

Stenographic Transcript  
Before the

COMMITTEE ON  
ARMED SERVICES

## **UNITED STATES SENATE**

TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON THE POSTURE OF UNITED  
STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND AND UNITED  
STATES CYBER COMMAND IN REVIEW OF THE DEFENSE  
AUTHORIZATION REQUEST FOR FISCAL YEAR 2027 AND THE  
FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM

Tuesday, April 28, 2026

Washington, D.C.

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1 TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON THE POSTURE OF UNITED STATES SPECIAL  
2 OPERATIONS COMMAND AND UNITED STATES CYBER COMMAND IN REVIEW  
3 OF THE DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST FOR FISCAL YEAR 2027  
4 AND THE FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM

5  
6 Tuesday, April 28, 2026

7  
8 U.S. Senate

9 Committee on Armed Services

10 Washington, D.C.

11  
12 The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 11:27 a.m. in  
13 Room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Roger  
14 Wicker, chairman of the committee, presiding.

15 Committee Members Present: Senators Wicker  
16 [presiding], Fischer, Rounds, Ernst, Sullivan, Cramer,  
17 Scott, Budd, Schmitt, Banks, Reed, Gillibrand, Blumenthal,  
18 Hirono, Kaine, Warren, Rosen, and Slotkin.

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1           OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ROGER WICKER, U.S. SENATOR  
2 FROM MISSISSIPPI

3           Chairman Wicker: This morning, we held a hearing on  
4           When we recessed until 11:15, I didn't know that a vote  
5 was going on, on the Senate floor, so. We appreciate our  
6 witnesses, visiting with us down in the classified SCIF, and  
7 now we meet today to receive testimony, in open session on  
8 the posture of United States Special Operations Command,  
9 United States Cyber Command.

10           We're joined by Admiral Mitch Bradley, commander of the  
11 United States Special Operations Command, General Joshua  
12 Rudd, commander of the United States Cyber Command and  
13 director of the National Security Agency, Mr. Derrick  
14 Anderson, assistant secretary of defense for special  
15 operations and low-intensity conflict, and Ms. Katie Sutton,  
16 assistant secretary of defense for cyber policy. And all  
17 members are reminded to silence their devices, including the  
18 chair.

19           Recent operations, including Absolute Resolve, Midnight  
20 Hammer and Epic Fury, represent a wider shed moment for  
21 American military power. Each operation wove cyber effects  
22 into the fabric of Joint Force operations at the beginning  
23 of planning. Consequently, our cyber operators were able to  
24 illustrate the potential of these capabilities as a force  
25 multiplier unlike any other. We must ensure that the

1 lessons learned from recent operations are fully digested  
2 and integrated into our doctrine and planning.

3       However, we cannot allow these successes to lull us  
4 into complacency. Cyber threats are immediate, persistent,  
5 and they are escalating. Every day, our adversaries target  
6 America's critical infrastructure and government networks.  
7 They're advancing their capabilities to outpace and  
8 outcompete our forces in cyberspace, and we must not allow  
9 that.

10       To keep up with these threats, we must redouble our  
11 efforts to modernize and strengthen American cyber forces.  
12 Doing so requires us to make fundamental updates to the way  
13 military services generate, organize, and sustain cyber  
14 forces. This effort is as ambitious as it is necessary.  
15 The Pentagon has launched a department-wide initiative,  
16 Cybercom 2.0, to increase skill and readiness of our cyber  
17 forces.

18       This initiative is simple. Just like any other  
19 military service, we will need a well-trained pipeline of  
20 cyber operators, supported by a whole range of acquisition  
21 professionals, and we do not have that today, and perhaps  
22 have testimony about how far along we are. Our cyber  
23 operators are working overtime, and we're not ready to  
24 generate new forces to replace them. I'm troubled that this  
25 effort is not moving fast enough. Current operations will



1 always be priority number one, but we must ensure this pace  
2 is sustainable.

3 Our cyber operators are not the only highly specialized  
4 forces in demand. America's Special Operations Forces are  
5 more important now than ever before. No longer confined to  
6 their traditional role as a force of last resort, Special  
7 Operations Forces often serve as a first choice across the  
8 full spectrum of military action. Special Operations Forces  
9 conduct direct action against high value targets, as we  
10 witnessed during the raid to apprehend Nicolas Maduro from  
11 his heavily fortified compound outside Caracas.

12 They train and advise partner forces, building capacity  
13 and strengthening alliances across Latin America, Europe and  
14 the first island chains. They gather intelligence against  
15 our adversaries and hostile environments. They respond to  
16 crises worldwide at a moment's notice, and they operate in  
17 the gray zone between peace and war, the context in which  
18 much of today's strategic competition unfolds.

19 However, the funding provided to Special Operations  
20 Command has not kept pace with the seemingly insatiable  
21 demand for its capabilities. The Command faces a troubling  
22 gap between its mission requirements and available  
23 resources, and I do think there's consensus on both sides of  
24 the dais and both sides of the aisle to correct that as soon  
25 as we can.



1           Last year, General Bryan Fenton, then-commander of  
2 Special Operations Command, stated before this committee,  
3 "We continue to grapple with years of flat budgets, a 14  
4 percent decrease in buying power, significant personnel  
5 reductions, and the requirement to evolve our technology and  
6 authorities. All this forces tradeoffs, tough choices that  
7 challenge current missions and put modernization at risk."

8           Ladies and gentlemen, unfortunately, the \$1.6 billion  
9 increase in last year's reconciliation funding was not fully  
10 applied to the purpose for which Congress intended it.  
11 Perhaps we could discuss that today. This morning, I look  
12 to Admiral Bradley and Secretary Anderson to tell us, to  
13 tell this committee, what they need. I hope they will tell  
14 us how to equip their force to combat the advanced  
15 militaries of China and Russia, to remain fully engaged in  
16 the fight against violent Islamic terrorism, and to respond  
17 at a moment's notice as our Nation's premier crisis response  
18 force.

19           And with that, I recognize my friend and colleague,  
20 Ranking Member Reed, for his opening remarks.

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

3           Senator Reed: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and  
4 welcome Admiral Bradley, and General Rudd, Mr. Anderson, and  
5 Ms. Sutton. Thank you very much, and please convey our  
6 thanks, our deep thanks, to the men and women under your  
7 command.

8           Tomorrow marks 2 months since President Trump launched  
9 the war with Iran. Both Special Operations Command and  
10 Cyber Command are deeply engaged in this conflict. Our  
11 special operators and cyber forces have played a major role  
12 in enabling combat operations, conducting information  
13 warfare, and providing intelligence support, including the  
14 remarkable mission to rescue the crew of the F-15 aircraft  
15 shot down in Iran earlier this month.

16           This hearing is a reminder that modern warfare requires  
17 the full integration of every element of American military  
18 power. Today, I would like our witnesses to provide updates  
19 on how their personnel are engaged in the war with Iran, and  
20 what lessons should be drawn for future conflicts. Admiral  
21 Bradley, our Special Operations Forces are unparalleled, but  
22 they are not without limits. I am concerned the  
23 administration has been deploying your forces at an  
24 unsustainable pace and for missions that could be  
25 questioned.

1 Over the past year, SOCOM has led and executed the  
2 attack on Venezuela to capture Nicolas Maduro, the boat  
3 strike campaign in the Caribbean, and Pacific, and various  
4 operations throughout the Middle East and Africa. I have  
5 serious concerns about Operation Southern Spear in  
6 particular. Our service members have been ordered to strike  
7 and kill hundreds of suspected criminals in the open ocean  
8 over the past 8 months, placing them in legally and  
9 ethically powerless circumstances. I would ask for an  
10 update on SOCOM's role in Southern Spear and its missions in  
11 the region moving forward.

12 Additionally, Admiral Bradley, in your prepared  
13 statement, you rightly discuss how warfare is increasingly  
14 defined by, in your words, "competition below the threshold  
15 of armed conflict." In essence, a gray zone environment.  
16 That is precisely where our Special Operations Forces should  
17 be most effective. And I would ask for your plans to  
18 prepare our Special forces for such environments, and what  
19 impact today's high operations tempo could have on future  
20 readiness.

21 Similarly, Mr. Anderson, I would appreciate an update  
22 on the role of our special operations in advising U.S.  
23 partners in Europe and the Indo-Pacific, and what steps you  
24 are taking to help equip and modernize our forces. I would  
25 also ask for an update on your efforts to strengthen the

1 abilities of your office to fulfill its service secretary-  
2 like responsibilities for the oversight of the organization  
3 and readiness of our Special Operations Forces.

4 General Rudd, Ms. Sutton, I understand you are  
5 conducting a Cyber 2.0 force structure review. I welcome  
6 such a review. The current cyber mission force design is  
7 more than a decade old, and chronic readiness problems  
8 persist. Our most skilled cyber operators are highly sought  
9 after in the private sector, and the military cannot easily  
10 match the financial incentives that they're presented with.  
11 As such, a professional attrition in CYBERCOM remains high.  
12 I would appreciate an update on the force design changes you  
13 are considering, and how such changes could affect the joint  
14 cyber warfare fighting architecture.

15 Additionally, this committee has been briefed in closed  
16 session about the cyber activities used during recent  
17 operations like Midnight Hammer and Absolute Resolve. I  
18 would like to understand in open session how you are  
19 integrating cyber effects into combat missions and  
20 operational planning, and where shortfalls remain that can  
21 be addressed through legislation.

22 Finally, Ms. Sutton, your office is new, and its  
23 mandate is very consequential: providing civilian oversight  
24 and advocacy for CYBERCOM. I would like to hear how you are  
25 structuring your office, whether you are adequately



1 resourced, and how you are working across the Department to  
2 improve acquisition functions in civilian hiring authorities  
3 for the command. Thank you again, all of you. The  
4 missions of SOCOM and CYBERCOM are indispensable to our  
5 national security, and I look forward to your testimony.

6 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

7 Chairman Wicker: All right. Secretary Anderson, I  
8 think we'll start with you on opening statements, if you  
9 don't mind. And I know you gave a full statement in the  
10 classified section, but feel free to go ahead and tell us  
11 what you have in mind.

12 Mr. Anderson: Thank you, Senator. I appreciate that.

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1           STATEMENT OF HONORABLE DERRICK M. ANDERSON, ASSISTANT  
2 SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR SPECIAL OPERATIONS AND LOW-  
3 INTENSITY CONFLICT

4           Mr. Anderson: Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed,  
5 and other distinguished members of the committee, thank you  
6 for the opportunity to testify on the global posture of our  
7 Nation's Special Operations Forces. I'm honored to testify  
8 alongside Assistant Secretary Kathryn Sutton, Admiral Mitch  
9 Bradley, and General Joshua Rudd.

10           The SO/LIC team, together with their USSOCOM  
11 counterparts, bring invaluable expertise, leadership, and  
12 insight as we advocate on behalf of the SOF enterprise, our  
13 service members, and their families. People are the  
14 foundation of SOF and of the Joint Force. They are our  
15 competitive advantage against our adversaries. We are  
16 thankful for those who have volunteered to serve, those  
17 currently in harm's way, and those who have made the  
18 ultimate sacrifice, including the 13 U.S. service members  
19 we've lost during ongoing operations. We honor their lives  
20 and legacy, and will never forget the sacrifices in defense  
21 of our country.

22           Today's security environment is defined by  
23 simultaneity, convergence, and speed. State adversaries,  
24 terrorist organizations, and transnational criminal networks  
25 are increasingly aligned, technologically-enabled, and

1 active across domains and regions. To answer these  
2 challenges, the National Defense Strategy marks a  
3 fundamental shift directing the Department of War to  
4 implement a flexible, realistic approach to protect  
5 America's interests.

6 Purpose-built for this era, SOF provides capability and  
7 optionality, comprising only 3 percent of the Joint Force,  
8 and less than 2 percent of the Department's budget, roughly  
9 equivalent to the procurement cost of a single aircraft  
10 carrier, SOF delivers outsize strategic value. SOF provides  
11 senior leaders with scalable, tailorable, and asymmetric  
12 options across the full spectrum of competition in conflict,  
13 leveraging persistent global presence, generational  
14 relationships, and unique authorities.

15 The quiet professionals within SOF shape the operating  
16 environment, strengthen partners, and impose costs on our  
17 adversaries. While you may not read about it in the  
18 headlines, every major operation has a soft component to IT.  
19 Operations like Southern Spear, Rough Rider, Midnight  
20 Hammer, Absolute Resolve, and Epic Fury, have demonstrated  
21 our Nation's prowess and commitment to confront our  
22 adversaries wherever they may be. From the Western  
23 Hemisphere, across the Indo-Pacific, to the Middle East,  
24 Africa, Europe, and beyond, SOF has been decisive in  
25 defending the homeland, deterring China, and enabling our

1 partners and allies. Should deterrence fail, SOF's postured  
2 with the Joint Force to prevail in high-end conflict.

3 In accordance with the law and congressional guidance,  
4 of which we are immensely grateful, the Department has taken  
5 decisive and concrete steps to institutionalize sole  
6 oversight and advocacy role and strengthen the governments  
7 of the SOF enterprise. Over the last year and a half, we  
8 have transformed the Secretariat for Special Operations to  
9 provide direct civilian oversight across, organize, train,  
10 and equip responsibilities. Not to duplicate or disrupt the  
11 operational execution role of USSOCOM, but to support,  
12 sustain and strengthen it. This transformation moves us  
13 beyond the old advisory construct to a true exercise of  
14 authority, direction, and control through an analytical,  
15 disciplined, data-driven, and strategically sound approach.

16 While the maturation of these initiatives is ongoing,  
17 these foundational changes fulfill congressional intent, and  
18 provide the oversight mechanisms needed to shape force  
19 structure, guide budgetary and planning processes, and forge  
20 the future of SOF. The optionality that SOF delivers  
21 requires resourcing and investments to maintain our  
22 competitive edge. SOF needs sustained partnership,  
23 predictable resourcing, and continued modernization.

24 We greatly appreciate the support from this committee,  
25 and I commit to continued collaboration with Congress, and

1 to make full use of my position in the Department and  
2 alongside the services to ensure SOF remains resourced,  
3 ready, relevant, and accountable, and to ensure that they  
4 can meet today's missions while transforming for tomorrow's  
5 challenges.

6 I'm honored to lead this lead this off enterprise. I  
7 invite you to visit our special operators and their families  
8 across the globe to see firsthand the great work they do and  
9 the challenges they face. Our service members and their  
10 families represent the finest that America has to offer, and  
11 are something we as a Nation should be proud of.

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

14 [The prepared statement of Mr. Anderson follows:]

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1 Chairman Wicker: Okay. Let's go to Admiral Bradley,  
2 and then we'll do Secretary Sutton, and General Rudd.  
3 Admiral, you're recognized.

4 Admiral Bradley: Chairman, thank you.

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1           STATEMENT OF ADMIRAL FRANK M. BRADLEY, USN, COMMANDER,  
2           UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATION COMMAND

3           Admiral Bradley: Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed,  
4           and distinguished members of this of this committee, thank  
5           you for the opportunity to represent the men and women of  
6           the United States Special Operations Command.

7           I am honored to testify alongside Honorable Derrick  
8           Anderson, our ASW(SO/LIC). In SOCOM, we rely upon the  
9           empowered SOCOM and SO/LIC team for oversight, support, and  
10          advocacy to succeed in all of our global missions.  
11          Furthermore, privileged to testify alongside our partners  
12          from CYBERCOM, General Josh Rudd and Honorable Katie Sutton.  
13          The deep integration between our commands ensures, as you  
14          have said, Chairman, that we can project power and protect  
15          the homeland across all domains.

16          Distinguished members of this committee, the Honorable  
17          Anderson has laid out the strategic challenge, and I'd like  
18          to emphasize what this means for your warfighters inside  
19          SOCOM. The bottom line is, we do not have the luxury of  
20          focusing on only a single goal or mission. While we defend  
21          the homeland as our top priority, we must also orient our  
22          force on the long-term pacing challenge of China. We  
23          simultaneously deter the acute threat of conventional  
24          aggression from Russia and Iran, and remain postured to  
25          dismantle the networks of their proxies, while we guard

1 against the reckless provocations of isolated rogue states.  
2 And through it all, the persistent threat of ideologically-  
3 driven and narco terrorism continues to demand our and our  
4 integrated interagency constant vigilance. This is the  
5 reality of simultaneity.

6 To meet this reality, we carry on the legacy of the  
7 Chindits, the marine Raiders, the underwater demolition  
8 teams, and the Jedburghs of World War II: small teams who  
9 flew and parachuted behind enemy lines, or swam through  
10 murky waters, not to win the war by themselves, but to  
11 empower our partners to win it as part of a greater  
12 alliance. That is the essence of how we, as just 3 percent  
13 of the Joint Force, and less than 2 percent of the  
14 Department's budget, provide an indispensable asymmetric  
15 advantage.

16 We are a force ready to multiply the effects of our  
17 allies, partners, and our Joint Force teammates. Our Joint  
18 Force teammates recognize this. They recognize that our SOF  
19 are more in demand today than we ever have been. Your \$2  
20 billion, near \$2 billion uplift to our budget last year in  
21 2026 was an important down payment. But after 5 years of  
22 flat budgets, only with increased investment can we continue  
23 to meet the demands of the competition, crisis, and  
24 modernization for future conflict.

25 You see, our purpose is our mission. This means that

1 we are laser-focused on maintaining the readiness required  
2 to defend the homeland, to deter aggression from our pacing  
3 challenge, and to enable true burden sharing by empowering  
4 the growing capacity of our allies and partners. But that  
5 mission is not accomplished by technology alone. It is  
6 executed by the most decisive advantage we have: our people.

7 Empowered by a culture of meritocracy and supported by  
8 critical programs that you have helped to manifest, like the  
9 preservation of the force and family, the health of your SOF  
10 formation is not just, strong, it's getting stronger every  
11 day. And to ensure these exceptional men and women can  
12 succeed in the complex environments of tomorrow,  
13 increasingly encroaching upon today, we are making  
14 transformation our imperative. We must adapt faster than  
15 our adversaries.

16 We must sustain and improve our ability to project  
17 force through the most contested environments. We must  
18 evolve to leverage the ubiquitous information environment,  
19 and we must make advantageous use of abundant charitable  
20 autonomy as we support the Joint Force. We are evolving our  
21 force design, accelerating capability development, and  
22 strengthening our partnerships with the services and allies  
23 to stay ahead of emerging threats.

24 Our partnership with so with CYBERCOM is a hallmark of  
25 this evolution, synchronizing virtual and physical domain



1 maneuver across the spectrum for mission success. As the  
2 Department's lead for experimentation in autonomy, we are  
3 not just adapting, we are driving change. We are working  
4 with the services to incorporate next-generation  
5 capabilities, systems that are precise, autonomous,  
6 affordable, and always consistent with the law of war. Our  
7 goal: to deliver these tools with the element of surprise  
8 from unwarned access and placement at scale, ensuring our  
9 forces maintain the decisive advantage against any  
10 adversary.

11       However, our ability to accomplish this is not  
12 guaranteed. It requires accelerated modernization in your  
13 continued partnership. Predictable resourcing for our  
14 programs. Modernization is a strategic necessity. SOF was  
15 purpose-built for this era of competition, and with your  
16 continued support, we will meet today's missions while  
17 transforming to ensure we are ready for the challenges of  
18 tomorrow.

19       Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

20       [The prepared statement of Admiral Bradley follows:]

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1 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Admiral. Secretary  
2 Sutton, you are recognized.

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1           STATEMENT OF HONORABLE KATHERINE E. SUTTON, ASSISTANT  
2 SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR CYBER POLICY

3           Ms. Sutton: Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed, and  
4 distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the  
5 opportunity to testify here today.

6           I'm honored to be here with General Rudd, whose immense  
7 experience, especially in the Indo-Pacific region, will  
8 prove invaluable as we posture to implement the priorities  
9 of the National Defense Strategy. I congratulate Lieutenant  
10 General Hartman and his wife, Kathryn, on his retirement,  
11 and thank him for his service and visionary leadership that  
12 has built the cyber enterprise over the years, setting the  
13 stage for our future success.

14           It is a privilege to also testify alongside our Special  
15 Operations partners, Assistant Secretary of War Derrick  
16 Anderson, and Admiral Mitch Bradley. This joint appearance  
17 underscores a critical reality the synergy between our  
18 communities creates an asymmetric advantage, presenting our  
19 adversaries with compounding dilemmas in both physical and  
20 virtual worlds.

21           In my role, I'm responsible for overseeing the  
22 Department's cyber operations policies, integrating cyber  
23 activities, and exercising authority, direction, and control  
24 over U.S. Cyber Command. I'd like to start by describing  
25 two key dynamics of the strategic cyber environment. The

1 character of cyber warfare is changing rapidly, shaped by  
2 the growing threat posed by our adversaries and accelerated  
3 by the ever-growing power of technology.

4 The first major change we are seeing is that our  
5 adversaries have moved beyond conducting espionage and  
6 theft, and are preparing for conflict by pre-positioning  
7 disruptive capabilities inside our Nation's critical  
8 infrastructure. This strategic shift from exploitation to  
9 effects aims to disrupt military deployments and sow chaos  
10 in crisis or conflict. Cyber threats like Vault Typhoon are  
11 not just a nuisance. They represent a significant and  
12 persistent threat to our national security.

13 Second, artificial intelligence is a powerful force  
14 multiplier, increasing the speed, scale, and sophistication  
15 of these threats. AI accelerates the entire attack  
16 lifecycle, creating a new dynamic where the pace of attacks  
17 challenges our ability to react and the scale overwhelms our  
18 ability to defend. Rapid innovation has lowered the barrier  
19 for entry for advanced cyber actors, blurring the line  
20 between nation states and other malicious actors. Our  
21 adversaries are operationalizing AI to outcompete us, and we  
22 must move urgently to put these same tools in the hands of  
23 our warfighters.

24 Given these realities, a purely defensive posture is no  
25 longer sufficient. To implement the 2026 National Defense



1 Strategies vision of achieving peace through strength, we  
2 must act decisively to transform the cyber enterprise,  
3 guided by three core priorities. First, we must integrate  
4 cyber across all domains. Cyber is the connective tissue of  
5 modern warfare, playing a critical role in joint operations  
6 alongside our special operations partners. We will continue  
7 to integrate cyber capabilities across every warfighting  
8 domain to develop a full range of options to deter conflict  
9 and ensure the Joint Force has every advantage.

10 Second, we must gain strategic advantage below the  
11 level of armed conflict. A resilient defense must be paired  
12 with proactive, relentless disruption. By empowering our  
13 world-class cyber operators to execute full spectrum cyber  
14 operations, we will systematically erode our adversaries'  
15 cyber capabilities, dismantle their infrastructure, and  
16 impose consequences.

17 Third, our force must organize to dominate. Our  
18 strategies are only as effective as the force that executes  
19 them. Through the Cyber Command 2.0 initiative, we are  
20 undertaking the most comprehensive transformation of our  
21 cyber force since its inception to elevate our operational  
22 readiness, scale technological advantage, and propel our  
23 force to meet the modern demands of conflict. To achieve  
24 these priorities, we are leveraging the engine of American  
25 industry, harnessing the speed and innovation of the private



1 sector to protect the cyber domain that powers our national  
2 security, our economic prosperity, and the American way of  
3 life. My office is leading the development of a Department  
4 of Cyber Strategy to implement this pivot, which I look  
5 forward to sharing with the committee when complete.

6 Let there be no doubt, the Department of War's  
7 commitment to the defense of this Nation is absolute. We  
8 have a solemn duty to ensure our Joint Force is equipped to  
9 dominate within the highly contested cyber domain. The  
10 support of this committee is fundamental to this mission  
11 success. Thank you for your support, and I look forward to  
12 your questions.

13 [The prepared statement of Ms. Sutton follows:]  
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The Chairman: Thank you very much. General Rudd.

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1           STATEMENT OF GENERAL JOSHUA M. RUDD, USA COMMANDER,  
2           UNITED STATES CYBER COMMAND/ DIRECTOR, NATIONAL SECURITY  
3           AGENCY/ CHIEF, CENTRAL SECURITY SERVICE

4           General Rudd: Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed,  
5           and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for  
6           the opportunity to testify before you today, alongside my  
7           distinguished colleagues from the Department and U.S.  
8           Special Operations Command. With me today is Command Chief  
9           Master Sergeant Kenneth Bruce, U.S. Cyber Command and  
10          National Security Agency senior enlisted leader. We are  
11          honored to represent the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines,  
12          Guardians and Coast Guardsmen, as well as the civilians who  
13          defend our networks and deliver effects that matter every  
14          day.

15          I want to thank this committee for your continued  
16          support for our critical mission at U.S. Cyber Command. I  
17          also want to recognize and thank Lieutenant General Joe  
18          Hartman and his wife, Kathryn, for their many years of  
19          service to this nation and their incredible contribution to  
20          Cyber Command and the National Security Agency.

21          The people of U.S. Cyber Command are paramount to our  
22          success. Their professionalism and dedication enable  
23          everything we accomplish. Our workforce represents the  
24          finest talent in cyber operations. A broad team of military  
25          service members and civilian professionals delivering

1 unparalleled expertise to one of the Nation's most critical  
2 missions. CYBERCOM's mission is threefold: defend the  
3 homeland, defend the Department of War's information  
4 networks, and support the Joint Force.

5 In executing these missions. We maintain a formidable  
6 partnership with the National Security Agency. NSA's roles,  
7 responsibilities, and capabilities complement CYBERCOM,  
8 creating a unity of effort that strengthens our common  
9 defense. Since taking command, I have emphasized four  
10 operating principles; speed, scale, innovation, and  
11 integration.

12 I'm proud to report that CYBERCOM has been executing  
13 under these principles since before my arrival, which has  
14 made for a smooth transition and allowed me to hit the  
15 ground running. Throughout 2025 and into 2026, we've  
16 quickly adapted to the dynamic and complex cyber domain,  
17 demonstrating our value at scale. In 2025, we executed more  
18 than 8,000 cyber missions, an increase of 25 percent  
19 compared to 2024. This year, we expect even more activity,  
20 and with your support, I'm certain our talented force is up  
21 to the task.

22 CYBERCOM gains experience and insights from real-world  
23 operations every day, and that experience guides our  
24 operational support to the warfighter. Our innovative  
25 activity contributes to mission outcomes to force building

1 initiatives like Cybercom 2.0, and to the employment of  
2 emerging technologies. Cyber domain cuts across all  
3 warfighting domains, and integrating cyber into the Joint  
4 Force operations enhances combatant command effectiveness  
5 across the board.

6 When called upon, CYBERCOM employs full spectrum cyber  
7 operations with and on behalf of the other combatant  
8 commands to deter and, if necessary, defeat our adversaries.  
9 Our participation in Operation Absolute Resolve and  
10 Operation Epic Fury are prime examples of this integration  
11 in action, cyber and kinetic operations working seamlessly  
12 to achieve joint objectives. We're also executing the  
13 service-like authorities granted to us by Congress.

14 Cybercom 2.0 is moving at pace and achieving new  
15 milestones each month through Cybercom 2.0. We will deliver  
16 the capability and capacity to identify and hire a talented  
17 workforce, provide them with optimal training, and  
18 incentivize them to stay in the cyber force. Additionally,  
19 it will enhance our ability to work more closely with  
20 industry and academia to develop, acquire, and  
21 operationalize cutting edge capabilities. Cyber command  
22 will continue to work with the cyber policy team and the  
23 services to ensure Cybercom 2.0 is implemented effectively.

24 Thank you for the privilege of appearing before you  
25 today. I look forward to working with you, and I look

1 forward to your questions.

2 [The prepared statement of General Rudd follows:]

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1           The Chairman: Thank you very much, Secretary Sutton  
2 and General Rudd. Let me begin with the two of you. I read  
3 a pretty disturbing quote from General Bryan Fenton last  
4 year about years of flat budgets, 14 percent decrease in  
5 buying power, and significant personnel reductions. How is  
6 Cybercom 2.0 going to address these? And is the work -- is  
7 our pace at this point happening fast enough? Secretary  
8 Sutton?

9           Ms. Sutton: Senator, thanks for the opportunity to  
10 talk about this really critical initiative. One Of the  
11 concepts of Cyber Command 2.0 is really looking at how we  
12 build mastery into our force before we continue to just grow  
13 the force. We have built out our cyber mission force, and  
14 have largely been able to get them to a basic trained and  
15 qualified level.

16           What we really need to look at, and what the aim of  
17 Cyber Command 2.0 is how do we take that basic and trained  
18 force, and build in domain mastery and specialized skills to  
19 be able to get after some of these problems that we face,  
20 and have them be a more effective and more lethal force? To  
21 do that, the Cyber Command 2.0 implementation plan looks  
22 across the entire talent management pipeline to really  
23 address this not as an incremental one-by-one step, but to  
24 relook at the entire way that we talent-manage this force to  
25 really build that unique technical skill set in the way that

1 we've done other models in the Department, like the medical  
2 community, the SOF community, the nuclear community.

3 And so, we are undertaking that implementation plan  
4 very rapidly, looking at how we can do quick wins and pilots  
5 off the bat, and then take lessons learned from those and  
6 implement more of the long-term policies. We can always  
7 move faster, and we continue to move faster and look forward  
8 to continuing to brief you on our progress as we move  
9 forward.

10 The Chairman: Well, General, I'll let you follow-up  
11 there, but could you identify your most -- in connection  
12 with Cybercom 2.0, your most important milestone to achieve  
13 at the earliest possible moment?

14 General Rudd: Yeah. Thanks, Chairman. Appreciate the  
15 opportunity to follow-up on this. The Cybercom 2.0 approach  
16 is built on seven attributes. First and foremost, it's the  
17 people. We've got to identify, recruit, and assess and  
18 bring in the right people, and get them at that baseline  
19 level of certification that enables them to do the mission  
20 as soon as they get to the force.

21 The next attribute that's really guiding and driving us  
22 is incentivization. So, both monetarily for the skill set,  
23 great competition with the private sector, as you would  
24 imagine for this type of skill set, and making sure that we  
25 harness every authority and every cent that we have to



1 incentivize the workforce.

2       Next critical piece of this is training. We've got to  
3 have the right training pipeline and the right resources  
4 centered around training to go again from what the services  
5 provide, which is that baseline operational capability, and  
6 then bringing it to what we desire for every member is the  
7 mastery. We've then got to make sure that we can retain  
8 this force. This is where we look at models like Special  
9 Operations Command, where across the service components,  
10 there's a career path where we can retain the best and the  
11 highly trained ones that have, again, ideally gained mastery  
12 or working towards mastery. We can repeatedly keep them in  
13 a rotation and an assignment here at Cyber Command. And  
14 also, much like Special Operations, we're developing and  
15 executing specialized mission sets that require specialized  
16 training, and again, the ability to incentivize and retain  
17 that talent.

18       And then, finally, we're looking at it's not just the  
19 cyber operator, but it's also the enablers. It's the  
20 headquarters element and the support pieces that come with  
21 that. That's part of the force presentation model from the  
22 services, and that's what we're getting after. Chairman,  
23 the most -- I think one of the biggest challenges is really  
24 just figuring out how do we attract the right people and  
25 incentivize them to want to have a career in cyber force.

1           The Chairman: And just, you can't do this on the  
2 cheap, can you, General?

3           General Rudd: Chairman, we certainly can't.

4           The Chairman: Thank you very much. Senator Reed.

5           Senator Reed: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

6           Admiral Bradley and Mr. Anderson, you have some of the  
7 same issues, and you've been working at it before, as  
8 Secretary Sutton and General Ward, of creating a service  
9 secretary-like position. And since you've been both  
10 confirmed, what have you done to sort of accomplish that  
11 mission of getting you into the service secretary-like mode,  
12 and maybe what advice you have for us, our CYBERCOM friends?

13          Mr. Anderson: Senator, first and foremost, you know,  
14 Honorable Sutton and I speak regularly about this topic. I  
15 can assure you of that. But I want to thank the committee  
16 specifically on the 907 authorities that you gave us in the  
17 NDAA that allowed us to be a service-like entity. Since  
18 taking the seat, we've had a few initiatives. But just to  
19 highlight a few, Senator, you know, we've been investing  
20 more in our personnel. Having that advocacy for the budget,  
21 specifically, being in the room with our service secretaries  
22 to make sure we're doing things in an efficient manner and  
23 it's the best dollar going for the taxpayer.

24          Administratively, Admiral Bradley and I have done a  
25 sprint, as you might call it, where we have taken our staffs

1 to look at where there might be efficiencies made so we  
2 don't have duplicate efforts, both from the SO/LIC  
3 enterprise as well as from the SOCOM enterprise. Ideally,  
4 we come out with a general order, one similar to what the  
5 Army and other services do, where it lays out the roles and  
6 responsibilities for us as a service like SO/LIC, and then  
7 obviously, SOCOM and Commandant Bradley.

8 So, it's been a great, great initiative that we've been  
9 pushing forward, and it's quite honestly made our staffs  
10 talk and be more open and dialogue on how we do things, so.  
11 I'd be remiss not to mention I have, I think, how we've  
12 organized ourselves specifically in SO/LIC to mirror  
13 something like what the services have, where we have a  
14 capabilities and development. We have an NMRA, and we have  
15 a special operations analytical arm as well. So, it's a lot  
16 of work, but we're moving headstrong forward with it.

17 Senator Reed: Admiral.

18 Admiral Bradley: Yes, Ranking Member. At first, I'd  
19 start, foundationally, we inside the uniform aspects of  
20 SOCOM recognize the constitutional foundation of civilian  
21 control of the uniformed service. It's a critical facet of  
22 our constitutional democracy, and we are fully supportive of  
23 manifesting it inside our formations as well. Very  
24 pragmatically as well, as SOCOM recognizes that the next  
25 challenges we face will be solved through a tighter

1 integration with our service teammates. We have to also  
2 have that service connection at the secretariat level.

3 And so, inside the Pentagon, it's very important for a  
4 robust, empowered SO/LIC to be able to be in the same  
5 meetings and to have the same interactions to complement  
6 what we are doing on the uniform side and the sprint and the  
7 interactions that our staff are having to both find places  
8 where horizontal integration is appropriate, that is teaming  
9 to divide labor and be better, but also appropriately where  
10 vertically oversight functions need to exist. Both of those  
11 are critical aspects that are coming out of this sprint.

12 Senator Reed: Thank you very much.

13 General Ward, we've talked a lot about CYBERCOM. Can  
14 you, tell us what you believe your three top challenges are  
15 at NSA?

16 General Rudd: And sorry, Ranking Member, at NSA?

17 Senator Reed: Yes, I'm sorry. That's my Rhode Island  
18 accent. Forgive me.

19 General Rudd: All right. Thanks, Ranking Member. The  
20 -- you know, it kind of goes back to the operating  
21 principles against which I conveyed both to the committee in  
22 my opening statement, but also to the forces. We have to  
23 move at the pace of the strategic environment in which  
24 driven really in large part by the pace of technology. So,  
25 the ability to be able to harness technology ahead of an

1 adversary, to be at the foremost front, and retain and  
2 maintain that advantage is really what's critical.

3 The next piece is the ability to scale. We've got to  
4 take our efforts again to move fast, figure out where does  
5 it apply not only across other parts of NAS, but across  
6 CYBERCOM, but and then, of course, across the entirety of  
7 the Joint Force, and then driven by innovation, moving  
8 creatively to solve the hardest problems. We may not always  
9 have the scale and mass that we would desire, but we know  
10 that we can creatively outthink anybody.

11 And then finally, it's integration. We want to make  
12 sure that we are nested with, again, not only across the two  
13 commands to be complementary, that delivers that speed, but  
14 then in support of the Joint Force, but also in support of  
15 interagency, where required.

16 Senator Reed: Well, I've 14 seconds left, so I can  
17 just salute, Secretary Sutton, I think you're going to do an  
18 excellent job. And one of the issues, the question I was  
19 going to ask, I will send you a written question.

20 [The information referred to follows:]

21 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 The Chairman: Time's up.

2 Senator Reed: The center -- thank you -- the center of  
3 gravity for your AI efforts in the CYBERCOM realm. And  
4 also, I think, in special ops. I think that's the question  
5 that I will send in writing, but it's important.

6 Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

7 The Chairman: Thank you, sir. Senator Fischer.

8 Senator Fischer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

9 Admiral Bradley, how are you working in assessing SOCOM  
10 if it's appropriately postured for the Indo-Pacific?

11 Admiral Bradley: Senator, thank you. First, we look  
12 at it across the spectrum of conflict; competition, crisis,  
13 and should crisis cascade into conflict. How are we  
14 positioned to be able to support the combatant commander, my  
15 good friend, Admiral Paparo. How are we prepared to  
16 integrate with the services and the service components there  
17 in the INDOPACOM AOR, and at a competition level, how are we  
18 able to provide value to our allies and partners to  
19 strengthen the resilience of our alliances there? And we  
20 believe that that is foremost and most important in any  
21 strategy of deterrence is to have that stronger alliance.

22 Senator Fischer: So, do you have direct input when  
23 you're talking about being able to integrate with services?  
24 Do you have input on the training and equipping them for the  
25 Indo-Pacific?



1           Admiral Bradley: Certainly, on our SOF forces, I do.  
2 I have direct responsibility, statutory responsibility to  
3 ensure that our SOF members are trained and adequate to the  
4 missions that they'll be presented with.

5           Senator Fischer: To integrate with the services?

6           Admiral Bradley: Well, to do our missions, and part of  
7 our mission is to integrate with the service. So, yes.

8           Senator Fischer: Okay. Thank you.

9           We've seen our adversaries increasingly coordinate,  
10 especially on malign activity. So, how is SOCOM working to  
11 strengthen relationships with our allies and our partners,  
12 which you talked about earlier, but both in terms of  
13 building up, first of all, our capabilities with them, but  
14 also their own capabilities and when you work on those  
15 combined training exercises.

16           Admiral Bradley: Senator, of course, the first level  
17 in a relationship is trust. The first, the most basic  
18 essence. And that trust comes from credibility. Our  
19 relationships over generations help us to give that  
20 credibility, bring that credibility and that trust. I might  
21 pick just one as an example. The country of the  
22 Philippines, where for 100 years, over 100 years now, we've  
23 had an institutional relationship as a Nation. But just  
24 since 2016. And our partnership on island to help the  
25 Philippine Armed Forces clear Marawi, one of their principal

1 cities of the threat from ISIS, has given us great ability  
2 to stretch across turbulent political and diplomatic times  
3 to today, where we are able to use that credibility, help  
4 them see and share information with them through some new  
5 relationship dynamics to understand the threats to their  
6 sovereign territory. And so, that that sharing of  
7 information is a critical aspect to allow them to take  
8 action for their own problems in the information in the  
9 competition space.

10 Senator Fischer: I'm sure you've had a number of  
11 opportunities there in the Indo-Pacific to work on having  
12 that greater collaboration with our partner forces. I was  
13 interested in your view on the exercises that took place  
14 with Cold Response 26, you know, looking at Norway and  
15 Finland, an entirely different environment, I'd say.

16 Admiral Bradley: Yes, ma'am. I'll speak more  
17 generally, and I don't want to get ahead of my good friend  
18 General Grynkewich there who of course oversees those. But  
19 from a soft perspective, our partnership with our  
20 Scandinavian, and European, and NATO allies has always been  
21 critical. Of course, for the last 25 years, a lot of focus  
22 for us in the Middle East, not as many snowcapped mountains  
23 to work as in the high north. And so, as we re-enter into  
24 that area, working with our Scandinavian partners has  
25 brought an awful lot of reprisal of old skills back, and so,



1 we are deepening those. And I think that partnership, not  
2 just on the land, but in the maritime domain, is a critical  
3 component to what we will offer to NATO for future  
4 deterrence.

5 Senator Fischer: Good to hear.

6 Ms. Sutton, how will Cybercom 2.0 enable the Department  
7 to better adapt to the evolving technological landscape when  
8 we look at AI? That's kind of what the question is that  
9 Senator Reed, I think, was going to send you.

10 Ms. Sutton: So, as technology continues to move at a  
11 tremendous speed, one of the gaps we're seeing in the force  
12 is the ability to get our force after they've made it  
13 through the service basic training to have training  
14 available at the speed of need to address some of these  
15 technologies. So, for example, someone might have made it  
16 through their basic training. How do we provide training  
17 for them on cloud, AI, on SCADA systems, other specialized  
18 things we're going to need.

19 One of the enablers of Cyber Command 2.0 is creation of  
20 an advanced cyber training and education center, which is  
21 not going to be a brick-and-mortar institution that builds  
22 courses sort of the traditional way, but is looking at how  
23 we leverage industry and academia to have training available  
24 for our active force to be able to get it, closing those  
25 skill gaps. As technology continues to move quickly, let's



1 leverage the training that's available in industry that's  
2 moving at that speed as well.

3 Senator Fischer: Thank you. I will have a question  
4 for General Rudd for the record. When we look at Cybercom  
5 2.0 and specifically for the Indo-Pacific. Thank you.

6 [The information referred to follows:]

7 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1           The Chairman: Thank you, Senator Fischer. Senator  
2 Blumenthal.

3           Senator Blumenthal: Thank you, Senator Wicker. Thank  
4 you all for being here. And again, as I expressed this  
5 morning, thank you all for your service.

6           In our closed session, we discussed a number of the  
7 questions I'd like to raise now. First, I think our  
8 cooperation with Ukraine is tremendously important. I'm  
9 regretful that we are, in my view, failing to provide all of  
10 the support that we should militarily. I am working hard on  
11 a Russia sanctions bill that I hope will help economically  
12 stop the flow of revenue to Putin's war machine from  
13 purchasers of Russian oil and gas.

14           And intelligence sharing has been tremendously  
15 important to Ukraine in pushing back, and, I think,  
16 impressively on Russia's assault. The false narrative that  
17 Russia is winning, I've tried to counter based on my trips  
18 to Ukraine, 10 in all, most recently in February, where I  
19 saw really the progress that Ukraine is making contrary to  
20 some of the propaganda that Russia is spreading about how  
21 they are winning.

22           But I'd like to ask this panel, maybe beginning with  
23 General Rudd, whether our intelligence sharing is continuing  
24 in a robust way, as it has been in the past, which I think  
25 has been tremendously important to the extent you can



1 comment in this setting.

2 General Rudd: Thanks, Senator Blumenthal. As we  
3 discussed previously, the focus and attention on a variety  
4 of priorities and efforts remains steady. We move in an  
5 agile manner to various crisis and/or efforts, but we  
6 maintain focus and pressure on that. And so, our support  
7 through European Command from an intelligence perspective in  
8 support of that effort remains intact. We're looking  
9 consistently and making sure that we have the right  
10 resources and folks focused on that, and working very  
11 closely with General Grynkewich on that.

12 Senator Blumenthal: I hope that our military command  
13 will let us know if there's any change in that approach and  
14 policy, because I think that the American people deserve to  
15 know if there is a reduction or diminution in our  
16 intelligence commitment. General Bradley -- I'm sorry,  
17 Admiral Bradley, if you could tell us a bit about the  
18 lessons learned from Ukraine.

19 Admiral Bradley: Senator, absolutely. First to answer  
20 the original question and maybe bridge to that, one of the  
21 things that I think we provide through those relationships  
22 long standing is the venue for others to partner and to  
23 bring capacity and capability. And so, one of our SOF  
24 headquarters there, offers the opportunity for 19 different  
25 nations to partner, to come to support the effort across the



1 area. And I think that's critical because it is not just  
2 about what we bring, but it's about enabling those partners  
3 to really share more of the burden, to be able to provide  
4 assistance to the Ukrainians as well.

5       Ultimately, though, I think to your point about lessons  
6 learned, if I look back over the last 25 years of  
7 counterterrorism targeting, where our integrated interagency  
8 law enforcement, intel community, and military were able to  
9 bring great precision to our understanding of both the  
10 adversary, but also the context around the adversary, the  
11 civilians that were not adversaries. That has been very  
12 important. Those lessons have translated, very importantly,  
13 into the high-end conflict of the Ukraine battlefield, and  
14 so we continue to apply those lessons, refine them with new  
15 information, and frankly, we learn from them as well as we  
16 do, in part, to our teammates there.

17       Senator Blumenthal: When I visited Ukraine, often I've  
18 gone to the drone manufacturing facilities, which have grown  
19 in sophistication and number. They're producing, I think,  
20 1,000 drones a day now. And what has so impressed me is  
21 they change. They work on the evolution of their drones on  
22 the assembly line. They'll get real-time information from  
23 the battlefield, and they'll make adjustments literally as  
24 they are manufacturing. And I don't know anything in our  
25 industrial base that is as nimble, and agile, and quick. I

1 hope this panel agrees that we need to move more in that  
2 direction. Would you agree, Admiral?

3 Admiral Bradley: Senator, I do, although I will say  
4 that many of our business, our Defense Industrial Base  
5 partners are watching this as well. And of course,  
6 Ukrainians are driven by the existential need for that cycle  
7 of adaptation. As we watch that, I have great confidence  
8 that our industrial base here can do the same.

9 Senator Blumenthal: Thank you. Thank you, Mr.  
10 Chairman.

11 The Chairman: Thank you very much, Senator Blumenthal.  
12 Senator Budd.

13 Senator Budd: Thank you, Chairman. Good to see each  
14 of you, and thank you all for being here.

15 Admiral Bradley, I want to talk about SOCOM's operation  
16 and maintenance budget, if you will. So, I noticed that O&M  
17 has only increased from \$9.4 billion to \$10.9 billion  
18 between 2019 and 2027. So, it's failing to keep pace with  
19 inflation, and more importantly, the increase in the  
20 operational tempo. So, can you talk about what you'd be  
21 able to do with a higher top line and some of the tradeoffs  
22 that you're currently making between O&M as it is, and  
23 modernization and also MILCON.

24 Admiral Bradley: Senator, I will. Specifically, to  
25 O&M, in unique ways, Special Operations Command uses our Ops



1 and maintenance budget for our key modernization efforts.  
2 In most cases, to be able to -- we modernize just not just  
3 through the development of new means articles and in  
4 devices, but also the ways in which those means are used  
5 that requires more exquisite ranges that have the ability  
6 for us to be able to practice, train, and rehearse in  
7 increasingly contested electromagnetic spectrum  
8 environments. Those are difficult to be able to produce  
9 inside the United States, but not undoable. It just takes  
10 more money.

11 We also need threat representative systems to be able  
12 to operate against, again, and operators to mimic our  
13 adversaries as they operate them. All of that takes new  
14 ranges, and money, and for the employment of autonomy. As  
15 Senator Blumenthal was discussing, we have to be able to  
16 bring together our standard exquisite weapon systems now  
17 with teamed and collaborative autonomy, and there are very  
18 few places inside the United States where that is an easy  
19 thing to do in many places where it needs to be done and we  
20 are working to do that.

21 Senator Budd: Thank you for that.

22 A question for you, Admiral Bradley, and also Secretary  
23 Anderson. I'd like your thoughts on how we retain mid-  
24 career operators, if you will. You know, I know each  
25 service drives their own bonus programs, and I acknowledge

1 that money is not the only reason why folks stay or go. So,  
2 tell us what you're doing to help retain our most seasoned  
3 operators, whether it's through non-monetary or monetary.  
4 Secretary Anderson, we'll start with you, and then Admiral  
5 Bradley, please.

6 Mr. Anderson: Yes, Senator. One of the things I  
7 noticed when I was over in the Army was, you know, you just  
8 can't throw money at the problem all the time, right,  
9 whether it be retention bonuses. That certainly is helpful,  
10 but we've seen things in the Army where, you know, change of  
11 duty, location. Those small things are what keep our  
12 individuals in.

13 But what I would argue within the SOCOM community that  
14 we do incredibly well is our preservation of the force and  
15 family, which Congress is been so gracious to give us that  
16 \$11 million. Now, granted, we're going to see an increase  
17 in the workforce on that. But what I will tell you is when  
18 we look at the service member and when they're making those  
19 decisions to stay in the military, it's typically not done  
20 in the team room. It's not done at the pool. It's not done  
21 wherever. It's usually done at the kitchen table. So, the  
22 preservation of the force and family has been an absolutely  
23 amazing program where we're not only taking care of our  
24 operators from a physical standpoint, but from a mental  
25 standpoint.

1           You'll hear Admiral Bradley talk about the mind gym  
2 that we have our service members where if you see a  
3 professional athlete, when they go out to the top tiers.  
4 Yes, their physical body is absolutely in great shape, but  
5 their minds also have to be pristine. And so, whether it be  
6 family, family outings where we can take individuals and  
7 have them speak with folks to help their family out, but  
8 that program, the preservation of the force and family is  
9 absolutely critical when we look at retention, Senator.

10           Senator Budd: Thank you.

11           Admiral Bradley: Senator, the only thing I would add  
12 is that, as you highlighted, pay incentives are a part of  
13 it, but those are controlled by the services. And another  
14 place where a robust and empowered SO/LIC helps us to be  
15 able to stitch those together to ensure we have a common  
16 approach across all the services for all of our operators  
17 and enablers.

18           Senator Budd: Very helpful. Thank you both.

19           Secretary Anderson, I'm a strong supporter of the  
20 U.S./Israel Counter-UxS program. I think that's in your  
21 office. So, can you talk about what your team's doing to  
22 assist Israel in countering Iranian unmanned systems, and  
23 how these programs actually help our own military in return?

24           Mr. Anderson: Yes, Senator. So, we have a unique  
25 ability to be able to work with countries like Israel. And

1 there's a few other countries out there where we do  
2 essentially a 50/50 burden-sharing investment. What we have  
3 found incredibly helpful is to see some of the counter-UxS  
4 that U.S. and Israel have developed together that have 100  
5 percent been applicable to operations like Epic Fury.

6 Now, granted, we don't always have the capability that  
7 has the same function, if that makes sense. So, there's  
8 certainly things that we want to use the capability for that  
9 the Israelis want to use the capability for, but it's been  
10 100 percent an absolute great partnership with the Israelis  
11 to be able to not only on the counter front, but a few other  
12 different areas that we've been able to work with the  
13 Israelis.

14 Senator Budd: Very helpful. Thank you-all.

15 The Chairman: Thank you very much, Senator Budd.  
16 Senator Hirono.

17 Senator Hirono: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

18 General Rudd, in previous elections, as part of the  
19 Election Security Group, ESG, both CYBERCOM and NSA played a  
20 vital role in protecting our democratic processes from  
21 foreign interference, and I assume you share my concern that  
22 there is a potential for foreign interference in our  
23 upcoming elections. And so, I'd like to ask if you have  
24 already set up or are you planning to set up the ESG to  
25 ensure that there is no foreign interference in our upcoming



1 elections?

2 General Rudd: Senator, we certainly share your  
3 concern, and we're always looking, as you would expect us  
4 to, for any type of foreign activity that would undermine  
5 our democratic process. And as we discussed, we are  
6 postured and ready to support as required or tasked in  
7 making sure that we safeguard our elections.

8 Senator Hirono: Well, do you have an ESG set up for  
9 this purpose?

10 General Rudd: Senator, I don't know that an ESG has  
11 been established yet, but we are prepared to as required.

12 Senator Hirono: Well, we used to have ESG, and I think  
13 you can understand why I'm concerned, because there's no  
14 reason not to anticipate foreign interference in our  
15 elections, i.e. Russia, China, possibly Iran, although  
16 they're being -- maybe they have other things to deal with.  
17 But do you anticipate foreign interference with our upcoming  
18 elections?

19 General Rudd: Senator, I think it's reasonable to  
20 expect based on what we've seen in the past.

21 Senator Hirono: And so, I think it is really important  
22 to set up an ESG, and I will follow up with you on whether  
23 that is happening. And will you commit to zealously  
24 guarding our elections this year and report to Congress any  
25 attempts by this administration to polarize the process?



1           General Rudd:  Senator, we will certainly execute what  
2 we're tasked to in regards to that.

3           Senator Hirono:  Yeah.  I realize that that you have a  
4 responsibility regarding foreign interference with our  
5 elections, but there is definitely efforts to domestically  
6 interfere with our elections by, for example, having the  
7 former Attorney General sue 29 States for voter rolls.  
8 These are millions of people's information.

9           What does the Department of Justice need with these  
10 with this information, what do they intend to do?  And not  
11 to mention, the desire to push for the passage of the so-  
12 called SAVE Act, which will result in millions of people who  
13 are currently registered to vote, unable to register to vote  
14 because they don't have either a birth certificate or a  
15 passport.  So, there are things happening on the domestic  
16 front, and that's why, you know, I have some serious  
17 concerns.

18           For Admiral Bradley, one of SOCOM's enduring  
19 competitive advantage, and you mentioned how important our  
20 allies are, in great power competition is its network of  
21 allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific, built over decades  
22 through sustained engagement, training and interoperability.  
23 Given the increased demands for homeland defense and allied  
24 burden sharing in the new NDS, how are you increasing SOF's  
25 posture and presence in the First and Second Island chains

1 to deter Chinese aggression and support Admiral Paparo's  
2 denial defense?

3 Admiral Bradley: Senator, thank you. As you know,  
4 General Fenton was very strong on leading to adjust our  
5 posture over the last 4 years to be able to have -- to  
6 empower those generational relationships. And thanks to  
7 both chambers, frankly, but your strong work, we are well  
8 resourced with people and the right structure to be able to  
9 sustain that presence and that commitment while we manage  
10 the ongoing threats to the homeland and the other  
11 commitments that we have.

12 Senator Hirono: Okay. I'm glad that some of you  
13 already talked about the importance of having the kind of  
14 workforce that is trained to deal with the needs of the  
15 cyber domain. And General Rudd, what -- you mentioned that  
16 it is really critical to get the right kind of people. What  
17 are the right kind of people that you're hoping to recruit  
18 to be trained in the cyber domain?

19 General Rudd: Yeah. Thanks, Senator. As you would  
20 expect, someone who's highly technical-minded, smart,  
21 innovative, motivated, and is committed to doing something  
22 extraordinary.

23 Senator Hirono: Do you have a number goal? I mean,  
24 how many thousands of people are we going to need to have  
25 this kind of training to counter the malign activities of

1 our near-peer competitors?

2 General Rudd: Yeah, Senator, I think we have  
3 objectives that are outlined within Cybercom 2.0. But I  
4 think what I owe this committee, and frankly, the Nation, is  
5 a continuous assessment to make sure that we have the right  
6 numbers.

7 And to your opening point, that they're the best, most  
8 highly qualified talent, and that we can make sure that we  
9 can up-game them through training and through the mechanisms  
10 that'll make this enduring.

11 The Chairman: General, if you could quantify that on  
12 the record by supplementing your answer.

13 General Rudd: Chairman, I certainly will.

14 [The information referred to follows:]

15 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 Senator Hirono: Thank you.

2 The Chairman: Thank you, Senator Hirono. Senator  
3 Scott.

4 Senator Scott: Thank you, Chairman. I want to thank  
5 each of you for joining us here today.

6 It is critical that the U.S. is always ready to deter  
7 any threats. One big way is by working with our allies and  
8 partner nations to solidify our coordinated efforts to  
9 ensure our security around the world, even in places where  
10 we don't have our own troops readily stationed. Admiral  
11 Bradley, how do foreign military sales programs enhance U.S.  
12 military-to-military relationships in the Indo-Pacific and  
13 globally?

14 Admiral Bradley: Senator, foreign military sales,  
15 direct commercial sales and the like, are all critical to us  
16 being able to have expectation of interoperability and  
17 expectation of what our allies and partners will be able to  
18 perform when they act on their own behalf. That, in turn,  
19 gives us a much better ability to understand what their  
20 weaknesses might be, or what gaps that might need to be  
21 filled by U.S. contributions. And so, as you highlight,  
22 even in places where we are not present in all times or  
23 always, knowing what they are using and how they're using it  
24 gives us that extra advantage.

25 Senator Scott: So, you know their capability, and



1 also, if you're ever going to work with them, you know what  
2 -- how to operate with them.

3 Admiral Bradley: Yes, sir.

4 Senator Scott: What risks do we face to access and  
5 influence if we fail to work well with our allies and remain  
6 a reliable and timely defense partner compared to  
7 competitors like Communist China?

8 Admiral Bradley: Well, Senator, in all cases,  
9 placement and access is a corollary to understanding. And  
10 so, being on the ground with those out on the edge of the  
11 territory, to be able to appreciate the context of what's  
12 happening helps to inform our decision-making in the rear  
13 and throughout the chain of command. So, I believe that it  
14 is fundamental to our ability to know not only when we  
15 should act, but how we should act, and that is a partnership  
16 that we see play out across the world, not just in the Indo-  
17 Pacific.

18 For instance, in Ecuador, recently, some really good  
19 operational results informed by our Ecuadorian partners to  
20 help us choose which and how to target adversaries there.  
21 But that, of course, is just an instance that has been  
22 played out over the last 25 years across the Middle East,  
23 Africa, across Europe as well, and I believe the same analog  
24 applies globally.

25 Senator Scott: Admiral Bradley and Assistant Secretary

1 Anderson, how does the forward presence of U.S. Special  
2 Operations Forces contribute to countering Communist China's  
3 influence campaigns, particularly in the Indo-Pacific and  
4 other key regions? And what advantages do Special  
5 Operations Forces bring in building partner capacity,  
6 strengthening resilience and shaping the competitive  
7 environment below the level of armed conflict?

8 Admiral Bradley: Senator, I might start, but just  
9 quickly, that same placement and access and that  
10 understanding allows us to use what is the equivalent of the  
11 high ground in the influence sphere of competition: the  
12 truth. In almost every case, all we have to do is  
13 illuminate the truth of our adversary's nefarious activity,  
14 to allow our partners to then counter it and to be able to  
15 use it to their advantage.

16 Mr. Anderson: Senator, I might add just back to  
17 Admiral Bradley's point of placement and access, without  
18 going into some detail, but just being present in some of  
19 these areas with our partners is an absolute deterrent. Not  
20 only that, but we some of our forces and what they've been  
21 able -- the capabilities they've been able to create, if you  
22 might call it, within some of these areas of responsibility.

23 One example is, you know, some of our Special  
24 Operations Forces had a critical need for medical and  
25 medical roll to facility. And what they were able to do was



1 work with the local hospital to embed themselves within that  
2 hospital, not only providing care for that local area, but  
3 also providing training for themselves. That in itself is  
4 one a capabilities development, a readiness development.  
5 But also, you know, we talk about by, with, and through your  
6 partners, there's no better way than through the local  
7 population.

8 Senator Scott: Thank you.

9 Admiral Bradley, how are your Special Operations Forces  
10 integrating unmanned and autonomous technologies into their  
11 operations?

12 Admiral Bradley: Senator, at every level, as we say,  
13 from the battlefield to the back office. Finding ways to be  
14 able to bring autonomy, a treatable mass autonomy to bear is  
15 a very important part of how we, on the edge, can leverage  
16 our placement and access to not only serve our own  
17 interests, but to be able to help our partners who generally  
18 don't have the same budgets we do, to be able to buy that  
19 kind of capacity, to give them asymmetric advantages.

20 So, autonomous capability is critical to our  
21 understanding from a sensing perspective as well as it is  
22 from a surveillance to be able to sustain containment of an  
23 objective that you would want to watch, and then, finally,  
24 clearly for the ability to project violence should that be  
25 required.



1           Senator Scott: So, looking at the success of the  
2 Ukrainian Armed Forces have had with drones and other  
3 autonomous opportunities, do you think we're moving fast  
4 enough?

5           Admiral Bradley: Senator, I would never suggest that  
6 the pace at which we are moving today is fast enough. We  
7 need to continue to accelerate it. Clearly, the Ukrainians  
8 are driven by an existential need that we do not feel. And  
9 so, we need to make up that difference in existential  
10 motivation, with a real appreciation of the advantage that  
11 it will provide us, and importantly, to deal with the  
12 challenges of simultaneity, to be able to help our partners  
13 to do the same.

14           Our role inside the Department there is to identify  
15 opportunities to test, to validate, and to illuminate those  
16 down selected, and, frankly, to work with our industry  
17 partners to help them improve their capabilities so that  
18 they might be more readily integrated into our services,  
19 warfighting constructs, as well as our allies and partners.

20           Senator Scott: Thank you. Thank you, Chairman.

21           The Chairman: Thank you, Senator Scott. Senator  
22 Kaine.

23           Senator Kaine: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And thanks to  
24 the witnesses.

25           I have questions for Admiral Bradley and Secretary



1 Anderson, really about two topics Operation Southern Spear,  
2 and then the Preservation of Force and Family initiative  
3 that you've discussed. On Southern Spear, I'm correct, am I  
4 not, that the lead on Southern Spear operations is SOUTHCOM,  
5 but special operators often play a role in particular  
6 operations within that. Am I correct?

7 Admiral Bradley: Yes, Senator.

8 Senator Kaine: There is an article that was published  
9 on April 21 in The Guardian that I'd like to introduce for  
10 the record. The title of it is, "We were terrified they  
11 were going to kill us: fishers who survived U.S. boat strike  
12 speak out." If I might introduce that into the record, Mr.  
13 Chair.

14 The Chairman: Without objection.

15 [The information referred to follows:]

16 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1           Senator Kaine: You guys will be surprised to know that  
2 I don't just believe everything I read in in news accounts,  
3 but this is one that is public that I want to ask about.  
4 It's a story about a U.S. strike purportedly on an  
5 Ecuadorian fishing vessel near the Galapagos that took place  
6 on March 26. And the indication in the story, as I say,  
7 it's a week old, is that this was a fishing vessel that  
8 after the boat was struck, a U.S. patrol boat rescued those  
9 on the vessel, handcuffed them, transferred them to a  
10 Salvadoran patrol boat. They were eventually taken to  
11 Salvador, where they were released to a U.N. shelter, and  
12 then eventually taken back home to Ecuador, where they were  
13 released without charge. Are you aware of the allegation of  
14 this U.S. strike on this Ecuadorian fishing vessel, Admiral,  
15 or Secretary?

16           Admiral Bradley: Senator, I am aware of the article.  
17 I'm also aware that later in the article it quotes the  
18 Department's response to it as there not having been any  
19 U.S. military involvement. I'm also aware that there are --  
20 there were no recorded or no U.S. strikes within 3 weeks  
21 around that incident. As well, I believe the Ecuadorian  
22 government has rendered judgment that there were no U.S.  
23 involvement in that. So, I can't speak to the -- any  
24 greater detail, obviously. SOUTHCOM and the Department  
25 would own that. But those are those are from, you know,

1 superficial observations.

2 Senator Kaine: Yeah. Let me read the portion from the  
3 article that I think you're referring to. "The Pentagon and  
4 the White House did not respond to requests for comment.  
5 U.S. Southern Command said it had, 'no information to  
6 provide regarding any U.S. government personnel involvement  
7 in any of the incidents.'"

8 Are you aware of any investigation into this. This is  
9 a pretty, you know, tough claim. The tough claim that the  
10 U.S. would have attacked a fishing boat that had nothing to  
11 do with any group on the classified DTO list. Are you aware  
12 of any investigation that's being done into this public  
13 reporting to see if it's accurate or not?

14 Admiral Bradley: Senator, I'm not. I believe, though,  
15 the methodology we go through is first to assess a claim  
16 like this, whether or not it is credible. And I believe  
17 from what you've cited there and what I understand from the  
18 rendering, that it was deemed not to be credible, therefore,  
19 further investigation not required.

20 Senator Kaine: And, Secretary Anderson, is that your  
21 understanding as well?

22 Mr. Anderson: Yes. Senator Kaine, I know exactly what  
23 Admiral Bradley say, unaware as well, from what I've what  
24 I've been told.

25 Senator Kaine: So, your testimony based on your

1 understanding and this is SOUTHCOM equities, obviously, but  
2 Special Operations participates. Is that this public  
3 reporting At least SOUTHCOM has gone back, and they cannot  
4 find evidence that the U.S. carried out air strike  
5 operations of that kind on that day. That's your  
6 understanding?

7 Admiral Bradley: Yes, Senator, it is.

8 Senator Kaine: Well, I think it's important to put  
9 that on the record, because, obviously, if there is  
10 information about the veracity of this, it should come out.  
11 One of the things that I think can be a little confusing in  
12 this instance that could have led to confusion in this  
13 circumstance is, as far as I know, Southern Spear is a  
14 military operation carried out against targets connected to  
15 organizations, the list of whom are still classified. Is  
16 that correct?

17 Mr. Anderson: I believe so, Senator.

18 Senator Kaine: I think that the operations authorized  
19 by the President can be carried out against organizations on  
20 a list of DTOs, designated terrorist organizations, that is  
21 classified. It's only been shared with Congress in a  
22 classified setting. It has not been made public. And that  
23 also means the enemy hasn't been told you're an enemy. If  
24 you if you declare war against Iraq, for example, or Al-  
25 Qaeda, that public declaration alerts the enemy to know

1 that, hey, you're the enemy. If you associate with the  
2 group subject to the designation. If the DTO list in  
3 Southern Spear is purely classified, that means we haven't  
4 alerted those who the U.S. has determined are combatants,  
5 that we are, in fact, engaging in war against them, and that  
6 can lead to confusion.

7 My time is up, but I just want to just say this. I do  
8 commend what you guys have done on this Preservation of  
9 Force and Family initiative, and I think it's particularly  
10 needed among special operators, but I also think it offers a  
11 template more generally for the way we ought to approach the  
12 issue of the, you know, long-term well-being of our service  
13 members. So, keep it up, and spread the best practices from  
14 what you're doing. Thank you.

15 The Chairman: Senator Sullivan.

16 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank  
17 you to the witnesses. I just want to add to Senator Kaine's  
18 point. We had a classified briefing a couple months ago on  
19 the ways in which both SOCOM, Southern Command, NSA, go  
20 through the targeting in this regard. And, Admiral, isn't  
21 it true it's the JAG officers are there in every step of the  
22 way, the NSA is. I mean, it is an exquisite, detailed, and  
23 very robust targeting Op before anyone is given the  
24 authority to go strike. Correct?

25 Admiral Bradley: Senator, that is correct. It is



1 based off of the lessons learned and the processes perfected  
2 over the last 25 years of persona targeting.

3 Senator Sullivan: Yeah. No, I think the that briefing  
4 from my perspective was very impressive. General Rudd, I  
5 want to go back to where you and I had a good conversation  
6 during your confirmation process. And it's about how our  
7 adversaries often all over the place take aggressive,  
8 offensive, state-sponsored kind of cyber-related actions  
9 against us across so many spheres; elections,  
10 infrastructure.

11 NSA, and our other services do a great job on defending  
12 that, but I think, you know, the best defense is also a good  
13 offense, right? And I know you probably can't answer the  
14 questions here, but are we also looking at offensive  
15 operations from a cyber perspective to keep our adversaries  
16 at bay? The one I always think would be good is letting the  
17 people of China and Russia know just how corrupt their  
18 leaders are, how rich they are. Putin, I think, is one of  
19 the richest guys in the world. Xi Jinping's sister is a  
20 billionaire. I wonder how that happened. I mean, isn't it  
21 also good to go on offense, right? We get we get attacked a  
22 lot, but to let people know that we can go on offense with  
23 the exquisite capabilities that you have.

24 General Rudd: Senator, we absolutely have to be  
25 capable of providing offensive options and certainly working



1 in concert with Honorable Sutton as she crafts out the  
2 strategy for the Department in support of the NDS. You  
3 could expect it will be in a position, and we have to have  
4 the capabilities to --

5 Senator Sullivan: I mean, when these dictators are  
6 using cyber Ops to come after the most important thing to  
7 all of us, which are the, you know, American elections, when  
8 none of them would ever stand for election because they fear  
9 their own people. I think we should flex a little offensive  
10 cyber capability. Do you agree with that, Madam Secretary?

11 Ms. Sutton: Absolutely. As was articulated in the  
12 President's cyber strategy for America, we need to be very  
13 clear that malicious cyber actors in this space have and  
14 will feel the consequences of their action. We need to look  
15 at how we leverage all tools of national power, whether it  
16 be military offensive capabilities or other interagency  
17 efforts, and that is something we are going to be posturing  
18 with the new Department of War cyber strategy --

19 Senator Sullivan: Good.

20 Ms. Sutton: -- to make sure we have those  
21 capabilities.

22 Senator Sullivan: Good. I think it's really  
23 important. We don't have to say it, but, I mean, they want  
24 to come play with our elections, we can make sure their  
25 people know how corrupt they are, their leaders, because a



1 lot of them are corrupt. And their people should know that.

2 General Rudd, we're really excited. In Alaska, NSA  
3 Alaska's expansion is almost complete. You know, it's great  
4 to see that my understanding is the new addition is going to  
5 be able to house 50 additional billets there. You know that  
6 the group in Alaska, they do fantastic work. It's not on  
7 the front pages. It doesn't need to be, but would you be  
8 willing to visit NSA Alaska with me soon and meet these  
9 great Americans who are conducting these missions under your  
10 command from my State and work with me on ensuring any  
11 additional requirements. We need to fully man that  
12 expansion in NSA Alaska, 50 additional billets. We can make  
13 sure we get done.

14 General Rudd: Hey, Senator, I look forward to that  
15 opportunity. I think we may have a chance here in the near  
16 future to see that site at its ribbon cutting.

17 Senator Sullivan: Yeah.

18 General Rudd: But I also have a confession to make. I  
19 think I pledged in confirmation hearing that I would go  
20 there first, if confirmed. I hope you'll appreciate and  
21 understand.

22 Senator Sullivan: Everybody commits to coming to  
23 Alaska.

24 General Rudd: Well, it'll be my second location, in  
25 the role only because Hawaii, as I think, you know,

1 experienced some pretty horrific storms and it caused some  
2 physical damage and wanted to check on our folks there.

3 Senator Sullivan: General, your excuse is acceptable.

4 The Chairman: General, all of our witnesses are  
5 absolved from that promise.

6 General Rudd: But no, Senator, I --

7 The Chairman: It's made by everyone under duress, and  
8 we understand.

9 Senator Sullivan: It's not duress. They're just going  
10 to see, Mr. Chairman, the most strategic place in the world.  
11 And, Admiral, I want to and maybe I submit this for the  
12 record, but the University of Alaska Fairbanks is doing  
13 fantastic work on the counter-UAS strategy testing. DIU is  
14 going to make an announcement here on a commitment to work  
15 with the University of Alaska Fairbanks on all the counter-  
16 UAS stuff that they're doing, which is really needed, and  
17 we're at the cutting edge up in Alaska. So, I'd like to get  
18 Secretary Anderson, you, and the Admiral, maybe in an answer  
19 for a question for the record, because I'm over my time here  
20 to work with me and the committee on those really good  
21 opportunities on a critical area for our national security,  
22 and that's the counter-drone mission. Thank you. Thank  
23 you, Mr. Chairman.

24 [The information referred to follows:]

25 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

1           The Chairman: Thank you, Senator Sullivan, and thank  
2 you for your question about the leaders of our adversaries.  
3 Vladimir Putin is not our friend. Not only is he one of the  
4 most notorious war criminals of our time, but one of the  
5 greediest thieves breathing on the earth.

6           Senator Sullivan: Well, Mr. Chairman, Senator Warren  
7 and I have worked on this very issue together. It's a  
8 bipartisan issue that, hey, these guys are coming after our  
9 elections, we need to make them feel the pain.

10          The Chairman: Why don't we recognize her at this  
11 moment?

12          Senator Warren: Thank you.

13          I want to talk about what's going on with our troops  
14 when they're injured. We have 400 troops, at least, so far,  
15 who've been injured in President Trump's war with Iran, and  
16 now traumatic brain injuries have become the "signature  
17 injury" of the war against Iran. Research has shown that  
18 special operators are at a higher risk of blast exposure in  
19 TBI, which, as you know, increases the risk of suicide, of  
20 seizures, and of memory loss. Several hundred special  
21 operators are now deployed in the Middle East, and I'm very  
22 concerned about whether or not our troops are getting the  
23 care that they need for these injuries.

24          For instance, we know about a soldier who was injured  
25 in the Iranian drone strike in Kuwait, and he was promised



1 TBI care once they made it out of the war zone. But even  
2 after being shipped to Germany and then to Texas, the  
3 soldier didn't receive care for weeks. So, Admiral Bradley,  
4 do you think that wounded soldiers should have to wait  
5 nearly a month to see a doctor?

6 Admiral Bradley: Senator, I know in the hypothetical,  
7 I absolutely don't believe that. I don't know the details -  
8 -

9 Senator Warren: Fair enough.

10 Admiral Bradley: -- of the situation, though.

11 Senator Warren: Yeah, but that's the real point. We  
12 can agree they need help, and they need to be evaluated  
13 right away. And this committee has worked on a bipartisan  
14 basis to help service members with brain injuries. But  
15 without records of these injuries, it becomes harder and  
16 harder to get care. That's particularly critical for high-  
17 speed boat teams and special operators, given the exposure  
18 to these pounding waves and high caliber weapons. Boat team  
19 leaders have described how, "The damage piles up almost  
20 unnoticed for years and then cascades." But DOD requires  
21 cognitive assessments only every 5 years, and SOCOM every 3.

22 I have a bipartisan bill with Senators Ernst, and King,  
23 and others on this committee to make sure that these  
24 injuries don't fall through the cracks, including by  
25 requiring more regular screening and logs to be able to

1 track exposure. Admiral Bradley, the effects of TBIs can  
2 compound over time, as we know. Do you agree that it is  
3 better if we catch these brain injuries earlier rather than  
4 later?

5 Admiral Bradley: Senator, I absolutely do.

6 Senator Warren: Good. And do you support keeping  
7 better records so that we're able to do that and more  
8 frequent evaluations?

9 Admiral Bradley: Senator, I do. It is critical to be  
10 able to understand the mechanisms of harm that come from  
11 these various sources that we don't understand very well.  
12 And that data, those logs, that data will help to inform not  
13 only treatment, but also means to be able to prevent it in  
14 its outset.

15 Senator Warren: Good. I appreciate that. You know,  
16 the fact that troops have faced long wait lists to get  
17 specialty care for brain health within DOD's military  
18 system. And one of the ways that DOD has tried to address  
19 these wait lists is by partnering with outside experts like  
20 Home Base back in Massachusetts. Home Base's comprehensive  
21 brain health and trauma program has helped get 95 percent of  
22 special operators that it's treated back into the field.  
23 Admiral Bradley, in your experience, have special operators  
24 benefited from programs like Home Base?

25 Admiral Bradley: Senator, absolutely. That



1 comprehensive program for brain health is a critical part.  
2 We also have partnerships with USC, University of North  
3 Carolina, and Southern Florida, and several others, to be  
4 able to do the same thing. They are all very capable and  
5 progressing programs. I think as you highlight,  
6 institutionalizing those beyond the pilot, that they are  
7 into something that is a part of our mainstream system that  
8 can then be treated with Tricare and with our VA systems is  
9 a critical next step.

10 Senator Warren: And I very much appreciate your point  
11 about institutionalizing it. We can't just treat this as a  
12 one off. We know the problem exists. We've got to record,  
13 we've got to document, and we've got to have people who can  
14 treat it. We need to have dedicated resources to support  
15 our troops who are suffering from brain injuries. The Trump  
16 administration has plunged us into a war and is asking  
17 Congress for a record \$1.5 trillion for the Pentagon. It is  
18 outrageous that we would be cutting corners on treating  
19 wounded warriors. Thank you, Admiral. I look forward to  
20 working with you on this.

21 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

22 The Chairman: Thank you. Senator Rosen.

23 Senator Rosen: Well, thank you, Chairman Wicker,  
24 Ranking Member Reed, and thank you for -- well, I saw you a  
25 little bit earlier today, so thank you again for your

1 service and for being here.

2 I want to talk a little bit about operational tempo and  
3 readiness reporting, because cyber operation forces will, of  
4 course, have -- they're always in high demand, but they've  
5 been in extra high demand since CYBERCOM was established,  
6 which has been exacerbated by the challenges of getting the  
7 unit readiness numbers up at the same time. Now that we're  
8 fighting wars in multiple theaters, I have to imagine that  
9 the operational tempo of those forces is also increasing  
10 dramatically. So, General Rudd, could you give us a sense  
11 of what the trend is for the operation tempo of Cyber  
12 National Mission Force, please?

13 General Rudd: Thank you, Senator Rosen. I appreciate  
14 the attention on this topic as you described and as we would  
15 expect, very high demand and a very high operational tempo  
16 for our cyber warriors in support in real time, 24/7 of the  
17 Joint Force across a number of problem sets. And so, this  
18 really speaks to the heart of one of the attributes of  
19 Cybercom 2.0 that we refer to as optimized unit phasing.  
20 So, think of a cycle upon which you rotate. Again, this is  
21 where we have a lot to gain from understanding SOCOM's model  
22 for years. Both Admiral Bradley and I were part of a system  
23 that had a rotational force effort.

24 Now, granted, there are surges, and we account for  
25 those, but part of the way we accounted for that is size of



1 the force and bringing in sufficient capacity to be able to  
2 operationally employ the force continuously across a number  
3 of problem sets.

4 Senator Rosen: Well, that's good because you didn't  
5 know what my next question would be, but it's to Secretary  
6 Sutton, the status of implementing the 97 recommendations  
7 from Cybercom 2.0. What is that and the resources, speaking  
8 of to your point, General, the resources needed to implement  
9 them, especially when setting up three enabling  
10 organizations?

11 Ms. Sutton: Senator, thank you for that question and  
12 for your continued focus on this, on the cyber topic over  
13 the years. From an implementation perspective. As you  
14 mentioned, there's a lot of tasks. So, the approach that  
15 we're taking is that within my office, I've built a core  
16 team that is dedicated to the implementation process. And  
17 one of the things that's really exciting to me about that is  
18 it features contributions from all of our service cyber  
19 components, and we've actually brought in people who have  
20 been in our force for a long time that are now have the  
21 opportunity to build the system, the talent management  
22 system, that they wish they would have had. So, it's the  
23 unicorns that we're trying to build at scope and scale are  
24 now coming in and helping to write the details, build out  
25 the assessments we need, and come up with the models of how



1 we keep careers going to build mastery.

2 From a resource perspective. We have included funding  
3 for the Cyber Command 2.0 initiatives in the President's  
4 2011 budget, including funding to start incentive pay to get  
5 mastery incentives implemented, as well as for some of the  
6 enabling organizations, and some of the other service  
7 requirements to be able to get this to speed and look  
8 forward to being able to execute that upon passage of the  
9 budget for fiscal year 2027.

10 Senator Rosen: Thank you.

11 I'm going to stick on cyber operations for a minute  
12 because I want to talk about intelligence capabilities. So,  
13 General Rudd, your responses to our advance policy questions  
14 during your nomination process, you mentioned the  
15 criticality of foundational intelligence to support  
16 cyberspace operations and the need for that capability to  
17 keep pace with operational needs. So, as we all know, the  
18 fiscal year 2025 NDAA has set a requirement for DOD to  
19 establish a cyber intelligence capability to provide just  
20 that sort of foundational intelligence support. So, General  
21 Rudd, you have the ability to shape this foundational  
22 intelligence capability from the start. So, could you  
23 elaborate a little bit more based on your experiences at  
24 INDOPACOM and SOUTHCOM, what you would like to see  
25 incorporated in this foundation intelligence capability,

1 please?

2           General Rudd: Well, Senator, the reference to my past  
3 experience, I would tell you intelligence drives Ops, and  
4 Ops drives intelligence. And so, it's a continuous cycle.  
5 And what we learned over decades of fighting alongside each  
6 other in a variety of places is the intelligence apparatus  
7 has to be closely linked to and understand the operational  
8 side of this. And I haven't had the chance to specifically  
9 dive into this yet. It's going to be part of my initial  
10 assessment, and happy to come back to you for the record as  
11 I look more closely at that.

12           [The information referred to follows:]

13           [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1           Senator Rosen: Thank you. I look forward to that. We  
2 have a lot of work to do. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

3           The Chairman: Senator Slotkin, we're doing everything  
4 we can to keep you from asking your question. Senator  
5 Banks, you're recognized.

6           Senator Banks: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

7           General Rudd, can you talk about how the PLA is using  
8 artificial intelligence to enhance its military operations?

9           General Rudd: Senator, I -- as you would hope and  
10 expect, that's certainly something that we are paying  
11 particular attention to, the details of which I'd probably  
12 rather go into in a closed --

13          Senator Banks: You can vaguely -- I mean, you can  
14 vaguely talk about how artificial intelligence is used in  
15 warfare and gains that they're making. I mean, I don't  
16 think there's anything classified about that.

17          General Rudd: Yeah, Senator, I appreciate that.

18          Senator Banks: You would agree that they are using  
19 artificial intelligence?

20          General Rudd: Senator, I think that's quite clear that  
21 they are. Yes, sir.

22          Senator Banks: Thank you. So, that being the case,  
23 would you agree that AI is "dual-use technology"?

24          General Rudd: Senator, dual use in what sense? Both  
25 for non-military and military? Senator, I think that's a



1 fair way to characterize it.

2 Senator Banks: And how important is it for the U.S. to  
3 have more and better high-end chips than what China does?

4 General Rudd: Senator, I would take that category more  
5 broadly and say I think it's critical that the U.S. has the  
6 technological advantage in every aspect of warfighting. And  
7 certainly, as we see the increase in the advent of the  
8 application of artificial intelligence, we're going to have  
9 to make sure that we retain and maintain our advantage in  
10 that and move as fast as we can.

11 Senator Banks: You agree -- I mean, I believe we have  
12 today, we have the advantage. I think you would you just  
13 said that to maintain our advantage. So, you agree that we  
14 have the advantage. What would happen if we lost that  
15 advantage?

16 General Rudd: Well, Senator, I think this team right  
17 here is going to do everything we can to make sure that we  
18 don't do that. Certainly, we're working furiously to do  
19 that, and we're not going to be complacent. We won't be  
20 satisfied. In my opening statement, I emphasized four  
21 operating principles; speed, scale, innovation, and  
22 integration. I think if we press as hard as we can to apply  
23 those principles to everything that we're doing, but in  
24 particular an effort to maintain our advantage in the  
25 highest tech areas, we'll be okay. And yet we'll not be



1 satisfied.

2 Senator Banks: Last week, President Trump said that,  
3 quote, "America's aging and constrained electric grid  
4 infrastructure poses an increasing threat to national  
5 defenses." What risks do cyberattacks pose to our critical  
6 infrastructure?

7 General Rudd: Well, Senator, the -- it's certainly a  
8 vulnerability, and I think that's -- the awareness and  
9 understanding of that is the first line of defense. And  
10 then making sure that, experts in this field know how to get  
11 ahead of it, know how to apply the best cyber defenses.  
12 And, certainly to the extent we're able and we have the  
13 capacity, we want to make sure that we're working with the  
14 right folks to protect our critical infrastructure.

15 Senator Banks: And I assume what President Trump is  
16 saying about the infrastructure, that would extend to  
17 transportation nodes like seaports, airports, and railroads,  
18 would you agree with that?

19 General Rudd: Well, Senator, I won't speculate on what  
20 the president meant specifically. I haven't had that  
21 conversation with him, but I think it's fair -- actually, I  
22 think it's important that we figure out what the definition  
23 of critical infrastructure is, prioritize where we need to  
24 put our efforts and resources to safeguard it.

25 Senator Banks: Thank you. My time is expired.

1           The Chairman: Thank you very much. Senator Slotkin.

2           Senator Slotkin: Thank you.

3           I want to support everything that Senator Banks just  
4 said, and just return to the topic on the classified AI  
5 race. I know we can't talk about it here, but I don't think  
6 the American public understands how important it is to win  
7 that race. That it's the equivalent of winning the nuclear  
8 race, like whoever gets there first. And I think, you know,  
9 if we were healthy as a country, then elected officials from  
10 both sides of the aisle would be focusing on this constantly  
11 to make sure we win this race.

12           In that spirit, General Rudd, you know, I think the  
13 thing that has been -- congratulations on being in the seat  
14 -- I think the thing that has caught the attention of a lot  
15 of us is the announcement in the last 3 or 4 weeks by  
16 Anthropic and then OpenAI of new products, Mythos being the  
17 Anthropic product, and the OpenAI product having a longer  
18 name. And they are testing this new product very  
19 differently than a commercial product. They are testing it  
20 like a weapon. They have provided, at least in Anthropic's  
21 case, they've provided Mythos to like 50 big companies for  
22 them to test, and stress-test and figure out the  
23 vulnerabilities. Microsoft is one of those companies.  
24 They're turning around and announcing like 270 new patches  
25 just last week, which we assume Mythos picked up.

1           And I was so concerned about this new step we're taking  
2   and how it supercharges cyberattacks that I did a big Zoom  
3   yesterday with 350 Michiganders, IT professionals for our  
4   hospitals, our schools on how to prepare for this threat.  
5   Is the NSA or CYBERCOM testing Mythos right now and using  
6   this moment to test out our own vulnerabilities?

7           General Rudd:   Senator, this is a critically important  
8   topic.  I think the way you described it was appropriate.  
9   And, you know, what I don't want to do is speak to one  
10  specific model.  I think what we need to think about is the  
11  application and the access to early, all future models that  
12  we see in terms of the capability that the most current  
13  models and the new models potentially imply for both  
14  defensive --

15          Senator Slotkin:  I understand.

16          General Rudd:  -- our critical infrastructure, our  
17  Nation's networks --

18          Senator Slotkin:  We have two companies, right, who  
19  have -- I mean, this is public information, right?  They've  
20  come out with these products in the past month.  It sent the  
21  cybersecurity world in the commercial sector kind of  
22  spinning that we now have this supercharged AI technology  
23  that finds these vulnerabilities.  I'm just asking if the  
24  Pentagon or NSA is testing out either of these two  
25  companies' models.

1           General Rudd:  Senator, again, we're looking at all  
2 models that we think have the power that --

3           Senator Slotkin:  So, yes.  I want you to be using  
4 them.  I want you to be experimenting with them, but the  
5 Pentagon has had a very public fight with Anthropic.  Again,  
6 this is public information.  So, I'm just making sure that  
7 the newest, hottest AI-empowered cybersecurity models are  
8 being used by the Pentagon on cyber security.  So, I'm  
9 taking your answer as yes, and correct me if I'm wrong.

10           Let me turn to another topic.  And, you know, we're  
11 heading towards a summit between the President and Xi  
12 Jinping, the Chinese President, on May 14.  Huge deal,  
13 right, in the world of negotiation and security.  And I am  
14 just concerned that there's a topic on the table of allowing  
15 Chinese vehicles into the United States.

16           And I think the Chinese have shown themselves to be bad  
17 actors when it comes to collecting data on American  
18 citizens.  They hacked the President and Vice President's  
19 phones during the campaign.  Salt Typhoon, Vault Typhoon,  
20 setting into our infrastructure.  They stole a bunch of our  
21 records.  Probably yours, definitely mine in 2016 from OPM.  
22 I mean, they are not positive actors, and this body banned  
23 Huawei and TikTok because of the data they were taking on  
24 Americans.

25           So, can you just say aloud, I asked others in uniform

1 this last week, do you believe that allowing in Chinese cars  
2 with LiDAR and full-motion video geolocation, the ability to  
3 be hacked via Bluetooth, do you believe that that is a  
4 threat to our military bases, our critical infrastructure,  
5 and generally, to collecting on American citizens?

6 General Rudd: Yeah, Senator, I think we need to take  
7 into account any potential technological application that  
8 poses a threat against our bases, our service members, and  
9 make sure we do everything.

10 Senator Slotkin: Yeah, I would love the chairman's  
11 help. I've tried for 2 years in a row to ban Chinese  
12 vehicles from our military bases. As I understand it,  
13 abroad, our military bases with all these Chinese cars, they  
14 can already get on. They've got 15 percent market share in  
15 Mexico. So, I would hope that this committee could at least  
16 do the banning of them collecting on our military bases.  
17 And I yield back.

18 The Chairman: Thank you very much, Senator Slotkin.  
19 And this concludes today's hearing. I'd like to thank our  
20 witnesses for their testimony. For the information of  
21 members, questions for the record will be due to the  
22 committee within 2 business days of the conclusion of this  
23 hearing.

24 [The information referred to follows:]

25 [COMMITTEE INSERT]



1           The Chairman: Thank you very, very much for your  
2 information and your testimony today. And we are adjourned.

3           [Whereupon, at 1:07 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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