

Stenographic Transcript
Before the

COMMITTEE ON
ARMED SERVICES

UNITED STATES SENATE

TO CONDUCT A CONFIRMATION HEARING ON THE
NOMINATIONS OF:

MR. AUSTIN J. DAHMER TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF
DEFENSE FOR STRATEGY, PLANS, AND CAPABILITIES;
HONORABLE ROBERT P. KADLEC TO BE ASSISTANT
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR NUCLEAR DETERRENCE,
CHEMICAL, AND BIOLOGICAL DEFENSE POLICY AND
PROGRAMS;

AND

MR. MICHAEL J. BORDERS, JR. TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
OF THE AIR FORCE FOR ENERGY, INSTALLATIONS, AND
ENVIRONMENT

Tuesday, November 4, 2025

Washington, D.C.

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1 TO CONDUCT A CONFIRMATION HEARING ON THE NOMINATIONS OF:
2 MR. AUSTIN J. DAHMER TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
3 FOR STRATEGY, PLANS, AND CAPABILITIES;
4 HONORABLE ROBERT P. KADLEC TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF
5 DEFENSE FOR NUCLEAR DETERRENCE, CHEMICAL, AND BIOLOGICAL
6 DEFENSE POLICY AND PROGRAMS;
7 AND
8 MR. MICHAEL J. BORDERS, JR. TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF
9 THE AIR FORCE FOR ENERGY, INSTALLATIONS, AND ENVIRONMENT
10

11 Tuesday, November 4, 2025
12

13 U.S. Senate
14 Committee on Armed Services
15 Washington, D.C.
16

17 The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:30 a.m.,
18 in Room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Roger
19 F. Wicker, chairman of the committee, presiding.

20 Members Present: Wicker, Fischer, Cotton, Rounds,
21 Ernst, Sullivan, Scott, Mullin, Budd, Schmitt, Banks,
22 Sheehy, Reed, Shaheen, Gillibrand, Blumenthal, Hirono,
23 Kaine, King, Warren, Rosen, Kelly, and Slotkin.
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1 OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ROGER F. WICKER, U.S.
2 SENATOR FROM MISSISSIPPI

3 Chairman Wicker: So, the hearing will come to order,
4 and we'll ask our guests to take their seats. We'll begin
5 in just a moment.

6 I welcome our witnesses and their families, some of
7 whom I just had an opportunity to greet, and thank them for
8 being here this morning. We face a threat environment more
9 dangerous than any since World War II. I say this at
10 almost every hearing because it bears repeating. In such
11 challenging times, I'm grateful that these individuals have
12 answered the call to serve.

13 Let me just pause for a moment and say, this morning,
14 we remember a longtime public servant who passed away
15 during the night, former Vice President Richard Cheney, a
16 man who repeatedly answered the call to serve. He was
17 White House Chief of Staff. He served as Secretary of
18 Defense. He was elected to the House of Representatives
19 some 5 times and, ultimately, to the vice presidency,
20 serving in that role for 8 consequential years. So, we are
21 thinking of his family and loved ones today as the
22 committee meets.

23 As to our business, I welcome our witnesses, and,
24 first of all, Dr. Robert Kadlec has been nominated as
25 Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear Deterrence,



1 Chemical, and Biological Defense Policy and Programs. Last
2 year, Congress created this position because we hoped to
3 align the Department's fractured nuclear management
4 structure. This is an incredibly important position,
5 especially today. China and Russia are rapidly expanding
6 their nuclear arsenals while our own modernization programs
7 are behind schedule. I look forward to working with the
8 Department to establish a position in a manner consistent
9 with congressional direction in this NDAA that we are
10 working on right now.

11 Just last week, the President made it clear that he is
12 aware of our nuclear modernization challenges as compared
13 to our adversaries. That was encouraging news that the
14 President is putting emphasis on this. This committee has
15 recognized the issue and proposed we have one position in
16 the Pentagon responsible for nuclear matters instead of a
17 big bureaucracy. I will note that we've not yet received
18 written intentions from the Department about how they will
19 implement the law considering this position. I look
20 forward to hearing Dr. Kadlec's views on how, if confirmed,
21 he'll work to ensure the Department follows statutory
22 direction and empowers this position to enact the nuclear
23 reforms we so desperately need.

24 Mr. Michael Borders has been nominated to be Assistant
25 Secretary of the Air Force for Energy, Installations, and



1 Environment. As I've stated to other assistant secretaries
2 with these responsibilities in the Army and Navy, the
3 military branches have for far too long ignored their
4 facilities. The Air Force is no exception. It is now
5 required by statute to right the ship and continue to work
6 toward a 4-percent annual plant replacement value by 2030,
7 as was made in law last year through our NDAA, which was
8 signed by the President. With his experience as Commander
9 of the Air Force Installation and Mission Support Center,
10 Mr. Borders is especially qualified to address this problem
11 and get the Air Force back on track.

12 Mr. Austin Dahmer has been nominated to serve as
13 Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy, Plans, and
14 Forces. If confirmed, he would have broad, important
15 responsibilities. He would oversee the implementation of
16 the National Defense Strategy and the prioritization and
17 execution of the Department's security cooperation
18 initiatives. Mr. Dahmer would be responsible for DOD's
19 Global Force Posture and its contingency and theater
20 campaign plans. These responsibilities would effectively
21 make Mr. Dahmer the Department's chief strategist. He
22 would help build the plans to implement the Commander in
23 Chief's vision. The Commander in Chief's vision.

24 I make this point in particular because I've noticed
25 an unsettling trend this year. At times, the Pentagon



1 officials have pursued policies that are not in accord with
2 President Trump's orders or seem uncoordinated within the
3 administration. We saw one example of this last week in
4 the decision to withdraw an infantry brigade combat team
5 from Romania. I spoke about this in a statement with
6 Chairman Rogers of the House Armed Services Committee. We
7 noted that this decision did not appear to reflect the
8 policy mandate of President Trump. Just 2 weeks ago, the
9 President had said that troops would not be withdrawn from
10 Europe. It is unclear to me how the move fits with the
11 Commander-in-Chief's direction.

12 Excuse me for a moment.

13 We're going to ask that several things be discussed in
14 this hearing, and I hope there are questions and answers in
15 this regard.

16 The Department is allegedly conducting a broad review
17 of U.S. forces stationed abroad. I say "allegedly" because
18 the Department has not formally conveyed to this committee
19 that it is actually undertaking such a review. We read
20 about it in the newspapers, and last week, we saw its
21 earliest manifestation with the abrupt announcement that I
22 mentioned with regard to the infantry brigade team from
23 Romania and Southern Europe. The timing of that
24 announcement is curious at best. For a generation, we've
25 insisted that the Europeans do more, and thanks to



1 President Trump, they are doing more as their defense
2 spending reveals, but creating new military force
3 structures and producing the equipment by these allies to
4 accompany it will take years to field, and so the questions
5 arise.

6 Last week, when the Pentagon abruptly withdrew a
7 brigade from Romania, did our Department, did our witness
8 consult with the Romanians prior to the decision to
9 withdraw the brigade from Europe? Romania shares the
10 largest border with Ukraine of any NATO ally. Russia
11 invaded and occupied parts of Ukraine, with whom Romania
12 shares that border. Is there a backfill plan for those
13 forces we are withdrawing? Is the U.S. planning further
14 drawdowns of our ground forces in Europe? If so, this
15 Committee and this Congress would appreciate being advised
16 as members of the same American team. Is the Department
17 planning to draw down either two brigade combat teams
18 assigned to the Combat Forces Command in the Republic of
19 Korea?

20 The dictator, Putin, is rattling his nuclear saber at
21 the United States and NATO while he's doubling down on his
22 war in Ukraine. The U.S. must always weigh the cost and
23 benefits of troop deployments around the world. I think we
24 would like to know today could we hear the thinking of the
25 strategy aspect, the strategy portion of the Pentagon about



1 the signal sent by the decision to reduce troop presence in
2 Europe at this particular time. In addition, I've been
3 disappointed to see the President's decisions apparently
4 slow walked or reversed at other points this year.

5 Earlier, Ukraine stopped receiving our security assistance
6 even though President Trump wanted to deliver it. When the
7 President was asked about this, he said he did not know who
8 had ordered this. In addition, the AUKUS deal was cast
9 into doubt, despite the President's strong support of the
10 AUKUS agreement, much to the surprise and dismay of
11 Australia, one of our most steadfast allies.

12 There are strong foreign policy debates in my
13 political party. We do not have consensus on every issue,
14 and I welcome a healthy discussion on America's role in the
15 world, and I think the President does, too. I've supported
16 President Trump's efforts to blend three approaches to
17 foreign policy, and I have supported the President
18 steadfastly in this regard. He combines a muscular use of
19 the U.S. military with win-win deals with our allies and,
20 thirdly, tough negotiations with red lines for our
21 adversaries. Amid these debates, I think everyone would
22 expect the President's national security strategy staff to
23 follow his lead and implement his vision.

24 Throughout this year, the committee has had a
25 relatively positive relationship with the Pentagon,



1 especially Secretary Hegseth and Deputy Secretary
2 Steinberg. I've been disappointed to find one exception to
3 that cordiality. Members and staff of this committee have
4 struggled to receive information from the Policy Office and
5 have not been able to consult in a meaningful way with the
6 shop, either on the National Defense Strategy or the Global
7 Posture Review. This does not match our experience with
8 the first Trump administration during which we had
9 extensive consultations between the administration and the
10 Congress and allies throughout the strategy development
11 process. I look forward to improved interactions with the
12 policy team in the coming months and the new year. The
13 situation needs to improve if we are to craft the best
14 defense policy.

15 With that, I turn to my colleague, Ranking Member
16 Reed.



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

3 Senator Reed: Well, thank you very much, Mr.
4 Chairman. I do want to add my comments regarding the
5 passing of Vice President Dick Cheney. He was a dedicated
6 public servant. His entire life was involved with public
7 service, and he had a profound respect for the Constitution
8 and conducted himself in that way constantly. We disagreed
9 at certain times, but no one could doubt his sincerity and
10 his service to the Nation.

11 Good morning to our witnesses, and congratulations on
12 your nomination. I would like to welcome you and your
13 family members. I'm a little bit jealous of Mr. Border's
14 son. He's the best dressed person in the room, but what
15 can you say?

16 Mr. Dahmer, you are nominated to be Assistant
17 Secretary of Defense for Strategy, Plans, and Capabilities.
18 This is one of the most consequential policy positions in
19 the Department, responsible for advising the Secretary of
20 Defense on the National Defense Strategy, force planning,
21 contingency operations, and Global Force Posture. However,
22 I would note that the committee was informed just 2 days
23 ago that this position title has apparently changed to
24 "Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy, Plans, and
25 Forces." The Department indicated that this is merely a



1 cosmetic change, and the new title more appropriately
2 reflects the organization's mission. They also stated that
3 all duties and responsibilities of the office remain
4 unchanged. However, from the limited information we have
5 been given, this does not appear to be accurate.

6 The Department is realigning the portfolios for three
7 deputy assistant secretary positions that are nested under
8 the ASD for Strategy, Plans, and Capabilities and who would
9 directly report to Mr. Dahmer, if you are confirmed.

10 Specifically, according to the information provided to the
11 committee late yesterday, responsibility for AUKUS, which
12 belonged to DASD for Force Development and Emerging
13 Capabilities portfolio, will now be transferred to a
14 different assistant secretary of defense.

15 Reviewing the roles and responsibilities of an office
16 is not unusual, and sometimes it's needed. Normally, when
17 the Department conducts such a reorganization, it will send
18 to the committee a summary of those changes for our review
19 and consideration before the Committee proceeds with a
20 nomination. This is important because the Senate has a
21 constitutional duty to advise and consent on all Senate-
22 confirmed nominees. As such, having a basic understanding
23 of a nominee's duties is imperative to our oversight role.
24 Unfortunately, that did not happen in this case. Rather,
25 we were informed this weekend that these changes had been



1 made, and they were designed to "realign certain policy
2 activities and rebrand parts of the organization to better
3 reflect the priorities of the Trump administration."

4 In fact, according to the memorandum that was provided
5 to the committee, these changes were made last month and
6 were effective as of October 8, 2025, and yet the
7 Department never notified the committee of these changes,
8 even though it had ample opportunity to do so prior to
9 today's hearing. Mr. Dahmer, given that the committee has
10 not had the opportunity to review all the changes, I would
11 ask you to explain what your understanding is of the
12 changes to the portfolio to which you have been nominated.

13 The Department has been developing a forthcoming
14 National Defense Strategy, and while the NDS has not yet
15 been released, there has been considerable reporting and
16 considerable concern about its strategic direction.
17 Reports indicate that new strategy will emphasize domestic
18 and regional missions at the expense of competing with
19 China in the Indo-Pacific. Mr. Dahmer, both the 2018 and
20 2022 National Defense Strategy clearly prioritize long-term
21 strategic competition with China and Russia as our pacing
22 challenges. I would like to understand whether you agree
23 with that assessment or whether you believe that the
24 Department of Defense should be primarily focused on
25 homeland security and domestic military operations.



1 Similarly, I'm concerned that the forthcoming Global
2 Posture Review calls for significant reduction of U.S.
3 troops in Europe and the Middle East, which could have
4 strategic consequences for our alliances. Indeed, as the
5 chairman has pointed out, we've already withdrawn troops or
6 directed the withdrawal of troops from Romania, all of that
7 done without any consultation with the Congress and any
8 specific articulation of national defense policy changes.
9 So, I would ask you to explain these proposals.

10 Dr. Kadlec, you are nominated to be Assistant
11 Secretary of Defense for Nuclear Deterrence, Chemical, and
12 Biological Defense Policy and Programs. This is a new
13 position created by the fiscal year 2025 NDAA, combining
14 nuclear weapons policy and acquisition with chemical and
15 biological defense programs. Your expertise in biodefense
16 is significant, as you have served in senior policy
17 positions in the Pentagon, Special Operations Command, and
18 the Department of Health and Human Services. Indeed, I
19 think your presence will add greatly because biological,
20 offensive, and defensive positions have been, I think,
21 under considered by the Department. However, this position
22 emphasizes nuclear weapons policy and acquisition, and, Dr.
23 Kadlec, I'd like to understand what qualifications you
24 bring to managing the Department's nuclear portfolio during
25 this critical modernization period.



1 Additionally, I'm concerned about the President's
2 recent statements on nuclear testing. Breaking a testing
3 moratorium maintained since the 1990s would be
4 strategically reckless, in my view, inevitably prompting
5 Russia, China, and others to resume their own programs.
6 Dr. Kadlec, I would like to know your perspective on the
7 destabilizing effects such testing could have on an already
8 fragile nonproliferation architecture.

9 Finally, Mr. Borders, you are nominated to be the
10 Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Energy,
11 Installations, and Environment. This position provides
12 oversight of all Air Force and Space Force installations
13 worldwide, including military construction, housing,
14 operational energy, environmental protection, and PFAS
15 remediation. I want to thank you for your career of
16 military service and congratulate you on your recent
17 retirement. However, I must note it's highly unusual for
18 an active duty field grade officer to retire and
19 immediately assume a Senate-confirmed position. I would
20 appreciate your testimony on how your career has prepared
21 you for this position.

22 Among many issues with the Air Force, I'm particularly
23 concerned about installation resilience. Extreme weather
24 has caused the Department billions in damage and recovery,
25 which compromises readiness and mission execution. I would



1 like to know what steps you would take to mitigate the
2 costly impacts of extreme weather on our installations.
3 Additionally, you have previously advocated for significant
4 policy changes to address military housing shortages. If
5 confirmed, I would like to know how you would implement
6 those proposals across the Air Force and Space Force, and
7 how you would ensure rigorous oversight of both privatize
8 housing and enlisted barracks.

9 Again, to all our nominees, thank you, and I look
10 forward to your testimony. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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1 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Mr. Ranking Member, and
2 now the committee will move to standard questions.

3 [Brief pause.]

4 Chairman Wicker: Oh, Mr. Borders, you're recognized
5 for your opening statement.

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1 STATEMENT OF MR. MICHAEL J. BORDERS, JR., TO BE
2 ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE FOR ENERGY,
3 INSTALLATIONS, AND ENVIRONMENT

4 Colonel Borders: Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member
5 Reed, and distinguished members of the committee, it is an
6 honor of a lifetime to appear before you today as the
7 President's nominee --

8 Chairman Wicker: Could you speak a little closer to
9 the microphone?

10 Colonel Borders: Is this better?

11 [Brief pause.]

12 Colonel Borders: Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member
13 Reed, and distinguished members of the committee, it is an
14 honor of a lifetime to appear before you today as the
15 President's nominee for Assistant Secretary of the Air
16 Force for Energy, Installations, and Environment. The
17 confirmation process reflects one of the great strengths of
18 our democracy, and I thank you for your role in it and you
19 and your staff's time. I am deeply grateful to President
20 Trump for this opportunity, and I'm humbled by the trust he
21 has placed in me. I would also like to thank Secretary
22 Hegseth and Secretary of the Air Force Meink.

23 With profound gratitude, I give thanks to God who
24 calls us the righteousness and justice. I thank Him for
25 the blessings of family, and the gift of service, and the



1 opportunity to be before you today. I want to thank those
2 who shaped this journey: my parents, Master Sergeant Mike
3 Borders, Senior, United States Army Reserves, retired, and
4 Karen Borders. They refused to let me quit anything ever.
5 My brother, Rodney, and his family, and my resilient,
6 beautiful wife, Monira, and my son, Zayne, for their
7 support. This is the foundation that allowed me to serve
8 our Nation and hopefully continue serving.

9 Last month, I concluded a 28-year active duty career
10 in the United States Air Force, a career where I defended
11 nuclear weapons, conducted detainee operations in
12 Afghanistan, and led counterinsurgency operations in Iraq,
13 spending over 36 months in the Middle East. I teamed with
14 the interagency to develop U.S. Government policy for
15 Thailand and Burma. I've commanded 6 times with over 8
16 years in command, and that taught me that changing
17 paradigms requires more than ideas. It demands execution
18 at the speed of relevance. The office I have been
19 nominated to lead sits at the heart of operational
20 readiness. Our installations are not simply bases or
21 infrastructure. They are power projection platforms
22 essential to defeating China or any adversary that would
23 test our resolve.

24 Ending Iranian nuclear aspirations began in the local
25 communities around Whiteman Air Force Base where our airmen



1 and their families live and work in. I understand this and
2 so does China. Our bases, energy grids, and military
3 housing represent exactly the kind of infrastructure they
4 aim to hold at risk. I believe protecting our
5 installations and energy systems is not an abstract policy
6 discussion. It is directly tied to our ability to deter
7 and defeat China or any future adversary. We are at a
8 critical moment. China is investing heavily in
9 capabilities to design and hold our bases at risk and local
10 communities at risk, disrupt our logistics, and deny
11 access. The question is not whether our installations will
12 be tested. It is will they be ready.

13 If confirmed, my priorities will remain tightly
14 aligned with that mission: resilient installations;
15 building and sustaining bases and local communities that
16 can operate under attack and continue to generate combat
17 power; energy assurance: developing secure, adaptive
18 energy systems that reduce vulnerabilities and ensure
19 mission continuity in contested environments; environmental
20 stewardship: meeting our obligations to the land, water,
21 and communities we serve while sustaining operational
22 readiness and quality of life.

23 Given that our Nation's most valued resource is its
24 military service members and their families, recognizing
25 that safe, quality and well-maintained homes, and strong



1 community integration are essential to mission readiness.
2 These priorities are inseparable. Every decision in this
3 portfolio must strengthen those priorities. I also
4 recognize that success in this role depends on partnership.
5 The Department of the Air Force's strength lies in its
6 dedicated military and civilian professionals and the local
7 communities that support them, and the oversight of this
8 Committee. If confirmed, I'm committed to transparency and
9 will work with you, listen to the concerns of airmen,
10 guardians, and their families, and build alliances across
11 government and industry to ensure rapid, measurable
12 progress.

13 This nomination is more than an honor. It is a solemn
14 responsibility, and I feel the weight of it. It is the
15 participation in our sacred principle of civilian control
16 over the military. It is a charge to ensure every dollar
17 strengthens mission capability, honors the taxpayer, and
18 sustains the force for the future fight. As I close, I
19 return to gratitude: to God for strength, to my parents
20 for teaching me the value of service, to my wife and Zayne
21 for their support and motivation, and to President Trump,
22 Secretary Hegseth, and Secretary Meink for their trust, and
23 to you, this committee, for your partnership and oversight.

24 Thank you for considering my nomination. I look
25 forward to your questions and the opportunity to serve.



1 [The prepared statement of Mr. Borders follows:]

2 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 Chairman Wicker: And thank you, Mr. Borders. Dr.
2 Kadlec, your opening statement, sir.

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1 STATEMENT OF HONORABLE ROBERT P. KADLEC, M.D., TO BE
2 ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR NUCLEAR DETERRENCE,
3 CHEMICAL, AND BIOLOGICAL DEFENSE POLICY AND PROGRAMS

4 Dr. Kadlec: Thank you, Chairman Wicker, Ranking
5 Member Reed, and members of the committee. I'm honored to
6 be President Trump's nominee for the Assistant Secretary of
7 War for Nuclear Deterrence, and Chemical, and Biological
8 Defense Policy and Programs. I want to thank the President
9 and Secretary Hegseth for their trust and confidence. I
10 strongly support their commitment to preserve peace through
11 strength by increasing the lethality of our armed forces
12 and reestablishing deterrence. If confirmed, I intend to
13 pursue four urgent priorities to achieve their objectives:
14 maintain and sustain the current nuclear triad; modernize
15 our nuclear command and control; accelerate the development
16 and deployment of the Sentinel ICBM, B-21 Bomber, Columbia
17 class submarine, and other critical nuclear deterrent
18 capabilities, such as SLCM-N, as well as supporting
19 modernization of our nuclear enterprise; and finally,
20 deploy credible capabilities to deter adversary biological
21 weapons use.

22 I want to acknowledge my family: my wife of 39 years
23 Dr. Ann Vrtis, an accomplished anesthesiologist, veteran,
24 and retired Air Force colonel, and, more importantly, the
25 mother of our two daughters, one of whom is serving in the



1 U.S. Army. My daughters are here today in spirit. I also
2 want to acknowledge the memory of my parents who survived
3 World War II's devastation when deterrence failed. My
4 mother, an American teenager, was held in a Nazi detention
5 camp. She met my father, a Czech national, in a forced
6 labor factory. After the war, my mother returned to
7 America, and my father escaped in 1949 and worked in
8 refugee camps until my mother could raise the money to
9 bring him to America. He became an American citizen in
10 1952.

11 In 1975, at the end of the Vietnam War and the height
12 of the Cold War, I entered the Air Force Academy intent on
13 becoming a flight surgeon. I earned the opportunity to
14 attend medical school because of an act of this body --
15 Congress -- and I attended the Uniform Services University
16 of Health Sciences. My medical career began with the first
17 1st Special Operations Wing at Hurlburt Field. In 1984,
18 the Wing was still grappling with the failed Desert One
19 mission and the implications of the Holloway Commission
20 report. The Cold War was still hot, and the Wing's focus
21 was how to fly, fight, and win against Russia and the
22 Soviet Union in a CBRN environment. The experience
23 influenced my pursuit of training in tropical diseases,
24 military preventive medicine, and a career of supporting
25 special operations, counterterrorism, and



1 counterproliferation.

2 In August 1990, I was assigned to an Air Force Special
3 Tactic Squadron. My first day was memorable as Saddam
4 invaded Kuwait. I was part of a small team ordered to the
5 Pentagon to support planning efforts to deter and defeat
6 any use of WMD by Iraq. From Bragg, I was assigned to
7 OSD's first Counterproliferation Policy Office, serving
8 both as a United Nations weapons inspector in Iraq and an
9 OSD representative to the Biological Weapons Convention in
10 Geneva. From the Pentagon, I served in CIA's
11 Counterproliferation Division, then taught future military
12 leaders WMD and Homeland Security policy at the National
13 War College until the 9/11 attacks. While serving on the
14 White House Homeland Security Council, I co-authored
15 President Bush's biodefense policy and deployed 4 times to
16 Iraq in support of the counter-WMD mission.

17 After retiring from military service in 2005, Senator
18 Burr hired me as his staff director of the Senate HELP
19 Bioterrorism subcommittee, and later the Deputy Staff
20 Director of the Senate Intelligence Committee. During
21 President Trump's first term, I had the privilege of being
22 HHS Assistant Secretary of Preparedness and Response, and I
23 led the medical responses to multiple hurricanes, did
24 adaptive planning for potential nuclear weapons used by
25 Korea, and led HHS' COVID-19 pandemic response, including



1 the development and deployment of vaccines during Operation
2 Warp Speed.

3 I accepted this nomination because I believe we're at
4 another critical time in our Nation's history. The
5 congressionally-mandated Strategic Posture Commission noted
6 for the first time we confront two peer nuclear adversaries
7 who are intent on replacing the U.S.-led international
8 order. The risk of simultaneous wars with multiple
9 adversaries, each possessing advanced conventional, space,
10 cyber, nuclear, and chem-bio weapons, challenges our
11 current deterrent posture, requiring new and potentially
12 different capabilities. The priorities of sustaining our
13 current triad, and accelerating deployment of future
14 capabilities, and ensuring effective command and control,
15 modernizing the nuclear enterprise, and creating a credible
16 deterrent against biologic agents are all urgent and vital
17 for America's future.

18 My parents' life story continues to inspire me, and if
19 confirmed, I shall work tirelessly in this area. I also
20 want to ensure that we can protect our homeland and the
21 Joint Force from WMD to preserve peace, freedom for our
22 children, and America's posterity. I look forward to your
23 questions.

24 [The prepared statement of Dr. Kadlec follows:]

25 [COMMITTEE INSERT]



1 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much, Dr. Kadlec.
2 Mr. Dahmer, you're now recognized.

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1 STATEMENT OF MR. AUSTIN J. DAHMER TO BE ASSISTANT
2 SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR STRATEGY, PLANS, AND CAPABILITIES

3 Mr. Dahmer: Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed,
4 distinguished members of the Committee on Armed Services,
5 good morning. It is an exceptional honor to appear before
6 you today as President Trump's nominee to be Assistant
7 Secretary of War for Strategy, Plans, and Forces. I'm
8 profoundly grateful for this opportunity to continue to
9 serve our Nation.

10 I want to express my deep and abiding gratitude to
11 President Trump for nominating me for this critical role
12 and to Secretary Hegseth, Deputy Secretary Feinberg, and
13 Under Secretary Colby for their trust and leadership. I'm
14 fully committed to implementing the President's agenda for
15 American defense strategy, focused on putting Americans'
16 interests first and realizing the President's vision of
17 peace through strength. To my family, both here today and
18 those watching from afar, your unwavering love and support
19 have been my constant foundation throughout my career.
20 Especially to my remarkable wife, Ellie, seated behind me,
21 herself a veteran of the United States Marine Corps, and to
22 my darling daughter, Sutton, thank you for your endless
23 understanding, encouragement, and love. I could not do
24 this without you, and I thank God for you every day.

25 Members of the committee, the role of Assistant



1 Secretary of War for Strategy, Plans, and Forces, to which
2 President Trump has nominated me, comes with genuinely
3 profound responsibilities, especially at such a critical
4 time for our national security. Peace and the protection
5 of American interests cannot be assumed. We must ensure
6 our military coheres under a sound defense strategy; that
7 it has the forces, plans, and posture to execute the
8 strategy; that our efforts to arm allies and partners
9 strengthen and do not detract from our ability to execute
10 the strategy; and that, ultimately, the Joint Force is able
11 to deter our rivals, and, if deterrence fails, give the
12 President the best possible military options to prevail in
13 conflict. My career has been dedicated to grappling with
14 these exact challenges.

15 President Trump appointed me to the Department on
16 January 20, and for the last 9 months, I have had the
17 opportunity to lead various parts of the policy
18 organization, ensuring that the Department's strategic
19 approach is aligned with the President's peace through
20 strength agenda. My tenure in Congress as a Senate
21 national security advisor provided me invaluable
22 experience. My work here for the Article I branch of
23 government has given me a deep appreciation for the vital
24 role that this body plays in our national defense. During
25 this time, I traveled extensively across the United States



1 and the Indo-Pacific, gaining firsthand insights into the
2 strategic and operational challenges facing our
3 warfighters, especially in the face of China's
4 extraordinary military buildup.

5 My other work prior to my time on Capitol Hill has
6 also provided me with experience relevant to this role. My
7 academic and research background underscores my commitment
8 to rigorous, fact-based thinking on the type of defense
9 strategy and force planning issues that is required in this
10 role. My work in the defense industry on a broad range of
11 strategic and military technical issues provides a range of
12 insights on which to draw. I also continue to leverage my
13 experience as a ground intelligence officer in the United
14 States Marine Corps and my time at the United States Naval
15 Academy for what they taught me as a leader, and for the
16 direct experience afforded me of operational planning,
17 military forces and capabilities, readiness and related
18 issues. This blend of strategic thinking and practical
19 experience is what I assess is needed to meet the moment in
20 this role and, if confirmed, I pledge to leverage every
21 ounce of my experience to ensure our strategy is sound and
22 our forces are optimized to execute it. I pledge to be a
23 faithful partner to this committee, actively supporting
24 your critical oversight responsibility, seeking your input
25 as we work together toward a common goal of securing our



1 Nation and protecting our freedoms.

2 Thank you for this tremendous honor, and I look
3 forward to your questions.

4 [The prepared statement of Mr. Dahmer follows:]

5 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much, Mr. Dahmer, and
2 I'm now back on the correct order of business, I believe.
3 At this point, I will ask our witnesses standard questions
4 that are proposed to all of our civilian nominees, and
5 it'll be fine if you simply answer "yes" or "no" at the
6 same time. We'll be able to record that.

7 Have you adhered to applicable laws and regulations
8 governing conflicts of interest?

9 [Chorus of yeses.]

10 Chairman Wicker: Have you assumed any duties or taken
11 any actions that would appear to presume the outcome of the
12 confirmation process?

13 [Chorus of noes.]

14 Chairman Wicker: Exercising our legislative and
15 oversight responsibilities makes it important that this
16 Committee, its subcommittees, and other appropriate
17 committees of Congress receive testimony, briefings,
18 reports, records, and other information from the executive
19 branch on a timely basis. Do you agree, if confirmed, to
20 appear and testify for this committee when requested?

21 [Chorus of yeses.]

22 Chairman Wicker: Do you agree to provide records,
23 documents, and electronic communications in a timely manner
24 when requested by this committee, its subcommittees, or
25 other appropriate committees of Congress, and to consult



1 with the requester regarding the basis for any good-faith
2 delay or denial in providing such records?

3 [Chorus of yeses.]

4 Chairman Wicker: Will you ensure that your staff
5 complies with deadlines established by this committee for
6 the production of reports, records, and other information,
7 including timely responding to hearing questions for the
8 record?

9 [Chorus of yeses.]

10 Chairman Wicker: There may be hearing questions for
11 the record even today. Will you cooperate in providing
12 witnesses and briefers in response to congressional
13 requests?

14 [Chorus of yeses.]

15 Chairman Wicker: Will those witnesses and briefers be
16 protected from reprisal for their testimony or briefings?

17 [Chorus of yeses.]

18 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much, and now we
19 begin a series of 5-minute rounds of questioning, and I
20 will begin with a question that I've asked repeatedly of
21 nominees with the Department of War.

22 Much of the funding in the defense reconciliation bill
23 is unspecific because of our Senate rules and will
24 technically be at the discretion of the Department, though
25 we have provided written recommendations for them. And



1 I'll ask you each individually on this one, a "yes" or "no"
2 question, and we'll begin with you, Mr. Dahmer. Do you
3 commit to follow the Congress' spending recommendations in
4 defense reconciliation unequivocally?

5 Mr. Dahmer: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

6 Chairman Wicker: Dr. Kadlec?

7 Dr. Kadlec: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

8 Chairman Wicker: Mr. Borders?

9 Colonel Borders: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

10 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much. Let me begin
11 then, Mr. Dahmer, with some issues that I raised in my
12 opening statement. And let me say I very much appreciated
13 the sentiments of your opening statement, particularly when
14 you pledged to be a faithful partner to this committee,
15 actively supporting critical oversight and seeking input as
16 we work together on a common goal. I appreciate that.
17 Let's talk about this instance that I mentioned when
18 President Trump was asked who in the administration had
19 ordered a pause on Ukraine aid. He stated, "I don't know.
20 Why don't you tell me?" At that time, you were serving as
21 a Senior Advisor to the Undersecretary for Policy. What
22 happened there, and what's your assessment of that decision
23 in light of the President's comments?

24 Mr. Dahmer: Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think,
25 as you correctly pointed out in your opening statement,



1 that President Trump has been very clear that the United
2 States is continuing to provide military aid and military
3 materiel to Ukraine. I'm not aware of any pause in that
4 aid. I'm aware of a lot of inaccurate reporting in the
5 public on this, but I'm not aware of any pause.

6 Chairman Wicker: So, you're saying that when the
7 President was asked who had ordered the pause, that you
8 questioned and you challenged that a pause had been ordered
9 at all.

10 Mr. Dahmer: That's right, Mr. Chairman. I'm not
11 aware of a pause in military aid to Ukraine.

12 Chairman Wicker: Well, can you give us some insight
13 as to how you think that information, inaccurate though you
14 say it was, was imparted to the public in such a general
15 way?

16 Mr. Dahmer: I read stories in the news almost on a
17 daily basis that have inaccurate reporting about the
18 government, about the Pentagon, so I can't say specifically
19 how that worked.

20 Chairman Wicker: So, a pause in Ukraine security
21 assistance in and around early July was never ordered.

22 Mr. Dahmer: Mr. Chairman -- excuse me -- I'm not
23 aware of any pause in aid to Ukraine.

24 Chairman Wicker: Okay. Well, I think we can all
25 agree, though, that there was a rather abrupt withdrawal of



1 a brigade from Romania. Did you consult with the Romanians
2 prior to the decision to withdraw the brigade from Europe?

3 Mr. Dahmer: Mr. Chairman, I understand that our
4 allies, including the Romanians, were consulted prior to
5 the order being given.

6 Chairman Wicker: And who did the consultation within
7 your office?

8 Mr. Dahmer: Mr. Chairman, I'm not aware of who
9 specifically discussed with the Romanians, but, if
10 confirmed, I would be very happy to brief you and the
11 Committee. I understand the Committee has been briefed, or
12 rather the Congress has been briefed, no less than 4 times
13 on this issue, to include 3 times prior to the public
14 announcement being made. There was a classified briefing
15 yesterday, to my understanding, but, again, if confirmed, I
16 would absolutely commit to ensuring that.

17 Chairman Wicker: We may ask for some clarification
18 then on the record, and there'll be another round. Is
19 there a backfill plan for those forces we're withdrawing?

20 Mr. Dahmer: Mr. Chairman, I would just point to,
21 again, as you did in your opening statement, President
22 Trump's historic success at the Hague Summit this summer.
23 I think the conclusion of this rotational deployment is a
24 success story in getting our allies --

25 Chairman Wicker: But just "yes" or "no." Perhaps



1 there will not be a backfill plan. I just wonder if there
2 is, to your knowledge, a backfill plan or if that is not in
3 the works.

4 Mr. Dahmer: Mr. Chairman, I certainly wouldn't want
5 to get ahead of the Secretary or the President's decision
6 space on future global force management decisions, so --

7 Chairman Wicker: Well, I certainly agree with that,
8 sir. I certainly agree with that, but I think it's fair to
9 ask, to your knowledge, are we planning further drawdowns?
10 To your knowledge.

11 Mr. Dahmer: Mr. Chairman, I'm not aware of specific
12 plans for future drawdowns, but absolutely, if confirmed, I
13 would commit to ensuring that you and the Committee are
14 fully briefed in a classified setting and at the
15 appropriate time.

16 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, and I've gone over my
17 time. Mr. Ranking Member.

18 Senator Reed: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Mr.
19 Dahmer, in your advanced policy questions, you responded
20 that Russia poses a threat to European security. However,
21 you did not directly answer the question if Russia poses a
22 threat to the United States. Do you believe that Russia
23 poses a threat to the United States?

24 Mr. Dahmer: Yes, Senator.

25 Senator Reed: Thank you very much, and if you do



1 believe that, would you also agree that it's harmful to our
2 national security interest to reduce U.S. forces in Europe?

3 Mr. Dahmer: Mr. Ranking Member, again, the
4 President's historic success at the Hague Summit in getting
5 our NATO allies and partners to increase their defense
6 spending and to field combat, credible military forces,
7 this is actually an example of the President and the
8 administration's success at burden sharing, including with
9 NATO. We were able to conclude this temporary rotational
10 deployment of this additional brigade combat team, which
11 began in February 2022. I would note in the Department's
12 statement at that time, this was always intended to be a
13 temporary deployment to deter Russia and aggression against
14 NATO and to reassure our NATO allies, and this is a success
15 story. We were able to conclude this rotational
16 deployment, restore readiness to the Army and to its
17 brigade combat team forces in this case, and strengthen
18 burden sharing with allies and partners precisely to be
19 able to deter the threat of Russian aggression against
20 NATO.

21 Senator Reed: So, you perceive that Russia has ceased
22 its aggression against NATO and Ukraine, even though
23 there's evidence of increased activity by the Russians in
24 Europe -- drone attacks, drone incursions -- and, in fact,
25 such an incursion happened in Romania. So, we succeeded in



1 our mission against the Russians?

2 Mr. Dahmer: Mr. Ranking Member, Russia has not
3 attacked NATO. I think, objectively, our deterrence
4 posture vis-a-vis Russia has been successful. Ukraine is
5 obviously not a part of NATO, so the ongoing war, which the
6 President is focused on peace and bringing a conclusion to
7 that war, continues to stand. I would note that there is a
8 high degree of alignment between both civilian and military
9 leaders on the assessment and on further decision for
10 conclusion of this rotational deployment.

11 Senator Reed: In your responses to the advanced
12 policy questions, you indicated, "Regarding Europe, our
13 goal is to empower our NATO allies to be capable of taking
14 primary responsibility and prioritizing security assistance
15 packages designed to promote burden sharing in the region,
16 to include defending against Russia." In light of this
17 view, which recognizes the need to continue to support our
18 allies with military assistance, do you agree that zeroing
19 out the security cooperation funding for U.S. European
20 Command, which was in the administration's fiscal year 2026
21 budget, makes sense?

22 Mr. Dahmer: Mr. Ranking Member, NATO, again, through
23 President Trump's historic credit at the Hague Summit in
24 securing 5-percent spending on their own defense,
25 empowering them to lead in their own defense. The NATO



1 allies are rich countries, and they need to step up and
2 spend in their own defense. We've been fully transparent
3 with our NATO allies, from the President on down, that the
4 President and this administration expect them to step up in
5 their own defense, and we've given them opportunities to
6 transition these programs henceforward.

7 Senator Reed: Well, isn't there a partnership aspect
8 of NATO that all members have to contribute to the common
9 effort, and this budget the President has submitted
10 basically says we're not going to put any money into the
11 significant aspects of NATO cooperation? I think your
12 answer is probably going to be similar to your previous
13 answers, so I'll just leave that as a rhetorical question.

14 Dr. Kadlec, my time is running out. I want to commend
15 you because I think biological warfare has been
16 underestimated as a potential going forward, and your
17 experience with biotechnology and biological enterprises is
18 significant, but the question of nuclear right now is so up
19 in the air. For example, last week, President Trump said,
20 "Because of other countries testing programs, I have
21 instructed the Department of War," otherwise known as the
22 Department of Defense, "to start testing our nuclear
23 weapons on an equal basis. That process will begin
24 immediately." Then on Sunday, last Sunday, Secretary of
25 Energy Wright said, "I think the tests we're talking about



1 right now are systems test. These are not nuclear
2 explosions. These are what we call non-critical
3 explosions." However, on "60 Minutes" later in the day,
4 the President was asked, "Are you saying that after more
5 than 30 years, the United States going to start detonating
6 new weapons for testing," in response, the President said,
7 "I'm saying that we're going to test nuclear weapons like
8 other countries do, yes." Where are we?

9 [Laughter.]

10 Dr. Kadlec: Sir, to your point, I followed the same
11 conversations, and I think, if confirmed, I'll be able to
12 understand more clearly what the nature of the direction is
13 to the Department. I have not been privy to any
14 communication from the President --

15 Senator Reed: Stepping back, and just a final point,
16 Mr. Chairman, do you think resuming nuclear testing would
17 be destabilizing?

18 Dr. Kadlec: Sir, one thing that I did identify in
19 just the short period of time from these statements is that
20 there's been a pattern, what appears, of concerns going
21 back to 2019 about the adherence and compliance of both
22 Russia and China with the Threshold Test Ban Treaty, I
23 would guess, negotiated during the Cold War --

24 Senator Reed: Mm-hmm.

25 Dr. Kadlec: -- entered to in force in 1990, which



1 limits explosive testing below 150 kilotons. The issue
2 here is whether there's evidence, and, again, I'm not privy
3 to classified information, because it's highlighted in
4 these compliance reports in 2020, 2021, and 2025 that there
5 may be information that would suggest otherwise. So, I
6 would be speculating,, and don't think that'd be helpful to
7 anybody, but I do commit to the idea that this is a very
8 important issue. It's a very important issue to the idea
9 of what we're facing with our adversaries because some of
10 these kinds of weapons would be called regional kind of
11 weaponry, things that would be used on a tactical or
12 operational basis.

13 Senator Reed: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your
14 indulgence. Thank you very much.

15 Chairman Wicker: Senator Fischer.

16 Senator Fischer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome to
17 all of you for being nominated, and congratulations to you
18 and your family for that.

19 Dr. Kadlec, nuclear weapons are the foundation of our
20 national defense, and every Secretary, including Secretary
21 Hegseth, along with senior leaders at the Department, have
22 consistently stated that nuclear deterrence is the
23 Department's highest priority mission. Yet for too long,
24 there has been a lack of clear leadership at the Office of
25 the Secretary level for the nuclear enterprise. And that's



1 why last year in the NDAA, we created this new position,
2 replacing an old office with one that has a clear mission
3 and greater authorities to effectively oversee both nuclear
4 weapons and our nuclear policy. If confirmed, you will be
5 the central advisor to the Department on all matters
6 relating to our nuclear forces. When we met earlier this
7 year, I appreciated our conversation about the Strategic
8 Posture Commission's final report and those 81
9 recommendations that came out of it. What were your
10 impressions of that report, briefly, sir?

11 Dr. Kadlec: Ma'am, I would just give you two high-
12 level ones: the urgency of the problem and the existential
13 nature of the problem that are posed by two pure nuclear
14 powers that are aligned against us, including potentially
15 North Korea, that are intent to, basically, subvert the
16 U.S.-led international order.

17 Senator Fischer: Managing that transition from our
18 legacy systems to the new delivery systems that we are
19 online with, that's going to be a key challenge for you, if
20 you are confirmed, and for the Department. In that
21 position, how will you ensure that STRATCOM Commander is
22 always able to execute the U.S. nuclear deterrence mission?

23 Dr. Kadlec: Well, thank you very much, Senator
24 Fischer, for that because I do believe that's a very
25 important kind of connection and authority and



1 responsibility of my potential office, if I'm confirmed
2 into that position. And clearly, it's going to be
3 requiring constant communication, constant in-depth kind of
4 exchanges of information that would give us good
5 understanding of what the threat is and what the
6 capabilities as he sees as a strategic commander that are
7 necessary to keep our deterrence both stable and effective,
8 and I --

9 Senator Fischer: And what's your assessment then of
10 the current state of our nuclear forces and our
11 modernization program?

12 Dr. Kadlec: I think I would coin a phrase from the
13 chairman, which is "too old, too few." I really do think
14 that we need to accelerate the modernization of our
15 programs or programs of record, but as it's identified in
16 the Strategic Posture Review, that's identified as
17 necessary but not sufficient, and so there are other
18 elements of the nuclear programs that we have to address.
19 Long-range strike options is obviously one of them and
20 making sure that gets certified and implemented quickly.
21 So, is SLCM-N, and there may be other capabilities that may
22 be identified by the Strategic Commander, STRATCOM, to
23 basically fill the gaps that we may have informed by our
24 theater combatant commanders.

25 Senator Fischer: NC3 is extremely important as well.



1 Senator King and I call it the fourth leg of the triad. I
2 guess what do you view your position to be in advocating
3 for the modernization and, really, the development of NC3
4 to make sure that it is ready and capable when the time
5 comes?

6 Dr. Kadlec: Well, Senator Fischer, I think the key
7 thing there is preserving the decision space for the
8 President and ensuring that the communications and the
9 system of detection, decision-making, and direction are all
10 resilient to the current threat that we're facing and
11 future threats that we may face through cyber, through
12 space, and through EMS challenges, and I think all those
13 things have to be factored in. To your point, I agree with
14 you and Senator King concerning the importance of this,
15 particularly during the transition from, if you will,
16 legacy to new systems, analog to digital that will have to
17 be made.

18 Senator Fischer: If confirmed, one of your most
19 important responsibilities will be to serve as the Staff
20 Director of the Nuclear Weapons Council, and that's where
21 you are going to be overseeing the coordination between the
22 Department and NNSA with respect to those nuclear programs.
23 I hope that you will take that responsibility seriously,
24 and I may have some questions for you for the record on
25 that. Thank you.



1 Dr. Kadlec: Thank you, Senator. I do take it
2 seriously and that it is an important role and function.
3 Thank you.

4 Senator Fischer: Thank you, sir.

5 [The information referred to follows:]

6 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Fischer. Senator
2 Hirono.

3 Senator Hirono: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman,
4 and welcome to each of you. I'll start with two
5 foundational questions that I ask all nominees relevant to
6 fitness to serve. We'll start with Mr. Dahmer and go down
7 the line. Since you became a legal adult, have you ever
8 made unwanted requests for sexual favors or committed any
9 verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature?

10 Mr. Dahmer: No, Senator.

11 Dr. Kadlec: No, Senator.

12 Colonel Borders: No, Senator.

13 Senator Hirono: Have you ever faced discipline or
14 entered into a settlement relating to this kind of conduct?

15 Mr. Dahmer: No, Senator.

16 Dr. Kadlec: No, Senator.

17 Colonel Borders: No, Senator.

18 Senator Hirono: Mr. Borders, several of the critical
19 service training areas across Hawaii are leased from the
20 State and are set to expire in the next few years, and
21 these leased lands are vital to ensuring training and
22 readiness in the Pacific. However, the lands in question
23 also hold cultural significance to the native Hawaiian
24 community. So, will you commit to continue engaging in
25 good faith with State officials and the community to ensure



1 Air Force land retention and leases are renegotiated in a
2 way that is fair to the State, the people of Hawaii, and
3 the military?

4 Colonel Borders: Senator, I was fortunate enough to
5 spend 3 years of my career in Hawaii at INODPACOM, and I
6 have an appreciation for the deep connection that Hawaiians
7 have with the land. If confirmed, you have my commitment
8 that that will absolutely go into any decision or
9 discussion that we have.

10 Senator Hirono: Thank you. I'm glad that you
11 understand the sensitivities and the importance of making
12 sure that the community input is there. For Mr. Dahmer,
13 since the administration has identified China as a pacing
14 threat to U.S. national security and the Indo-Pacific as
15 the priority theater, I am concerned about reports that
16 indicate that perhaps the draft National Defense Strategy
17 deprioritizes the pacing challenges posed by China. And if
18 confirmed, you will be responsible for implementing this
19 change through critical DOD documents, like the Defense
20 Planning Guidance. What risk would deprioritizing China in
21 the Indo-Pacific pose to U.S. national interest?

22 Mr. Dahmer: Well, Senator, thank you for the
23 opportunity to address this. I think Secretary Hegseth was
24 clear as recently as last week that, defending our own
25 homeland is the number one priority of the Department, and



1 I would note the previous two National Defense Strategies
2 under both a Republican and a Democratic administration,
3 prioritized defending our own homeland over all other
4 duties of the Department and the Joint Force, that China
5 remains the pacing threat of the Department, and that this
6 strategy and the focus of the Department actually increases
7 the focus on China as our principal rival and as our pacing
8 threat, again, as Secretary Hegseth noted last week. I
9 wouldn't want to get ahead of the President and Secretary
10 and going too much into a draft National Defense Strategy,
11 but if confirmed, I would look forward to the opportunity
12 to brief you and the committee in the appropriate setting.

13 Senator Hirono: In acknowledging China as a
14 continuing pacing threat, it is important that we continue
15 to focus various resources. Our resources on the Indo-
16 Pacific, as Admiral Paparo, our INDOPACOM commander has
17 said, the homeland is in the Pacific. National security
18 very much should be focused on the Pacific.

19 Mr. Borders, the joint basing contract between the
20 Navy and Air Force -- if you can call it a contract -- at
21 Pearl Harbor-Hickam has led to extensive infrastructure
22 restoration and military construction delays in the Hickam
23 Airfield, and I visited the airfield and looked at the
24 runways. And so, the delays have impacted the military's
25 operational readiness in the Indo-Pacific. If confirmed,



1 what efforts will you take to improve coordination with the
2 Navy to address the extensive challenges, particularly at
3 Hickam Airfield? Mr. Borders.

4 Colonel Borders: Senator, for me, it is extremely
5 important that our installations across CONUS/OCNUS are
6 resilient installations capable of projecting power. As I
7 understand this issue, this really is going to require a
8 lot of close coordination with the Navy, and should I be
9 confirmed, that will be a priority for me to make sure that
10 this installation, in particular, and this relationship
11 with the Navy is solid and moving forward.

12 Senator Hirono: And then we need to fix the
13 underinvestment at Hickam, and especially when you see the
14 runways that are not even ready for the kind of weight that
15 a fully-stocked plane will have. So, even the Navy has
16 acknowledged that we need to fix those runways. Thank you,
17 Mr. Chairman.

18 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much, Senator Hirono.
19 Senator Rounds.

20 Senator Rounds: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, let
21 me just say to all of you, thank you for your service to
22 our country. Dr. Kadlec, I don't have any questions for
23 you. After our meetings and the amount of work that you've
24 done in the past, I have confidence that you are the right
25 person for this job, and I thank you for offering to serve



1 our country once again. Thank you.

2 Dr. Kadlec: Thank you, Senator.

3 Senator Rounds: Mr. Borders, I appreciated the
4 opportunity to visit with you in my office, and I most
5 certainly have appreciated the approach that you've taken
6 with regard to your service. I've got a couple questions,
7 specifically for the record, with regard to the Ellsworth
8 Air Force Base, and I'd like to just work them through with
9 you quickly. Ellsworth Air Force Base is preparing to host
10 the first operational B-21 Raider Squadron, also the first
11 training squadron as well, which brings significant
12 infrastructure demands, from specialized maintenance to
13 weapons generation facilities. If confirmed, will you work
14 with this committee to make certain that the infrastructure
15 on Ellsworth Air Force base is appropriate for a weapons
16 system as critical as the B-21, whether it is protection
17 from the weather or evolving threats like drones?

18 Colonel Borders: Senator, again, thank you for your
19 time in your office. If confirmed, I will absolutely look
20 forward to being transparent and working with this
21 committee to make sure we have the right infrastructure at
22 our installations.

23 Senator Rounds: Thank you. Also, with regard to the
24 Douglas School District, which is right there at Ellsworth
25 Air Force Base, Mr. Borders, we discussed the importance of



1 making sure that our bomber community and their families
2 are taken care of, especially as the B-21 mission comes
3 online and sees significant growth over a very short period
4 of time. If confirmed, will you work with this committee
5 to make certain that the Douglas School District is
6 resourced appropriately?

7 Colonel Borders: Yes, Senator. If confirmed, I look
8 forward to that.

9 Senator Rounds: Thank you. Mr. Dahmer, we did not
10 have the opportunity to visit, through no fault of yours.
11 We just simply weren't able to connect. The Trump
12 administration has called for prioritization of the China
13 threat with broad support from Congress. That means
14 increased attention and resources for INDOPACOM. Senior
15 Department officials, including your current boss, have
16 agreed with the assessment that, in the event the U.S. and
17 China engage in hostilities, adversaries like Russia and
18 Iran will seek to press their own advantage in Europe, the
19 Middle East, and elsewhere. Mr. Dahmer, do you agree with
20 the assessment that in the event the U.S. is engaged in
21 hostilities with China, it increases the likelihood that
22 our other adversaries in other theaters will initiate
23 hostilities against us?

24 Mr. Dahmer: Senator, thank you for this really
25 centrally-important question. Absolutely, number one, I



1 agree with that assessment, and I think this just
2 underscores really the central problem that our Nation and
3 the Department and the Joint Force face, the scope and
4 scale of the threats that you just eloquently enumerated --
5 China, Russia, Iran, North Korea, Islamic terrorists,
6 narcoterrorists, et cetera -- and we only have so many
7 military and other resources with which to address them. I
8 think the overall approach, I think as the President and
9 the Secretary have enumerated, is, one, obviously to defend
10 our own homeland above all else, and to, number two, deter
11 China in the Indo-Pacific as, in many ways, an
12 unprecedented threat, and to significantly increase our
13 efforts at burden sharing with our allies and partners
14 precisely to address that very real threat of simultaneity
15 as you just laid out.

16 Senator Rounds: Well, let continue on then. Do you
17 agree that Operation Midnight Hammer, significantly, it
18 decreased the Iranian threat in the near term and weakened
19 the China-led axis?

20 Mr. Dahmer: Senator, absolutely, Operation Midnight
21 Hammer, and as the President has been clear, his objective
22 is peace, but through strength. And I think Operation
23 Midnight Hammer is a signal achievement of the Joint Force
24 with our Israeli allies to be able to execute that
25 operation and I think really just encapsulates this



1 administration's approach, as I understand it to be --

2 [Cross talking.]

3 Senator Rounds: Well, let me continue on or I'm going
4 to run out of time. Do you agree that Operation Rough
5 Rider significantly decreased the Houthi threat in the near
6 term and weakened the China-led axis?

7 Mr. Dahmer: Senator, I think Operation Rough Rider,
8 again, highlights the President's signal ability to be
9 willing to employ decisive military force when necessary to
10 achieve peace.

11 Senator Rounds: Did it weaken the China-led axis?

12 Mr. Dahmer: Senator, I have not seen any specific
13 indications of --

14 Senator Rounds: Well, then let me go on one other
15 thing because I'm going to run out of time here. Do you
16 think that our allies acting alone without U.S. support
17 could've achieved any one of those operations?

18 Mr. Dahmer: Senator --

19 Senator Rounds: I think this is the key.

20 Mr. Dahmer: Excuse me, Senator?

21 Senator Rounds: This is the key.

22 Mr. Dahmer: Absolutely.

23 Senator Rounds: Could any one of our allies have done
24 any one of those items without our support?

25 Mr. Dahmer: I don't think so, Senator, certainly not



1 Operation Midnight Hammer. The specific capabilities that
2 the U.S. Joint Force provided to that operation are unique,
3 in my understanding.

4 Senator Rounds: Critical that we participate, or
5 those items would not have been done.

6 Mr. Dahmer: Yes, Senator.

7 Senator Rounds: Thank you.

8 Mr. Dahmer: Thank you, Senator.

9 Senator Rounds: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

10 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much, Senator.
11 Senator Warren.

12 Senator Warren: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So, right
13 now, we have a fragile ceasefire in Gaza, and we need to
14 make it last. Following the October 7 terrorist attack,
15 Prime Minister Netanyahu initiated a war that has cost
16 nearly 70,000 Palestinians their lives. About a third of
17 them were women and children. We need the ceasefire to put
18 us on a path to peace. Now, one of the tenets of the
19 ceasefire is that all parties must provide "full aid into
20 Gaza" "without interference." This is powerfully
21 important. For months, the Israeli Government had a near
22 total blockade of food, medicine, and other critical
23 humanitarian supplies, leading to half a million
24 Palestinians in Gaza suffering from the first declared
25 famine in the Middle East.



1 Now, Mr. Dahmer, you've been nominated to be the
2 Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy, Plans, and
3 Capabilities. If confirmed, you will advise the Secretary
4 on how to align DOD resources to our National Security
5 Strategy, including enforcing the conditions of the
6 ceasefire. Mr. Dahmer, do you support President Trump's
7 ceasefire, including ensuring full aid goes into Gaza
8 without interference?

9 Mr. Dahmer: Yes, Senator, I absolutely support the
10 President's --

11 Senator Warren: Good.

12 Mr. Dahmer: -- agenda, including his efforts at peace
13 in Gaza.

14 Senator Warren: Okay. I'm glad to hear you believe
15 that. Now, in the past you have tweeted that providing aid
16 to Palestinians makes U.S. "support to Israel look
17 performative." But on top of continuing to limit aid, the
18 U.S. Government chose to work with Gaza Humanitarian
19 Foundation, an inexperienced organization with no history
20 in food distribution. It was created by management
21 consultants and run by armed contractors. Previous
22 ceasefires saw more than 400 aid distribution sites, but
23 GHF limited distribution, instead of 400 to four, and on
24 GHF's watch, over 1,000 starving Palestinians, desperately
25 seeking food near GHF sites, were killed amid multiple



1 reports that the IDF has been opening fire on them. Mr.
2 Dahmer, do you think the GHF has a record of success in
3 delivering aid to Palestinians?

4 Mr. Dahmer: Well, Senator, I think President Trump
5 has been clear not only that he's focused on peace, but
6 that he expects both Israel and Hamas to abide by the
7 ceasefire.

8 Senator Warren: Okay. I appreciate that, but I asked
9 a very specific question. Do you think the GHF has a
10 record of success in delivering aid to Palestinians? It's
11 a "yes" or "no" question.

12 Mr. Dahmer: Senator, I don't have enough information
13 about the specific organization you cited.

14 Senator Warren: You don't have enough information?
15 Expertise is critical here, and I'm worried DOD's complete
16 indifference to the experience in delivering aid will only
17 cost more Palestinians their lives.

18 Now, on October 21, U.S. Central Command announced
19 they had opened a civil military coordination center where
20 U.S. military personnel will help facilitate assistance
21 from international counterparts into Gaza. The Netanyahu
22 government promptly selected one of the architects of the
23 GHF to be their representative at this U.S.-led center.
24 Press reporting indicates DOD is considering replicating
25 GHF's model, including limiting aid distribution to a



1 handful of sites. Mr. Dahmer, this is one of the most
2 complex areas to deliver aid. Would DOD be more successful
3 by partnering with experienced aid organizations that have
4 had some real success in delivering that aid?

5 Mr. Dahmer: Senator, thank you for the important
6 question. I would also note that U.S. Central Command
7 released just a few days ago video of Hamas actually
8 looting an aid truck as it was being delivered --

9 Senator Warren: Well, I appreciate that, but that is
10 not the question I asked. I have very limited time here.
11 The chairman is very strict about our time. I'm asking
12 you, this is a complex part of the world to deliver aid in.
13 Would DOD be more successful if they partner with somebody
14 who actually had had some success in delivering aid in this
15 region?

16 Mr. Dahmer: Senator, if confirmed, I would commit to
17 always working, not only across the Department on our
18 security cooperation efforts and humanitarian aid -

19 Senator Warren: Could I just have a "yes" or "no" to
20 my question?

21 Mr. Dahmer: Senator, I'm sorry. What is the
22 question?

23 Senator Warren: The question is, it's a complex area
24 to deliver aid. Would DOD be more successful if it
25 partnered with experienced aid organizations that have had



1 success in delivering aid in this region?

2 Mr. Dahmer: Senator, I would agree that a
3 demonstrated record of success would be a positive
4 indicator of future success.

5 Senator Warren: Well, I appreciate that. Half a
6 million people are starving in Gaza right now, and we need
7 to do everything we can to help. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
8 I apologize for going over.

9 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Warren.
10 Actually, I haven't done very well at being strict on the
11 time today. Let me just ask you this, Mr. Dahmer. Who
12 attacked who on October 7, 2 years ago?

13 Mr. Dahmer: Mr. Chairman, Hamas attacked Israel on
14 October 7, 2023.

15 Chairman Wicker: Thank you. Senator Scott.

16 Senator Scott: Thank you, Chairman. I want to thank
17 each of you for being here and your willingness to serve.
18 I've had the opportunity to travel to meet with a lot of
19 our allies, and NATO allies, Baltics, allies in the Indo-
20 Pacific are answering the President's call to step up their
21 share of defense spending, exceeding the 2-percent GDP
22 target. I think they trust the President's word, and they
23 want to continue to buy American-made defense products. I
24 think that's the good news. It's good news for our
25 economy. It's good news that they're willing to pay up for



1 their defense.

2 However, as I met with allies, almost to a tee,
3 they're all frustrated. They're blindsided when they find
4 out how difficult it is. They can't get approval to buy
5 American defense products. So, they want to buy them and
6 our manufacturers want to sell them, and they're having a
7 difficult time getting it done. So, you know, it seems to
8 me that somebody's dropping the ball, that there's a
9 process that's not working, and we've got to figure out how
10 to get this fixed. You know, next, we have instances where
11 our allies are being blindsided, they're being surprised
12 about, you know, a message. So, Mr. Dahmer, you said that
13 there's been three briefings with regard to what happened
14 with the drawdown for Romania. Can you tell me who did
15 them with the dates because I wasn't invited.

16 Mr. Dahmer: Senator, my understanding that the Office
17 of Legislative Affairs engaged the committee on at least
18 three occasions prior to the announcement being made
19 public, and I further understand that there was a
20 classified briefing yesterday. I'd have to get back to you
21 who the specific individuals were on those briefings and
22 notifications.

23 Senator Scott: Okay. Can you --

24 Chairman Wicker: Let me stop right here. That was
25 not done, to our knowledge. I just checked with staff from



1 the majority and the minority, and the information I have
2 is that that was not communicated. Where did you get that
3 information, Mr. Dahmer?

4 Mr. Dahmer: Mr. Chairman, obviously seems to be some
5 miscommunication. My information is from the Department's
6 Legislative Affairs arm, so happy to follow up with you and
7 your staff and connect the right individuals so we can get
8 the specific information about --

9 Chairman Wicker: Okay.

10 Mr. Dahmer: -- which notifications were made on which
11 specific dates to which individuals.

12 Chairman Wicker: Okay. I appreciate that. Are we
13 confusing notifications with a briefing? A brief
14 notification is one thing, but a briefing where information
15 is imparted and questions can be asked is quite something.
16 Check on that, will you do that, and get back to us on the
17 record.

18 Mr. Dahmer: Absolutely, Mr. Chairman.

19 Chairman Wicker: Okay. I do appreciate that.

20 [The information referred to follows:]

21 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 Chairman Wicker: And, Senator Scott, we stopped the
2 clock, and we resume it again for your questioning. Thank
3 you for letting me intervene.

4 Senator Scott: Thank you, Chairman. Yeah, I think
5 all of us would like to have more information on how the
6 decision was made. Did we tell Romania? Do you know? Do
7 you have any background? What did we say to them, and what
8 was the rationale?

9 Mr. Dahmer: Yes, Senator. My understanding is that
10 Romania was notified before the order was made public.

11 Senator Scott: Do you know how long before?

12 Mr. Dahmer: I don't know, Senator, but I would
13 happily follow up with you on the record for that.

14 Senator Scott: Okay.

15 [The information referred to follows:]

16 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 Senator Scott: So, you're nominated to advise the
2 Pentagon on Strategy, Plans, and Capabilities, so if our
3 allies can't buy American products, is that good for us,
4 and what can be done to make sure they can buy American
5 products?

6 Mr. Dahmer: Senator, thank you for this question.
7 The availability of American products to our allies and
8 partners is not something that I've dealt with under my
9 purview in the Pentagon, but I would certainly defer to the
10 economic and commercial policymakers in the administration
11 in that area.

12 Senator Scott: Do you think it's important that they
13 buy our products?

14 Mr. Dahmer: Absolutely, Senator. I think, as you
15 noted rightly, the President's focused on making sure our
16 defense and military sales, processes are streamlined. As
17 the President repeatedly highlights, the American defense
18 industry makes the best world-class capabilities and
19 weapons, and so I think it's absolutely central, as far as
20 the Department of War is concerned, in terms of ensuring
21 that our allies and partners are able to purchase American
22 arms, and that our defense industry is revitalized to the
23 point where we're able to supply both the U.S. Joint Force
24 as well as our allies and partners, and done so in a timely
25 and efficient manner.



1 Senator Scott: We've seen the Policy Office differ
2 from the President's policy twice with obviously Ukraine,
3 and the President reversed those decisions both times. Is
4 that good for us?

5 Mr. Dahmer: Senator, I'm not aware of any pause in
6 U.S. military aid to Ukraine. I think the President has
7 been clear that the U.S. is continuing to provide weapons
8 to Ukraine, and I'm not aware of any pause in that
9 provision.

10 Mr. Dahmer: You don't think the Policy Office ever
11 did that? I know what the President said, but did the
12 Policy Office say something different? Did they pause?

13 Mr. Dahmer: Senator, the Policy Office and, if
14 confirmed, I'm committed to implementing the President's
15 agenda. The Policy Office is not in the chain of command,
16 doesn't have the power or authority to order such a pause.
17 We provide policy advice, but, again, I'm not aware of any
18 pause in military aid to Ukraine.

19 Senator Scott: Okay. Thank you. I will have a
20 number of questions for the record on what the Policy
21 Office has been doing compared to the President's and
22 Secretary's directives and stated policy objectives. This
23 will include the confusion between what I've heard the
24 President and Secretary call for versus what the Policy
25 Office has been doing, from weapons sales and deliveries to



1 troop drawdowns, and not just regarding Europe, but also
2 regarding the Indo-Pacific. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

3 [The information referred to follows:]

4 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Scott. Senator
2 Kaine.

3 Senator Kaine: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Two of the
4 witnesses -- and this is really for the public -- two of
5 the witnesses, Dr. Kadlec and Mr. Dahmer -- have described
6 their positions as Assistant Secretary of War. The
7 Department is designated by congressional statute as the
8 Department of Defense, not the Department of War. Congress
9 has not authorized the name change. The current NDAA
10 before us does not authorize the name change. As far as
11 I'm concerned, there's no effort for Congress to make the
12 name change. The President did this by executive order but
13 acknowledged it would take a congressional authorization,
14 and it was an alternate name. I view it as a form of
15 political cosplay. Cosplay isn't my thing, but to each his
16 own.

17 Mr. Dahmer, I want to ask you a question. Who invaded
18 who in Ukraine in February 2022?

19 Mr. Dahmer: Senator, it's a military fact that Russia
20 invaded Ukraine in February 2022.

21 Senator Kaine: Thank you for being unequivocal about
22 that. We've had witnesses before us in the past who have
23 not been so unequivocal, and I appreciate that. Mr.
24 Dahmer, I have posed a series of questions to the
25 administration about ongoing military actions and publicly



1 discussed potentially imminent military actions that I've
2 not received answers for, and I want to ask you about any
3 involvement you've had, not the content, but just whether
4 you were involved. So, have you had involvement in
5 discussions about military strikes of boats in the
6 Caribbean and Pacific near South America?

7 Mr. Dahmer: Yes, Senator.

8 Senator Kaine: And what role have you or your unit in
9 this Department with Bridge Colby played in those
10 discussions? Again, not to get into the content of the
11 discussions, but what role do you play in those
12 discussions?

13 Mr. Dahmer: Senator, my current role performing the
14 duties of the Deputy Under Secretary for Policy is to
15 oversee various elements of the policy organization and to
16 provide my policy advice. If confirmed, I would pledge to
17 continue.

18 Senator Kaine: Actually, I'm not going to ask about
19 the next step, but I just want to find out where decisions
20 are being made. So, you've been involved in discussions
21 about this. Have you been involved in discussions about
22 the legal rationale for those strikes?

23 Mr. Dahmer: I have heard some of the discussions on
24 that --

25 Senator Kaine: Okay.



1 Mr. Dahmer: -- but certainly the Office of General
2 Counsel is obviously the lead for the legal.

3 Senator Kaine: Great. Thank you. We have not been
4 provided the list that has been publicly disclosed. The
5 fact of the list has been disclosed, but we have not been
6 provided the identities of organizations on that list who
7 are subject to presidential targeting. Have you been
8 involved in discussion about the composition of that list?

9 Mr. Dahmer: No, Senator, I have not.

10 Senator Kaine: Okay. Have you been involved in
11 discussion about particular strikes and whether there's
12 sufficient evidence to warrant a strike in a particular
13 case?

14 Mr. Dahmer: Yes, Senator.

15 Senator Kaine: Okay. One of the questions that I've
16 asked is why strike rather than interdict. The U.S. is
17 still interdicting narcotrafficking ships in many parts of
18 the world. Have you been involved in discussions about the
19 policy of when to strike versus when to interdict?

20 Mr. Dahmer: No, Senator.

21 Senator Kaine: The President has publicly disclosed
22 that he's authorized covert operations in Venezuela. Have
23 you been involved in any discussions about covert military
24 operations in Venezuela?

25 Mr. Dahmer: No, Senator.



1 Senator Kaine: The President has indicated that he's
2 contemplating land invasion of Venezuela. Have you been
3 involved in any discussion about potential land invasion of
4 Venezuela? And again, I'm not asking about the content of
5 such discussions. I'm just trying to find out where
6 discussions and decisions are being made.

7 Mr. Dahmer: Senator, our job at the Department of War
8 is to plan for a range of contingencies. In part, my role,
9 if confirmed, would be to review the Department's war plans
10 and --

11 [Cross talking.]

12 Senator Kaine: But in the past, before you came in
13 today, have you been involved in discussions about
14 potential land operations in Venezuela?

15 Chairman Wicker: Go ahead and finish your sentence,
16 and then answer the senator's question.

17 Mr. Dahmer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, if
18 confirmed, part of my role would be to assist the Under
19 Secretary in his statutory Title 10 role of reviewing war
20 plans, campaign, operational contingency plans. As the
21 Secretary has been clear, the Department plans for all
22 ranges of contingencies, and that's part of our central
23 role of the Department.

24 Senator Kaine: Could you please answer my answer now?

25 Mr. Dahmer: Senator, I would be happy to brief you in



1 a classified setting on this --

2 Senator Kaine: Again, I'm not going to ask what, but
3 have you been involved in such discussions? I'm not asking
4 you what the discussions were. Have you been involved?

5 Mr. Dahmer: Senator, I've been involved in a range of
6 discussions with respect to --

7 Senator Kaine: Concerning land operations in
8 Venezuela?

9 Mr. Dahmer: Senator, I would be happy to brief you in
10 a classified setting.

11 Senator Kaine: Let me ask one last question. Have
12 you been involved in any discussions about use of U.S.
13 military within or against Nigeria?

14 Mr. Dahmer: Senator, I would point to the President's
15 public comments and the Department and the Joint Force
16 plans for a range of contingency operations.

17 Senator Kaine: You've answered a number of my
18 questions about whether or not you've been involved, but
19 with respect to military operations in Venezuela or
20 military operations in Nigeria, you've refused to even say
21 whether you've been involved in such discussions. I find
22 that to be of significance. Can I just ask again about
23 Nigeria? Have you been involved in discussions about
24 military operations within Nigeria?

25 Mr. Dahmer: Senator, I'm aware of the President's



1 public comments. The Department plans for a range of
2 contingencies, and I'll be happy to brief you in a
3 classified setting.

4 Senator Kaine: I yield back. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

5 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much. Senator Budd.

6 Senator Budd: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and, again,
7 congratulations to you all, and thank you for your
8 willingness to serve.

9 Mr. Dahmer, what's your assessment of how the
10 Department is doing in restoring deterrence and preventing
11 China from forcibly seizing Taiwan?

12 Mr. Dahmer: Senator, thank you for the opportunity to
13 address this, and certainly my time as a Senate national
14 security advisor, and including our trip to Guam together
15 and the Northern Marianas, certainly drove home the central
16 salience of the China challenge and the really critical
17 need to restore deterrence. I think the President's very
18 historic, along with the Secretary, trip to Asia and
19 meeting with Xi has really underscored the President's
20 approach of peace through strength. And while we're
21 centrally focused on the military aspect of peace through
22 strength at the Department, and ensuring that our defense
23 strategy and our military forces are able to deter China in
24 the Western Pacific, the President's diplomatic efforts, to
25 include with Xi himself, are making clear that we can have



1 a modus vivendi with China. We can have peace through our
2 two countries, but that's peace through strength from the
3 American side to ensure that American interests are always
4 advanced.

5 Senator Budd: Thanks for that answer, and as a
6 follow-up to that, and this gets at the question Senator
7 Scott was talking about in regards to foreign military
8 sales. You know, President Trump, he signed a deal to sell
9 100 Harpoon coastal defense systems at the end of his first
10 administration, but only a few of those have arrived in
11 Taiwan. So, what do you want to do to ensure the delivery
12 of these defense articles to Taiwan?

13 Mr. Dahmer: Yes, Senator, and that's something that,
14 again, in my time in the Senate, those missiles are
15 manufactured in St. Charles, Missouri, and I've been able
16 to see that production line and the challenges, I think,
17 that are emblematic of our defense industrial base more
18 broadly. I think on this specific case, the Department is
19 working very urgently and expeditiously to ensure that
20 Taiwan has the capabilities that it needs to defend itself.

21 Senator Budd: Mm-hmm.

22 Mr. Dahmer: And I would be very happy to brief you in
23 a classified setting on the specific measures --

24 Senator Budd: Thanks for that.

25 Mr. Dahmer: -- that the Department is taking on the



1 Harpoons.

2 Senator Budd: I look forward to that. You know, in
3 your advanced policy questions, you mentioned the need to
4 increase security cooperation with the Philippines. So, if
5 confirmed, Mr. Dahmer, how would you achieve this, and what
6 role do you see them playing in a Taiwan contingency?

7 Mr. Dahmer: Well, Senator, Philippines is obviously a
8 Mutual Defense Treaty ally of the United States, has a very
9 important geographic position as well along the First
10 Island Chain. I think the advances that the Department has
11 made in our force posture and presence in the Philippines
12 is absolutely critical to our overall deterrence posture
13 and our strategy in the Western Pacific, and I think
14 continuing to advance that. If confirmed, the posture
15 angle would be a central focus for me, and also ensuring
16 that our plans appropriately incorporate the abilities of
17 our allies and partners, especially our critical ones like
18 the Philippines.

19 Senator Budd: Thank you. Now, I know our National
20 Defense Strategy is not yet public, but tell me how you
21 think the Special Operations Forces can be a force
22 multiplier in the Western Pacific, and how do you envision
23 the employment of SOF across the continuum.

24 Mr. Dahmer: Special Operations Forces, in my
25 assessment, provide very unique capabilities in support of



1 the Joint Force overall, and that's true in great power
2 competition, great power deterrence, and potential
3 conflict, as well as their enduring role in ensuring that
4 the homeland is defended through counterterrorism, et
5 cetera. The unique capabilities, the unique placement and
6 access that Special Operations Forces afford us, to include
7 prior to a potential outbreak of high-end conflict, again,
8 provide very, very unique capabilities to the Joint Force.
9 And if confirmed, I would ensure that Special Operations
10 Forces, including with my colleague in the Special
11 Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict Office, would be
12 integrated, not only in our overall strategy, but in all
13 the aspects of our plans and posture.

14 Senator Budd: Thank you very much. Mr. Borders, I
15 have seen the state of the old childcare center on Seymour
16 Johnson Air Force Base. I know that's a special base to
17 our chairman as he has spent time and years there, but if
18 confirmed, what recommendations would you give the
19 Secretary of the Air Force to improve childcare access to
20 our airmen and their families?

21 Colonel Borders: Senator, thank you for that
22 question. That's pretty near and dear to my heart. My
23 son, Zayne, who lasted about an hour and a half here --
24 [Laughter.]

25 Colonel Borders: -- we were on an extended wait list.



1 The problem with that is the stress that brings into our
2 Air Force and Guardian families. There are different
3 programs. We were able to get, say, into a couple of
4 programs that I would like to highlight if nominated or if
5 confirmed -- excuse me -- but also specifically start to
6 look at local partnerships. What can we utilize with our
7 local communities? Can we utilize enhanced-use leases or
8 intergovernmental service agreements to really kind of get
9 after this problem of childcare. It is a significant
10 problem, and, quite honestly, it takes away from the focus
11 of the mission when you're thinking about, you know, where
12 am I going to put my son for the day? How am I going to
13 provide adequate, safe care for him? So, if confirmed,
14 Senator, I look at addressing that issue head on.

15 Senator Budd: Thank you very much, and to your son,
16 Zayne, that was an impressive hour and a half, so.

17 Colonel Borders: Hour and a half, Senator.

18 Senator Budd: Thank you, Chairman.

19 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much, Senator Budd,
20 and, yes, I would like to underscore the importance of
21 childcare. We're doing very well with recruiting, but
22 that's a very important part on it, so thank you very much
23 for that. Senator Slotkin, you are now recognized.

24 Senator Slotkin: Thank you. Mr. Dahmer, just to
25 correct the record on Romania since there was bipartisan



1 concern about how to treat an ally, many of us spoke to the
2 ambassador here, many of us spoke with senior leadership in
3 Romania, and they will tell you that they found out from
4 the press that you had decided to pull out. They had
5 invested a lot of their own money. They were willing to
6 commit more of their own money to take over the cost
7 sharing, and, in general, I just don't think it's the right
8 way to treat allies. I've been in the job that you are now
9 sitting in, and the Romanians, if you call them, will let
10 you know that they got no notification other than in the
11 press.

12 Mr. Borders, thank you for our meeting in my office.
13 I appreciated you coming by. As the Assistant Secretary of
14 the Air Force for Energy, Installations, and Environment,
15 that's a big deal in a State like Michigan when it comes to
16 the cleanup of PFAS around, particularly our Air Force
17 installations. Michigan, 10 years ago, had the Flint water
18 crisis, an apocalyptic poisoning of an American city, and
19 since then, Michiganders have been extremely focused on
20 their water quality. It's a very bipartisan issue. This
21 isn't Democrat versus Republican. This is can my kids
22 drink their water, swim in the local lake, et cetera, et
23 cetera.

24 In September, there was a report that Department of
25 Defense is very quietly going to be delaying a cleanup plan



1 that the Department had agreed to. We had just gotten on a
2 better footing with Department officials after many years
3 of, frankly, the Department treating us like crap in these
4 communities. These are communities where people don't feel
5 safe drinking their well water, sending their kids to the
6 YMCA camp that's on top of a plume of PFAS, and where some
7 of the highest blood levels of PFAS exist in our citizens.
8 So, I know you're just coming into the job, but can I get
9 your commitment in front of this panel, but also
10 Michiganders, that you're going to do everything in your
11 power to keep to the original timeline just agreed to in
12 the last year and a half?

13 Colonel Borders: Senator, thank you for being so
14 gracious with your time in the office, and what I took away
15 from our meeting was how personally involved and how
16 personal an issue this is to you, and how hard you're
17 working to rectify it. If confirmed, you have my
18 commitment to continue to work with you and this committee
19 to make sure the positive glide slope that we spoke about,
20 we stay on that glide slope.

21 Senator Slotkin: Great. I appreciate that, and we
22 would love to welcome you in Michigan, talk to the people
23 on the ground in Oscoda and Grayling, around Selfridge, all
24 these other places. Just again, these are very pro-
25 military communities. Again, no one wants to be in a



1 tension, but if you have a home, you know, your whole life
2 is wrapped up in that home, you know that, and if you can't
3 swim in the lakes, can't drink the water, it feels like
4 something has been stolen from you. So, thank you for your
5 commitment, and we'd love to welcome you.

6 Similarly, you'll be in charge of environmental
7 assessments. The President made a big decision on
8 Selfridge Air Force Base, our big international guard base,
9 to replace our A-10 fighter mission with F-15 EX'es. We're
10 very excited about that. The President and I don't always
11 agree on things, but, man, we agree on bringing that
12 fighter mission in. But, of course, I know what it's like
13 to work at the Pentagon, and when the Commander in Chief
14 makes a decision that maybe the bureaucracy doesn't agree
15 with, they try to claw it back and sort of hold things up.

16 Right now, in order to move forward with spending
17 money on MilCon and, you know, building out runways, we
18 need an environmental study to be done at Selfridge Air
19 Force Base. My understanding is, it will be in your power
20 to expedite that, and right now it's being held up as
21 something that is holding back meeting the President's
22 timelines of bringing that fighter mission in. So, do I
23 have your commitment that, if confirmed, you're going to do
24 everything possible, not drag your feet, listen to the
25 Commander in Chief, and get that environmental study done



1 on an expedited basis?

2 Colonel Borders: Senator, I realize how important
3 this is to President Trump and the commitment that he made.
4 If confirmed, I am more than willing to work with you and
5 this committee to make sure that we keep on timeline, we
6 work with the committee to collapse certain areas or
7 expedite certain areas, absolutely. This is critically
8 important for the United States Air Force, and you have my
9 commitment to work with you on this issue.

10 Senator Slotkin: Great. Look forward to working with
11 you. Thanks for your time. Yield back.

12 Chairman Wicker: Thank you. Senator Kelly, you're
13 next.

14 Senator Kelly: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Dr. Kadlec,
15 congratulations on your nomination. Thank you for your
16 previous service and your willingness to continue to serve
17 our country. I'd like to take a minute to discuss
18 explosive nuclear testing. When it comes to nuclear
19 weapons, we want to make sure we have a stable geopolitical
20 environment. Could you tell me what strategic benefit we
21 would get by continuing or starting to conduct explosive
22 nuclear tests today? And if there is no benefit, or maybe
23 if you think there is, is there anything to be said about
24 destabilization by doing this?

25 Dr. Kadlec: Senator, I appreciate the question, and I



1 would just offer that, at this stage and in earlier
2 questioning, there was a question about what was meant by
3 the opportunity or issue of testing at this moment. I
4 would just highlight more from a background or context
5 perspective, there seems to be three reasons why you would
6 want to test. One are technical uncertainties about the
7 weapon, and, clearly, I think in the context of what has
8 happened recently with the President receiving the report
9 that certifies our stockpile is both safe, secure, and
10 effective, and reliable. That doesn't seem to be the
11 issue. The second one seems to be, broadly, whether or not
12 there is an issue around the qualifications or capabilities
13 of the nuclear enterprise in terms of how that would be
14 affected by resuming testing. And clearly, we're making
15 huge investments to recapitalize and modernize our
16 enterprise, both the human capital as well as the physical
17 capital, so that doesn't seem to be the issue. The third
18 one seems to be whether there's geopolitical context or
19 reasons to do that.

20 Earlier, I mentioned, not based on the President's
21 comments, but based on a review of compliance reports by
22 the State Department, going back to 2019, that would
23 suggest that there's been a concern about both Russia and
24 China's adherence or compliance with the threshold test ban
25 treaty and whether or not there's been any issues around



1 that. Obviously, that's a classified set of issues. It
2 was identified such in the State Department reports, and
3 that's something I have not been briefed on.

4 Senator Kelly: But we have conducted more than 1,000,
5 my understanding --

6 Dr. Kadlec: Thousand fifty-four.

7 Senator Kelly: Yeah, 1,042 nuclear tests.

8 Dr. Kadlec: Fifty-four.

9 Senator Kelly: The Chinese have done tests maybe 40
10 times. So, it does appear to clearly benefit them if our
11 resumption of nuclear testing was to push them to start
12 testing their weapons, they could build a more reliable
13 nuclear triad. So, that's my big concern, and it doesn't
14 seem the President has done any clarification on this, what
15 he meant. He's had the opportunity a number of times to
16 comment on it, and I don't know if that comes from he
17 doesn't want to admit that he misspoke, but this is a
18 destabilization issue between us, Russia, and the Chinese.
19 Would you agree?

20 Dr. Kadlec: Senator Kelly, there are a number of
21 things that are destabilizing about the current strategic
22 environment that have a little to do with testing and
23 everything to do with the modernization that Russia has
24 performed, development of asymmetric nuclear
25 capabilities --



1 Senator Kelly: Yeah, I agree with you.

2 Dr. Kadlec: -- with Poseidon --

3 Senator Kelly: Yep.

4 Dr. Kadlec: -- with the SS-29, with the nuclear
5 cruise missile, the Skyfall, and the same goes with China
6 with the DF-27, DF-26, DF-17, and a whole series of other
7 capabilities that they've gone on to develop, as well as
8 demonstrating a closer collaboration with Russia in its
9 strategic capabilities.

10 Senator Kelly: Yeah. You know, we have to come up
11 with a plan on how we counter those capabilities. You
12 know, how do we defend the homeland against those systems
13 that you did mention because it does bring some very unique
14 challenges. You combine that with hypersonic missile
15 systems on different trajectories and the challenge that we
16 would face from those. However, not being completely clear
17 on whether or not we are going to resume testing and
18 leaving that out there as an option of testing nuclear
19 warheads again. Russians probably don't have that much to
20 benefit from it based on the number of tests they've done,
21 and certainly we have the ability to model nuclear
22 detonations pretty well, so it doesn't seem like we need
23 the data. When we're in this strategic competition with
24 China right now, I think it's really important that we all
25 understand where we're coming from, and in the case of the



1 Chinese, they clearly benefit from this change in our
2 posture on testing.

3 Dr. Kadlec: Senator, if confirmed, I will certainly
4 commit to understanding what the presidential direction is
5 to the Department, subject to this issue.

6 Senator Kelly: I appreciate that. Thank you.

7 Chairman Wicker: Thank you for your answer to that,
8 Dr. Kadlec. Very important exchange. Senator Sullivan.

9 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
10 Gentlemen, congratulations. I want to begin with a little
11 story. So, I was a brand new senator here in 2015.
12 Secretary Ash Carter went through his confirmation process.
13 I met with him, had a good discussion, had hearings. I
14 supported him and then wanted to meet with him on
15 something, had a discussion, took me 3 months to get ahold
16 of the Secretary of Defense, okay? So, he was kind of
17 like, hey, I got through my Senate confirmation. I don't
18 need any advice from you guys. So, with the Trump
19 administration, the senior leadership of the Trump
20 administration, the President, the Secretary of Defense,
21 the Chief of Staff, all his energy guys, Interior, Energy,
22 EPA, at least from this Senator's perspective, when you
23 reach out to them, boom. I mean, the President of the
24 United States is incredibly responsive. Pete Hegseth is
25 incredibly responsive. You know who the hardest guy to get



1 ahold of in the Trump administration is? The Under
2 Secretary of Defense for Policy. I hope he's watching.
3 I'm meeting with him tomorrow. Maybe he'll cancel on me.
4 I don't know. He came to this committee and said, hey, I'm
5 going to work with the Congress. He hasn't on big issues,
6 okay?

7 So, here's what I need right off the bat from each one
8 of you. If you get confirmed, and we'll see if you do,
9 will each of you commit, if a chairman or ranking member
10 or, you know, minority member, or someone like me reaches
11 out to you, because I'm going to get your cellphone, and
12 says, hey, I want to discuss something with you, that you
13 will get back to us same day? Mr. Dahmer, can I get your
14 commitment on that? The guy you're going to go work for
15 has been really bad on this, worse than the administration.
16 The Secretary of War, boom, I reach out to him, and, look,
17 I don't abuse it. Certainly don't abuse it with the
18 President or his Chief of Staff, but, man, I can't even get
19 a response, and we're on your team.

20 Mr. Dahmer: Senator --

21 Senator Sullivan: Can I get your commitment same damn
22 day?

23 Mr. Dahmer: Yes, Senator.

24 Dr. Kadlec: Yes, Senator.

25 Colonel Borders: Yes, Senator.



1 Senator Sullivan: Okay. Now, let me give you a
2 little sense of why this is so frustrating. Look at these
3 two gentlemen, the Ranking Member and the Chairman. You
4 think they got a little experience on defense stuff? Do
5 you?

6 Mr. Dahmer: Yes, Senator.

7 Colonel Borders: Yes, Senator.

8 Mr. Dahmer: Do you guys?

9 Dr. Kadlec: Yes, Senator.

10 Colonel Borders: Yes, Senator.

11 Senator Sullivan: Okay. I've been on this committee
12 for 11 years, okay? We have a little experience. Like
13 you, Mr. Dahmer, I served in the Marine Corps. A little
14 experience, okay? So, it's frustrating when on the DOD
15 stuff, especially on the policy stuff, on big decisions,
16 we're not getting anything, and we're not. We're not.
17 Trust me, I've been trying, okay? So, let me give you an
18 example. Mr. Dahmer, I want a commitment from you on this
19 NDS. Where do you think the requirement for an NDS comes
20 from?

21 Mr. Dahmer: Senator, it's in Title 10.

22 Senator Sullivan: Yeah, it comes from us, right?
23 Okay. Don't you think it would be smart to maybe preview
24 it? Hey, Chairman Wicker, you got any thoughts on this?
25 You're real smart. You think it would be good to work that



1 a little bit with the Congress? Do you?

2 Mr. Dahmer: Yes, Senator. If confirmed, I absolutely
3 commit to ensuring that you and that the Committee are
4 fully briefed on National Defense Strategy.

5 Senator Sullivan: Because it's not happening right
6 now, and it's not only frustrating, it looks to us like
7 some of the big decisions coming out of the Policy shop at
8 the Pentagon are undermining what the President's trying to
9 get done. Now, we can debate that, but you're not helping
10 yourself. You're not. Can I get everybody's commitment on
11 the NDS? Same?

12 Dr. Kadlec: Yes.

13 Colonel Borders: Yes.

14 Senator Sullivan: Reaching out to us? Let us preview
15 it. Maybe we'll have some ideas on it. I mean, I'll give
16 you one. I raised it with the Secretary. Better have
17 something strong on the Arctic, right? There is a lot
18 going on in my neck of the woods. The Russians and Chinese
19 are up there all the damn time. We are on the front lines
20 of this new era of authoritarian aggression. President's
21 been great on it, but I hope the NDS is good on it. Can I
22 get all of your commitments on this?

23 Colonel Borders: Yes, Senator.

24 Dr. Kadlec: Yes, sir.

25 Mr. Dahmer: Senator, absolutely commit to ensuring



1 that you're fully briefed and --

2 Senator Sullivan: Before it's released.

3 Mr. Dahmer: Senator, I can't speak for the Secretary,
4 so --

5 Senator Sullivan: Okay. Well, I think it makes
6 sense. Let me turn to Mr. Borders. I appreciated our
7 meeting the other day. Thank you very much. I want to
8 follow up with you on a number of those issues. I think
9 you're very qualified, and I look forward to work with you.
10 Mr. Kadlec, I have one quick question for you. I saw this
11 movie over the weekend. It's a pretty good movie. It's
12 getting some criticism, but I think it's a pretty good
13 movie. It's called A House Full of Dynamite. Talks a lot
14 about Fort Greeley. As a matter of fact, Fort Greeley in
15 Alaska plays a very important role. So, I've been working
16 hand in glove with the President and his team, first term
17 and second term, on missile defense. Senator Cramer and I
18 are the two leads on the Golden Dome initiative. I worked
19 directly with Secretary Hegseth, with the President, with
20 his team, General Guetlein, and then during President
21 Trump's first term, I went to his big speech at the
22 Pentagon. We laid out all his principles for missile
23 defense. I was the only member of Congress there.

24 My bill, The Advancing America's Missile Defense Act,
25 passed during his first term, and one of the elements that



1 had, additional build-out of GBIs at Fort Greeley, okay?
2 If you watch the movie, you see how important GBIs at Fort
3 Greeley are. We expanded the silos at Fort Greeley to
4 include 60 GBIs, and we built a new set for 20. Right now,
5 those silos have been empty for 5 years. It makes zero
6 sense. So, can I get your commitment, if confirmed, in
7 terms of nuclear deterrence, having more GBIs at Fort
8 Greeley is kind of the essence of nuclear deterrence. And
9 the fact that we have 20 empty silos because the Pentagon
10 can't pull its hat out of its you know what is remarkable
11 to me. Can I get your commitment to look at that and speed
12 up the putting in of GBIs at Fort Greeley, for god's sakes?
13 It is ridiculous.

14 Dr. Kadlec: Senator, I do commit. However, I would
15 just point out that I don't have the responsibility for
16 this missile defense program. Obviously, General Guetlein
17 has that role, but I have a great interest in what he does
18 and the efficacy of that system, so --

19 Senator Sullivan: But it's all about nuclear
20 deterrence --

21 Dr. Kadlec: Correct.

22 Senator Sullivan: -- which you will have
23 responsibility over.

24 Dr. Kadlec: And, sir, like I said, I commit to you on
25 this.



1 Senator Sullivan: Great. Okay. Thank you. Thank
2 you, Mr. Chairman.

3 Chairman Wicker: Thank you. Before we move on, I'd
4 like to ask unanimous consent to add into the record,
5 Senator Sullivan, the document dated 8 October 2025:
6 Memorandum for Senior Pentagon Leadership; Commanders of
7 the Combatant Commands; Department of War Agency and DOW
8 Field Activity. Subject: "Retitling the Assistant
9 Secretaries of War." That's dated 8 October 2025. Mr.
10 Dahmer, do you know when that was delivered to Committee
11 staff?

12 Mr. Dahmer: Mr. Chairman, I'm not aware of that, but
13 I will find out.

14 Senator Sullivan: Okay. I'll tell you on the record,
15 it was delivered to us Sunday night, day before yesterday.
16 That's when we got this document dated 8 October 2025. And
17 attached to that, Senator Sullivan and members of the
18 committee, is OUSW policy, and along the bottom portion of
19 this paper, which, also, I ask unanimous consent, is it
20 lists as disestablished the senior coordinator for
21 Afghanistan, the Space and Missile Defense, the Force
22 Development and Emerging Capabilities, and the
23 disestablishment of the Arctic and Global Resilience. So,
24 I ask unanimous consent at this point to add these
25 documents into the record.



1 Without objection, that will be done.

2 [The information referred to follows:]

3 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 Chairman Wicker: Do you have further questions,
2 Senator Sullivan, in light of this information?

3 Senator Sullivan: Yeah. Mr. Dahmer, I'm curious.
4 So, we had a good meeting, Chairman, all the Ranking
5 Members on the Republican side about month ago, a little
6 under a month ago, with the Secretary, with the Deputy
7 Secretary. Really good. Two hours. Covered a lot. I
8 think the Secretary's doing a great job. But I raised this
9 Arctic issue, and, you know, some people are like, oh, it's
10 Senator Sullivan being parochial. Baloney, man. Come up
11 to my State. See it. By the way, I need a commitment from
12 all of you to come to Alaska. Can I get that commitment?

13 Mr. Dahmer: Yes, Senator. I've visited Alaska
14 before, and I would certainly welcome the opportunity to do
15 so again.

16 Dr. Kadlec: Yes, Senator.

17 Colonel Borders: Yes, Senator.

18 Senator Sullivan: So, again, I'll just ask, is there
19 a robust defense in Policy Section dealing with the North
20 Pacific and the Arctic and the NDS as drafted? Mr. Dahmer,
21 do you know?

22 Mr. Dahmer: Senator, I can't comment on the content
23 of the draft National Defense Strategy. I certainly don't
24 want to get ahead of the Secretary's decision space in that
25 area, but if confirmed, I absolutely will commit to



1 ensuring that you and the Committee are fully briefed in a
2 classified setting on the NDS.

3 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

4 Chairman Wicker: But what is the significance of
5 disestablishing this Arctic mission in the document that's
6 in the record?

7 Mr. Dahmer: Mr. Chairman, the Office of Arctic and
8 Global Resilience was merged with the Office of Western
9 Hemisphere Affairs, America's Security Affairs, and
10 certainly able to enhance the consideration of Arctic
11 Security Affairs in the context of Western Hemisphere and
12 the Americas more broadly, while realigning some of the
13 priorities of that office under the previous administration
14 that dealt with climate change and some of the priorities
15 of the previous administration.

16 Senator Sullivan: Look, Mr. Chairman, can I comment?

17 Chairman Wicker: Yes. We're out of order, but
18 proceed, and then Senator Rosen has been very patient.

19 Senator Sullivan: So, for 10 years I have been
20 critical of the other side of the aisle on their obsession
21 with climate change as they brought it into the Pentagon.
22 I think the Secretary of the Navy and the Biden
23 administration was obsessed and would come here and
24 testify, so I couldn't agree more on that, right? I
25 couldn't agree more. I talked to the Secretary about it.



1 Couldn't agree more, but come on up to my State, see what's
2 going on. We have joint Russian-Chinese strategic bomber
3 task forces in our ADIZ. We have joint Russian-Chinese
4 naval task forces in our EEZ. We have no infrastructure
5 like we need on ADAC to push back, right? This should be a
6 very high priority and want to make sure it is in the NDS.
7 And, you know, I think the Secretary, certainly in our last
8 meeting, I raised it with him. He's took note, but this is
9 real stuff, and if you watch these hearings, you know,
10 listen to the INDO-PACOM Commander, you listen to NORTHCOM
11 Commander, this isn't about climate change. It's about
12 hardcore national security of America on our Northern
13 frontier where we are being pressed by our adversaries
14 almost every day. That's what's going on in the Arctic,
15 and if you checked in with this Committee, you might learn
16 something.

17 Chairman Wicker: Thank you. Would you like to
18 respond, Mr. Dahmer? It's not necessary.

19 Mr. Dahmer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just
20 say I fully agree, Senator, on the critical importance over
21 the Arctic and of Alaska. When I was a Senate national
22 security advisor, I had the privilege of visiting Fort
23 Wainwright, but I would certainly welcome, and, if
24 confirmed, I would commit to visiting Alaska again and
25 seeing more of that State and its military installations.



1 And I certainly agree on the absolutely critical salience
2 of the geography there, most centrally, not only to
3 defending the homeland through missile defense, as you
4 stated earlier, but also to deterring China in the Western
5 Pacific and the very close proximity, relatively speaking,
6 especially of the Aleutian Island chain, for example, to
7 the First Island Chain.

8 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much. There'll
9 possibly be questions for the record on that, but I thank
10 the Committee for its indulgence, and I recognize Senator
11 Rosen.

12 Senator Rosen: Well, thank you, Chairman Wicker, and
13 I want to thank Senator Sullivan because, clearly, you're
14 very polite in your answers, but we see no sense of urgency
15 to relate to Congress. We see no sense of urgency to
16 connect with Congress pre-publication of the NDS, and we
17 are the Article I co-equal branch. You have people on this
18 committee with experience. You talk about Nevada. We're
19 going to talk about Nevada, the assets in Nevada, Alaska.
20 Every single State has assets that are critical to our
21 national security and safety, and to disregard and seeing
22 no sense of urgency. I appreciate your politeness, but
23 where is a sense of urgency, and where is the sense that
24 you really will connect with us? I agree with the Chairman
25 on that one, and it is shameful that a letter came to us,



1 I'm not even sure how, but a month later on something so
2 important, but now I'm going to go on with my questions. I
3 know I burned a minute on that. Maybe I got some of my
4 time. I've been waiting. I'll take a little extra.

5 Chairman Wicker: Everybody else has.

6 Senator Rosen: Everybody else has, so why not me?
7 But I want to talk about toxic exposure, exposure at
8 classified locations. So, Colonel Borders, as a member of
9 this committee, you've heard me raise this time and time
10 again. I have constituents who have served in data mass
11 locations within the Nevada Test and Training Range, data
12 mass locations. It means that nobody ever gets to know
13 they actually were there. I know that all of you
14 understand this. They believe they were exposed to
15 radiation from our days of conducting explosive nuclear
16 weapons testing and from toxins in burn pits.

17 However, the DOD does not classify the range as a
18 place where contamination occurred, despite the Department
19 of Energy providing a presumption of exposure for their
20 personnel who served at the same exact time in the same
21 locations on the range because we have both DOE and DOD co-
22 equal in these kinds of tests. Locations in the range,
23 such as Tonopah Test Range, it's both a DOE and Air Force
24 installation, and because their service records are masked,
25 these veterans, our veterans, can't even prove to the VA



1 they were ever stationed there. Can't talk about it. This
2 leads to denial of benefits while DOE employees are
3 covered. The Senate NDAA contains a few of my provisions,
4 thank goodness, to address this issue, including
5 classifying the NTTR as a place where contamination
6 occurred, requiring the Secretary of the Air Force to
7 identify everyone who served within the NTTR since the date
8 of the first nuclear test in January 1951, establishing a
9 process for them to provide proof of their assignment, and
10 requiring the DOD to document all toxic exposures,
11 including those that occurred domestically, into a service
12 members' ILER. It's critical that these folks get their
13 benefits.

14 So, Colonel Borders, if confirmed, will you work with
15 me and this committee to ensure that the Department of Air
16 Force does a couple of things: first of all, provides a
17 presumption of exposure at relevant Air Force
18 installations, classifies them as locations where
19 contamination occurred, and such as those places where the
20 Department of Energy has already done so for their
21 personnel, we would have parity with the Department of
22 Energy in this classification?

23 Colonel Borders: Senator, if confirmed, you have my
24 commitment to work with you and this committee to bring
25 about some transparency and really get after the heart of



1 this, which is the safety and health of our airmen,
2 guardians, and our families, absolutely.

3 Senator Rosen: Thank you. I want to talk about CCAs
4 in the future at Creech Air Force Base, which, again, is in
5 Southern Nevada. So, Colonel Borders, with the arrival of
6 Experimental Operations Unit at Creech Air Force Base and
7 the future deployment of collaborative combat aircraft --
8 CCA -- it is easier to say "CCA" -- if CCAs are to be
9 permanently based at Creech, which is what I am hopeful
10 for, I'm curious what new investments will be made to
11 address current deficiencies in housing and support
12 services at the base. Creech is very remote. It is
13 outside Las Vegas, but very remote. If you've ever been
14 there, it has limited housing, limited services nearby, so
15 airmen have to commute many miles from base where they
16 live. It's even a longer commute for those who have to
17 drop their kids off to childcare or utilize the services at
18 Nellis Air Force Base, which is at the opposite end of the
19 Las Vegas Valley.

20 So, Colonel Borders, if CCAs are to be permanently
21 based at Creech, what should the future of base
22 infrastructure and support services look like, and will you
23 prioritize these investments if confirmed? And do you know
24 how this new mission would lead to a buildup of the base
25 and personnel who work there?



1 Colonel Borders: Senator, this really reminds me more
2 of our Cannon Air Force base and Air Force Special
3 Operations Command.

4 Senator Rosen: Mm-hmm.

5 Colonel Borders: RICI bases, or remote and isolated
6 CONUS installations, bring a host of challenges whenever
7 you start talking about an inclusion of an aircraft or
8 systems or more personnel. I would absolutely commit to
9 you to look at some of the pathfinding initiatives that we
10 developed in Air Force Special Operations Commands to
11 include enhanced use leases, intergovernmental service
12 agreements, to see what we can do to really get after this
13 in a more timely manner than what MilCon may bring.

14 Senator Rosen: Thank you. We appreciate that as a
15 classification of remote base is in this year's NDAA. I'm
16 going to ask my last question quickly because I want to
17 keep with you, Colonel Borders. We want to prepare for the
18 next-generation air power at the Nevada Test and Training
19 Range. We look forward to the future of air dominance, the
20 integration of uncrewed platform, and that's what they do
21 at Creech, like the CCA, Collaborative Combat Aircraft,
22 with man fighters, next-generation air dominance. We're
23 going to require advanced training in these environments,
24 and Nevada's going to play a central role in the
25 transformation of our military. Of course known as the



1 crown jewel of the Air Force, the Nevada Test and Training
2 Range is the largest contiguous air, ground, and military
3 training space in the lower 48 for testing and evaluations
4 of weapon systems, tactics development, and advanced air
5 combat training, without interference from commercial
6 aircraft. Modernization of the range has been among the
7 Air Force's top priorities to ensure our high-end training
8 keeps pace with current and emerging threats and
9 capabilities.

10 I'm glad we were finally able to pass modernization in
11 the fiscal year 2024 NDAA after many years of collaborative
12 work between the Nevada delegation, Air Force, Department
13 of Interior, and local stakeholders. And so, I'd just ask
14 you quickly, we could take it off the record, but if you
15 want to say one sentence and come to our office and talk to
16 us about this, what are your priorities for future
17 investment in the Nevada Test and Training Range that is
18 critical to our Nation's security?

19 Colonel Borders: Senator, I agree with you with the
20 criticality, and I look forward to working with you and
21 coming to discuss this further, but any process that we do
22 in the Air Force for my section will be a deliberate,
23 repeatable, sustainable, transparent process.

24 Senator Rosen: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

25 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Rosen. Captain



1 Cotton?

2 Senator Cotton: Witnesses sometimes come before this
3 Committee, and they face charges and they don't always get
4 to respond to them. It's my practice, on certain
5 occasions, to allow them to respond. Code Pink lunatics
6 used to accuse Secretary Austin of committing war crimes.
7 I always allowed him to deny that calinate for him and
8 Israel. At Secretary Hegseth's hearing, Code Pink lunatics
9 accused him of being a Christian Zionist. I thought that
10 was an odd claim. I'm a Christian. I'm a Zionist. Is
11 there anything wrong with being a Christian Zionist?
12 Secretary Hegseth didn't think there was, so I allowed him
13 to respond to the Code Pink lunatics. Earlier today, both
14 Secretary Wicker and Secretary Scott -- "secretary." I'm
15 promoting him.

16 Chairman Wicker: You're demoting.

17 Senator Cotton: But I may be demoting. Senator
18 Wicker and Senator Scott asked you, Mr. Dahmer, about the
19 question on Romanian troop withdrawals and whether Romania
20 was notified, and you said they were notified, but then
21 Secretary -- "secretary" -- then Senator Slotkin said, not
22 citing press reports as the other senators had, but citing
23 the Romanian ambassador and Romanian officials, that these
24 Romanian officials were not, in fact, notified in advance,
25 they learned it from the press, but Senator Slotkin didn't



1 give you a chance to respond to that. Would you care to
2 respond to her assertions of what the Romanian Ambassador
3 and other Romanian officials said to her?

4 Mr. Dahmer: Senator, thank you very much for the
5 opportunity to respond to that. I was not the specific
6 individual to conduct the notifications to the Romanians.
7 My understanding is that the Romanians were briefed before
8 this was made public. Obviously, just as the United States
9 Government is not a monolithic actor, the Romanian
10 Government is not either, so I'm not aware of which
11 specific individuals were briefed. I would be happy to
12 follow up for the record to provide you with that
13 information, but thank you for the opportunity.

14 Senator Cotton: Do you believe Senator Slotkin is
15 misrepresenting her conversations with the Romanian
16 Ambassador?

17 Mr. Dahmer: I have no reason to think that she's
18 misrepresenting her conversations.

19 Senator Cotton: What about the Romanian Ambassador,
20 misrepresenting his --

21 Mr. Dahmer: I'm not aware of any reason for such a
22 mischaracterization, but, again --

23 Senator Cotton: Yeah.

24 Mr. Dahmer: -- I would be happy to follow up with
25 which specific individuals or positions in the Romanian



1 Government were notified.

2 Senator Cotton: Okay. The second issue, the alleged
3 pause on aid to Ukraine earlier this year, press reports
4 cited the Policy shop as being the reason for that pause.
5 I think Senator Wicker and Senator Scott both asked about
6 that, and you said there was no such pause. Is that
7 correct?

8 Mr. Dahmer: That's my understanding. Yes, Senator.

9 Senator Cotton: Okay. Another third unexpected
10 development earlier this year was a review of the so-called
11 AUKUS Agreement -- Australia/U.K./U.S. Submarine Agreement,
12 that this caught many of our friends in the U.K. and
13 Australia by surprise. Press reports said it even caught
14 administration officials by surprise. Can you comment on
15 whether or not this review, which originated in the Policy
16 shop, was coordinated in advance with Australia and the
17 U.K. and others in the administration?

18 Mr. Dahmer: Yes, Senator, and thank you again for the
19 opportunity to address this. Secretary Hegseth testified,
20 I believe, to the House that he was directing a review of
21 the AUKUS Initiative as an initiative of the previous
22 administration. He directed Under Secretary Colby to lead
23 that review for the Department. I think as President Trump
24 was very clear in his Oval Office meeting with Prime
25 Minister Albanese that the President supports AUKUS and



1 advancing AUKUS, you know. As a signature initiative of
2 the Biden administration, I think it was natural and right
3 to ensure the review that it accorded with the President's
4 America First peace through strength agenda. I would note
5 that both Australia and the United Kingdom, when they
6 underwent changes in governments, conducted their own
7 reviews of AUKUS as well, but I think as the President was
8 clear we're advancing AUKUS and working to ensure its
9 success. And I would just, as a matter of forces and
10 capabilities, just really just stress the critical
11 importance of our nuclear-powered attack submarine fleet to
12 defend the homeland and deter our rivals.

13 Senator Cotton: Okay. So, we're full steam ahead on
14 AUKUS now.

15 Mr. Dahmer: Senator, I would welcome the opportunity
16 to brief you in a classified setting on the conclusions and
17 recommendations of the review, but I think President Trump
18 was absolutely clear that he supports AUKUS, and we're
19 moving forward.

20 Senator Cotton: Okay. A couple other items. There
21 were press reports in June that the Policy shop was opposed
22 to deploying more assets to the Middle East during the 12-
23 day war. These press reports surfaced after Israel had
24 begun its strikes in Iran but before our strikes on their
25 nuclear facilities, so while the shooting was going on.



1 Are those press reports inaccurate, that the Policy shop
2 opposed deploying additional assets in that critical period
3 of a few days?

4 Mr. Dahmer: Senator, I'm not aware of the reports
5 you're referencing. I certainly don't want to get into
6 classified discussions, but I think, absolutely, the Policy
7 organization and certainly we have been committed, and if
8 confirmed, I will continue to ensure that the President and
9 the Secretary are provided with the best possible credible
10 military options. I think Operation Midnight Hammer is a
11 signal success of the administration and the Department and
12 the Joint Force in being able to ensure peace through
13 strength, including with decisive military force.

14 Senator Cotton: Okay. Also in June, there were media
15 reports that the so-called 2-by-2 meeting with Secretary
16 Hegseth and Secretary Rubio meeting with their Japanese
17 counterparts, were canceled because the Policy shop had
18 insisted that Japan increase its defense spending. The
19 meeting, as I understand it, was, in fact, canceled. It
20 didn't go forward. Is that media report incorrect that the
21 Japanese were offended by the Policy shop's insistence?

22 Mr. Dahmer: Senator, that is not my understanding of
23 why the meeting was canceled.

24 Senator Cotton: Okay. Well, could I say it's curious
25 to me that these are five different instances -- Ukraine



1 aid, notification about the Romanian troop withdrawal, the
2 AUKUS review, deploying assets in advance of Midnight
3 Hammer, and the meeting between Japanese and U.S. officials
4 -- all coming out of the Policy shop. And I understand
5 that media reports can be wrong, believe me, but it just
6 seems like there's this, like, pigpen-like mess coming out
7 of the Policy shop that you don't see from say, Intel &
8 Security, and Acquisition & Sustainment. Why do you think
9 it is that there's so many controversies emanating out of
10 the Policy shop and not these other offices in the
11 Department?

12 Mr. Dahmer: Senator, I would like to understand that
13 myself. I mean, as you, I think, just indicated, there's a
14 lot of fake news out there, there's a lot of inaccurate
15 reporting, and I think I would be happy to address other
16 specific questions, as I have done for each of these cases.

17 Senator Cotton: Okay. Thank you. Mr. Borders, one
18 question. I assume you're aware that Ebbing International
19 Guard Base in Fort Smith has the F-35 training mission?

20 Colonel Borders: Yes, Senator.

21 Senator Cotton: Good. I can tell you're well
22 prepared for my questions then because, obviously, we think
23 this is a critical part of more burden-sharing from our
24 allies. We want to sell them F-35s made here in the United
25 States. We want their pilots to get trained. We've worked



1 in my office, along with Senator Bozeman, Congressman
2 Womack, with the Air Force, with the Air National Guard,
3 with the State of Arkansas, and the local community, and
4 Fort Smith to move this project along very quickly. And
5 everyone has been very responsive, and I think they may
6 have even set records for this. I think things are going
7 well. We've got foreign pilots in Fort Smith flying out of
8 Ebbing every day now. There's going to be more in the
9 months and the years ahead.

10 I just want to make sure that I have your commitment
11 that if something comes up in your lane that requires
12 action, that you'll have the same sense of urgency about
13 this mission that everyone else who has been working with
14 us for years to get the sound of freedom back into the
15 River Valley, and get more F-35s trained and deployed to
16 our allies have shown for years.

17 Colonel Borders: Yes, Senator. If confirmed, you
18 have my commitment, and I'm also very proud of the role
19 that the Installation and Mission Support Center and Air
20 Force Civil Engineering Center played in getting this and
21 maintaining this important project on track.

22 Senator Cotton: Great. Thank you.

23 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Cotton. You took
24 both your round one and round two questions. Just to ask
25 this in follow-up for Senator Cotton, there's nothing



1 classified about the fact that we're full steam ahead with
2 AUKUS, is there?

3 Mr. Dahmer: Mr. Chairman, no. I think the President
4 was clear that we're moving forward with AUKUS.

5 Chairman Wicker: Okay. I just wanted to make that
6 clear. The title of the position for which you've been
7 nominated is Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy,
8 Plans, and Forces. Apparently, that was changed on October
9 8 to Strategy, Plans, and Capabilities. Is that correct?

10 Mr. Dahmer: Mr. Chairman, it's actually the inverse
11 of that. It was "Capabilities," and it was changed to
12 "Forces" on October 8.

13 Chairman Wicker: Okay. I'm sorry. I misspoke, and
14 that's exactly right. Whose job would it have been to
15 inform the Congress and the committee of that?

16 Mr. Dahmer: Mr. Chairman, again, you know, I
17 apologize that the committee was not notified. I'll take
18 that responsibility myself. Far be it from --

19 Chairman Wicker: It would've been your job to tell
20 us?

21 Mr. Dahmer: Well, working through the Office of
22 Legislative Affairs, Mr. Chairman.

23 Chairman Wicker: Okay. Were they informed of this
24 and told to notify the Congress?

25 Mr. Dahmer: Mr. Chairman, as you read the document in



1 question into the record, it was a memorandum for senior
2 Pentagon leadership, which would include Legislative
3 Affairs.

4 Chairman Wicker: All right. And is it your testimony
5 that, in substance, there's really no change in the duties
6 of this position, that this is merely a wording change?

7 Mr. Dahmer: Yes, Mr. Chairman

8 Chairman Wicker: And not a substantive change.

9 Mr. Dahmer: My understanding is that the duties and
10 responsibilities of the position are the same and that it's
11 a title change.

12 Chairman Wicker: Okay. Now, what is your title now
13 within the Department?

14 Mr. Dahmer: Mr. Chairman, I was appointed by
15 President Trump as the Deputy Assistant Secretary for
16 Strategy and Force Development. Since early to mid-March
17 -- I'd have to get back to you on the specific date -- I've
18 been performing the duties of the Deputy Under Secretary
19 for Policy.

20 Chairman Wicker: And how similar will your duties be,
21 if confirmed, for this position for which you've been
22 nominated?

23 Mr. Dahmer: Mr. Chairman, my duties would be narrower
24 in scope to the extent that I would be, if confirmed, 1 of
25 8 assistant secretaries underneath the Under Secretary for



1 Policy. Obviously, the position to which Dr. Kadlec is
2 nominated is a bit of a unique position within the
3 Department in terms of its shared responsibility between
4 policy and acquisition and sustainment. But so, I would be
5 if confirmed, one of the assistant secretaries focusing on
6 a more narrow portfolio --

7 Chairman Wicker: So --

8 Mr. Dahmer: -- related to national security, national
9 defense strategy, the military forces, force development
10 and design, plans, posture, and security cooperation.

11 Chairman Wicker: And so, you have been performing
12 some of the duties that Dr. Kadlec would assume, should he
13 be confirmed. Is that correct?

14 Mr. Dahmer: Mr. Chairman, performing the duties of
15 the Deputy Under Secretary, I am involved with supervising
16 various parts of the Policy organization and providing the
17 duties of the deputy to Under Secretary Colby, but I have
18 not been performing the duties of the position to which Dr.
19 Kadlec is nominated.

20 Chairman Wicker: Okay. And one final question:
21 there are concerns on the National Defense Strategy. I
22 think certainly anyone listening to this hearing would
23 agree that there have been questions about that. Has the
24 Department consulted with our closest allies in developing
25 the NDS?



1 Mr. Dahmer: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

2 Chairman Wicker: And which allies has the Department
3 consulted and in what format?

4 Mr. Dahmer: Mr. Chairman, it's been via written
5 classified inputs from those allies and partners. I don't
6 have the specific list of which allies and partners here
7 with me today, but, if possible, I'd like to follow up --
8 [Cross talking.]

9 Chairman Wicker: Well, okay. It doesn't have to be
10 an extensive list, but can you name some allies that your
11 Department has consulted with on the development of the
12 NDS?

13 Mr. Dahmer: Mr. Chairman, I know off the top of my
14 head we've consulted Australia and the United Kingdom, but,
15 again, if it's okay, I would like to follow up for the
16 record and ensure we have the complete list of which allies
17 and partners were consulted.

18 Chairman Wicker: And which allies and partners in
19 NATO, and were these dialogues led by the Department?

20 Mr. Dahmer: Mr. Chairman, the specific classified
21 inputs to the strategy were conducted in written form, so I
22 was not the individual who specifically delivered those
23 solicitations for inputs. I was able to review each of
24 those allies' and partners' inputs and the performance of
25 my duties, and, again, I would like to follow up with the



1 full list of which allies and partners.

2 Chairman Wicker: Very good. And so, if you will,
3 feel free to supplement your answer on the record.

4 [The information referred to follows:]

5 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 Chairman Wicker: Senator Reed.

2 Senator Reed: Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr.
3 Dahmer, you've been performing the duties of the Deputy
4 Under Secretary of Defense since March 2025. This is the
5 number two position in the Policy Directorate, which,
6 essentially, gives you the full scope of what is being
7 conducted by the Policy Directorate. And, in fact, you've
8 indicated in response to the Chairman, your new duties will
9 be much less expansive, and yet my impression today is
10 you've cloaked your testimony in a veil of ignorance. You
11 don't know what's happened in many different cases when, in
12 fact, you were basically the stand-in and the surrogate for
13 Secretary Colby. In response to Senator Scott's question
14 about when Romania was notified of our withdrawal of
15 troops, you indicated you had no knowledge of that. When
16 was the Romanian Government notified of their withdrawal
17 troops?

18 Mr. Dahmer: Ranking Member Reed, I am not aware of
19 the specific date, and, if possible, I'd like to follow up
20 with you for the record to give you a precise --

21 Senator Reed: Well, no. You're telling me you were
22 the number two person in the Department and that you're not
23 aware, either before or after the fact, of what date the
24 Romanians were notified?

25 Mr. Dahmer: Yes, sir.



1 Senator Reed: All right. You indicated in response
2 to another question that you were unaware of the pause in
3 supplies of equipment to Ukrainians. Is that your
4 response?

5 Mr. Dahmer: Mr. Ranking Member, I'm not aware of any
6 pause in military aid to Ukraine.

7 Senator Reed: Well, that's interesting because the
8 administration announced that there was a pause directed by
9 Secretary Hegseth so that he could evaluate the status of
10 stockpiles of materiel throughout the Department of
11 Defense, and yet you're not aware of a pause.

12 Mr. Dahmer: Mr. Ranking Member, military aid,
13 military weapons, military material have continued to flow
14 to Ukraine.

15 Senator Reed: The Department has indicated clearly
16 that there was a pause. The pause was Department-wide and
17 countrywide, and yet you claim there was no pause. Again,
18 as the number two in Policy, what were you doing? I mean,
19 were you participating in significant discussions as, for
20 example, shall we pause aid to Ukraine or other countries?
21 Are we withdrawing troops from Romania? Did you
22 participate in those discussions of withdrawing troops from
23 Romania?

24 Mr. Dahmer: Mr. Ranking Member, I was involved in
25 discussions. I would be happy to ensure that you, your



1 staff, and the committee are fully briefed.

2 Senator Reed: Why don't you tell us right now? It's
3 not classified. It's a public record that said we're
4 withdrawing troops from Ukraine -- excuse me -- Romania.
5 When did this discussion begin? When were the Romanians
6 notified? I mean, who did it?

7 Mr. Dahmer: Mr. Ranking Member, I don't have the
8 specific date that the Romanians were notified. I'd be
9 happy to follow up for the record.

10 Senator Reed: How about an estimate, like when were
11 you first notified that the troops would be removed from
12 Romania?

13 Mr. Dahmer: Mr. Ranking Member, this decision from
14 the Secretary was extensively coordinated inside the
15 Department. Civilian and military leadership discussed, as
16 for all Global Force Management decisions, through the
17 Secretary's Orders Book process. I don't have the specific
18 date, but I would be very happy to follow up for you --

19 Senator Reed: No. I mean, Mr. Dahmer, you're clearly
20 avoiding answers to questions that you should've been
21 acutely aware of in your position. That does not augur
22 very well for your role and the future role in the
23 Department of Defense since it's essential that this
24 committee has accurate and specific knowledge. And I think
25 you, essentially, indicated to us that you won't cooperate



1 with us, that those pledges you've made to the Chairman
2 about providing witnesses and also following the guidance
3 of the committee as far as the appropriation of funds.
4 It's very disappointing to hear someone who just won't
5 answer just specific questions of this Committee, and I
6 thank you for your attendance this morning. Thank you, Mr.
7 Chairman.

8 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Reed. This
9 concludes today's hearing. I'd like to thank our witnesses
10 for their testimony.

11 For the information of members, questions for the
12 record will be due to the Committee within 2 business days
13 of the conclusion of the hearing.

14 [The information referred to follows:]

15 [COMMITTEE INSERT]



1 Chairman Wicker: And we are adjourned.

2 [Whereupon, at 11:54 a.m., the committee was
3 adjourned.]

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