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COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
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United States Senate

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Ms. Christine E. Wormuth
Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Strategy, Plans and Force Development

C/o CAPT Jeff Bennett, USN
Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Legislative Affairs)
1300 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1300

Dear Ms. Wormuth:

I was disappointed that, during your recent nomination hearing, you failed to provide a straightforward answer to my question about whether al-Qaeda is a growing or receding worldwide threat.

On this point, the intelligence community's assessment seems quite unanimous and clear. For example, on February 11, 2014, Director of National Intelligence James Clapper addressed the matter before the Armed Services Committee. When asked whether al-Qaeda is on the path to defeat, he replied unequivocally, "No. It is morphing and franchising itself, not only here but in other areas of the world." Defense Intelligence Agency Director, Lieutenant General Michael Flynn, testified similarly. In addition, U.S. Special Operations Commander, Admiral William McRaven expressed a comparable view on February 27, 2014, describing the threat from al-Qaeda as "much more broad" today than before.

And, while I appreciate the point you made while not responding to my question—that al-Qaeda is a conglomerated group comprised of original members and affiliates—I would like to believe that you find the destabilizing influence and regional threats posed by *both* to be of concern to Congress, and ask that you complete the record on this matter. As the Senate prepares to review your nomination for the position of Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, please respond in writing to the attached questions not later than March 10, 2014.

1. Is the threat posed to American security interests by al-Qaeda or al-Qaeda affiliated groups growing or receding?
2. Do you believe that Syria and Iraq have become transit points and training grounds for al-Qaeda, al-Qaeda affiliated groups, or related terrorist organizations?
3. Do you believe that the longer the war in Syria goes on, the more likely it is that foreign fighters will use the conflict to become greater threats to the West, including the U.S. homeland?

I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,



John McCain
United States Senator