

Stenographic Transcript  
Before the

COMMITTEE ON  
ARMED SERVICES

**UNITED STATES SENATE**

HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON  
THE POSTURE OF UNITED STATES INDO-PACIFIC COMMAND  
AND UNITED STATES FORCES KOREA

Thursday, March 10, 2022

Washington, D.C.

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5 Thursday, March 10, 2022  
6

7 U.S. Senate

8 Committee on Armed Services

9 Washington, D.C.  
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11 The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:30 a.m. in  
12 Room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Jack Reed,  
13 chairman of the committee, presiding.

14 Committee Members Present: Senators Reed [presiding],  
15 Shaheen, Blumenthal, Hirono, King, Warren, Peters, Manchin,  
16 Duckworth, Rosen, Kelly, Wicker, Fischer, Cotton, Rounds,  
17 Ernst, Tillis, Sullivan, Scott, Hawley, and Tuberville.  
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1           OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JACK REED, U.S. SENATOR FROM  
2 RHODE ISLAND

3           Chairman Reed: I will call this hearing to order.

4           Good morning. The Committee meets today to receive  
5 testimony from Admiral John Aquilino, Commander of U.S.  
6 Indo-Pacific Command, and General Paul LaCamera, Commander  
7 of U.S. Forces Korea. Gentlemen, thank you for your service  
8 to the nation, and please convey my thanks to the men and  
9 women serving under your commands at this critical time.

10          The Department of Defense has appropriately identified  
11 China as the "pacing threat" for the United States military.  
12 In the next decade, the Indo-Pacific region is projected to  
13 generate two-thirds of the global economy and be home to  
14 two-thirds of the global population, and we must calibrate  
15 our strategy accordingly.

16          For the past several decades, China has studied the  
17 United States' way of war and focused its efforts on  
18 offsetting our advantages. Beijing has made concerning  
19 progress in this regard, especially with respect to  
20 disruptive technologies and weapons like hypersonics,  
21 artificial intelligence, 5G, and biotechnology. China does  
22 not accept U.S. global leadership or the international norms  
23 that have helped keep the peace for the better part of a  
24 century. Maintaining our competitiveness in this region  
25 will take a concerted, whole-of-government effort, but the

1 U.S. military, specifically INDOPACOM, will play a central  
2 role. As we speak, the importance of getting our approach  
3 right is on full display as another near-peer competitor,  
4 Russia, continues its brutal and illegal invasion of  
5 Ukraine.

6 Even as China has made progress, however, there is  
7 broad consensus that our comparative advantage over China is  
8 our network of allies and partners in the region and  
9 globally. Strengthening that network should be at the  
10 center of any strategy for the Indo-Pacific region, and the  
11 maturation of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, or Quad,  
12 involving the United States, Japan, India, and Australia,  
13 presents an opportunity to establish a durable framework.  
14 It is my hope that the Quad, as well as Korea, will provide  
15 a platform for engaging other regional partners.

16 The most likely flashpoint that could turn our  
17 competition with China into a conflict is Taiwan. If China  
18 is the pacing threat for the Defense Department, Taiwan is  
19 the pacing scenario. Following the brutal repression of  
20 pro-democracy demonstrations in Hong Kong by China over the  
21 past 2 years and the unprecedented number of aggressive  
22 Chinese military incursions into Taiwan's airspace, the  
23 world has a right to be concerned.

24 There has been discussion in the last year regarding  
25 whether we should be more explicit about coming to Taiwan's

1 aid militarily if they are attacked by China, the so-called  
2 "strategic ambiguity; versus "strategic clarity" debate. In  
3 my opinion, we should maintain the policy of strategic  
4 ambiguity that has helped to maintain the peace in the  
5 Taiwan Strait for decades. More than anything, changing our  
6 policy to strategic clarity could actually lead to  
7 escalation and the very conflict we are working so hard to  
8 prevent.

9 Admiral Aquilino, faced with these wide-ranging  
10 challenges, I would like to your assessment INDOPACOM's  
11 preparedness to carry out the United States' strategy in the  
12 region.

13 As we seek to more effectively compete with China, we  
14 must also manage the threat posed by North Korea. North  
15 Korea has vexed both Republican and Democratic  
16 administrations for decades. Maintaining peace and  
17 stability on the Korean Peninsula must remain a priority for  
18 the Department of Defense, though solving the long-term  
19 challenges posed by North Korea will require all elements of  
20 national power.

21 Through various intelligence reports, we know that Kim  
22 Jong Un views nuclear weapons as "the ultimate deterrent  
23 against foreign intervention," and, over time, intends to  
24 gain "international acceptance and respect as a nuclear  
25 power." The ultimate goal of U.S. policy remains the

1 denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, but we are not  
2 taking an all-or-nothing approach. Instead, the Biden  
3 administration has pursued what it describes as "a  
4 calibrated, practical approach to diplomacy with the North  
5 with the goal of eliminating the threat to the United  
6 States."

7 This approach will require smart and firm engagement  
8 with the North Koreans, but, more importantly, it requires  
9 coordination with our allies and partners in the region,  
10 particularly South Korea and Japan. General LaCamera, I  
11 would ask for your views on the partnership between the  
12 United States, Japan, South Korea, and other regional  
13 partners in addressing North Korea's destabilizing activity.

14 Similarly, General, the highest priority of any  
15 military commander is ensuring the readiness of the forces  
16 under their command to perform their mission. I hope you  
17 will share your views on how U.S. Forces Korea can maintain  
18 readiness through training and exercises with their South  
19 Korean counterparts while avoiding miscommunication or an  
20 unintentional escalation in tensions with the North.

21 Finally, Secretary Austin announced earlier this week  
22 that the Navy's Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility on the  
23 island of Oahu will be closed within the year following a  
24 series of major fuel spills. I believe that closing this  
25 facility was the right decision, and I would like to know,

1 generally, what steps are being taken to ensure the safety  
2 and health of the military families and civilians in the  
3 affected communities. More broadly, the closure of Red Hill  
4 is a significant change for our fueling and logistics  
5 approach in the Indo-Pacific, and that should be recognized  
6 by INDOPACOM Command.

7 Thank you again to our witnesses. I look forward to  
8 your testimonies.

9 Senator Inhofe could not be here today, so I am  
10 submitting his opening statement for the record.

11 [The prepared statement of Senator Inhofe follows:]  
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1 Chairman Reed: And with that let me recognize Admiral  
2 Aquilino.

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1           STATEMENT OF ADMIRAL JOHN C. AQUILINO, USN, COMMANDER,  
2           UNITED STATES INDO-PACIFIC COMMAND

3           Admiral Aquilino: Thank you, Chairman Reed,  
4           distinguished members of the committee. I want to thank you  
5           for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss  
6           the Indo-Pacific region. I sincerely appreciate your  
7           dedicated support to INDOPACOM, our servicemembers, and  
8           their families, and we wish Senator Inhofe well.

9           The People's Republic of China is the most  
10          consequential strategic competitor to the United States.  
11          The PRC is executing a dedicated campaign that utilizes all  
12          forms of national power in an attempt to uproot the rules-  
13          based international order to the benefit of themselves and  
14          at the expense of all others.

15          In the region, Russia also presents serious risks. As  
16          evident from their unprovoked and unjustified attack on the  
17          Ukraine, Russia has no regard for international law, its own  
18          commitments, or any principles that uphold global peace.  
19          Similarly, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and  
20          violent extremist organizations also pose acute threats to  
21          peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific.

22          To address these threats, Secretary Austin has  
23          articulated clear priorities: defend the homeland, deter  
24          our adversaries, and strengthen our allies and partners.  
25          These priorities are advanced through integrated deterrence,

1 which is the Department's approach to preventing conflict  
2 through the synchronization of all elements of national  
3 power, coordinated with the joint force across all domains,  
4 together with our allies and partners.

5 INDOPACOM's mission is to prevent conflict through the  
6 execution of integrated deterrence and, if necessary, be  
7 prepared to fight and win. "Seize the Initiative" describes  
8 INDOPACOM's approach to accomplish these missions. This  
9 approach requires the joint force to think, act, and operate  
10 differently. We do that by realigning our posture,  
11 advancing our warfighting capabilities, providing both the  
12 Secretary and the President with options across the spectrum  
13 of competition, crisis, and conflict.

14 Effective deterrence requires significant investment to  
15 defend the homeland, protect the joint force, operate in  
16 contested space, provide all domain battlespace awareness,  
17 with an integrated fires network to deliver those effects.

18 These initiatives are incorporated into a theater  
19 campaign plan facilitated by agile logistics, a robust  
20 exercise in experimentation program, and regular and  
21 consistent collaboration with our allies and partners to  
22 promote peace in the region. We must make concerted efforts  
23 to increase our resilience and strengthen our capabilities  
24 through sustained investments generated by predictable  
25 budgets, as strong industrial base, and reliable supply

1 chains.

2 I am optimistic we will see a strategy-based fiscal  
3 year 2023 budget that takes the appropriate initial steps to  
4 address key adversarial challenges and increase our  
5 warfighting advantages. The resource we commit now and in  
6 the future will help preserve a free and open Indo-Pacific,  
7 it will strengthen our deterrence posture, and provide us  
8 the ability to fight and win, should deterrence fail.

9 Thank you, Chairman, and I look forward to the  
10 questions.

11 [The prepared statement of Admiral Aquilino follows:]

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1 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Admiral. General  
2 LaCamera, please.

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1           STATEMENT OF GENERAL PAUL J. LaCAMERA, USA, COMMANDER,  
2           UNITED NATIONS COMMAND/ COMBINED FORCES COMMAND/ UNITED  
3           STATES FORCES KOREA

4           General LaCamera: Chairman Reed, distinguished members  
5           of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear  
6           here today. I appreciate your leadership and dedication in  
7           supporting our total force and our families who work with  
8           our Korean allies and the United Nations Sending States in  
9           order to man a stable and secure environment on the Korean  
10          Peninsula.

11          I would also like to thank President Biden, Secretary  
12          Austin, and General Milley for their continued leadership  
13          and support, along with Admiral Aquilino, the functional  
14          combatant commanders who support us, my fellow component  
15          commanders, and my interagency colleagues. It is easy to  
16          stand on freedom's frontier with this tremendous support.  
17          Finally, I want to thank your Korean hosts and their  
18          professional military.

19          I am pleased to update you on the great work done by  
20          our dedicated personnel who serve in the Republic of Korea.  
21          They are professionally executing the missions of the United  
22          Nations Command, Combined Forces Command, and U.S. Forces  
23          Korea. The United States-Republic of Korea alliance was  
24          forged in the crucible of battle. While the Democratic  
25          People's Republic of Korea continues to pose multiple

1 threats to regional and international security, this  
2 alliance remains the linchpin of the regional stability and  
3 has prevented the resumption of hostilities that shredded  
4 the peace some 72 years ago. It remains ironclad, and our  
5 servicemembers, along with the Republic of Korea military  
6 are trained and ready to respond to a provocation or crisis,  
7 if called upon.

8 Our three commands -- United Nations Command, Combined  
9 Forces Command, and U.S. Forces Korea -- must remain  
10 vigilant, prepared, and ready. Under one commander, these  
11 three commands are empowered to maintain a stabilized  
12 security environment for the Republic of Korea and our  
13 regional allies. We have international legitimacy through  
14 the United Nations Command, whose mission is to enforce the  
15 1953 Armistice Agreement, coordinate U.N. Sending State  
16 contributions, and execute assigned functions directed by  
17 the U.S. national authorities through Joint Chiefs of Staff  
18 to preserve peace and security on the Korean Peninsula.

19 UNC ensures a true multinational effort in support of  
20 armistice conditions while maintaining the utmost respect  
21 for the Republic of Korea sovereignty. We are proud of the  
22 combined teamwork of the U.S.-Korean alliance.

23 Combined Forces Command is the combined warfighting  
24 headquarters, representing the U.S.-Korea bilateral military  
25 partnership. Formed in 1978, it is a unique entity that

1 takes policy, direction, and missions from the Combined  
2 Military Committee and is governed by and subject to bi-  
3 national decision-making consensus.

4 We maintain our strong U.S. commitment to Korea. U.S.  
5 Forces Korea is the premier joint force committed to  
6 defending the security of the Republic of Korea. It is  
7 disciplined, trained, and ready to fight tonight, respond in  
8 crisis, and win in conflict. Central to meeting any threats  
9 is resourcing and strengthening our force and best possible  
10 care of our families. I am grateful for your support and  
11 leadership in these no-fail tasks.

12 I know you are aware of South Korea's powerful  
13 economic, military, and technical standings. No doubt you  
14 are aware of the social impact. All of this is part of the  
15 hard work, discipline, and dedication of the Korean people,  
16 all done under the security umbrella of the U.S.-Korea  
17 alliance. The Republic of Korea is an incredible ally and  
18 it is a privilege to move into the future together with them  
19 in the Land of the Morning Calm.

20 I am honored to command and serve this dedicated  
21 multinational combined and joint force in one of the most  
22 significant and dynamic regions of the world. Those who  
23 serve are committed, capable, and well supported. The force  
24 is postured to deter aggression, protect U.S. interests, and  
25 if necessary, defeat any adversary. As long as a threat

1 persists, the U.S.-Korean alliance remains vigilant,  
2 determined, and steadfast in defense of the Korean Peninsula  
3 and across the region. As the commander of these incredible  
4 servicemembers I appreciate this committee's continued  
5 support to fully prepare them to fight and win on the most  
6 dangerous piece of ground, the last 100 meters of land, sea,  
7 and air.

8 Finally, it has been an honor to work with the Moon  
9 administration. Congratulations to President-Elect Yoon.  
10 We look forward to working with his administration to  
11 strengthen the U.K.-ROK alliance and take on regional  
12 challenges.

13 Thank you for the opportunity to provide an opening  
14 statement. I look forward to your questions.

15 [The prepared statement of General LaCamera follows:]  
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1 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, General.

2 Admiral Aquilino, Taiwan has historically purchased  
3 expensive platforms rather than asymmetric systems which may  
4 be more relevant in an actual conflict with China. And in  
5 addition to that, Taiwan has one of the most robust  
6 economies in the world. Do you agree that Taiwan should  
7 have sufficient budgetary resources to procure the necessary  
8 defense systems?

9 Admiral Aquilino: Thank you, Chairman. I think I  
10 would leave it to Taiwan as to identify the number and  
11 amount of resources that they would like to invest. What I  
12 think I would say is the trend is in the right direction for  
13 the capabilities that we have seen them invest in. So for  
14 example, the Harpoon missile system is a capability that  
15 would provide a viable defensive posture for the people of  
16 Taiwan. Additionally, the F-16 capability for their air  
17 force.

18 So the amount that they would like to invest is part of  
19 the calculus. What they invest in, I think they are on the  
20 right path.

21 Chairman Reed: We are in a position to help them  
22 facilitate the acquisition of appropriate defense  
23 capabilities, and again they seem to have the resources to  
24 be able to support such an effort. Are there opportunities  
25 for us to get involved in co-development and co-production

1 of systems that will help them?

2 Admiral Aquilino: Thanks again, Chairman. I think  
3 there certainly is opportunity there. As we operate through  
4 the lens and in compliance with the Taiwan Relations Act,  
5 anything that we could do to bolster the defensive  
6 capabilities would be desirable.

7 Chairman Reed: Thank you. General LaCamera, you are  
8 in a very difficult situation with North Korea right on your  
9 front line and China hovering over everything. To what  
10 extent do you believe the Chinese are targeting our alliance  
11 with Korea and what insights might you share with us in  
12 terms of that effort?

13 General LaCamera: Thanks, Chairman. As you recall, a  
14 couple of years ago when the THAAD protection was put in  
15 there was an economic penalty put against the Republic of  
16 Korea for that. And it appears that the Republic of Korea  
17 has been able to come out of that. But it is still in the  
18 news. It is still a concern of the Koreans. And as I meet  
19 with my Korean counterparts it is always a topic of  
20 conversation.

21 Their influence is -- you know, they are neighbors.  
22 There is a diplomatic influence and there is clearly an  
23 economic influence. And they also have about 900,000  
24 Chinese that do live in South Korea. So there is an  
25 influence there that we have to paying attention to.

1 Chairman Reed: Well thank you very much. Admiral  
2 Aquilino, with respect to force posture your prepared  
3 testimony states, "More distributed combat power increases  
4 the liability, reduces risk, and enables the transition from  
5 defense to offense quickly should deterrence fail." And  
6 what are your top four posture priorities for the region?

7 Admiral Aquilino: Thanks, Chairman. As we take a  
8 look, the Guam cluster is clearly the top priority to  
9 provide capabilities as well as improving the posture in  
10 that place.

11 Tinian island, Palau, and the cluster there is highly  
12 important. Additionally, Japan is important to ensure that  
13 we get the DPRI right in coordination with our Japanese  
14 partners. The Philippines, very strategy terrain, and we  
15 are working through the EDCA sites that we have coordinated  
16 with the government of the Philippines to provide additional  
17 capability. And Australia is a place there we are focused,  
18 as I would articulate the top four.

19 Chairman Reed: There is a pending presidential  
20 election in the Philippines. Does that represent a  
21 potential change in our relationship, either positive or  
22 negative?

23 Admiral Aquilino: Chairman, the Philippines are a  
24 mutual defense treaty country. They have gone through many  
25 different elections, as many of the countries in the region.

1 So again, I am hopeful that we will continue to be able to  
2 operate, as Secretary Austin went over most recently and was  
3 able to solve the visiting forces agreement problem. So the  
4 Philippines is certainly on the proper trend and a great  
5 partner.

6 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Admiral. Thank  
7 you, General, for your testimony and your service.

8 Senator Wicker, please.

9 Senator Wicker: Thank you very much. Admiral, the CNO  
10 says we need 31 traditional amphibious warships. That is  
11 worldwide. How many do you need in your command?

12 Admiral Aquilino: Senator, if it is okay I will get  
13 back to you on the record for that as a classified event.

14 Senator Wicker: Okay. Well, let me just say, we are  
15 learning some lessons these last two or three weeks about  
16 reality and about some of our adversaries view what you call  
17 the rules-based international order. So I am really asking  
18 you to tell us what you need, and I think both sides of the  
19 dais here would do everything we can to make sure that  
20 happens.

21 Now let me ask you this. Every September 30th, this  
22 Congress, House and Senate, is supposed to send to the  
23 President a defense appropriation bill. It is wrapped up in  
24 an omnibus bill now, and we still have not had a chance to  
25 pass it here in the second week of March 2022. How much of

1 a problem is that? For the two of you, Admiral and General,  
2 what can you not do, what have you not been able to do for  
3 this part of the fiscal year because of the absence of a  
4 defense appropriation bill, and have we spent money  
5 needlessly because you are operating under a continuing  
6 resolution from the previous fiscal year?

7 Admiral Aquilino: Thanks, Senator. As I stated in my  
8 testimony, our predictable budgets are certainly helpful,  
9 both for the industrial base, the companies that support us,  
10 and to deliver the capabilities, operations and things that  
11 we need. The critical impact is the loss of buying power.  
12 I do not know the exact number that DoD has estimated with  
13 regard to the extent of the CR, but that loss of buying  
14 power is significant, in the billions.

15 It also has a separate effect for me, and I am not an  
16 acquisition authority, but it does have an effect on me, and  
17 that is none of the new starts or requests for capabilities  
18 are able to be delivered or started, begun, under a  
19 continuing resolution. So for my top three priorities -- a  
20 defense of Guam system, we have been unable to start or  
21 support that; the delivery of a mission partner environment,  
22 my ability to connect with all of our allies and partners to  
23 share information, plan, coordinate, and execute operations;  
24 and then the Pacific Multi-Domain Training and Exercise  
25 Capability System, in other words our ability to link all of

1 the ranges that we have to train at the high end, with live  
2 virtual and constructive capability. We have been unable to  
3 start any of those.

4 Senator Wicker: Have you had to spend money on things  
5 that, once this thing gets passed and the President signs  
6 it, really are no longer that important?

7 Admiral Aquilino: I am not aware of any of those,  
8 Senator.

9 Senator Wicker: How about that, General, and the  
10 overall question.

11 General LaCamera: I agree with everything the admiral  
12 said. I would add a couple of points. I do not know if we  
13 have had to spend any money on it. It does affect the  
14 buying power. It does affect how much time we have left to  
15 spend money going forward. At a tangible level, it is  
16 impacting some maintenance and it is impacting some new  
17 starts with, say, a counter-UAS program, going forward.

18 Senator Wicker: Admiral, what do you think the lessons  
19 the leadership of the People's Republic of China are  
20 learning from what is going on now in Ukraine?

21 Admiral Aquilino: Thank you, Senator. So there are  
22 three that I am watching very specifically. Number one, the  
23 loss of life required to create and execute an illegal war  
24 is certainly something that ought to be taken away. Both  
25 President Putin and President Xi Jinping should learn that

1 lesson, that cost of life is broad, extensive, and will  
2 haunt them both.

3 Second, the international condemnation that we are  
4 seeing of like-minded nations coming together to articulate  
5 the illegal aspect, the displeasure, and the needless loss  
6 of life needs to continue. And the third, the significant  
7 economic impacts that the free world can bring together  
8 against a nation who would take this type of action.

9 Senator Wicker: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

10 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator Wicker.

11 Senator King, please.

12 Senator King: Admiral, thank you. Thank you both for  
13 being with us this morning.

14 Admiral, we have learned a lot in the last week or so  
15 about nuclear doctrine in Russia, particularly the idea of  
16 escalate to deescalate. What do we know about China's  
17 nuclear doctrine? We know that they are vastly expanding  
18 their nuclear capability. As I say, do we have ideas about  
19 what China's assumptions are about the use of nuclear  
20 weapons?

21 Admiral Aquilino: Senator, thanks. I do not think I  
22 would assume anything, and I would defer to my partner,  
23 Admiral Richard as the STRATCOM commander. I think what I  
24 would tell you is what do we see happening in the theater,  
25 and that is an extensive buildup of nuclear capability,

1 articulated and intended to be delivered by the PRC -- 700  
2 silo-based or warheads by 2027, and over 1,000 by 2030.

3 Senator King: That is from a base of almost zero. I  
4 mean, their expansion has been dramatic, has it not?

5 Admiral Aquilino: Extremely, quickly, and as Admiral  
6 Richard most recently testified.

7 Senator King: Thank you. China calls itself a near-  
8 Arctic nation and is becoming more and more active in the  
9 Arctic. One of my concerns is the extent to which there may  
10 be gaps between NORTHCOM, EUCOM, INDOPACOM, given China's  
11 activities in these various areas. Reassure me about your  
12 integration with your fellow combatant commanders,  
13 particularly NORTHCOM, where China is operating in that  
14 region.

15 Admiral Aquilino: Thanks, Senator. As you know,  
16 NORTHCOM is actually the lead for the Arctic, so we  
17 coordinate persistently with General VanHerck and General  
18 Walters. Some of the examples, you know, when the most  
19 recent Russian submarine came from the North Fleet over to  
20 the Pacific Fleet, we monitored and watched that as it  
21 crossed combatant commander lines.

22 General VanHerck, I support him for the long-range  
23 aviation flights or any threats that emit from the  
24 northwestern portion of either from Russia or China as it  
25 applies to the homeland defense mission, no matter what path

1 they take.

2 So our cooperation and collaboration is persistent.

3 Senator King: Well part of our new strategy in the  
4 Indo-Pacific is dispersal. Would not a reinvigoration of  
5 Adak make some sense, and given its strategic position,  
6 again, it is in NORTHCOM but it is pretty darn close to  
7 INDOPACOM as well.

8 Admiral Aquilino: Yes, Senator, and we have used Adak  
9 most recently in an exercise, I think about a year ago, for  
10 a combined Navy-Marine Corps event from that area. So  
11 clearly a strategic location for both defense of the  
12 homeland and to be able to project power forward. We are  
13 going to have to take a look at the length of the runway  
14 there for some future operations.

15 Senator King: Thank you. I hope that is under  
16 consideration because again, if dispersal is the goal we do  
17 not want to concentrate everything in Guam, for example. We  
18 want to present problems for a potential adversary.

19 General, I have been concerned on an ongoing basis with  
20 the relationship between South Korea and Japan. A, where  
21 does that stand, and B, does the new administration have any  
22 -- did they come into this election season, which concluded  
23 yesterday, with any stated position about strengthening or  
24 further weakening the relationship between two countries  
25 which are important allies to us?

1           General LaCamera: Thanks, Senator. I am not aware of  
2 any specifics, but I think as President Yoon talks about  
3 security as a top priority that my best military advice is  
4 -- and I think the military leaders and my Korean  
5 counterparts truly understand the importance of a U.S.-ROK  
6 and a ROK-Japan relationship, and that is one of my top  
7 priorities as a commander of USFK.

8           Senator King: I appreciate that, and I hope that is a  
9 priority, to try to foster that relationship and improve it,  
10 because in a time of conflict, as we have learned, allies  
11 are essential. Winston Churchill once said, "The only thing  
12 worse than fighting with your allies is fighting without  
13 your allies." Thank you, General.

14           Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

15           Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator King.

16           Senator Rounds, please.

17           Senator Rounds: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Gentlemen,  
18 let me begin by just saying thank you very much to you and  
19 your families for your years of service to our country.

20           Admiral Aquilino, the space and cyber domains are where  
21 we are seeing a lot of activity and pose a real threat to  
22 our national security. With seven of the nine nations  
23 capable of launching satellites in your AOR, can you explain  
24 how you integrate your operations with USSPACECOM and  
25 USCYBERCOM, recognizing it provides both opportunities for

1 us but also some real threats?

2 Admiral Aquilino: Thanks, Senator. As we synchronize  
3 our operations together I have the greatest partners in  
4 General Nakasone from Cyber Command, General Dickinson from  
5 Space Command. As a matter of fact, I have asked them both  
6 to meet me in Australia in about a week and a half to  
7 synchronize with our Australian counterparts and continue to  
8 work towards improved capabilities in space and cyber.

9 This process is in our headquarters, that again you  
10 have heard me articulate this think, act, and operate  
11 differently. One of the critical aspects of that is how to  
12 synchronize all domain effects, and that includes space and  
13 cyber. I have dedicated people in my headquarters as cyber  
14 components and space components that operate in my  
15 headquarters every day, and I cannot be any more  
16 synchronized than that.

17 Senator Rounds: And I also like the fact that it is  
18 not just synchronized in multiple domains but with our  
19 allies as well, which I think is a critical part of our  
20 long-term prospects in the region.

21 General LaCamera, it has been brought to my attention  
22 that our service men and women and their families are  
23 required to receive a rapid test for COVID for them to  
24 return to Korea, but this test is not covered by TRICARE. I  
25 think it is wrong to charge our servicemembers for medical

1 tests that we are requiring them to take. Can you perhaps  
2 explain to me what this does to these young men and women  
3 and what the costs involved are, and perhaps give us some  
4 reasoning as to maybe why we should take some action  
5 immediately to resolve this?

6 General LaCamera: Thank you, Senator. If they are on  
7 official travel orders that is covered. They can claim  
8 that. If they are departing on leave, I will test them for  
9 any requirements leaving the Republic of Korea. But coming  
10 back in, there are ways that they can get it from CVS, out  
11 on the economy. The challenge becomes if they do not get it  
12 in time then they have to pay out of pocket to make sure  
13 that they can get back into the country. The requirement is  
14 48 hours right now, and it is currently not covered under  
15 TRICARE. And again, you know, so soldiers, sailors, airmen,  
16 marines, they want to do the right thing. They want to come  
17 back in. They are paying out of pocket. And currently  
18 right now I believe I do not have the capability to  
19 reimburse them.

20 Senator Rounds: Thank you, sir. I have one more  
21 question for Admiral Aquilino. The Indo-Pacific AOR has  
22 been described as the most consequential region of America's  
23 future. As such, it would appear to me that we should be  
24 working very hard to increase our network of allies and  
25 partnerships in the region.

1           The Army Corps of Engineers has done some remarkable  
2 work building partner capacity in areas of water and  
3 environmental security, disaster risk management, and  
4 humanitarian assistance construction projects. The Corps  
5 does a lot of this work from the civil works perspective and  
6 in concert with USAID. Can you speak to the effectiveness  
7 of these programs in building regional partnerships as  
8 opposed to how China does business?

9           Admiral Aquilino: Thanks, Senator. So the Army Corps  
10 of Engineers is certainly active in the region, as well as  
11 the engineering corps of all the services. We take on  
12 projects that support communities, deliver military  
13 warfighting capacity, and support our allies and partners.  
14 That is a vastly different model than the PRC is using with  
15 regard to bringing in workers, bringing in materials, and  
16 then settling in nation. So the models are completely  
17 different.

18           I was just in Palau. As a part of the Seabee corps  
19 that is forward deployed in Palau, I met with four interns  
20 from the island of Palau that were operating with the  
21 Seabees to learn skills, trade, and to improve the  
22 infrastructure of their island. So drastically different  
23 models, and I am confident that the nation sees which of  
24 those models they like better, and it is the United States'  
25 model.

1           Senator Rounds: Thank you, gentlemen. Thank you, Mr.  
2 Chairman.

3           Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Rounds.

4           Senator Hirono, please.

5           Senator Hirono: Thank you, and Admiral Aquilino and  
6 General LaCamera, thank you very much to both of you.

7           Mr. Chairman, I thank you for your opening remarks in  
8 support of the closure of the Red Hill facility and the need  
9 for us to address the INDOPACOM fueling needs in alternative  
10 ways.

11           Admiral Aquilino, we are going ahead with safely  
12 defueling this massive facility, or these massive tanks, and  
13 we are going to need to provide resources in the out years  
14 to deal with the environmental issues related to the closure  
15 of this facility. What are your major concerns and  
16 priorities with respect to the future fuel storage  
17 requirements for INDOPACOM?

18           Admiral Aquilino: Thank you, Senator. Thanks for the  
19 continued support. In the set of options I briefed the  
20 Secretary, and the decision that he has made with regard to  
21 closing it, was focused on three critical things. Number  
22 one, the top priority was clean, safe water for the people  
23 of Hawaii, servicemembers, and their families. Number two  
24 was to ensure that we could execute our military mission  
25 set. The option that he selected I believe provides a more

1 diverse, distributed, and effective fuel distribution model  
2 that meets all of my requirements.

3 Senator Hirono: How do you plan to mitigate any  
4 potential vulnerabilities that an alternate fuel solution  
5 may have? Although in my opinion we reduce our  
6 vulnerabilities by not having all our fuel in one place, but  
7 do you have some concerns about vulnerabilities of  
8 distributing this fuel, I do not know, throughout the  
9 Pacific, perhaps?

10 Admiral Aquilino: I absolutely do not, Senator.  
11 Again, I believe, as you articulated, a much more diverse  
12 and distributed, both land-based and sea-based, is the best  
13 model to ensure we can meet our warfighting needs.

14 Senator Hirono: The Compact of Free Association  
15 agreement, co-filed between the U.S. and the Republic of the  
16 Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and I  
17 know that you visited Palau, which is one of the other  
18 nations that are part of COFA, but as to the other two  
19 nations they are coming up for renewal in 2023, and Palau in  
20 2024. And as you noted in your written statement to the  
21 committee these agreements have significant impact on your  
22 ability to advance the priorities of the Pacific Deterrence  
23 Initiative and maintain a free and open Indo-Pacific.

24 I am really glad that you visited Palau and that we are  
25 going to be perhaps looking at different ways that we can

1 jointly be supportive, more supportive of these compact  
2 nations as we go forward. So I hope you will continue to  
3 prioritize our partnerships with these island nations to  
4 support our overall strategy in the Pacific.

5 Admiral Aquilino: Yes, ma'am. It is absolutely  
6 important to get to the appropriate renegotiation of the  
7 compact agreements. Again, visiting Saipan, Guam, Palau,  
8 and Tinian were really, really worthwhile trips for me. I  
9 got to spend some time with President Whipps from Palau.

10 As you know, the negotiation of those agreements are  
11 led by State Department in coordination with the Department  
12 of the Interior, and Department of Defense has a  
13 representative on the team, and have articulated my request  
14 to negotiate those as soon as possible in a way that is  
15 certainly beneficial to the United States as the PRC is  
16 looking to infiltrate throughout the region.

17 Senator Hirono: Exactly, and I think that our country  
18 should be paying more attention and a more supportive role  
19 with regard to our compact nations, because they are there  
20 in large extent because they are very much a part of our  
21 national security priorities.

22 Regarding North Korea, for both of you, this year alone  
23 we have seen North Korea executing nine rounds of missile  
24 tests, including a purported hypersonic missile, and its  
25 first launch since 2017 of an intermediate-range missile,

1 potentially capable of reaching Guam. Admiral Aquilino and  
2 General LaCamera, what is your assessment of the credibility  
3 of such threats from North Korea? Maybe we will start with  
4 you, General.

5 General LaCamera: As I live under that threat,  
6 Senator, the threat is real, and it spears that he is trying  
7 to develop capabilities to defeat our systems and threaten  
8 the peninsula and threaten regional stability.

9 Senator Hirono: So, Admiral Aquilino, is this one of  
10 the reasons that our protective systems on Guam is your top  
11 priority, or a top priority?

12 Admiral Aquilino: Absolutely. The ability to defend  
13 the homeland of Guam as well as the military forces that  
14 operate there. What I would say, though, is that the  
15 relationship we have with the South Koreans and the Japanese  
16 is critical. General LaCamera and I synchronize with  
17 General Won and General Yamazaki every time there is one of  
18 these launches, and if you just recently read we have  
19 increased the readiness level on both the peninsula and in  
20 support of the defense of Japan today.

21 Senator Hirono: And, Mr. Chairman, I want to note, not  
22 to mention the need to protect Hawaii. As we develop these  
23 missile systems, defense systems in Guam, we do still have  
24 the issue of Homeland Defense Radar - Hawaii.

25 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Hirono.

2 Senator Cotton, please.

3 Senator Cotton: Admiral, last year your predecessor,  
4 Admiral Davidson, warned that China may invade Taiwan, in  
5 his words, quote, "the next years." That was a year ago.  
6 In your best military opinion does that forecast still hold?

7 Admiral Aquilino: Thanks, Senator. I was going to  
8 start with -- who said that?

9 Senator Cotton: Admiral Davidson.

10 Admiral Aquilino: I do not even think about that last  
11 guy anymore. I think that his articulation was based on a  
12 couple of different points, but we would have to ask Admiral  
13 Davidson how he came to that.

14 One of the things that I have watched is President Xi  
15 Jinping has articulated and challenged his military to be  
16 able to modernize and complete its modernization by 2027.  
17 If we look over the past 10 or 15 years, that target date  
18 has moved left from 2035-ish, persistently. So 2027 is the  
19 military task.

20 I can tell you where I am is I see actions that give me  
21 concern that the timeline is shrinking, and the mission that  
22 I have been given is to be prepared for it. So when you  
23 look at the actions of the PRC as it applies to breaking  
24 their agreement for Hong Kong, taking physical, lethal  
25 actions on the line of actual control with India, completely

1 illegal claims for the entire South China Sea in every sea  
2 space and airspace inside their self-proclaimed nine-dash  
3 line, all of these actions give me concern. The most recent  
4 water-cannoning of Philippine sailors in the vicinity of  
5 Second Thomas Shoal. All of these things give me concern,  
6 and I cannot predict the date, Senator. I just know I need  
7 to be ready now.

8 Senator Cotton: I agree, Admiral. They give me a lot  
9 of concern as well. It was 6 years last year. It is 5  
10 years now. I think we should be as concerned that it might  
11 be 5 months and be ready for that.

12 One way to be ready for that, in the opinion of former  
13 Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who I think is one of  
14 the most distinguished statesmen of the region and of his  
15 generation, said that the United States should consider  
16 abandoning so-called strategic ambiguity regarding Taiwan,  
17 which we do not make it perfectly clear that we will come to  
18 their defense.

19 Given what we have seen in the invasion of Ukraine and  
20 what we understand about China's intentions, based on what  
21 you just said, should we make it clear to Beijing that we  
22 will, in fact, come to Taiwan's defense if Beijing attacks  
23 Taiwan?

24 Admiral Aquilino: Senator, as you know we currently  
25 are in execution and support the One-China policy. I think

1 what I would say is strategic ambiguity has served us very  
2 well for the past 40 years.

3 Senator Cotton: It has served us well under different  
4 circumstances, when the PLA was not capable of executing  
5 this mission and Beijing knew that. I would suggest now  
6 that the PLA is capable, the main constraint on China's  
7 leaders is America's intentions, and that is why we should  
8 change from strategic ambiguity to clarity.

9 Admiral, I want to turn to your opening statement. You  
10 used the phrase "integrated deterrence." The Pentagon  
11 defines that as "working across warfighting domains,  
12 theaters, and the spectrum of conflict in collaboration with  
13 all instruments of national power as well as allies and  
14 partners," end quote. That sounds to me like a bureaucratic  
15 word salad, cooked up in Colin Kahl's office. I do not  
16 understand what integrated deterrence adds to deterrence.  
17 Could you explain to me what you think the difference is  
18 between those two terms, because "deterrence" is a very  
19 simple and long-standing concept that depends centrally on  
20 hard military power, to include nuclear weapons?

21 Admiral Aquilino: Thanks, Senator. So again, in the  
22 late that I operate, in the military lane, again I believe  
23 that that hard power, credible combat power provides a  
24 deterrent value through the military sphere. I also believe  
25 that there are other forms that actually may be more

1 impactful. As we are watching in the Ukraine side, the  
2 economic impacts clearly have an opportunity, and I do  
3 believe synchronizing those with the military lane can  
4 really have an impactful ability to deliver deterrence.

5 Senator Cotton: All dependent, though, on continued  
6 military dominance across all military domains, to include  
7 our nuclear arsenal. Correct?

8 Admiral Aquilino: Certainly the military sphere,  
9 Senator, I coordinate with Admiral Richard as we present the  
10 entire spectrum of military capabilities to adversaries. So  
11 the synchronization of convention and strategic is critical,  
12 and then combining that with the rest is certainly valuable.

13 Senator Cotton: Yeah. And I want to commend you,  
14 because you have been very clear-eyed and sober while you  
15 have been in this command about the need for military power  
16 in the Western Pacific to deter China. I just want to make  
17 sure that events of political acrobatics [phonetic] in the  
18 Office of the Secretary of Defense are not going to  
19 undermine that military power on which all deterrence is  
20 based. Thank you, Admiral.

21 Admiral Aquilino: Yeah, Senator, if I could just make  
22 one comment. The Secretary has been completely supportive  
23 of the approach that we have taken, and not once have I been  
24 asked to throttle back or do anything different.

25 Senator Cotton: I did not say "the Secretary." I said

1 "the Office of the Secretary of Defense," which is large  
2 and sprawling and has a lot of political hacks in it.

3 Chairman Reed: Thank you. Senator Blumenthal, please.

4 Senator Blumenthal: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. Thank you  
5 both for your service and for being here this morning.

6 There was an announcement in December, as you know,  
7 that Australia was planning to build a new naval station on  
8 its east coast to base nuclear submarines planned for under  
9 the AUKUS agreement. This base could resupply and maintain  
10 American nuclear submarines, increasing the capabilities of  
11 both countries, Australia and our country, in countering  
12 China's influence and threats in the Pacific region. AUKUS  
13 allows us to capitalize on one of our greatest advantages in  
14 the Pacific, namely the strength and capabilities of our  
15 submarine fleet, which is second to none in the world.  
16 Sharing this technology with Australia will be a force  
17 multiplier, but those submarines are not scheduled to be  
18 commissioned for another 10 or more years. There was a lot  
19 of hoopla at the time of the announcement, but not so much a  
20 realization that there will be some delay.

21 The AUKUS agreement also provides a framework for joint  
22 cooperation and integration of cyber capabilities,  
23 artificial intelligence, and quantum technologies.

24 Admiral, as you know the United States, the UK, and  
25 Australia are currently engaged in an 18-month period of

1 consultation to determine the optimal pathway to nuclear-  
2 powered submarines for Australia. What would you like to  
3 see come out of this process? What themes of inoperability  
4 have you identified for AUKUS, moving forward, and can the  
5 timeline be accelerated?

6 Admiral Aquilino: Thanks, Senator. So the AUKUS  
7 agreement is really important, and everybody goes right to  
8 submarines, but as you articulated it is more broad than  
9 that. And we are working immediately to increase our space  
10 and cyber capabilities together with the Australians. We  
11 are looking at posture options beyond just submarines and  
12 naval bases to be able to operate together. And right now  
13 we are completely interoperable with the Australians.

14 On the submarine side, I think the Australians need to  
15 see the result of this initial review. They will have some  
16 decisions and choices to make. And then I think there are  
17 ways to bridge to that development as they work to get to  
18 the infrastructure, and then we review the additional basing  
19 options that you just articulated.

20 We would love to go as fast as possible. We certainly  
21 have to be mindful of the nuclear reactors and the safety of  
22 those things as we work this forward.

23 Senator Blumenthal: Speaking to the importance of this  
24 agreement, would you say it is more significant in light of  
25 what we have seen in Ukraine, and if so, for what reason?

1           Admiral Aquilino: I do not know if I would compare it  
2 on the Ukraine side. I think as I look at the theater that  
3 we operate in, there is vast number of basically  
4 multilateral relationships that are important, when you  
5 think about ASEAN, when you think about a trilateral  
6 relationship with South Korea, Japan, and the United States.  
7 This is just another one of those multinational agreements  
8 that provide both a military capability and capacity that is  
9 important for the region.

10          Senator Blumenthal: And do you think there is the  
11 opportunity or the potential for accelerating the timeline?

12          Admiral Aquilino: I think we will have to see the  
13 results of this review. I guess what I would say is this  
14 really will not happen quickly. If we can get from 10 years  
15 to 8 years, boy, that would be herculean.

16          Senator Blumenthal: And where do you think the  
17 submarines will be built?

18          Admiral Aquilino: I know the Australians certainly  
19 would like to have that industrial capacity. I think having  
20 an additional industrial base in another place for us is  
21 possible. But as you know, all of the United States  
22 submarines are built in Connecticut.

23          Senator Blumenthal: I know. Rhode Island. And Rhode  
24 Island has a role to play as well. Thank you very much,  
25 Admiral.

1 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Blumenthal.

2 Senator Ernst, please.

3 Senator Ernst: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and again,  
4 gentlemen, thank you very much for being here.

5 General LaCamera, let us start with you. We have seen  
6 a lot with the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and it just  
7 hammers home how connected the world is and the responses  
8 that we see from democratic nations. We have heard a lot  
9 about how EUCOM and INDOPACOM are totally different  
10 theaters, yet the responses from the Japanese, the  
11 Australians, the South Koreans when it comes to Ukraine have  
12 surprised a lot of people.

13 What do you think about the allied responses to the  
14 invasion of Ukraine, and can you shed some light on how all  
15 of these different regions are interconnected?

16 General LaCamera: Thank you, Senator. As I sat down  
17 with the Minister of Defense before coming to Washington,  
18 D.C., I told him we were paying attention to what is going  
19 on there. It is not a blueprint but it can be instructive  
20 to large-scale combat operations on the Korean Peninsula and  
21 in the region. And we need to be paying attention to that,  
22 boil it down to its fundamental lessons.

23 But I think as discussed already several times, you  
24 know, our true asymmetric advantages are alliances and  
25 having a coalition. And so I think it continues to

1 reinforce the importance of making sure that we have that  
2 strategic and international depth, and we can take  
3 everybody's capabilities and put it together as an  
4 asymmetric advantage.

5 Senator Ernst: And I think that is well said. There  
6 are so many connectivities, ways that we work with allied  
7 partners around the globe, that just become force  
8 multipliers no matter what that theater. So I am going to  
9 continue on some of that interconnectivity that we have. I  
10 know we were having a fuel discussion earlier, so I am going  
11 to direct this one to the Admiral.

12 In light of the energy crunch that we have now with the  
13 Russia invasion of Ukraine, it is my understanding that our  
14 military has fuel contracts with the Japanese and South  
15 Korean refiners, but much of their oil does come from Iran  
16 and others. Have you taken a close look at our DLA's energy  
17 contracts for INDOPACOM, and is that a strategic concern?

18 Admiral Aquilino: Thanks, Senator. We certainly keep  
19 a look at the refinery capability around the globe and how  
20 it might impact. I have not looked down to the second-,  
21 third-order effects as we coordinate with Japan, Korea, and  
22 the host nations. I would be glad to take that on with DLA  
23 to see where those vulnerabilities might be.

24 Senator Ernst: I would appreciate that, because again,  
25 there is so much that goes on under the surface, and if we

1 are relying upon Iran and other adversaries, just as we are  
2 seeing in our own economy right now, we are so reliant upon  
3 Russia. Russia is using those dollars to fund their war  
4 machine. The same could be said of a number of other near-  
5 peer adversaries like Iran. The dollars they are generating  
6 from their oil then also goes to fund terrorist activities,  
7 proxy activities around the globe.

8 So we are all interconnected, going back to what  
9 General LaCamera said. We have various strategic alliances,  
10 but we also need to look at where our adversaries are and  
11 how we can rely on partners for solutions rather than just  
12 focusing on folks like Russia and Iran and others. It is  
13 very important that we look at those secondary and tertiary  
14 implications.

15 So I will yield back my time. Thank you very much.

16 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator Ernst.

17 Senator Warren, please.

18 Senator Warren: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you  
19 to our witnesses for being here today.

20 Admiral Aquilino, I want to ask about the impact of  
21 defense industry consolidation on our ability to compete  
22 militarily and to be able to control costs. So last month  
23 the Department of Defense issued a disturbing report finding  
24 that defense mergers and growing concentration is reducing  
25 the number of suppliers and creating vulnerabilities in our

1 supply chain. And, of course, that is because when only a  
2 small number of companies produce components that DoD needs  
3 to buy, a pandemic or a single company's decision to cease  
4 production can leave us without the parts that we need, or  
5 instead of ceasing production those companies can just jack  
6 up prices to make more profits, without fear of being  
7 undercut by competitors.

8 So let me ask, Admiral Aquilino, do you consider  
9 hypersonic weapons to be an important priority?

10 Admiral Aquilino: Yes, ma'am.

11 Senator Warren: Hypersonic weapons is one area where  
12 the DoD report is particularly alarming, warning that  
13 vertical integration of those contractors and suppliers,  
14 quote, "will likely lead to reduced competition and may  
15 eliminate it altogether." Do you agree that DoD generally  
16 benefits from competition among defense contractors and  
17 suppliers?

18 Admiral Aquilino: Senator, let me just start by saying  
19 I do not have any acquisition authority, but competition is  
20 certainly the foundation of our free market.

21 Senator Warren: Well, it is not only a foundation of  
22 our free market, you are absolutely right, but it is how we  
23 assure that we are going to have supply and we are going to  
24 have it at a price that we can afford. That is why I have  
25 been concerned that DoD is asleep at the wheel when it comes

1 to mergers and acquisitions. Since the 1990s, we have gone  
2 from 51 aerospace and defense prime contractors down to just  
3 5 today. Controlling costs for hypersonics is going to be a  
4 major challenge for the Department. The GAO found that the  
5 costs of one of the Navy's programs nearly doubled in a  
6 single year, and that an Air Force program increased by 40  
7 percent in its first year.

8 Look, we are planning to invest about \$15 billion  
9 through 2024, so those kinds of cost increases add up in a  
10 hurry. Overruns in these programs take resources away from  
11 other Department priorities and other needs across the  
12 Federal Government, and the cost issues are significant  
13 enough that the Air Force Secretary Kendall has expressed  
14 concerns that they are not, quote, "cost effective."

15 So let me just ask you one more question in this  
16 general area, if I can. There are a number of factors that  
17 drive these cost increases. I realize that. There is  
18 complexity, poor planning, weak oversight. But do you think  
19 it will be important to prevent further concentration among  
20 hypersonics contractors, Admiral?

21 Admiral Aquilino: Senator, again, not being the person  
22 who actually purchases those things I think what I would say  
23 is I need to capability, and I need it as soon as possible.  
24 I encourage any particular way that we can execute that,  
25 with the most effectiveness for the delivery of the system,

1 at the most efficient cost to the taxpayer.

2 Senator Warren: I appreciate that and that is fair  
3 enough. You know, I think the Department's report makes  
4 clear that this needs to be a priority. If we do not have  
5 competition in this sector it is going to be extremely  
6 difficult to control costs, and I am working on legislation  
7 to address this right now.

8 So, Admiral, I hope that you and I can work together on  
9 controlling costs as we go forward. As you may know, your  
10 command submitted the largest wish list of any command,  
11 nearly \$1 billion, and these so-called unfunded priorities  
12 have become an extremely pernicious tool to boost what is  
13 already runaway Pentagon spending.

14 So I am going to be following up with you with more  
15 questions about these lists, but I urge you to be a more  
16 responsible steward of taxpayer dollars than your  
17 predecessors were and to think carefully about your requests  
18 for this year. Thank you.

19 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Warren.

20 Senator Tuberville, please.

21 Senator Tuberville: Thank you. Thank you very much.  
22 Thank you, gentlemen, for being here today and your service.

23 General, how has the vaccine mandate affected your  
24 troops in your command? Any at all? Any numbers?

25 General LaCamera: We are sitting at 99 percent

1 vaccinated. There are some exceptions to policies. I do  
2 not control those. Those go back to the departments. But  
3 it has had no impact to combat readiness.

4 Senator Tuberville: Admiral? Any?

5 Admiral Aquilino: Same, Senator. Again, the services  
6 control it, about the same percentage, maybe a bit higher,  
7 but there has been no impact on mission.

8 Senator Tuberville: Domestic extremism education  
9 courses are required. Any positive results you have seen  
10 out of this, General?

11 General LaCamera: Yes. You know, we take on new  
12 soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines each week. We have got  
13 to integrate them into the formation, and we have to tell  
14 them that any extremism is not tolerated. And commanders at  
15 all levels are focusing on that. It goes against good order  
16 and discipline, and it makes us less combat ready.

17 Senator Tuberville: Have you all had to take these  
18 courses? I am just asking.

19 General LaCamera: I have, yeah. I have participated  
20 in them, and I tell you, sitting in there and listening to  
21 the different demographics and age groups, I have learned.  
22 It is boggling.

23 Senator Tuberville: Admiral?

24 Admiral Aquilino: Senator, we owe the servicemembers,  
25 the civilian warriors that support us a safe, healthy place

1 where they can execute their oath that they took for the  
2 uniformed members and for the civilian members, their desire  
3 to serve their nation. We owe them a healthy, safe,  
4 comfortable place to work.

5 I have taken the same courses. We have actually done  
6 some additional things, and I can tell you I have learned a  
7 lots, in just talking with the servicemembers. You know,  
8 they are willing to tell you some of the things they have  
9 experienced. And to General LaCamera's point, there is zero  
10 tolerance for any discrimination, sexual harassment, and we  
11 are learning a bunch.

12 Senator Tuberville: That is the reason I am asking  
13 these questions. I am for that. And do we need to make it  
14 better? I come from the education field. Is there ways we  
15 can make it better? Do we need to talk to more people,  
16 more commanders, more officers, enlisted? How can we make  
17 it better?

18 General LaCamera: I think we are a learning  
19 organization and I think we are learning from the junior  
20 servicemembers as they give us their experiences and as we  
21 see the different generational gaps. So, I mean, any help  
22 that we can get from the outside, but internally, you know,  
23 after-action reports and sharing lessons learned has kind of  
24 been our -- has made us the military that we are today.

25 Senator Tuberville: Good. We have all got to be on

1 the same team, as dangerous as this world is.

2 You know, one area I believe we excelled in with this  
3 Ukraine conflict is the information right. We successfully  
4 countered Russian and Chinese disinformation. This is a  
5 fight that both of you in your AOR is going to be important.

6 You know, what tools do you all need? Do you need any  
7 more tools to get out the messaging effectively, you know,  
8 because it will ramp up as years and days go by? General?

9 General LaCamera: I mean, we have to be able to  
10 compete in the information space. It is easier to put a  
11 bullet in someone's head than it is to put an idea in their  
12 head, and we never send just one bullet or just one bomb.  
13 It is constant. We have got to be prepared to compete in  
14 the information space. We have got to be prepared to make  
15 mistakes and react to it. We are not going to get it  
16 perfect, but I think, again, watching Ukraine, we are  
17 watching a country who is able, you know, a leader who is  
18 able to shut off the information to his own people. And we  
19 have got to figure out ways to penetrate that and get that  
20 message out.

21 Admiral Aquilino: Thanks, Senator. You know, the  
22 changing information space, as you articulated, is really  
23 challenging. Disinformation, misinformation, propaganda.  
24 In the Indo-Pacific command we have initiated JTFIP in  
25 Singapore, and with our partners in Singapore we have put

1 together an information capability that can lead to the  
2 potential identification of violent extremists. That is  
3 done with, right now, nine countries.

4 So we are learning how to do this better. I do not  
5 think I have any specific tools right now, but in my 1242  
6 report you are going to see requests to ensure we can fund  
7 those things that we have today. And to General LaCamera's  
8 point, as we learn how to go forward I am certainly happy to  
9 share thoughts with you.

10 Senator Tuberville: One other question, Admiral. In  
11 this year's NDAA, we got in an Aegis system for Guam. We  
12 just need to find a way to fund it. Your thoughts? Is it  
13 still a priority?

14 Admiral Aquilino: Absolutely, sir. It is still my  
15 number one priority.

16 Senator Tuberville: Thank you.

17 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Tuberville.

18 Senator Shaheen, please.

19 Senator Shaheen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and good  
20 morning. Thank you both for your testimony this morning.

21 South Korea has a new president. I guess my question  
22 is to you, General LaCamera, because he has, during his  
23 campaign, appeared to take a more hardline approach with  
24 respect to both North Korea and China. Can you talk about  
25 how you see his new administration continuing to work with

1 the United States and whether you expect any changes there?

2 General LaCamera: Thanks, Senator. Working with the  
3 country team, you know, we will reach out to his transition  
4 team, and I look forward to taking what he talked about in  
5 his campaign and continuing to move forward when it comes to  
6 protecting South Korea and maintaining regional stability.  
7 It seems very promising, everything that we have seen on the  
8 conservative side, in his approach and focus on defense, and  
9 now we will have to see what it looks like in execution.

10 Senator Shaheen: So I do not know if you want to add  
11 anything to that, Admiral, but do we expect him to continue  
12 to collaborate with us in regional alliances, in the Quad,  
13 in looking at things like AUKUS that we are continuing to  
14 try and partner with Asian countries on?

15 Admiral Aquilino: Thanks, Senator. You know, the  
16 alliance with the South Koreans, it is clearly the linchpin  
17 to the broad set of alliances that go to the region.  
18 Really, really important, no matter who is elected. I see  
19 at the mil-to-mil level, alongside my battle buddy, General  
20 LaCamera, they are a clear, solid, treaty alliance partner.  
21 We operate together every day on the peninsula. So again, I  
22 think we will continue to work together, and I do not expect  
23 any changes.

24 Senator Shaheen: Well, and President-Elect Yoon is new  
25 to politics ,I understand, and has made a number of

1 statements in his campaign about North Korea and about his  
2 interest in seeing North Korea behave differently. Do we  
3 have any concerns about that? Do we expect to work with him  
4 on how South Korea and North Korea continue to interact, if  
5 at all?

6 General LaCamera: Yes, Senator. To me the alliance, I  
7 mean, it is an intangible relationship here that we have to  
8 continue to work with the Republic of Korea going forward to  
9 allow the diplomatic process to work with DPRK and as the  
10 trajectory of peace on the peninsula. So we expect to work  
11 with him. We worked well with the Moon administration, and  
12 I expect that we will continue to work well with the  
13 incoming administration. We do respect the sovereignty of  
14 the Republic of Korea.

15 Senator Shaheen: Of course. I appreciate that, and I  
16 appreciate the partnership that we have shared with them in  
17 the Indo-Pacific.

18 Admiral, the Women, Peace, and Security Act requires  
19 the U.S. government, for the first time, to strengthen the  
20 participation of women in conflict prevention and peace  
21 negotiations, and I know that INDOPACOM is actually taking a  
22 leadership role in implementing this law, initiating  
23 trainings around gender insecurity. Can you talk about why  
24 you see that as important and how you are seeing that get  
25 implemented in ways that you think will be helpful to us in

1 the future?

2 Admiral Aquilino: Yes, Senator. I think I would start  
3 at the foundational level, right. This is about talent, and  
4 50 percent in the United States are our ladies, and there is  
5 talent everywhere. So our role in ensuring that the rest of  
6 our partners understand it, can benefit from it, these are  
7 like-minded nations with like-minded values. So we work  
8 hard to transmit that.

9 At the most recent Chiefs of Defense Conference that we  
10 had there were 18 representatives from the region, and one  
11 of the specific topics that we discussed was how are we  
12 going to more diversify, specifically as it applies to  
13 women, peace, and security. The Vice Minister of Japan came  
14 and gave a presentation, and she is an amazing lady. It was  
15 really notable to the rest of the participants.

16 But bottom line is we all agreed, as one of the three  
17 takeaways, is we were going to work towards increased  
18 diversity with our female population through the lens of  
19 military service.

20 Senator Shaheen: Thank you. I am really pleased to  
21 hear that. Thank you very much. I look forward to further  
22 updates as you continue to implement the program.

23 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

24 Senator Sullivan, please.

25 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and

1 gentlemen, thank you for your service, exceptional service  
2 in my view, and the service of your families.

3 By the way, you do not have to comment on it. I am  
4 going to take exception to Senator Warren's view of unfunded  
5 mandates as some kind of wish list. I actually read them, I  
6 am not actually sure she has, and I believe they are  
7 actually needed priorities.

8 Admiral, you have been talking about integrated  
9 deterrence, the economic impacts of the free world coming  
10 together on Ukraine with the sanctions, all instruments of  
11 national power. I think one of the lessons from Ukraine and  
12 the brutal invasion by the dictator, Vladimir Putin, is that  
13 comprehensive economic and financial sanctions have the best  
14 chance of deterring conflict when they are clearly  
15 articulated and ready to go, before the conflict begins.  
16 And I recently introduced legislation, Congressman Gallagher  
17 in the House introduced companion legislation that would  
18 mandate comprehensive and devastating economic and financial  
19 sanctions against the Chinese Communist Party, key sectors  
20 of China's economy, and leaders of the CCP in the event it  
21 initiates a military invasion of the island democracy of  
22 Taiwan.

23 I was in Europe recently, discussing this with many of  
24 our allies and encouraging them to consider similar actions.

25 What is your thought on legislation like that, particularly

1 as it relates to all instruments of American power and the  
2 deterrent effect beyond just what you control, which is the  
3 military instrument?

4 Admiral Aquilino: Thank you, Senator. I will have to  
5 go into detail and take a look at the legislation. I have  
6 not read it to date. I guess I think what I would say it as  
7 long as it is in compliance with the Taiwan Relations Act as  
8 a portion of all forms of national power I would be  
9 supportive.

10 Senator Sullivan: Thank you. Let me ask, just  
11 following up on that, the Chinese Communist Party has  
12 already crushed Hong Kong, once a bastion of liberty.  
13 Unfortunately, I think the free world barely raised its  
14 voice. I believe a violent, successful takeover of Taiwan  
15 by the CCP would be sea change in how the world is ordered,  
16 not just the Western Pacific but the world. I think it  
17 could change the history of the 21st century in the ways of  
18 the "Guns of August" of 1914 changed the 20th century.

19 What is your analysis of that, especially as it relates  
20 to the trust our treaty allied partners have in the region?

21 Admiral Aquilino: Senator, I think most of the nations  
22 in the region have the same view. The change in the  
23 international world order is at risk. There are economic  
24 impacts. Two-thirds of the global flow of trade flows  
25 through that region in the maritime domain. There is

1 expansive second-, third-order effects that would be  
2 concerning.

3 Senator Sullivan: You know, you mentioned Philippines,  
4 Guam, Australia. Can you talk a little bit about Alaska in  
5 terms of the fight, in terms of if you need to be ready, our  
6 proximity, which as you know is quite close to Korea, Japan,  
7 Taiwan, our military forces, which you have operational  
8 control over, over 100 fifth-gen fighters, all kinds of  
9 other things. And related to that, are we becoming too  
10 militarily concentrated with our military assets on Guam?

11 Admiral Aquilino: I do not think we are becoming too  
12 consolidated or too focused on Guam. It is a strategic  
13 location, certainly as Alaska is a strategic location. And,  
14 Senator, all of those forces that are positioned there would  
15 certainly be needed and expected to join any response  
16 options.

17 Senator Sullivan: Let me ask my final question for  
18 both the general and admiral. I believe the Ukrainian  
19 invasion has made it clear that we are in a new era of  
20 authoritarian aggression, led by two dictators, Putin and Xi  
21 Jinping. They are driven by historical grievance. They are  
22 often increasingly isolated, which makes them dangerous.  
23 They are very paranoid about their democratic neighbors  
24 because they cannot bring democracy and freedom to their own  
25 people. And as you both know, the CCP often looks at -- as

1 a matter of fact, both of them look at historical grievances  
2 as a way to justify current and future claims of aggression.  
3 That is happening in Ukraine right now. But as you have  
4 already mentioned, the nine-dash line, South China Sea,  
5 Taiwan.

6 In the 13th century, the Yuan Dynasty of China invaded  
7 and occupied Korea for several decades. To both gentlemen,  
8 has the CCP ever mentioned this as a possible pretext for  
9 aggressive or future actions against the Korean Peninsula?  
10 They seem to do it a lot in other areas of Asia, and this is  
11 one area that they have previously occupied.

12 General, why don't we start with you.

13 General LaCamera: Thanks, Senator. Again, I think  
14 history is instructive, not a blueprint, but I think the  
15 answer really lies in the head of Xi Jinping.

16 Senator Sullivan: But have you ever heard that? I  
17 mean, the nine-dash line, in my view, is ridiculous, but  
18 they still brought that out as a map and say, "Here, this is  
19 history. Now we are going to make sure everybody abides by  
20 it." They did occupy and invade Korea. Have you ever heard  
21 that from them?

22 General LaCamera: I have not.

23 Senator Sullivan: Okay. Admiral, how about you?  
24 Because, you know, they are looking at many other areas, and  
25 again, a lot of times, based on historical grievances? Any

1 thoughts?

2 Admiral Aquilino: I have not seen that yet, Senator.  
3 Again, a lot of focus, obviously, on the reintegration of  
4 Taiwan and the extensive claim through all areas inside the  
5 nine-dash line. I have not seen or heard of them beginning  
6 to lay the groundwork for a Korea issue.

7 Senator Sullivan: I think it is something we need to  
8 keep an eye on. Thank you, gentlemen. Thank you, Mr.  
9 Chairman.

10 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Sullivan.

11 Senator Kelly, please.

12 Senator Kelly: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Admiral and  
13 General, I have a question for each of you. First, Admiral,  
14 it is about building partner capacity. Security cooperation  
15 programs are an important tool for us to achieve our  
16 national security objectives. It strengthens our regional  
17 security efforts. It assists in combatting shared threats  
18 and provides valuable intelligence to deter potential  
19 aggression.

20 The 2018 National Defense Strategy sought to shift the  
21 prioritization of security cooperation activities away from  
22 counterterrorism and towards great power competition with  
23 Russia and China. Additionally, the fiscal year 2021  
24 defense bill established the Pacific Deterrence Initiative,  
25 in part to prioritize security cooperation activities in the

1 Indo-Pacific.

2 So, Admiral, how is INDOPACOM utilizing security  
3 cooperation partnerships to counter Chinese incursions into  
4 the South China Sea and deter potential aggression against  
5 Taiwan?

6 Admiral Aquilino: Thanks, Senator. First of all, when  
7 we continue to work with our allies and partners by itself  
8 is a huge deterrent value. So that continued exercising  
9 operations that is enabled through the security cooperation  
10 funding is really important.

11 Second, it helps, in some cases, to deliver some  
12 posture options. So there is an economic benefit and a  
13 counter to the one-belt, one-road as we work with our allies  
14 and partners. And then certainly to build their capacity in  
15 the forms of articles that we can either sell or give  
16 certainly enhances interoperability and allows us to be able  
17 to quickly come together and operate together. So there are  
18 multiple benefits.

19 Senator Kelly: You mentioned the funding. Are you  
20 resourced adequately?

21 Admiral Aquilino: We will see when the 2023 budget  
22 comes out, and I have articulated and will highlight my  
23 requirement.

24 Senator Kelly: All right. Thank you.

25 General, the U.S. military has not conducted its annual

1 large-scale exercises, Full Eagle and Key Resolve with South  
2 Korea since 2018. I myself, I participated, you know, a  
3 long time ago, in Team Spirit, at least a couple of times,  
4 and believe that it is critical that we maintain a  
5 deterrent, and part of a deterrent is to convince the North  
6 Korean through these exercises that despite their larger  
7 force our ability to operate jointly with our partners is a  
8 significant force multiplier.

9       You know, North Korea must know that the U.S. and South  
10 Korean militaries are prepared to operate jointly and  
11 effectively to repel a North Korean attack, and as we look  
12 at the situation unfolding in Ukraine, it is concerning to  
13 think that the cancellation of these exercises could be  
14 misinterpreted to signal a waning commitment.

15       Do you believe large-scale exercises contribute to  
16 deterring potential North Korea aggression?

17       General LaCamera: Senator, thank you. I do. You  
18 know, his, in the information space trying to get us to  
19 cancel those exercises and potentially reduce our readiness  
20 works in his favor, and he does not have to expend any  
21 energy.

22       But while we have not done the field training exercise  
23 that you referred to -- Full Eagle, Team Spirit -- we have,  
24 last year we did do our command post exercise in the spring  
25 and the fall, and we are scheduled to do it coming up here.

1 We are also training at all levels in the field with our ROK  
2 allies.

3 Senator Kelly: When do you expect to be back to doing  
4 a large-scale exercise?

5 General LaCamera: That will be determined as the new  
6 administration comes in, and working with the Minister of  
7 Defense going forward.

8 Senator Kelly: Could you just kind of describe the  
9 difference in readiness between pre-2018, in the remaining  
10 time -- I only have about 30 seconds -- compared to what it  
11 is today, if you can kind of quantify that in a way?

12 General LaCamera: All the reports are that we are able  
13 to achieve readiness, the same readiness levels. Again, the  
14 gold standard for me at the tactical level are the live  
15 fires, and then force-on-force, we are able to get the  
16 Koreans off the peninsula to our combat training centers and  
17 to do that training there. As a commander, obviously more  
18 is better. But it is hard for me to speak before my time.

19 Senator Kelly: But your preference is to do the large-  
20 scale exercises on the Korean Peninsula.

21 General LaCamera: Yes. My preference is to do as much  
22 training as possible at all echelons.

23 Senator Kelly: All right. Thank you, General.

24 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Kelly.

25 Senator Hawley, please.

1           Senator Hawley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you  
2 both for being here. Admiral, it is good to see you again.  
3 Thanks for your time a couple of days ago.

4           I want to start with something that the NDAA from last  
5 year says, Section 1241 in particular. It says that it is  
6 the policy of the United States to maintain the capacity of  
7 the United States to resist a fait accompli that would  
8 jeopardize the security of the people on Taiwan, and the  
9 NDAA also defined that term, "fait accompli," to mean the  
10 resort to force by the People's Republic of China to invade  
11 and seize control of Taiwan before the U.S. can respond  
12 effectively.

13           Tell us why it is important for the United States to be  
14 able to respond quickly in order to prevent a fait accompli.

15           Admiral Aquilino: Thank you, Senator. Certainly where  
16 our forces are positioned, again, a number forward but much  
17 in reserve on the west coast of the United States. Credible  
18 combat power placed forward has an extremely valuable  
19 deterrent value. A, it can respond with speed; B, it is  
20 operating in the area and can rehearse, and ultimately there  
21 is no better training than operating in the space you would  
22 fight in.

23           Senator Hawley: And I just want to underline what you  
24 said there about the necessity for our forces to be postured  
25 forward, combat-credible forces postured forward. That is

1 what will enable us to respond quickly. Have I got that  
2 right, if I understood your testimony correctly?

3 Admiral Aquilino: Yes, sir.

4 Senator Hawley: Very good. Let me ask you this. We  
5 recently heard from a RAND analyst, Dave Ochmanek, who has  
6 written that Taiwan, in his view, ought to prioritize  
7 asymmetric defenses like the following. Here is a non-  
8 exhaustive list: smart minds, anti-ship missiles that are  
9 deliverable from mobile launchers, mobile short-range air  
10 defense missile systems and distributed reconnaissance and  
11 communications systems.

12 In your view, why are asymmetric defenses and  
13 capabilities so important for Taiwan to be able to deter  
14 Chinese aggression?

15 Admiral Aquilino: Thanks, Senator. Again, a defense  
16 in-depth mindset and model that can deliver. We have heard  
17 many cases the defense of Taiwan being described as a  
18 porcupine. Those capabilities allow those effects to be  
19 delivered in multiple places, at multiple times, in multiple  
20 ways. So I concur with the capabilities articulated.

21 Senator Hawley: Let me ask you this. You said earlier  
22 today that anything that we could do to bolster the  
23 defensive capabilities of Taiwan would be desirable. I  
24 think that is so important. I have introduced my own piece  
25 of legislation, the Arm Taiwan Act, which authorizes \$3

1 billion annually to accelerate Taiwan's deployment of  
2 asymmetric defenses and conditions that aid on Taiwan  
3 increasing defense spending and undertaking key defense  
4 reforms.

5 Here is a broader question for you. We need Taiwan to  
6 strengthen its asymmetric defenses, in particular, as  
7 quickly as possible, do we not? Can you tell us why that  
8 is?

9 Admiral Aquilino: Well, I think, Senator, one of the  
10 lessons learned as we watch what is going on in Europe is,  
11 number one, aggressive nations can take action. So number  
12 one, action against the island of Taiwan could happen,  
13 lesson one. Lesson two, there needs to be a readiness level  
14 as soon as possible.

15 Senator Hawley: And for that reason, is it fair to say  
16 that it is critical for Taiwan to keep increasing its  
17 defense spending and to continue to implement defense  
18 reforms in order to achieve that sort of porcupine state  
19 that you were talking about earlier?

20 Admiral Aquilino: Yes.

21 Senator Hawley: Let us talk a little bit about some of  
22 the physical capabilities that you are going to need in  
23 PACOM in order to deter China, and I am thinking of things  
24 like attack submarines, carrier strike groups, high  
25 ammunitions, air-breathing ISR. The thing about all of

1 these physical capabilities is that they can only be used in  
2 one place at one time. Am I right about that, is it fair to  
3 say?

4 Admiral Aquilino: I would say in some cases. There  
5 are certain domains that capabilities could be brought to  
6 bear very quickly when I think about space and cyber.

7 Senator Hawley: Right. Got you. But leaving aside  
8 space and cyber and thinking about just the physical  
9 capabilities, these are sometimes called the high-demand,  
10 low-density assets that if they get used in one theater --  
11 let's say EUCOM -- then they are not available in PACOM.  
12 And so there is a tradeoff. Have I got that right? I mean,  
13 we have got to make choices.

14 Admiral Aquilino: Again, depending on type. So  
15 bombers can move quickly, and we, in many cases, share those  
16 in the same mission, across multiple combatant commands.  
17 But most at the speed that they can move can only serve us  
18 one at a time.

19 Senator Hawley: Fair enough. Where I am going with  
20 this is something you and I have already talked about, which  
21 is that while we have a current crisis in EUCOM, I think as  
22 we think about the ongoing challenges that we face in PACOM,  
23 both in the short end and the long term, I want to make sure  
24 that DoD is not taking capabilities from your theater, that  
25 we have absolutely got to have to continue to deter China

1 through a strategy of denial, and using them in other  
2 theaters, unless, of course, they are backfilling in some  
3 way.

4 So if you want to comment on that, go ahead.

5 Admiral Aquilino: If you do not mind, Senator.

6 Senator Hawley: Please.

7 Admiral Aquilino: Again, I just want to be very clear  
8 that the Secretary has not removed anything that he has  
9 allocated to me at this point to a different theater.

10 Senator Hawley: Very good. If I could, just one more  
11 question, Mr. Chairman, and it is about the admiral's  
12 upcoming 1242 report. Just give us a sense, Admiral, as we  
13 anticipate that report and without commenting on the  
14 specifics yet because it is not out, but how important will  
15 it be for Congress to fully fund the requirements that you  
16 have listed in that report in order to do your job of  
17 deterrence in PACOM?

18 Admiral Aquilino: Sir, I think what I would say is,  
19 you know, the committee and the Congress has tasked me to  
20 provide those requirements. I think I would leave the  
21 legislations and the legislating up to this team. What I  
22 would do is just thank you for your focus on the Indo-  
23 Pacific command, and I look forward to being able to deliver  
24 you those requirements.

25 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Hawley.

1 Senator Duckworth, please.

2 Senator Duckworth: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and good  
3 morning, Admiral Aquilino and General LaCamera. I  
4 appreciate your service to our nation and I want to thank  
5 those servicemembers under your commands for their tireless  
6 work in tackling enormous challenges that we now face in the  
7 Indo-Pacific.

8 As you know, I have been a vocal voice for combat-  
9 credible logistics, and so we are going to talk about that  
10 again today. I have been consistent and loud in this  
11 committee about my concerns because I know how difficult  
12 effective sustainment can be, and I know that outrunning  
13 supply lines can result in a catastrophic loss of a tempo  
14 for military forces.

15 Right now we are watching an object lesson in the  
16 importance and challenge of an effective logistics plan with  
17 Vladimir Putin's disastrous invasion of Ukraine, and that is  
18 a neighboring country, with whom he shares a border. You  
19 know, while Putin's ineffective approach to sustainment  
20 generally tracks with his patterns of arrogance and  
21 strategic failure, I hope that we are thinking critically  
22 about how much greater the sustainment problem will be if we  
23 are called to defend our troops and allies in your area of  
24 responsibility, a very far distance from home.

25 Admiral Aquilino, where do you see the greatest gaps in

1 INDOPACOM's ability to conduct logistics in a contested  
2 environment, and how are you planning to fill those gaps,  
3 and what areas of upcoming budget requests are most critical  
4 for your success? Whatever you can share in this  
5 unclassified environment, obviously.

6 Admiral Aquilino: Yeah, thanks, Senator. The posture  
7 initiatives that we have laid out -- and again, I look  
8 forward to coming to briefing you at a classified level on  
9 the approach, the plan, the hubs, the spokes, the different  
10 legs of our logistics plan, I would love to show it to you.

11 But the posture, the places that we are going to have  
12 to set up, critical. The transfer from one place to another  
13 and then into the region, whether it be sealift, airlift,  
14 those are the second set of capabilities that we are  
15 interested in.

16 Senator Duckworth: Thank you. Same question to you,  
17 General.

18 General LaCamera: Thank you, Senator. Sustainment  
19 operations is a focus item for me, and it is the commander's  
20 business, and I made it very clear to my subordinate  
21 commanders. My discussions with Admiral Aquilino is when  
22 does strategic movement become operational maneuver and what  
23 combat power is going to have to be used to secure those  
24 lines of communication will be a discussion that we will  
25 have in a crisis and in conflict.

1           As we get different capabilities on the peninsula,  
2 where that line is we might be able to provide that  
3 capability in working with the ROK navy, ROK air force, et  
4 cetera. That will all be part of the integration going  
5 froward. But I can assure you that sustainment operations,  
6 not just getting to the peninsula and getting those  
7 supplies, but also in the fight in defending the peninsula  
8 is a priority.

9           Senator Duckworth: Thank you. Gentlemen, last week I  
10 met with General Van Ovost, Commander of the USTRANSCOM, who  
11 was visiting from Scott Air Force Base in Illinois, and she  
12 assured me that our strategic logistic requirements will  
13 play a larger role in the upcoming NDS, and I look forward  
14 to seeing the details when that NDS is released. But I will  
15 be closely watching to see how the Department implements and  
16 resources that strategy going forward.

17           Admiral Aquilino, I know you have been working closely  
18 with U.S. Transportation Command, which I think is important  
19 given the unique challenges of the tyranny of distance that  
20 poses to TRANSCOM in your area of responsibility. One  
21 particularly concerning mission I have discussed with  
22 TRANSCOM was patient transport, wounded warriors. It is  
23 clear that in a contested environment in INDOPACOM we will  
24 not be able to evacuate patients from theater as quickly as  
25 we were able to in Iraq and Afghanistan. There are more

1 challenges, and there might need to be a dwell time of maybe  
2 5 hours, 6 hours, or 12 to 24 hours, before we can transfer  
3 them to the next mode of transport.

4 In the event of a conflict in INDOPACOM, we will need  
5 to think outside the box established over the last 20 years  
6 in order to effectively care for our wounded. This is an  
7 area that I am ready and willing to support.

8 Admiral, would you commit to sharing any analysis your  
9 command is conducting on medical mobility with me and this  
10 committee once it is completed, and will you commit to  
11 working directly with my staff on ways we can partner with  
12 you to tackle this potential problem?

13 Admiral Aquilino: Senator, absolutely. So we have  
14 been working through a set of CONOPS on what does it look  
15 like, and as you articulated, in a really complex theater,  
16 most of it water. We have said again, through this lens of  
17 hubs, spokes, transition stations, so I would be glad to  
18 show you how we are thinking about. But your point is  
19 really valid. This theater and this operation, we will not  
20 be able to meet the golden hour.

21 Senator Duckworth: Yeah. One final question. I would  
22 like to move onto strengthening our partnerships in the  
23 region. Senator Blumenthal did talk about AUKUS and how  
24 bold the Australians are. You know, they are all in. They  
25 put all their chips in with us. And as you and I discussed

1 last year, I think we need to match their bold commitment to  
2 the partnership if we are going to make it successful,  
3 especially when it comes to submarines.

4 Admiral, how can you support implementation of the  
5 AUKUS deal in your operations and planning for the region,  
6 and from your perspective how can Congress support this  
7 partnership and be equally as bold, especially when it comes  
8 to components of deal such as they are building the capacity  
9 to build their own submarines?

10 Admiral Aquilino: Thanks, Senator. I think step one  
11 is to let this report run out, right. So they have some  
12 decisions to make which are significant decisions as we work  
13 through the submarine portion. Once they identify a couple  
14 of key ways forward -- you heard the other day they decided  
15 they are going to have to have a base on the east coast -- I  
16 think now we can kind of step in, partner with them, and  
17 work towards some of these posture initiatives. We will  
18 work toward nuclear power school. We can partner with  
19 riders on submarines. There are a bunch of things we can  
20 do, but they really have to make some choices first, and I  
21 am confident they are looking to go as fast as possible as  
22 well.

23 Senator Duckworth: I am out of time, Mr. Chairman.  
24 Thank you.

25 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator Duckworth.

1 Senator Scott, please.

2 Senator Scott: Thank you, Chairman. First I want to  
3 thank each of you and everybody in your command for your  
4 service.

5 Admiral, given your unique position in the Indo-Pacific  
6 command you have observed the Communist Chinese regime. Is  
7 it your personal opinion that General Secretary Xi will take  
8 over Taiwan by force if he sees the opportunity?

9 Admiral Aquilino: Senator, I do not think I would try  
10 to predict. I think what I would I tell you is the mission  
11 I have been given is, number one, to prevent this conflict,  
12 number two, if deterrence fails to be able to fight and win,  
13 which leads me to a place that says I need to be ready  
14 should he make that choice.

15 Senator Scott: Thank you. Admiral, in your personal  
16 opinion, do you believe that this Administration has given  
17 proper attention to the possibility of Communist China  
18 invading Taiwan?

19 Admiral Aquilino: I think as stated by the Secretary  
20 and the Administration, the priority theater, most  
21 consequential theater for the future of the United States is  
22 the Indo-Pacific theater, and the most concerning strategic  
23 competitor is the PRC. So I think that articulation and  
24 that priority has been well stated, Senator.

25 Senator Scott: Admiral, has the Pacific Defense

1 Initiative been properly funded, and does it provide the  
2 right counter to Communist China and its threats in the  
3 region?

4 Admiral Aquilino: I thank the committee for support to  
5 the Indo-Pacific, and as articulated in the law, Senator, I  
6 will continue to provide the requirements as identified and  
7 tasked by the NDAA to identify my critical requirements.  
8 And again, I thank the committee as we work through the  
9 legislation process. As you know, I submitted my unfunded  
10 list. It was based on that report, and I will continue to  
11 do so.

12 Senator Scott: Thank you. Admiral, as we discussed  
13 the last time you were before us, I have introduced  
14 legislation that calls for the building up of Taiwan's  
15 defenses as well as preparations in the United States that  
16 will allow us to aid Taiwan if Communist China attacks or  
17 tries to change its government using military coercion. My  
18 bill also calls for a more transparent, realistic, and  
19 necessary policy change. We must announce clearly that our  
20 position toward aiding Taiwan is not ambiguous. Communist  
21 China should know that we will come to Taiwan's defense, and  
22 since we last spoke even the Japanese government made clear  
23 that it would not tolerate a Chinese military move against  
24 Taiwan.

25 So here is my first question. Do you believe that

1 preventing Communist China from controlling Taiwan is a  
2 strategic necessity for the United States?

3 Admiral Aquilino: Senator, I completely support the  
4 One-China policy, operate in accordance with the Taiwan  
5 Relations Act, to communicate its reassurances, and I think  
6 that is going to be a policy decision. I think there are  
7 certainly implications, but I standing by to support the  
8 requirements and tasks as identified by the National  
9 Security Council.

10 Senator Scott: After the Administration's botched  
11 withdrawal from Afghanistan and the failure to be able to  
12 deter Putin from invading Ukraine, do you believe that this  
13 has emboldened Xi to try to take Taiwan by force?

14 Admiral Aquilino: I think we are still trying to learn  
15 what President Xi Jinping has learned from this event, and  
16 we continue to watch to try to identify, has he learned the  
17 correct lessons as it applies to the changing world order  
18 and the concern that we see in the Ukraine.

19 Senator Scott: Thank you. General, with the election  
20 yesterday in Korea, and even before that, have you seen any  
21 change in South Korea's attitude toward Communist China and  
22 concern about the risk of Beijing's aggressive actions?

23 General LaCamera: Thanks, Senator. There is a  
24 relationship that they have, a diplomatic and economic  
25 relationship, and a cultural relationship that they have

1 with China. I have not seen any major changes in that  
2 relationship. The current administration has been on a  
3 working-towards-peace declaration as its priority.

4 Senator Scott: So as we have watched China's  
5 aggressive actions, do you think the general public in Korea  
6 is taking note, and now as they watched Putin invade  
7 Ukraine, has that had any impact on the attitude in South  
8 Korea to want to bolster their defense and support what we  
9 are doing to help defend them?

10 General LaCamera: It is hard for me to ascertain. I  
11 have been stateside since the invasion began, so I, just  
12 anecdotally, am getting reports on kind of the reaction.  
13 The political reaction is that President Moon has taken  
14 action against the Russians from a sanctions perspective,  
15 and it is costing them economically.

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

17 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Scott.

18 Senator Rosen, please.

19 Senator Rosen: Well thank you, Chairman Reed, for  
20 holding this hearing. Thank you so much to our witnesses  
21 here today for your service to our nation and really your  
22 expertise in these important areas.

23 I would like to focus today on cyber, artificial  
24 intelligence, and the importance of maintaining our  
25 technological edge in general, particularly as it relates to

1 this region. So I want to talk about, first, cyber threats,  
2 because some of the most devastating cyberattacks that have  
3 targeted the United States, well they have originated from  
4 China and North Korea. And just this week a cybersecurity  
5 firm reported that a Chinese state-sponsored hacking group  
6 successfully compromised the networks of at least six U.S.  
7 state governments since May of 2021.

8 So, Admiral Aquilino, what are you doing, what are we  
9 doing to defend against Chinese state-sponsored cyber  
10 threats and what more should or could we be doing to deter  
11 these malicious activities?

12 Admiral Aquilino: Thanks, Senator. So you have  
13 highlighted certainly a concern that we worry about, not  
14 only in our own networks but in our ally and partner  
15 networks. Whether they be state actors or non-state actors,  
16 the potential impact is significant. In close coordination  
17 with my partner, General Nakasone, who has that  
18 responsibility to defend the defense global information  
19 grid, and to work with our allies and partners, we are  
20 linked very closely. He works in lanes both in the  
21 defensive lane and has the ability to work in the offensive  
22 lane as well.

23 So that partnership is consistent. We have both  
24 identified the critical requirements on both sides, and he  
25 continues to support us.

1           Senator Rosen: It is important that we work with our  
2 partner countries in collective collaborative. General  
3 LaCamera, what are the U.S. forces in Korea doing to deter  
4 and mitigate North Korean cyber threats?

5           General LaCamera: Thank you, Senator. Again, our  
6 concern is making sure that our networks are protected and  
7 making sure that our alliance networks are protected from  
8 those cyberattacks. We do practice it on a regular basis,  
9 and in an exercise coming up that will be part of the  
10 exercise, to make sure we are protecting it.

11          Senator Rosen: And how quickly do you feel you can  
12 respond when you have that exercise? How quickly do you  
13 receive your reports on those, gentlemen, after your  
14 exercises, that you can respond to the vulnerabilities that  
15 you might find?

16          General LaCamera: I think we can respond fairly  
17 quickly. You know, we know that that is going to be part of  
18 their attack plan, and that protecting our networks and  
19 reacting to those and making sure that we have the  
20 redundancy in our plans. And, you know, the real question  
21 is, you know, we rely heavily on digital, but at what level  
22 can we quickly switch to analog so that we are not  
23 vulnerable from that piece there.

24          Senator Rosen: And you share those with your partner  
25 services so that they can be aware of any vulnerabilities as

1 soon as you find them?

2 General LaCamera: Yes, Senator.

3 Admiral Aquilino: Senator, so General Nakasone is  
4 really good. I will tell you, if it is detected, it is a  
5 critical information requirement for me. I will know within  
6 minutes, as well as all the components.

7 Senator Rosen: Thank you. I appreciate that.  
8 Components, I have a whole nother discussion on software  
9 bill of materials. We can talk about components another  
10 day.

11 But again, Admiral, as we discussed when you testified  
12 before the committee last year, China is accelerating its  
13 military modernization through its cutting-edge technology,  
14 and they want to close the technological gap with the U.S.  
15 as quickly as possible. They are making investments in AI,  
16 robotics, cyber, hypersonics. They are procuring commercial  
17 technologies we know that can be adopted for military  
18 purposes.

19 So I want to follow up on my question from your  
20 confirmation hearing last year. Do you believe today that  
21 China has achieved technological parity with the U.S. in any  
22 of its operational systems, and are there any that you feel  
23 that they are out outpacing us? What should we be investing  
24 in with you to give you the tools to not let that happen?

25 Admiral Aquilino: Thanks again, Senator. So let me

1 start with intent. The intent of the PRC is to take  
2 advantage in every one of those. We continue to be the  
3 greatest military on the planet, and we need to keep and  
4 continue to keep those advantage. So number one, for  
5 protection, whether they be defense or defense-critical  
6 contractors or other sources, we have to protect those  
7 critical communities that you articulated in order to  
8 maintain those advantages.

9 Senator Rosen: Thank you. I see that my time is up.  
10 I hope that we will have a hearing talking about the lessons  
11 learned from the war in Ukraine. As we begin to find out  
12 more about any particular cyber or technological activity we  
13 can prepare for our future adversaries.

14 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

15 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Rosen.

16 Senator Manchin, please.

17 Senator Manchin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you,  
18 sir, for your service, and thank you for being here.

19 General Aquilino, recently this committee had a very  
20 sobering briefing from the Department. In this briefing it  
21 was mentioned that the Marine Corps made the very hard  
22 decision to procure a NMESIS anti-ship missile instead of  
23 the more traditional equipment, but Congress made a decision  
24 to zero that request out in exchange for two CH-53K  
25 helicopters, and part of that is built in my state. So I

1 mentioned this example because it is one of many. I believe  
2 the majority of my colleagues agree with me. In order to  
3 compete against China we ought to do the best thing we can  
4 do, not what is politically popular. Let us put it that  
5 way.

6 With that in mind, what domain of warfare do you  
7 believe the U.S. still maintains an asymmetrical advantage  
8 against China, and what weapons systems or equipment do you  
9 believe we should procure to widen that advantage?

10 Admiral Aquilino: Thanks, Senator. So I will start by  
11 saying that we do have the world's greatest military in all  
12 domains, foundational. There are certainly capabilities  
13 that we want to go ahead and pursue, and I commend the  
14 commandant on making some of those tough choices, right. So  
15 land-based, anti-ship fires is a critical component of the  
16 strategy and the approach, but it will take the entire joint  
17 force. So that is one example. There are some hypersonic  
18 capabilities that we certainly want to continue to pursue  
19 and then deliver. We want to be able to continue to work  
20 unmanned capabilities to provide different alternatives as  
21 part of the contribution.

22 So there are a number of those. Those are just three  
23 examples.

24 Senator Manchin: General LaCamera, you mentioned in  
25 your opening statement your work towards achieving the

1 bilateral Conditions-Based Operational Control Transition  
2 Plan between the United States and the Republic of Korea.  
3 When fully implemented, the Republic of Korea will assume  
4 direct operational control over their military in the event  
5 of war with North Korea.

6 So my question would be, can you explain to the  
7 committee if this transition plan is successfully executed,  
8 how will the immediate nature of our presence on the Korean  
9 Peninsula change?

10 General LaCamera: Thank you, Senator. As we go  
11 through this bilaterally agreed-upon Conditions-Based OPCON  
12 Transition, we are in the process of working through what  
13 are the bridging capabilities and what are the enduring  
14 capabilities. So when the chalk line is finally snapped it  
15 is hard for me to predict right now, based on the  
16 capabilities that the Korean military has and what the  
17 requirements are.

18 We are also in the process of rewriting our operational  
19 plan.

20 Senator Manchin: Being the U.S. Forces Korea  
21 Commander, how would you lead your force in the event of a  
22 war on the Korean Peninsula following the plan's execution?

23 General LaCamera: How would I lead the forces? It  
24 would be part of the Combined Forces Commander. So I would  
25 become the Deputy Commander of Combined Forces Command, and

1 my deputy would become the Combined Forces Commander. I  
2 would work underneath him. I would still retain the title  
3 of U.S. Forces Korea and UNC Commander. And then it is  
4 still a binational decision-making process between both  
5 national command authorities.

6 Senator Manchin: Admiral, the Marine Corps has taken  
7 significant risk in recent years to reorient the service  
8 towards our pacing threat, China. Among the many  
9 initiatives the Marine Corps is pursuing is orienting the  
10 Marine Corps towards developing the doctrine for  
11 expeditionary advanced-base operations. What are you doing  
12 as the INDOPACOM Commander to support the Navy and Marine  
13 Corps refined and further operational to this concept?

14 Admiral Aquilino: I think what I would say, Senator,  
15 is making them prove it to me, right? So it is a concept  
16 for a number of years now, and we are working to rehearse it  
17 and practice it.

18 Senator Manchin: What challenges do you see with that?

19 Admiral Aquilino: We see certain challenges in  
20 capability delivery, transportation, placement, and posture,  
21 in some cases.

22 Senator Manchin: Can I ask you both one final  
23 question. Knowing what you know and the insight that you  
24 have on where we are in the Ukrainian-Russian war -- the  
25 Putin war. I am not even going to ingratiate them by

1 calling it the Russian war. It is the Putin war. The  
2 escalation, your concerns about escalating this war,  
3 escalating into bringing us into conflict, chances of them  
4 breaching over into the NATO allies?

5 Maybe General LaCamera. The Marines are first to go,  
6 so tell me if you are ready or not.

7 General LaCamera: Thank you for compliment. I am sure  
8 the commandant would appreciate it. I am watching the  
9 impact that it will have on the Korean Peninsula, and the  
10 regional stability is my main concern. I do not have the  
11 insights of what is really going on.

12 Senator Manchin: Admiral, your thoughts?

13 Admiral Aquilino: Senator, you know, it is part of the  
14 commander's business to assess three things in everything we  
15 do, no matter what theater or where we are. Number one is  
16 risk to force. Are we putting U.S. servicemembers,  
17 families, or supporting people in harm's way? So risk to  
18 force, to make sure I can send everybody back with Mom, Dad,  
19 and the kids after the mission is complete. Number two is  
20 risk to the mission itself. Am I going to achieve what I am  
21 trying to do and generate the effect that I am trying to  
22 generate? And then number three, risk to escalation. We  
23 assess it in every single event, every single operation, and  
24 I know my counterparts in EUCOM are doing the same thing.

25 Senator Manchin: Thank you, sir. Thank you, Mr.

1 Chairman.

2 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Manchin.

3 Senator Peters, please.

4 Senator Peters: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank  
5 you, gentlemen, from your testimony today and for your  
6 service to our country.

7 Admiral Aquilino, there has been significant discussion  
8 regarding how our partners in South Asia, particularly  
9 India, have responded to the crisis in Ukraine, and I am  
10 concerned that we may be missing the forest from the trees  
11 here, and I believe that as a country we need to balance  
12 some legitimate Indian concerns with our desire to work  
13 closely with them at the same time, as well as other Quad  
14 partners to maintain a free and open Indo-Pacific.

15 So my question for us, Admiral, is can you speak to the  
16 relationship you have with our Indian counterparts, and what  
17 more can we do to strengthen our security relationship  
18 between our two countries?

19 Admiral Aquilino: Senator, to start I have no  
20 concerns. Our partners in India are tremendous partners and  
21 the mil-to-mil relationship is probably at its highest  
22 point. We continue to do more together.

23 Forgive me for a second but I will recognize my  
24 partner, General Rawat, and his wife, who just recently  
25 passed in an unforeseen helicopter incident.

1 But when you talk about tremendous partnership, it is  
2 there. What more can we do? Continue the information  
3 sharing, continue to support them with the equipment they  
4 need up on the line of actual control, and continue to  
5 partner and operate together throughout the region.

6 The Malabar exercise with Japan, Australia, the United  
7 States, and India is critical. Increased unilateral and  
8 multilateral engagements with the Indians, and ultimately  
9 continue to sell them equipment so we can be more  
10 interoperable and more effective together in the military  
11 sphere.

12 Senator Peters: Admiral, I would also like to get a  
13 greater sense of what the competition for influence looks  
14 like on the ground in Oceania, using Papua, New Guinea, as  
15 an example. In your posture statement you mentioned that  
16 the People's Republic of China is, quote, "moving to  
17 increase its defense attaché footprint in Papua, New  
18 Guinea," end of quote. This is happening at the same time  
19 as the U.S. is strengthening our military ties there,  
20 including the 2020 National Guard State Partnership Program  
21 expansion.

22 So my question for you is, how have the people and  
23 defense forces in Papua, New Guinea, responded to our  
24 efforts there, and what more can we do to strengthen our  
25 relationship with some of the smaller nations that are in

1 your AOR?

2 Admiral Aquilino: Well, the State Partnership Program  
3 is critically implementation, Senator. I have 14  
4 relationships between the National Guard and the nations in  
5 the region. That is one aspect. As you know, we are also  
6 plussing up our diplomatic capabilities there. In 2019, we  
7 put a defense attaché, and in 2021, we just added a security  
8 cooperation officer. So small investments for big payback,  
9 to be boots on the ground and to be able to engage with  
10 those critical partners.

11 Senator Peters: Just continuing with that concept, and  
12 I appreciate your support for it, your posture statement  
13 also discussed how the People's Republic of China entered  
14 into a security agreement with the Solomon Islands Police  
15 Force. Last month, the State Department confirmed plans to  
16 open an embassy in the Solomon Islands to increase our  
17 influence before China gets more strongly embedded there.

18 So my question to you is, do you support State  
19 Partnership Program expansion to countries like the Solomon  
20 Islands, and if you do, what conditions must be met before  
21 these partnerships can begin, in your opinion?

22 Admiral Aquilino: Thanks, Senator. Again, I certainly  
23 do support the expansion, if it is funded, and we can  
24 sustain it in a way that is open, transparent, and in  
25 accordance with our values, which is the critical linkage

1 between these countries and ours. This generates the  
2 people-to-people ties that bring us closer together. As a  
3 matter of fact, I am meeting with General Hokanson tomorrow  
4 to have this exact discussion on where else might he be able  
5 to start putting some support.

6 Senator Peters: Very good. Well thank you. Thank you  
7 for your response. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

8 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Peters, and  
9 gentlemen, thank you for your testimony today, but more  
10 importantly, for your life-long service and dedication to  
11 the nation and that of your families. And please, as I  
12 suggested initially, pass on our thanks and gratitude to the  
13 men and women in your command and their families for their  
14 dedication and selfless service to the nation. I think we  
15 all feel that both the INDOPACOM and Korea are in good  
16 hands.

17 With that I will adjourn the hearing. Thank you.

18 [Whereupon, at 11:28 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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