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**RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE MIDDLE
EAST: THE SECURITY SITUATION IN THE
SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC**

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS

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ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS

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**RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST: THE
SECURITY SITUATION IN THE SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC**

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC, Thursday, April 19, 2012.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:04 a.m. in room 2118, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Howard P. “Buck” McKeon (chairman of the committee) presiding.

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

The CHAIRMAN. The committee will come to order. I was just informed that first votes could happen between 10:10 and 10:25. The Secretary has a hard close time at 12:30, so we are going to be as expeditious as we possibly can here.

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. The House Armed Services Committee meets today to receive testimony on the security situation in Syria from the Secretary of Defense, the Honorable Leon Panetta, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Martin Dempsey. Gentlemen, thank you for your distinguished service to our Nation and thank you for being here today.

The Syrian conflict is now in its second year and the situation remains both uncertain and dire. As we convene, a tenuous ceasefire is in place. It comes on the heels of horrifying violence at the hands of the Assad [President Bashar al-Assad] regime, yet even though Assad has committed the ceasefire, reports indicate that he continues to inflict violence on the Syrian people. President Assad’s fierce crackdown has been ruthless, including flagrant human rights violations, extra judicial killings, use of force against non-combatant civilians, including children, and interference with the provision of medical aid and humanitarian assistance. To date, the United Nations estimates the death toll from the crisis at 9,000, while other estimates put the death toll as high as 12,000.

Just over a year ago, in the midst of the Arab Spring, the Syrian people peacefully took to the streets calling for the opportunity to elect their leadership through a free and fair democratic process. This desire for freedom and justice from an oppressive regime embodies the essence of what is driving the opposition, and is one that we can relate to and should support. The President has stated that the violence in Syria must end and that Assad must go. But it remains completely unclear how the President will accomplish these goals.

In addition to the humanitarian concerns that I believe we all share, I am very concerned about the implications for regional con-

flict. As recently as April 10th, Assad-backed military units shot across the border into Syrian refugee camps in Turkey, killing five individuals. Additionally, violence has spilled into Lebanon and Iraq could begin to behave erratically as it considers the prospect of a Sunni-controlled government succeeding the Assad regime and its western border or alliances forming between Syria's Sunni population and Iraq's own Sunni population.

Moreover, the situation presents a strategic opportunity to deal a blow to known supporters of terrorism in the region as Iran continues to back the Assad government and groups such as Hezbollah have enjoyed support and residence in Syria. On the other hand, there is much we do not know about the opposition. Syria also maintains robust air defenses that limit military options.

Therefore I am not recommending U.S. military intervention, particularly in light of our grave budget situation unless the national security threat was clear and present. Nevertheless, these reflections lead me to wonder what the United States can do to stem the violence and hasten President Assad from power. We also need to understand what we are doing to insure the security of one of the world's largest stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons. To paraphrase General Petraeus, how does this all end? I look forward to your insights into the security situation and our way forward in Syria.

[The prepared statement of Mr. McKeon can be found in the Appendix on page 35.]

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Smith.

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

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the interest of time, let me just say that I agree completely with the chairman's opening remarks. The Assad regime has made a clear and awful choice to simply kill as many of its own people as he can to maintain power. It is an international outrage that should be condemned by all nations. I applaud both the Department of Defense and the Secretary of State and our U.N. [United Nations] representative for their work to call attention to this outrage and try to build international support to stop it. I think we need greater support in nations like Russia and China should rise to the challenge and work with us to find a solution to this problem and they clearly have not done enough.

I also agree with the chairman, the fact that I don't see a military option for us in this area for a wide variety of reasons, I have a longer statement which I will submit for the record that explains that, but we should look at every possible option for how we can stop this. I also agree that it has profound impacts for a region that was already unstable in many ways.

So I look forward to the testimony from our witnesses today to hear what our best options are going forward to try to contain this and to give this committee a full briefing on where the situation is at, and where they see it going as difficult as that prediction might be. I thank the chairman and I thank both of our witnesses

for their leadership of our country and for being before us today, and with that, I yield back.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Smith can be found in the Appendix on page 37.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Secretary Panetta.

**STATEMENT OF HON. LEON E. PANETTA, SECRETARY OF
DEFENSE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**

Secretary PANETTA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Representative Smith, Members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to be able to discuss what is obviously a very tense and fluid situation in Syria.

Widespread demands for political change in Syria started more than a year ago, emerging out of the Arab Spring that was impacting on other countries, and it obviously then hit Syria as well. But rather than trying to meet the legitimate demands of the people, the regime of Bashar al-Assad turned instead to violence against its own people. That violence has been brutal and it has been devastating. It has put the Syrian people in a desperate and difficult situation. It has outraged the conscience of all good people, and it has threatened stability in a very important part of the world.

The United States has made clear that the Assad regime has lost its legitimacy, and that this crisis has no effective solution without Assad's departure. As the President has stated, Assad must go. Recent days are testing whether the Assad regime will live up to all of its responsibilities to the Syrian people and to the international community. Restoring calm to the cities and towns across Syria is just one test for Assad in the days ahead. Assad is responsible for fully abiding by the transition plan that has been outlined by the Joint [U.N.–Arab League] Special Envoy, Kofi Annan.

He also faces deep skepticism about his motives, a skepticism based on a long train of Assad's deceitful actions to date, including broken promises to his own people and to the international community. The United States is committed to holding the Syrian regime to its obligations. We are leading an international effort to help stop the violence and support a peaceful, political transition in Syria. Even as we speak, Secretary of State Clinton is meeting with our international partners in Paris to determine what additional steps should be taken to make that happen. We know achieving that end is a tough task. From every angle, the situation in Syria is enormously complex. There is no silver bullet. I wish there was, but there isn't.

At the same time the situation is of grave consequence to the Syrian people. There are many others who are affected by what happens in Syria as well, including Syria's neighbors, Turkey, Lebanon, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, and all nations with a vital interest in the Middle East.

Meanwhile, it is fair to say that Iran is Syria's only ally in the region. No other country stands to lose more than Iran from the eventual fall of the Assad regime, which is why Iran is supporting the regime with material, financial, and technical assistance. We also know that the complex problems in Syria cannot all be solved through the unilateral actions of the United States, or for that matter, any other country. They demand a coordinated, international

response that is uniquely tailored to the situation we are confronting in Syria.

There are, however, certain principles that have guided the Administration's response to unrest across the Middle East. These basic principles have shaped our responses in Tunisia, in Egypt, in Libya, and now in Syria.

First, we oppose the use of violence and repression by regimes against their own people. Second, we support the exercise of universal human rights. And third, we support political and economic reforms that can meet the legitimate aspirations of ordinary people throughout the region. Our policy in Syria is very clear: We support a political and democratic transition that fulfills the Syrian people's greatest aspirations. To support that objective, the United States is leading international efforts along five tracks.

First, we are supporting efforts to maintain international pressure and advance transition, political transition in Syria. We join with our partners in the U.N. Security Council including now Russia and China in calling for the urgent comprehensive and immediate implementation of all aspects of the Annan plan.

Second, we are further isolating the Assad regime, we are encouraging other countries to join the United States, the European Union, and the Arab League in imposing strong sanctions against it. These sanctions are putting Assad under greater pressure than ever before. We are undermining the financial lifelines of the regime; three United States executive orders have targeted senior leadership, Commercial and the Central Bank of Syria. The result is that 30 percent of the regime's lost revenues have occurred as a result of those sanctions. The U.S. and the EU [European Union] have imposed a strong oil embargo, the exchange rate has depreciated by more than 50 percent and their GDP [Gross Domestic Product] has been in a serious decline, approaching almost a minus 8 percent in 2011 and more now.

Third, we are strengthening and unifying the nonviolent political opposition in Syria. The United States is in the process of providing direct nonlethal support, including communications and medical equipment to the civilian lead opposition. We are taking these actions in concert with similar steps taken by the friends of Syria and other international partners to assist the opposition.

Fourth, we are providing emergency humanitarian assistance to the Syrian people. With the total commitment so far in excess of \$25 million, food rations, medical supplies, water, and other relief supplies have been provided.

And lastly, we are reviewing and planning for a range of additional measures that may be necessary to protect the Syrian people. By acting along these lines, we are increasing pressure on the Assad regime every day. Make no mistake, one way or another, this regime will ultimately meet its end. There are legitimate questions about what steps are necessary to achieve this end, with some arguing for an approach similar to the one we took in Libya. The fact is that our recent experience in Libya is helping to inform the approach that the United States is taking towards Syria. First, our efforts are strengthened, strengthened by multilateral international consensus, that is extremely important to our ability to keep maximum pressure on the Assad regime.

Second, we should maintain clear regional support from the Arab world itself. Nations of the Arab world are outraged at the regime and what they are doing to the Syrian people.

Third, we should offer substantial U.S. contributions where we can bring unique resources to bear.

Fourth, we should have a clear legal basis for our approach there. And that clearly involves close consultations with Congress.

And fifth and finally, our approach must keep all options on the table, all options on the table. While recognizing the limitations of military force, we must be prepared to take whatever action is required. But let me also say that the situation in Syria is different from the one in Libya, in some very important ways; this is not Libya. In Libya, there was widespread international support in the Arab world and elsewhere in a clear Security Council authorization for military intervention. And NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] was authorized to act on that. No such consensus currently exists regarding Syria.

The opposition is also not as well organized and does not control territory is what we saw in Libya. There are almost 100 different groups. On the one hand that indicates that this is an insurgency that is broad based, but on the other hand, it makes it difficult to determine who to help if they cannot come together and organize as a single opposition force.

We must also be mindful, as Secretary Clinton has noted, of the possibility that outside military intervention will make a volatile situation even worse and place even more innocent civilians at risk. The United States has made clear that we are on the side of the Syrian people and they must know that the international community has not underestimated either their suffering or their impatience. The Defense Department, as we always do, is reviewing and is continuing to review plans for a variety of possible scenarios should the President determine that further steps are necessary. In the meantime, our only clear path is to keep moving diplomatically through the international community in a resolute and deliberate manner to find a way to return Syria to the Syrian people. If we remain dedicated to that effort I think we ultimately can prevail. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Secretary Panetta can be found in the Appendix on page 39.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.
General Dempsey.

**STATEMENT OF GEN MARTIN E. DEMPSEY, USA, CHAIRMAN,
JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF**

General DEMPSEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Congressman Smith and other distinguished Members of this committee. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today and discuss the evolving situation in Syria. The situation is tragic for the people of Syria and for the region. Real democratic reforms should have been the Assad regime's response to last year's peaceful protest. Instead, the regime responded with brutality. Syria's internal convulsions are having consequences for a region already in turmoil. Refugees are fleeing, spillover into neighboring countries is an increasing concern, and of course, we also need to be alert to opportunistic ex-

tremists who may seek to exploit the situation, as well as the need to be especially alert to the fate of Syria's chemical and biological weapons, they need to stay exactly where they are.

With other conscientious nations, the United States is applying diplomatic and economic pressure on the regime to compel Assad and his accomplices to stop the killing their own.

Our military's role to this point has been limited to sharing information with our partners, our regional partners, but should we be called on to help secure U.S. interests in other ways, we will be ready. We maintain an agile regional and global posture. We have solid military relationships with every country on Syria's border. Should we be called, our responsibility is clear—provide the Secretary of Defense and the President with options, and these options will be judged in terms of their suitability, their feasibility, and their acceptability.

We have a further responsibility to articulate risk and the potential implications to our other global commitments. In closing, I want to assure you and the Nation that America's Armed Forces are ready to answer the call, wherever that takes us. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of General Dempsey can be found in the Appendix on page 42.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much. We—the vote has been called. We are 5 minutes into the vote. I will ask questions and get as much done as we can before, and we will break. Those of you who desire to leave earlier to get over there to vote, I would encourage you, I think there are three votes, to return as quickly as we can so we can keep this moving forward.

Mr. Secretary, according to media reports this morning, the French President stated that action should be taken to establish humanitarian corridors. What are your views on this option? Have you been aware of that?

Secretary PANETTA. Mr. Chairman, we have looked at a variety of options as to what could be done, including the possibility of developing humanitarian corridors. And again, we are prepared to do whatever the international community ultimately agrees ought to be done. But clearly, we have made plans along those lines.

The CHAIRMAN. General Dempsey, you stated that Syria's chemical and biological weapons need to stay exactly where they are. What can be done and what is being done to ensure that Syria's chemical and biological stockpiles are secured?

General DEMPSEY. At this point, Chairman, we are, as I mentioned in my statement, sharing information and intelligence with our regional partners. And in the aggregate, we feel like we have a good understanding of the disposition, the current disposition of Syria's chemical and biological weapons.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Ranking Member Smith.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess one of my concerns is, it's been said for a long time since the uprising has started that Mr. Assad's days are numbered, and he can't long last, but I have been worried about that ever since I was in Israel last summer and had some conversations about that. What is the path for that happening? Because as I said in my opening remarks, the Assad regime has sort of decided they don't care what the inter-

national community thinks. They are going to kill as many people as they need to kill to stay in power. Regrettably they are getting at least some sort of tacit support from important nations like Russia and China, and much more direct support from Iran and that makes them clearly different than Qadhafi and Libya. Qadhafi had no friends anywhere, he couldn't get that assistance.

With that support, what are the mechanisms that we—the levers we need to pull to make sure the Assad regime, in fact, goes, or might that support not be enough to let them stay as violently as they need to?

Secretary PANETTA. I think the concerns that you have indicated, Congressman, are the concerns that we all share, that part of the problem here is that Assad still seems to maintain the loyalty of the military even though there have been significant defections, that the military still seems loyal and they continue to strike back at the Libyan people, even as this effort to try to achieve a ceasefire and try to reduce violence there, we still see continuing artillery barrages violating the whole effort.

Mr. SMITH. If I could focus on—what hope is there to get Russia and China to change their stance and actually be more aggressive about pressuring the Assad regime?

Secretary PANETTA. I think the fact that—obviously, that was a concern when they initially voted against the Security [Council] Resolution that would have taken action here, but they have come around, they have supported the resolution that was adopted, supporting Annan and his effort to try to achieve a ceasefire, and diplomatic pressure is being brought on both Russia and China, particularly Russia has had a longstanding relationship in that part of the world with Syria, to bring pressure on them to exercise whatever influence they can to try to ensure that they abide by the Annan plan.

So there is some progress being made on that front. The additional steps that are important is that the international community continues to be very unified in taking action against that regime. There are additional sanctions that can be applied. We applied some very significant sanctions, they are having—they are putting great pressure on the regime itself. That pressure needs to continue.

The third thing that I would indicate is that this is a broad-based insurgency, and I think it is fair to say that the Intelligence Community feels that because it is a broad-based insurgency, yes, he can strike back, and yes, he can try to continue to hold on, but ultimately his days are numbered and ultimately he will be taken down.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is all I have.

The CHAIRMAN. The committee will recess now until we are able to return after the votes. Thank you very much.

[Recess.]

The CHAIRMAN. The committee will come to order.

Mr. Bartlett.

Mr. BARTLETT. Thank you. Mr. Secretary, in your oral testimony, you noted that the Administration has publicly committed to sending communications equipment to Syrian opposition groups and hu-

manitarian organizations. I am aware of American companies that can provide the necessary hardware to the Syrian opposition groups and humanitarian efforts. What steps is the Administration taking to ensure the allocated funding and potential future allocations are dedicated to the procurement of U.S.-manufactured equipment? What steps are being taken to ensure American-made technologies are being reviewed and properly vetted?

Secretary PANETTA. Congressman, I think I will yield to General Dempsey on this as well.

Secretary PANETTA. But my sense is that most of the communications gear that we are talking about is made in this country, and that is primarily the communications gear that we would be transferring to the opposition leaders.

General DEMPSEY. I have nothing further to add to that, Congressman. That program is being supervised by the Department of State.

Mr. BARTLETT. The State Department, other than the Office of Political Military Affairs, is typically not charged with providing communications equipment to besieged areas. And it is my understanding that the political and military affairs personnel at stake are not actively involved in determining the nature of what equipment should be distributed to Syria. Seeing as how the Department of Defense would have more precedent in such a role, what inter-agency coordination is occurring between the Department of State and Department of Defense?

Secretary PANETTA. Congressman, there is ongoing coordination with the Department of Defense, or with the Department of State, on this issue. We do have a liaison that is there and working with them, but let me give you a more in-depth report as to what the level of that relationship is like. But there is—there is a military liaison that is working with the State Department on this issue.

General DEMPSEY. I have nothing to add, Congressman.

Mr. BARTLETT. Thank you very much. I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Ms. Sanchez.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you both gentlemen, for being here once again and for your service to our country. As you know, Russia has not been very cooperative in moving the U.N. closer to authorizing some form of action in Syria. And I know a lot of us have been disappointed in trying to move something. Some Members have suggested that we use some sort of pressure on Russia to help convince them to be more helpful. For example, we could fence Cooperative Threat Reduction funds. Do you believe that is a good idea? Why or why not?

Secretary PANETTA. You know, at this stage, obviously the State Department is the one that is taking the lead in dealing with Russia, so I am not going to kind of prejudge what the State should or should not use as leverage with Russia. At this point, I would have to say that Russia has been cooperative with regards to enacting support for Annan's effort at a ceasefire. They seem to be working with the international community in trying to advance that ceasefire and getting it in place.

The most important leverage, frankly, for Russia, is to try to make sure that they understand that, in fact, their interests are

served by taking these steps, because once Assad goes, the interests that they have in Syria are going to go away unless they participate with the international community.

Ms. SANCHEZ. General.

General DEMPSEY. Thank you, Congresswoman. Just if I could broaden the aperture a bit and point out the places where we are cooperating with Russia in a very positive way.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Great. I am not suggesting that I am one of those but do I hear from my colleagues we should—

General DEMPSEY. Sure, yeah. And I guess my point would be we have to understand it in the context of the entire relationship, not this particular issue in isolation because we have terrific cooperation with them on the northern distribution network out of Afghanistan, counterterrorism, counterpiracy, counternarcotics. So I think we have to understand the entire thing in context and deal with them as we would other nations with whom we have a variety of relationships.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Gentlemen, some have said that if we would just, and I quote this very loosely, “handle Syria,” that that would help us in what is brewing with respect to Iran, that one of the effects of military is that, of course, Assad has one of the largest army ground troops in the area and that that sort of buttresses Iran’s, you know, some have called it bullying in the area. What do you say to that? That somehow Syria—that if we would get involved in Syria and we could help the people there move on to a more democratic or different type of government, that it would help us to bring the threat of Iran down in the neighborhood?

Secretary PANETTA. There is absolutely no question that if the Assad regime comes down that the one country in that part of the world that is even going to be further isolated is Iran. And Iran knows that and that is the reason they continue to provide some assistance to Assad is because they know that their interests are in maintaining the Assad regime, not in seeing it go down.

General DEMPSEY. The other thing I think I would add, Congresswoman, is the fall of the Assad regime would be a serious blow to Iran, and I think General Jim Mattis has testified before this body to that effect. But saying that it is the key would be analogous to saying you are going to solve a Rubik’s cube puzzle by lining up one side and neglecting the other three. This is a very complex region of the world and there are no, as the Secretary said in his opening comments, there are no silver bullets out there.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Secretary, are there any circumstances under which the United States would get involved militarily? For example, what if Turkey invoked Article 5 of our NATO charter?

Secretary PANETTA. I think it is clear that the only way that the United States would get involved militarily is if there is a consensus in the international community to try to do something along those lines and then obviously ensure that the international community is able to get the authorities required in order to make that happen. The one area with regards to Article 5 in Turkey, Article 5 has only been enacted once after 9/11, as I recall. But they would have to make clear that what is happening there really does truly represent a direct threat to Turkey. And I think at this point that is probably a stretch.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Thank you. And thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the time.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Mr. Jones.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much, and Mr. Secretary, General Dempsey, thank you for being here today. And Mr. Secretary, if the situation changes, and you believe that use of force in Syria becomes necessary, will this Administration seek authorization from Congress before taking action?

Secretary PANETTA. We will—we will clearly work with Congress if it comes to the issue of the use of force. This Administration wants to work within the War Powers provision to ensure that we work together, and not separately.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Secretary, as a former Member of Congress, I have the biggest concern, and this has not pointed at this Administration, it could be at any administration that they seem to want to take the authority to decide whether or not they need to go into a country that is not been a threat, they might have evil dictators, they might have problems in those countries. But I have been very concerned. I actually went to the Federal courts with Dennis Kucinich and two other Republicans and two other Democrats. We went to the courts because of the decision and how it was made—I realize you were not there at the time—about Libya. I continue, and the American people seem to agree, that we in Congress have not exerted our Constitutional responsibilities when it comes to war. And I hope that if there is a decision including Iran as well as Syria, if the decision is made to commit American forces, that the President would feel an obligation to the American people, not to Congress necessarily, but the American people to explain and justify why we would take that kind of action.

And again, I am talking about a situation where we are not being attacked, we just see things happening in other countries that we don't approve of. And I would hope, and I think you did give me this answer, but if you would reaffirm that if we have to use military force and as we are going to initiate that force, was it going to be our initiation that causes that force that the President, any President would come to Congress and the American people and justify the need to attack.

Secretary PANETTA. Congressman, as you understand, this President as other presidents will operate pursuant to the Constitution. The Constitution makes clear that the Commander in Chief should act when the vital interests of this country are in jeopardy. And I believe this President believes that if that, in fact, is the case he would do that in partnership with Congress in terms of taking any action.

Mr. JONES. Well, I will make another statement and then I will work toward a closing, Mr. Chairman. I remember my good friend, Randy Forbes from Virginia, asked Secretary Gates when we went in and it seemed like the Administration if they called the leadership of the House and Senate, it must have been one call each House, each Senate. And Mr. Forbes asked Mr. Gates if the Libyans fired missiles in New York City, would that be an act of war? And I will have to say, because my friend from Virginia is a very articulate and a very intelligent gentleman, that he never got a straight answer.

So I hope that you will prevail upon the Administration not to take those kind of actions as they did in Libya, whether it was justified or not. We won't get into that debate, but in my opinion that was really kind of a snub of Congress and the responsibility of Congress based on the Constitution.

Secretary PANETTA. Congressman, what I can assure you of is as long as I am Secretary, we won't take any action without proper legal authority.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Secretary, thank you very much. And with that, Mr. Chairman, I will yield back my 39 seconds.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Mr. Andrews.

Mr. ANDREWS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you Mr. Secretary and Chairman, your service is both an inspiration to us and a blessing to our country. We thank you very much for it.

I want to congratulate the Administration on your success with Russia and China, moving them to a very different place on this issue as compared to where they were just a few weeks ago. And Mr. Secretary, I think that the data you gave us about the exchange rate for the Syrian currency and the GDP are a reflection of the effectiveness of that coalition. But you also note that we do not yet have the level of consensus in the Arab world that existed for the Libyan problem. What do you see as the principle obstacles to achieving that kind of consensus with respect to Syrian regime?

Secretary PANETTA. I think the Arab world is struggling with the same issues that the whole international community is struggling with which is, in order to take additional actions, what in fact does make sense? You know, who is the opposition? How can we best assist the opposition? How do we best provide the kind of help that the Syrian people need in order to overcome the situation? What kind of pressures would best be placed on Assad in order to force that regime downward?

All of those same difficult complex issues that the whole international community is dealing with, the Arab community is confronting as well. In Libya, that all came together; in Syria, it is still a difficult challenge to try to put those pieces together.

Mr. ANDREWS. Do you suppose, this is a hypothesis, that the cohering factor in the Libyan situation was a sense that Qadhafi had completely lost the support of his own people, and no one wanted to be associated with a regime that was illegitimate in that sense? Do you think that Assad has simply not reached that point with his own people yet or is there some other factor that is diverting us from that consensus?

Secretary PANETTA. I think it is the factors that I pointed out in my testimony make this different from Libya. The fact that number 1, he does still enjoy, as I said, the loyalty of a good chunk of the Army and the military, and that makes it more challenging in terms of trying to undermine the regime. Secondly the opposition is dispersed, there are a lot of groups there that represent the opposition. In Libya, there were some different tribal groups that made up the opposition, they were holding territory. We knew who they were, we could define what the opposition was that needed assistance. This is much more difficult, there aren't geographic areas that are being held by the opposition, it is much more of an insurgency kind of opposition.

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Secretary, if I may, taking off on that, you mentioned the phrase "vital national interest" a few minutes ago. Do you agree with the proposition that it is a vital national interest to the United States to discourage regimes which could serve as an incubator for asymmetric warfare against the United States?

Secretary PANETTA. I think that would, you know, obviously have to be debated on the issue of does it directly impact our vital interest? I guess an argument could be made along those lines. I would think in this case, it is really important for the international community. If we are going to continue to work with the international community, if we are going to be a partner with them in deciding what additional actions ought to be taking place, that it ought to be within the international context that decisions for action ought to be taken.

Mr. ANDREWS. How would you characterize the public record of the relationship between Syria and Hezbollah?

Secretary PANETTA. The public record, and more importantly, the intelligence record that we have is that there is always been a close relationship between Syria and Hezbollah, and that Hezbollah has always had some level of protection.

Mr. ANDREWS. Do you agree with the proposition that the weaker Hezbollah is, the better the United States is?

Secretary PANETTA. Hezbollah, in our book, is a terrorist organization, they have spread terror not only in that region, but elsewhere, and anything—anything done to weaken a terrorist group is in our interest.

Mr. ANDREWS. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much. Mr. Forbes.

Mr. FORBES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Secretary, thank you for being here and General Dempsey, we thank you for your service, you are both good men, you have served your country well, and we just are honored that you would be here and share your thoughts with us here today. We know you have a tremendous challenge, and the risk to the country out there is huge today. And when we talk about vital national interest, probably there is no greater vital national interest that we have than the rule of law. So sometimes we have to just ferret that out and see what that is.

And as I understand what you have indicated to this committee, Mr. Secretary, and correct me if I am wrong, you believe that before we would take military action against Syria, that it would be a requirement to have a consensus of permission with the international community before that would happen. Is that a fair statement, and if not, would you tell me what the proper—

Secretary PANETTA. I think that is a fair statement.

Mr. FORBES. If that is fair, then I would like to come back to the question Mr. Jones asked, just so we know, I know you would never do anything that you didn't think was legally proper, and you said that the Administration would have proper legal authority before they would take any military action. So my question is what is proper legal authority? And I come back to, as Mr. Jones pointed out with the War Powers Act, it is unlikely we would have a declaration of war, but that would be one of the things. Certainly we know if there was a national attack, that would be one of them.

And then the second thing, of course, the joint—the War Powers Act would be specific statutory authorization. Do you feel that it would be a requirement to have proper legal authority that if you did not have a declaration of war or an attack on the United States, that you would have to have specific statutory authority, in other words the permission of Congress, before you take military action against Syria?

Secretary PANETTA. We would not take action without proper legal authority.

Mr. FORBES. And I understand, and in all due respect, I don't want to put you in interrogation, but we are trying to find out what exactly proper legal authority is, because that is what we have to act under. And we don't have the President here to chat with him or have a cup of coffee with him, and ask him, you are the closest we get. And so we ask it from your understanding and as Secretary of Defense, what is proper legal authority? Would that require specific statutory authorization from the United States Congress if we had not had a declaration of war or an attack upon the United States?

Secretary PANETTA. Well, again let me put it on the this basis, this Administration intends to operate pursuant to the War Powers Act, and whatever the War Powers Act would require in order for us to engage, we would abide by.

Mr. FORBES. Again, Mr. Secretary, thank you for putting up with me as I just try to stumble through this and understand it. But as I read the War Powers Act, it has those three requirements, are there any other requirements that you are familiar with that I am leaving out or not reading?

Secretary PANETTA. No.

Mr. FORBES. If that is the case, then again, I just come back to if there is no declaration of war, no attack upon the United States, and if we are going to comply with the War Powers Act, would that require specific statutory authority by Congress before we took military action?

Secretary PANETTA. Again, under the Constitution, as I indicated, the Commander in Chief has the authority to take action, that involves the vital interest of this country, but then pursuant to the War Powers Act, we would have to take steps to get congressional approval. That is the process that we would follow.

Mr. FORBES. You would have to take steps to get that approval, but would the approval be required before you would take military action against Syria?

Secretary PANETTA. As I understand the Constitution and the power of the President, that the President could, in fact, deploy forces if he had to under—if our vital interest were at stake, but that ultimately then under the War Powers Act, we would have to come here for your support.

Mr. FORBES. So would you get the support of Congress after you began military op—

Secretary PANETTA. In that particular situation, yes.

Mr. FORBES. And then just one last thing and make sure I am stating this correctly, it is your position that the Administration's position would be that we would have to get a consensus of permission from the international community before we would act, but

that we wouldn't have to get specific statutory authority from Congress before we would act?

Secretary PANETTA. Well, I think in that situation, if the international action is taken pursuant to a Security Council resolution, or under our treaty obligations with regards to NATO that obviously we would participate with the international community. But then ultimately, the Congress of the United States, pursuant to its powers of the purse, would be able to determine whether or not that action is appropriate or not.

Mr. FORBES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Mrs. Davis.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary and General Dempsey, we certainly appreciate your being here and all of your dedicated service.

I wanted to ask you more about the opposition groups. I think you have been quite clear that it is a diverse group and probably hard to read them in many ways. Are there several issues where you see them fragmenting or coalescing and particularly as it would relate to trying to broker any kind of agreement with the Assad regime short of eliminating it?

Secretary PANETTA. As I have indicated, there are a number of groups that are involved in the opposition. It has not always been easy to get those groups to be able to coalesce. There are some outside Syrian groups that are making an effort to do that.

There has been better progress by other countries that have tried to, one way or another, provide assistance to try to urge those groups to coalesce, and there has been a little more progress on that front, but it is still a difficult challenge.

General DEMPSEY. What I would add, Congresswoman, is—and it kind of threads back to an earlier question—why does it seem so difficult to get the countries in the region to coalesce around a single unifying idea here, I think it is because they are extraordinarily cautious about what comes next. To thread these two themes together, a different regime or a different governance model in Syria will affect the relationship of Ankara, Damascus, Cairo, Riyadh, Tehran, Baghdad. It will. Now, that is not to predict some negative outcome, but it will change. I think what they are circling around here is can they get a little clearer idea of what might happen on the other end of this. So these two thoughts are linked, I think.

Mrs. DAVIS. In thinking as well about some of the efforts that we have undergone there in terms of humanitarian missions, how are we protecting those, if at all? What is happening in that arena? And to what extent do we think it is going to have a positive effect or helping to mobilize others and/or bring the opposition groups together in any way? What effect does it have?

Secretary PANETTA. The humanitarian assistance, obviously, the State Department is directing most of that assistance, but it is going through programs like the World Food Program. There is about \$10.5 million that is being dispersed in food rations. The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees is providing medical services and supplies, food and water, blankets, hygiene kits, and heaters at about \$8.5 million. And the International Committee on the Red Cross is providing relief supplies under their authorities at about

\$3 million. And there are some NGOs [Non-governmental Organizations] that are providing some additional assistance as well.

Most of that—I think it is fair to say, Congresswoman, that a lot of it is probably being done in the refugee areas where a lot of the refugees have gathered; and we have an extensive number of refugees both on the Turkish and Jordanian borders that have located there.

Mrs. DAVIS. So less so in cities, less so in areas where it needs to be protected—

Secretary PANETTA. I think that is correct.

Mrs. DAVIS [continuing]. As it is going to the population.

Is there any perception through those efforts that we are there to help the people of Syria? That we have ongoing efforts?

Secretary PANETTA. Yes, I think it has been made clear that we are trying to do whatever we can to provide that help. We are making efforts to try to do some outreach into Syria itself, to try to assist those who have been harmed and try to see what we can do to provide assistance there as well. It is a much more difficult challenge.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Wilson.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, Chairman Dempsey, thank you for your service. I appreciate it as a veteran and also a very grateful parent of a son serving in the military.

In the context of the instability that you are reviewing, I'm very concerned about the sequestration of the defense budget, which would be a reduction of 8–12 percent beginning next January. You both have correctly warned of the hollowing out of the military, but people are still confused because they have heard and seen a \$100 billion cut, a \$487 billion cut, and now a pending \$600 billion cut. It is just total confusion.

What message do you have to the American people? What do you want them to know about the effect of sequestration, Mr. Secretary and General?

Secretary PANETTA. Congressman, I tried to make clear time and time and time again that sequestration and the cuts involved in sequestration would be a disaster for the Defense Department and would truly hollow out our force and weaken our national defense.

We are already cutting close to half a trillion dollars pursuant to the Budget Control Act. We have made those proposals. They are part of our budget. We are doing that over 10 years. And that has been difficult. It has been a difficult challenge to try to do it pursuant to a strategy and do it in a way that protects our national defense.

Sequester, which is a whole other set of cuts that are out there that are supposed to take effect in January, represent a \$500–600 billion across-the-board meat ax approach to the budget that would impact every area of the defense budget, regardless of policy, regardless of strategy, and blindly strike at every area of the defense budget.

So for that reason, obviously, we have urged the Congress, we have urged whoever we can to work together to make sure that doesn't happen.

General DEMPSEY. I would add, Congressman, in terms of what message to the American people, so I think, first and foremost, that the military is not oblivious to the economic ills of the Nation and have done our best to contribute as part of the equation of national power, which includes economic, diplomatic, and military power. All three have to be in balance. Therefore, we have stepped up to the plate and done our best to make better use of our resources.

Secondly, we adjusted our strategy after the lessons of 10 years of war and our projection on what the Nation would need in 2020, and we mapped the '13-'17 budget to it, absorbing the \$487 billion cut. And that if we have to absorb more cuts, we have got to go back to the drawing board and adjust our strategy.

What I'm saying to you today is that the strategy that we would have to adjust to would in my view not meet the needs of the Nation in 2020 because the world is not getting any more stable. It is getting increasingly unstable, for all of the reasons we are talking about here today.

So, I think we've done as much as we can do, given what I know about the future we are about to confront.

Mr. WILSON. I particularly appreciate your pointing out this is not a peace dividend. The world is so dangerous, and so thank you for emphasizing that.

Additionally, General, I am very concerned about the National Guard. This year, the Administration has been proposing a reduction in 100,000 personnel in the ground forces in the Army and the Marines. But, fortunately, in a way for the Guard, that is Active Duty. But I see a threat to the Guard. If there was sequestration, a concern I have, or reduction in the size of our Army Guard, that has already had an impact on the Air Guard, which I think is not good, but the cuts, how large will these be? A 50,000 reduction? A 100,000 reduction? What could our governors, our TAGs [The Adjutant Generals], the National Guard families see coming their way?

General DEMPSEY. Our job as the Joint Chiefs is to keep the force in balance and have enough of it ready to go tonight and a different amount of it ready to go in 30 days, 6 months, or a year. And that is how we balance the force against requirements.

The reason the Army—and I was the Chief at the time—didn't take any of this reduction out of the Guard is because we had grown the Active Force over the past 10 years by about 65,000. We had not grown the Guard. We had about 8,000. So when we absorbed the cuts, we didn't take many of those cuts off of the Guard because we hadn't grown the Guard. We wanted the Guard to be about the size it was.

If you are asking me would a further reduction in our budget authority result in an effect on the Army National Guard, yes. I can't tell you today how deeply, because it would depend on the depth of the cut. If we have to make more cuts and if our responsibility remains keeping the force in balance, it will affect both Active Guard and Reserve.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you very much for your concern. I just see cuts of dramatic effect affecting American families and our security. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much for your answers on the sequestration. I think this is one of the most difficult issues facing our defense. And we understand that defense has to be on the table, and we have been there. These cuts that we are going through right now are enormous. And the fact that defense accounts for 20 percent of the budget and we have taken 50 percent of the savings out of defense is something that cannot be overlooked.

What we really need to understand is we cannot solve our Nation's financial difficulties on the backs of the military. And the thing that we really need to keep in mind is if we eliminated the whole discretionary budget, defense, all discretionary spending, we would still be running a half-trillion-dollar deficit. So what we really need to do is to fix the mandatory spending side of the budget.

Mr. Kissell.

Mr. KISSELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, gentlemen, for being here today and your service.

We have talked about the differences between Syria and Libya. We have talked about trying to identify the different influences of the different folks within Syria and how tough it is to predict an outcome and where this might go.

So I'm going to put you a little bit on the spot, Mr. Secretary. We have seen sometimes democracy, when you give people the choice, they don't always choose necessarily what we would like for them to choose. So democracy can be unpredictable, as we are seeing in some of the results of Arab Spring heading in different directions as it plays itself out.

Scenarios for Syria, as you indicated, it is not a matter of if but when this regime falls. What do we anticipate, maybe best-case, worst-case outcome being? What kind of government, what kind of relationships within Syria? What would be some of the things we could look for?

Secretary PANETTA. Congressman, at some point you probably ought to sit down with our intelligence analysts to discuss some of those possible options.

I will give you some sense. This can happen in a good way, and it can happen in a bad way. If the Assad regime—if we can do this pursuant to the Annan ceasefire and the reforms that he is suggesting and it is done in a politically careful way in terms of implementing the reforms that have to be done and you can have Assad move out and try to develop, you know, a government that would be able to take its place, that would be subject to, hopefully, a vote of the people and implement the kind of democratic reforms that ultimately the people deserve, that would be the best way for it to play out. And it could be done in a way that recognizes that there are divided populations in Syria but that all of them would be brought into that kind of government. That would be the best way for this to move forward.

The worst way is that suddenly it comes down. Various tribes, the various segments of that population that are there begin to assert themselves and you have the beginnings of some kind of civil

war that takes place within there to try to assert who should take charge. And that would probably be the worst development.

Somewhere in between, hopefully, you can get some of the reforms that need to take place. But, you know, it could take us in a better direction. So there is a range of possibilities that are there. But I think the bottom line is that anything that takes the Assad regime down is a step in the right direction right now.

What the international community has to assure is that, if that happens, it happens in the context of legitimate reforms that keep that country together and that serve the Syrian people.

Mr. KISSELL. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

General Dempsey, you mentioned that the relationship between the government and the military is strong right now. Is there a basis for that relationship being strong in terms of maybe just the Generals saying we are going to stay with whoever we think is going to come out on top? Is there a situation, scenario, where that might change and the military might withdraw some of that support and make some other things possible?

General DEMPSEY. Yes, I think there are conditions. I would like to think that the military leaders in Syria would recognize that using the kind of violence they are using against their own citizens is a fool's errand and that at some point that will jeopardize them as an institution.

By the way, that could be one of the reasons they are beginning to hold on tighter now, is that they have used this violence and if now they return to garrison and allow a referendum to occur, change government, I think they will feel themselves to be at great risk.

I was going to say what we need to do, but this is best solved by the regional actors with our support because, you know, there is a scenario where, at the end of this, those that are arrayed around Assad become the oppressed and, as the Secretary described it, we end up in a situation that is a prolonged civil war.

So, yes, I think there is reason to believe that the military could come to understand that they are on a path to their own destruction as an institution. But I think that case has to be made by regional players, less so by us.

Mr. KISSELL. Thank you, gentlemen.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Turner.

Mr. TURNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, Chairman Dempsey, I want to thank you for your strong statements this week on the issues of addressing sexual assault in the military. I think your leadership is well needed, and I appreciate your strong statements and your strong action.

We had a meeting yesterday with General Amos. We understand, General Dempsey, he is certainly echoing your strong commitment. We appreciate the efforts of both of you. It makes a big difference to the men and women who are serving.

General, you just said that the world is becoming increasingly unstable. And, Mr. Secretary, you have recently said every day we are within an inch of war. I think as we look to the issue of Syria we know that Russia and China have blocked two United Nations Security Council resolutions with respect to Syria, and certainly I

think that takes us to an issue of, when we look to the world and instability, of a question with regard to Russia and China.

With regard to Russia, we have seen public reports that they continue to arm the Syrian military, have sent Russian advisors to Syria, and have deployed naval forces off the Syrian coast. My first question is, Mr. Secretary, how would you say that Russia is supporting Syria's military today?

Secondly, I want to switch to China, which unavoidably takes us to the issue of North Korea. North Korea's recent ballistic missile launch failed. Many people sighed with relief, but I think that is probably misplaced relief in that we know that North Korea continues its quest for missile technology and most recently, in the observance of the 100th anniversary of the birth of the founder of the dictatorship, brought forward their new road-mobile missile. Secretary Gates previously indicated that North Korea is becoming a direct threat to the United States.

I recently wrote to Secretary Clinton and General Clapper—and I ask that my letter be made a part of the record—over my concern of what appears to be China's support for the new North Korean missile that was unveiled.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. TURNER. Thank you.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on pages 49–57.]

Mr. TURNER. Specifically, a transporter erector launcher system for the new missile that appears to be of Chinese origin.

So my second question then is, Mr. Secretary, can you tell me your concerns over China supporting North Korea's missiles, and is North Korea a direct threat to the United States? Is that something that we are witnessing and have to be concerned with China and their involvement?

Secretary PANETTA. Look, there is no question that North Korea's capabilities with regards to ICBMs [inter-continental ballistic missiles] and their developing nuclear capability represent a threat to the United States. For that reason, we take North Korea and their provocative actions very seriously.

Regardless of the success or failure of that effort at the launch—and it was a huge failure—the fact is it was a provocation. Taking that step was condemned and should have been condemned, and our hope is that they don't take any additional provocative actions. The history is that they usually turn somewhere else to try to do something provocative. We hope they don't do that.

We are prepared from the Defense Department's point of view to deal with any contingency. But there is growing concern about the mobile capabilities that were on display in the parade recently in North Korea. I have to tell you, we need, frankly, to get better intelligence as to exactly what those capabilities are, exactly what is real and what is not real here in order to determine exactly what that threat represents.

But I think the bottom line is, if they in fact have a mobile capability to be able to have ICBMs deployed in that manner, that that increases the threat coming from North Korea.

Mr. TURNER. Before the time is expired, the concern then is China's involvement with North Korea being able to make these ad-

vances, support for the systems, and then, of course, Russia's involvement with Syria?

Secretary PANETTA. We have made very clear to China that China has a responsibility here to make sure that North Korea, if they want to improve the situation with their people, if they want to become a part of the international family, if they in fact want to deal with the terrible issues that are confronting North Korea, there is a way to do that. And China ought to be urging them to engage in those kinds of diplomatic negotiations. We thought we were making some progress, and suddenly we are back at provocation.

Mr. TURNER. The concern, obviously, is that, beyond just diplomacy, if the equipment itself has trade and technology exchanges.

Secretary PANETTA. I am sure there has been some help coming from China. I don't know the exact extent of it. I think we would have to deal with it in another context in terms of the sensitivity of that information. But clearly there has been assistance along those lines.

With regards to Russia, Russia has a long history of having provided military assistance and economic assistance to Syria. The good news is that Russia is now working with us to try to get a ceasefire and hopefully put that in place. They are, I think, at least working with the international community right now. But the reality is that Russia could have a much more significant impact on Syria and on Assad if they were willing to assert that.

Mr. TURNER. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Ms. Speier.

Ms. SPEIER. Thank you, Mr. Secretary and General.

Let me ask, Secretary Panetta, violence has not abated. The initiatives by U.N. Special Envoy Annan have been undertaken, but when do we determine that they are not successful and move on to plan B?

Secretary PANETTA. I think that is what Secretary Clinton is dealing with in Paris as we speak, which is to look at that situation, to determine what the next steps are with regards to the Annan initiative.

I think there is an effort to try to, obviously, deploy monitors that can go in and determine whether or not those violations are taking place. There is also consideration of perhaps a peacekeeper initiative to try to back up the Annan initiative with peacekeepers. What the final decisions are, are going to rest with the international community.

Ms. SPEIER. In terms of arms flowing to Syria from Iran, do we have credible estimates on what is flowing from Iran into Syria?

Secretary PANETTA. I think, to discuss that in depth, we really ought to do it in the context of an intelligence briefing.

Ms. SPEIER. All right.

General Dempsey, I'm concerned about the report that NATO's assessment of the Libya air campaign found that there were numerous problems with cooperation when it came to sharing target information and sharing analytical capabilities. How are we incorporating the lessons learned from Libya into our current actions in Syria?

General DEMPSEY. I actually was encouraged that the lessons learned were credible and transparent, because I was a bit afraid that there was going to be this euphoria about Libya as a template for future actions that would have taken us down a path that probably would be ill-advised.

So I am alert to that. I'm actually going to Brussels next week to meet with my NATO CHODs [Chiefs of Defense]. One of the agenda items is, in fact, Operation Unified Protection.

What we have got to do is we have got to be candid with each other—I can assure you I will be—about what they can reasonably expect us to provide, what they need to provide in terms of ISR [Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance], the analysis fusion of intelligence and operations, and investments that they need to make in order to close some gaps that heretofore they relied almost exclusively on us to provide. So I actually see this as a positive thing.

Ms. SPEIER. General, what do you think are the greatest risks if the United States intervenes?

General DEMPSEY. In Syria?

Ms. SPEIER. Yes.

General DEMPSEY. First of all, on occasion I have been portrayed as saying this would just be too hard, so let's not do it. I want to assure you that is not the case. If asked to do something, we absolutely have the capability.

But in terms of my concerns and how they would translate into military advice, I would have to be very clear about the military objectives that I was being asked to achieve, and I would have to be clear about how those military objectives were contributing to some outcome that we would all understand and probably agree upon.

So what is the outcome? If it is just stopping the violence, that is one outcome. If it is changing the regime, that is another outcome. But the point is I can build from that outcome. I can build military options.

My other responsibility is to balance the risk to the mission. What would be the cost of doing this in lives and equipment? And the risk to the force? Because it is a zero sum game. We are deployed all over the world. If I am asked to do something in Syria, if the Secretary turns to me and says, I need this option developed, then my responsibility is to assure that I understand the military objective, I build an option that will deliver it, and that I articulate the risk, not just to the mission we are talking about but to our global responsibilities. And it is all an integrated part of my advice.

Ms. SPEIER. Thank you.

I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Wittman.

Mr. WITTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Panetta and General Dempsey, thank you for joining us and thank you for your service to our Nation.

Secretary Panetta, I will begin with you. I want to follow up on your scenarios of looking at U.S. engagement in Syria. You spoke about engaging the international community, looking at NATO partners, and making a decision about that particular engagement.

Do you envision a scenario where the U.S. would act unilaterally? And do you also look at a situation where, in any scenario, would the U.S. look at a broader combat perspective on that? In other words, will we have boots on the ground moving into a peace-keeping operation in that scenario? So I want to get your perspective on that.

Secretary PANETTA. At this point in time, Congressman, the decision is that we will not have any boots on the ground and that we will not act unilaterally in that part of the world.

Mr. WITTMAN. I just wanted to make sure that we were looking at those particular scenarios.

General Dempsey, to get your perspective, we see what is happening in Syria. We also see the Arab Spring. That has unfolded in the Middle East over the last 18 months. As you look at that scenario, are you concerned about the continual expansion of the effort by Assad in Syria maybe moving to other areas in the Middle East—Turkey, Lebanon, Iraq? What is your perspective on what potentially this holds if this effort in Syria continues?

General DEMPSEY. Again, speaking as the principal military advisor to this body and the President's SecDef [Secretary of Defense] and National Security Advisor, I don't see the Assad model spreading. I think quite the opposite. I think the model is that previously suppressed populations, seeing what is happening around them, are beginning to rebel against the traditional strongmen, who in many cases have been from the minority side of the demographic equation.

That is why I agree with the Secretary that change in Syria is inevitable. I don't know how long it will take for it to occur, but it will occur. I have concerns about that. Because I think long term we are all eager to see these populations that have long not been reaping the benefits of the resources in their country, have been suppressed politically, and in some cases have been suppressed even in terms of their religious freedoms and certainly women's rights.

I think that long term this will become a stabilizing influence. But I think getting from here to there is going to be a wild ride. So I think we are in for 10–15 years of instability in a region that has already been characterized by instability.

Mr. WITTMAN. Let me ask you, too, on this line, General Allen was here testifying before us last month talking about operations in Afghanistan. I want to get, both Secretary Panetta and General Dempsey, your perspectives.

His comments were this. He said that he saw the use of U.S. power there extending past 2013. I want to get your perspective on that and understand, do you agree with General Allen? Are you looking to him as far as his guidance, his thought about how we utilize our current forces there, as we are drawing down? What is necessary past 2013?

Because I think all of these parts of what happens not only in the Middle East but also there in Afghanistan and obviously our efforts there in Iraq are all intertwined, so I want to get your perspectives on that.

Secretary PANETTA. Congressman, you bet we are listening to General Allen. He is the best. He has exercised tremendous leader-

ship out there and tremendous dedication and, more importantly, he has put together a very good plan for the future with regards to Afghanistan.

As I have pointed out, 2011 was a turning point. We have seen the Taliban weaken. They have not organized an effort to regain any area that they have lost. They have engaged in these sporadic hits. And we expect that they will continue. They are resilient. But they have been weakened.

More importantly, the Afghan people themselves have rejected them.

More importantly than that, the Afghan Army is beginning to operate on its own. These events that took place in Kabul over the weekend told us, told General Allen, that the Afghan Army, the Afghan police, are in fact becoming an effective force to achieve security in Afghanistan.

And more importantly, the transitions are working. We have two tranches of transitions that have occurred. Fifty percent of the population is now under Afghan security and control. The third tranche, which is to take place this year, will put 75 percent of the people under Afghan security and control.

So the plan and the strategy that General Allen has developed, and that NATO supports, is to proceed with that plan to take us through 2013 and be able to complete the final transitions and then draw down to the end of 2014. And then, beyond that, to have an enduring presence there that represents a continuing effort to provide support to the Afghans on counterterrorism, on training, advice and assist and other areas.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Mr. Larsen.

Mr. LARSEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, thanks for being here.

General Dempsey, earlier, before votes, you were answering questions about chemical and biological weapons in Syria, and I don't want to recharacterize your comments so I will say what I thought I heard, and then you can recharacterize more accurately.

Did you say that you thought we had sufficient transparency into the security and location of the Syrian chemical and biological weapons caches?

General DEMPSEY. I did. To recharacterize it, I believe we have sufficient intelligence on their facilities related to chemical and biological weapons in consultation with our close allies in the region.

Mr. LARSEN. The second part of that question is kind of the "so what" question. So what if we do? Does that mean that we are in a position to do something about it if the circumstance arises where we need to do something about it, and are we willing to do that, and who makes that call?

General DEMPSEY. Well, let me start where you began, which is the "so what" of it. As we watch these facilities and monitor—if you are talking about what are our vital national interests in that particular country, it seems to me that the proliferation or the potential proliferation of chemical and biological weapons, that is to say weapons of mass destruction, would be right at the top of the list.

Mr. LARSEN. I would agree with that. In terms of the discussions we are having today about Syria and the resistance and the vio-

lence in Syria, if Syria was going to use—if we thought Syria was going to use these chemical and biological weapons, what do we do?

General DEMPSEY. Again, because of the classification of this setting, let me just assure you that we have planning that is updated constantly on actions we could take in the event that those weapons—and, by the way, the planning is being done with our allies in the region.

Secretary PANETTA. I just wanted to assure you on that last point that we have made plans to try to deal with any contingency involving those areas. Because we think that does represent the most serious concern with regards to our security.

Mr. LARSEN. I understand the classification here, and hearing that assurance is important. We can explore this later in a different venue.

Secretary Panetta, I want to change the focus a little bit. Folks have been asking about Afghanistan and China and Russia. I want to ask about the story I read this morning about Yemen. Because about 2 years ago, the current CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] director was sitting about where you are sitting as a CENTCOM [Central Command] telling us that we did understand there is a difference between a civil war and what is a counterterrorism national security interest that the U.S. is trying to be supportive of in Yemen. A lot has changed since then obviously with the Arab Spring, but I don't know that a lot has changed in terms of the U.S. staying out of a civil war versus the U.S. continuing to pursue a counterterrorism strategy in Yemen.

The story this morning about joint strikes, whether it is true or not—let's assume that it is just a story and we are reading it—that the CIA is looking at changing their strategy on how they conduct joint strikes and where they go, causes me to question whether or not—is the CIA tail-wagging the DOD [Department of Defense] dog or the State Department dog on this issue? I will just put it out to you. We need to have that answer, and you can't leave the dais until you answer that.

Secretary PANETTA. Thank you.

First of all, with regards to the story in the paper, I think those involved classified operations, and I guess I would urge you to try to get what is behind that based on that kind of classified briefing.

With regards to the larger issue—and I understand the implications of what you are asking—from DOD's perspective, and I think it is, frankly, true for Intelligence, our target there represents those terrorists—those Al Qaeda terrorists that involve a threat to this country. And there are very specific targets. This is not broad based. We are not becoming part of any kind of civil war disputes in that country. We are very precise and very targeted and will remain pursuant to those kinds of operations.

Mr. LARSEN. That is great from a DOD perspective. I guess we need a little clearer idea about the Administration's perspective, if they are changing their view about Yemen or not over the last couple of years.

Secretary PANETTA. Again, without going into specific details here, the position of the administration is that our interest in Yemen is the same interest we had in the FATA [Federally Administered Tribal Areas] and we have in Somalia, which is to go after

those terrorists—those al Qaeda terrorists who are involved in planning attacks on this country. No more, no less.

General DEMPSEY. If I may add, that is on what we are doing kinetically. But I also want to point out that we are working very closely with the military in Yemen, notably their special forces, to increase their capabilities as a building-partner-capacity endeavor. So I think it is important not to see this as we are only doing one thing and not the other. We are actually trying to round it off.

Mr. LARSEN. I appreciate that. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mrs. Roby.

Mrs. ROBY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you again for you guys being here today.

Just real briefly, over the next 3 months, can you just explain to us how you see the opposition? Do you see it fragmenting or do you see it coalescing? How do you see this playing out over the course of the next 3 months?

Secretary PANETTA. In Syria?

Mrs. ROBY. Yes. Sorry. Back to the topic.

Secretary PANETTA. If I could give you a firm answer as to what we saw happening, I probably wouldn't be in this job. I would be somewhere else.

It is a tough thing to try to look at the elements at play here and try to determine just exactly how this will play out. Obviously, Intelligence has provided its perspective on this.

I think the best thing that we can see is that, as a result of this broad-based insurgency, as a result of the international community's unified approach to dealing with Syria and applying the sanctions, applying the pressures, and continuing to indicate that Assad must step down, as a result of what the U.N. is doing now in implementing a ceasefire where you now have the support of Russia and China, there is a whole series of efforts here that I think are putting incredible pressure on the Assad regime to do the right thing. This may continue to play out. Assad will continue probably to resist these efforts, but I think it is just a matter of time before he is brought down.

General DEMPSEY. I have nothing to add, Congresswoman.

Mrs. ROBY. I guess, playing off of that, the Department of Defense's assumptions around this, how have our plans evolved specifically over the last year since we have seen the Syrian revolution commence?

Secretary PANETTA. What we do and what General Dempsey does with the service chiefs is to develop all of the plans necessary for any contingency. And whatever the President ultimately decides, we will be prepared to implement.

General DEMPSEY. Just to kind of give you the view of the region writ large, we are a NATO partner with Turkey. We have a very strong relationship with Jordan. Obviously, Israel. We are still 200–300 military strong in Iraq. And of course Iraq has a piece of this as well on their western border.

We have been meeting with leaders throughout the region. The Secretary met with President Barzani from the Kurdish region, and they have a huge interest. There are Kurd populations in northeastern Syria, in eastern Turkey, in western Iran, and in

northern Iraq. And these issues are all intertwined. So, right now, we are in the business of sharing intelligence, sharing information, building partner capacity where we can, and having the credible thread of military capability to undergird our diplomatic and economic efforts.

Mrs. ROBY. I guess what I would just add to that is, based on comments that have been made from my colleagues in their previous questioning as it related to what happened in Libya and maybe the concerns regarding the War Powers Act and how we proceeded in that action that, of all of the conflicts that we have dealt with over the past years, that the one lesson learned is end game and that there needs to be a clear defining of the mission on behalf of our troops, our military families, and also Americans. So it is my hope, and echoing the sentiments of my colleagues, that as we move through this, as you continue to share information with us, as we act in our congressional oversight role, that there will be clear lines of communication on behalf of our military families and the American people.

Secretary PANETTA. I appreciate that concern. I want to assure you that I think General Dempsey and I are unified with regards to not proceeding with any military action unless there is a clear objective, unless we know what it is going to take to achieve that objective, how long is it going to take, and ultimately do we have a legal authority to in fact accomplish what we are being asked to accomplish. And that would involve very close consultations with Congress.

Mrs. ROBY. Thank you both so much.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Franks.

Mr. FRANKS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank both of you for being here.

General Dempsey, it looks like it is a real possibility that a post-Assad government might potentially be dominated by the Muslim Brotherhood, as seems to be coming to pass in Egypt. What do you think the major likely impacts will be on the security of Israel and other U.S. interests in the region if that occurs?

General DEMPSEY. Yeah, I wouldn't personally predict it would be Muslim Brotherhood. But what we do know for a fact, just demographically, is that 70 percent of the Syrian population is of the Sunni confessional of Islam. And, therefore, you would have a pretty dramatic shift from a minority government and a majority out of power to the majority in power.

I think there will be some combination of conservative Islamic party's secular—Syria has quite a tradition of secularism that I wouldn't discount. And among the minority, the Kurds, the Druze, and the Christians, who have been supported by the Assad party, but I think they could be persuaded to become part of the government. And that's the point, I think, is that in terms of looking toward helping identify the opposition but then also holding them accountable before we support them, to committing themselves to a representative, shared government at the end of this thing so that we don't end up creating the conditions for a civil war.

Mr. FRANKS. I think that sounds good. I guess my concern is, of course, you know, in Egypt, Egypt was a fairly moderate government as far as the Arab world goes. And with their elections, they brought in about 40 percent Muslim Brotherhood, in their parliamentary elections about 20-some plus Salifis, and that is a fairly frightening coalition.

I suppose the question then should be asked: What are we doing and what more can we do to ensure that Syrian Kurds, Christians, any of the Jewish population, and other minorities there are fully protected and will have meaningful roles in building at least a religiously and ethnically tolerant democratic Syria, should the Assad regime be eventually overthrown?

We tried to do that in Iraq. Many of us were quite concerned about religious freedom there. That was not achieved, and there is a terrible purging, especially of the Christian population in Iraq now. It is a frightening thing, I think, to a lot of us. What can we do to try to prevent that dynamic from occurring in Syria in a post-Assad regime?

I direct that to either of you.

Secretary PANETTA. The things you have pointed out are truly legitimate concerns. You know, I guess the response is that if we can build democratic institutions into these countries, and to some extent we even see it—we see it in Iraq. We are beginning to see it in Egypt. We certainly see it in Libya. Which is that once you build some of these institutions where parties have to participate in governing and they have to look at how they can build coalitions and try to meet their responsibilities to the people, that, whether you like it or not, it does have some kind of moderating impact.

Even in Egypt, where I understand your concerns, the fact is that the Brotherhood, there are various segments of the Brotherhood. Some are now trying to understand that they are going to have a bigger responsibility there. They are going to have to exercise leadership with regards to every aspect of governing there.

And in Iraq, every time it looks like it is headed in one direction, the fact is that the Kurds and others that are part of that government continue to bring pressure on the president to try to stay in the right path. It doesn't always work as crisply as we would like, but the fact is it does impact on that. We are seeing some of that in Libya.

There are a lot of forces. As a result of the Arab Spring, we have unleashed a lot of forces here. But one thing I don't think we ought to lose sight of is that, as a result of all of this, we can direct and help direct those countries in a better direction than where they were. We have to stick to that.

Mr. FRANKS. Mr. Secretary, if I could try to squeeze in one last—because you're on the right track here. I guess I'm hoping that we might be able to involve some of the religious and ethnic minorities, at least in northern Syria. Because it seems to me if we do that ahead of time, we have a chance of ameliorating the issue.

And, of course, we should probably be pretty thankful to Israel for taking out the nuclear plant at this point, if the Muslim Brotherhood does gain control of Syria.

Any thoughts you may have?

Secretary PANETTA. No, I agree with what you just said.

Mr. FRANKS. Thank you.

Mr. WILSON. [Presiding.] Thank you, Mr. Franks.

It is very fitting as we conclude with Congressman Chris Gibson of New York, who himself is a distinguished veteran of service in the Mideast and in Central Asia. Congressman Gibson.

Mr. GIBSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the strong leadership in the Department of Defense of both distinguished careers of the gentlemen with us today.

I will talk about Syria in a second, but while I have the Secretary, I am very curious to hear his feedback. So I am recently back from Fort Bragg, visiting with one of the subordinate commands of the Special Operations Command. In previous work with General Clapper and the Intelligence Community—and let me say up front that it is remarkable the level of teamwork that is going on out there, but yet I feel that we are lacking in terms of systemic codification of some of the very encouraging developments over the past decade.

I am still hearing that it is not very often but it can happen that the Intelligence Community may be working a line of operation, Special Operations Command may be working a line of operation, and figuratively they will bump into each other. I know there are efforts to bring stronger collaboration in terms of information-sharing, but, given your recent history and work, I would be very curious to know now in your current capacity what your thoughts are in terms of reform to bring a closer collaboration between the Intelligence Community and the Department of Defense?

Secretary PANETTA. I would yield to General Dempsey on this as well, but from my own experience as director of the CIA and now as Secretary of Defense, at least in the history that I have been in this town, I don't think there is a better relationship between the intelligence and the military operations, special operations forces, than there is today. They are truly working together.

Whether those operations are taking place in Pakistan, Afghanistan, in Yemen, in Somalia, other parts of the world, they are unified in the approach. They are working off of strong intelligence resources that are being shared. The operations that are developing, whether they are done on a covert basis or an overt basis, are basically worked out in the operations centers that have developed in each of those areas. There is very close coordination. There isn't a target that is taken on that doesn't involve the participation of both the intelligence and military operations, and they are doing it very effectively.

I do think that we need to learn the lessons. I think you are right that we need to put in place probably the kind of lessons learned so that we can make sure that the kind of cooperation that is going on now is one that continues. That is probably my biggest concern, is that it is working well now. We are facing Al Qaeda and we are facing terrorism together. But as we are able to achieve some success there, there may be a danger that both of these may go off and try to do their own thing. That is what we have to pay attention to.

General DEMPSEY. Yes. I would only add that the sort of game-changing lessons learned over the last 10 years are the integration of ISR, SOF [Special Operations Forces], and cyber, by the way. So

I think where you are seeing us move with our new strategy is we call it a global networked approach to warfare. Global and networked are the operative words.

Think of it this way: Most of our adversaries, in fact even state actors, are not confronting us directly. They are confronting us through networks of surrogates and proxies and asymmetrically. So to defeat a network, we have to be a network.

It gets right at what you said, Congressman. We have to find ways to network our capabilities internal to the interagency of government—DHS [Department of Homeland Security], FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation], DOD, CIA, and all of those—as well then with our international partners in ways that we haven't had to do before. But we are on it. We are working it.

Mr. GIBSON. I concur with the assessment. And, of course, as we go forward, we don't want to overcodify to the point that we stifle initiative. But I am also concerned and I think I hear the same thing that much of this is based on relationships. It is forged in the crucible. And to the extent that we can codify that, that it wouldn't come to an end in the event that two individuals, very strong willed, may not get along, we still need this to work. So much to do.

Just one specific question—I see my time is getting short here. But with regard to the unrest in Syria, have there been any adverse implications, ramifications in Anbar and in Nineveh Province?

General DEMPSEY. No, not coming from Syria in. One of the biggest tribes in the Arab world, and you probably know this having served there, but it runs from northern Saudi Arabia through western Iraq and up into Syria, and there is assistance being provided on the basis of tribal relationships flowing into Syria. It is another one of the complications I mentioned. But we haven't seen any kind of backwash coming back the other way.

Mr. GIBSON. Thank you very much.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you, Mr. Gibson.

As we conclude, Mr. Secretary, thank you for being here today. Thank you for your service.

Chairman Dempsey, thank you again for your service and your commitment to our troops, military families, and veterans.

We shall be adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:17 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

APRIL 19, 2012

PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

APRIL 19, 2012

Statement of Chairman Howard P. "Buck" McKeon
Hearing on the Security Situation in the Syrian Arab Republic

April 19, 2012

Good morning ladies and gentlemen. The House Armed Services Committee meets today to receive testimony on the security situation in Syria from the Secretary of Defense, the Honorable Leon Panetta, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Martin Dempsey. Gentlemen, thank you for your distinguished service to our nation, and thank you for joining us today.

The Syrian conflict is now in its second year, and the situation remains both uncertain and dire. As we convene, a tenuous ceasefire is in place. It comes on the heels of horrifying violence at the hands of the Assad regime. Yet, even though Assad has committed to the cease-fire, press reports indicate that he continues to inflict violence on the Syrian people. President Assad's fierce crackdown has been ruthless: including flagrant human rights violations; extrajudicial killings; use of force against noncombatant civilians, including children; and interference with the provision of medical aid and humanitarian assistance. To date, United Nations estimates the death toll from the crisis at 9,000 – while other estimates put the death toll as high as 12,000.

Just over a year ago, in the midst of the Arab Spring, the Syrian people peacefully took to the streets, calling for the opportunity to elect their leadership through a free and fair democratic process. This desire for freedom and justice from an oppressive regime embodies the essence of what is driving the opposition, and is one that we can relate to and should support. The President has stated that the violence in Syria must end and that Assad must go. But it remains completely unclear how the President will accomplish those goals.

In addition to the humanitarian concerns that I believe we all share, I am very concerned about the implications for regional conflict. As recently as April 10th, Assad-backed military units shot across the border into Syrian refugee camps in Turkey, killing five individuals. Additionally, violence has spilled into Lebanon; and Iraq could begin to behave erratically as it considers the prospect of a Sunni-controlled government succeeding the Assad regime on its western border or alliances forming between Syria's Sunni opposition and Iraq's own Sunni population. Moreover, the situation presents a strategic opportunity to deal a blow to known supporters of terrorism in the region, as Iran continues to back the Assad government and groups such as Hezbollah have enjoyed support and residence in Syria.

On the other hand, there is much we do not know about the opposition. Syria also maintains robust air defenses that limit military options. Therefore, I am not recommending U.S. military intervention, particularly in light of our grave budget situation, unless the national security threat was clear and present. Nevertheless, these reflections lead me to wonder what the United States can do to stem the violence and hasten President Assad from power. We also need to understand

what we are doing to ensure the security of one of the world's largest stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons. To paraphrase General Petraeus, how does this all end?

I look forward to your insights into the security situation and way forward in Syria.

Statement of Ranking Member Adam Smith
Hearing on the Security Situation in the Syrian Arab Republic
April 19, 2012

Thank you Mr. Chairman. And I would like to thank our witnesses for appearing today to talk about this important, and difficult, situation.

The brutal actions of the Assad regime taken in a desperate attempt to maintain power are an affront to all civilized people of the world. The United Nations estimates that at least 9,000 Syrian civilians have been killed by the regime during the last year, and there is no reason to doubt that with the apparent collapse of the Kofi Annan-negotiated cease fire, many more will die at the hands of the regime in the day ahead.

There are no end of voices calling on the U.S. and the Administration to do “something.” Some point to a responsibility to protect civilians around the world from the evil actions of their own regimes, which we would all like to do. Others point out that eliminating the Assad regime would weaken Iran and pressure Hezbollah, both laudable goals. Many of these observers draw a parallel with Libya—the United States and NATO intervened in Libya, so why not Syria?

The reality is that this is a false comparison. Conditions that existed in the Libya case are simply not present regarding Syria. In the Libya case we saw a largely united international community, including other NATO members and countries in the Middle East who saw it as in their interest to take direct military action. We have not seen that at all in Syria. In fact, Russia continues to firmly stand with the Assad regime. In Libya, the opposition to the regime was relatively united, while in Syria the armed opposition is disjointed and disorganized and we lack basic knowledge of who they are.

The combat environment in Libya was comparatively simple as most fighting took place along a few roads. In Syria, fighting takes place in urban environments, which is vastly more complex. In Libya the threat of man-portable anti-air missiles was relatively easy to avoid, Syria possesses one of the densest integrated air-defense systems in the world. Libya gave up its programs to construct weapons of mass destruction ten years ago, while Syria has chemical and biological weapons stored on military bases across the country. Libya was a tribal society, while Syria is a powder keg of ethnic and religious groups who have been set at each other’s throats under the rule of the Assad family.

None of this is to say that there are no actions we can and should take in Syria. The regime is evil and, as President Obama has repeatedly stated, must give up power. But we need to acknowledge upfront that the situation in Syria is vastly more complex and that given these complexities there very well may be no military solution. We should support the Syria people in any way that we can, but we must be extremely cautious as we discuss the potential for the use of military force. Any such action will require vastly more resources than Libya, would last much

longer, and would have a vastly more complex and dangerous aftermath, and we do not have infinite resources. We cannot intervene everywhere, but instead have to make realistic judgments about when such intervention makes strategic sense and can help accomplish realistic goals.

I hope our witnesses can help us think this through today. We need to be clear ourselves and with the American people about the constraints on and risks of direct military intervention. We need to consider what other options exist, and how we should make choices about what courses to pursue. Bashar al-Assad is continuing the brutal and oppressive course charted by his father, and we would all like to see that end. I hope our witnesses can help us about if, and how, we can help bring that about.

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**SECRETARY OF DEFENSE LEON E. PANETTA
STATEMENT ON SYRIA
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, APRIL 19, 2012**

Chairman McKeon and Representative Smith, thank you for the opportunity to discuss the tense and fluid situation in Syria.

Widespread demands for political change in Syria started more than a year ago. Rather than meeting these legitimate demands, the regime of Bashar al-Assad turned instead to violence against its own people. That violence has been brutal and devastating. It has put the Syrian people in a desperate and difficult situation. It has outraged the conscience of all good people. And it has threatened stability in a very important part of the world.

The United States has made clear that the Assad regime has lost its legitimacy and that this crisis has no effective solution without Assad's departure. As the President has stated, Assad must go.

Recent days are testing whether the Assad regime will live up to all of its responsibilities to the Syrian people and to the international community. Restoring calm to cities and towns across Syria is just one test for Assad in the days ahead. Assad is responsible for fully abiding by the transition plan outlined by Joint Special Envoy Kofi Annan. He also faces deep skepticism about his motives, a skepticism based on a long train of Assad's deceitful actions to date, including broken promises to his own people and to the international community.

The United States is committed to holding the Syrian regime to these obligations. We are leading international efforts to help stop the violence and support a peaceful political transition in Syria.

We know achieving that end is a tough task. From every angle the situation in Syria is enormously complex. There is no silver bullet. At the same time, the situation is of grave consequence to the Syrian people. There are many others who are affected by what happens in Syria, including Syria's neighbors – Turkey, Lebanon, Iraq, Israel, and Jordan – and all nations with a vital interest in the Middle East. Meanwhile, Iran is Syria's only ally in the region. No other country stands to lose more than Iran from the eventual fall of the Assad regime, which is why Iran is supporting the regime with material, financial and technical assistance.

We also know that the complex problems in Syria cannot all be solved through the unilateral actions of the United States or any other country. They demand a coordinated international response that is uniquely tailored to the situation.

There are, however, certain principles that have guided the Administration's response to unrest across the Middle East. These basic principles have shaped our responses in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and now Syria: first, we oppose the use of violence and repression by regimes against their own people; second, we support the exercise of universal human rights; and third, we support political and economic reforms that can meet the legitimate aspirations of ordinary people throughout the region.

Our policy toward Syria is clear: we support a political and democratic transition that fulfills the Syrian people's aspirations. To support that objective, the United States is leading international efforts along five tracks:

- First, we are supporting efforts to maintain international pressure and advance transition in Syria. We join with our partners in the United Nations Security

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Council, including Russia and China, in calling for the urgent, comprehensive, and immediate implementation of all aspects of the Annan plan.

- Second, we are further isolating the Assad regime. We are encouraging other countries to join the United States, the European Union, and the Arab League in imposing strong sanctions against it. These sanctions are putting Assad under greater pressure than ever before;
- Third, we are strengthening and unifying the non-violent political opposition in Syria. The United States is in the process of providing direct non-lethal support, including communications and medical equipment, to the civilian-led opposition. We are taking these actions in concert with similar steps taken by the Friends of Syria and other international partners to assist the opposition;
- Fourth, we are providing emergency humanitarian assistance to the Syrian people, and we are working to broaden our efforts at relief, with a total commitment so far of \$25 million; and
- Fifth, we are reviewing and planning for a range of additional measures that may be necessary to protect the Syrian people.

By acting along these lines, we are increasing pressure on the Assad regime every day. Make no mistake – one way or another, this regime ultimately will meet its end.

There are legitimate questions about what steps are necessary to achieve this end, with some arguing for an approach similar to the one we took in Libya.

The fact is that our recent experience in Libya is helping to inform the approach of the United States to Syria:

- First, our efforts are strengthened by multi-lateral, international consensus;
- Second, we should maintain clear regional support from the Arab world;
- Third, we should offer substantial U.S. contributions where we can bring unique resources to bear;
- Fourth, we should have a clear legal basis for our approach;
- Fifth, and finally, our approach must keep all options on the table, while recognizing the limitations of military force.

But the situation in Syria is different from the one in Libya in important ways:

- In Libya, there was widespread international support in the Arab world and elsewhere, and clear Security Council authorization, for military intervention. No such consensus currently exists regarding Syria;
- The opposition is not as well organized and does not control territory;
- We must also be mindful, as Secretary Clinton has noted, of the possibility that outside military intervention will make a volatile situation even worse, and place even more innocent civilians at risk.

The United States has made clear that we are on the side of the Syrian people. They must know that the international community has not underestimated either their suffering or their impatience. The Defense Department has reviewed and is continuing to plan for a variety of possible scenarios should the President determine that further steps are necessary. In the meantime, our only clear path is to keep moving diplomatically in a resolute and deliberate manner with the international community to find a way to return Syria to the Syrian people.

Thank you.

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Leon E. Panetta
Secretary of Defense



Leon Edward Panetta was sworn in as the 23rd secretary of defense on July 1, 2011.

Before joining the Department of Defense, Mr. Panetta served as the director of the Central Intelligence Agency from February 2009 to June 2011. Mr. Panetta led the agency and managed human intelligence and open source collection programs on behalf of the intelligence community.

Secretary Panetta has dedicated much of his life to public service. Before joining CIA, he spent 10 years co-directing with his wife, Sylvia, the Leon & Sylvia Panetta Institute for Public Policy, based at California State University, Monterey Bay. The Institute is a nonpartisan, not-for-profit center that seeks to instill in young men and women the virtues and values of public service. In March 2006, he was chosen as a member of the Iraq Study Group, a bipartisan committee established at the urging of Congress to conduct an independent assessment of the war in Iraq.



From July 1994 to January 1997, Mr. Panetta served as chief of staff to President Bill Clinton. Prior to that, he was director of the Office of Management and Budget, a position that built on his years of work on the House Budget Committee. Mr. Panetta represented California's 16th (now 17th) Congressional District from 1977 to 1993, rising to House Budget Committee chairman during his final four years in Congress.

Early in his career, Mr. Panetta served as a legislative assistant to Sen. Thomas H. Kuchel of California; special assistant to the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare; director of the U.S. Office for Civil Rights; and executive assistant to Mayor John Lindsay of New York. He also spent five years in private law practice.

He served as an Army intelligence officer from 1964 to 1966 and received the Army Commendation Medal.

Mr. Panetta holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science and a law degree, both from Santa Clara University. He was born on June 28, 1938 in Monterey, where his Italian immigrant parents operated a restaurant. Later, they purchased a farm in Carmel Valley, a place Secretary and Mrs. Panetta continue to call home. The Panettas have three grown sons and six grandchildren.

HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT OF
GENERAL MARTIN E. DEMPSEY, USA
CHAIRMAN
JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
BEFORE THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SYRIA
APRIL 19, 2012

HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

Mr. Chairman, Congressman Smith, and distinguished members of the Committee, I appreciate this opportunity to discuss with you the evolving situation in Syria.

The situation is tragic—for the people of Syria and for the region. Real democratic reform should have been the Assad regime's response to last year's peaceful protests. Instead, the regime responded with brutality. When ordinary Syrians tried to defend their homes, the regime opened up with an arsenal of heavy weapons. When the Arab League acted to end the bloodshed, the Assad regime actually escalated the violence. And the regime's response to Kofi Annan's cease fire plan has offered little new encouragement.

The Syrian people are suffering. These internal convulsions are having consequences for a region already in turmoil. Refugees are fleeing. Sectarian impulses are emerging. Spillover into neighboring countries—each one a partner or ally of ours—is an increasing concern.

We also need to be alert to extremists—who may return to well-trod ratlines running through Damascus—and other hostile actors—including Iran—which has been exploiting the situation and expanding its support to the regime. And, we need to be especially alert to the fate of Syria's chemical and biological weapons. They need to stay exactly where they are.

The regime's brutality has catalyzed a growing international consensus to compel Assad and his accomplices to stop killing their own. With other conscientious nations, the United States is applying diplomatic and economic pressure on the regime, supporting the opposition, and providing humanitarian assistance.

Our military's role has been limited to sharing information with our regional partners—each one very capable in its own right.

Should the armed forces of the United States be called on to help secure U.S. interests in other ways, we will be ready. We maintain an agile regional and global posture. We have solid military relationships with every country on Syria's border. We know how to integrate our unique capabilities with others.

Should we be called, our responsibility is clear—provide the Secretary of Defense and the President with options. This is what the nation expects of us.

Any potential option needs to be judged in terms of several criteria. One is suitability—whether the actions will help produce the intended outcome. Another is feasibility—whether we can accomplish the mission with the time and resources available. We will also consider its acceptability—whether the action is worth the cost and is consistent with law.

We have a further responsibility to articulate risk. All options require us to take some risk—time and capacity have limits. All options also come with unintended consequences. We can anticipate some, but many we cannot. Therefore, we need to be clear-eyed about the potential implications for our other global responsibilities.

In closing, I want to assure you and the Nation. America's armed forces are always ready to answer our Nation's call.

General Martin E. Dempsey Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff



General Martin E. Dempsey serves as the 18th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In this capacity, he serves as the principal military adviser to the President, the Secretary of Defense and the National Security Council. By law, he is the nation's highest-ranking military officer. Prior to becoming Chairman, the general served as the Army's 37th Chief of Staff.

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

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

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

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

(Current as of Jan 2012)

DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

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Secretary Clinton, General Clapper
April 17, 2012
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ICBMs that could be tipped with nuclear warheads aimed at the United States. Such cooperation therefore poses a direct threat to the security of the American people.

Based on the gravity of this threat, I ask for your prompt response to the following questions:

- 1) Is there any evidence that China or Chinese entities have supplied TELs for a North Korean Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile or ICBM? If so, how many? And, when did the Administration learn of the possibility that such TELs would be transferred to North Korea?
- 2) What, if anything, has the Obama Administration done to ensure China halts such cooperation and demands the return of these TELs?
- 3) Is there any other evidence of Chinese entity support for North Korea's ballistic missile program, whether technology transfer or otherwise?
- 4) Would such cooperation be in violation of any United Nations Security Council Resolutions or any U.S. sanctions laws, including the Iran, North Korea, Syria Nonproliferation Act? If so, when will the United States invoke such sanctions as are available against China and Chinese entities for this apparent support for the North Korean ballistic missile program?

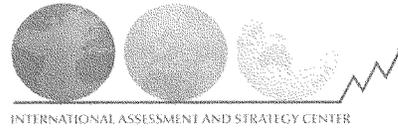
I am sure you agree that the United States cannot permit a state such as the People's Republic of China to support—either intentionally or by a convenient lack of attention—the ambitions of a state like North Korea to threaten the security of the American people. Indeed, the possibility of such cooperation undermines the Administration's entire policy of investing China with the responsibility of getting tough on North Korea.

Sincerely,



MICHAEL R. TURNER
Chairman
Subcommittee on Strategic Forces

CC: The Honorable Leon Panetta, Secretary of Defense
General Martin Dempsey, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
General C. Robert Kehler, Commander, U.S. Strategic Command
Admiral Samuel J. Locklear III, Commander, U.S. Pacific Command
Lt. Gen. Patrick O'Reilly, Director, Missile Defense Agency



April 15, 2012

The Honorable Michael Turner
Chairman, Strategic Forces Subcommittee
Armed Services Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Turner:

North Korea revealed its new KN-08 three-stage missile during the 15 April 2012 parade to mark the centennial of their late founder-leader Kim Il Sung. Given the staging and size of this missile it is possible it may achieve a range of 5,000 to 6,000km, especially if a light warhead is employed. At the longer range this missile may be able to reach Anchorage, Alaska if launched from the northernmost corner of North Korea. In a threat that has been developing for over a decade, the KN-08 not only threatens Alaskans, but will also threaten Alaskan petroleum transshipment points crucial to the American economy, all of which justifies additional missile defense assets for Alaska. This missile could easily reach Guam, Okinawa and the Philippines.

However, I am writing to point out that the 16-wheel transporter-erector-launcher (TEL) for this new missile is very likely based on a Chinese design. There is even the possibility that it is manufactured in China for North Korea's use. This new North Korean missile's TEL appears to be based on the WS2600, a 16-wheel TEL design from the 9th Academy of the China Aerospace Science and Industry Corporation (CASIC), or as it is also known, the Sanjiang Special Vehicle Company. This entity also produces the "WS" series of TELs that are used by CASIC's DF-11, DF-16 and DF-21 short and medium range missiles.

A newly revealed image from a brochure for CASIC's WS2600 16-wheel TEL demonstrates many similarities with the North Korean TEL which include:

1. Nearly the same windshield design and cab roof line.
2. Nearly the same windshield wiper configuration.
3. The same door and handle design.
4. A very similar grill area.
5. A very similar front bumper lighting configuration.
6. Nearly the same design for the initial steps to the TEL cabin.

This set of similarities raises disturbing questions that I would suggest deserve investigation by your Committee. Such participation by a Chinese entity in this North Korean missile program

would require approval from the highest levels of China's government and from the People's Liberation Army. It may also be possible that such assistance by this Chinese entity extends as far back as the beginning of this North Korean missile program, perhaps as long as a decade. The likelihood of this particular relationship then raises the possibility that other Chinese entities may have assisted the design and manufacturing aspects of this missile, because the ability to design the TEL requires extensive knowledge of the missile.

China regularly assures the world that it opposes North Korea's obtaining nuclear weapons, and has taken a high profile role in leading international negotiations ostensibly to "convince" North Korea to halt its nuclear missile programs. This most recent action, if confirmed, indicates that China is a key partner in helping North Korea to build its future missile forces, which may soon be capable enough to attack the United States and its allies with nuclear warheads. Tragically, American policy over the past 20 years has not been premised on the fact that China is part of the problem, but instead on the hope that it is part of the solution. This approach effectively has bought both states two decades to expand their proliferation efforts at the expense of U.S. national security and regional stability.

The potential existence, long suspected by experts, of a long-term Chinese program to actually assist North Korea's nuclear missile capability suggests that China's public statements and actions are systematically at variance with its real goals. If it is indeed China's goal to help North Korea to obtain a nuclear missile capability, this of course suggests that many assumptions and aspects of U.S. policy toward China require a fundamental re-evaluation.

Finally, it should be noted that inasmuch as North Korea seeks to export practically all of its weapons, it should be expected that the Chinese-designed TEL, and even the new North Korean missile, will be sold to Iran.

Sincerely,

Richard D. Fisher, Jr.
Senior Fellow
International Assessment and Strategy Center

Attachment:

1. Image from brochure of CASIC WS2600 16-wheel TEL.
2. Image of close up of TEL of new North Korean missile.
3. Same two images with highlighted similarities.
4. Brochure page of CASIC WS2600 TEL.
5. Larger images of new North Korean missile.



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WS系列超重型越野车底盘



WS2600超重型越野车底盘 WS2600 super heavy-duty off-road chassis

- 进口大功率德依茨柴油机，高低档档分动器，动力强劲。
- 进口ZF全自动变速箱，匹配性好。
- 断开式驱动桥带有轴间和轴间差速器，越野性能优良。
- 超宽断面轮胎和中央充放气技术，通过性优良。
- 高度可调的油气悬架，特别适用于敏感装置的运输。
- 前后多组转向集成技术，机动灵活。
- 在-40℃~50℃条件下工作，环境适应性优良。

- Imported high-power DEUTZ diesel engine uses high-low double gear transfer case which has strong power.
- Imported automatic transmission case of ZF, well matched with the chassis.
- The divided axle has differential gears between the axles and bridges which has great through off-road performance.
- Over-wide cross section tires and central automatic air inflating&deflating system have well traffic ability.
- Varying height hydro pneumatic suspension is especially applied to transport the sensitive installation.
- Front and back multiple steering integrated technology is more mobility and flexibility.
- Works in -40℃ ~ 50℃ condition which has well acclimation.

驱动形式	10×8
总长 (mm)	16350
总宽 (mm)	3050
总高 (mm)	2820
尺寸	
轴距	
I-II 轴 (mm)	2266
II-III 轴 (mm)	4650
轴距	
III-IV 轴 (mm)	2056
IV-V 轴 (mm)	2050
轴距 (空载) (mm)	2375
最高车速 (km/h)	29500
额定总质量 (kg)	65000
最大牵引质量 (kg)	42500
最高车速 (km/h)	70
最大爬坡度 (%)	40
最大坡度 (%)	25
等速百公里平均燃油消耗量 (L/100km)	160
性能参数	
公路行驶里程 (km)	850
满载初速30km/h时制动距离 (m)	<12
接近角 (°)	16
离去角 (°)	25
最小离地间隙 (mm)	400
最小转弯直径 (m)	30
最大涉水深度 (m)	1.2
最大爬坡速度 (m/s)	2.5
垂直跨障高度 (m)	0.4

最大续航里程 (km) : 650



 中国航天科工集团第九研究院
China Aerospace Science and Industry Cooperation 9th Academy



最大续航里程 (km) : 650



 中国航天科工集团第九研究院
China Aerospace Science and Industry Cooperation 9th Academy







QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING

APRIL 19, 2012

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MS. SANCHEZ

Ms. SANCHEZ. As you know, Russia has not been cooperative in moving the UN closer to authorizing some form of action in Syria. Some members have suggested that we use some sort of pressure on Russia to help convince them to be more helpful. For example, we could fence Cooperative Threat Reduction funds. Do you believe that this is a good idea? Why or why not?

Secretary PANETTA. Cooperative Threat Reduction funds, such as the Department's Nunn-Lugar program, typically deal with weapons of mass destruction issues on which the U.S. and Russia have cooperated successfully. These programs are important to both governments and the international community writ-large.

The U.S. continues to engage with Moscow at the highest levels on Syria in an effort to persuade them that continued support of the Assad regime, including through weapons transfers, is not in their long-term strategic interests. We believe that continued engagement with Russia—rather than threatening decades-old programs that benefit both sides—offers the best chance of impacting Russian calculations on this issue.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. LANGEVIN

Mr. LANGEVIN. Secretary Panetta, to the greatest extent that you can, given the unclassified environment of this hearing, please share with us your views on the stability of the “cessation of violence” and the most likely end-game scenarios in Syria.

Secretary PANETTA. The U.S. Government policy is to hasten the fall of the Asad regime and push forward with a stable and democratic transition.

As UN/Arab League Joint Special Envoy Kofi Annan recently reported, the Asad regime has, so far, failed to comply with key obligations. The Asad regime's forces have not pulled back from population centers, and a heavy military presence still poses a significant threat to the Syrian people. It remains to be seen if the Asad regime will maintain its pledge to permit peaceful demonstrations, open access for humanitarian aid and journalists, and begin a political transition.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Recent news articles have reported that Turkey is seriously considering the creation of an exclusion zone inside Syrian borders. Can you provide an assessment of the feasibility and likelihood of such an undertaking, as well as the effect that it would have on the security situation? How would such an action affect our NATO treaty responsibilities?

Secretary PANETTA. Turkey is rightly concerned about the brutality of the Asad regime, the resulting in-flow of Syrian refugees into Turkey, and incidents of violence along and across the Turkey-Syria border. As NATO Secretary General Rasmussen has stated that the Alliance is closely monitoring the situation along the Turkish-Syrian border.

As the international community works to find a way to end the violence in Syria, the United States is conducting planning for a range of scenarios, including how to support partners and Allies that border Syria. Turkish officials have also said that they have their own planning for a possible exclusion or buffer zone. Turkey has a modern force and would likely be capable of establishing and maintaining an exclusion zone inside Syrian borders, whether opposed or unopposed. However, since Turkey has not formally approached the United States or NATO to discuss the details of its planning, it is difficult to assess the feasibility or likelihood of a Turkish exclusion zone inside Syria.

As a NATO member, Turkey has the right to assess that the violence along its border with Syria warrants consultations with Allies under Article 4, which stipulates that Parties to the North Atlantic Treaty may consult whenever, in the opinion of any Ally, the territorial integrity, political independence, or security of an Ally is threatened. If Turkey were to approach Allies under Article 4 with concerns about its border, the United States and all Allies are obliged to determine if the Turkish situation warrants an Alliance response to restore and maintain security in the region—an obligation I take seriously.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MS. SPEIER

Ms. SPEIER. Secretary Panetta, how should Congress measure whether the Annan plan is working in Syria? What options are on the table moving forward?

Secretary PANETTA. As UN/Arab League Joint Special Envoy Kofi Annan recently reported, the Asad regime has, so far, failed to comply with key obligations. The Asad regime's forces have not pulled back from population centers, and a heavy military presence still poses a significant threat to the Syrian people. It remains to be seen if the Asad regime will maintain its pledge to permit peaceful demonstrations, open access for humanitarian aid and journalists, and begin a political transition.

We continue to work with our international partners to come to a political solution that ends the violence in Syria and prepares the groundwork for a stable transition in which Asad leaves.

However, we are also attuned to efforts by the Asad regime to forestall international action by making additional empty promises or taking half steps. We therefore maintain close contact with our allies and partners regarding potential cooperative measures that could be taken to support the UN monitoring mission in Syria.

Ms. SPEIER. Secretary Panetta, some argue that the perceived absence of international support is making the armed opposition more jihadist in nature. In your opinion, is there any validity to this concern?

Secretary PANETTA. Based on what is known, extremist elements—and foreign fighters in particular—still appear to have a relatively small role in relation to the armed Syrian opposition. The United States will continue to monitor extremist groups closely and work with allies and partners to disrupt flows of terrorist financing and foreign fighters.

Ms. SPEIER. General Dempsey, in its quarterly report to Congress, the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction stated that Iraq cannot defend its air space if Iran violates it to provide arms to Syria. Recognizing that this is an unclassified forum, to what degree can Syria's other neighbors prevent arms flows to support the regime through Turkey, Iraq, and Lebanon?

General DEMPSEY. Internal politics, a lack of resources, and an expansive border make it difficult for Jordan and Lebanon to effectively secure their territories. Amman is dealing with an influx of Syrian refugees and Beirut is divided along pro- and anti-Syrian lines. However, both countries have increased border security through the continued deployment of troops and equipment, as Amman and Beirut fear weapons smuggling and movement of fighters would increase the potential for violence to spill across the border. Turkey has numerous means to prevent arms shipments into Syria, including routine customs enforcement procedures, diplomatic and economic pressure, and military options. Turkish military and Jandarma forces frequently patrol mountainous and desert terrain along Turkey's borders, making such routes unreliable for smuggling large shipments and heavy weapons. Turkey has not closed its border or ceased trading with Syria, however, and the large volume of traffic originating from and transiting Turkey prevents Ankara from inspecting all trucks, aircraft, and ships bound for Syria.

Ms. SPEIER. General Dempsey, former U.S. envoy to Bosnia Daniel Serwer recently argued that the presence of observers is tamping down the violence, but that there are insufficient numbers of observers on the ground. In your assessment, how many observers would be necessary to meaningfully decrease the violence? To end it?

General DEMPSEY. It is difficult to determine the number of observers necessary to decrease violence or make it end. UN observers provide a monitoring function that does not involve direct intervention to stop violence. We support UNSCR 2043 that mandates 300 UN Military Observers (unarmed) on the ground in Syria. These observers will provide substantial distributed monitoring capacity. We believe this force will be in place by the end of May and it will take some time to assess the effect their presence is having both on Regime and Opposition actions.