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COMMITTEE ON
ARMED SERVICES

UNITED STATES SENATE

TO CONDUCT A CONFIRMATION HEARING
ON THE EXPECTED NOMINATION OF
MR. JAMES N. MATTIS TO BE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Thursday, January 12, 2017

Washington, D.C.

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U.S. Senate
Committee on Armed Services
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The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:31 a.m. in Room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. John McCain, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Chairman McCain: Well, good morning all.

For the information of the members, at about 15 minutes before the last question, you will be notified and asked that -- the committee will immediately proceed to consideration of Senate bill 84, which is to provide for an exception to a limitation against appointment of persons as Secretary of Defense within 7 years of relief from active duty as a regular commissioned officer of the armed forces. This bill, when enacted, would authorize retired General James Mattis to be appointed as Secretary of Defense. It is important that we have all members present for the consideration of that bill, and when there is about 15 minutes left in the questioning, you will be notified, and I hope people will all come back to vote on this important issue of the waiver.

Good morning.

And I would like to first recognize two of our distinguished colleagues who are here today, former colleagues. We were all three together during the Coolidge administration.

[Laughter.]

Chairman McCain: And we are very glad to see you back here again.
So I know that in the interest of our friends’ time, maybe we could begin with Senator Nunn and Senator Cohen making their introductory remarks. We are honored to have you back before the committee again. Two very distinguished, most distinguished members that I have had the opportunity and honor to serve with. In deference to your age, Senator Nunn, we will begin with you.

[Laughter.]
STATEMENT OF HON. SAM NUNN, U.S. SENATOR FROM GEORGIA, RETIRED

Senator Nunn: Thank you, Chairman McCain and Senator Reed. It is a great honor to return to the Senate Armed Services Committee with my good friend for many years, as you observed, Mr. Chairman, Bill Cohen, for the purpose of introducing Jim Mattis on his nomination to be Secretary of Defense.

Before praising our distinguished nominee -- and I will praise him because I think he deserves it -- I want to commend you, Senator McCain and Senator Reed and the members of this committee, for your excellent work in passing significant reform legislation in the most recent Congress. Your continuous efforts to make our military more efficient and more effective are essential to our Nation’s security and we owe you our thanks. I know from experience reform is not easy. Everything you do is tough in that arena, and it does not get the notice that it deserves except for the people who oppose the reform. Those are the ones who notice it. So congratulations on that legislation. And I know there is a lot more to do, but you have made some progress.

I also want to commend my good friend and congratulate my good friend, Senator David Perdue, while becoming a member of this committee and continuing a strong Georgia tradition of service on what I believe is the best committee
in the Senate.

Mr. Chairman, Senator Reed, and members of the committee, in September of 1950, my great uncle, Carl Vinson, as chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, presented to the House of Representatives a strong case for Congress to pass a waiver to allow General George Marshall to assume the position of Secretary of Defense. So there is some history here.

Today I urge you to pass the same type of waiver for Jim Mattis who retired from the Marine Corps 3 and a half years ago. I believe that the law requiring a Secretary of Defense to be out of active duty at least 7 years does remain relevant today, but there is also a good reason that there can be, on occasion, case by case, common sense exceptions through congressional actions.

The Congressional Research Service has written an excellent paper on the legislative history of the separation from military service requirements. When the original statute was passed in 1947, the Department of Defense had just been created by merging the Department of War and the Department of Navy. There were several very famous generals and admirals emerging from World War II who were highly publicized heroes, including a few five-stars, and Congress did not want one service overpowering the newly created department. So that to me is an important part of the
history of this legislation.

Mr. Chairman, Senator Reed, and committee members, I believe that exceptions to this restriction should be based on the experience, the skills, and the character of a nominee and our country’s need to ask them to serve in this important role.

I also believe that your examination of Jim Mattis’ credentials, character, and record will convince you that he, like George Marshall, should be granted a waiver and confirmed as Secretary of Defense.

Mr. Chairman, I have followed Jim’s career for a long time because when I was chairman of this committee, my staff director, Arnold Punaro, who is here today, also a marine, repeatedly told me that a young officer by the name of Jim Mattis was demonstrating strong leadership capabilities and had a very long runway ahead. Mr. Chairman and Senator Reed, and Chris and Liz and members of the staff who know Arnold Punaro will understand my reluctance to ever admit that Arnold was always right, but in the case of Jim Mattis, he was dead on point. Jim Mattis became one of our Nation’s most effective and respected military leaders.

Jim has the experience and skill to be an excellent Secretary of Defense. He has the deep knowledge about the many challenges we face around the world today. He understands not only the importance of civilian control of
the military, but he has also written the book, so to speak, on the relationship of today’s voluntary force and civil society, which deserves a great deal of attention.

Jim’s experience as combatant commander clearly demonstrated his ability to effectively work with diplomats and national leaders.

Mr. Chairman, Senator Reed, and members of the committee, over the last 3 years, Jim Mattis has become fully engaged in civilian life from the world of business to the NGO world to the college campus. He has quickly learned what I call the Admiral Crowe Rule that after retirement as a four-star, if you jump into the back seat of your car, you will go nowhere until you move to the driver’s seat and turn on the key. He learned that one pretty quickly.

Jim Mattis has been a valuable corporate board member and has learned business lessons that will help him make the Department of Defense more efficient. Jim has gone from the Marine Corps spit and polish to the business coat and tie to whatever they wear on campus these days. As a professor, he has developed a rapport with young students by quickly figuring out they are not quite the same as Parris Island recruits.

In summary, Mr. Chairman, Jim Mattis is a rare combination of thinker and doer, scholar and strategist. He understands, respects, and loves the men and women in
uniform and their families. He also understands the structure and the organization of the Pentagon, and he knows what the building has to do to give the troops the tools they need to do their job of protecting our Nation's security.

Jim also knows the awesome powers and responsibility of our military forces and the challenges of our complex and very dangerous world. He understands that our military cannot be our primary tool to meet every challenge, and he strongly supports the important role of diplomacy and has been outspoken in the important need of giving the State Department the resources they need to be fully effective.

My bottom line, Mr. Chairman and Senator Reed and members of the committee, is that I believe Jim Mattis is exceptionally well qualified to lead the Department of Defense. I urge this committee and the Senate to pass a statutory waiver to allow him to serve our Nation in this new role and to confirm him as Secretary of Defense.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Senator Nunn follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]
Chairman McCain: Thank you, Senator Nunn.

Senator Cohen?
STATEMENT OF HON. WILLIAM COHEN, U.S. SENATOR FROM MAINE, RETIRED

Senator Cohen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is an honor to be here this morning to testify on behalf of General Mattis. Senator Nunn, Senator Reed, Senator Inhofe, I think you may be the only three who are still here on the Armed Services Committee when 20 years ago I came before the committee seeking your endorsement for Secretary of Defense. So it has been 20 years, and what a difference a generation makes because at that time, when we first met, you were a young captain in the Navy and took us on a trip Senator Nunn mentioned to China where we met Deng Chou Ping and also did some great work on the way back in Korea.

So I thank you for all of the years you devoted to this country. You remain a hero of mine and to millions of people not only in this country but the world over. So it is a real honor for me to be here with you and with Senator Nunn. I served 18 years here in the Senate. He served 24. And I must say that the experience of working with Senator Nunn was one of the true highlights of my political career. So it is a pleasure for me to join with Senator Nunn.

I want to associate myself with the remarks of the former Senator from Georgia and simply submit my own written statement, which is quite brief, to the committee and I will try to summarize.
Jim Mattis I first met when I went to the Pentagon. He was a young colonel. And as Senator Nunn has pointed out, he had a reputation even then. This is somebody to watch. He is young. He is smart. He does not really belong behind a desk, although he may belong there right now, but at that time, he wanted to get out into the field. He is a warrior by nature.

And I want to say that he has the nickname of "Mad Dog." It is a misnomer. It should be "Brave Heart" because what really characterizes Jim Mattis is his courage. And, Mr. Chairman, you have written about this in terms of why courage matters, and you quoted from Churchill who said that courage is the first of human resources because it guarantees all else, all the others. And so we have seen the history of Jim Mattis in terms of being a warrior, a brave heart on the battlefield.

But that is really not why we are here. If he were only a great warrior, you would say, well, there are a lot of other warriors as well. He comes because he is a man of thought, as well as action. And sometimes it is said you can judge people by the friends he makes, the company he keeps, but also by the books he reads. General Mattis has some 6,000 books in his library, most of which, if not all of them, he has read, and he can refer to either Alexander the Great, General Grant, Sun Tzu. And I suspect he is
probably the only one here at this table who can hear the 
words “Thucydides Trap” and not have to go to Wikipedia to 
find out what it means. And so he is a scholar as well and 
a strategic thinker as well as a great warrior.

These hearings are important not only because you get a 
chance to listen to the views of the nominee in terms of 
what is his or her -- in this case, his -- experience, what 
does he see as the world events that we are going to be 
confronted with, what does he bring to the table in terms of 
giving you confidence that the person making that judgment--
and after all, he is number 2. He is number 2 in the chain 
of command. It goes from the President through him to the 
combatant commanders. That is it.

That is why it is so important that you have a chance 
not only to assess his background experience but also his 
character. That really is what you need to know because no 
one goes to the Secretary of Defense or any major position 
and can anticipate everything that is going to come at him. 
They talk about the tyranny of the inbox. Well, you have 
tyranny in the inbox in the Pentagon and things come at you 
with a velocity of a heat-seeking missile. And so you have 
to then look and say how do I deal with this. Who is it 
that is making the decision? In that case, I think you 
should take great confidence in this man who understands 
what it means to be in battle and he understands what it
1. means not to go into battle.

2. And the love for his troops is returned in a way that I have not seen before. His troops, men and women alike, in all services love this man, and they love him because he loves them and what they do for our country, what they are willing to risk for our country.

3. And so you look at his character. He is a humble man with very little to be humble about. But if you were to go to his hometown and see that he is a devoted son to his 94-year-old mother Lucille in Richland, Washington, if you would look, you would see he is a member of the board of the Tri-City Food Bank, and on any occasion you can see him helping to distribute food to needy families. And you will also see him refuse to exempt himself from jury duty. He was called to serve on a jury involving a gross misdemeanor case. He could have been exempted. But he said, no, I am here to serve. So he is one of six people in that Benton County District Court.

4. Beyond that, what is most impressive to me is that he takes the time without any fanfare to visit the Gold Star families. That is something that is a heavy, heavy responsibility, to go to the families, talk to the people who have lost their sons and daughters, husbands, wives in battle under his command. So that tells me a lot about who Jim Mattis is and why you should take that into account.
And finally -- I feel a senatorial speech coming on, so I will try to just sum up right now.

[Laughter.]

Senator Cohen: One of my other heroes, in addition to Senator McCain, is Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. And he is a hero because he not only was a great Supreme Court Justice, he was also a veteran of the Civil War. And you cannot read any opinion of his without seeing how he reflects back upon his time in battle. And there is a great -- I think it is 1894 -- Memorial Day speech you all should read. But in the conclusion of the speech, he says whether a man accepts from fortune her spade and will look downward and dig more from aspiration for axe and cord and will scale the ice, the one and only success which it is his to command is to bring to his work a mighty heart.

Members of the committee, this man, Jim Mattis, brings to the job of the Secretary of Defense a great and brave heart. And I hope you will vote to confirm him quickly.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Senator Cohen follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]
Chairman McCain: I want to thank both Senator Nunn and Senator Cohen. I view as one of the great privileges of my time here in the United States Senate was the honor of serving with both of you. And so I think it means a lot to me personally but also to members of the committee that you would come here today on behalf of this nominee. Thank you for being here.

Senator Cohen: And could I pay special recognition to Senator King?

Chairman McCain: No.

[Laughter.]

Senator Cohen: I was going to add from the great State of Maine and someone we used to call Governor and now proudly call Senator. Nice to see you.

Chairman McCain: He represents the geriatric part of this committee.

[Laughter.]

Chairman McCain: I thank both Senator Nunn and Senator Cohen for being here.

Obviously, the committee meets today to consider the nomination of General James Mattis to be the Secretary of Defense of the United States.

2 years ago, General Mattis, the last time you came before this committee, the idea that we would be meeting again under the present circumstances would have been hard
to imagine, most of all by you. But I for one could not be happier.

All of us recognize the unique, indeed historic, nature of this nomination. General Mattis enjoyed a long and distinguished career in uniform, but current law would bar him from serving as Secretary of Defense for 3 more years. While I strongly support retaining the law, I also believe that our Nation needs General Mattis’ service more than ever. So after this hearing, the committee will meet to consider special legislation to allow General Mattis to serve as Secretary of Defense.

If confirmed, General Mattis would have the honor of leading a team of Americans who represent everything that is noble and best in our Nation. Our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines do everything we ask of them and more. They make us proud every day. Our many defense civil servants also sacrifice day in and day out for our national security and rarely get the credit they deserve. I am confident that no one appreciates our people and values their sacrifices more than General Mattis.

And yet, we meet today at a time of increasing global threat and disorder. For 7 decades, the United States has played a unique role in the world. We have not only put America first, but we have done so by maintaining and advancing a world order that has expanded security,
prosperity, and freedom. This has required our alliances, our trade, our diplomacy, our values, but most of all our military for when would-be aggressors aspire to threaten world order, it is the global striking power of America’s armed forces that must deter or thwart their ambitions.

Too many Americans -- too many Americans -- seem to have forgotten this in recent years. Too many have forgotten that our world order is not self-sustaining. Too many have forgotten that while the threats we face may not have purely military solutions, they all have military dimensions. In short, too many have forgotten that hard power matters, having it, threatening it, leveraging it for diplomacy and, at times, using it. Fairly or not, there is a perception around the world that America is weak and distracted, and that has only emboldened our adversaries to challenge the current world order.

The threat posed by violent Islamic extremism continues to metastasize across the Middle East, Africa, Asia, Europe, and but for those who remain vigilant, our homeland. It should now be clear that we will be engaged in a global conflict of varying scope and intensity for the foreseeable future. Believing otherwise is wishful thinking. So if confirmed, General Mattis, you would lead a military at war. You of all people appreciate what that means and what it demands.
At the same time, our central challenge in Middle East is not ISIL, as grave a threat as that is. It is a breakdown of regional order in which nearly every state is a battlefield for conflict, a combatant, or both. ISIL is a symptom of this disorder. At the same time, Iran’s nuclear weapons ambitions have been postponed but not halted. And it continues to modernize its military, expand its malign influence, and seek to remake the region in its image, from Syria to Iraq to Yemen.

In Asia, the rise of China is shifting the balance of power in ways that increasingly challenge longstanding U.S. interests. We see a new assertiveness in China to confront U.S. allies and partners, make vast territorial claims with no basis in international law, carve out spheres of influence, and revise the current order.

North Korea is testing nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles at an alarming rate. Our intelligence community publicly assesses that North Korea could soon develop a nuclear-capable intercontinental ballistic missile that is capable of striking the U.S. homeland. This may become a defining crisis for the next President.

And then there is Russia. Over the past 8 years under President Vladimir Putin, Russia has invaded Ukraine, annexed Crimea, threatened NATO allies, and intervened militarily in Syria, leaving a trail of death and
destruction and broken promises in his wake. Russia’s military has targeted Syrian hospitals and first responders with precision weapons. Russia supplied the weapons that shot down a commercial aircraft over Ukraine. Russia’s war on Ukraine has killed thousands of Ukrainian soldiers and civilians. And in the most flagrant demonstration of Putin’s disdain and disrespect for our Nation, Russia deliberately interfered in our recent election with cyber attacks and a disinformation campaign designed to weaken America and discredit Western values.

Each of our last three Presidents has had great expectations of building a partnership with the Russian Government. Each attempt has failed, not for lack of good faith and effort on the U.S. side, but because of a stubborn fact that we must finally recognize: Putin wants to be our enemy. He needs us as his enemy. He will never be our partner, including in fighting ISIL. He believes that strengthening Russia means weakening America. We must proceed realistically on this basis.

We must build a position of significant strength vis-a-vis Russia and any other adversary that seeks to undermine our national interests and challenge the world order. We must reestablish deterrence. And that is primarily the job of the Department of Defense.

But for too long, the Department of Defense has planned
and optimized itself for short-term, episodic contingencies. Whether against great powers or global terrorist movements, we now face a series of long-term strategic competitions with clear military dimensions that often occur below the threshold of armed conflict.

What makes all of this worse is that America’s military technological advantage is eroding. Our competitors, especially China and Russia, have gone to school on the American way of war, and they are rapidly modernizing their militaries to exploit our vulnerabilities with advanced anti-access and area-denial capabilities. Indeed, the entire model of American military power projection is increasingly being called into question on land, at sea, and in the air, and especially in space and cyberspace. In light of these threats, business as usual is not just misguided, it is dangerous.

All of these problems are compounded by the self-inflicted wounds of the Budget Control Act. For 5 years, national defense spending has been arbitrarily capped. As global threats have risen, defense spending has often fallen in real terms. Each military service has deferred critical modernization and shed capacity, which has damaged readiness. Worse still, what we do spend is producing less combat power. In constant dollars, we spend nearly exactly the same amount on defense as we did 30 years ago. But we
are fielding 35 percent fewer combat brigades, 53 percent fewer ships, and 63 percent fewer combat aircraft squadrons, all this while overhead costs that do not add to combat power have steadily increased. In short, we have done grave harm to our military, as each of our Joint Chiefs of Staff has repeatedly testified to this committee. Meanwhile, our national debt has increased nearly $4 trillion over the life of the Budget Control Act.

The President-elect has said he wants to, quote, fully eliminate the defense sequester and, quote, rebuild our military. If so, he will find many allies on this committee. The Budget Control Act is harming us in ways that our enemies could only dream. We must repeal this legislation and increase the defense top line. This will not be cheap, but it pales in comparison to the cost of failing to deter a war or, worse, losing one.

For all these reasons and more, I believe the Nation needs General Mattis. We need to stop deterring ourselves and return to strategy, aligning our ends, ways, and means to address global threats. We need to resize and, more importantly, reshape our military, giving our warfighters the most advanced capabilities so they never find themselves in a fair fight. We must continue to reform the Department of Defense so more of its limited dollars are spent on increasing the lethality of our military, not adding to its
bureaucracy. That especially means improving defense acquisition, which still takes too long and costs too much to deliver too little.

I would like to conclude by saying a few words about trust and accountability and about the relationship between this committee and the Department of Defense.

One of the few benefits of my advanced age is the sense of perspective it affords. In recent years, I have witnessed a steady loss of trust and deterioration of relations between Congress and the Department. It is felt on both sides, and there is plenty of blame to go around.

Department leaders have too often treated Members of Congress as afterthoughts to be notified, not partners to be meaningfully consulted. And Congress has too often sought to bend the Department to its will through ever-growing amounts of legislation, trying to manage it from afar rather than oversee it.

We cannot afford to go on like this. Our challenges are too grave. The wide margin for error we once enjoyed in the world is gone. We need to take more risk if we are to maintain our strategic and technological advantage. We cannot let fear of failure slow us or stop us from innovating. These are challenges that the Department of Defense and the Congress, especially this committee, must manage together.
The only way to restore this trust is to start trusting each other. If confirmed, you would have to trust us to be your partners in major decision-making and in sharing the greater risks that are necessary to win in a more competitive world. In return, if you will be accountable to us -- and you will be -- we must trust you to determine how best to get the results we demand with fewer statutory and regulatory impediments.

In short, let us make it our common mission to restore accountability. If we can do that, though the threats we face may be great, I am confident we can succeed.

Senator Reed?
Senator Reed: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Let me join you in welcoming General Mattis to this morning’s hearing. I thank him for his many decades of distinguished service to the country and to the Marine Corps, and I appreciate his willingness to return to public service, this time in a civilian capacity.

In addition, let me also recognize and thank Senator Sam Nunn and Senator and Secretary of Defense Bill Cohen for their distinguished service and their very thoughtful and eloquent words this morning. Thank you, gentlemen.

General Mattis began his long and distinguished career in the United States Marine Corps as a second lieutenant, commissioned through the ROTC program at Central Washington University. He has served at the highest echelons of the Marine Corps and capped his service as the Commander of the United States Central Command.

General Mattis, if you are confirmed as the Secretary of Defense, you will lead the Department during a time when the United States faces many complex and multifaceted challenges that do not offer quick or easy solutions. Some of these challenges involve traditional nation-state tensions, while others cross international boundaries.

Also, you will help oversee national security policy
for a President who lacks foreign policy and defense experience, and whose temperament is far different from prior Presidents. I think many Americans and many in this body on both sides of the aisle are rightly concerned about how he may respond when he is tested by Russia, Iran, North Korea, and other transnational threats such as cyber.

Considering some of these hotspots in the world in detail, I would like to start with Iran, which remains a top concern for this committee. Their behavior with respect to proxy forces across the region has not improved, and Iran’s unsafe and unprofessional actions in the maritime arena continue. However, I continue to believe that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA, is the most effective way to prevent Iran from resuming their nuclear weapons program. General Mattis, while you raised concerns about the JCPOA when it was being negotiated, you stated during a Center for Strategic and International Studies forum in April 2016 that, in your words, there is no going back, absent a real violation. I agree with that assessment. I look forward to hearing your thoughts about how we can build upon the JCPOA to address other Iranian threats, including its malign influence in the region and ballistic missile program.

The threat posed by violent extremist groups remains a persistent and likely a generational problem. Our actions
to support local partners on the ground in Iraq and Syria have made significant gains in recapturing areas once held by ISIL, including operations directed at Mosul and Raqqa. However, ISIL continues to find new ways to terrorize innocent civilians and recruit new members. In the long term, successful military action against ISIL, Al Qaeda, and other violent extremist groups must be complemented by non-military efforts by the international community to address the circumstances that led to the rise of such groups, again echoing some of the comments that my colleagues mentioned about the complementarity of the State Department and other agencies with respect to national security policy.

In North Korea, Kim Jong-un has destabilized the Korean Peninsula, and recent nuclear tests and ballistic missile developments further threaten the region. Regimes as authoritarian and insulated as North Korea’s are brittle and prone to collapse, and how we deal with North Korea’s missile capabilities and its potential for collapse will be an ongoing debate and challenge for the Department of Defense.

Russia has perpetrated aggressive actions against its neighbors, has roundly rejected the post-Cold War international order that is whole, free, and at peace. Furthermore, Russia’s employment of hybrid warfare tactics in an effort to undermine democracy and to destabilize
neighboring countries cannot be ignored. In light of the intelligence community’s recent assessment that President Vladimir Putin ordered an influence campaign designed to undermine our presidential election, this committee will be interested to hear your views regarding the best posture with regard to Russia going forward, both in the cyber realm and on the ground in Eastern Europe.

In addition to these broad strategic challenges, we must also grapple with issues specific to the Department of Defense. For instance, this committee has done its best to allocate extra funding to support full spectrum readiness, including additional home station training, flying hours, steaming days, depot maintenance, and installation sustainment. General Mattis, given your extensive military experience, I would welcome your assessment of current readiness levels and your thoughts on what else can and should be done.

Our men and women in uniform remain this committee’s top concern. Recruiting and retaining a sufficiently sized, trained, and equipped military, with the necessary character and talent to meet national defense requirements, is a paramount goal. To that end, I strongly support Secretary Carter’s decision to develop gender-neutral occupational standards for all military occupations and to open service in all occupations to those who can meet those standards.
regardless of their gender, to include service in ground combat units. For the first time, highly talented and motivated female marines and soldiers are being assigned to units that were previously closed to them. Successful implementation of this decision requires strong leadership to ensure that individual success of the service member and the collective success of their units and their service. And I expect you to provide that leadership.

I remain concerned that too often our service members and their families fall victim to financial problems. This is an issue, I think, of importance. A deployed soldier, sailor, airman, or marine hearing from a spouse back home about unscrupulous financial companies is unacceptable, and so I hope you pay particular attention to the Military Lending Act which I and the chairman have made a very strong priority in this committee.

Defense budgets, I think we would all agree, should be based on our long-term military strategy. However, defense spending is subject to the Budget Control Act, as the chairman has pointed out, and the defense investments that have been made to rebuild readiness and modernization platforms and equipment are in jeopardy. In addition, we must be aware that simply adding additional funding to OCO, for example, or increasing defense spending at the expense of other government agencies, creates other problems and is
not an effective long-term solution. One of your first
tasks of the new administration will be to submit a fiscal
year 2018 budget that addresses these issues and goes to the
point that the chairman made of repealing the Budget Control
Act.

General Mattis, if confirmed, you will manage a
Department of Defense grappling with many extraordinarily
difficult challenges and it will require strong civilian
leadership. In order to serve as the Secretary of Defense,
Congress must provide an exception to the statutory
requirement that currently prohibits individuals from being
appointed if they are within 7 years of their military
service. Earlier this week, this committee held a hearing
on civilian control of the armed forces, which was
illuminating and instructive. I hope you will candidly
share with the committee this morning the actions you will
take to ensure your tenure reflects and protects the
principle of civilian control of the military, if you are
confirmed.

When he assumes office, President Trump will become
Commander-in-Chief of our armed forces. I continue to hope
that the gravity of the Office of the President and the
magnitude of the challenges our country faces would
encourage him to be more conscientious and thoughtful with
his comments.
However, in the 2 months since his election, President-elect Trump has made a number of defense-related policy statements addressing North Korea’s ICBM capability, our trade relations with China, and an expansion of U.S. nuclear weapons. Most troubling is the President-elect’s repeated praise for the leadership of Vladimir Putin and his seeming indifference to Russia’s efforts to influence the presidential election. Many have supported the waiver legislation and your confirmation because they believe you will be, to paraphrase Thomas Jefferson, the saucer that cools the coffee. I look forward to hearing how you intend to manage the relationship of the Department of Defense with the NSC and with the President.

Again, I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the committee’s careful process in considering this nomination, and I look forward to hearing from our nominee.

Chairman McCain: Thank you.

General Mattis, there are standard questions that we are required to ask, and I would go through those very quickly and point out in order to exercise its legislative and oversight responsibilities, it is important this committee and other appropriate committees of Congress are able to receive testimony, briefings, and other communications of information. Have you adhered to applicable laws and regulations governing conflicts of
interest?

Mr. Mattis: I have.

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

Mr. Mattis: I will.

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

Mr. Mattis: Yes.

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

Mr. Mattis: Yes.

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

Mr. Mattis: 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?

Mr. Mattis: Yes, sir.

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

Mr. Mattis: I have not.

Chairman McCain: Welcome before the committee, General Mattis.
STATEMENT OF JAMES N. MATTIS, TO BE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Mr. Mattis: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Reed. It is an honor to come before you for this confirmation hearing as the President-elect’s nominee for the position of Secretary of Defense.

I request my written statement be accepted for the record.

Chairman McCain: Without objection.

Mr. Mattis: I want to thank all of you on the committee for taking time to see me during my courtesy calls, and I thank you for your willingness to accommodate this hearing and consider my nomination. I have testified previously in front of this committee, and I have always held it in the highest regard. And based on my past years’ experience, I do trust this committee and each member of it, and if confirmed, I will demonstrate that trust.

I wish to thank former Senator William Cohen for so kindly introducing me this morning, and I am equally grateful to the long-serving former chairman of the committee, Senator Sam Nunn, for his strong support.

It is humbling to be considered for this position, and I thank the President-elect for placing trust and confidence in me.

When this unanticipated request came, I was enjoying a
full life west of the Rockies. I was not involved in the presidential campaign and I was certainly not seeking or envisioning a position in any new administration. That said, it would be the highest honor, if I am confirmed, to lead those who volunteer to support and defend the Constitution and to defend our people. All my remarks today recognize that it is only with the advice and consent of the Senate that I can be confirmed.

I know the Senators of this committee are well aware of the many global security challenges we face. We see each day a world awash in change. Our country is still at war in Afghanistan and our troops are fighting against ISIS and other terrorist groups in the Middle East and elsewhere. Russia is raising grave concerns on several fronts, and China is shredding trust along its periphery. Increasingly we see islands of stability in our hemisphere, democracies here, in Europe, and in Asia, under attack by non-state actors and nations that mistakenly see their security in the insecurity of others.

Our armed forces in this world must remain the best led, the best equipped, and the most lethal in the world. These demanding times require us to put together a strong national security team here in Washington. If confirmed, I will lead the Department of Defense and be a forthright member of that team. I recognize that I will
need to be the strongest possible advocate for military and
civilian personnel and their families. I will foster an
atmosphere of harmony and trust at the Department with our
interagency counterparts and the congressional committees.

As swiftly as the President-elect’s national security
team is confirmed, I will work to make sure our strategy and
military calculus are employed to reinforce traditional
tools of diplomacy, ensuring our President and our diplomats
negotiate from a position of strength.

In addition to ensuring collaboration across government
and the adoption of an integrated strategy, we must also
embrace our international alliances and security
partnerships. History is clear: nations with strong allies
thrive and those without them wither.

If you confirm me, my watchwords will be solvency and
security in providing for the protection of our people and
the survival of our freedoms. My priorities as Secretary of
Defense will be to strengthen military readiness, strengthen
our alliances, and bring business reforms to the Department
of Defense.

Our military is the envy of the world representing
America’s awesome determination to defend herself. Working
with you, I will endeavor to keep our unique all-volunteer
force second to none. We open the door to all patriots who
are eligible and meet the standards, provide them with the
training, equipment, and leadership essential to their
success, and ensure all service members are treated with
dignity and respect.

I recognize my potential civilian role differs in
essence from my former role in uniform. Civilian control of
the military is a fundamental tenet of the American military
tradition. Both the Commander-in-Chief and the Secretary of
Defense must impose an objective strategic calculus in the
national security decision-making process and effectively
direct its actions. Civilian leaders bear these
responsibilities because the esprit de corps of our
military, its can-do spirit, and its obedience to civilian
leadership reduces the inclination and power of the military
to oppose a policy it is ultimately ordered to implement.

If the Senate consents and if the full Congress passes
an exception to the 7-year requirement, I will provide
strong civilian leadership of military plans and decisions
in the Department of Defense.

I recognize under the Constitution it is the Congress
that raises, sustains, and supports our armed forces through
annual authorizations and appropriations. For many years, I
have watched you in action and testified before you. I look
forward to collaborating closely for the defense of our
Nation.

I am mindful of the extraordinary privilege it is to be
nominated for this position. I will hold service members, civilians, and their families foremost in my thoughts and work to give the Department the best chance for victory if you confirm me.

Finally, on a personal note, I have worked at the Pentagon twice in my career. But few people may know I am not the first person in my family to do so. When in the wartime spring of 1942 my mother was 20 years old and working in military intelligence, she was part of the first wave of government employees to move into the still-unfinished Pentagon. She had come to America as an infant and lives today on the banks of the Columbia River in the Pacific Northwest. Little could she imagine in her youth that more than 90 years after she immigrated to this country and 75 years after she first walked through the doors of the War Department, one of her sons would be sitting here before you today.

Thank you. May I take your questions?

[The prepared statement of Mr. Mattis follows:]
Chairman McCain: General, I neglected -- would you like to introduce members of your family who are here with us today?

Mr. Mattis: Thank you, Senator. They are safely west of the Rockies as well right now.

[Laughter.]

Chairman McCain: Very quickly. Our uniformed military leaders have testified before this committee that the Budget Control Act has put the men and women serving in uniform at greater risk. Do you agree with that?

Mr. Mattis: I do, sir.

Chairman McCain: I believe that we are in serious trouble in Afghanistan as the Taliban is able to mount greater and more serious attacks on capitals across that nation. Do you agree with that assessment?

Mr. Mattis: They have made advances and eroded some of our successes, Chairman.

Chairman McCain: And the ANA is sustaining unsustainable, over a period of time, losses.

Mr. Mattis: I need to review the actual casualty figures and the recruitment, sir, but I believe that is correct.

Chairman McCain: Do you believe that we have a strategy that will allow us to regain control of Raqqa?

Mr. Mattis: I believe we do, sir. However, I believe
that strategy needs to be reviewed and perhaps energized on
a more aggressive timeline.

Chairman McCain: It seems to me that some of the
actions we are taking, 50 troops here, 200 there, smacks of
mission creep. Do you think that there are some aspects of
that?

Mr. Mattis: Chairman, I am not current on this issue.
If confirmed, I will get current very quickly.

Chairman McCain: I just returned from a trip to the
Baltics, Georgia, and Ukraine. They are incredibly worried
about our commitment to them. And one of the major
priorities that the Baltic countries have is a permanent
U.S. military presence, not a base, but a permanent military
presence in the Baltics. Do you agree with that?

Mr. Mattis: Chairman, once the new national security
team is confirmed, I want to sit down with them and come up
with a coherent, integrated strategy that uses diplomacy,
military --

Chairman McCain: I am specifically speaking of the
Baltics.

Mr. Mattis: I do, sir.

Chairman McCain: On that trip that I took with Senator
Graham and Senator Klobuchar, we went to Mariupol, close to
the front lines, with the President of Ukraine where we took
part in various ceremonies and meetings with these brave
Ukrainians, 10,000 of whom have been slaughtered by Vladimir Putin and his invasion of Crimea and Ukraine. I know you can appreciate the fact that there was a ceremony where the President of Ukraine gave their highest award to the mother of a young man who had just been killed by a Russian sniper a couple of days before. It is always very moving. And it brings home graphically what the Russians have done in Ukraine and Crimea, Crimea in blatant violation of the Budapest Agreement, for which they recognized Crimea as part of Ukraine in return for Ukraine giving up its nuclear inventory.

What do you think we ought to do about Russia, General Mattis? Do you think we ought to maybe have sanctions against Russia or basically sit by, as we have for the last couple years, and watch their aggression, by the way, including their precision-guided weapons against hospitals in Aleppo? The list goes on and on of the atrocities that have been committed by Vladimir Putin while we again try a reset. I have watched three Presidents commit themselves to a new relationship with Vladimir Putin. All three have been an abysmal failure. Should we ignore the lessons of history in our relationship with Vladimir Putin, and what should we be doing?

Mr. Mattis: Chairman, history is not a straitjacket, but I have never found a better guide for the way ahead than
studying the history. Since Yalta, we have a long list of
times that we have tried to engage positively with Russia.
We have a relatively short list of successes in that regard,
and I think right now the most important thing is that we
recognize the reality of what we deal with with Mr. Putin
and we recognize that he is trying to break the North
Atlantic Alliance and that we take the integrated steps,
diplomatic, economic, military, and the alliance steps
working with our allies to defend ourselves where we must.

Chairman McCain: You are a distinguished student of
history, and as we are all aware, that following World War
II a world order was established which has held for
basically the last 70 years. Do you believe that that world
order is now under more strain than it has ever been?

Mr. Mattis: I think it is under the biggest attack
since World War II, sir, and that is from Russia, from
terrorist groups, and with what China is doing in the South
China Sea.

Chairman McCain: And that would argue for us making
sure we are adequately prepared to meet these challenges.

Mr. Mattis: I think deterrence is critical right now,
sir. Absolutely. And that requires the strongest military.

Chairman McCain: Do you think we have a strong enough
military today in order to achieve that goal?

Mr. Mattis: No, sir.
Chairman McCain: I thank you.

Senator Reed?

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

And thank you, General, for your testimony and again for your service.

As I mentioned in my opening statement, your comments at CSIS indicated that despite misgivings about JCPOA, in your words, there is no going back. And short of a clear and present violation, that was enough to stimulate the European actions as well that we have to essentially stay the course. Is that still your view?

Mr. Mattis: Sir, I think it is an imperfect arms control agreement. It is not a friendship treaty. But when America gives her word, we have to live up to it and work with our allies.

Senator Reed: There also are, as I pointed out and as you recognized and have pointed out much more eloquently, challenges arising from the non-nuclear aspects of Iranian proxy support, the interference with shipping. In fact, there was an incident this week of provocation. How do you apply appropriate pressure to the Iranians to contain their behavior in these areas without jeopardizing the solidarity of the European and world community and the durability of the JCPOA?

Mr. Mattis: Chairman, once the new national security
...team is confirmed, we will work together. But I think to publicly display what Iran is up to with their surrogates and proxies, their terrorist units that they support, to recognize the ballistic missile threat, to deal with their maritime threat, and to publicly make clear to everyone what they are doing in the cyber realm all helps to constrain Iran.

Senator Reed: Thank you.

General, if you are to become the Secretary of Defense, you will be a critical component of the intelligence community. You produce intelligence through the Defense Intelligence Agency. You can consume intelligence because it is the basis of most every recommendation or decision that you would make. And we are in a very unique situation where we have the President-elect disparaging the intelligence community, questioning its conclusions, and questioning its motivations, suggesting perhaps that there would be some actions taken, perhaps bordering on retribution, for intelligence analysis that is being done, we presume -- I certainly presume -- based on the tradecraft and allegiance to the facts and the best judgment that they can make.

Do you believe if you observe behavior such as that, disrupting the intelligence community, disparaging it, undermining it, ignoring it -- again, I could go on. Do you
feel you have an obligation to the country and the
Constitution to inform the committee of those actions?

Mr. Mattis: Senator, I can tell you that in my many
years of involvement in the military, I had a close
relationship with the intelligence community. I could
evaluate their effectiveness at times on a daily basis, and
I have a very, very high degree of confidence in our
intelligence community.

Senator Reed: And if you see that community being
undercut, not debated about their conclusions, but undercut
or somehow ignored or selectively being listened to or
ignored, again, do you feel you have an obligation to make
us aware of this so that we can exercise our
responsibilities?

Mr. Mattis: I will be completely transparent with this
committee, sir, but I would not have taken this job if I did
not believe the President-elect would also be open to my
input on this or any other matter.

Senator Reed: You have talked about the situation with
respect to Russia. One aspect of that is operations in
Syria. There has been some discussion on and off during the
campaign of cooperating with the Russians in Syria. Do you
think there is a possibility of that, a likelihood of that,
or would that be a good approach?

Mr. Mattis: Senator, Russia, to quote the chairman’s
opening statement, has chosen to be a strategic competitor. They are an adversary in key areas, and while we should always engage and look for areas of cooperation -- even in the worst years of the Cold War, President Reagan and Secretary Shultz were able to work with Russia, the Soviet Union at that time, and reduce the nuclear weapons. So I am all for engagement, but we also have to recognize reality and what Russia is up to. And there is a decreasing number of areas where we can engage cooperatively and an increasing number of areas where we are going to have to confront Russia.

Senator Reed: Thank you.

Chairman McCain: Senator Inhofe?

Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I am not going to take all of my time here because every question I was going to ask the chairman has already asked, and I liked the answers. I also have been honored to have known you for 30 years, and that is not normally the case. And so I am so excited that you are willing to do this.

The two things that we are concerned with are readiness and -- what I am concerned with is readiness and the U.S. influence. A year ago, you stated our influence in the Middle East is at its lowest point in 4 decades, and I agree with that. We had also confirmation testimony last November
by General Goldfein that said continuous combat operations and reduced overall budgets have driven readiness to historically low levels.

    And I look and I see Senator Cohen and Senator Nunn. I spent time with both of them and I admire them so much.

    But this is not like it used to be. I mean, right now we have one-third of the Army brigade combat teams are ready to fight in all types of warfare. The current Air Force is the smallest and oldest in the Air Force history. Yet, only half of its fighter squadrons are ready to fight in intensity combat. And General Mattis, in your Marines, the aircraft -- their combat and marine aviators are at historical lows right now in terms of flight time. The same thing with the Navy. We have the requirements for 308 ships, and we only have 274. So this is not like it used to be.

    And I would only say this, that I really believe that we will have to relook at the priorities that we have in this country. And I enjoy quoting President Reagan when he first came in. He said, quote, starting by considering what must be done to maintain peace and review all the possible threats against our security, then a strategy for strengthening peace and defending against those threats which must be agreed upon, and finally our defense establishment must be evaluated to see what is necessary to
project against any and all of the potential threats, the cost of achieving these ends is totaled up and the result is the budget for national defense. Do you think he was right at that time?

Mr. Mattis: Yes, sir, I do.

Senator Inhofe: I look forward to that. Thank you for being willing to do this.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman McCain: Senator McCaskill?

Senator McCaskill: Thank you.

Thank you, General Mattis, for also being willing to do this. You and I have had a chance to work together in the past, and we also have had a chance to visit.

I would like to first briefly talk about the overseas contingency operating fund and the joke, the cruel joke, that is being played on the American public that we have not been able to come together in an honest way and confront the needs of our military and confront the needs of our domestic national security in a bipartisan compromise to allow us to quit putting base military funding in a fund that does not have to be paid for. And it has gotten worse every year. And it is such a hypocrisy. It is one of the reasons everybody in America is so disgusted with us that we cannot be honest with the American people about the needs of our country and come together in a bipartisan way to meet them
in a way that is responsible in terms of the way that we
budget and spend money.

Tell me how you intend on addressing this important
issue going forward.

Mr. Mattis: Senator, the need for our country to
maintain a safe and secure nuclear deterrent, a decisive
conventional force while maintaining an irregular capability
is completely understood, and I know it is by this
committee. But how do you then translate that into
budgetary discipline and managerial integrity of the budget?
And as you know, we will bring forward from Defense what we
think we need for overseas contingencies, for the base
budget, this sort of thing. But I believe -- my desired end
state would be everything is in the base budget except for
something that legitimately pops up that could not be
anticipated.

But at the same time, we are not in a position there to
dictate that, and the bottom line, we will come to you with
what is necessary and then support this committee and the
Congress in justifying it and making certain we have your
confidence we are spending every dollar for what we should
be spending it on, something we cannot do right now I am
aware of. But that is my goal in this effort.

And I do not have a solution for what the chairman
described as a self-inflicted wound of the Budget Control
Act. I do not know how to get around this in a way that puts the Congress really back into its oversight role rather than salami slices of cuts where you do not actually exercise your judgment. I am much more comfortable with you doing that than some arithmetic. So I think I am with you. I share 100 percent of your frustration and your goal, ma’am. I cannot tell you I know how to get there other than giving you my best military advice.

Senator McCaskill: Thank you.

I also want to briefly touch on women serving in every military occupational specialty. And you and I had a chance to visit about this at length.

I am particularly proud of the work that has been done on this in my State. Since 1999, the Sapper leader course at Fort Leonard Wood has been impressively maintaining completely general-neutral standards determining who and who does not graduate with that prestigious tab. It is a rigorous physical requirement of the Sapper tab. Despite those rigorous physical demands, over the course of the graduation rates since 1999, the graduation rates for women and men have both been at about 50 percent.

So understanding that none of us want any standards diminished and that we have got to maintain the highest physical standards for the specialties in which men and women are going to serve, can you address for this committee
how committed you are going forward to having both men and
women serve alongside each other when they are capable of
doing the work for our country?

Mr. Mattis: Yes, Senator, I can. I think you hit on
the point that no standards are changed. The standards are
the standards, and when people meet the standards, then that
is the end of the discussion on that.

I would also add that what we are talking about here is
somewhere north of 15 percent of our force is made up of
women, and the reason we are able to maintain an all-
v olunteer force with very, very high recruiting standards is
because we go to males and females. And that same
application of that human capital has got to show that where
they can best serve, that is where they go.

Senator McCaskill: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman McCain: Senator Wicker?

Senator Wicker: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Mattis, let us talk about Israel for a few
moments. Would you agree that the United States shares
common values and strategic interests with Israel?

Mr. Mattis: Israel is a fellow democracy, and I think
Israel’s security is very, very important to the United
States.

Senator Wicker: Are there any other democracies in the
Middle East?
Mr. Mattis: No, sir.

Senator Wicker: Would you agree that the threat of Iran’s regional belligerence and nuclear ambitions are a shared threat both to the United States and to Israel?

Mr. Mattis: And I agree, and I would add also to our Arab partners in the region.

Senator Wicker: And I think you said that we are going to have to live with what the administration has done with regard to the energy agreement with Iran. Are you confident that we can monitor the situation with regard to possible violations? Do we have that capability?

Mr. Mattis: I will have to get in and look at the classified data, if you confirm me, Senator. I believe we can have it. I just cannot respond authoritatively right now if we have got those processes in place.

Senator Wicker: In your opinion, what did the United States’ failure last month to veto the U.N. resolution with regard to Israel do to our bilateral relationship with Israel?

Mr. Mattis: Sir, I would have to get back and look at that. I say that because I have read what is in the newspaper and what is going on in both Tel Aviv and Washington and New York, but I do not have a very authoritative view of that right now. I think we have got to restore a better relationship with Israel and with our
Arab allies. I think there is a sense on their part that we
are indifferent to the situation they face, the security
situation that they face.

Senator Wicker: And we certainly do not need to send
the signal that we are indifferent to their situation. Do
we?

Mr. Mattis: The greatest generation came home from
World War II recognizing, whether we like it or not, we are
part of this world, sir. We are going to have to remember
that lesson.

Senator Wicker: And I realize this was a foreign
policy question, but you are going to be part of the
national security and foreign policy team. And let me say
that one of my greatest concerns with regard to our failure
to veto this resolution and therefore to let it be adopted
by the U.N. Security Council is that people will argue this
establishes international law. And somehow this Congress
and this new administration are going to have to send the
signal that we do not recognize that with regard to the
Israeli presence in certain sections of Jerusalem, that we
do not recognize that resolution as international law. And
we are in a tough position there.

If you would like to comment on that, I would be glad
to hear your thoughts, sir.

Mr. Mattis: Sir, I think ultimately we are going to
have to promote peace between the Palestinian and the
Israeli authorities there, and that is going to take time to
build that kind of trust. And we should be a partner in
trying to build that resolution between those peoples.

Senator Wicker: When one speaks of Israel maintaining
its qualitative military edge over neighbors in the region,
what does that mean to you, General?

Mr. Mattis: Sir, it has to do with the technology of
the military equipment provided. I would only add that we
also have improving relations between Israel and some of
those neighbors, and where we can work in terms of
partnership with both Israel and the Arab neighbors, we can
strengthen everyone’s security and stability in the Middle
East.

Senator Wicker: Do you believe their qualitative
military edge needs to be revitalized?

Mr. Mattis: I am not aware that it is not vital now,
that it is not fully formed right now.

Senator Wicker: And with regard to the Thucydides
Trap, of course, Secretary Cohen has insulted every member
of this committee by suggesting that we do not readily
understand that. But with regard to that, as I understand
it, this occurs when a rising power tries to meet the power
of an already existing and established power. Do you think
that is a risk when it comes to our relationship with China,
particularly in the Asia-Pacific region?

Mr. Mattis:  Sir, I believe that we are going to have
to manage that competition between us and China. There is
another piece of wisdom from antiquity that says, fear,
honor, and interest always seem to be the root causes of why
a nation chooses to go to hostilities. And I would just say
that what we have got to do is engage diplomatically, engage
in terms of alliances, engage economically, and maintain a
very strong military so our diplomats are always engaging
from a position of strength when we deal with a rising
power.

Senator Wicker:  Thank you very much. Good luck to
you, sir.

Mr. Mattis:  Thanks.

Chairman McCain:  Senator Shaheen?

Senator Shaheen:  Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And welcome, General Mattis, and thank you for your
willingness to continue to serve this country.

I have read that in 2005, as Commander of the Marine
Corps Combat Development Command, that you asked researchers
to, quote, unleash us from the tether of fuel and explore
ways to improve the efficiency of military vehicles in order
to reduce the strain that energy put on supply lines because
you not only when you commanded the 1st Marine Division
during the 2003 invasion, but you had also seen what happens
when our troops outran their fuel supplies.

So can you speak to why you think this is important? And will you as Secretary of Defense continue to support the military’s effort to pursue alternative and more efficient sources of energy to reduce our reliance on conventional fuel supplies?

Mr. Mattis: Yes, Senator. We will take advantage of every advance in terms of extending our legs, extending our energy efforts. And certainly there is a lot of progress that has been made. I have been living in Silicon Valley for the last several years. So you can understand my interest in what they are doing out there in the private sector.

Senator Shaheen: Well, thank you. I think our military is way ahead of much of much of the rest of government and much of the private sector. And those are lessons that can be shared that will benefit the private sector as well.

Chairman McCain talked about the threat that Russia poses, and listening to your responses, it sounded to me like you also believe that Russia poses a threat to the United States and to, I think you said, the trans-Atlantic alliance.

Today for the first time since the fall of communism, American troops arrived in Poland as part of the European
Reassurance Initiative. How important is it for us to continue these initiatives to reassure our European allies that we will continue to support them? And how concerned are you that some of President-elect Trump’s statements with respect to continuing to support NATO, to support our allies in Europe has undermined our ability to continue this initiative? And will you support the ERI continuing as Secretary of Defense?

Mr. Mattis: Senator, I do support ERI. NATO, from my perspective, having served once as a NATO Supreme Allied Commander, is the most successful military alliance probably in modern world history and maybe ever. It was put together, as you know, by the greatest generation coming home from a war to defend Europe against Soviet incursion by their military. Yet, the first time it went to war was when this town and New York City were attacked. That is the first time NATO went into combat. So my view is that nations with allies thrive and nations without allies do not. And so I would see us maintaining the strongest possible relationship with NATO.

Senator Shaheen: Thank you.

And are you concerned about some of the statements that President-elect Trump has made with respect to our historic European allies and to NATO, and have you had a chance to have discussions with him? And how confident are you that
he recognizes what you have just said about the importance of those relationships?

Mr. Mattis: Senator, I have had discussions with him on this issue. He has shown himself open even to the point of asking more questions, going deeper into the issue about why I feel so strongly. And he understands where I stand, and I will work with the other members of the national security team, once the Senate confirms them, to carry these views forward.

Senator Shaheen: Thank you.

I think Senator Inhofe raised the issue of readiness for our troops. And when you and I met, we also talked a little bit about the National Guard and the importance of the Guard as being part of the one force that we depend on.

Readiness is, obviously, a concern for the National Guard as well. And in New Hampshire, for example, our National Guard has experienced a 32 percent decline in force structure since 2007, much more than many States that are smaller than we are. And they have had trouble with training rotations, resources, equipment, other aspects of readiness. Can you commit to us, in addition to trying to address readiness with our active duty forces, that you will also look at the Guard and Reserve and try and ensure that they also have access to what they need to be ready for deployment?
Mr. Mattis: Senator, I share the chairman’s view that we have shrunk our military capability. And one of the things that that forces on is is the awareness. It is not just a strategic reserve anymore in National Guard. It is also an operational reserve. That means they have to be ready to go on very short notice. That is just a reality when we have shrunk our military to the point we have, yet not reduced our strategic obligations.

So we are going to have to keep the National Guard and the Reserves of all the armed forces at the top of their game. We cannot deploy them without having them at a high state of readiness, mostly in equipment and training. There are some things, obviously, they do not do because they are not on duty 365 days a year, but as an operational reserve and strategic reserve, they will be critical.

Senator Shaheen: Thank you, General.

Chairman McCain: Senator Fischer?

Senator Fischer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, General Mattis, for your past service to this country and thank you again for your willingness to step forward in service once again.

I was happy to see your responses to the advance policy questions affirm the importance of nuclear weapons, which you describe as fundamental to our Nation’s security, and your statement that, quote, we must continue with the
current nuclear modernization plans for all three legs of the triad. End quote.

When we talked in my office about the triad in our meeting last week, you brought up, I believe, a very important point that bears repeating relating to the ICBM force. And there is a broad recognition that the legs of the triad have different strengths. The bombers are visible, and therefore they have what I call signaling value. The submarines are highly survivable, and the ICBMs are the most responsive leg and they can be launched at a moment’s notice.

You mentioned what you called the targeting challenge of our ICBM force and what that targeting challenge poses for our adversaries. Could you explain that further?

Mr. Mattis: Ma’am, in my review of the triad that you brought up here, Senator, I looked at each one of those legs. Is it necessary? And I have not had access to all the classified data, but I had a fair amount of background on this, and some of the aspects of why we have a triad have not changed.

So in looking at each leg of it with the ICBM force, it is clear that they are so buried out in the central U.S. that any enemy that wants to take us on is going to have to commit two, three, four weapons to make certain they take each one out. In other words, the ICBM force provides a
cost-imposing strategy on an adversary. And again, what we are trying to do is set such a stance with our triad that these weapons must never be used ever again. And so the deterrent value of the ICBM force is that an enemy would have to basically use three or four times as many weapons to take out each individual one. So that is the targeting challenge the enemy faces against the ICBM force.

Senator Fischer: Thank you.

And in your answers to this committee’s advance questions about whether we are deterring hostile activity in cyberspace, you say no. And you continue on to state, quote, to be deterred, our adversaries must know they will suffer consequences from cyber attacks that outweigh any gains they hope to achieve. If they choose to act as adversaries, we will treat them as such. End quote. I completely agree and believe that more cost must be imposed on those who are responsible for cyber attacks.

So this gets to the issue we have discussed in great detail on this committee, which is the lack of an overall policy to respond to cyber attacks.

When we discussed this in our recent meeting, you made a point that I believe is also very important, which is that the lack of a policy is potentially destabilizing because adversaries, unaware of our boundaries, may take a provocative action that forces the United States to act
militarily. I believe you characterized it as, quote, stumbling into a conflict.

Essentially we do not want to find out what constitutes an act of war in cyberspace the hard way. Can you elaborate on that point for us?

Mr. Mattis: Senator, I believe a lot of crises and even wars have started from miscalculation. So while it is important we make clear what we stand for, I think in an area such as you are bringing up here, cyber, it is also important that our adversaries know what we absolutely will not tolerate. And by making that clear, you are less apt to have somebody stumble into a situation where now we are forced to take action.

That said, putting together a policy like this is not something the Department of Defense can do alone. We certainly have a key role, a fundamental role. But at the same time, from our Treasury Department to our Commerce Department to our Homeland Security, we need to get a lot of people in the room and put this policy together. I realize it is a new domain, but that does not give us an excuse not to address it on an urgent basis.

Senator Fischer: Thank you, sir. I look forward to working with you on that. This committee has been focused on cyber. We are looking for a policy, and I look forward to developing one with you.
And I invite you to come to Nebraska and visit Offutt and would love to be there when you are there. Thank you.

Mr. Mattis: Thanks, Senator.

Chairman McCain: Not required.

Senator Gillibrand?

Senator Gillibrand: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to continue some of the line of questioning started by Senator McCaskill.

Do you plan on rolling back the opening of infantry positions to women based on your previous statements?

Mr. Mattis: Senator, I have never come into any job with an agenda, a preformed agenda, of changing anything. I come in assuming the people before me deserve respect for the job they did and the decisions they made.

Senator Gillibrand: I ask specifically because in previous speeches, one from the Marines Memorial Club in San Francisco on April 16th, 2015, you were asked specifically about whether we should open infantry positions and special forces combat jobs to women. And you said you did not think it was a good idea. You said, when you mix -- you know that when you mix EROS, when you mix affection for one another, that could be manifested sexually. I do not care -- if you go anywhere in history, you will not find where this has work. Never has it worked.

And then in a previous speech on April 23rd, 2014, you
said the idea of putting women in there is not setting them up for success. Could we find a woman who could run fast enough? Of course, we could. Could we find a few who could do the pull-ups? Of course, we could. That is not the point. That is not the point at all. It is whether or not you want to mix EROS.

And so in both of these question and answer sessions, you said you do not think you could do it. Have you changed your view on this issue?

Mr. Mattis: Senator, I was not in a position to go back into government when I made those statements. There are many policies that have been enacted over many years, including the years since I have been on active duty. I am coming in with the understanding that I lead the Department of Defense, and if someone brings me a problem, then I will look at it, but I am not coming in looking for problems. I am looking for ways to get the Department so it is at the most lethal stance. And in that regard, it is all about military readiness. I am looking for military readiness and what we can do in that regard.

Senator Gillibrand: Do you plan to oppose women serving in these combat roles?

Mr. Mattis: I have no plan to oppose women in any aspect of our military. In 2003, I had hundreds of marines who happened to be women serving in my 23,000-person Marine
division. And this is 10 years before I retired, and I put
them right into the front lines alongside everyone else.

Senator Gillibrand: So you no longer believe that EROS
is a problem when men and women are serving together.

Mr. Mattis: I believe that if we are going to execute
policies like this, we had better train our leaders so they
can handle all things that come from a policy that is
decided in this town. That is our responsibility to train
our young leaders who are going to be dealing with factors
that perhaps their fathers did not have to deal with.

Senator Gillibrand: In your book, “Warriors and
Citizens,” and the interviews that you did afterwards, you
were talking about the disconnect between civilians and the
civilian elites’ view of the military and the military’s
view of itself. And you cite various policy debates that
you think there is a disconnect. And two that you cite, you
said, in recent policy debates such as those about allowing
homosexuals to serve openly, retaining a residual force in
Iraq and Afghanistan, cutting military spending, assigning
women to combat units, and other items. You believe that
the American public is not nearly as concerned as it should
be that the changes to military policies are accruing risk
to our forces. We fear that an uninformed public is
permitting political leaders to impose an accretion of
social conventions that are diminishing the combat power of
our military, disregarding our warfighting practitioners’ advice.

Do you believe that openly serving homosexuals, along with women in combat units, is undermining our force?

Mr. Mattis: Senator, my belief is that we have to stay focused on a military that is so lethal that on the battlefield, it will be the enemy’s longest day and their worst day when they run into that force. I believe that military service is a touchstone for patriots of whatever stripe. I mean, it is simply the way that they demonstrate their commitment. And I believe that right now the policies that are in effect, unless a service chief brings something to me where there has been a problem that has been proven, then I am not going in with an idea that I am going to review these and right away start rolling something back.

Senator Gillibrand: Do you believe that allowing LGBT Americans to serve in the military or women in combat is undermining our lethality?

Mr. Mattis: Frankly, Senator, I have never cared much about two consenting adults and who they go to bed with.

Senator Gillibrand: So the answer is no?

Mr. Mattis: Senator, my concern is on the readiness of the force to fight and to make certain that it is at the top of its game so when we go up against an enemy, the criteria for everything we do in the military up until that point
when we put our young men and women across the line of departure, is they will be at their most lethal stance. That is my obligation. As I move into this job, that is how I will look at the --

Senator Gillibrand: Thank you.

And for the record, I would like in writing whether you believe gender --

Chairman McCain: The Senator’s time has expired.

Senator Gillibrand: Understood, sir. Just for the record --

Chairman McCain: The Senator’s time has expired.

Senator Gillibrand: Thank you.

Chairman McCain: Please adhere to the rules of the Senate.

Senator Gillibrand: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman McCain: Senator Cotton?

Senator Cotton: Thank you.

General Mattis, welcome to the committee. Thank you for your many decades of service, and thank you for your willingness to answer the call to serve once again.

In his speech on our defense in Philadelphia, President-elect Trump committed to a 540,000-man Army, a 36-battalion Marine Corps, a 350-ship Navy, and an Air Force with at least 1,200 fighter aircraft. Do you agree that these numbers are the correct targets for which we should
aim for our armed forces?

Mr. Mattis: Sir, in my discussion with the President-elect, he wants to strengthen the military. I will have to look at those numbers in particular. I would tell you that he takes the issue seriously, as you can see from what he has proposed there, and I believe that that is the right direction. The timing, the phasing of that, and making certain that whatever you have already bought for us is fully maintained -- these are challenges that we will have to look at for current readiness and future readiness of the force. But I believe the direction he has outlined is accurate.

Senator Cotton: Thank you.

Do you have a perspective on what is a more urgent priority: current end strength or the aging equipment of our armed forces?

Mr. Mattis: Senator, I think that we have a reset problem in several of our armed forces coming out of many years of hard use. That reset has not been achieved. We also have a current maintenance problem where our ships are at sea long because the ships that are supposed to relieve them are not prepared. And then we have got to look at the future force to make certain -- like in my case, every time I went to fight, somebody had done something 20 years before that put me in a dominant position. So we are going to have
to balance all that. And I look forward to working with this committee in figuring this out, trying to get the right balance for that.

Senator Cotton: Thank you.

I want to return to the nuclear triad discussion you had with Senator Fischer in which you expressed your support for it. When we look at the triad we have today, though, it is getting somewhat long in the tooth. I think every leg of that triad may be older than I am. We are undertaking a significant modernization program today. Are you committed to the continuation of the Columbia class submarine?

Mr. Mattis: Yes, sir, I am.

Senator Cotton: The B-21 bomber?

Mr. Mattis: A manned bomber? Yes, I am, sir.

Senator Cotton: The ground-based strategic deterrent?

Mr. Mattis: I am, sir.

Senator Cotton: Long-range standoff cruise missile?

Mr. Mattis: I need to look at that one, sir. My going-in position would be it makes sense, but I need to look at in terms of its deterrent capability.

Senator Cotton: Secretary Bob Gates for whom we both served, me at many, many, many levels lower than did you, wrote in his books that a common misunderstanding in Washington is the Deputy Secretary of any department manages the department. He said that only the Secretary of Defense
can truly run the Department and really run major critical programs. He cited as some examples the mine-resistant ambush-protected vehicle, unmanned aerial ISR assets in theater, and the so-called “golden hour” of getting combat care to troops who are wounded on the battlefield. Just three examples that he had to prioritize and invest his time and influence and prestige to accomplish within the Department’s bureaucracy.

As you look forward to serving as Secretary of Defense, what are the two or three priorities you think that are most urgent and most intractable in which you will need to personally invest your time and influence and prestige?

Mr. Mattis: In strengthening the military, sir, there are times when the Secretary himself has to overrun any kind of obstacles, but you want to set up a department that by and large can do that as a matter of its core processes. And in this case, what Senator McCaskill brought up earlier where I cannot come before you and tell you that we have an ironclad audit to show you where we are spending money means that we are going to have to get some people -- I do not know if it is the Deputy or the Chief Management Officer -- who are focused 24/7 on getting these business practices down to a point that I can win your confidence when I come up here and ask for money.

At the same time, I think that the decisions on the use
of force, the active oversight of operations overseas, and the engagement with our allies are things that I am going to have to spend a lot of time on based on some of the questions and comments that have been given here today.

Senator Cotton: Thank you again for your willingness to serve our country once again.

Chairman McCain: Senator Blumenthal?

Senator Blumenthal: Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

I want to join the rest of my colleagues in thanking you for your service and your willingness to serve again.

You and I have discussed the issue of civilian control over the military, and I am extremely concerned by the precedent that your assuming this office would set. And I think you, in some respects, share that concern because civilian control over the military is a bedrock principle that goes to the very founding of our republic. And I am not going to elaborate on my reasons for feeling so strongly about it. I would like to place in the statement to that regard, if there is no objection, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman McCain: Without objection.

[The prepared statement of Senator Blumenthal follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]
Senator Blumenthal: Thank you.

But let me say very bluntly if there were ever a case for a waiver of that principle, it is you at this moment in our history. Senator Cohen made reference to your heart and your caring for your troops and their caring for you, and I believe that your appreciation for the costs of war in blood, treasure, and lives and the impact on veterans afterward will enable you to be a check on rash and potentially ill-considered use of military force by a President-elect who perhaps lacks that same appreciation.

And so I think you will have a critical role as Secretary of Defense in providing a check on that kind of action.

And in that regard, I want to focus on one of the costs of war, which is post-traumatic stress disorder. I call it post-traumatic stress, an invisible wound of war. The chairman and I worked together to support a measure called the Clay Hunt Veterans Suicide Prevention Act, and I thank him again for his leadership on that issue, which focuses on the difficulties that veterans have and the impact in causing suicide among veterans, again an invisible and often disregarded cost of war. 20 veterans every day still commit suicide in the greatest country in the history of the world.

I would like a commitment from you that you will address the issues of post-traumatic stress and veterans and work with the VA on attempting to fight this scourge of
suicide in our military.

Mr. Mattis: Senator, this cuts to the very heart of any of us here who have ordered troops into harm’s way, and how could they come home to this great country carrying something that puts them into that sort of despair? I am guided largely by Dr. Jonathan Shay from Boston, from Cambridge and what he has done in his study of this issue. And you have my full commitment on this.

Senator Blumenthal: And you and I have also discussed veterans of past wars who may have been discharged with less than honorable status because of PTS that was undiagnosed at the time partly because it was not even regarded as a condition or a diagnosable condition. And I think you expressed your interest in addressing that issue as well.

Mr. Mattis: There are appeal processes, but I need to look at those processes and whether or not the framing guidance to those appeal boards takes this into account. And I do not know that right now, but I will look at it.

Senator Blumenthal: General, you expressed your commitment in response to previous questions to the Columbia class Ohio replacement program, and I welcome that commitment. I think it is essential as part of our nuclear triad.

You and I have also discussed the Virginia attack class submarine program, the construction of two a year. I assume
you will remain committed to that program because it is so vital to our undersea strategic superiority. It is one of the areas where we have an asymmetric advantage.

Mr. Mattis: Absolutely, Senator.

Senator Blumenthal: And I think you agree too, because you mentioned our support for Israel, that the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter program is important to our strategic edge in the world and to our allies like Israel and others around the world, including in NATO, that will depend on it.

Mr. Mattis: Yes, sir. Many of our allies have got their air superiority on the F-35 program, and it bonds us tightly together with them.

Senator Blumenthal: Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman McCain: Senator Rounds?

Senator Rounds: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, first of all, thank you for your service. Thank you for taking the time to visit with us personally prior to in our office.

As I think back, I thought perhaps one of the biggest challenges that you may face is differentiating between that of a military leader versus a civilian leader coming into the Department of Defense. Could you perhaps just share very briefly your philosophy on the difference in how you would perhaps share the difference and address any questions
anybody on this committee may have concerning how you would respond militarily versus that as the civilian leader?

Mr. Mattis: Senator, the military is under civilian control in this country, and the result is that once they have had their say, they have given their input, the military leaders stand back and then carry out the decision to the best of their ability. In changing roles here, I have to make certain that I am carrying out that responsibility principally to advise the elected Commander-in-Chief on the use of force in a way that takes into account all of America’s basically different strengths, economic, diplomatic, military. Generally speaking, we would use military as a deterrent role, as a reassurance to our allies, and certainly in most cases as a last resort. So the role of the Secretary of Defense is a broader portfolio than that of a military officer.

Further, it is a position of civilian control that works with the Congress to maintain civilian control of the military. This is not just up to the executive branch. Civilian control of the military is also a responsibility that is shared with this committee in particular and with the broader Congress.

And I still remember my first day in 1969 standing at the newly discovered position of attention in a barber shop, and on the wall was the picture of the President of the
United States wearing a suit, the Secretary of Defense in a suit, the Secretary of the Navy in a suit. And below that were photos of the commanders, my Marine commanders. On its first day in the military, it was a graphic display of civilian control of the military there in the executive branch, but I have learned the role of the Congress over many years of testimony.

Senator Rounds: Thank you.

2 years ago, you advised us that this committee must lead the effort to repeal the sequestration that is costing military readiness and long-term capability while sapping troop morale. Likewise, the President-elect has called the rescinding of the threat of sequestration. So did the unanimous report of the bipartisan National Defense Panel, which was cited by the President-elect.

Sometimes I think we misunderstand in this country that the number one priority that we should be looking at is the defense of our country because if we are not free, nothing else really matters. When you talk about sequestration, we seem to have a misunderstanding that somehow expenditures for defense should be equalized with the expenditures for non-defense discretionary spending.

Would you care to state your opinion in how you would advise the President with regard to sequestration and the elimination of those caps and what it means to the United
States military?

Mr. Mattis: Senator, I understand the need for solvency and security because no nation in history has maintained its military power if it did not maintain its fiscal house in good order. At the same time, I believe that this country has got to be prepared to defend itself. The idea of a government of the people, by the people, for the people remains a radical thought in many people’s minds in this world, and we are going to have to be able to fight for it. So as a result of that, I believe that we can afford survival.

I do not believe in mathematical calculus that basically makes the Congress spectators as salami sliced cuts come in and you do not have control over that. If I cannot make the argument for you for why we need a military program, then I am willing to lose it. But if I can make that argument, should you confirm me, I do not want the Congress in a role where sequestration is making decisions for you and you are not able to influence this.

Senator Rounds: Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I have a series of questions under cyber, but I would like to ask if I could submit those for the record.

Chairman McCain: Without objection.

Senator Rounds: Thank you.
Thank you, sir. I appreciate your service and look forward to supporting you in this nomination.

Chairman McCain: Senator Hirono?

Senator Hirono: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, General Mattis.

I hope that you can provide me with a yes or no answer to this question, and then I will move on to other questions.

Is there something innate in being a woman or LGBT that would cause you to believe that they could not be part of a lethal force?

Mr. Mattis: No.

Senator Hirono: Thank you.

We have strategic interests in the Indo-Asia-Pacific AOR, and I believe the Obama administration’s concept of a strategic rebalance should be continued. I know that you are well aware of the armies in this part of the world, what is happening with China and North Korea. Will you continue our commitment to strengthening our presence in the Indo-Asia-Pacific AOR, recognizing the strategic importance of this part of the world to our national defense and our national security?

Mr. Mattis: Senator, the Pacific theater remains a priority in my mind.

Senator Hirono: So you will continue that commitment
to strengthen our presence.

Mr. Mattis: At which commitment, ma’am?

Senator Hirono: A commitment to this part of the world, the Indo-Asia-Pacific part of the world, in terms of military resources, in terms of our presence, in terms of strengthening our allies in this part of the world.

Mr. Mattis: Yes. We have worldwide responsibilities, and certainly the Pacific looms large in that.

Senator Hirono: Thank you.

The President-elect has taken to Twitter tweeting defense companies on program costs and expectations. Understandably the companies have responded. These tweets have impacted markets, created instability and some uncertainty within the industry. And while we all agree that we need to ensure that our contractors deliver the systems our warfighters require on time and within costs, I do not think that this is the best way to get that point across, especially if you are the President of the United States.

So my question is, should you be confirmed, how would you deal with industry and their concerns and the President-elect, if he continues to use Twitter to express his views and opinions about major defense acquisition programs, which has legally binding contracts already in place?

Mr. Mattis: Senator, it is not my role to comment on
the President-elect’s statements other than to say I believe it shows he is serious about getting the best bang for the
dollar when it comes to defense dollars. And that is where I find common ground with him. I want to be able to come to
you and say here is the money you gave us and here is what we did with it. And I see his statements about the cost of
certain defense programs as showing his serious side about keeping these costs under control.

Senator Hirono: Well, we on this committee have spent a lot of time, particularly under Chairman McCain’s leadership, looking at the costs and the time frames for delivery of various systems. So certainly we share that. It is a matter of how best to go forward as we ask these questions. And in my view using Twitter as a means is not the most efficacious way to do that.

Turning to our allies, once again in the Asia-Pacific area, you have indicated that you believe we are stronger with our allies and partners in Asia. And President-elect Trump has made some statements regarding some key allies in the region, Japan and Korea, suggesting at one point that we would not defend them if necessary.

Do you consider these kinds of statements damaging? And what would you do to strengthen these alliances, should you be confirmed?

Mr. Mattis: Senator, I think that we have a long
history in this city with Presidents, Secretaries of Defense
asking allies to carry their fair share of any kind of
defense burden when they share in the benefits. And I have
lived through these kind of discussions in NATO and
elsewhere. So what I would do, to answer your question, is
I would find common ground with our allies, but I would not
just take traditional allies. I would be looking for new
allies and make certain that we are creating as many allies
as we can as we try to keep peace and stability.

Senator Hirono: I agree with you.

In response to a question from Senator Shaheen, you
said that you support the ERI. Do you believe that we need
to have a parallel effort in the Indo-Asia-Pacific area?

Mr. Mattis: Each region has its own unique
characteristics, Senator. I believe that we have a fair
number of similar troop deployments in the Pacific already
that send the kind of message that ERI sends to Europe.

Senator Hirono: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman McCain: Senator Ernst?

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

General Mattis, thank you for appearing in front of our
committee today.

I will start with some basic yes or no questions, sir.
Can I get your confirmation that you will make cutting
wasteful spending a priority?
Mr. Mattis: Yes.

Senator Ernst: Do you commit to working with me to combat and prevent military sexual assault and retaliation?

Mr. Mattis: Absolutely.

Senator Ernst: Do you commit to leveraging the unique capabilities of our Guard and Reserve forces to enhance our national security missions?

Mr. Mattis: Yes.

Senator Ernst: Will you provide me with advance notice should you decide to make any changes to the gender integration policies that are in place?

Mr. Mattis: I will always keep this committee informed, ma’am.

Senator Ernst: I appreciate your commitment.

And I want to thank Senator McCaskill for bringing up the Sapper course. We have had discussions about this in the past. When I graduated my engineer officer basic course in 1993, I and the 11 other women that attended that course were not afforded the opportunity to even compete for the Sapper course. So I am glad that we have rectified that in the years since.

Flash forward 10 years. 2003, Operation Iraqi Freedom One. I was a transportation company commander serving in Kuwait and Iraq. I had an assigned weapon, an M-9, 9 millimeter pistol, but I also had assigned to me an M-16
rifle because the joke that we had in the military was that sometimes the most effective use of an M-9 is to simply throw it at your adversary.

So when I met with you last week, you emphasized that you are committed to making our military more lethal. To do this, I think one place you need to start is with our military small arms. Russia continues to upgrade its service rifle, all while we continue to modify our M-4’s. Many of our troops still carry M-16’s. The Army cannot even figure out how to replace the M-9 pistol first issued in 1982. Take a look at their 350-page micromanaging requirements document if you want to know why it is taking so long to get this accomplished. Our military’s current service rifle shoots a bullet that, as you noted, is illegal for shooting small deer in nearly all States due to its lack of killing power.

Do you agree that we cannot grow a more lethal force while using outdated small arms and ammunition?

Mr. Mattis: I do agree with that approach, ma’am. I have been away for several years, and as you know, the Army and the special forces and the Marines have all been working on creating a more lethal round for the M-16, M-4. So I am not current on it right now what they have done with the actual ammunition to perhaps increase the lethality. So I would have to get current on that. But I am in 100 percent
agreement with the approach you are taking.

Senator Ernst: Certainly. Lethality is very, very important, and we do need to relook that because I do think that we need to be on par with any of our adversaries.

I am well aware of your experience in CENTCOM, and I thank you for your great service. That region will inevitably and rightfully remain a major focal point when talking about Islamic extremism. However, I do believe we need to look at other regions around the globe, and we cannot turn a blind eye to ISIS in regions outside of the Middle East such as in Southeast Asia. There are many news reports that have showed those areas are very active. In reports from last year, I noted over 57 Philippine Government forces have been killed in battles linked with ISIS groups. There was also an attempted U.S. embassy bombing in Manila and many other ISIS-claimed attacks throughout that region.

Secretary Carter did agree with my assessment on ISIS in Southeast Asia. And President Obama was made well aware of my concerns. However, we have yet to develop a strategy to combat ISIS especially in those regions where we are not focusing.

How should our new administration address the rising threat of ISIS in Southeast Asia, and will you commit to working with me on this, sir?
Mr. Mattis: Absolutely, Senator. The way we do this, I think we have to deliver a very hard blow against ISIS in the Middle East so that there is no sense of invulnerability or invincibility there. There has got to be a military defeat of them there. But it must, as you point out, be a much broader approach. This requires an integrated strategy so you do not squeeze them in one place and then they develop in another and we really are right back to square one. We have got to have an integrated strategy on this, and it has got to be one that goes after the recruiting and their fundraising, as well as delivering a military blow against them in the Middle East. And that way you slow down this growth and start rolling it back by, with, and through allies.

Senator Ernst: I appreciate it.

God bless you, General. Thank you.

Chairman McCain: Senator Heinrich?

Senator Heinrich: Thank you, Chairman.

General Mattis, in your 44 years of service, you have built a distinguished resume and demonstrated an unwavering commitment to this country. Having said that, we need to weigh your qualifications today against the need to change an important law that seeks to preserve the ultimate civilian control of the military.

But in doing so, I believe we also need to consider
another factor, which is the temperament of the incoming White House team. Something you said earlier struck me. It was crises and wars start by miscalculation. I want to go back and remind folks about something that could have happened a number of years ago.

During the Cuban missile crisis, Air Force General Curtis LeMay and other military commanders urged President Kennedy to launch a preemptive raid on Cuba. Many people believe that would have provoked a Soviet nuclear response. In the end, we averted a nuclear exchange and were fortunate enough to have individuals in the White House who showed a great deal of both restraint and calm during a very intense crisis. We hope it is not so, but the next administration could well encounter a similar situation.

Granted, every situation is unique. What assurances can you provide that, if confirmed, you will approach a time of crisis with the same temperament that you have shown us today -- and I would point out that is not always consistent with your nickname -- and provide sound policy and guidance to the President-elect particularly as it relates to something as serious as the use of nuclear weapons?

Mr. Mattis: Senator, first, I assure you that that nickname was given me by the press, and some of you may have experienced similar occasions with the press where perhaps they did not get it quite right.
Senator Heinrich: Touche.

Mr. Mattis: But I would just say, Senator, that what you must always have is have a team of people together. It may not be a pretty process, but you look at all options. You do not default to one -- and I want to point out default particularly to the military one -- prematurely, that you have your diplomats, you have everyone in the room as we look for every possible solution. And in that regard, what the military can do by being strong is you provide the strongest deterrent and thus you provide the strongest support for our diplomats to try to find a non-military option. It is the peace through strength idea. It goes back all the way to George Washington. So that is my overarching approach, sir, if that addresses your question.

Senator Heinrich: It does.

In a related question, I am fortunate enough to represent the men and women who work at our national labs, people who work every day to ensure that our nuclear weapons are safe, secure, and reliable. How important do you believe that deterrent is in terms of priority within your mission set? And will you continue to support the civilian control both in authority and administration of that deterrent?

Mr. Mattis: I consider the deterrent to be critical, Senator, because we do not ever want those weapons used.
And so either a deterrent safe and secure, it is compelling, or we actually open the door for something worse, whether it be an accident, technical accident, or a political accident. So to me it is an absolute priority.

Senator Heinrich: And the issue of civilian control?

Mr. Mattis: No reservations, sir.

Senator Heinrich: You testified before this committee back in January 2015. You probably remember that. And you suggested that if you were in our shoes at the time, one of the things you would ask the Obama administration is the following questions. What are the key threats to our vital interests and in what priority level? Now, as the potential Secretary of Defense in a new administration, how would you answer that question?

Mr. Mattis: Sir, I would consider the principal threats, to start with, Russia. And it would certainly include any nations that are looking to intimidate nations around their periphery, regional nations nearby them, whether it be with weapons of mass destruction or, I would call it, unusual, unorthodox means of intimidating them, that sort of thing. And at the same time, as the chairman has pointed out, we face now an era where we are going to be fighting the terrorist threat. I mean, that is simply a reality. We are going to have to address that one.

Senator Heinrich: Thank you for the candidness of your
answers. I think I am out of time. I appreciate it.

Chairman McCain: Senator Tillis?

Senator Tillis: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

General Mattis, welcome. Thank you for the generous amount of time you spent with me in my office. I am going to go back to a couple of the things that we discussed, but I just wanted to tell that I think Secretary Cohen’s characterization of brave heart could not more perfectly put your personality and your legacy in proper perspective.

Now, I want to talk about this. Fortunately for me -- I think Chair McCain has brought it up once or twice. It is the actually the only instance in 2 years that I was able to correct him on something and I know that I was right. He said it was a 200-page RFP for the next generation handgun. It is almost 700 pages.

I want to talk a little bit about why I think this is making our men and women on the battlefield less lethal, less prepared, less capable than they should be. When you start a program in the Air Force in 2008, then you decide with DOD that it should be the next generation handgun, then you let from 2008 to 2017 transpire, you create a nearly 700-page RFP, and we have not even down-selected the suppliers yet and we are supposed to replace the last generation handguns by 2020. Frankly, I think we should be replacing them sooner than that if it makes our soldiers
safer and more lethal on the battlefield.

This is a great testament to what is wrong with defense acquisition. And this is not about counting beans. This is about saving lives, and this is about killing the enemy.

This is what we have got to fix. So I am not going to get you into the details except to say here is a mentality in the DOD that has got to get fixed too.

I wanted the exact number. So I had my staff tell me what the exact page count is. It is 680 pages. Now, interestingly enough, they will probably come back and say, well, it is only 340 because you print it out on a single page, not double-sided because they already came back and said that there are only 39 pages of technical specs. Well, if there are 39 pages of technical specs, what is all this other garbage in this document? Because that is the stuff that is preventing us from getting a more lethal, more reliable, more effective weapon on the battlefield.

I am going to keep on pounding on this thing. I could not possibly imagine the capabilities you bring in terms of recommending to us how we need to fight wars and take the fight to the enemy on the battlefield. But I do know business, and I do know that the business of the DOD has to change and it needs to start with this kind of stuff.

You gave me a good answer in the committee. I just want to keep on pounding this. I am going to bring my prop
here so that we all get it right. 680 pages, 9 years, and
we are not even in down-selection. So it is 10 years plus.
A decade, for a pistol? I can break down and put together
my 40 caliber pistol pretty easily with a blindfold on. In
other words, they are relatively simple devices. I know
that we have special applications for special operations, et
cetera. That can be dealt with. But this one-size-fits-
all, it is okay to go 9 or 10 years to get a new lethal
weapon has to stop.

Now, so all I want from you -- I know that you are
going to do a great job of leading our armed services. I
have no doubt about that. Would not even question it, would
never presume to know how to take on the enemy and eliminate
them. You know how to do that, and I look forward to
supporting your nomination and the waiver later today. I
need your commitment that we are going to get away from the
words that I heard in the last administration to fixing
defense acquisition and we start operating, and that when
you come before this committee, you can almost invariably
assume -- you and your deputies -- it is going to be about
what progress have you made so that we end this cycle that
is costing us money and making a more dangerous place for
our soldiers that are out there taking the fight to the
enemy.

Do I have you commitment?
Mr. Mattis: You do, Senator. And I cannot defend this. I will say that at times there have been regulations that required us to do things --

Senator Tillis: That is going to be my last question. I am going to true to time, General. And you are one of the last people that would be before this dais that I want to interrupt, but I want to get this point in and get finished in my 36 minutes.

Here is the other thing that we need to do. If somebody goes back and reviews this over the last 9 years, they are going to find out Congress is responsible for some number of these pages. And we need, as I told you in our office, to put a mirror down at that witness table from time to time and say it is this long because somebody got a provision in the NDAA or somebody got a provision in an appropriations bill that caused us to be less efficient. And I hope that I have your commitment to come in here and say it is this way in part because of muscle memory in the DOD and it is this way in large part because you guys are forcing inefficient processes that are making my women and men on the battlefield less safe and less capable. And I would welcome that feedback from you as Secretary.

Mr. Mattis: I will bring it to you, sir. Obviously, it requires collaboration with this committee, and I am eager to do that.
Senator Tillis: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman McCain: Excellent questions.

Senator Warren, welcome to the committee.

Senator Warren: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It is an honor to be here.

And thank you, General Mattis, and thank you for meeting with me last week and being so generous with your time.

I am hoping I can just follow up on a couple of the conversations we had, and I am hoping you can give me yes or no answers so we can cover as much ground as possible.

We all learned at last week’s cybersecurity hearing technological threats to our Nation are evolving and growing in number. And to face those threats, we are going to need our best and our brightest.

Massachusetts leads the Nation in innovative defense work and scientific research that helps protect our service members. The Natick Soldier Systems Center developed cutting-edge equipment for our service members in areas like nutrition and protective gear. MIT’s Lincoln Laboratory conducts advanced research and development to strengthen our air and missile defense, cybersecurity, and other capabilities. Cambridge is one of only three places in the country with the Defense Innovation Unit Experimental, DIUx,
which leverages the expertise of entrepreneurs and tech firms to accelerate the delivery of advanced products into the hands of our service members.

So, General, do you agree that it is critical for DOD to invest in innovation to enhance our national defense?

Mr. Mattis: Absolutely.

Senator Warren: Good.

Do you believe that DOD should strongly weigh the intellectual resources of a region when evaluating where to locate facilities such as DIUx and other research-based commands, especially in situations where the military is partnering with academic and technical organizations?

Mr. Mattis: We should embrace any area where we have that sort of opportunity.

Senator Warren: Thank you.

Next, I want to ask about something else. You recently edited a book on civilian-military relations, and in one of the book’s essays, Mackubin Thomas Owens, another Marine Corps veteran, wrote that good civilian-military relations are not the same as constant agreement and that this misperception may be -- and I will quote him -- the result of promoting yes men who are politically safe and who will not readily fulfill their obligations to provide the best military advice as forcefully as possible.

Owens also wrote that effective policy requires that,
quote, we insist that soldiers present their views frankly
and forcefully throughout the strategy-making and
implementation process and that this is key to healthy
civil-military relations.

So let me start. Do you agree with these statements?

Mr. Mattis: I do, Senator.

Senator Warren: Good.

Defense Secretary is a civilian job, but does your
belief in the importance of frank advice extend to the
relationship between the Defense Secretary and the
President’s other national security advisors?

Mr. Mattis: Absolutely, Senator, and I would not have
taken this nomination if I did not have that belief.

Senator Warren: Good.

And what about the President himself? Under what
circumstances will you advocate for your views forcefully
and frankly?

Mr. Mattis: On every circumstance, Senator.

Senator Warren: I am very glad to hear that. Thank
you.

You know, in public remarks at a think tank in May
2015, you said that Russia wants to promote its own
security, quote, through instability and is, quote, trying
to create a sphere of unstable states along its periphery
intimidated. I assume you stand by this assessment today?
Mr. Mattis: I do, Senator.

Senator Warren: Good.

As Defense Secretary, when it comes to advising the President on the threats posed by Russia, will you advocate for your views frankly and forcefully to the President to speak about these threats and the need to take them seriously?

Mr. Mattis: I will, Senator Warren.

Senator Warren: Thank you very much. I hope that that is right because if you end up in this job, our national security may well depend in part on your willingness to voice your opinions even when others disagree, even when you are under pressure to remain silent. We are counting on you.

I see that I am about out of time. I have some other questions I would like to ask about women serving in the military and LGBTQ in the military, but I will submit those as questions for the record.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman McCain: Senator Sullivan?

Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And, General, welcome. Good to see you again, and thank you for your exceptional service to our Nation which is continuing.

You co-wrote last August in an article where you were
stated as saying, quote, the international system, as we know it and as we created it, is under assault from the forces of entropy that fill vacuums and corrode order when the United States is not actively engaged. Unquote.

In the Arctic, Russia has filled a vacuum left by the U.S., and as you know, General, just in the past few years, the buildup in the Arctic by the Russians has been quite dramatic, a new Arctic command, four new Arctic brigades, 14 operational airfields, 16 deepwater ports, 40 icebreakers with 13 more on the way, 3 nuclear-powered, huge new land claims in the Arctic for massive oil and gas reserves, the most long-range air patrols with Bear bombers since the Cold War, a SNAP military exercise in 2015 that included 45,000 troops, 3,400 military vehicles, 41 ships, 15 submarines, and 110 aircraft.

What is the effect on the United States not being actively engaged in the Arctic, as you mentioned in your article?

Mr. Mattis: Senator, I think America has global responsibilities, and it is not to our advantage to leave any of those areas of the world absent from our efforts.

Senator Sullivan: What do you think Russia is trying to achieve in the Arctic with that massive military buildup?

Mr. Mattis: I do not know. I believe, however, that we are going to have to figure it out and make certain that
we are not seeing an expansion of these efforts to dominate
what has been up until now part of the international
commons.

Senator Sullivan: What role would you see of increased
U.S. presence and involvement with regard to our role in the
Arctic versus what the Russians are doing?

Mr. Mattis: Senator, with the new sea routes of
communication that are opening up, as the sea ice retreats,
I think we are going to have to recognize this is an active
area, whether it be for search and rescue, for patrolling,
maintain sovereignty up along our Alaska coastline, that
sort of thing.

Senator Sullivan: So, General, as you probably know,
the sentries of America’s Arctic are in Alaska. Can I get
your commitment to come to Alaska, see our outstanding
military in the State that the chairman knows Billy Mitchell
called the most strategic place in the world?

Mr. Mattis: Yes, sir. I will get there, sir.

Senator Sullivan: Excellent. We need to get the
chairman up there as well soon.

I want to turn to China. China’s leaders have stated
that they are not militarizing the South China Sea. Do you
agree with them?

Mr. Mattis: No, I do not.

Senator Sullivan: Yesterday in his confirmation
hearing, Rex Tillerson commented that we should prohibit
access to the islands in the South China Sea, prohibit
access to the Chinese. What in your view should our
response to China’s militarization of the South China Sea
be?

Mr. Mattis: Sir, we are going to have to put together
a policy that is put together by the State Department, by
Treasury, by DOD. We are going to have to integrate this so
that we are not dealing with an incomplete or incoherent
strategy. But the bottom line is, sir, the international
waters are international waters, and we have got to figure
out how do we deal with holding onto the kind of rules that
we have made over many years that led to the prosperity for
many nations, not just for ours. This has been part of why
many nations have got more prosperous because of this
freedom of commerce.

Senator Sullivan: You have emphasized, I think
rightfully so, our allies as a key strategic element of U.S.
national security. What role should they be playing with
regard to our response in the South China Sea?

Mr. Mattis: Sir, my view is you always want more
allies with you than fewer. I have never gone into any
fight in an all-American formation. I have always fought
alongside allies. But also, I believe allies contribute
greatly to deterrence and modifying the behavior or
misbehavior of those who would disrupt the global order.

Senator Sullivan: Let me begin by just mentioning
there is a number of us who believe that over the last
several years the U.S. has lost credibility internationally
where our adversaries no longer fear us and our allies do
not trust us. Perhaps the most glaring example of that is
Iranian actions in the Persian Gulf harassing U.S. naval
ships, taking sailors hostage.

I just want to finish with one question. How do we
regain our credibility internationally? And you are a
historian. Do you believe that the new administration will
have its credibility challenged early in its tenure?

Mr. Mattis: If confirmed, Senator, I have to assume
that our credibility will be challenged as simply part of
the responsibility that I carry. I think the way you
maintain credibility is when you give your word on
something, you live up to it and you put together policies,
even though it is more difficult, by, with, and through
allies so that they are at the table as we put the policies
together so they are with us when the policies come under
pressure.

Senator Sullivan: Is it a dangerous period when you
are trying to regain credibility?

Mr. Mattis: It is, sir.

Chairman McCain: The Senator’s time has expired.
Maybe you can stop by while refueling. It is a good place for refueling.

[Laughter.]  
Chairman McCain: Senator Peters?
Senator Peters: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
And thank you, General Mattis. I will join my colleagues in thanking you for your service. You have spent your entire life in service of the country keeping us safe, and we all know the most important function of the Federal Government is to keep its citizens safe at all times. And you have done that with honor and with integrity. So thank you on behalf of a grateful Nation.

Many of my colleagues have quoted from your book that you edited, “Warriors and Citizens,” and I am going to follow suit because I would just like you to elaborate on a passage that I thought was interesting and I think is worthwhile for us to know more about as how you will approach this job as a strategic thinker, providing strategic advice to the President, as well as to the Congress. So I am going to ask you to comment on this.

This quote is because the American public holds its military in such high regard, we are putting it at greater risk. We have allowed our strategic thinking to atrophy, allowing our policymaking to become flabby because our military’s high level of performance has lulled our
sensibilities. This is both a political failure and a moral one.

If you could elaborate on what you meant by political failures, moral failures, and how those of us who are involved in policymaking have become flabby.

Mr. Mattis: Well, it certainly was not meant in any personal sense.

Senator Peters: Well, I understand that, although I do have to have my Fitbit. That is true.

[Laughter.]

Mr. Mattis: Senator, it goes back to a belief I have that America has two fundamental powers. One is the power of intimidation. I was part of it. And America will defend herself and our idea, this experiment that we call America--that is all it is -- is an experiment in democracy. But the other power I think that perhaps we have used less in the recent years, the last 20 years maybe, is the power of inspiration. And I think that the power of inspiration of America at times has got to be employed just as strongly, and because the U.S. military is devoted to being the top in its game in a competition where second place is last place, we should not simply be turning to the military because it is a very capable military, because it is well led. It is now a national treasure. I am the first to admit that. But it does not mean we should be turning to the military to
answer all of our concerns in our relations with the world. And that is the source of where I was coming from for that statement.

Senator Peters: Very good.

In terms of strategic thinking, which you will be intimately involved in for us, and as a student of history, you know as well as anyone else that we cannot fight the last war, and throughout history that seems to have repeated itself all too many times. And we need to be thinking forward.

In our meeting together, I was struck by a statement that you made where you said that as a commander in the field, you benefited from decisions that were made 10 to 15 years before you put on the uniform and were in command.

We are facing an unprecedented time of change. When we look at technology and how it is transforming our world, we are probably in one of the most exciting times to live. And the world that we see today is going to be radically different in 10 years. That means weapon systems are likely to be considerably different. We can see how cyber has changed political warfare, has given leverage to political warfare in an unprecedented way as has been evidenced by the Russian attacks on our political system here and their interference in our political system. In the biotech area, we are seeing dual-use technologies like CRSPR that will
give enemies a low-cost yet very high-impact weapon and also
the areas in artificial intelligence. Recently a study came
out that said that artificial intelligence may be one of our
most important weapons to maintain a unique, asymmetric
advantage over our adversaries.

How do you plan to be thinking about where we need to
be 10 to 15 years and to utilize these strategies and
understanding the threat is much different?

Mr. Mattis: Senator, we have to make certain we are
not dominant and irrelevant at the same time, dominant in a
past form of warfare that is no longer relevant. And I
believe the way you do this is you get your strategy right,
and that starts with getting our policies right. So you
match your strategy, economic, diplomatic, military, covert,
education, all of this. You map that to ensuring that you
are going to be relevant for the future. Once you do that,
you also adopt it. In the paradox of war, the enemy always
moves against your perceived weakness. So you cannot opt
out of certain things. Bottom line, you get to a point
where you have the fewest big regrets when the crisis
strikes. You will never have no regrets because we are
dealing with something that is fundamentally unpredictable.

But it also means we are going to have to enlist the
civilian communities that are leaders in some of these areas
that you and Senator Warren have both talked about,
artificial intelligence and what the labs are doing, and make certain we are harvesting those lessons learned and the advances they have, but more importantly that we are integrating them. It does no good to be the best in just the lab and you do not mainstream what you have learned from it.

So it is a matter of how do you maintain current readiness if we fight tomorrow, the young men and women have got to be at the top of their game. But at the same time, we have got to be looking out so, like me, somebody who is not even in the military yet 10 years from now looks back and says what we did today wrote the headlines that we want to read 10 years from now.

Senator Peters: Thank you.

Senator Reed [presiding]: On behalf of Chairman McCain, let me recognize Senator Perdue.

Senator Perdue: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, thank you for your extraordinary lifetime of dedication and commitment and service to our country and your willingness to serve again. I was very impressed in our conversation this week with your humility and with your acuity of the global situation today.

Several past Secretaries of State have actually said in recent years that the greatest threat to national security is our own federal debt. Do you agree with that, sir?
Mr. Mattis: I do, sir.

Senator Perdue: Today we see a situation in 2017. We have the smallest Army since World War II, the smallest Navy since World War I, and the oldest and smallest Air Force ever. Sir, do you think we can meet the missions of what we are talking about with the Four Plus One challenge mission we have today with Russia and China, the symmetric threats, the traditional symmetric threats, but growing, the asymmetric threats of ISIS and other terrorists around the world, with rogue nations developing nuclear capabilities like Iran and North Korea and then this new hybrid warfare that we are seeing in Eastern Europe and around the world and even here at home, cyber warfare, and now the arms race in space? Sir, do you believe that that is a tenable situation that we can meet the missions that we are looking at asking our military to do today?

Mr. Mattis: Senator, I believe we have to strengthen our military due to the situation as you describe it. I think it is accurate what you are describing.

Senator Perdue: Sir, in the last 30 years, we have disinvested in our military in the 1970s. We recapped it in the 1980s. We disinvested it in the 1990s. We recapped it in 2000, and now in the last few years, we have disinvested again such that today -- and you know this, but I have a question for you because we need your leadership in this.
You are going to be straddling the civilian advice world and also the military world when you are Secretary of Defense. Today we are spending about 100 basis points less than our 30-year average. That is about $200 billion less than our 30-year average. That is not the most important number, though.

The most important number is the last time we had a Secretary of Defense actually do a bottom-up mission requirement request for funds was Secretary Bob Gates in 2011 did a 5-year plan. And for 2016, he requested a number that in today’s dollars was $100 billion greater than what we allocated in 2016. And that is before ISIS, before Crimea, before Syria.

Sir, you cannot speak to the specific number, but I would like to know how you plan to address your goal of solvency and security in an environment where today every dime we spend on our military, every dime we spend on our VA and veterans, and every dime we spend on most of our domestic programs frankly is borrowed. Given that in the last 8 years, we borrowed 35 percent of what we spent as a Federal Government, and today the baseline budget for the next 10 years says that we will do the same thing, that means that every dime that we spend on the U.S. military, every dime you are going to be concerned with as Secretary of Defense is fundamentally borrowed.
In that situation, General, how will you approach, being Secretary of Defense, addressing the needs of the military with us in that environment?

Mr. Mattis: Senator, as has been mentioned by several of the members of this committee, one of the most important things we do as a government -- the most important thing -- is maintain the independence and the freedom of this country. So to me that is a priority.

At the same time, we have got to try to figure out -- and you have seen the waxing and waning of our military size and our strength. As we try to adapt that military to the realities, we do not want a military that just breaks the bank, but at the same time, we cannot solve this debt problem on the backs of our military alone. This is why I think I need to support strongly the congressional leaders who are trying to repeal sequestration and the Budget Control Act to ensure that we put the Congress back into a position to prioritize where this money is being spent. And we are going to have to make hard calls, but I consider it an abrogation of our generation's responsibility to transfer a debt of this size to our children.

Senator Perdue: General, thank you so much for your perspective, your willingness to serve, your history, and for what you are going to do for our country in the next decade. God bless you. Thank you.
Senator Reed: On behalf of Chairman McCain, let me recognize Senator Kaine.

Senator Kaine: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

And thank you, General. It is great to be back with you.

I associate myself with the comments of Senator Blumenthal that the traditional restriction to Secretary of Defense that requires some period in civilian life before serving is a very important one. And I also agree with him that features of the times, features of, frankly, my concerns about the incoming administration, and features in your background I think make this an opportune moment to make an exception. And in particular, the fact that you are somebody who writes a lot and has a lot of things in your background you can write about but that you chose to work with others to write this book, “Warriors and Citizens,” about the very issue that is at issue in the waiver, the connection between civilian and military life, the similarities and the differences, trying to understand the different cultures and find strategies to better enable each to understand -- the fact that you chose that is something that I think speaks particularly to your suitability for a waiver in this exceptional circumstance.

General Mattis, you have testified before us often, and you have also written. A long-term interest of mine is the
belief that we should not be at war without a vote of Congress. You authored a piece entitled “Using Military Force Against ISIS” in March of 2015 in which you said a strong authorization to use military force, supported by a majority of both parties in both houses of Congress, will send an essential message of American steadfastness to our people and to the global audience. Its passage will demonstrate our country’s fundamental unity and enable a broader commitment to deal firmly with the real and growing menace.

Is that still your opinion?

Mr. Mattis: Yes, Senator, it is.

Senator Kaine: And is it not the case that congressional engagement around an authorization of use of military force is part of what civilian control is? We exercise civilian control of the military through appropriate congressional oversight and through taking our responsibilities like the Article 1 war powers responsibilities seriously.

Mr. Mattis: I think congressional oversight and appropriations, authorizations are a critical part of civilian control of the military.

Senator Kaine: General Mattis, you spoke -- and I was very glad you did -- about the complex situation in the Middle East, and one of the items that should be on our
table, as difficult as it is, is trying to do what we can appropriately do to find a peace between Palestine and Israel. It is difficult, just like finding a peace in Ireland was difficult, but we should not give up. We played a pivotal role in that important Good Friday Accord in the 1990s, and I think it is important that we continue to play it. And I am happy that you mentioned that.

Obviously, this is a peace that would need to be hammered out between Palestine and Israel, Palestinians and Israelis. But should the United States military standing willing to provide security assistance, for example, as it does to provide peacekeeping along the border between Israel and Egypt in the multinational force of observers in your opinion?

Mr. Mattis: Senator Kaine, I would have to look at the specific commitment before I came back and answered that question. But I do not have a going-in prohibition to engaging along those lines, but I would have to look at the actual mission.

Senator Kaine: If it were to be the desire of the parties, as they are talking about a potential peace, if they saw a valuable role for the United States to play in peacekeeping between the nations, would you think that would be an appropriate use of the American military similar to the peacekeeping we provide on the Egypt-Israel border since
Mr. Mattis: Peace in that area, sir, is in our vital interest, and so if we could contribute, it certainly is something we should look at.

Senator Kaine: One last area of questions, General Mattis. I was really intrigued. You talked about in the Middle East Israel and others, Arab nations in the Middle East, feel we are indifferent to their security concerns, and that was the phrase you used, “indifferent.” And when I travel, I hear the same thing. And I try to match up two feelings because I will hear that and I think that is an accurate perception of what I hear when I travel. But I also sit here in this body where we approve, for example, 10-year memorandums of understanding, spending significant American dollars to provide security assistance to Israel. We are in multiple theaters of war in the Middle East, and we have been there since 2001. It is not like we are not there. And so I try to match our investment of blood, talent, and treasure with the feeling of leaders in these countries of why are you indifferent to us. And the only way I can understand is we are actually present, but we do not communicate a clear strategy. We are kind of here on this issue and that issue, but there is a good deal of uncertainty about what we will do tomorrow and what we will engage in and what we will not.
We had testimony before this committee a year or so ago from a military officer, senior officer, he said we have OPLANs but no strategy. A lot of OPLANs for every contingency, but the strategy is unclear. Do you think that contributes to this feeling of indifference or concern among allies in the Middle East and elsewhere?

Mr. Mattis: Senator, I think you summed it up. There are tangible and intangible elements to this. Certainly on the tangible, we are tangibly engaged across the board. Intangibly, people do not know where we stand. Too often there is a question. And I believe too that the lack of an integrated strategy at times has had us working against one issue with someone while working for the issue, and it just created confusion, sir.

Senator Kaine: Thank you very much, General Mattis. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Senator Reed: On behalf of Chairman McCain, let me recognize Senator Cruz.

Senator Cruz: Thank you, Senator Reed.

General, welcome back to this committee, a committee you spent a lot of time before. And I want to start just by thanking you for your many decades of service, your service risking your life and leading your men into harm’s way to protect this country. We are grateful. And you are being called back to service once again to protect this country.
I think you are going to be an extraordinary Defense Secretary. I am proud to support your nomination. And I think you are going to be confirmed by a strong bipartisan vote.

One of the reasons for that is over decades serving, you have earned a reputation for candor, for strength, for not blowing smoke, which is a rare thing in the town of Washington, D.C., and also as a marines’ marine. Indeed, you will remember my chief of staff is a former marine. And when you came by my office to visit, I do not think I have ever seen my chief of staff more excited. Senators do not do anything for him. He is completely unimpressed by any of us. But if Elvis Pressley had walked into the office, he would not have been more thrilled than to see you walk in, General. And so thank you for your willingness to come back once again and help pull this country back from the precipice. I think we are in very perilous times.

When you and I talked, you talked about what you call the strategic mismatch between the commitments being placed on our military right now and the capacity that has been provided to meet those commitments. Can you share your views on what is needed to fix that? How do we rebuild the military to ensure we can do everything that is necessary to keep this country safe?

Mr. Mattis: Senator Cruz, the first point I would make
is the hard-used equipment that we brought back from the
wars. If we are going to continue to use it, it has got to be
refurbished. It has got to be at the top of its game.

The second point is that this committee and this
Congress has provided a lot of money for a lot of ships and
planes and other equipment, and if we do not maintain that
gear, it is worthless. So we are going to have to increase
our operations and maintenance funds.

Further, as the world situation dictates this, we are
going to have to adapt and strengthen the military.

The one commitment I would give you, Senator, is that
as we are doing this, I am going to be working with our
allies to make sure that it is not only the American
taxpayer who is carrying this burden. Those nations that
share our values, those nations that share perhaps just our
security concerns -- we are going to work with them so that
we maintain the strongest alliance as possible. So I am not
coming to you trying to get the American military to do what
is rightly more of an alliance kind of work or coalition or
partnership work.

Senator Cruz: So one of the areas we discussed was the
need to maintain air superiority going forward, and you
referenced that need just a minute ago. And I think an
important piece of that is the F-35 program, which I believe
successful completion of the F-35 program is critical to
future mission success, both for us and for key allies like the United Kingdom and Israel. And right now, we have over 200 F-35’s fielded today, and just this week, the Marine Corps began the first F-35 overseas deployment. Now, all of us are concerned about limiting costs, and that needs to be a focus going forward.

But can you highlight for this committee what separates the F-35 from legacy aircraft and the advantages it provides to our military in future combat situations?

Mr. Mattis: Senator, the F-35 is critical for our own air superiority in the future because of its stealth characteristics and some of its electronics capability that is inherent to the airplane which actually magnifies each individual aircraft’s capability. But it is equally important, if not more so, to some of our allies. And I say “more so,” because this will be the total fighter strength of their air force. So to them it is an all-in sort of situation.

So the F-35 -- the President-elect has talked about the costs of it, but he has in no way shown a lack of support for the program. He just wants the best bang for the buck.

Senator Cruz: Sure. And I look forward to working closely with you to strengthen that program.

My final question is you have long been a defender of the warrior ethos. And you and I have both been concerned
that sometimes a political agenda at the Pentagon has gotten in the way of a warrior ethos. Can you describe for this committee the importance of restoring the warrior ethos and why that matters for our ability to keep this country safe?

Mr. Mattis: Senator, the primitive and often even atavistic aspects of the battlefield tests the physical strength, the mental agility of everyone. But most of what it tests is the courage and the spiritual side of the troops we put in harm’s way. And oftentimes it is only unit cohesion, leadership, and the belief in themselves and their comrades that allows them to go through what they have to go through and come home as better men and women, not as broken. And so the warrior ethos is not a luxury. It is essential when you have a military.

Senator Cruz: And, General, I am confident that is the first time in a Senate hearing the word “atavistic” has been used.

Chairman McCain [presiding]: The Senator’s time has expired.

Senator King?

Senator King: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, Mr. Chairman, I bring news from the Intelligence Committee where at the opening of the hearing on the new Director of the CIA, all the power went off and the room went completely dark.
Chairman McCain: A clear cyber hack.

Senator King: I think either the Almighty or the Architect of the Capitol has a sense of humor.

[Laughter.]

Senator King: General Mattis, one of the comments you made earlier about fear, honor, and interest are the bases of all wars is now in my telephone. If it ever gets hacked, they will find that quote, along with those of Lincoln and Churchill. So thank you for that thought.

General Mattis, you have been a warrior. This job -- you need to move from being a warrior to a manager, two very different sets of skills, and particularly the manager of the sprawling bureaucracy that the Defense Department has become. And as you know, we are constrained for resources. Even if we are able to get rid of the Budget Control Act, even if we are able to get rid of sequestration, there are still always going to be limits on resources.

I hope that you will examine with a fresh set of eyes the administrative structure of not only the civilian side but the military side of the Defense Department in order to be able to find and free up resources for the modernization, readiness, training, all of those elements. I just think this is going to be a very important part of your job. I would like your thoughts on that.

Mr. Mattis: I agree, Senator, 100 percent with this.
I think that right now what we face is a time when with
technology and with new approaches, we can do some of the
things that lie behind what you are asking for there. For
example, skip echelon where you do not need something at
each echelon. You remove it and you actually expedite
processes and this sort of thing. What we do not want to do
is continue to have layer upon layer of bureaucracy that is
not value-added, but how we go through and remove it is
probably going to take collaboration with this committee
because in many cases those elements are there as part of
our organization set by the Congress. So I will have to
come to you and show you what I propose to manage it better
and show you what the problem is, and if I can get your
agreement there, I think we can move forward on it.

Senator King: I think that is very important, and I
hope that can be a specific, not just a general commitment
but a project, if you will, an identified, specific project
to look into those. I did not expect to quote Churchill so
soon, but one of his comments that you suggest, the sum
total of all committee deliberations is usually no. And
that is what makes it so difficult to get things done.

Mr. Mattis: Yes, sir.

Senator King: Nuclear modernization. One of the
things that concerns me looking out beyond the budget of
this year or next year is what I call the nuclear
modernization bulge. The cost of the Ohio class replacement, the B-21, which is moving forward, missiles, also not often mentioned a serious upgrade of the command and control system. The NAOC, the National Airborne Operations Center, as you know, is a plane that is older than many of the people in this room, not you and I, but many of the people in this room. I think how we deal with that is something that has to have some special attention because if we do not find additional funding for that bulge, then all the other acquisition programs will be squeezed out. Do you agree with that assertion?

Mr. Mattis: I agree both that the additional funding has got to be found because it will squeeze out everything else if we do not find a way to do it, but also that the command and control, in light of the cyber situation we face right now, sir, has got to be a high priority when we look at the modernization of the triad.

Senator King: Another subject. I believe I understand your position on this, but are you supportive of elevating Cyber Command to a full unified combat command?

Mr. Mattis: I have got to look at the actual breakout, Senator, so I understand which duties stay in which place because the way they are set up right now, it may not break apart quite as well if we hold that same organization. So we will just have to look at it and, if we go down that
road, make certain if they are fit for function at that point. Philosophically I am okay with it.

Senator King: And I appreciate the subtlety of your answer because the worse result would be to create a new unified combatant command and leave remnants of the function in other places so that you ended up with duplication. I think that is --

Mr. Mattis: You summed up by concern, sir.

Senator King: I think that is an apt concern.

Well, General Mattis, I am so pleased that you are willing to continue your service to the country to come back to this side of the Rockies, as you suggest, and I appreciate your testimony here today. Thank you very much.

Mr. Mattis: Thank you, Senator.

Senator King: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman McCain: Colonel Graham?

Senator Graham: Thank you. Appreciate that.

General, what if I call you Mr. Mattis? How about Mr. Secretary? Whatever works. Right?

Mr. Mattis: I am only a nominee.

Senator Graham: Okay, right. Mr. Nominee.

What is the capital of Israel?

Mr. Mattis: The capital of Israel that I go to, sir, is Tel Aviv because that is where all their government people are.
Senator Graham: Do you agree with me that the capital of Israel is Jerusalem?

Mr. Mattis: Sir, right now I stick with the U.S. policy.

Senator Graham: Do you support moving the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem?

Mr. Mattis: I would defer to the nominee for Secretary of State on that, sir.

Senator Graham: Do you support maintaining qualitative edge for Israel against all potential adversaries in terms of their military capability?

Mr. Mattis: I do, sir.

Senator Graham: Do you support a two state solution?

Mr. Mattis: I do if that brings peace to the Middle East. I am eager to see it work. If there is another solution, I would be happy to hear what it is.

Senator Graham: Absolutely.

Who is in charge of the Palestinian community?

Mr. Mattis: That is a good question, sir. I think there is a number of people who think they are.

Senator Graham: It would be hard to have a two state solution if one of the parties really does not have anybody in charge.

Mr. Mattis: There is nothing easy about the two state solution.
Senator Graham: Do you think Hamas is a terrorist organization?

Mr. Mattis: I do, sir.

Senator Graham: Do you think they would abide by any agreement that the Palestinian Authority negotiated with Israel, given the state of affairs as we know today?

Mr. Mattis: Only if forced to.

Senator Graham: Okay. I would like to know how we would force them, but let us move on.

North Korea. Did Trump tweet a red line when he said not going to happen?

Mr. Mattis: I am not going to characterize the President-elect, sir. I would just tell you that the seriousness that he takes --

Senator Graham: How would you characterize that tweet?

Mr. Mattis: Pardon, sir?

Senator Graham: How would you characterize what he said. He commented on their ICBM ambitions, and he says not going to happen. So to me, I hope it is a red line. I mean, I am not arguing with him. I am not so sure I would have done it that way. But do you think we should have a red line when it comes to the ICBM program in North Korea?

Mr. Mattis: Sir, it is a serious threat, and I believe that we have got to do something about it.

Senator Graham: Do you believe it is in our national
security interest to make sure that North Korea never
develops a missile that could hit the American homeland with
a nuclear weapon on top of it?

Mr. Mattis: Yes, Senator, I do.

Senator Graham: Do you believe that necessary force
should be on the table?

Mr. Mattis: I do not think we should take anything off
the table, sir.

Senator Graham: When it comes to Iran, you said in
terms of the agreement we have, we gave our word. Is that
what you said?

Mr. Mattis: We did, yes, sir.

Senator Graham: I think President-elect Trump gave his
word to the American people, I am going to change this deal
because it is terrible. Do you expect him to keep his word?

Mr. Mattis: Sir, once the national security team is
confirmed, once it is confirmed by the Senate, I will work
with the other members to come up with the best possible
situation we can make for America --

Senator Graham: Do you think it is a terrible deal?

Mr. Mattis: It is not a deal I would have signed, sir.

Senator Graham: How would you make it better?

Mr. Mattis: Sir, the first thing is I would ask the
Congress to have a joint committee from Banking, Armed
Services, and Intel to oversee the implementation of the
deal, and should there be any abrogation of it, should there be any cheating, then the Congress would be kept informed on a routine basis of what is going on so that you know what is happening. At the same time, we are going to have to make certain that our intelligence services are fully staffed to watch over them, and that involves working with our allied intelligence services that have unique capabilities to work inside the country. Further, we would put together a combined air missile defense capability for our Gulf allies so that they can work together with us. And every time we catch Iran up to some kind of terrorist activity, we would take that to the United Nations and display it for the world to see.

Senator Graham: Well, thank you very much. Do you believe Iran’s behavior outside their nuclear program has been destabilizing in the Mid-East?

Mr. Mattis: Absolutely.

Senator Graham: Do you believe that when they held our sailors hostage, that was an affront to America?

Mr. Mattis: Yes, sir.

Senator Graham: Do you believe they deserve to be sanctioned based on what they have done in the Mid-East, test firing four missiles in violation of U.N. resolutions, that the regime deserves to be sanctioned for their behavior outside their nuclear program?
Mr. Mattis: I believe that sanctions will work best if they are international so that they cannot evade them.

Senator Graham: Are we going to give the world a veto over what we do?

Mr. Mattis: I would never give the world a veto --

Senator Graham: Finally, do you support additional sanctions against Russia for all the bad things they have done in the past and likely to do in the future?

Mr. Mattis: Senator, I would like to get with the new national security team, craft a strategy to confront Russia for what it has done.

Senator Graham: Are you familiar with the sanctions that Senator McCain and I introduced along with Democrats?

Mr. Mattis: I have not read them.

Senator Graham: I am going to send them to you, and I would like you to respond in writing whether or not you think they will be a deterrent and we should do it.

Thank you for your willingness to serve.

Mr. Mattis: Yes, sir.

Chairman McCain: Senator Donnelly?

Senator Donnelly: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, General, for stepping to the plate again.

You have committed to being unrelenting in addressing military suicide, if confirmed. I appreciate your approach to treating mental health just like physical fitness as a
readiness issue, and it is not tied, as you know, to deployments or to combat experience. It is happening across the board. And as we look at this, one of the things we were able to do back in 2014 is this committee and this Senate was able to pass legislation that provided a mental health examination for every service member, Army, Guard, and Reserve, across the board every year. And this is the year coming up that the heads of all the services have said they are going to implement this.

If confirmed, do you commit that you will move forward to assure that they keep to that schedule?

Mr. Mattis: I will do my best, Senator. I will look at if we have got the assets in place to actually allow the commanders to meet that schedule. It will probably be something where we have got to make certain that we have allowed for that.

Senator Donnelly: One of the other things -- you talk about assets. The most recent NDAA included a program to train military physician assistants in psychiatric care, and that would help to fill the gap in terms of being able to provide care and treatment to all who need it.

If confirmed, will you ensure that that program is carried out faithfully?

Mr. Mattis: That sounds like an excellent program. That would address the one concern I would have that we make
a program but there is not enough assets.

Senator Donnelly: Right. There is no point in doing something if the back end is not in place. And we will work very hard to make sure the back end is in place so that it can be carried out.

My colleague and friend, Senator Blumenthal, was talking about mental health assistance for veterans. You know, obviously, we want to make sure it is in place for service members as well. But we also want to talk about the handoff when you are finished, and when you are finished serving and you become a vet. And General Chirelli, who I am sure you are very familiar with, has extended an incredible amount of time in trying to prevent suicide among veterans. And in talking to him, one of the things he told me was the biggest challenge was when you are done on DOD, on the Department of Defense side and you are handed off to the VA, the drugs and prescriptions you may be receiving as a service member to help with challenges -- that they are not included in the VA schedule. And so you may be receiving treatment with prescription X and it is no longer available, and at one of the most vulnerable times, you look up and the help and care you need is not available.

I would like your commitment that you will meet with the VA, sit down with them to make sure that there is no gap in what is called the formulary, that there is no gap in the
handoff so that we stand up and do what we are supposed to
do for our veterans.

Mr. Mattis: I will meet with him, sir. I think there
are issues like this that are characterizing handoff from
medical records to formulary. There is a whole lot of them.
And so we have got to come up with some kind of process that
addresses what the fundamental problem is, and that is that
we are not using the medical records coming out of DOD for a
seamless transfer over. And I realize there is some law
involved here about disability and all. But we have got to
address this.

Senator Donnelly: There is a whole bunch of
challenges, as you said. This particular one where you look
up and one day you are being treated here and the next day
the things you are being treated with are no longer
available may be the most urgent.

I want to follow up on Senator Graham’s comments
regarding North Korea because, obviously, the ICBM test
would be an incredible game-changer. If confirmed, what
approach would you recommend to the Commander-in-Chief as a
more effective U.S. strategy to send a message to North
Korea?

Mr. Mattis: Sir, it is going to take an international
effort. It is going to have to require nations in the
region, as well as us, to work together on this, and that is
going to be challenging with at least one or two of the
nations. But also, I think we are going to have to look at
our negotiation stance and working with the State Department
to see if we have the right stance for the way ahead.

    Senator Donnelly: We look forward to also working
together on that because Senator Graham was talking about
red lines, and sometimes when you send a message --
obviously, in your case it has always been that way. When
you send a message, you keep it. You let them know it is
coming and do the appropriate thing.

    The last thing I want to ask you about is nuclear
modernization. It is very, very important. We have a lot
of it moving forward. One of the things we have worked on
is commonality, that we have the Navy, we have the Air
Force. And in many cases what the Navy has done or what the
Air Force has done, we reinvent the wheel and have the other
part of the services redo the same thing. So what I would
like to make sure is that the Air Force and the Navy and
their respective program managers -- that we enhance the
commonality because it can help save us money, but at the
same time, it will also make the modernization more
effective. Instead of running two parallel lines that do
not even match --

    Chairman McCain: The Senator’s time has expired.

    Senator Donnelly: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
Chairman McCain: Senator Sasse?

Senator Sasse: Thank you, Chairman.

General Mattis, thank you for your past service and for your --

Chairman McCain: Could I just -- General Mattis, did you have a response to Senator Donnelly very quickly?

Mr. Mattis: Senator, I would like to talk with you or send someone over to talk to your staff about specifics under the commonality so I know what the problem -- you obviously have studied this. So I would just like to get some more data, sir.

Senator Donnelly: Thanks, and I look forward to your confirmation.

Mr. Mattis: Yes, sir.

Chairman McCain: Senator Sasse?

Senator Sasse: General, thanks for your past service and for your soon-to-be future service.

Could you tell me, do you believe that the U.S. military has a sophisticated, broadly understood cyber doctrine?

Mr. Mattis: No. I do not believe so.

Senator Sasse: When will we? Can you unpack for us a little bit of the path toward a both offensive and defensive strategy?

Mr. Mattis: Because of the cyber domain, Senator, it
is not something the military can do in isolation. This is
going to require us to work with Homeland Security and a
number of other government elements in order to make certain
what we do in the military realm is connected to what they
are doing in their realm because cyber cuts across
everything we do today. And so you cannot do something in
isolation, and that slows down the process. Now, I have not
been part of it up until now, but I anticipate that is part
of the reason why I cannot give you a positive answer right
now.

Senator Sasse: Thank you, sir. I am one of only about
two people in the Senate who has never been a politician
before. So I have been here 24 months, and over those 24
months, we have consistently heard that we are right around
the corner from having a cyber doctrine. Do you think we
will in 18 months?

Mr. Mattis: Sir, I have got to stoke this problem and
figure out what are the issues that have caused us not to
have an integrated policy right now. And especially being
this is going to take an integrated effort by the executive
branch and probably up here on Capitol Hill, there are also
perhaps privacy concerns, constitutional concerns as part of
this. We are going to have to put all of this together and
take it one step at a time and come up with what we think we
can do quickly. And I would hope that part of it could be
done faster than 18 months from now, but this is a very big issue.

Senator Sasse: Thank you.

Do you think it is possible that a traditional espionage operation could constitute an act of war? For example, if Russia were to hack and publish U.S. continuity of operation plans, would that be an act of war?

Mr. Mattis: Senator, I think I would have to study act of war and the ramifications of making that statement. Generally to me an act of war means we are going to war if it happens. That is a grave decision, and I would not put it on automatic pilot. I would make certain we know where we stand, make certain we know what happened, and then you would have to act appropriately.

Senator Sasse: Many of us here are concerned that the public crisis of confidence, the accelerating public distrust is partly related to the perception that governmental responses in the executive branch right now to different foreign hacks are treated differently partly based on the partisan and political assumptions people make about them. If you look back to the OPM hack 18 months ago, we were told that this was a fairly traditional espionage operation, but it seems to me when 22 million, or whatever the exact number is of Americans who have been serving their government, have their information hacked and stolen and
potentially leaked, that is not just a traditional espionage
operation and certain uses of that data in the future -- we
need to countenance what that might mean.

Could you tell me, do you believe that the U.S. should
be actively deterring these sorts of cyber attacks? And I
assume you are going to say yes. Can you tell us a little
bit more about what the doctrine of deterrence looks like in
the cyber domain?

Mr. Mattis: Senator, the answer is yes. And my
personal information was part of that leak. So I understand
it in rather personal terms.

Senator Sasse: Mine too.

Mr. Mattis: But I would also tell you that we have got
to put together a doctrine that works. I have looked at
several different doctrines back when I was on active duty.
I looked at nuclear warfare doctrine. Mutual assured
destruction will not work, by the way. I came to the
conclusion that one was not the right way to go. But we are
going to have to come up with the guiding principles for how
we are going to deal with this sort of thing, and right now,
I cannot give you a good answer.

Senator Sasse: I have only a few seconds left. So in
closing, could you just tell me a little bit about what you
think our human capital pipeline looks like in the
cyberspace? Are we prepared for the kinds of battles we are
going to be facing going forward?

Mr. Mattis: Senator, I think we have to get the best possible people in. This is a complex area that requires technical expertise, and once we get the policy written, that will help us to guide recruiting and organization and that sort of thing. We have got to get the policy right up front.

Senator Sasse: Thank you, sir.

Chairman McCain: Captain Nelson?

Senator Nelson: You take me back a few years, Mr. Chairman.

And, Senator Sasse, those were very appropriate and thoughtful questions. And I think this committee is going to have a chance to dig in in depth on a number of those as we explore with the future of Secretary of Defense those questions about cyber.

General, I think there are a number of us here that are quite disturbed about the President-elect’s attitude toward Vladimir Putin. How do you differ with what the President-elect has expressed about Putin?

Mr. Mattis: Senator, I am not sure where it differs. I can tell you that my view of Putin is that he has chosen to be both a strategic competitor, to quote the chairman’s opening statement, and an adversary in key areas. I certainly go along with the President-elect saying again he
wants to have an engagement there. Even in our worst years of the Cold War, we actually still engaged with the Soviet Union, for example. But I have very modest expectations about areas of cooperation with Mr. Putin.

Senator Nelson: What if the President-elect came to some conclusion with Mr. Putin with regard to NATO? Now, you have certainly been involved in that because you were involved in the transitioning of NATO. What would be your advice to the President-elect about the best posture for NATO in the future against the Russians?

Mr. Mattis: Senator, if we did not have NATO today, we would need to create it. NATO is vital to our national interest and it is vital to the security of the United States. It is vital to the protection of the freedoms of the democracies that we are allied with.

Senator Nelson: I certainly agree. But some comments by the President-elect have said that maybe members of NATO ought to be treated differently if they do not pony up with the money. Does that start to tangle up and disentangle NATO?

Mr. Mattis: Senator, I am confident that the President-elect expects us to live up to our word to include NATO in Article 5.

Senator Nelson: I hope you are right. And I assume by your answer that you certainly will stand up.
Mr. Mattis: 100 percent, Senator.

Senator Nelson: Thank you, General.

You have commented, General, on the political objectives must be clearly defined to ensure military success in Iraq and Syria. How will your recommendations for pursuing Iraq and Syria differ from the Obama administration?

Mr. Mattis: Senator, I think the most important thing is to know, when you go into a shooting war, how you want it to end and by setting up the political conditions that you are out to achieve up front and coming to agreement on that in the national security team and with the Congress. Then you give it full resourcing to get there as rapidly as possible. And I think it is getting there as rapidly as possible is probably where it would differ from the current administration where it would be a more accelerated campaign from what the President-elect has already called for.

Senator Nelson: You are a four-star. Do you anticipate any tension with the three-star, General Flynn, in his position?

Mr. Mattis: No, sir, I do not.

Senator Nelson: Does that mean he will respect your rank?

Mr. Mattis: Sir, the national security decision-making process -- as you know, you need different ideas to be
strongly argued. You do not want the tyranny of consensus, of group think early. It has been compared in some cabinets to a team of rivals even, and it is actually healthy. It is not tidy. It will be respectful. Of that I am certain. And I do not anticipate that anything but the best ideas will win, sir.

Senator Nelson: Thank you, General.

Chairman McCain: General Mattis, we are going to move forward right away on the issue of the waiver immediately. We want to thank you for appearing before the committee. I know you eagerly look forward to additional appearances before the committee in the future.

[Laughter.]

Chairman McCain: So we thank you. Thank you very much, General.

This hearing is adjourned.

Mr. Mattis: Thank you, Chairman. Thank you, Ranking Member. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen.

Chairman McCain: And we will in about 1 minute convene the committee on the issue of the Mattis exception legislation. We will just wait just a minute.

[Pause.]

Chairman McCain: Well, the committee will come to order.

And we now proceed to consideration of Senate bill 84--
1 we have a quorum -- to provide for an exception to a
2 limitation against appointment of persons as Secretary of
3 Defense within 7 years of relief from active duty as a
4 regular commissioned officer of the armed forces. The bill,
5 when enacted, will authorize retired General James Mattis to
6 be appointed as Secretary of Defense. A copy of the bill
7 should be before you.
8
9 Also before you is a copy of section 179 of the
10 recently enacted continuing resolution that provides for
11 expedited consideration of a specifically described bill.
12 S. 84 is the qualifying legislation prescribed in section
13 179 as qualifying legislation. S. 84 is entitled to an
14 expedited procedure that will enable the incoming President
15 to nominate him, for the Senate to give advice and consent
16 for General Mattis to serve as Secretary of Defense,
17 hopefully on the evening of the upcoming inauguration day.
18
19 I remind our members that this transition of
20 administration takes place once again at a time of war.
21 When President Obama took the oath of office in 2009, he had
22 the distinct advantage to begin his term with Robert Gates
23 as his Secretary of Defense. I believe our next Commander-
24 in-Chief in our Nation will be well served to have James
25 Mattis on duty as Secretary of Defense as early as possible
26 in the new administration.
27
28 I will invite the ranking member, Senator Reed, to
engage in a colloquy to discuss this historic legislation.

Nearly 70 years ago, our Nation was also at war and the Congress took the extraordinary action to grant an exception to allow President Truman to appoint General George Marshall as Secretary of Defense. At that time, the Congress stated that granting such an exception should not be repeated.

During the hearing Tuesday, we heard from two prominent historians and scholars of civil-military relations, both with significant experience in the Department of Defense. Both of them stated their support for the 7-year cooling off period that is currently in the law, but they also recommended that this committee approve an exception for the second time in 7 decades.

Obviously, I support this bill and I ask that all our members approach this extraordinary task with a spirit of bipartisanship that is the hallmark of the Armed Services Committee. I urge you to follow the recommendation of Dr. Hicks on Tuesday, to submit for the record a statement of your views on this extraordinary and historic legislation so that future Senators may understand the context of the action we take today.

If there is no objection, I propose that the record of this hearing be left open for member statements for 1 week to allow as many of you as wish to include a statement to do so. Without objection, it is so ordered.
I note that we have a hard stop at 3:00 p.m. for all Senators’ classified briefing on Russian interference in our election. For that reason, I encourage our members to submit written statements for the record. But as many as would like to speak, an opportunity to do so before we vote on the bill.

Finally, I invite the attention of the members to the requirement of section 179 that provides for the expedited consideration of this bill. In order to avail ourselves of the expedited procedure, the bill may not be amended. It is also my preference as chairman to have a full and open consideration of our amendments in committee proceedings, but today I request our members refrain from offering amendments since it is not allowed under the legislation.

I do not consider this procedure as establishing a precedent on how this committee will conduct its business. This is an extraordinary time. And I thank all the members for their consideration.

Senator Reed?

Senator Reed: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I believe our colloquy will be on the floor as we consider the bill.

I want to thank you for convening this committee markup to consider S. 84, a bill that would provide a one-time exception from the longstanding law requiring individuals to
be at least 7 years relieved from their military service before being appointed Secretary of Defense.

I also want to thank you for holding Tuesday’s hearing to examine civilian control of the armed forces and the implications waiving the statute would have on civilian-military relations and on the development of defense policy and strategy.

I found the testimony from both expert witnesses to be informative, and I believe the hearing helped underscore the gravity of waiving this requirement on civilian control of the military.

As we consider this legislation today, we must be extremely careful that we do not irrevocably harm civilian control of the armed forces. As I stated earlier this week, civilian control of the military is enshrined in our Constitution, and we must never take it for granted.

I have a number of concerns about changing the statutory requirement, including the possible politicization of our armed forces and the impact with so many recently retired general officers serving at the highest echelons of government will have on the development of national security policy and how that may shape the advice that will be ultimately be provided to the President.

Furthermore, I am deeply concerned that providing the waiver to General Mattis, regardless of qualifications and
his distinguished military career, will set a dangerous
precedent that an exception to the longstanding statute
could be construed as an ordinary legislative change to be
used frequently for future nominees.

Nevertheless, I will support a waiver of General Mattis
to serve as the Secretary of Defense based on his testimony
this morning, his commitment to civilian leadership, and his
military expertise, which I believe will serve him well in
addressing the many global challenges we face.

However, as history has demonstrated, Congress has
enacted an exception one time since the creation of the
Department of Defense. Waiving the law should happen no
more than once in a generation. Therefore, I will not
support a waiver for future nominees, nor will I support any
effort to water down or repeal the statute in the future.

This requirement has served the Nation well for the
past 7 decades. It is up to this committee to ensure that
the principle of civilian control of the armed forces, which
is the bedrock of civilian-military relations, remains the
defining tenet of our democracy.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman McCain: Thank you.

Any members that would like to make comments at this
time, please seek recognition.

All right. If there are no further remarks, then I
will entertain a motion that the committee report out the bill.

Senator Reed: I move.

Chairman McCain: Is there a second?

Senator Wicker: I second.

Chairman McCain: The clerk will call the roll.

The Clerk: Mr. Inhofe?

Chairman McCain: Aye by proxy.

The Clerk: Mr. Sessions?

Chairman McCain: Aye by proxy.

The Clerk: Mr. Wicker?

Senator Wicker: Aye.

The Clerk: Mrs. Fischer?

Senator Fischer: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Cotton?

Senator Cotton: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Rounds?

Senator Rounds: Aye.

The Clerk: Mrs. Ernst?

Senator Ernst: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Tillis?

Senator Tillis: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Sullivan?

Senator Sullivan: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Perdue?
2. The Clerk: Mr. Cruz?
4. The Clerk: Mr. Graham?
5. Chairman McCain: Aye by proxy.
6. The Clerk: Mr. Sasse?
8. The Clerk: Mr. Reed?
10. The Clerk: Mr. Nelson?
12. The Clerk: Mrs. McCaskill?
14. The Clerk: Mrs. Shaheen?
15. Senator Reed: Aye by proxy.
16. The Clerk: Mrs. Gillibrand?
17. Senator Gillibrand: No.
18. The Clerk: Mr. Blumenthal?
20. The Clerk: Mr. Donnelly?
22. The Clerk: Ms. Hirono?
24. The Clerk: Mr. Kaine?
The Clerk: Mr. King?
Senator King: Aye.
The Clerk: Mr. Heinrich?
Senator Heinrich: Aye.
The Clerk: Mrs. Warren?
Senator Warren: No.
The Clerk: Mr. Peters?
Senator Peters: Aye.
The Clerk: Mr. Chairman?
Chairman McCain: Aye.

The Clerk: 24 ayes, 3 nays. The motion is agreed to.
Chairman McCain: I thank the members for their cooperation. Hopefully we can get this done before 3 o’clock so people who have plans can fulfill those. I want to thank every member for their cooperation.

Is there any further business?
[No response.]
Chairman McCain: If not, this hearing is adjourned.
[Whereupon, at 12:42 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]