

Stenographic Transcript
Before the

Subcommittee on Strategic Forces

COMMITTEE ON
ARMED SERVICES

UNITED STATES SENATE

TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
MISSILE DEFENSE ACTIVITIES IN REVIEW OF THE DEFENSE
AUTHORIZATION REQUEST FOR FISCAL YEAR 2027 AND THE
FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM

Monday, April 27, 2026

Washington, D.C.

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1 TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE MISSILE
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4 PROGRAM

5
6 Monday, April 27, 2026

7
8 U.S. Senate

9 Subcommittee on Strategic Forces

10 Committee on Armed Services

11 Washington, D.C.

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13 The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 3:30
14 p.m., in Room SR-222, Russell Senate Office Building, Hon.
15 Deb Fischer, chairman of the committee, presiding.

16 Committee Members Present: Senators Fischer, King,
17 and Rosen.

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1 OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. DEB FISCHER, U.S. SENATOR
2 FROM NEBRASKA

3 Senator Fischer: The hearing will come to order.
4 Welcome to our witnesses today and thank you for your
5 service to this country. We look forward to hearing your
6 testimony.

7 As everyone here understands, the United States faces
8 a very different threat environment than ever before. Our
9 adversaries are developing non-ballistic threats, including
10 hypersonic and long-range cruise missiles designed to hold
11 our homeland at risk. Our adversaries have also spent
12 decades building multilayered defensive systems, often
13 referred to in the past as anti-access, aerial denial
14 capabilities.

15 While the Department did begin programs to modernize
16 our ability to defend against limited ICBM attacks from a
17 rogue actor, the United States has failed to make a similar
18 investment to defend against a broader range of attacks.
19 We now have a real opportunity to build a homeland defense
20 architecture capable of meeting the threats that we
21 currently face.

22 General Guetlein, you have been granted extraordinary
23 authorities as the direct reporting program manager for
24 Golden Dome. While I appreciate our conversations on
25 Golden Dome in classified settings, I look forward to you

1 sharing more with the American public this afternoon on why
2 we need to improve our missile defense posture and how you
3 plan to do so in a cost-effective manner.

4 Lieutenant General Collins, I look forward to hearing
5 what progress has been made on enduring Missile Defense
6 Agency programs, including the Next Generation Interceptor
7 and Glide Phase Interceptor, as well as how MDA is
8 supporting Golden Dome.

9 Assistant Secretary Berkowitz, your deep expertise in
10 missile defense and deterrence policy is an invaluable
11 resource for this Department, and I appreciate your
12 frankness and insight into the risks and the opportunities
13 before us.

14 General Lozano, the Army's contributions towards
15 regional and forward-deployed missile defense systems
16 cannot be overstated. I look forward to hearing more about
17 these systems and an update on the defense of Guam.

18 With that I would recognize Senator King for any
19 opening remarks.

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1 STATEMENT OF HON. ANGUS KING, U.S. SENATOR FROM MAINE

2 Senator King: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am going to
3 submit my opening remarks for the record, some very
4 detailed points that I think will come up in the hearing,
5 and we can proceed directly to our witnesses. Thank you.

6 [The prepared statement of Senator King follows:]

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1 Senator Fischer: Thank you, Senator King.

2 Again, welcome to our panel today. Secretary
3 Berkowitz, would you begin with your opening comments
4 please.

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1 STATEMENT OF THE HON. MARC J. BERKOWITZ, ASSISTANT
2 SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR SPACE POLICY

3 Mr. Berkowitz: Chairman Fischer, Ranking Member King,
4 and distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for
5 the opportunity to testify on the Department of War's
6 missile defense activities. It is an honor to appear with
7 my colleagues, General Guetlein, Lieutenant General
8 Collins, and Lieutenant General Lozano.

9 America faces intensifying strategic competition in
10 the security environment. The pace and scale of the threat
11 is unprecedented. Our rivals are expanding, diversifying,
12 and increasing the sophistication of their arsenals of
13 missiles and aerial weapons. They are integrating
14 offensive strike and missile defense systems into joint
15 operations to deny access and impose costs.

16 By threatening America's safety, territorial
17 integrity, and economic prosperity, rivals aim to undermine
18 our political will, societal cohesion and morale, and
19 ability to project power. President Trump is restoring
20 American strength to meet these challenges and secure
21 peace. He issued an executive order to field and operate
22 the Golden Dome for America, a comprehensive, next-
23 generation defense against the most catastrophic threats
24 facing the United States. The Golden Dome will protect our
25 homeland, citizens, critical infrastructure, and second

1 strike capability.

2 The President's Golden Dome for America initiative is
3 the cornerstone of our homeland defense posture. It is a
4 necessary and pragmatic response to the growing threat
5 posed by ballistic, hypersonic, and advanced cruise
6 missiles as well as other next-generation aerial weapons.
7 The Golden Dome will complement our nuclear deterrent.

8 Today, our capability to defend the nation is limited,
9 and its effectiveness is eroding against increasingly
10 advanced threats. The Golden Dome will rectify this by
11 creating a layered defense-in-depth of the United States.
12 It will defend against accidental, unauthorized, rogue,
13 decapitation, and coercive attacks.

14 In contrast to the current limited defense system,
15 consisting of a single layer of Ground-Based Midcourse
16 Defense interceptors, multiple terrestrial and space-based
17 defensive layers will complicate adversary attack planning
18 and provide more engagement opportunities to destroy
19 incoming threats.

20 Combined with the prospect of retaliation, the Golden
21 Dome will strengthen deterrence by denying adversaries the
22 ability to achieve their objectives through coercion or
23 aggression. Moreover, it will save lives and limit damage
24 should deterrence break down.

25 The cost of the Golden Dome, while significant, is a



1 necessary investment to protect assets of truly
2 incalculable value -- the lives of our citizens and the
3 territorial integrity of our nation. The cost of failing
4 to defend our homeland would be infinitely greater.

5 China is our pacing competitor. We will deter China
6 from a position of strength with a denial defense along the
7 first island chain. Our regional missile defense posture,
8 centered on our Aegis destroyers as well as Terminal High
9 Altitude Area Defense and Patriot batteries provides a
10 forward-deployed, layered Integrated Air and Missile
11 Defense network. As Operation Epic Fury underscores,
12 regional missile defense is essential to protect and defend
13 our forces, allies, and partners.

14 Our global alliances will remain a strategic advantage
15 if our allies and partners invest properly in defense. The
16 Department will continue to pursue opportunities for
17 missile defense and defeat cooperation to increase burden-
18 sharing capacity and interoperability.

19 We are also supercharging the U.S. Defense Industrial
20 Base by cutting bureaucratic red tape, empowering program
21 leaders to take calculated risks, and leveraging private
22 sector innovation. We must accelerate the delivery of
23 critical missile defense and defense capabilities at scale.

24 In closing, with the continued support of Congress,
25 the War Department will invest in the missile defense and



1 defeat programs necessary to achieve peace through
2 strength. Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

3 [The prepared statement of Mr. Berkowitz follows:]

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1 Senator Fischer: Thank you, Mr. Secretary. General
2 Guetlein, welcome. You are recognized for your opening
3 comments.

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1 STATEMENT OF GENERAL MICHAEL A. GUETLEIN, USSF,
2 DIRECT REPORTING PROGRAM MANAGER, GOLDEN DOME FOR AMERICA

3 General Guetlein: Chairwoman Fischer, Ranking Member
4 King, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee, thank
5 you for the opportunity to report on the progress of Golden
6 Dome for America.

7 We are here today because the global strategic
8 landscape has changed. For the first time in a generation,
9 our nation's margin of safety has vanished. While we have
10 been focused on the away game, our adversaries have been
11 working around the clock to challenge us at home, and today
12 the homeland is exposed and relatively undefended.

13 A new generation of advanced air and missile threats,
14 unprecedented in their speed, numbers, and lethality, now
15 holds the American homeland at risk. Our adversaries are
16 not just expressing the intent. They are demonstrating the
17 capability to threaten our families and our way of life.
18 This threat is not theoretical. We see it unfolding in
19 front of our own eyes every day on our televisions. It is
20 real, it is growing, and we must meet it with American
21 resolve.

22 Golden Dome for America is the Administration's bold
23 and decisive answer to this danger. It is the cornerstone
24 of our strategy to rapidly improve the defensive equation
25 of the homeland and to ensure peace through strength. This

1 is not another weapon system. It is a layered, integrated
2 shield designed to defend the homeland against the full
3 spectrum of advanced threats. This vision is ambitious,
4 but it is achievable. The foundational technology exists
5 today, and we are moving with the utmost urgency to bring
6 it to bear.

7 Our strategy is built on speed, affordability, and
8 partnerships. My priority is establishing a unified
9 command and control network to link our existing battle-
10 proven systems and field credible defenses now.

11 With the resources authorized by this Committee, we
12 are also investing in next-generation technology to
13 dramatically increase our defensive capacity and
14 fundamentally drive down the cost per intercept for
15 generations to come.

16 Make no mistake -- the greatest challenge here is not
17 technical. It is organizational. Success requires forging
18 unity of effort across the Federal Government, and as the
19 Golden Dome Director I have been granted unprecedented
20 authorities to do just that. The leaders on this panel
21 before you today, along with NORTHCOM, represent this new
22 way of doing business.

23 We are working as one team. NORTHCOM is my number one
24 customer. The Missile Defense Agency is integrating the
25 architecture and delivering cutting-edge capabilities. The

1 Army is building the operational framework, and policy is
2 deterring our adversaries.

3 In addition, we are transforming our relationship with
4 the industrial base, using innovative partnerships and
5 prize-based competitions to unleash the full power of
6 American innovation.

7 Golden Dome is a generational investment in the
8 security of our nation. It is a promise to the American
9 people and a clear message to our adversaries that their
10 reckless and aggressive actions will not go unanswered.
11 With your continued support and resources, we will deliver
12 a defense that protects every American. We owe nothing
13 less to our children and our children's children.

14 Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

15 [The prepared statement of General Guetlein follows:]
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1 Senator Fischer: Thank you, General Guetlein.
2 General Collins, welcome. You are recognized for your
3 comments.

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1 STATEMENT OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL HEATH A. COLLINS,
2 USAF, DIRECTOR, MISSILE DEFENSE AGENCY

3 General Collins: Thank you, ma'am. Good afternoon,
4 Chair Fischer, Ranking Member King, and distinguished
5 members of the Subcommittee. Thank you for your continued
6 unwavering support of the missile defense mission.

7 Since its initial founding as the Strategic Defense
8 Initiative Office in 1983, and through its current
9 establishment as the Missile Defense Agency in 2002, the
10 men and women of this missile defense enterprise have made
11 the impossible possible, hitting a bullet with a bullet,
12 and we have integrated disparate capabilities from
13 services, agencies, and nations into an effective weapon
14 system, proven in combat in recent years, months, and days.

15 We have developed, globally delivered, and evolved the
16 missile defense system since it went operational in 2004,
17 to address evolving threats, leverage new technology, and
18 align with the nation's national policy. MDA has leveraged
19 its extensive experience in integrating, testing, and
20 delivering technologically advanced missile defense systems
21 to deliver on its promises and commitments to our nation,
22 and provide the warfighter the battle-proven lethal and
23 effective systems that have saved thousands of lives.

24 This team has adapted to the changing character of
25 war, but the mission is not done. Recent operations have

1 only highlighted the increasing pace of change, and MDA is
2 increasing our acquisition tempo to maintain relevancy.
3 Today, MDA is pressing ahead to continue developing and
4 delivering the disruptive, lethal, resilient, agile, and
5 affordable capabilities required today and tomorrow for the
6 defense of the U.S. homeland, our deployed forces, and our
7 international partners. We continue our transformation
8 into the fast and agile enterprise the nation needs, and we
9 are renewing our focus on delivering cutting-edge
10 capabilities across the air, land, sea, and space domains.

11 With the ongoing transition and transfer of proven
12 missile defense systems, MDA will invest more purposely in
13 the development, experimentation, integration, testing, and
14 delivery of breakthrough technologies and foundational
15 missile defense capabilities.

16 MDA will continue to develop and test system elements,
17 components, and technologies for this new generation of
18 capabilities, what we are calling Missile Defense System -
19 Next, and it will continue to operate as the system-of-
20 systems integrator for the homeland defense architecture,
21 developed and delivered by the Office of the Golden Dome
22 for America. MDA is aligned with Golden Dome, I with
23 General Guetlein, to deliver the critical capabilities
24 required to defend our homeland and our nation's interests.

25 In closing, I would like to honor those who have paid



1 the ultimate price in the service to our country and thank
2 those warfighters, civilians, contractor professionals, and
3 their families, of those operating the missile defense
4 system around the world, around the clock, in harm's way
5 today. They honor us with their selflessness and
6 sacrifice.

7 I greatly appreciate your steadfast support for MDA
8 and your commitment to providing the resources necessary
9 to execute the missile defense mission. Recent conflicts
10 have proven and cemented the vital role missile defense
11 plays in this strategic environment and on the battlefield.

12 Thank you. I look forward to your questions.

13 [The prepared statement of General Collins follows:]

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1 Senator Fischer: Thank you, General Collins. General
2 Lozano, you are recognized for your comments, sir.

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1 STATEMENT OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL FRANCISCO J. LOZANO,
2 USA, PORTFOLIO ACQUISITION EXECUTIVE FIRES, UNITED STATES
3 ARMY

4 General Lozano: Chairman Fischer, Ranking Member
5 King, and members of this Subcommittee, thank you for the
6 opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the
7 criticality of defending the island of Guam. On behalf of
8 Army senior leadership we thank you for your continued
9 support of our soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines,
10 guardians, civilians, and their families.

11 Guam is an undisputable part of the homeland, and I
12 cannot overstate its strategic criticality as the home of
13 American citizens. Defending Guam is unquestionable. It
14 is a geostrategic location that makes it central to the
15 deterrence efforts against our adversaries in the Indo-
16 Pacific, serving as a critical hub for power projection,
17 logistics, and regional operations.

18 Our ongoing efforts center on defending against
19 increasingly sophisticated and evolving threats. As the
20 Joint Program Acquisition Executive, our organization is
21 charged with synchronizing the development, testing,
22 integration, fielding, and sustainment of the Guam defense
23 system components. These components span across 25
24 prototype efforts and programs of record in the Army, Air
25 Force, Navy, and the Missile Defense Agency.

1 The Joint Program Acquisition Executive also serves as
2 the material developer for the Guam Defense System Battle
3 Manager. This suite of products allows current service-
4 and agency-developed weapon systems and command and control
5 to behave as a unified system. Guam currently hosts
6 multiple systems that not only deliver critical defensive
7 capabilities but also provide soldiers with valuable
8 training and hand-on experience.

9 In the past year, the Army has fielded a Lower Tier
10 Air and Missile Defense Sensor, known as LTAMDS, and that
11 battery is on the island. Additionally, a terminal high-
12 altitude area defense battery, known as Task Force Talon,
13 is fully integrated and actively operated by soldiers
14 stationed there.

15 An AN/TPY-6 radar panel, provided by the Missile
16 Defense Agency, also serves as a key element of the Guam
17 defense system architecture, contributing to a
18 comprehensive, 360-degree coverage of the island. With
19 initial operating capability taking place in fiscal year
20 2027, the GDS architecture will continue to evolve to
21 outpace the threat, and could incorporate new technologies
22 in the future, such as directed energy.

23 Thank you once again for the opportunity to be here.
24 I look forward to your questions about the Guam defense
25 system. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of General Lozano follows:]

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1 Senator Fischer: Thank you, General.

2 Assistant Secretary Berkowitz, I would like to begin
3 with you and General Guetlein. In this setting, what
4 threats is GDA being designed to defend against, and
5 perhaps more importantly, how well is the homeland defended
6 against those threats today?

7 Mr. Berkowitz: Thank you for the opportunity to
8 underscore a critical rationale for the program. As I
9 indicated in my opening statement, we are in a very complex
10 and dangerous security environment where our rivals have
11 dramatically expanded their missile and aerial arsenals.
12 Those include ballistic missiles, hypersonic missiles,
13 advanced cruise missiles, and other advanced aerial weapon
14 systems. The threat they pose, whether nuclear armed or
15 even conventional, are truly grave threats to our homeland,
16 to the American population, to our critical
17 infrastructures, and to our second strike capability. And
18 that is the reason why the President took the initiative to
19 order the Department to pursue the Golden Dome initiative.

20 If you could remind me about the second part of your
21 question, please.

22 Senator Fischer: Can we defend against those threats
23 today?

24 Mr. Berkowitz: Today we have a very limited, ground-
25 based, single-layer homeland defense system that was



1 specifically designed against a small-scale rogue attack
2 from North Korea. And we have very limited capability
3 against any other attack with ballistic missiles, and we
4 have no defense against hypersonic weapons or cruise
5 missiles today -- I should say advanced cruise missiles.

6 Senator Fischer: Thank you. General Guetlein, would
7 you like to add anything to that?

8 General Guetlein: Yes, Chairwoman. Golden Dome is
9 designed to get after the next generation aerial threats,
10 which includes unmanned aerial systems against our
11 homeland, cruise missiles, hypersonic and maneuvering
12 hypersonic missiles, as well as ballistics from the air and
13 ballistics from the sea.

14 Today, as Secretary Berkowitz discussed, we were
15 really focused on the rogue nation intercontinental
16 ballistic missile threat to protect the homeland, and then
17 we relied on our oceans to take the fight to the enemy.
18 That distance has been quickly eroded by their technology,
19 so Golden Dome is protecting for both conventional threats
20 that we see unfolding on television every day as well as
21 nuclear-capable threats that could be brought against the
22 homeland.

23 Senator Fischer: General Guetlein, in the President's
24 fiscal year 2027 budget request for Golden Dome it included
25 over \$17 billion in the mandatory portion of the request.



1 In this setting, can you tell us why it is critical for
2 these funds to be provided to Golden Dome this cycle, and
3 what happens if we wait to fund these programs until fiscal
4 year 2028 or even later?

5 General Guetlein: Thank you, Chairwoman, for that
6 question. Today, as we stated, the homeland is relatively
7 undefended, and our number one objective is to change the
8 homeland defense equation as fast as we possibly can, with
9 the objective of delivering an operational capability to
10 protect against those next-generation aerial threats by the
11 summer of 2028.

12 Senator Fischer: And are you ready, in your plan, to
13 be able to put that \$17 billion to good use and then to be
14 ready in fiscal year 2028 for more funding to continue the
15 buildout?

16 General Guetlein: Absolutely, Chairwoman. We have
17 completely gotten the entire architecture approved. We
18 know what the testing strategy is going to be to get us to
19 the summer of '28, and we are postured to rapidly put those
20 funds on contract, efficiently and affordably, to deliver
21 an operational capability in the summer of 2028.

22 Senator Fischer: Great. And what is the total
23 projected cost of Golden Dome, and how will you ensure that
24 the taxpayers' money is going to be spent responsibly?
25 What is going to happen if portions of the planned



1 architecture turn out to be not feasible, from a cost
2 perspective?

3 General Guetlein: Chairwoman, that is a great
4 question. Currently, the estimated cost of Golden Dome
5 with the objective architecture out into the 2030s is \$183
6 billion. That is the \$175 billion that the President
7 announced when he stood up Golden Dome, plus an additional
8 \$10 billion to accelerate space capabilities that were not
9 originally part of our architecture.

10 We have built the foundation of Golden Dome upon a
11 scalable, modular architecture, using affordable elements
12 and taking advantage of competition and innovation from
13 industry to deliver those elements. And we have scaled it
14 so that it is multilayered and integrated. If any
15 component of the architecture cannot deliver on time, we
16 have pathways to pivot away from that and embrace a
17 different technology.

18 Senator Fischer: Thank you, General Guetlein.
19 Senator King.

20 Senator King: I have a couple of more general
21 questions. Number one, I am very concerned about the way
22 this is being funded. In this year's budget, almost 25
23 percent of the budget is in this reconciliation slush fund
24 that does not go through the normal appropriations process.
25 It makes defense a partisan process, which I think is



1 unfortunate. I mean, the Senator and I were here in the
2 days of OCO. This is Son of OCO, and it is a fund that
3 does not have the oversight of the United States Congress.
4 Yes, it is authorized by Congress, but in a purely partisan
5 way. And since I have been sitting on this Committee all
6 of our work has been bipartisan until now. And I do not
7 understand how this all happened.

8 And you talk about mandatory spending. Mandatory
9 spending is Social Security and Medicare. This is not
10 mandatory spending, and this is the American taxpayers'
11 dollars, and it is our responsibility to shepherd those
12 dollars and to approve and work through and have oversight
13 over programs created.

14 I thought, Mr. Horowitz [sic], what you said was
15 interesting. You said it was the President's initiative
16 and continued support of Congress. So the President gets
17 to say we are going to do a \$150, \$200, \$300 billion
18 project, and Congress can sit meekly by and say, "Okay,
19 we'll write the check for you." I do not understand.

20 I am very disturbed by the precedent that this has
21 created, which is basically, for this year, I understand,
22 is about 25 percent of the defense budget is out of the
23 consideration of the Appropriations Committee and the Armed
24 Service Committee, and the Chairman of our Committee is
25 reduced to saying, will you hopefully follow the precedents



1 of Congress -- we have heard it said at multiple committee
2 meetings -- rather than the process that is supposed to
3 take place, which is the President proposes, the Congress
4 considers the risks and the costs, and enables and
5 authorizes the program.

6 I do not know if any of you want to respond to this,
7 but I really am very concerned about the process that we
8 are talking about here. None of you personally have any
9 responsibility, but we are talking about taking 25 percent
10 of the defense budget away from the Appropriations
11 Committee and effectively away from the authorizing, the
12 Armed Services Committee, and handing it to OMB and the
13 White House. That is not the way our system is supposed to
14 work. Mr. Horowitz [sic], can you give me some reason why
15 it should be done this way and not through the ordinary
16 appropriation process that has stood this country in good
17 stead for a couple hundred years?

18 Mr. Berkowitz: Yes, Senator, I would like to answer
19 the question. My understanding is that the rationale for
20 making the request as part of the reconciliation part of
21 the budget is to accelerate the President's initiative and
22 to provide flexibility --

23 Senator King: That is another way of saying, "We
24 don't want to mess with that messy congressional thing
25 where they consider and have hearings," right? You just

1 want to do it, because the President wants it. Is that
2 what you are saying? Accelerate.

3 Mr. Berkowitz: No, sir. What I am saying is that
4 this is a one-time request for a plus-up to accelerate.

5 Senator King: This is the second year of
6 reconciliation. This is not a one-time request. This is
7 year number two.

8 Mr. Berkowitz: The other part of the rationale is
9 that it provides flexibility given the rapidly changing
10 dynamics of advanced technology, sir.

11 Senator King: Well, I really do not like this
12 process. I think it is a huge mistake, and I think it is
13 one more abdication of Congress' responsibility and
14 authority to take care of the taxpayers' money.

15 General Lozano, what is the cost of defending Guam,
16 what you outlined? What is the total cost of the defense
17 that you outlined in your testimony?

18 General Lozano: Thank you, sir, for your question.
19 Right now we are tracking a total cost of about \$3.5
20 billion, sir.

21 Senator King: Okay, \$3.5 billion. So the total cost
22 of Golden Dome projected, I think, is \$175 billion. Divide
23 that -- I am not very good at doing math in my head, but
24 that comes out, what is it? I will do it right in front of
25 you. It would be about 50,000 times that. I mean, we are



1 talking about a very significant cost.

2 General Guetlein, can you do Golden Dome and protect
3 like Guam is being protected with that \$175 billion budget?

4 General Guetlein: We can absolutely protect the
5 homeland form \$175 billion. Senator, the difference is
6 Guam is a point defense, and it needs to be self-contained
7 and self-defended, whereas protection of the homeland is an
8 area defense. It is similar to --

9 Senator King: When you say area defense, what does
10 that means? That means the whole country. Montana is not
11 necessary going to be protected, or Iowa.

12 General Guetlein: Protecting everything
13 simultaneously. So if you were trying to protect a single
14 jewel in a museum, you would have to put down an enormous
15 amount of protection measures and defensive measures to
16 protect that one jewel. If you step back and you are
17 trying to protect the entire museum, you can now go back to
18 a regional defense, protect the perimeter without having to
19 dedicate all those point defenses. That is really the big
20 difference between the way we are protecting Guam and the
21 we are going to protect the homeland.

22 Senator King: So the budget that you have, you can
23 protect the entire homeland, the villages of Louisiana or
24 New Mexico or Montana or Maine, with the system that you
25 are proposing. It is not designed to protect particular



1 areas like the National Capital or the major metropolitan
2 areas?

3 General Guetlein: Golden Dome is designed to protect
4 the entire homeland from that array of threats, whether
5 that be counter-UAS cruise missiles, hypersonics, or even
6 ballistics from the air or ballistics from the sea. The
7 entire homeland to include Alaska and Hawaii, and after the
8 defense of Guam is delivered, Guam will be part of the
9 defense of the homeland, as well.

10 Senator King: My time is up. We will have a second
11 round, I presume, Madam Chair?

12 Senator Fischer: Since we have no other members here
13 I think we will continue, if you are good with that,
14 Senator King.

15 General Guetlein and General Collins, I have a
16 question for you. Can you walk us through the role that
17 Missile Defense Agency has in supporting Golden Dome? I do
18 not know how you want to work this, who wants to start.

19 General Guetlein: If you are okay, Madam Chairwoman,
20 I will start. What we wanted to do is take advantage of
21 the vast resources and the expertise of the Missile Defense
22 Agency, which has been around for several decades. So
23 under the authorities memo that the Secretary of War gave
24 me, they aligned Missile Defense Agency under the
25 operational control of Golden Dome to do the systems-to-



1 system integration, to do the testing, and to do the
2 transition from development into operations, to take
3 advantage of the vast expertise and resources of the
4 Missile Defense Agency.

5 So under Golden Dome, General Collins is actually
6 dual-hatted as my deputy for systems-to-systems
7 engineering, as well as the Director for the Missile
8 Defense Agency, reporting to the Director for Research and
9 Engineering within the Department of War.

10 Senator Fischer: Thank you. General Collins, in your
11 answer if you could talk a little bit about that
12 integration that we did yesterday at our meeting in
13 classified, if you could bring that up a little bit.

14 General Collins: Yes, ma'am. Thank you. Certainly
15 to build on General Guetlein's comments, Missile Defense
16 Agency -- and I mentioned in my opening comments that we
17 have a long history of integrating disparate capabilities
18 into effective, combat-proven missile defense systems. And
19 the big ask that comes with Golden Dome is part of that, as
20 well.

21 One additional thing, we are also an acquirer of a
22 number of those capabilities, as well. So we are acquiring
23 capabilities to deliver, and then we are the integration
24 lead for Golden Dome across all the services and agencies
25 as we go forward.

1 That integration role really covers down on a number
2 of different parts of what integration means. There is
3 program integration, making sure all of the acquisitions
4 and deliveries and schedules are integrated together.
5 Earlier today, ma'am, we talked about an integrated master
6 schedule and how, in an integrating office that we stood
7 up, are really the source of bringing in the capabilities
8 and the schedules from all of the different partners,
9 integrating those together. So General Guetlein has
10 insight into execution as well as all of the
11 interdependencies across the enterprise.

12 Another integration is systems integration, more of
13 the technical integration piece. My chief engineer at the
14 Missile Defense Agency works shoulder-to-shoulder with
15 General Guetlein's chief engineer, and they really make
16 sure that the technical integration, the requirements, the
17 interfaces, and the management of those interfaces are tied
18 together seamlessly so that when the kit arrives it all
19 works together as a single weapon system.

20 And then we are building below that, as well -- how do
21 we integrate with operations, how do we integrate with the
22 warfighter, interagency, and the like.

23 So all of those are part of the Integrating Office,
24 and it is really part of the DNA of Missile Defense Agency
25 in support of General Guetlein and Golden Dome for America.

1 Senator Fischer: I would ask any witness this. We
2 are looking at a generational investment here in homeland
3 defense, and we want to make sure it is going to be what we
4 need in order to meet the threats that we have. Are you
5 working with industry so we have the best concepts and
6 technology available for this? And when you work with
7 industry partners, the second and third tier of suppliers,
8 are you making sure that those supply lines cannot be
9 exploited in the future, or even now?

10 General Guetlein: Chairwoman, I will take that. We
11 are absolutely working in partnership with industry. I
12 have personally met with well over 400 individual companies
13 over the past 6 to 8 months, to share with them my problems
14 but also to understand how they can solve our problems.

15 We have stood up the C2 Consortium, the Command and
16 Control Consortium, which includes both the traditional
17 contractors as well as new entrants. There are 11 of them
18 now, working in partnership to deliver our next-generation
19 command and control capability.

20 And then, as of last week, we stood up what we call
21 the Ecosystem Hub. The Ecosystem Hub is a one-stop shop
22 for industry to come do business with Golden Dome. It is a
23 single point of entry. It includes two-way communications
24 to have transparent dialogue back and forth. It has
25 strategic matchmaking. I can connect them to anybody in

1 the Federal Government that may be in need of their
2 services or their capabilities. It has a security and
3 resilience element to it.

4 We have brought on companies like Exiger and Govini to
5 do supply chain resilience, down to the multiple levels
6 deep into the supply chain, to look for alternatives to
7 expand the supply chain and diversify it. And then we also
8 partner them with a red team that goes in and helps them
9 figure out how the threat is going to manifest itself, how
10 to protect and defend themselves against that threat, in a
11 very transparent and partnering type manner.

12 So we are embracing industry like we have never
13 embraced industry in the past.

14 Senator Fischer: Thank you, General. Senator King.

15 Senator King: What is the estimate of the number of
16 missiles, UAVs, and other attack elements that China has?
17 What do we know?

18 General Guetlein: Senator, those numbers are
19 classified, but they range, depending on the type of
20 threat, from several hundred to tens of thousands.

21 Senator King: I guess one of my questions about
22 Golden Dome is that the cornerstone of our defense strategy
23 for 80 years has been deterrence, mutually assured
24 destruction, and we lived through a period in the second
25 half of the 20th century where we faced an aggressive



1 adversary, with a lot of capabilities, strategic missiles,
2 bombers, the whole range, without any Golden Dome. And
3 what protected us was not sensors and missiles but the idea
4 of deterrence, that if we are struck we will strike back in
5 such a way as to impose unacceptable costs on the
6 adversary.

7 What has changed that makes this new initiative
8 necessary, from the experience that we had with the Soviet
9 Union in the second half of the 20th century? They had
10 bombers, they had missiles, they had strategic capability,
11 they had ICBMs, and that is what we are talking about that
12 China has. Why is it that we suddenly need a defense
13 shield when we went without one for 70 years and it worked?
14 Mr. Horowitz [sic]?

15 Mr. Berkowitz: Thank you for the question, Senator.

16 Senator King: And I am being a little argumentative,
17 but I am genuinely skeptical and want to understand why
18 this is necessary now, when it was not necessary when we
19 faced a similar threat, perhaps more aggressive, from the
20 Soviet Union?

21 Mr. Berkowitz: Well, thank you for the question. I
22 think it is a very important question that Congress and the
23 American public must understand to be able to support the
24 program's rationale.

25 What I would say is that the strategic environment has



1 changed dramatically since the end of the Cold War, and
2 that we are no longer facing just a single, monolithic
3 threat. We are now facing multiple nuclear-armed rivals
4 who have increasingly sophisticated missile and aerial
5 capabilities, first off. The second thing I would say --

6 Senator King: But deterrence, I mean, while this is
7 all going on we are upgrading our own triad very
8 substantially in terms of our ICBMs, in terms of new
9 bombers and new nuclear submarines. So why won't
10 deterrence work with China if it worked for 50 years or 80
11 years, with the Russians?

12 Mr. Berkowitz: I believe that strategic stability
13 cannot be based on U.S. societal vulnerability to assured
14 retaliation. Our competitors clearly do not accept that
15 their societal vulnerability contributes to stability.
16 Both Russia and China, and for that matter, other actors,
17 have long pursued their own integrated air and missile
18 defense systems. Their objections to U.S. missile defenses
19 are not really about preserving strategic stability. They
20 are aimed at weakening or constraining our own defense
21 capabilities that would complicate their ability to use
22 coercive threats or to attack the United States. In short,
23 what they have been doing is insisting that U.S.
24 vulnerability is stabilizing while simultaneously rejecting
25 such vulnerability for themselves.

1 As I said earlier, the Golden Dome is intended to be a
2 complement to our nuclear deterrence because in conjunction
3 with our nuclear triad a homeland missile defense
4 capability will provide us both a sword and a shield that
5 will have a synergistic benefit to strengthen deterrence,
6 and should deterrence fail, it will be provide a means to
7 protect the territorial integrity of the nation and the
8 lives of our citizens.

9 Senator King: Thank you. General, knowing that we
10 are in an open setting, can you explain how Golden Dome
11 would work? In answer to my question about Guam you said,
12 "Well, this isn't like Guam. We are not protecting
13 particular places."

14 By the way, I did my math. If we protected particular
15 places in the U.S. we could do 50 if we had the same cost
16 that we have in Guam. But you are saying the system does
17 not work that way. Can you give us the concept of how it
18 would work, rather than having THAAD batteries around
19 Kansas City, for example?

20 General Guetlein: Absolutely, Ranking Member. If you
21 look at the way we fight the away game, every one of our
22 weapon systems have to be self-contained so that it can
23 operate in a bare-bones environment, that it can operate
24 independently, disconnected from the larger enterprise.
25 That is not the way we need to defend the United States.

1 Rather than having all those point defenses being able to
2 operate independently, we can actually bring that
3 capability back to the United States, integrate it and
4 network it in new and innovative ways, layer it, bring to
5 bear multidomain capabilities, automate it, and then take
6 advantage of the next-generation level of processing
7 artificial intelligence to make sense of a greater array of
8 data, to get a better fire control solution. So it allows
9 us --

10 Senator King: But the missiles coming from China,
11 what is the defense? I mean, you used a lot of words
12 there, but are we still talking about THAADs and Patriots,
13 or are we talking about something entirely different?

14 General Guetlein: Ranking Member, we are talking
15 about something different.

16 Senator King: Well, tell us what it is.

17 General Guetlein: We are integrating and networking
18 an array of effectors and an array of sensors, using next-
19 gen technology, to get a greater magazine depth at a lower
20 cost per intercept.

21 Senator King: Okay. So when you talk magazine depth
22 we still are talking some kind of kinetic response.

23 General Guetlein: We are talking about kinetics. We
24 are talking about non-kinetics. We are talking about left-
25 of-launch. We are talking about a whole host of



1 capabilities in a layered effect, to include directed
2 energy, and bringing it to bear in new and innovative ways.
3 We cannot go into the specifics of the effectors nor the
4 magazine depth, but it is a different set of capabilities
5 than what we currently have for the away game.

6 Senator King: You said directed energy because you
7 knew that was something I was going to respond to. Thank
8 you. Thank you very much. And again, I am not trying to
9 be argumentative, but my job is to represent the American
10 people who I think deserve to understand how this thing
11 would work, why we are doing it, whether it will, in fact,
12 increase our security, and as I said at the beginning, how
13 it is being funded. Thank you. Thank you very much,
14 gentlemen.

15 Senator Fischer: Thank you, Senator King. If Senator
16 Rosen is ready, she just joined us. Take your time. Get a
17 breath.

18 Senator Rosen: Normally it is fly-in day and I never
19 get here before 5:30. But today I was up here.

20 Senator Fischer: You made good time then. Good to
21 see you.

22 Senator Rosen: Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you
23 for being here. Thank you for holding the hearing, and
24 thank you for your service to our country. I really
25 appreciate that.



1 Well, I am going to talk a little bit about Golden
2 Dome and the vulnerabilities that are there. The proposed
3 Golden Dome architecture represents a significant expansion
4 of the U.S. missile defense network. Integrating a wide
5 variety of systems, numerous touchpoints that, of course,
6 have to be protected.

7 An example would be the Command, Control, Battle
8 Management, and Communications system that serves as the
9 global network linking disparate sensors and shooters.

10 So, General Guetlein, can you talk to me about how the
11 Department is addressing the wide variety of systems and
12 numerous touchpoints that need to be protected in such a
13 complex interconnected system?

14 General Guetlein: Thank you, Senator. The threats
15 that you are talking about are very detrimental to our
16 capabilities. When we first stood up Golden Dome, the
17 first thing we did was architect in cyber resiliency from
18 the start. Whereas traditionally our legacy systems had to
19 be architected after the fact, we actually brought to bear
20 cyber resiliency from the beginning.

21 Then we stood up what we call the GDA Ecosystem Hub.
22 It is actually a collaborative effort with industry to help
23 them protect their IP and to protect their systems. So we
24 have red teams that can go into industry, to show them how
25 the threat is going to manifest itself and how to protect

1 and defend themselves against that threat, in a very
2 collaborative and partnering way going forward.

3 From a command and control perspective, we brought to
4 bear some of the leaders of industry that know how to do
5 this. They are architecting in cyber resiliency from the
6 very foundation of our command and control capability, that
7 brings to bear all the legacy C2 systems. GDA become
8 basically the glue layer, if you will, federating all of
9 these in a machine-to-machine interface with cyber
10 resiliency as the foundation.

11 Senator Rosen: I think that is really critical,
12 because if we do not work with the public sector, that
13 interconnectivity, every touchpoint is a point of
14 vulnerability, to your point.

15 I want to talk about, building on that, I appreciate
16 what you are doing there, bringing in industry partners,
17 building that cyber resiliency, from the bottom, or from
18 the top, from every side -- I guess we will say it like
19 that.

20 But I want to ask you to consider that adversaries
21 like China are employing already jamming capabilities,
22 other tactical means to confuse our missile defense
23 systems. What measures are you taking then to ensure the
24 integrity of the data layer and prevent that cyber
25 interference from degrading our defensive response during a



1 conflict?

2 General Guetlein: We have built in a layered set of
3 capabilities, multidomain set of capabilities so that we do
4 not have a single point of failure. And where we can we
5 have pulled our capabilities off of the grid, to be able to
6 operate independently, at the tactical edge, if necessary,
7 and that they are disconnected from the broader enterprise,
8 if you will.

9 Senator Rosen: Thank you. I want to move on to talk
10 a little bit about some lessons learned in missile defense,
11 because our current real-world air and missile defense in
12 the Middle East, in Ukraine, well, we know they provided
13 insights into how advanced air and missile defense systems
14 perform under extreme stress. These engagements have
15 highlighted not only the effectiveness of layered defense
16 architectures but also the challenges. And I so appreciate
17 your focus on resiliency, redundancy, and all of that. It
18 is just critical.

19 But the challenges are posed by high volume, mixed
20 threat types, that include cruise missiles, ballistic
21 missiles, unmanned aerial systems, in addition to adversary
22 tactics designed to exploit our system's limitations.

23 General Collins, can you describe how the Department
24 is incorporating the lessons learned from the recent air
25 and missile defense operations into its testing and



1 evaluation process, and what steps are you taking going
2 forward to validate or update our systems before they are
3 deployed again?

4 General Collins: Thank you, Senator Rosen. Very
5 important question. We have certainly had a number of
6 lessons learned over the last couple of years in Ukraine,
7 as you mentioned, and defense of Israel, as well as in just
8 the last couple of months --

9 Senator Rosen: I was going to say, the Middle East,
10 too, but we will stick to this.

11 General Collins: -- and very much in OEF, as well.
12 And I think you have really tagged into the increasing
13 complexity and a scale and a layering that we have not seen
14 or planned for in the past. It is an ever-increasing rate.
15 And the ability to do integrated battle management and
16 integrated command and control is paramount to the success
17 of these weapon systems going forward.

18 During the operation we meet with the warfighter every
19 single day. We pull data from the systems every single day
20 and analyze every data source, from every weapon system.
21 And we have been feeding that data back to the operators.
22 They have been making tactics changes, techniques procedure
23 changes, within a day of seeing the adversary make a
24 change, as we go forward.

25 In addition, we are distilling those down into

1 upgrades and advancements of the weapon systems that we are
2 responsible for, as well as working with the Army on their
3 systems. And we put hundreds of updates out to the field
4 in the last 2 years, to AEGIS, to THAAD, to C2BMC, in
5 response to the capabilities that we have seen.

6 There are still capabilities that we need to continue
7 to drive forward in. I think salvo size and the complexity
8 of integrated salvo size is a very tough problem to scale
9 the system into. As we move forward, one of our key
10 technology thrusts in the future, for Missile Defense
11 Agency and in support of Golden Dome, is to make sure that
12 we can get the lethality, affordability, and the
13 scalability into the future weapon systems that we bring to
14 bear, so that we can really get the magazine depth at as
15 affordable cost as possible, to take out these threats.

16 And then with the agility of open systems
17 architectures and government ownership of the baselines and
18 the technology baselines, that is going to help us be
19 agile, as well, as we move forward. I think those are all
20 fundamental things that we are bringing to bear to make
21 sure we are as agile as possible against this nefarious
22 threat.

23 Senator Rosen: Well, thank you. I have so many more
24 questions. I will submit them for the record.

25 Senator Fischer: Senator Rosen, if you would like to

1 ask a few more questions, please do. We have had two
2 rounds.

3 Senator Rosen: Okay. Well, thank you. I wanted to
4 kind of finish up on this, because there has been a high
5 demand in expenditure of our missile defense systems,
6 right. So what is the state of our inventory and our
7 industry's capacity to replenish those missile reserves?
8 How do you think we are faring on that? We are coming up
9 on the NDAA. So many lessons learned about what is going
10 on between Ukraine and the Middle East, about what else we
11 need to do. But can you talk to me about that?

12 General Collins: Yes, Senator. While the inventories
13 are sensitive, and we could take the actual numbers
14 offline, scale is extremely important as we move forward.
15 And for a couple of years now I have been in the hearings
16 talking about we needed increased focus on capacity. And
17 we have been building a capacity debt, where we have not
18 maximized our production lines to meet the needs that the
19 warfighter has identified.

20 That changed last year. Deputy Secretary Feinberg has
21 really focused the Munitions Acceleration Council on
22 engaging industry, bringing the right sustained focus, the
23 right sustained resources, to move the needle and speed up
24 capacity to what we need, not what fits into the budget.
25 And that is a very different way to look at this problem.

1 It will take time to scale the supply chain, to grow it and
2 receive the --

3 Senator Rosen: And we have to identify it before we
4 can begin to scale it. That is where the challenges are.

5 General Collins: Yes, ma'am. And in this President's
6 budget that has been released, there is a significant
7 increase to all of the critical munitions that we require,
8 to include missile defense interceptor inventories, as we
9 move forward.

10 And I would just say, we got here by not having
11 sustained focus and resources on munitions. We really need
12 to sustain the resources and the focus on munitions in the
13 years to come, to replenish the stocks and get us the
14 magazine depth that we need.

15 Senator Rosen: Thank you. Can I ask one more about
16 staffing? Perfect. I have a few more, but I will finish
17 up with this one. I want to stay with you again, General
18 Collins, on Missile Defense Agency staffing. So you are
19 the Director. You oversee global organization, 9,000
20 military, civilian, and contract personnel. That is a lot
21 of people.

22 Given the ambitious Golden Dome initiative, how is the
23 Administration's push to reduce the Federal workforce,
24 eliminate contracts affected your agency's ability to
25 really manage this massive expansion? How do you get to be

1 nimble, bring in the people that you need to, as you are
2 learning more and more every day. The datasets coming down
3 every day from real-time events in the AOR and theater is
4 really changing what we know.

5 So how are you managing this -- massive expansion for
6 Golden Dome, dwindling missile stockpiles? Of course, you
7 have to collaborate with industry and work with our allies.
8 So tell us what you need to do, what we should be thinking
9 about as we manage this going forward, seeing what we are
10 learning every single day.

11 General Collins: Yes, ma'am. I will say Missile
12 Defense Agency, a strength of the Missile Defense Agency is
13 the long depth of knowledge and experience we have, with an
14 unmatched commitment to the mission from the entire
15 workforce, whether they be the civilian, the military, or
16 the contractor, and we continue to have that.

17 We have reduced the size of the Missile Defense Agency
18 last year. But we were specific in focusing on areas that
19 made us faster and made us more agile as we move forward.
20 And we are at a manning level today that continues to
21 support us moving faster.

22 Senator Rosen: Do you have the authorities, though,
23 to hire people in new areas? As you are learning from what
24 is happening real time, you may see you need to plus-up on
25 something in a place you did not expect, right?



1 General Collins: Yes, ma'am. As the Director of the
2 Missile Defense Agency I do have the flexibility to pivot,
3 identify the competencies that we require, and then the
4 authorities to go hire the right people into the right
5 professions. And whether that is engaging them through
6 contract hirings or through the civilian workforce, as
7 well, I do have hiring authorities to be able to identify
8 those.

9 And we have started some tiger teams within the agency
10 to make sure we do a full competency survey of the agency
11 to identify if there are any areas that we may be a little
12 thin on, especially as we move into some new areas like
13 artificial intelligence, machine learning, even some of the
14 applications of that to quantum and crypto and those types.
15 Those are probably some growth areas that we still need to
16 address and get to.

17 And then I will tell you the last thing that we are
18 probably really fortunate because we are located in
19 Huntsville, Alabama. We are located in Colorado Springs.
20 We are located in the northern Virginia area. Fantastic
21 incubators for technical talent. Yes, ma'am.

22 Senator Rosen: Yeah. Well, thank you. Thank you
23 again for your service and commitment. We are learning a
24 lot, and we are going to have to be nimble and agile to
25 meet the emerging threats. So thank you so much. Thank

1 you, Madam Chair.

2 Senator Fischer: Thank you, Senator Rosen. We are
3 happy that you were able to join us today, on a Monday. I
4 know it is hard for you.

5 General Collins, last questions I have for you. Can
6 you give us an update on the Next Generation Interceptor
7 program?

8 General Collins: Yes, Senator. Thank you for that
9 question. Next-Gen Interceptor, we have been talking about
10 it for a number of years. It is the future of the ground-
11 based, mid-course defense, homeland defense, against peer
12 and rogue intercontinental ballistic missiles. That
13 program is still executing. That is still our largest and
14 highest priority program when it comes to that defense of
15 the homeland against the peer threat.

16 That program continues. A couple of years ago we did
17 a down-select, an earlier down-select than planned, due to
18 priorities, and since then we did replan about 18 months
19 ago, we replanned the delivery of the program based on some
20 issues and concerns with our solid rocket motor.

21 We are continuing to drive that program forward. The
22 end of this year we are on track for the All-Up Round full
23 system Critical Design Review, to close the design phase of
24 the Next-Gen Interceptor program and completely move into
25 the manufacturing and test phase of that, as we drive



1 towards first flight test in 2029.

2 We have no open, major liens against the design of the
3 system, which is a plus at this point in the time of a
4 program. We are, as we transition into manufacturing,
5 identifying and finding some issues with some of these new
6 systems -- the solid rocket motor, the inertia measurement
7 movement, as well as some in the sensors. And we are
8 working to buy down those risks and move forward as quickly
9 as possible to make sure we pull the day as far to the left
10 as possible. General Guillot, General Guetlein, and I are
11 regularly talking about Next-Gen Interceptor and the
12 important part it plays in the layered defense of our
13 homeland, as we move forward.

14 Senator Fischer: Thank you. And General Lozano, good
15 afternoon.

16 General Lozano: Good afternoon, ma'am.

17 Senator Fischer: Chairman Wicker and I had the
18 opportunity to visit the Pacific last August and spend some
19 time on Guam in trying to assess the situation there. Can
20 you give us an update on the implementation of the defense
21 of Guam?

22 General Lozano: Yes, ma'am. Thank you for your
23 question. The program is executing on schedule and on
24 budget. I am very proud of all the work that has occurred
25 thus far to deploy early capabilities onto Guam. As a part

1 of the Army's Transformation in Contact initiative, and
2 also working closely with the Air Force and the Missile
3 Defense Agency, as I stated earlier, not only do we have a
4 THAAD battery out there, but we also have elements of the
5 Air Force's Air Base Air Defense capabilities on Anderson
6 Air Force Base. We also have a couple of lower-tier air
7 missile defense sensors, an ALP sensor, and a couple of
8 Integrated Air and Missile Defense Battle Command Systems,
9 IBCS, Engagement Operations Centers.

10 So we have started infiltrating capability out onto
11 the island early so that we could start working through
12 some of the integration challenges that we forecasted we
13 might face when we started planning what the defense of
14 Guam might look like.

15 This has also provided an opportunity for the 94th Air
16 and Missile Defense Command to start sending soldiers down
17 to Guam to start training on these systems, so that they
18 could start developing CONOPS and tactics, techniques, and
19 procedures, what we call TTPs, on how to operate and employ
20 this system.

21 Right now we will conduct our Integrated Flight Test
22 Campaign '26, this year at White Sands Missile Range. That
23 will act as a graduation opportunity, a missile flight test
24 campaign for us. And then we will start flowing the bulk
25 of the systems out to Guam in the '27-'28 time frame.

1 So everything remains on schedule. Everything remains
2 on track, the development of the capability, the production
3 of the systems. So we are looking forward to continuing to
4 mature and evolve that capability so that it maintains its
5 relevancy against the threats we intend to face, ma'am.

6 Senator Fischer: Thank you, sir. Senator King.

7 Senator King: One final question going back to the
8 beginning of my comments. Secretary Berkowitz, what is the
9 justification for this bifurcated budget process that we
10 have experienced last year and this year, for the first
11 time in my experience? Why do we need to do it this way,
12 which is a radical departure from how defense budgets have
13 been built over the years. What is the justification?

14 Mr. Berkowitz: Senator, I would have to give you the
15 same answer I gave before with respect to the request
16 specifically for Golden Dome, which is within my portfolio.
17 The broader budget construction is well outside of my area
18 of responsibility.

19 Senator King: Columbia-class submarines is a one-time
20 --

21 Mr. Berkowitz: Well, for this year --

22 Senator King: -- and the B-21s. I do not understand
23 why Golden Dome is any different than B-21 or any other
24 defense initiative that requires a special budgetary
25 treatment, that basically takes it largely out of the

1 purview of Congress and congressional oversight.

2 Mr. Berkowitz: Sir, the answer is the flexibility to
3 address the dynamics of advancing technology, and to
4 accelerate the President's priority.

5 Senator King: Well, that is not a very satisfactory
6 answer, I must say. All of the things you said could apply
7 to any other major weapons program that we have had in this
8 country. And I just do not understand why all of a sudden
9 25 percent of the defense budget is off limits for the
10 normal appropriations process. But that is something I
11 will take up with -- I think there is a hearing tomorrow
12 with Secretary Hegseth. Thursday. So warn him. Thank
13 you.

14 Senator Fischer: Thank you, Senator King.

15 I would like to thank the panel for being here today
16 and giving us some really good information. I appreciate
17 your service again.

18 If we have questions for the record, those need to be
19 submitted, and I hope you will answer them in a timely
20 manner.

21 With that, this Subcommittee hearing is adjourned.

22 [Whereupon, at 4:34 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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25