

Stenographic Transcript
Before the

COMMITTEE ON
ARMED SERVICES

UNITED STATES SENATE

TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON THE POSTURE OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY IN REVIEW OF THE DEFENSE
AUTHORIZATION REQUEST FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026

Thursday, June 5, 2025

Washington, D.C.

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7 U.S. Senate

8 Committee on Armed Services

9 Washington, D.C.
10

11 The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:31 a.m. in
12 Room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Roger
13 Wicker, chairman of the committee, presiding.

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

3 Chairman Wicker: Good morning. The Senate Armed
4 Services Committee meets today to receive testimony on the
5 posture of the United States Army. I want to thank our
6 witnesses, Secretary of the Army, Dan Driscoll, and the
7 Chief of Staff of the Army, Randy George, for being here.

8 Unfortunately, it seems that detailed Fiscal Year 2026
9 budget will not be available for several more weeks.
10 Nonetheless, we'll benefit from speaking to both Secretary
11 Driscoll and General George.

12 In the past month, we've been speaking publicly about
13 the Army Transformation Initiative, or ATI. This initiative
14 seeks to change portions of the Army's capabilities and
15 force structure, while maintaining the Army's flat budget.
16 The Army provided this committee with the first real set of
17 details on the ATI about a week ago. This hearing marks the
18 beginning of the Army's discussion with Congress on the
19 idea.

20 We are ready to work with you gentlemen. In fact, we
21 must work together rapidly to fix fundamental problems with
22 the Army. Since 2000, the list of failed Army modernization
23 initiatives, such as the Comanche Helicopter, the Crusader
24 Howitzer, and the Future Combat Systems, has continued to
25 grow. Between 2002 and 2012, the Army spent \$50 billion on

1 programs it eventually canceled. The record in the past
2 five years has been better, but it still contains
3 significant missteps.

4 The Army recently spent \$2 billion on a scout
5 helicopter that will never fly. Other cancellations of
6 programs have followed, including the Strategic Long Range
7 Cannon program, the Extended Range Cannon Artillery
8 programs, and the M10 Booker armored infantry support
9 vehicle, as well as the Humvee. Fundamentally, the Army
10 needs to decide how to adapt to the changing character of
11 warfare and meet priority missions, particularly against
12 China and Russia.

13 Mr. Secretary, many ideas you propose in your
14 transformation initiative and your budget will meet that
15 mark. I think you'll find widespread support for increasing
16 investments in long range fires and air and missile defense,
17 as you proposed. I would note however, the lack of
18 logistics investment in your plan, given the Army's central
19 role in logistics in the Pacific. So perhaps we'll talk
20 about that

21 Mr. Secretary, I think you'll find Congress a very
22 willing partner when presented with convincing analysis that
23 justifies investment changes. In particular, those changes
24 should help American soldiers deter war, and if necessary,
25 win in a convincing fashion. Where we do disagree, it will

1 likely be in effects on the industrial base. Our defense
2 industrial base is brittle. We cannot afford to let sites
3 close or we will lose the defense expertise of many skilled
4 workers. We need investment strategies that recognize this.

5 Our investment should provide stability and ensure the
6 United States can maintain maximum competition. The Army
7 cannot follow the divest-to-invest strategy that the Navy
8 and Air Force have wanted to pursue. The United States
9 faces too many threats today to leave gaps in capabilities.
10 It will require tightly woven investment strategies among
11 the Army, Congress, and industry to get this right.

12 So, we look forward to your testimony of that. I turn
13 to my friend, the Ranking Member of this committee.

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

3 Senator Reed: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman
4 and Secretary Driscoll, General George, welcome to today's
5 hearing. Thank you both for your service to the nation and
6 the Army, and please convey the committee's appreciation for
7 the men and women serving under your command.

8 Let me first take a moment to recognize a historic
9 milestone for the United States Army. This month marks the
10 250th anniversary of the founding of the Continental Army in
11 1775. Since then, millions of Americans have stepped
12 forward to serve in the Army and protect their fellow
13 citizens, both on our own soil and abroad.

14 For me personally, the opportunity to serve in the Army
15 and to lead American soldiers, was the privilege of my life.
16 I'm proud to recognize this important moment in our nation's
17 history.

18 Today, the threats the Army faces would be
19 inconceivable to its founding leaders. As we speak China is
20 working to challenge America's interest and leadership in
21 the world. Vladimir Putin continues to use vicious assault
22 on Ukraine, as a stepping stone in his imperial vision, and
23 Iran seeks to exploit violence in the Middle East to expel
24 the United States from the region.

25 The United States Army, the most powerful ground force

1 in the world is fundamental to deterring and if needed,
2 confronting these threats. Secretary Driscoll, General
3 George, last month you announced an ambitious plan called
4 the Army Transformation Initiative. This initiative would,
5 among other changes, reduce headquarters, consolidate
6 commands, redirect funding, restructure infantry brigades,
7 reduce procurement of ground vehicles and aviation systems.

8 Now, I'm always open to considering new ways to improve
9 efficiency and invest in the right technologies for the
10 future, that has to be a constant imperative. However, I
11 have questions about this initiative, including that
12 analysis and rollout for the decision and the implementation
13 plan. And gentlemen, I would ask that you discuss this plan
14 in detail and explain your objectives to the committee.

15 I would also note that it's difficult to fully discuss
16 the Army's posture when we have yet to receive a budget
17 request from the Administration. This is quickly becoming
18 the longest delayed budget submission in memory, and I urge
19 the White House to deliver it quickly.

20 To my understanding, in its Fiscal Year 2026 budget,
21 the Department of Defense will request yet another flat
22 budget for the Army. I'm concerned that we risk the Army's
23 combat strength if we do not provide it with the resources
24 it needs to continue full modernization. Secretary
25 Driscoll, General George, I'm interested in hearing how the

1 service is adjusting its operating concepts and forced
2 posture within these budget constraints.

3 To that end, I'm very skeptical of the Administration's
4 deployment of more than 10,000 soldiers to the southern
5 border, including elements of the 10th Mountain Division
6 headquarters and a fourth entry division Stryker Brigade, as
7 well as the expansion of Army installation to create so-
8 called national defense areas along the border.

9 I'm also deeply concerned that Secretary Hegseth is
10 considering a request from the Department of Homeland
11 Security to activate more than 20,000 National Guard troops
12 to carry out immigration enforcement operations deep within
13 the country. And that nearly \$1 billion is reportedly being
14 diverted from barrack's improvement activities to fund
15 border operations to include border wall construction.

16 Let me be clear, border security is a priority, and I
17 voted for bills to harden our borders, tougher laws, and
18 reform. But immigration enforcement is a mission that must
19 be carried out by the Department of Homeland Security, not
20 the Department of Defense.

21 In my personal gauges with commanders at all levels,
22 many of them have made clear that these boarder missions are
23 deepening problems they're having with their training time,
24 resources, and readiness. I'm aware that at least one
25 brigade's Combat Training center rotation has been canceled

1 to support this mission, and others are at risk. Secretary
2 Driscoll I'd like to know how you plan to ensure our
3 soldiers' time, training and capabilities are not needlessly
4 wasted as the Army works hard to meet its existing demands.
5 Ultimately, the Army's success depends on its soldiers and
6 civilians.

7 Over the past two years, the Army has made significant
8 progress in recruiting activities that has enjoyed success
9 with programs like the Future Soldier Preparatory Course.

10 However, I am concerned that the Administration efforts
11 to limit who serves and in what roles they may serve could
12 have a chilling effect on recruiting and retention. There
13 is room in the Army for all qualified volunteers. This
14 includes at the United States Military Academy, where recent
15 efforts to stifle education and narrow the student body,
16 represents an assault on merit and inclusion.

17 Indeed, contrary to many of the Administration's
18 claims, I would argue that the current American soldiers and
19 West Point cadets, some of the finest of ever served. And
20 I'm interested in your thoughts on this issue.

21 Finally, I've recently visited a number of Army posts,
22 including in Germany, Korea, Guam, and throughout the
23 continental United States. I've been impressed by the work
24 our soldiers and Army civilians are doing to not only train
25 and equip warfighters, but also to incorporate lessons and

1 knowledge from our foreign partners, including the tens of
2 thousands of Ukrainians who have conducted training in.

3 As Ukraine's recent and indeed revolutionary drone
4 operation deep within Russia demonstrates, the future of
5 combat, and UAS warfare in particular, is evolving at a
6 breathtaking speed. The Ukrainian drone operation should
7 serve as a clarion call for every commander, at every level,
8 about how they plan to protect their forces and
9 installations at home and abroad at all times. I'd like to
10 know what lessons and tactics the Army is learning from the
11 conflicts in Europe, the Middle East, and what resources are
12 needed to implement them.

13 Again, I thank the witnesses for their participation
14 today. I look forward to the testimonies. Thank you, Mr.
15 Chairman.

16 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much, Senator Reed.
17 We'll proceed now with opening statements. Secretary
18 Driscoll, you may go first.

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

3 Secretary Driscoll: Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member
4 Reed, distinguished members of this committee, it is a
5 privilege to address you today. I want to express my
6 sincere gratitude for your unwavering support of our
7 soldiers and their families.

8 I'd like to start off this hearing with some good news.
9 Earlier this week, the United States Army met its Fiscal
10 Year 2025 recruiting goals, four months early, bringing in
11 more than 61,000 new recruits. These men and women are
12 stepping up during a time of global uncertainty and complex
13 threats, and those threats are real.

14 When I went through my confirmation hearings in this
15 very room, I pledged to be the soldier's Secretary of the
16 Army. That commitment has guided our approach every step of
17 the way. The Army Transformation Initiative has been
18 conceived with the soldier in mind, and your partnership is
19 critical, as General George and I begin implementing this
20 transformation, which is now more urgent than ever.

21 This week we witnessed a stark illustration of modern
22 warfare in Ukraine and Russia. Reports indicate a
23 coordinated strike against Russia's strategic bomber force,
24 using a swarm of over 100 inexpensive drones. At a cost of
25 a mere tens of thousands of dollars, Ukraine inflicted

1 billions in damage, potentially setting back Russia's bomber
2 capabilities for years. The world saw in real time how
3 readily available technology can disrupt established power
4 dynamics. Drones are about one example of a broader shift,
5 and the Army needs to keep pace.

6 In my first three months as Secretary General, George
7 and I have immersed ourselves in understanding why the Army
8 has been slow to innovate. Our soldiers are not the
9 problem. I've met with them in the Middle East, Europe,
10 along the southern border, and at installations across the
11 United States. Their strength, dedication, and unwavering
12 commitment to this nation are inspiring. We ask a great
13 deal of them, and they consistently deliver.

14 Nor is the ingenuity of American industry at fault.
15 Our tech sector continues to thrive, driven by innovation,
16 entrepreneurship, and a willingness to embrace risk. So
17 where does the problem lie? As Secretary, I have found that
18 the Army has become calcified, having suffered from years of
19 inefficiency, slow moving processes, and wasteful spending.

20 Program lobbyists and bureaucrats have overtaken the
21 Army's ability to prioritize soldiers and warfighting. We
22 must all work together to ensure the Army is ready to fight
23 and win.

24 The Army Transformation Initiative will make us into an
25 Army that is lean, agile, and relentlessly focused on

1 empowering its soldiers. An Army that embraces innovation,
2 collaborates effectively with the private sector, and
3 prioritizes warfighting readiness above all else.

4 To achieve this vision, we must streamline our
5 acquisitions process, reclaim our right to repair and
6 cultivate a culture that rewards innovation and calculated
7 risk taking. We must empower those closest to the fight to
8 make the decisions.

9 The Army Transformation Initiative is a first step to
10 achieve this vision, but this transformation hinges on your
11 support. We are asking this committee to empower us to make
12 these changes while providing your constitutionally mandated
13 oversight.

14 We're asking for the flexibility to make decisions that
15 keep pace with the rapid advancements and technology and the
16 evolving nature of warfare. We are asking for this
17 committee to work with us to maximize the value of every
18 dollar appropriated to best support our soldiers.

19 I ask this because it's my duty, both as the Secretary
20 of the Army, and as an American citizen, to ensure that
21 every dollar that the Army receives contributes to defending
22 this great nation of ours. I know we are all committed to
23 our soldiers, to their success, and to providing them with
24 the overwhelming advantage that they deserve.

25 Thank you, and I welcome your questions.

[The prepared statement of Secretary Driscoll follows:]

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Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much, Secretary.

General George, you're recognized.

1 STATEMENT OF GENERAL RANDY A. GEORGE, USA, CHIEF OF
2 STAFF OF THE ARMY

3 General George: Thank you, Chairman Wicker, Ranking
4 Member Reed, distinguished members of the committee, thank
5 you for the opportunity to talk with you today and take your
6 questions.

7 I want to start off by saying that I'm extremely proud
8 of our Army. I'm proud of our troops that are out in the
9 Indo-Pacific, on the southern border, in the Middle East, in
10 Europe, and everything our Army has done over the past year
11 to respond to wildfires, floods, and a bridge collapse.

12 We have formations all around the world conducting
13 missions and exercises and innovating with our partners and
14 allies. When not deployed, our units are conducting tough,
15 realistic training at their home stations and our combat
16 training centers. Our Army is a professional team that
17 remains focused on its warfighting mission, and young
18 Americans want to be a part of it. This is evidenced by our
19 strong recruiting numbers this year, and I would also add
20 very strong retention numbers.

21 Just a couple of days ago, as the Secretary mentioned,
22 we've met our recruiting mission for the year, and we still
23 have our most productive months ahead of us. And while I'm
24 proud of our Army, I also know we have work to do. We know
25 the world is changing. Commercial technology is rapidly

1 evolving, especially AI and autonomous systems, and this is
2 impacting the character of war. We understand that we must
3 transform to stay ahead of our adversaries, and we need to
4 get better by 2026 and 2027, not by 2030.

5 Over the last year, using existing Fiscal Year 2024
6 funding, some of our units transformed in contact, which
7 means they experimented with the changing how we train,
8 fight, man, and equip while they were deployed or in
9 training environments. This was a great proof of concept to
10 confirm that our formations are capable of rapidly improving
11 their lethality.

12 One transformation in contact brigade in Europe was 300
13 percent more effective in lethal targeting in training.
14 Transformation in contact taught us some valuable lessons
15 about what our Army should be buying and how we should be
16 buying it, and we are just getting started. We're going to
17 make these changes we can at our level so that we can
18 continue to dominate the modern battlefield.

19 For instance, canceling programs that are obsolete are
20 not what our warfighters need. Developing and adapting war
21 winning capabilities and buying modular open architecture
22 designs that can be iteratively updated, cutting and
23 consolidating headquarters. For instance, we're going to
24 reduce geo structure, cut 1,000 positions from our own staff
25 here in DC and add in modern business systems that will make

1 us more effective.

2 And finally, we will power down authorities and funding
3 so that commanders in our fighting formations have what they
4 need to make their teams and their communities successful.

5 What I've learned from being in the seat is that our
6 job as leaders is to do what we can with the budget that we
7 have. I've been talking about the need for Agile funding
8 for UAS, counter-UAS, and EW. We need flexibility in those
9 areas and many more. Technology is changing too rapidly.
10 We've got to be able to buy capabilities rather than
11 specific programs, so that we can always get our warfighters
12 the best available tech and equipment for the fight. And
13 this is where we could use your help.

14 We are quickly approaching our Army's 250th birthday.
15 "This We'll Defend" has been our motto for 250 years, and
16 I'm looking forward to celebrating our long legacy of duty.
17 More importantly, our soldiers are ready today, to defend
18 our country, and we will do our part to ensure they have
19 what they need to be successful in that enduring mission.

20 And Chairman and Ranking Member, we look forward to
21 taking your questions on how important the OIB is to us, how
22 specifically we're going to transform, and what lessons
23 we're learning from the conflicts today.

24 Thank you for your support.

25 [The prepared statement of General George follows:]

1 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, General, and thank you for
2 mentioning the anniversary and birthday which is quite
3 significant for this nation, and very personally significant
4 to a number of members of this committee. So, thank you
5 very much.

6 We were rolling out and did roll out some very specific
7 information about the Reconciliation Bill in just the last
8 day or two. This bill has been developed with hand and
9 glove consultation with the Administration and with our
10 colleagues in the House of Representatives. It's one of the
11 least controversial sections of the Reconciliation Bill/

12 However much of the funding in the Defense
13 Reconciliation Bill, because the rules have to be unspecific
14 and will technically be at the discretion of the Department
15 of Defense, though we'll write recommendations for them.

16 So, I need a quick yes or no from each of you,
17 particularly based on the fact that this has been written in
18 consultation and with changes made to accommodate the
19 Administration. Do you commit Mr. Secretary, first to
20 follow congress' suspending recommendations in the Defense
21 Reconciliation Bill unequivocally?

22 General George: Yes.

23 Chairman Wicker: Is it General George?

24 General George: Yes, sir.

25 Chairman Wicker: Thank you. And that's been the

1 answer by all of our witnesses. The Organic Industrial
2 Base, ammunition plants, depots, arsenals remain vital to
3 sustaining combat operations. We've read Mr. Secretary in
4 your ATI memo about potential closure of Pine Bluff Arsenal,
5 Bluegrass Army Depot, Red River Army Depot.

6 In light of the fact that, that we're going to be so
7 focused on reindustrialization, I would caution that we'd be
8 very careful about that. Are you planning to propose
9 closing these three facilities, Mr. Secretary?

10 Secretary Driscoll: Chairman, we are creating a plan
11 to look at what we can do with them, with shifting work from
12 them as one of the options. I think General George and I
13 stand hand in hand with you acknowledging that our Organic
14 Industrial Base is not sufficient for the threats today or
15 in the future.

16 I think spending is constrained as it should be. We
17 owe that to the American taxpayer. We are working on plans
18 that could use those facilities for other purposes, but if
19 the funding does not come and it has to come from the rest
20 of the budget, I think our current belief is that those
21 dollars at our current budgeted level would be best suited
22 somewhere else.

23 Chairman Wicker: Well, I hope we'll continue to have a
24 meaningful dialogue there as the body that's
25 constitutionally charged with the power of the purse. And

1 it may be that that our need for reindustrialization will
2 tie in quite well with actually continuing to utilize these.

3 Now, you mentioned drones, and we sure have learned a
4 lot in the last five or six days, about small inexpensive
5 drones. I don't know if most people realize that our drone
6 manufacturers create drones that cost 10 times as much as
7 Chinese drones. DOD is spending less than a hundred million
8 dollars per year on small drones. It seems to me this makes
9 it difficult for our industrial base to achieve economies of
10 scale and buying the equipment to produce at a more
11 reasonable price.

12 Do you agree with me on that, and do you agree that we
13 very much need to address this issue, Mr. Secretary? And
14 then I'll ask General George to comment also.

15 Secretary Driscoll: I think Chairman, if we were only
16 10 times more expensive, I would say that that would be
17 better than the actual reality, which I think we are
18 sometimes 50 times to 100 times more expensive. We are so
19 expensive that it just makes the cost curve absolutely
20 impossible for us.

21 And so, I wholeheartedly agree that we as a nation,
22 have got to set a moonshot to figure out both how do we
23 defend against these low-cost drones, and then how do we
24 create enough to scale against Russia. It's estimated maybe
25 creating 4 to 6 million this year. I mean, and China even

1 more, I think the last number I saw is they might be doing
2 50 million across their entire country. We are currently
3 not ready for it, but we need to work with you to speed up
4 the current tests that we are doing.

5 Chairman Wicker: General George, I assume that you and
6 the Secretary are of one mind on this issue.

7 General George: We certainly are Chairman. There are
8 two aspects of this, to your previous comment on the,
9 industrial base. I think that that's something again, you
10 look at like DJI is producing 15 million drones. You know,
11 one of the challenges for us, like Brushless motors,
12 controllers, things like that, that I think that this is
13 where we need to move to in our own industrial base and be
14 able to do that. It could help commercial industry here
15 stateside as well. So that's one aspect. The other thing
16 --

17 Chairman Wicker: Millions of people are listening to
18 you on television. Tell them what DJI is.

19 General George: It's a PRC company that makes drones,
20 15 million drones. And again, we need the parts and we
21 could produce that here. And the second thing that I would
22 add, Chairman, is that I think this is why it's important
23 that we buy in portfolios, you know, the capability
24 portfolios. So, program or record is -- you know, that we
25 wouldn't buy the same drone, was one that we've canceled,

1 you know, 25-year-old drones. We know that those are
2 updating.

3 And so, we could, I think in UAS counter-UAS and EW, we
4 need to have the flexibility, we can come over here. We
5 certainly want the oversight and explain what systems we're
6 buying, but this is an area that is rapidly transforming and
7 adapting, and we need to be able to maintain pace with that
8 and have the flexibility to do it.

9 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, sir. Senator Reed.

10 Senator Reed: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Let
11 me begin with a tragic incident that happened on January
12 29th of this year. 67 people were lost when the U.S. Army
13 Blackhawk helicopter collided with a PSA airline flight 534.
14 Obviously, it was tragic moment.

15 In the intervening weeks and months as investigations
16 are ongoing, family members have expressed to me significant
17 concerns by the lack of transparency and direct
18 communication for the Army, specifically Army senior
19 leaders. And Secretary Driscoll, does the Army commit to
20 establish a direct communication with these families? I
21 think it's fair and necessary.

22 Secretary Driscoll: Senator, the incident on that day
23 is a tragedy. Our hearts go out to the victims and their
24 families. The Army is doing everything we can to learn from
25 the incident to ensure that it never occurs again. There is

1 obviously an investigation and lawsuits ongoing. And the,
2 the best advice we've received from counsel to date is to
3 let those play out. And so that's our current position,
4 Senator.

5 Senator Reed: No, I understand that. But I think just
6 reaching out in a very clearly non-substantive way, but in a
7 compassionate way, that the Army understands their grief and
8 they we're doing all we can without obviously specifying
9 would be appropriate. You know, I do understand that the
10 National Transportation Safety Board and the Army is
11 conducting investigations, but General George, could you
12 briefly describe the changes that you've already made to
13 improve the safety in that?

14 General George: Yes, sir. I think again, we've been
15 cooperating fully with the National Transportation Safety
16 Board and had our own folks in here. The biggest thing is
17 the flight routes have completely changed. And that was a
18 decision that was made, that the route that was -- I believe
19 it's Route 4 that's passed there, that is closed off.
20 Immediately we heard, we made adjustments, and with people
21 that are coming in right now, there's very, very few flights
22 that come in and out of the Pentagon.

23 I would tell you that, we do -- and you're aware of the
24 mission, we still have a mission to do. So, our formations
25 need to continue to make sure that they're doing that right.

1 But also, that the changes that we've done with making sure
2 that ADSB and that there's constant communication. So
3 again, we're working very closely with the FAA, both locally
4 and then nationally to make sure that that we learn from
5 this. And learning means changing, and that's what we're
6 doing.

7 Senator Reed: No, I appreciate that. But again, I
8 think on a human level, some contact with the families would
9 be more than appropriate. Mr. Secretary, New York Times
10 recently reported that the Department of Homeland Security
11 asked for over 20,000 National Guard forces to conduct
12 interior immigration enforcement. Have you been asked to
13 prepare for this requirement?

14 Secretary Driscoll: We have.

15 Senator Reed: Immigration enforcement in the interior
16 of the United States is unprecedented for the National
17 Guard. And the scale of assistance that they're asking for
18 is equally unprecedented. The rooting 20,000 Guardsmen to
19 first of all, they're not trained for it. It'll necessarily
20 pull those persons away from their jobs, their families but
21 more importantly, I think it's going to divert them from
22 their more traditional role, disaster relief, supporting
23 local emergencies. And we know that this is likely to be a
24 very strenuous hurricane season, which I'm told begins on
25 June 1st. From which states would the Army be pulling these

1 troops?

2 General George: I'll jump in. We are working through
3 this right now, and obviously we get asked to provide
4 soldiers, you know, we're ready to do that. We are, I will
5 tell you sir, prepared to respond to emergencies, that we've
6 done that routinely, I mentioned that in my opening
7 statement on what we're able to do across to all the COMPOs,
8 and then with whatever missions that we're aligned to do
9 those, you know, clerical or whatever, they would be aligned
10 to whatever the soldiers are trained.

11 Senator Reed: Is this a mission that, in your
12 experience, that National Guard would've been trained for,
13 going and searching for illegal immigrants in major cities
14 and across the country?

15 General George: Again, Senator, I think that, you know
16 the missions would be aligned with what our soldiers are
17 trained to do within the authorities that we would have
18 under Title 10.

19 Senator Reed: Do we have a cost estimate yet of how
20 much it would cost to deploy 20,000 National Guards?

21 Secretary Driscoll: Senator, I don't believe we do,
22 but we'll follow up with your office the moment we know what
23 states and estimated costs.

24 Senator Reed: Just finally, we recognize that both
25 legally and traditionally soldiers are not police officers

1 or ICE agents. And much of what they do lies outside of
2 this law enforcement environment. Are you concerned about
3 the scene of U.S. Army, and people won't make distinction
4 between National Guard and U.S. Army, driving and military
5 vehicles and pulling people out of houses and putting them
6 in the backs of trucks and drive them away? I don't think
7 that's the image the Army has strove for 250 years to create

8 Secretary Driscoll: Senator, it's hard to answer that
9 hypothetical because we have not heard of those details in
10 the planning. And so, it's hard to answer today.

11 Senator Reed: So, if you were directed to begin to
12 seize people, put them in trucks and driving away, you would
13 object because that is inconsistent with the Army of the
14 United States?

15 Secretary Driscoll: Again, Senator, it's hard to
16 answer that hypothetical. No one has asked that question.

17 Senator Reed: Thank you. And thank you, Mr. Chairman,
18 for the extra time.

19 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Reed. Senator
20 Fischer.

21 Senator Fischer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Secretary,
22 General, welcome. The Army was already undergoing
23 significant changes prior to the April 30th letter from the
24 Secretary of Defense. I understand that we've had some
25 success in increasing experimentation and getting soldier

1 feedback early in the acquisition process. This results in
2 more intuitive capabilities, easier for soldiers to use.

3 How does the Army Transformation Initiative build on
4 the transformation in contact efforts so that technology can
5 be delivered into the hands of the soldiers faster? That to
6 Mr. Secretary.

7 Secretary Driscoll: It is all built off transformation
8 in contact, and all built in as many instances its humanly
9 possible off what soldiers have actually told us. So, if
10 you look at what the most successful small, medium, and
11 large businesses in America do, particularly if you looked
12 at the venture capital backed ones, what they would have, is
13 this concept called minimum viable product, which is this
14 idea that if you have an idea, get a prototype as quickly as
15 possible and get it to your end user.

16 And what we have tried to do, and what the Army has
17 done really well, I think, or I hope, is to get things we
18 are testing into the hands of our soldiers as fast as
19 possible.

20 General George and I were with an autonomous software
21 company that did designs, essentially the software for
22 autonomous vehicles about two months ago at this point. And
23 we saw what they had. We asked if they had ever put in an
24 Army vehicle. They said, no, we got them a vehicle, 10 days
25 later, they sent us a video fully automating our Humvee and

1 our ISV.

2 We got it in the hands of soldiers all within three or
3 four weeks, and we're currently learning from that. And so
4 that to us is how we will actually quickly innovate and
5 change our Army to face today's threats.

6 Senator Fischer: Will you tie in the command and
7 control to that as well? Are you working with any specific
8 private industry to be able to do that?

9 General George: Yes, Senator, we're working with a
10 bunch of companies that are doing that. Again, for all of
11 this, I think what we're learning is we're going to have to
12 pass data very rapidly. So, I think the network to us is
13 foundational to everything we do. If you're going to sense,
14 you have to decide and whatever you're going to do to act,
15 the network is central to that.

16 I wanted to just add on the lessons. I mean, besides
17 just the equipment, for us the biggest change is actually
18 having developers that are right there with our soldiers to
19 see what works. We're seeing what the battery life in a
20 cold environment versus the humidity that's out there right
21 now in the Pacific. So, we're seeing those.

22 We're changing how we're organized. We know you can be
23 seen anywhere on this planet. How we're going to reorganize
24 our formations, we're learning that. And how do we better
25 train our soldiers to operate in EW environments? How do we

1 better train FPV operators? All of that. And again, we
2 have to constantly -- we're in the continuous transformation
3 mode.

4 Senator Fischer: Okay, thank you. We saw a long-range
5 hypersonic weapons test in June and December of last year,
6 and I was encouraged by the success of those tests. Do you
7 still anticipate, Mr. Secretary and General, fielding that
8 capability by the end of Fiscal Year 2025?

9 Secretary Driscoll: We do, and one of the things we're
10 also excited about is we're testing a new version of it,
11 that is one 10th of the cost and we think has even better
12 attributes. And so, it would be early to know whether it
13 will work, but we're optimistic.

14 Senator Fischer: In your written testimony, you
15 highlight that the Army's mid-range capability system, it's
16 been deployed in the Philippines, since April I think of
17 last year. Can you provide us with an update on that
18 program and when you expect additional batteries to be
19 fielded?

20 General George: Again, Senator, that's another thing
21 that we're looking at a total of five batteries. And what
22 we're also doing with that is same thing with continuous
23 transformation. How do we make those systems smaller? How
24 do we tie them in better? How do we make them so that
25 they're more mobile? That's what we're working on.

1 Senator Fischer: As you're testing these different
2 capabilities, these new capabilities, do you have some of
3 these businesses, you said they were alongside soldiers and
4 being able to see the real time effects.

5 So, as you're testing these things in real time, and
6 you understand the field battle that you may be facing in
7 very near future, are you also soliciting not just comments
8 from industry, but also to continue to solicit those
9 comments from soldiers as well? And have you been able to
10 make changes in any of these capabilities that you're
11 currently testing?

12 General George: Yeah, we both wanted to push the
13 trigger on that one.

14 [Laughter.]

15 General George: We have done that. I get one of the
16 things, for example, that soldiers said, hey, listen, it
17 would be better to have an autonomous system or an
18 optionally manned vehicle that could move around and could
19 do those things. Hey, we need the command-and-control piece
20 of this to be smaller and more mobile.

21 And so, we're making those changes and we've had
22 companies that have actually gone out and this is about
23 leveraging commercial industry to do this, that have made,
24 those vehicles and then brought them out to our formations
25 and we're testing them. And again, getting them to our

1 soldiers is the most important thing we can do.

2 Senator Fischer: Great. Thank you. The chairman's
3 going to gavel you out Mr. Secretary. Thank you very much.

4 Chairman Wicker: You of course, witnesses can
5 supplement their answers. Senator Shaheen.

6 Senator Shaheen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr.
7 Secretary, General George, thank you both for being here. I
8 want to follow up on Senator Reed's question about the role
9 of the National Guard in dealing with illegal immigrants.
10 And I'm looking at a memo here from the executive secretary
11 at the Department of Defense, from the Department of
12 Homeland Security.

13 And one of the things they say in this memo is that
14 they're asking the National Guard, up to 3,500 personnel, to
15 support field investigative units for high priority fugitive
16 cases. Joint task force operations for absconder fugitive
17 tracking, surveillance and canvassing missions, night data
18 analysis, call center support, night operations, and rural
19 interdiction.

20 That doesn't sound hypothetical to me, Mr. Secretary.
21 That sounds like that is a direct request that has already
22 been made to the Department of Defense, and I assume you
23 might have seen it from the Department of Homeland Security
24 to engage in those operations. It also says that the Army
25 is not going to be, or the Department of Defense is not

1 going to be reimbursed for those operations.

2 So, do you know who's going to pay for those, and what
3 account from the Department of Defense that those operations
4 would come from?

5 Secretary Driscoll: Senator, I don't know what account
6 sitting here right now, but we can follow up with your
7 office.

8 Senator Shaheen: Well, I would hope that if -- first
9 of all, I share Senator Reed's concerns about asking the
10 National Guard to engage in those kinds of operations. As a
11 former Governor, I can tell you that I didn't want our
12 National Guard going off to do something when we needed them
13 at home in New Hampshire.

14 But I would also be very concerned about who's paying
15 for those. And the Department of Homeland Security, if
16 they're going to engage in these operations, then they ought
17 to be footing the bill, not asking the Department of Defense
18 and the Army or anybody else in the National Guard to do
19 that. So let me just register my grave concern, Mr.
20 Chairman, about that.

21 I want to go on to another topic at this point, and
22 that is a lot of the discussion so far has been about the
23 changing role of conflict and war. And one of the places
24 where I think we're seeing those operations vary
25 dramatically is in the information warfare systems arena.

1 And so, I'm concerned about the Army's decision last
2 year to reduce nearly 3000 special Operation forces
3 personnel. Most of those were from Military Information
4 Support Operations, MISO. And this comes at a time when
5 we're looking at expanded operations on the part of Russia,
6 on the part of China, our adversaries.

7 I sit on the Foreign Relations Committee. We had a
8 hearing earlier this year that pointed out that China's
9 spending over \$1 billion a year on disinformation operations
10 around the world. And so, it feels to me like we're
11 unilaterally disarming in this arena at a time when we
12 should be engaging and thinking about how to do that.

13 So, I wonder General George, from an operational
14 perspective, does SOCOM have the ability to replace those
15 positions? And how are you thinking about information
16 warfare?

17 General George: First on the information warfare,
18 Senator, I completely agree with you. I mean, that is
19 something and I think rather than what we've been talking
20 about, looking at specific formations, we're also looking
21 -- we have a bunch of specialties that we have had around
22 for 20 or 30 years. And I think like anybody does in the
23 commercial sector, you have to adapt and change and make
24 sure that you're doing that.

25 So, the cuts were made and this was worked with U.S.

1 Army Special Operations Command and SOCOM, were print media,
2 leaflet drops, people that were doing those kinds of things.
3 And I would argue that the world has changed and what we
4 should be doing, we should be focused on, in the meantime,
5 we have grown cyber capability and how we're going to do
6 that, you know, through technology, I think is important.

7 And I think the other thing that we've learned is that
8 we're going to have to this kind of capability throughout
9 our formation. It's less about headquarters; it's about
10 having capabilities at Echelon throughout all of our
11 formations. We're all living -- you're not going to give
12 just a certain people a capability, because we're all going
13 to have to operate on this very complex battlefield. And
14 that's what we're looking at.

15 So, we just had a discussion about this. I'd love to
16 come over and talk to you about this more in detail on what
17 we're looking at and how we're going to embed this in across
18 our formation.

19 Senator Shaheen: I would very much enjoy seeing a plan
20 for how that's going to be done, because I think that's one
21 of the most serious disadvantages we have right now. Thank
22 you, Mr. Chairman.

23 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very, very much. Senator
24 Cotton.

25 Senator Cotton: Gentlemen, welcome. I was at Fort

1 Meyer yesterday, as the Old Guard recognized several persons
2 as honorary members of the regiment for their critical work
3 in getting the Caisson Platoon back up to limited
4 operations, and also for their work at the Carter state
5 funeral, where the Caisson Platoon, and its horses, and
6 horsemen, so well represented the Army and the nation. And
7 I want to thank you both for your work on getting the
8 Caisson Platoon back in operation and on the path towards
9 full operation very soon.

10 Secretary Driscoll, I want to turn to the munitions
11 crisis that our nation faces. President Trump recently
12 said, we need to take a long, hard look at defense
13 procurement and our defense industrial base because it's
14 been withering down to nothing.

15 Given all the money we spend on the Pentagon, it's
16 unacceptable that we would ever run out of ammunition or be
17 unable to quickly produce the weapons we need. You also
18 acknowledged our munitions crisis at your confirmation
19 hearing, you said, "One of the greatest problems facing our
20 time is getting our munitions and getting our magazines back
21 up to where they need to be." I assume three months onto
22 the job, you still believe that addressing the nation's
23 munitions crisis is vital, if we are to deter and if
24 necessary, fight and win a war against China.

25 Secretary Driscoll: Absolutely, Senator, and I would

1 even update and say, after a hundred days of seeing it, it's
2 worse than I thought at my confirmation hearing.

3 Senator Cotton: Thank you. So do I and most members
4 of the committee. That's one reason why I was pleased to
5 see that the Army Transformation Initiative focuses on
6 arsenals, ammunition plants, and depots and Organic
7 Industrial Base. Secretary Hegseth's memo about the
8 initiative, directs the Army to modernize the Organic
9 Industrial Base to generate the ammunition stockpiles
10 necessary to sustain national defense during wartime, by
11 implementing 21st century production capabilities.

12 Given this in your earlier remarks, Senator Wicker, I
13 think it's safe to say that we share the Secretary's belief
14 that the Organic Industrial Base is a crucial element of our
15 broader defense industrial base. You agree?

16 Secretary Driscoll: Unequivocally.

17 Senator Cotton: Thank you. And we're not the only
18 ones either. There are other members of this committee like
19 Senator Mullin and Senator Ernst and Senator Rosen, who have
20 long pushed the army to strengthen its Organic Industrial
21 Base.

22 That includes updating and expanding operations at
23 facilities like Pine Bluff Arsenal and my state McAllister
24 Army ammunition plant in Oklahoma, Hawthorne Army Depot in
25 Nevada. All these facilities, like all of them across the

1 Organic Industrial Base, are underused. And we've thought
2 for some time the Army should be expanding them to meet
3 urgent national security needs.

4 And while I agree with you that the commercial industry
5 will play an important role in solving the crisis, I think
6 we all know that industry alone can't do it all. First, I'm
7 doubtful that private businesses are going to take up work
8 like smoke grenades or other niche capabilities required by
9 the military.

10 For instance, I'm skeptical that it's profitable for a
11 business to stand up new production of white phosphorus
12 ammunition, which is only produced in Pine Bluff when the
13 customer base is limited to the U.S. military and the cost
14 of production are so high. Just some rough back of the
15 envelope calculations I've made, suggested it would cost
16 around half a billion dollars to replicate that capacity.

17 And second, I think we've also learned pretty
18 definitively over the last three years of the Ukraine War,
19 that our commercial industrial base, while vital, simply
20 doesn't have the capacity to produce all the munitions that
21 our nation needs, and that our allies need, much less what
22 we would need in a major conflict.

23 So, I think expanding munitions production, especially
24 for necessary materials like Nitrocellulose and RDX that are
25 currently choke points in the munition supply chain, will

1 require us to leverage the inherent advantages of the
2 facilities that you own, that the Army owns. Those Organic,
3 Industrial Base facilities like Pine Bluff Arsenal.

4 All these places have highly trained workforces.
5 They've already gone through onerous environmental
6 permitting. They can handle munitions. They have the
7 infrastructure that would only be replicated at a very high
8 cost, over many periods of years. Standing up munitions
9 factories from scratch would cost millions and millions of
10 dollars, while expanding operations at these existing
11 facilities that we already own is much less costly and more
12 efficient.

13 And giving that, can you commit to all of us, as the
14 Chairman suggested, that we work together to create a plan
15 to expand and modernize the Army's organic base, including
16 facilities like Pine Bluff Arsenal?

17 Secretary Driscoll: Senator, we absolutely want to
18 work with this committee, and this is not intended to be a
19 cop-out answer. As we look at our budget, one of the
20 fundamental problems that we have is, our military
21 construction costs -- and I'll do a parallel and then bring
22 it right back -- are 68.5 percent more expensive than if we
23 just built something right on the other side of our fence
24 line and a lot of that is statutorily driven.

25 There are some inefficiencies from government doing it,

1 but generally speaking, there are so many constraints on us
2 that when we try to work within our budget to expand our
3 munitions supplies, and we look at the math, the math
4 oftentimes says we're too expensive for ourselves. And so,
5 in the limited resource world that we live in, when we try
6 to do these tradeoffs, it's hard to justify.

7 But working with this committee to try to streamline a
8 lot of that, allocate additional resources, I get we are
9 wholeheartedly in agreement, that it is one of the most
10 critical things for our country.

11 Senator Cotton: Thank you. I think we will want to
12 examine the math and we want to work together to find the
13 path where we can meet the nation's munitions needs, some of
14 which will come, no doubt, from expanded private production,
15 but some of which is going to have to come from our Organic
16 Industrial Base. Thank you.

17 Chairman Wicker: Mr. Secretary, we also might want to
18 work with you on alleviating some of the constraints you
19 referred to, that you mentioned make it more expensive to
20 work with the existing facilities. Thank you very much,
21 Senator Hirono.

22 Senator Hirono: Thank you both for being here. I
23 would like to join Senators Reed and Shaheen, for once
24 again, raising our concerns about the deployment of 10,000
25 soldiers to the southern border, and the use of 20,000

1 National Guardsmen to engage in immigration enforcement.
2 We've raised these concerns as I said before, about using
3 soldiers to do things that are not in the mission of the
4 DOD. These were raised at your nomination hearings Mr.
5 Secretary.

6 Can you commit to not supporting a request to use
7 National Guards people for core law enforcement functions
8 such as arrests and detentions?

9 Secretary Driscoll: Senator, I can commit to not using
10 our National Guard for any unlawful use. And just to
11 reiterate, I have not heard of one single request that makes
12 me believe any current plan is something that they are not
13 legally able to do.

14 Senator Hirono: So that's the operative word, you
15 know, the conditioning word, that you would not do anything
16 that would be unlawful. And if the President says this is
17 what he wants and his view, whatever he does, is lawful.
18 So, this is a legitimate concern that we have because the
19 President has his priorities and those priorities are to
20 round up a lot of people in many instances, I would say
21 illegally, raising those kinds of questions.

22 So, it is a legitimate question for you, Mr. Secretary,
23 that you commit to not allowing the use of National Guards
24 for law enforcement purposes. So, I put that question to
25 you out there.

1 Secretary, it is very appropriate that the Indo-
2 Pacific, AOR is a focus of our national security. And one
3 of the critical negotiations that are occurring right now,
4 has to do with the training areas that the Army uses in
5 Hawaii, including Pohakuloa, which is some 22,000 acres.
6 Some of the least critical portions at least from the state.
7 And these lease negotiations have got to be completed
8 successfully. Otherwise, these training areas expires in
9 2029, right around the corner.

10 And these lands are crucial to maintaining military
11 readiness in the Pacific, but also whole cultural
12 significance for the Native Hawaiian community, a very
13 important community. Will you commit to working closely in
14 good faith with state officials, the community, and the
15 Hawaii Congressional delegation on this critical negotiation
16 matter?

17 Secretary Driscoll: Absolutely, Senator. And just on
18 behalf of the Army, the Hawaiian community, we speak to
19 soldiers who had just redeployed from that area, and they
20 always say how well they're treated and how well they're
21 cared for. And so, we are grateful for them taking care of
22 our soldiers.

23 Senator Hirono: These negotiations are so critical
24 that that there is a special person who's been appointed to
25 facilitate these negotiations. General George, I applaud

1 the Army's focus on innovative sustainment solutions like 3D
2 printing, to quickly and cost-effectively address long lead
3 times for parts and delays in production.

4 And you noted in your testimony that there was a delay
5 of one year for a part that was going to cost only \$20 from
6 the private sector, and your material command, 3D people,
7 just printed this part for 16 cents, something like that.
8 So, this is the kind of innovative and creative solutions
9 that I very much applaud.

10 So, I secured a provision in last year's NDAA, which
11 directs the establishment of an advanced manufacturing
12 facility in Hawaii to support all of the services. So, is
13 this something that you are supporting, General?

14 General George: We are certainly supporting advanced
15 manufacturing, 3D printing, making sure that we have it at,
16 not just the large production facilities, but having it from
17 top to bottom. That would start with like Rock Island, what
18 we do and you know, there's commercial industries that are
19 using that. We just tested it at Project Convergence out in
20 the Pacific.

21 I think a big piece of that too, is giving our ability,
22 because we normally do that under battle damage, assessment
23 to repair, the right to repair. And that was a big part of
24 what we had in in Army Transformation Initiative as well. I
25 know Secretary --

1 Senator Hirono: Thank you. So, since you raised the
2 example of what can be done, if we had this kind of
3 capability, I hope that you'll prioritize our ability to do
4 that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

6 Senator Ernst: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair. And thank
7 you gentlemen for being here today. Secretary Driscoll and,
8 and General George, I am always inspired by your willingness
9 to move our great Army forward. So, thank you for that.

10 And I just want take a brief moment and address some of
11 the concerns as well that have been expressed by my
12 colleagues about the utilization of the National Guard. And
13 having been a longtime National Guard member, I say, the
14 more that we can use our soldiers in jobs that are
15 appropriate for our soldiers, I say go for it.

16 My soldiers always looked for those opportunities to
17 volunteer, to serve in those types of capacities. So,
18 whether they're working in logistics opportunities, they're
19 fueling vehicles, they're repairing vehicles. If they are a
20 transportation soldier, they're a transporter. They want to
21 be able to drive, whatever it happens to be, we can always
22 further their skills by having those types of mobilizations.

23 We also just saw mobilization of 1,800 Iowa Army
24 National Guardsmen. They are going overseas. It is a
25 different type of mission than what we would see here in the

1 United States, but we want to wish them godspeed. We had a
2 number of send offs over the course of this past week.

3 And just talking about transformation, I want to
4 continue on with that theme. We're going through a lot of
5 reforms for modernization, and you also have had some really
6 notable progress in recruiting and retention. So General
7 George, if I could start with you, we're only midway through
8 the year and you've already met the Army's recruiting
9 mission or their goals. So, can you talk to us a little bit
10 about how that has been possible, and what you see as the
11 motivating factor right now for young men and women deciding
12 to serve in our great United States Army?

13 General George: I think I would love to give my ranger
14 buddy here an opportunity to jump in on that one too. I
15 think it starts with leadership. It has been picking the
16 right recruiters; our recruiters are doing great. We're
17 trying to give them also the right technology. One example
18 is using something right off the shelf so that people aren't
19 filling out, which you're very familiar with, hundreds of
20 forms, that it's down to something that's very simple. So,
21 our recruiters can get out there and talk about the Army.

22 In the end, I think they want to join the people that
23 are out there, and we need to make sure that we continue to
24 do that. They want to join a team that has a great mission
25 and a great purpose. And, you know, I think it's a great

1 start for their life. And I think that that's the biggest
2 thing, and we need to continue to get after that.

3 Senator Ernst: Agreed, thank you. Secretary.

4 Secretary Driscoll: Senator, I was going to say, one
5 of the ways we look at retention and recruiting is as a
6 trailing and a leading indicator of the health of the Army.
7 And so, on the leading indicator side, do young people want
8 to come join an organization that is returning to its
9 lethality roots, it's pushing for excellence. Do they want
10 that?

11 And very excitingly, 8 months into our 12-month goal,
12 we hit the annual goal on the retention side. Those are the
13 soldiers that are every single day, seeing is their
14 leadership, are their senators, is the bureaucracy
15 delivering to them what they need to stay in. And even more
16 exciting to us is we hit that 12-month goal, six months into
17 the year. And so, we think of these as very good indicators
18 that the army's in a healthy spot with our humans.

19 Senator Ernst: It's really, really astounding. And I
20 appreciate the remarkable work that you both have done now.
21 I did introduce the Serve Act, and that will improve the
22 connection between service opportunities and local
23 communities. And I'm really, really excited about the
24 opportunity to get to that pass this year.

25 Again, going back to the Army transformation, I really

1 do support the initiative and its efforts to redirect
2 resources toward emerging capabilities, like the counter-
3 UAS, electronic warfare, air defense. We saw what happened
4 in Russia with the Ukrainian drone attack. Really sobering
5 reminder on how modern warfare is changing and how we need
6 to adapt. So, we're seeing the right kind of change within
7 the Army. So again, kudos to you. We've got a bottom-up
8 transformation. We've got experimentation and contact and
9 smart divestments.

10 So, thank you for being willing to take some of those
11 hard challenges on, you're making those hard choices.
12 You're cutting positions and you're reinvesting in our
13 operational needs. And again, I know how tough that is, but
14 Secretary Driscoll, how is the Army adapting its training
15 and talent management to support these more technical kinds
16 of units and our operational needs?

17 Secretary Driscoll: So, to training one of the most
18 -- and just to reinforce the bottom-up concept, I was down
19 at Fort Jackson a couple weeks ago, which is where I did
20 basic training, 19 years, 18 years ago. And you do these
21 lanes five weeks into the course.

22 So, these are soldiers who've been in the United States
23 Army for five weeks. And what their drill sergeants had
24 done is, they had gotten drones to film them in the lanes
25 and then in their after-action review, they would actually

1 look and see what do I look like from a drone's view?

2 But then this is the part that's so remarkable to me.

3 Each time a drill sergeant took soldiers through this event,
4 they learned something from these soldiers who were five
5 weeks in, and those learnings have trickled up from Fort
6 Jackson, South Carolina, and the Pentagon, and have actually
7 changed some of the ways that we are telling people to
8 engage with drones, which is just absolutely remarkable.

9 Senator Ernst: That's amazing. Thank you very much,
10 gentlemen. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

11 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Ernst. Senator
12 Kaine.

13 Senator Kaine: Thank you, Mr. Chair and thanks to our
14 witnesses for your service. Happy birthday to the Army
15 family. I look forward to celebrating at Fort Gregg Adams a
16 week from tomorrow, in the Petersburg area near where I
17 live. I'm looking forward to that.

18 Secretary Driscoll, you were here for your confirmation
19 hearing on January 30, and I was not in a good mood that
20 day, and it didn't have anything to do with you. The night
21 before, I had been alerted about the crash at Reagan
22 National, 67 Lives lost. Earlier that morning, I had gone
23 out to the scene to interact with the Secretary of
24 Transportation and airport officials. We know a lot more
25 today than we knew then. The NTSB did an interim report

1 that they released in March. And they frankly pointed out a
2 lot of flaws.

3 There were flaws on the Army side in terms of some of
4 the broadcasting equipment on the Black Hawk not being
5 turned on during that flight. And problems with some of the
6 routes, particularly in the congested airspace.

7 There were serious problems on the air traffic control
8 side. There was a real shortage of folks in the tower that
9 day. Normally there would be one person handling the
10 incoming jets and somebody else dealing with the helos. One
11 person was doing both of those jobs when that crash
12 occurred.

13 Major problems with the FAA, and the decade before this
14 crash there had been hundreds of near misses between helos
15 and passenger jets logged into the FAA. But the FAA had
16 apparently done nothing with that information to try to
17 solve or prevent an accident of the kind that occurred. And
18 we got to be honest; Congress has not helped this situation
19 either.

20 Shortly before that crash, months before that crash,
21 Congress voted to add more flights into an over congested
22 airport, over the significant objections of the Metropolitan
23 Washington Airport's Authority, which is appointed by
24 Congress to run these airports. And they had told us; this
25 is a disaster waiting to happen. Please don't add more

1 flights than Congress chose to do. So anyway, and it's my
2 hope that we will have learned the lesson and not repeat
3 that.

4 The interim report in March of the NTSB is going to be
5 followed up by a final report, or at least a more
6 comprehensive report, we think, at the end of the month of
7 July. But I just want to reflect back on the 67 families,
8 the memory of the 67 and their families, they're looking for
9 answers.

10 And when they watch a hearing, and they hear a question
11 about it as was directed by Senator Reed, and the answer is,
12 "There's an investigation ongoing, and there's a
13 litigation," I'm going to tell you what they hear. What
14 they hear when they hear that answer is, minimizing
15 liability is more important than our suffering. Minimizing
16 liability is more important than making sure this doesn't
17 happen again to other families.

18 I've done a lot of disaster response as a Mayor and
19 Governor, and I've had a lot of lawyers tell me, well, you
20 can't really give answers, because if you do, somebody might
21 file a lawsuit against you. We owe it to the memory of the
22 67 and to their families, for them to be completely
23 confident that we are overturning every last stone and
24 making every last -- to minimize the chance this will ever
25 happen again.

1 And right now, I will say I've interacted with the
2 families a lot, and I'll let echo what Senator Reed said.
3 They frankly feel that American Airlines has been pretty
4 solicitous towards them. They feel like the Commerce
5 Committee and the Senate has been pretty solicitous towards
6 them.

7 They don't really feel like the Army has been
8 solicitous towards them, have really sat down and heard
9 their questions. And there's some that maybe can't be
10 answered because the investigation is not yet complete, but
11 they don't really feel that they're being listened to.

12 And I think that's an important thing that I would just
13 put to you, that I think you have taken steps, I've met with
14 the Army as recently as yesterday, to talk about steps that
15 have been taken with respect to new protocols about having
16 the ADS-B system generally turned on. And if it's not going
17 to be turned on, there's kind of an important protocol you
18 go through to make sure that you can have that turned off
19 for sensitive missions without jeopardizing others.

20 You've made some positive changes. You've made changes
21 to the helicopter rounds in the area, you know, this
22 National Capital region. That's really important. But I
23 don't necessarily think some of the public is aware of the
24 changes that have been made.

25 There was a recent incident in early May, where a helo-

1 passenger jet interaction caused the air traffic tower to
2 ask the jets to do a go round because of a helo that was
3 landing into Pentagon. That's not necessarily a bad thing,
4 that was out of an abundance of caution. But when things
5 like that get reported in the paper, and I frankly think
6 there was some of the reporting was a little bit inaccurate
7 when they get reported in the paper, you know, it's not to
8 our benefit.

9 So, what I would encourage you to do, share to the
10 greatest degree possible with the families and with the
11 public what the Army has already done, because I think
12 you've taken some positive steps. And then just try to
13 maintain as close a dialogue as you can, not only with the
14 families of the three Army aviators who died, but with the
15 families of the 64 who lost lives on the passenger jet that
16 day. Thank you. I yield back.

17 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Kaine. Senator
18 Budd.

19 Senator Budd: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you
20 both for being here today. Secretary Driscoll, it's great
21 to see you again. Thanks for being in North Carolina in a
22 very patriotic event with your family and supporting the
23 Army in North Carolina.

24 So, I want to bring up something that you said
25 yesterday during the testimony with the House Armed Services

1 Committee, and then I've heard it referenced a little bit
2 this morning in your opening comments and in your response
3 to Senator Ernst's question. You mentioned about learning
4 from over flights with drones and the training at Fort
5 Jackson. I think that's excellent. So, thank you for
6 sharing that.

7 You know, we've seen all seen the stories coming out
8 from Russia, how the Ukrainians have yet again, showed
9 boldness and initiative in operations spiderweb, and we
10 applaud them. But it makes me think, how do we make sure
11 that we don't become the victims in a similar situation
12 against us? And how do we make sure that we're defending
13 ourselves against potential enemy drone attacks? We've
14 talked about offensive operations, but less about true
15 protection.

16 So, if you would talk about the Army keeping pace and
17 counter drone technology, and how do we make sure that we
18 protect our troops at home and abroad from these threats?

19 Secretary Driscoll: Thanks for the question, Senator
20 Budd. And just to close out with Senator Kaine, I will
21 reflect on your remarks. If any of the families are
22 listening, we are absolutely devastated by that outcome. If
23 anything, we are saying sounds like callous legalese, it's
24 not intended to be. So, thank you for sharing that, and I
25 commit to reflecting and following up.

1 Senator Budd, air and missile defense is -- when we see
2 our Air Defenders and we saw them in the Middle East, we say
3 with a very straight face that they are the new tip of the
4 spear. The way that warfare is changing and what we saw
5 with Operations Spider's Web in Russia, and the sheer volume
6 of damage, I think our estimate is for sub \$20,000 in cost,
7 they took out, up to call it 10-ish billion in assets.

8 And we would face that same problem, is one of the
9 challenges of our lifetime as an Army to figure this out.
10 We are testing all sorts of different solutions from the
11 smallest being just shooting a 50-caliber round, the highest
12 being -- we have ground-based interceptors that are based in
13 Alaska and are a lot more expensive. We have things in the
14 middle, like directed energy which require kind of different
15 power grids and different ways of thinking about delivering
16 and storing power. We were doing all sorts of experiments
17 with our soldiers.

18 We were just with a company yesterday who was part of
19 Operation Spider's Web in Ukraine, and hearing about how
20 they participated in it. And we said immediately, like,
21 we've got to figure out how to get this technology into our
22 soldiers' hands this summer, so that we can start to learn.
23 Because it was obviously so effective there.

24 And I guess in summary, what we're trying to do is test
25 as many things as we possibly can and then work with this

1 committee once we find the ones that are working to scale
2 them as quickly as possible.

3 Senator Budd: Thank you for that. General George, it
4 was reported last year that the Army intended to raise a
5 fifth multi-domain task force and that it would be stationed
6 in Fort Bragg, North Carolina, with the plan to be fully
7 operational by Fiscal Year 2028. So, the question is, is
8 that still on track? And in a broader sense, how will the
9 Army Transformation Initiative affect that force structure
10 of the MVTf units?

11 General George: Yeah, I would tell you, Senator, that
12 those plans are still on track. These are capabilities that
13 we know we're going to need. I mean all of the things for
14 multi-domain effects that we're going to have to do to
15 include the counter UAS that you were just talking about.
16 So that's definitely a capability that we're going to need
17 and continue to grow.

18 Senator Budd: So, I want to -- continuing, General
19 George, I want to applaud the Army's investment in its next
20 Generation C2 or Command and Control program, which will
21 take advantage of software solutions to give real time data
22 to commanders so they can make decisions better and faster
23 than our adversaries. So, what's the status of next Gen C2,
24 and where has it succeeded and where can it improve?

25 General George: I think if you were going to ask the

1 Secretary or I, we're very encouraged by what we're doing.
2 I think we know that we have to change how we pass data,
3 move data, based on how you can be seen anywhere on this
4 planet. We just saw when we were out in at the national
5 training center, the concept, it works. And so, we're now
6 looking to scale it. We will have a division that's doing
7 it this summer. You know, we just want to go faster.
8 That's our press.

9 We just did a warfighter over in Europe, and I know,
10 you know, General Donahue, we just were up on the net with
11 his team. This is transforming the network from theater all
12 the way down to the tactical level. And we have to do as
13 much as we can to go faster.

14 Senator Budd: Thank you.

15 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Budd. Senator
16 King.

17 Senator King: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Very
18 straightforward question. We've got this big parade coming
19 up in a little over a week. What's the budget?

20 Secretary Driscoll: 25 to 40 million.

21 Senator King: That's a pretty rough estimate for
22 something that's going to happen in less than 10 days.
23 That's as close as you can give us here today?

24 Secretary Driscoll: We have a bucket set aside,
25 Senator for any contingencies or damage that we cause. We

1 are aspiring to zero, but we have already budgeted in in
2 case we have to reimburse anyone.

3 Senator King: So, a minimum of 25 million and
4 somewhere in around 40 is the upward estimate?

5 Secretary Driscoll: Yes, sir.

6 Senator King: Thank you. In October of 2023, a tragic
7 event occurred in Maine where an army reservist killed 18
8 people in a matter of minutes. Subsequent to that, it was
9 determined that he had substantial brain injury, most likely
10 caused -- he was a trainer in munitions -- by blast over
11 pressure and continued exposure. There was a lot of
12 activity at the time in the Army and in the Pentagon
13 generally on this issue of blast over pressure, mental
14 health, baselining.

15 And I just want to be sure, are you aware of that work?
16 And I just want to be sure it isn't lost in the transition
17 from one Administration to the other. This is a very
18 serious problem. It turns out that this one case in Maine
19 was kind of a notorious one, but this is something that
20 threw out the armed services, particularly in the army.
21 General, do you want to address that? Are we staying after
22 this issue?

23 General George: We're staying after that. It was
24 probably about three weeks ago that we had the team up to
25 talk about that. So, and operators, and we're using one of

1 our very specialized units that do a lot of these very high-
2 end kind of training. Right now, we have implemented the
3 neurological testing, so people going on and doing that.

4 Senator King: So, you're doing a baseline?

5 General George: And that's the baseline. But also, we
6 are changing again, it's how you train as well, and you kind
7 of alluded to that, is do you need the level of explosives
8 when you're doing certain kind of training, how can you
9 reduce that? We're looking at equipment, how do we change,
10 for example, the Kevlar may be very helpful against bullets
11 coming at you, but it does other things when you have
12 concussive events. And so how do we change that?

13 So, I probably once a quarter I will have discussions
14 on this, and these are ongoing with what we're doing, so
15 we're continuing on that.

16 Senator King: Good.

17 Secretary Driscoll: And Senator, I can just echo, this
18 does come up often and we are trying to look at our
19 training. We're obviously choosing to expose soldiers to
20 things and make sure that it is worth the risk.

21 Senator King: I appreciate that, and all the right
22 work has been done at the fairly high level. I just want to
23 be sure it gets down to the ground in terms of day-to-day
24 activity, that it's not just reports in the Pentagon, but
25 that it's direct changes in the way equipment and training

1 and those things. Because as I say, it turns out to be a
2 widespread problem and something we need to address. I
3 appreciate your updates.

4 Mr. Secretary, my understanding is the Army
5 Transformation Initiative has recommended reducing civilian
6 workforce in the Army by 23,000 people. My question is,
7 where did that number come from?

8 General George: I would jump in a little bit on this.
9 Senator, what we had done, and again, this wasn't like, hey,
10 we're going to reduce a specific number. I think you'll
11 also notice in there that were combining headquarters. We
12 had examples where we had two fairly, geo led headquarters
13 within a stone's throw of each other that kind of had
14 overlapping missions. So, what we are doing is looking at
15 how we can, we're going to reduce our business systems. I
16 think I mentioned that upfront.

17 We have a lot of old business systems and programs that
18 we don't need and it can be done with data. I have a smart
19 board that's in my office where I can get most of this data.
20 So that basically from top to bottom is what we're looking
21 at. I do think that there are additional areas where we
22 can, find more efficiencies, our goal is to fill our
23 formations --

24 Senator King: So, you have examined the structure and
25 come to that number. You didn't start with a percentage or

1 a number to work toward? Is that what you're saying?

2 Secretary Driscoll: Correct, Senator. It was not
3 driven not arbitrary, but it was not driven downward. It
4 was where we thought there were redundancies. And then a
5 lot of the cuts we referenced in ATI, or to General George's
6 point, the intent is, when soldiers enlist that they don't
7 want us in the Pentagon pushing paperwork. That
8 headquarters function has grown and bloated, and it's our
9 own fault. We are trying to push them back out to the --

10 Senator King: It strikes me as a large cut, and I
11 think it has to be weighed about 1 percent of the Army
12 budget for those 23,000 people. Some of them had to be
13 doing useful work. I just would be interested in following
14 up to see where the cuts are actually happening, and the
15 analysis that led to that. Thank you very much, Mr.
16 Chairman.

17 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator. Senator
18 Sullivan.

19 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Gentlemen,
20 thank you for your testimony and your continued exceptional
21 service to our great nation. Mr. Secretary, thank you for
22 your Alaska visit. You made your commitment to me clear,
23 and you followed through on it very quickly in your tenure.
24 I appreciate that.

25 I was just back home for the last 10 days and hosted

1 the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Caine, and we had
2 a good opportunity to meet with the 11th Airborne soldiers
3 who are really impressive.

4 I wanted to get your impressions on your visit. And
5 then I wanted to ask on the Army Transformation Initiative.
6 General, thanks for coming into my office last week or two
7 weeks ago, to give an update.

8 I want to get a sense of how the 11th Airborne Division
9 will be impacted by that, particularly on two issues; the
10 merging of the headquarters that may affect Fort Wainwright
11 and JBER. We still want that to be a warfighting
12 headquarters. I know you do too. It's been an admin
13 headquarters for many years. I love the idea of the 11th
14 Airborne now being the competitor to the 82nd Airborne.

15 I know the 82nd Airborne has a storied history, so does
16 the 11th Airborne, by the way, in World War II. A lot of
17 people don't know that, but it's always good to have that
18 good internal competition. Just for the 82nd Airborne folks
19 watching, I do think the 11th Airborne is maybe not only
20 catching you, but surpassing you, particularly on Arctic
21 OPS.

22 Maybe you guys can comment on that as well, but your
23 impressions, Army Transformation Initiative, and then also
24 the issue of the 11th Airborne's aviation assets necessary
25 to complete that transformation from a Stryker brigade to an

1 air assault unit up in Fairbanks. Want to make sure they're
2 getting the proper Helo assets. And what's your vision on
3 that?

4 So, there's a lot of questions, but mainly, your
5 impressions to both of you on your Alaska trip. I think you
6 guys are doing a great job up there. I think the morale's
7 high, that's a unit that knows what it's all about now,
8 which I think for a long time, maybe it hadn't. And as you
9 know, that purpose is important

10 Secretary Driscoll: As somebody who is stationed at,
11 for drum New York with the 10th Mountain Division. I think
12 I --

13 Senator Sullivan: By the way, where there's no
14 mountains.

15 Secretary Driscoll: I think I mentioned this in my
16 hearing, that I didn't know that you get there and there are
17 no mountains there. And contrasting that with Alaska and
18 the training at Black Rapids, I mean, it is remarkable what
19 soldiers are out there doing. I ended up doing an exercise
20 with some of them, and it's hard and it's different, and
21 it's just the way you have to think about moving soldiers up
22 these mountains, and a lot of the world is filled with this,
23 this arctic mountainous region.

24 And so, the other part that kind of blew my mind was,
25 we went to a testing facility where they were testing our

1 equipment in these incredible freezers that would go
2 negative 50, negative 60 degrees. And they would show you
3 what happens to fluid and what happens to all of these
4 different items that we the United States Army purchase,
5 that just the manufacturers either don't have the ability to
6 do it or just don't take the time to do it.

7 And there are all of these instances where we are
8 buying a billion dollars of something and finding out it
9 can't operate in negative 20-degree temperature, which is
10 cold, but it's not that cold.

11 Senator Sullivan: And you get that a lot up at Fort
12 Wayne, right?

13 Secretary Driscoll: You get it a lot. And so, the
14 soldiers will take nearly every piece of equipment they get
15 out on these very cold days on behalf of the United States
16 Army, so we can learn. And, we have learned a lot, and it
17 has changed how we procure things. We try to get it to them
18 earlier in the process, so they can tell us if it works in
19 those conditions.

20 Senator Sullivan: So, on the helo assets and the
21 headquarters in terms of Army Transformation, I know General
22 you mentioned to me you didn't think that was going to
23 impact the OPS, and size of the units up at the 11th
24 Airborne, but can you unpack a little bit of that right now?

25 General George: I would say, one of the things that

1 we're trying to do with Army Transformation Initiative, and
2 again, this gets to continuous transformation and make sure
3 we're moving forward. I think that's actually a capability
4 you mentioned, you know, having a division up there that
5 needs to be a warfighting capability that we need to add,
6 certain lethal aspects to that division.

7 And so, what we've got to do is -- I think other
8 places, it's why we're trying to lead the way with what
9 we're doing -- reducing here and another headquarters. This
10 is exactly the kind of capability that we need to grow. And
11 because of 11th airborne, I think I've told you there, if
12 you can operate when it's 40 and 50 below, those troopers
13 approve that they can go anywhere. They're just physically
14 tough folks that can do things. And we want to invest in
15 that Arctic capability up in Alaska.

16 Senator Sullivan: By the way, that came up a lot in
17 our discussions with General Caine, the ability, the
18 discipline, the leadership needed to operate at 40 below
19 zero. If you can operate in 40 below zero, where it's hard
20 to do anything, to your point, Mr. Secretary, you can
21 operate anywhere in the world.

22 You can operate in the jungle, you can operate in the
23 desert, but you can't operate in 40 below zero unless you're
24 trained, tough and disciplined. And I think that's what
25 those troops are becoming.

1 So, I appreciate that. I'll have a few more questions
2 for the record, but thanks for your leadership to both of
3 you.

4 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much. Senator Peters.

5 Senator Peters: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and gentlemen
6 welcome to the committee and thank you for your service. As
7 we've discussed here in the committee, and three of us have
8 had a chance to discuss in my office and other places,
9 certainly the Army Transformation Initiative is going to
10 refocus the army towards future conflicts and some real
11 creative thinking. I believe going into that and I
12 appreciate that.

13 But as the Army begins this rapid modernization
14 efforts, I'm hopeful we're going to continue to capitalize
15 on my State, State of Michigan's really unique commercial
16 automotive expertise, including billions of dollars of
17 research and development and advanced manufacturing talent
18 that is located there. And at the same time, I think we
19 also must ensure that ATI does not compromise readiness
20 innovation and manufacturing.

21 And I'm specifically concerned about potential impacts
22 on some critical hubs like the Detroit Arsenal, as well as
23 the ground vehicle systems center in Michigan. These sites
24 as I think both of you know, are central to the Army's
25 modernization goals and the key for both shaping for testing

1 and fielding the next generation capabilities.

2 So, my first question is for you Secretary Driscoll.

3 Do I have your commitment to work together to maintain both
4 the Arsenal and GVSC's role in supporting the future for the
5 Army's both wheeled as well as tracked vehicles?

6 Secretary Driscoll: I would love to work with you
7 Senator and the ISV, the Infantry squad vehicle, it comes
8 off of Chevy Colorado, so it's dual use. The GM defense
9 have been incredible partners. I saw them a couple weeks
10 ago as we were visiting and what they have been able to make
11 for our soldiers and their CEO actually goes out into the
12 field with our soldiers to figure out how can it be better,
13 and then they will iterate those changes within a couple of
14 weeks.

15 So, I completely agree that what has occurred in the
16 vehicle manufacturing in Michigan, is incredibly valuable
17 for soldiers.

18 Senator Peters: And my understanding -- well, thank
19 you for bringing that vehicle up and General, you and I
20 talked about that as well, but I'll ask you another
21 question. But my understanding is when you leverage that
22 commercial expertise, you mentioned the Silverado used for
23 this particular vehicle, you can go from concept to
24 prototype to low-rate production within six months. That
25 doesn't happen very often in the procurement process.

1 And that's my question for you General George; can you
2 speak to how the Army's going to continue to leverage
3 Michigan's automotive manufacturing and R&D efforts and kind
4 of build on what Secretary Driscoll told us?

5 General George: Certainly, Senator. I think this gets
6 back to what we're looking at for our all across
7 acquisitions. And we do have -- Detroit Arsenal is
8 important to us, but what's really important is our access
9 to adopt and modify technology that's coming from the
10 commercial sector, that's been really important to us.

11 And what GM and Ford and those companies spend on R&D
12 and what they're doing with autonomous systems, in certain
13 ways, what we're looking at is how do we restructure to make
14 sure that we are taking advantage of that and not trying to
15 build our own systems. We can't compete with what those two
16 amazing companies can do up there. So, what specifically do
17 we need to do? And that's been our focus, and we've talked
18 to a lot of the companies that are up there and will
19 continue.

20 So that will continue to be important to us. I think
21 we need to adapt a little bit how we're doing that to take
22 full advantage of what the commercial sector in Detroit
23 offers us.

24 Senator Peters: Great. Well, thank you both of you
25 for that answer. General George, exercises like Northern

1 Strike and Northern Michigan, strengthen our ability to work
2 with our allies and deter potential conflicts. Northern
3 Strike currently brings over 6,300 participants from across
4 the U.S. as well as our international partners to Michigan's
5 National All Domain Warfighting Centers.

6 It's the largest training area east of the Mississippi.
7 And both Admiral Paparo in the African Command Commander,
8 General Langley have praised Northern Strike for its
9 strategic value as well as its importance to Joint Force
10 readiness.

11 So, my question for you sir, is do you support training
12 exercises for increased interoperability with our partners,
13 including multinational joint training exercises like
14 Northern Strike, and will you also commit to working with me
15 to expand both active and reserve components that will
16 operate and train at Northern Strike?

17 General George: Absolutely Senator. I think what's
18 -- and I've been up to Northern Strike, and I think it's
19 very unique. I've been really proud of what the tag and the
20 guard has done up there, to make that a great training
21 opportunity.

22 And I think we're looking everywhere. You know, one of
23 the things we need to do is expand our capability to operate
24 drones, operate in the electromagnetic environment,
25 countering drones. So, all of that, using those kinds of

1 spaces to do that'll be critically important to us today and
2 in the future.

3 Secretary Driscoll: And Senator, I think my office is
4 coordinating with yours, but I'm actually going up there
5 this year, I think with you and your colleagues, so I look
6 forward to seeing Northern Strike with you.

7 Senator Peters: Well, I appreciate that. I look
8 forward to that. And you'll be impressed, like the General
9 has been, I'm sure. So, we'll welcome you there. Thank
10 you, Mr. Chairman.

11 Chairman Wicker: Thank you. Senator Tuberville.

12 Senator Tuberville: Good morning, gentlemen.
13 Congratulations on your recruiting. I know how hard that is
14 in my formal profession, getting the right people. General,
15 are we keeping our qualifications, discipline, values
16 physical requirements when we recruit these people?

17 General George: I definitely think we are Senator.
18 And one of the things that we have been having discussions
19 is how we're raising our standards because of what we're
20 having coming in and doing that. So, we've had fewer, at
21 the Future Soldier Prep course, we're going to keep that as
22 an option. We do have times where we have some really
23 brilliant soldiers out there, that maybe need to spend a
24 couple of weeks getting in a little bit better shape to join
25 our formation, and that's what that's for, but really

1 pleased with the path that we're on.

2 Senator Tuberville: As long as we're putting them
3 through that and they can handle it. Again, I've been
4 through that before. A lot of people need to get in better
5 shape.

6 In Secretary Hegseth's memo directing the Army
7 Transformation Initiative, it states that the Army will
8 begin enabling AI driven command control by 2027. Secretary
9 Driscoll, how will the Army be using artificial intelligence
10 to help decision making?

11 Secretary Driscoll: Senator, we think of the Army as
12 kind of two discrete functions, when General George and I
13 talk about it. One is like a large enterprise business that
14 moves people and things across the country and the world.
15 The other is a hopefully an incredibly lethal war killing
16 machine and warfighting machine. And so, I think AI and
17 generative AI will meaningfully impact both spaces.

18 The first thing we're working on, is creating a data
19 layer that basically allows for our people and our things
20 and our sensors to all communicate in near real time. on
21 the warfighting function. Once you can have that occur, you
22 can layer generative AI for things like fires targeting for
23 air and missile defense. It's incredibly valuable.

24 I would estimate that we'll start to see that at scale
25 in kind of 12 to 18 months. On the Army, as an enterprise

1 business side, we're incredibly optimistic. We have 200-
2 plus enterprise systems right now that are oftentimes
3 siloed. Oftentimes we've had software created just for us
4 that we have to maintain that is a decade out of date. And
5 we think generative AI will be able to help us with all
6 sorts of tasks in the coming months.

7 I'm excited to announce or just give credit to the
8 recruiting team. They've onboarded to a very common CRM,
9 Customer Relationship Management tool called Salesforce.
10 Generative AI can be applied to a lot of the things that we
11 do as we recruit soldiers and bring them into the Army.

12 Senator Tuberville: Thank you. You know, we're right
13 outside the gate at Redstone Arsenal. Secretary, have you
14 been there yet?

15 Secretary Driscoll: Would you mind repeating that?

16 Senator Tuberville: Have you been to Redstone Arsenal
17 in Huntsville yet?

18 Chairman Wicker: What state is that?

19 Senator Tuberville: That's in Alabama.

20 [Laughter.]

21 Secretary Driscoll: I have.

22 Senator Tuberville: Okay. If you hadn't, we need to
23 get you there. And by the way, you're making decisions and
24 transforming our military. I'm good with that. You're
25 actually cutting some contracts and things in my state. If

1 it helps, I'm all for it. And so, we'll work with you as
2 much as we can.

3 But right outside the gate at Redstone, a partnership
4 between Davidson Technologies and D-Wave had completed the
5 assembly of a quantum computer system that should be soon
6 complete, its calibrations and readiness tests. Secretary,
7 how can the Army leverage these new systems, and
8 successfully implementing its transformation and optimize
9 the future the right way?

10 Secretary Driscoll: Senator Slotkin and I were at a
11 dinner a couple nights ago talking about quantum computing,
12 and what quantum computing is going to be able to do, to how
13 our ability to process information as human beings is other
14 worldly, is some things as simple as convoy routes for
15 transportation, all the way up to you could probably start
16 to plan out where should you put air and missile defense
17 systems, and how would they react in near real time to
18 threats. And so, any sort of innovation like that we are
19 completely supportive of.

20 Senator Tuberville: Thank you. It's a lot of good
21 things going on especially with AI. I hope we all
22 understand too, that for AI and all the future big tech
23 stuff, we're going to need energy. Big time. China doubles
24 our energy every three years that we have in this country.
25 We're way behind. And we can talk about all these

1 technologies that we want, unless we have energy, which
2 should be a national security threat, then we're going to
3 have huge problems. You agree with that Secretary?

4 Secretary Driscoll: Yes.

5 Senator Tuberville: General?

6 General George: Yes, Senator. I do.

7 Senator Tuberville: Yeah. I would hope we start
8 talking about it a lot more. Make sure that, with all these
9 things we got coming down the pipe, that we have the
10 availability to; number one, be able to build them, and
11 number two, have the energy to run all of our data centers
12 and metadata centers in the future. Thank you, Mr.
13 Chairman.

14 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Tuberville.

15 Senator Blumenthal.

16 Senator Blumenthal: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank
17 you both for your service and thanks for being here today.
18 I listened to your early response, Secretary Driscoll, about
19 the cost of the celebration that's planned. Just to be
20 absolutely clear, I'm all in favor of celebrating the Army's
21 250th. I'm hoping maybe we'll celebrate the Navy's as well,
22 having some Marine Corps background.

23 But I am struck by the cost, \$25 million to \$40
24 million, as Senator King said, that's a pretty widespread,
25 and you are saying that it's due to the damage that may be

1 caused. Is that the result of having tanks going through
2 the streets of Washington and possibly tearing up the
3 streets? And what other damage would be done?

4 Secretary Driscoll: To the cost Senator, I think from
5 our perspective we're optimistic and we'll be able to report
6 to you after the parade if we think --

7 Senator Blumenthal: But why have tanks? Why this kind
8 of parade?

9 Secretary Driscoll: We believe we have a once in a
10 lifetime opportunity to fill up our recruiting pipeline with
11 young Americans.

12 Senator Blumenthal: Wouldn't your preference be to
13 save money in light of the budget cuts we're seeing for
14 training programs, freezes on hirings, shrinking staff
15 levels, deferring maintenance, jeopardizing equipment
16 maintenance, these problems are not theoretical. Wouldn't
17 you agree that this money could be better spent? We don't
18 have unlimited funds.

19 Secretary Driscoll: Very sincerely, Senator. I think
20 this is a once in a lifetime opportunity to tell the story
21 of the American.

22 Senator Blumenthal: There are a lot of once in the
23 lifetime opportunities. We all have them, but it doesn't
24 mean that we spend money extravagantly. In fact, it would
25 be an honor to the Army to, in fact, devote those resources

1 to where they're really needed.

2 And let me just cite to you the fact that the National
3 Guard Bureau has yet to be reimbursed \$38 million by the
4 Department of Army for its essential work during the
5 Presidential inaugural mission. It isn't a minor oversight.
6 This mission demanded the guard's expertise in security and
7 logistics and emergency response. And the National Guard
8 needs that money. Why are you stiffing the National Guard
9 and spending 25 to 40 million on a parade?

10 General George: I'm not aware of the \$38 million that
11 you're talking about, Senator. We just went down yesterday,
12 that was one of the things that we're talking about that,
13 you know, we were talking about some of the things that we
14 need to put out there that we've been working through. So,
15 I can follow up with you on that.

16 Senator Blumenthal: Well, I hope that you will,
17 because I have a lot of trouble justifying to veterans
18 who've been fired from positions in the federal government,
19 that we're spending potentially \$40 million on a parade,
20 when they have been fired because supposedly, we have to
21 eliminate waste, including veterans who were in the
22 Department of Veterans Affairs. I don't know how you can
23 justify that kind of expenditure.

24 Let me ask you, drone warfare; are you satisfied that
25 we are doing enough to protect our bases in this country and

1 elsewhere against the swarms of small, lightweight drones,
2 such as Ukraine used in its operation spiderweb and such as
3 terrorists used in the Middle East against our base in
4 Jordan?

5 I've visited that area. I've heard personal
6 descriptions from the troops there about what they fear in
7 our inability to defend them against these types of small,
8 lightweight drones. Are you satisfied? We're doing enough
9 both on the offense to develop our drone warfare, and in
10 terms of defending our cities as well as our bases?

11 Secretary Driscoll: Senator, we are not doing enough.
12 The current status quo is not sufficient. We are rapidly
13 trying to iterate and prototype and work with companies who
14 actually are deploying their technologies into Ukraine. I
15 think this is probably an instance where the United States
16 can be a fast follower, if we can ingest and suck out a lot
17 of the lessons learned and the technology from Ukraine.

18 Senator Blumenthal: I'm going to interrupt because my
19 time is about to expire, and I know the chairman will
20 interrupt me, but I have visited the Ukraine drone
21 factories. I've spent some time with their military,
22 talking about their drones. And I guarantee you; they are
23 at the tip of the spear. They are way ahead of us. We have
24 a lot to learn from them.

25 And it's not just a luxury or convenience. We are at

1 risk because of the technology that they have developed, and
2 the Russians are soon going to take from them, because
3 that's the pattern in this war. The Ukrainians take a step;
4 the Russians try to keep up with them on growing warfare.
5 And I think we not only have a lot to learn, but we have an
6 obligation to learn it. And I would like to ask you, just
7 because my time's expired for a briefing on this area, which
8 I think is revolutionizing modern warfare. Thanks, Mr.
9 Chairman.

10 Chairman Wicker: Senator, I think that's a very
11 important goal. I would note for members that we will have
12 a closed hearing immediately 15 minutes after the
13 adjournment of this. And I would suggest that Senator would
14 want to ask those questions.

15 General George: I would love a chance to address you
16 on that topic in specific.

17 Chairman Wicker: Let's do that.

18 Senator Blumenthal: Even if -- with respect, Mr.
19 Chairman, I'm not sure I'll be able to attend the closed
20 briefing. I'm going to try, but the briefing may not
21 exhaust this topic. I would suggest a specific briefing on
22 drone technology and warfare, if it's all right.

23 Chairman Wicker: There'll be no time limit and no
24 limit on the subject matter. So, we'll do the best we can.
25 And I hope the Senator will be able to attend. Senator

1 Schmitt.

2 Senator Schmitt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I actually
3 share Senator Blumenthal's, I think that'd be a good thing
4 to do. And it seems to be the topic du jour, which is UAS
5 and counter UAS and probably for good reason, although, you
6 know, we've been briefed on these topics before. Seeing
7 what everybody saw with Ukraine and with Russia, I think
8 sort of highlights the need for us to be speedy with this.
9 We can talk more about it in the classified setting, but
10 certainly it's been something that is on the radar.

11 I want to commend the Army for, I think being ahead of
12 this. And quite frankly, versus the Air Force. I think the
13 Air Force is, from everything I've gathered, is really
14 clumsy about how they're protecting our assets with counter
15 UAS. And it's an unwillingness to adopt technologies that
16 already exist in the private sector. And I don't really
17 understand why, that's not really the question for you guys
18 today.

19 But I know that you guys are sort of leading the joint
20 effort, right? Can you talk me through what might be done
21 then? Let's just say of all the branches, you guys are
22 number one in this and noting and granting that there's work
23 to do. How can you help influence like, just say the Air
24 Force is doing, I mean, this is a big concern, obviously
25 Whiteman Air Force Base is in Missouri, Fort Leonard Woods,

1 also in Missouri.

2 But could you just walk me through that, what leading
3 that effort means and how we can lead to be more nimble as
4 it relates to counter UAS?

5 General George: I think Senator this is a joint
6 problem. Everybody's going to have to understand how to not
7 only employ drones, but protect yourself from drones and
8 autonomous systems. So, I will again point out that I think
9 we need to be more agile in our funding and buy
10 capabilities. You kind of referred to that, that we don't
11 get locked into some program because things are moving very
12 rapidly.

13 The discussion we had yesterday with somebody who was
14 supporting Ukraine, I mean, was an update and it's going to
15 continue to happen. I think stateside we have submitted I
16 think we're going to have to make some changes. One, we're
17 going to have to work locally with the FAA and FCCs locally.
18 But some of this gets to the 130i, and I think that that's
19 legislated as far as what it is, how we can share
20 information on drones. I think that legislation is about
21 nine or 10 years old. And I think that that needs to get
22 updated.

23 And then the big thing that we're looking at is on
24 every system we've mentioned, I think we should be, one,
25 really focused on cost curve. How do we do this in a way

1 that you're not sending million-dollar missiles or using big
2 expensive equipment against things that are, you know,
3 relatively cheap. And that's what we're looking at.

4 And we are running a very large exercise this month and
5 next, right now we're doing this overseas and going through
6 all of that, and I would love to come and brief you on off
7 that. Because there's several different systems, both
8 kinetic and non-kinetic, right? that we are employing,
9 really around the world, because they work different in
10 different environments.

11 And we're doing the same thing state side. We've done
12 stuff where we've sent things, for example, down to the
13 border, to make sure that we're testing it in every
14 environment.

15 Senator Schmitt: And I think it's having a great
16 impact I think on what's happening at the border now. In
17 many ways the autonomous efforts are, not only are they
18 gathering important intelligence and directing critical
19 resources to apprehend people trying to come here illegally,
20 there's a sort of a scarecrow effect too. Like, it's there.
21 People know it's there. The cartels are sophisticated in
22 the places that they want to go. So, I mean, I think at the
23 border, this is actually very important.

24 But I want to drill down just a little bit with the
25 time that I have, and this is going to be a much longer

1 discussion, as it relates to, you know, there's a big focus
2 on the actual drone and what the drone does. But there's a
3 lot of things that happen before a drone were to be
4 intercepted or shot down. There's detection, right?
5 There's sort of awareness with sensors. How is the Army
6 getting -- what steps are being taken right now to make us
7 more nimble, to acquire these sorts of systems?

8 Because I do have great concern that the efforts that
9 are being made, we've got a long way to go. So, what is
10 happening right now? And maybe that's for you, Mr.
11 Secretary or General.

12 Secretary Driscoll: Senator, what we are trying to do
13 is and we can talk about this more in the classified
14 setting, but talk specifically to the companies and the tool
15 makers that are being used in war right now and figure out,
16 how do we get -- what they used on Sunday was a pretty
17 ingenious way to get it in some ways. And I think we would
18 not have been ready for that. And we are not ready for it,
19 but we know what they did. We are going to get it in the
20 hands of soldiers in the coming weeks, and we will be after
21 that.

22 Senator Schmitt: And I appreciate that candor and just
23 make one final point. I think that, and this is the Air
24 Force in particular. I'm sorry that I'm picking on the Air
25 Force today, but the truth is, they've asked private

1 companies to come in and do an assessment and they have a
2 good way to do it. And they say, oh, thank you for your
3 input. We're going to keep doing it the way we're doing it.
4 That's just my concern.

5 So, thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your grace for my
6 extra 40 seconds.

7 Chairman Wicker: And thank you. And that's our
8 responsibility to change that, Senator. Let me just say
9 this with regard to drones. Because this can be said in an
10 open session and we'll have a closed session the public will
11 not know it. Our reconciliation bill contains \$1 billion of
12 funding for small drones and another billion dollars for one
13 way attack drones. Some of that will not go to the Army,
14 but much of it will. And I wanted the public and members
15 who will not attend the closed session to know that.

16 Senator Duckworth.

17 Senator Duckworth: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to
18 associate myself with Senator Blumenthal's comments about
19 blowing \$30 million on a parade. Let's be clear, you're not
20 doing it to celebrate the Army's birthday. You're doing it
21 to stroke Donald Trump's ego.

22 If you want to celebrate the Army's birthday by
23 spending \$30 million, I would recommend you think about
24 something along the lines of maybe spending that money on
25 childcare for military families, perhaps tuition

1 reimbursement for military families. There are lots of ways
2 to celebrate the Army's birthday, without blowing it all on
3 a parade.

4 I also want to echo the concerns of my colleague,
5 Senator Reed, Shaheen, and Hirono about misusing and burning
6 the readiness of our National Guard troops and other
7 expensive military assets, like deportation flights for so-
8 called interior law enforcement operations. The military
9 should not do the job of DHS for it.

10 I'm especially concerned by your answer to Senator
11 Hirono, Mr. Secretary. I think you copped out with your
12 answer of we will do what's legal. That answer ignores your
13 obligation to advise what is right for our warfighters and
14 to focus on warfighting, not to say what is legal.

15 Secretary Driscoll, General George, I appreciate much
16 of your transformation efforts. I've long advocated for the
17 Army to make hard forward-looking decisions, and I
18 especially support the push to modernize ammunition's
19 enterprise to produce and deliver munitions to warfighters
20 at scale.

21 That's why your proposed cuts to Rock Island are
22 confusing and troubling to me. Rock Island Arsenal is a
23 critical part of the Army's advance manufacturing ecosystem.
24 It is central to the future of battlefield sustainment and
25 logistics.

1 Yet, under your current plan, two commands with very
2 distinct missions, Army Sustainment Command and Joint
3 Munitions Command will be integrated. We've been told this
4 consolidation will result in workforce reductions of
5 approximately a hundred personnel, and the phasing out of a
6 data center and Army Material Command. Beyond this, details
7 are scarce.

8 Secretary Driscoll, do you have more recent updates on
9 the workforce impacts of these plan changes, including how
10 many personnel will be affected and the timeline of
11 implementation?

12 Secretary Driscoll: Senator, I just want to echo how
13 important Rock Island is. I think we have a trip scheduled
14 or hopefully soon to go up there. The workers up there have
15 been remarkable and have helped our country and our Army for
16 a long time.

17 As it relates specifically to sustainment and the Joint
18 Munitions Commands, when we were looking at it, basically
19 the headquarters exists so close together, we thought we
20 could have efficiencies without actually impacting the
21 outputs. By combining, the intent is not to slow down
22 production in any sort of way.

23 And then specifically Senator, to your question, no
24 changes from what you referenced.

25 Senator Duckworth: No. How many personnel would be

1 affected and what's the timeline of implementation?

2 General George: I wanted to just kind of reinforce, we
3 have two headquarters that are kind of very almost co-
4 located, and there's a lot of things that we can do within
5 that, I think to combine that. So, what we still need and
6 what we want to invest in is all the technical expertise
7 that we get at Rock Island and probably the unmatched right
8 now, 3D printing capability added manufacturing, that even
9 commercial industry is coming in there and using it.

10 So, it's kind of where we're looking across the
11 formation of how we can update our business systems, combine
12 some of these capabilities, and I think it's going to make
13 us better. And we're happy to come over and brief you that
14 in detail or meet you at Rock Island Senator and have that
15 discussion.

16 Senator Duckworth: Okay. I'd be willing to meet you
17 at Rock Island. So just go stew on the same question. How
18 many persons will be affected and what's the timeline of
19 implementation? You still haven't answered me.

20 Secretary Driscoll: Senator, we're currently working
21 on the plan. I would actually hypothesize there would be
22 growth at Rock Island on a net basis. But combining those
23 units, they're working on the plan right now. We'll provide
24 them the moment they're available.

25 Senator Duckworth: Okay. I mean, I think what you're

1 doing is scaling down. I hope that the answer is that we're
2 going to work towards a minimum workload at the very least
3 at Rock Island to maintain that capacity.

4 I want to flag that I joined the bipartisan Arsenal
5 Workload Sustainment Act with Senators, Durbin, Grassley,
6 Ernst, and Representative Sorenson. This bill would
7 incentivize private industry to partner with arsenals to
8 ensure more predictable workload throughout the year to
9 enhance efficiency and keep costs low at all of our
10 arsenals. I hope that you and General George will work with
11 us to move and get this legislation passed.

12 Secretary Driscoll: We'd love to Senator.

13 Senator Duckworth: Thank you. I'm also deeply
14 concerned by the Army's plan to divest from the Humvee and
15 JLTV without a clear replacement that meet the full spectrum
16 of mission requirements.

17 We have been told that the Infantry Squad Vehicle was
18 identified as the future for ground mobility. But let's be
19 honest, the current model of that vehicle does not support
20 the needs of medical evacuation. And the Humvee fleet that
21 you plan to retain, which could serve as ambulances in the
22 meantime, is already facing severe maintenance issues. This
23 ground capability for medical evacuation is not a gap that
24 we can afford to ignore.

25 What is the Army's plan to bridge this gap in ground

1 medical evacuation capacity, as the Humvee is phased out?

2 Either one of you can take that.

3 General George: Yeah, I'll take that one, Senator.

4 You brought up the armor protection. We have 18,000 plus
5 JLTVs, continuing to buy those. So obviously medical
6 evacuation and how we do that. Having done that with all of
7 our vehicles, that's why we're also talking about having
8 armored vehicles that are inside our formations are going to
9 be critical moving forward. So, we need a broad bunch of
10 capability.

11 We're also looking at autonomous systems and how they
12 can go into certain areas. We have 105,000 Humvees, and
13 certainly that's part of our -- we're going through that
14 process right now, how we make sure that we're maximizing
15 the vehicles we need.

16 You mentioned medical vehicles that would be in that
17 category of how we would make sure that we're maintaining
18 that capability that we need. So, they're going to be in
19 our formation. We've bought what we need to have inside our
20 formation.

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

22 Senator Scott: Sure. Thank you, Chairman. Secretary
23 Driscoll, General George, thank you for both for being here.
24 I want to thank you President Trump, Secretary Hegseth for
25 ensuring that our Army is a lethal warfighting machine. I

1 appreciate all the changes you're working to make to restore
2 the warfighting ethos and that our Army is ready for
3 whatever may come.

4 Can you talk about -- when I was governor of Florida
5 for eight years and we put a lot of effort into a program in
6 Orlando Simulation Training Instrumentation program,
7 headquartered in Orlando. It plays a critical role in
8 preparing unmatched testing, modeling, simulation, and
9 training systems to ensure warfighters are ready for the
10 next fight.

11 There's a reason it's in central Florida. It hosts a
12 world class manufacturing, science, and technologies
13 industry, that supports over 30,000 good paying jobs,
14 generates more than \$7 billion annual and economic impact in
15 the region. It's also strategically located in a unique
16 defense innovation ecosystem, alongside your other partners,
17 Navy, Air Force, Marines, and recently established U.S.
18 Space Force training headquarters at Patrick Space Force.

19 I put a lot of effort into it when I was Governor and
20 we put a lot of effort to make sure this place everybody
21 wants to serve. Can you talk about what your plans are
22 there? Either one of you?

23 General George: Yeah, I'll jump in on that, Senator.
24 Obviously, what's very important to a simulation is very
25 important to us. Just took a brief back two days ago. We

1 consistently run the warfighters. What I will tell you is
2 that we're looking at -- I think we can do more with
3 commercial industry, and that's kind of what we're focused
4 on, you know, down there with PEO STRI.

5 And you know, there's companies all over our country
6 that can produce simulations. Right now, our overhead for
7 our simulation exercises that we're running, which are with
8 soldiers, is high. And I know that the technology exists
9 for us to move that. So that's generally what we're trying
10 to do down there.

11 We just did a big conference down in Orlando. It was
12 about six weeks ago, where we kind of explained where we
13 are, where we need to move with next gen simulation. And
14 much like some of the previous comments, I think us doing
15 this internally is, we are going to need less expertise. We
16 should be able to adopt and modify commercially available
17 tech that is out there. And that's what we're focused on.

18 Secretary Driscoll: And Senator, I would just say,
19 simulation has leapt forward in the last couple of years too
20 and it should have some incredible benefits for the United
21 States Army. If we think about TRADOC, and the number of
22 times that we have to uproot soldiers from their families
23 and move them somewhere in the world, that's not a
24 particularly good outcome for all training.

25 And so, we're looking at simulation and try to expand

1 our use cases outside of its typical kind of maybe siloed
2 war gaming function to actually start to empower and train
3 our soldiers around the world.

4 Senator Scott: So, what impact do you think it'll have
5 there and what impact will it have on your ability to work
6 with all the other branches?

7 General George: I don't think it'll impact it. what
8 we're looking at when we're basically aligning our program
9 management, where we have adopt, modify, and develop. And I
10 think these are areas that we need to be developing less on
11 our own and adopting it more from people out there that
12 really know how to do that.

13 So, there'll be people that can oversee those programs,
14 people that understand contracting and actually having
15 warfighters down there to know what we need, and then
16 getting it out to our formations quickly.

17 Senator Scott: Okay. If there's anything I can do to
18 help you all, just let me know. Thank you.

19 Secretary Driscoll: Thanks Senator.

20 Chairman Wicker: Senator Rosen.

21 Senator Rosen: Well, thank you Chairman Wicker,
22 Ranking Member Reed. I appreciate it. And I would also
23 like to thank Secretary Driscoll, General George for
24 testifying today, for your service to our country.

25 I know we're talking a lot about training, so I'm going

1 to talk about small arms training, small arms range in
2 Nevada, of course, because Army leaders in the past have
3 made commitments to me to build Nevada's first certified
4 small arms training range, at Hawthorne Army Depot. So, the
5 Nevada National Guard and Reserve soldiers no longer have to
6 travel out of state to fulfill their annual weapons
7 qualification at an average cost of \$500,000 per year per
8 unit. You want to save money, build our range.

9 I'm appreciative that the Army followed through on
10 these commitments and included this project in the Fiscal
11 Year 2025 budget request, which was added in both the House
12 and Senate Fiscal Year 2025 appropriations bills. However,
13 since Congress did not pass these bills and instead passed a
14 full year CR without budget tables, we lack certainty about
15 whether or not the Army will actually fund this project,
16 which is already well underway.

17 So, to both of you, can I have your commitment that the
18 Army will in fact deliver Nevada's first certified small
19 arms training range, so that our soldiers can meet their
20 annual requirements at a greater convenience and lower cost
21 to the taxpayer Secretary Driscoll?

22 General George: Yes, Senator. We love rifle ranges
23 for the record.

24 Secretary Driscoll: Yes, Senator.

25 Senator Rosen: Thank you. We're going to stay on this

1 and we're going to talk about the transformation initiative
2 and its impact to Nevada. You know, again, Hawthorne Army
3 Depot is the world's largest ammunition and demilitarization
4 facility. The depot stores and demilitarize munitions and
5 ensures munitions readiness for each of the services.

6 Despite its size and crucial role that Hawthorne plays,
7 its dire need of continued infrastructure upgrades.

8 Investing in our munition's depot has only become more
9 important in light of our need to ramp up munitions
10 production, backfill our stockpile.

11 So, we've heard quite a bit today about the Army
12 Transformation Initiative, but I'm concerned about these
13 broad structural changes, particularly reductions in
14 platforms, personnel systems as you've been alluding to.
15 They might impact critical facilities and communities such
16 as Hawthorne.

17 So, during both your confirmation hearings, you made
18 commitments to consider further investments in Hawthorne.
19 And can I have your commitment, as that the Army moves
20 forward with its transformation initiative, investments in
21 Hawthorne will continue providing munitions readiness for
22 the Army and DOD? Secretary Driscoll.

23 Secretary Driscoll: The munitions Depots are
24 incredibly important. Our magazine depth is not where it
25 needs to be. We have got to figure out as a nation how we

1 are going to do these investments.

2 I think when you're referencing the cuts that we're
3 making at ATI, what we're trying to do is from a bottoms-up
4 approach where we over indexed on things like Humvees or
5 JLTVs, or where did we overinvest in research and
6 development for things like our robotic combat vehicles.
7 Where can we save money and reallocate those dollars to best
8 help with all of these big problems that we have?

9 And so, I can absolutely commit that we would want to
10 work with your office; to figure out how can we rapidly
11 continue to scale our munition space.

12 Senator Rosen: Perfect. General George, please.

13 General George: Yeah, I would agree with what the
14 Secretary said. And plus, the other thing that we'd like to
15 work with you on is how we can probably build some of these
16 things and repair things cheaper because I'm confident we
17 can do that as well.

18 Senator Rosen: We would love to work with you on that.
19 Thank you so much. And my final questions about cyber
20 workforce development, because the Fiscal Year 2024 NDAA
21 included my bipartisan legislation, authorizing the Army to
22 create a civilian cybersecurity reserve to provide CYBERCOM
23 with qualified civilian personnel for surge capacity,
24 ensuring that the U.S. government has cyber talent it needs
25 to respond to malicious activity and secure the DODs

1 information and its systems.

2 So, General George, and then Secretary Driscoll, can
3 you provide a status update on the Army's implementation of
4 a civilian cyber reserve?

5 General George: I just heard about -- I think it was
6 last week, I took a brief readiness brief specifically on
7 cyber and had our Army cyber came up and how we're fill in
8 the formations. What I don't have for you is the specifics
9 on the civilians.

10 I will tell you this is a conversation we have a lot,
11 as far as like for the guard and people that are actually
12 out there working and that's their day job and have them,
13 connected to that is critically important to us. There's a
14 lot of folks filling those positions. I do think this is an
15 area we are trying to expand, we're doing pretty good right
16 now, expanding it, but as you know, this is something that
17 takes months and years to get the exquisite capability that
18 we're talking about. So, I can come and go over this in
19 detail with you.

20 Senator Rosen: It would be great to have a meeting
21 with my team. I appreciate that. Thank you. Secretary
22 Driscoll.

23 Secretary Driscoll: Nothing additional to add other
24 than we talk about this all the time, a little more often in
25 the National Garden Reserve sense, but the civilian ability

1 to scale our cyber needs. Everything we're talking about
2 with this data layer and generative AI will require cyber
3 warriors to help us.

4 Senator Rosen: Especially as we try to implement
5 CYBERCOM 2.0. So, thank you. Thank you both.

6 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much. Senator Banks.

7 Senator Banks: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thanks to
8 both of you for being here today. I want to echo what
9 others have already pointed out. It's somewhat awkward to
10 have a budget hearing without the Army's budget. So, when
11 it is released by the Pentagon later this month, I hope we
12 can work together to talk about priorities in the budget and
13 how we can fight for them.

14 But General George, thanks to the inspirational
15 leadership of President Trump and Secretary Hegseth, there's
16 a big difference between this year and last year when it
17 comes to Army recruitment. And I want to unpack that with
18 you a little bit. The Army has already met its recruiting
19 goals for the rest of this fiscal year. The Army is seeing
20 its best recruitment numbers in over 10 years, and the Army
21 has already beaten its retention goal for the year.

22 What do you make of that? What's the big difference
23 between last year and this year that has gotten us to that
24 point?

25 General George: I would tell you, Senator, we have

1 made steady improvement over time with that. As you know,
2 we've been talking about how we pick our recruiters, the
3 leaders that we have, give them the right technology to make
4 sure they're doing that, reducing the amount of forms and
5 things that people are figuring out. So, we hope to
6 continue on that.

7 We have had very good months. I think we are at this
8 point in time where we got this, we hadn't seen this since
9 2014, so we're very happy with where we're at.

10 Senator Banks: You say we've had very good months and
11 I want to go there. Was there a good month? Was there a
12 point, if you study the trends of these recruitment numbers,
13 when did you see the significant shift? Because this is a
14 significant difference between last year and this year.

15 General George: Yeah, I can get you the monthly data
16 that goes back from September, October. And we have seen a
17 rise, a slight rise, but we've been on a pretty good steady
18 path.

19 Senator Banks: I just want to -- was November an
20 indicator, November 5th?

21 General George: We did have a really --

22 Senator Banks: Was there a significant increase in
23 Army recruitment after November 5th?

24 General George: We have seen recruitment numbers come
25 up a little bit. Yes.

1 Senator Banks: It seems obvious to me, that who the
2 Commander in Chief is matters to military recruitment. And
3 I have seen those trends General, it would be great to
4 unpack them even further with you, the difference between
5 last year and this year. And a Pentagon that's focused on
6 lethality, a Commander in Chief who's inspiring the next
7 generation to step up and serve our country.

8 And my big question for you though is how do we keep
9 that going? What do we from this point forward to keep
10 those recruitment numbers heading in the direction that they
11 are?

12 General George: This is a discussion we have, pretty
13 consistently. I think we have to continue to do what we're
14 doing. We have to constantly evaluate. For us it's, are we
15 getting the right track? you know, 16 different specialties
16 and making sure that we're doing it. One of them that we
17 have been doing very well on this year that we have had
18 struggles with was 18 x-rays. You know, how do we reach
19 those people? How are we assessing folks in there?

20 So that how we look at our marketing, I think this is
21 just something that we have to constantly evaluate, Senator.
22 And it's important too on the retention side, you mentioned
23 that, how you know what we're doing inside of our formation
24 to make sure that we're retaining --

25 Senator Banks: Can you give us some anecdotes or

1 reasons why higher recruitment and higher retention matters
2 to the United States Army?

3 General George: I think it would matter to everybody
4 in the joint force. So, you want to have a fully capable,
5 trained formations --

6 Senator Banks: What can you do with better retention
7 and recruitment that you couldn't do without?

8 General George: Well, what's important about retention
9 is that you are keeping -- we were just talking about cyber.
10 You're keeping somebody in that you've trained, you know,
11 some people are enlisted in the Army, many, many years ago.
12 You look at keeping people that you have invested in, you've
13 trained in, oftentimes people have other opportunities.
14 They stay because of the team and because of the mission,
15 signal, I mean, I can go down.

16 But NCOs really drive our training inside of our
17 formation at the platoon company and battalion level. And
18 keeping those great NCOs on our team is obviously critically
19 important to our lethality.

20 Secretary Driscoll: And Senator, It's a virtuous
21 cycle. When we are having a harder time recruiting, we have
22 to lower standards, which definitionally means we're letting
23 in just different population and the Army feels that. And
24 what we're able to do now is there's so much demand, we can
25 start to raise standards. We can start to focus on putting

1 people where we have the most need.

2 Senator Banks: And clearly the last Administration
3 lowered standards to meet recruitment goals. And can we go
4 backwards and put those standards back to where they need to
5 be, so that we're getting the best in the brightest since
6 the Trump bump of recruitment is obviously real. So, I
7 guess that's what I'm going for.

8 Secretary Driscoll: We are actively quantitatively
9 raising standards on things like our APFT. And if this
10 momentum continues, we will continue to prioritize giving
11 slots to basic training to the most qualified young adult.

12 Senator Banks: That's really great news. Thank you.
13 I yield back.

14 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Banks. Senator
15 Slotkin.

16 Senator Slotkin: So, I don't want Senator Kelly to
17 beat me up. We thought he was going next, but I will
18 happily take my five minutes. Thank you for being here.
19 We've talked a lot even this week about the Army
20 transformation. And I'll echo a number of things that
21 Senator Peters said.

22 I think we all understand the need for the Army to
23 modernize. I don't think there's a single person who feels
24 like we should say the same and the status quo is just doing
25 great. And that's based on the fact that China's investing

1 in new technology, new techniques, and if they and others,
2 that we may hopefully never have to fight, if they are ahead
3 of us on a whole bunch of different things, like we are not
4 doing our job in preparing and protecting the United States.
5 So, I think we're all on the same page.

6 I just want to make sure that it's not just about
7 cutting stuff, right? And we understand that you've looked
8 at cutting things like Humvees and the JLTV and things that
9 Michigan does. But that we also look at processes and
10 procedures, right? You alluded to this in your strategy.

11 Right now, China can go from concept to fielding a new
12 system in one year. The U.S. military, and I say this with
13 love, can go from concept to fielding in three years, if
14 we're lucky, right? If we're lucky. So, to me, the future
15 is going to be won by the people who are most agile and
16 flexible in taking the new great idea, some of the stuff
17 we're seeing in Ukraine right now, and moving it to contact
18 faster.

19 And I would just offer that we don't want to destroy
20 the defense industrial base, we want to update it. And I
21 think Michigan can be the place to do that advanced
22 manufacturing, to bring in AI, to bring in 3D printing, to
23 bring in all these new techniques that are going to make us
24 go faster.

25 So, I'm thrilled that you're coming. We're going to

1 show ourselves off and instead of fighting to hold on to
2 everything that we've had in the past, we want to be the
3 defense point of contact for advanced manufacturing for the
4 future. And we're going to give you the dog and pony to
5 make sure you feel the same way, because we are pretty hot
6 shit in what we do in Michigan. I'm just going to say that.
7 Sorry to swear, Mr. Chairman.

8 So, can you talk a little bit about why, like on the
9 advanced manufacturing piece, can you help elaborate on what
10 the Army is going to do to speed up that flash to bang
11 concept to fielding with advanced manufacturing?

12 Secretary Driscoll: So, Senator, just to the earlier
13 point about the cuts, I think when we've rolled out Army
14 Transformation Initiative, there were basically four
15 buckets, I won't hit them all. But the first bucket was the
16 cuts in order to take the 48 billion in savings that the
17 President of the United States and Secretary of Defense,
18 empowered us with to innovate and spend it to make the Army
19 stronger.

20 And General George and I are optimistic that Army
21 Transformation Initiative will be a renaissance for the
22 American industrial base, for small and medium businesses,
23 so that they can show us their innovation. We the United
24 States Army, have been a very poor customer oftentimes, and
25 I would say perhaps all the time, we do not allow small and

1 medium businesses to show us their product, have us get into
2 the hands of soldiers, to show them how to improve it, and
3 then reward them when we need it, often enough.

4 And there's this chasm that has been created that only
5 incredibly large companies that take, I would say three
6 years as generous and it's probably closer to 10. But we
7 are actively working to fix it.

8 Senator Slotkin: Yeah. And I would just say to your
9 earlier point about modeling and simulation, Michigan is
10 quickly becoming the hub for it. If you want to like test
11 something out before you have to build an actual scale
12 model, bring in a platoon of guys to let them put on the VR
13 glasses and test something out before we build it. We're
14 going to become the hub of that and we are eager to show
15 that off.

16 But I would say, I think one of my many criticisms of
17 this Administration in general, is that they're really happy
18 to have the press conference about cutting this many people
19 or this many programs. But as someone who worked in the
20 federal government, it's often the procedures within the
21 departments and agency that take forever, right?

22 There are so many steps, there's so many things to do.
23 And I would welcome the Pentagon actually saying, we're not
24 just going to do the press conferences on how many woke
25 people we got rid of, or woke programs we got rid of. And I

1 would contend with some of those things, but it is about
2 actually cleaning up our internal processes. So, it's not
3 so laborious.

4 And I've never once a democrat or Republican, including
5 the Trump administration, first time, gotten a proposal,
6 please take off these regulations, please Congress remove
7 these things. They may have been well intended, but it's
8 too much. So please don't just do the shiny object, the
9 stuff that gets the political attention, please actually dig
10 in and do the damn work so that if you want transformation,
11 you actually get it.

12 Secretary Driscoll: And I just want to quickly give my
13 ranger buddy a shout out on the recruiting side. There were
14 over 600 forms that could possibly be filled out on
15 recruiting, 600. I don't even know what they could all
16 possibly ask, but obviously you'd have to repeat your name
17 57 times on each of the forms.

18 And what General George did with the recruiting team
19 is, he said, you are not allowed to have more than 10 forms
20 full stop, make it work. And they are at currently, I think
21 eight or nine and have cut down on 592 forms, which is
22 remarkable. And we would be delighted to give you that
23 list.

24 Senator Slotkin: Yes. Thank you very much.

25 General George: Can I add one thing, Chairman?

1 Chairman Wicker: Oh, sure.

2 General George: Thank you. We have asked Senator for
3 agile funding in the past, and you know, we have to buy
4 capability portfolios for drones, counter drones, EW. We
5 will be submitting that as part of our budget to have that
6 capability. We've been asking, I think in here for that --

7 Senator Slotkin: I would happily give flexible funding
8 and multi-year funding if we could get our act together up
9 here. I think we can all acknowledge that we haven't, but
10 it's also for more traditional things. We've given you a
11 lot of authorities over the years. There's a culture
12 problem in the Pentagon. It's not just what more
13 authorities we can give you. So, I'm open to it but do the
14 internal work too.

15 General George: I agree a hundred percent, Okay.

16 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Slotkin. Senator
17 Kelly, you were polite, I think, and let Senator Slotkin
18 walk in the door ahead of you and you seem to have been
19 punished for that.

20 Senator Kelly: Well, it worked out well because of
21 what she had asked Mr. Chairman.

22 Chairman Wicker: And so, you yield back, I understand
23 you're yielding back. Is that correct?

24 Senator Kelly: No, I am not.

25 Chairman Wicker: Okay. Senator Kelly.

1 Senator Kelly: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you
2 Senator Slotkin. It was perfect talking about advanced
3 manufacturing because I have a similar and a related
4 question on the Army Transformation Initiative.

5 So, first of all, Secretary Driscoll, General George,
6 thank you. Good to see you both again and thank you to you
7 and your families for your continued service. Secretary
8 Driscoll, in reference to the Army Transformation
9 Initiative, is it correct that it is consistent with the
10 Secretary of Defense's directive on Army transformation and
11 acquisition reform? That those things are consistent?

12 Secretary Driscoll: Yes.

13 Senator Kelly: Okay. Thank you. And that directive
14 states that the Army must prioritize investments and
15 existing resources to improve electronic warfare
16 capabilities, among other things. Is that correct?

17 Secretary Driscoll: Yes, I believe so.

18 Senator Kelly: Yeah. Thank you. And I agree, I mean,
19 lessons learned from the conflict in Ukraine, especially do
20 underscore the requirement for just how important our
21 offensive and defensive electronic warfare capabilities are.
22 We've seen that on the battlefield in Europe. So, it seems
23 to me that the Army would want to bolster its electronic
24 warfare test and evaluation capabilities.

25 Senator Slotkin talked about advanced manufacturing.

1 One aspect of being able to manufacture advanced innovative
2 combat power is to be able to test it and evaluate it.
3 Without testing and evaluation, you don't know what you're
4 going to get. So, we want to ensure that we can deliver the
5 most advanced war fighting capabilities in any conflict.
6 Would you agree with that?

7 Secretary Driscoll: Yes.

8 Senator Kelly: So, it's concerning to me that the U.S.
9 Army Test and Evaluation Command, ATEC, has a reduction in
10 force plan that would disproportionately impact the Army's
11 primary Electronic Warfare Test and Evaluation Center and
12 that is the electronic proving ground at Fort Huachuca,
13 outside of Sierra Vista in Arizona.

14 The electronic proving ground provides the unique
15 capability to execute electronic warfare developmental
16 testing without interference due to its unique geography, it
17 sits in a bowl surrounded by some mountains. It also
18 benefits from an ideal climate. There's over 320 flying
19 days per year in federally protected airspace, which further
20 minimizes interference and allowing us to conduct aggressive
21 offensive EW jamming tests, that really show off our
22 capability. This is important developmental test.

23 The existing ATEC proving grounds simply cannot provide
24 the same environments outside of Fort Huachuca. That would
25 leave us without the ability, if we get rid of personnel at

1 Fort Huachuca, at the electronic proving ground, we will not
2 have the capability to do that developmental test and to
3 train our soldiers and pilots how to use these systems, to
4 counter our adversaries. So, if carried out, this reduction
5 in force at EPG, this could result in some long-term
6 consequences for testing and evaluation and readiness.

7 So, Mr. Secretary, do you agree that disproportionately
8 slashing our electronic warfare test centers, would harm the
9 Army's electronic warfare capability?

10 General George: Do you mind if I jump in on this one,
11 Senator?

12 Senator Kelly: Yes, sir.

13 General George: As you know, we also have Yuma that's
14 over there. We have White Sand and Dugway. I agree with
15 you on the EW. And what we've looked at, and I know Pat
16 Gaydon at the Army Test and Evaluation, and we've had a lot
17 of discussions on this. We are also testing some of this
18 stuff around the world. What we had heard was, and we are
19 looking at is where do we have excess capacity that we're
20 actually not using that, I think we can come over and lay
21 that out.

22 So yes, EW is going to be important. Yes, we're going
23 to have to do it in a lot of different locations. What I
24 will tell you is probably we will be doing much differently
25 at the John R. Fox Range and what's happening is adding

1 drones, adding FPV drones and doing different training

2 Senator Kelly: General, let me give you a quick
3 example though. And obviously Yuma proving ground is also a
4 valuable Army asset in the state of Arizona. They are
5 different. The geography of the electronic proving ground
6 allows us to do stuff there that we cannot do anywhere else.
7 If you want to simulate a surface to air missile system, the
8 electronic signature from it in Yuma proving ground, you're
9 talking about maybe 0.1 watt, a power output before you can
10 start to interfere with communication systems, airplanes, TV
11 stations in and around the Phoenix area.

12 When you do that at the electronic proving ground, you
13 can go an order of magnitude or more higher in power output.
14 There's no place like it anywhere. And the riff that is
15 planned at ATEC, is if that continues and is carried out, we
16 are going to find ourselves in a situation where we cannot
17 do the testing that we need on these EW systems.

18 So General and Mr. Secretary, I encourage you to look
19 into this and I am happy to have a follow-up discussion with
20 you about it.

21 Secretary Driscoll: Senator, and I visited there and I
22 can echo that the work they're doing is incredible, but
23 we'll follow up with your office.

24 Senator Reed: Thank you, Senator Kelly. I believe you
25 are accompanied by your brother.

1 Senator Kelly: Yes.

2 Senator Reed: Who is also an astronaut?

3 Senator Kelly: And a former Naval pilot.

4 Senator Reed: Fighter pilot, yes. Combat.

5 Senator Kelly: He is in the audience.

6 Senator Reed: Here he appears a striker of resemblance
7 to you.

8 Senator Kelly: He does. Thank you. We're twins. I'm
9 the original and he's the cheap copy.

10 Senator Reed: Okay. You're number one, he's number
11 two.

12 Senator Kelly: That's correct.

13 Senator Reed: Okay. Well, but let me salute a family
14 of aviators and astronauts.

15 Chairman Wicker: And this concludes the open portion
16 of today's hearing. I want to thank our witnesses for their
17 testimony. For the information of members, question for the
18 record will be due to the committee within two business days
19 of the conclusion of the hearing. We will commence the
20 closed portion of this hearing in the Senate Security in 15
21 minutes. We are recessed until then.

22 [Whereupon, at 11:51 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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