

OPENING STATEMENT OF U.S. SENATOR JACK REED
CHAIRMAN, SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

ROOM SD-G50
DIRKSEN SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
Tuesday, June 15, 2021

*To conduct a hearing on the Army budget posture in review of the Defense Authorization
Request for Fiscal Year 2022*

(As prepared for delivery)

REED: The committee meets today to receive testimony on the President's Defense Budget Request for the Army for Fiscal Year 2022.

Our witnesses this morning are Christine Wormuth, Secretary of the Army, and General James McConville, Chief of Staff of the Army. Thank you both for your service and willingness to appear before us today. And I would also like to wish a happy birthday to the Army, which turned 246 yesterday.

President Biden's Defense Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2022 includes approximately \$172.7 billion in funding for the Army, a reduction of \$3.6 billion from the FY21 enacted budget. The Army's request focuses on taking care of its people, maintaining and enhancing military readiness, and innovating and modernizing, but it does so in the face of these significant reductions. Budget briefings indicate that the Army budget decreased while the budgets of the Air Force and Navy increased, primarily because of the focus on China as our pacing threat, and the decision to withdraw from Afghanistan. The Army has thus prepared a tightly crafted budget that prioritizes modernization efforts over procurement and military construction. With that in mind, I am interested in hearing about the Army's view of their mission globally, especially in the INDOPACOM theater, now and in the future. Further, we would like to understand the risk the Army is assuming with current funding projections.

The Army's most valuable asset has always been its people. This budget request would increase funding for military personnel by \$1.2 billion and support a total force of just over a million soldiers. It also includes adjustments for retirement compensation reform, recruiting and retention incentives, and an across-the-board pay raise for military and civilian personnel of 2.7 percent – an important message to the workforce that begins to reverse years of pay freezes and benefit cuts.

The Army must continue to improve its readiness in the context of long-term strategic competition. The Army's ongoing focus on large training exercises, including the Defender series in Europe and the Pacific, and its leadership in the Project Convergence series, demonstrate progress in the right direction. These large-scale events not only test system capabilities and exercise critical skill sets to include mobilization and deployment of the force; they also facilitate joint and coalition training, reflecting how we would fight in future operations. The Army has also introduced the Regionally Aligned Readiness and Modernization

Model, or ReARMM, to synchronize all Army components across regions and provide predictability to the formations within the service: Regular Army, National Guard, and Army Reserves. This effort has great promise, and I would ask our witnesses to elaborate on how the budget request supports ReARMM and the Army's other important readiness efforts.

The Army's budget request includes an overall decrease in Research, Development, Test, and Evaluation (RDT&E), but makes important increases in several cutting-edge technology areas. To remain competitive with China and Russia, it is critical that we continue to invest in these emerging technologies which will define future battlefields across all domains. The Army specifically has been pursuing modernization in the areas of long-range precision fires, air and missile defense, soldier lethality, next generation combat vehicles, future vertical lift, and the communications network. These are ambitious and far-sighted objectives, but we must acknowledge that the Army has historically struggled to effectively modernize. The establishment of Army Futures Command, and the associated reorganization of related commands, injected tremendous energy into modernization efforts, and Congress has provided the Army with wide latitude to make programmatic and structural changes. Secretary Wormuth, General McConville, I would ask that you update the committee on the Army's modernization and RDT&E efforts and what resources are needed to effectively continue them.

Finally, as I said at the opening, the Army is fundamentally about people. In previous hearings before this committee, you have both committed to the Army being a "People First" organization, not just for soldiers, but their families, Army civilians, and veterans. For too long, issues such as racism, extremism, sexual harassment, and sexual assault have, in too many instances, gone unchecked. As we progress through this legislative year, the committee will tackle many important policy issues, including how we prevent and prosecute sexual assault and harassment in the ranks. More than anything, cultural change within the force is critical to reducing the number of sexual assaults and related offenses. The President directed a review earlier this year, and I know the Department and the Army have been hard at work. I plan to incorporate the Administration's recommendations into the mark and look forward to debate and votes on the issue.

Again, I thank the witnesses for their participation today and I look forward to their testimonies.

Let me now recognize Ranking Member Inhofe.