

Stenographic Transcript
Before the

COMMITTEE ON
ARMED SERVICES

UNITED STATES SENATE

HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY
ON THE CURRENT READINESS OF THE JOINT FORCE

Wednesday, March 12, 2025

Washington, D.C.

ALDERSON COURT REPORTING
1029 VERMONT AVE, NW
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WASHINGTON, DC 20005
(202) 289-2260
www.aldersonreporting.com

1 HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY
2 ON THE CURRENT READINESS OF THE JOINT FORCE

3
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5
6 U.S. Senate
7 Subcommittee on Readiness and
8 Management Support
9 Committee on Armed Services
10 Washington, D.C.

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12 The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:31 a.m.
13 in Room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Dan
14 Sullivan, chairman of the subcommittee, presiding.

15 Committee Members Present: Senators Sullivan, Wicker,
16 Scott, Schmitt, Sheehy, Hirono, and Kaine.

1 OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. DAN SULLIVAN, U.S. SENATOR
2 FROM ALASKA

3 Senator Sullivan: This hearing will come to order.

4 The Readiness Subcommittee meets today to receive the
5 testimony on the current readiness of the United States
6 Armed Forces.

7 I deeply appreciate our witnesses -- our esteemed
8 witnesses from our military services. This is a impressive
9 photo right here of all five services and our excellent work
10 from the Government Accountability Office by Diana Maurer.

11 This is one of the most important hearings certainly
12 this committee undertakes all year. In my view, it is one
13 of the most important hearings in the Senate for the year
14 because there are very few other issues more important than
15 the readiness of our United States military.

16 I look forward to the valuable testimony of the
17 witnesses as it will pertain to their services' readiness.
18 I hope we can have a really good, candid discussion.

19 We are living in a very dangerous world where our
20 adversaries can and regularly do contest us across the globe
21 and we must remain vigilant in our pursuit of balancing
22 readiness, modernization, and training with our global
23 commitments.

24 In my view, for the last four years we have taken a
25 holiday from history with the Biden administration's focus

1 on issues in the military that had nothing to do with
2 readiness.

3 The list is long -- climate change over ship building,
4 transgender surgery for active duty troops, DEI, a lack of
5 focus on war fighting and lethality and defeating our
6 enemies.

7 I appreciate Secretary Hegseth's three priorities:
8 restoring the warrior ethos, rebuilding our military, and
9 reestablishing our deterrence.

10 Many of you know, and I have talked to all of you about
11 this, I am a big fan of the book by T. R. Fehrenbach "This
12 Kind of War," which Marines and soldiers all read, and it is
13 about the Korean War and how in 1945 we had the most lethal
14 military in world history and five years later in 1950 the
15 United States military had a hard time stopping and
16 defeating a peasant army from North Korea, and thousands of
17 American troops died in the process because a lack of
18 leadership from our civilian and uniformed military.

19 This must never happen again. There must never be
20 another Task Force Smith that we saw in the Korean War.

21 My view is we have a moral obligation to prepare for
22 any future conflict beginning with the realization that
23 unlike any previous conflict our service members will be at
24 risk from threats well beyond -- well before they reach
25 foreign soil, airspace, or waters.

1 The world has changed dramatically as it pertains to
2 our homeland as well. We can no longer consider ourselves
3 safe based solely on the tyranny of distance from nations
4 and actors that would do us harm.

5 One of the things that we are working on in this
6 Congress and this committee in conjunction with the
7 President is his Iron Dome -- now Golden Dome -- legislation
8 of mine with Senator Cramer we hope to make bipartisan in
9 this committee to bolstering our homeland defense.

10 Suffice to say the world is a dangerous place and the
11 facts demand a response from not just the uniformed
12 personnel sitting before us -- and, again, I respect the
13 service, decades and decades of military service from all of
14 you -- but from Congress as well.

15 Let us look at a few facts. In the last four years
16 have done to our militaries provided by the military
17 services and GAO the Army has done an outstanding job
18 working to increase recruiting but there remains significant
19 operational demands and increasing pressures on an already
20 under strength force with units being manned at less than 80
21 percent.

22 Sixteen of the Navy's 32 amphibious warfare ships are
23 in unsatisfactory condition and the Air Force of today is
24 very different from what we saw during the global war on
25 terror.

1 Yes, we have more capable aircraft and yet the KC-46
2 and KC-135 tanker fleets sits at an aircraft availability
3 rate of 52 percent and 57 percent respectively versus 66
4 percent during the entirety of the global war on terror.

5 While modernization will help improve these figures at
6 what cost will that come in terms of readiness and training?

7 These are the key issues that so many of you as our leaders
8 in the military have been focused on.

9 There are many other issues that GAO has raised and our
10 members here will be raising, but I want to thank the
11 witnesses in advance again for their exceptional service to
12 our country and for their testimony today.

13 I look forward to that testimony and now I would like
14 to turn it over to Ranking Member Senator Hirono.

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1 STATEMENT OF HON. MAZIE K. HIRONO, U.S. SENATOR FROM
2 HAWAII

3 Senator Hirono: Thank you, Senator Chairman -- Senator
4 Sullivan, rather. Well, you have you new responsibilities.

5 Gentlemen, thank you for your dedicated service to our
6 nation and I thank the service members and each of your
7 respective branches as well.

8 Ms. Maurer, it is always great to have you back and to
9 see you. The tireless work that you and your team deliver
10 to Congress every year is instrumental to each NDAA.

11 In your opening statements I ask that each of you
12 briefly describe what impacts to readiness a full year
13 continuing resolution -- CR -- would have.

14 For example, billions in military construction and
15 family housing projects would not occur in a full CR. So,
16 please, for all three of you I would like you to briefly go
17 over what the impacts of a full CR may be -- a year's CR.

18 So even without a full CR readiness challenges range
19 from retaining a skilled civilian workforce, balancing
20 modernization with legacy platform maintenance, and training
21 to core missions.

22 And, yet, while Congress provides ample resources to
23 DOD every year we still see delays in ship maintenance, cost
24 overruns in military construction projects, and avoidable
25 problems with family housing and barracks.

1 Each of you are doing the best you can. Readiness
2 requires the consumption of dedicated resources, time,
3 training, and equipment, which is why deployments to the
4 Southwest border, which are all for show, mind you, are
5 stripping precious time, focus, and resources away from our
6 service members.

7 In its request for assistance from DOD for fiscal year
8 '25 the Department of Homeland Security -- DHS --
9 acknowledged that tasks at the Southwest border require no
10 specific military training skill set or specialty to perform
11 Customs and Border Protection -- CBP -- duties.

12 Some of the DHS requests include operator level
13 maintenance of CBP civilian vehicles, which can be found in
14 the owner's manual of an SUV.

15 Other requests include changing tires, windshield
16 wipers, light bulbs, oil changes, stocking warehouses, data
17 entry, administrative support, et cetera.

18 In 2019 DOD discontinued support like this because they
19 found units were not performing core military functions and
20 continuing to do so would adversely impact readiness and
21 morale.

22 Yet, here we are again. Perhaps having elite
23 warfighters from the 101st Mountain Division change oil in
24 Chevy Tahoe or mechanized infantry of a Stryker brigade
25 combat team overseeing the stocking of civilian warehouses

1 and data entry on the CBP computers are what Secretary
2 Hegseth envisions when he talks about lethality.

3 But those nonmilitary roles do not sound like they
4 contribute to restoring the warrior ethics and they
5 certainly do not rebuild readiness.

6 So these are slogans that Secretary Hegseth likes to
7 throw out but the reality is our troops are being deployed
8 to the Southwest border to do things which does nothing to -
9 - it does nothing to contribute to readiness.

10 DOD has written a blank check, moreover, to DHS for its
11 time, personnel, and resources and as it stands now DOD is
12 electing to do all of this on a nonreimbursable basis in an
13 open ended timeline. Incredible.

14 We are not even two months into this administration,
15 yet here are some of the opportunity costs to date. Marines
16 are missing the chance to train in a bilateral exercise with
17 our allies and partners.

18 Army soldiers will miss a combat training center
19 rotation. Air Force aircraft from the immediate response
20 force and the Space Force are using limited resources to
21 perform tactical surveillance, reconnaissance, and tracking
22 programs for DHS and CBP.

23 Where will the readiness of our forces be 60 days from
24 now and beyond?

25 During the first Trump administration it took units

1 from the 101st Airborne Division a year to regain their
2 readiness after being deployed to the border. We should
3 learn from that mistake.

4 DOD is slow to respond to the requests for information
5 to this committee, yet publishes nearly daily photo ops of
6 troops on the border.

7 In the meantime, Immigration and Customs Enforcement
8 agents are dressing up like they are in the military.
9 Soldiers are performing data entry in uniform in the same
10 room as CBP agents are processing migrants, and airmen are
11 removing their name tags and unit patches when they
12 transport migrants on military aircraft.

13 All of these actions erase the distinction between
14 civilian and military personnel. Removing active duty
15 forces from their units and core missions to perform support
16 functions of law enforcement agencies does not contribute to
17 lethality or war fighting.

18 And where is Secretary Hegseth's meritocracy when DHS
19 and CBP asks DOD to do their jobs for them and foot the bill
20 no less?

21 Not only does this administration prioritize these
22 deployments but claims with a straight face that ordering
23 U.S. service members to cover the jobs of DHS civilians has
24 no impact on military readiness and resources.

25 This is delusional, dishonest, unbelievable. The

1 choice to burn readiness to score imagined political points
2 dangerous -- is dangerously misguided. It is a massive
3 waste of time, resources, and personnel when border
4 crossings are at an all-time low.

5 In closing, again, I wanted to thank the vice chiefs
6 and Ms. Maurer for their service, for being here, for your
7 hard work, insights and leadership, and I would really
8 appreciate a frank discussion with you today.

9 Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

10 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Senator Hirono. I
11 appreciate your renewed found focus on readiness. I am just
12 thrilled about that.

13 And by the way, we have been sending troops to the
14 border for decades. My first deployment as a United States
15 Marine I came back from a WestPac 31st MEU deployment under
16 President Clinton after being in the Taiwan Strait, and half
17 my battalion immediately got sent to the border. So this
18 has been going on for quite some time and it is nothing new.

19 But I appreciate your focus on --

20 Senator Hirono: Mr. Chairman, I do not think it serves
21 our purposes because you and I have worked together --

22 Senator Sullivan: Well, we are going to get into the -
23 -

24 Senator Hirono: -- for you to personally insult me,
25 okay.

1 Senator Sullivan: I am not insulting you at all.

2 Senator Hirono: Thank you.

3 Senator Sullivan: I am not insulting you. I am just
4 glad you are focused on readiness.

5 Senator Hirono: That is what it felt like.

6 Senator Sullivan: My Democrat colleagues and the Biden
7 administration have not always been so focused but it is
8 great that you guys are.

9 So with that, I would like to begin our testimony and,
10 gentlemen, I am going to have to step out for a minute but I
11 will be here for the whole hearing.

12 So, General Mingus, if you can begin, sir. Thank you
13 very much. You will have five minutes and your extended
14 written testimony can be submitted for the record.

15 Thank you, General.

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1 STATEMENT OF GENERAL JAMES J. MINGUS, USA, VICE CHIEF
2 OF STAFF OF THE ARMY, DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

3 General Mingus: Thank you.

4 Chairman Sullivan, Ranking Member Hirono, and
5 distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for the
6 opportunity to address you today.

7 The Army stands ready to defend our nation. Right now
8 over 109,000 soldiers are deployed or forward stationed
9 across 140 countries, executing missions that deter, defend
10 and provide immediate response options.

11 Still, our adversaries are moving faster than we are.
12 That is why we are reorganizing our formations, refining how
13 we fight, and modernizing faster than ever pushing new
14 capabilities into the force in months, not years.

15 Under transformation in contact, or TiC, which I will
16 talk about throughout, we are enhancing our tactical
17 networks, rapidly fueling UAS/counter UAS electronic warfare
18 systems and increasing mobility across our formations.

19 In the last nine months TiC delivered 11 new
20 capabilities and technologies to war fighters across the
21 101st, the 25th, 10th Mountain, and 34th infantry divisions.

22 In fiscal year '25 and '26 we will expand this to TiC
23 2.0 and it will encompass all units within the 101st, 25th,
24 82nd, 4th Infantry Division, and additionally it will extend
25 to include additional armored and Stryker brigade combat

1 teams.

2 We will also scale to integrate three multi-domain task
3 forces and further integrate Army National Guard units.
4 Central to the Army modernization are command and control,
5 integrated air and missile defense and long-range precision
6 fires.

7 Next generation command and control, or Next-Gen C2,
8 will provide resilient data sharing and real time
9 situational awareness, enabling war fighters to synchronize
10 combat power across all domains.

11 We are also improving our layered air defenses,
12 expanding Patriot formations, increasing short-range air
13 defense battalions, and adding directed energy systems
14 capable of countering most or more sophisticated UAS
15 threats.

16 Additionally, the Army's long-range hypersonic weapon
17 will soon be operational by the end of this year, adding
18 unprecedented speed and range to our arsenal both for us and
19 the Navy.

20 At the heart of those efforts is the health and
21 effectiveness of our organic industrial base. We continue
22 to execute our \$18 billion 15-year plan to modernize 23
23 depots, arsenals, and ammunition plants.

24 Newly established facilities in Lake City, Missouri and
25 Mesquite, Texas are expanding 6.8 millimeter and 155

1 munition productions while for the first time in 40 years
2 TNT production is being reestablished in the United States
3 to reduce reliance on foreign suppliers.

4 However, weapons and equipment do not define readiness.
5 Soldiers do, and the Army is making targeted investments to
6 ensure that they can focus on their mission -- new barracks
7 and construction, modernizing efforts and replacing outdated
8 housing.

9 Dining facilities are being updated to provide more
10 flexible, nutritious options and the holistic health and
11 fitness program, or H2F, embeds experts directly into our
12 units to ensure peak human performance.

13 Recruiting remains a priority. The Army exceeded its
14 goal in fiscal year '24 with over 55,000 new soldiers and we
15 are targeting 61,000 this year, and we are currently 72.7
16 percent of that goal for this year -- 44,358 as of this
17 morning, which is 50 percent ahead of where we were this
18 time last year.

19 I will end on budget. With no budget increases to
20 offset inflation and reducing buying power the continual
21 growth and the cost of paying allowances is crowding out the
22 Army's ability to modernize its force or maintain its
23 infrastructure.

24 The Army essentially has three levers to address top
25 line shortfalls -- end strength, readiness, and

1 modernization. Our end strength is approximately 25,000
2 personnel less than the improved structure, resulting in
3 undermanned formations and overtaxed high demand units such
4 as Patriot battalions.

5 Additionally, the Army has had to slash its
6 modernization budget by billions over the last few years.
7 As a result, procurement is reduced to minimum sustainable
8 rates, delaying fielding of new material to formations and
9 research and development has been cut, slowing technological
10 advances.

11 Ultimately, the Army can afford a large, ready or
12 modern force but with the current budget it cannot afford
13 all three. Either we provide soldiers the capabilities
14 needed to win or accept greater risks in other areas.

15 But whatever risk we accept now we will likely pay for
16 it later, not in delayed projects or budget adjustments but
17 in real-world battlefield consequences.

18 We need to invest in the things in training our
19 soldiers need for the next fight, not the last fight.

20 Thank you.

21 [The prepared statement of General Mingus follows:]

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1 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, General.

2 Admiral?

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1 STATEMENT OF ADMIRAL JAMES W. KILBY, USN, VICE CHIEF
2 OF NAVAL OPERATIONS, DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

3 Admiral Kilby: Chairman Sullivan, Ranking Member
4 Hirono, subcommittee members, thank you for the opportunity
5 to testify --

6 [Technical issue.]

7 Admiral Kilby: -- of the United States around the
8 world. Your oversight and funding help us to be ready when
9 the nation calls.

10 In the past year alone American sailors have defeated
11 hundreds of drones and missiles, and carried out dozens of
12 offensive strikes in the Red Sea and the eastern
13 Mediterranean.

14 They have strengthened alliances and deterred
15 aggression in the Western Pacific and they have used
16 unmanned systems to counter the flow of illegal narcotics
17 across the southern border.

18 In short --

19 [Technical issue.]

20 Admiral Kilby: -- remains posture --

21 [Technical issue.]

22 Admiral Kilby: -- resting and neither will we --

23 [Technical issue.]

24 Admiral Kilby: -- to improve with urgency. I have
25 spoken to several of you about a sustained focus on adapting

1 the mindset, skill set, and tool set to drive meaningful
2 process improvement. Consistent and predictable funding is
3 foundational to our improvement efforts.

4 The Navy will need to make hard choices this year if we
5 are operating under a full year continuing resolution.

6 [Technical issue.]

7 Admiral Kilby: -- in this --

8 [Technical issue.]

9 Admiral Kilby: -- will slow our progress to get
10 weapons and equipment we need to modernize our fleet and we
11 will also slow ship building including our amphibious
12 warships.

13 And with the Navy exceeding recruiting and retention
14 goals last year and on track to do so again we will need
15 additional funding to sustain our momentum.

16 Our priority remains our readiness accounts which are
17 most vulnerable under a CR or sequestration. We are
18 optimistic that Congress will grant us the flexibility to
19 allocate funds to our top priorities.

20 Despite these challenges, your Navy will maintain ready
21 platforms, people, and infrastructure. We set a goal to
22 make 80 percent of our ships, submarines and aircraft combat
23 surge ready by January 1st, 2027.

24 To do that we are reducing maintenance delays and
25 improving manning, training, modernization and sustainment.

1 We are seeing progress in the last year. We increased our
2 surface ship depot maintenance from 41 percent on time
3 completion to 68 percent.

4 Unfortunately, this progress is not consistent across
5 all platforms. I am not satisfied with amphibious ship
6 maintenance. Our Navy and Marine Corps operate as a lethal
7 integrative force and we have work to do here.

8 To improve we are procuring spare parts earlier,
9 refining, partnering, planning with industry partners,
10 acquiring diesel engine repair kits and building steam plant
11 expertise.

12 Our second goal is recruiting and retention. The Navy
13 is committed to attracting and developing Americans who can
14 innovate, solve hard problems, and dominate in combat.

15 Thanks to process improvements, our targeted
16 investments, we contracted over 40,000 sailors last year,
17 the most since 2003, and we are currently on pace to exceed
18 our recruiting goals in '25.

19 We are committed to improving quality of service. We
20 reduced the wait list for child development centers from
21 3,400 children in 2024 to 2,500 as of January 31st, 2025.

22 We have reduced poor unaccompanied housing -- we have
23 reduced our pool of unaccompanied housing rooms rated as
24 poor from 25 percent to 21 percent and will continue to
25 reduce this through focusing investments.

1 We are focusing on the investment of critical
2 infrastructure in the Indo-Pacific, targeting it to where it
3 has our most impact on our war fighters.

4 The shipyard infrastructure optimization program is a
5 once in a century opportunity for us to improve the
6 effectiveness of our public yards. Through SIOP we have
7 completed over 40 projects and invested \$1 billion in
8 getting ship maintenance completed on time.

9 The budget you are reviewing today includes an
10 additional \$6.3 billion for the next 40 projects. I am
11 proud of the Navy's accomplishments in the past year. We
12 still have work to do to ensure that we remain the world's
13 most premier Navy for another 250 years.

14 Your leadership and support are critical to Navy
15 readiness. On behalf of our sailors, civilians and families
16 around the world, thank you. I look forward to your
17 questions.

18 [The prepared statement of Admiral Kilby follows:]

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1 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Admiral.

2 General?

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1 STATEMENT OF GENERAL CHRISTOPHER J. MAHONEY, USMC,
2 ASSISTANT COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS, DEPARTMENT OF THE
3 NAVY

4 General Mahoney: Good morning, Chairman Sullivan,
5 Ranking Member Hirono, Senator Kaine. Thanks for the
6 opportunity to appear this morning.

7 I am honored to represent the Marine Corps and discuss
8 our current warfighting readiness. Since my testimony last
9 year, your Marine Corps has continued to progress and refine
10 our force design implementation through a campaign of
11 learning.

12 We are modernizing our force to meet the challenges of
13 the modern battlefield. As directed by our commandant, we
14 balance that modernization with our ability to respond to
15 crises.

16 This balance ensures that over 32,000 Marines forward
17 postured and deployed are trained and ready to support the
18 combatant commanders' competition campaign, deter global
19 threats, and when necessary fight our nation's battles.

20 Whether acting as the forward eyes and ears in the
21 southwest islands or expanding maritime domain awareness in
22 a unified High North and across the Baltic Sea or supporting
23 -- the defense support of civil authorities by constructing
24 obstacles in intel analysis on the southern border, your
25 Marines are ready to operate in any clime and place, as our

1 song says.

2 There remain external challenges, though, to our
3 warfighting readiness. The most acute readiness detractors
4 are the lack of amphibious ship availability, which has been
5 brought up already by my shipmate, and the absence of
6 organic littoral mobility to marry up with our MLR
7 capabilities.

8 The gap in these capabilities creates significant risk
9 and degrade force readiness across the competition spectrum
10 toward conflict.

11 Yet, despite these challenges your Marine Corps remains
12 ready. Our personnel, our maintenance, supply and training
13 readiness remain high, just as all of you would expect.

14 In both recruiting and retention the Marine Corps made
15 mission and exceeded expectations in fiscal year 2024, and
16 you heard it here first. We will make our numbers this year
17 and, in fact, we will be able to push contracts on the order
18 of a thousand into the next fiscal year.

19 I remain completely humbled by the quality of our
20 recruits and the Marines we make fleet wide. I cannot say
21 enough about the excellence and discipline of our recruiting
22 force and continue to do what others say is not possible,
23 making mission without lowering standards, which is
24 something we will never do.

25 That discipline together with consistent funding remain

1 key ingredients for a high state of readiness. Our
2 unprecedented second unmodified audit opinion is evidence of
3 that discipline. Our books are clean. Our books are open.

4 The Marine Corps is appreciative of the continued
5 support from Congress and support for the commandant's
6 priorities, which are creating and enduring total force
7 readiness.

8 With your advocacy we will sustain our current future
9 force readiness to maintain the honor of being the first to
10 fight when called.

11 With your support for additional resources we will
12 restore the state of our infrastructure readiness in a
13 manner consistent with your expectations as well as the
14 expectations of our commandant.

15 Thank you for the opportunity to speak, and I look
16 forward to your questions. Semper Fidelis.

17 [The prepared statement of General Mahoney follows:]

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1 Senator Hirono: [Presiding.] Thank you, General.
2 I call on General Guetlein. Please proceed.

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1 STATEMENT OF GENERAL MICHAEL A. GUETLEIN, USSF, VICE
2 CHIEF OF SPACE OPERATIONS, DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

3 General Guetlein: Thank you, Chairman Sullivan,
4 Ranking Member Hirono, and the distinguished members of this
5 subcommittee for allowing me the opportunity to discuss the
6 United States Space Force with you and with the American
7 people today.

8 The Space Force underpins our nation's capabilities
9 within the joint force, within our economy, and within the
10 society as a whole.

11 In our first five years of existence we validated the
12 importance of the Space Force as a service and made
13 remarkable progress in building an agile mission-focused
14 organization that grasped the magnitude of the space threat.

15 We delivered critical capabilities, developed doctrine,
16 and took significant steps to integrate space power into
17 joint operations.

18 We are now comprised of approximately 15,000 Guardians,
19 including officers, enlisted, and civilian personnel, and we
20 are integrated into other DOD components -- the intelligence
21 community, our allies, and commercial partners, maintaining
22 maximum readiness and securing our advantages in space.

23 Our military is faster, better connected, more
24 informed, precise and lethal based on our ability to harness
25 space. The world's use of space is growing at an

1 accelerating rate demonstrated by a significant growth in
2 space launches and an increase in active spacecraft in
3 orbit.

4 As access to and the use of space grows the strategic
5 landscape in space is becoming increasingly complex and
6 perilous. We were once -- what were once theoretical
7 threats or now daily occurrences.

8 I have observed our adversaries' actions and they are
9 employing new capabilities to counter our advantages. Our
10 competitors are jamming GPS signals, spoofing and disrupting
11 satellite communications, and developing advanced anti-
12 satellite weapons.

13 Unfortunately, this behavior has become the norm rather
14 than the exception, creating an increasingly hostile
15 environment and putting at risk our continued freedom in the
16 space domain.

17 To meet these challenges the Space Force is
18 accelerating our transformation as a warfighting service
19 through our theory of success called competitive endurance.
20 Competitive endurance is the bedrock of our ability to deter
21 and, if necessary, defeat our adversaries.

22 It deters them from extending conflict into the space
23 domain and enables the joint force to achieve space
24 superiority while preserving the long-term safety, security,
25 and sustainability of space.

1 This approach ensures we avoid operational surprise,
2 deny first mover advantage, and engage in responsible
3 counter space campaigning, all of which result in deterring
4 aggression and, if necessary, decisively defeating
5 challenges to our way of life.

6 An essential requirement supporting competitive
7 endurance is Guardian development. We are focused on
8 purpose built training to meet the unique needs of the Space
9 Force.

10 Our Guardians are dedicated war fighters who understand
11 the gravity of the threats that we face. We must ensure
12 that they have the necessary training, resources and
13 unwavering commitment to continue to face these threats head
14 on.

15 Also essential is our continued integration as a
16 critical component of the joint force in fostering enduring
17 partnerships with the commercial sector and our allies
18 around the world, which will allow us to overcome resource
19 constraints and build a resilient hybrid space architecture
20 forging the Space Force we need.

21 At only 3 percent of the DOD budget the Space Force
22 offers an immense value proposition for the joint force and
23 for our nation.

24 However, it is woefully under resourced to meet the
25 nation's demand for space capabilities. We must increase

1 investment to deter the threat and if necessary to
2 decisively defeat challenges to U.S. space superiority.

3 The strategic choices we make today will determine
4 whether space remains a domain for peace and progress or
5 becomes a contested battleground for future conflict.

6 The Space Force is committed to ensuring a future where
7 space remains a source of American strength and a foundation
8 for global security.

9 Achieving this vision requires a shared commitment to
10 providing the Space Force with the resources, the
11 authorities, and the support necessary to meet the growing
12 challenges of the space warfighting domain.

13 On behalf of all Guardians and their families, thank
14 you for your support and commitment to ensuring the United
15 States Space Force remains a cornerstone of the joint force
16 in protecting the American way of life.

17 I look forward to working with all of you and I look
18 forward to taking your questions. Thank you.

19 [The prepared statement of General Guetlein follows:]
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1 Senator Sullivan: [Presiding.] Thank you, General.
2 Lieutenant General Spain?
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1 STATEMENT OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL ADRIAN SPAIN, AIR
2 FORCE DCS OPERATIONS

3 General Spain: Chairman Sullivan, Ranking Member
4 Hirono, and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the
5 opportunity this hearing provides to talk about the elements
6 of readiness for the Air Force -- the four primary pillars
7 being parts and supply, people, flying and training, and
8 current infrastructure.

9 To these I would add elements for future readiness,
10 rebuilding acquisitions, long-term sustainment, and
11 recruiting and retention at a relevant pace and scale, all
12 in a way that reflects our shared purpose.

13 Senators, I can confidently state that your United
14 States Air Force stands ready and able to defend America's
15 homeland, ensure a robust nuclear deterrent via our two legs
16 of the triad, and project power around the world to deter
17 and win as the nation requires.

18 It is our solemn duty and your airmen are ready. It is
19 also a fact that today's airmen will do so with the oldest
20 airplanes, the smallest force, and with fewer monthly flying
21 hours than at any point in our history.

22 Airmen have and always will get the job done but today
23 they do so at elevated risk. Meanwhile, China's military
24 forces are expanding and modernizing. Their nuclear
25 modernization, long-range missile proliferation, and recent

1 test flights of two six-gen aircraft is simply further
2 evidence of the elevated threat in this strategic
3 environment.

4 Conflict is certainly not desirable nor is it
5 inevitable. It is our responsibility to be prepared should
6 diplomacy or deterrence fail.

7 Often, we have focused on the individual elements of
8 readiness and not how they must be synchronized to create a
9 warfighting capability over time. Even in this hearing we
10 will likely talk about individual programs and individual
11 projects, all of which are very important.

12 But the previous strategic environment, mostly
13 permissive and without a significant challenger, allowed us
14 the luxury of segmented attention, priority, and risk.
15 Today's strategic environment does not.

16 Today's readiness requires a synchronized approach --
17 the right parts and the right maintainers and the right
18 support infrastructure and the right qualified air crew and
19 all in the right balance and not or.

20 Many of our past decisions were appropriate given the
21 previous strategic environment but no longer. So we have
22 taken deliberate steps to see this for what it is and do
23 something about it.

24 We have specifically prioritized parts and supply in
25 applying our program. We have also reconnected our manpower

1 and infrastructure priorities directly to our core readiness
2 outcomes in both our processes and our data.

3 It is our intent to maintain focus and priority on
4 these pillars to strengthen our readiness and improve our
5 lethality and we are moving out.

6 I am grateful for this committee and the broader
7 Congress' support and look forward to working with you to
8 deliberately improve our current and future readiness
9 posture and undeniably retain our position as the world's
10 greatest Air Force.

11 With respect to the CR, without anomalies the CR
12 clearly has impact on our readiness up to the tune of about
13 \$4 billion.

14 Anomalies -- without anomalies and with the Fiscal
15 Responsibility Act kicking in it is closer to \$14 billion
16 which we cannot afford.

17 However, we expect and look forward to the final
18 version of this CR if it were to pass with flexibility and
19 agility and anomalies to spend as required to retain
20 readiness to the maximum possible level.

21 Thank you, and look forward to your questions.

22 [The prepared statement of General Spain follows:]

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1 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, General, for your very
2 frank testimony. I very much appreciate that.

3 Finally, Ms. Maurer from GAO, thank you for your great
4 work on many issues.

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1 STATEMENT OF DIANA C. MAURER, DIRECTOR, DEFENSE
2 CAPABILITIES AND MANAGEMENT, GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY
3 OFFICE

4 Ms. Maurer: All right. Well, good morning, Chairman
5 Sullivan, Ranking Member Hirono, and other members.

6 [Technical issue.]

7 Ms. Maurer: -- here today to discuss GAO's
8 recommendations to help the military address long-standing
9 readiness challenges that span several administrations.

10 I would like to in particular highlight three cross
11 cutting challenges that we continue to find across the
12 services.

13 First, DOD faces growing gaps between mission and
14 resources. In many areas the services assume risk because
15 of imbalances between what they have been tasked to do and
16 the people, parts, and facilities they have --

17 [Technical issue.]

18 Ms. Maurer: -- Pentagon needs to focus more on
19 sustainment. Buying new systems is just the beginning.
20 Ensuring combat-ready units can operate and sustain those
21 systems is the hard part, and all too often a host of
22 sustainment problems means planes, ships, and vehicles are
23 not available when needed.

24 And third, DOD's ability to move and support forces
25 lags behind operational needs. The services face potential

1 adversaries who will contest the movement of people,
2 material and information.

3 DOD needs to adapt its decades-long reliance on
4 uncontested logistics, just in time distribution --

5 [Technical issue.]

6 Ms. Maurer: My written statement summarizes reports
7 with over 100 recommendations to help address these
8 challenges.

9 So, for example, the Navy needs an industrial based
10 strategy to help get better results from the private
11 companies that repair and build ships. The Navy -- the Army
12 should ensure units have the necessary training, facilities,
13 and support before fielding new equipment.

14 The Space Force needs to refine its plans for training
15 and exercising its squadrons. The Navy should coordinate
16 with the Marines to fix amphibious ships and reach agreement
17 on what it means to make -- what it means for a ship to be
18 available.

19 DOD should decide when and how various services will
20 assume sustainment responsibilities for missile defense
21 systems, and for the F-35 program DOD needs to reassess the
22 balance of sustainment responsibilities between contractors
23 and services, and ensure maintainers have access to the
24 technical data they need to meet operational mission needs.

25 GAO's recommendations will help improve military

1 readiness and that is the heart of what we do at GAO. We
2 help improve the government.

3 Now, we are currently in the midst of a vigorous
4 national debate about improving the effectiveness and
5 efficiency of the federal government.

6 GAO's independent nonpartisan role in the legislative
7 branch is as important now as it has ever been. We will
8 continue to provide facts, analyses, and recommendations to
9 this committee and to all 535 members so you can execute
10 your congressional oversight of executive branch programs
11 and activities.

12 Thank you for the opportunity to testify this morning
13 and I look forward to your questions.

14 [The prepared statement of Ms. Maurer follows:]

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1 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Ms. Maurer, and I agree
2 with you that you guys do excellent work.

3 I recently had the opportunity to highlight your work
4 on the Navy industrial base issues to our incoming Secretary
5 of the Navy, and I think that was a excellent report.

6 So I am going to begin with just a line of questions.
7 By the way, it is great to have our chairman of the full
8 committee here. Shows the importance of this subcommittee
9 and the topics we are tackling today.

10 I will begin my questioning for all six witnesses so
11 please try to be brief. It is going to focus on bad news,
12 good news, and flexibility.

13 So what do I mean? You have already touched on it,
14 General Spain. You did a good job. The CR, right? I think
15 from a readiness standpoint none of us think this is
16 helpful.

17 What would be worse, in my view, is a government
18 shutdown. So the impact of the CR and then, very
19 importantly -- and General Mingus, you and I had the
20 opportunity to talk about this yesterday -- flexibilities
21 that you would like us to provide you in the future, NDAAs
22 on budgeting, that is a topic that when we deal with these
23 CRs.

24 Unfortunately, it has been a way of life for our
25 military for many years. It is a failure on the part of

1 Congress.

2 But what kind of flexibilities do you need to be more
3 ready that you could use? And this could be very broad or
4 very specific.

5 And then the good news, very quickly, we have had a
6 turnaround in recruiting. I think it has a lot to do with
7 some of the comments I made in my opening statement where
8 the last four years our military was not focused on
9 lethality and warfighting, and why young men and women join
10 to fight and defend their country was focused on other
11 stuff, irrelevant stuff, and it hurt recruiting.

12 Why do you think -- where are you on recruiting and why
13 do you think there has been such a dramatic turnaround?

14 So those are the questions I would like each of you to
15 answer. We will start in the lineup here.

16 General Mingus, if you can hit on all three of those.

17 General Mingus: Thank you, Chairman.

18 A full year-long continuing resolution impact, yes, to
19 the degree and the severity is unknown as was kind of talked
20 about earlier.

21 Based on the anomalies that come out of this, the puts
22 and takes in the various lines in the budget, what is
23 plussed up and not we will have to take a couple of days to
24 kind of fully -- if it is actually enacted before the end of
25 the week the true impact.

1 But new starts, spending limits, spending power and
2 buying power, those are critically the ones that always rise
3 to the top and we have never had a yearlong continuing
4 resolution. This it will be the first for the Department of
5 Defense.

6 So a lot to be determined in terms of what those
7 impacts are going to be.

8 Flexibility -- sir, you and I talked about this last
9 night. We all submit a j-book and a budget almost 18 to 20
10 months before we actually see an enactment in an
11 appropriation. A lot can happen in that 18 to 20 months.

12 Every line of accounting, every piece of equipment,
13 every radio, has its own individual line within the J-Books
14 that come back in our budget line items on the back end of
15 appropriations.

16 For high-tech things -- UAS, counter UAS, high-tech
17 command and control systems that evolve at a rate faster
18 than our budget cycle -- we would like to compress those
19 lines to allow us to move in year of execution those monies
20 to new things that come online in year of execution.

21 Senator Sullivan: If you can work with us, all the
22 services with regard to language on the flex -- those kind
23 of flexibilities are really important, I think needed, and
24 something that we could work on to get in the NDAA.

25 General Mingus: Sir, and I yield my time to the others

1 because I went pretty deep in recruiting --

2 Senator Sullivan: Just for the committee's sake, real
3 quick here just -- I mean, we talked about it but just for
4 the on the record I think it is important for lessons
5 learned on recruiting who you recruit, where you recruit,
6 how we recruit.

7 General Mingus: More professionalization of our
8 recruiting force, expanding the population. All those
9 things that we have been working for the last 18 to 24
10 months we believe are coming to fruition this year.

11 We have seen momentum unlike we have seen in probably a
12 decade. We are at 50 percent ahead of where we were last
13 year, 73 percent of mission. So as I said in my opening
14 statement, just over 44,000 of a mission of 61,000.

15 I think as you and I talked last night, we are going to
16 have the opposite problem we did a couple years ago where
17 come this summer we may have an end strength that is
18 actually bigger than what we have an appropriations for --

19 Senator Sullivan: Maybe we can work on that.

20 Admiral, and, again, I will yield time back. These are
21 important questions but we will get through all of them.

22 Go ahead, Admiral.

23 Admiral Kilby: Sure. Hey, two big buckets. One, the
24 CR. Major impact on us. We have gotten used to partial
25 CRs. As General Mingus says, this is our first full year CR

1 so we will have to figure that out, and we are looking
2 forward to flexibility, anomalies, authorities, to address
3 the kind of things that General Mingus talked about.

4 Let me just use one specific example. Two years ago,
5 probably a little more than two years ago, we were not -- we
6 were thinking about counter UAS. We were not thinking about
7 counter UAS from the perspective that we have grown to
8 appreciate in the Red Sea.

9 So the ability to turn quickly and use money and have
10 the flexibility to address those things, as we are trying to
11 do with the forward strike group where we are bolting on
12 systems that are more effective for counter UAS like Coyote
13 and Road Runner. Those are all appreciated and hard to do
14 in a CR.

15 So I give you that piece, the flexibilities and for us
16 to work through it. There is a merge with the next topic,
17 which is recruiting. We have made some progress in the Navy
18 as the other services have.

19 We have stormed the problem. We understand, and you
20 and I went over, and Ranking Member Hirono and I discussed
21 what we did in the Navy to break down the problem and
22 understand what it takes to make a productive recruiter.

23 So I think there is renewed focus and clarity on that.

24 We have done the things General Mingus has described where
25 we have spread to zip codes to get every available person

1 into the Navy and we are ahead of goal.

2 Right now our projection was 12,000 contracted. We
3 have contracted 14,000. We were supposed to have 12,200
4 shipped. We have shipped 12,700. So we are ahead of goal.

5 I am very concerned about the CR and the impact on that
6 machine and slowing it down. So for us we want to maintain
7 course and speed, accelerate and bring in all the people we
8 need to close down our gaps at sea. CR makes that a little
9 more challenging.

10 Senator Sullivan: Great. I am going to yield back to
11 Senator Hirono. I will get through this line of
12 questioning.

13 I do want to do a recognition, Admiral, to the sailors
14 and Marines who have been deploying all over the world and
15 in the Red Sea in particular, you know, remarkable
16 performance in terms of shooting down all the incoming
17 missiles and drones at your ships.

18 My understanding it is the most combat that the Navy
19 has undertaken in terms of serious missile threats to our
20 ships since World War II and you have done it incredibly
21 well.

22 So to all the sailors and Marines on those deployed
23 ships for the great job they have done, thank you from the
24 entire United States Senate.

25 Senator Hirono?

1 Senator Hirono: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

2 I get that a full year CR is going to present some very
3 unique challenges for all of our services including our
4 Space Force. So we will do what we can to help you all.

5 Admiral Kilby, I recognize the need to build a larger
6 fleet. However, I have significant concerns about the
7 Navy's basically dismal track record of maintaining ships
8 and submarines in the current fleet.

9 We consistently see delays, increased costs, ships
10 without adequate crew, a lack of spare parts, and other
11 issues.

12 General Mahoney, it seems clear that maintaining
13 amphibious ships is not a top Navy priority and I do
14 understand Ms. Maurer said that the Navy and the Marines
15 need to come to an agreement on how these amphibious ships
16 will be maintained.

17 But how do delays in the Marine Corps' amphibious ship
18 maintenance impact your ability to train and deploy Marines
19 and how would you be better supported by and how could you
20 be better supported by the Navy?

21 General Mahoney: Senator, thank you for the question.

22 We are very concerned with the condition of the
23 amphibious fleet and the availability of the amphibious
24 fleet. As of this morning -- I check it every morning --
25 there were 13 of 32 amphibious ships available. In order to

1 get to a goal of 3.0 MEUs -- that is heel to toe MEUs
2 combined with our amphibious shipping off the East Coast --
3 one off the East Coast, one off the West Coast, and one in
4 the FDNF. That number is not going to do it.

5 I look at it in short, medium and kind of longer term,
6 perhaps, solution sets, and we are working closely with the
7 Navy. Of course, we have to get to terms of reference.

8 We cannot classify a ship that has not sailed in 10
9 years and probably never will sail as an available ship of
10 any class, much less an amphib.

11 What I would say is we need to resource amphibious
12 shipping to make it to their service lives and not
13 decommission them early.

14 Secondly, we have to get ahead of the maintenance
15 curve. That means years ahead of port loading, of
16 availability sequences, getting the avails in on time,
17 making sure that we have the parts and the maintenance crews
18 to maintain them and get them out of the avails on time.

19 More toward the midterm, we need to make every ship
20 count with service life extensions and midlife upgrades.

21 Lastly --

22 Senator Hirono: Thank you. I am sorry to interrupt
23 but I think that your needs are being clearly articulated,
24 and as Ms. Maurer suggested we need to have -- it sounds
25 like a good suggestion to me that the Navy and the Marine

1 Corps need to get to an agreement on what we are going to do
2 with the maintenance of these amphibious ships. To have
3 only 13 out of 32 available is what we say unacceptable.

4 So as we sit here can we have a commitment from the
5 Navy that you are going to get into an agreement on this
6 issue with the Marine Corps?

7 Admiral Kilby: Ranking Member Hirono, you have my
8 commitment to that. We do brief off the same data, which is
9 an improvement in the Navy and the Marine Corps.

10 We have the same database so we look at the things
11 similarly from big deck amphibs to LPDs to LSDs. So to me
12 that is a start. We have to do better.

13 Senator Hirono: Thank you. I agree you need to do
14 better.

15 Let me move on to General Mingus.

16 Several of the critical training areas the Army uses in
17 Hawaii, the main one being Pohakuloa on the Big Island, and
18 the leases are set to expire in 2029 and these are vital.
19 These leases are vital to ensure military forces can
20 adequately train in the Pacific. And when we talk about the
21 importance of the Indo-Pacific area we obviously need our
22 people to be trained.

23 And so I would like to ask you will you commit to
24 continue engaging in good faith with state officials,
25 because that is who you are negotiating these important

1 leases with, and the community to ensure land retention is
2 renegotiated in a way -- lease negotiation is done in a way
3 that is fair to the state, the people of Hawaii and the
4 military?

5 General Mingus?

6 General Mingus: Absolutely, ma'am. We are committed
7 to that. Since 2017 we have been working this. As you are
8 well aware, over 500 town halls, meetings, various
9 engagements that are out there.

10 2029 seems like a long ways away but it will be here
11 tomorrow.

12 Senator Hirono: I know that it is not --

13 General Mingus: And so we will continue to -- and are
14 committed to working this with you.

15 Senator Hirono: And to the extent that a land swap may
16 be in the offing, I do believe that we need to provide the
17 Secretary of the Army with the authority for that. Is that
18 correct?

19 General Mingus: Yes, ma'am.

20 Senator Hirono: Mr. Chairman, like you I have a number
21 of other questions. Could I just go over one minute?

22 Senator Sullivan: Sure.

23 Senator Hirono: Thank you.

24 So, General Mingus, last year we spoke at this hearing
25 about the Army's crumbling infrastructure in the Indo-

1 Pacific region. In Hawaii 50 percent of Army facilities are
2 currently classified as failing or failed, and the cost to
3 repair or replace them is over \$5 billion.

4 However, the Army and other services are not using non-
5 DOD-funded contracting mechanisms like energy savings
6 performance contracts to upgrade its infrastructure and lock
7 in lower utility bills.

8 What is the Army's plan to repair or replace
9 infrastructure in Hawaii and the Into-Pacific?

10 General Mingus: Ma'am, as we talked last year there
11 were significant investments in '23-'24. We are committed
12 to that for '25 and beyond.

13 We know that the water and some of the critical
14 infrastructure underneath a lot of these locations are
15 failing. We actually think it is maybe in excess of \$5
16 billion.

17 We have committed over a billion for this next year so
18 we absolutely want to work with you on those infrastructure
19 to include the leadership that goes with this as well.

20 Kwajalein is an example where that was largely paid for
21 with RDT&E dollars. We have actually put a garrison
22 commander there to make sure that the leadership in addition
23 to the resources is there to fix these problems.

24 Senator Hirono: I think the energy projects, for
25 example, are important because the Army is the biggest user

1 of it and the military -- DOD, Army in particular, is the
2 biggest user of energy and whatever sums you can save on
3 energy costs as well can go to other needed, necessary
4 projects.

5 So would you commit to clear the logjam on installation
6 of energy projects funded through non-DOD contract
7 mechanisms?

8 General Mingus: Absolutely take a look at that, ma'am,
9 yes.

10 Senator Hirono: Thank you.

11 Senator Sullivan: Thank you. Thank you, Senator
12 Hirono.

13 Chairman Wicker?

14 Chairman Wicker: Well, Chairman, I surely am glad you
15 gave Senator Hirono a few extra moments. You offered me an
16 opening statement and so I may take those few extra moments.

17 Senator Sullivan: You are the chairman of the
18 committee. You can do whatever you want.

19 The Chairman: Thank you. But I also want to
20 congratulate Chairman Sullivan and Senator Hirono for their
21 leadership in calling this hearing. It is a terrific panel
22 and it has been great so far.

23 Let me say this about the CR. We repeatedly say House
24 and Senate, Republican and Democrat, that we never need to
25 do this again and for some reason something comes up, some

1 group is unwilling to compromise and look at the long
2 picture, and we find ourselves in this position.

3 I will say this about the fact that this is the first
4 yearlong CR for the Department of Defense. I guess we could
5 at least admit that it is a hybrid CR in the sense that
6 there are the anomalies that our witnesses have mentioned
7 and the numbers have been plussed up just a little bit.

8 But this is a shame on our process and it is not in
9 keeping with what the Founders intended. They intended for
10 legislation to be difficult but they intended for the
11 parties and the houses to compromise and have some give and
12 take and finally get in the right direction.

13 In my view, Mr. Chairman and Ms. Ranking Member, the
14 real flaw in the CR that we will be voting on later this
15 week is that it does not provide enough money, regardless of
16 the anomalies and the tiny plus ups here and there,
17 regardless of that it does not provide adequate support for
18 the military and for the challenges we have from four
19 adversary nations -- pacing challenges, plus Russia, plus
20 North Korea, plus Iran that never before have worked
21 together to bring us ill.

22 And it is contrary, Mr. Chairman and Madam Ranking
23 Member, to the voice of the Senate in the National Defense
24 Authorization Act which plussed up national defense out of
25 the Armed Services Committee and from a bipartisan vote on

1 the floor about \$25 billion. We could not get that done in
2 conference and so we are where we are on the authorization.

3 But were it not for the prospect of a reconciliation
4 bill that adds \$150 billion for vital national security
5 purposes I could not vote for the Continuing Resolution as
6 it is.

7 Unless something changes, I will have to swallow my
8 words again this year and go ahead and pass it because the
9 alternative is so unpalatable and so dangerous.

10 But I will say this. Based on what we see and based on
11 what is in this Continuing Resolution, \$150 billion in the
12 reconciliation bill may not be enough and I am hearing some
13 comforting words, Mr. Chairman, from the administration that
14 they realize that too.

15 And I realize they are the budget hawks in this city
16 and they are the defense hawks in this city and we all want
17 fiscal responsibility.

18 But I am telling you \$150 billion in the reconciliation
19 bill may not be enough based on the way we have treated
20 defense over the past few years and based on what we are
21 about to do this week.

22 So thank you all for doing what you can with the
23 authorities, anomalies, and little plus ups that would give
24 you.

25 In the time I have to ask questions, let us talk about

1 the ability -- and I will direct this to you, General Mingus
2 -- the ability of our reserve component to be ready for
3 potential conflicts with near peer adversaries.

4 If a conflict began today, General, is the Army reserve
5 component manned, trained, and equipped appropriately to be
6 successful?

7 General Mingus: I would say it would depend on the
8 type of organization within the Guard and the reserve, sir.

9 We meet our directed readiness tables requirements in terms
10 of the active component, the Guard and the reserve, in terms
11 of what are required inside those immediate forces that are
12 needed inside of 10 days, 30 days, and 45 days.

13 Once you get beyond that then it is not as pretty as
14 you would see. This last year we did have to bring down in
15 the op tempo accounts for the Guard and Reserve -- we
16 typically like to keep them at 85 percent of their training
17 requirements -- we had to bring that down a little bit this
18 year because of the top line that we were at. So there is
19 concern.

20 Now, as a result of that, the Secretary and the chief
21 and all of us are taking a look at what is the right balance
22 between the active Guard and reserve and what mission sets
23 should be in those, and there is an active look at all of
24 that.

25 The Chairman: Well, do you not wish you did not have

1 to begin your answer with it depends. I wish you did not
2 have to begin your answer with it depends.

3 You talked about the balance. How about the balance
4 between the types of reserve units?

5 General Mingus: And that is what I mean, sir. So, for
6 example, our petroleum capacity is almost all in the reserve
7 component. We know that we are going to need some of that
8 capability early on in a fight and so do we need to move
9 some of that from our reserve component into the active
10 component. So that is some of the analysis that that we are
11 looking at.

12 The Chairman: Okay. Let us go to Admiral Kilby.

13 It seems that we are picking on that end of the table
14 so far today.

15 Admiral Kilby, the Navy spends billions of dollars each
16 year to operate and maintain its combat surface ships.
17 Those surface ships are vital to combat deterrence, defense
18 of the homeland. Yet, year after year we hear about
19 significant challenges to the readiness of our Navy's
20 surface fleet.

21 How is the Navy changing and modernizing in this regard
22 and also in the way they attack ship maintenance to get
23 problems under control?

24 Admiral Kilby: Two general areas here, sir. Thanks
25 for that question. One was addressed by General Mahoney.

1 One, locking down that planning in advance of that
2 availability is key. That requires the funding and the
3 contract closed about four months before we start the
4 availability, which allows the contractor to order those
5 long lead parts and develop those teams, in particular for
6 amphibs, steam maintainers and diesel maintainers, which are
7 a shrinking pool in our nation.

8 So lock down that project ahead of time and understand
9 the condition of the ship, which means you have to do
10 inspections and really understand vice opening things and
11 inspecting them during the avail.

12 So that is the first part about that. The second part
13 is this piece I mentioned in my opening statement, which you
14 did not hear, but getting to 80 percent of combat surge-
15 ready ships, aircraft and submarines.

16 We have had some success in the Navy doing that with
17 our fighter fleet and are spreading it to all our aircraft.

18 We want to do the same thing with our ships, same thing
19 with our submarines.

20 That is a bigger challenge because of the complexity of
21 it but that is the goal we are after. That requires some
22 focus and some effort to do that but it also requires
23 looking at processes which may not be helpful now in
24 changing those processes, and that is what we did with
25 aviation, sir.

1 The Chairman: Okay. And then let me just ask General
2 Mingus and Admiral Kilby, on the recruiting is part of
3 making this more successful long term a better career path
4 for the people we place in these positions?

5 General?

6 General Mingus: Yes, sir. I mean, most come in the
7 military for -- to serve, to make a better way for
8 themselves in terms of their lifestyle, some it is to get
9 college benefits --

10 The Chairman: A better career path for the people we
11 put in recruiting position.

12 General Mingus: Oh yes, sir. Absolutely. I
13 misunderstood the question.

14 That is one of the things we have talked about, similar
15 to what the Marine Corps has been doing for decades. If we
16 are going to put talent out in our recruiting formations we
17 have to reward that talent on the back end of it.

18 The Chairman: Absolutely.

19 General Mingus: So absolutely.

20 Admiral Kilby: Same applies for the Navy. Focus on
21 those recruiters, teach that, one, telling their story to a
22 potential recruit is what sells it.

23 Identifying with that individual and connecting with
24 them on a very personal level and having them see their
25 future in that is what we need. So focus on that process.

1 For us we had an incentivized structure which was not
2 to get the max people in. It was to recruit a certain
3 number of people per month.

4 We have taken those limits off. Bring everybody in.
5 Do not save up recruits for next month. Bring them all in
6 as soon as you can and that will either fill up our delayed
7 entry program or get those sailors to boot camp as soon as
8 possible. That has been our success.

9 The Chairman: Okay. Mr. Chairman, I want people in
10 the military who are assigned to our recruiting programs to
11 say, thank gosh I got this great position -- my career path
12 looks bright because I have been put on a fast track by
13 being a recruiter. That is my point.

14 Senator Sullivan: General Mahoney, so you want to
15 comment on that because the Marine Corps has been doing that
16 for decades.

17 General Mahoney: Yes, I would. Of the three things
18 that I think are the pillars of our success in recruiting,
19 the one main one is a professional recruiting force.

20 These people are screened, slated, handpicked,
21 incentivized while they are in the job. Typically, will get
22 meritorious promotions, and when they get out what we find
23 is when they return to the fleet they are some of our
24 strongest officers and staff NCOs.

25 The commandant was a recruiter.

1 Senator Sullivan: Most commandants have been
2 recruiters.

3 General Mahoney: Most commandants have been
4 recruiters. Most of our general officers have been
5 recruiters. Among our most successful staff and COs -- the
6 sergeant major of the Marine Corps was a recruiter.

7 So as far as Senator Wicker seeing a path, that is
8 baked in to how we make our recruiters and they are a breed
9 apart.

10 The Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

11 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

12 And, Admiral, just real quick. Eighty percent -- you
13 hit that with naval aviation on maintenance, right? Or on
14 readiness.

15 Admiral Kilby: We certainly hit it with fighters. I
16 get a report every week on every type, model, series of
17 aircraft in the United States Navy. We are not hitting it
18 in CMV 22s.

19 That is another story. We got -- but that is our goal
20 is to get there across the board for every type, model,
21 series that requires a different level of attention and
22 daily individual management by the Air Forces and the Navy
23 to make that happen. We want to apply that same level of
24 focus to our surface ships and our submarines.

25 Senator Sullivan: Great. Good.

1 Senator Kaine?

2 Senator Kaine: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And like others
3 I am just going to talk about the CR first.

4 You know, I came on this committee in January 2013 and
5 every year you all and your predecessors sit before us and
6 tell us that a CR is a bad thing and we do not listen to
7 you.

8 You know, I mean, at some point you got to measure by
9 the action, not by the words that we say. We have allowed a
10 CR to be normal from October 1 to the end of the calendar
11 year. That is just kind of the norm.

12 But we have often gone beyond that into the next
13 calendar year, and we stand on the threshold of the first
14 time where we have just gone to CR for the entire year.

15 And I agree with what the chairman said earlier -- the
16 chairman of the subcommittee -- that a CR is better than a
17 shutdown. I do agree with that. But why do we have to
18 accept, you know, half-assed over catastrophic?

19 I mean, the House voted on the CR yesterday and they
20 left town. They are out. They adjourned. This was not --
21 and now we are going to hear what the Senate has to say and
22 then try to do the right thing for the country.

23 They are gone because they are, like, okay, we can jam
24 you to vote for a CR that is bad for the defense of this
25 nation by skipping town on a Tuesday.

1 I mean, this speaks very loudly about the priorities of
2 this nation and this is all done in public with our
3 adversaries watching.

4 Admiral Kilby, I think you testified in your opening
5 testimony that under a CR one-fifth of our ships will miss
6 their maintenance schedule. Did I hear that right?

7 Admiral Kilby: Eleven. Specifically, 11 ships those
8 maintenance availabilities are at risk.

9 Senator Kaine: Okay. So we want to get to 80 percent
10 ready on ships and subs. Where are we now?

11 Admiral Kilby: Depending on the day, around 67
12 percent.

13 Senator Kaine: On both ships and subs, kind of --

14 Admiral Kilby: Ships and submarines are a little less.

15 Senator Kaine: Okay. What will one-fifth of our ships
16 missing their maintenance schedule under the CR -- what will
17 that do to the quest to get to 80 percent readiness for
18 ships and subs?

19 Admiral Kilby: Well, it will certainly be a setback.
20 We will take a penalty there. We will have to bow wave that
21 maintenance to the next year depending on the availability
22 and scheduling of that ship.

23 Worse off, we skip that availability which means it is
24 doubled down for the next one, which means we will have
25 growth work and a lot of things we did not anticipate.

1 Senator Kaine: All right. So we are being told that
2 this is the public -- we are being told in public this is
3 the impact of voting yes on this CR that is coming to us,
4 that we are just accepting that the quest to get to 80
5 percent is going to be set back because maintenance
6 availabilities for one-fifth of the ships under a CR are not
7 going to be, according to protocol.

8 Admiral Kilby: The only -- and I do not want to say
9 silver lining in that because I do not see a lot of silver
10 lining -- if we get a flexibility to move money we may be
11 able to address that. But it will impact something else.

12 Senator Kaine: Yeah. You will pull it out of
13 something else, of course.

14 But, you know, we are told, well, it is better than a
15 shutdown. Hey, it is Wednesday morning. I mean, on the
16 Senate side the appropriators basically had a deal at the
17 end of last year and that deal is still basically on the
18 table.

19 My hope is that there will at least be a vote in the
20 Senate to do a short-term CR and then actually get an
21 omnibus for the rest of the year.

22 I mean, an omnibus is kind of a funny thing, word, to
23 apply to a budget for less than half of the year but it
24 would be far preferable to a CR because you would have new
25 starts. You would have other authorities within an omnibus

1 that you are not going to get in the CR and we ought to be
2 able to do that.

3 And the House decided on Tuesday night, we are
4 splitting so we can force the Senate to accept a substandard
5 CR that will hurt the military. Great week, man.

6 Great, great week of work to leave town on Tuesday
7 night feeling good about yourself because you forced the
8 Senate to try to accept a substandard work product year
9 after year after year after year.

10 General Mingus, I want to ask you one question about
11 counter UAS readiness because the Army is the DOD's
12 executive agent.

13 Talk to me about how you are ensuring coordination
14 between the services and developing a joint counter small
15 UAS doctrine and solutions to addressing the UAS threat.

16 General Mingus: Thank you, sir.

17 As the executive agent you are well aware of the joint
18 counter UAS officer, the JCO, that is run by the -- but it
19 is a joint entity and everybody that is sitting at this
20 table there is probably very few weeks that do not go by
21 where we do not come together to talk about this problem
22 set, whether it is in the venue of what Replicator 2.0 is
23 going to bring across 100-plus sites across the country to
24 now what is part of the -- going to be part of the Golden
25 Dome.

1 But this conversation on the counter UAS side is
2 absolutely a joint problem. Yes, we have an Army officer in
3 charge of it but he is in a joint billet and he is speaking
4 for and trying to solve this problem for the joint force,
5 and I collectively think this team is trying to get after
6 that.

7 Senator Kaine: Give your effort a grade. That will be
8 my last question. Give your -- give the joint effort a
9 grade right now.

10 General Mingus: I would give it a grade in two ways.
11 One, compared to where we were two years ago in the B to B+
12 category compared to where we need to be it is probably in
13 the C.

14 Given the rate of technology changes in this space and
15 where our adversaries are going in this space we cannot go
16 fast enough when it comes to counter UAS.

17 Senator Kaine: Thank you very much. Thanks, Mr.
18 Chair.

19 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Senator Kaine.

20 Senator Scott?

21 Senator Scott: So my Democrat colleagues do not like
22 CRs but the prior majority leader, a Democrat, would not
23 even bring up a spending bill that we could have done last
24 summer to make sure we did not ever have to do a CR at all.

25 After four years of the Biden administration appeasing

1 our enemies and making our forces less lethal I am glad
2 President Trump's back and restoring peace through strength.

3 He has been clear that he takes the threat posed by
4 Communist China seriously, ensuring the United States is
5 posed to combat these threats. I look forward to hearing
6 how you are doing with that.

7 But my first question for General Mingus and Admiral
8 Kilby, since President Trump was elected recruitment numbers
9 are way up. So is that a result of President Trump's
10 election?

11 General Mingus: I think it is a combination of things,
12 sir. I think it is the efforts as I talked about in my
13 opening statement that have been -- being put into place for
14 the last 18 to 24 months. But we have seen a momentum over
15 the last couple months that has been pretty remarkable.

16 Admiral Kilby: I agree with General Mingus. We really
17 took a round turn on this last year. We had 373 more
18 sailors than we predicted to get at last year.

19 So we had an apparatus that was aligned to try to get
20 after this. I will take any win to get sailors in the Navy
21 that want to serve our country. So I do not know that I can
22 map that to the election or not but I am going to ride that
23 wave as long as I can.

24 Senator Scott: So my background before I got into
25 politics was I ran businesses and, you know, the expectation

1 was you had to beat your competition by improving every day.
2 You had to get your costs better. You had to get your
3 quality better. Everything you did you had to get better.

4 So, General Mingus and Admiral Kilby, can you tell me
5 in the last 12 months what would you say for -- what you are
6 responsible for what would you say is the big improvements?

7 General Mingus: Sir, I would say our transformation
8 and contact effort. We have infused the latest and greatest
9 technology when it comes to mobility, firepower, our
10 network, our UAS -- counter UAS efforts into multiple
11 formations, infuse that technology at a rate faster than we
12 typically would do in quantities that is greater than we
13 would typically do because we want to learn from them bottom
14 up to refine the decisions that we are going to make
15 programmatically down the road.

16 So that is going to expand into more formations as part
17 of TiC -- transformation in contact 2.0 this year and next
18 year. But that has been over the last 12 months what I
19 would say that has been our biggest win.

20 Admiral Kilby: Two things. One, coming from the same
21 type of thinking we are trying to build in the Navy, a
22 focused mindset, skill set, and tool set to get after that
23 continuous improvement.

24 There are some common themes here that we have applied
25 across the board from aviation. So the recruiting is an

1 improvement and I would say on-time completion of ship
2 availabilities as well as some success in submarine
3 availabilities.

4 But we have got a long way to go there, sir, to apply
5 that model consistently every single day.

6 Senator Scott: Thanks.

7 Admiral Kilby, we have seen the Pentagon failing to
8 recruit, pass an audit or deliver ships, equipment,
9 missiles, et cetera, on time and on budget.

10 On top of that, while the Marine Corps and Air Force
11 are 100 percent recapitalized on their C-130s, the Navy
12 needs over 30 C-130s and has yet to program for this
13 critical tactical air lift platform.

14 Today, the Navy only has one on contract. So can you
15 explain why that is?

16 Admiral Kilby: Sir, we try to balance our program
17 across the board -- all aircraft, all ships, all submarines.

18 I will take that question for the record and come back to
19 you with specifics about C-130. But, again, it is building
20 the most lethal program we can afford.

21 Senator Scott: General Mahoney, what would you say as
22 far as if you take the last 12 months how are you in a
23 better position and your response forward in a better
24 position than you were a year ago?

25 General Mahoney: Senator, two things.

1 The first is the second clean audit opinion two years
2 in a row and I think we are in the midst of having a hat
3 trick.

4 Why do I say that? One of the things -- I call it the
5 audit dividend -- we know exactly what we own, exactly where
6 it is, exactly who takes care of it, and what it is worth.
7 In that audit we can tell the condition of those pieces of
8 equipment so we have an increased visibility into the
9 operational readiness as a result of the audit.

10 The second thing is our third Marine littoral regiment
11 has just undergone a CRTX. They have been delivered their
12 long-range precision fires, their air defense.

13 So the concept of force design has gone forward. I
14 wish we could accelerate it and deepen the magazine but we
15 have seen that success on time.

16 Now we need to marry that capability up with organic
17 littoral maneuver in the form of the light amphibious
18 warships. But those are the two things -- force design and
19 audit.

20 Senator Scott: Thank you Chairman.

21 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Senator Scott.

22 Senator Sheehy?

23 Senator Sheehy: General Mahoney, am I to understand
24 the Marine Corps is the only branch to have passed an audit?

25 General Mahoney: That is correct, Senator.

1 Senator Sheehy: I get really tired of --

2 General Mahoney: The only DOD branch, sir.

3 Senator Sheehy: I get really tired of Marines
4 lecturing me how much better they are than I am. My wife is
5 a Marine so I already get it every day. So --

6 Senator Sullivan: I am glad your wife has wisdom.

7 Senator Sheehy: Well, I was in the Navy so I had to
8 marry up, right?

9 Counter UAS -- General Mingus, you brought it up.
10 General Mingus was my boss, actually, back in the day when I
11 went to Ranger school.

12 Counter UAS -- what branch -- what functional branch of
13 the Army do you guys place the counter UAS responsibility
14 in?

15 General Mingus: We have six warfighting functions
16 inside the Army so intel, command and control, maneuver,
17 fires, protection is where counter UAS sits right now.

18 But as we think about the future in the Army, the land
19 force, the vast majority of casualties that occur on a
20 battlefield is direct fire.

21 I think that a future battlefield the most casualties
22 are going to occur from the air, and so the notion of the
23 convergence of offensive and defensive fires, taking it out
24 of that protection warfighting function and making it part
25 of that scheme of fires and scheme of maneuver, I think, is

1 the way of the future. But today, to answer your question,
2 it is in the protection function.

3 Senator Sheehy: Okay. Admiral Kilby, where does the
4 Navy view counter UAS as a functional area?

5 Admiral Kilby: Because of our platform, Senator, we
6 keep them owned by the resource sponsors. So it is a
7 division of labor between the N9, which owns all our
8 warfighting platforms, and the N4, which owns our shore
9 installations. So there is a mix between those two.

10 Senator Sheehy: And, General Mahoney, where does the
11 Marine Corps place that?

12 General Mahoney: Our counter small UAS -- two parts.
13 Operational units with two programs of record, MADIS and
14 LMADIS, in our installations with installations counter UAS.

15 Just as a comment, as General Mingus brought up, we are
16 part of Project Convergence which has a counter small UAS
17 element to it in R&D and experimentation.

18 We are a big part of Replicator 2.0 which also invests
19 in counter small UAS, and we are invested in the program
20 office as well.

21 Senator Sheehy: And, General Spain, in Space Force and
22 Air Force where do you guys place counter UAS as a
23 functional area?

24 General Guetlein: From a Space Force perspective it is
25 very limited. We have very limited involvement.

1 Senator Sheehy: Right. Yeah.

2 General Spain: Senator, we put it in the protection
3 function as well. It is with our defenders. But as was
4 mentioned by the other panelists, we are in the process of
5 evolving that to the operational function.

6 And so it is a blend of our both defender force and our
7 operational force as we go forward.

8 Senator Sheehy: Well, I ask that because I actually
9 was one of the manufacturers of the MADIS program back in my
10 former life before I came here and so I spent a lot of time
11 on the range with your air defense LAAB platoon Marines
12 working with that and what I found as we worked with all the
13 branches as each branch, understandably, had a very
14 different view of where the COAS function fell and how they
15 viewed it.

16 You know, the Air Force was very much looking at it
17 from a security forces perspective, fixed installation
18 defense. The Navy, of course, was focused on it from a
19 shipboard.

20 When the Boxer had its incident with Iran in 2019 the
21 Army, of course, had more of a EW. They really viewed it
22 kind of as an electronic warfare issue.

23 And what I found was as each branch looked at it
24 through their own lens, the joint capability's office really
25 struggled to coalesce that into an acquisition vision that

1 actually worked and they ended up just buying any shiny
2 object that was dangled in front of their face and it led to
3 kind of the schizophrenic approach to it.

4 It is not a criticism. It is just a reality that as
5 that technology was developing quickly it was hard to meet
6 all the needs.

7 So I think trying to determine whether it is a specific
8 MOS or actually assigning a functional area within the
9 branches that say this is a fundamental change in
10 battlefield tactic technology.

11 As we see in Ukraine, I mean, every single day whether
12 it is FPVs or beyond line of sight drones it is not
13 transforming warfare but it is functionally transforming how
14 maneuver units will behave on the ground, and I think
15 treating it as a subspecialty that is branching off whatever
16 convenient, you know, area is there by focusing on what
17 really is a core capability, in my opinion, would help
18 coalesce the operational vision for what counter drone looks
19 like. It will also help streamline the acquisition process
20 so we can find that good technology quickly and field it
21 quickly.

22 But then also there is the offensive aspect where, you
23 know, we think of offensive drones as Reapers and Predators
24 dropping Hellfires and that we are defending against small
25 drones, but we are not, as far as I can tell, adopting small

1 UAS organic to our maneuver elements.

2 Just like every infantry squad has an automatic weapon
3 every infantry squad should have an organic SUAS offensive
4 capability, a backpack full of FPVs that they can fly at and
5 into the enemy maneuver units and disrupt them just like we
6 are seeing all over the world in battlefields, from Iranian
7 proxy groups to the Russia-Ukraine war.

8 From my old buddies still in uniform I do not hear that
9 we have an organic offensive small UAS capability within our
10 maneuver units and I think that is going to be a great
11 disservice to our young men and women when the next
12 conflicts arises.

13 So I yield back. Thank you.

14 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Senator Sheehy.

15 I am going to continue my line of questioning that I
16 started with General Mahoney to you just, again, on the --
17 we have already touched on it a lot but it is okay. I want
18 to hear from all the services.

19 The negative impact on the CR, the budget flexibility
20 that you would want or request as part of this year's NDAA,
21 and then any lessons learned on the good news that we are
22 all starting to see, I think, across the services on
23 recruiting and to kind of, you know, make sure we are
24 learning across services on that because -- I do not think
25 you got enough press but if you have an all-volunteer force

1 and we are hitting a recruiting crisis of tens of thousands
2 of Americans who we were short that is an existential threat
3 to our military.

4 Fortunately, it looks like we are beyond that but we
5 need to embed the lessons learned from all the services on
6 how we got out of that danger zone.

7 So, General, to you on those three questions.

8 General Mahoney: Senator, as far as the CR we have
9 canvassed pretty much all the negative things. I would just
10 like to hammer down on one.

11 We talked about anomalies and flexibility in order to
12 move between appropriations or accounts. We also need to be
13 mindful of what the top line is.

14 If there is only so much top line from which to flex or
15 with -- to move we are going to rob from one account to pay
16 for another.

17 Examples might be inflation that outpaces the plus up,
18 pay raises that were not planned for or budgeted but are
19 must pay bills -- that money will come from somewhere -- and
20 nonbudgeted contingencies that we pay out of our own --
21 primarily on M accounts will have to be accounted for
22 somewhere in the rules of that continuing resolution. A
23 knock-on effect specific to the Marine Corps is if -- and it
24 has already been touched on by Admiral Kilby -- if ship
25 maintenance or ship building or procurement or anything that

1 touches amphibious shipping it will have a knock-on effect
2 to the Marine Corps, as I spoke about with Senator Hirono
3 earlier.

4 As far as flexibility goes, I would reference the Lord
5 Hale study on PBB reform and I will just bring up three
6 things that come to mind immediately.

7 I think they have 16 recommendations in there which are
8 all really good. Multiyear availability of one-year
9 accounts so that you are not forced into making bad
10 decisions at the end of the year and buying things that you
11 really do not need but have a period of availability to
12 where you can make better executive and managerial decisions
13 against that appropriation.

14 Greater transfer authority so that we can move between
15 appropriations or move between sub activity groups in order
16 to solve a problem early so that we do not have to come to
17 Congress for an above threshold massive reprogramming late
18 in the year that may be related to need or not solve the
19 problem.

20 And lastly, and I will let it go, is multiyear COLIS
21 appropriations to have flexibility within a portfolio to
22 strengthen where you are weak and move money around to make
23 sure that you can get your objectives attained within an
24 account.

25 So multiyear availability, greater transfer authority,

1 and multiyear COLIS appropriation. We did the last one in -
2 - if you think of MRAP and you think of JADO back in the
3 day, that worked pretty well to get things done at an
4 accelerated pace.

5 I am running on here but recruiting, for us three
6 things. We have a brand that we will not back off from. We
7 believe that that brand is attractive.

8 We believe it is a magnet to a wide demographic of
9 young Americans who will prove themselves physically,
10 mentally, and morally qualified. We will not back off of
11 the standard.

12 And counter intuitively if you maintain a standard at a
13 high level that attracts people who want to perform to that
14 standard.

15 Senator Sullivan: That is a great lesson and I think
16 we have to always keep that in mind. All the services, no
17 matter what our recruiting challenges are, it is counter
18 intuitive but it works. So thank you for that.

19 General Mahoney: And lastly, Senator, I already talked
20 about it in detail and that is our recruiting force, a breed
21 apart who are hand screened, selected, incentivized,
22 promoted, and, as I said, when they get back in the fleet,
23 as you know, they are some of the best staff NCOs and
24 officers we have and they become a sergeant major in the
25 Marine Corps and commandant in the Marine Corps.

1 Senator Sullivan: Real quick, General Guetlein, can
2 you just hit on these three questions? Try to be concise.
3 I am going over my time here. I want to be respectful to my
4 colleagues but I do want to get through this issue of CR,
5 budget flexibilities and recruiting.

6 General Guetlein: Yes, Chairman, I can go pretty
7 quick.

8 From a CR, it is very -- it is a huge challenge. It is
9 very, very inefficient. It does impact us especially
10 because we are the smallest force with the smallest budget.
11 So any churn in our budget is a huge hit to us.

12 As far as what we would ask for flexibilities, I agree
13 with the rest of the staff. New START -- we are seeing an
14 enormous amount of threats emerging every single year and it
15 is very hard to get after those threats when you have to
16 wait two to four years to get the budget to get after those
17 threats. So anything you can do, budget flexibility for New
18 START authorities.

19 PE consolidation -- the ability to move money between
20 programs would be hugely beneficial, and then the multiyear
21 procurement -- the multiyear execution authority that
22 General Mahoney talked about.

23 As far as recruiting and retention we have actually got
24 a much easier problem because we have a much smaller force.
25 But we are seeing two recruits -- two volunteers for every

1 recruit that we take into the United States Space Force.

2 So we are able to be very, very, very selective for
3 high quality. Fifteen percent -- almost nearly 15 percent
4 of our recruits have some college level of education to
5 include all the way up to masters and PhDs.

6 Our recruiting objectives were met the last four years
7 in a row -- 104 percent for our enlisted, 101 percent for
8 our officers -- and we are looking at continuing growth in
9 the future and our retention rate has been in excess of 98
10 percent.

11 Senator Sullivan: Wow. Great. That is great news.
12 Great job, General.

13 Senator Schmitt?

14 Senator Schmitt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

15 And, Admiral Kilby, I want to direct this question to
16 you. I feel like the fever has broke finally on this
17 obsession that the previous administration had with DEI.
18 That is a good thing.

19 The previous administration also treated climate change
20 as a national security priority. I actually had one of the
21 more ridiculous exchanges in my first couple years here with
22 Secretary Del Toro, who told me Admiral Nimitz would have
23 cared about climate change too. It was sort of like the
24 "Twilight Zone."

25 But we have issues, right, in ship building. Now that

1 we are focused -- refocused on warfighting capability what
2 should Congress do to prioritize modernizing the fleet as
3 opposed to this political stuff?

4 Admiral Kilby: Two things, sir, super important for us
5 is to keep our maintenance going. We have got to get our
6 ships available. I am not going to build a whole mess of
7 new ships in two years so I have got to get the ships I have
8 up to speed and available.

9 The other thing we can do is continue to invest in
10 munitions. I think the lead time for them is shorter than a
11 ship so we must renew our magazines so we are ready to fight
12 if called.

13 Senator Schmitt: Okay. And then for -- sticking with
14 you, Admiral Kilby, and then also for General Spain, if we
15 had to fight a peer war in the next two years what would be
16 our greatest capability gap and what should Congress do to
17 address that?

18 Admiral Kilby: I will start first.

19 Again, munitions -- long-range munitions, preferred
20 munitions, are an area where we need to increase our
21 productivity as a nation, and then from a -- just a general
22 sense, our capabilities are pretty good with the exception
23 of that munitions quantity but our capacity is a problem.
24 So getting those ships and funding available out on time
25 will result in a greater capability overall.

1 General Spain: Senator, thanks for the question.

2 To your point, in the next two years the greatest
3 challenge for us is going to be regaining the sustainment
4 edge in our current fleet.

5 The lead time required for parts and supply over --
6 within that time frame required would require an infusion to
7 help us with our aircraft availability, our mission capable
8 rates, and training our flying force to be ready within that
9 window.

10 In addition, some flexibility on new opportunities with
11 technology in terms of asymmetric capabilities that would
12 enable us to actually inculcate our Force Design, which
13 calls for both high-end exquisite capability paired with
14 low-end, low cost per effect massive capability that can
15 augment the air component commanders who are in the field.

16 Senator Schmitt: Sounds like NGAD might be --

17 General Spain: The exquisite would be -- NGAD would be
18 an example of the exquisite, yes, sir.

19 Senator Schmitt: General, I guess, with the time that
20 I have remaining -- General Mingus and Mahoney, I just
21 wanted to ask if -- sort of the similar theme of
22 flexibility, if you had unrestricted funding for readiness
23 how should that be spent, first, in order to get that high-
24 end capability what would we be doing?

25 Like, if we are in an era of scarcity, right, that we

1 have to accept at some level what is the level of priority
2 or what are the priorities?

3 General Mingus: For us I would say -- well, the second
4 one would be just what Admiral Kilby talked about, our
5 magazine depth -- precision-guided munitions, long-range
6 precision fires, and the ability to scale rapidly at time of
7 crisis and conflict.

8 So it is one thing to bring production rates up but it
9 is another to have the ability to rapidly scale at time of
10 crisis and conflict.

11 And the other would be --

12 Senator Schmitt: And let me just -- how would you rate
13 where we are at right now on that front? Because I have
14 heard that. I agree with that. Where do you think we are
15 at with that?

16 General Mingus: Well, just using 155 as an example,
17 before the Russia-Ukraine conflict we were producing at
18 14,000 rounds a month.

19 We are now at -- we had a higher water mark in November
20 of 42,000, ramp into 70,000 by this summer, and 100K a month
21 by this fall. So that is a two-year journey. We have got
22 to be able to do that in months, not years.

23 And it is about automation and robotics. People are
24 hard to bring in, let go, bring in, let go, and so the key
25 to all this is automating those both organic and defense

1 industrial systems and bases to be able to do that.

2 And then the second place that I would put that money
3 is in our transformation efforts that I described earlier,
4 our TiC 1.0 and 2.0.

5 The end result of that infuse of technology into those
6 formations is they are more lethal, they are more agile,
7 they are lighter, they can get to places much faster, and
8 they are just better formations that are designed purpose
9 built for the next fight, not the last fight.

10 General Mahoney: Senator, if I had a three-part wish
11 list the first one would be to accelerate our Force Design
12 to ensure victory and more killing power in the contact
13 layer.

14 I agree completely with depth of magazine across
15 people, parts, programs. There are several things that we
16 do not have enough of that we need to build more and deepen
17 that.

18 If anything, what Ukraine, what the Levant, what the
19 Houthis, show us is that the short sharp illusion is just
20 that, a short sharp illusion. We need to shoot. We need to
21 be able to take a hit. We need to reset and get back in the
22 fight.

23 Secondly, our fourth-gen platforms are -- and
24 specifically our barracks for our Marines -- if we are going
25 to count on them to generate a lethal force we have got to

1 provide them the quality of life and the living conditions
2 that they rate.

3 And thirdly -- and we have already talked about it
4 extensively -- is the ability for us to move, maneuver and
5 sustain on 73 percent of the Earth's surface -- that is
6 amphibious shipping -- and project power from sovereign
7 American soil when we do that, as well as organic littoral
8 maneuver in order to move shore to shore in order to
9 maneuver to a position of advantage in order to sustain in
10 the contact group.

11 Senator Schmitt: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

12 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Senator Schmitt.

13 Senator Hirono?

14 Senator Hirono: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

15 I would say that as our services with the exception of
16 Space Force are facing recruiting challenges why should we
17 discourage or why would we be discouraging women and
18 minorities from enlisting with all this anti-DEI stuff?

19 Admiral Kilby the Navy's Shipyard Infrastructure
20 Optimization Program, or SIOP, projects were unfortunately
21 not included in Secretary Hegseth's list of protected and
22 prioritized programs following his directive to implement an
23 8 percent budget cut across the board at the Pentagon.

24 You testified today on the importance of SIOP and, of
25 course, clearly, we need to do a better job of repair and

1 maintaining our ships.

2 So with the flexibility that you are requesting in the
3 CR even if SIOP is not on Secretary Hegseth's list of
4 priorities are you planning to prioritize critical SIOP
5 projects across the fleet including, for example, completion
6 of the dry dock and planning and design for our waterfront
7 production facility at Pearl Harbor?

8 Indeed, we need to get on with continuing to modernize
9 our four public shipyards so that you will have available
10 ships to do what you need to do. So would you use the
11 flexibility that you request in the CR to prioritize SIOP?

12 Admiral Kilby: We want to continue on our SIOP
13 program, ma'am.

14 I have talked about the 40 projects we have done, the
15 additional \$6.3 billion that are in the budget that we want
16 to continue on, and the remaining projects we need to
17 execute. So we are committed to SIOP.

18 Senator Hirono: Good. I am looking to you for that
19 because what is the point in enabling us to build more ships
20 if we cannot maintain the fleet that we currently have.

21 A skilled workforce is foundational to military
22 readiness. However, this administration has implemented a
23 DOD hiring freeze and is planning to fire up to 60,000 DOD
24 employees.

25 DOD is eliminating people across the spectrum, from

1 firing general, in fact, officers without cause to removing
2 new and motivated employees. These would be the employees
3 who had just gotten hired and are being trained, and you
4 would think that we would want to keep those folks.

5 But the people in probationary status are among the
6 first to go, as happened across the administration. For
7 example, the VA, which is already strapped with the need to
8 hire people, they just eliminated some 2,400 employees and
9 about to eliminate 83,000 employees, going forward.

10 So, gentlemen and Ms. Maurer, how are these personnel
11 actions impacting the hiring, training, and retaining of a
12 skilled national security workforce, briefly? You can say
13 it is not helping.

14 General Mahoney: I will start.

15 Specific to the Marine Corps, we started our leaning
16 out process six budget cycles ago in accordance with Force
17 Design and talent management. So the start game of this
18 exercise for us we are pretty lean so any cut is going to
19 have some impacts.

20 However, of the 2,300 employees that we have identified
21 we have got protection, either exemption or exclusion, down
22 to a number south of 75. Not without impact but manageable
23 from the Marine Corps' standpoint.

24 What I am also concerned about is the exclusions or
25 exemptions for a hiring freeze. We lose about 7 to 10

1 percent of our civilian workforce just through natural
2 attrition each year so we have to figure out a way to
3 replenish that or the number will just keep going down.

4 Senator Hirono: Well, hundreds of thousands of federal
5 employees are being fired. These firings are not based on
6 any kind of a job performance evaluation. So it is going to
7 happen to DOD, I would say.

8 And so anybody else wants to --

9 Admiral Kilby: I will just connect there our last
10 exchange --

11 Senator Hirono: Admiral?

12 Admiral Kilby: -- Ranking Member. The shipyards are
13 exempt from the probationary employees and they are exempt
14 from the hiring freeze.

15 So we are trying to shape this in a manner that allows
16 us to continue the most important work as we work through
17 guidance from the administration. Also exempted from the
18 hiring freeze is the military Sealift Command, an important
19 force for us to maintain our fleet. So I think those are
20 efforts on the services' part to manage --

21 Senator Hirono: So basically all three of you are
22 needing to identify some very critical people that you want
23 to make sure that these firings do not hit. Is that what
24 you are doing?

25 Admiral Kilby: Yes, Senator.

1 Senator Hirono: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

2 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Senator Hirono.

3 I am going to finish this line of questioning with you,
4 General Spain, on the CR budget flexibilities and specific,
5 if you can get there, and then Air Force recruiting and
6 lessons learned, and then, Ms. Maurer, I would like you to
7 answer the same question as well.

8 General Spain: Mr. Chairman, thanks for the question.

9 We talked a little bit in the opening statement about
10 the bad but echo the comments from across the table on top
11 line restrictions.

12 Flexibility, in my mind, really comes down to treating
13 our readiness accounts and quality of life accounts in terms
14 of MILCON and FSRM with the same flexibility as operations.

15 The readiness impacts within those accounts have the same
16 deleterious effect across the force as stopping current
17 operations.

18 And so by allowing flexibility across the pillars of
19 those readiness accounts -- that is manpower,
20 infrastructure, flying and training, and parts and supply --
21 we can mitigate some of that risk that comes along with the
22 CR.

23 From a recruiting standpoint, the Air Force is above
24 glide slope on our recruiting goals for the year. We
25 increased the number by 20 percent and in fact we are still

1 above the 20 percent increase, and we have the largest
2 delayed entry pool that we have had in 10 years and the most
3 recruiting that we have done at this point in the year in
4 the last 15 years.

5 So we are in a good position.

6 Senator Sullivan: Are there lessons learned from what
7 you did to get over that hump?

8 General Spain: Yes, sir. So we have increased the
9 number of recruiters. We have increased the training, which
10 reflects some of the things that were said before.

11 I do not know if -- I was a recruiter when I first
12 started out in the Air Force waiting to go to pilot
13 training. It is a tough job and you need the right people
14 doing that work and we are bringing the right people in and
15 we are training them even better than we had before.

16 Senator Sullivan: Great.

17 Ms. Maurer, do you have any views on the -- in general,
18 the line of questioning that I have been going through on CR
19 but in particular -- we have heard the challenges of that.
20 But in particular what I want to hear from you is your sense
21 on flexibilities, that I know that we could provide more in
22 the budget to give our services the ability to address some
23 of the challenges that you put in your report but also give
24 them flexibility that if we have to -- you know, and
25 certainly I would not advocate for it but another CR,

1 another kind of budgetary constraint issue that they have
2 more flexibility to address them.

3 And then also if GAO has looked at lessons learned from
4 the recruiting kind of challenge that we had over the last
5 three or four years and how that has come about. What are
6 those?

7 Ms. Maurer: Sure. Thank you for the question, Mr.
8 Chairman.

9 On the issue of CR, talking about a full year CR makes
10 me think back to work that we did over a decade ago looking
11 at the impacts on sequestration.

12 Obviously, it is a little bit apples to oranges but we
13 issued a report 2015-ish that looked at how sequestration
14 impacted DOD, and at that time we had a recommendation that
15 DOD collect the lessons learned from sequestration and
16 stockpile them in case they needed those lessons later on
17 down the road.

18 In 2017 we reached out to the comptroller's shop. They
19 said they had taken action to implement that recommendation.

20 So that is sort of a takeaway item for the department is to
21 look back at what DOD did back in 2017 in terms of lessons
22 learned on sequestration and see what -- if any of those
23 lessons can be applied to today.

24 In terms of flexibilities, we have heard a lot and my
25 teams have heard a lot about the types of flexibilities that

1 the generals and the admiral talked about today.

2 Obviously, GAO tries to stay a little bit agnostic in
3 terms of specific flexibilities but what I will say is that
4 whatever flexibilities are offered should be directed
5 towards ensuring the ability of the services to meet the
6 readiness challenges that they face.

7 I talked about earlier in my opening statement there is
8 a significant imbalance between resources and mission and so
9 anything that we have done to help bring that into better
10 balance would be very helpful.

11 In terms of recruiting we are very encouraged to see
12 that the recruiting numbers have come up. We have issued a
13 whole series of reports in areas where the services have
14 critical shortfalls in the number of people they need.

15 So, for example, at the Navy, for every six sailors
16 that they need for the fleet they only have five assigned.
17 We found efficiencies in the number of air defenders, that
18 the Space Force has a really good force generation model but
19 they do not have enough Guardians to actually carry that
20 out, much less on the civilian and the contractor side. So
21 their improvements and that the change in the trend line in
22 recruiting can be helpful in that regard.

23 In some of our work on recruiting we think it is
24 important for the different programs, the different
25 services, to get an understanding of what is working, what

1 is not working, and then double down on the things that are
2 working and then share those lessons with each other. That
3 way you will get a better outcome.

4 Senator Sullivan: Okay, great. Thank you on that, and
5 I still have a number of questions. Senator Hirono, do you
6 want to do another round or do you want to submit questions?

7 Senator Hirono: I will --

8 Senator Sullivan: I am going to stay for a while since
9 I have all these very important members of our military. I
10 think --

11 Senator Hirono: I will be submitting -- I will be
12 submitting questions for the record. Thank you very much,
13 Mr. Chairman.

14 Senator Sullivan: Great.

15 Well, let me continue with some additional questions.

16 General Mingus, one of the things that I want to try to
17 nail down is my understanding is the top line number for the
18 end strength of the Army was reduced because of the
19 recruiting challenges. We almost had to do it in a forced
20 way.

21 Now that we have met these numbers again and you have
22 almost a surplus, will you be requesting from us and so you
23 have the flexibility to increase your top line to a certain
24 number? What is your flexibility on that? Because I would
25 like to see it.

1 If you need more funding to get to that higher top
2 line, I think we would all be certainly willing to provide
3 it. But what kind of authorities do you need to get back to
4 a higher end strength when the reduction in your end
5 strength was actually a result and function of the
6 recruiting challenges?

7 Now that you are going in the positive direction we
8 want to take advantage of that to increase your end
9 strength.

10 What do you need? Money? Authorities? Both.

11 General Mingus: Thank you, Chairman.

12 Money, yes, in the MILPERS account, because what we
13 asked for in this year's budget was an appropriations for an
14 end strength of 442,000.

15 What I believe will happen if the trajectories remain
16 consistent with where they are at today we are going to end
17 this year somewhere between 449,000 and 452,000 so almost
18 10,000 over what we believe will be appropriated from a
19 military pay and allowance account standpoint.

20 So there will be a deficit there that we will have to
21 come back and ask for help.

22 Senator Sullivan: Okay.

23 General Mingus: On the authorities --

24 Senator Sullivan: I would strongly encourage you to do
25 that. Nobody wants a smaller army and the fact that you had

1 to shrink due to recruiting challenges nobody wanted that,
2 and now that you are fixing it we need to reward you, in my
3 view, to get back to a higher end strength.

4 General Mingus: Yes, sir.

5 And for authorities, the Secretary of the Army -- all
6 the service secretaries -- can authorize a 2 percent
7 deviation from the NDAs. So that would put you at about
8 451,000. So we think unless it goes above that we will be
9 okay on authorities.

10 Senator Sullivan: Okay. Great.

11 General Mahoney, I want to go to a topic you and I and
12 the commandant have discussed a lot. That is where we are
13 in Force Design and, you know, a very innovative Marine
14 Corps initiative, started with General Berger, but not
15 without criticism.

16 And any time you innovate you are going to get
17 criticized. There is no doubt about that. I think the
18 Marine Corps has gotten ahead of the curve on a lot of
19 issues relating to drones and loitering munitions and, you
20 know, light, flexible forces that can move with weapons
21 systems that can take out Chinese shipping. All very
22 innovative.

23 However, one of the criticisms was that the divest to
24 invest strategy divested too much combat power in the Marine
25 Corps' primary mission of a 911 force with amphibs to go any

1 anywhere in the world at a moment's notice to kick in the
2 door with sufficient combat power was reduced and a lot of
3 criticisms came from, you know, within the family -- retired
4 four stars and retired commandants and retired very well
5 respected Marines.

6 So that is a difficult balance. I remember a hearing
7 that we had a couple years ago on Force Design where, you
8 know, I asked one of the top Marine Corps officers, hey,
9 look, you do an amphibious invasion and then you get three
10 miles in wherever you are and you have to cross a river.
11 Wait a minute.

12 Marine Corps got rid of all its bridging equipment.
13 How are we going to cross a river? The answer, I think, if
14 I remember was we are going to call on the Army.

15 Now, I love the Army but in the Marine Corps tradition
16 calling on the Army was not something that we typically have
17 done.

18 So where are we on the balance? Where are we on things
19 like bridging and route clearing? Where are we on things
20 like artillery, infantry, which we cut -- the Marine Corps
21 cut a lot.

22 And do you still think this criticism, which came from
23 some very, very well respected Marines, is legit? Are we
24 recalibrating a little bit in terms of -- we want an
25 innovative Marine Corps but we do not want to get rid of our

1 911 capability to kick in the door anywhere in the world and
2 bring significant combat power to bear anywhere and what is
3 the balance and how we doing on all those things, General?

4 General Mahoney: Senator, we talked extensively about
5 this and if you remember where the Force Design journey
6 started and that was with the statement that we are not
7 manned, trained, or equipped for the future fight.

8 That is something tough for a Marine to swallow. That
9 is what generated the shift in some of the design elements
10 of our force.

11 We believe that we are on the right course based on
12 operations extant today, based on experimentation that we
13 have done, based on what the COCOMs demand.

14 That having said, our commandant is very -- his top
15 priority, in fact, is to balance that modernization. If we
16 put that in the modernization bin, although Force Design is
17 modernization, talent management, training and education and
18 logistics, we will put it in the modernization bin with the
19 ability to respond to crises.

20 We have talked about the dearth of amphib shipping.
21 That is significant. I believe it is strategic to the
22 nation. As far as organic combat power goes, we divested of
23 heavy armor. We do not believe in the situations that we
24 were faced that we need organic heavy armor for maneuver or
25 maneuver support.

1 We believe we have enough artillery, both rocket
2 artillery and cannon artillery, for the problems that we
3 will face. We believe that we have enough engineering and
4 engineering support.

5 You brought up bridging. What we have found at gap
6 negotiation, gap crossing, is a shortfall and we have
7 divested of bridging equipment, frankly, that was too heavy
8 and logistically unsupportable.

9 Senator Sullivan: So can Marines cross a river if they
10 do an amphibious invasion and find themselves three miles
11 inland and have to cross a river?

12 General Mahoney: So there are other ways to negotiate
13 a gap, Senator. You know that. But as far as bridging
14 goes, we are looking at more expeditionary solutions and
15 this circles back to your point of recalibration.

16 One of the things about Force Design -- I will try to
17 keep this short -- was that it immediately admitted to being
18 wrong. We were to challenge all the assumptions along the
19 way.

20 If we found an assumption wanting or invalid then we
21 had to adjust to satisfy and verify that assumption. We
22 have looked very closely through what we call the campaign
23 of learning at those assumptions.

24 We have adjusted the size of a battalion. We have
25 adjusted some of the aviation capabilities we have. We have

1 adjusted some of the weapons that we have either bought or
2 not bought, and to your point where we are looking hard at
3 expeditionary solutions to bridging.

4 As far as joint support, frankly, I am less concerned
5 about the Army providing an M-1, A-2 for us as I am about us
6 as a joint force being able to project, set a theater, and
7 sustain a theater from a joint perspective.

8 Senator Sullivan: Great. Thank you.

9 Senator Hirono?

10 Senator Hirono: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

11 In 2019 the Secretary of Defense discontinued certain
12 tasks at the border after determining that service members
13 were not performing military functions and the continued
14 support would negatively affect military readiness and
15 morale.

16 I think that is an important aspect of what is
17 happening, the impact on morale.

18 General Mingus and General Mahoney, how is this
19 deployment -- the current deployment -- any different from
20 2019 when DHS was asking your units to perform the same non-
21 DOD tasks?

22 General Mingus: Thank you, ma'am.

23 We have been asked to defend and secure the border and
24 we are going to do that. That is a priority for this
25 administration. We are going to execute that mission as we

1 have been asked to do.

2 Over time as we build -- anytime you are asked to
3 defend it has three critical components -- a physical, a
4 technical, and a human -- and as those physical and
5 technical things come online, as our Secretary testified,
6 the human resources associated with this mission set will
7 come down.

8 But to answer your specific question that the lessons
9 we learned from 2019 is the troop to task, as we like to
10 use, was a one for one. Detection and monitoring, POE
11 support, admin support, data entry, et cetera.

12 And so there was no time to come offline to continue to
13 train and do their mission.

14 Senator Hirono: So it does not sound much different
15 than what was going on in 2019.

16 General Mingus: No, this time we are going to make
17 sure that the troop to task allows for rotations so that the
18 degradation in readiness is not as substantial as what we
19 saw in 2019.

20 Senator Hirono: That remains to be seen.

21 Do you have something to add?

22 General Mahoney: And, Senator, similar but not the
23 same.

24 We have been on the border, as has been stated, for a
25 while. The mission has changed with this recent evolution

1 where we are primarily executing engineering tasks and
2 engineering support tasks.

3 Think barrier and placement. But we are also executing
4 intelligence tasks and in both of those there is training
5 value, especially for the intelligence analysts, to collect
6 and analyze what is a very complex situation.

7 But as General Mingus brought up, any time you have 10
8 essential tasks and you are only training to one or two of
9 them you have to figure out a way to either accept risk in
10 the tasks that you are not training to or to figure out a
11 training plan.

12 And maybe unlike the Army we -- even before we had a
13 rotational basis where we could plus up the skills any tasks
14 that were not being performed and we will manage the same
15 way right now.

16 Senator Hirono: And there is actually -- from what you
17 are testifying, you are needing to find some tasks that our
18 military people are doing on the border that somehow has
19 more relevance to what they should be doing in the military
20 and that, perhaps, if you had your druthers your people
21 would not be in the border at all, especially as border
22 crossings are at an all-time low.

23 during the NORTHCOM posture hearing, General Guillot
24 said that units deployed to the Southwest border get only
25 one dedicated training day per week.

1 General Mingus, General Mahoney, and Ms. Maurer is one
2 day a week normal for military training?

3 General Mingus: Depending on which cycle you are in,
4 ma'am, it could be normal. But I will go back to where I
5 talked about before it is the ability to cycle people in and
6 out of their tasks associated with the border mission versus
7 going back and the ability to train on their mission and
8 central tasks.

9 The other thing I would offer -- and this is going to
10 expand on General Mahoney -- is that at the highest level of
11 our doctrine the joint force has to be able execute offense,
12 defense, and stability operations simultaneously.

13 This is a defensive operation and so there is training
14 value associated with that. Is it going to be the same as
15 if they went to the National Training Center? Absolutely
16 not. But there is still value to be had if the leadership
17 takes the right approach to it.

18 General Mahoney: And, Senator, I am not familiar with
19 exactly what NORTHCOM said but I would maintain that our
20 engineers and our intel analysts have had far more than one
21 day of training to train for this mission.

22 For obstacle and placement, for intelligence analysts,
23 they undergo a whole battery of training to prepare them for
24 just to support the civilians.

25 Senator Hirono: So you are saying that our troops on

1 the border are actually getting equivalent -- something that
2 is equivalent to more than one day a week in training.

3 So, you know what? I mean, I would like -- I think
4 that you are doing your best to be very forthcoming in your
5 assessment of your troops being deployed to the border and,
6 clearly, you can do all you -- you are doing your best to
7 enable your -- these people to be getting the kind of --
8 some sort of equivalent training.

9 But it is hard to -- frankly, it kind of stretches the
10 imagination to think that that is happening and that they
11 are not losing the kind of training and opportunities to
12 train that would be the case if they were not.

13 Ms. Maurer: Senator, from a GAO perspective I will
14 just say real briefly that I think back to one of my
15 previous jobs at GAO was on GAOs Homeland Security and
16 Justice team and we obviously -- that team continues to do
17 oversight of the DHS, and I think about all the capabilities
18 that currently exist within CBP and ICE and other federal
19 law enforcement agencies on the border.

20 I think from an oversight perspective it would be
21 interesting to pursue what those agencies are doing and at
22 what point are their capabilities insufficient to meet the
23 mission needs on the Southwest border and we are not -- we
24 are not looking specifically at that topic right now. But I
25 think that is something valuable to think about.

1 From a readiness perspective one of the trends we have
2 seen over the years is there can sometimes be a tendency to
3 look to DOD to perform functions that can also be performed
4 by the domestic and civilian agencies.

5 In many cases that is definitely warranted, but DOD
6 comes in with a heavier footprint, it costs bigger dollars,
7 and it does have a readiness and a mission and a resource
8 tradeoff for the department as well.

9 Senator Hirono: Yeah. Of course, a flight using
10 military aircraft to take only about 100 people to another
11 country costs over \$2 million. That is not a very efficient
12 use of military resources.

13 You raise a good point, Ms. Maurer. I know you know
14 that up to today we have not received information from
15 either the Homeland Security or the DOD as to the need
16 asserted for the troops to go to the border.

17 We await that kind of information but until then,
18 highly questionable.

19 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

20 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Senator Hirono.

21 I am going to wrap up here with just a few more
22 questions. Again, thanks for the patience. This has been a
23 really good, enlightening hearing and I appreciate all the
24 witnesses' testimony and frank discussion of our readiness
25 challenges.

1 General Spain, I am going to turn to you a little bit
2 on contested logistics. Ms. Maurer talked about it. We all
3 deal with it, all the services, but the Air Force, I think,
4 in particular with its tanker fleet, is particularly
5 challenged because tankers are so important.

6 The previous Secretary of the Air Force committed after
7 the Chief of Staff of the Air Force and many others over the
8 last several years we are going to be moving more KC-135s to
9 Eielson.

10 But what is the sense of your tanker fleet writ large
11 and how can we be addressing that, and can you commit to me
12 to keeping that timeline on getting those four tankers? I
13 think one has already been moved to Eielson but we need
14 three more with over 100 fifth-gen fighters in Alaska.

15 As you know, our Air Force is doing a fantastic job,
16 real-world missions, very regularly intercepting Russian
17 Bear bombers in our ADIZ, Chinese and Russian strategic
18 bombers in our ADIZ.

19 Our military -- our Air Force has done a great job up
20 there. But as you know, those intercept missions are not
21 easy and we need tankers, but we need tankers throughout the
22 world. So what is the situation there?

23 General Spain: Thanks, Senator. I appreciate the
24 question.

25 As you are fully aware, we are committed to the KC-46

1 program, 89 aircraft on the ramp today, and recent
2 deployments have been wildly successful in their ability to
3 offload gas to a multitude of receivers both in theater and
4 around the world.

5 For the KC-135, obviously, we did some reengineering
6 and service life extension in the '80s and the '90s that
7 will keep the platform flying for decades to come.

8 But we are also fully committed to tanker
9 recapitalization post the KC-46 program. Right now we are
10 on track to continue to procure 15 KC-46es a year and we are
11 continuing to move the tanker recap acquisition strategy
12 forward and we will continue to do so.

13 And to your point, we are continuing to move down the
14 path to bringing the remaining three KC-135s to Eielson for
15 the reasons that you mentioned. We have some work to do
16 with the department on some notifications but beyond that we
17 will be able to move relatively quickly.

18 Senator Sullivan: Great. Keep me posted on that.
19 That is very important.

20 General Mingus, we talked about the 11th Airborne
21 Division, Arctic Angels. I would like to just to get an
22 update from your perspective on how that unit is doing. I
23 try to touch base with them a lot.

24 From what I can tell they seem to be very motivated,
25 and now that that is a warfighting headquarters any other

1 additional personnel that we talked about coming to that
2 unit in Alaska.

3 And then any other thoughts about additional multi-
4 domain task force that you are looking at placing? I know
5 that you were looking at Alaska for a multi-domain task
6 force at one point but just to update, really, the
7 operations and morale of the 11th Airborne Division, who do
8 a great job in my state.

9 General Mingus: Thanks, Chairman. I know you are
10 proud of them and we are as well.

11 Their trajectory still continues to move in a very
12 positive direction both on the suicide front, also on the
13 people side that you and I talked yesterday, but also on the
14 operational side.

15 Multiple warfighter exercises -- they just demonstrated
16 their ability to self-deploy in flight rig all the way from
17 Alaska to Hawaii, jump in and participate in a high-scale
18 warfighter exercise on island just a couple months ago. So
19 from an operational perspective they continue to improve and
20 get better every day.

21 The other fundamental change that we made in Alaska was
22 converting the brigade in Alaska from a Stryker to an
23 infantry brigade combat team.

24 So that climate, culture, and the identity associated
25 with being light fighters, Arctic light fighters, they

1 absolutely have embraced that. It has turned the corner in
2 that organization and they are often a great start. So
3 very, very proud of where they are headed.

4 On the multi-domain task forces we did consider but in
5 the end, sir, we did not make a selection to go to Alaska
6 for the for the fifth multi-domain --

7 Senator Sullivan: Where is the fifth multi-domain task
8 force going to be home ported?

9 General Mingus: Fort Lewis, Fort Carson, Hawaii, Fort
10 Bragg, and Europe.

11 Senator Sullivan: Okay, great. Thank you.

12 Admiral, you and I had a good discussion on Adak the
13 other day. That is -- if you look at a map it is an
14 incredibly strategic base. It is the gateway to the Arctic.

15 It is much further west than Hawaii. It is kind of a
16 dagger in the flank of China.

17 Can you give me your sense on the strategic value of
18 Adak and any updates since you and I talked about that?

19 Admiral Kilby: Well, just for the record, sir, we went
20 to look at Adak from kind of a small, medium and large warm
21 basing perspective on what we could do in the future with
22 your support, and we are going to send up a team to engage
23 with the Aleut Corporation and the Department of
24 Transportation from Alaska to really understand that to a
25 greater level.

1 We sent 14 ships to Dutch Harbor last year, two from
2 the FDNF, 12 from San Diego. So there is a need. I
3 happened to speak to Admiral Paparo last night on a number
4 of issues. This came up. He talked about the increased
5 activity by China and Russia in that area.

6 So, to me, that lends itself to address those types of
7 activities so we are not having to sail so far to get there.

8 Senator Sullivan: Well, I appreciate that. And,
9 again, that is not just aircraft. Strategic bombers and our
10 ADIZ that our great Air Force is doing such a good job of
11 addressing.

12 To your point, it is Chinese and Russian joint naval
13 task forces in our EEZ up in Alaska. This is happening on a
14 regular basis. The rest of the country does not really
15 notice but we notice in Alaska. We are on the front lines,
16 and we appreciate the great work our service members are
17 doing there.

18 And so I want to thank you on that and look forward to
19 working with you on that.

20 Can we get to a point -- I know it was already
21 discussed in depth -- but on the on the amphibs between the
22 Navy and the Marine Corps?

23 You know, General Mahoney, we talked about the Marines
24 kind of 911 kick in the door capability. But essentially
25 that goes away if you do not have a MEU ARG that you can

1 rely on.

2 So, Admiral, can you commit to us to work with us and
3 the Marine Corps on prioritizing amphibs? You know, I am
4 just being frank here. You do not get the sense that if it
5 was a Ford-class carrier or something like that that the
6 maintenance numbers that GAO has reported would be so
7 challenged.

8 Right now the recent GAO report stated, roughly, 50
9 percent of the amphib fleet was in poor condition, poor
10 material condition, including five out of the nine LHA/LHD
11 carriers, in 90 percent of the LSDs. Those are numbers that
12 are shocking and they really undermine the Marine Corps'
13 ability to do its job. And it is a team -- one team, one
14 fight, Navy/Marine Corps. But that is a real detriment.

15 Admiral Kilby: Yes, sir. Thanks for that question. I
16 am not satisfied with amphibious maintenance or readiness.
17 We are committed to the 80 percent combat surge ready. In a
18 subset --

19 Senator Sullivan: So that is going to be all surface
20 warships, the 80 percent idea?

21 Admiral Kilby: Yes, sir. But as a subset, I have
22 asked Admiral McLane, who is a SWO boss, to really do a deep
23 dive on amphibious ships in particular and there are some
24 things I discussed that we can do better there.

25 But you have my commitment to meet that goal, to exceed

1 that goal, and to ensure that we have a three-ship ARG ready
2 for the Marine Corps when they embark.

3 As a result of the Boxer and Wasp challenges -- the
4 LHDs that you mentioned -- I directed a study in last April,
5 and I reviewed that study in November and there are some
6 actions that were taken to get after that splitting up the
7 flag responsibilities of CNMRC, which is a maintenance
8 command, as of today, and C-21. Admiral Bill Greene will
9 give command to Admiral Lannamann and he will be C-21 and
10 Admiral Lannamann will be CNRMC.

11 So focusing on that with that effort and leadership I
12 think will help us there but as a subset of our perform to
13 plan for surface ships I am going to focus on amphibious
14 ships. You have my commitment.

15 Senator Sullivan: Great. Thank you very much for
16 that.

17 And General, how many MEU ARGs did we deploy out of the
18 West Coast last year?

19 General Mahoney: Fifteenth MEU.

20 Senator Sullivan: Was it a full complement?

21 General Mahoney: It was not. It was -- due to the
22 issues with Boxer, Somerset sailed as a single. She was
23 joined by Harper's Ferry. Boxer had to go back for
24 maintenance, and so it was a conga line of three ships. I
25 believe they only operated as a three-ship for less than two

1 months.

2 Senator Sullivan: And we need to fix that.

3 My final question is a bit of a complicated one. So,
4 General Guetlein, I am going to give it to you since it
5 seems to make the most sense but it is an issue that I am
6 trying to figure out how we work this, and it relates to the
7 President's vision for a Golden Dome.

8 I, as I mentioned, have drafted legislation with
9 Senator Cramer that we are hoping is going to be bipartisan.

10 It is very comprehensive in terms of missile defense for
11 the country.

12 But I think most people would be surprised that missile
13 defense for America really, really strongly entails pretty
14 much every service right here. Of course, there is a space-
15 based component -- that is in my bill. There is an Army
16 component.

17 General Mingus, you certainly know the 49th missile
18 defense battalion is a U.S. Army battalion at Fort Greely
19 that really protects the whole country right now.

20 I love their motto, "The 300 protecting the 300
21 million," but all the ground-based missile interceptors
22 protecting our country are at Fort Greely. This bill would
23 dramatically plus that up.

24 Admiral, this bill has a lot of Aegis Ashore focus, in
25 Hawaii, for example, in other places so -- and then, of

1 course, General Spain, the Air Force plays a huge role in
2 missile defense.

3 So my question is as we are working on this -- I
4 briefed Mike Waltz on our bill. I briefed Secretary Hegseth
5 on our bill -- I have even briefed President Trump -- on the
6 legislation that we put together after the executive order
7 came out. So I know the Pentagon is really getting on this.

8 But how do we how do we coordinate? What is your sense
9 -- and, General, I will start with you as the Space Force
10 service.

11 What is the best way to try to integrate and work
12 together? This committee wants to work with all the
13 services but it is an integrated effort. It literally is
14 Space Force, Air Force, Army, Navy.

15 The Marine Corps, as I am sure, has some tactical
16 element to it, General Mahoney, but this is a full service
17 approach.

18 What is the best way that we can work together
19 legislatively, of course, with the President's executive
20 order, but the full Pentagon integrating the different
21 services, all of whom play a important role?

22 I think a lot of Americans would be surprised that, you
23 know, the cornerstone of missile defense, which is in
24 Alaska, all the ground-based missile interceptors commanded
25 by the Army, all the major radar sites, particularly the

1 Clear Space Force Air Station with the new long-range
2 discrimination radar.

3 How do we integrate that, General, and if anyone else
4 has a thought on that. It is a really important issue. It
5 is a really good vision that the President has put forward.

6 We just need to operationalize it between the Pentagon, the
7 Congress, and we need to get on it.

8 And, Ms. Maurer, if you have a view on this as well I
9 would welcome that.

10 So, General, why do we not start with you? Final
11 question, I promise, but it is an important one.

12 General Guetlein: Thank you, Senator. It is -- let me
13 start with it is a very bold vision that is going to have a
14 lot of complexity to it, as you said.

15 The good news is we just met with the vice chairman
16 yesterday in the Joint Requirements Oversight Council. So
17 we had all the combatant commands.

18 We had the OSD staffs. We had the service staffs. We
19 had NGA. We had MDA and the National Reconnaissance Office
20 all present in that room talking about what is it going to
21 take to get after something of this magnitude.

22 I would compare this, the only time that I can think of
23 in the history of the United States where we have gone after
24 something this complex was the Manhattan Project. That is
25 how complex this capability is going to be.

1 But I am going to tell you it is not complex because
2 the technology is going to be hard. It is complex because
3 of the number of organizations and the number of agencies
4 that need to be involved as you said as you were going
5 around with your question.

6 Organizational behavior and culture are going to be our
7 two biggest challenges. The way to get through
8 organizational behavior and challenges is we got to make
9 sure first and foremost that we have one entity in charge
10 that has the full support of the nation, from the President,
11 from the Hill and from the American people on down. That
12 person or that that entity needs to be empowered and
13 resourced to make decisions across organizational
14 boundaries.

15 Senator Sullivan: And is that -- do we have that yet?

16 General Guetlein: We do not have that yet. That is
17 what was in discussion. That is what we talked about
18 yesterday with the vice chairman. We are going to talk
19 about it next week with the deputy secretary of defense.

20 Senator Sullivan: Good.

21 General Guetlein: And the Secretary of Defense owes an
22 answer back to the President by the end of March --

23 Senator Sullivan: Good.

24 General Guetlein: -- and we are on path to do that.
25 But not only is it an organizational challenge between

1 agencies and services but we also need to bring the full
2 blunt of our industrial base into the equation and empower
3 them to be successful, harness their innovation.

4 That means we need to embrace the nontraditional
5 contractors and get their ideas and get their capabilities
6 on the table.

7 Senator Sullivan: By the way, they are really
8 motivated, those nontraditional contractors, to play an
9 important role here. So I am really glad you are
10 highlighting that.

11 General Guetlein: Yes, sir. We have had numerous
12 industry days. I have taken numerous meetings.

13 The Missile Defense Agency had an industry day trying
14 to look at the whole of the U.S. -- not just the government
15 but the whole of the U.S. to get after this problem. We are
16 also having conversations with our allies -- can the allies
17 bring capabilities to the table.

18 The Canadians are very interested in partnering with us
19 on the protection of the homeland. They would like it to be
20 the protection of the continent. So we are having those
21 kind of conversations as well.

22 Senator Sullivan: It would be great to see the
23 Canadians participating and helping fund missile defense
24 right now. It is my distinct recollection that they do not
25 participate hardly at all. They do not do anything on NORAD

1 missile defense.

2 General Guetlein: They do participate in NORAD. They
3 do not participate in missile defense. Yes, that is
4 correct.

5 Senator Sullivan: Yeah. They need to participate in
6 missile defense. If a rogue North Korean missile is shot
7 into our continent we are not going to wait to see if it
8 hits Chicago or Toronto. We are going to shoot it down.

9 Canada needs to step up like they have not been on
10 defense spending. It has been woefully inadequate as a NATO
11 -- as a wealthy NATO member, and they need to do it on
12 missile defense, too.

13 I have been pressing the Canadians for years on this.
14 They do not put any money into missile defense and it is not
15 acceptable.

16 General Guetlein: The last element that I would bring
17 to bear on here, as we start to look at the authorities and
18 start looking at the accountability everything we have
19 talked about in this session today dealing with the
20 continuing resolution also comes to bear.

21 This program to be successful has to have funding
22 stability. They have to know that they are going to have
23 those resources from year to year to be successful or else
24 they are going to be very inefficient and they are going to
25 suffer death by a thousand cuts through fits and starts and

1 stops.

2 Senator Sullivan: That is an outstanding answer,
3 General. I really appreciate that.

4 Any other comments? Ms. Maurer, do you have a --

5 Ms. Maurer: Yeah, very quickly, Mr. Chairman.

6 So we issued a report a couple weeks ago looking at
7 sustainment of missile defense in Guam, which I think could
8 be, in a sense, sort of a preview of potential coming
9 attractions, and the general's point is definitively spot on
10 about the sheer complexity of the number of organizations.

11 That report we had probably the most complicated org
12 chart that I have ever put in a report that I signed out
13 under my name because there are so many different
14 organizations.

15 That is just Guam, which is a small island, as you
16 know. So getting arms around that challenge is going to be
17 important.

18 The second point I would like to make is that thinking
19 about sustainment, that needs to be part of the conversation
20 from day one. That has been a continuing challenge in the
21 missile defense enterprise.

22 The Missile Defense Agency develops and purchases the
23 technology. In theory, it is handed off to one of the
24 services to operate and sustain. Those handoffs have not
25 been happening in the way that they have been envisioned.

1 In fact, that is one of our recommendations in this
2 report on Guam is that DOD needs to spell out specifically
3 who is going to do what and how sustainment is going to work
4 for a Guam defense system.

5 Senator Sullivan: Great. Any other thoughts?

6 Admiral?

7 Admiral Kilby: Yeah. I am just going to offer one
8 thing I talked about at JROC. We can do this. In 2008 we
9 shot down a satellite that was deorbiting full of fuel in
10 six weeks.

11 The whole of government got together with agencies, the
12 science community, and industry and we made it happen. So
13 we can do this. We just need to do the things that were
14 outlined and provide clear lines in C2 and solid, consistent
15 budgeting, and I am convinced that we can deliver.

16 Senator Sullivan: Good. That is a great answer.

17 Anyone else on this topic?

18 General Spain?

19 General Spain: Senator, briefly, I agree with
20 everything that has been said.

21 The stitching together of the various capabilities will
22 be the key enabler of Iron Dome and Golden Dome, obviously,
23 the scaffolding of which exists today in Air Force forces
24 and Space Force forces, along with the Army ground-based
25 deterrent.

1 The integrated PEO that we have in Major General Luke
2 Cropsey in our ABMS program and the CJADC2 program will be
3 the thing that will allow each of the services to connect
4 the effectors, the sensors, and the sense making capability
5 across all services and agencies.

6 That will need to be a primary focus of this effort
7 along with the capabilities that each of the services will
8 bring.

9 Senator Sullivan: Good. Well, these are great
10 answers. You know, you have a strong vision from the
11 commander in chief. The President, obviously, is really
12 focused on this. He mentioned it in his State of the Union
13 last week.

14 It will be in the budget reconciliation bill that we
15 are working on. The DOD component is going to have a lot of
16 funding on this. So I think it is a sense of urgency that
17 we all need to work together on -- the Congress, the
18 executive branch.

19 And, General, you kind of laid out a vision in the
20 importance of some key principles and we look forward to
21 working with all of you and look forward to having that
22 designated individual or agency in charge. I think that is
23 a really important component as well.

24 So with that, I want to thank everybody. This has been
25 a long hearing but a really important hearing. I want to

1 thank, again, all six of you for your service -- decades of
2 service to our country in uniform and without -- or not in
3 uniform. GAO does a great job.

4 If there are additional questions for the record my
5 Senate colleagues will submit those in the next few days,
6 and we respectfully request that you try to respond to those
7 within the next two to three weeks.

8 With that, this hearing is adjourned.

9 [Whereupon, at 11:53 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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