

Stenographic Transcript
Before the

COMMITTEE ON
ARMED SERVICES

UNITED STATES SENATE

HEARING TO CONSIDER THE NOMINATION OF GENERAL
RANDY A. GEORGE, USA FOR REAPPOINTMENT TO THE
GRADE OF GENERAL AND TO BE CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE
ARMY

Wednesday, July 12, 2023

Washington, D.C.

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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 Gillibrand, Blumenthal, Hirono, Kaine, King, Warren, Peters,
16 Duckworth, Rosen, Kelly, Wicker, Fischer, Cotton, Rounds,
17 Ernst, Sullivan, Scott, Tuberville, Mullin, Budd, and
18 Schmitt.

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

3 Chairman Reed: Good morning. Let me call this hearing
4 to order.

5 The committee meets today to consider the nomination of
6 General Randy George to be the next Chief of Staff of the
7 United States Army.

8 General, congratulations on your nomination. I would
9 like to welcome your wife, Patty, son, Grant, and daughter-
10 in-law, Hannah, and daughter, Andrea, and son-in-law
11 Timothy. We are grateful to your family for the many years
12 of support for your service and would also like to recognize
13 and thank Senator Ernst, who will be introducing you
14 shortly.

15 Let me also thank the outgoing chief, General
16 McConville, as he prepares for retirement. The nation is
17 safer and the United States Army is on a path of
18 generational transformation because of his leadership.

19 General George, the committee welcomes your nomination
20 to serve as Chief of Staff of the Army. As the current Vice
21 Chief you have helped lead the Army through a critical
22 period of modernization.

23 Previously, as the senior military assistant to the
24 Secretary of Defense you gained a valuable understanding of
25 how the department requires the joint chiefs and combatant

1 commanders to work together in support of the National
2 Defense Strategy. You bring extensive command experience,
3 having led at every level from platoon to core including in
4 combat.

5 You also have important analytical and force management
6 expertise from both an Army and joint force perspective.
7 These experiences make you the right person at the right
8 time to lead the Army.

9 The Army is in the midst of its most significant
10 modernization effort in decades, the service pursuing an
11 aggressive strategy called Army 2030 defined by the adoption
12 of multi-domain operations and return to large-scale
13 formations.

14 The Army is shifting to a division-based configuration
15 that will need to operate in what you have described as
16 dispersed, mobile, and low-signature teams. To remain
17 competitive with China and Russia the Army must continue to
18 invest in cutting-edge technologies that will define future
19 battlefields.

20 Specifically, the Army has been pursuing modernization
21 in key areas like long-range fires, air defense, vertical
22 lift, and deep sensing. These are ambitious and farsighted
23 objectives.

24 I am particularly encouraged by the Army's recent
25 creation of a new cross functional team focused on contested

1 logistics. This team, under the direction of Army Futures
2 Command, will address the need for more resilient and agile
3 logistics in dangerous environments like the Indo-Pacific.

4 General, I would like to know your plans to continue
5 the Army's modernization efforts and what resources are
6 needed to support them.

7 Even as increased resources are being allocated to the
8 Indo-Pacific region, including for sea and air capabilities,
9 the Army is being relied upon to provide a reliable presence
10 around the world.

11 In particular, the Army is providing significant
12 support to operations in Europe from logistics to rotational
13 forces and command and control elements. We are reminded
14 every day in Ukraine that combat credible ground forces are
15 fundamental for deterrence.

16 With that in mind, I am interested in hearing about
17 your view of the Army's mission globally and how you would
18 adjust its operating concepts and force posture to support
19 the National Defense Strategy.

20 Perhaps your most pressing challenge, however, will be
21 addressing the Army's recruiting crisis. I will argue that
22 all of the military services are facing their most severe
23 recruiting challenges since the establishment of the all-
24 volunteer force 50 years ago.

25 Last year the Army fell far short of its recruiting

1 goals and the same appears likely this year. There are a
2 number of factors contributing to this challenging
3 recruiting environment including low national unemployment
4 rates, lingering problems from COVID-19, and historically
5 low numbers of Americans eligible for or interested in
6 military service.

7 I understand the Army is conducting an overhaul of its
8 recruiting and retention practices including the launch of a
9 major new marketing campaign and the expansion of the Future
10 Soldier prep course.

11 I would ask for an update and how you plan to recruit a
12 broader pool of potential recruits, if confirmed, and grow
13 back end strength in the coming years.

14 Further, I would like to understand how the Army plans
15 to modify its current structure to account for reduced end
16 strength in the near term but eventual growth to support the
17 advanced capabilities being developed through the Army's
18 modernization efforts.

19 General, these complex challenges will require the full
20 complement of your skills. Thank you for your willingness
21 to continue your service and lead the Army at this critical
22 time. I look forward to your testimony.

23 Let me recognize the ranking member before I recognize
24 Senator Ernst for her introduction.

25 Senator Wicker?

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

3 Senator Wicker: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and General
4 George, I extend my congratulations to you and your family
5 on your nomination.

6 I welcome your wife, Patty -- and I understand she is
7 your West Point sweetheart -- as well as your children,
8 Grant and Andrea and their spouses, Hannah and Timothy.
9 Welcome to you all. I am going to have a little family
10 reunion myself this weekend and so it is good to see a
11 family together.

12 The President has nominated you Vice Chief of Staff of
13 the Army to take the post of Chief of Staff pending Senate
14 confirmation, which I hope will come quickly. I believe you
15 are a great choice for this role and its associated duties.

16 Your leadership is battle tested, as the chairman has
17 already mentioned, having served in several major military
18 operations throughout your career.

19 You have also worked alongside a range of allied and
20 partnered militaries, experiences that will surely be of
21 value in our global military competition with the Chinese
22 Communist Party and the Russian Federation.

23 It is no secret that this is a very dangerous national
24 moment, perhaps the most dangerous national security moment
25 since World War II, a claim affirmed by many leading general

1 flag officers who have testified here before this committee.

2 The Army must resource multi-theater deterrence
3 missions, expansive work with the allies and partners, and a
4 large homeland defense mission set. The Army is stretched
5 thin as its portfolio grows.

6 During the current war in Ukraine the United States
7 Army has acted as a NATO shield to further aggression. The
8 Army's constant and enduring presence in Central Europe has
9 proved essential for deterrence, disaster response,
10 logistics operation, and military-to-military training
11 missions including training the Ukrainian Armed Forces.
12 Mississippi's own National Guard is in Europe now supporting
13 these causes.

14 I welcome your thoughts on what else the United States
15 could do to enable Ukrainian success including your thoughts
16 on the provision of ATACMS and aerial denial munitions.

17 However, we cannot discount the many struggles the Army
18 faces and, again, the chairman has indicated an interest in
19 this troublesome fact. Recent reporting indicates the Army
20 is set to miss its fiscal year 2024 recruitment goal by some
21 30 percent.

22 The Army has also been delinquent, General, in
23 delivering Congress its Total Army Analysis. The purpose of
24 the Total Army Analysis is to give us, the lawmakers, a more
25 accurate picture of future unit organization projections for

1 the service.

2 I am going to be asking if you can give us some
3 assurance that the legislative branch will be given some
4 respect in following the law in this regard.

5 The Army has improved its procurement process in recent
6 years but there is more room for progress. I am encouraged
7 to see that parts of the Army are diligently revitalizing
8 our industrial base but I remain disappointed that we are
9 not doing everything in our power to resource the industrial
10 base.

11 In fiscal year '24 alone we could invest an additional
12 \$1.4 billion into the Army's munitions industrial base and
13 every penny of that would be well spent. This funding would
14 establish a steady production line for Switchblade 600
15 weaponized drone, buy another Patriot missile defense
16 launcher, and expand the capacity of the production line for
17 extended range GMLRS.

18 There is also much more to be done in the Indo-Pacific.
19 The European Deterrence Initiative funded a wholesale change
20 in Army force posture in Europe and we need a similar change
21 in the Indo-Pacific. We have yet to make the investments
22 necessary to build the Army posture we need on the First
23 Island Chain. In particular, I am worried about the state
24 of our logistics plans for which the Army has the functional
25 lead.

1 So, General, I would like to hear your articulation of
2 the Army's role in the Indo-Pacific including in contested
3 logistics and what you would like from Congress in achieving
4 this vision. Tell us what you need and we will try to get
5 it to you.

6 As the country's largest and oldest military service
7 the Army will inevitably play an integral role in the future
8 of our national defense around the globe. I am hopeful that
9 you will be able to lead it through this dangerous period
10 and I look forward to your testimony.

11 Thank you.

12 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Wicker.

13 Senator Ernst, please?

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1 STATEMENT OF HON. JONI ERNST, U.S. SENATOR FROM IOWA

2 Senator Ernst: Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Wicker,
3 and distinguished members of the committee, it is my
4 privilege today to introduce my dear friend and a native
5 Iowan, Randy A. George, for his nomination to be Chief of
6 Staff of the U.S. Army.

7 As a veteran of the Iowa Army National Guard I know
8 firsthand that the role of the Chief of Staff of the Army is
9 one of the most important in the military. I believe
10 General George is the right man for this critical job.

11 General George had humble beginnings growing up in
12 Alden, Iowa, a town with just over 700 residents. He joined
13 the Army straight out of high school as a junior enlisted
14 soldier.

15 He had a great eagerness to learn and later
16 commissioned from West Point in 1988 as an infantry officer
17 with a bachelor of science in engineering. Later in his
18 career he attended the Naval War College and eventually
19 became an instructor.

20 General George is a decorated war fighter with
21 extensive combat service including in the Gulf war, the Iraq
22 war, and the war in Afghanistan. He is an experienced
23 leader, holding command at every echelon in and out of
24 combat.

25 In 2008 he commanded the Fourth Brigade combat team and

1 the 4th Infantry Division while in support of Operation
2 Enduring Freedom. Later in 2017 he returned to Afghanistan,
3 this time commanding the entire 4th Infantry Division. Most
4 recently, he commanded I Corps, managing daily activities
5 for more than 44,000 soldiers to deploy, fight, and win
6 decisively in the Indo-Pacific region.

7 Throughout his service General George never shied away
8 from difficult tasks and completed them with distinction.
9 He is a skilled joint officer having served in the Joint
10 Staff J3 and responsible for geographic combat operation,
11 and he has distinguished himself as the Vice Chief of Staff
12 of the Army, a position he assumed in August. In this role
13 General George has been instrumental in helping lead our
14 great U.S. Army.

15 As new threats emerge our Army must maintain highly
16 trained and lethal forces to fight and win the nation's wars
17 and I have full confidence that he understands the
18 requirements of our Army at this critical time.

19 If confirmed, General George will spearhead Army
20 modernization to deter or, if necessary, defeat great
21 powers.

22 General George is also laser focused on the betterment
23 of our Army from recruiting and retention to readiness and
24 training. He knows the needs of soldiers and their
25 families.

1 General George is a hardworking public servant but I
2 would be remiss to not mention that General George is also a
3 great family man. It truly takes an extraordinary family to
4 serve in our military and I would like to thank his wife and
5 West Point classmate Patty and their two children, Grant and
6 Andy, for their selfless commitment and support over the
7 years.

8 I firmly believe that General George's qualifications,
9 record, and character and, of course, his great home state
10 make him the right nominee to serve in this important role.

11 General George has my full confidence. Thank you, Mr.
12 Chairman.

13 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Ernst, not only for
14 your introduction but for your service. Thank you very
15 much.

16 General George, please, your testimony?
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1 STATEMENT OF GENERAL RANDY A. GEORGE, VICE CHIEF OF
2 STAFF OF THE ARMY

3 General George: Okay. First, thank you, Senators.

4 Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Wicker, members of the
5 Senate Armed Services Committee, I am humbled to have been
6 nominated to serve as the 41st Chief of Staff of the Army
7 and I want to thank you all upfront for your steadfast
8 support of our soldiers and their families.

9 I know this has already been done but I would also like
10 to introduce my family. My wife, Patty, is behind me. She
11 is my West Point classmate and, yes, by every measure she
12 was the better cadet. She has been my toughest critic and
13 biggest fan for 34 years of marriage and she has kept our
14 family strong through numerous moves, deployments, and
15 assignments. She has also been a friend and a mentor to
16 many military spouses over the years.

17 Our two kids are behind me as well, our son, Grant,
18 whose hair is now too long, who served in the 4th Infantry
19 Division in the Ranger Regiment, and he is here with his
20 wife, Hannah. And my daughter Andy and her husband, Tim,
21 are also joining us.

22 Patty and I joke that we gave our kids the opportunity
23 to attend three different high schools. We do believe that
24 it made them tougher and more adaptable and I know they are
25 both very thankful for that.

1 My mother and father, Bob and Lorraine, are watching
2 from home in Alden, Iowa. I think it is closer to 800
3 people where I am at, Senator Ernst. My mom was a little
4 uncertain when I shipped off to basic training at 17 but I
5 know my dad was very happy to have me off the payroll.

6 There is not a military presence in Alden, Iowa, and we
7 were not from a military family. But there was a Korean War
8 veteran in town that I did some work for while in high
9 school. He told me stories about his time in the Army and
10 it inspired me to go talk to a recruiter. I came into the
11 Army to get money for college and I have stayed because of
12 the mission and the people.

13 Over the last almost 250 years the Army has become one
14 of the greatest ground forces the world has ever seen. We
15 have been the main effort for every conflict in our
16 country's history and have dominated our adversaries because
17 of the courage, imagination, and determination of our
18 soldiers and our nation.

19 Integral to that, if confirmed I plan to have four
20 focus areas.

21 My number-one focus will be on warfighting so that our
22 Army is always ready to respond when our nation calls.

23 Second, I will work to ensure that we are continually
24 improving to stay ahead of our potential adversaries. As
25 the war in Ukraine has shown us we are in a rapidly changing

1 strategic environment. We cannot afford not to evolve.

2 Third, I will work to ensure that we have the
3 industrial and sustainment base and the soldier and family
4 support infrastructure to rapidly project our force across
5 the globe.

6 Fourth, and finally, I will continue to strengthen the
7 Army profession and build cohesive teams which starts with
8 fixing recruiting so that we remain an Army of the people
9 and for the people, a formidable team of all-volunteer
10 warriors.

11 I am proud to be a U.S. Army soldier and I look forward
12 to your questions.

13 [The prepared statement of General George follows:]

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1 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, General.

2 I have a series of standard questions which you could
3 respond to.

4 Have you adhered to applicable laws and regulations
5 governing conflicts of interest?

6 General George: Yes, Chairman.

7 Chairman Reed: Have you assumed any duties or taken
8 any actions that would appear to presume the outcome of the
9 confirmation process?

10 General George: No, Chairman.

11 Chairman Reed: Exercising our legislative and
12 oversight responsibilities makes it important that this
13 committee, its subcommittees, and other appropriate
14 committees of Congress receive testimony, briefings,
15 reports, records, and other information from the executive
16 branch on a timely basis.

17 Do you agree, if confirmed, to appear and testify
18 before this committee when requested?

19 General George: Yes, Chairman.

20 Chairman Reed: Do you agree when asked before this
21 committee to give your personal views even if your views
22 differ from the administration?

23 General George: Yes, Chairman.

24 Chairman Reed: Do you agree to provide records,
25 documents, and electronic communications in a timely manner

1 when requested by this committee, its subcommittees, or
2 other appropriate committees of Congress and to consult with
3 the requester regarding the basis for any good faith delay
4 or denial in providing such records?

5 General George: Yes, I do, Chairman.

6 Chairman Reed: Will you ensure that your staff
7 complies with deadlines established by the committee for the
8 production of reports, records, and other information
9 including timely responding to hearing questions to the
10 record?

11 General George: Yes, Chairman.

12 Chairman Reed: Will you cooperate in providing
13 witnesses and briefers in response to a congressional
14 request?

15 General George: Yes, Chairman.

16 Chairman Reed: Will those witnesses and briefers be
17 protected from reprisal for their testimony or briefings?

18 General George: Yes, Chairman.

19 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, General.

20 Welcome. I think we all share Senator Ernst's
21 enthusiasm and confidence in your assumption, if confirmed,
22 of the role of Chief of Staff to the Army and one of the
23 issues that you identified upfront was recruiting, and we
24 know there are many forces that I mentioned in my comments
25 that are making it difficult not just for the military but

1 for businesses to recruit.

2 If confirmed, what actions would you take to address
3 this recruiting crisis? I must say, as I mentioned before,
4 I was very impressed with General Kelly and the Future
5 Soldier prep course. I think also too we have to spread our
6 focus not only two high school ROTC but to junior colleges.

7 But please, sir, your comments?

8 General George: Yes, Chairman. As I said in my
9 opening statement, I think it is the number-one challenge
10 that we face and the one thing that we have to be focused
11 on. We are.

12 I will tell you that every leader in the Army and I
13 have been as the Vice as completely focused on this and
14 there is really two areas. Some of these are -- we are
15 doing whatever we can in the short term and I will mention a
16 couple of those.

17 We also have a longer term or what we have called
18 basically a sprint that we hope to finish here within this
19 next month of what are -- do we need -- how do we need to
20 change structurally or what big changes do we need to make,
21 are we -- how we are picking recruiters, where we have our
22 recruiters at, the command and control structure, marketing.
23 We are reviewing every aspect of that.

24 As you mentioned up front we are -- some of the
25 challenges that we are having is having people to meet our

1 standards. We do not -- we are not going to lower our
2 standards. The Future Soldier prep course has been very
3 helpful to that.

4 We are down there helping them, people that generally
5 otherwise meet the standards to get in the military, pass
6 our -- the ASVAB. We have had challenges with folks passing
7 the entrance test and that is helping them and then also
8 helping them to pass the height and weight so that they get
9 in.

10 We have seen very good success for that, better than 95
11 percent, and they are doing better in basic training and we
12 -- I think the big thing on the -- you mentioned on
13 perceptions, lot of people are -- there is two big things.

14 I think that the big perception is putting their life
15 on hold that young kids are worried about. I can -- I
16 remember that and was basically told, hey, it is going to
17 accelerate your life and I still use that because it was,
18 because it has, and I think we need to get that word out and
19 we are working very hard to do that. But that is the big
20 reason that we hear people are not coming in the military.

21 Chairman Reed: I thought it was interesting you
22 mentioned that -- the Korean War veteran who got you
23 interested. One of the issues is a generational one. We
24 just do not have the volume of veterans we used to have that
25 would talk to young men and women and inspire them. But we

1 have to get this solution solved.

2 One issue I will ask is you have been looking closely
3 at the fighting in Ukraine, and what lessons are you drawing
4 from what is going on there that can -- must be applicable
5 to the Army?

6 General George: We are -- I mean, there is a lot of
7 lessons that we are taking from that and something that we
8 are studying. I think everybody is studying that. So I
9 will give you a couple of broad -- very broad ones.

10 First, Chairman, I think that partners and allies and
11 just the strength of that, I mean, was something that was
12 -- has been immediate think how we, the Western forces, go
13 about mission command and how we allow initiative and just
14 how impactful that is on the battlefield.

15 I could go down every warfighting function that we
16 have. I will mention a couple and each really quick. I
17 think the importance of long-range fires and the accuracy of
18 that that is something that the Army, really, the joint
19 force is investing in and just how important that is.

20 I think people are seeing around the world how great
21 U.S. equipment is. That is another thing that I think
22 everybody is seeing. We are learning a lot in logistics and
23 with 3D printing that is happening that is up there.

24 We used to pull artillery tubes, for example, back to
25 be repaired and maybe all the way back to a depot. That is

1 happening to tele maintenance in a much more forward
2 position. We are learning a lot in counter unmanned systems
3 so counter UAS and how they are being used. I mean, it is
4 -- that is rapidly evolving over there. So I think I could
5 go on and on on this one.

6 Chairman Reed: Well, thank you, sir, and, again, thank
7 you for your service, your family's service. Back in 1971
8 dating fellow cadets was not encouraged but times have
9 changed for the better and the result is before us.

10 General George: Yes, sir.

11 Chairman Reed: Thank you, sir.

12 General George: Thank you.

13 Chairman Reed: Senator Wicker, please?

14 Senator Wicker: I will leave that alone.

15 [Laughter.]

16 Senator Wicker: I mentioned a couple of things in my
17 opening statement, General, so and it may be that others
18 will want to delve into this. I mentioned the Total Army
19 Analysis, which is required in last year's NDAA, Section
20 1044.

21 You just solemnly answered one of the standard
22 questions that the chairman always asks, will you ensure
23 that your staff complies with deadlines established by this
24 committee for the production of reports, records, and other
25 information. Do you acknowledge that that includes things

1 like the Total Army Analysis?

2 General George: Yes, sir.

3 Senator Wicker: I just want to point out when
4 something is placed in the statute by the House and Senate
5 and signed by the President it is the law of the land, and
6 we want to give you what you want to win for our nation and
7 we do hope that our general officers will lead by example by
8 giving us in a timely manner what we want and transitioning
9 to what you need.

10 Talk about what the ATACMS could do for our friends in
11 Ukraine in winning this war against the illegal Russian
12 invasion. The French are now prepared to deliver what you
13 call Storm Shadows, or SCALPs.

14 I do not know what the correct term is that we are
15 supposed to use. How helpful would our ATACMS be to the
16 effort to defeat the Russian invasion of Ukraine?

17 General George: Senator, the ATACMS, obviously, are
18 great. That missile is a great system, adds range. So that
19 is basically what it would be providing is the ability to
20 attack deeper targets.

21 In the end, I think that we have discovered at looking
22 at this -- and the chairman asked about lessons learned
23 -- it is still a combined arms fight. There is a lot of
24 things that go into conducting offensive operations and I
25 think that is an aspect of it.

1 Senator Wicker: Well, you are -- you are you are going
2 to obey the commander in chief, no question about it, and he
3 is going to make the call there. But you also have agreed
4 to give us your own personal opinion. These ATACMS would be
5 helpful to the Ukrainians who have asked for them. Is that
6 not correct?

7 General George: Yes.

8 Senator Wicker: And in terms of the range of them, if
9 that is a problem actually the range of the French weapons
10 being provided to Ukrainians is greater range. Is that not
11 correct?

12 General George: I am not familiar with exactly what
13 the range is on the -- on the French weapon.

14 Senator Wicker: Okay. Well, just supply that on the
15 record and that will be fine.

16 Let me ask you about a favorite of mine and that is
17 Junior ROTC. You are a graduate of the academy and I am
18 -- I got my commission through ROTC at the University of
19 Mississippi.

20 But it has become clearer and clearer how important the
21 ROTC at the high schools is. If you ask a principal of a
22 high school, you ask a superintendent of a public school
23 system, if they would like to have Junior ROTC of some kind,
24 whether it is Army or whatever, they will -- they have
25 always given me a resounding yes and the RAND Corporation,

1 other independent studies, have confirmed that Junior ROTC
2 in high schools is a citizenship builder and only 10 percent
3 of our high schools are able to have Junior ROTC. But 40
4 percent of our recruits come from students who have been in
5 Junior ROTC.

6 So we are -- we are increasing the floor of Junior ROTC
7 in the NDAA and raising the ceiling. What is your opinion
8 about this and will you help us make Junior ROTC a success
9 pursuant to this NDAA?

10 General George: Senator, I agree with you completely.
11 I was going to say the exact same thing. Where you have had
12 JROTC in a school we see, whether they are part of the
13 program or not, they get exposure to the military and we
14 have increased people that are joining the military.

15 So that is good, and I think they are great programs
16 and what -- we are, yes, committed to continuing to grow
17 these programs. What we want to do is responsibly grow
18 them, make sure that we are picking the right people and
19 working with the local schools to do that.

20 But I agree with you, and we are looking -- too we have
21 to look at, make sure that we are -- there are some areas
22 where we are not that we could expand in some of these areas
23 and we are looking at all of that.

24 Senator Wicker: Right. And, Mr. Chairman, in general,
25 there are whole sections of the country where there is

1 really a paucity of Junior ROTC. This is a citizenship
2 builder, and whether they go into the military or not it is
3 a subset of schools that are overachievers, that attend
4 school more regularly, that graduate more regularly, and go
5 on to higher education later.

6 So thank you for that assurance. And thank you, Mr.
7 Chairman.

8 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Wicker.

9 Senator King, please?

10 Senator King: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

11 Before beginning my questions, I cannot help but
12 comment on the futility of this hearing since we know that
13 General George will not be confirmed in any time in the
14 foreseeable future, not because of his qualifications or his
15 experience or his vast knowledge that he would bring to the
16 job but because of a hold that has been held on all general
17 officers.

18 General George, you have committed to giving us your
19 best professional advice. Do you believe that this blanket
20 hold on the promotion of general officers, which has left
21 us, for example, without a commandant of the Marine Corps in
22 the first time in over 100 years, is undermining national
23 security?

24 General George: Senator, it is -- yes, it is impacting
25 our readiness. For us it is important as we move leaders to

1 get the right leader in the right place at the right time
2 and especially with the -- with the right experience and so
3 that is -- that is what we are challenged with right now
4 with the hold.

5 Senator King: Thank you.

6 Senator Wicker: Mr. Chairman, I have to take a point
7 of personal privilege here, if I might, and I will be brief.

8 I am mindful of the senator from Maine's point of view.
9 But as a matter of fact a nominee for Chief of Staff of the
10 Army can be brought to the floor in the usual manner despite
11 a hold by the majority leader, taken up for a vote, cloture
12 voted, and the confirmation proceed.

13 Is that not correct, Mr. Chairman?

14 Chairman Reed: That is correct but that does not
15 account for the 250 and 60 general officers that are on hold
16 and the response --

17 Senator Wicker: Indeed, it is -- it is a general
18 statement -- it is a general statement that applies to the
19 others. But with regard to this nominee and the one
20 yesterday they will be taken up in the normal course when
21 the majority leader decides to bring them to the floor and I
22 think that will happen expeditiously.

23 Thank you, sir.

24 Senator King: My response would be that national
25 security is being compromised by all 250 of those nominees

1 that are being held up, not just by one or two.

2 I would like to proceed with my questions if I could,
3 Mr. Chairman.

4 Chairman Reed: Continue.

5 Senator King: General, you have two hats if -- when
6 confirmed. One is best military advice to the President of
7 the United States. The other is Chief of Staff of the Army.

8 One of the hardest things to do is saying something
9 that is difficult to the boss. Are you willing to give the
10 President of the United States advice that he or she does
11 not want to hear?

12 General George: Yes, I am, Senator. I think we have
13 had -- I have had to give advice to my boss. As I have
14 advanced in my career I have had to do that.

15 Senator King: And I hope that that is -- that is
16 something that you will remember as you undertake this
17 position because it is -- if you look back through history,
18 even recent history over the last 20 or 30 years, telling
19 the boss what they wanted to hear got us into some real
20 serious trouble. So I hope you will remember this moment
21 and take that responsibility very, very seriously.

22 You mentioned the nature of war and the quote you used
23 was "rapidly changing strategic environment." Could you
24 expand on that a bit and tell me what you mean by that and
25 how you believe we have to evolve to meet those new

1 challenges?

2 General George: Senator, I will use unmanned systems
3 as an example and loitering munitions and what we have seen
4 because I think there has been a lot of that that has been
5 out there in the open source press, but just how quickly
6 things are -- you can take something off the shelf, for
7 example, and weaponize it or add different components to it.

8 There is 3D printing that can go to that and can
9 rapidly change and so what that has caused also for us is
10 that you have to think about how do you defend yourself
11 against that.

12 So I think we have to look at it both on the offensive
13 and on the defensive side. I think what we have seen with
14 -- as well on the -- with software and just how quickly you
15 can change and advance capabilities. That is happening and
16 you can really look at that across all the other warfighting
17 functions as well. Cyber.

18 Senator King: Speed is one of the things you are
19 focusing on. Delighted to hear you talk about 3D printing
20 because we cannot afford to be, as you say, sending
21 something back to the depot.

22 In my view, every barrack -- every barracks, every
23 hangar, every ship should have a 3D printer and we should be
24 buying the intellectual property when we buy a platform. Do
25 you agree?

1 General George: Yes, Senator, I agree.

2 Senator King: Very quickly in some time that I have
3 left, lessons from Ukraine -- what have we learned about
4 what is going on in Ukraine and how that war has proceeded
5 in terms of tactics, strategy, weaponry? Some quick
6 thoughts on lessons from Ukraine.

7 General George: I will try to give a couple in
8 addition to what I talked about before because I could go
9 on. We are studying this -- we are learning a lot from
10 this. Just what is going on right now I think we are
11 learning how difficult offensive operations are and what you
12 have to piece together to do.

13 I think it is the same for -- I did not cover a lot
14 earlier on integrated air and missile defense but it gets to
15 the counter UAS piece that I brought up before that you are
16 going to have to have systems that are able to knock down,
17 and you -- first, you got to see all of that but then you
18 got to be able to knock down small class one, two, three
19 unmanned systems all the way up to cruise missiles and I
20 think that that is a real challenge that we are -- we are
21 learning over there.

22 And I think Ukraine is doing a great job. But the
23 basic thing that I think we have learned from the beginning
24 is it is critical to have the will to fight and that is
25 exactly what the Ukrainians have been showing us over there.

1 Senator King: Thank you. Thank you very much,
2 General.

3 Chairman Reed: Senator Rounds, please?

4 Senator Rounds: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

5 General George, first of all, I want to thank you for
6 your service to our country and to your family. And Patty,
7 thank you, because when you deploy your entire family really
8 deploys.

9 There is a separation that does not go away, movements
10 that a lot of the rest of the country do not take into
11 account from one location to another as your different
12 missions are assigned, and I want to say thank you to not
13 just you but your family as well for that.

14 I would like to begin, General, with a discussion that
15 I have asked all of the other service chiefs about. All of
16 the other service chiefs and the combatant commanders have
17 expressed concerns about the impact auctioning off portions
18 of the 3.1 to 3.45 gigahertz band of the spectrum would have
19 on our defensive capabilities.

20 Based on what we have discussed before, if this report,
21 which is due in September, demonstrates that auctioning the
22 3.1 to 3.45 gigahertz portion of the spectrum will adversely
23 impact our national security what would be your advice to
24 the President and Congress?

25 General George: Senator, my advice would be we need

1 that spectrum and if we were going to lose that, obviously,
2 it would be time and resources to be able to adjust to that
3 capability. We are taking part in that study right now and
4 providing our insights to that.

5 Senator Rounds: Thank you. I think one part that is
6 missing sometimes is is that certain parts of the spectrum
7 have to one degree or another the necessary physics that
8 allow for some real capabilities and that is the reason why
9 some of our systems have been established in that area to
10 begin with. Would you concur with that?

11 General George: I would concur with that.

12 Senator Rounds: Thank you, sir.

13 General, there is -- at the time here it looks like
14 right now there is perhaps a 90,000 personnel shortfall
15 between the numbers within the Army and the numbers that we
16 are projected to need.

17 You are going to take your position at a time in which
18 this recruiting crisis is probably the most severe that it
19 has been since the DOD's 50-year all-volunteer force was
20 created in the first place.

21 While the Army struggles to meet recruiting numbers
22 many have criticized what is viewed as an increased and an
23 untoward emphasis on immutable characteristics like race and
24 sex throughout the DOD and the department has increasingly
25 focused on new policies and plans in areas like equity,

1 extremism, gender ideology, abortion, and sex change
2 operations. There is even a growing bureaucracy focusing on
3 these specific issues.

4 I know that when you started there was a concern about
5 this may set us back a few years or it delays your movement
6 into other activities and so forth. That was the way it was
7 then and that still is one of the concerns, as you have
8 expressed earlier.

9 That did not stop us from meeting our recruitment goals
10 20 years ago, and while it may impact some today I think
11 there are other things that may have an impact as well
12 including the items that I have just discussed.

13 I guess my perspective is that everyone should be
14 welcome to serve if qualified. But we are losing focus on
15 teamwork, discipline, and the enormous challenge presented
16 by an emergent China.

17 How do you see this issue, sir, and is this an area
18 where when we start talking about all of these other items
19 are they impacting our ability to recruit young men and
20 women?

21 General George: Senator, I would say yes. Perceptions
22 -- the first thing you mentioned, I mean, we -- yes, we have
23 to turn recruiting around and I am confident and we are
24 going to put the whole Army's effort and all the leaders
25 behind it to do that and we appreciate any help that you are

1 providing with that.

2 We are keeping soldiers in the Army. So retention is
3 at near historic. So they like the units that they are
4 serving in. I will tell you that I spend most of my time
5 focused on warfighting and that has been my -- that has been
6 my experience.

7 We do talk about building cohesive teams. That has
8 been my -- also been my experience since I was first in.
9 There are things that you have to do to make sure that you
10 are bringing everybody together from across the country and
11 everybody has the same values and character as part of that
12 that is critically important to us.

13 So I do -- I think anytime that there is a perception
14 of something from somebody because it is -- like I mentioned
15 up front, it was a veteran that talked to me. It is coaches
16 that talk to people and teachers and, I mean, I would want
17 people to know that the Army is a great place to be.

18 It is a life accelerator and we are focused on our
19 mission, and there is so many things that you can do in the
20 military to advance your life and we got to get the word out
21 on that.

22 Senator Rounds: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

23 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Rounds.

24 Senator Kaine, please?

25 Senator Kaine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1 General George, great to meet with you yesterday. I
2 look forward to supporting your nomination.

3 I will add to the recruiting challenge you could hardly
4 send a worse message to people who were thinking about
5 joining the military and maybe making a career out of it
6 than is being sent right now with these military holds.

7 One of my kids is a Marine officer eight years active,
8 now a Reservist, like everybody else who joins an all-
9 voluntary military willing to risk their life for their
10 country.

11 But why would they sign up to serve knowing that a
12 member of the United States Senate could block their
13 professional advancement because they are disappointed with
14 a policy that they had nothing to do with? And that is what
15 is happening right now.

16 Two hundred and fifty people, soon to be more than 600,
17 who have volunteered to wear the uniform of the country and
18 risk their life to defend the country are being blocked from
19 professional advancement because a member of this body is
20 disappointed with a policy that these hundreds have nothing
21 to do with.

22 If you are disappointed with a policy in the military,
23 especially if you are a member of this committee, you have
24 an opportunity every year when we mark up a defense bill to
25 try to convince your colleagues that the policy should be

1 changed.

2 I have been now through 11 NDAA's on this committee and
3 every year I introduce amendments and try to convince my
4 colleagues that my position is right, and sometimes I
5 prevail but I often do not, and if I cannot convince my
6 colleagues I am right that is on me. But I do not take it
7 out on hundreds of officers and their families whose lives
8 are being put in limbo because I am unhappy.

9 This is -- I associate myself with Senator King's
10 point. This is hurting our defense. This is hurting our
11 nation when we are in a very challenging global environment,
12 and as we are talking about what we can do to try to make
13 military service more attractive it is sending exactly the
14 wrong message to people that we are trying to encourage to
15 join the military.

16 General George, you -- I think you are aware we had a
17 hearing earlier this year where Army experts came and talked
18 about the recruiting challenge and they listed the reasons
19 that through some intense surveying why recruiting is tough
20 and the number-one reason is, I am worrying that I am
21 putting my life on hold, that others will move ahead and I
22 will not because I will be in a situation where I cannot
23 advance.

24 That was even a more powerful factor than, I am
25 worrying about the risk of my life. People were able to

1 accept that risk and still wanted to join but the number-one
2 factor that people were not joining is, gosh, I am worried
3 that if I join the military I am going to have to put my
4 life on hold and I will not be able to advance like others.

5 This body is sending a loud message that is being heard
6 all over this country to people who have risen through the
7 ranks, who have served, who have deployed multiple times,
8 whose families have moved, who have sacrificed. We are
9 sending a loud message to them that, wow, Kaine's mad about
10 something that the Pentagon is doing and he could not
11 convince his colleagues that it was right.

12 So, what, I should just punish everybody who had
13 nothing to do with it? I pray that we will turn from this
14 dangerous path because if one senator can do this, hey, all
15 hundred will find something at the Pentagon that they are
16 not wild about and suddenly it is okay -- well, look, I am
17 not happy and I could not convince my colleagues but I at
18 least can punish people who are blameless. I hope we will
19 turn from this.

20 General, I want to ask you about the Radford Depot. My
21 team and I recently went to the Radford Army ammunition
22 plant. We heard about the challenges that they face
23 competing for contracts.

24 Radford is a strategic capability, critical component
25 in our nation's mission to produce munitions, which is

1 important and getting more important. Although cost is an
2 important consideration in these items we also need to
3 preserve the viability of an organic industrial base. I
4 know you have spent time focusing upon the munitions
5 production needs of the country.

6 So how do you view the balance between choosing vendors
7 with lowest cost bids while maintaining the ability to
8 deliver readiness from our organic industrial base?

9 General George: As you mentioned, Senator, Radford and
10 several other depots out there are critically important and
11 it is an amazing workforce, having been to a bunch of them,
12 and what they do and just how patriotic they are in their
13 mission.

14 I think what we are looking at doing -- and we have
15 spent some of our own money to try to -- we need to inside
16 the budget. We appreciate the support we have gotten from
17 Congress. I think we got \$1.6 billion last year to also
18 invest in that. We do have to upgrade these depots. I
19 think that it is important to do that and do it in a way
20 where we can increase production.

21 I can give one example of an ammunition plant where you
22 can build the capability, you can keep the same size
23 workforce, and then have the ability to expand production
24 from there, and I think that is where we need to focus.

25 Senator Kaine: I appreciate it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

1 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Kaine.

2 Senator Ernst, please?

3 Senator Ernst: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you
4 very much, General George, for your time today.

5 Patty, thank you for being here and to the rest of the
6 family and I want to send a special thank you also to your
7 parents back home in Iowa and I know that they are very,
8 very proud of your accomplishments, General George.

9 I also know that when you are confirmed you will be an
10 effective steward for the Army and a great partner to those
11 of us on this committee.

12 So I do want to express some of the concerns that I
13 have, and we have discussed our Special Operations Forces in
14 detail but just for everyone's knowledge and information
15 with the recruiting challenges the Army is expressing
16 interest in cutting our SOF forces. SOF was born for great
17 power competition. They are the nation's purpose built
18 force for campaigning against great powers.

19 Their value proposition is to deter war in peacetime
20 and create military advantages for the joint force in
21 wartime. But SOF also remains the nation's premier force
22 for crisis response and counterterrorism.

23 As a recent congressionally-mandated study determined
24 the demand signal from theater commanders for SOF will
25 increase. I am concerned to learn of the proposals to cut

1 Army SOF by 10 to 20 percent.

2 Now, I know we are facing budgetary challenges. The
3 end strength challenges also are squeezing the whole Army.
4 But SOF are not mass produced and I doubt that cutting them
5 would create the savings the Army is actually looking for
6 and, worse, those cuts could have disproportionate impact on
7 Special Operations missions.

8 So the numbers are not adding up at this time. We are
9 looking to cut SOF when we need them the most.

10 So, General, do you believe these reductions would
11 limit the Army's ability to provide forces to commanders to
12 deter great powers, counterterrorism, and respond to crises?

13 General George: Senator, I have been deploying side by
14 side with SOF forces for the last 20 years. I agree with
15 you that they are an amazing capability. They have been and
16 they will continue to be. I agree with that.

17 What we are doing with modeling I have been talking
18 with both General Braga, who is the USASOC commander. The
19 Army makes up about 65 to 70 percent of all of SOCOM and
20 what we do is model to see how are things going to be
21 different, what capabilities do we need.

22 So when I was in Afghanistan just a couple of years ago
23 there was 11,000 that was there. Most of that was SOF and
24 we are not doing that. So I think we have to review all of
25 this. We are in the process. There has been no decisions

1 made. I am close to both of them. I actually heard from
2 General Fenton this morning.

3 So we are talking through that. But I think what we
4 owe you is the best joint force and military that can tackle
5 the problems that are ahead and that is what we are working
6 on.

7 Senator Ernst: Yes. And so just to make clear, you
8 will be working with those commanders -- those operational
9 commanders and making sure that the cuts would not create
10 operational risk and you can report those to Congress. Is
11 that correct?

12 General George: Yes, Senator, we are working closely
13 with them. Absolutely.

14 Senator Ernst: Okay. And I do hope that as you are
15 working through those issues then before any of those cuts
16 are approved that you would notify members of this
17 committee.

18 General George: And just earlier because Senator
19 Wicker -- of course, we are going to come over before any of
20 these final -- this comes out that we will talk it over with
21 you first.

22 Senator Ernst: Good. Thank you. And, General, I do
23 want to share SOCOM's assessment. We did receive this just
24 recently and it says that SOF can only execute its assigned
25 mission with SOF enablers and cutting enablers increases

1 risk to mission.

2 And, Mr. Chairman, I just want to if -- I would ask if
3 we could enter this into the record.

4 Chairman Reed: Without objection.

5 [The information follows:]

6 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 Senator Ernst: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

2 And thank you, General. SOF -- they are a strategic
3 capability for the joint force and I look forward to working
4 with you to strengthen them. I will follow up with
5 additional questions for the record.

6 But again, General George, you have my full support
7 with your nomination and confirmation. I am proud to be
8 sharing the desk with you this morning for the introduction
9 and, again, congratulations to your family.

10 Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

11 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Ernst.

12 Senator Rosen, please?

13 Senator Rosen: Thank you, Chairman Reed. I appreciate
14 you for holding this hearing.

15 And I want to thank you too, General George, for
16 testifying today, for your lifelong service, your
17 thoughtfulness and, of course, we would always be remiss if
18 we did not think about the families who pack and unpack, do
19 all of that, I guess, schlepping around the world in order
20 to support the service to our nation. So I thank you and
21 your family.

22 But I want to talk a little bit about a small arms
23 range for Nevada and so I want to revisit an issue that I
24 have consistently raised with General McConville and
25 Secretary Wormuth.

1 Currently Nevada's Guard and Reserve soldiers are
2 traveling to surrounding states in order to satisfy their
3 annual weapons qualification. It is an average cost of
4 \$500,000 -- half a million dollars per year per unit.

5 I am appreciative of the Army's commitment to correct
6 this would spur the effort underway to build a permanent
7 range at Hawthorne Army Depot by fiscal year '25.

8 It is my understanding that Nevada Army National Guard
9 is on track to complete their planning and design to meet
10 that timeline.

11 So, General George, if confirmed, can I have your
12 commitment that a small arms qualification range is built
13 enough by '25 so that Nevada's soldiers can meet their
14 annual requirements at greater convenience and lower cost to
15 the taxpayer?

16 General George: Yes, Senator.

17 Senator Rosen: Thank you. I will take that as a
18 strong yes.

19 General George: A strong yes.

20 Senator Rosen: Well, everybody is very excited to do
21 that in Nevada. It will really improve our readiness.

22 And we are going to stay with Hawthorne Army Depot
23 because we are the largest ammunition depot and
24 demilitarization facility, and so despite its size and
25 crucial role that Hawthorne Army Depot plays for our

1 munitions readiness it is in desperate need of significant
2 infrastructure upgrades such as replacing boilers that were
3 installed in 1974, nearly 50 years ago. They are now
4 inoperable. We need to modernize condemned buildings that
5 are unable to be occupied and fixing roads that are
6 currently impassable.

7 And so I am proud that this committee adopted my report
8 language during the NDAA markup that encourages the
9 Secretary of the Army to prioritize infrastructure
10 investments for Hawthorne and requires the Army to brief us
11 on the status to upgrade and repair the infrastructure and
12 functionality of the depot.

13 And so the need to invest in our munitions depots has
14 only become more acute in light of the need to ramp up
15 munitions production not only to arm Ukraine but also to
16 backfill our own stockpiles.

17 So during this year's Army posture hearing Secretary
18 Wormuth made a commitment to me to take a look at
19 investments at Hawthorne.

20 So, General George, again, if confirmed, can I have
21 your commitment to include Hawthorne in the Army's next
22 future years defense planning or even unfunded priority list
23 so that Congress can fund these investments to ensure our
24 munitions readiness? This is top of mind.

25 General George: Yes, Senator. We are -- I mean, we

1 are reviewing that. We do have a plan across all of that
2 and, obviously, we have to balance readiness exercises and
3 everything else to look at that.

4 But yes, it is critically important for us and we will
5 definitely take a close look at Hawthorne, really, and
6 across our industrial base.

7 Senator Rosen: Thank you. I appreciate that, and I
8 want to talk a little bit now about remote maintenance
9 support that we are giving to Ukraine.

10 And so we know that the Army is providing remote
11 maintenance teams to allow Ukrainians on the frontlines to
12 receive immediate advice -- hands-on advice from U.S.
13 soldiers and contractors on weapons and equipment
14 maintenance.

15 So as Ukraine receives more advanced equipment the
16 demand for these teams is, frankly, going to grow and so,
17 General George, what should the Army be doing to expand this
18 program to ensure it is equipped to efficiently and
19 accurately respond to requests out in an active battlefield
20 like in Ukraine as -- particularly as their counter
21 offensive continues to evolve?

22 General George: Well, Senator, as earlier we were
23 talking about lessons I think that is one of the big lessons
24 that we have learned, what you can do with tele maintenance
25 and what that does to reduce -- have to backhaul things and

1 what you can fix forward.

2 So I am really -- we are really proud of what Army
3 Materiel Command and U.S. Army Europe is doing to put this
4 forward across all of these equipments and we will
5 -- absolutely we pay close attention to operational
6 readiness rates and will continue to support them.

7 Senator Rosen: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

8 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Rosen.

9 Senator Scott, please?

10 Senator Scott: Great. Thank you, Chairman. Thank
11 you, General George. Thank you for being here. Thank you
12 for your family for being here. Thank you for your service.

13 So can we talk about recruiting? Let me just give you
14 some numbers that you probably already know. I guess the
15 Army missed their numbers by 25 percent last year and I
16 think it is on track to do 23 percent less this year.

17 There is a Pentagon study that showed 77 percent of
18 American youth are not eligible to serve and there is a
19 recent Wall Street Journal article that highlighted a
20 disturbing trend that said children of military families,
21 who typically make up 80 percent of Army recruits, are
22 telling their children not to serve, especially those in the
23 South. So I will just give you the things I will ask and
24 you can answer me in any order.

25 One, can you talk about what you are going to do, if

1 anything, on the people that were discharged on COVID? So
2 if you can talk about that. And then what would you -- if
3 you were -- if you got to talk to all these military
4 families about why their kids should serve what would you
5 say to them and what would you tell if you were talking to
6 -- like, I think I was telling somebody in your team I have
7 got an 11-year-old grandson who I am sure is going to serve
8 in the military. Why should he serve in the Army? What
9 would you tell these kids why they should go in to the Army?

10 Can you talk about what you are doing at Fort Jackson
11 where you are trying to prepare kids for joining the
12 military that might not be able to get in, and then is there
13 anything Congress ought to be doing to help you? And there
14 is no -- however -- whatever order you want to do it.

15 General George: Okay. Thanks, Senator.

16 First, on COVID discharges we do have a process. There
17 have been people that have come back into the Army that were
18 discharged for COVID and specifically for COVID. It was not
19 COVID and several other things that kind of went along with
20 that. So I am confident that we have a process and we have
21 had people that come back in.

22 Senator Scott: Do you think it is going to work?

23 General George: What is that?

24 Senator Scott: Do you think a lot of people -- do you
25 think a lot of people will come back?

1 General George: Well, that will be, obviously, up to
2 them. We want anybody who is able bodied and wants to come
3 back and serve their country to come back and join us.

4 Your second question was talking to families --

5 Senator Scott: Does this surprise you? Does that
6 number surprise you about military families telling their
7 kids they do not -- they should not come back in or they
8 should not --

9 General George: I do not know where you got this
10 statistic at, Senator, but I wanted --

11 Senator Scott: I will find it. It is the Wall Street
12 Journal article.

13 General George: What I was going to tell you is, and I
14 just had a friend who just sent -- his son just did a year
15 of college and now he is enlisted and he is going to the
16 Rangers so I am -- which I am very happy about.

17 So I think there is a lot of them out there that are
18 still telling their kids and they know. I think what we got
19 to do is change the perception and talk to them about what
20 we are doing and the one thing I would tell you -- and I
21 think we have had a couple of conversations -- we got to get
22 out and get that story out to people that are influencers
23 and talk to our veterans and tell them what we are focusing
24 on.

25 Again, retention has not been a problem for us. People

1 are staying in the military. We are very busy. We are
2 deploying. We are doing things.

3 So why the Army? And, obviously, I love the Army. I
4 have been doing this for a really long time. I know you can
5 do almost anything in the Army and I think it has proven to
6 be a meritocracy. Work hard. Do your job. You are going
7 to -- you are going to advance.

8 And there is a million different things you can do from
9 cyber. Everybody does not have to be an infantryman or
10 artillery. There is a lot of things that you can do in the
11 military and I tell everybody that I did not plan. I came
12 in for a couple of years. I have mainly stayed for the
13 people initially, and, obviously I love the mission. So and
14 I think we got to get that word out and talk to people.

15 I am really proud of, to your last question on Fort
16 Jackson, what we are doing down there with the Future
17 Soldier prep course and it gets to your -- you said 77
18 percent cannot meet the standards.

19 We have had -- we have seen some of the -- that has
20 dropped, actually, from just a couple of years ago. We want
21 people to meet our standard and I think we want them to know
22 that, that we are willing to invest in them and help them
23 pass that test to get healthier.

24 I would love if -- and if you have not been down there
25 I think it is good and I am always amazed when I -- the

1 number-one story I always hear is everybody says, I am glad
2 I put my phone up a little bit and I am sleeping better. I
3 am doing better. But I think it is helping. That course is
4 helping them. We are seeing great results out of it.

5 Senator Scott: Can you -- thank you. Can you just
6 talk -- we do not have much time left but just talk about
7 the troops we have in Asia and the importance of them and
8 are they really doing their job? Are they are going to help
9 deter either China, North Korea or any bad actor?

10 General George: Absolutely. I think, Senator, we got
11 -- and USARPAC is doing a lot. Would like to come sit down
12 and talk to you about that or have somebody that can explain
13 what the Army is out there doing in the Pacific.

14 And like we talked about with Ukraine I think
15 partnerships, partners, and allies mean a lot and human
16 interoperability, I think, is the most important thing. You
17 get that out of exercises that we are doing over there and
18 we are doing a lot of them. I was -- it is amazing the
19 relationships that we have built, I think, in Europe and we
20 are doing the same thing in the Pacific Theater.

21 Senator Scott: Thank you, sir.

22 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Scott.

23 Senator Warren, please?

24 Senator Warren: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is good
25 to see you here, General George. Welcome. Congratulations.

1 So I am deeply concerned about the increasing number of
2 suicides that we are seeing among active duty soldiers. In
3 the first quarter of 2023, 49 active duty soldiers took
4 their own lives. That is the highest first quarter number
5 since DOD first started collecting these data a decade ago.

6 Now, the Army has studied this problem a lot but it has
7 not acted with enough urgency. From 2019 to 2022 the Army
8 sponsored 47 studies addressing suicide. However, an Army
9 audit obtained by the Project on Government Oversight found
10 that nearly 90 percent of those studies, quote, "did not
11 have any actionable recommendations or recommended only more
12 research." Nearly 90 percent of them, and for the few
13 studies that did have actionable recommendations the Army
14 did nothing.

15 Now, the Army was originally supposed to issue new
16 suicide prevention regulations in the fall of 2021. Nearly
17 two years after that deadline it has still failed to do so
18 and our service members are suffering.

19 So, General George, if you are confirmed can I count on
20 you to help get these regs out and, even more importantly,
21 to help get these regs implemented in order to address the
22 suicide crisis in our military?

23 General George: Yes, Senator.

24 Senator Warren: Good.

25 General George: Can I talk -- can I say a couple of

1 things about that?

2 Senator Warren: You sure can. You sure can.

3 General George: Just in my experience because as a
4 commander it was not necessarily the regulation --

5 Senator Warren: Fair enough.

6 General George: -- that made the difference for me.
7 It was getting the resources and then command emphasis and
8 that is what we have to do, and right now we are doing what
9 we call a building cohesive teams update and I always talk
10 about every location is a little bit different and I always
11 give the example of Alaska versus Fort Irwin versus now Fort
12 Liberty. Very different. They are facing different
13 challenges and I think that that is what we are trying to do
14 is focus.

15 One of the things that we have learned from we will
16 take things that work. But in Alaska they are doing
17 something called Mission 100, which is basically getting
18 somebody to talk to a counselor immediately.

19 Everybody has to do that within a year because what we
20 are finding is a lot of these problems are not necessarily
21 behavioral health problems. They are relationship issues,
22 financial issues.

23 I think we got to look at this through health and
24 holistic fitness. Our health and holistic fitness -- where
25 we have fielded that in the brigades we have seen reductions

1 in behavioral health and in suicides. And so, again, I
2 think it is -- that is what we have to focus on are the end
3 results and we are not happy with where we are at.

4 Senator Warren: Well, and I appreciate the attention
5 that you have paid to this and I have every confidence you
6 will continue to do this.

7 But I just want to be able to say quite publicly, you
8 and I, this has got to be a priority for the Army and seeing
9 these first quarter numbers is truly alarming.

10 One other thing that we know -- you raise several
11 factors can contribute to suicide. Another one we know is
12 failure to respond to sexual harassment or assault.

13 So, General George, do you agree that addressing sexual
14 assault and harassment should be part of the solution to
15 suicide prevention programs at DOD?

16 General George: Senator, I think all of that is yes as
17 a part of that if you are having them and so first it is
18 prevention of those kind of things that we have to focus on
19 and then -- and the response, absolutely, making sure that
20 we are taking care of the victim.

21 Senator Warren: I appreciate that. We do not have
22 suicide prevention regulations yet but we do have
23 recommendations from what is called the Suicide Prevention
24 and Response Independent Review Committee and one of the
25 shortfalls it identified in a report earlier this year is

1 the critical shortage of behavioral health professionals.

2 Do you agree that one tool in addressing these
3 shortages could involve the Army working with service
4 members to facilitate access to whatever care can help them
5 whether it is directly through DOD or outside DOD?

6 General George: Yes, Senator, I agree with that and
7 like I said before I think what we are trying to do is if it
8 is specifically -- I think there is a national shortage in
9 behavioral health specialists so what we want to do is make
10 sure that we are triaging and people who need the behavioral
11 health actually get that, and if somebody has a financial
12 issue or relationship issue they are talking to somebody.

13 Senator Warren: I appreciate that. I just want to
14 mention that in Massachusetts we have the Home Base program,
15 which is making a big difference to service members and
16 their families.

17 They provide treatment for post-traumatic stress
18 disorder and depression as well as for the complicated grief
19 of loved ones who have lost a service member or a veteran to
20 suicide, and it provides an opportunity for service members
21 to get the help they need without worrying about the stigma
22 of seeking help through DOD instead.

23 So I want us to do everything we can in this area and I
24 look forward to having a chance to work with you. Thank
25 you, General George.

1 General George: Thank you, Senator. I look forward to
2 getting up to see Home Base and everything else.

3 Senator Warren: Good. I am going to hold you to that.

4 General George: Yes, Senator.

5 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Warren.

6 Senator Tuberville, please?

7 Senator Tuberville: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

8 General, thanks for being here, you and your family.
9 Thanks for your service.

10 As we talked about yesterday we want to try to keep
11 politics out of -- out of your business. You do not need
12 that and I apologize for what you have had to go through
13 this morning. Some of your hearing time should not -- you
14 should not have had gone through that but -- because you
15 cannot control that, okay. So but I thank you for being
16 here.

17 But you are going to find out in your recruiting -- we
18 have talked about recruiting today -- your three biggest
19 hurdles are going to be politicians, the media, and social
20 media. That is going to be your three biggest problems.

21 I have gone through that before not in the military but
22 also in coaching, and so that is some things that you are
23 going to have to fight through.

24 Just one little story. About a year ago -- I will tell
25 you a sad story -- one of the big things that we get here

1 -- that you get satisfaction from is to be able to nominate
2 young men and women to the military academies, which is
3 awesome. I mean, it is an awesome accomplishment.

4 They work for it all their life. They put their heart
5 and soul into it, and I called a young man last year in
6 Alabama, and it had been his lifelong goal to be perfect in
7 every score and in school.

8 And he said, Coach, I am going to turn it down. I have
9 read too much in the media about what is going on. I do not
10 want any part of it. That is the direction that we are
11 headed in this country.

12 We need kids like him to be in the military, not force
13 them out because of too much dang politics. So good luck to
14 you and I think you are going to do an awesome job.

15 I want to ask you about the future long-range assault
16 aircraft, the new helicopter that we are getting ready to
17 start, and you are going to be the recipient of that. What
18 is your thoughts about it, the decision that we made with
19 the dual rotor?

20 General George: You are talking of FLRAA?

21 Senator Tuberville: Yeah, the FLRAA. Yeah.

22 General George: Well, I think that that helicopter,
23 obviously, the ones that we have had and I have been on for
24 the last 20 years are great. This one you are going to get
25 double the speed and double the range and have the ability

1 to upgrade from them.

2 I think that that will be a significant improvement and
3 as I mentioned up front we have to constantly be looking to
4 evolve and I think that this will help us -- definitely help
5 us to do that.

6 Senator Tuberville: Do you think that is going to help
7 us in the Indo-Pacific the Army being involved if there
8 happens to be a future conflict?

9 General George: I do, yes, Senator.

10 Senator Tuberville: Because of the size, the speed?

11 General George: I think the size and the speed and
12 getting -- and moving things around. Yes, Senator.

13 Senator Tuberville: Thank you. Tomorrow I will be
14 meeting with General Hamilton, the commander of the Army
15 Materiel Command, and as you know Anniston Depot is the
16 designated center of industrial and technology excellence
17 for vehicles such as the M-1 Abrams tank and the Stryker.

18 The depot has teammates deployed around the world in
19 direct support of our nation's war fighters providing
20 service and repairs in the field, especially in this time of
21 the conflict we are having in Europe.

22 General, what is being done to ensure that the depots
23 around the country can meet the current forecasted workload
24 to replenish what we are losing now?

25 General George: Senator, first, as I mentioned to you,

1 I think, we are super proud of Anniston. A lot of what ends
2 up in Ukraine has been touched by the great workforce that
3 is down there at Anniston and also helping with all of the
4 logistics is also coming out of Redstone.

5 We are in the process of updating the industrial base.
6 It is critically important to the Army, really, to the joint
7 force and to our nation. We have a long-range plan to do
8 that and we have kind of broken it up in increments to
9 prioritize what we can do.

10 We had spent a good amount -- \$1.5 billion -- out of
11 our budget. Thanks to Congress we got an additional \$1.6
12 billion, and I think we are continuing to look at that and
13 what we need to do to pull it left.

14 It is oftentimes not as easy as just going out and
15 fixing everything all at once because we also have to
16 continue to do what we are doing at Anniston. So you have
17 to figure out how you are upgrading it while continuing the
18 mission.

19 Senator Tuberville: I am amazed at how many people it
20 takes to run a tank, not the people inside but the people
21 that follow along -- the fuel, the maintenance, mechanics.

22 General George: Yes, sir. Yeah.

23 Senator Tuberville: I mean, it is unbelievable just
24 looking through that scenario. But, again, congratulations
25 --

1 General George: Thank you, sir.

2 Senator Tuberville: -- to you, your family and look
3 forward to going to Redstone and Fort Novosel and Anniston
4 in the near future. Thank you.

5 General George: Thank you.

6 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Tuberville.

7 Senator Kelly, please?

8 Senator Kelly: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and good to
9 see you again, General, and very nice meeting your family
10 and congratulations on your nomination.

11 And I really appreciate the conversation we had -- I
12 think it was about a month ago -- about the importance of
13 leveraging existing Army assets to strengthen our electronic
14 warfare capabilities and hearing your perspective on how
15 critical our Army's training ranges are to that work and
16 that effort.

17 The Fort Huachuca electronic proving ground offers
18 great potential for electronic warfare testing,
19 experimentation, and training. In Fort Huachuca, as we
20 discuss, has a truly unique geography that allows us to
21 safely employ electronic warfare effects and to train very
22 realistically, and a DOD team recently came out to the fort
23 and assessed their capability and found that it does have
24 the capacity and the expertise and the will also to do more
25 and, in my view, we need to seize this opportunity.

1 That is why I led a provision in this year's defense
2 bill requiring that the Secretary of Defense carry out a
3 demonstration of a new Western Range complex. This will
4 eventually serve as a joint multi-domain nonkinetic testing
5 and training environment across military departments and the
6 Western Range complex would connect multiple nonkinetic
7 ranges and training sites to better replicate some real-
8 world threat conditions. And I also worked on provisions to
9 require assessments on where we may need to invest to ensure
10 that we keep pace with changing technology and threats.

11 So, General George, if confirmed, you would oversee the
12 execution of Army policies and programs on electronic
13 warfare. So could you explain a little bit why this
14 capability is so important as we accelerate modernization to
15 meet threats posed by countries like Russia and China?

16 General George: Yes, Senator. We -- this kind of gets
17 to some of the earlier questions we were talking about what
18 have we learned and a lot in electronic warfare and also in
19 signals intelligence. That is a big part of what we can do
20 out in Huachuca.

21 There is very few locations like what we have -- the
22 capability that we have out at Huachuca, which is also our
23 -- the Army's intel center and we have to immediately adapt
24 the kind of lessons that we are learning and we need places
25 where we can do that, and we are looking at a place just

1 like you are talking about doing that at Huachuca. Also
2 have to integrate that into our combat training centers.

3 So I think it is absolutely -- if we are going to
4 evolve we are going to have to learn how to adapt to those
5 environments.

6 Senator Kelly: And one of the things that makes Fort
7 Huachuca unique is the geography, and when you put an
8 emitter out on the Barry Goldwater Range on the ground to
9 emulate some Chinese threat compared to what you can do in
10 Fort Huachuca you are talking about upwards of 10 times the
11 power and what that enables is, say, it is a surface to air
12 missile threat, a fighter, to be able to identify that
13 threat from a much greater distance.

14 So could you talk a little bit about the context of
15 what this means for a future conflict in the Pacific if we
16 were to get into one?

17 General George: Well, I think that what you are
18 talking about being able to do is realistic training that we
19 have to be able to do. Those are the kind of threats that
20 we are going to face and you have to train -- you have to
21 train for that.

22 We are doing the same thing in trying to incorporate
23 that where we can with our exercises. Some of our exercises
24 have actually linked back to capabilities that we have had
25 at the electronic proving grounds.

1 I think we have to -- obviously, the Pacific is the
2 expanse and doing geography and linking all of these
3 capabilities to include command and control is something
4 that we will -- we will continue to do. But it is,
5 obviously, critically important to the Army and, I think,
6 the joint force.

7 Senator Kelly: Well, thank you, General.

8 In my remaining time here I just want to talk about a
9 visit I had at the Army Futures Command, and I was briefed
10 on their efforts to ensure that the U.S. Army remains at the
11 forefront of technological innovation and warfighting
12 capability.

13 And they had some concerns that they did not have a lot
14 of nimble funding tools and sources and they were often at
15 risk of missing some opportunities to leverage innovation
16 from industry because they did not have the funding tools
17 available to get resources to companies without it taking,
18 in some cases, a couple years.

19 So I know I am running out of time here. But, General,
20 I am interested in getting some help and a commitment to
21 facilitate some collaboration between the Army Futures
22 Command and the Office of Strategic Capital and to see if
23 you would be willing to work with me on these efforts to
24 bridge what we often refer to as the valley of death in
25 government contracting.

1 General George: Absolutely, Senator. Whatever we can
2 do to, I think, do things -- evolve quickly we are
3 absolutely interested in that and I am happy to come see you
4 and talk to you about that more.

5 Senator Kelly: Thank you, General.

6 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Kelly.

7 Senator Budd, please?

8 Senator Budd: Thank you, Chairman. Thank you,
9 General, for being here and congrats on your nomination.

10 I want to focus on Special Operations Force structure
11 and potential cuts that have now been widely reported,
12 including an exclusive by the Secretary of the Army with the
13 Army Times.

14 Special Operations Forces play a critical role in
15 strategic competition, counterterrorism, and crisis
16 response. So and, General, a true or false question here.
17 So given these requirements would you say that demand for
18 Special Operations Forces from the combatant commands is
19 growing? True or false, please.

20 General George: I do not know the answer to that
21 specifically. But if you were to ask me how much it is
22 since what we were doing 10 years ago I think, again, what
23 we are trying to do to look at this, and there has been no
24 decisions made on this -- on anything with the force
25 structure but we are doing things differently and this

1 really comes down to if we are operating in the same theater
2 together and doing the same thing and that is what we model.
3 There are ways that we can do things, I think, one, more
4 efficiently and, two, that would be better for the -- for
5 the joint force.

6 So we have a lot of capabilities that are out there
7 already campaigning and I think that we can do a lot of
8 things together, Senator.

9 Senator Budd: General, thank you. I appreciate your
10 responses earlier to Senator Ernst and her kind introduction
11 of you.

12 The trend that I am seeing -- and this is anecdotal and
13 we probably would have the data that we are seeing an
14 increased demand on this -- but the joint concept for
15 competing states that the joint force will conduct irregular
16 warfare operations and activities proactively to subvert,
17 create dilemmas for adversaries, and impose costs on
18 adversaries' strategic interest.

19 So when I think of irregular warfare I think
20 specifically about Army SOF, Green Berets, psychological
21 operations, civil affairs.

22 So another true or false. Decreasing the overall
23 -- and this is, again, decreasing overall capacity of Army
24 Special Operations will decrease joint force ability to
25 conduct the irregular warfare called for by the joint

1 concept for competing. Would that be true or false?

2 General George: I am sorry I have not given you a true
3 or false, Senator. But I do think that, first of all, for
4 SOF it takes a long time to grow that capability. We have
5 not talked to anybody at SOCOM about -- specifically for
6 SOF, that specific capability, because I agree with you we
7 need that capability and -- out there. I think what we are
8 talking about is how we support that capability that they
9 have.

10 Senator Budd: Thank you, General. And keeping with
11 that it would seem that if we did decrease SOF in the joint
12 force that would decrease our ability to compete. So what
13 does the operational and personnel tempo look like for Army
14 Special Operations?

15 General George: I would tell you that the op tempo is
16 high really across the Army for what we are doing. So that
17 is kind of how we measure it as far as we are looking at
18 brigade combat teams, the same enablers that we are talking
19 about are over there forward.

20 For example, in Europe right now it is all the Army
21 enablers that are already over there that are supporting the
22 SOF so they would not have to send additional folks over
23 there. So that is what we try to do to do economies of
24 scale. That is what you would expect us to do because we
25 also need an Army that can fight and win and so I think that

1 is all part of it.

2 Senator Budd: General, continuing on with that, and I
3 think I heard in that answer that you said it is high right
4 now. So if demand is increasing and capacity would decrease
5 under the Army's reported plans would that not negatively
6 impact both operational and personnel tempo?

7 General George: Again, what we are -- we would like to
8 decrease tempo -- perstempo -- for everybody that is out
9 there.

10 Senator Budd: Right. But understand if it is -- if it
11 is actually is increasing would not decreasing under the
12 Army's reported plans -- would that not negatively impact
13 operation personnel tempo? I mean, they seem they could be
14 going in opposite directions.

15 General George: If you are talking very basically like
16 that -- I would love to come over and have a detailed
17 conversation with you on this, Senator -- really, for
18 everybody -- about this.

19 Senator Budd: Thank you, General. So I hope that we
20 can make some reasonable decisions here -- I look forward to
21 that conversation -- that are in the best interests of the
22 Army and the joint force as a whole. So I am going to be
23 following this closely and I would love detailed updates as
24 the department's planning progresses.

25 But in my final time here I want to ask on a different

1 topic. When we spoke in my office you mentioned the Army
2 needs to improve its marketing strategy to address the
3 recruiting crisis. You have mentioned recruiting a bit
4 before.

5 But what strategies and tools -- a little different
6 question -- what strategy and tools would you suggest to
7 improve Army recruiting?

8 General George: I will give you one quick example,
9 Senator. I heard this when I was out with a recruiting
10 company commander. I do not remember if it was Oklahoma or
11 Texas or it was one of the others and he said, hey, if you
12 are a nationally -- your national message might be buy a
13 certain kind of vehicle and out here we buy Ford 150s. That
14 is what it is.

15 And so how do we tailor local messages to local. That
16 is one thing that I think that we have to look at because we
17 are different and we are trying to appeal to a very broad
18 -- we want to come from across society and so I think that
19 we have to look at it in detail from the local markets all
20 the way up to the larger markets and that is what we need to
21 do.

22 Senator Budd: Thank you, General. Chairman, my time
23 has expired.

24 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Budd.

25 Senator Hirono, please?

1 Senator Hirono: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

2 General George, welcome. Thank you very much for your
3 service and your commitment to continuing to serve and, of
4 course, aloha to your family because we all know that when
5 you serve your family also serves.

6 We have had over the last two days the -- hearings on
7 two really important nominations. Yesterday was General
8 Brown to be the Chair of the Joint Chiefs and today you to
9 be the Chief of Staff for the Army.

10 It has been made abundantly clear how damaging the
11 holds that Senator Tuberville has placed on military
12 promotions is and yesterday I note that Senator Tuberville
13 in his questioning of General Brown for his position said if
14 there is anything he can do to help General Brown, and I
15 would say -- and I would join my colleagues in saying,
16 Senator Tuberville, you have made your point and I ask you
17 to lift your hold because, as I said, it has been made
18 abundantly clear by all of your testifying that these holds
19 are creating much damage to our readiness, our ability of
20 our military to proceed. So there is that for Senator
21 Tuberville.

22 General George, as part of my responsibilities I want
23 to ensure the fitness of all nominees who come before any of
24 the committees on which I serve for fitness to serve and I
25 ask the following two initial questions.

1 Since you became a legal adult have you ever made
2 unwanted requests for sexual favors or committed any verbal
3 or physical harassment or assault of a sexual nature?

4 General George: No, Senator.

5 Senator Hirono: Have you ever faced discipline or
6 entered into a settlement related to this kind of conduct?

7 General George: No, I have not, Senator.

8 Senator Hirono: General George, I have been sitting
9 here for a while, and I very much appreciate your very
10 thoughtful responses to the questions that have been put to
11 you and especially relating to very sensitive issues such as
12 suicide and, I would say, the continuing scourge of sexual
13 assault and harassment in the military. I appreciate your
14 thoughtful responses.

15 As the chair of the Readiness Subcommittee I have made
16 very clear the importance of infrastructure as a top
17 priority and the Army, like every service, has a deep
18 backlog of maintenance and modernization for its facilities
19 and basic infrastructure and, in fact, in Hawaii there is a
20 backlog of almost \$5 billion in facilities maintenance and
21 modernization and that is the deficit. We discussed this
22 yesterday.

23 Where does infrastructure replacement, repair, and
24 maintenance stand in your order of priorities for the Army?

25 General George: I will tell you, Senator, that it is

1 integral. Our job is to be prepared for -- to fight and win
2 our nation's wars and having the right infrastructure
3 depending on what it is is a critical aspect of that.

4 You know in Hawaii how critical Schofield and
5 everything that we have out there, the training area, PTA,
6 is to us out there. So we have to pay attention to that.
7 It gets to recruiting as well. If you are not -- if you do
8 not have the right infrastructure that has an impact on your
9 workforce and so I would say it is of critical importance to
10 us.

11 Senator Hirono: There is such a huge infrastructure
12 deficit throughout the DOD but the Army has a huge presence
13 in Hawaii as well as in other places and what I would like
14 to see going forward under your leadership is a more obvious
15 commitment to infrastructure replacement, maintenance,
16 modernization.

17 I do not really see that as a commitment. We wait
18 until things fall apart, where electricity goes out at
19 Tripler, the major hospital in Hawaii, and you cannot have
20 that, not to mention the huge concerns regarding Red Hill.

21 So you did mention the importance of renegotiating our
22 leases for training, especially Pohakuloa, and part of those
23 renegotiations is very much talking with the community.

24 So I would like to have your commitment that you will
25 make sure that that kind of outreach is occurring. The last

1 thing we need to happen for these really critical training
2 areas is some concerns raised that we have not addressed due
3 to some lack of outreach and continuing discussions with
4 especially the native Hawaiian community.

5 General George: I agree with you 100 percent, Senator,
6 and we will -- we will partner with the local community. I
7 know they are doing that right now.

8 Senator Hirono: As we are doing these leases I think
9 there may be an opportunity for the Army to really look at
10 its needs and return some of the land to the state. So that
11 kind of a process I think is very important. I hope you
12 will conduct that and with a view of returning land that you
13 do not need to the state.

14 General George: Okay, Senator. Yes.

15 Senator Hirono: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

16 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Hirono.

17 Senator Mullin, please?

18 Senator Mullin: Thank you, Chairman, and I honestly
19 had no intention of addressing this but I have to because it
20 seems like my colleagues from the other side continue to
21 bring up the Tuberville hold and they are leaving a factor
22 out of this, that Chuck Schumer can bring this up for vote
23 anytime he wants to. Secretary Austin can come here and
24 address his concerns anytime he wants to.

25 Senator Tuberville has the right to put a hold on it

1 because he believes something is illegal. He believes that
2 Secretary Austin is going outside of Code 1093. 1093 was a
3 code -- was a law that was passed that President Biden
4 -- for my colleagues that may not know the history of this,
5 President Biden voted for that was very clear that allowed
6 exceptions only in three cases for the armed services to pay
7 and assist in any circumstances for an abortion.

8 That is the law, and if we do not like the law then we
9 have the right as a body to change it. But yet we are
10 ignoring that issue, and if Secretary Austin believes that
11 it is within his authority to do so then he can come in here
12 with his team of attorneys and, Chairman Reed, you can have
13 a hearing on it and he can explain it to all of us, or Chuck
14 Schumer can simply bring it to the floor for a vote and we
15 can all vote on it and say we do not believe in law anymore
16 and we want to dissolve it.

17 But my colleague has the right to put a hold on it. So
18 we can continue to gripe about it all we want but it is
19 within his right to do it and it is within our body to
20 address his concerns if we choose to. But we are all
21 ignoring that issue.

22 So I think my colleagues should probably refocus on
23 themselves and call in Chuck Schumer or this committee to
24 have a hearing on it.

25 With that being said, I will quit my rant.

1 General George, a pleasure seeing you again. I truly
2 think we have developed a friendship. I appreciate you,
3 and, Mrs. George, your sacrifice. Holy smokes, between you
4 and your service and your husband's service in the way you
5 guys have held a family together is remarkable.

6 I just commend you guys. My heart goes out for you.
7 The sacrifice and service that you have made and your
8 children have made I just thank you. Thank you for giving
9 us this opportunity.

10 I get thanked all the time for my service and I stop
11 and I say, no, there is not one of us who could do this if
12 you all did not do your job and do it well. So God bless
13 you and God bless your family and I wish you -- I wish you
14 all the luck and I am going to just end this because I
15 really do not have any question for you because we have met
16 multiple times.

17 I really thank you for your interest in our munitions
18 depot in McAlester and, of course, Fort Sill. I look
19 forward to the time we get you back in Oklahoma and we get a
20 tour of those facilities along with Tinker and even Vance
21 and Altus. So Godspeed, and that you understand you do have
22 a friend in me and I am here wanting to get in the boat and
23 row in the same direction with you and continue to make this
24 country stand out and be the greatest nation in the world.
25 Thank you.

1 General George: Thank you, Senator.

2 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Mullin.

3 Senator Duckworth, please?

4 Senator Duckworth: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

5 I just want to correct the record here. Senator
6 Tuberville has been given multiple off ramps. He was
7 offered a vote on Senator Ernst's bill which was far -- much
8 more overall encompassing. He has been given lots of
9 opportunities and he is simply refusing to lift a hold.

10 For the first time in over a hundred years we do not
11 have a commandant of the Marine Corps, someone who can have
12 the full power and authority of a commandant. This is
13 absolutely unacceptable. We have all of these officers and
14 their families. My colleagues talk about and laud the
15 family members for their service.

16 We have family members who are being pulled out of
17 schools, unable to start a new school term. We have spouses
18 who cannot start a new job, who have lost their jobs. The
19 entire military readiness is slowly grinding to a halt and
20 it is going to get worse every single day because Senator
21 Tuberville has injected politics into this.

22 And let me make it clear. DOD statute is very clear.
23 The DOD cannot fund abortions and the DOD is not funding
24 abortions. The DOD is simply providing the ability for
25 service members to travel to a different state from the one

1 in which they are assigned in order to receive reproductive
2 health care.

3 The DOD is not paying for those abortions. They are
4 simply saying if you cannot get the reproductive health care
5 you need, whether that is an abortion or IVF or an IUD or
6 wherever that is, then you should be able to travel
7 someplace for that.

8 And you know who gets hurt the most on this? Our
9 lowest ranking. It is the youngest women in the military.
10 It is the spouses of the youngest men in the military who
11 have to ask for a pass from their sergeants to leave their
12 duty station so that they can go take care of their health
13 care needs, and what we are telling them -- what Senator
14 Tuberville is telling them is, I do not care about you.
15 Thank you for your service but you cannot take care of your
16 own healthcare or your spouse's health care.

17 And to simply put this as this is a political thing and
18 this is about the military providing abortion is absolutely
19 categorically untrue because the military is not providing
20 abortions in this instance.

21 Now, let me also be clear that our men and women in
22 uniform face so many hardships they should be able to take
23 care of themselves and their family members, bottom line,
24 and if there is anybody that is injecting politics into this
25 it is Senator Tuberville, who is fundraising -- he is

1 fundraising off of his hold on the military leadership that
2 is affecting the national security of this country. If he
3 truly cared about this he would not be fundraising off of
4 it. That is my rant.

5 Now, General George, good morning and welcome to you
6 and your family and congratulations on your nomination. I
7 am just going to skip all my preamble and just get to the
8 point.

9 General George, if confirmed how would you direct the
10 Army to prepare for a combat scenario where peer adversaries
11 target our supply webs and logistical networks? This
12 follows up on our conversation that we had. I care deeply
13 about contested logistics.

14 What efforts does the Army need to adopt to enhance
15 resilience and effectiveness in a contested logistics
16 environment and how can Congress contribute to these
17 efforts? We talked about this a little bit and I wanted you
18 to be able to elaborate on that here.

19 General George: Yes. Thanks, Senator.

20 We have stood up contested logistics so we share your
21 concern on this. It is absolutely critical and this would
22 be a partnership with, really, Army Futures Command as
23 leading it with Army Materiel Command.

24 But it is a challenge for us and I think, really, for
25 our country from the strategic level. We have talked a lot

1 this morning about an industrial base. But that is
2 strategic readiness and so making sure that you are
3 protecting that and ammunition and what we are producing
4 back here, and then the same thing with ports and getting
5 things and operational logistics all the way down to what we
6 can do to tactical logistics.

7 So it is a very -- I think you have -- I know you are
8 familiar with the term that logistics is for professionals.
9 I mean, it is very challenging, very hard, and I think we
10 are going to have to really partner. I know the joint force
11 is thinking about this and, really, it is going to take all
12 of us together to make sure that we are as ready as we can
13 be.

14 Senator Duckworth: Thank you. Can you drill down a
15 little bit on your experience as a commander and your
16 multiple deployments in OIF and OEF dealing with operational
17 logistics, especially energy, batteries for radios, diesel
18 fuel, but then also talk a little bit about supply parts and
19 perhaps the need for having additive metals milling
20 equipment downrange so that we can produce some of our own
21 repair parts?

22 General George: Yeah. Thanks for this because it had
23 not come up, Senator. I will give an example. When I was a
24 brigade -- I had a light brigade BCT in eastern Afghanistan
25 -- we lost soldiers because we had to move fuel and parts

1 and do those kinds of things so in very dangerous territory.
2 Whatever we can do -- I think that reducing fuel consumption
3 makes us more nimble on the battlefield and will obviously
4 make a difference in the Pacific but, really, anywhere. So
5 battery, increasing that.

6 I also -- what I also like about that is that when you
7 have -- a lot of our vehicles have thermal sights, have
8 different sights. When you are able to have -- the engine
9 is not running and you have silent watch I think that makes
10 you also more lethal.

11 So we are focused on those kinds of things. For the
12 individual soldier I think it is also important because
13 nobody likes to carry a lot of heavy batteries. So whatever
14 we can do to also lighten that load and we are working on
15 all of those things.

16 Senator Duckworth: The fewer batteries they carry the
17 more ammo they can carry, right?

18 General George: That is exactly right. Yes, Senator.
19 Thank you.

20 Senator Duckworth: Thank you. I yield back, Mr.
21 Chairman.

22 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator.

23 Senator Cotton, please?

24 Senator Cotton: General George, welcome, and
25 congratulations on your nomination. Thanks for your

1 lifetime of service. Mrs. George, thank you as well.

2 I know that several senators have addressed with you
3 the recruiting challenge. Well, I call it the recruiting
4 crisis that the Army faces. I think this is the number-one
5 challenge, certainly, the most urgent challenge you have to
6 address.

7 Some things are beyond your control. You cannot
8 control rising wages in the private sector. You cannot
9 control a shrinking teenage population or 20 something
10 population in our country.

11 But some things will be in your control and I would
12 just add my voice to all of those other senators about
13 trying to address those concerns about expanding eligibility
14 pools, making it easier to push a waiver authority down from
15 the general officer level to the field or even company grade
16 level, addressing some of the perceptions of political
17 correctness in the military and so forth.

18 This is a tough challenge. I hope you succeed. The
19 nation needs you to succeed. But I think it is probably
20 going to be one of the main things that your tenure is
21 measured by if you cannot succeed.

22 Second -- we discussed this yesterday. I want to put
23 it on the record, though. The Caisson Platoon at the Old
24 Guard is a very special unit. Normally we would not talk
25 about platoons or even regiments at a hearing like this.

1 But the Old Guard is a regiment of national importance.

2 It does not just perform in -- at ceremonies at the
3 White House and state funerals but it also performs military
4 honors funerals every single day and because of right now
5 the stand down of the Caisson Platoon there are not caissons
6 being used with horses in the Arlington National Cemetery,
7 and every day that goes by that that is not happening that
8 means a veteran who earned those honors and a family who is
9 there for the funeral is not receiving them.

10 So can I get your commitment on the record that the
11 Army does not intend to end or eliminate the Caisson
12 Platoon?

13 General George: Senator, there is no intention to
14 eliminate that capability.

15 Senator Cotton: Thank you. And I know the Army has
16 laid down a path forward. I think it is up to a year or
17 maybe a little bit less than a year now. Can I get your
18 commitment as well that you will try to do everything you
19 can to accelerate that process and get horses back operating
20 with the Caisson Platoon in Arlington National Cemetery?

21 General George: Yes, Senator. That is our goal to
22 accelerate.

23 Senator Cotton: Okay. Finally, I want to address the
24 ongoing saga about the Army's combat fitness test and gender
25 neutral standards. We have talked about this. You have

1 heard me talk to your predecessor and Secretary Wormuth
2 about it. For years the Army said they would have general
3 neutral standards under the combat fitness test.

4 Last spring at the last minute the Army decided not to
5 do that. This committee in the NDA directed it to have
6 gender neutral standards in the combat arms branches.
7 Secretary Wormuth and her army of lawyers found a way to say
8 that they did not need to do that.

9 So here we are this year with Congress being more
10 directed. The House of Representatives, in language
11 proposed by Representative Waltz, includes a directive that
12 the Army should impose, one, gender neutral standards in
13 combat arms branches, and two, those standards have to be
14 higher than they are for the Army as a whole because,
15 frankly, the Army standard is kind of pathetic.

16 The Army standards require you to run two miles in 22
17 or 23 minutes, and I say run. I want the record to report
18 that I use sarcastic air quotes with my fingers when I say
19 run because moving two miles in 23 minutes is not running.
20 It may be shuffling but it is not running.

21 This committee tried to have the same approach, at
22 least I did, that Representative Waltz proposed but the Army
23 came back to us and said they would rather revert to the old
24 Army physical fitness tests -- the old fashioned two-mile
25 run, pushups, and sit ups and use gender specific standards.

1 So what I sense is an ideological opposition in the
2 Secretary of the Army's office to having gender neutral
3 standards for the combat arms branches. I just want to read
4 you something and see if I can get your agreement on it.

5 While it may be difficult for a 120-pound woman to lift
6 or drag 250 pounds the Army cannot artificially absolve
7 women of that responsibility. It may still exist on the
8 battlefield.

9 The entire purpose of creating a gender neutral test
10 was to acknowledge the reality that each job has objective
11 physical standards to which all soldiers should be held
12 regardless of gender. The intent was not to ensure that
13 women and men will have an equal likelihood of meeting those
14 standards.

15 General, do you agree with that sentiment?

16 General George: Yes, Senator, I do.

17 Senator Cotton: Thank you. It was given by one of
18 your officers, Captain Kristen Griest. She may be a major
19 by now. She was one of the Army's very first female
20 infantry officers and one of the first graduates of the
21 Ranger school so I think she should know what she is talking
22 about.

23 So to be clear, I do not want the Army necessarily to
24 return to the old Army physical fitness test. I am fine if
25 they keep the combat fitness test. I do expect the Army to

1 have gender neutral standards for the combat arms branches
2 in which ground combat roles have irreducible physical
3 demands.

4 So can I get your commitment that you will work with
5 this committee and with the House Armed Services Committee
6 to move forward in a way that achieves your objectives with
7 the combat fitness test but also ensures that we have gender
8 neutral and higher standards for those demanding combat arms
9 branches?

10 General George: You have my commitment, Senator, and I
11 would like to -- I do like the Army combat fitness test. I
12 think it is a great test. I think it is changing the
13 fitness culture.

14 So far we have been doing this through the active
15 component for this last year and we are getting ready to do
16 it in compos two and three so the National Guard and the
17 Army Reserve.

18 I was thinking back to when I first came on. I think
19 this is important because this will help us set a good
20 baseline and decide where the standards are. When I first
21 came in, enlisted in the Army, I know by the time I was a
22 lieutenant the standards were a lot different, a lot higher,
23 and that is what we need and that is what we need to do.

24 So we would like to take the time to make sure that we
25 are doing this appropriately and have them set the right

1 way.

2 Senator Cotton: Good. I am glad to hear that because,
3 again, it was not my idea to say the Army should revert to
4 the physical fitness test as opposed to the combat fitness
5 test. It was the secretary's office and some of my
6 Democratic friends who had such an ideological opposition to
7 gender neutral standards that you and I and Captain Griest
8 all think that the Army should have.

9 So I am happy to work with you on that. I am happy for
10 the Army to have gender specific standards in profession
11 -- or in branches and MOSes that do not require those same
12 kind of demanding physical positions like an intelligence
13 analyst or a systems network or anything -- any other kind
14 of jobs.

15 But in things like the infantry and artillery and armor
16 I think we can all agree that there are irreducible physical
17 demands that we have to ensure male and female soldiers
18 alike can be on the battlefield.

19 Thank you.

20 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Cotton.

21 Senator Peters, please?

22 Senator Peters: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

23 General George, welcome. Good to see you again and
24 congratulations on your nomination as well.

25 General George, as you are well aware, for decades the

1 Army has prepared soldiers for deployment overseas through
2 the use of validation exercises conducted either at the JRTC
3 or NTC. These exercises are, of course, of critical
4 importance to allow soldiers and their commanders to conduct
5 training that they may not be able to receive at their home
6 station with -- it can be training with larger formations
7 and supporting units necessary for success when they deploy
8 overseas.

9 I believe this is especially true, and I think you
10 would agree, for Reserve components and for the National
11 Guard. But as the Army places more emphasis on the need to
12 fight in the cyber and space domains and in contested and
13 degraded EW environments I am becoming concerned that this
14 model leaves National Guardsmen ill prepared for
15 participation in validation exercises and, more importantly,
16 for deployment downrange.

17 I think we need to be investing more in National Guard
18 exercises and installations that can host the type of large-
19 scale combat operations that include cyber and EW effects to
20 better prepare our troops.

21 So my question for you, sir, is what if any changes
22 need to be made to the current validation exercise training
23 model to better prepare soldiers, especially National
24 Guardsmen, for the threats that they are facing in the
25 coming years?

1 General George: Well, I think a couple of things,
2 Senator.

3 You are right that we have to evolve here and adapt on
4 how we are going to train in a multi-domain environment and
5 in some areas that is going to be difficult regardless of
6 where that is.

7 I think I was talking to Senator Kelly earlier about
8 how much altitude airspace you own, what you are allowed to
9 do with signals in EW and those kinds of things. So we are
10 looking at that. I think simulations is going to be a big
11 part of that too to allow people to train in that
12 environment much like we do with some of the cyber that can
13 do more remote.

14 So I think it is going to be a combination of things.
15 I know this is something that we are talking about a lot on
16 our -- on our training side inside of our G3 to figure out
17 how we are going to move forward.

18 And the Army is a total army. We all have to come
19 together. Grayling is one of those spots that we talked
20 about that you can do a lot of those -- that kind of
21 training as well.

22 I know there is -- I think Northern Strike is coming up
23 soon --

24 Senator Peters: Right.

25 General George: -- and so those kind of locations, I

1 think, where you can get after multi-domain training and
2 much like we are doing with those exercises I think that
3 will also help us.

4 Senator Peters: Great. Well, and we talked about that
5 facility. I understand you trained there yourself as a
6 young lieutenant and I appreciated your offer, if confirmed,
7 to come up and to see the facility again because it is
8 certainly that type of facility that can help facilitate
9 that. So I look forward to working with you, if confirmed.

10 General, as the Army continues development of
11 autonomous mobility platforms an enterprise wide solution to
12 data collection and management is going to be without
13 question vital to ensure that the relevant program executive
14 offices and their respective program managers do not add
15 vehicle specific solutions to the challenge posed by
16 autonomous mobility.

17 I would argue that that type of error would leave the
18 department susceptible to vendor lock-in of boutique
19 solutions and would prevent the efficiencies that can be
20 gained from, basically, service wide use of data sets to
21 build AI/ML algorithms.

22 So my question for you is do you believe that the
23 current Army approach to autonomous mobility is sufficient
24 to meet the challenges in an affordable and timely manner
25 and what structure changes, including potentially the

1 creation of a PEO focused on ground autonomy, do you think
2 needs to be made to ensure that the Army is moving on the
3 cutting edge of this technology in this field?

4 General George: Senator, I want to go to the -- your
5 question first on the PEO. I think just like we are doing
6 on the cross functional teams and we have done this, I think
7 ASA (ALT) -- Mr. Bush has done this recently with making
8 some adjustments. You cannot let your structure get in the
9 way of how you have to adjust your force and what you are
10 going to need on the battlefield to win.

11 So yes, we are going to have to look at that and see
12 how we are doing that and I think that we are. There has
13 been some recent changes that we have done. I mentioned
14 added a cross functional team and taken things that we need
15 to do that.

16 Autonomous systems is a good example of where we need
17 to really partner with commercial American ingenuity -- I
18 think we see that up in Detroit as an example -- that it is
19 happening out there and that is -- we need to have those
20 kinds of partnerships.

21 I think what we are looking at is everything that we
22 are building we need to make sure has open architecture
23 -- this gets to your question -- to your issue on vendor
24 lock -- to make sure that we have the ability to -- you are
25 not locked into that, that we have an open architecture,

1 that we can easily adapt these systems.

2 I think that that is the way we are going to have to do
3 this if we are going to continue to evolve.

4 Senator Peters: Great. Thank you, General. Thank
5 you, Mr. Chairman.

6 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Peters.

7 Senator Schmitt, please?

8 Senator Schmitt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

9 Good to see you. Enjoyed our visit in the office, and
10 as I told you my grandfather was an infantryman in the Army
11 during World War II and was very proud of his service. We
12 are proud of his service and thank you for your service.

13 I guess a couple of questions, and I know I asked you
14 this -- more of a statement but also, I guess, a response.
15 I just think whatever we can do to depoliticize what is
16 happening right now in the military, I think, is paramount.

17 I mean, I think it goes to the recruiting challenges.
18 It goes to public trust, and based on our conversation it
19 sounds like that is -- you are on the same page of keeping
20 politics no matter whose it is out of the military and just
21 be the best war-fighting military in the history of the
22 world. And you would agree with that statement, correct?

23 General George: I would agree with that, Senator.

24 Senator Schmitt: Okay. And then as a sort of rubber
25 kind of meets the road here, as our pacing challenge,

1 biggest threat, whatever you want to call communist China,
2 they are that and just curious to hear your -- and you may
3 have asked this but this is the downside of being the last
4 one on the -- on the dais here to ask questions. But your
5 view of how the Army -- and in many ways the Army has done
6 this before but not as recently and how you think under your
7 command here the Army evolves or does things differently to
8 face that threat in the INDOPACOM theater.

9 General George: Okay. Thanks for that question,
10 Senator.

11 I think first is just to make sure -- you were talking
12 earlier about perceptions -- that it is very much a joint
13 theater out in the Pacific and I think the Army has a big
14 role. As we know from history we did back in World War II
15 when there was actual fighting out there.

16 So I think for deterrence in everything will have a
17 huge role as part of the joint team. I could go down
18 several of the -- contested logistics came up. I think Army
19 will have a significant role in that integrated air and
20 missile defense.

21 The Army is kind of -- will lead the way and have a
22 -- will be very important to the theater in that. Long-
23 range fires, I think, are critical, very hard. As you have
24 seen, I think it is -- big deterrence as well -- it is very
25 hard to dynamically target things that are on the ground and

1 can hide in that clutter and so I think our long-range
2 fires. We have -- already have to multi-domain task forces
3 that are out there operating and exercising out there. So I
4 think that will be critical.

5 And then the Army is, really, has your close combat
6 force. That is what I have grown up in those and you are
7 going to need those to secure things and you are going to
8 need them -- we are always going to need offensive
9 capability and I think on the land as a land power and I
10 think we will need that.

11 Senator Schmitt: And you mentioned logistics, too,
12 and, as you know, Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri we train a
13 lot of great personnel to deal with logistics. As far as
14 -- this is the last question before I yield back -- as far
15 as needs go by way of weapon systems, generally speaking,
16 what is it that you think -- as we turn our attention more
17 intensely towards China and that theater what is the
18 greatest need there?

19 General George: Well, I will tell you I have been -- I
20 think what has been great in the Army is we have had a very
21 good plan and stuck to it for the last several years.

22 Long-range fires is a good example of that across that
23 portfolio. Same with integrated air and missile defense.
24 One of the areas that we are really focusing on now to kind
25 of add that rolls into that is countering unmanned systems

1 so counter UAS. It is a different threat and how we are
2 focused on that.

3 And so we are -- we have -- the Army is now the
4 executive agent for that and investing more in that and I
5 think that that is going to be another one of those that we
6 are going to have to rapidly evolve in, Senator.

7 Senator Schmitt: Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Mr.
8 Chairman.

9 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Schmitt.

10 Senator Sullivan, please?

11 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

12 General, congratulations on your nomination. I want to
13 thank you and your family for your exceptional service. I
14 think you are highly qualified and I am looking forward to
15 strongly supporting your confirmation. So thank you to your
16 family as well.

17 I just got back from the NATO summit last night late
18 and had the opportunity to visit with the First Cav troops
19 in Lithuania who are doing an exceptional job. So I know
20 you know that but I wanted you know that we had a CODEL -- a
21 bipartisan CODEL of senators who spent a couple hours with
22 them and it looked like they are doing great and morale is
23 high and I think they understand the importance of their
24 mission.

25 I do want to just touch on the recruiting issues.

1 Maybe you have a comment or two on what we can focus on. I
2 was disappointed, to be honest, and I do not like to get
3 into the politicization issues but at a roundtable event
4 Secretary Wormuth just last week talked about one of her
5 concerns on recruiting was politicians labeling the Army as
6 woke as damaging recruiting efforts. That was her comment.

7 I think the secretary -- the best way that she can
8 address this kind of issue is not to blame politicians but
9 just to make sure that the Army is, indeed, not so-called
10 woke.

11 Have you have seen that Emma recruiting ad -- Army Emma
12 recruiting ad? Do you know what I am talking about?

13 General George: I do not think I have seen it but I
14 will.

15 Senator Sullivan: Yeah. This is Exhibit A in a woke
16 Army, in my view. I have no idea who the Army was trying to
17 get with that ad. But it was an embarrassment, I thought,
18 and it was taken down, I believe.

19 Take a look at it. But the secretary -- it was a joke,
20 in my view. I have no idea. It would be good to know maybe
21 for the record who approved that and what the goal -- who
22 are we trying to get? I just do not understand that.

23 But that is on the Army. It is not on politicians.
24 The secretary -- I was disappointed to see the secretary
25 kind of deflecting blame on an issue like this. What are

1 your thoughts on the recruiting issues?

2 General George: Just specific to that point, Senator,
3 I think, again, people are staying inside of our formations.
4 I know that we are focused on our mission, as you have seen,
5 with -- out there with the troops and we got to get the word
6 out about how the Army and the military in general can
7 accelerate your life and it is a great place to serve and we
8 are working hard to do that.

9 Senator Sullivan: Okay. Let me -- let me turn to the
10 11th Airborne Division. I really want to commend you and
11 General McConville and the secretary for that decision, and
12 I was back home last weekend as well and it seems like that
13 unit is doing exceptionally well.

14 We still are having these suicide -- these high levels
15 of suicide in Alaska, which, of course, is horrendous,
16 heartbreaking. Can you give me an update on how you think
17 the 11th Airborne is doing and then can I get a commitment
18 from you?

19 I do think our leadership in Alaska and the Army has
20 really put a lot of effort and focus on these really
21 difficult issues of mental health and suicide. So I am not
22 criticizing at all here but I would like your commitment to
23 continue to focus on that, particularly in my state,
24 particularly some of the MILCON projects that are coming on
25 board that I think are going to be positive.

1 But can you comment on 11th Airborne, how you think
2 they are doing? I know that you had mentioned in a hearing
3 a couple months ago it is the number-one requested place.
4 They did a big jump on the anniversary of the patching. So
5 I would love to hear your views on that and, again, a
6 commitment on continuing that focus on the challenges of
7 suicide in Alaska.

8 General George: First of all, absolutely, Chairman,
9 you have my commitment. Building cohesive teams and taking
10 care of soldiers and families is our top priority. We are
11 actually proud of what 11th Airborne is doing up there and I
12 -- yes, we are -- it is an enlistment incentive to do
13 assignment of choice.

14 A lot of people like to go up there to the north
15 country and serve in that and we have seen that up there.
16 People are proud to be part of that airborne unit. We are
17 proud of what they are doing.

18 Senator Sullivan: It is good to have the 82nd have a
19 little competition, right?

20 General George: I am sure there is a little bit of
21 competition. You know how things work.

22 Senator Sullivan: Yeah, I do know how and I am glad
23 they have a little competition. I think the chairman was
24 part of the 82nd Airborne. All right.

25 General George: But yes, we are proud -- we are proud

1 of what they are doing. I actually -- and I am -- I think
2 what they are doing up with Mission 100 -- I think you might
3 be familiar with that. I always give Alaska as the example
4 of to tackle any problem you have to let a commander -- make
5 them responsible, hold them responsible and accountable but
6 give them the resources and do things different.

7 Alaska is different than Fort Liberty or anywhere else
8 and so they have done some very innovative things up there.
9 I think changing to 11th Airborne was a big -- is a big
10 plus. They are doing hard training up there in their ethos,
11 which I think helps with a lot of things as well. So we are
12 really proud of what 11th Airborne is doing.

13 Senator Sullivan: I would agree with that, General,
14 and seeing the morale it seems to be better because of their
15 mission-oriented focus. They know what they are all about.
16 They got to -- they have a warfighting headquarters, I
17 think, which made it -- makes a difference as well.

18 Let me ask one final question, Mr. Chairman, if it is
19 okay. I have been -- I know that you are looking at
20 additional multi-domain task force locations and I want to
21 get your assessment on how you think that is going but also
22 your commitment -- I know you cannot say yes or no right now
23 -- but to work with me and this committee on the possibility
24 of a multi-domain task force in Alaska.

25 We have the best training in the world. Our strategic

1 location is unrivaled. The father of the Air Force, Billy
2 Mitchell, called Alaska the most strategic place on the
3 planet. A number of services are recognizing that you are
4 six hours from Korea, Japan, the Taiwan Strait.

5 A lot of flag officers actually do not recognize it.
6 Even though we are not west of the International Date Line
7 we are closer to the fight in the Pacific and even in
8 Europe, given our strategic location.

9 So can you just give me an assessment on how you guys
10 are looking at the next location for a multi-domain task
11 force and commit to me to working with this committee on the
12 possibility of having one in Alaska?

13 General George: We have not made any final decisions.
14 We are still working through that and absolutely committed
15 to working with the committee, Senator.

16 Senator Sullivan: And is the goal one or two more
17 multi-domain task forces?

18 General George: The plan is for two additional multi-
19 domain task forces.

20 Senator Sullivan: Okay. Good. Thank you. Thank you,
21 Mr. Chairman.

22 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Sullivan.

23 I want to make, one, an announcement and, two, a few
24 follow-up questions. In the discussion today there was the
25 issue when our committee is going to be briefed on the

1 legality of the Secretary of Defense's policy regarding
2 reproductive rights.

3 Pursuant to an amendment that we voted on in the NDAA
4 markup there will be a briefing next Wednesday morning for
5 all SASC members. So I encourage all of our colleagues to
6 come and to receive a thorough briefing on the legality of
7 his position.

8 The other issue that comes up consistently is why do we
9 not just take a vote on these 251 nominees that are on the
10 floor. There are more uncommitted and every day or every
11 week this will grow and grow and grow, and I just want to
12 remind everyone that Senator Tuberville and others who are
13 insisting on these votes are also insisting on we follow all
14 the procedures, which includes cloture -- time pre and post
15 cloture.

16 For the 251 nominations that would take 668 hours.
17 That is 27 days if we work around the clock and we typically
18 do not work around the clock. It would be 84 days if we
19 worked eight hours a day.

20 That is an impossible goal to achieve and, by the way,
21 that would prevent us from dealing with issues like the
22 National Defense Authorization Act, appropriations bills,
23 and other important legislation. So this notion of just let
24 us take a vote is, I think, indefensible based on the fact
25 that it is virtually impossible to do that.

1 The other aspect here, too, with respect to readiness
2 is that even if we took a vote on a -- to your nomination,
3 General, and went through all of the procedures, et cetera,
4 you would not have a Vice Chief of Staff, correct?

5 General George: That is correct.

6 Chairman Reed: Who would perform the role of Vice
7 Chief of Staff?

8 General George: I mean, we are still working through
9 this because I think we are a little bit in uncharted
10 territory. But we would have to look for people across the
11 staff to kind of pick up some of those duties where they
12 could.

13 Chairman Reed: And, of course, that affects readiness?

14 General George: Yeah. As I mentioned earlier,
15 Chairman, it is just having the right -- if you do not have
16 the right people. There is a reason we have these positions
17 and have these people in place, and you always want to field
18 a full team. So you want your full team on the field.

19 Chairman Reed: And the joint -- the Vice Chief of
20 Staff for the Army is a member of JROC, the Joint
21 Requirements Committee?

22 General George: Yeah, I would -- having done this for
23 the last year the Vice job is very busy.

24 Chairman Reed: So who would represent the Army on the
25 JROC?

1 General George: So we would, again, have to look at
2 the G3 or the director of the Army staff or look at those
3 and there is -- that is challenging as well.

4 Chairman Reed: And, of course, those general officers
5 would be three stars, not four, and all the other Vices
6 would be four. Is that correct?

7 General George: That is correct, Chairman.

8 Chairman Reed: And it was interesting because on our
9 debate in the committee there was a decision to increase the
10 rank of the deputy commanding general of the National Guard
11 bureau to four stars because the logic was without the
12 fourth star he would be dismissed by superiors. He would
13 not -- could weigh in effectively and it is probably the
14 same case, you might argue, in the JROC.

15 The JROC sets all of our requirements, going forward.
16 So the Army would be represented by somebody but somebody
17 who is not really the Vice Chief of Staff of the United
18 States Army.

19 General George: The right leader with the right
20 experience in the right place is exactly what we want,
21 Chairman.

22 Chairman Reed: And you would not have that --

23 General George: We would not have that.

24 Chairman Reed: -- even if you were confirmed as the
25 chair?

1 General George: That is correct, Chairman.

2 Chairman Reed: And that readiness situation would go
3 down the chain of command. For example, the designated vice
4 chief is the director of the Joint Staff right now. So his
5 position --

6 General George: That is correct.

7 Chairman Reed: -- and he could -- he would be waiting
8 to move and also someone else would be waiting to take his
9 place. So we would be in this sort of perpetual who is on
10 first situation and that affects readiness.

11 General George: Yes, it does, Chairman.

12 Chairman Reed: So even if we decided to confirm you
13 there would be a significant impact on readiness in the
14 United States Army?

15 General George: Yeah, I would agree with that,
16 Chairman. Yes.

17 Chairman Reed: Yeah. That is one issue that I think
18 has to be understood.

19 There is a second issue, too. This discussion about
20 the woke Army, diversity, all of the things we are doing
21 that is just -- on the military strikes me as wrong.
22 America is a diverse country and we have to have the diverse
23 army. Is that your position?

24 General George: Yes, Chairman, that is my position.

25 Chairman Reed: And, in fact, as we bring more people

1 into the service from diverse backgrounds we tend to get
2 much more quality. Is that correct also?

3 General George: That is correct.

4 Chairman Reed: Now, I had the privilege of serving
5 under a battalion commander in the 82nd who was an African
6 American and he was a tremendous leader, and I think that
7 continues not just in terms of racial but also ethnicity and
8 other aspects that we have to look at.

9 Now, there has been the suggestion, I think, by so many
10 of my colleagues that this wokeism is what is causing the
11 recruiting problem. The Army conducted a survey on February
12 22nd, 2023 -- published a survey, the Army Pulse survey.
13 You are familiar with that?

14 General George: I am, Chairman. Yes.

15 Chairman Reed: The number-one reason that the
16 respondents gave for why they would not join the Army, I
17 would be putting the rest of my life on hold. You said that
18 several times. That is 21 percent.

19 The second highest response at 13 percent was women and
20 racial or ethnic minorities are discriminated against in the
21 Army -- against in the Army, which goes back to my question
22 of do we not need diversity training and such training so
23 that people do not feel as if they are going to be
24 categorized and discriminated?

25 General George: I think we do, Chairman, and as you

1 know we have been doing that and should -- that is part of
2 building a cohesive team and bringing everybody together.
3 We absolutely have to do that.

4 Chairman Reed: When you look for the woke category
5 -- and by the way, those two categories together are 34
6 percent -- when you look at the woke category and the
7 question was asked the Army is placing too much emphasis on
8 the wokeness -- in other words, diversity, equity training,
9 marginalizing those with conservative views, et cetera
10 -- that is 5 percent.

11 Now, that is not something that you can dismiss but
12 that is not the most significant by a long shot reason are
13 not -- people are not coming on. Is that your conclusion?

14 General George: I think I agree with you we cannot
15 dismiss anything and we got to get after perceptions. Just
16 like I was telling you before, the Army is a great place to
17 serve. I know that.

18 I believe that with all of my heart, and we have got to
19 get that out there. You are going to accelerate your life.
20 You are going to have a good experience. You are going to
21 have good leaders out there and we are focused on our
22 mission. So I think we have to attack them all and keep
23 getting people into our formation, Chairman.

24 Chairman Reed: I agree. But this notion that the Army
25 -- people are just turning their backs on the Army en masse

1 in huge numbers because it is woke is not borne out by the
2 analysis.

3 General George: That is not what we found in the
4 survey.

5 Chairman Reed: Thank you.

6 Now, the other suggestion or implication about a lot of
7 these comments is that all the Army does is stand around and
8 have kind of psychotherapy sessions all day long. You are,
9 I am sure, familiar with the sergeant major of the Army,
10 Sergeant Major Grinston. He was asked, essentially, this
11 question about readiness and training and maintaining
12 standards and his answer, I think, is very revealing.

13 He was asked in the House. "Congressman, yes, we have
14 maintained our standards and I would say that when I look at
15 it there is one hour of equal opportunity training in basic
16 training and 92 hours of rifle marksmanship training, and if
17 you go to OCET there is 165 hours of rifle marksmanship
18 training and still only one hour of equal opportunity
19 training.

20 So the emphasis in the Army is where it should be
21 -- the skills to fight, to lead, to succeed, and supporting
22 that is a response to one of the major issues that people
23 see is a problem in the Army -- discrimination against
24 women, against minorities, et cetera.

25 So you are going to -- you are keeping the Army on

1 target, no pun intended, and that is why the Army is
2 deploying so successfully. That is why when you go to
3 places like Lithuania or the Pacific you see extraordinarily
4 professional forces that are doing their job every day.

5 And we do have to get the message out and I think your
6 point too that messages have to be tailored to the audience
7 makes a great deal of sense. And, again, I was -- I think
8 this whole situation of stopping the confirmation of
9 military officers for a political reason -- and this is a
10 political reason -- there is no more political issue in this
11 country than reproductive rights, et cetera -- is wrong and
12 I -- last evening I saw on Fox News a Marine Corps Medal of
13 Honor winner who was very outraged that the commandant could
14 not be confirmed in a reasonable manner.

15 Any further comments, sir?

16 General George: I agree with you. We would like to
17 get our leaders in the right place and, again, this did not
18 come up but there -- as it impacts family I do worry longer
19 term about what younger officers are seeing and we do not
20 want that either.

21 Chairman Reed: I agree.

22 General George: So I would like to get this resolved.

23 Chairman Reed: Thank you. Again, thank you for your
24 service. Thank you for your wife's service. And, again, I
25 will reiterate back in 1971 PDI, right -- oh, PDA, right?

1 General George: It is PDA.

2 Chairman Reed: PDA. I am sorry. I am getting old.

3 PDA --

4 General George: Statute of limitations on that.

5 Sorry.

6 Chairman Reed: It is and I am sorry about that, sir.

7 But I do not know how they handle it now but in the old

8 corps we just walked around.

9 But thank you for your service. Thank you for your
10 family's service. And I am tempted to say go Army. Go
11 Army. Thank you.

12 General George: Go Army. Thanks, Chairman.

13 Chairman Reed: The hearing is adjourned.

14 [Whereupon, at 11:47 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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