

RECORD VERSION

STATEMENT BY

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Introduction

Chairwoman Hirono, Ranking Member Sullivan, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on the readiness of our Nation's Army. On behalf of the Secretary of the Army, the Honorable Christine Wormuth, and the Chief of Staff of the Army, General Randy George, we appreciate the tireless work that our elected representatives do to ensure that our Army has the resources needed to deter our adversaries and, when called upon, fight, and win our Nation's wars. As the world enters a new era of geopolitical competition and technological advancement, the United States Army stands at the forefront of ensuring our Nation's security and preparedness.

The Imperative for Increased Readiness

The increasing complexity of global conflicts and the emergence of new security threats underscore the urgency of enhancing the Army's readiness. As geopolitical tensions escalate and technological advancements evolve, the Army must be prepared to respond swiftly and effectively to a variety of challenges. The ongoing war in Ukraine against Russia's unlawful 2022 invasion, China's aggressive actions in the Indo-Pacific, Iranian proxy groups' attacks on U.S. bases and commercial shipping vessels, and the war between Israel and Hamas, all highlight the complex and multifaceted nature of modern conflicts. Investments in exercises and campaigning, modernizing our industrial base, transforming our capabilities, and taking care of our greatest asset – our people, are crucial to ensuring that the Army can safeguard national security and uphold international stability. Time is not on our side and the defense of our Nation depends on our ability to maintain lethal, ready forces that are prepared for any challenge.

In recognition of this, the Army is focused on delivering ready combat formations today as well as continuously transforming for the future. The Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 budget request for Army readiness reflects the imperative for maintaining the highest state of operational readiness and our acute awareness of rapidly evolving global threats. Our current operational readiness is demonstrated through the Army's proven record of robust partnerships and alliances, challenging training in realistic environments, the millions of munitions provided to Ukraine, and strategic positioning of

our forces to secure national interests. We are investing in our future readiness by continuously transforming our capabilities, force structure, the industrial base, and our recruiting enterprise.

Current Readiness: Delivering Ready Combat Formations Today

From Europe to the Middle East and Africa, Latin America to the Indo-Pacific, our Army is meeting the many challenges of today while simultaneously investing and transforming rapidly to confront the challenges of tomorrow. Despite a challenging recruiting environment and significant transitions to new capabilities, the United States Army continues to meet combatant command requirements. Over 140,000 highly trained Soldiers from across all our components demonstrate our readiness every day in 143 countries across the globe. Aided by our organic industrial base, they stand ready to defend the nation's interests and maintain security alongside our Allies and partners.

Continuous, realistic, and challenging training is the bedrock of our readiness and ensuring the Army remains the most lethal and capable land fighting force in the world. The Army's Combat Training Centers (CTCs) play a pivotal role in validating unit capabilities in a complex and highly realistic environment, be it the jungle, the Arctic, woodlands, or the desert. We are executing twenty-two rotations at these centers each year. Our CTCs are continuously integrating lessons learned from current conflicts to train units to recognize and counter a myriad of threats. The CTCs' opposition forces are employing all types of drones and robotics based on lessons learned from Ukraine, and units are fielded a mixture of current and new technologies, enabling seamless integration of cutting-edge capabilities. The Army's newest CTC, and first regional center in the Indo-Pacific, the Joint Pacific Multinational Readiness Center (JPMRC), is generating readiness not just in our Army units, but also in the Joint Force and our coalition partners. JPMRC is exportable – meaning units can train forward in the most realistic environments, sometimes across the International Date Line, alongside Allies and partners with an emphasis on combined, joint operations. The focus on comprehensive and integrated training ensures that forces are well-prepared,

adaptable, and capable of executing coordinated operations effectively across the vast Indo-Pacific theater.

As the Army invests in rigorous training to enhance operational readiness, we are simultaneously contributing to integrated deterrence through our support to campaigning and strategic partnerships. Central to this is the Army's support to campaigning in the Pacific theater, facilitated by Operation Pathways. Through exercises like Talisman Sabre, Garuda Shield, Balikatan, and many others our Soldiers built and maintained relationships, interoperability, and integration with our Allies and partners. Last year, the 38th Balikatan exercise with the Philippines included participation from over 17,500 Soldiers and focused on emerging technology on the battlefield. The exercise provided diverse training opportunities that focused on Cyber Defense, Humanitarian Civic Assistance, maritime security, amphibious operations, urban operations, aviation operations, counterterrorism, and realistic field training within the Indo-Pacific. Operation Pathways is also building our own interior lines. By increasing our interoperability with and support to Allies, Partners, and the Joint Force, we are positioning ourselves to better respond in competition, crisis, and conflict. For FY 2025, we are requesting \$1.5 billion for Pacific Deterrence Initiative activities to sustain these efforts in the region, with focus on enhancing posture through military construction projects, prepositioning of equipment, campaigning forward with Allies and partners, and continuing investments in long range munitions. Congressional support for modeling the Pacific Deterrence Initiative off the European Deterrence Initiative would enhance transparency and strategic focus in the Indo-Pacific region.

The Army also remains steadfast in our support to our European Allies and partners, as demonstrated by our continuous rotational deployments and exercises in the theater. Our request for \$2.1 billion to support the European Deterrence Initiative will allow the Army to continue strengthening alliances, enhance combat effectiveness, intelligence sharing, and regional security, and exercise our ability to rapidly project combat forces. The Arctic Shock exercise in Alaska supported campaigning and interoperability in the European theater by providing U.S. and Allied forces with critical experience and training in extreme cold-weather conditions, including an airborne operation into Norway. Our Arctic forces routinely work with countries like Norway,

Canada, Finland, and Sweden in the harshest of environments, showcasing our commitment and readiness to defend the nation in any environment and our capability to rapidly deploy from Alaska across the globe. This spring, over 16,000 of our Soldiers will train with more than a dozen other countries in Exercise Defender 24, NATO's largest military exercise since the Cold War.

We continue to provide support to Ukraine in its war to maintain its sovereignty and territorial integrity against Russia's unprovoked invasion. To date, our troops have trained over 17,000 Ukrainian Soldiers. We have sent major combat systems and munitions to Ukraine, including 21 High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS), 1.5 Patriot air defense batteries, 131 Strykers, 33 Abrams tanks, 170 Bradley fighting vehicles, 66 M777 Howitzers, 72 M119 Howitzers, 36 M109 Paladins, and over 1.7 million artillery munitions. Providing this equipment not only helps the Ukrainians, but it earns the trust of our Allies and demonstrates our commitment to their security in an environment of continued competition for influence that is increasingly threatened by China and Russia. The Army has cash-flowed over \$1 billion from our base programs to support contingency operations in Ukraine and the Middle East. Supplemental funding enables the Army to accelerate force modernization through replenishment of our stockpiles. For example, the Army has sent older M113 Armored Personnel Carriers (APCs) to Ukraine and is replacing those stocks with state-of-the-art Armored Multipurpose Vehicles (AMPVs). Two additional examples of accelerated modernization from the supplemental include replacing High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWVs) with Joint Light Tactical Vehicles (JLTVs) and Bradley M2A2s with more modern Bradley M2A4s. Supplemental funding is also investing in the American industrial base, creating numerous jobs around the nation and a skilled workforce that is harnessing American ingenuity to replenish our equipment, support our Allies and partners, and ensure we remain the most lethal and capable force in the world.

The Army's organic industrial base (OIB) provides a core and foundational capability to enable materiel readiness, sustain surge capacity, and support future weapons system platforms. Composed of twenty-three depots, arsenals, ammunition plants, and 30,000 people, the OIB manufactures, rebuilds, maintains, and stores equipment for not just the Army, but also the Joint Force. In FY 2023, the Army invested

more than \$2.5 billion for modernization of the OIB between the base budget, supplemental funding, and the Capital Investment Program. These investments had significant impacts on upgrading facilities, infrastructure, and tooling, increasing production capacity, and ultimately resulted in a more modernized OIB. In the 26 months since Russia's invasion into Ukraine, the OIB has more than doubled their monthly production capacity of 155mm munitions, from 14,000 a month in 2022, to 30,000 a month today. The Army is maximizing use of multi-year procurement authorities for critical munitions, to include 155mm artillery, Guided Multiple Launched Rocket Systems (GMLRS), and Patriot missiles. These authorities provided by Congress allow us to more rapidly award contracts, drive down costs, while signaling a steady demand signal to industry to encourage further research and development. However, there is still more work to be done. Some reports indicate that the Russian industrial base is capable of producing 250,000 artillery munitions per month and 100 tanks per month. Meanwhile, the average age of one of our industrial base facilities is over 80 years old, and more than half of our facilities were built prior to 1945. Modernizing the OIB with sustained investment is critical to rapidly innovate, produce, and repair both enduring systems and the Army's signature modernization efforts.

Building Future Readiness through Continuous Transformation

As we confront an increasingly complex and unpredictable security environment, we must continue to build strategic readiness by transforming our capabilities, force structure, industrial base, and by remaining competitive to recruit and retain the best talent America has to offer. The FY 2025 budget request supports the National Defense Strategy, and balances meeting operational readiness requirements now with modernizing for the future, while taking care of our greatest asset – our Soldiers and their families.

Transforming Our Capabilities

As part of the Army's most significant transformation undertaken in the last 40 years, we are adding more than 30 new or upgraded systems across six critical modernization portfolios into current and new types of units. These priority investments

are essential for the Army to maintain overmatch on the future battlefield – from the brigade to theater level. Several of these signature modernization efforts have already been fielded, including the Maneuver Short Range Air Defense (M-SHORAD) which defends brigades from fixed and rotary wing aircraft, including uncrewed aerial systems. Additionally, the Precision Strike Missile, the Army's next generation surface-to-surface ballistic missile that provides commanders an all-weather capability to attack critical targets at all depths of the joint battlefield, will complete first tranche of deliveries by the end of the year. These modernization efforts underscore the Army's commitment to maintaining a technologically advanced and operationally effective force capable of meeting the challenges of modern warfare. By prioritizing investments in critical capabilities such as decision advantage, air and missile defense, long-range fires, and uncrewed assets, we are enhancing our ability to deter aggression, protect our interests, and prevail in future conflicts.

As the operational landscape evolves, the Army recognizes the importance of leveraging advanced unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) to maintain a decisive edge on the battlefield. Future UAS development represents a cornerstone of our modernization efforts, enabling us to enhance our reconnaissance, surveillance, target acquisition, and battle damage assessment capabilities while minimizing risk to our forces. In 2025, the Army is requesting \$129M to procure 7 FTUAS systems. This family of UAS platforms with varying capabilities and payloads will provide commanders with the flexibility and versatility needed to adapt to dynamic and unpredictable operational environments.

In response to the proliferation of UAS, the Army has prioritized developing and fielding advanced counter-UAS systems tailored to address the diverse array of unmanned threats encountered on the modern battlefield. These systems encompass a range of kinetic and non-kinetic capabilities designed to detect, track, and neutralize hostile drones with precision and effectiveness. One of the primary focus areas of the Army's counter-UAS efforts is the development of directed-energy systems, including high-energy lasers and microwave weapons, capable of disabling or destroying UAS platforms at extended ranges. Directed-energy systems offer several advantages over traditional kinetic weapons, including rapid engagement times, reduced collateral damage, and unlimited magazine capacity. To support the operational force, the Army

has programmed funding for nine counter-small UAS (C-sUAS) Division Sets between FY 2022-FY 2029 to protect division critical assets and maneuver formations from the sUAS threat. The first two divisions, the 82nd Airborne Division (Fort Liberty, North Carolina) and the 1st Cavalry Division (Fort Cavazos, Texas) have already undergone an initial fielding of sUAS equipment and will receive their occupational specialty-specific equipment before the end of 2024. The Army also fielded prototype counter-UAS systems such as Directed Energy-Maneuver Short-Range Air Defense (DE-MSHORAD) to forward-deployed forces in critical theaters of operation, including the USCENTCOM area of responsibility.

The FY 2025 budget request allows the Army to support the integration, acceptance testing, hardware evaluation, demonstration, and delivery of two additional DE-MSHORAD prototypes in FY 2025. It also will enable the Army to continue development of two other directed energy counter-UAS systems: the Indirect Fire Protection Capability-High Energy Laser (IFPC-HEL) prototype and the Indirect Fire Protection Capability-High Power Microwave (IFPC-HPM) prototype. Furthermore, our current budget structure of program-based budget line items limits our ability to evolve rapidly. To maintain capability overmatch in a competitive operating environment, the Army must be empowered with the fiscal agility needed to transform at the speed of innovation while preserving the necessary oversight by Congress. Adopting a capability-based budget structure would provide the Army flexibility to procure the latest technology to meet emerging needs of the warfighter. As such, the Army seeks consolidation of UAS, counter-UAS, and Electromagnetic Warfare budget line items into larger portfolio frameworks so that the Army is better postured to keep up with the pace of technology.

The Army is also restructuring its watercraft program to improve readiness and prioritize modernization while reallocating resources and globally repositioning assets to meet requirements. In the Indo-Pacific theater, Army watercraft systems are fundamental to positioning and sustaining troops and equipment for the Joint Force. In recognition of these requirements, we are focused on recapitalization of our legacy watercraft to extend their lifespan; we are making investments in new watercraft, and we are looking at all options to address any remaining sealift shortfalls.

Transforming Our Force Structure

To capitalize on these modernization efforts and the refocus on large scale combat operations against technologically advanced military powers, the Army is moving forward with a significant force structure transformation. Central to this transformation is completing the build-out of five Multi-Domain Task Forces (MDTFs), which integrates capabilities across all domains to enhance operational flexibility and effectiveness. They are designed to increase the depth and scale at which Army forces can protect Joint and Coalition forces, conduct intelligence gathering and synchronization, deliver non-kinetic space and cyber effects to shape operations, and deliver long-range fires in support of joint force maneuver. In addition to the MDTFs, the Army has implemented a series of force structure changes to enhance our ability to project power, protect critical assets, and achieve overmatch against potential adversaries. This includes eight Indirect Fire Protection Capability (IFPC) battalions with M-SHORAD, the expansion of IFPC battalions tasked with defending against rocket, artillery, and mortar (RAM) threats, and the establishment of dedicated counter-UAS batteries to counter the growing proliferation of hostile drones. To complement the Army's watercraft system investments, the latest force structure authorizes two additional Composite Watercraft Companies, which will bring greater reach to the Indo-Pacific theater. By continuously adapting our force structure to align with emerging threats and operational requirements, we ensure that our Army remains a potent and effective instrument of national power, safeguarding our interests and defending our nation's security in an increasingly uncertain world.

Transforming Our Organic Industrial Base

The OIB Modernization Implementation Plan (MIP) is the Army's 15-year, three-phased, \$18 billion plan to modernize the Army's 23 depots, arsenals, and ammunition plants. It focuses investments on five lines of effort: facilities, tooling/processes, workforce, network/cyber, and energy/environment. The goals and outcomes of the MIP include meeting current Army readiness demands; supporting enduring and signature modernization systems; surging for large-scale combat operation reducing single points

of failure and reliance on foreign sources; identifying and mitigating supply chain risks; sunsetting legacy systems and right-sizing production/manufacturing capacity; and aligning the workforce to support 21st century technology. Phase one of the MIP began in October 2023 and focused on repairs, restoration, and modernization of the critical support infrastructure to address the risk of rapidly aging and outdated infrastructure. The projects also include updates to critical production facilities to enable support to ammunition production and sustaining our modernization programs. Modernizing the OIB also supports our Allies and partners by enhancing equipment interoperability, increasing capacity for foreign military sales, and improving coalition maintenance support.

The FY 2025 budget request for the MIP includes \$1.5 billion for modernization projects at Holston Army Ammunition Plant, Iowa Army Ammunition Plant, Lake City Army Ammunition Plant, and Radford Army Ammunition Plant, along with continued production of 155mm artillery, the Next Generation Squad Weapon system, strategic fires, and enduring systems. Stable, consistent, and predictable funding is foundational to OIB modernization. Without focus over the 15-year MIP, we risk the relevance and readiness of the OIB to support the modernized Army of 2030 and 2040 as well as the strength of our Allied and partner forces.

Transforming Our Recruiting Enterprise

The operational readiness of our Army is dependent on the quality of an all-volunteer force, and we are committed to recruiting quality Soldiers in a competitive marketplace. We have transformed our recruiting enterprise to sustainably recruit now and into the future, to position the Army in the labor market as an employer of choice. In the fall of 2023, the Army announced major changes that have already yielded positive results on the FY 2024 recruiting outlook. We expanded the prospect market and have set a goal that by FY 2028, at least one-third of all new recruits will hold more than a high school degree. We are creating an enlisted and warrant officer talent acquisition job specialty to professionalize our recruiting workforce. We are seeking to elevate the U.S. Army Recruiting Command (USAREC) from a two-star to a three-star command with an extended tenure of at least four years, directly reporting to the Secretary of the

Army and Chief of Staff of the Army. We will also continue to build upon the success of the Future Soldier Preparatory Course (FSPC), which has brought more than 18,000 new Soldiers into the Army since its inception in the summer of 2022. This program is an investment in America's youth to assist them in overcoming barriers to service by providing focused academic and fitness instruction to help recruits meet and exceed the Army's desired accession standards for body fat composition and academic test performance prior to basic training, without lowering our accessions standards. While not a recruiting program, Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) enables the Army to reconnect with communities across the Nation while introducing Cadets and educators to military, national, and public service opportunities. The FY 2025 President's Budget request supports growth of the JROTC program to 1,744 schools by the end of FY 2025. The Army is unparalleled at unlocking a person's full potential and will invest in young people so that they can meet our standards. We need continued support from community leaders, parents, influencers, and Congress to encourage young men and women to serve.

Retaining the Force with High-Quality Housing

With ongoing and emerging threats worldwide, retaining and building resilience in our force and our facilities has become increasingly important. The Army finished FY 2023 achieving 102% of our retention mission. The active component is on track to meet its FY 2024 retention mission of retaining 54,700 and has retained over 32,000 Soldiers to date – a completion rate of over 58%. We understand that retention is critical to our readiness, and a driving factor of retention is ensuring we are taking care of our Soldiers and their families.

The Army's FY 2025 Military Construction (MILCON) budget request across all components is \$3.9 billion, which covers 45 projects. We are dedicated to providing safe, high-quality housing and barracks for our Soldiers. In FY 2025, we are requesting \$935 million for nine new unaccompanied housing construction projects across Active Duty and Army Reserve at multiple installations. We have programmed \$161 million for a 567-bed barracks at Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Washington to address the lack of available housing--which has caused many Soldiers to live off base, where the cost of

living is higher than current Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) rates. Additionally, the Army has requested 100% of the barracks sustainment requirement in the operations and maintenance account to address deferred maintenance and sustain our barracks' quality. The Army is also exploring options with the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) and the Office of Management and Budget to privatize barracks for junior enlisted Soldiers where it makes sense to do so, beginning at Fort Irwin, California. And to decrease the requirements for Soldiers to serve as barracks managers and enable them to focus on warfighting, the Army is allocating \$35 million to hire civilian barracks managers at multiple installations.

Family Housing and Childcare

The Army is making significant investments to also provide high-quality family housing, including both government-controlled and privatized family housing. To achieve this goal, the FY 2025 budget requests \$752 million for the operation, maintenance, leasing, privatization oversight, and construction of Army Family Housing worldwide. The Army has programmed funding for three construction projects in FY 2025. This includes the construction of 84 new housing units in Chievres, Belgium, the replacement of 54 units in Baumholder, Germany, and the renovation of 35 units at Camp Zama, Japan. In addition to ensuring high-quality government-controlled housing, the Army has made significant progress in improving the quality of privatized housing. Private housing providers will invest over \$2 billion in new construction, renovations, and other development work over the next three years.

The resilience of our force is dependent on more than just housing. Our Soldiers and their families need access to safe, affordable childcare so that they can focus on their missions. The Army provides a robust Child Care Fee Assistance Program that supports nearly 10,000 children daily. The FY 2025 MILCON Budget request includes \$174 million for three Child Development Centers and one Youth Center. By investing in childcare facilities and programs, the Army is helping to ensure that military families have access to safe and reliable childcare, which ultimately supports the readiness and resilience of our military force.

Installation Resiliency and Operational Energy

Resilient, efficient, and affordable installation energy and water are crucial to Army's ability to deploy, fight, and win our nation's wars from the homeland and our OCONUS bases. Installation energy and water resilience investments ensure power projection and deployment capabilities despite risks of grid power and water disruptions from natural disasters or man-made kinetic or cyber-attacks. To assess risks to our installations, the Army has completed initial Installation Energy and Water Plans (IEWPs) for almost every installation, and we have started developing Installation Climate Resilience Plans (ICRPs). To test our resilience, Army installations conduct Black Start Exercises assessing installations' ability to respond to an electric grid outage. These exercises have been completed at ten installations and planning is underway to execute these exercises at seven additional locations throughout FY 2024. The FY 2025 budget request prioritizes critical requirements such as water utility resilience investment and privatized utility infrastructure in key locations such as Hawaii. Reflecting the supply chain vulnerabilities and risks of contested environments, the Army is looking at new energy technologies to reduce the logistics burden. For instance, the Army is engineering and testing technologies like tactical vehicle hybridization, electrification of UAS, and sustainable ground-based power systems for our expeditionary contingency bases. The Army is considering all available options and exploring emerging technologies including nuclear, geothermal, and hydrogen fuel cells to strengthen its energy resilience and deliver the power necessary to accomplish the Army mission.

Conclusion

The Army's FY 2025 budget request for operational and strategic readiness represents an investment in the future of our nation's defense. We are delivering ready combat formations now while transforming to meet the needs of the rapidly changing environment. We are investing in our greatest asset – our people, to guarantee the longevity of an all-volunteer force. Our future military successes will be defined by our ability to rapidly integrate developing technologies including precision long-range fires, information systems, hypersonic weapons, quantum computing, artificial intelligence,

robotics, and pervasive all-domain sensors. The future battlefield will be stretched geographically and virtually across all domains, such as in space and cyber, and compressed in urban environments and close-quarters combat. Warfare will encompass all domains, requiring joint and combined operations with Allies and partners to effectively manage threats across the full continuum of conflict, from strategic competition to high-intensity warfare. Our formations are experimenting with new systems and tactics to confront emerging battlefield dynamics to ensure we maintain our competitive advantage over potential adversaries. To maintain capability overmatch, our Army must develop solutions faster through iterative, perpetual, and continuous improvement and modernization. By embracing continuous transformation, modernizing our force structure, and prioritizing the well-being of our service members, we are better positioned to confront the challenges of tomorrow. We express our gratitude to Congress for their unwavering support of our nation's Army and its mission to safeguard our freedoms and interests around the globe.