

# Posture of the Army in Review of the Defense Authorization Request for FY24 and the Future Years

March 30, 2023

**U.S. Senate - Committee on Armed Services**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

**Jack Reed [D-RI] [presiding]**  
**Jeanne Shaheen [D-NH]**  
**Kirsten E. Gillibrand [D-NY]**  
**Richard Blumenthal [D-CT]**  
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**Joe Manchin III [D-WV]**  
**Tammy Duckworth [D-IL]**  
**Jacky Rosen [D-NV]**  
**Mark Kelly [D-AZ]**

**Roger Wicker [R-MI]**  
**Deb Fischer [R-NE]**  
**Tom Cotton [R-AR]**  
**Mike Rounds [R-SD]**  
**Joni Ernst [R-IA]**  
**Dan Sullivan [R-AK]**  
**Kevin Cramer [R-ND]**  
**Rick Scott [R-FL]**  
**Tommy Tuberville [R-AL]**  
**Markwayne Mullin [R-OK]**  
**Ted Budd [R-NC]**  
**Eric Schmitt [R-MO]**

**WITNESSES:**

**Honorable Christine E. Wormuth** - Secretary of the Army

**General James C. McConville, USA** - Chief of Staff of the Army

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**CHAIRMAN REED:** Let me call the hearing to order. Before we start, I would like to acknowledge the UH60 Blackhawk training accident that occurred last night at Fort Campbell. Our thoughts are with the Army family today and I know this hits General McConville in a particularly difficult way as an aviator and as a former commander of the 101st Airborne Division. You know and you feel it personally.

It also demonstrates the enduring risks our men and women who volunteer to serve our nation face every day, not just in combat zones but in rigorous training. So all of our thoughts and prayers are with these families and with the Army today. Thank you.

The committee meets today to receive testimony on the President's budget request for the Army for fiscal year 2024. Our witnesses today are Secretary to the Army Christine Wormuth and Chief of Staff of the Army General James McConville.

Thank you both for your service and please convey this committee's appreciation to the men and women serving under your command.

General McConville, as this will be your last posture hearing before your retirement, on behalf of the committee I would like to offer you our sincere gratitude and congratulations. The nation is safer and the United States Army is on a path of generational transformation because of your leadership.

We thank you for your many decades of selfless service and we thank your family for their continued support, and most particularly for their continued service. I believe that every one of your sons is in the United States Army and that your son-in-law is in the United States Army. Am I correct?

**GENERAL MCCONVILLE:** And my daughter, Senator –

**CHAIRMAN REED:** I am sorry. You must be Irish. How many children do you have? [Laughter.]

**CHAIRMAN REED:** The Army is faced with historic challenges, though, and even as the service is undertaking its most thorough modernization effort in 40 years while in the midst of the most difficult recruiting environment in half a century, the Army is being called upon to increase its forward operating presence.

The Army's strength has always been drawn from its soldiers and its leaders and its tenacity to get the job done, and that characteristic grit is certainly needed today.

In its fiscal year 2024 budget the Department of Defense has requested \$185 billion to the Army, marking the fourth straight year of a flat budget for the service. Even as every other service and element of the department has benefited from significant increases, the Army has seen its funding essentially plateau.

Understandably, the department is focused on the pacing threat in the **Indo-Pacific** where the nature of competition relies heavily on our nation's sea and air strength. However, I am concerned that inadequate investment in the United States' primary land component may create vulnerabilities. Combat credible ground forces are fundamental for deterrence, as we are witnessing every day in Europe.

Furthermore, the Army has a critical role to play in the **Indo-Pacific** including providing long-range fires and ground forces, training and experimentation with our partners and allies, and enabling logistics and prepositioned stocks.

We risk the Army's combat credibility if we do not provide it with the resources it needs to continue to field modernization and to continue to be a force to be reckoned with.

Even as we focus sea and air resources to the **Indo-Pacific**, the Army will be relied upon to maintain a reliable presence around the world. With that in mind, I am interested in hearing about the Army's view of its mission globally as well as how the service is adjusting its operating concepts and force posture to support the National Defense Strategy to include the **Indo-Pacific**. To remain competitive with **China** and Russia we must continue to invest in cutting-edge technologies that will define future battlefields across all domains. The Army specifically has been pursuing modernization in key areas like long-range fires, air defense, vertical lift, and deep sensing, among others. These are ambitious and farsighted objectives.

I am particularly encouraged by the Army's announcement yesterday of the creation of a new cross functional team focused on contested logistics. This team, under the direction of Army Futures Command, will address the need for

more resilient and agile logistics in dangerous environments like the **Indo-Pacific**. Secretary Wormuth, General McConville, I would ask you update the committee on the Army's modernization efforts and what resources are needed to effectively continue them. As I mentioned, the Army's most valuable asset has always been its people. I am pleased to see this budget request placed as a priority on taking care of our soldiers and Army civilians by providing an across the board pay raise of 5.2 percent and investing in barracks improvements. At the same time, the Army is struggling to recruit new soldiers. Last year, the service fell far short of its recruiting goals and the same appears likely this year. There are a number of factors contributing to this challenging recruiting environment, including low national unemployment rates, lingering problems from COVID-19, and historically low numbers of Americans eligible for or interested in military service.

I understand the Army is conducting an overhaul of its recruiting and retention practices including the launch of a major new marketing campaign and an expansion of the Future Soldier prep course.

I would ask for an update on how you plan to recruit a broader pool of potential recruits and grow back end strength in the coming years.

Finally, the Army was continue to improve its readiness in the context of long-term strategic competition. The Army is focused on large training exercises including Defender Europe and **Pacific** Pathways, and its leadership in the Project Convergence series demonstrate a commitment to regional preparedness.

These large-scale events not only test system capabilities, unit skills, and logistics resilience, they also facilitate experimentation and training with our allies, reflecting how we would fight in future operations. We are seeing the importance of efforts like this right now in Ukraine. I would ask for an update on how the Army is designing large-scale exercises to support its focus on our pacing threats, **China** and Russia. Again, I thank the witnesses for their participation today. I look forward to the testimonies. Now let me recognize the ranking member, Senator Wicker.

**SENATOR WICKER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I want to thank our witnesses for being here. I also join the chairman in offering my condolences to the families of those killed at last night's training accident Fort Campbell. On this committee we take the safety of our service members seriously and will

seek a clearer understanding of exactly what happened. I will also say that when it comes to the Army, the distinguished chairman of this committee knows whereof he speaks and I am fortunate to have him as a teammate.

I want to also thank General McConville for his service to the United States. Since earning his commission from West Point in 1981 he has faithfully served his country as an Army aviator and as a general officer. I also want to recognize General McConville's family, as the chairman has done, and I do not know if we have recognized the favorite family member, which I understand is his youngest – his grandson, Patton.

No U.S. soldiers are fighting against Russia in its brutal invasion of Ukraine. This is Ukraine's fight and it is fighting well and valiantly. Even though no U.S. troops are directly engaged in the fight, the United States Army is providing critical on-the-ground support for Ukraine. Thousands of U.S. soldiers are deployed to provide logistics to supply Ukraine's military. Thousands more are training Ukrainian military personnel, and the result is a significantly degraded Russian military, as Secretary Austin testified earlier, and that is a positive development. The lessons of Ukraine should be an example of our efforts in the **Pacific**. The Army is and will continue to be on the leading edge of efforts to rebalance our **Western Pacific** forces. United States Army **Pacific**, through Pacific Pathways and other engagements, has established significant relationships with allies and partners that promise to enable access and maneuvering capabilities across the theater.

Further, the Army has successfully and rapidly pushed the envelope to rebuild our arsenal of democracy through significant capacity expansion, investments, and proposed multiyear contracts, though more work remains. The Army also has an important role to play in contested logistics and in providing more options for sensors and shooters to the joint force. I am heartened by the speed with which the Army has sought to reshape itself to provide deterrent value against the **Chinese People's Liberation Army** but we should still do more to accelerate this effort.

In particular, we should capitalize on the progress made on the precision strike missile and the mid-range capability weapon system. For next-generation combat vehicles platforms like the optionally manned fighting vehicle and the armored multipurpose vehicle may soon replace or reinforce their aging

counterparts.

I hope to hear more about these advancements and those in network, soldier lethality, future vertical lift, and air and mission missile defense. None of these achievements or capabilities would work without the dedicated soldiers of the United States Army and I join the chairman in noting that we are in the front edge of a recruiting crisis. I would like an update on this year's recruiting goals and how the Army has changed its strategy to meet its recruitment and retention objectives.

Along these lines, let me reiterate a position that I have had for several years now during the markup of the NDAA. I am strongly in favor of expanding the Junior ROTC and I do believe this is a valuable program not only for potential military members but principally for citizenship and public service in our young people.

And then, sadly, I must mention the Biden administration's disservice to the Army in the fiscal year 2024 budget submission. In that regard, I associate myself with the remarks of the distinguished chairman of this committee.

When accounting for inflation, this year's budget is about a 2 percent cut compared to last year. The impact of that cut is even more severe at a time when personnel expenses are rapidly increasing.

Meanwhile, General McConville submitted a list of almost \$2 billion worth of unfunded priorities the Army needs, including support for partnership-building exercises in the **Indo-Pacific**, and I do appreciate those submissions because it informs this committee.

Further, the budget request fails to use multiyear procurement authority for critical missiles like PAC-3 and GMLRS. I am confident my colleagues on a bipartisan basis, again, will join me to correct this inadequate budget and ensure the Army has the right resources to confront the nation's current and future challenges.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think we share very many views along this and we look forward to hearing the testimony directly from these distinguished witnesses.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Thank you, Senator Wicker, very much. Secretary Wormuth, please?

**MS. WORMUTH:** Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Wicker, distinguished members of the committee, thank you for your ongoing support as we continue to build the Army of 2030, and thank you for your comments and thoughts and prayers for the families of our soldiers who were killed in the crash. Our hearts go out to them. It is a heavy day for the Army, I would say, in that regard.

We are pleased to appear before you today. I am, as you noted, joined by General McConville and want to thank him for his years of service and leadership of our Army. I am grateful to work with him every day. We have accomplished a lot this year but we have a lot of work ahead of us.

We remain focused on our three key priorities – people, modernization, and readiness. The fiscal year '24 budget allows us to support the National Defense Strategy, to provide ready forces to the combatant commanders, and to take care of our people.

By investing over \$39 billion in procurement and RDT&E, we are maintaining our momentum on our modernization programs and we are, largely, on track to bring 24 systems into the hands of soldiers and across the finish line in fiscal year '23.

This is a big year for long-range precision fires. Prototypes of the precision strike missile, the mid-range capability and the long-range hypersonic weapon will be in the hands of soldiers this fiscal year.

It is also a big year for next-generation combat vehicles. Mobile protected firepower is in production and AMPV is also being fielded, and it is a big year for our integrated air and missile defenses and the future vertical lift program as well.

As we shift from two decades of counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations to large-scale combat operations we are also transforming our force structure. We are going to need to adapt our force structure to make room for things like the multi-domain task forces as well as other new units like the indirect fire protection capability and our M- SHORAD battalions.

We are a ready army and we continue to emphasize readiness in everything we do. We are funding 22 Combat Training Center rotations this year.

We have a robust exercise program and we are implementing our new readiness

model, which lets us balance modernization, training, and ongoing missions. We are also investing in Army prepositioned stocks, which have been key in everything that has been going on in Europe and will serve us well in other theaters as well.

To assist Ukraine in fighting Russia the Army has provided over \$20 billion of lethal assistance including a wide range of munitions, radars, combat vehicles, and other things, and one of the most important lessons we have learned from Ukraine is the need for a more robust Defense Industrial Base. So in our budget this year we have \$1.5 billion to invest in our arsenals, ammo plants, and depots. We are also working very closely with our partners in industry to increase munitions production so that we can continue to help the Ukrainians but also, very importantly, to replenish our own stocks, and even as our soldiers provide lethal assistance and train Ukrainian soldiers we are not taking our eye off the pacing challenge of **China**. **INDOPACOM** may be a theater named after two oceans but the Army has an important role to play there. The best way to avoid fighting a war is to show that you can win any war you might have to fight.

So the Army is contributing to strengthening deterrence in **INDOPACOM** every day as we campaign in the region through our exercises and partnerships, and if deterrence fails the Army will be a key player on the joint force team in the event of a conflict.

As important as it is to build new weapon systems and maintain our readiness, people are the strength of our Army. This budget increases soldier and Department of Army civilian pay by 5.2 percent and funds important quality of life improvements like family housing, barracks, childcare initiatives, and other important programs.

We also, of course, want to build cohesive teams of soldiers that are trained, disciplined, and fit. So the Army is committed to building positive command climates across the force so our soldiers can be everything they can be.

And since appearing before you last year we have taken steps to build out a prevention workforce that will help us in our efforts to reduce harmful behaviors across the Army, which in turn will help us with recruiting and retention. We are also continuing to strive to prevent suicide in our ranks. Suicide is a national challenge but we have to do everything we can to reduce suicide in the Army. So we are pursuing a range of initiatives to help our soldiers be more resilient.



One of the most important things we can do is to make sure that we have engaged leaders at every level who know their soldiers and make sure that their soldiers know their leaders and are connected to their buddies and families. Our Army is the greatest army in the world but if we are going to keep it that way we must solve our recruiting challenge. The difficult recruiting landscape we face did not appear in one year and it is going to take us more than a year to solve it.

But we are laser focused on this challenge and we are not going to lower our standards to solve the problem. The whole Army leadership is adapting and changing how we are recruiting.

We are generating positive momentum from initiatives like our Future Soldier prep course, our soldier referral program, and our new advertising campaign "Be all you can be."

Our efforts are geared towards doing one thing, reintroducing the Army to the American public and inspiring a renewed call to service. We very much need your help to be successful in this effort.

I am proud of all that our soldiers do to protect our country every day, and I look forward to your questions.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Thank you, Madam Secretary. General McConville, please?

**GENERAL MCCONVILLE:** And thank you, Secretary, for your leadership.

Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Wicker, distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to be here today.

And before I start I would like to express my sincere condolences to the families of the crews, the medivac helicopter from 101st, who are being informed today of their loss. They served our country proudly and very, very proud to serve with them, and they remain in our thoughts and prayers as we go out throughout the day.

The United States exists for one purpose and that is to protect the nation by being ready to fight and win our nation's wars as a member of the joint force, and we have hundreds of thousands of soldiers training every single day around the world to make that happen, just like those medivac pilots.

To do this the Army has three clear priorities – people, readiness, and modernization, or, in other words, future readiness. We have remained aggressively committed to these priorities while answering the nation’s call during every crisis and every challenge.

This year, the Army continues to undergo its greatest transformation in almost 50 years and we are delivering on modernization because we have been consistent and we have been persistent on our modernization priorities. Last year, we officially updated our capstone warfighting doctrine to multi-domain operations, which incorporates emerging lessons from Ukraine. We continue to stand up new organizations to support our new doctrine. Last June we reactivated the historic 11th Airborne Division in Alaska.

In September, we stood up the third of the five multi- domain task forces. As the Secretary noted, we are on track for 24 signature weapon systems in ’23. But at the end of the day, we must get the right people in the right place in order for any of these initiatives to be successful. That is why people remain the Army’s number- one priority.

We want every young person, every parent, to know that service in the Army is a pathway to success both in and out of uniform. Whether you serve for four years or 40 years, the Army offers endless possibilities.

We are not a profession of arms but a profession of professions. You can be whatever you want to be in United States Army. In fact, you can be all you can be. I am often asked how people can help us and my answer is inspire young men and women to serve, because when we get the call we go with the Army we have. The Army we have is the world’s greatest fighting force because we serve with the world’s greatest soldiers.

With your continued support we are going to keep it that way. I look forward to your questions.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Thank you very much, General McConville.

Secretary Wormuth, our munitions situation has come into very, very sort of focused and graphic dimensions with the Ukrainian fight. Not only do we have to continue to supply the Ukrainians, we also have to replenish our supplies.

So what obstacles are in your way to do that and what should we do as a

Congress to assist you?

**MS. WORMUTH:** I think, Senator, the biggest obstacle – there are perhaps two obstacles but let me first say I think we are buying at the absolute edge of defense industrial capacity right now and we are really working to expand that capacity in real time, and that is why you see us investing \$1.5 billion in our own organic industrial base so the ammo plants, for example, at Scranton that build 155 shell casings we are investing in that plant to increase its production capacity, and we have done a lot with industry, as I said.

The multi-year procurement authorities that we have been given are very, very helpful and that is one thing that I think is helping us quite a bit.

The biggest obstacles, really, are twofold, I would say. One, some of the machining tools that are needed to open up new production lines are just very large, complex machines themselves and take time to fabricate and time to install, and there is just a limit to sort of what we can do to compress that timeframe.

And then the other issue is, of course, some of the fragility in the supply chain that we have seen throughout the pandemic and we are, again, working very closely with our defense industry partners to try to help them strengthen those supply chains wherever we can.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Thank you very much, Madam Secretary. General McConville, we are at an unfortunate impasse in efficiently nominating and confirming general officers and flag officers. Can you tell us what the real-world effect of this is, unit readiness but also, I think, morale and the personal decisions of families about whether they are going to stay in the service or depart?

**GENERAL MCCONVILLE:** Senator, right now at the Senate we have three three-star generals. One is the space missile commander and the G-4 and also our ASALT and there is also 37 other one-star generals.

The impact is probably most felt in some ways on the families and the kids. Even though it looks like it is only 40 generals there is probably four or five other transitions that have to happen so as someone moves up, someone moves, and works their way through.

So what it really does it affects the families and some of the kids. They are trying to figure out where they are going to go to school, when they are going to move, and all those things kind of come in to the readiness of the force. And, as you know, we have some major transitions coming up this summer, and we talked about – I am going to retire by law and that is going to be in August and so there will be a replacement that will go through the process.

But with every – at this level there is probably eight moves we made. There will be a promotion to the chief, whoever that person becomes. All those jobs are going to have to change.

All those officers have families and kids that are going to be affected, and anything we can do to help smooth those transitions will put us in a much better position for readiness.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** I think there is another aspect here, too, is that we have some extraordinary talented – in fact, I would say they are all extraordinarily talented – the senior officers and even captains and majors who could walk out the door tomorrow and command million-dollar salaries as crypto specialists, et cetera.

Is that a dynamic, too, that is being affected?

**GENERAL MCCONVILLE:** Well, I hope not. I mean, you know, most officers do not do it for the pay. I mean, if you take a look at, you know, the one-star pay, it is \$180,000. People go, that is a lot of money. But most of these folks are sitting with 30 years in so actually it is a net of about 45. They make – they do these jobs for \$45,000 a year and generals do it for nothing because we are at 40 percent in those type things.

But people do not do it for the money. I think they do it for the respect, and so I think that is very, very important that we actually take a look at what they do. These general officers and these leaders that are coming up in the Army are the best I have ever seen.

I have been doing this for a long time. I have seen a lot of generals. They are all combat proven. Their families have been through 20 years of continuous combat. They are the best I have ever seen and I would ask that we do all we can to get them confirmed.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Well, thank you very much. My time is rapidly diminishing and just let me commend Madam Secretary, you and General McConville for, again, looking at this contested logistics cross functional team.

Napoleon, I think, said an army moves on its stomach, and in the **Pacific**, particularly, we might be able to produce the munition but if we cannot get it to the front lines we will not prevail.

With that, and I will try to be – I will stop now and, again, thank you.

Senator Wicker, please?

**SENATOR WICKER:** It is hard to stop, is it not, Mr. Chairman?

Let us talk about unfunded priorities, General McConville and Madam Secretary.

The Army budget request includes investments to support prototyping for the long-range hypersonic missile flight test, the mid-range capability missile, initial fielding of the precision strike missile, both the MRC and PRISM, our own **INDOPACOM** commanders' unfunded priorities list. So I want to ask you to talk about that. And also the commander's unfunded priorities list includes \$377 million for Army campaigning. Tell us, and we will, first, General McConville, do you agree that expanding the **Pacific** Pathways program gives us more deterrence in the **Indo-Pacific** and would you discuss, please, specifically those unfunded priorities?

**GENERAL MCCONVILLE:** Yes. I think it is very important that we continue campaigning in the **Indo-Pacific**. That is how we build strong allies and partners and relationships, and those are very important in any future conflict.

**SENATOR WICKER:** Okay, but why – do you have any idea why they were not funded? Did this come down from OMB? Secretary Wormuth, would you comment on that?

**MS. WORMUTH:** Senator Wicker, we have funding in our base budget for Operation **Pacific** Pathways. I do not have the number off the top of my head but it is, I think, over \$100 million for **Pacific** Pathways. I think the unfunded list that you are referring to is the **INDOPACOM** commanders' unfunded priority list.

**SENATOR WICKER:** Indeed, yes, that is my question.

**MS. WORMUTH:** And I have no doubt that Admiral Aquilino would like to see more invested in both exercises and weapon systems. He is very focused on his theater.

We in the Army have to balance across all of our requirements across the European theater or across the **INDOPACOM** theater. We have got to be able to invest sufficiently in our modernization systems and take care of our people.

So we have invested in **Pacific** Pathways. We are investing in modernization of the precision strike missile, the mid-range capability.

I just suspect that Admiral Aquilino would like to see us do more but again –

**SENATOR WICKER:** Well, would you like to see us do more? If we found the extra money that would be advantageous for national security in the **Indo-Pacific**, would it not?

**MS. WORMUTH:** Certainly, if Congress were to give the Army more money I think we would look at investments in the **INDOPACOM** region, yes.

**SENATOR WICKER:** Okay. Now, let us talk about recruiting, and I think, General McConville, you mentioned inspiring young people and, of course, you have inspired the next generation of McConvilles to do this. Secretary Wormuth, you are married, I believe, to a retired naval officer.

It occurs to me that with base closures and the shrinking military presence around the country that there are fewer and fewer young Americans who actually grow up knowing members of the military and seeing them go off to work and having them as members of their families. Yes or no, General McConville, this is part of the problem, is it not?

**GENERAL MCCONVILLE:** I believe so. Eighty-three percent of the young men and women that come into the military come from a military family and that population with 1 percent serving is getting much smaller.

**SENATOR WICKER:** Right. I have been a strong advocate for expanding high school junior ROTC since I became aware of a RAND Corporation study which basically sang the praises of Junior ROTC as a subset of high achievers within a

school.

You could even have a poorly performing school but the subset of students there who are participating in Junior ROTC stay in school longer, they graduate with higher grades, and they achieve better in life.

I have never found a superintendent or principal who, when asked about Junior ROTC, did not say they would like to have Junior ROTC in their school or they are delighted that they have them.

General McConville, if we went beyond what the DOD is asking in expanded Junior ROTC in the high schools how helpful would that be?

**GENERAL MCCONVILLE:** What I know, Senator, is that 44 percent of the young men and women that come into the military come from a high school that has JROTC and 10 percent of the high schools have JROTC not necessarily in that, and I think what is really important is the structure and the exposure that they get.

But more importantly is the instructors. We got to make sure whoever the instructors are are of the quality they are going to help inspire young men and women to serve.

**SENATOR WICKER:** Indeed, these are probably retired senior officers or retired senior enlisted persons who are very inspiring.

**GENERAL MCCONVILLE:** Many are, and but it only takes one to not live up to that standard that can hurt the program. So I think it is extremely important we have strong vetting in place and make sure we have the right people leading these programs.

**SENATOR WICKER:** And I agree with you there. Thank you very much.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Thank you very much, Senator Wicker. Senator Gillibrand, please?

**SENATOR GILLIBRAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Secretary Wormuth, in October you ordered inspections into toxic mold on military installations and found that over 2,000 Army facilities have mold problems. I understand that the proposed budget for new barrack buildings would only pay for five new barracks

buildings. How much does the Army need to remediate these mold issues or rebuild impacted facilities?

**MS. WORMUTH:** Thank you, Senator. Yes, we found mold. We inspected 68,000 buildings and found mold in about 2,100, and we are investing \$3.5 million to remediate the mold in those 2,100 building and we are going to continue to keep a very close eye on mold in the barracks.

We are spending about a billion dollars a year across all three components – active, Guard and Reserve – on barracks, both renovations and building new barracks, and we are going to continue to do that through 2030. The challenge we have, Senator, is just we have such an enormous inventory of barracks that we are not able to rebuild all of them in one to two years as we might like and still be able to, again, invest in new weapon systems and invest in other initiatives that we need to do. So we are trying to strike a balance.

**SENATOR GILLIBRAND:** Are you doing any medical monitoring of the service members who have been exposed to toxic mold?

**MS. WORMUTH:** I think we probably need to do more there to make sure that we are tracking that. I know that there has been a DOD IG report recently that touches on that.

**SENATOR GILLIBRAND:** I would like you to submit an analysis about what you intend to do to make sure the service members who have been exposed are healthy.

**MS. WORMUTH:** Okay. Thank you.

**SENATOR GILLIBRAND:** Thank you. General McConville, I was deeply concerned to hear of Private Ana Basaldua Ruiz's death on Fort Hood earlier this month. Yet another young woman who was allegedly sexually harassed is now deceased.

Can you discuss how the Army is progressing in building a prevention workforce and implementing the Independent Review Commission's recommendations to decrease the incidence of sexual harassment and how are you protecting your young service members from these crimes?

**GENERAL MCCONVILLE:** Yes, Senator. Just like I said, parents send their sons



and daughters to us. I have sent our sons and daughters to the Army and we have a sacred obligation to take care of them. Commanders will be held responsible.

But it really comes down to from the bottom up, building cohesive teams where everyone takes care of each other, everyone treats everyone with dignity and respect. And when that does not happen we are going to investigate. We are going to hold those accountable that did it.

But the Army's trying to really get after that. There is a lot of prevention for us getting – how do you get ahead of these type things, how do you make sure it comes back to readiness. Everyone has to be a valued member of the team. Everyone has to be treated with dignity and respect, and that is what our commanders are doing.

**SENATOR GILLIBRAND:** So with regard to Fort Hood, the previous report said that the climate was so toxic that it was permissive for sexual assault and sexual harassment. What are you doing to address the climate at Fort Hood?

**GENERAL MCCONVILLE:** Well, we have. We changed out – from that report we actually took out 14 leaders, which has never been done in, really – at least I know in the history of the Army.

But the leadership that is in place at Fort Hood I have tremendous confidence in. They are after this. They are on top of it. They are doing everything they can to get the investigation and get the information and they are working very closely with the family.

**SENATOR GILLIBRAND:** Thank you. Secretary Wormuth, will you talk about the development of multi-domain operations and how you have shifted personnel to ensure that multi-domain task forces are fully resourced? How has staffing for these roles been impacted by the Army failing to hit its recruitment goals by thousands of soldiers?

**MS. WORMUTH:** Thank you, Senator. As you know, we now have three multi-domain task forces and we will eventually build a fourth and fifth multi-domain task force. They vary a little bit in size. They are tailor made to the theaters that they support and work in, and right now they are fully manned.

I would expect that we will continue to make sure that they are fully manned

even as we work through how we are going to deal with the Army getting slightly smaller and dealing with recruiting challenges.

But they are very, very important because they bring capabilities that are kinetic through the long-range fires battalions but also very important nonkinetic work. They work on intelligence and developing targeting. They have cyber capabilities, electronic warfare capabilities, and they are going to be very, very important in both Europe and **Indo-Pacific**.

**SENATOR GILLIBRAND:** Thank you. Can you discuss in this setting how Project Linchpin is integrating artificial intelligence into Army systems? I understand that the project aims to improve navigation systems, anticipate maintenance needs, help with targeting, and aid intelligence analysis.

Will you address how this project will or will not keep a human in the loop on intelligence and targeting analyses?

**MS. WORMUTH:** That is an important project and we are very much trying to integrate and bring more artificial intelligence capabilities into our Army in various ways. That is very much going to be a wave of the future, I think, clearly.

An Army Futures Command is going to be looking as we think – start thinking about the Army of 2040 how can we bring even more AI capabilities.

So we are using AI right now with some of the work that we are doing with the experimentation we are doing with the 18th Airborne Corps. We also have an AI Integration Center at Carnegie Mellon University that we are working with very closely and many of the fellows coming out of that program are going into different parts of the Army to help us do more with AI capabilities.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Thank you, Senator Gillibrand. Senator Fischer, please?

**SENATOR FISCHER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Senator Wicker briefly touched on the – really, the need and the value that we receive as members of Congress from the unfunded priority list that you provide and I would say that the majority members of Congress view that as a useful tool so that the committee can use that and you can convey what is needed to meet the challenges that you face. So I do thank you, General, for the visibility that you have provided on the importance of your needs so that it will allow us to make more responsible, I think, resourcing decisions on those needs.

If I could, I would like to ask both of you – the Army has spent the last 20 years primarily conducting counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations in the Middle East and can you provide an update on how you plan to rebalance your forces, restructure training and exercises, or develop unique capabilities in order to meet the increased demand that we are going to see in the **INDOPACOM** area? And I would especially like to know what you learned from the Project Convergence exercises.

**MS. WORMUTH:** Certainly, Senator Fischer. We are doing a lot to shift from COIN and CT to large- scale combat operations through exercises like Defender Europe – excuse me, and **Pacific** Pathways in the Pacific. We have come out with a new field manual, 3-O, which is our vision and doctrine for multi-domain operations, and I would say when we look at the **Indo-Pacific** we are really going to be focused on establishing and setting up and securing staging bases for air and maritime forces, contested logistics.

The Army will play a huge role in terms of making sure that the joint force has the supplies that it needs, and many of the new air and missile defense systems that we are developing are directly designed to deal with the anti- access area denial threats that **China** poses, for example. So our entire modernization program is focused on developing the kinds of capabilities that we need for large- scale combat.

**SENATOR FISCHER:** And, General, with Project Convergence what did you learn?

**GENERAL MCCONVILLE:** Yeah, I think Project Convergence is really the future. It is the ability to take deep sensing, different types of sensors, and quickly move information to an integrated battle command system, take advantage of artificial intelligence, and then move that data to an effective lethal means.

And a good example of that is countering unmanned aerial systems. So we are going to have a whole bunch coming at us and you do not necessarily want to be shooting Patriot missiles at \$100,000 UASs and so if you think about the future battlefield there will be multiple threats. We will have multiple sensors to pick up those threats. We will bring them quickly into an integrated battle command system, take advantage of the technology, and then get them to the right weapon systems that can deal with that problem. And we are seeing this nascent right now in Ukraine. They are doing a very good job taking advantage

of the sensor they have with the fires they have and that is how – a lot to do with how effective they have been.

**SENATOR FISCHER:** When you look at the change in the battlefield, and we talked about this a little bit earlier this week, can you provide the committee an update on the development of the Army's long-range hypersonic weapon?

**GENERAL MCCONVILLE:** Yeah. Right now we have a battery that is already fielded. The systems are ready to go. We are doing testing. We have some – a couple more tests to do on the weapon systems and we had to test that we are working through like every test to get it to the final configuration.

But at least the schedule we have right now we anticipate having a hypersonics capability by the end of this year, which has been pretty remarkable.

**SENATOR FISCHER:** Yeah. Thank you. Madam Secretary, we spoke earlier this week about the Future Soldier prep course. Can you highlight to the committee some of the successes of the program?

**MS. WORMUTH:** Certainly. This program has been very successful. We have it at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, and also Fort Benning, Georgia. We have had about 8,000 young Americans go through the program. There is two components. It is sort of like a mini boot camp.

There is an academic component, which is designed at helping young people who have not quite scored high enough on the ASVAB raise their scores, and then we have a physical fitness component because in some cases we have got young kids who want to serve but they are not quite within our body fat composition requirements.

It has been very successful, both pathways, if you will. About 97 percent of the folks who go into it have graduated and have gone on to basic training, and many of them are performing very well at basic training as well.

**SENATOR FISCHER:** So that is a way to reach – get closer to the goals that you have for the recruitment –

**MS. WORMUTH:** Yes, absolutely, and to do so in a way that does not lower our standards, which both the chief and I feel is very important.

**SENATOR FISCHER:** Exactly. Thank you very much.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Thank you, Senator Fischer. Let me remind my colleagues that when we conclude this open session we will recess and start a closed session in SVC 217. Senator Hirono, please?

**SENATOR HIRONO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you both for being here and, General McConville, thank you very much for your service and best wishes on your retirement.

Secretary Wormuth, we have talked a number of times about the state of the military's infrastructure in Hawaii, and I know you have visited Hawaii several times to see the failures for yourself.

I appreciate your attention in this area but as you know there are still rolling blackouts at Schofield Barracks, issues with the water systems at Tripler, and UXO removal concerns on the Big Island.

A majority of the Army's facilities in Hawaii are failed or failing with an estimated cost of repair of almost \$5 billion. Fixing this will not happen in one year but we must start taking these projects off the unfunded lists and make real progress.

Madam Secretary, how are we going to chip away to the \$5 billion in fixing that we have to do? Do we not need to get more of these projects off the unfunded list?

**MS. WORMUTH:** Thank you, Senator Hirono. We do have considerable infrastructure challenges in Hawaii, as you note, and I would say both above ground in terms of buildings and barracks – I saw some barracks that were not in good shape at Schofield Barracks – as well as our underground infrastructure in Hawaii.

And the chief and I right now as we look to the next budget – we are building the next five-year budget – are looking at how we can invest more in infrastructure. We actually sent out a team from Army Materiel Command and from our installations' energy and environment team to assess the infrastructure.

They came back with, frankly, a multibillion-dollar bill and so what we are trying to do is look at how we can find more resources to put towards that problem and we also want to do it in a way, frankly, that is mindful of the

limited construction capacity that is on Hawaii. So there is – it is going to be complex to sort of figure out how many projects we can do a year and how do we phase that in in such a way that we do not overtax the capacity on islands.

**SENATOR HIRONO:** It makes a huge difference to the community when the military writ large – because the community is not necessarily making distinctions that Red Hill, oh, that is a Navy issue and Pohakuloa is an Army issue. It is all combined, and every time we can make real progress in dealing with the infrastructure needs I think it would be – it really helps the community to understand that the military is there as part of our community and they are making progress or they are doing good things. We need to think of it in that way and I know you recognize that.

Senator Wicker has have asked these questions, General McConville. The National Defense Strategy makes clear that the priority theater is the **Indo-Pacific**. So efforts like the Army's Operation Pathways, the newly constituted multi- domain task force in Hawaii, and the **INDOPACOM** aligned fifth security force assistant brigade are crucial to the Army's success in this area.

And, yet, despite Admiral Aquilino identifying the need for our \$473 million investment in **Pacific** Pathways what is being requested is only \$123 million and – because **Pacific** Pathways, though, that mainly pays for exercises with allies. Is that not right, General?

**GENERAL MCCONVILLE:** That is correct.

**SENATOR HIRONO:** So I assume that when there is such a big gap between what Admiral Aquilino wants and what he is getting that it just means that we are doing far fewer exercises in the **Indo-Pacific** AOR, and I do not know what the numbers are. But at some – is that a good way to think about it, that we are funding far fewer exercises than what Admiral Aquilino thinks is necessary?

**GENERAL MCCONVILLE:** Well, as the Secretary said, we are trying to balance the exercises with the barracks with the training and in the modernization, and we have requested additional funding if it is available to support that campaign and I stand by the notion the more campaigning, the more resources we have, I think the stronger our allies and partners will be and the stronger our presence will be.

**SENATOR HIRONO:** I tend to agree with that and, yeah, the military has over an \$800 billion budget and one would think that some of these priorities can be better met. You were asked about the sexual harassment of – both of you – and it continues to be a scourge in spite of the efforts of this committee, particularly with Senator Gillibrand’s leadership.

And so, General McConville, you noted that it starts at the top and it goes all the way down. I think both of you agree. I am glad that you took swift action with regard to the culture at Fort Hood.

But with the most recent tragic suicide, I realize the investigation is still going on but I think that how we deal with sexual assault and harassment really impacts our ability to recruit women to the military. Would you agree with that, Madam Secretary and General?

**GENERAL MCCONVILLE:** I think it affects readiness. I think –

**SENATOR HIRONO:** Yeah.

**GENERAL MCCONVILLE:** – one of the secret sauces of good units is cohesive teams and if you have sexual harassment, you have sexual assault, you have any type of racism, any of those type things hurt the cohesion of a unit and we do not want that in our Army.

**SENATOR HIRONO:** We can do a lot more, I know that. So thank you very much.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Thank you, Senator Hirono. Senator Cotton, please?

**SENATOR COTTON:** On behalf of all our Arkansans I also want to express my condolences for the soldiers whose lives were lost in the crash of two Blackhawk helicopters near Fort Campbell overnight.

It is a terrible tragedy for all their families and the 101st community, and if you have served time there as I know General McConville has served more than a day or two at Fort Campbell, it is especially hard hitting.

And, General McConville, I want to add my thanks and congratulations to you for a highly distinguished and decorated career of service to the Army. I know you are not retiring yet and you will run through the tape later this year.

But we are very grateful for what you have done for our country and we are glad that in the middle of a recruiting crisis we are getting a four for one McConville trade. We may be losing you but we have got three children and one in-law. So thank you and your family for your service. Secretary Wormuth, I want to talk about the Army Combat Fitness Test and this ongoing years-long saga of that. Last year the Army unveiled gender-based standards after many years of promising gender-neutral standards. As a result, this committee directed the Army within 180 days of the enactment of last year's NDAA to promulgate new gender-neutral standards for combat arms, MOSs. What is the status of those new standards?

**MS. WORMUTH:** Thank you, Senator. We are looking forward to coming to brief you in June about where we are on that NDAA requirement, and I know you and the chief had a discussion about this.

The language in the bill, as you know, talks about gender-neutral standards for combat, military occupational specialties, and we will be able to lay out for you how we have approached that to date.

We also, as you know, are coming up on the deadline for the active duty component to finish taking the test for record, the Army Combat Fitness Test. The Guard and Reserve folks have until October to take that test for record. But we can also give you an update on the data that we are seeing from that and what we can take away from that and what we can learn in terms of how we might adapt the ACFT, going forward.

**SENATOR COTTON:** So the law calling the Army to establish the standards by June, not to brief Congress by June, are you going to – are you prepared to meet that requirement to establish the standards?

**MS. WORMUTH:** We actually have standards in a DA Pam that lay out requirements for all of the combat MOSs that are gender neutral and we can brief you on those.

**SENATOR COTTON:** Can you tell us what those combat MOSs are today or what branches, at least?

**MS. WORMUTH:** I believe that we have them for all of the MOSs, Senator.

**SENATOR COTTON:** Okay. But it is your understanding – the expectation of



this committee is that we have a single standard for the combat arms branches and then for all the other noncombat arms branches there will be a male and a female standard?

**MS. WORMUTH:** These are – as I have read the law that you all put in last year these are standards. They are physical gender-neutral standards for combat, military occupational specialties, yes.

**SENATOR COTTON:** Yes, because I mean – and I was not the only one. I mean, Senators Ernst and Gillibrand and Duckworth expressed concerns about this as well as did most of the committee.

I mean, when you are talking about things like the infantry there is irreducible physical demands. You have to be able to carry a 75- or 100-pound pack or carry a 250- pound wounded comrade, whether you are a man or a woman. Or if you are an artillery or armor you have to be able to handle shells that can weigh up to a hundred pounds. The standard, we all think, should be somewhat different if you are, say, working on a computer. That work is very vital but it is not the same kind of physical demands that the combat arms are, and in the middle of a recruiting crisis I do not think we should be taking steps to dissuade anyone, young men or young women, who may not be up to the physical rigors of armor and artillery but are able to perform all those other roles. That is your understanding of what this Congress intended, right?

**MS. WORMUTH:** Senator, the DA Pam spells out exactly those kinds of things. I think the issue has been is – there is our combat. There is the fitness test and then there are the standards for the MOSs and there is a distinction there.

**SENATOR COTTON:** Correct. I mean, this has been a long saga, as I said, and in retrospect, I mean, we had an Army that, let us see, toppled a Marxist government in Grenada, toppled a narco government in Panama, kicked Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait, toppled the Taliban, toppled Saddam Hussein, doing pushups, sit-ups, and a two-mile run.

So I think those guys were pretty physically fit that did all those things. But we are where we are. We have moved to the combat fitness test. I do not think the issue are the events on it.

The issue is making sure that we have high standards that are suited for the

demands of the battlefield and we just want to make sure that that is what we are going to get from the Army by the 180-day deadline.

**MS. WORMUTH:** Yes.

**SENATOR COTTON:** Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Thank you, Senator Cotton. Senator Kaine, please?

**SENATOR KAINE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and to our witnesses, thank you for your service to the country. I add my sentiment to those who have expressed just sorrow over the incident with the servicemen and women at Fort Campbell. I know that it is tough for the whole Army family and the committee shares in that.

I just want to share with my committee colleagues, I had the opportunity to do something six days ago. I was at the first of the nine base renamings. Two years ago in the NDAA this committee in a bipartisan way decided that bases that had been named for Confederates should be renamed for American heroes whom all could admire, and it was a – it is a pretty tough task.

The naming commission considered about 7,000 or 8,000 names and then reduced that to 2,000 and then to about 500, and eventually reduced it down to 87 names and from those names had to find nine. Talk about a commission I am glad I was not on.

But the first renaming was Fort Pickett, which had been built right before World War I and named in honor of General Pickett, the Confederate general. It was renamed Fort Barfoot.

Van Barfoot was a Choctaw from Mississippi who enlisted, came to train at Fort Pickett, and then was deployed overseas in World War II and fought courageously in Italy and won a medal of honor under the most unusual circumstances, demonstrated great heroism in killing a lot of Germans and capturing scores of Germans and then saving the lives of many Americans.

He then came back and continued to serve in the Army in Korea, served in the Army in Vietnam. When he retired from active duty he was connected deeply to the Virginia National Guard, which is headquartered now at Fort Barfoot. Was very involved in the Virginia War Memorial in Richmond that honors those who

lost their lives in recent wars.

He last made news when he was about 90 years old because he hung an American flag that was too big, according to his homeowners association, and they had the foolishness to try to test a Congressional Medal of Honor winner. The ceremony was just amazing. It was led by tribal representatives from Virginia, Virginia's recently recognized tribes, and everyone in this community – Dinwiddie and Blackstone and Crewe and Lunenburg, Brunswick Counties – was so proud to be there and the naming commission did a remarkable job.

And just to see the family – Colonel Barfoot's daughter spoke, other family members were there, and to talk to the naming commission about the care that they used in approaching this and knowing something about the other names that are forthcoming – the other base names – will be done in the months to come.

I just wanted to say job well done to the Army and to the naming commission and doing it and just to report back to my colleagues.

Everyone here around this dais supported that at the time in committee, and I think if you go to one of these you will be really proud, as I was, to have played a little part in it and appreciate the Army approaching it the right way. General McConville, I have a couple of questions for you. In watching the Russian invasion of Ukraine we realize how different a conflict is where you have contested logistics and contested airspace versus the war on terrorism where we often had dominance in airspace and there was not such a contest.

Can you share your thought – you have talked a little bit about this already this morning – on the contested logistics and how the Army will conduct logistics operations in contested environments and the plans that you are putting in place to do that?

**GENERAL MCCONVILLE:** Yes, Senator. I think, again, one of our biggest changes in our training and how we operate is we are able to operate fairly without any type of enemy contact from here all the way to Iraq, Afghanistan, and we know that is not going to be the case. It is not going to be the case in the **Pacific** if we have to fight in the **Pacific**. It is not going to be the case here. So what we are doing is building those capabilities and some of it is just by prepositioned stocks. We cannot assume we are going to be able to just sail

across the seas safely. So we want to position equipment and ammunition in the theater. We need to disperse it. We need to protect it.

And there is that old saying about amateurs study tactics and professionals study logistics and what we see is those tanks and artillery pieces and aircraft become expensive paperweights if they do not have fuel, if they do not have parts, and they do not have ammunition. So all that is part of what this contested logistics is about, and you can think about here, I mean, with cyber capability right now. So we are going to be attacked by cyber. We are going to – they are going to use space. We use space a whole bunch right now to move things, and even how we move by air or sea we are going to have to protect our systems and we are going to have to be aware of that and we are going to have to basically fight our way across.

And that is where our allies and partners become so important, the fact we have developed these relations, we have access and presence, we can quickly move into the – whether it is ports or airfields, and then we have the equipment and we have forces in the right place that can facilitate all of this.

**SENATOR KAINE:** Just one fact for my colleagues as I conclude, and it will inspire a question for the record. In World War II we used 1.67 gallons of fuel per soldier. In Iraq and Afghanistan that had gone up to 27.3 gallons of fuel per each member of our troops. The contested logistics with respect to deployment of fuel that we will need will be a real challenge and I will ask a question about that for the record. I yield back, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Thank you very much, Senator Kaine. Senator Rounds, please?

**SENATOR ROUNDS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to both of you for coming before our committee today. General McConville, thank you for your service and thank you to your family for their service to our country as well.

You make a very good point when we talk about the number of places that you have been but also the fact that we lost young soldiers who were training and that it is not just those that are facing an adversary but those that are training throughout the year throughout our country that also take risk on a daily basis, and our thoughts and prayers are with you, the entire team, and the family of these soldiers.

General McConville, as you know, there is an effort by some in Congress to require sharing of all or some of the 3.1 to 3.4 or .5 band of the electromagnetic spectrum, also known as the S-Band, and that is – right now it is held by DOD and some of the private sector needs it for 5G development, which is also important. But can you confirm that the Army has systems critical to our national security that reside on this portion of the spectrum?

**GENERAL MCCONVILLE:** Yes, I can, Senator, and from where I sit it is – I know there is a study that is being done. I think it is really important we do our independent study, take a look at what that means, and it happens to some of our bases with encroachment when people want to move close and we understand that that can happen. But if we cannot do the training we need to do, same thing with these systems. I understand perspectives where you want to develop the communications capability. But the only thing I would advise if asked is just take a hard look at – independent people looking at that and we know the risks to national security when we make that decision.

**SENATOR ROUNDS:** Thank you. I think part of the point that we try to make is we are practicing at multiple bases across the entire United States. So we have that risk at multiple locations across the entire United States during our training sessions.

Let me just take a step forward here, Secretary Wormuth. Thank you for what you do and your looking ahead in terms of what the Army will be facing. Part of what it is, and it was just mentioned a minute ago, and that is the – within the cyber domain and the challenge that we literally will not go to war without having a cyber presence.

How well do you believe that the fiscal year 2024 budget supports the growing cyber threat, and where is the Army taking risk in the cyber domain and where would additional funding be most helpful in buying down that cyber risk?

**MS. WORMUTH:** Thank you, Senator. We are making a lot of investments related to cyber in this budget because it is such an important area, and ensuring that we have good cybersecurity is really critical, particularly for our modernization programs.

We have got to make sure that they are secure and not able to be stolen by our adversaries. We have over \$400 million in this budget for implementation of our

zero threat approach to cybersecurity. We are spending about a half billion dollars to continue moving to the cloud.

One of my objectives is for us to become a more data- centric Army and, certainly, having our data in the cloud is critical. We have got about \$600 million in the budget for modernizing our cryptography and retiring some of our technical debt with our tactical radios.

So I do not think that we are taking a lot of risk in this budget in the cyber area because it is so important. My own view is if there is a place where we are taking risk, and I think this is a place where as an entire joint force we may be taking risk, it is in – I worry a lot about threats to the homeland, particularly through the cyber domain and so much of the critical infrastructure in our country is outside in the private sector, that figuring out how we work more closely with state and local governments, with private companies, to make sure that we are secured outside the fence line that is where – that is where I think we have risk and that is, in my view, more about how do we work together better organizationally necessarily than about the amount of money you spend.

**SENATOR ROUNDS:** And I agree with you. I also think that you have taken a major step forward, once again, in terms of coordinating with other sectors.

I know that you have entered in or are entering into an agreement with Dakota State University in South Dakota on some advanced cyber activity as well and we appreciate the opportunity to be a part of the solution.

General McConville, I have two thoughts. First of all, I am just going to ask this rather quickly. I understand that the Army is the executive agent for the theater, integrated air and missile defense, including the protection of fixed sites like airfields and supply depots. The missile threat to fixed and semi-fixed sites seems one of the most challenging threats to the joint forces. What additional investments, if any, does the Army need to make in air and missile defenses?

**GENERAL MCCONVILLE:** Senator, I agree with you. It is a significant threat and we are making significant investments. We are going to build more Patriots. We are building indirect fire protection capability, nine of those units. We are building counter UAS batteries. I think on the future battlefield we are going to protect it. But what we are also doing is taking advantage of an integrated battle command system and, again, this sensor, this convergence of having multiple –

getting away from having one radar for one air defense system. So you take advantage of all the sensors that are out there and you use an integrated battle command system and you get better sensors so we can see things coming in. Taking advantage of the technology when it comes to artificial intelligence and so we can deal with those systems early on.

But I think when the Secretary and I talk about it that is why air and missile defense is so important, especially in the **Pacific**, and we want to be able to do that.

**SENATOR ROUNDS:** Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Thank you very much, Senator Rounds. Senator Peters, please?

**SENATOR PETERS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, Madam Secretary and General McConville, I want to add my condolences to my colleagues' here for the horrible accident in Kentucky. I know that my heart goes out to their family, friends, and the entire Army community right now, who I know is all grieving.

Secretary Wormuth, in 2018, the Army requirements oversight councils were held for both the Abrams and the Stryker programs.

A modernization goal was set for the Abrams program at a rate of one full brigade per annum funding cycle, and similarly for the Stryker a modernization goal was set to upgrade one half a brigade each year.

Congress has continually and consistently supported these programs and maintained these desired modernization rates with significant congressional adds along the way to support what Army leadership describes as, quote, "enduring programs that the Army will depend on for decades." So my question for you, ma'am, does the Army continue to support the Abrams and Stryker programs and at a modernization rate that is workable to support the industrial base that makes this equipment?

**MS. WORMUTH:** Senator, we do very much support the Abrams and Stryker programs. Those vehicles – I think we have the best tanks in the world. I think if you asked the Poles and the Australians they would say the same, the Ukrainians as well.

The challenge that we have is that we are trying to both continue buying important enduring platforms like Abrams, like Stryker, while at the same time investing in developing new next-generation combat vehicles like AMPV, like the optionally-manned fighting vehicle, and with the budget that we have we are only able to buy the volumes that you see in the budget that we have presented.

I do think in terms of Abrams, for example, as I said, there are significant foreign military sales that have been made and I think that will be very helpful with sustaining the industrial base for those programs.

**SENATOR PETERS:** Very good.

General McConville, for decades the Latvian – we have had Latvian troops training with the Michigan National Guard up at Camp Grayling to learn skills necessary to counter potential Russian invasion in Latvia and, certainly, never has this training been more relevant than it is right now. But in addition to Latvians, we routinely have other European allies as well as **INDOPACOM** partners trained at Camp Grayling to take advantage of the size and the capabilities that that installation offers.

Our National Guard installations, and I hope you agree, are a hidden gem. They offer capacity and unique training environments for not only U.S. forces but also our allies as well.

So my question for you, General, is how does the Army budget invest in the National Guard and in particular into its military installations, its ranges, its training areas, to help enable the Guard to conduct the multi-domain operations training that is so essential today?

**GENERAL MCCONVILLE:** Senator, first of all, let me highlight what a great job the National Guard is doing with Michigan and these partners, and if you take a look at Ukraine, you take a look at Latvia, these state partnerships have been going on for quite a while and, quite frankly, why these armies have the capabilities, that they have the capacity and the competence.

What we do in the National Guard is we talk to them very closely. We want to resource them within our means we can and we come to their priorities and we lay them out and you will see some of those even on our unfunded priority list that did not quite make it in the budget.



And, really, like the Secretary said, to us it is all about balance. We have a fixed budget, as both sides have said. Some would argue that you cannot transform an Army without having 3 to 5 percent real growth.

That is what – we are trying to do that and we are trying to do the best we can with what we have and deliver the best Army we can do with the resources we get.

**SENATOR PETERS:** Thanks. And, General, the National Defense Strategy places great emphasis on the ability of our forces to operate in contested environments and the need to overcome enemy disruption, and my question for you is how is the Army empowering commanders and local installations to replicate live electromagnetic effects during home station training scenarios focused on operating in these domains?

**GENERAL MCCONVILLE:** Yeah, that is something we are trying to get to. I would say we are doing a better job at our National Training Centers as such because that is expensive and also the places you can actually do that we have to work our way through it when you start using those type systems.

But as you say, Senator, that is something that is really the big shift that we are seeing. We are going to be jammed in the battlefield. They know how important data is for us.

If you go to the National Training Center right now you have a very different experience than you did a couple years ago. You cannot expect to have – if you are emitting as a command post or you are trying to do things we are going to take all those things that you depend on away from you so when you are in actual combat it should be a lot easier.

**SENATOR PETERS:** Right. Right. Thank you, General.

**GENERAL MCCONVILLE:** Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Thank you, Senator Peters. Senator Ernst, please?

**SENATOR ERNST:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and my condolences as well to the families and the fellow soldiers all within the 101st Screaming Eagles family. We are sincerely, sincerely upset about the loss of those soldiers and it hits home for so many of us.

But thank you for being here today, Secretary Wormuth and General McConville.

On Saturday I will have the great opportunity to attend a retirement of a dear friend of mine from the Iowa Army National Guard, and it seems that many of us that have gray hair are seeing many of our friends and family members retire through the years and, General McConville, I wish the best to you and to your family as well.

And we know as we are stepping out of the uniform and out of the boots and leaving the ranks behind that we need young soldiers to step up into those ranks and so I do want to address some of the recruiting challenges that we are seeing today.

On Tuesday, Chairman Milley had told us that the threats of America are at its highest since World War II and our Army is smaller now than it is required to be. By September Army end strength could fall to 445,000 soldiers and that is a 7 percent decline just over the past two years.

So today I want to focus on our high schools and how some of those high schools are truly failing our military and their students.

The law requires high schools that receive federal funding allow access to our recruiters and as the Department of Education admits on its very own website only about 95 percent of the schools actually follow the law by allowing military recruiters access to their students. And, Mr. Chair, if I could enter into the record – this is from the Department of Education’s website.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Without objection. [The information follows:] [COMMITTEE INSERT]

**SENATOR ERNST:** Thank you.

And it does raise a question. So 95 percent do allow some level of access. So what about the 5 percent of schools that deny access to military recruiters? It really is about following the law of the United States. But it is not just about the law. It is about the opportunity that is extended to those students and it is about patriotism.

So, General McConville, I am going to ask you to put on a recruiter’s badge for a moment – through your years of experience you know this very well – but how

would you explain the benefits of service to the many students in the 1,100 schools who deny access? Who have not been able to meet a recruiter?

**GENERAL MCCONVILLE:** Yeah. What I would say to those superintendents or those teachers or those counselors that do not want military recruiters you may be depriving your students of doing maybe the most important thing in their life and having an impact.

And we use the – kind of the slogan or the motto of be all you can be but there is just so many stories of people that have rose to the highest levels, have gotten an education, whether they did it in the military or gone further.

But I just think that everyone should have an opportunity to serve, not necessarily in the Army or the military but just in general. They will be much better citizens, they will do a much better job, they will get training, they will get education, they will get leadership and they will just be – and when they are older and gray like some of us and they look back on their lives they will say, I served in the 101st Airborne Division.

**SENATOR ERNST:** Yeah.

**GENERAL MCCONVILLE:** I was part of the Band of Brothers. There was a young woman from the 82nd. We asked her why she joined the military, and she was at Kabul and did some incredible things and what she said to us – she goes, "I did not want to go through life without having an impact."

And we just had another – an officer. He was an All- American at Duke, played basketball there. He went to – played professional basketball and he was talking at an event for us, and he served with the Rangers. He came back. He goes, I worked on a Coach K. It was great team. I worked – played for two professional basketball teams. But the best team I ever was on was the Army. So –

**SENATOR ERNST:** Outstanding, and I know one of my staff members this morning he mentioned this is how he came to serve was he met a recruiter at his school.

So I think it is really important that we allow that access because, as you said, so many people that join they join because they have a family member. But there is a whole swath of young men and women that are incredible and really deserve the opportunity to serve.

They just have to be exposed. They only know what they know, and those recruiters can really take in discussions about benefits and patriotism and so we think that that is really, really important.

So I do have some questions that I will submit for the record, Secretary Wormuth, for you as well in regards to recruiting. But we, certainly, want to make sure that we are correcting this by the high schools and I have legislation I am working on to do that.

But I thank you both very much. General McConville, thank you for your service. Thank you, Secretary.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Thank you, Senator Ernst. Senator Kelly, please?

**SENATOR KELLY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I could not agree more with the senator from Iowa on this, the opportunity to serve, and as you mentioned, General, some of it – just somebody talking about it later, my dad served in the 82nd Airborne, and I would hear it from him all the time and one of the reasons I took my path not in the Army but in the Navy.

Also, I want to share my condolences on yours and, Madam Secretary, for you, too, and the Army's loss. We often expect losses in combat. Training accidents are – especially mid-air are just horrific, and so we are with you in sharing the grief over this.

General, you talked a little bit about training opportunities. I want to talk about a place specific to Arizona because for the last several years we have been hearing from witnesses as we prepare for this pacing threat of **China** that we need to be doing everything we can to prepare for this fight that we, obviously, do not want to get in and the best way we can – in my opinion, that we can avoid staying out of a fight is to make sure that our adversaries understand that they are not going to win and that means being as prepared as possible.

Electronic warfare is something we have talked about a lot lately. It is a critical mission. I am really pleased to see that DOD has taken a fresh look at our capability here because it is going to be part and a big part of a potential future fight, especially if it is in the Western **Pacific**. So I have been looking at this issue closely and I know some of my colleagues on the committee have as well. But we need expanded airspace. The stick is longer than it used to be. We need

more space. The threat is more significant, and we need to be able to replicate the high-end threat and have areas where we can put emitters and have the dynamic opportunities to best equip their forces and train them. DOD has had officials out to see the electronic proving ground at Fort Huachuca in Arizona and folks agree that this has the – this place has the capacity and it also has the expertise and they are willing to do more.

So, General, can you please talk to the Army's vision and strategy for ensuring that our military is prepared for the advanced electronic warfare threats that we will face in the future?

**GENERAL MCCONVILLE:** Yes, Senator, you make a great point about Fort Huachuca. There is a reason why we have the unmanned aerial system training out there. There is a reason why we have electronic warfare capability at areas like that. It takes special places. Certainly, got to have the size. But it is also where you can do it. There is – I mean, we do a lot of stuff at the National Training Center. We do it out at Fort Huachuca. But it is something that is going to be more important in the future. We got to train the way we are going to fight. We got to expose our commanders to that environment, and our intent is that our training centers are so rigorous that when they actually go into combat it is an easier day.

**SENATOR KELLY:** Yeah. That is what you want, right. You want the training to be the most challenging thing.

**GENERAL MCCONVILLE:** That is right.

**SENATOR KELLY:** Not often the case. You know, Fort Huachuca also offers geography and a landscape that really does not exist anywhere else, this natural bowl where you can transmit on a lot of different frequencies at very high energy.

This is a real opportunity, too, and it has got a lot of potential to help the Air Force with their F-35s that every – not every but a lot of their training missions they need to be considering the high-end threats.

We can put emitters at Fort Huachuca. We also have opportunities to extend the size of the Barry Goldwater Range and may be connected to a MOA. The Jackal MOA, I think, that is north of Fort Huachuca.

So in my remaining time I am going to have another question for the record on

the Fort Huachuca range. But I have got about 30 seconds and I really do not want to go over.

So, Madam Secretary, I am going to submit another question for the record about your vision for human machine teaming and working together. That offers a lot of opportunities for us in future conflicts. Thank you, and I will yield back my eight seconds.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Thank you, Senator Kelly. I appreciate that very much.

Senator Scott, please?

**SENATOR SCOTT:** Thank you, Chairman. Thank each of you for being here. Thank you for what you do.

General, can you talk about why should communist **China** or why should Russia, any of our enemies – why should they be concerned about the capacity that our Army and our military has and why should they – when they look at our recruiting we are not hitting our recruiting numbers. Support of the military is not what it used to be.

Should they be concerned? Should they have – be concerned whether if they want to invade Ukraine or **China** wants to go in Taiwan or North Korea wants to do something in South Korea? Should they be concerned or not?

**GENERAL MCCONVILLE:** I think when I look at our adversaries, should they be concerned about the United States Army, absolutely, yes, they should be. It is the most lethal and ready army in the world and I think when we – I have spent a lot of time traveling around the world so when I go to Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Romania, you name it, that is the respect that our soldiers have.

Every one of those countries wants us to be a partner with them and I think it is the same thing in the **Pacific**. And I think it is only going to get better with resources as we transform the Army to make sure that we have the capabilities as part of the joint force that are going to make maybe an amphibious type of assault or an airborne assault or an air assault very difficult to do.

And but as far as for people side of the house do we have some challenges? Absolutely. But we are looking for everyone's help to work our way through these problems, to inspire young men and women to serve.

**SENATOR SCOTT:** What do you think about Taiwan's effort to put themselves in a position that communist **China** will not want to invade? Do you think they are doing all the right things?

Do you think they are – they have a big enough military and do you think they have made – are going to make it difficult for them?

**GENERAL MCCONVILLE:** What I would like to do, Senator, is take that to the – if we can take it to the next session.

But here is what I would say, generally. I think there is some good lessons learned when we deal with allies and partners from Ukraine, and what I would say is take a look at what are their capabilities, what are their capacity, what is their competence, and by capabilities what type of weapon system they have.

Do they have the right weapon systems to defend themselves? Do they have enough of those weapon systems? Are they competent in those weapon systems? But, to me, the most important thing is do they have the will to fight, and if they do not have the will to fight to defend their country like the Ukrainians did we need to take a hard look at that.

**SENATOR SCOTT:** What do you think about – what do you think about the capacity of the military in South Korea and the willingness of the people to defend their freedoms?

**GENERAL MCCONVILLE:** I think the South Koreans have very good capacity and I think they are very committed to defending their freedom.

**SENATOR SCOTT:** So you think that North Korea should be – should be concerned if they wanted to invade?

**GENERAL MCCONVILLE:** I think North Korea should be concerned.

**SENATOR SCOTT:** Okay. What about – what about our NATO allies? Do you think they are building the capacity they need and they have the willingness?

I mean, if you look at Germany as an example and you look at their pathetic response to the invasion of Ukraine where they have not put up the resources they should, they have not built the military they should – I mean, what do you think about what NATO allies are doing?

**GENERAL MCCONVILLE:** I think NATO allies respond to their interests. There is a lot of things that go on in each country. I look back to General Marshall when he had my job. He said, you know, when I had the time I did not have the money. Then when I got the money I did not have the time.

We are seeing that kind of play out right now and that is why it is very important that we invest in our militaries during a time we are not in a major conflict and that is why we want to develop these future systems right now while we have the time and we have some money before it is too late.

**SENATOR SCOTT:** Do you think that – do you think that our NATO allies are doing their part?

**GENERAL MCCONVILLE:** I think the NATO allies I have seen – again, the ones that are most in, I would say, harm's way absolutely. If you look at what the Poles are doing, you look at what the Romanians are doing, you look at what the Lithuanians are doing, Estonia, things have changed.

I have seen a fairly significant change in how NATO has come together because they see a real threat.

**SENATOR SCOTT:** Do you think the American public understands enough about the threat of communist **China**?

**GENERAL MCCONVILLE:** I think Americans may or may not. I would not speak for the Americans. But I think in a lot of ways people are focused on what is happening in this country and when you start to talk about what is happening in Ukraine or what happens in Taiwan it gets to this world order bit, and for a lot of people they are not quite sure how that plays into their lives.

But we can show that regional conflicts have global implications and we want to avoid regional conflicts. It is no one's interest to have a Ukraine or have a Taiwan.

**SENATOR SCOTT:** Thank you. Thank you, Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Thank you very much, Senator Scott. Senator King, please?

**SENATOR KING:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, Secretary Wormuth, I want to compliment you on something in the budget. In these hearings you rarely



have that happen. The fact that you have a significant increase in R&D I think that is very important because my next question is going to be to General McConville, which is about the changed nature of warfare.

We have seen enormous changes – cyber-directed energy, all of space, all of those things that are – have become so much part of conflict that in the first day, I guess, the question is are your Army units going to be able to maneuver if they cannot communicate and if GPS is gone? That is the kind of environment that we are facing.

**GENERAL MCCONVILLE:** I think what we are doing is we are prepared for that environment. So, in fact, one of our cross functional teams is we call it alternate precision navigation timing. Basically, it is how do we figure out what happens when they jam a GPS.

So I come from the philosophy you never want to be a one option commander. You never want to be dependent on one option. You never want to be dependent on the weakest link of a supply chain.

So, as you mentioned so eloquently, Senator, we are moving from air-land battle – if you think about it that is two domains we are kind of focused on fighting, that has been the doctrine used for last 40 years – to multi-domain operations.

So we are going to be contested in space because we all – the Army uses space a lot. Certainly going to be contested in cyber all the way to the homeland because we are going to have to basically fight from port to – from fort to foxhole.

We are, certainly, going to be contested in the air. You can see how right now even Ukraine we have been contesting the sea. Ships are getting sunk and that matters. And then definitely on the ground.

So it is going to be a very complex battlefield. We have to teach our soldiers. Many of you have visited our soldiers in the field and our operation centers. They were huge operation centers. They had stadium seats. They had big screens on them. That is not the future. They are going to have to learn to move, and how they emit and how they communicate is going to become extremely important.

**SENATOR KING:** And are you satisfied that we are taking adequate in terms of both training, expenditure, and culture, if you will, to be thinking in new and

different ways in order to deal with this entirely new threat environment?

**GENERAL MCCONVILLE:** I think we are, Senator, but I think we can always do more. But if you go out to our National Training Center and our Joint Readiness Training Center and other training centers, that is what we are making them do.

So they cannot set up the big operation centers. We make them move every couple hours, and they are seeing swarms of unmanned aerial systems and so they are getting their radios jammed. They are getting their GPS jammed. And so what we have to do to our soldiers, who a lot of them have spent the last 20 years doing counterinsurgency and counterterrorism, this is the new fight and we built new doctrine.

We are building new organizations to get after that. We are doing talent management differently now. We are going to be coding on the battlefield. We are going to have to have people that can actually code on the battlefield because then they are going to be trying to defeat algorithms and we have to be able to do that.

**SENATOR KING:** Well, I appreciate that, and I have been asking the same kind of questions of the Navy. In fact, the Secretary of the Navy showed up at my office last week with a sextant just to prove that GPS was not the be all and end all.

A question relating to my service on the Veterans Affairs Committee. One of the issues that we have identified with our veterans is the transition between active duty and veteran status and how we can facilitate that in a more active way.

Suicide – the disproportionate number of suicides occur within two or three years of separation from active duty.

General, I hope this is something that you are focused upon because it is critical to make sure that that transition happens smoothly and that the new veteran knows that there is available services and that there is somebody that cares about them when they leave the service.

**GENERAL MCCONVILLE:** Senator, as you and I talked about, I am absolutely committed to that. I want to make that work.

Transitions are the most dangerous time. I am a student of suicides. They

break my heart every time we lose a soldier and they happen during transitions, whether it is a transition in their relationship, transition in their job, transition in their financial status, or even transition out of the military.

When they leave that warm web of friends, and we have to do a better job of – we do not want them to have a smooth landing. We want them to have a smooth takeoff. How do they leave the Army or the military as a whole and get into that welcome that we talked about and we have to have a – we have to manage that transition for them.

**SENATOR KING:** I appreciate that and I also – I want to end with a compliment to you not only for your many years of incredibly distinguished service but when you were talking about Taiwan you listed capability and capacity and I was madly writing notes, and you anticipated because you came down to the conclusion of the most important factor is will to fight – will to fight – and that is the one thing that we have learned from Ukraine was so critical. So thank you for your service and thank you for your important testimony here today.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Thank you, Senator King. Senator Budd, please?

**SENATOR BUDD:** Thank you, Chairman. Again, thank you both for being here. I just want to extend my condolences to the family of those killed at Fort Campbell last night. I come from a family of aviators including a Blackhawk pilot, so we are certainly keeping them in our prayers. Secretary Wormuth, quality of life is a major factor in retaining soldiers and their families, as you know. The Army is investing to replace barracks and built a new child development center at Fort Bragg in my home state in North Carolina. These are going to go a long way but there is much more to be done.

Can you please discuss how the Army is investing in quality of life initiatives this year?

**MS. WORMUTH:** Certainly, Senator. One important quality of life investment we are doing is barracks, both building new ones, as you said, and renovating ones that we have.

So we have got about a billion dollars in this year's budget for barracks across active, Guard, and Reserve and we are going to keep that kind of investment until 2030 to really try to get after our entire inventory. And, in fact, General

McConville and I are looking at can we find a way to invest even more in barracks.

We are also investing quite a bit in family housing and we work very, very closely with our five privatized housing partners to try to make sure that they are building new inventory and maintaining the inventory that we have. We have had some challenges with those companies a few years ago but I think we are in a better place with them now, although there is always work to do.

Another big set of quality of life investments we are making are in – related to child care. In the last couple of years we have built a number of new CDCs. What we are really focusing on this year is trying to make sure that we are staffing our CDCs at the highest level possible so we can operate at maximum capacity.

So we have raised the minimum wage for our daycare workers. We have raised the fee assistance for our soldiers from \$1,500 a month to \$1,700 a month. We are giving recruiting bonuses basically for CDC workers. We are giving bonuses for our in-home child providers – spouses, in many cases, who open up their own homes. If they move from one duty station to another and stay with the program there is a bonus for that as well. So we are really trying to focus on child care.

**SENATOR BUDD:** Very good. Do not let up, particularly in North Carolina. If you would keep your eye on that, appreciate it.

General McConville, are the Army and the Marine Corps – are they interoperable in the **INDOPACOM** theater?

**GENERAL MCCONVILLE:** I believe so. I think we work very closely together. We have done what we call Project Convergence where we are bringing together the forces. We are all trying to get to the point where we have a combined joint all-domain command and control capability and I know that the commandant and the chief level we work very closely. They are training together out there. We are sharing capabilities and, quite frankly, there is plenty of work for everybody out there.

**SENATOR BUDD:** So you mentioned their capabilities but how do their missions and their capabilities differ and how are they mutually supportive?

**GENERAL MCCONVILLE:** I think when we take a look at the – when I take a look at the Marine Corps, if you are going to do it, when you think about forced entries, okay, I have looked at the Marine Corps as the experts on amphibious operations.

I look at the Army as the experts on airborne operations from 82nd Airborne Division, 18th Airborne Corps, 101st, the expert on air assault operations. So when you take a look at those type of operations that is where it plays out. But the Marine Corps has, certainly – from the maritime environment can do great things. But at the end of the day, where the where the Army comes in is, quite frankly, the capacity and the scale. You are going to do large-scale combat operations on land. You can do them in the United States Army in conjunction with the Marine Corps.

**SENATOR BUDD:** Thank you.

So how is the Army incorporating multi-domain task forces into theater operational plans and theater formations to operate in a denied or degraded environment?

**GENERAL MCCONVILLE:** Yeah. I think we are going to see the multi-domain task force being in tremendous demand by all combatant commanders. Quite frankly, it already is. We are seeing some of the value, and I can talk a little more about that in a classified session of what they are doing. But when you think about what they exist to do is they provide long-range precision fires. So you are going to see hypersonics. You are going to see mid-range capability to sink ships. PRISM can do that.

But they also provide long-range precision effects. So they are in intelligence. They are in IO – information operations. They do cyber. They do electronic warfare in space, and you can also bolt in air and missile defense. So when you start thinking about the ability to assist in maybe a no-fly zone with – from the ground we can assist in that because we will have integrated air and missile defense.

If you think about maybe you want to have a no-sail zone or assist in that because we are going to have anti-ship capability, anti-axis capability, that organization will play very well into that.

**SENATOR BUDD:** Thank you very much. I have another question but I will submit it for the record. Thank you both.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Thank you, Senator Budd. Senator Blumenthal, please?

**SENATOR BLUMENTHAL:** Thanks, Mr. Chairman. Thank you both for your very articulate and informed testimony today, and I join in condolences to the family – the larger family – Army family of the nine soldiers who died at Fort Campbell.

Secretary Wormuth, I want to focus for the moment on helicopters, the Sikorsky and Bell competition for the next long-range assault aircraft contract.

That contract was awarded to Bell. I am sure you are familiar with efforts on my part and our delegation's part to get some of the basic facts, which we are entitled to receive as a matter of oversight. I am deeply disappointed that we have received none of the essential facts that underlie the Army's decision to go with Bell rather than Sikorsky when, in fact, Sikorsky may have a less expensive, more maneuverable longer-range helicopter under FLRAA.

But as disappointed as I am with the decision I am more disappointed with the lack of an explanation and, in fact, the reliance, apparently, on a regulation, which Deputy Secretary Hicks acknowledged does not bind. The Army has not bound it in the past, does not bind it now from providing this information to us.

I am not going to get into a debate on the legalities here. What I am interested in knowing is your commitment to give us that explanation when the source selection process has concluded, which will be next week when the GAO issues its opinion.

Will you commit to give us a briefing and an explanation next week when the GAO finishes it?

**MS. WORMUTH:** Absolutely, Senator. I have already asked Doug Bush, our Assistant Secretary for Acquisition, to be prepared to give you that briefing the minute the GAO completes its review.

**SENATOR BLUMENTHAL:** Thank you. General McConville, I am struck by your quotation – I do not remember who it is attributed to – General Marshall, that when I had the time I did not have the money; when I had the money I did not

have the time.

I am afraid that aptly describes our situation in Ukraine, or more specifically, the Ukrainians' position vis- a-vis are providing the money, the arms, the weapons that are needed because I too had been impressed with the will of Ukrainians.

When I visited three times over the last, roughly, year, speaking not only with President Zelensky but with his top military leadership, with everyday Ukrainians, they will fight to the last person. They will fight with pitchforks, if necessary. They do not want our troops on the ground. They want what we would give our troops if they were on the ground.

And I have also been impressed, and I hope you will take this message back to the men and women under your command, with the training that we provide. I visited Grafenwohr in Germany and watched the training that our soldiers are providing to those Ukrainian freedom fighters, men and women who six, eight, 10 weeks ago were bakers, computer programmers.

Now they are about to go to the trenches in Ukraine, and the bond between them and our soldiers is really inspiring and the kinds of skills that our soldiers are imparting to them really inspiring.

I hope we can give to them the arms that they need and you, as a professional – and I underscore the word professional – not only distinguished but a man who knows how wars are won will also support the kinds of increased arms that are needed now because time is not on our side. The spring is an essential time to provide that aid. And so I want to ask you whether you think Ukrainians are getting enough now to win because if they do get enough they will win, and in your professional judgment whether we should be doing more.

**GENERAL MCCONVILLE:** Some of that question I could talk in a classified session about. But I agree with you as far as on the Ukrainians.

I mean, they learned to operate our Patriots in weeks, which is really pretty incredible, and same thing over in Grafenwohr where they come in, they are really serious about the training, they are very, very professional, and they want to do it.

And they are taking our things that people thought were not possible, some of

our very sophisticated systems, which historically you could never give to another military because they could not maintain. It is nice to have the gear but you have to maintain it, you have to sustain it, and so far, I think, they are doing a magnificent job of working that. And we are learning a lot from telemaintenance to teletraining and when they are down range and they are very innovative on taking our systems and doing that extremely well. And from our standpoint we are giving them the weapon systems that are requested from us at the same time the Secretary and I are trying to make sure that we have what we need to go and do the job, and we appreciate your support in replenishing not only the ammunition but also allowing us to modernize the Army while we go ahead and provide them with the systems they need.

**SENATOR BLUMENTHAL:** My time is expired, but thank you both.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Thank you, Senator Blumenthal. Senator Sullivan, please?

**SENATOR SULLIVAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman and General. Madam Secretary, welcome. Thanks for your great service. Appreciated the call yesterday.

My condolences as well to the Army family members in this recent crash. It reminds us that it is a risky profession 24/7.

I wanted to ask you – first, compliment both of you and then ask kind of a two-part question. How is the 11th Airborne Division doing? We love them in Alaska. Very proud of them in Alaska.

General, it was great being with you for the patching ceremony in Fairbanks and Anchorage last year. And then I know that the Army is looking at standing up two or three – two more multi-domain task forces, and I am not trying to be greedy here but I just happen to live in the state that Billy Mitchell called the most strategic place in the world and, by the way, so did the NORTHCOM commander last week in a hearing. Best training in the world by far, and a gateway to the Arctic, gateway to the **Pacific**, a couple of miles away from Russia and the Taiwan Strait and – I am talking about Alaska.

So we would love to have a multi-domain task force base in our great state. But maybe if you can talk about both 11th Airborne and where you are looking for the next multi-domain task force that would be great. Both of you.



**MS. WORMUTH:** Thanks, Senator Sullivan. We are very pleased with the 11th Airborne Division. I think the reestablishment of that division has really reinstilled our soldiers in Alaska with a sense of purpose. I think morale is quite high as we –

**SENATOR SULLIVAN:** Is it not the most – the highest?

**MS. WORMUTH:** I was just about to say that. Yeah.

**SENATOR SULLIVAN:** Okay. Sorry. Did not want to steal your thunder.

**MS. WORMUTH:** It is the most popular – most popular duty station right now. One of the –

**SENATOR SULLIVAN:** In the U.S. Army. So everybody is requesting it more than – that is so great.

**MS. WORMUTH:** Yeah. Exactly. They just completed a major training exercise, which went very, very well. I think we set a goal in our Arctic strategy a few years ago to really bring back our cold weather expertise and we are really starting to do that in a way that I think is going very, very well.

And as you know, General Eifler and Command Sergeant Major Daley are – and all of the leaders below them are very engaged and I think the division is doing great things.

**SENATOR SULLIVAN:** Good. General? And then maybe you can talk multi-domain task force as well.

**GENERAL MCCONVILLE:** Yes, Senator. It is really interesting when you take a look at a unit that gets purpose.

**SENATOR SULLIVAN:** Yeah.

**GENERAL MCCONVILLE:** In the Army those who have served, like, little tabs, little patches –

**SENATOR SULLIVAN:** Mean a lot.

**GENERAL MCCONVILLE:** – mean a lot.

**SENATOR SULLIVAN:** Oh, yeah.

**GENERAL MCCONVILLE:** And what I see is there has been a huge change in Alaska because of the focus and now they – it used to be people were trying to survive up in the Arctic. Now they are thriving –

**SENATOR SULLIVAN:** Good.

**GENERAL MCCONVILLE:** – and they are becoming the best in the world and becoming masters of their craft, and now they are working with – around the world in other places, too, where we understand the importance of the Arctic as a strategic environment that we are going to have to deal with and a lot of people look in the Arctic and now we have a force that is fully capable of doing that.

They have taken that mission on from an airborne and air assault. Again, those type tabs mean a lot to our soldiers and I think they are making a huge difference. On the multi-domain task force right now we are kind of taking a look. I think we are not going to – certainly, not commit here where we are starting to look, but in the **Pacific** when you start thinking about why you would want that capability is the anti-access capability.

You want the capability to provide maybe a no-sail zone, maybe a no-fly zone capability in conjunction with the joint partners, and then it is just a matter of the type of capabilities.

We are going to have long-range precision fires. Where is – and they do not necessarily have to be all together but you start to kind of lay that down how do you want to do that and then how do you want to position forces or rotate forces forward so they are also operating in the theater, and all those have to come together?

**SENATOR SULLIVAN:** Okay. If you can keep me and this committee informed on what you are looking at for the next deployment and stationing of those that would be great. My next question is on the budget, and I kind of took Secretary Austin and General Milley to task here. The Biden administration keeps putting forward defense budget cuts, three in a row. We bolster it up in a bipartisan way. I think that is leading from behind. They know we are going to do that so they put forward significant cuts, and I pressed General Milley and Secretary Austin. The current budget right now shrinks the Navy, shrinks the Marine Corps, and shrinks the Army to 450. It is a pretty low number for the U.S. Army, and I think this – but they also say it is the most dangerous time since

World War II. It is kind of a disconnect there in terms of the signal we are sending, emboldening people like Putin and Xi Jinping.

Can you comment, Madam Secretary or General, on the – going from 485 to 450 and how does that enhance America’s national security in terms of end strength for the U.S. Army?

**MS. WORMUTH:** Thanks, Senator. I really appreciate the question because I want to make clear that the fact that Army’s end strength is decreasing is not due to the budget. It is not because we have been told cut the Army or there is not enough money to invest in a larger army.

The issue, frankly, is really our recruiting challenge and we have talked a little bit about that with you. We have got to solve our recruiting challenge and what you can see in the five-year budget that we submitted is our intent to build back our end strength.

So over the next five years we hope to start increasing our end strength by about 4,000 a year. But we are going to have to work really hard on recruiting to do that.

**SENATOR SULLIVAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Thank you very much, Senator Sullivan. Senator Warren, please?

**SENATOR WARREN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I would also like to express my condolences to the family and the friends of the nine soldiers who were killed in the Army helicopter crash at Fort Campbell. It is a reminder of how much we owe to every one of our service members who put themselves in harm’s way on our behalf. So it is a very sad day.

I want to thank our witnesses for being here today. What I want to talk about today is behavioral health. Improving behavioral health resources and access for our service members is critical to supporting those who are already sacrificing so much to serve our country, and I am deeply concerned that we are not doing enough to address the crisis of substance use disorder for our service members. So last fall I sent a letter to the Defense Department along with my colleagues Senator Markey, Senator Cornyn, Senator Murkowski, and Senator Heinrich on reports of high levels of fatal drug overdoses involving opioids and

fentanyl at Fort Bragg, Fort Bliss, and West Point. In DOD's response we discovered a total of 15,293 active duty service member overdoses from 2017 to February of 2023. There were 332 fatal overdoses. Now, this is a problem for all of the services but the Army had the highest rate of overdose death. Secretary Wormuth, one of the ways for us to be able to address this issue is to understand the extent of the problem. Is there any kind of annual public reporting on service member overdoses?

**MS. WORMUTH:** Senator, I am sure that we track that data. I am actually –

**SENATOR WARREN:** I did not ask if you track the data. I asked if you had a regular reporting of the data because I could not find one.

**MS. WORMUTH:** We may not and we probably should have one.

**SENATOR WARREN:** Okay. There is no annual reporting, and I just want to make clear the only reason we know the numbers that I just cited is because DOD provided it as an answer to our letter.

Public data that are updated on an ongoing basis would help us better understand and track this problem and whether any new policies that DOD implements are effective. We got to collect the numbers to know what is happening here. Now, one other aspect of this DOD's data showed that more than 80 percent of fatal overdoses by service members were accidental. One thing that could help us prevent accidental overdoses from becoming fatal overdoses is easy accessibility of the overdose reversal drug Naloxone. Secretary Wormuth, DOD says that it provides Naloxone in high-risk cases, which is a good best practice. How often has the Army provided Naloxone to service members and their families?

**MS. WORMUTH:** I do not have that information, Senator Warren, off the top of my head. I do know that we have established a public awareness campaign for our soldiers called One Pill Can Kill and, for example, at Fort Bragg every single newly arriving soldier gets that prevention training because we are deeply concerned, particularly with fentanyl being as prevalent as it is – we are deeply concerned about making sure our soldiers know the dangers there.

**SENATOR WARREN:** And I want you to know I very much appreciate that you are trying to engage in other harm reduction techniques here. I am in favor of

that. But I want to make the pitch that it needs to be more coordinated and that we need better accountability. You got to have the numbers – what programs are you trying and what effect is it having on outcomes.

We know across this country now that harm reduction services save lives. We need to be doing everything that we can to mitigate overdoses among our service members including using harm reduction services that are available and then tracking whether or not they are having the outcomes that we hope for. So I would like to be able to work with you more on this and see if we can get a stronger program in place.

**MS. WORMUTH:** We would welcome that.

**SENATOR WARREN:** Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Thank you very much, Senator Warren. Senator Shaheen, please?

**SENATOR SHAHEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Secretary Wormuth and General McConville, for being here this morning.

And I would also like to offer my condolences. I was in Romania at the end of February and had a chance to meet personally with a number of members of the 101st Airborne who were there from Kentucky. So I can only imagine how devastating it is for the people, for everybody in the 101st but especially for the families.

I would like to begin, Secretary Wormuth, with asking you about the enhanced night vision goggle binoculars, or ENVGBs, because Congress stepped in to restore the full \$300 million in funding for 2023 after the Army budget request did not include any funding for the ENVGBs, and as I have heard from a number of companies and soldiers it is very important to this critical program to maintain the industrial base for it.

And that is why I was very concerned and did not really understand why again this year the Army has requested only \$30 million for fiscal year 2024 for the ENVGB program and that is especially after, in the words of the Army's unfunded priority list last year, failure to fund the ENVGB program, and I quote, "decreases soldier survivability." So how does the Army justify this decision?

**MS. WORMUTH:** Thank you, Senator. The enhanced night vision goggle binoculars are a great product, great system. Our soldiers – they are very, very popular. They have got a lot of great capabilities.

I would say our approach to funding the ENVGBs is similar, in some cases, to other important systems like Abrams and Stryker. We are trying to strike a balance between investing in enduring programs or well tested systems like the enhanced night vision binoculars while also making sure that we have sufficient resources to invest in some of the new systems that we are developing. So our judgment was that that funding level was sufficient and allowed us to be able to strike a balance across our program.

**SENATOR SHAHEEN:** Well, again, I understand and we have had these conversations before about the IVAS program and I know the Army has now ordered an IVAS 1.2 variant. But I think it is not at all clear and, in fact, I would like, Mr. Chairman, to submit for the record the Integrated Visual Augmentation System report here that was done by the Inspector General – well, it was done by fiscal year 2022 directors of Operational Test and Evaluation. It is their report.

But it confirms, I think, what the Inspector General found when he said the Army is at risk of wasting, and I quote, "wasting up to \$21.88 billion in taxpayer funds to field a system that soldiers may not want to use or use as intended and the fact is this report found that IVAS did not demonstrate improvements to deficiencies and that soldiers were, in fact, performing worse than they had without the system.

So, again, I understand the balance that you are trying to strike but it is hard for me to understand how much longer we are going to spend money on a program that does not seem to be accomplishing what you say is the intent.

**MS. WORMUTH:** Senator, what I would say there is we have had some challenges with the IVAS program, that is for sure, and the \$22 billion figure that is cited in that report assumes that we buy it for the entire Army, which is not our current plan.

With the 1.2 variant if Congress funds that what we are going to try to do is see if it can be successful. We are working very, very hard with Microsoft. But it is a new system that will allow us to train, to rehearse, and to fight and it gives some additional capabilities beyond the night vision goggles, which, again, are

superlative. So if we think it can work then we will invest in it. If it does not prove out this time then we will move on. But I think we believe that we should give it a chance. It is a very important step forward in terms of wearable technology for our soldiers.

**SENATOR SHAHEEN:** And, again, I understand the intent and why on paper it looks like a technology that would be worth investing in. But the fact is to date it has not proven to be a technology that soldiers can use and improve their ability to operate.

So I would again urge you to take a look at that program and to really question how far down the road we want to go investing in something that is not working. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** All right, and without objection the report will be submitted for the record. [The information follows:] [COMMITTEE INSERT]

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Senator Rosen, please?

**SENATOR ROSEN:** Well, thank you, Chairman Reed. I appreciate you holding this hearing. I would like to thank the witnesses for being here to testify today and, of course, for your service to this nation.

General McConville, as this will be your last time before the committee, thank you for your decades of distinguished service leading the brave men and women of the United States Army.

We appreciate you, and I also, too, like all of my colleagues want to express my deepest condolences for the families, the fellow soldiers, of those that were lost in last night's tragedy at Fort Campbell, and just to express my heartfelt sympathies.

So I am going to talk a little bit about Nevada and, General McConville, I want to revisit an issue that I raised with you last year. Thank you for your commitment to ensure that Nevada will finally have its first small arms qualification range, and as we discussed, Nevada's Guard and Reserve soldiers are traveling to surrounding states in order to qualify or satisfy their annual weapons qualification, and it is about an average cost of around \$500,000 a year per unit.

And so I appreciate your commitment to look into this, which spurred the effort

underway to build a permanent range in Hawthorne Army Depot by fiscal year '25. I understand that the Nevada Army National Guard is on track to complete their planning and design to meet that timeline and so, General McConville, can I again have your commitment that the Army will see this project through in fiscal year '25 so that soldiers can meet their annual requirements at greater convenience and lower tax cost to the taxpayer?

**GENERAL MCCONVILLE:** You have mine but I just want to check with the Secretary because she is going to be here. You have my commitment.

**MS. WORMUTH:** We will follow through on it, Senator Rosen.

**SENATOR ROSEN:** I have been to where they proposed it, at Hawthorne Army Depot. Everyone is so excited. The plans are really great and everyone is looking forward to having that in Nevada and with all the rest of our military there and Reserves there how it can be used for everyone in our state. So thank you for that. Really appreciate it. And, again, I am going to move on to you then Secretary, about Hawthorne Army Depot. It is the world's largest ammunition depot and demilitarization facility, and the depot stores demilitarizes munitions and ensures munitions readiness for the DOD.

And despite its size and crucial role that Hawthorne plays it is in desperate, desperate need of significant infrastructure upgrades. As an example, I heard from folks in Hawthorne earlier this month that the boilers, which were installed in 1974, were inoperable and the facilities were without heat.

The need to invest in our munitions depots has only become more acute in light of our need to ramp up munitions production not to only arm Ukraine but to, of course, backfill our own stockpiles.

And so given this, does the Army have plans to invest in repairs or upgrades to the munitions depot, and if it does not can I have your commitment that we can include Hawthorne in Army's – in the Army's next future years defense planning unfunded priority list so that we can – we really need to care about our munitions readiness.

**MS. WORMUTH:** Yes, Senator Rosen. First of all, I would say on life, health, and safety issues we always want to take care of those. So I will make sure that we go out and look at the – at Hawthorne and assess whether there is a life, health,



and safety issue with the boiler because if there is we will want to take care of that right away.

We have a 15-year \$18 billion organic industrial base strategy and plan to try to address modernizing all of these facilities and many of them are quite old, as you know. They are sort of vintage World War II. Again, we cannot do all of the modernization in one year so we try to phase that over time and, certainly, I believe that there are investments planned for Hawthorne depot a couple of years from now.

But we are – we constantly assess that plan every year and will talk to General Hamilton, the new head of Army Materiel Command, to make sure that we have got investments in Hawthorne in the right prioritization.

**SENATOR ROSEN:** Yeah. I think that – well, first of all, about the boilers not all of Nevada is a desert so it does get cold there and, really, our munitions readiness, building up our stockpile, they have been – they are always so busy but it has really played an even more integral role since we have been in Ukraine.

And I guess I will go on to this. Ukraine keeps receiving more advanced equipment – the Abrams tanks, the Patriot missile defense system – and those demands for those teams and capabilities continue to grow. So what are you doing to expand the current programs and ensure that we are equipped efficiently and accurately to respond to requests from the battlefield, especially as it relates to Ukraine?

**MS. WORMUTH:** Senator, we are investing \$1.5 billion in the organic industrial base this year to try to expand production for munitions precisely so that we can continue to supply Ukraine what they need but also to replenish our own stocks, and we are using some of the supplemental money that Congress has given us to replenish our stocks and not just buy new old stuff but we are buying new new stuff. So we are replacing M-113 vehicles with the new AMPVs, for example.

We are also working really closely with industry to try to see how they can increase the scope and scale of their munitions production to, again, try to make sure we can keep supplying the Ukrainians.

**SENATOR ROSEN:** Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Thank you, Senator Rosen. Senator Duckworth, please?

**SENATOR DUCKWORTH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do want to express my condolences.

General McConville, you and I know inherently the – how dangerous the job is, especially that of our helicopter crews, and I personally gave you some heavy, heavy nights in Iraq a lifetime ago when my own aircraft went down while you were in – where we were supporting your unit, the first CAV there. So know that I have been thinking about those crews and their families.

Good morning to both of our witnesses. I appreciate our candid conversation earlier this week. In your written testimony you highlighted the critical importance of contested logistics in both short sharp operations as well as for protected conflict.

My colleagues have heard me talk about these difficulties in this committee for some time now, especially as we look into the **Indo-Pacific** region. General McConville, in what ways does this year's Army budget request support contested logistics for the joint force and what efforts are you making to bolster sustainment capabilities and capacity, especially in Southeast Asia?

**GENERAL MCCONVILLE:** Thank you, Senator. As we take a look, one of the big things we have done right off the bat is stand up a cross functional team for contested logistics. As you know very well, I mean, we cannot do what we do without logistics. We are seeing it playing out in Ukraine, and Ukraine is such a great lesson for us all because we are seeing it play out.

But it is on land and we have very robust capability to support logistics in Europe. We need to do the same thing in the **Pacific** and that is working with allies and partners. In the budget there is funding for watercraft. There is funding for prepositioned stocks, which is really important moving them forward, fuel distribution, all these type things that we are going to need to operate these weapon systems.

These weapon systems without fuel, without parts, without bullets do not perform their duty. So we are working that very hard and we think it is very important.

**SENATOR DUCKWORTH:** Thank you. A critical vulnerability for any military,

as we said, is the logistical tail associated with delivering operational energy to its fielded forces. Both our readiness and our allies' and partners' readiness will be bolstered by, one, reducing reliance on fossil fuels and employing more diverse and renewable operational energy sources; developing innovative delivery systems; distributed storage, as you said pre-po; sources flexible contracting and improved automation; and, of course, ensuring supply lines are resilient in the face of climate change, disruption through energy supplies and also cyber attacks. Secretary Wormuth, General McConville, how important is logistics cooperation in Europe and the **Indo-Pacific**, and what efforts in your budget request work towards operational energy security and resilience?

**MS. WORMUTH:** Senator, as General McConville said, logistics are going to be critical. It is that old saying of amateurs do strategy and professionals do logistics, and we have made substantial investments in that area in this budget.

Specifically on operational energy, I would say we have got over \$1.3 billion in our budget this year for two big areas – about a billion dollars in installations resilience, really making sure that our installations are adapting to extreme weather.

But the other \$300 million is investing more in operational energy and looking at electrification of our vehicles, looking at investing in developing hybrid vehicles.

So, for example, we have a hybrid Bradley that I was able to see, as well as hybrid JLTVs, for example, and those are really important because they are going to be much more fuel efficient, which means that we will not have to have the kinds of fuel convoys that we saw in Iraq, for example, which means we are going to put fewer soldiers at risk. But those hybrid vehicles are also lower signature, which is really important when you are looking at the kind of contested environment, and they are very, very quiet, which is going to increase their survivability and, ultimately, our lethality.

So those operational energy investments are really important.

**SENATOR DUCKWORTH:** I just – DOD put out a statistic a while ago about Iraq that said that 80 percent of our casualties in Iraq came from convoy operations and over 50 percent of those convoys were for logistics and fuel – movement of fuel. I think it is highly important.

But when you look to the **Indo-Pacific** region we are going to have to be able to partner with so many folks both in terms of partner military and allies and friends but also commercial resources as well, and I think it is important to make sure that we plus up our cyber capabilities and that of our allies also.

I know that the Army Futures Command in particular is leading efforts when it comes to developing members across the total force with skill sets in advanced technology areas such as computer programming, coding, AI, ML. I wonder – I would like to hear from each of you about the benefits to the department that comes from leveraging the digital skills of its total force service members, particularly those in the Reserve component who have tech skills from their civilian careers.

**MS. WORMUTH:** Sure, Senator. Just briefly, I would say we desperately need to build out our tech skills, our cyber capabilities. They are going to be incredibly important – our AI capabilities – and we need to be able to leverage them not just in the active component but in the Guard and Reserves.

In many cases where we cannot compete, frankly, financially with the salaries that people can get in the commercial sector, being able to draw on cyber capabilities from people in the Guard and soldiers in the Reserves is a great way to sort of thread that needle.

**SENATOR DUCKWORTH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Thank you very much, Senator Duckworth. Thank you, Secretary Wormuth, General McConville. We will recess the open hearing and reconvene at 1200 hours in SVC 217, and I have been informed there is a vote that will commence at 11:45. Thank you very much and we will see you shortly, and thank you. And we recess. [Whereupon, at 11:44 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]