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Before the

COMMITTEE ON
ARMED SERVICES

UNITED STATES SENATE

TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON MATTERS WITHIN
THE JURISDICTION OF THE ASSISTANT
SECRETARIES FOR ENERGY, INSTALLATION, AND
ENVIRONMENT IN SUPPORT OF THE FISCAL
YEAR 2026 NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION
ACT

Wednesday June 25, 2025

Washington, D.C.

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10TH FLOOR
WASHINGTON, DC 20005
(202) 289-2260
www.aldersonreporting.com

1 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON MATTERS WITHIN THE JURISDICTION OF
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3 ENVIRONMENT IN SUPPORT OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2026 NATIONAL
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5
6 Wednesday June 25, 2025

7
8 U.S. Senate

9 Subcommittee on Readiness and
10 Management Support

11 Committee on Armed Services
12 Washington, D.C.

13
14 The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:34 p.m. in
15 Room SR-232A, Russell Senate Office Building, Hon. Sullivan,
16 chairman of the committee, presiding.

17 Committee Members Present: Senators Sullivan
18 [presiding], Fischer, Scott, Sheehy, Hirono, and Kaine.

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

3 Senator Sullivan: The Readiness and Management
4 Subcommittee hearing is now in session. I want to begin by
5 noting that this committee is focused on readiness today,
6 although, unfortunately you're not reading about it in the
7 press or anything. It marks the 75th anniversary of the
8 outbreak of the Korean War, which is a real lesson in
9 American readiness that I think we in the Senate and
10 hopefully in the Armed Services continue to learn from
11 today. Because that was a -- outbreak of that war was a
12 real lesson and hard knocks in terms of readiness. And it's
13 something I think we all need to remember.

14 And of course, to the remaining American veterans of
15 the Korean War, we want to thank them for their service.
16 I've never liked the term the Forgotten War. I think it
17 should be called the Noble War because it was the United
18 States coming to save a country from a communist invasion,
19 many of whom we didn't know and young Americans sacrificed
20 in enormous ways, 37,000 killed in action.

21 And we in our country unfortunately barely even talk
22 about that war. So, I wanted to begin by that. Our
23 committee meets today to receive testimony on the
24 department's military construction, energy installations,
25 environmental and base closure programs in the review of the

1 defense authorization request of Fiscal 2026, I would like
2 to welcome Assistant Secretary Marks to his first hearing
3 since his recent confirmation.

4 So, Mr. Secretary, welcome, I congratulate you and look
5 forward to working closely with you in this very important
6 role for our military and the Pentagon. I also thank the
7 other esteemed witnesses for being here today and for their
8 continued service to our country.

9 Each of you play an important role in ensuring our
10 Armed Forces are ready at a moment's notice to defend our
11 country. But right now, we are facing problems and
12 challenges that are detrimental to that objective. While
13 our personnel are the backbone of our military, the
14 installations are what bring them together. Simply put, our
15 decaying facilities are causing significant issues with
16 regard to our warfighters and the locations and resilience
17 of our bases could serve as a detriment to our national
18 security during wartime.

19 With that in mind, I want to discuss our current basing
20 posture in the Indo-Pacific in the context of dispersal,
21 survivability, and logistics, including for bulk fuel and
22 energy requirements. I believe we have over concentrated
23 our basing and force posture in the Indo-Pacific at places
24 like Guam and we should look for opportunities to both
25 disperse and harden these facilities, make them more

1 resilient. And position ourselves to better support
2 operational and strategic maneuver in a contested
3 environment in this critical AOR.

4 I would like to hear from each of you on the
5 implementation of the Fiscal Year 2025 National Defense
6 Authorization requirement to achieve 4 percent plant
7 replacement value by 2030. This requirement came after a
8 lack of priority from the services that led to crumbling
9 infrastructure in many areas across the United States and
10 the world. This has only driven up the cost in damage
11 service readiness. We must take immediate action to
12 mitigate this damage for many of these facilities throughout
13 the world.

14 As Chairman Wicker said during the Air Force Posture
15 hearing, "This is the law of the land." I would
16 additionally like to discuss any updates each of you have in
17 improving and maintaining unaccompanied housing. The poor
18 living conditions which unfortunately include sewage
19 overflow flow, mold, mildew, broken windows, decrease the
20 quality of life and readiness for service members mostly
21 junior enlisted and their families, which of course,
22 negatively impacts readiness across the services.

23 We must ensure that our service members are not living
24 in barracks that do not meet the standards set by the
25 Department of Defense. Additionally, your thoughts on the

1 department's work in operational energy in how these systems
2 can transform the modern warfighter are crucial to this
3 Committee's work on contested logistics.

4 Finally, I would like to hear from each of the
5 witnesses about your future priorities since the department
6 did not release the future year's defense program budget
7 through 2030, we are still waiting for that. The challenges
8 we are facing today are the result of years of pushing these
9 problems aside, kicking the can down the road. We must work
10 together to modernize our infrastructure to give our country
11 and our troops the best footing possible for any contingency
12 that is thrown their way.

13 Again, I want to thank the witnesses for attending
14 today. I look forward to each of your testimony. And with
15 that, I want to thank my Ranking Member, Senator Hirono, and
16 ask her for her opening statement.

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

3 Senator Hirono: Thank you, Chairman Sullivan. I want
4 to thank each of our witnesses for your years of service and
5 to the many hardworking civilians in your respective
6 organizations, I thank them. This subcommittee remains
7 focused on ensuring that the Department of Defense is
8 equipped not only to meet today's operational requirements
9 but also to strengthen the long-term resilience, readiness,
10 and well-being of our military installations.

11 And I appreciate your engagement on each of these
12 critical issues. I have been very focused on infrastructure
13 and I'm glad that the chair recognizes the importance of
14 modernizing and repairing our infrastructure, which we have
15 not done a very good job on. And I want to begin by
16 expressing concern regarding this department's ability to
17 deliver timely, efficient, and cost infective
18 infrastructure, construction delays and cost overruns
19 undermine readiness and public trust.

20 I will ask each of you to identify specific areas where
21 the military construction process can improve and what steps
22 are being taken to enhance accountability and performance.
23 I recognize this is pretty much a perennial problem but when
24 I ask each of you to identify very specific ways that we can
25 do better, I mean, very specific things that are doable,

1 things that we can see the outcomes of the improvements.

2 So, please think about that as I'm finishing my
3 remarks. Another priority area is the quality of military
4 housing. And apparently both of the chair and I certainly
5 have visited military housing and see the needs there. So,
6 both for families and unaccompanied service members, quality
7 housing directly affects morale, retention, and overall
8 readiness. Significant work still needs to be done. For
9 example, the department's March report on its use of waivers
10 highlighted 32 substandard facilities on Army installations.
11 Yet we know the problem is broader.

12 That is why I am troubled to learn about the Army's
13 plan to divert \$1 billion of facilities sustainment,
14 restoration, and modernization funding to pay for operations
15 at the Southwest border. These funds were originally
16 intended for the repair and maintenance of facilities like
17 barracks. This is only occurring because the Secretary of
18 Defense has chosen at every turn to waive reimbursement as
19 an option in the many requests for assistance from the
20 Department of Homeland Security.

21 And it's a curious choice made by the Defense Secretary
22 especially since the DOD's Fiscal Year 2024 Agency financial
23 report cited a deferred facility maintenance backlog of \$267
24 billion. That is a significant part of the DOD's whole
25 budget. We have to do better people. We know that.

1 So, we need to understand how the department plans to
2 ensure that soldiers have access to safe, well-maintained
3 housing considering this shift, this committee asked the
4 Army three weeks ago for simple details on planned versus
5 executed facility sustainment, restoration, and
6 modernization projects in Fiscal Year 2025. Yet we've not
7 received anything to date. So, Dr. Waksman, I expect the
8 Army to deliver answers as soon as possible to our requests.

9 Pivoting to the Indo-Pacific, as each of you know,
10 several of the militaries more essential training areas
11 across Hawaii are leased from the state and are set to
12 expire in the coming years. The training areas are
13 foundational to joint readiness in the region and at the
14 same time they hold cultural and historical significance to
15 the native Hawaiian community. It is essential that any
16 path forward respects that significance while ensuring our
17 forces have access to the ranges and facilities that they
18 need.

19 The department must work in good faith with state
20 officials and the community to ensure these leases are
21 renegotiated in a way that is equitable to all parties.
22 Regarding military construction in the Indo-Pacific, we have
23 previously authorized the extensions of the H-2B visa
24 programs to ensure sufficient labor for projects in Guam and
25 the Northern Mariana Islands, Secretary Marks, as a

1 construction in the region accelerates. We need to
2 understand the potential cost and readiness implication of
3 these mission critical visas that they are extended.

4 And I realize that the chair has asked the question as
5 to the continuing spending that's going on in Guam. But if
6 we intend to continue to do what we need to do in Guam,
7 these visas are very necessary. Next, I'd like to touch on
8 demand reduction and installation resilience. The
9 department's investment and operational energy programs not
10 only reduces the logistics footprint for our warfighters but
11 also enhances their combat capabilities as well. It is
12 critical these programs continue to garner the bipartisan
13 support they've had for years now.

14 Meanwhile, initiatives like the Readiness and
15 Environmental Protection Integration Program and Sentinel
16 Landscapes strengthen our installation readiness. These
17 programs strengthen our installations -- sorry. These
18 programs not only improve energy security and mission
19 assurance but also protect surrounding ecosystems and
20 prevent encroachment on military basis.

21 Finally, I want to address the growing risks posed by
22 extreme weather and natural disasters to our installations.
23 Secretary Marks, as you experienced firsthand, these events
24 have cost the department tens of billions of dollars and
25 directly impact mission readiness. It is imperative that

1 DOD approaches these risks proactively so that joint forces
2 better postured to adapt to the risks to military
3 installation resilience. So, we can expect a lot more of
4 these unpredictable weather events and as I know we should
5 be better prepared to deal with the damage costs by these
6 massive weather events. We have a lot of ground to cover
7 today, so I thank each of you for being here and thank you,
8 Mr. Chairman.

9 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Senator Hirono. And now
10 we're going to begin with five-minute opening statements.
11 If you have a longer written statement for the record, we'd
12 be glad to submit that for the record. We'll begin with
13 you, Secretary Marks.

1 STATEMENT OF MR. DALE R. MARKS ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF
2 DEFENSE FOR ENERGY, INSTALLATIONS, AND ENVIRONMENT

3 Mr. Marks: Well, Chairman Sullivan and Ranking Member
4 Hirono and distinguished members of this subcommittee thank
5 you for the opportunity to appear before you today. As you
6 mentioned, the newly confirmed Assistant Secretary of
7 Defense for Energy Installations and Environment, I really
8 do appreciate this opportunity to discuss the President's
9 proposed Fiscal Year 2026 budget for the Department of
10 Defense's Energy Installation Environment portfolio.

11 The President and Secretary of Defense have laid out a
12 clear objective for the department, achieve peace through
13 strength. And as the secretary has said, the threats we
14 face are serious. Our investments to counter them must also
15 be and that's what this budget is intended to do. And I
16 firmly believe that the strength and lethality of our
17 military is built both on the weapon systems that defend us
18 and on the readiness of our service members and their
19 families who accomplish this mission.

20 And make no mistake, our installations are weapons
21 systems just like our ships, tanks, and planes. We must
22 ensure that they're postured to carry out the entire
23 spectrum of military operations. At the same time, we know
24 that America is a target. Our installations are under
25 threat not just from our adversaries but from aging

1 infrastructure, extreme weather, and increasingly complex
2 operational demands. Our budget request includes 17.9
3 billion in military construction funds, 27.3 billion in FSRM
4 and 3.8 billion in installation, operational energy
5 investments and addresses these challenges by focusing
6 squarely on military readiness and operational capability.

7 This ensures our resources directly support what
8 matters most, maintaining ready forces and resilient OP
9 installations that can operate effectively under any
10 condition. In particular, we're focusing on energy
11 dominance, infrastructure modernization, operational energy
12 security and investing in our innovation and research
13 programs in support of the warfighter.

14 At the same time, we recognize the resilience of our
15 installations is enhanced by partnering with our defense
16 communities and we're making a concerted effort to work with
17 them on mutually beneficial initiatives that enhance
18 redundancies and prevent risks to national security. We
19 also recognize that our service members' readiness starts at
20 home.

21 We want to ensure our warfighters are able to deliver
22 100 percent of their effort to their missions without having
23 to worry about issues with their housing or about the health
24 and safety of their family members back home. So, our 1.9
25 billion in family housing and 1.2 billion unaccompanied

1 housing request supports our commitment to ensuring that the
2 DOD's housing portfolio provides a positive living
3 experience for military personnel and their families.

4 And we also continue to address risks to human health
5 and environment through our environmental cleanup programs
6 funded at 1.5 billion. We're moving in the right direction
7 but I recognize we must do better on behalf of our service
8 members and their families. To accomplish these goals, the
9 department must ensure that we make the most efficient use
10 of our resources and manpower to enable us to focus on our
11 core mission of defending the nation. EINE is coordinating
12 several efforts to review current processes and regulations
13 to create efficiencies and reduce costs, including a review
14 of our MILCON and FSRM investment portfolios, real property
15 efficiencies and a review of our implementation of
16 environmental laws and regulations.

17 Finally, as part of this administration's effort to
18 counter China's malign actions in the Indo-Pacific, we
19 continue to work with key stakeholders to address DOD's use
20 of lands and natural resources in Hawaii through the Hawaii
21 Coordination Cell. We're also undertaking holistic master
22 planning effort to effectively sequence development,
23 prioritize infrastructure needs and align support functions
24 with mission growth on Guam.

25 And we'll look forward to working with Congress to

1 address issues such as further extension of the H-2B visa
2 authorities. Going forward with some big issues to tackle
3 such as meeting Congress' directive to significantly
4 increase our FSRM investment to at least 4 percent of plant
5 replacement value. And I look forward to working with this
6 committee to address these challenges head on and fulfill
7 our commitment to our soldiers, sailors, Airmen, Marines,
8 and Guardians. Thank you and I look forward to your
9 questions.

10 [The prepared statement of Mr. Marks follows:]

11 [SUBCOMMITTEE INSERT]

1 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Secretary Marks. I
2 appreciate you touching on the four percent issue and a
3 master plan for Guam. That's all important.

4 Dr. Waksman, we want to hear from you now.

1 STATEMENT OF DR. JEFF L. WAKSMAN, ACTING ASSISTANT
2 SECRETARY OF THE ARMY FOR INSTALLATIONS, ENERGY AND
3 ENVIRONMENT

4 Dr. Waksman: Thank you. Chair Sullivan, Ranking
5 Member Hirono, and distinguished members of the
6 subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to provide an update
7 on the Army's Energy Installation and Environmental
8 programs.

9 Our installations are no longer sanctuaries away from
10 the fight. To ensure mission success our installations must
11 be modern, resilient, and hardened to support any and every
12 mission, whether they're at home or abroad.

13 Achieving these requirements necessitates a sustained
14 and focus effort. Our investments and installations must
15 facilitate warfighter training, lethality, and readiness.
16 The critical services that enable installations to function
17 must be secure and reliable. Lastly, installations must be
18 as efficient and effective as possible. To facilitate the
19 modernization transformation of installations, this year's
20 budget requests \$8.7 billion for facility sustainment,
21 restoration, and modernization, another 3.1 billion
22 requested for new planning and construction. Beyond the
23 funding request in the President's budget, our privatized
24 housing partners plan to invest more than \$2 billion in our
25 homes over the next few years.

1 Part of enabling our readiness and lethality is
2 ensuring quality housing for both unaccompanied soldiers and
3 their families. The Army recognizes that its deferred
4 maintenance backlog has grown over many years and has caused
5 unintended consequences with both housing and operational
6 facilities. While the Army continues to prioritize funding
7 toward our permanent party unaccompanied housing, we are
8 bouncing investments in our mission-oriented facilities.
9 For privatized family housing portfolio, we have made many
10 improvements to the Army's oversight of our housing
11 providers. This includes new quality control mechanisms and
12 third-party inspections of our homes, allowing our
13 installations' leaders to verify the quality and status that
14 were completed.

15 To project power and provide resiliency or
16 installations, associated services need to be able to
17 rapidly recover from a disruption, whether natural or
18 manmade. The Army continues to explore a variety of
19 technologies that provide more reliable energy to our
20 installations and soldiers to include nuclear energy. To
21 help improve the resiliency of our energy systems beyond the
22 generation source, the Army continues to conduct black start
23 exercises which provide us with vital information about the
24 interconnection of critical assets on our installations and
25 increase our resiliency.

1 We thank Congress for your continued support of our
2 energy resilience programs. Our installations must also
3 provide realistic world class training environments to
4 maximize our warfighters lethality. To that end, our
5 environmental programs are critical to meeting statutory
6 requirements for preservation of training lands and to
7 ensure that the water on our installations is safe for
8 consumption.

9 One of our most critical training ranges is the
10 Pohakuloa Training Area in Hawaii, which allows combat
11 training geared toward the Indo-Pacific. The Army continues
12 to work with the state government and local Hawaiians to
13 ensure that these training lands can continue to support
14 this vital training, while also addressing the concerns of
15 the local community.

16 The Army is also improving our business practices by
17 working with private partners to find ways to deliver higher
18 quality and more economical support installations. As an
19 example, our use of energy saving performance contracts and
20 intergovernmental support agreements save us millions of
21 dollars each year and help us to develop and improve
22 partnerships with our local defense communities.

23 In closing, the Army continues to strive to make many
24 of these critical investments designed to deliver the
25 highest quality, most efficient and safest army

1 installations possible to support lethality, readiness, and
2 warfighting.

3 Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the
4 committee, and I look forward to your questions.

5 [The prepared statement of Dr. Waksman follows:]

6 [SUBCOMMITTEE INSERT]

1 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Dr. Waksman. Next, Ms.
2 Johnson Turner.

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1 STATEMENT OF MS. BRENDA M. JOHNSON-TURNER, PERFORMING
2 THE DUTIES OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE NAVY FOR ENERGY,
3 INSTALLATIONS AND ENVIRONMENT

4 Ms. Johnson-Turner: Good afternoon, Chairman Sullivan,
5 Ranking Member Hirono, and members of the subcommittee.
6 Thank you for the invitation to speak with you today on the
7 Department of Navy's Energy Installations and Environment
8 Portfolio.

9 Our Marines, sailors and dedicated civilians serve with
10 urgency to defend, project peace through strength and when
11 needed defeat our enemies. This portfolio provides direct
12 support to the warfighters and their families and it's
13 foundational to all that we do. We appreciate your support
14 for the resources required to train like we fight and win
15 decisively.

16 Warfighting excellence starts on our installations, our
17 power projection platforms. The resilience of our
18 installations is paramount and I remain deeply committed to
19 ensure that we provide the infrastructure to support our
20 sailors, Marines, civilians, and all of our critical
21 missions.

22 Unfortunately, much of our aging infrastructure is not
23 in good condition. As an institution, we have allowed these
24 assets to degrade over time. The average age of our
25 infrastructure is over 50 years old and beyond its useful

1 life. However, we have expanded the planning horizons to
2 ensure that the important investments we make at our
3 installations have the greatest impact.

4 In a similar fashion, the Navy continues to make
5 significant investments in the Shipyard Infrastructure
6 Optimization Program to improve submarine aircraft carrier
7 nuclear maintenance at the Navy's four public shipyards.
8 With 40 projects completed to date, we are already seeing
9 the return on investment with increased nuclear maintenance
10 throughput so that our aircraft carriers and nuclear
11 submarines can get back in the fight on time.

12 And the housing portfolio, we know our Marines and
13 sailors are better fighters if they know that their families
14 are living in safe quality housing. Our housing portfolio
15 must meet appropriate life health and safety requirements to
16 provide a positive living experience for our service members
17 and our families.

18 For our barracks, the Marine Corps remains committed to
19 The Barracks 2030 plan. Over the past 24 months, the
20 Marines have initiated repairs and renovations at 23
21 barracks. In the past three years, the Navy has renovated
22 14 barracks that improves the quality of life for our
23 sailors. With the planned expansion of the public private
24 venture projects for both the Hampton Roads and San Diego
25 regions, we will provide an additional 11,000 beds.

1 The results are very clear, expanding PPV across the un
2 account housing portfolio increases quality of life. We
3 continue to be thankful to Congress for the authorities
4 provided to get after our infrastructure challenges. We are
5 reviewing our critical infrastructure to fully address the
6 gaps in modernization and recapitalization, and addressing
7 the challenges and threats to infrastructure.

8 Our work inside the fence line is important to serving
9 as good defense community partners outside the fence line.
10 We will continue to partner with communities and utility
11 providers to decrease vulnerabilities. The Department of
12 the Navy is also examining military construction
13 improvements and alternative construction material to
14 deliver resources to the warfighter faster.

15 In addition, the department continues to make progress
16 on completing environmental cleanups and remains focused on
17 chemicals of emerging concern like PFAS. All in all, these
18 tangible improvements are necessary to ensure the long-term
19 strength and readiness of our force but we have more work to
20 do.

21 We appreciate Congress's continued support, and I look
22 forward to your questions.

23 [The prepared statement of Ms. Johnson-Turner follows:]

24 [SUBCOMMITTEE INSERT]

1 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Ms. Johnson-Turner. Mr.
2 Saunders, you're next.

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1 STATEMENT OF MR. MICHAEL E. SAUNDERS, ACTING ASSISTANT
2 SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE FOR ENERGY, INSTALLATIONS AND
3 ENVIRONMENT

4 Mr. Saunders: Chairman Sullivan, Ranking Member
5 Hirono, and distinguished members of the Senate Armed
6 Services Subcommittee on Readiness and Management Support,
7 on behalf of the Department of the Air Force and the nearly
8 645,000 active and reserved component Airmen and Guardians,
9 thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today.
10 I welcome the occasion to discuss the department's Fiscal
11 Year 2026 budget request for our energy installations and
12 environment programs.

13 Our partnership with this subcommittee has been
14 foundational to ensuring that we maximize the lethality and
15 warfighting capability of our 177 DAF installations across
16 the globe. One of our top priorities for the DAF is the
17 quality of life of our Airmen, Guardians, and their
18 families. Therefore, we focus our investment and innovation
19 on our housing, dormitories, and child development centers.

20 To this end, we have initiated our first ever
21 commercial on base apartment complex at Edwards Air Force
22 Base and are seeking to privatize our CONUS lodging in order
23 to modernize and ensure robust sustainment. We're also
24 implementing Wi-Fi for service members in our unaccompanied
25 housing. In addition to quality of life, the health and

1 safety of our service members, their families and the
2 surrounding communities remain among our highest priorities.

3 As such, the DAF remains committed to fulfilling our
4 PFAS related cleanup responsibilities in accordance with the
5 federal law, implementing the new PFAS drinking water
6 standard and promoting transparent collaboration and
7 engagement with surrounding communities. Today, the DAF is
8 undeniably focused on ensuring our installations are ready
9 to support air and space operations in an era where China is
10 expanding, modernizing, and diversifying its entire
11 military.

12 As power projection platforms, the readiness of the
13 Department of the Air Force's Installations is critical to
14 our national security. The DAF's Installation in
15 Infrastructure Action plan or I2AP, is the guiding
16 revitalization of our installations to ensure the Air Force
17 and Space Force can deliver combat power with the necessary
18 speed, range, and intensity to deter adversaries.

19 The I2AP sets clear objectives, goals, and key actions
20 to align installations with critical mission capabilities,
21 optimize vital infrastructure, and maximize mission
22 assurance. We appreciate the subcommittee's support for
23 improving our infrastructure with the NDAA budget provision
24 on FSRM. This will greatly improve our facility conditions.
25 However, we will struggle to meet this budget requirement in

1 full without first optimizing our inventory. Sustaining the
2 associated excess infrastructure forces us to invest
3 critical dollars in areas that do not directly contribute to
4 warfighting and contributes to significant backlogs and
5 maintenance and repair.

6 Therefore, we're increasing demolition and freeing up
7 scarce resources by pursuing several innovative approaches
8 such as expanding the use of enhanced use leases, strategic
9 real estate opportunities, and developing city base
10 opportunities. To that end this week, my team is in
11 Massachusetts working with the state, local and installation
12 leaders to explore opportunities at Hanscom Air Force Base.

13 To achieve peace through strength, we must also ensure
14 our installations can remain resilient through disruptions,
15 reducing our reliance on vulnerable energy sources and
16 rapidly fielding emerging technologies is essential to
17 defending the homeland and strengthening deterrence. The
18 DAF continues to pursue microgrids and utilize third party
19 financing and innovative partnerships to modernize and
20 improve resiliency.

21 We're also steadfast in our pursuit of commercial micro
22 reactor technology to include a recent announcement of a
23 notice of intent to award a power purchase agreement at
24 Eielson Air Force Base in Alaska. In closing, the DAF is
25 committed to ensuring our installations provide the nation

1 with the warfighting capability it needs to deter our
2 adversaries and to provide or providing high quality of life
3 for our Airmen, Guardians, and their families to ensure we
4 maintain a lethal and combat credible force.

5 Thank you for your continued support of our Airmen and
6 Guardians and I look forward to taking your questions.

7 [The prepared statement of Mr. Saunders follows:]

8 [SUBCOMMITTEE INSERT]

1 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Mr. Saunders.

2 I'll begin the questioning here. And I highlighted
3 this and I'd like to start with you, Secretary Marks, and
4 maybe talk to or mention this to each of the other
5 witnesses. The current projected MILCON in Guam, and I'm
6 not saying Guam is not strategically important. It is.

7 But they go up from \$4.7 billion in current projects to
8 over 46 billion in planned future projects. Secretary, the
9 Navy mentioned to me after his visit, he thought the number
10 was north of \$50 billion. And I have raised this as an
11 issue where I just think the strategic imagination of our
12 leadership has been lacking whereby with our INDOPACOM
13 Commanders, the current one, I have a deep respect for. The
14 previous one, Admiral Aquilino, I also had deep respect for.

15 But there's a sense that everything is defaulting to
16 Guam, every service. And it creates, in my view, strategic
17 vulnerabilities. Particularly if there's a war with China.
18 With all of our forces on one relatively small island, this
19 I think creates huge vulnerabilities.

20 So, Secretary Marks, can you touch on that? You say
21 you have a holistic Guam master plan that you guys are
22 looking at. I'm assuming it's going to start to look at a
23 more dispersed force in INDOPACOM and not come to this issue
24 of a default to Guam, literally on everything. \$50 billion
25 in MILCON when half the Marine Corps and the Navy are

1 already out there, it seems to me not very smart.

2 Mr. Marks: Senator, thank you for that. And I know
3 you're a deep student of history. You and I have spoken of
4 that before so I completely understand the perspective as
5 you go there. As I refer to that was part of when we began
6 this understanding as I came in to look at a holistic
7 picture of where we're putting things. This affects not
8 only the Indo-Pacific but here in the homeland as well.

9 As we look at our real estate as our holdings, as well
10 as the cost of everything that we are doing. And part of
11 that is working with our combatant Commanders that you
12 mentioned.

13 Senator Sullivan: Yeah.

14 Mr. Marks: Not only Admiral Paparo, but also General
15 Guillot in terms of what is the correct force laydown, where
16 do those things need to be and then balancing that with the
17 cost that we need to get there. And so we've just, at least
18 from my seat, begun to take a harder look at that. I
19 understand your concerns of that. And Senator, I would love
20 to come back to you and discuss that further as I can get a
21 little bit more insight.

22 Senator Sullivan: Good. I'm glad you're undertaking
23 that initiative. I appreciate that. I commend you for
24 that. Do you have a timeline by which you want to get that
25 study done? Sometimes as you know, in big bureaucracies,

1 DOD being one, when they want something to go away, they
2 say, "Hey, we're going to study at it and we'll get back to
3 you Senators in three years." How about giving a little
4 timeline on that?

5 Mr. Marks: Yeah. Senator, I've not yet sent one to my
6 team. They're trying to give me a better understanding. I
7 will tell you though that both visits to Alaska, to
8 INDOPACOM and to NORTHCOM are all being planned right now
9 for me because I want to sit down with each one of them. I
10 think we're planning a visit with your staff in August to go
11 out to Alaska.

12 That is really the timeline I'm on. I need to be able
13 to sit down with each of them, have this conversation and
14 continue to drive that planning ahead. So, I will come back
15 to you at that when we work our plannings.

16 Senator Sullivan: Let me ask because we have other
17 equities in terms -- I appreciate that answer. In terms of
18 services, Mr. Saunders, obviously the Air Force is very
19 heavily invested in Guam. Again, I worry about a couple of
20 well-placed missiles in Andersen Airfield is gone, right?

21 Ms. Johnson Turner, you know the Marines are -- I'm not
22 sure how public it is but -- kind of resisting having 8,000
23 Marines on Guam, no place to train. The housing is
24 enormously expensive to build, just to get a couple of
25 marine barracks up. Do either of you have any concerns

1 about the Air Force or the Marine Corps Navy being over
2 concentrated in Guam with so many forces and so much MILCON
3 in one place in the Indo-Pacific?

4 Ms. Johnson-Turner: Senator Sullivan, thank you for
5 the question. As you noted, Guam is a special and strategic
6 location and one that's vital to the National Defense
7 Strategy. As Mr. Marks noted, we are staying very connected
8 with the combatant Commander on all things holistically as
9 it relates to force flow, force posture and appropriate
10 operational lay down and operational diversity.

11 So, sir, we will continue to strike the right balance
12 with our Indo-Pacific presence. Again, being very nested
13 closely with the combatant Commanders.

14 Senator Sullivan: Mr. Saunders?

15 Mr. Saunders: Yes, sir. Thank you for the question.
16 Similarly, our MILCON program and our investments in general
17 are heavily influenced by combatant Commander requirements.
18 And so, we recognize the strategic importance of Guam but
19 all of the requirements within the INDOPACOM AOR and we, as
20 I mentioned, focus those priorities from the combatant
21 Commanders and our component Commander in our case the PACAF
22 Commander into areas like Guam and other areas in the Indo-
23 Pacific.

24 Senator Sullivan: Thank you. And I appreciate
25 Secretary Mark's reference to history. When you look at our

1 own history, particularly in INDOPACOM, when we've over
2 concentrated forces, it is not always turned out so well for
3 our country, our readiness, our lethality, which I know
4 you're all focused on. Senator Hirono.

5 Senator Hirono: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Secretary
6 Marks, I know you are fully aware of the importance of the
7 training areas in Hawaii, particularly Pohakuloa. And Dr.
8 Waksman, you just noted how important that training area is
9 to our military in the Indo-Pacific. So, I would want both
10 of you to commit to continuing the kind of good faith
11 negotiations that we are engaged in to ensure that
12 especially Pohakuloa remains as a necessary training area
13 for our troops in Hawaii.

14 Mr. Marks: Senator, not only my commitment but I had a
15 call just last evening with my Hawaii Coordination Cell as
16 we continue to move all of the issues to forward. So, yes,
17 ma'am.

18 Dr. Waksman: Yes, Senator, I echo his comments. We
19 have a cell as well in Hawaii who work these issues. As you
20 know, we can't formally negotiate until the records of
21 decision are published, which the Army is currently planned
22 to do in August. But we absolutely will commit to engaging
23 with the local Hawaiian population and local government and
24 other local nurse groups to make sure that they're all being
25 --

1 Senator Hirono: Yeah, as we know there are some
2 challenges to these negotiations, not to mention that the
3 fact that one of the state agencies did not to okay the EIS.
4 So, the good thing is I believe that the Governor is very
5 interested in moving forward, working in good faith with all
6 of you.

7 So, recent reporting review that a billion dollars, as
8 I mentioned, the facility sustainment, restoration and
9 modernization funds will be moved from repairing and
10 maintaining facilities. And as I noted, there are something
11 like in the order of over \$200 billion in deferred
12 maintenance needs. So, this is money that's supposed to go
13 to for barracks and barracks repair but instead they're
14 being diverted to activities on the southwest border.

15 Secretary Marks and Dr. Waksman can you explain how you
16 plan to ensure the soldiers are living in safe and adequate
17 barracks in light of this decrease in funding to the tune of
18 about \$1 billion and possibly more? And have you determined
19 how this will impact the Army's maintenance backlog?

20 Mr. Marks: So, Senator, thank you for that. We of
21 course all remain very committed to that and to the health
22 and well-being of all of our service members. But most of
23 that money was originally things that had not fully executed
24 and we are restoring that into the Fiscal Year 2026. But
25 I'll defer to Dr. Waksman in terms of the exact way nature

1 in which that was done.

2 Dr. Waksman: Yeah. As Secretary Mark said we did not
3 pull any funding from any projects that were already being
4 spent on. It was money that had not already been assigned.
5 You are correct that we have a very bad backlog of
6 maintenance that we have to fix. And so, what we're trying
7 to do is to try to buy that back as best as we can in Fiscal
8 Year 2026. The Fiscal Year 2026 FSRM budget for the Army is
9 going to be 25 percent higher than it was even in Fiscal
10 Year 2024. And so, my instruction to the team has been to
11 not forget any of these actions that we were going to do and
12 to make sure that everything is getting funded that needed
13 to get funded.

14 Senator Hirono: So, the fact of the matter is that,
15 that the DOD has decided that it is going to assist Homeland
16 Security in various immigration enforcement programs. Now
17 this is being done without reimbursement and the DOD can ill
18 afford for any of these monies that should go to things like
19 barrack's restoration and repair, can ill afford any of this
20 kind of diversion.

21 So, we will be watching to see how you're going to make
22 up the difference. And in fact, Dr. Waksman, over three
23 weeks ago, this committee asked the Army for a comparison of
24 what facility sustainment, restoration and modernization
25 projects were planned for Fiscal Year 2025 compared to what

1 has been executed to date. And we have not received this
2 information. And when can we expect this information from
3 you?

4 Dr. Waksman: Senator, that's a fair question. We have
5 just really finalized all those numbers internally. We're
6 getting ready to pull that together and I make a commitment
7 to you that we will get that to you as soon as we have it
8 finalized and ready for release.

9 Senator Hirono: Okay. We're going to hold you to that
10 time timeline soon. Ms. Johnson-Turner, you noted that some
11 14 Navy barracks have been renovated. That's good news. I
12 visited Arizona Hall, a Navy enlisted barracks at Joint Base
13 Pearl Harbor. And the facility is dated, lacks essential
14 air conditioning. In fact, I note that the Air Force
15 doesn't even let its unaccompanied Airmen in places that are
16 not air conditioned but yet the Navy has this facility that
17 is not air conditioned.

18 And that is not some kind of a luxury because it's
19 pretty tough to be in a place that's not air conditioned.
20 So, I found out that the restoration costs for these
21 barracks is \$10 million. That seems eminently doable. So,
22 I'd like to know from you, what is the plan and when can I
23 expect the renovation of Arizona Hall to begin?

24 Ms. Johnson-Turner: Senator Hirono, I appreciate the
25 question. As noted, unaccompanied housing remains a

1 priority for the Department of the Navy and I appreciate
2 your attention to and support for the Department of the
3 Navy. Specific to Arizona Hall, we did have sailors that
4 were moved out of that facility about a year ago. We are
5 moving forward with a structural assessment although the
6 building is wholly vacant, which we expect to receive those
7 results this summer.

8 Senator Hirono: So, is there \$10 million being
9 requested to complete the renovation of Arizona Hall?

10 Ms. Johnson-Turner: Senator, I will have to get back
11 to you on the specific amount. I think part of it was --
12 now that the facility is vacated and there is no sailors or
13 other service members residing, was to get the structural
14 assessment and determine the next step.

15 Senator Hirono: You may not have the specific amount
16 but can you tell me if this is happening in this budget?

17 Ms. Johnson-Turner: I will look forward to getting
18 back to you Senator in short order.

19 Senator Hirono: Thank you.

20 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Senator Hirono. Senator
21 Fischer.

22 Senator Fischer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank
23 you all for being here today.

24 As you know, FSRM funds are used by the service in
25 order to maintain, repair and improve existing military

1 facilities. And this committee has been leading the way on
2 reforms when it comes to the sustainment of our
3 infrastructure.

4 In responding to a committee request for information, I
5 understand that the services as well as the Office of the
6 Secretary of Defense would be in favor of changing FSRM from
7 a one-year authorization to a three-year authorization.
8 First, can each of you tell me if you support this idea, Mr.
9 Secretary?

10 Mr. Marks: Senator, thank you. And as I think you and
11 I have spoken before, anything that increases flexibility
12 and allows us to program appropriately but also allows us to
13 reduce the overall cost as we can get after it, certainly we
14 would support and I would want to work with you to see how
15 that would become implemented.

16 Senator Fischer: Great. Dr. Waksman?

17 Dr. Waksman: Yeah. I echo Secretary Marks. Any
18 additional flexibility is always welcome. You're right
19 about this challenge. It's like a credit card debt where
20 you save a little bit of money now and you have to pay way
21 more later. And we understand this is a big hole that we
22 have to dig out of and we're looking forward to working with
23 you on trying to solve that problem.

24 Senator Fischer: Great. Ma'am?

25 Ms. Johnson-Turner: Senator, I absolutely concur with

1 Secretary Marks. Anything that enhances flexibility and our
2 buying power would be much appreciated. It would get us
3 beyond the Fiscal Year encroachment, as well as give us more
4 time to better plan.

5 Senator Fischer: Mr. Saunders?

6 Mr. Saunders: Senator, I appreciate the question. I
7 echo all the comments previously. It would add additional
8 flexibility and make us more efficient in executing the
9 program.

10 Senator Fischer: Okay. That is great. So, if you're
11 in support of this, why hasn't Congress seen a legislative
12 proposal on this topic or seen any kind of change in your
13 annual budget request? Who wants that one?

14 Mr. Marks: Senator, we'll take that one.

15 Senator Fischer: Okay. Great.

16 Mr. Marks: And work that as we move forward, certainly
17 I think that that is something we need to sit down and work
18 language with you on to ensure it's in the proper place.
19 But I was made aware of that just this week. So, I'll
20 absolutely want to work with you on that.

21 Senator Fischer: Thank you very much. Mr. Saunders,
22 as you know in March of 2019, Offutt Air Force Base in
23 Nebraska experienced a massive flood forcing displacement of
24 3,200 people and causing millions of dollars in damage. Six
25 years later, that rebuilding is still in progress but I

1 would like to highlight that in a testament to the
2 resiliency and fortitude, the Airmen of Offutt Air Force
3 Base have maintained full mission capability throughout this
4 entire time.

5 However, these same Airmen are having to execute their
6 missions out of aging facilities that are not suited to the
7 task. Could you please provide an update on the Offutt Air
8 Force Base rebuilding effort? And I would ask them that you
9 follow up with that and make sure things stay on track. The
10 facilities are out of date, dangerous, not healthy and we
11 want to be able to provide for our people.

12 Mr. Saunders: Senator Fischer, thank you for that
13 question. We share your same interest in ensuring that we
14 restore the facilities to operational condition and that we
15 provide high quality facilities for our Airmen that are
16 working at our critical location at Offutt. In this case
17 throughout the Fiscal Year 2019 through 2024 program we've
18 invested about \$988 million in that national disaster
19 recovery effort so far.

20 It's 11 separate projects that are awarded. And as you
21 noted some of them are still in construction and I remain
22 committed as you've asked to keep a pulse on that to ensure
23 that we continue to execute that program.

24 Senator Fischer: Thank you very much. Mr. Secretary,
25 what steps are we taking across our installations to ensure

1 that that critical infrastructure and the industrial control
2 systems are protected at a lot of these installations? You
3 know that we have to make sure that they're protected, that
4 they're hardened just as much as we worry about the
5 technology.

6 Mr. Marks: Senator, I really appreciate that question
7 because that is critical to everything that we do, and we
8 have such a dependency on our community partners in that,
9 right, our unified or our utility providers and how we
10 operate with that. In fact, I am meeting with several of
11 them tomorrow to discuss how we collectively can get after
12 this problem and certainly focus our investments on ways
13 that make us not only resilient from just an energy
14 dominance, energy security and redundancy position but also,
15 as you mentioned, the cybersecurity that goes along with
16 that.

17 And I certainly think from an efficiency perspective,
18 our ability to digitally monitor the work that we do is also
19 important to our future efforts. And we'll be prioritizing
20 that as we move it.

21 Senator Fischer: You know, as we're looking at the
22 coordination, not just with industry partners but across the
23 services as well, do you have any thoughts on how we can
24 improve on that?

25 Mr. Marks: Well, I think certainly as Dr. Waksman, all

1 the services do our black start exercises are beginning to
2 reveal to us some of those abilities of places where those
3 redundancies lack. That's allowing us to then focus our
4 efforts on first and foremost ensuring that we don't have
5 failures such as at Offutt, which obviously has a critical
6 national security mission that we want to ensure that is
7 there, right?

8 So, as we do those that allows us to then begin to move
9 out given the resources that we have to focus on that. But
10 we can certainly come back and try to work with you on that.

11 Senator Fischer: Okay. Great. I'd be really
12 interested in hearing how not just how we coordinate but how
13 we can, and once again, make it move faster.

14 Mr. Marks: Yes, ma'am.

15 Senator Fischer: Thank you.

16 Senator Sullivan: Thank you Senator Fischer. Senator
17 Kaine.

18 Senator Kaine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to
19 our witnesses. I want to ask about UASs. We certainly are
20 seeing in real time the threat they pose in combat and the
21 new iterations of them on the battlefield. But they also
22 affect security of DOD installations. We've had incursions
23 at Langley. There have been other bases in the country that
24 have seen these.

25 Talk a little bit about what each of the service

1 branches are doing. You know the Army is playing kind of a
2 facilitator role. NORTHCOM is playing a key role. But what
3 are you doing with respect to installations both at home and
4 are installations abroad to be more really kind of on the
5 leading edge of the best practices for UAS incursions?

6 Mr. Marks: Senator, I appreciate that question very
7 much, especially given my last role in which that was a
8 singular focus that I was working there in Florida. I would
9 say writ large. And I will allow my partners here to also
10 add. One of the critical pieces of this that I believe
11 we're focused on is not only inside the fence line but also
12 outside the fence line.

13 So, if I wait until that threat is at the fence line,
14 it's much too late. We saw what happened in Spider Web, we
15 can see the real threat that can happen. And so one of the
16 initiatives that we are moving forward in without our
17 installations is to work on the community ability to
18 integrate these working on the jurisdictions and the
19 authorities that go with that.

20 I will defer again to my partners here in terms of
21 technologies that we're applying to those solutions but
22 that's one of the key efforts that my office is going to
23 focus on.

24 Dr. Waksman: Thanks, Senator. It is a great question.
25 As you know, counter UAS is a big part of what the Army's

1 doing now. And it's a financial question, right? Can we
2 shoot down stuff cheaper than what they're shooting at us?
3 But I think there's two important parts to it that the
4 Army's focusing on in addition to just the technology.

5 One is the energy piece. If you're going to have all
6 these radar systems, microwave systems, et cetera. How do
7 you ensure that you have reliable energy for that? But
8 also, it's a policy piece. There are policy and legal
9 challenges with doing counter UAS, particularly
10 domestically. The FAA tends to frown on us shooting things
11 down out of the sky. And so working that problem, I think
12 it's a concern that we're going to want to work with you and
13 the rest of Congress on going forward.

14 Ms. Johnson-Turner: Senator Kaine, thank you for the
15 question as it does have the attention of the Department of
16 the Navy. We are looking at the systems that we have in
17 place at many of our critical and mission critical
18 installations as well as the research and development.

19 As we know, technology is constantly increasing. I
20 just led a critical infrastructure form within the
21 Department of the Navy where we are looking holistically
22 across Marine Corps and Navy equities to get a whole love
23 done, if you will, approach to get after this. We're also
24 looking at the authorities that we have in place and where
25 we may have potential gaps.

1 And then you've heard the Marine Corps talk about sort
2 of their 3D printing that they've been able to do at
3 Quantico to really continue to push focus and attention to
4 moving forward with drones.

5 Senator Kaine: Saunders?

6 Mr. Saunders: Senator, thank you for the question.
7 I'd start by reiterating for the Department of the Air Force
8 as well as the other services that our installations are
9 power projection platforms and they operate in increasingly
10 contested environment, including a contested environment in
11 the homeland as you noted with incursions at Langley and
12 other locations.

13 So, the department is obviously heavily invested in
14 working and partnering with the joint counter small UAS
15 office, the assistant services and looking at all options
16 both kinetic and non-kinetic solutions and ensuring that we
17 develop solutions that are nested in a broader airbase
18 defense and airbase air and ballistic missile defense
19 framework. And that's headed through our Air Force side --
20 on the Air Force side through the A3 but it includes
21 stakeholders across the Department of the Air Force.

22 Senator Kaine: You know, if I could just say to my
23 Senate colleagues here, the Langley incursions were maybe 18
24 or 19 months ago. And we've been together in sort of the
25 SCIF where we've tried to get information about; do we know

1 the origin, no, even though it was 19 nights in a row. It
2 wasn't just like one night. We still haven't really been
3 given very good information about it.

4 And maybe it's hard to come upon that information now.
5 But the same issues when we asked 19 months ago. Well, the
6 FAA doesn't like us shooting stuff down outside of base, of
7 course they don't. The local government, I got this Mayor
8 of Hampton, he doesn't want that. But those answers, 19
9 months ago, I got them. But it's been 19 months and I'm
10 still worried that everyone recognizes as a challenge but
11 I'm not really sure we've got the protocols that we should
12 have by now.

13 And I'm going to add to it. I was at one of our major
14 defense contractors in Virginia. I don't need to name them
15 but they said they have drone incursions around their
16 perimeter a lot. People trying to see what's going on.
17 What do you do? We call the service branch that we're
18 contracting with and we let them know. And they say,
19 "Thanks, we're glad you let us know."

20 But there's not that much done beyond a phone call and
21 an, "Okay, thanks for letting us know." So, I am nervous
22 about this. That there are a lot of stakeholders. It's
23 FAA, it's local government, it's federal law enforcement
24 trying to do the investigation to determine who's
25 responsible. You have to separate the innocent hobbyist

1 from the potential bad malefactor or foreign actor who's
2 coming after you.

3 But I just worry that we're not yet coming up with the
4 protocols we need. And that's something that I'm sure we'll
5 talk about as we're doing the markup in the NDA. One other
6 question I wanted to ask about housing. There's a GAO
7 report, 2023, poor living conditions undermine quality of
8 life and readiness.

9 And that is now about two years old, highlighted number
10 of poor living conditions that we're familiar with but the
11 report made 31 recommendations. And I wonder what's our
12 status in terms of implementing or how many have been
13 implemented, how many are in implementation? Can you talk a
14 little bit about that Secretary Mark?

15 Mr. Marks: Yes. Absolutely Senator, thank you for
16 that. And over half of those have already been implemented.
17 There's another three that we're attempting to close out
18 right now. Those are going through their process but I
19 expect those to be moved shortly. And then each of our
20 partners has a game plan in which we meet regularly to get
21 those to closure. So, I think we're on a good pace to get
22 those there through our housing offices.

23 Senator Kaine: If I did that question for the record,
24 I think it might be helpful for not just this subcommittee,
25 but all committee members to kind of get the 31, these have

1 been done. Here are the three that we think we're closing
2 in on. Here are the ones we're still working on.

3 So, I'll probably ask that question for the record
4 because I think everybody's probably going to be interested
5 in that answer.

6 [The information appears in the appendix:]

7 / SUBCOMMITTEE INSERT

1 Mr. Marks: Understood. Thank you, sir.

2 Senator Kaine: Okay. Thank you.

3 Senator Sullivan: Great. And Senator Kaine, yesterday
4 a number of us introduced the Golden Dome Act, which is all
5 about missile defense, which has a significant UAS
6 component. And it's got a UAS component that deals with
7 FAA, DOD, and the Services, to try to get to exactly what
8 you are talking about. I think it's a really important
9 issue and I think our services also have concerns that
10 nobody has the authority to actually shoot down a drone if
11 it were doing nefarious activity right now. So, I agree
12 with you.

13 I think it's something we're going to certainly want to
14 take up in the NDAA markup.

15 Senator Kaine: Great.

16 Senator Sullivan: Thank you. Well, we're going to go
17 to second round of questions here and I'll begin with you
18 Secretary Marks. One of the issues, you're probably seeing
19 it, I'm sure all our witnesses have seen it. In terms of
20 MILCON, one of the challenges we have is the oversaturation
21 of burdensome regulations, many of which come from NEPA,
22 where it takes years and years and even beyond a decade to
23 get through NEPA reforms or NEPA reviews.

24 Then the inevitable litigation that comes with them to
25 do anything on basis. So, Mr. Secretary, I'm sure you saw

1 the very important Supreme Court case ruling on the Eagle
2 County case, where the court found that agencies will get
3 significant deference on NEPA reviews and importantly
4 clarifies that agencies don't have to do reviews and
5 shouldn't do reviews for impacts outside the project's
6 immediate jurisdiction.

7 So, have you started to incorporate that into your DOD
8 NEPA analysis and importantly, like for example on Guam I
9 know that the Department of Interior was doing a huge NEPA
10 review on some of the base housing related to Guam,
11 incorporating that with the other agencies that might be
12 doing NEPA analysis on military basis to more quickly
13 streamline MILCON projects, which often can take a decade or
14 more because of NEPA red tape?

15 Mr. Marks: Senator, absolutely. And in fact, since
16 I've been in the seat, that's been a high priority to try to
17 get after that, working with our partners in ways in which
18 we can accelerate that by, while still acknowledging our
19 legal policy responsibilities, of course. One of those of
20 course is, the team has looked at opportunities there.

21 Where can we use CATEx, where can we use other
22 abilities to move that forward, shrink those timelines again
23 while still meeting those. I'll defer to my partners if
24 they have recent examples but we hope to bring that forward
25 very soon. And I agree with you, I've experienced that

1 personally where the standard answer to any environmental
2 answer is, "Well, that'll be two years from now before I
3 come back to you with an answer." That to me, is an
4 unacceptable, so.

5 Senator Sullivan: Yeah. Not acceptable. It's a
6 dangerous world out there and we can't --

7 Mr. Marks: It is. Absolutely, sir.

8 Senator Sullivan: We wouldn't be saying that during
9 World War II or any other times, we need to up the tempo.
10 Let me turn to the very important issue. A number of you
11 have talked about the issue of energy. And one element, and
12 you don't want to repeat rumors, but one of the things that
13 I've heard rumors on, again, in the Indo-Pacific region is
14 the lack of energy storage as a detriment to prosecuting
15 warfighting plans in the Indo-Pacific, particularly even
16 exacerbated more because of the closure at the Red Hill Fuel
17 facility in Hawaii.

18 So, is that something that you're hearing about from
19 the combatant Commanders? In one of the areas that you and
20 I talked about during your confirmation process, Secretary
21 Marks, was the former base at ADAC, which in addition to
22 having two 8,000 foot runways, a sub base, has one of the
23 largest and still operational fuel depots in the world. 22
24 million gallons of fuel can be stored there.

25 But what are our challenges with regard to fuel a

1 warfighting capability that we need in INDOPACOM,
2 particularly given the Red Hill Fuel Facility shut down and
3 I believe ADAC offers a really important element for
4 INDOPACOM fuel logistics. A lot of people don't know. If
5 you look at a map, ADAC is over a thousand miles west of
6 Hawaii. And it's in the AOR, very far out in the AOR.

7 Mr. Marks: Senator, I appreciate that. And I've been
8 tracking both Admiral Paparo's and General Guillot's
9 comments to you about those issues. We are looking at the
10 global force posture. I know my Navy Partners made a visit
11 to ADAC to begin to do an assessment on that. And certainly
12 we're looking at that global force posture. Anything that
13 increases distance slows us down and our ability to support
14 the warfighter is certainly a concern.

15 And we'll continue to work with combatant Commanders
16 and my service partners to see what we need to do as the
17 next steps.

18 Senator Sullivan: But are you hearing from the
19 combatant Commanders that they're worried about fuel
20 supplies in any kind of contingency? And I'm not just
21 saying it's Red Hill, I'm just saying in general, it's a big
22 Pacific Ocean out there and our warfighters need fuel. I'm
23 hearing that.

24 Mr. Marks: Senator, and I don't doubt it. And that's
25 why, as I mentioned earlier in my comments, that I've

1 reached out to the combatant Commanders to sit down as
2 quickly as possible, as well as very quickly sitting down
3 with my partners at the Defense Logistics Agency to try to
4 get a better grasp on that situation for you. So, I'll come
5 back to you but I will defer to my partners here, my
6 colleagues if they have a greater influence.

7 Senator Sullivan: Well, just with regard to ADAC, the
8 INDOPACOM Commander and the NORTHCOM Commander testified in
9 the full committee that we need to reopen that base. I got
10 a commitment recently from the Navy, Ms. Johnson-Turner to
11 come brief me again on this. This was in a call with the
12 SECNAV. Nobody's done it. That was about three or four
13 weeks ago. So, I'm still waiting. I've been waiting a long
14 time. Getting impatient on that.

15 But I'd like to get your commitment to get what was
16 already a commitment to come brief me on their latest visit,
17 whether it's dealing with fuel, runways, sub bases. It's a
18 very strategic location. Two combatant Commanders have
19 already said we need to reopen it. And I just haven't
20 gotten anything from the Navy yet. Can I get your
21 commitment to get the Navy at a senior level in my office
22 soon as they've already committed to me to brief me on this?

23 Ms. Johnson-Turner: Senator Sullivan, the ADAC is
24 definitely a strategic and important location. I will
25 follow up within internal to the Department of the Navy so

1 we can circle back with you.

2 Senator Sullivan: Good. Thank you. Senator Hirono.

3 Senator Hirono: Any questions about reopening Red Hill
4 is going to require a lot of thought because these were
5 massive -- it was a massive facility.

6 Senator Sullivan: Just for the record, I didn't say
7 anything about reopening Red Hill.

8 Senator Hirono: Well, that's what it sounded like to
9 me.

10 Senator Sullivan: No, I'm not saying that at all.

11 Senator Hirono: Good.

12 Senator Sullivan: I'm saying the Navy needs to use
13 ADAC as a replacement to Red Hill not. I know how sensitive
14 Red Hill is. That's the last I would not her. That's your
15 area.

16 Senator Hirono: That's the last stop. Encroach.
17 Thank you very much.

18 Senator Sullivan: Nothing about --

19 Senator Hirono: I'm all for being open minded about
20 what we need to do to make sure that our readiness posture
21 remains strong. However, if Red Hill was a facility that
22 mainly stored aviation fuel. So, the Air Force has
23 something to say about that. And in the meantime, though,
24 the presence really is not so much the Air Force in Hawaii
25 but it's the Navy and the fuel there was not for Navy.

1 Okay. I'm going to ask some really easy questions so
2 that we can move on. In previous NDAA's, we have extended
3 the H-2B visas for military construction related to Guam and
4 the CNMI. Secretary Marks, would you support another
5 extension of H-2B visas for military construction on Guam
6 and the CNMI?

7 Mr. Marks: Senator Hirono, I absolutely would look for
8 an extension that would help with costs, with manpower and
9 continue to move our projects along so they don't incur any
10 additional costs.

11 Senator Hirono: So, the answer is yes?

12 Mr. Marks: Yes.

13 Senator Hirono: Okay. I did mention in my opening
14 that I wanted each of you to discuss very briefly but
15 specifically some ideas to improve the military construction
16 process. And I suppose part of it is somehow hastening the
17 NEPA review process. But do you have any specific ideas on
18 what we can do to hasten military construction?

19 Mr. Marks: We do, Senator. And we've looked right now
20 at ideas such as accelerated design built. So, bringing in
21 the team earlier. Bundling projects so that we can
22 accelerate those, right? One large project moving through
23 quickly if we can do that. But I would also look at things
24 that -- I've asked our team to investigate, such as the use
25 of artificial intelligence solutions to move the projects

1 along more quickly.

2 We certainly want to look at industry standards. And
3 so, I've asked our team to begin to look at the unified
4 facilities criteria, the UFCs. Basically, in a broad sense,
5 anything that would restrict us from moving forward that is
6 contrary to either industry standards or contrary to law.
7 We need to identify those and try to remove the restrictions
8 that allow us to get things done quickly to the proper
9 standards.

10 Senator Hirono: So, the things like design build, are
11 you implementing that kind of a process to speed up the
12 building process?

13 Mr. Marks: That is absolutely something we want to
14 move forward as quickly as possible.

15 Senator Hirono: So, if you have specific examples of
16 that is working, please come back with them.

17 Mr. Marks: I will come back to you with one. Yes,
18 ma'am.

19 Senator Hirono: Is the Secretary speaking for the rest
20 of you? Do the rest of you have other ideas on what we can
21 do to speed up the process?

22 Dr. Waksman: Yes, I think what you're referring to is
23 the design build process, which has been demonstrated by
24 other agencies to work faster. But there's also the
25 progressive design build process, which we'd like to

1 explore. That is not something that we currently have
2 authority to do but that's really the best practices in the
3 private sector. And we've had to work with Congress to see
4 if that authority can be extended.

5 Senator Hirono: Anything to add?

6 Ms. Johnson-Turner: Senator Hirono, I concur with
7 Secretary Marks and Dr. Waksman. The other thing that I
8 would say is we have really benefited from the authority
9 that Congress provided to us for the OTA pilot. We've
10 learned a lot of lessons, tried to move out with
11 industrialized construction if you will, to get us as close
12 as we can to a progressive design build. But being able to
13 further leverage OTA authority and military construction
14 would be of great benefit.

15 Mr. Saunders: Yes. Senator Hirono, you asked if the
16 Assistant Secretary spoke for all the Services. I think in
17 this case there is a joint working group with the Services
18 led by the Office of the Secretary of Defense. So, yes,
19 that does provide all of the same responses. And I was the
20 only thing I was going to add was to echo the comment of the
21 OTAs which is a relatively recent authority and that does
22 help.

23 Senator Hirono: Thank you. I did mention in my
24 opening that I have concerns about our ability, that the
25 department's ability to withstand weather events and to

1 protect our infrastructure. And I'm assuming that you're
2 going to proceed with some of those kinds of considerations.
3 I did want to get to one thing that's come up recently. And
4 that is just this afternoon, it was reported that the Navy
5 and the Air Force will create two additional national
6 defense areas.

7 NDAs attached to Joint Base San Antonio and Texas and
8 Marine Corps Air Station in Yuma, Arizona. For Mr.
9 Saunders, a Joint Based San Antonio is 150 miles from the
10 border inside a city of 1.5 million people. How do you
11 justify creating a national defense area so far from the
12 border and inside a major city?

13 Mr. Saunders: Yes, Senator Hirono, thank you for that
14 question. And it also provides me the opportunity maybe to
15 provide a little bit more clarity to what we're actually
16 doing. The Air Force is pursuing an NDA, but it's along the
17 Rio Grande from Roma, Texas to the Gulf of America. It's
18 roughly 260 or 270 miles long. It'll encompass the river
19 bank to the high watermark. The Joint Base San Antonio
20 reference that you mentioned, is the administrative
21 organization that will oversee and adopt that real property
22 on the Department of the Air Force on real property records.

23 Senator Hirono: Secretary Marks, you know that there
24 are concerns about the continuing creation because this is
25 like number four of these creation of these national defense

1 areas and it enables the military to get around Posse
2 Comitatus. So, Secretary Marks, are there any plans or
3 discussions to establish similar national defense areas in
4 other U.S. cities?

5 Mr. Marks: Senator, there's always planning going on
6 in terms of what we need to do to assist with what the
7 President has asked us to do. However, at this time, those
8 two are the one that I'm tracking.

9 Senator Hirono: So, there is already a diversion of
10 4,000 National Guards people and it's 700 or so active-duty
11 military in L.A., and there is a concern about what they're
12 doing in these cities. And this is all under the control of
13 the President, thanks to a court decision. But there is a
14 question as to what these troops can do in these areas, even
15 if they're called up in L.A., because there is this issue of
16 Posse Comitatus. So, there are these concerns about the
17 diversion of our troops.

18 So, as we create these areas, how many troops are going
19 to be there monitoring or whatever they're going to be doing
20 in these additional NDAs that has to do with border issues?

21 Mr. Marks: Senator, our troops are there in a Title 10
22 status. That means they're in a federal status. They are
23 there to assist not violate Posse Comitatus. And so, as we
24 look at those, they are there simply in a -- temporarily
25 protect our ICE agents and other federal personnel there

1 within the federal confines of the real property that they
2 are on. And so, it's not an intent to Posse Comitatus
3 simply to exercise the Title 10 work that they're doing
4 there.

5 Senator Hirono: So, my question is, Mr. Chairman, if
6 you don't mind, how many troops will be for the Air Force
7 and for the Navy will be assigned to monitor or patrol these
8 additional NDAs? That's what I want to know.

9 Mr. Marks: Senator, I don't have that exactly unless
10 my colleagues have the exact numbers. We'll take that for
11 the record, if we may, ma'am. And I'll get back to you.

12 Senator Hirono: Do you have a response?

13 Ms. Johnson-Turner: Senator, I do not know the exact
14 number either. So, as Secretary Marks denoted, we would
15 have to get back to you.

16 Mr. Saunders: Yeah, similarly, ma'am, we would work
17 with the Commander in command in NORTHCOM in this case. And
18 they would identify the requirements which would answer the
19 question of the number. And so, we'd be able to get back
20 with you after coordinating with them.

21 Senator Hirono: I would like that information provided
22 to this committee.

23 [The information appears in the appendix:]

24 / SUBCOMMITTEE INSERT

25

1 Senator Hirono: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

2 Senator Sullivan: Senator Kaine.

3 Senator Kaine: Just one last question. And this is to
4 Secretary Marks. There's an office within the Pentagon, the
5 Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation. That has
6 been very helpful in Virginia and I suspect in other states
7 too. You know as our Hampton Roads, I'll use that as an
8 example. 12, 13 cities and counties on different sides of
9 the water but all really unified in their support for the
10 many military missions in the area.

11 That office has been really great in terms of working
12 in coordination when the community is trying to figure out
13 what to do on infrastructure, road building or bridge
14 construction obviously. We like to work in tandem, not just
15 with a single base but with all the military installations
16 where people are going to be driving to and from every day.
17 that office has proven really valuable. The office has had
18 a budget over the years where they've been able to help fund
19 local, you know, it might be a part of a transportation
20 study.

21 Senator Durbin and I wrote a letter to Secretary
22 Hegseth about this in March, just saying, "Hey, this is a
23 good office as you're getting started, pay attention to
24 this. It can really be used to leverage good relationships
25 with local communities." And I would just like, you know,

1 your commitment that you see the value of this office and
2 anything you can do to enhance its effectiveness will be
3 good for the military mission.

4 And it'll be good outside the gate in terms of the
5 community base relationships.

6 Mr. Marks: Senator, thank you for that question. And
7 first, thank you that you've seen the incredible value of
8 OLDCC. As a former installation person, I use them
9 extensively. And so, I was very excited that they are part
10 of the portfolio that I get to lead. And you absolutely
11 have my commitment, Senator, that we'll continue to push
12 that forward.

13 I think I often say I get better than a three to one
14 return on investment when I use the OLDCC money, especially
15 as it works within our community. So, thank you for your
16 support and you have my commitment.

17 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Senator Kaine. I want to
18 talk a little bit more on the, you know, Mr. Secretary, I
19 mentioned the dispersal of forces in the Indo-Pacific that
20 just made strategic sense but there's also a operational
21 need. I have a chart I'm trying to get here but I've shown
22 it to many of you. I've brought it to many hearings and
23 it's all the activity we're getting in the North Pacific, in
24 the ADAC with regard to Russian and Chinese incursions into
25 our airspace.

1 Our aid is in Alaska and our EEZ into our waters. In
2 the last three years, we've had a whole host of Russian Bear
3 Bomber missions and Chinese naval task forces. And in an
4 unprecedented manner, joint Russian and Chinese strategic
5 bomber task forces and naval task forces. So, the need for
6 infrastructure from which to project American power in this
7 part of the world, refuel, intercept these incursions is
8 really, really important.

9 So, can I talk to you about that just briefly?
10 Secretary Marks, as you're looking at the lay down, you need
11 dispersion because you don't want to get attacked but you
12 also need dispersion and force projection capability.
13 Because this is the homeland, right? This is the northern
14 border and they are very active up there.

15 And then Mr. Saunders, the INDOPACOM Commander, and
16 particularly the NORTHCOM Commander, have talked about the
17 need for additional airspace logistics but also runway space
18 on the Aleutian Islands and ADAC, in Western Alaska, Galena,
19 Deadhorse, you know, northern part of Alaska. Because when
20 these brave Airmen and women do their intercept missions, if
21 it's February over the Arctic Ocean and you're flying an F-
22 16 and you lose an engine, you better want to have
23 infrastructure capability for an SAR mission.

24 So, I'd like to get your views on that. Hopefully
25 you've listened to what the NORTHCOM Commander has said with

1 regard to forward infrastructure basing for aircraft and
2 Navy ships to project American power in a part of the world
3 that's getting very, very busy. We are on the front lines
4 in Alaska with great power competition and it's a regular
5 occurrence. That's our border. Nothing more important than
6 that.

7 Mr. Marks: Senator, I appreciate that and the level of
8 detail as you have laid out. And in fact, as I mentioned to
9 you in my hearing as goes Alaska defense, so it goes
10 homeland defense, right?

11 Senator Sullivan: Yeah.

12 Mr. Sullivan: So, I agree with you there, Senator.
13 The development of the National Defense Strategy that we're
14 working on, we owe that to the Secretary here by August,
15 focuses on Arctic maritime strategy, Arctic strategy. I
16 would also echo General Guillot's comments which he as well
17 stated that when you're at those long distances, having the
18 ability to launch SAR, as you mentioned is of critical
19 importance.

20 And so, what I would want to continue to do Senator, is
21 one, acknowledge you have the threat, I think assessment
22 exactly correct. And I think from there is working through
23 the process as we do both the National Defense Strategy, the
24 protection of that and how that works to protect U.S.
25 interests up there is of vital importance. We'll continue

1 to focus on that as we move forward. But I'll defer to my
2 colleague on that.

3 Senator Sullivan: Great. Mr. Saunders, you probably
4 heard General Guillot talking about air station capability
5 at ADAC, right? There's two 8,000-foot runways there right
6 now with fuel as I mentioned. In Galena, which as you know,
7 that's western Alaska. It used to be a -- or interior kind
8 of western Alaska, it used to be an air base.

9 King Salmon, that's another area that used to be an Air
10 Force Air Base, Deadhorse, which is the most northern part
11 of Alaska where there's a civilian airport there. But the
12 ability to launch SAR rescue missions there is really,
13 really important. I have the chart here. I'll show it real
14 quick. As you're answering I'll just put it up there.

15 It gives you a sense, right? We're very busy up there.
16 It oftentimes doesn't make the lower 48 news but I'll tell
17 you, it makes the news in Alaska. And it should, right?

18 When you have Russian and Chinese joint strategic Bear
19 Bomber task forces with armed MiGs coming into our ADIZ, we
20 need to protect ourselves and protect our Airmen. If you
21 looked at any of those installation upgrades, we already
22 have them in all those areas I mentioned. Runways, former
23 bases that we could use for more infrastructure and power
24 projection to address this.

25 And here's just the number. And the green is joint

1 OPs, Russian Chinese operations. Either joint strategic
2 bomber task forces or joint naval task forces. And we even
3 got a balloon task force when the Chinese sent their spy
4 balloons over Alaska, which our Air Force did a great job of
5 shooting down. So, do you have an update on that?

6 Mr. Saunders: Yeah. Senator Sullivan, thank you for
7 that. You know, what's not lost on me is our interim
8 National Defense Strategy has us focused on INDOPACOM but
9 first defending the homeland, which basically addresses both
10 of these issues as you're talking about the Alaska region
11 and the Arctic.

12 Senator Sullivan: Well, this is homeland?

13 Mr. Saunders: Exactly.

14 Senator Sullivan: INDOPACOM because it's North Pacific
15 and Arctic, right? I mean, it's all three. You know, I was
16 meeting with the incoming Supreme Allied Commander, he had
17 his confirmation hearing yesterday. You look at Alaska, the
18 other thing that's really important but also challenging.
19 And Mr. Secretary, that's why you're so important. You have
20 the seams of all these different combatant commands, right?
21 You have NORTHCOM, you have EUCOM, Russia, you have
22 INDOPACOM and you have STRATCOM because of all our missile
23 defenses in Alaska.

24 There's three, four critical combatant commands right
25 there in that part of the world. And that's why our

1 adversaries are all over it coming to our territory. So,
2 I'm sorry, I interrupted. But do you have a -- do you want
3 to unpack that a little bit more?

4 Mr. Saunders: No, it is really just reiterating your
5 point that our focus is on the INDOPACOM and defending the
6 homeland and these other areas. As I mentioned in the
7 earlier discussion, we also prioritize our combatant
8 Commander requirements. So, as those combatant commanders
9 identify requirements and increase their priority within
10 those requirements, that influences our priorities for both
11 MILCON and FSRM investments.

12 And that would be no different in these areas that you
13 described. The only other piece I would add with respect to
14 the Air Force and in this region especially, our agile
15 combat employment concept allows us to be able to work not
16 only from fixed installations but from other installations.
17 And that would help address a lot of the areas that you're
18 working at, even if it's having access to Deadhorse. It
19 doesn't necessarily mean it's a permanent installation. But
20 it means that we can station aircraft perhaps on the
21 civilian airfield as it is today to be able to provide the
22 support that we need in certain times.

23 Senator Sullivan: Well, I appreciate you saying the
24 emphasis on the combatant Commanders because again, just to
25 reiterate, the INDOPACOM Commander and the NORTHCOM

1 Commander in full committee hearings have said, "We need to
2 reopen ADAC right there." That's a thousand miles west of
3 Hawaii. That is real strategic terrain. That's the gateway
4 to the Arctic.

5 That is on China and Russia's flank. When I've talked
6 about reopening ADAC, the Chinese Communist Party goes nuts.
7 They hate it, which to me is a good thing, right? And then
8 you have all the different NORTHCOM Commander requests.
9 That's Deadhorse in the Arctic area, Galena, King Salmon,
10 all out here. But these are critical areas that the
11 NORTHCOM and INDOPACOM Commander have both said that they
12 need. So, we'll want to work with you, Mr. Secretary, and
13 your counterparts here on making those a reality.

14 Let me turn to the topic of energy. And Mr. Secretary,
15 you've already talked about the importance of energy
16 dominance, energy resilience. I think some of the other
17 witnesses have talked about that. As you are aware because
18 you and I talked about it during your confirmation process,
19 the President himself, the Commander in Chief has really
20 highlighted the Alaska LNG project.

21 And the reason that's so important -- you might want to
22 put that Alaska map up again. The reason that is so
23 important for our country, it has huge potential both for
24 energy security for America, reducing the trade deficit.
25 The estimates of this large-scale LNG project are about \$10

1 billion annual trade deficit reduction if we are sending LNG
2 to our allies in Japan and Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, the
3 Philippines, India. But very importantly for your position
4 and all of your positions is energy resilience for our
5 bases.

6 So, right now, that pipeline, the natural gas is up
7 here, we're looking at -- they're building a big pipeline
8 that would parallel the Trans Alaska pipeline and an LNG
9 export facility here on the Kenai Peninsula. So, Mr.
10 Secretary as you and I have talked about, do you believe a
11 pipeline like that, which will go right past critical bases
12 at Fort Wainwright, at Eielson, at JBER, that's a hundred
13 years supply of clean burning Alaska Natural Gas, which are
14 bases Alaska need.

15 Could our bases benefit from that kind of abundant,
16 very reliable and resilient supply of energy for our
17 military bases for both regular use and use during time of
18 war?

19 Mr. Marks: Senator, absolutely. And we've been
20 watching with great interest where this goes, certainly
21 diversity of energy sources is critically important as we've
22 discussed. And we would continue to be very interested to
23 see as this moves forward, how that could be integrated into
24 our facilities.

25 Senator Sullivan: Great. And then the second

1 component of this, as I've already mentioned, the President,
2 you may have seen highlighted this project in his State of
3 the Union address. He highlighted this project in a meeting
4 with the Japanese Prime Minister. He highlighted this
5 project in a recent phone call with the previous President
6 of Korea, the interim President there.

7 This also has the potential to really help our allies
8 in Asia secure American LNG and get off Russian LNG, Russian
9 gas, Qataris gas, which we're seeing over the last couple of
10 weeks is very strategically vulnerable. Do you see it
11 playing an important role in that regard as well?

12 Mr. Marks: Well, certainly Senator. I think economic
13 security is national security. So, our ability to have
14 that, again, that diversity and the sourcing and knowing
15 where that is, is certainly very important to it. And
16 again, we would love to see this continue to move forward.

17 Senator Sullivan: Good. Let me just ask one final
18 question. You know, I had a two-hour meeting with the
19 Deputy Secretary of Defense just a couple of weeks ago,
20 primarily on the Golden Dome, where we're working together
21 with the Administration of the Department of Defense. But
22 I've talked to Secretary Hegseth, the Deputy Secretary of
23 Defense, and others about this energy project. There's a
24 potential for the Department of Defense to be a purchaser of
25 the gas and can help with regard to the pipeline.

1 Can I just get your commitment, as you and I have
2 talked about during your confirmation process to work with
3 us on that, both the Secretary and the Deputy Secretary have
4 said that this is something they want to work with us on and
5 more importantly, the President has made this a top priority
6 of his administration?

7 Mr. Marks: Senator, yes. We absolutely want to work
8 on this with you.

9 Senator Sullivan: Great. Let me turn to another form
10 of energy. Mr. Saunders, can you give me an update on where
11 we are on the Eielson? You mentioned it in your opening
12 testimony on your Eielson a modular nuclear power project
13 and what the potential is for that, not just at Eielson but
14 maybe throughout interior Alaska as a further potential?

15 Mr. Saunders: Yes, Senator. Thank you for that
16 question. So, we're very proud to have recently announced
17 our notice of intent to award a micro nuclear reactor power
18 purchase agreement for Eielson. It'll be a five-megawatt
19 solution. Working with Oklo, is the agency that will
20 ultimately be the awardee that, as I mentioned, had a public
21 announcement, I think it was last week, if not, the week
22 before.

23 And we're on target to finalize that agreement in the
24 2027 timeframe. I'd be remiss though if I didn't
25 acknowledge that that would be the first of an effort that

1 the DAF is looking at. The DAF is committed to micro
2 reactor technology throughout its portfolio as well as all
3 kinds of energy sources. As the Assistant Secretary
4 mentioned, we want to diversify and reduce our dependence on
5 particularly contested energy sources. And so this is one
6 step in that direction and we're proud to have announced
7 that notice of intent to award.

8 Senator Sullivan: Good. Thank you. Let me continue
9 on with you, Mr. Saunders. I have been working for years
10 now to get four KC-135s to Eielson to support our aerial
11 refueling mission. As you know, we have over 100 fifth-
12 generation fighters in Alaska, in addition to an F-16
13 intercept squadron up there that does a lot of these Russian
14 intercepts.

15 And the tankers are absolutely fundamental to doing
16 this real-world mission on a very regular basis. Not to
17 mention all the great training that we conduct at Red Flag
18 at least three or four times a year. Former Secretary of
19 the Air Force, Kendall, ordered the active association on
20 the four KC-135s to happen.

21 We've had one of these KC-135s move to Eielson. Our
22 new Secretary of the Air Force has committed to me in public
23 hearing that we're going to continue with doing that. We
24 have this issue of the housing market in Alaska. We want
25 these to be accompanied tours with the 400 plus new Airmen

1 that'll be coming with these KC-135s.

2 Do you have an update on what we can be doing
3 collectively with regard to housing in the Eielson,
4 Fairbanks, North Pole, interior Alaska area? There's some
5 questions that the data on the housing is a little stale,
6 some questions that we need more housing, some questions
7 that we might need base housing. But we want to make this
8 happen.

9 We want to make these deployments really great
10 experiences for our Airmen, but we also want to get these
11 KC-135s here soon. It's mission critical for the Air Force,
12 for that intercept mission. As you know, as all of you
13 know, any contingency in the Indo-Pacific, everybody's going
14 to be flying over Alaska because of how strategic we are on
15 the Great Circle route. Do you have an update on that Mr.
16 Saunders?

17 Mr. Saunders: Yeah. Thank you, Senator. Let me start
18 by reiterating Secretary Meink's commitment to relocate the
19 four KC-135s to Eielson. As you've noted, AMC has already
20 transferred one. And then the additional three aircraft
21 will be reassigned from the Pacific Air Force's Command,
22 PACAF, by the end of Fiscal Year 2026.

23 Senator Sullivan: Is that within a year from now?

24 Mr. Saunders: Roughly a year and a quarter.

25 Senator Sullivan: Okay. We want to shorten that

1 timeline. I've only been waiting on this for 10 years.

2 Mr. Saunders: Yes, sir. Right now the current
3 estimate is the end of Fiscal Year 2026. You alluded to the
4 housing and as you know, my office worked with your staff
5 during a recent site activation visit to enable these four
6 aircrafts plus up.

7 Senator Sullivan: We appreciated that very much.

8 Mr. Saunders: And during that time, we acknowledged
9 that the local community is addressing the housing issue and
10 requirement. And we made sure that the data is refreshed
11 now that it, you know, there still is a concurrent travel
12 restriction. However, we do allow families to relocate to
13 Eielson.

14 What the current restriction does is it in essence
15 requires the member to either secure housing before they
16 depart and their family would depart with them at the same
17 time when they arrive in Alaska. Or it would wait till they
18 arrive in Alaska and secure the housing before the family
19 relocates to minimize disruptions to the families.

20 Senator Sullivan: What's the best way to get that
21 concurrent restriction lifted? Because what we want is the
22 Airmen to come, accompany tours, bring their spouse, bring
23 their kids. It helps the community. It makes for a better
24 deployment. Three years as opposed to one year. Do you
25 have any recommendations for us? We want to work with you

1 on this.

2 Mr. Saunders: I agree with you wholeheartedly as a
3 former military member and a military dependent. I grew up
4 in a military family, traveling with your family is
5 obviously what we want to do. In this case the PACAF
6 Commander has the travel restriction and they keep pulse on
7 the requirement. And so, I need to defer to the PACAF
8 Commander as to when that requirement would change. But
9 they are certainly keeping pulse to ensure that that the
10 housing is there to support the family.

11 Senator Sullivan: And that restriction is based on
12 what the PACAF Commander sees as the limited housing stock?

13 Mr. Saunders: It sees in the need to find housing and
14 secure housing before the family relocates. Now I should
15 reiterate, that doesn't mean that we don't allow families to
16 Eielson. They certainly do. It is in a company tour. So,
17 members do get to bring their family. They just need to
18 show that they have secured housing before the family
19 actually relocates.

20 Senator Sullivan: Okay. Good. Let me ask one final
21 question. You've been great witnesses today. It's a very,
22 very informative hearing. I mentioned and each of you
23 mentioned but I just want to triple check it. And I was
24 pleased to see that each of you actually mentioned
25 significant funding for kind of the barrack upgrade issues,

1 right? And you might remember a couple of years ago, this
2 became a giant issue that went to the Sec Def level and the
3 Secretary and Chief of the Staffs of the Army, Air Force,
4 Marines, Navy because the enlisted housing, it was revealed
5 was very substandard and really not worthy of the men and
6 women who sacrificed for their country to serve in our
7 military.

8 So, I just want a quick gut check with each of you on
9 where you think our housing is, particularly for enlisted
10 members of the military. You have put in each of you, in
11 your budget requests, significant upgrades to that. Is
12 there more you need to get to a level that we want to make
13 sure, "Hey, if you raise your right hand to join the Marines
14 or the Navy or the Air Force or the Army, you're not going
15 to be living in a dumpy place on base that's got mice and
16 rats and mold.

17 We're going to give you a good place to live so you can
18 be ready to serve your country when you're called." Are we
19 feeling good about that Mr. Secretary? And I'd like to go
20 to each of the service representatives.

21 Mr. Marks: Senator, certainly. And I think you're
22 seeing across the board investments of over 30 percent as we
23 continue to commit. Also, what I appreciate and thank you
24 for your support in terms of the latitude of things like
25 leasing and other options that we can get after. So, we're

1 getting after the problem. Certainly, we need to keep the
2 pressure on.

3 Senator Sullivan: By the way, we want to give you that
4 authority to be creative. It's not always a cookie cutter
5 approach in different communities. It can be a creative mix
6 of different things living out in town. Not everybody lives
7 on base but we need to make sure they're getting those good
8 housing. Dr. Waksman.

9 Dr. Waksman: No problem.

10 Senator Sullivan: I noticed you're a PhD nuclear
11 physicist, so you know, that's impressive. That's why I
12 wanted to call you doctor.

13 Dr. Waksman: It's not as complex as barracks, sir.
14 So, we have an index that we've been using to look at
15 barracks quality, BCI. And so, the scary number is a score
16 of 70. If barracks is below 70, it's considered poor or
17 failing. The most recent time the Army looked at this, 14
18 percent of our barracks are below that metric. So, it's
19 totally unacceptable. We have a plan in our budget. I know
20 we haven't released the flight deck but we have a plan to
21 get everything above 70 before 2030. And then, we're
22 working with OSD on a plan to actually -- beyond that to
23 even get the scores of 80 for all --

24 Senator Sullivan: And did you put in a significant
25 budget request, do you believe in this year's budget on this

1 topic? I forgot what yours was but it sounded like it was
2 in a couple of billions of dollars.

3 Dr. Waksman: Yes, sir. We believe that the budget for
4 Fiscal Year 2026 gets us on that glide path to 2030.

5 Senator Sullivan: Okay. Great. Our next witness.

6 Ms. Johnson-Turner: Senator, thank you for the
7 question. Yes, unaccompanied housing remains a priority
8 within the Department of the Navy. Our secretary, just as
9 it relates to the Navy acts for 100 percent inspection. And
10 the Marine Corps did this in 2024. We are continuing to
11 stay focused on that on the Navy side.

12 We are looking at improving overall quality of life
13 with our Forging Communities of Excellence Plan. And on the
14 Marine Corps side, we have Barracks 2030 that gets after.
15 Putting more focus on renovating and rightsizing the
16 portfolio as far as updating our furnishings on a more
17 frequent basis as well as civilian managers.

18 So, all in all, lots of investment. We are definitely
19 in the dawn looking at all of the solutions, whether it's
20 PPV leasing or other avenues to get us to get the quality of
21 housing that our sailors and our Marines deserve.

22 Senator Sullivan: Good answer. Mr. Saunders, you can
23 wrap it up.

24 Mr. Saunders: Yeah, the Department of the Air Force
25 also certainly has a high standard for our unaccompanied

1 housing as well as our members with families in either in
2 off base housing to provide them support or in our
3 privatized housing or our military family housing or
4 government owned housing, I should say. With respect to the
5 unaccompanied housing, we're investing heavily there. In
6 this current FYDP period, it's about a threefold investment
7 compared to the previous FYDP. And so roughly \$1.1 billion
8 invested or from the period of 2022 to 2026 which like I
9 said, is about three times higher than the previous five-
10 year plan.

11 We have a dorm master plan that guides our investments.
12 Similarly, we track on building condition index and we work
13 on the worst case first. We've got investments funded both
14 this year, the next Fiscal Year. And then, obviously,
15 planned throughout the FYDP.

16 If there were additional directed funding available to
17 us, we certainly would apply that to our master plan to
18 reduce the timeline in addressing all those requirements.

19 Senator Sullivan: Great. Well, I'm glad to see all
20 the Services are focused on this important priority. It's a
21 priority of mine. It's a priority of the Senate Armed
22 Services Committee. Well, with that, I appreciate the
23 witnesses' excellent job during this hearing.

24 If there's additional questions for the record, we will
25 submit those within the next four days, and we respectfully

1 ask you to try to get those returned to this subcommittee
2 within the next two weeks.

3 And with that, thanks again. This hearing is
4 adjourned.

5 [Whereupon, at 4:11 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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