



Congressional Hearing
May 12, 2026

Committee on Armed Services

Job No. 1707282-001

1 TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON THE POSTURE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE
2 ARMY IN REVIEW OF THE DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST FOR
3 FISCAL YEAR 2027 AND THE FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM
4

5 Tuesday, May 12, 2026
6

7 U.S. Senate
8 Committee on Armed Services
9 Washington, D.C.
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11 The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:55 a.m. in
12 Room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Roger
13 Wicker, chairman of the committee, presiding.

14 Committee Members Present: Senators Wicker
15 [presiding], Cotton, Ernst, Sullivan, Cramer, Scott, Budd,
16 Banks, Sheehy, Reed, Shaheen, Blumenthal, Hirono, Kaine,
17 King, Warren, Peters, Duckworth, Rosen, Kelly, and Slotkin.
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1 OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ROGER WICKER, U.S. SENATOR
2 FROM MISSISSIPPI

3 Chairman Wicker: The committee will come to order.

4 The Senate Armed Services Committee meets today to
5 receive testimony on the posture of the United States Army.
6 I want to thank our witnesses, Secretary of the Army, Dan
7 Driscoll, and acting Chief of Staff of the Army, General
8 Chris LaNeve, for being here. Thank you, gentlemen.

9 Today, the Army is being asked to conduct more
10 demanding missions and more locations against more capable
11 adversaries than at any time in a generation. Russia's war
12 of choice in Ukraine has underscored the enduring importance
13 of land power in high intensity conflict. In that theater,
14 the U.S. Army has played a critical role in helping
15 Ukrainians plan for and resource their forces through the
16 Security Assistance Group-Ukraine. Our Army has also
17 harvested many lessons from that partnership to inform our
18 modernization.

19 At the same time, we're witnessing the Army's essential
20 contributions to ongoing operations in CENTCOM. U.S. Army
21 soldiers like those from the 1st Battalion, 43rd Air Defense
22 Artillery, are using Patriot systems to help defend our
23 service members, partners, and allies against persistent
24 missile and drone threats. Similarly, the Arkansas National
25 Guard's 142nd Field Artillery Brigade is employing ground-

1 based missiles to strike enemy targets deep inside Iran.
2 These actions demonstrate both the reach of America's Army,
3 only 5 years since President Trump rightly chose to build
4 new weapons instead of tolerating Vladimir Putin's constant
5 violations of the INF Treaty.

6 Meanwhile, the pacing challenge posed by China demands
7 that the Army be prepared to support Joint Force operations
8 across vast distances under persistent threat in a tempo we
9 have not seen in decades. Many think of the Western Pacific
10 as solely naval and air theater, but our two witnesses
11 certainly do not agree with that. Our ground forces
12 continue to make absolutely crucial contributions to
13 security in the First Island chain, including through
14 massive and growing partnerships with our South Korean,
15 Japanese, and Filipino treaty allies.

16 All these demands underscore the importance of fielding
17 and sustaining the most advanced and capable systems in the
18 world, from missile defense and long-range strike weapons,
19 to resilient command-and-control systems, and new methods of
20 breaching defensive lines. These capabilities are not
21 theoretical. They are being employed today to protect
22 American lives and uphold stability.

23 The Army provides the backbone of our global logistics.
24 This enables joint operations, and it delivers the land
25 combat power that it takes to deter aggression and, if



1 necessary, to win decisively. The Army must be ready, but
2 our readiness today is frankly uneven. Modernization
3 efforts have produced promising capabilities, but not at the
4 speed and scale required by the threat. I think our
5 witnesses will agree with that. At the same time, the Army
6 continues to struggle with the operational readiness rates
7 of its primary equipment, its maintenance backlogs, and its
8 munitions stockpiles. All are under extreme strain.

9 Under Secretary Driscoll, the Army has made significant
10 strides to prepare for changing combat conditions. So, I
11 commend the Secretary on that. The Army has acted with
12 discipline and foresight to develop a new generation of
13 weapons; the precision strike missile, low-cost munitions,
14 the new MV-75 helicopter, the M1E3 tank, and finally, after
15 20 years of struggles, a more coherent command-and-control
16 system. I also appreciate the Army's improved approach to
17 modernization of our organic industrial base.

18 I remain troubled that the Pentagon is not moving fast
19 enough, or has not been moving fast enough to improve the
20 logistics capability and capacity of the Joint Force. And
21 the Secretary will want to talk about that, certainly,
22 today. Logistics, sustainment, and pre-positioning will be
23 decisive in any future conflict. The Army must demonstrate
24 how it will enable the Joint Force to operate effectively
25 across that theater. This will require additional resources

1 to bring unmanned surface and air vehicles into the Force at
2 scale to purchase next-generation capabilities to sustain
3 U.S. forces in Dispersed locations.

4 I want to also commend the Army, led by U.S. Army
5 Europe, in developing new methods of warfare in response to
6 tactical and operational lessons learned in Ukraine. The
7 eastern flank deterrence line concept consists of largely
8 unmanned tripwire, combined with layered missile defenses
9 and distributed strike capabilities. It's exactly the
10 direction we need to go, and I hope the Army will field
11 those capabilities to European Command rapidly.

12 So, I look forward to hearing from Secretary Driscoll
13 and General LaNeve about how to handle these challenges. We
14 will need clear priorities, disciplined execution, and
15 transparent communication as we move forward to secure that
16 the U.S. Army remains ready, modern, and capable of meeting
17 the moment.

18 With that, I turn to my colleague and friend, Ranking
19 Member Reed.

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1 STATEMENT OF HON. JACK REED, U.S. SENATOR FROM RHODE
2 ISLAND

3 Senator Reed: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And
4 Secretary Driscoll, General LaNeve, welcome. Thank you for
5 both of your outstanding service, and please convey my
6 appreciation to the soldiers and civilians serving under
7 your command.

8 I want to begin by expressing my deepest condolences to
9 the families of those who have sacrificed and were lost in
10 the Middle East over the past several months. Their
11 sacrifice deserves our greatest respect and gratitude. I
12 also want to acknowledge the absence of General Randy
13 George. Last month, Secretary Hegseth removed him as Army
14 chief of staff without explanation. General George is one
15 of more than two dozen general and flag officers that were
16 fired over the past year, not for cause, not for misconduct,
17 but for reasons the Secretary of defense has refused to
18 share with this committee.

19 What we do know is this: nearly 60 percent of those
20 fired are female or Black, in a field where women and
21 minorities represent less than 20 percent of general
22 offices, and that is a disturbing pattern that directly
23 undermines the merit-based promotion system. Secretary
24 Driscoll, General LaNeve, these issues are of great
25 importance to this committee, and I would ask for forthright

1 answers today.

2 The Army has been extensively deployed over the past
3 year. The Army's tactical contributions to the operations
4 in Venezuela, Iran, the Red Sea, and its continued support
5 to Ukraine have been outstanding. The soldiers and
6 commanders executing these missions have done their jobs
7 with great professionalism and skill. I disagree with many
8 of President Trump's foreign interventions, but my concerns
9 are strategic, not with our military forces.

10 Secretary Driscoll, last year you announced an
11 ambitious plan called the Army Transformation Initiative.
12 Among other changes, this initiative combines major
13 commands, restructures brigade combat teams, reorganize
14 aviation, and moves toward capability-based portfolio
15 acquisition. These are significant changes. I want to
16 understand how the Army is balancing this transformation
17 while it is conducting combat operations overseas and
18 maintaining a significant role on the Southwest border.
19 Secretary Driscoll, I would ask for updates on these
20 efforts.

21 The Army is also facing a nearly \$2 billion readiness
22 shortfall, largely because DHS has failed to reimburse the
23 Army for border support missions. The committee will want
24 to understand, and we made some progress in the closed
25 session, what this means in concrete terms. I received

1 concerning reports about the potential for canceling
2 training rotations, grounded flight hours, and reduced Guard
3 and Reserve training resources. These are real costs for
4 real units. I would note that rather than addressing this
5 shortfall, the reconciliation bill under consideration in
6 the Senate would send roughly \$1 billion more to DHS, the
7 same department that has not paid its bills to the Army.

8 At the same time, the Army has proposed increased
9 funding for important programs like munitions procurement.
10 That effort is well-reasoned. However, even if production
11 timelines shortened from 3 years to 2, the munitions gap we
12 have suffered from the war in Iran does not close overnight.
13 I would like to know where Army munitions stocks stand today
14 and what the realistic replenishment timeline looks like
15 given expenditures in Iran.

16 Further, while I understand the Army is realigning its
17 civilian workforce, the Department has been far too slow to
18 start civilian hiring after last year's reckless DOGE cuts
19 and hiring freezes. The Army has also curbed its SMART
20 scholars program, which fast tracks STEM-trained civilians
21 into future leadership roles, and has disrupted partnerships
22 between Army depots and local community colleges. Secretary
23 Driscoll, the Army civilian workforce is a readiness asset.
24 Hollowing it out has long-term consequences that may not
25 show up in this year's budget, but will absolutely show up

1 in this committee's hearings years from now. I want to hear
2 how you are planning to speed up civilian hiring and ensure
3 the Army is investing in its future workforce.

4 Finally, I am interested in hearing more about the
5 Army's modernization priorities, the development of next-
6 generation helicopters and tanks, infantry fighting
7 vehicles, UAS and counter-UAS systems, offensive and
8 defensive fires. And the evolving pre-positioning model are
9 welcoming efforts, very much so, in a congested logistic
10 environment where we stage our material will matter as much
11 as what we have on hand. I would appreciate an update on
12 how the Army is balancing these efforts.

13 I look forward to your testimony, and thank you, Mr.
14 Chairman.

15 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, sir. And, Secretary
16 Driscoll, you are now recognized for your opening statement.

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1 STATEMENT OF HONORABLE DANIEL P. DRISCOLL, SECRETARY
2 OF THE ARMY

3 Secretary Driscoll: Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member
4 Reed, distinguished members, it is an absolute privilege to
5 address you today.

6 After a year in this position, I am prouder than ever
7 to represent our soldiers and their families. As all of you
8 know, our soldiers are the very best in the entire world.
9 They're bold, decisive, and they can overcome anything when
10 we properly enable them. That's why I spent over 130 days
11 on the road across 19 countries and 25 States to hear
12 directly from them. I ate with them, put hands on their
13 equipment, and had candid discussions with soldiers of every
14 single rank. What I heard was clear: our soldiers are ready
15 to innovate and win, but our own bureaucracy and regulations
16 are still holding them back.

17 Getting what soldiers need to win and making the Army
18 budget actually work for them is definitionally a bipartisan
19 topic, and I know all of you agree with that. You supported
20 our Army for decades and we wouldn't be here without all of
21 you. But we know the system that should benefit soldiers
22 remains broken. Quality of life and battlefield advantage
23 aren't always the number one budget priority. It's a simple
24 fact, and we need your help to continue to change it. We
25 need right to repair legislation, relief from pre-World War

1 II laws, and significantly more budget flexibility. Thank
2 you so much for last year's progress, but if we're going to
3 win the next fight, we must go even further.

4 Technological change is accelerating, warfare is
5 evolving and speed is absolutely critical. Your help to
6 either lower barriers to innovation or stick to the decades-
7 long status quo makes all the difference. I invite all of
8 you to come see our transformation firsthand. We are
9 partnering with private industry to adopt the best tech,
10 talent, and trade craft. We're inviting those partners onto
11 our bases to unlock dormant resources and offset Federal
12 budget delays. We are blazing a trail for our Nation on
13 nuclear energy, counter-drone capabilities, and military AI.
14 Despite red tape, we're delivering better dining, barracks,
15 Wi-Fi, and 3D printed barracks.

16 Even though it can feel like the deck is sometimes
17 stacked against us, the United States Army is a beacon of
18 transformation. For instance, as we speak, we are hosting
19 the largest hackathon in human history to retroactively
20 jailbreak our siloed equipment. It's named Operation
21 Jailbreak. Last month, in Europe, soldiers showed me how
22 our software systems are compartmentalized, isolated, and
23 ineffective against modern threats. Meanwhile, Ukraine's
24 Delta common operating system, their modular open system
25 architecture command-and-control system is absolutely

1 incredible. It fully integrates every single drone, every
2 sensor, and every shooting platform into just on single
3 network. Ours does not.

4 Unfortunately, for decades, our budget process
5 incentivized companies to protect their intellectual
6 property at all costs, creating walled gardens in our C2
7 architecture, and this has been the status quo for far too
8 long. It is no longer acceptable and industry is helping us
9 solve it. I contacted nine of our defense primes and other
10 large partners who immediately agreed to send thousands of
11 pieces of equipment, engineers, and scientists to Fort
12 Carson. Together, we will force our way through the
13 firewalls, link every system, and achieve true right to
14 integrate. This is our first sprint and we will do it
15 again, and again, and again, until we get it right.

16 I want to be clear; this is a perfect example of the
17 Army's potential for speed and innovation. Absolutely no
18 one else has the talent, the drive, and the obsessive work
19 ethic to pull this off so quickly. Operation Jailbreak is
20 the first of many sprints to bypass red tape and
21 bureaucracy. What we're doing in Colorado should be the
22 standard operating procedure going forward. It's the
23 iterative process that makes America's tech sector the very
24 best in the world.

25 But you would be amazed at the regulatory walls that

1 stood in our way, and we've expended a sinful amount of
2 energy just to do the right thing. Imagine what we can do
3 if you continue to help us slash those restrictions. We can
4 do more if you help us balance oversight with speed. We can
5 maximize our budget if you help us partner with America's
6 entrepreneurs. We can move faster if you help us shed
7 obsolete equipment and invest in the future. And with your
8 help, we can ensure our Army remains the dominant land
9 fighting force for the next 250 years.

10 Thank you so much for having us, and I look forward to
11 answering your questions.

12 [The prepared statement of Secretary Driscoll follows:]

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1 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary.

2 General LaNeve, you are recognized.

3 General LaNeve: Thank you, sir.

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1 STATEMENT OF GENERAL CHRISTOPHER C. LANEVE, USA, VICE
2 CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE ARMY

3 General LaNeve: Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed,
4 thank you for the opportunity to appear before this
5 committee today.

6 The credibility of our Army is defined by what it's
7 prepared to do, not what it intends to do. So, every
8 decision I make enables our soldiers to be more lethal and
9 ready to fight and win, and serve as the backbone of the
10 Joint Force. In the Indo-Pacific, we're building a force
11 posture to deter threats to U.S. national interest, and
12 designed to extend the operational reach and endurance of
13 the Joint Force. Right now, 87,000 soldiers are campaigning
14 throughout the region. Our Typhoon missile systems are
15 forward deployed to the Philippines and Japan, we've
16 positioned LTAMDS in Guam, and IFPC unit in Korea, extending
17 next-generation air and missile defense against current
18 threats in the region.

19 The 1st and 3rd Multi-Domain Commands are now
20 operational in the region, and this fall, the 4th Multi-
21 Domain Command headquarters will stand up at Fort Carson.
22 Each Multi-Domain Command brings together long-range fires,
23 intelligence, electronic warfare, space, and cyber, all
24 integrated into a single theater level capability designed
25 to support the Joint Force commanders across vast distances

1 of the Pacific.

2 Every one of these capabilities exist because of the
3 investments this committee supported. In the Middle East,
4 our forces continue to defend U.S. personnel and partners
5 while sustaining layered air and missile defense, long range
6 strike capability, and operational logistics across CENTCOM.
7 At home, we're preparing the force for future conflict at
8 our combat training centers. It's where we train our
9 soldiers to fight against an adversary in the mud, to solve
10 complex problems, and to test our latest systems.

11 But we cannot field modern kit while sustaining aging
12 systems that consume time, money, and manpower. Divesting
13 legacy platforms reduces the maintenance demand that falls
14 hardest on our junior soldiers and frees resources to
15 advance next-generation systems. That's why we restructured
16 how we acquire, design, sustain, and field equipment with
17 decisive focus on speed, the right to repair, and system
18 modularity. That thinking is already reflected in some of
19 our next-generation platforms, like the XM30 Infantry
20 Fighting Vehicle, the M13E Abrams, and the MV-75 Cheyenne,
21 which provides unprecedented speeds, range, and flexibility.

22 Each of these systems are designed to the next
23 operational upgrade requires integration, not a brand-new
24 start. But none of these matters if we can't produce and
25 sustain at scale, and that's why we continue to modernize

1 the OIB through advanced manufacturing, depot modernization,
2 and expanded partnerships with industry, including enhanced
3 use leases that accelerate infrastructure development and
4 production capability.

5 And while the industrial capacity is important, the
6 strength of our Army is only as strong as our ability to
7 retain experienced soldiers, and whether the force we're
8 building reflects the standards we claim to uphold. That
9 standard includes \$4 billion in infrastructure investments
10 throughout 2026, rolling out our campus-style dining
11 facilities, scaling our holistic health and fitness across
12 the entire force.

13 And soldiers are seeing the difference and so do
14 American citizens. Our recruiting numbers are soaring.
15 We're on track to achieve this year's succession target
16 ahead of schedule, because in the end, soldiers are the
17 reason your Army can do what it does. Your Army delivers
18 the intelligence and fires that enable maneuver. We sustain
19 operations, we protect the force. We provide the command-
20 and-control architecture that allows the Joint Force and
21 America's allies to operate together. Every component of
22 the fight, the joint fight, depends on our Army's ability to
23 do all those things simultaneously and exceptionally well.
24 We will not fail our country. This We'll Defend. And thank
25 you for your continued support as we sustain the best Army

1 the world has ever known.

2 [The prepared statement of General LaNeve follows:]

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1 Chairman Wicker: Well, thank you very much, and now we
2 begin our round of questioning. Let me start with you,
3 Secretary Driscoll. Operation Jailbreak involves the right
4 to integrate. How many -- this is brand-new this month. Is
5 that right, Secretary Driscoll?

6 Secretary Driscoll: As of about a week ago.

7 Chairman Wicker: All right. Okay. How many companies
8 are involved at this point?

9 Secretary Driscoll: So, we started, Chairman, with the
10 five primes. Anduril, Palantir, and L3Harris were the
11 original. They have since been inviting other companies to
12 come out. If I were estimating, I would guess 30 to 50
13 companies are currently involved by day 10. And what we
14 have told industry is we will take every single piece of
15 equipment that our Army uses. This is thousands of pieces
16 of equipment, and all of them will be jailbroken. Which
17 just practically means all of them will be able to share
18 information out of the system and receive information into
19 the system. And what's so powerful about this is once you
20 can do that to these pieces of equipment, and this is what
21 we've learned from the Ukrainians, this is where you can
22 start to layer in things like generative AI models to help
23 you with decision-making.

24 Chairman Wicker: Okay. How long have the Ukrainians
25 been using this concept?

1 Secretary Driscoll: I would say the entire war.

2 Chairman Wicker: Okay. Is it frustrating to you that
3 now in the fifth year, we're just embracing this concept
4 this month, May of 2026?

5 Secretary Driscoll: Chairman, I would look at myself
6 and only myself that we haven't moved faster on it. I do
7 think that what we have that the Ukrainians don't have is we
8 have deep infrastructure, we have deep expertise, and the
9 downside of a bureaucracy can also empower some upsides of a
10 bureaucracy. And so, what has been incredibly valuable for
11 us, and I don't think respectfully the Ukrainians could have
12 done it in 10 days, is we have basically the entire Defense
13 Industrial Base is now moving to this.

14 Chairman Wicker: Have signed on?

15 Secretary Driscoll: They are actively shipping
16 equipment and we have scientists and computer engineers
17 currently in Colorado making everything flow. And so, I
18 think what we will be able to do in 6 weeks will be unlike
19 anything that could be done anywhere else in the world.

20 Chairman Wicker: Okay. So, in 6 weeks, you're going
21 to have tangible results?

22 Secretary Driscoll: Unequivocally.

23 Chairman Wicker: Most interesting. How fast is the
24 Army moving to embrace low-cost munitions across portfolios
25 and when are we going to start moving faster? So, both of

1 you can answer that. Yeah, General.

2 General LaNeve: Sir, we're tied in with the Deputy
3 Secretary of War's Munitions Council. We're moving as fast
4 as we possibly can. I think the goal is to have a magazine
5 depth that supports both low-cost munitions and our
6 exquisite munitions so we have the proper fit and the proper
7 numbers that we think we're going to need in a future
8 conflict.

9 Secretary Driscoll: And, Chairman, I would say, under
10 Secretary of War and the President, we've spent the first 9
11 months of, at least my time in the seat, redoing a lot of
12 the bureaucratic structures that existed with how we buy
13 things, how we test things, and how we scale things. And
14 there are some leading indicators to me that make me believe
15 that we have made strong and lasting changes that will allow
16 us to do this much more frequently.

17 So, if you look at the day 5 of the war where we wanted
18 to go get more interceptors for the Shahed drones, we were
19 able to contract for Merops and 10,000 Bumblebees within 5
20 days. Those were showing up in theater in packages of 1,000
21 or more, and we were able to flow soldiers in as a train-
22 the-trainer model. And that to me is a massive success that
23 shows me or makes me believe that all of the changes that
24 had occurred earlier in the year are actually working, and
25 allowing us to be able to start to scale these lower cost

1 solutions.

2 Chairman Wicker: Mr. Secretary, in 60 seconds, can you
3 give us a quick overview of your role in what might happen
4 in the Indo-Pacific with regard to the Army?

5 Secretary Driscoll: Absolutely. I think what we've
6 seen in CENTCOM in the last couple of months is the Army has
7 a huge role to play. We are the logistical backbone of what
8 is occurring in the theater. We are able with our long-
9 range precision fires to reach out and touch the enemy in
10 ways that just the Army historically had not been able to.
11 And then one of our superpowers as an Army is we can
12 disperse quickly. And so, whether it's on the air defense
13 side or on the offensive side, the United States Army will
14 play a huge role in whatever happens in the Indo-Pacific.

15 Chairman Wicker: All right. I'll yield back. Senator
16 Reed.

17 Senator Reed: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And
18 let me commend you, Secretary Driscoll, because you not only
19 sense the change in warfare, but you seized an opportunity
20 and you're pushing through. Well done.

21 Based on the experience in Ukraine, we understand
22 fundamental changes are taking on. And I sort of
23 characterize it when I served in the military a few years
24 ago, the manager was shoot, move, and communicate. Today,
25 it's communicate so you can shoot and move. And hackathon

1 goes right to that principal issue. Well done.

2 Let me ask another question, though. The military
3 promotion board system is central to our military in every
4 way, shape, and form. The law that we promulgated requires
5 the selection board use a comprehensive evaluation process
6 to review an officer's entire record and select officers who
7 are, "the best qualified for promotion in future service."
8 It's based on the collective assessment and judgment of
9 their peers throughout their OERs and also the senior
10 officers on the board. Can you tell us why Secretary
11 Hegseth has directed that five names be withheld from the
12 most recent Army one-star list concerning officers accused
13 of no misconduct, and did you support or recommend the
14 actions by the Secretary?

15 Secretary Driscoll: Ranking Member, the private
16 conversations between me and Secretary of War, I'll never
17 talk about those. I will say that the United States Army
18 has always followed the rules and regulations around
19 promotions board.

20 Senator Reed: Well, I don't think there's a very clear
21 role for the Secretary of Defense to take off individuals
22 from the board. What other promotion boards have been
23 subject to this review?

24 Secretary Driscoll: I'm sorry, Senator, would you mind
25 repeating?

1 Senator Reed: The Secretary of Defense removed several
2 names from a promotion board, which I think is highly
3 unusual, to be diplomatic. What other boards has he
4 reviewed with the intent perhaps of removing people from the
5 board from the recommendations?

6 Secretary Driscoll: Senator, as far as I know, no
7 other names have been put on a different scroll.

8 Senator Reed: So, what incentivized the Secretary look
9 at this particular board?

10 Secretary Driscoll: I do not know, Senator.

11 Senator Reed: Well, it's a question I think would be
12 important to ask. Now, if these officers were judged by
13 their peers and their superiors to be of as statutorily
14 required, best qualified for promotion in future service,
15 they've been denied immediate promotion. Would they still
16 be eligible to go before another board?

17 Secretary Driscoll: As I understand it,
18 mechanistically, Senator, the scroll that was submitted to
19 the Senate did not include these officers' names on it.
20 Another scroll could be submitted either individually or
21 with the collective four to the Senate for promotion as it
22 stands today.

23 Senator Reed: Are you actively reviewing the
24 individual cases so that you can determine yourself that
25 these individuals should be reconsidered for a board and

1 promotion?

2 Secretary Driscoll: I can commit to you, Senator, and
3 the entire committee, that General LaNeve and I are
4 advocating for American soldiers every single day, and we
5 are constantly working to make sure that the Army is
6 promoting the best.

7 Senator Reed: My fear is that this is not something
8 that's obscure, but it's very relevant to every officer and
9 every person in the Army, and that they've seen literally a
10 life's work suddenly terminated without explanation by the
11 Secretary of Defense. That doesn't send a good message, I
12 believe, to the forces.

13 Let me raise a subject that is seldom considered here,
14 Kwajalein. As you know, Mr. Secretary, the Army is
15 responsible for Kwajalein, and as you also know, I suspect
16 the status theory is terrible. Out of date radars. It's
17 the major missile testing system for the Army, for the whole
18 Department of Defense. Can you confirm that the Army is
19 still in charge, and how are you going to remedy the poor
20 situation?

21 General LaNeve: Sir, we are. We still are the
22 executive agent and we're looking at ways to improve the
23 infrastructure there. It's a critical component for
24 testing, as you say, in the Pacific, and we're not walking
25 away from it.

1 Senator Reed: Thank you. In 30 seconds, General
2 LaNeve, based on our experience in Ukraine, the observation
3 we've conducted, how are you going to integrate that into
4 the new combat vehicle systems? My sense is combat vehicles
5 are very much vulnerable to drones and other systems, but
6 can you respond?

7 General LaNeve: No, sir. And thanks for the question.
8 That's one of the key secret sauces in our new PAEs that the
9 Secretary and team created is to be able to use lessons
10 learned and feed it into the acquisition process, get it out
11 into the soldier's hands, test it, and then get the feedback
12 back into the acquisition to be able to have a system that
13 continually innovates for the future threat. So, our
14 lessons are being incorporated in all of our systems across
15 the board.

16 Senator Reed: Thank you very much. Thank you,
17 Chairman.

18 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Reed. Senator
19 Shaheen -- I mean, Senator Ernst. I'm sorry.

20 Senator Ernst: Thank you.

21 Chairman Wicker: It's right here in front of me.

22 Senator Ernst: Thanks, Mr. Chair. And thank you,
23 Secretary Driscoll and General LaNeve for being in front of
24 our committee today, and for your continued service to our
25 Nation.

1 I do want to start with the Army Transformation
2 Initiative. And I want to thank the Ranking Member for
3 bringing up the dismissal of General Randy George because,
4 Secretary Driscoll, when you first came into your position,
5 I remember meeting with you, met with General George about
6 the Army Transformation Initiative, which was long, long
7 overdue. This committee has been very clear that we support
8 the goal of a leaner and more lethal Army. And with the
9 dismissal of Randy George, we also saw the dismissal of
10 General Hodne who was the U.S. Army Transformation and
11 Training Command Commander, two very unfortunate dismissals
12 at a time when we do need that leaner, more lethal Army.

13 So, as we look at this, we need to achieve electronic
14 dominance, we need to get unmanned systems into every
15 division, and we need to enable AI-driven command and
16 control at the theater corps and division levels. Secretary
17 Driscoll, can you provide an update on what tangible
18 progress we are now making in the Army Transformation
19 Initiative? And can you talk about some of the areas where
20 we did in the past several months achieve greater
21 capabilities within the Army because of the ATI?

22 Secretary Driscoll: Absolutely, Senator. I'm
23 incredibly optimistic that the groundwork that we've laid in
24 the last 10 to 16 months has allowed us to move more quickly
25 as an Army. We've been able to do new starts on an M1E3, a

1 new version of a tank, the FLRAA, a long-range helicopter,
2 has gotten a lot of investment and focus. Our Next Gen C2
3 has expanded the number of divisions, and we were able to do
4 that much work more quickly than we were originally able to.
5 And part of that is because of the hard decisions that we
6 made on where to cut spending. It is very hard once a
7 system and a program get up to be able to stop the spending
8 in the future because all sorts of different reasons make it
9 where that momentum is pretty difficult. I'm incredibly
10 grateful to all of you for supporting us. We saved about
11 \$48 billion, we think, over the 5-year period that we've
12 been able to reinvest into our transformation.

13 And then the last bit I'll say is a lot of it has been
14 systematic changes. So, when we look at what we did
15 converting over our PEOs to PAEs, essentially what we did is
16 we took 13 silos of decision-making, and within that silo,
17 you'd have 15 different stops between when we wanted to buy
18 something and when we actually could purchase it, and any of
19 those stops could kick it back to the beginning. And so,
20 for acquisition decisions, some of the times it would take
21 between 2 and 4 years to get something we knew we wanted
22 into the hands of soldiers. By the time we actually got it
23 there, it was already outdated. We have been able to
24 collapse those systems down and do much more like what
25 occurs in the commercial sector where we're doing the

1 equivalent of putting our engineers with our manufacturers,
2 and our accountants and our lawyers all on one team.

3 And so, an example of when we've been able to move very
4 quickly where I don't think we could have pre-ATI is getting
5 the Merops and the Bumblebee into the CENTCOM. From day 5,
6 we decided we needed it. By day 10, we had contracted for
7 23,000, and by day 20, they were starting to flow into
8 theater.

9 Senator Ernst: That's really good, and I do hope the
10 other service branches take a look at what the Army has been
11 able to achieve and find a way forward in their own service
12 branches because this is pretty exemplary. And then as
13 we're looking ahead, what are the next major phases in this
14 initiative and where do you see that we are assuming the
15 greatest risk as we're executing?

16 General LaNeve: Ma'am, thanks for the question. You
17 touched on it. So, we spent a lot of time in the beginning
18 of Army Transformation looking at division and below, really
19 at the tactical level. You hit it spot on in your opening
20 question. We're taking a hard look now at corps, Army
21 Service Component Commands, and what we have to change
22 inside of those organizations to take on more of a role in
23 how we're going to have to fight in the future, and that's a
24 lens that we're taking a look at right now.

25 Senator Ernst: That's wonderful. Yes, Secretary?

1 Secretary Driscoll: And Senator, I'd say the biggest
2 risk is not going fast enough. Next Gen C2, we think it
3 will be in all the divisions, or we're modeling it to be in
4 all the divisions within 5 years. I don't think that's
5 sufficient. I think we need to do it in 2 or 3.

6 Senator Ernst: Yeah, yeah.

7 Secretary Driscoll: It is just simply a spending
8 pacing item at this point because we know what we need to
9 do.

10 Senator Ernst: Okay. Thank you, gentlemen, for being
11 here.

12 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Ernst. There's a
13 vote going on now on the floor, actually a series of two
14 votes. We will continue our hearing during the vote, and
15 I'll be leaving, and I think Senator Budd will take the
16 gavel for about 5 minutes. At this point, I call on Senator
17 Hirono.

18 Senator Hirono: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome to
19 both of you.

20 Secretary Driscoll, I want to ask you about your
21 approach to the negotiations involving Hawaii's military
22 training lands consisting of some 29,000 acres. I
23 understand the importance of these training lands for Army
24 readiness and Indo-Pacific deterrence. I also understand
25 the importance of this land and these negotiations to the

1 people of Hawaii and the Native Hawaiian community. And
2 that is why I have been engaging with DOD leaders about how
3 these negotiations will proceed expressing the need for
4 community input for a number of years now.

5 And at your confirmation hearing, and again at last
6 year's posture hearing, you committed to negotiating in good
7 faith with the State and the community. So, it was
8 concerning that instead of what I would consider open
9 communication and transparency, the Army last year pursued
10 unilateral condemnation language as shown by your attempt to
11 add last minute NDA language to support condemnation and
12 Congress responded by instead reinforcing the continuing
13 need for good faith negotiations.

14 A unilateral decision to condemn State lands would
15 bypass the community, the state government, and the
16 congressional delegation. The relevant condemnation statute
17 in fact requires the Army to pursue and exhaust all other
18 available options before starting condemnation proceedings.
19 So, I don't see how the Army can meet that requirement when
20 it has not even resubmitted corrected EISs to address the
21 deficiencies noted by the Board of Land and Natural
22 Resources, which it may -- led to their disapproval of the
23 Army submitted EISs.

24 It's been a year. So, given these actions appears that
25 -- you know, I hope this isn't the case, that the Army is

1 trying to run the clock and leave unilateral condemnation as
2 the only viable course of action. And I want to state again
3 for the record that I oppose unilateral condemnation. What
4 we need is a negotiated approach to these lease lands. And
5 I've taken that position for years, and we're now at the
6 point where the leases are almost up, and final negotiations
7 need to occur with meaningful community engagement and
8 input, especially from the Native Hawaiian community.

9 So, Secretary Driscoll, I have a number of questions
10 about your plans going forward. You previously -- first,
11 you previously committed to negotiating in good faith. Do
12 you still stand by that commitment?

13 Secretary Driscoll: Yes, unequivocally.

14 Senator Hirono: The Army EISs were rejected by the
15 Hawaii Land Board last summer because of several noted
16 deficiencies, including their failure to adequately assess
17 the cultural and historical impacts of continued training.
18 Mr. Secretary, can I get your commitment that the Army will
19 resubmit their EISs to address these deficiencies?

20 Secretary Driscoll: Senator, just to the spirit of the
21 question, I try to always say this, and I mean it very
22 sincerely. When you talk to our soldiers and their families
23 who spend a lot of their lives on the Hawaiian islands,
24 they're incredibly grateful to the community. The community
25 has been fantastic to them over decades and so we want to be

1 very respectful --

2 Senator Hirono: That's good.

3 Secretary Driscoll: -- of the deep relationship that
4 those people have with the land. And so, I commit to
5 following up with your office.

6 Senator Hirono: And I hope that means that you will be
7 resubmitting your EISs, because to me, resubmitting the EIS
8 is part of what even the condemnation statutes requires you
9 to do, which is to exhaust all avenues. That means
10 negotiations.

11 Next question. What is the status of your negotiations
12 with the State of Hawaii? And can you describe in detail
13 what steps you plan to take in the next 60 days? The time
14 is running on these leases to advance and negotiate an
15 agreement with the State.

16 Secretary Driscoll: Senator, we've aspired over the
17 years before I was even in the seat. I think we've had a
18 number of meetings. And then since I've been here, I can
19 speak more articulately to that. We've engaged with the
20 delegation both who represent here in D.C., but then we've
21 had a lot of conversations with State leadership. And what
22 we've tried to do is balance out fairness to the local
23 population with this idea and this commitment from me that,
24 we, the United States Army, must maintain this land. We
25 need it for our training. We need it to be ready for the

1 Indo-Pacific. And with the timeline that you are
2 referencing coming up very, very, very soon, we're --

3 Senator Hirono: Frankly, the negotiations must occur
4 with the State of Hawaii because the lease is with the
5 State. That means negotiating with the governor, basically.
6 So, those need to proceed in good faith, as I would call it.
7 And so, I want to urge you again to resume, if there have
8 been a pause, resume these good faith negotiations because
9 that's what it's going to take for us to come to a
10 resolution that is going to be fair to all parties. And
11 that certainly, includes with the input of the Native
12 Hawaiian community. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

13 Secretary Driscoll: Yes, ma'am.

14 Senator Budd: [Presiding.] Thank you, Senator. I
15 recognize myself. Good to see you both. Great to see a
16 North Carolinian here. Thank you, both, for your service.

17 General LaNeve, I was proud to see the Army's request
18 of 2,400 infantry squad vehicles, or the ISVs, in this
19 year's budget request. So, I think that's the right step to
20 modernize the squad vehicles and increase survivability.
21 They're very impressive. We even saw them in Western North
22 Carolina as the 18th Airborne Corps was out there for
23 Hurricane Helene, and I appreciate their work there. So,
24 what are some of your thoughts on multi-year procurement for
25 that platform and also expanding procurement of the ISV-

1 Heavy?

2 General LaNeve: Yeah, sure. I support multi-year
3 contracts. I mean, it helps us in the bargaining process.
4 It helps us in the full procurement of it. The heavy
5 version is going to be able to provide us the ability to
6 also generate power on the battlefield that we're going to
7 need to have that's running our command-and-control centers
8 and some of our advanced weapons systems. It's a critical
9 platform that we're going to need as well and look forward
10 to having that compete in the next rounds.

11 Senator Budd: Well, thank you for that. I look at
12 multi-year as being a great way to take better advantage of
13 taxpayer dollars and use it more efficiently. I mean, if
14 you're doing 1-year contracts, it seems risky to the
15 producer and we can drive down the cost per unit. If it's
16 aircraft for the other branches, or yourselves, or ISVs, I
17 think it's a smart way to go forward. Did you have a
18 comment on that, Secretary?

19 Secretary Driscoll: Yes, Senator. And the ISV is
20 actually a success story in a lot of different ways,
21 particularly for North Carolina with Hendricks Automotive, a
22 racing company. And one of the things is we were converting
23 over the ISV, which is 80 percent of Chevy Colorado into
24 what is now a very powerful, beloved military vehicle is the
25 rapid iteration of our soldiers being able to test the

1 versions. And then this automotive racing company being
2 able to make changes in near real time is what got that
3 vehicle from off the drawing board into the hands of
4 soldiers. And it is truly one of the beacons of
5 transformation that we use for all the rest of the products
6 that we're working on is we say, we need you to be more like
7 Hendricks Automotive.

8 Senator Budd: Well, it's certainly a great model.
9 Thank you, Mr. Secretary. Another question, I know you've
10 been laser-focused on applying lessons learned from Ukraine
11 to the Army Transformation Initiative. One lesson that I've
12 learned is that small UAS, small drones, they need to be
13 able to operate in a GPS-denied environment sometimes with
14 its own counter-droning technology on board. So, what's the
15 Army doing on this front? And I'll start with you, Mr.
16 Secretary.

17 Secretary Driscoll: You're absolutely right, Senator.
18 This is the future of not only warfare, but just more
19 generally how humans inflict violence on each other. This
20 is a risk at our stadiums, our arenas, our ports, our
21 borders, and not just for our Nation, but every nation all
22 at once as we have the World Cup coming up. The President
23 and Secretary of War have been very focused on partnering
24 with the rest of the Federal Government to counter these
25 exact problems. And so, what we, the United States Army,

1 are doing is we have formed JIATF -- or we are the lead to
2 JIATF 401, the Nation's preeminent counter-drone joint task
3 force.

4 And in that, we are testing all sorts of drones in all
5 sorts of environments, and we are working with our Federal
6 partners to create training lands where we can do all of the
7 things you're talking about with electronic warfare, because
8 one of the problems we as the Nation have is, and it's more
9 of an upside than an outside, but we're not actually in a
10 war environment and we just don't want to take the same
11 level of risk for training and testing as you might do
12 perhaps in Ukraine or in CENTCOM right now. And so, we are
13 actively building out those ranges on behalf of the
14 government.

15 Senator Budd: Understood. Another question, Mr.
16 Secretary. The 18th Airborne Corps has uncovered some
17 valuable lessons in Scarlet Dragon with technology testing,
18 one of which is the need for AI-enabled predictive logistics
19 software. So, what's the Army doing to prioritize contested
20 logistics capabilities specifically for a fight or long
21 distances like in the Western Pacific?

22 Secretary Driscoll: We were talking about Operation
23 Jailbreak where we're physically breaking down these pieces
24 of equipment so information can flow, a parallel exercise
25 that has been going on is in our business systems. I think

1 it was about a year and a half ago, we had over 600 business
2 systems and many of them didn't exchange information. We
3 have collapsed those down to 200, which any business owner
4 would still be horrified at the idea of 200 business
5 systems. We are pushing them down to hopefully land in the
6 teens where all of them will be able to exchange information
7 and that once we break down those data silos, that's where
8 we can start to layer in agentic solutions to help us with
9 planning for the contested Indo-Pacific environment.

10 Senator Budd: Well, I appreciate both of your work.
11 You're headed in a great direction. Thank you. I now
12 recognize Senator King.

13 Senator King: Thank you very much, Mr. Acting
14 Chairman. I thought for a moment you and I could take over
15 the committee.

16 [Laughter.]

17 Senator King: I appreciate the recognition.

18 Mr. Chairman, I want to reiterate a point that is I
19 think very significant. For the first time in my experience
20 on this committee, we are putting 25 percent of the Defense
21 budget out of the bipartisan process. Mr. Secretary, you
22 mentioned the -- I tried to get the exact words -- the Army
23 budget is a bipartisan project and 15 percent of this budget
24 is in so-called "mandatory spending", a term I've never seen
25 before in this context, which is basically reconciliation,

1 which is by definition, a partisan project. In terms of the
2 entire Defense budget, the Golden Dome project, for example,
3 is in this new category that's outside of the bipartisan
4 process, both here in this committee and in the
5 Appropriations Committee.

6 I think that's a very dangerous precedent that's being
7 set because basically it is deciding that a significant part
8 of the Defense budget shall be off limits to the minority
9 party, whichever it may be at a particular time. This is a
10 significant change in our budgetary process that Mr.
11 Chairman, I think we should really have a serious look at.
12 I don't view this as a partisan issue. I view this as an
13 institutional issue, and we are basically ceding, in this
14 case, 25 percent of our budgetary authority that's outside,
15 as I say, the authority of this committee and the
16 Appropriations Committee.

17 Mr. Secretary, I'm a little unsure about the Operation
18 Jailbreak. By the way, I compliment you on the impulse for
19 this. I think it's absolutely essential, but you keep
20 talking about integration and data silos. That's not right
21 to repair. Please, what are we actually talking about here?
22 Are we talking about getting the IP that will enable us to
23 repair? Because I believe for years that we should be
24 buying that IP every time we buy a platform, but it sounds
25 like Operation Jailbreak is more about data sharing than it

1 is the IP on right to repair these weapon systems.

2 Secretary Driscoll: You're exactly right, Senator.
3 So, it is separate and distinct, slightly related to why
4 it's important to us, but we're calling it right to
5 integrate. And so, fundamentally, what we are requiring is
6 each and every system that we use that creates data needs to
7 create an API or an SDKS software development kit so that it
8 can push information outside that closed system and we can
9 send it over a network to our -- we're starting with
10 Anduril's Lattice platform for command and control, but
11 basically what we are requiring -- we are retroactively
12 going back and creating these APIs and SDKs, and we are
13 proactively requiring any new piece of equipment that we buy
14 to be able to share information and receive information so
15 we can control it.

16 Senator King: I get that. And I think that's
17 salutary. And that's one of the lessons from Ukraine, I
18 think, is vastly increasing the speed on command and
19 control. But right to repair is a separate issue. And in
20 my view, every Army depot, every Navy ship, every Air Force
21 hangar should have a 3D printer. We have a readiness
22 problem, as you well know, on all of these complicated
23 machines, whether it's an airplane, a ship or a weapon
24 system and we shouldn't be waiting for a valve from the
25 manufacturer. And I hope that you'll push in the

1 procurement process for buying the IP so that we can print
2 our own parts or get our own parts in the market and not be
3 held up by the proprietary nature of the IP on these
4 complicated weapon systems. Are you with me on this?

5 Secretary Driscoll: Yes, Senator. Right to repair.
6 There are a couple of reasons that make it more important
7 now than ever. One of the reasons is if our pacing threat
8 is in the Indo-Pacific and we're worried about contested
9 logistics, for many and most of the parts, we need to be
10 able to manufacture them on site or nearly onsite. And with
11 the increase in advanced manufacturing that's been going on,
12 we're actually at a place that we can do that.

13 And so, what we the Army are doing is through our
14 Vantage platform. We are scanning in a lot of these parts
15 that break often. We are putting in the digital design file
16 and what that is doing for soldiers is it's actually
17 allowing them to access a nearby advanced manufacturing
18 platform or a 3D printer and print these parts. And so,
19 like the 101st Airborne had 80 percent of its 777s down, and
20 many of them were for a part that had ended up we could 3D
21 print for \$8. And so, we have since fixed that.

22 Senator King: If Delta Airlines had that availability,
23 they'd be out of business. I hope that you'll also talk to
24 your procurement folks to be sure this is a part of the
25 acquisition process that we're buying not only the object,

1 but we're buying the IP so that we can maintain the object
2 ourselves. So, I commend you for this, but don't stop with
3 integrating software. Let's keep going on the repair
4 itself.

5 Secretary Driscoll: Yes, sir.

6 Senator King: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

7 Chairman Wicker: [Presiding.] Senator, I add my
8 commendation. I would only say that right to repair is
9 easier said than done, and it involves intellectual
10 property, and I wish everyone the best who's trying to
11 negotiate this because it's a sticky wicket. Senator
12 Blumenthal.

13 Senator Blumenthal: Thank you. Thank you both for
14 your service. Thanks for being here.

15 To the extent that you can in this setting, could you
16 give me your assessment of how the Ukrainians are doing
17 against the Russians? I think there is a false narrative
18 that the Russians are winning. In fact, the contrary seems
19 to be true, at least in certain parts of the battlefield.
20 Certainly, the Ukrainians I think are capable of prevailing
21 if they have sufficient support from us. What's your
22 assessment?

23 Secretary Driscoll: Senator, I talk to the Ukrainians
24 reasonably frequently, and definitely through SAG-U. The
25 United States Army has had a presence helping Ukraine since

1 day 1. A lot of our leaders have developed very long-term
2 relationships and it's been a two-way street. We have
3 learned an enormous amount from them. When I talk about
4 Operation Jailbreak, that was because 2 weeks ago, we were
5 in Germany running a joint exercise, and the Ukrainians
6 actually sent some of their most talented people to help us
7 learn how they would do the fight, and it was in that
8 instance that we learned this. But then on our side, we are
9 able to see and help with a lot of their intelligence
10 gathering.

11 And I think what we are seeing is the Russians loss of
12 Starlink has set them back pretty meaningfully. They have
13 probably since regathered the momentum. The Ukrainians have
14 done an incredible job of starting to innovate to larger
15 group 2, group 3, and group 4 drones, which is what we're
16 seeing where they're able to reach farther into Russia to
17 cause damage. I think the quick summary would be what we
18 expect as a United States Army when we look at the conflict
19 is continued grinding slow success in either direction with
20 neither side likely able to break through in the next 18
21 months.

22 Senator Blumenthal: General?

23 General LaNeve: Yeah, sir, I concur completely with
24 the Secretary. As I said in the earlier session, I ran the
25 training program for a year early on was eye-opening to see

1 how long that they could hold on and what they've been able
2 to do up to this point. But I concur with the Secretary's
3 assessment.

4 Senator Blumenthal: And do we have munitions that we
5 can provide to them that would be useful to them? They're
6 buying them. We don't have to pay for them.

7 Secretary Driscoll: Senator, I think we'd prefer to
8 answer that in a closed setting.

9 Senator Blumenthal: Let me ask you, in terms of our
10 Defense Industrial Base, again, to the extent you can talk
11 about it in this setting, I think there is a feeling long-
12 term over years that we've failed to make our defense
13 production as nimble and agile. The Ukrainians certainly
14 have demonstrated both agility and nimbleness. I've seen
15 them on my nine trips to Ukraine visiting the drone
16 factories, how they actually make changes to their products
17 on the assembly line in real time as they receive
18 information from the front. We have nothing like that
19 agility or nimbleness. Can you talk about what the
20 Department of Defense should be doing to make our defense
21 contractors more responsive to the needs of our military?

22 General LaNeve: Sure. I can speak to the first part
23 about our industrial base or our Army's 23-plus depots.
24 We've taken a hard look at ways across the board to invest
25 in this for long-term, whether it's advanced manufacturing,

1 it's land use agreements, it's bringing in private-public
2 partnerships in at each of the different sites in order to
3 get our industrial base up to a footing that we know that
4 we're going to need them at to be able to produce at scale,
5 whether that's parts for drones or parts for our equipment,
6 both in the fleet that we have now and the fleet that we're
7 going to look to procure in the future.

8 The Secretary has pushed us to ensure that we have the
9 ability to be able to utilize our organic base in the
10 equipment that we're going after into the future. I think
11 the Department writ large sees the same issues that we all
12 acknowledge in a workforce that in sites that haven't been
13 fully invested in over decades

14 Secretary Driscoll: And Senator, I would just echo
15 what General LaNeve is saying with we believe a one time and
16 you-all have to balance the preferences of your constituents
17 much more than we do. We are more narrowly focused on
18 soldiers and their family and lethality, but we believe that
19 2027 budget would give us the one-time spending to increase
20 a lot of our abilities and capabilities on the OIB, which
21 would make our country a lot safer.

22 Senator Blumenthal: Thank you.

23 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator. Senator Scott.

24 Senator Scott: Thanks, both of you, for being here.

25 Secretary, I have three things. The first is Orlando.

1 You've got the Army's Program Executive Office For
2 Simulation, Training and Instrumentation. So, located in
3 Orlando, what's going on? Are you going to make it a lot
4 bigger? So, just tell me, what do you think is going to be
5 happening there? I was governor and we put a lot of money
6 into the simulation program. It's a big opportunity.
7 Whichever one wants to answer it. But our goal is to do
8 whatever we can, of course, to grow it, but you have to do
9 what's best for the Army.

10 General LaNeve: Sure. Our simulation center there is
11 incredible. It's going to continue to be very, very
12 important as we move forward with our modernization program.
13 We are not stepping away from the incredible capability that
14 we have there, especially what it provides to our combat
15 training centers, provides inside of our warfighting
16 exercises that we execute at Brigade and all the way up to
17 core level. There's a critical component in there that can
18 help us to continue to modernize that program.

19 Secretary Driscoll: And, Senator, what I would say is
20 simulation is more important than ever. The ability to take
21 data from the battlefield, whether it's in CENTCOM or what
22 we can get out of Ukraine, and to feed that into the system
23 to learn and not just for the human learning, but to train
24 our counter-drone models, to train our drone models. As
25 these agentic solutions start to flow, data and simulation

1 will matter more than ever. And so, if I was guessing as a
2 directional guidance to a space, I would imagine that
3 vertical grows over time.

4 Senator Scott: Sure. Secretary, drones, and you've
5 talked about it a little bit. So, we had a speaker at one
6 of our lunches the other day that said that Ukraine is
7 building five million drones a year, and said -- doesn't
8 mean this is accurate -- but said that our military will add
9 100,000 to 150,000 drones a year. So, what do we need? How
10 fast can we get there? Because clearly it sure appears that
11 then going forward, drones are going to become more
12 significant. And it actually is way safer for our military,
13 our men and women. So, can you just talk about how far away
14 you want to get? How are we doing?

15 Secretary Driscoll: Absolutely, Senator. Drones will
16 be a core part of future combat and no matter where you go,
17 I think what we as a Nation need to do is create the
18 mechanisms and the tools to be able to scale when we need
19 to. We don't need five million drones a year right now, nor
20 would we want them because they will get outdated likely
21 well before we need them, but we need to be ready to scale,
22 and have a plan and have the resilience in the supply chain,
23 and know where we're going in that moment.

24 And so, what we are doing is as an Army starting to
25 slowly flex the muscle. And so, we should have some of the

1 first brushless motors rolling off our manufacturing lines
2 that the Army are owning. We don't expect to supply the
3 entire industry brushless motors, but we think it is so
4 important for future warfare that we need to do that on our
5 depots and our arsenals. And so, what we are working on now
6 in owe back to this committee is a more fulsome plan of how
7 we are looking at the entire drone ecosystem, and where we
8 think we need to have redundancy and overinvestment.

9 Senator Scott: That makes sense. And then with the
10 ability to ramp up if we need.

11 Secretary Driscoll: Unequivocally, yes.

12 Senator Scott: Yeah. So, you've had the job for a
13 little while. What are you most proud of? What do you feel
14 good about that you're getting done?

15 Secretary Driscoll: This sounds like a unnecessarily
16 flattering remark to all of you and to the American
17 soldiers, but the vast majority of people I interact with
18 every single day want to make our country safer. They want
19 to innovate. The American soldier having spent time out of
20 uniform at fancy schools and working at fancy firms, I would
21 bet on them 100 percent of the time to solve a difficult
22 problem. And so, I guess now 18 months in, I am
23 significantly more optimistic that all of these massive
24 challenges and this inflection point that is occurring all
25 over the world all at once, that we're going to win, that we

1 will do it with whatever resources you give us, and that the
2 American soldier will come out the other end even more
3 lethal, more ferocious, and hopefully, less likely to be
4 needed because every adversary will know that they will lose
5 that fight. And 18 months in, I can say I'm more positive
6 than when I started.

7 Senator Scott: Great. Are both of you confident that
8 you're continuing to get the best leaders around you to be
9 able to make sure we have the most lethal force?

10 General LaNeve: I am 100 percent confident, sir.

11 Secretary Driscoll: I would say the Army from my mere
12 three and a half years in, and then getting to see it from a
13 different vantage point. Its superpower is that it creates
14 incredible leaders at all levels of echelon, and I would
15 have absolutely no doubt that if you took out 50 at any
16 given point, we could replace them immediately and the Army
17 would go rolling along like it has for 250 years.

18 Senator Scott: Thanks. Thanks, both of you.

19 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Scott. Senator
20 Warren.

21 Senator Warren: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

22 We need a military right to repair law. Got an example
23 today and that is Blackhawk helicopters. There's a tiny
24 knob that pilots need to scroll through for information and
25 every month about four of them break. The Army could

1 replace them for about 15 bucks, but because the Army does
2 not have right to repair, the whole helicopter goes offline
3 and the contractor charges \$ 47,000 to replace the entire
4 screen. Let that sink in. \$15 or \$47,000.

5 Now, Secretary Driscoll, you and other military leaders
6 have repeatedly said that Congress needs to pass the right
7 to repair law. And last year, both the House and the Senate
8 passed reforms, but the big defense contractors lobbyists
9 killed it behind closed doors. So, let's talk out in the
10 open about what those lobbyists are claiming. Let's just
11 get it out here. Number one, they say contractors can't
12 hand over their intellectual property and data because the
13 Army would steal it. Secretary Driscoll, what do you say to
14 big contractors that claim the Army can't be trusted with
15 sensitive data?

16 Secretary Driscoll: Senator, I would say that's one of
17 the more preposterous things I've heard in the last 18
18 months.

19 Senator Warren: But you have heard it?

20 Secretary Driscoll: I have heard it often is that we,
21 the United States Army, would take this data and do
22 something nefarious at worst, or at perhaps best from a
23 moral perspective, we would haphazardly handle it. The
24 United States Army, and the Pentagon, in particular, are
25 exceptionally good at handling sensitive data and we have

1 incredible processes in place, I would say more so than any
2 other organization. And so, my reply is and has always
3 been, we don't want to take any data. We just want to
4 purchase it.

5 Senator Warren: Okay. So, let's do another one. Big
6 contractors claim that DOD doesn't need right to repair
7 reforms because you already have all of the authority you
8 need to access technical data for repairs. Now, it turns
9 out when you look at that existing legal authority, it
10 explicitly says that technical data, "does not include
11 computer software." Secretary Driscoll, it's 2026. Most
12 weapons run on software. If the Army can't use software to
13 repair its own equipment and weapons, is that a problem for
14 readiness?

15 Secretary Driscoll: Unequivocally, yes.

16 Senator Warren: So, in fact, for example, the Army is
17 already unable to repair the Avenger air defense system
18 because it doesn't have the software it needs. So, right to
19 repair must include software.

20 Let's do one more. Big contractors have floated the
21 idea of "data and as a service", which is really just code
22 for pay per view. It means that the Department is "metered
23 and build every single time they access materials". And
24 it's pretty easy to see how costs would add up in those
25 circumstances since one contractor is already charging the

1 Air Force \$900 a page for upgrades to its maintenance
2 manuals. Secretary Driscoll, aside from the cost of pay per
3 view, what happens if the Army is trying to repair a piece
4 of broken equipment in a remote area and it has to keep
5 messaging the contractor to get access to the manual?

6 Secretary Driscoll: Senator, this is what happens
7 frequently, whether the specifics are true today or it's
8 directionally true. Directionally, our soldiers struggle
9 mightily to keep a lot of our equipment online and this is
10 not in a moment of conflict. That could be the decisive
11 point between us being successful somewhere 6,000 miles away
12 in the Indo-Pacific, or failing our mission if we can't
13 repair our own equipment.

14 Senator Warren: It is a reminder we've got to have
15 this access, and I just want to say this business of data as
16 a service is just one more attempt to try to gouge American
17 taxpayers and put our service members at risk.

18 Last question. Secretary Driscoll, does the Army need
19 Congress to pass right to repair reforms in this year's
20 National Defense Authorization Act, or should we let the big
21 contractors kill it once again behind closed doors? What do
22 you think here? This one is known as low and slow over the
23 plate.

24 Secretary Driscoll: Yes. This is one of the most
25 important things, and I don't say this to be over the top.

1 I'm not intending to play into the set of questions. We,
2 the United States Army, and, we, the broader military, must
3 maintain the right to be able to take advantage of all of
4 the new tools because if we don't, our adversaries will, and
5 we will be put at a meaningfully worse position.

6 Senator Warren: Well, I very much appreciate the job
7 you're trying to do. General, I'm sorry I didn't get to ask
8 you the same set of questions, but I got a tough chairman
9 who shuts me down when I go over.

10 Chairman Wicker: She's 15 seconds over, and I'm pretty
11 hot about it.

12 Senator Warren: Exactly. I can tell. But I really do
13 appreciate all you're trying to do. We need to help you out
14 with getting right to repair through this year.

15 Chairman Wicker: There will be an opportunity, of
16 course, for a second round and questions for the record,
17 also. Senator Sullivan, you're recognized.

18 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I want
19 to commend Senator Warren on her great work on right to
20 repair. It's very bipartisan and get that over the goal
21 line. Thanks for your leadership on that.

22 Mr. Secretary, General, good to see you both. Thanks
23 for your visit to Alaska. I heard it went well. I want to
24 talk about some Alaska issues. I appreciate that. Sorry I
25 wasn't there to show you around, but I thank you for that.

1 I don't thank you for stealing one of my top staffers,
2 though, who's sitting behind you, but I will forgive you.
3 It's for the betterment of America, I guess, that I had to
4 lose Jimmy, who's done a great job. I'm sure he's doing a
5 great job for you.

6 A couple things I wanted to talk about, Fort Greeley.
7 The USARPAC commander was just out there this past weekend.
8 The 49th Missile Defense Battalion does a great job with
9 regard to missile defense for America. What was your
10 assessment when you're out there? One thing that frustrates
11 me is that we have 20 empty silos out there still. We need
12 more missiles in those silos. That's, I'm sure you know,
13 the motto of the 49th Missile Defense Battalion, the 300
14 protecting the 300 million. They're literally modern-day
15 Spartans. Do you have any sense on that, when we can
16 accelerate more missile defense at Fort Greeley? General,
17 Mr. Secretary, either of you.

18 General LaNeve: Yeah, sure. We're tied in with the
19 team that's looking at that. I can't give you a sense of
20 how fast those are going to be -- you know, more assets
21 moved there. I can tell you how critical that site is for
22 all of our defense.

23 Senator Sullivan: Yeah, maybe a cue for if you can
24 give me more details on that. We need to accelerate more
25 ground-based missile interceptors there. I think it's just

1 a no-brainer. I spent the weekend in Fairbanks, Alaska, at
2 the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and Fairbanks Military
3 Appreciation Dinner. Major General Cogbill was there, the
4 11th Airborne Division Commander. By the way, the morale
5 there seems very high. They were whipping every other Army
6 unit in these competitions. General and his Sergeant Major
7 went through all these things the 11th Airborne's doing, no
8 offense to the 82nd, but there's some good competition going
9 on right now, and I'm very proud of that unit.

10 One of the first things I did as a brand-new Senator, I
11 was here only a couple weeks and the Obama administration
12 was going to cut 40,000 additional active-duty troops. This
13 is in 2015, which they did, and they were going to get rid
14 of the 425, the only airborne brigade combat team in the
15 entire Indo-Pacific. I fought like crazy as a new Senator
16 to stop that, which I did. I put a hold on everybody in the
17 Army's system until we got them to relinquish cutting the
18 425. And now, the 425 is, as you know, part of the 11th
19 Airborne.

20 The 17 additional helos, my understanding, are coming
21 to the 11th Airborne Division. Can you give me an update on
22 that, and then some of the good work that's being done with
23 regard to drones? You may have seen the University of
24 Alaska Fairbanks just had a partnership with DIU on the
25 drone capabilities that we have at the university. And if

1 you can give me an update both on the helos coming to Fort
2 Wainwright as part of the 11th Airborne Division, and the
3 work that we want to scale up that the 11th Airborne's doing
4 on drone software and other capabilities.

5 And then as you answer that, because I want to be
6 respectful, Mr. Secretary, one thing I want to make sure we
7 do maybe in a phone call -- I'm sorry we didn't get to meet
8 before this. There was a memo on the 8-day contracting
9 awards that came out from some DAS in the Army. It looks
10 like it goes against previous commitments that senior Army
11 leadership made with regard to me. So, I'd like, offline,
12 to talk about that, this memo's causing a heck of a lot of
13 confusion and I think it's misguided.

14 Chairman Wicker: 45 seconds.

15 Senator Sullivan: But so with that, I'll follow-up
16 with you, Mr. Secretary. Can you talk about the 11th
17 Airborne there, General, and the issues that I raised, and
18 the great job they're doing?

19 General LaNeve: Sir, first off, thanks for the support
20 of getting the 11th across the goal line. My daughter
21 served in 125 --

22 Senator Sullivan: Oh.

23 General LaNeve: -- so bringing both of those units
24 together under one division command, it brings about the
25 esprit de corps and the morale that you're seeing across

1 that division right now. We got great leadership up there.
2 Sir, there's a lot of good going on inside the division
3 right now, especially with what they're doing with drone
4 experimentations. We'll take all those lessons learned,
5 especially what we're learning about just surviving in the
6 winter --

7 Senator Sullivan: Yeah --

8 General LaNeve: -- up there.

9 Senator Sullivan: -- cold winter.

10 General LaNeve: Yes, sir. And what we got to do
11 across the goal line, I mean, you take a look at batteries
12 alone. We're going to learn a lot from how quickly the cold
13 takes a battery down. It's the same thing that's going to
14 happen in the heat when we're in the jungle. So, we are
15 learning a lot across the board in there. We are moving the
16 helicopters. It's part of the aviation transformation.
17 There's some that are coming out of further reaches in the
18 Pacific, and that will come back into Alaska to fully field
19 the aviation brigade up there. We haven't walked back from
20 that, and that's moving as fast as possible.

21 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, General. And you can
22 supplement your answer for the record. I appreciate your
23 testimony in that regard.

24 [The information referred to follows:]

25 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

1 Chairman Wicker: Senator Peters.

2 Senator Peters: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And,
3 gentlemen, welcome to the hearing here today.

4 Secretary Driscoll, as you experienced last summer when
5 you were up in Michigan -- sorry I wasn't able to join you,
6 I was out of the country during that time, but I know you
7 enjoyed seeing Exercise Northern Strike in operation and the
8 thousands of troops, both U.S. allies and partner service
9 members from over 20 countries. So, we're at that National
10 All-Domain Warfighting Center. And as you know, the center
11 is comprised of about 148,000 acres of training space at
12 Camp Grayling, and 17,000 square miles of special use
13 military airspace at the Alpena Combat Readiness Training
14 Center. It's an incredible place to do very advanced and
15 sophisticated training.

16 And in recognition of this unparalleled training
17 environment, the Department recently designated it as a
18 national range for un-crewed aerial systems training as
19 well. So, my question is, with this new designation, how is
20 the Army leveraging exercises like Northern Strike for
21 realistic drone and counter-drone warfare, and are you
22 exploring greater Army involvement at the National All-
23 Domain Warfighting Center in Michigan to leverage these
24 unique capabilities for new un-crewed range designations?

25 Secretary Driscoll: Senator, Camp Grayling is an

1 incredible asset our Nation, I think, has underutilized for
2 the last couple of decades. The amount of airspace that we
3 have there to test and to train is unmatched or nearly
4 unmatched in all the places I've gone. What we must do as a
5 Nation is continue to get a lot of flight data, and we have
6 to get learnings that can be fed into systems, and Camp
7 Grayling is at the top of our list to expand our presence
8 there.

9 And then if you think about the manufacturing
10 capabilities of Detroit, in particular, when we were there,
11 what they were capable of doing with drones and having
12 created drone corridor for training and testing, for a lot
13 of commercial companies, it is the exact type of place where
14 we, the Army, want to grow our presence because what we have
15 learned is we can nearly never be the cutting edge of these
16 technologies. They just move too fast. And so, we want our
17 soldiers co-located with venture-backed startups and
18 venture-backed founders so that they can both get the
19 excitement, but also the forward edge of what's possible.
20 And we found that at Camp Grayling and the rest of Michigan.

21 Senator Peters: Well, great. Well, look forward to
22 continuing to work with you to expand that, and appreciate
23 your comments.

24 Secretary Driscoll, this committee has consistently
25 prioritized environmental stewardship through the bipartisan

1 national defense bills by tackling PFAS contamination and
2 prioritizing environmental cleanup. So, to bring back Camp
3 Grayling into the discussion, I have concerns about
4 conflicting and inconsistent comments by the administration
5 regarding the importance of environmental stewardship
6 despite the strong support from this committee and others.
7 And I'm particularly troubled about what this means for PFAS
8 cleanup at installations like Camp Grayling, which you just
9 mentioned, which is an amazing facility but clearly has some
10 issues that we need to deal with, particularly with those
11 local communities.

12 So, with that in mind, do I have your commitment to
13 prioritize environmental programs to include the PFAS
14 cleanup at installations like Camp Grayling in Michigan as
15 well as across country? But if you could talk about camp
16 Grayling specifically, I certainly would appreciate it.

17 Secretary Driscoll: Senator, very broadly, you
18 definitely have the Army's commitment to be good stewards in
19 the communities where we live. We aspire to be very
20 thoughtful, and almost like the Boy Scouts where we leave
21 the areas we train and live better than when we found them.
22 And so, very broadly, you have that commitment, and then
23 specifically, I'll follow back up with your office on PFAS
24 at Camp Grayling.

25 Senator Peters: Great. I appreciate that.

1 And this is really to both of you. The Army, as you
2 both know, conducts critical work to design, test, and
3 engineer the next generation of ground combat systems in
4 Michigan at the Detroit Arsenal to include Ground Vehicle
5 System Center, which is GVSC. But despite the critical work
6 that they're doing, I'm concerned about workforce changes
7 that included reassignment of personnel, the removal of
8 collective bargaining rights of employees at the Arsenal.
9 And I'm troubled that these employees at the Arsenal will no
10 longer have the right to bargain for fair wages, for job
11 security, and for a dignified retirement, quite frankly.

12 So, I hope I have both of your commitment to look
13 seriously into these issues and ensure that the changes are
14 not going to harm the technical teams that are there and
15 risk overburdening what are really highly specialized and a
16 valuable workforce. If you want to comment generally about
17 that, but certainly would have, I don't know how familiar
18 you are with what's happening in the Detroit Arsenal, but if
19 you could talk about that, I'd certainly appreciate it.

20 General LaNeve: Sir, you do have -- I speak for myself
21 and I speak for the Secretary as well that our commitment
22 you know, as we look at our human capital and all of our key
23 infrastructure, that we're doing it with dignity and care as
24 we try to balance where the workforce is across our base.

25 Senator Peters: Secretary?

1 Chairman Wicker: Thank you.

2 Senator Peters: Will follow-up on more. Thank you. I
3 appreciate that.

4 Chairman Wicker: Senator Sheehy.

5 Senator Sheehy: Good afternoon, gentlemen.

6 Mr. Secretary, I'd like to talk a little bit about how
7 critical it is for our warfighters to be able to repair and
8 maintain their own equipment, especially in foreign-deployed
9 areas, and how important it is for combatant commanders and
10 commanders who are closest to the fight to have the
11 flexibility, the authority and the funding to not just
12 acquire the equipment that they need quickly, but then
13 sustain, maintain, and in some cases, modify that equipment
14 for the needs of the battlefield.

15 The 21st century battlefield moves quickly. Software
16 and electronic warfare and spectrum landscape changes
17 constantly, and sometimes the design of a device or the
18 architecture of a software program may look great in a test
19 range or in a lab, but when it hits the realities of combat,
20 it requires modification and sometimes those modifications
21 can take years. So, what is the Department doing to resolve
22 this and what can we do on the Hill in a bipartisan manner
23 to make sure we're giving you and the warfighters the tools
24 to get that done?

25 Secretary Driscoll: Senator, you are absolutely right.

1 Warfare has changed so dramatically that one of the few
2 things I can guarantee is when we go into a large-scale
3 conflict, within days, minutes, or hours, we will know where
4 we need to change our equipment, and our tools, and our
5 TTPs, and we will have to start to act quickly. And so, we,
6 the United States Army, are not Ukraine. We have more
7 assets. We have a deeper Defense Industrial Base. We have
8 many tools and resources at our disposal that make it so
9 that we can fight differently.

10 But the thing we must do like the Ukrainians and we
11 must do like armies all over the world is we must be able to
12 adapt quickly. And so, what we've done is we have redone
13 how we purchase things. So, we've changed our acquisition
14 structure to where we are using a model we call
15 "transformation and contact" where our soldiers are getting
16 to test in the field our devices in advance, and they are
17 helping us work with the manufacturers and the software
18 developers before they even get the first real purchase to
19 get it closer to where we know we will need it to be.

20 And then the other things that we are doing is we are
21 working with you and all of your colleagues to do things
22 like statutorily require that we always have our right to
23 repair, that we always have a right to integrate. And what
24 we mean by that is we must have the design files for the
25 parts and the pieces where when we're 6,000 miles from home,

1 we must be able to manufacture those changes -- or excuse
2 me, manufacture those pieces ourselves.

3 And then for right to integrate, what we're doing there
4 is we're basically requiring every piece of equipment to be
5 open through an API or an SDK so we can feed data out and
6 feed data in. And what that does is it will stop us from
7 having to swivel-chair between six to eight systems, which
8 is what happens right now. When you go to SAG-U and see how
9 our Army is interacting with the Ukrainians, we have six to
10 eight systems that we're using. When you engage with the
11 Ukrainians, they basically have one or two systems at most
12 and that is what we're doing as Army to get ready.

13 General LaNeve: Hey, sir, if I may. One, we
14 appreciate your support on right to repair. It's critical
15 for us. One, our industrial base can't keep up with our
16 enduring systems right now. So, we got to have the ability
17 to make our own parts and fix our equipment, and it's going
18 to be demonstratively harder to do that in a Pacific
19 theater, and we got to be able to do this at the edge. You
20 give it to the soldiers; they will fix our stuff
21 immediately, fast.

22 Senator Sheehy: Well, I agree, and we'll keep working
23 on it.

24 Second is air defense. So, the wars you, and I, and
25 all of us fought in, we didn't really have to worry about

1 air to ground threats from our adversary. However, as we've
2 learned here in the past few years, really since ISIS, with
3 the drone threat, of course now we're seeing it even more so
4 with our fight against Iran is our ability to protect
5 ourselves from airborne threats. We've done fantastically
6 well at intercepting threats, whether it be missiles,
7 drones, or otherwise, but we also have a legacy air defense
8 model built largely on active radars and active sensing, and
9 that can present a serious vulnerability for us with a peer-
10 to-peer fight with China or someone else.

11 What is the Army doing, and what can we do further to
12 develop passive sensing so we're not emitting locations for
13 our air defense forces, and whether that's terrestrial-based
14 or space-based, but what does that look like right now for
15 the Army?

16 General LaNeve: Sir, yes, across the board. I mean,
17 it's a layered defense and we are going after everything to
18 be able to protect our soldiers and really the Joint Force.
19 It's what we do as part of the Joint Force. So, whether
20 it's new systems that we're pushing as fast as we can in the
21 CENTCOM to learn how they're being operated and the success
22 that they're having there, or going after space-based
23 technology to help us to defeat what was going to be a much
24 larger scale of these systems if we're going against a near
25 peer. So, yes to everything that you just said. We have to

1 go after for our layered defense

2 Secretary Driscoll: And Senator, we're kicking off on
3 Thursday a DCI, Defensive Critical Infrastructure, meeting
4 down at Fort Bragg, and we've been invited in a host of
5 participants, so power companies, utilities, water. And
6 what we are doing there is we are hoping to build a
7 blueprint for how to defend ourselves both in CONUS, and
8 then export those lessons to OCONUS, but things like
9 acoustic passive sensors. If you look at what's happening
10 in Ukraine, they are getting an incredible amount of value
11 out of that and we are just under-invested in it right now.

12 Senator Sheehy: Great. Thanks, gentlemen. Rangers
13 Lead the Way.

14 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Sheehy. Senator
15 Kaine.

16 Senator Kaine: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And thanks to
17 the witnesses for both the closed setting and this one.
18 Really good information.

19 Secretary Driscoll, I have two topics that I would like
20 to raise with you. Despite a Pentagon budget request that
21 would increase the top line by 50 percent, if you include
22 both components, and despite the fact that that top line
23 increase produces significant and I think well-merited pay
24 raises for our troops, there's no pay raise for the civilian
25 workforce. There's a bonus pool, but there's no guaranteed

1 pay raise for the civilian workforce. About a quarter of
2 the Army component is civilian. A huge portion of that
3 civilian workforce in the Army and the other branches are
4 veterans. So they've already served in an active capacity
5 and now they're civilians, and I'm very troubled by the
6 absence of a pay increased proposal in the President's
7 budget.

8 I'm not going to ask you to justify it because I know
9 the way budgets get done. Often, we ask for things and
10 somebody else makes the decision. But for those who are
11 paying attention to this hearing, who are part of the
12 civilian workforce or their families, talk to me about the
13 value add that that one-quarter of the Army's workforce that
14 civilian provides to our Nation's defense.

15 Secretary Driscoll: Senator, one of my other major
16 lessons in the last 18 months in the role is how critical,
17 crucial, and patriotic our civilian workers are. To your
18 point, many of them are former service members who have
19 gotten out, but even the ones who aren't, you don't take
20 that job for the pay. You take that job because in the vast
21 majority of instances, you care deeply about our country and
22 you want to contribute as an expert. What we, the Army,
23 have owed our civilians we've tried to do over the last 8 or
24 9 months, we've kept a hiring freeze in place longer than
25 most. And we did not do that because we want to overburden

1 the civilian workforce. We did not do that just to be
2 punitive to a process that had grown large and unwieldy. We
3 did that because we wanted to take the time to thoughtfully
4 match our people to our jobs that we needed.

5 We've done that over the last 6 weeks. We are undoing
6 or pulling off the hiring freeze in the vast majority of
7 instances. And what we are cautiously optimistic is that
8 going forward, what civilians should see in their day-to-day
9 is a much more controlled management over their career. And
10 what we hope that leads to is even if we're not able to give
11 them pay raises today, we should be able to give them pass
12 to grow in their career and their profession to make more
13 money.

14 Senator Kaine: I hope the committee might tackle this
15 as we're working on the NDAA. Oftentimes, our civilians are
16 just serving side by side with soldiers or other troops.
17 I'm on the board at West Point. You've got Army profs and
18 assistant profs. You've got civilian profs and assistant
19 profs. When they're serving side by side co-teaching
20 classes and things like that, or serving in any other
21 capacity, and one side is getting a pay raise and the other
22 group is not, that does create some internal challenges. I
23 hope we might deal with it.

24 The only other issue I wanted to ask you, Senator
25 Driscoll, is this. Last year, during the hearing, I really

1 focused with you just because it was sort of time-critical
2 and tragic, frankly, about staying engaged with the families
3 who lost loved ones in the Flight 5342 crash that claimed
4 the lives of civilians, patriotic soldiers, aviators. I
5 think it's really, really important that we continue to be
6 transparent, but also learn the lessons and improve. And
7 you and I have had some conversations.

8 The Army's already done a number of things to respond
9 to NTSB preliminary reports and your own work, and that's
10 positive. I think we have an opportunity to do more, but
11 there are three Army investigations that are still pending
12 about that crash, and I was told when the NTSB issued their
13 report in January, that the three were likely to come to a
14 resolution sometime soon. My understanding is that's not
15 the case. When will these investigations be done in your
16 best estimation?

17 General LaNeve: Sir, the 15-6 I think is one of the
18 ones you're talking about. I just received the brief on it
19 yesterday. You and I talked about this --

20 Senator Kaine: Yeah.

21 General LaNeve: -- in the office call. That moves
22 forward in the process to be able to get it in front of the
23 Army families, and then to be able to be, with the
24 Secretary's consent, shared. And that process moving on, I
25 think the 18th of the month is the date that we're hoping to

1 meet the gates.

2 Secretary Driscoll: And, Senator, just to publicly
3 reaffirm the commitment that I made privately to the
4 families, we will be as transparent as law allows us because
5 we too want to learn as much as we possibly can from this so
6 it doesn't happen again.

7 Senator Kaine: And I would just encourage as I close,
8 obviously, transparent with the Army families, but I think
9 transparent with all those who lost their lives that day.
10 Again, there may be some legal restrictions, but lawyers
11 usually tell you that there are legal obstacles. There
12 aren't. I say that as a lawyer. And I would just say we
13 really owe it to these families to help them believe that we
14 are doing everything possible to minimize the chance this
15 will ever happen again.

16 Secretary Driscoll: And just on behalf of the Army, we
17 wholeheartedly agree. And when I say families, I mean all
18 of the members.

19 Senator Kaine: Great. Thank you.

20 Chairman Wicker: And thank you for that, gentlemen.
21 Senator Cotton.

22 Senator Cotton: Thank you, gentlemen, for your
23 appearance here and your service to our Nation.

24 Arlington National Cemetery is hallowed ground, not
25 just for our Army, but for our entire Nation. General

1 LaNeve, I first want to thank the Army and Secretary
2 Driscoll for restoring the Caisson Detachment at Arlington
3 National Cemetery following the unwise decision in 2023 to
4 pause it. Caisson's participation in military funerals has
5 been a time-honored tradition honoring our Nation's heroes
6 and their families. I'm glad we're on track to move beyond
7 limited operations and back to four squads performing
8 funerals later this year.

9 General LaNeve, can we get your personal commitment
10 that the Army will continue to prioritize the Caisson
11 Detachment for years ahead, including the sustained
12 resourcing the unit needs?

13 General LaNeve: Yes, sir.

14 Senator Cotton: And can you also give us your personal
15 commitment that you'll keep this committee informed of any
16 delays or additional resources you might need to keep the
17 caisson detachment fully operational?

18 General LaNeve: Absolutely. Sure.

19 Senator Cotton: Thank you.

20 Secretary Driscoll, Pine Bluff Arsenal along with the
21 rest of the Army's organic industrial base is essential to
22 address our munitions crisis. I want to thank you and what
23 the Army has done to make sure that we're fully using the
24 organic industrial base. I'm pleased that the Army and the
25 Arkansas Congressional Delegations joint efforts have

1 ensured that Pine Bluff will evolve and expand its mission
2 to meet the needs of our military. The proposed enhanced
3 use lease agreement with Hanwha is one prime example of
4 working with private industry to enhance our organic
5 industrial base. Of course, addressing the munition's needs
6 that have been all on our minds today is going to require an
7 all-of-the-above strategy for both private industry and Army
8 programs of record.

9 Given those demands and need to scale production across
10 all 23 sites, can you tell us what's next in your thinking
11 about how to ensure that installations like the Pine Bluff
12 Arsenal and our other organic industrial base sites receive
13 the government and private investment they need to help
14 solve our munitions crisis?

15 Secretary Driscoll: Yes, sir. Senator, the Hanwha
16 investment, I was down with the governor talking to Hanwha a
17 couple weeks ago, and we are incredibly excited and proud of
18 using that as a pathfinder for how we can scale this across
19 the country. The other pathfinder that we're doing is we
20 went out to private industry to see was it possible to do
21 data centers. And so, we're excited to have two data
22 centers, one in Texas, one in Utah, that we are using to
23 build out the model to flex our might as an Army where we
24 have millions of acres of land where we can partner with
25 private industry. What our next step is, Senator, we

1 basically went out with an RFI and we said: our American
2 industry, what would you do on our bases, our arsenals, and
3 our depots?

4 We had 200 submissions last month. We have narrowed
5 them down to about 110 that we could do. I'd say of those
6 110, 60 are some of the most well-known names and our
7 largest private companies and private investors. Last week,
8 we met with Treasury, and we met with OMB. They're giving us
9 full-time employees for 90 to 180 days for us to go through
10 these 110 proposals, and what we are hoping to do is within
11 a couple of weeks or months be able to announce a lot more
12 partnerships like Hanwha or different arsenals and depots.

13 Senator Cotton: Good. Thank you. I think that's a
14 very welcome development. These sites have languished for
15 some years and I'm glad that we're taking full advantage of
16 all the opportunity they provide to help address our
17 munition crisis.

18 I want to talk briefly about physical fitness
19 standards. I'm pleased to see the Army leading the way on
20 restoring fitness standards for combat troops. The new
21 combat field test establishes a single mission-based
22 standard that's aligned to the demands of combat, ensuring
23 readiness and lethality in soldiers serving in, I believe,
24 24 designated combat military occupation specialties. Can
25 you explain, Mr. Secretary, how high standards across all

1 units of our military contribute to greater lethality?

2 Secretary Driscoll: Senator, I think in your
3 experience in combat, certainly General LaNeve, when we've
4 spoken about it, when bullets start to fly, it doesn't
5 matter whether you're a male or a female, it doesn't matter
6 where you grew up, none of that matters. It is the perfect
7 egalitarian system of can you be there for your battle buddy
8 on your right and left? And what, we, the Army, have tried
9 to do in my time in, and then certainly in this seat, has
10 been to model out that behavior across all of our different
11 MOSs, but certainly our combat arms. And we are excited to
12 follow President Trump's lead and Secretary of War Hegseth's
13 to continue to expand and invest in our soldiers to make
14 them the most lethal fighting force in the world.

15 Senator Cotton: And these uniform standards,
16 irrespective of sex, will not just be uniform standards, but
17 high standards that's appropriate to the military occupation
18 specialty?

19 Secretary Driscoll: It is a hard test, Senator.

20 General LaNeve: Yes, sir. And high standards, sir. I
21 have a daughter that's in the Army and a son that's in the
22 Army and they both want high standards across the board for
23 all of our occupational specialties, but especially the 24
24 that are --

25 Senator Cotton: So, you've done the research, you're

1 confident these standards are uniform and high. There's
2 what's needed to be ready to fight in these MOSs and now
3 you'll apply this test and the chips will fall where they
4 may, no matter what the results are along race, sex,
5 religion, political affiliation, or dietary preferences?

6 Secretary Driscoll: That's the intent, sir.

7 Senator Cotton: Thank you.

8 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Cotton. Senator
9 Shaheen.

10 Senator Shaheen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank
11 you, both, for being here. It's been a marathon morning,
12 I'm sure.

13 Secretary Driscoll, I want to go back to some of the
14 issues we raised, we discussed earlier in the closed session
15 about pre-positioned stock. This is not classified
16 information as I understand, but my understanding about the
17 Army's interest in pre-positioning stocks throughout Europe
18 was because it reduces deployment times, and it acts as a
19 deterrence, and helps in providing combat power for any
20 contingency operations.

21 Now, as I understand, General Grynkewich was interested
22 in updating the APS before more troops are removed from his
23 theater from Germany because he's interested in being able
24 to rapidly assemble floor armored brigade combat teams. So,
25 you raised concerns about cost earlier. So, can you talk

1 about what's the cost difference between maintaining APS in
2 theater versus surging forces and equipment from the U.S. in
3 the event of a crisis?

4 General LaNeve: Ma'am, thank you for the question. As
5 we discussed earlier, there's a balance in there too of
6 being able to surge forces to fall in on equipment that is
7 ready and compatible with the equipment there. So, APS,
8 while is almost an insurance policy, that equipment stays at
9 a level that at times is not compatible with the equipment
10 that we would bring forward. I mean, to have equipment
11 forward always is good for speed to get personnel in place,
12 but it is unsustainable at that cost right now. So, for --

13 Senator Shaheen: The cost of what? Transporting new
14 equipment as the capabilities change, or the cost of
15 guarding the equipment? Help us understand what the
16 additional costs are that you're concerned about.

17 General LaNeve: Maintaining equipment sets that just
18 sit and the cost associated with that, it's somewhere around
19 \$2 billion-plus for that one BCT. And I know that General
20 Grynkewich is looking at different ways to mitigate this
21 cost to help the Army to be able to meet this requirement.
22 As discussed earlier, we'd like to see some of those
23 equipment be training sets that we could fall in on and
24 utilize in exercises across Europe when needed.

25 Senator Shaheen: So, what would be the deterrent to

1 doing that?

2 General LaNeve: Well, it's just a different way to
3 look at the equipment, and that would have to be a
4 discussion between SACEUR and the team. I know that the
5 Joint Chiefs is looking at this as well and how our posture
6 is across the world on all of our forward position forces or
7 fleet.

8 Senator Shaheen: So, the issue is internal? You all
9 could decide that you're going to use the equipment for
10 training if you decide to do that?

11 General LaNeve: I think it's a different
12 categorization of it and then there's a different funding
13 line associated with it.

14 Senator Shaheen: But it's still an internal decision,
15 you're telling us.

16 General LaNeve: Yes, ma'am.

17 Senator Shaheen: Secretary Driscoll, I want to go back
18 to last year when you were helping to negotiate with the
19 administration between Russia and Ukraine, or when the
20 administration offered a plan that looked like it had been
21 written by Russia to end the war. And at that time, you
22 suggested that it was important to get a peace deal as
23 quickly as possible because Ukraine was facing defeat on the
24 battlefield. I've seen a number of unclassified assessments
25 and open source reports that I'm sure you've seen in the

1 last month or so that suggests that not only is Ukraine not
2 in danger of losing the war at this point, but that Russia
3 is the one who's in danger of losing the war. And if we
4 would just put a little more pressure on Russia, that their
5 economy would be in real trouble. So, can you tell us, do
6 you think that Ukraine is at this point seems like it's been
7 defeated, and what more should we be thinking about to do in
8 order to pressure Russia so that they actually do lose this
9 war?

10 Secretary Driscoll: Senator, I encourage anybody who
11 has contacts in Ukraine both individually to ask about their
12 experience with us and the broader administration, and then
13 the United States Army more broadly has been there from day
14 1 supporting the Ukrainian people.

15 Senator Shaheen: Well, I don't disagree with you on
16 the Army. That's not really the question that I'm asking
17 you. I'm asking you, and given that the administration just
18 lifted the sanctions on Russian oil so that they're
19 recouping about \$4 billion a month because of that oil to
20 help fund the war in Ukraine, and by the way, to help the
21 Iranians with their targeting of U.S. military sites and
22 service members in the Middle East, why should we not think
23 that there's a mismatch --

24 Senator Banks: [Presiding.] Time has expired.

25 Senator Shaheen: -- between what the Army is doing, as

1 you say, and what the administration is doing with respect
2 to helping the Russians to fund their war.

3 Senator Banks: Senator, your time has expired.

4 Senator Shaheen: Thank you.

5 Senator Banks: I yield myself 5 minutes.

6 General, China's most recent defense white paper says
7 that the PLA Navy is bolstering capabilities for "maritime
8 maneuver operations and maritime joint operations." In
9 response, the U.S. Army's Multi-Domain Task Forces are
10 becoming key to the Army's role in the Indo-Pacific. How
11 important are MDTFs in deterring aggression in the Indo-
12 Pacific and what can I and members of the committee do to
13 help you accelerate their critical capabilities?

14 General LaNeve: Yeah, sure. First, thanks for the
15 question. Thanks for your support. The Multi-Domain Task
16 Force is the multi-domain command is critical as a theater-
17 enabling element that the task forces can be placed across
18 the Pacific at scale and operate underneath it. They're a
19 critical component of deterrence and then if needed, the
20 ability to bring those effects on any adversary. So, the
21 ability to have them forward in theater in positions that
22 have a direct deterrence is critical for us. And we're
23 seeking to support Admiral Paparo and his team in how
24 they're looking at setting the theater for that.

25 Senator Banks: Good. We want to be supportive, so let

1 us know how we can support the Army as you advance that
2 cause.

3 Secretary Driscoll, you and I have talked many times
4 before, and I appreciate your efforts to prepare the Army
5 for the future battlefield. How are you balancing though
6 the need to modernize and transform the active component
7 while also ensuring that the guard and the reserve component
8 retain the equipment and capabilities that they need for
9 their mission?

10 Secretary Driscoll: Senator, I think what -- A, I
11 appreciate those conversations we've had, and, B, the Guard
12 and the Reserve components, when we look at CENTCOM, when
13 you look at the border, when you look at a lot of the
14 missions that the United States Army has undertaken since
15 I've been in the role, the Guard and the Reserve play an
16 incredible role in that. And under both, formerly General
17 George and under General LaNeve, when we talk, we talk very
18 specifically about resourcing everyone at the same time.

19 Obviously, with budget constraints, that's not possible
20 to technically do simultaneously, but what we don't want to
21 do is we don't want to model out and how we roll out new
22 equipment to the force, this idea that they're anything
23 other than an equal participant and oftentimes carrying the
24 exact same burden when we go to conflict. And so, we very
25 explicitly are hoping to upgrade them to things like Next-

1 Gen C2 and give them new equipment as we roll it out to the
2 broader force.

3 Senator Banks: You and I have talked about this
4 before, and as you know, Humvees are made in Indiana. A lot
5 of really good jobs and workers that make the Humvee's
6 important to Indiana, but it's also important to the Army,
7 especially to the Reserves. The Army Transformation
8 Initiative transitions the Humvee away from the active
9 component. At the same time, more than half of the adjutant
10 generals have asked that Congress fund modernized Humvees.
11 What role can the Humvee play for the Army Reserve and Guard
12 across a wide range of missions like disaster relief and
13 homeland security?

14 Secretary Driscoll: I would say, Senator, the Humvee
15 has been an incredible asset for the U.S. Army for decades,
16 and what we are not trying to say is that it will no longer
17 have a role. We are trying to balance that out with other
18 assets, but there are all sorts of things. One of the
19 vehicles that we were able to make autonomously driven was a
20 Humvee because it's drive by wire.

21 Just like the ISV, you can upgrade these things very
22 quickly and use them for all sorts of purposes that if you
23 were thinking about a non-autonomous vehicle that constrains
24 its use case in a way that once you're able to do all of
25 these things with open architecture systems, the Humvee's

1 going to be able to help us on the border, it's going to be
2 able to help us with natural disasters. It's going to be
3 able to help us in a lot of theaters where it may still have
4 a lot of relevance, even if it's not the one-stop solution
5 anymore.

6 Senator Banks: Can you give us a quick update, with
7 the last 40 seconds I have left, on how the transition's
8 going?

9 Secretary Driscoll: Which transition? Sorry, Senator.

10 Senator Banks: So, overall --

11 Secretary Driscoll: From the Humvee --

12 Senator Banks: Overall, Army Transformation
13 Initiative, just give us a progress report.

14 Secretary Driscoll: Yes, sir. So, we are about 1 year
15 in right now. It was May of last year when we did it. I
16 try to look for leading indicators that it's actually
17 working. I think the first one is if you -- and I invite
18 anyone on the committee to actually go talk to soldiers. I
19 think that they would say right now feels very different.
20 The Army feels like it's moving quickly. I think if you
21 look at what we're doing with our data on our business
22 system side, or if you look at where we're doing this
23 operation jail-break, but it's been occurring before, those
24 are all good. If you look at the new M1E3, the FLRAA, the
25 different systems that we are procuring, they are all open

1 architecture and these are the types of platforms and assets
2 that can change in the future in a way that we just
3 historically have not thought about it.

4 Senator Banks: My time has expired.

5 Secretary Driscoll: Thank you, Senator.

6 Chairman Wicker: [Presiding.] Thank you, Senator
7 Banks. Senator Peters -- I mean, Senator Kelly. I'm sorry.

8 Senator Kelly: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Gentlemen,
9 thank you for being here today.

10 Secretary Driscoll, the electronic proving ground near
11 Fort Huachuca provides a very unique electronic warfare
12 testing capability, largely because it has very favorable
13 geography protected airspace surrounded on all sides by
14 terrain. And because of that, we've got an ability there to
15 conduct very aggressive electronic warfare and jamming tests
16 with minimal interference that goes beyond the area. This
17 is the kind of testing we need to understand how our systems
18 would perform if we were up against near-peer adversaries,
19 and that's why I've been kind of frustrated by the Army's
20 lack of communication regarding changes that are already
21 underway at EPG.

22 We've tried to engage with the Army multiple times. My
23 office has learned about staffing reductions and mission
24 impacts after they've happened, even though we're trying to
25 communicate with the leadership. So, we're trying to

1 proactively engage, but we're not getting the response that
2 we would normally expect. And it's one of the Army's
3 premier facilities for EW and spectrum operations. So, when
4 the Army reduces capacity there without clearly articulating
5 some kind of long-range plan, it raises real questions about
6 how these decisions align with the Army's stated priorities
7 with regards to modernization.

8 So, I'd just like a commitment from you if we could
9 work with your office to try to figure out what's going on
10 and make sure that the decisions we are making are in the
11 best interest of the Army?

12 Secretary Driscoll: Senator, absolutely. And just to
13 go back a step, one of the things we've tried to model out
14 in the last 18 months is ultra responsiveness, ultra
15 transparency, ultra clarity, both to the private sector, to
16 our larger defense partners through the primes, and the
17 smaller mids, and then also to all of you. And so, I
18 apologize that we haven't been faster and more clear, but we
19 will remedy that.

20 Senator Kelly: All right. Thank you. And then on
21 another subject, I'm a bit concerned about the Army's
22 direction here on aviation. This year you're spending \$4
23 billion. Next year, you're requesting half of that. Your
24 requests include zero AH-64 Apaches, zero Chinook, Block 2s,
25 and one UH-60 Black Hawk. And while I understand the intent

1 of the Army Transformation Initiative, I'm also concerned
2 that we're divesting in some capabilities that fill a
3 critical requirement. We talked a little bit about this,
4 General, about learning the correct lesson from the former
5 conflict, and we've got to be really careful here and we
6 don't have a validated replacement for these systems.

7 A reasonable path forward I think would be to sustain
8 Army aircraft we have and use their capacity until we
9 integrate new technologies, but instead we're facing a
10 budget request that leaves Congress no assurances at the
11 Army and especially the National Guard will not suffer from
12 a significant capability gap in its ability to move people
13 and weapons cargo, but also put fire down range, especially
14 with regards to the Apache.

15 I'm concerned that we might be repeating a mistake that
16 we saw with the Air Force and the A-10 where the service
17 spent years arguing it could retire the platform only to
18 realize that there's a critical mission need and nothing to
19 fill it. And then suddenly, with extra costs now, extend
20 the aircraft's life after the industrial capacity and its
21 sustainment challenges have gotten worse. Once production
22 lines, and suppliers, and workforce capacity disappear,
23 rebuilding them can be rather costly and time-consuming.
24 And this budget, I think, threatens the health of the
25 Defense Industrial Base in that regard. Industry has been

1 very clear that foreign sales on these systems are not
2 enough to sustain the production lines past maybe the early
3 2030s.

4 We've also been hearing from some small businesses. I
5 heard one that says, hey, the writing is on the wall here
6 and it wants to get out of the business of supporting Army
7 helicopters. So, that could be something you're going to
8 have to deal with. But Mr. Secretary, you continue to say
9 that the Apache, Black Hawk, Chinook have a role and need to
10 be modernized, but the budget doesn't actually get us there.
11 So, can you explain, I know I'm over my time here, how do we
12 do this and sustain these systems under this existing budget
13 request?

14 Chairman Wicker: You can supplement your answer on the
15 record also, but go ahead and try to answer briefly.

16 Secretary Driscoll: Absolutely, Senator. So, our
17 intent, and we've as you've rightly pointed out, tried to
18 say on the record a number of times, excuse me, these
19 systems will be in the Army's life for a very long time.
20 What we are trying to do is get out in advance of the number
21 that we will have at total as we start to bring on things
22 like FLRAA. What does that ideal balance look like? And
23 so, that's what you see reflected in the current budget. I
24 think we are optimistic that FMS will make up a lot of the
25 cases to keep these lines on.

1 Senator Kelly: But still in the budget, right now one
2 Black Hawk, zero Apache, zero Chinook, and the FMS thing
3 from our -- as my office has looked into this, it just
4 doesn't seem like enough to sustain the helicopter
5 industrial base. So, thank you. I'm sorry I'm over my
6 time.

7 Chairman Wicker: Thank you for that observation,
8 Senator. Senator Slotkin, I'm sure you were as delighted as
9 I am that Senator Rosen has appeared. Senator Rosen, you're
10 recognized for 5 minutes.

11 Senator Rosen: Thank you, Chairman Wicker, for holding
12 this hearing. Sorry, Senator Slotkin. Anyway, thank you,
13 Secretary Driscoll, General LaNeve for testifying today for
14 the classified briefing, which was terrific. I appreciate
15 your service.

16 I want to talk a little bit about duty status reform
17 because as evidenced in recent operations, the National
18 Guard has evolved from a strategic reserve into a
19 consistently operational force. The reserve components are
20 now relied upon at unprecedented pace for overseas
21 deployment and state emergency activations often with a
22 disparity of entitlements depending on their duty status.
23 Reserve component soldiers experience the bureaucratic
24 inequities of no fewer than 29. 29 different encumbers from
25 duty statuses, which prevent them from receiving the same

1 pay and benefits as their active-duty counterparts
2 performing the same duties. So, Secretary Driscoll, there
3 is a DOD legislative proposal to fix this issue that OMB has
4 not yet cleared for Congress to consider and this is really
5 hurting our Guard.

6 And so, in the meantime, what specific initiatives are
7 the Army considering to modernize and consolidate these duty
8 statuses? Number one, you're going to reduce administrative
9 burden, and you're going to improve pay and benefits
10 continuity and better support our Guard and Reserve
11 soldiers, and how are you going to support duty status
12 reform? It is critical for retention, taking care of our
13 Guard and Reserve, and retention of our Guard and Reserve.

14 General LaNeve: Yeah, ma'am. First off, thanks for
15 recognizing the incredible commitment and impact that all of
16 the components, but especially our Reserve and Guard are
17 playing right now across the globe. We are taking a look at
18 this. We're tied in with the Department as they're looking
19 at this broadly as an entire department, not just an Army
20 alone in it.

21 Senator Rosen: Thank you. It is really critical.
22 Secretary Driscoll, I think we have to do it across agency,
23 across services, but it's really important and it's hurting
24 our Guard in Nevada, and of course, across the country.

25 Secretary Driscoll: And Senator, they just handed me a

1 note saying it just cleared OMB.

2 Senator Rosen: It just cleared. Well, there you go.
3 And that's how fast I asked the question got it done.

4 Secretary Driscoll: There it is, ma'am.

5 Senator Rosen: And that's how -- and there we go.
6 Well, thank you for that. You made my day.

7 Secretary Driscoll: Of course. And I would just
8 follow-up really quickly, and this is a very boring thing we
9 don't reference often, but our business systems, like the
10 duty status matters a lot. But it's also our business
11 systems are failing our soldiers, and so this is the backend
12 of how they get paid and how they get their benefits --

13 Senator Rosen: That's right.

14 Secretary Driscoll: -- and how we treat, care for
15 them.

16 Senator Rosen: That's why I brought it up is my number
17 one question. Thank you.

18 Secretary Driscoll: We are trying to optimize it all.

19 Senator Rosen: I want to quickly, in the time I have
20 left, talk about the cyber workforce. The fiscal year 2024
21 NDAA included my bipartisan legislation authorizing the Army
22 to create a civilian cybersecurity reserve to provide cyber
23 comm with qualified civilian personnel for surge capacity,
24 ensuring the U.S. Government has the cyber talent needed to
25 respond to malicious activity and secure DOD's information

1 and systems.

2 I'm the ranking member on Cyber Security Committee
3 here. And so, to both of you, can you provide a status
4 update on the Army's implementation of the Civilian
5 Cybersecurity Reserve? And to the Secretary, can you also
6 add, given that cyber personnel are often able to earn
7 significantly higher compensation outside of government
8 service, what authorities or compensation reforms does the
9 Army need from Congress to better compete with the private
10 sector for elite cyber talent? How are you measuring that,
11 and what can we do to help?

12 Secretary Driscoll: Senator, this is a topic near and
13 dear to my heart. We will follow-up with your office on a
14 more timely cybersecurity reserve update and so we can
15 provide you an update on where it is. More broadly
16 speaking; what authorities would we need? I think when you
17 actually look at the threat from a peer or near-peer, take
18 China as an example, and their ability to tie in their cyber
19 talent into their research universities and their private
20 companies, we as a Nation do not have something like that,
21 and all that guarantees is that we will not be able to keep
22 up. What we do have is if you look at our models from
23 OpenAI and Google, all of those are first class, best in
24 class, but we need the human beings to be able to operate
25 them.

1 Senator Rosen: We're going to do the mark in a few
2 weeks, and as ranking member on Cyber, I know Senator Rounds
3 and I might prefer, but really like to have that update from
4 you, if you could talk about that in general. There's just
5 a few seconds left if you want to talk about it at all.
6 Otherwise, I'm going to yield to Senator Slotkin.

7 General LaNeve: And I concur with the Secretary,
8 ma'am, and we'll follow back up with you on where we're at.

9 [The information referred to follows:]

10 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 Senator Rosen: Thank you. The sooner, the better.
2 That way we have some good input for the mark and less than
3 a few weeks now. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

4 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Rosen. Senator
5 Slotkin.

6 Senator Slotkin: Great. You're almost done. If
7 you're -- to me, you're at the end, the bitter end.

8 Chairman Wicker: There is a vote on, but I think we
9 can both make it.

10 Senator Slotkin: Thank you. I know I'm paying my dues
11 here. So, two very different questions. Thank you. I know
12 Senator Peter said this, too, but thank you for coming to
13 Michigan last year, coming to see Northern Strike, biggest
14 multi-domain exercise east of the Mississippi, and thank you
15 for coming to Detroit as well to see some of the tech
16 innovation we have going on. Given our manufacturing base,
17 we really feel we can increase the number of military
18 missions and contracts that we have coming through Michigan.

19 You know, you came and talked to a bunch of our defense
20 contractors in Macomb County about the Army Transformation
21 Initiative. And while we want deeply to modernize, there
22 are certain things since we do land vehicles where we're
23 kind of on the losing end of that experience. So, we're
24 trying to find other areas, and I think where we're poised
25 to really break out and become the Nation's leader is on

1 drone, R&D, and manufacturing.

2 And drones are becoming ubiquitous. I was just looking
3 at where we had some deadly tornadoes. They did search and
4 rescue via drone. People are looking for their lost pets as
5 a service now. You can hire a drone service. We want to be
6 poised, but what are the other things -- and we were very
7 happy, I should say, just early this year, the Army
8 designated one of our facilities up north as the first drone
9 testing site in the country. So, we feel like we're ready
10 to really take this to the next level. How should we be
11 thinking back home briefly about advanced manufacturing
12 using the capabilities that Michigan in particular has to
13 serving the next generation of Army soldier?

14 Secretary Driscoll: Senator, I think your State in
15 particular with its deep rich manufacturing history can help
16 us solve a problem that globally we are still gapped as a
17 human species, but then specifically the United States Army
18 for conflict, these larger group 3, group 4, group 5 drones,
19 when we compliment the Russians and we compliment the
20 Ukrainians, what we really mean is they're very good at
21 building the smaller ones. The larger ones, the types of
22 drones that will one day be able to supplement or someday
23 far in the future, replace things like the Apache are much
24 larger, much more difficult to build, require a lot of deep
25 expertise and a lot of investment. And so, that is a place

1 I think when we look out at the assets we as a Nation have,
2 we think Michigan and Camp Grayling can help us refine what
3 we're working on and help expand it and scale it.

4 Senator Slotkin: Yeah. Well, we want to be good
5 partners in that and we're the arsenal of democracy and have
6 a rich tradition of being there when our country needs us.
7 So, would love to talk to you more about that. Separate
8 topic. You were up at Camp Grayling, which is Grayling,
9 Michigan, which has like other military communities had a
10 problem with PFAS contamination. And I met via Zoom with a
11 bunch of local community advocates. These are folks who are
12 deeply supportive of the military presence. This is not
13 just like we have in other Air Force and former Air Force
14 locations in Michigan up in Oscoda. These are people who
15 believe in the mission, but they can't drink their well
16 water. The lake that Camp Grayling is on, Lake Margrethe,
17 they can't drink the water in that area. There's concerns
18 when there's foam. They can't let their kids or their dogs
19 touch that foam.

20 So, it's a real thing and the Army does have a
21 responsibility. There was \$20 million set aside by the Army
22 to clean that up, and early this year we got the word that
23 they want to do more testing before they engage in any
24 cleanup. I've seen this movie with the Air Force, and I
25 just am asking your commitment. We understand that testing

1 may need to go on for the rest of this calendar year, but
2 that has often been used as a way to push off and never take
3 responsibility when people are literally having to buy their
4 own water or get it provided to them. So, can I get your
5 commitment that you'll look at this particularly and that we
6 will not go beyond 2026 for that additional testing so these
7 people have some remediation, some cleanup of their wells.

8 Secretary Driscoll: I commit Senator following up with
9 your office with a very clear answer. I don't know the
10 specifics of the timing of the testing, but my experience
11 has been we don't intentionally do those things to delay.
12 So, I will check in and we will follow-up.

13 Senator Slotkin: Yeah. I think there's been
14 generations of folks on, again, not just Army, other
15 services, but this is not the beginning of this movie. It
16 may be new to you guys. It's not new to these communities
17 and would just ask for your commitment to follow up. Any of
18 us, if we had a home on a lake, would want to be able to
19 have our kids swim there safely and drink the water. So,
20 would just appreciate you looking into it.

21 Secretary Driscoll: Yes, ma'am.

22 Senator Slotkin: Thank you. I yield back.

23 Chairman Wicker: Senator Slotkin, how long has this
24 been a known problem?

25 Senator Slotkin: So, both in Army communities and in

1 former Air Force base up in Oscoda years and years, and at
2 this point it's got to be over a decade. We have some
3 Michigan residents who have more PFAS in their blood than
4 any other human beings on earth. And again, these are
5 dedicated communities who love the military, but can't send
6 their kids to certain summer camps because there's so much
7 contamination in their local lakes. So, this was an issue
8 I'm big on in the House and I continue to be hammering it in
9 the Senate. Would love your help, Mr. Chairman.

10 Chairman Wicker: Thank you. Senator Duckworth.

11 Senator Duckworth: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

12 Secretary Driscoll, I appreciated our meeting
13 yesterday, thank you, especially when you committed to
14 providing the families of the DCA crash victims, the
15 findings from any Army investigations without any additional
16 administrative hurdles. From my seat on both this committee
17 and Commerce, Science, and Transportation, I look forward to
18 working with you to implement necessary reforms to make sure
19 that our airspace is safe both for the flying public, but
20 also for our warfighters as well.

21 I do want now to turn to the Army's organic industrial
22 base. In my State, Rock Island Arsenal is home to critical
23 manufacturing of munitions and equipment. The Joint
24 Munitions Command, which delivers munitions to the
25 battlefield and the Army Sustainment Command, which drives

1 the Army's logistics enterprise to name only a few of the
2 Arsenal's critical functions. So, as I mentioned to you, I
3 was very concerned to hear in March that the Army was
4 suddenly reassigning employees who manage our munitions and
5 sustainment in the middle of a war.

6 Over the past 2 months, I've heard from constituents
7 who, instead of focusing on their missions, were thrust into
8 personal turmoil by the Army through a hasty personnel
9 campaign. In March, as many as 155 civilian workers at Rock
10 Island, many of whom are veterans themselves, were told,
11 "That they were 'Surplus employees.'" And they were left in
12 limbo for weeks worried that they would lose their jobs with
13 many only being told later, much later, weeks later, never
14 mind. Some of these so-called surplus employees were given
15 only 2 to 5 days to accept a job out of State and uproot
16 their families or face termination from civil service.

17 Two to five days, that's it. Two to five days to make
18 a life altering career decision. I don't think this is how
19 we should be treating our patriotic career civilians. And
20 my constituents are worried about the still uncertain merger
21 of two critical commands, the Joint Munitions Command, and
22 the Army Sustainment Command and what it means with their
23 jobs and their missions. Senator Driscoll, do you commit to
24 notifying me and this committee before any additional
25 workforce changes at Rock Island Arsenal, including from the

1 merger at JMC and ASC?

2 Secretary Driscoll: Senator, to all of your remarks
3 and it was helpful meeting with you yesterday. Those
4 populations, we aspired to do what was right. We aspire to
5 be thoughtful. Giving 2 to 5 days is probably not
6 sufficient for that decision in hindsight. And so, my
7 commitment to you is after meeting with you, I went back,
8 talked to the team and we will try if we have to have
9 similar conversations to give more time and more grace for
10 people to make these big decisions. To your question,
11 Senator, we will do our very best to include your and your
12 office and any sort of hiring that we have to do for Rock
13 Island.

14 Senator Duckworth: Will you contact us before it
15 actually takes place, especially if you're terminating
16 people?

17 Secretary Driscoll: Senator, I'm not intending to
18 pause unnecessarily. I'm trying to think through the
19 process of if we had to get rid of one individual because of
20 some sort of --

21 Senator Duckworth: No, I mean like an effort where --

22 Secretary Driscoll: Generally, your spirit of your
23 question, yes.

24 Senator Duckworth: Okay. Thank you. Shifting gears
25 to another issue, the domestic misuse of the military in

1 American cities and the taxpayers waste that has gone with
2 it. Months ago, President Trump claimed that he mobilized
3 500 National Guardsmen to reduce crime in Chicago, his
4 words, but they never set foot in Chicago. They stayed
5 confined to bases in Illinois because Federal courts and our
6 Supreme Court found their deployment illegal and cost
7 taxpayers \$21 million in the process. But President Trump's
8 obsession with misusing the military in American streets is
9 not over and he in fact often threatens to deploy the guard
10 for political purposes from saying he might send them to
11 airports, to lamenting he should have had them and these are
12 his words, "Seize the ballots in 2020." So, this is not
13 hypothetical. He said that. And don't forget, thousands of
14 Guardsmen are still in Washington, D.C. under no valid
15 mission and also are doing so at great taxpayer expense.

16 In fact, for fiscal year 2027, the President is
17 requesting \$605 million for D.C. deployment of the National
18 Guard. Just outside the walls of this building, Guardsmen
19 are forced to be away from their families and jobs to rove
20 around the city in packs of six, board, picking up trash or
21 gardening all while the National Guard has actual missions
22 to train for like responding to natural disasters or
23 preparing for combat. And I'd like to discuss some of the
24 ways the Army could better use the \$605 million that the
25 president wants to waste on unnecessarily deploying the

1 military to the Nation's capital.

2 Secretary Driscoll, yes or no, do you agree with the
3 call in the Army Transformation Initiative to expand pre-
4 positioned stocks in the Indo-Pacific?

5 Secretary Driscoll: Yes.

6 Senator Duckworth: Well, for \$605 million, the Army
7 could fund 11 times to pre-position stocks for repair parts
8 and supplies in Japan and Korea than it had last year.
9 That's what \$605 million could pay for. I'll give you
10 another example. Yes or no, do you agree that soldiers and
11 their families deserve access to affordable healthcare?

12 Secretary Driscoll: Yes.

13 Senator Duckworth: For \$605 million for that D.C.
14 deployment, the Army could provide 15,125 military families
15 IVF treatments. Instead of misusing the Guard to stoke his
16 ego, President Trump could keep his campaign promise and I
17 quote, these are his words, he wants, "to pay for all costs
18 associated with IVF treatments for our heroes." I urge
19 Congress to invest these funds where it really matters.
20 Thank you.

21 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Duckworth.

22 I'd like to thank our witnesses for their testimony.
23 Twenty members have been able to ask questions during this
24 open hearing. For the information of members, questions for
25 the record will be due to the committee within 2 business

1 days of the conclusion of this hearing, which is right now.

2 [The information referred to follows:]

3 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 Chairman Wicker: We are adjourned.

2 [Whereupon, at 1:04 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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