gulf?

General Scaparrotti: Yes, sir.

Senator Sullivan: Let me turn to another area. Both
of you have enormous areas of responsibility in terms of
geographic scope. One place where you actually overlap is
the Arctic. And as you know, we have had discussions of the
much more growing strategic importance in terms of shipping
lanes, in terms of resources, and in terms of Russian
military buildup, SNAP exercises that we saw tens of
thousands of Russian forces twice last year.

One of the concerns I have -- and I just passed out
something -- it is reflected in the chart -- is in order to
address some of these challenges, we have COCOM operational
seams in the Arctic where NORTHCOM is the advocate for the
Arctic area. EUCOM contains the main threat to the Arctic
region, and PACOM controls most of the forces.

So I would like to ask just one hypothetical. You
know, we talk a lot about FONOPs. Hypothetically if Russia
decided to deny access to vital U.S. international shipping
in the Arctic region, which is growing tremendously, which
combatant commander would respond to that threat?

General Scaparrotti: Well, sir, this gets at the issue
that we talked about earlier about most of our threats today
cross the boundaries of COCOMs. If it were in USEUCOM’s
area, I would take the lead and the others would probably or primarily be in support of that.

Senator Sullivan: What if it were shipping like right there in the Bering Strait, which is very close to your area but not really in your area? It is kind of in your area, General Robinson, but not really. This goes to the seams issues.

In the NDAA last year, we actually had an amendment that addressed this and had the Secretary of Defense to focus on the operational seams with regard to putting together an Artic strategy.

If confirmed, working with Admiral Harris in PACOM, will you focus on trying to address this COCOM operational seam that certainly can be worked through but seems to be a challenge?

General Robinson: Sir, if confirmed, I commit to you that I will focus on the Arctic. It is a complex place and it is becoming much more congested. And I will focus on understanding comprehensively what that is, along with Admiral Harris, and come back to you and talk about what should we do.

Senator Sullivan: General Scaparrotti?

General Scaparrotti: Yes, sir, I agree. I will.

Senator Sullivan: And in the NDAA last year, it focused on the Secretary of Defense, because of these issues
and the growing threat, being required to develop an Arctic strategy and new operational plans that reflect the new situation in the Arctic. If confirmed, will you work with OSD to make sure that those requirements from the Congress are fulfilled?

General Robinson: Yes, sir. I commit to you to come back and talk to you what I learn.

General Scaparrotti: Yes, sir, I will.

Senator Sullivan: Let me talk just very quickly on the European Reassurance Initiative. You know, General Scaparrotti, we have talked about that. I think a lot of us are very supportive of that. A lot of the focus, as you have mentioned, is in the east. Given what we have just talked about here, do you believe that that ERI should have a focus that is not just east but certainly in the north where some of our allies and friends have very significant concerns about Russian threats and aggression?

General Scaparrotti: Yes, sir. I think that ERI needs to look at the entire threat, as well as it needs to be joint in nature. There are other areas that we need to look at that, if confirmed, I will look at as I move forward.

Senator Sullivan: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman McCain: Senator Cotton?

Senator Cotton: Thank you.
Congratulations to you both on your nominations and, General Robinson, to your landmark nomination. I hope that we will see speedy confirmation of you both.

General Scaparrotti, I want to return to a question that a few of the Senators have addressed about Russian aircraft flying by first one of our ships and then one of our aircraft in northern Europe. I know that you are not aware of all the circumstances to specify a response, but does activity like that call for some kind of a response?

General Scaparrotti: Yes, sir, it does. It endangers our crew members, our ships, and does require a response of some type.

Senator Cotton: Is that because with no response, it emboldens Putin’s Russia to probe even further?

General Scaparrotti: I think they need to understand what is acceptable. We are flying and sailing in international waters in the Baltic, for instance, and we have every right to do so.

Senator Cotton: Need that response be symmetrical? Must we fly by one of their ships or one of their aircraft, or could it be asymmetrical, for instance, Javelins showing up on the border of Ukraine and Russia?

General Scaparrotti: I would just say that as we look at what options, we should keep everything on the table.

Senator Cotton: Whatever the response may be, even if
it is not a public response, Vladimir Putin needs to understand it is a response.

General Scaparrotti: Yes.

Senator Cotton: I want to turn to a topic we have discussed previously in your current role in Korea, cluster munitions and the coming ban on cluster munitions that have a dud rate below 1 percent.

What is your understanding of how many cluster munitions in the inventory today fail to comply with that Gates policy?

General Scaparrotti: Sir, I could not answer that accurately. I would just tell you my experience with the munitions that I have in Korea that I would lose just about all of my cluster munitions for use that I have stockpiled today.

Senator Cotton: What is the Department of Defense’s current policy or plan to address this problem?

General Scaparrotti: Today there are studies ongoing, and some assets available that in the future with programs of purchase that could begin to replace those. Some of those munitions do not have the same lethality as those that we have today, particularly against armor. And presently for those that are not envisioned but are actually munitions we know we could build, we do not have that replaces them in the numbers that we need. And I would say that is true in
Korea because I am very aware of what our requirements are.

Senator Cotton: Is one of those possible solutions

air-bursting traditional so-called dumb bombs and using them

against targets?

General Scaparrotti: That is an option.

Senator Cotton: Would that be an option that lacks the

kind of lethality against armor and artillery to which

you --

General Scaparrotti: If you were to use unitary

munitions to replace a cluster munition, you have to fire

three to five munitions in place of one. And so just

logistically it creates a problem as well. We need to

develop effective cluster munitions that meet the law, and

my recommendation would be that in the interim we retain the

cluster munitions that we have today.

Senator Cotton: Are you aware of any U.S.-produced

solution to this problem?

General Scaparrotti: I would like to take that for the

record. I am aware of some solutions we are working. When

you say it is U.S.-produced, I am not exactly sure who is

working on those products I am aware of, and it is probably

best I take that so I can also answer it in a classified

form as well.

Senator Cotton: Thank you.

This obviously of most famous concern on the border
between North Korea and South Korea given Russia’s recent probing throughout eastern Europe and the Middle East, how important is this issue for you in the new job after confirmation?

General Scaparrotti: It is very important. I would point out that Russia has used cluster munitions in the Ukraine themselves with great effect.

Senator Cotton: I thought so.

Vladimir Putin and many other analysts in Russia often cite historical grievances for their activity in places like the Ukraine and to bolster themselves domestically. They cite three grievances in particular: the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, the collapse and disintegration of the Soviet Union, and then NATO expansion into those historically Russian dominated territories. Do you think that that is a fair account for what has happened in the post-Cold War era?

General Scaparrotti: Well, sir, if I am following you, I would just say I think it is clear that Putin I believe -- I cannot say it is clear. I believe that Putin’s view is that Russia is being constrained by the international norms, international norms established by the West and predominantly the U.S. And it is from that view that he has I think set out deliberately to challenge those norms, to disrupt our international order globally wherever he has that opportunity.
Senator Cotton: And given that countries like Poland and Latvia and Lithuania and Estonia have all chosen freely to join NATO, do you think there is any truth to his claims that these are lands that are traditionally oriented towards the east?

General Scaparrotti: Well, he certainly claims that, but as you know, we believe and many of these countries desire to be a sovereign nation and make their own choice as to the type of government they have. And that is what we have traditionally supported as a part of our values and we are in support of today.

Senator Cotton: And the final claim he makes about NATO expansion is that this is an aggressive action towards Russia and could threaten their territorial integrity and sovereignty. Has NATO been investing lately in large-scale rearmaments of the kind that would launch a massive land invasion of Russia?

General Scaparrotti: No, sir. As you know, NATO, for nearly 20 years, reached out to Russia with the idea that they could become a part of the security that NATO provides to all of Europe as a partner, and they have refused that hand at this point.

Senator Cotton: And to look at his claim from the other direction, has Russia been investing in massive defensive buildup, say, building tank ditches on its border
with NATO or moving in other kinds of massive defensive
weaponry to forestall this supposed NATO invasion of Russia?

General Scaparrotti: Their modernization of their
forces is significant. It is developing an incredible
capability that we have seen them display with their first
out-of-area deployment into Syria, for instance, and the
weapon systems they deployed there. And then finally, if
you look at the area access or denial -- those areas are
A2AD that they have established -- I think there is ample
evidence of that.

Senator Cotton: I think based on the historical
record, as well as their own investments, it suggests tome
that Vladimir Putin’s narrative about the West is maybe
another classic Russian campaign of dezinformatsiya. Thank
you.

Chairman McCain: General Breedlove said that he
anticipated further Russian military activity -- separatist
Russian military activity in Ukraine. Do you agree with
that assessment?

General Scaparrotti: Sir, the indications that I have
seen, I believe that is true.

Chairman McCain: So do you believe that we should be
providing defensive weapons to Ukraine?

General Scaparrotti: Sir, I believe that we should
provide the weaponry that we believe they need to defend
Chairman McCain: Do you think they need and could use Javelin?

General Scaparrotti: Sir, I think there is a requirement for an anti-tank weapon like Javelin in their situation.

Chairman McCain: Thank you.

General, I hope that you will give some urgency to the issue that you and I discussed earlier and that is concerning the troop strength numbers. All these things take planning. They take execution, and now we are looking at a couple of months from now. So I hope you will make that a very high priority.

General Robinson, I am glad you are going to go down to the border. You will find that this time of year it starts getting very warm there. And you will also find that it is very hard on the personnel sometimes to sit in a vehicle on the border next to a fence in 115 degree heat, that efficiency declines rather rapidly. And that is hwy we have to emphasize technology. I hope at your first opportunity, you will go see Secretary Johnson so that we can better coordinate our activities on the border with Secretary Johnson.

The answer to this both whether it be the epidemic of
manufactured heroin or whether it be people or whether it be
the possibility of a terrorist, which increases coming
across our southern border, can only be defeated by
technology. We need to have the ability to detect those
tunnels. The Israelis I understand have that capability and
the capability exists. We are not going to stop the tunnels
-- and they are myriad, believe me, over the years -- just
by observing. We have to have the kind of technology which
exists.

I also believe that it is very important that we
understand that a lot of this manufactured heroin is coming
across our ports of entry, not necessarily by the
traditional ways because small amounts can be concealed.
And again, that is technology.

So with the rise of ISIS, we have an additional now
threat on our southern border and that is the threat of
terrorists coming across. And so your involvement, with
full respect to posse comitatus, is dramatically increased.
So I hope you will understand here. We have the threat of
terrorism and we also have a flood of manufactured heroin
and we also have a flood of children who come from the three
Central American countries and also put enormous strains on
our capabilities on the border.

One program, amongst others, I hope you will look at is
that Guard units from States all over America have come to
Arizona to train unarmed but providing manpower and capabilities that are much needed.

So I would say, obviously, you need to go to the border, but I would like to see close coordination between you and the Secretary of Homeland Security so that we can use the best talents that we have. Have no doubt that this is a crisis in the Northeast and the Midwest, the drugs alone, not to mention the threat of terrorists coming across our border. If those threats are true -- and I believe they are -- then your involvement is greater than it has been in the past.

Senator King, did you want to -- Senator Blumenthal?

Senator Blumenthal: Thank you, Senator McCain.

I want to emphasize how important Senator McCain’s comments are to all of us who are engaged actively in our States in this war against an epidemic. It is a public health hurricane that is sweeping our country and affecting the quality of people who are available to you, our military, doing your job very actively and responsibly in recruiting new men and women to join your forces. This public health hurricane is undermining the recruiting effort insofar as it diminishes the quality of people who are available to fight in our military, tearing apart families, causing heartbreak and heartache. I think you used that word, General Robinson.
I released last week a call to action with 23 specific recommendations focusing on health care, on law enforcement, on over-prescribing of pain killers on a variety of areas where I think the Nation needs to do more and do it better. And in my public comments, I have talked about the interdiction challenge, and it is not within the ability of States to do but it has to be part of our national mission every bit as vital to our national defense as any of the other missions that you have.

So I just want to second what my colleagues have said. I am not the first, but I want to emphasize the point that Senator McCain has just made so eloquently. I want to go to another topic that you have also been asked about, General Scaparrotti. I am very concerned about our submarine undersea warfare capability force. I know you are very much aware of it. You have been asked about it. The continued building of our Virginia class at the rate of two a year at some point will collide financially with the Ohio replacement program. In my view, we need to continue building those two Virginia class submarines every year. The “New York Times” story that has been mentioned to you in the course of this morning is only the latest evidence of the increased emphasis of our adversaries on undersea warfare capability, not just the Russians but the Chinese. I think in the course of that article, one of the comments
from one of our military leaders was that we are back to, in
a sense, the Cold War competition undersea.

I would like to know your views -- and General
Robinson, if you want to comment, you are welcome to -- on
whether this program continuing our building of two Virginia
class submarines every year with the Ohio replacement are
important, in fact, vital to our national defense.

General Scaparrotti: Yes, Senator. I defer the
numbers, et cetera to the services responsible for that, but
I can say personally that I think that we have dominance
undersea today, that it is our asymmetric advantage, and
that it is very important that we continue to maintain that
advantage, particularly in light of the challenges you
noted. And I think that both of those improvements to our
submarine classes are necessary.

General Robinson: Sir, I would just echo what General
Scaparrotti said.

Senator Blumenthal: I have heard it said from that
very place from others, General Robinson, and I know that
you share the view strongly that we should have an
asymmetric superiority in this area. But I think the
specifics are very important. It is not enough to just
generalize about it. And I hope that when you say you will
deref, you bring, both of you, a lifelong expertise and
experience to these views that I think are very, very
important for our civilian leaders.

General Robinson: Sir, I probably misspoke and said I agree with what General Scaparrotti said. I apologize if I said I defer.

Senator Blumenthal: No. I think he said he deferred. And I guess what I am asking, very bluntly, is that you not defer. And I know that is also more easily said than done, but I have such respect for both of your views that I hope our civilian leaders hear them and I hope that you will emphasize that this asymmetric advantage in undersea warfare is vital to our future. So I think I have talked enough and I defer to you, General Robinson and General Scaparrotti.

General Scaparrotti: Sir, if I could be clear, what I meant by that was it is a really service decision, but I assure you that, if confirmed, I will be clear in my advice and needs to the CNO with respect to those programs, particularly after I have a close look, if confirmed as the EUCOM Commander of my needs there.

Senator Blumenthal: I appreciate your views, and thank you very much. Thank you for your service to our Nation.

Chairman McCain: Senator King?

Senator King: Very briefly, General Scaparrotti, talking about the undersea capability and the increase in Russian submarine activity. I was in Iceland last fall and was really struck by what a strategic place. It is one of
the most strategic places on earth. Keflavik -- as you
know, we are now putting P-8’s back in there. I hope that
that might be an area that you will be in active
consideration of further reinvigoration of that capability,
subject, of course, to working with the people of Iceland.
But it sits right astride the Greenland-Iceland-U.K. gap,
and it is, as I say, I cannot imagine a more strategic
place. I hope we can focus some attention there. The
facility is amazing, and I think it would be one that we
would do well to do some concentrating on.

General Scaparrotti: Senator, I agree with your
concern and I agree with the importance of the location and
our capabilities in that gap that you described.

Senator King: Mr. Chairman?

Chairman McCain: Well, I thank the witnesses for your
service to the Nation, and we look forward to moving your
nominations through the United States Senate.

This hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:31 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]