

**HEARING TO CONSIDER THE NOMINATIONS
OF: HONORABLE MICHAEL G. VICKERS TO
BE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR
INTELLIGENCE; AND DR. JO ANN ROONEY
TO BE PRINCIPAL DEPUTY UNDER SEC-
RETARY OF DEFENSE FOR PERSONNEL AND
READINESS**

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2011

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:32 a.m. in room SDG-50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Senator Carl Levin (chairman) presiding.

Committee members present: Senators Levin, Reed, Webb, Udall, Hagan, Manchin, Blumenthal, McCain, Brown, and Ayotte.

Committee staff members present: Richard D. DeBobes, staff director; and Leah C. Brewer, nominations and hearings clerk.

Majority staff members present: Jonathan D. Clark, counsel; Gabriella E. Fahrner, counsel; Creighton Greene, professional staff member; Jessica L. Kingston, research assistant; Michael J. Kuiken, professional staff member; Gerald J. Leeling, counsel; Peter K. Levine, general counsel; Jason W. Maroney, counsel; Thomas K. McConnell, professional staff member; William G.P. Monahan, counsel; Michael J. Noblet, professional staff member; and John H. Quirk V, professional staff member.

Minority staff members present: David M. Morriss, minority staff director; Adam J. Barker, professional staff member; John W. Heath, Jr., minority investigative counsel; Daniel A. Lerner, professional staff member; Diana G. Tabler, professional staff member; and Richard F. Walsh, minority counsel.

Staff assistants present: Jennifer R. Knowles and Hannah I. Lloyd.

Committee members' assistants present: Carolyn Chuhta, assistant to Senator Reed; Gordon Peterson, assistant to Senator Webb; Jennifer Barrett, assistant to Senator Udall; Roger Pena, assistant to Senator Hagan; Lindsay Kavanaugh, assistant to Senator Begich; Joanne McLaughlin, assistant to Senator Manchin; Chad Kreikemeier, assistant to Senator Shaheen; Jordan Baugh and Elana Broitman, assistants to Senator Gillibrand; Lenwood Landrum and Sandra Luff, assistants to Senator Sessions; Clyde Taylor IV, assistant to Senator Chambliss; Charles Prosch, assist-

ant to Senator Brown; and Brad Bowman, assistant to Senator Ayotte.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR CARL LEVIN, CHAIRMAN

Chairman LEVIN. Good morning, everybody. The committee meets today to consider the nominations of two senior officials to serve in important positions within the Department of Defense. Dr. Michael Vickers has been nominated to be the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence. He is currently serving in that position on an acting basis while continuing his duties as the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations, Low Intensity Conflict, and Interdependent Capabilities. Dr. Vickers has served ably in that position, guiding and overseeing major elements of our operations against terrorists and insurgents across the globe.

Dr. Vickers has had a long and distinguished career in government service, much of which is relevant to the position for which he has been nominated by the President.

In his present position as Assistant Secretary of Defense-SOLIC, he has been deeply involved in intelligence matters across the government as a policymaker, as a consumer of intelligence, and as a producer of intelligence. He served previously as a CIA operations officer in multiple divisions, spanning the Near East, South Asia, and Latin America, and including involvement in covert actions. He also served as an Army Special Forces soldier and officer.

Congress created the position of Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence in 2002 in recognition of the growing importance of intelligence to our military forces, especially in conducting operations after the events of September 11. The Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence is the principal staff assistant and adviser to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense regarding intelligence—regarding intelligence, counterintelligence, security, and other sensitive matters. In this capacity, the USDI exercises the Secretary's authority over the intelligence components of the Department of Defense and is responsible for intelligence planning, programming, and budgeting, policy formulation, and oversight.

The USDI is also responsible for ensuring that the Department of Defense intelligence components are responsive to the direction and requirements of the Director of National Intelligence. Indeed, by formal agreement between the DNI and the Secretary of Defense the USDI is dual-hatted as the Director of Intelligence on the DNI's staff.

Dr. Jo Ann Rooney has been nominated to be the Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, the Department's number two position for military and civilian personnel issues, including recruitment, retention, pay and benefits, health care, readiness, and the quality of life of the members of our armed forces and their families. Dr. Rooney comes to us from academia, where she most recently served as the President of Mount Ida College and has served as an instructor at various colleges since 1994.

Dr. Rooney also serves on the board of trustees for the Jewish Hospital and St. Mary's Health Care, a nonprofit health care system in Louisville, KY, experience that could serve her well in her new position should she be confirmed.

The Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness position is vitally important as the Department and Congress continue to wrestle with many challenges, including vastly growing personnel and health care budgets and the proper size of the force. The Department is actively planning a reduction in its ground forces, depending on conditions in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the 2012 budget request includes modest reductions in the Army and Navy, while the Department plans greater reductions in future years.

In evaluating the size of the force, we must be mindful of the stress on the force, including inadequate dwell time for many soldiers and a deeply concerning suicide rate.

Finally, the Department is continuing its deliberate progress in implementing the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell."

We welcome both our nominees. We thank you them. We thank their families for their distinguished public and private service and willingness to serve our Nation in these important positions. When we call upon them for their opening statements, we will ask them to introduce the family members and their friends who are with them as they give those statements.

Senator McCain.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN

Senator MCCAIN. Thank you, Senator Levin. I join you in welcoming our nominees and their families and friends who are here today, especially our two youngest there, who have been working on paperwork for this, in preparation for this hearing. We thank you for that.

Secretary Vickers has had a distinguished and storied record of service to this country. He served as an Army Special Forces soldier, as a Central Intelligence Agency case officer, and since August 2007 as Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict and Interdependent Capabilities.

Mr. Vickers, you must be prepared to streamline the size and cost of the organizations which you'll oversee. Secretary Gates has announced his initiative to cut costs, eliminate waste and redundancies, and focus defense dollars on the most vital programs. With the rollout of the 2012 budget yesterday, we will want to know what parts of the defense intelligence enterprise will be affected.

In the face of an unacceptably high and increasing deficit, we must examine all aspects of defense spending. I hope we can learn from you how you would apply these efficiencies for cost savings for other vital defense priorities. For example, which intelligence functions are redundant and can be eliminated, which intelligence organizations that are bloated can be cut? Are there senior civilian positions that could be transferred or eliminated? Which contracts for services could be terminated and which major acquisition programs should be restructured or eliminated to save money?

My questions, however, should not be interpreted as reflecting a lack of concern or support for our ongoing operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Obviously, failure is not an option in achieving our goals in both Operation New Dawn and Operation Enduring Free-

dom and robust intelligence-gathering and analysis is critical to our success.

The list of imperatives for the defense intelligence enterprise is lengthy. We must be able to continue to locate and track America's most relentless enemies on the battlefield, to include former Guantanamo detainees who have made their way back into the fight. We must safeguard our Nation's vital secrets to prevent another Wikileaks episode and any further neutralization of our lawful intelligence collection methods. And through sound acquisition practices, we've got to ensure our troops and our Nation have the overhead surveillance required for national security and mission accomplishments.

Dr. Rooney, you've had a distinguished career in law, education, and health administration. I expect you'll be called on very quickly to assist Secretary Gates and Under Secretary of Defense Stanley in making progress in several key areas that demand attention. Foremost amongst these is identifying ways to improve the wellbeing and quality of life of servicemembers and their families. After 9 years of combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, our forces, particularly the ground forces, special operators, and the combat support personnel who mobilize and sustain them through multiple deployments, are stressed.

While recruiting is strong and retention levels for experienced NCOs and officers remain at historically high levels, the Department must continue to ensure that the resources, policies, and programs are in place to guarantee that deploying troops are trained, ready, and focused. For our wounded or injured, there must continue to be world-class care on the battlefield, and when they return home that the procedures for helping them and their families transition seamlessly to the next stages of their military service or civilian life work as rapidly and fairly as possible.

I look forward to hearing your testimony and I wish to congratulate you on your nominations and look forward to confirming you as quickly as possible.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator McCain.

Let me now call on you for your opening statement, Secretary Vickers.

**STATEMENT OF HON. MICHAEL G. VICKERS, NOMINATED TO
BE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR INTELLIGENCE**

Mr. VICKERS. Chairman Levin, Senator McCain, distinguished members of the committee: It is an honor to appear before you here today. Thank you for your consideration of my nomination. I am profoundly grateful for the confidence President Obama has shown in my by nominating me for the position of Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and in designating me as the acting USDI on 28 January. In the brief period I have been acting USDI, I have gained a further appreciation of the immense responsibilities of this office.

I am also deeply grateful to Secretary Gates for his support. I had the great privilege of serving with Secretary Gates in the Central Intelligence Agency during the 1980s and he has been the

model for me ever since of what a professional intelligence officer should aspire to.

As you know, the USDI is dual-hatted as the DNI Director of Defense Intelligence. I have had the great honor of serving with Director Clapper for the past 3½ years and I am grateful for his support for my nomination.

I would also like to thank my family for their love and support. It is a great honor, Mr. Chairman, to introduce them to the committee today. With me here today are my wife Melana and our daughters Alexandra, Sofia, Oxana, and Kalena. I would be a very poor dad if I did not also introduce in absentia our fifth daughter, Natasha, who is busily studying for her midterms at Ohio State and thus could not be with us today.

Chairman LEVIN. Which is the youngest of your daughters who are here today, by the way?

Mr. VICKERS. Kalena is our kindergartener, who is 6 years old on February 8th.

Chairman LEVIN. I think I just won her—I was trying to win her vote here by asking which is the youngest. Thank you.

Mr. VICKERS. And I'd like to also add that Oxana has the same birthday as President Obama. [Laughter.]

Also with me here today are my mother-in-law, Oxana Hepburn, my brother-in-law, Roman Gila, and his son and my nephew Muletti Gila, and numerous friends and colleagues from the Pentagon.

It has been a great privilege and honor for the past 3½ years to serve as Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations, Low Intensity Conflict, and Interdependent Capabilities under both President Bush and President Obama. Our special operators do much to keep us safe and I am immensely proud of them.

We face many challenges as a Nation, from the war with al Qaeda in Afghanistan to the pursuit of nuclear weapons by rogue states, the development of asymmetric capabilities by rising and resurgent powers, and the continued effects of the global financial crisis. I am confident we'll be more than equal to these challenges, as Americans before us were to the challenges that confronted them.

Our intelligence capabilities constitute an increasingly critical source of advantage for our Nation. Recent events in the Middle East remind us of the importance of intelligence, but also of the unpredictable and rapid turns developments can take. Our warriors in the field and our policymakers here at home are better served by U.S. intelligence today than at any time since I began my service nearly 4 decades ago. We owe them the best intelligence we can provide. If confirmed as USDI, I will do my best to ensure that this continues to be the case.

As a CIA officer in the 1980s, I learned first-hand about the importance of Congressional oversight of intelligence. Even more important, I learned what an indispensable partner the Congress can be.

I look forward to your questions, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Vickers follows:]

Chairman LEVIN. Secretary Vickers, we thank you very much for that opening statement.

Dr. Rooney.

**STATEMENT OF JO ANN ROONEY, PH.D., NOMINATED TO BE
PRINCIPAL DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR
PERSONNEL AND READINESS**

Dr. ROONEY. Good morning, Chairman Levin, Senator McCain, and members of the Senate Armed Services Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am grateful for the confidence that President Obama has shown in me by nominating me for the position of Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. I also want to thank Secretary Gates for his support of my nomination. If confirmed, I will be honored to serve.

I want to thank my family and extended family for their support and it's my pleasure to introduce them now. My mom, Patricia Rooney, is with me today and I want to offer her my heartfelt and special thanks. It is because of her support and that of my late dad John that I'm here with you today. My dad, an Army veteran, and my mom, a retired public school elementary teacher, taught me that anything is possible, but that I must embrace opportunities to use my experience and talent to help others and leave an organization and people better for my efforts.

I'm also fortunate to have several other people very special in my life here today. My dearest friend of over 30 years and true sister of the heart Linda Pissorney is here. Her daughter Alessia, a high school senior, is also here with us today. She and her sister Veronica, who is home because she has to be in school and she's with her dad, are truly my nieces in many ways.

Father Al Fraretra, who is like my big brother, is representing the rest of the extended family in the Boston area. Prior to becoming a priest, Al served in the Navy and spent time aboard the USS *Forrestal*.

Finally, Father Jim Rafferty, a very dear friend and someone who I've had the pleasure of logging many nautical miles sailing the waters throughout New England, is here lending support.

I have not had the opportunity to serve our Nation in uniform, as did my dad, my uncles, my godfather, and many members of my extended family. They served in peacetime and in wartime, including World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. But like many Americans, I'm aware of the myriad of challenges members of our military, the civilian force, and their families face in supporting their service to our country. It is my desire to serve our country and, if confirmed, I pledge to bring all of my experience, knowledge, energy, and passion to the role.

The responsibilities and functions of the Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness are vast and challenging. They encompass advising and assisting the Under Secretary of Defense and providing staff assistant advice to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense in matters relating to manpower, force management, planning, program integration, readiness, Reserve component affairs, health affairs, training, civilian and military personnel requirements and management, commissary and exchange, morale, welfare, and recreation, quality of life matters, spousal and family support, and dependent education.

By nature, as the needs of our military and civilian members of DOD and their families change the responsibilities of the role must also evolve.

My background in law, finance, business, strategy, organizational change, education, and health care provide me with a broad range of experiences and perspectives to bring to this role if confirmed.

All of us face daunting challenges, not only within the Department of Defense, but throughout the country, in areas of health care, cost containment, efficient use of resources, assessments, and accountability. Yet the goal is to balance these issues in a way to ensure we have the necessary resources so that the men and women in the Department are able to meet our Nation's requirements for national security.

I understand the importance of working with this committee, the entire Congress, other governmental departments and agencies, and civilian and educational institutions in order to accomplish this goal. I understand the longstanding and daunting challenges associated with these and other aspects of DOD personnel and readiness, enabling the effective recruitment, retention, and training of the people we need. I will take all these responsibilities seriously and, if confirmed, I pledge my best efforts to work with this committee and many others to meet these challenges.

In closing, I would like to again thank President Obama and Secretary Gates for selecting me as the nominee for this position. If the Senate confirms me, I will make every effort to live up to the confidence they and all of you have placed in me.

Thank you. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Rooney follows:]

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Dr. Rooney.

We give a warm welcome to your families and friends, who are such an important part of who you are and your being here today.

We have standard questions which we ask our nominees, which we'll ask each of you now. You can answer together. Have you adhered to applicable laws and regulations governing conflicts of interest?

Dr. ROONEY. Yes.

Mr. VICKERS. Yes, sir.

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

Mr. VICKERS. No.

Dr. ROONEY. No.

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

Mr. VICKERS. Yes.

Dr. ROONEY. Yes.

Chairman LEVIN. Will you cooperate in providing witnesses and briefers in response to Congressional requests?

Mr. VICKERS. Yes.

Dr. ROONEY. Yes.

Chairman LEVIN. Will those witnesses be protected from reprisal for their testimony or briefings?

Dr. ROONEY. Yes.

Mr. VICKERS. Yes.

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

Mr. VICKERS. Yes.

Dr. ROONEY. Yes.

Chairman LEVIN. Do you agree to provide documents, including copies of electronic forms of communication, 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?

Dr. ROONEY. Yes.

Mr. VICKERS. Yes.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you.

I think we'll try a 7-minute round of questions.

Dr. Vickers, we've been making efforts over the years, this committee, to expand the budgets, the production rate, the planned number of orbits, for major UAVs that have been so critical to our forces in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere, including the Predator and the Reaper. Our current objective is 65 orbits for these aircraft. The budget for fiscal year 2012 that we just received funds these aircraft at the maximum current production rate.

However, the fact is that our troops need more and are asking for more of these assets right now. They're living with significant unfulfilled requirements every day. Now, we were recently told that the limiting factor for accelerating the expansion of that force is operators and linguists rather than the production capacity at factories. So my question is, why can't the services accelerate the recruitment and the training of operators and linguists?

Mr. VICKERS. Mr. Chairman, our ISR task force, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance task force, under Secretary Gates's direction has been working very hard since 2008 to provide the intelligence capabilities our warriors in the field require. Nevertheless, demand has continually outstripped supply, which is one reason during the recent quadrennial defense review we raised the requirement for Predator and Reaper combat air patrols or for orbits from 50 to 65, and it's not clear at this point that 65, which we'll reach in 2013, will still meet our demand.

To supplement that, we've been adding manned aircraft of various kinds, variations of C-12 aircraft, Project Liberty by the Air Force, and medium altitude reconnaissance and surveillance system by the ground forces, to address this shortfall.

As you noted, buying the aircraft is not enough. We also have to have operators, linguists, bandwidth, across the intelligence cycle. The Air Force in particular has been working very hard at converting operators to these functions. In fact, there are now more pilots involved in unmanned aircraft in the Air Force than there are flying manned aircraft. But we still have work to do.

Chairman LEVIN. I recently wrote Secretary Gates about the current requirements for ISR support in the Horn of Africa and about the Department's current acquisition plans for additional ISR assets to support the geographic combatant commands. Now, I've not received a reply to this letter, but I would ask, since less than 10 percent of the requirements are being filled right now, that you pay

some very urgent attention to that and that you get a response to that as quickly as possible. Would you do that?

Mr. VICKERS. Yes, sir, I will.

Chairman LEVIN. Dr. Vickers, in your current position as Assistant Secretary of Defense-SOLIC, I think you understand very well how our Special Forces have discovered how to tightly integrate the different sensors to achieve unprecedented capabilities to identify high-value enemy personnel, to locate them, to track them, to identify their broader networks, and attack them.

Signals intelligence, sensors are used to cue airborne video cameras where to look. Radars that can detect moving vehicles or even people walking are used as tipoffs to begin focused collection, and so on.

Now, it's proven a lot more difficult for the regular conventional forces of the Army, Air Force, and Marine Corps to achieve the degree of ISR system integration necessary to replicate SOCOM's success because the ISR assets are not under unified control. It's my understanding that the ISR task force and the Joint Staff are focused now on this problem. Do you have any ideas as to how the organizational obstacles can be removed in order to truly integrate our ISR assets operationally?

Mr. VICKERS. Yes, sir, I do. As you noted, the technique that our Special Operations Forces have pioneered, which we call "find, fix, finish, exploit, and analyze"—to have a recurring intelligence cycle to lead to successive operations to take down an enemy network is something that has been progressively transmitted from our national Special Operations Forces to our theater forces and progressively to our general purpose or conventional forces.

General Petraeus is working this problem with his J-2 very, very hard in Afghanistan and we're seeing results in that area.

I would add as well that we're providing additional capabilities in Afghanistan that we only had in very limited numbers in Iraq, for example, very persistent aerostats over all our conventional force positions to provide the kind of persistent surveillance that our forces need, particularly against improvised explosive devices.

There is still some work that needs to be done. if you compare the different organizations, national, Special Operations Forces, theater, and conventional forces, in their ability to rapidly exploit this kind of information, but the gap is narrowing.

When we used to describe a goal in the Department of trying to make conventional forces more special operations-like, we used to mean operating in small groups like special operators. Now we mean the ability to exploit intelligence across the cycle in the manner you described.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you.

Dr. Vickers, General Petraeus in a recent interview discussed what he called the growing friction between local Taliban fighters living in Afghanistan and the Afghan Taliban leadership who phone in orders that the local insurgents should continue to fight against Afghan and coalition forces through the winter, while the leadership remains safely in the sanctuaries in Quetta and elsewhere in Pakistan.

According to General Petraeus, Taliban leadership is eager to keep up the fight through the winter because they know they've

suffered losses over the last year. He also said that we're seeing a degree of discord among the Afghan Taliban leaders and between them and the lower level fighters, and a level of discord that we have not seen in the past. Do you agree with General Petraeus's assessment that there is friction and discord between local Taliban fighters in Afghanistan and the Taliban leadership in Pakistan as the leadership phones in those orders while they keep safely somewhere else, and is this level of friction something that we've not seen in the past?

Mr. VICKERS. Yes, sir, I do agree with General Petraeus's assessment. I'd be happy to provide more detail in a classified session, but let me say now that this discord as operational commanders from Afghanistan go back to sanctuary in Pakistan for the winter has increased over the past year, particularly as the effects of the surge of forces the President ordered in December '09 really began to be felt at the end of this past 2010 fighting season, from September to November.

So the situation that General Petraeus was describing, where the Taliban senior leadership wants to continue the fight during the winter months—a lot of local commanders have been voting with their feet, essentially, and saying, I've had enough of this, to the effects of our increasingly effective operations, but also because of multiple competing interests within the insurgency. The insurgency is not a monolithic group. A lot of fighters fight for very different reasons, including economic ones. So there's naturally a lot of frictions induced there. But the leadership-warrior divide is a big part of it.

Thank you.

Before I call on Senator McCain, let me just quickly mention that I hope we'll get a quorum here this morning, and when we do we will offer the committee budget to be approved.

I'm going to turn the gavel now over to Senator Reed and call upon Senator McCain.

Senator MCCAIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank the witnesses. Secretary Vickers, we've recently heard some rather guardedly optimistic assessments of the situation in Afghanistan. Do you agree with those assessments?

Mr. VICKERS. Yes, sir, I do.

Senator MCCAIN. The main problems still being corruption and Pakistan?

Mr. VICKERS. The strategic problem, sir, as you identified, are the continued presence of a sanctuary in Pakistan and then the governance challenge.

Senator MCCAIN. On the issue of Wikileaks, what's your understanding of the status of investigations into the cause of Wikileaks?

Mr. VICKERS. Sir, the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence has mainly been focused on assessing the damage, which they've done a very good job on, and remedial measures with our chief information officer in the lead. My understanding of the investigation is that it is ongoing, but that's about all I can say at this time.

Senator MCCAIN. I've been interested to hear some in the media and others say that Wikileaks was a good thing, that it was a good

thing, and that it didn't damage our National security or our ability to carry out our missions.

Yet isn't it true that in Wikileaks some individuals who were cooperating with us were identified in Wikileaks?

Mr. VICKERS. Yes, sir, that is true.

Senator MCCAIN. And that puts their lives in danger?

Mr. VICKERS. Yes, sir, it does.

Senator MCCAIN. So I guess I'm curious about your assessment of the damage that Wikileaks did to your abilities, and particularly in the area of getting people to cooperate with us in the vital aspect of human intelligence.

Mr. VICKERS. Sir, I think it's had implications from the foreign policy level about governments wanting to ensure that their confidential relationships with the United States are protected, down to operational issues, as you mentioned, of assets that would cooperate with us. Fortunately, we are able to attract the intelligence assets that we require to serve our policymakers and warriors, but the damage should not be understated in terms of—and the Department has learned many lessons about how to prevent this from ever happening again.

Senator MCCAIN. But the damage especially has been on the operational level. If we disclose an ambassador's candid assessment of a foreign leader, that's one thing. But to have operations and individuals disclosed in my view—and more importantly, what is your view—this can be very, very damaging, and some local individual may think twice before agreeing to cooperate with us if that person's name is going to be publicized.

Mr. VICKERS. Yes, sir, that is exactly correct. As a former CIA operations officer, your first responsibility is to protect the security of those who would cooperate with the United States through tradecraft and proper information security, and they depend on us to do that.

Senator MCCAIN. Do you have a good sense of how these former detainees are making their way back into the battlefield? I saw a news report this morning that another one was apparently killed, just reports today. Do you have a sense on how they're making their way back to the battlefield?

Mr. VICKERS. Sir, approximately 20 to 25 percent have made their way back in one form or another.

Senator MCCAIN. That we know of.

Mr. VICKERS. That we know of. Some of those have subsequently been killed or recaptured. Others are out there fighting against us as well. The routes that they take depend on the circumstances of their release. But needless to say, it's been in multiple countries and multiple routes, and I'd be happy to discuss that in more detail at a classified session.

Senator MCCAIN. You would agree it is a problem?

Mr. VICKERS. Yes, sir, it is.

Senator MCCAIN. Because now it seems to be a status symbol for those that return to the battlefield with their compatriots.

Mr. VICKERS. Yes, sir. That's a very good point, that some mid-level operatives have been elevated to leadership positions by this conferral of status.

Senator MCCAIN. Dr. Rooney, we intend, obviously, to confirm you, and obviously I believe you're well qualified. But you don't have a depth of experience with the men and women in the military. If I could suggest—and suggestions are a very cheap commodity around here—that you spend some time traveling around, not only to the bases here in CONUS, but also our overseas bases and areas, if you can, even forward deployed, so to give you a better depth and understanding of the challenges, particularly of the repeated deployments that our men and women in the military have been making and the strain and stress that that puts on their families. I hope you will do that as a very high priority.

Dr. ROONEY. Yes, sir. If confirmed, that would be an immediate priority.

Senator MCCAIN. Last year, in a contentious markup this committee voted 15 to 12 to allow servicemembers, their dependents, and retirees to obtain privately paid abortions at military hospitals. Do you support the administration's position that abortions should be provided in military hospitals?

Dr. ROONEY. My position, sir, is to support the law and enforce the law. But I also understand that the abortions are voluntary, they would be outpatient services, and it's not mandatory that any physicians there actually perform the abortions, but it's making the health care available. So I would comply to the law.

Senator MCCAIN. Thank you.

Senator REED [presiding]. Thank you, Senator McCain.

Senator Blumenthal.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to join both the chairman and Senator McCain in thanking you, Secretary Vickers, for your service in the past, very distinguished service, and thank you, Dr. Rooney, for undertaking this very challenging, but critically important, assignment.

Secretary Vickers, I'd like to ask about one of the answers that you gave in the pre-submitted questions, a very important area that I know has concerned the committee in the past regarding the sharing of information, raw intelligence data, where you observe in the past there have been cultural barriers to the full access to this information.

I wonder if you could please describe for the committee what steps you would take to increase the sharing and availability of this data to special operations personnel and others in the field who need it?

Mr. VICKERS. Yes, sir. As I indicated in my answers to the committee's prehearing questions, the intelligence community was raised throughout the Cold War on the principle of need to know, and increasingly in the war with al Qaeda and wars in Afghanistan and Iraq the responsibility to share is an imperative for our forces on the battlefield. That means not only sharing with our own forces, but in Afghanistan we have 49 nations fighting alongside us and sharing with them as well.

This requires technical solutions to the problem. Until recently in Afghanistan we had 26 different networks, that we're standardizing to facilitate the movement of information into a common network. But it also requires changes in the way we operate and what information can be provided at what level. Particularly, as Chair-

man Levin noted, some of the sensitive information we get in signals intelligence and others, that has typically been very compartmented, is critical on a time-sensitive basis to operators, both to kill or capture their adversary, but also to protect from attack.

So we have been working that very hard. There is an inherent tension, however, between the responsibility to share and need to know that we always have to weigh to protect sources and methods from unauthorized disclosure, while making sure we get timely information in the hands of our warfighters.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Do you feel that the barriers, as has been observed before, are still primarily cultural, or do you think there are procedural barriers that need to be overcome?

Mr. VICKERS. I think there's a mix, sir. I think some of it is cultural legacy, but others, as I said, are technical challenges, or also, as Chairman Levin noted earlier, having the intelligence structures to rapidly process and move the information. Not all elements of the force are equally equipped in that area and it's something we're working to address.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Going to another line or area of questioning, I wonder if you could give us some more precise view about the extent of the discord and perhaps the magnitude of the phenomenon of these perhaps dissatisfied enemy combatants voting with their feet, as you have put it?

Mr. VICKERS. Sir, you mean those going back into combat?

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Exactly.

Mr. VICKERS. There are different perspectives on this, sir. Some are inherently repeat offenders, in the way that some portion of those from the criminal justice system do the same, particularly if they're going back into an area where they're surrounded by those engaged in terrorism, and there are certain ungoverned areas that they've made their way back to in Yemen, in Pakistan, that are very conducive to this. So I wouldn't want to ascribe a single motivation, but looking at a number of these cases over the past several years and the recidivism, some have chosen a life of terrorism and their associates have.

In some cases it's a family business that we've seen, that a lot of relatives are all engaged in the same line of work. So I think that creates a greater propensity for them to go back. It's hard to know a priori necessarily which ones will and won't.

There are those that we have very clear indications that would and therefore they're not released. But there are others that are in that grey ground that we need to do more to fix.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. And are there specific steps being contemplated to do more in that area, as you suggested?

Mr. VICKERS. Yes, sir. We have a Department of Justice-led, with inter-agency participation, to review release of detainees at the highest levels or to transfer them to another country, and then we have task forces in the field working with local governments to review cases in the zones of armed conflict as well.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Dr. Rooney, you may have seen recent reports about the very unfortunate and tragic perils of perhaps over-use of combinations of pharmaceutical drugs in treating young men and women coming back and suffering from post-traumatic stress and other psychological phenomena. Are you aware of these reports

and do you have thoughts about what can be done to address this problem?

Dr. ROONEY. Yes, sir, I am aware of the reports and the issue of particularly psychotropic drugs, whether it's on the military side or the civilian side, absolutely shares some common factors. I think the lesson that we're all learning is that—and I'm not a medical doctor—is that the use of drugs and not understanding the interactions of the drugs actually at times exacerbates the problem. I think we're getting a lot more intelligent about that. We're starting to get a lot more research about where those drugs are effective and where they're not, and also understanding that at times it's critical to link—sometimes our service people are going outside to civilian providers and then also having service inside, and we're not necessarily connecting and understanding the drugs that have been prescribed by both.

Because of that awareness, there is now much more emphasis on trying to destigmatize the treatment, so that we can have a coordinated basis of care. But it is an ongoing issue.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you very much. I thank you both for your answers and for your very distinguished service.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator REED. Thank you very much, Senator Blumenthal.

Senator Ayotte.

Senator AYOTTE. Secretary Vickers, Dr. Rooney, I first of all want to commend both of you for your career histories. Secretary Vickers, thank you so much for your service to our country. You're both eminently qualified. I also want to commend your families and thank them for their support of you for both of you in the positions that you've held and after your confirmation to these positions.

Secretary Vickers, I wanted to ask you again. You had cited a statistic in response to Senator McCain that 20 to 25 percent of the Guantanamo detainees have been released and have returned to the conflict. Is that the correct number?

Mr. VICKERS. Yes, ma'am. In the case of Guantanamo it's closer to 25 percent. Of the approximately 600 that have been released, about 150, we either know that they've returned or we strongly suspect that they've returned. In the case of other detainees that have been released on the battlefield, the number is between 20 and 25.

Senator AYOTTE. How is that fact informing release decisions going forward?

Mr. VICKERS. It has a strong impact on it, in the sense that remaining cases are scrutinized not just for recidivism, but also the ability in the case of third countries to continue to detain them if they're transferred. So a lot of detainees can't be transferred because there's not assurances that they'll be properly detained and not released.

Part of the recidivism problem breaks down when they're transferred to another country and then they're quickly released. So part of it is, as I said, is looking at the transfer problem in itself.

In zones of hostilities, it may be local politics in some cases. Someone with connections is getting someone released and then again there's a high probability that they'll be recidivists, but the political system has intervened in the past. So we've learned from

this experience and are trying to address it, but it's not a foolproof system.

Senator AYOTTE. Given the President's executive order advocating for the closure of Guantanamo, if tomorrow we capture a high-value target in Pakistan or overseas, or perhaps someone you would deem a repeat offender, what are we doing with them?

Mr. VICKERS. The administration is in the final stages of revising its—or establishing its detention policy. But there is a challenge with those picked up outside zones of hostilities. In zones of hostilities, in Afghanistan principally now, there are well-established procedures and mechanisms to detain them for the period as required. If a terrorist was picked up in Somalia, for example, say, one example of a very ungoverned space, that has been a vexing challenge for both administrations, I would add, both the Bush Administration and the Obama Administration, and there's not an obvious solution that presents itself.

But the USDI's responsibility in this is to work on the intelligence aspects and not the detainee policy. So I would defer to my policy colleagues in the Under Secretary for Policy's office and detainee affairs to address your question more fully.

Senator AYOTTE. Secretary Vickers, I fully appreciate that there are others that will have more direct impact on this. But given the breadth of experience that you have in this area and the vexing challenges that you've identified, what recommendations would you have to your colleagues in the administration on how we can best address this issue to make sure that if we capture a high-value target in one of these areas that we can make sure that we have the ability to interrogate that individual and also, if they present a continuing threat, that we can detain them?

Mr. VICKERS. On the interrogation side, the first step to extract intelligence, the administration has established a high-value interrogation group led by the FBI, with participation from Defense and CIA as well. That group has deployed several times and that mechanism should work well for interrogation and debriefing of detainees.

Options range from transferring to another country, provided human rights assurances and access to the detainee and others can be met. But given the problem that many countries are either incapable or unwilling of taking some of these detainees, we require some mechanism to be able to detain them ourselves. That again, others in the administration are working that very hard.

Senator AYOTTE. When we transfer to another country, Secretary Vickers, aren't we in a position there where we also don't have full control over the situation in terms of, even if we get assurances from the country, what the terms will be for that? The level of control we have is much less than if we had them, for example, in a Guantanamo type facility?

Mr. VICKERS. Before we transfer anyone, we want assurances that, in a number of areas, as I said, that if they need to be detained the country in question is capable of detaining them; if there is intelligence value to the detainee, that we would have access to that detainee. But countries are sovereign and we do our best to ensure that these conditions are met; they're not always met 100

percent in some of these areas. So again, that's part of the challenge.

Senator AYOTTE. How can Congress help with this issue, because it's obviously of deep concern if we are in a position where we capture a high-value target or a repeat offender and that person still remains a danger, or we need to have them in a position where we can gather important information from them?

Mr. VICKERS. It is critical to have the option of capturing for laws of war, but also for intelligence value as well. Again, this is something that my colleagues in the inter-agency and within the Department of Defense are working, and I'm sure they will come to the Congress for help on this.

Senator AYOTTE. Thank you very much. I appreciate your answers today. Thank you, Dr. Rooney.

Senator REED. Thank you very much, Senator.

Senator Hagan.

Senator HAGAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank Secretary Vickers for your past service to our country; and, to Secretary Vickers and Dr. Rooney, thank you for your agreeing to be nominated to these positions and your willingness to serve. Also, kudos to the families and extended families. Thank you for being here and supporting these very, very well qualified individuals.

I did want to ask, Secretary Vickers, when confirmed you will be responsible for implementing Secretary Gates's efficiency initiative as it relates to defense intelligence. In particular, you will need to downsize and consolidate the intelligence workforce and ensure that we avoid duplication of work among the respective intelligence agencies. What is your plan to address and implement this plan while still ensuring the timely development of actionable intelligence for our warfighters?

Mr. VICKERS. During the efficiencies process, the principal focus of eliminating redundancies was to look at service, meaning Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, intelligence organizations and those of the combatant commands. So we have developed an organization called Joint Intelligence Operations Centers, that every combatant command has, and they've all grown rather large, in the thousands of staff.

We have developed a standardized model, after some experience now, that resulted in the major warfighting command, or Central Command, to have a large JIOC, as we describe it, and Pacific Command, which has a lot of challenges in its region, to also have a very large JIOC. But the other combatant commands have been reduced in some cases or had contractors eliminated to a more standardized model appropriate to their theaters, that is Africa Command, Southern Command, Northern Command, and European Command. So there have been some savings in that area.

We've also consolidated missions. The counter-threat finance mission has been, on the intelligence side, has been assigned to DIA, so this will develop more focused intelligence to support Treasury and other policymakers who have the lead in this area, but also eliminate some redundancies. We had a lot of counter-threat finance intelligence across the Department.

We've also done the same in counterterrorism intelligence in the Department in empowering our Joint Intelligence Task Force for Counterterrorism in DIA to be the lead.

I would add that the—and we've reduced senior executive service ranks and contractors and others. I would add that Secretary Gates has been very clear that these rounds of efficiencies are really the first step in looking at eliminating redundancy. Intelligence is increasingly important to our policymakers and to our operators, but it's also an area in which the American people and the Congress invest a lot of treasure and we have to make sure it's as efficient as possible. So, if confirmed as USDI, it's something will be on the top list of my priorities.

Senator HAGAN. You've said that a lot of these efficiencies have taken place, but you'll also work to ensure that more efficiencies will go forward in these same areas?

Mr. VICKERS. Let me clarify, Senator Hagan. The decisions have been made about to standardize these intelligence organizations. There is an implementation plan that will occur. But yes, additional efficiencies might well be sought. Senator Levin mentioned in his opening comments about intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets and Senator McCain as well, that we probably still have some homework to do down the road.

Right now we're trying to give all the support we can to our warfighters in Afghanistan, but over time we will rationalize those as we move forward.

Senator HAGAN. Obviously, we do want to support them in every fashion possible.

Defense Secretary—Deputy Secretary of Defense William Lynn has addressed the Department's cybersecurity strategy, which I understand involves five pillars: the first, recognition that cyberspace is a new domain of warfare; two, proactive defenses, avoiding a fortress mentality; three, ensure the safety of critical infrastructure; four, undertake collective defense; and five, sustained technological advantage.

Mr. Vickers, within these pillars, which do you see as the most challenging to facilitate, and why? Just the whole pillars of cybersecurity.

Mr. VICKERS. Well, let me say, cyber is an increasingly important domain of warfare or competition, used both for intelligence purposes as well as potentially destructive purposes or warfighting purposes. The establishment of United States Cyber Command, which is overseen by our Policy Under Secretary and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs to the Secretary; the Office of the Under Secretary of Intelligence, Defense for Intelligence, really oversees the intelligence aspects of this.

But let me try to address your question in saying that the reason Cyber Command was established was because of the need to have a command for this emerging domain that was so important to our National economy and infrastructure, as well as our warfighting, but also someone to have an organization and a commander that had responsibility for both offense and defense, protecting our networks as well as potentially using this tool.

That integration of offense and defense I think will be very, very critical to our future, supported by appropriate intelligence in this new area.

Senator HAGAN. Thank you.

Dr. Rooney, let me ask you. If confirmed—when confirmed, you will play an integral role in implementing Secretary Gates's efficiency initiatives also related to personnel, namely the Army and Marine Corps endstrength reductions, freeze in civilian hire, reduction in contractors in the administration of TRICARE. What do you believe will be the impact of these initiatives?

Dr. ROONEY. Yes, the efficiency initiatives, as you've suggested, cut across many of the areas under personnel and readiness. The first one, from the human resource side, it gives an opportunity to really take a look at that mixture of active duty, Reserve, civilian, and contractors, and take a look at what are the roles, particularly in the contractors and the civilians, that they're playing in support services. Are some of those same programs still viable? Do they need to be administered differently? I think I've seen the term used, business, good business practices, and that's really just another way of saying, should we be doing the same thing, and if so should it be done maybe a little bit differently?

That would be the personnel side and looking, are there ways to cut some of those costs down and combine, really assess programs. If they're not working, then at that point they need to be eliminated and resources shifted to more critical, mission-critical type initiatives.

The health care side again is a myriad of possible initiatives, everything from a slight increase in the premiums that we saw, because that hasn't been changed since the mid-90s, but also changing behaviors—prescription drugs; using mail order instead of the current system ends up saving a tremendous amount over years. What we call supply chain, which is as you're purchasing, doing similar purchasing and look at how you're purchasing supplies for a hospital setting. You get great efficiencies in that. Contracting, another way that you can also look at your contracts, make sure you're getting not only the best prices, but coordination in those areas.

Then there's some other, longer term initiatives that end up eventually impacting efficiency, and that would be looking at practice plans. Are there ways to use urgent care facilities so that we're not forcing people to go to emergency rooms? That's also an issue on the civilian side. And so there are some opportunities there, and using primary care physicians differently in terms of practice focus, and then also those types of things I've seen also working in mental health areas. So it would be those types of things, taking the current proposals and expanding on them.

Senator HAGAN. You certainly do have a full plate in front of you. I will say, please look for the TRICARE. So many of the individuals are having trouble having the TRICARE accepted in places that are outside the actual bases.

My time is up. Once again, I thank both of you for your commitment to our country. Thank you.

Senator REED. Thank you, Senator.

Senator Webb.

Senator WEBB. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Vickers, you're eminently qualified by virtue of your military background, your operational experience, your educational enhancement, and your policy experience. I think this is a great fit and I will be a very strong supporter and hope to be working with you on some of these issues in the near future.

Dr. Rooney, I would congratulate you on a very strong career to date, particularly in the academic area, and your willingness to serve. I at the same time would like to learn more from you about how you have prepared yourself to take the experiences that you have had and apply it, apply them to this position. It's my understanding from reading your bio that you have not worked with the Department of Defense before; is that correct?

Dr. ROONEY. Yes, sir, that's correct.

Senator WEBB. This is an extremely important under secretaryship. I would like to point out for the record that I recommended the creation of this position in 1985 in a memorandum to Cap Weinberger. I'm not the only person who's ever recommended this position, but at the time when I was serving as Assistant Secretary of Defense we had 11 different stovepipes moving up to the Secretary, which was not a healthy management model. And Cap Weinberger's hesitation at the time was that it was going to consolidate so much of the responsibilities, the day to day responsibilities of DOD, under one office, and if you're going to do that you need to make sure that the people at the top comprehend the special nature of military service and of the Department of Defense.

I'd like to point out, if I may—you may have come across this—that solutions in the military don't always compute on a traditional civilian model. There are a lot of different factors in military service and across the board. We have these situations in the acquisition side, too, as well, but particularly in the area of personnel.

Your nomination has come forward very fast. It was sent on the 4th of February, which was a Friday, and we've had 11 days, most of which last week we weren't here. I have not had the opportunity to meet with you. I'm the chairman of the Personnel Subcommittee, which is the subcommittee that would have policy jurisdiction over the issues that you're working on.

So can you give me a better idea of how you have prepared yourself to understand the unique cultures that are involved in the United States military?

Dr. ROONEY. Yes, sir, I'd be happy to do that. I will step back a bit and say that when I went from being a business executive with a background in finance and tax law into higher education, my first presidency at a doctoral-level institution, I had never been a higher ed administrator. I had taught for a number of years, but never ran a college or university. And the way I assimilated into that culture was to be a perpetual student, which is what I would also propose here: learned really what happened in the institution and walk around, talk to people, listen, understand. It turned out to be very effective, to the point where I, prior to this, have been at my second presidency.

The same with hospitals. When I first started on a hospital board, quite frankly, the first meeting I sat in I didn't understand

most of the acronyms that were put in front of me. Again, what I really did was took the time to study it, talk to the people, spend time in the traditional form, as they say, walk-around management.

As Senator McCain pointed out earlier, one of the first things I would do would be continue on what have been tremendous briefings, but they have certainly been briefings, sir, and material I've been able to read and get a handle on, to understand more of clearly the military culture, but also that connection between the military members that this role would have responsibility for overseeing, personnel and readiness, but also the civilian counterparts in many ways and how that system worked together, and the contractors.

I think it would be the breadth of understanding all of that, and I think my experience in the past is showing that I can definitely make that transformation and dive in with that passion and that lifelong education focus, would enable me to prepare and be very effective for this role.

Senator WEBB. There are military cultures and there are cultures within the military cultures, and there are expectations that have evolved based on service in different eras, and they all affect the area that you are sitting here waiting to be confirmed on.

When I was the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, we had all 4 active services, all 7 Guard and Reserve components, plus political civilians and career civilians, and at any staff meeting we had at least 11 different cultural traditional among the uniformed people sitting at that table, with different relationships, quite frankly, with the overarching policies of the Department of Defense.

On issues of health care, you just mentioned the notion of increasing the premiums on TRICARE. Would you elaborate on that?

Dr. ROONEY. I mentioned that one of the efficiency initiatives set out for us by the Secretary was a modest increase, and I believe that number was about \$5 per month, in the premiums, understanding that we have the duty and obligation to support our service people—it's what we said from the beginning, that we would take care of our service people—but on the other hand trying to find a balance of supporting that, but also doing it in a fiscally sound and sustainable manner. So I would support the Secretary's position in looking at those modest increases.

Senator WEBB. Well, here's something you want to remember. As someone who grew up in the military, served in the military, have family members in the military, health care, lifetime health care for career military people, was part of a moral contract. I grew up inside that moral contract. So on the one hand, if you're applying a civilian model to a DOD medical program, you can say, well, if you compare a civilian health care plan, this is an incredibly good deal. On the other hand, these are people who have been told since the day they came into the military that they're going to have health care for the rest of their life if they give a career to the United States military.

It's a moral contract. I'm the chairman of the subcommittee that's going to have to evaluate this proposal, and I hope you will pay strong attention to—again, this is sort of the abstract nature

of military service, that doesn't come out when you try to compare a model directly with civilian programs.

There are a number of other areas like that. I'm going to ask you to do something. I'm going to ask you to come by and see me. I did not have the opportunity to talk to you, and we can discuss some of these things a bit more.

Dr. ROONEY. I would welcome the opportunity, sir.

Senator WEBB. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator REED. Thank you, Senator Webb.

I'm next in order, but let me recognize Senator Manchin.

Senator MANCHIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me too add to all of my colleagues, our thanks for your service, to both of you, and the willingness to serve. I think it's admirable.

Mr. Vickers, first with you. I've read your bio and I've learned a little bit about you and I like everything I see. Also, I'm new. With some of my colleagues, we're new to this committee, but we're also new to this process of evaluating where we are in the world, where we're going and how we get there in the best efficient manner. You seem to have been part of an Afghanistan movement back with the Soviet Union and what you were able to witness, what you were able to be a part of, to see an outcome, and to see how we dropped the ball. I think that that was very well documented.

We're in a situation now where, if you could for me identify the strength of our—who are enemy is in the Middle East, what the strength of our enemy is, what is the cost of our enemy, that they're financing their war with, and compared to what we as the United States Government and the people that are supporting our troops, which we will always do, and the comparison between what you saw in the outcome of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan to where we are today, and the predicted outcome of—it's the longest war we've ever been in and we're not seeing much change. So if you could help me with that, sir, first, your evaluation, because I don't know of a better person that's had a bird's-eye view and can evaluate this than you.

Mr. VICKERS. Well, thank you, sir. As you alluded to, one of the tragedies at the end of the Cold War, one of the great tragedies, is that we, after winning the war in Afghanistan, driving the Red Army out, we failed to win the peace and left a sanctuary in which al Qaeda could grow, in partnership with the Taliban, that then led to the events of September 11. Secretary Gates has said repeatedly that we will never make that mistake again.

As part of your second question—

Senator MANCHIN. I'm sorry to interrupt you on that, but if I could just ask for a further clarification. With that comment that Secretary Gates made and with the failure of before, of the Soviets, then what we're saying is that we need to have a presence, maybe a different type of a presence, but we will have to have a presence over there. The American people should understand, the citizens of this country should understand, we have to have a presence there.

Mr. VICKERS. What form that engagement takes, of course, will be determined based on conditions down the road. But unlike at the end of the Cold War, where we essentially disengaged from that region and allowed an ungoverned area to become very hostile

to us and to provide a sanctuary for al Qaeda, it's something that we don't want to repeat. A core element of our counterterrorism policy is to deny any sanctuary to terrorists, so that they can't plan operations against the homeland or our interests abroad.

You asked about the enemy. Unlike the Cold War, which was a very daunting time for Americans of a previous generation, but it had one virtue, that we had a principal adversary that we could focus on for a long period of time, and we got very good at that by the last decade of the Cold War. Today we face a more complex environment with a number of challenges around the world.

Foremost among those right now is really the continued threat that violent extremism poses to us, and specifically al Qaeda. It's why the President and his topmost advisors have said we are at war with al Qaeda, and that war spans a number of areas. Al Qaeda and its affiliates do not depend on great sums of financial strength to be able to plot against us in the manner they do. The September 11 attacks, for example, were carried out with approximately \$500,000 of investment.

Our Treasury Department, working with our interagency partners and partners around the world, does everything they can to constrict the flow of funds to al Qaeda and other terrorist and insurgent groups, and has had a significant success. But there are still funds flowing to various groups and, as I said, funds is not the critical resource that they depend on. It's willing people to do these attacks.

Senator MANCHIN. What's the strength of al Qaeda in Afghanistan?

Mr. VICKERS. Al Qaeda in Afghanistan is largely confined now to mid-level operatives, no senior operatives.

Senator MANCHIN. 10,000, 100,000?

Mr. VICKERS. No, sir. The Taliban insurgency is in the tens of thousands. Al Qaeda would be under 50 or so, 50 to 75, and that on a part-time basis. Al Qaeda is principally concentrated elsewhere, in Pakistan and then its affiliates in Yemen and elsewhere.

Senator MANCHIN. We have how many troops in Afghanistan now?

Mr. VICKERS. We have just shy of about 98,000 troops, just shy of 100,000, and 40,000-some of our coalition partners, and building up a substantial Afghan National Security Force.

The principal challenge in Afghanistan is the Taliban are still aligned with al Qaeda. They provided sanctuary to them in the past. It is adjacent to Pakistan, where al Qaeda's senior leadership resides currently. The President's stated goal is to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al Qaeda and prevent their return to Afghanistan and Pakistan. So Pakistan and Afghanistan are an integrated strategy for the United States. Even though Afghanistan is not principally where al Qaeda is, it could become a future safe haven if we were to repeat the errors we made after the Cold War.

Senator MANCHIN. I think the hardest thing that I have to understand, I know the people in West Virginia have to understand, is the greatest army that history has ever known, the United States, and the greatest trained and equipped soldiers, we're at 100,000 and let's say that our enemy may be at 30 maximum, probably more 10 or 15,000, by every report that I'm receiving.

I've also read in your kind of bio that you have a different—a different type of a procedure that you think would have worked there, or maybe you still think that or not, by an unconventional type of war with your special ops. I think that it sounds very intriguing and it seems like we're not going in that direction.

Mr. VICKERS. Sir, every counterterrorism and counterinsurgency challenge has to be taken on its own merits and time. Ultimately, local capacity—these are internal conflicts or transnational conflicts. We can't prevail in these wars without—in the counterterrorism case, it's a global challenge—without a host of international partners. We simply couldn't do it by ourselves. In any intra-state conflict, in an insurgency, ultimately it's the locals that have to be able to secure their territory. Sometimes we have to create the time and space for them to be able to do that as we build them up.

After our great success in 2001 of overthrowing the Taliban and kicking al Qaeda out of Afghanistan, we unfortunately did not build up Afghan National Security Forces to a sufficient level where they could gain control or stabilize their country and secure it. We are rapidly addressing that in the past few years.

So again, I would just caution that some of this is in the range of tactics specific to a portion in time, that may apply to one situation or one country and not another, or for this period of time and not a later period of time. But ultimately we have to empower locals to succeed.

Senator MANCHIN. Mr. Chairman, if I may real quickly just follow up.

If I may request that maybe I can meet with you personally and go into that in more detail, I would appreciate it very much, sir.

Dr. Rooney, just very quickly. I have heard and I know that Senator Webb had mentioned and talked about some concerns he may have. That would be a valid concern when you see the resume, but the bottom line is I also see your private sector experience, too. Would you consider yourself a cost-cutter or efficiency expert?

Dr. ROONEY. I think if you ask those that have worked with me, they'd probably say yes.

Senator MANCHIN. Thank you.

Senator REED. Thank you, Senator Manchin.

Let me take my time and then recognize Senator Ayotte for a second round and, Senator Blumenthal, if you also want a second round.

Secretary Vickers, Dr. Rooney, welcome. Thank you for your service. I've had the privilege to work with Secretary Vickers before. Thank you very much.

First of all, because of your extensive experience in your field of endeavor, if there's anything that you feel would be best held to comment on in a private, nonpublic session, let me know. Don't feel obliged to answer. But one question I think is obvious in the wake of the last several days. We have cooperated and collaborated with intelligence services throughout the Maghreb—Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, etcetera. What's your estimate of the status today of that cooperation going forward? Would that impose any complications on efforts under your jurisdiction?

Mr. VICKERS. Sir, the United States Government has intelligence relationships with scores of partners around the world, many scores of partners, including in North Africa and the Middle East. Each of those relationships is important in some right, but they vary in terms of the depth of intelligence sharing and the particular threat that emanates from that country. So I would hesitate in this open session to give a general answer, other than it's very important.

A number of al Qaeda plots are broken up every year and they are done by our local partners with intelligence assistance in some cases from us, in some cases intelligence provided by them. Our relationships with some of these countries that have had instability in recent weeks, we've had longstanding ties with them that will transcend this instability, both on the military side and on the civilian intelligence side. And, sir, I'd be happy to talk to you about it in greater detail.

Senator REED. Let me open up another topic, which Senator Hagan alluded to. That's cyber security. We often—history often suggests that we fight the last war and prepare for the last war. I think we all recognize now that, even in the context of low-intensity conflict, that cyber activities are becoming increasingly more important. Let me pose some issues.

How well do you think we're prepared for it, its coming, to what are the gaps, technological, institutional, and even legal gaps, in terms of your ability to deal with this new technology actually?

Mr. VICKERS. Sir, it is critically important and it's a domain that, as you indicated, is employed by both state and non-state actors in both forms of conflict, both for intelligence purposes as well as disruption and others. Cyber poses a number of challenges because it is inherently a global enterprise, so a lot of cyber traffic, of course, comes through the United States, which previous Congresses have addressed, which has been a tremendous help to U.S. intelligence.

I would be guilty of practicing law without a license if I go too far—

Senator REED. You wouldn't be the first here.

Mr. VICKERS. But in some cases it raises questions when the web site or server, for example, raises neutrality questions in law, of where that site is located. So it poses a number of unique challenges for us.

Then of course, there's always intel gain-loss when we look at operations in these areas. Is it better to monitor someone or take down? There's always very, very difficult decisions for policymakers to weigh in that area as well.

Senator REED. I think this is again a topic that will consume us, indeed consume us going forward.

Dr. Rooney, you've had an extraordinarily accomplished career. My colleagues with more experience than I have have commented on the unique culture of the military, and it is unique. But my sense is that you have associated yourself and worked with people who share some of the same attributes as our military. They have vocations, not just jobs; and they're dedicated to selfless service, not just to personal ambition. I think in your service and your association you have those, so I think those might be touchstones going

forward as you begin this job and I think they will be valuable touchstones.

But let me ask two basic questions. You have a myriad of responsibilities, from the immediate you've spoken about, but there's one that's continuing, and that is to try to integrate not just the operations within the Department of Defense, but the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs. I know Secretary Shinseki has been working very diligently on this.

We have problems where soldiers, sailors, marines, airmen are injured and then they had disability determinations and then they're transferred to the VA system and there's not that continuity of care. Just whatever impressions you have today of how you're going to deal with more fully integrating what the VA does for our veterans with what the Department of Defense does for active duty and Reserve personnel?

Dr. ROONEY. Yes, sir. While I have not been able to have an entire deep dive, what I can say is what I've learned is you're absolutely correct that the timing—even with the new integrated system—there is the first phase of that's been put in; there's two more phases throughout this year. My understanding is that will proceed on the time line outlined. But those time lapses are still approaching just under a year. 340 days I think was the last I saw.

I think any of us sitting here, while we might not know what the exact answer is, if you're looking for those services a day is too long, a week is too long. There are clearly some opportunities where better coordination and being able to understand where that process is bogging down. My understanding is it's in three different areas. What can be done to ensure much better communication and cooperation, building on—yes, a technology infrastructure is one way, so you don't duplicate services, but it's not the only answer at this point.

So I concur that what I've seen really points out some improvement, but a dramatic need for some further coordination between all areas.

Senator REED. Thank you.

One other area. Under the new financial reform legislation, we have created a Bureau of Consumer Affairs, and within that Bureau there is an office of military focus. In fact, Holly Petraeus is leading that up. I'm sure you will, but I urge you to ensure you link up, because some of the problems that military personnel face in terms of paying bills, in terms of getting appropriate resolution of their rights under the Soldiers and Sailors Civil Relief Act is a function not only of the Department of Defense, but this new bureau. And a lot of what you can do and will do through the services is educating young military personnel about their rights and their responsibilities. So that's just some advice as you, I assume, prepare to take these responsibilities.

Dr. ROONEY. Thank you, sir. If confirmed, I will.

Senator REED. Thank you very much, doctor.

Dr. ROONEY. Thank you.

Senator REED. Senator Ayotte.

Senator AYOTTE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Vickers, Dr. Rooney. Dr. Rooney, you were talking with Senator Webb about the health care system within the military

and he mentioned to you the moral obligation that we have to the military. Appreciating that we're in a fiscal climate where we do need to look to do things differently, there are still some unmet needs. In my State of New Hampshire, we actually have the second highest per capita rate of veterans in the country. Yet, effectively we're the only State in the Nation that does not have a full-service veterans hospital. Alaska is similarly situated, but there is an active duty military base in Alaska where there is full service available.

I would ask you for a commitment to work with me to look at that need and to come up with a solution so that the needs of veterans in New Hampshire are met, and particularly since we have more and more deploying as well in the Guard and becoming veterans and serving our country.

So I would ask you to look at that very carefully, because it is a moral obligation that we have to fulfil and, unfortunately, my State is one where I don't believe it's being fully followed through.

Dr. ROONEY. Absolutely. If confirmed, I would look forward to that.

Senator AYOTTE. Thank you very much.

The other question I have for you, we had talked briefly yesterday about this, but given the multiple deployments of our Guard and Reserve, what is it that you think that we can do to ensure that when our Guard and Reserve deploy and also when they return home that the sets of services are in place to make sure that as they return to civilian life, both they and their families, that they're getting the services that they need? Because with the multiple deployments in the active side, there is always the side when you go to a base that there is a much more robust set of programs than in the Guard and Reserve.

Yet we've asked so much of our guard and Reserve with these deployments.

I would ask you what thoughts you had on that to make sure that we are serving our guard and Reserve and so when they come home that they can acclimate back into civilian life and we give them that support that they deserve?

Dr. ROONEY. You're right. I'm glad we had a brief opportunity to have some of that conversation. But really, the issue does come that this is the first time where we have relied on the Guard and Reserve and their families to the extent that we have with multiple deployments. One of the factors I think everyone is recognizing now is when these people go home it isn't to a base. They're scattering throughout their states, they're scattering throughout the country.

The Department has not always been acutely aware of how to connect those people to services. At times—and we talked about it—there are some good examples where private sector nonprofits are brought in to be able to cover that. But that's not uniform across the country. So it would be a combination of looking at some of those States and those areas where those services are being connected better and seeing ways to do that across the country.

The other thing would be to close some gaps, where there are benefits being given to active duty, but yet there's some that slip through for education, potentially, to make sure that those again extend—employers; to see how again that reentry process can be ei-

ther streamlined and also involve the employers in that. Again, it's uniformity across the country, but there are some good examples out there to build on.

Senator AYOTTE. Very good. I appreciate that, and also would point you to, New Hampshire has a program, a deployment cycle support program, that is a partnership between State agencies and also the private sector, as a pilot or one that you could look to, that I think is very effective and one that other States could employ as well.

Dr. ROONEY. Absolutely.

Senator AYOTTE. Secretary Vickers, we had testimony before from General Austin and also Ambassador Jeffries about Iraq and our withdrawal from Iraq in December. I wanted to get your assessment of whether—the other day I saw a report, of course, of another terrorist incident in Iraq. My question to you is, do you have any concerns about our ability to transfer security as of December to the Iraqis? Also, we're going to leave a significant responsibility to protect our own people with the State Department, without the military support. What thoughts do you have on that?

Mr. VICKERS. I am confident that we're on the path toward this transition. There will be a robust civilian—as Iraq becomes a normal country, there will still be a large diplomatic mission, with military assistance, intelligence, a range of things to ensure that any threats to the stability of Iraq or threats external there are properly dealt with through our Iraqi partners.

That transition has already been well under way since August 2010 on a path to the end of '11, and have no reason to expect that it won't succeed. There is still violence in Iraq, but it is at very low levels compared to what it has been. So some of these attacks of course make news and they will continue to be a challenge for Iraq going forward, but it's something I have high confidence that the Iraqis can handle.

Senator AYOTTE. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Senator REED. Senator Blumenthal.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Just a couple of quick questions. First, to pursue the very significant questions asked by Senator Reed, and more comment than a question or a request. If there are any legal impediments to your efforts in this cyber area, I would very much like to know about them and I hope that you will suggest them, because I think, as Senator Reed very importantly observed, this is the next war or it may be even the present war, and if there's anything that you need, meaning you collectively, the Department of Defense, our defense efforts, need in that area, I would appreciate your letting us know.

Then to pursue an answer that you gave to Senator McCain. He asked about the corruption in Pakistan, which you very adroitly referred to as a governance challenge. Do we face the same kind of governance challenge in Afghanistan and, if so, to what extent, and what are we doing about it?

Mr. VICKERS. Yes, sir. In any counterinsurgency, governance and development are essential lines of operation as much as security. Ultimately, of course, it's up to the people of a nation to determine how they'll be governed. Afghanistan's history has been one essen-

tially of decentralized government, a central state that does some functions, but then the provinces and local areas have a lot of autonomy. When Afghanistan has been stable throughout its history, it's been with that model.

So the challenge is to make sure that there is governance that first and foremost meets the needs of the Afghan people, but, second, also does not undermine the international coalition's effort through corruption or other areas in providing assistance to the government of Afghanistan. So governance is a central challenge in stability and it is in Afghanistan as it is in many countries around the world. But in Afghanistan, of course, we have 100,000 troops and so we care very dearly about it.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you.

Dr. Rooney, just very briefly. You may be aware that in the past there have been difficulties in some of the treatment of our National Guard and our reservists in terms of recognizing that they have become in effect part of our Active-Duty Force and the failure to recognize that service in educational benefits and sometimes health care has been a problem. I've observed it in Connecticut, and I would appreciate your commitment that you will do everything possible to make sure that they are given the recognition they deserve in terms of those benefits and fair treatment and keeping faith with them.

Dr. ROONEY. Absolutely, sir.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator REED. Thank you very much, Senator Blumenthal.

I want to thank Secretary Vickers and Dr. Rooney for your testimony today and, on behalf of Chairman Levin and the Ranking Member Senator McCain, thank you for your service and your prospective service.

If there are no further questions, the hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:11 a.m., the committee adjourned.]