# SUBCOMMITTEE ON AIRLAND

# SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

To Receive an Update On

the F-35 Aircraft Program

Tuesday, June 23, 2026

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TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE F-35 AIRCRAFT PROGRAM

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U.S. Senate
Subcommittee on Airland
Committee on Armed Services
Washington, D.C.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 4:17 p.m., in Room SR-222, Russell Senate Office Building, Hon. Kevin Cramer, chairman of the subcommittee, presiding.

Committee Members Present: Senators Cramer [presiding], Moody, and Kelly.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. KEVIN CRAMER, U.S. SENATOR FROM NORTH DAKOTA

Senator Cramer: Good afternoon, everyone, and thank you, General Masiello, for being here, and being our only star witness today. And thank you to my colleagues for their attention to this very important discussion on the F-35 program, which, as we all know, is a cornerstone of American air power, and one of the most consequential defense programs of our generation. And it's all about generations these days, although I've noticed that generations are -- the timeline of a generation is much shorter than it used to be.

The F-35 is a strategic asset that strengthens deterrence, enhances interoperability, and reinforces the alliances and partnerships that underpin global security. Its success among our allies and partners is a testament to both its unmatched capabilities, and its ability to enable seamless operations alongside United States forces. Nations around the world continue to choose the F-35 because it strengthens collective defense and regional stability. That growing demand reflects confidence in American technology, industry, and leadership, while also delivering real benefits to the United States through improved coalition readiness, greater burden sharing, and a stronger industrial base that supports American workers and warfighters.

At the same time, we all recognize that success cannot be measured solely by sales or participation. The program must continue delivering the advanced capabilities our service members need on schedule and at a reasonable cost. That brings us to one of the most important topics before us today: making sure the Block 4 modernization effort gets and stays on track.

Block 4 is essential to preserving the f-35's operational advantage in an increasingly contested environment. Our adversaries are investing heavily in advanced air defenses, electronic warfare capabilities, and next-generation aircraft. To maintain the F-35s edge. We must deliver the upgrades that improve lethality, survivability, sensor integration, range, and mission effectiveness.

Finally, I'd also like an update on the Joint Program Office's plans to transition toward more service to specific program management responsibilities, as required by the Fiscal year 2022 National Defense Authorization Act, which directed the Department to establish a separate program office for each military service by 2027. I am interested in whether the Department remains on track to meet the statutory deadline, and how it plans to execute this transition, while preserving the efficiencies of a joint program and avoiding disruptions to production readiness and

modernization efforts.

With that, I thank you for joining us today, and I look forward to your testimony, General. Senator Kelly.

STATEMENT OF HON. MARK KELLY, U.S. SENATOR FROM ARIZONA

Senator Kelly: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General, thank you for being here today. The F-35 remains a cornerstone of American air power and a critical capability for the Air Force, the Navy, and the Marine Corps. I've seen this firsthand. I had the opportunity a couple of years ago to fly an F-16 against an F-35, and it was informative, to say the least. Could not see it on radar, even when I'm looking right at it, which was impressive. Had a crappy first turn so I was able to gun them up after a 9G turn in an F-16. And then I've also had the opportunity to fly the simulator down in Pax River against J-20s and the F-35. Impressive capability. Nothing like when I was flying in the Navy. This airplane is going to, you know, have a major role in any future conflict and especially in like a contested environment.

Today's hearing though, is about, you know, how do we field the F-35, and get the airplanes out into the fleet and get them fully mission capable with the challenges that remain, and I think it's fair to say that some of these challenges are significant. We've got new capabilities with, Block 4 tech refresh that are slow to be deployed despite that this is a multi-billion-dollar effort.

So, we all understand there's challenges with new

technology. I think it's fair to say that we've made some mistakes along the way. But those mistakes shouldn't be the same ones that we made before. I'm also concerned about the long-term sustainment costs of the airplane for the entire fleet. This has a big impact on the Department's budget and also then impacts the cost of acquiring airplanes.

At one point, the estimate was as large as over $1 trillion for the for the program. So, we need to understand what the Department is doing to reduce these future potential costs. And if those costs continue to rise, they're going to increase pressure on readiness and on other modernization priorities across the entire Department. So, this could mean less money to invest in the force structure that we need for our national security.

But I think it is also fair to say that this committee has been a strong supporter of the F-35, and I am a strong supporter of it. I think its capability is not like anything we've really had before, but that also means if we're going to continue to support it, we need accountability, and we need to have a clear understanding of how the Department is improving readiness, controlling costs, and ensuring that the program delivers on the promises. We must ensure that we do not sacrifice other important acquisition programs in the DOD portfolio. So, I look forward to hearing from you, General, and discussing a

path forward for the F-35. Thank you.

Senator Cramer: Thank you, Senator Kelly. So, Lieutenant General Gregory Masiello is the program executive officer, F-35 Lightning II Joint Program Office. Hard to imagine, a more significant position right now with what we're dealing with.

One of the things, General, before you make your opening statement and we start the discussion is I'm going to be wanting some sort of an update as well on the multi-year procurement process, how you see that playing out. You know, we recognized that as a committee, we just want to -- would love to get an assessment, your assessment of all of that. And with that, General, thank you for being here and I'll open it for your opening statement.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL GREGORY L. MASIELLO, USMC, PROGRAM EXECUTIVE OFFICER, F-35 LIGHTNING II JOINT PROGRAM OFFICE

General Masiello: First of all, thank you, Chairman Cramer, and Ranking Member Kelly, members of the subcommittee. I truly enjoy the opportunity to be here today, of course, we just started. But the last time somebody in my position was in front of anyone from the SASC was in 2016, so a lot has changed in the program since then. I have only been in this role since last July, but a considerable amount has changed. So, I'll run through an opening statement, and look forward to the discussion. I appreciate the fact that you both talked about the F-35 as the cornerstone. This is for the U.S. and for many of our allies and partners. This is the capacity fighter at scale, multi-role. There isn't anything else like it and what it does.

What I feel in my job and the job of our joint program office is to ensure that our globally deployed or deployable fleet for the U.S. and our allies and partners is ready. It's affordable, it's lethally effective, and survivable. Now, I realize that it's not my job to judge affordability. It's the people that have and pay the money. So, we do talk about cost control, and I'm happy to talk about that in the program, and I will highlight things like we measure and cost per tail per year. And if you look at where we are

across all of our variants in the U.S. inventory, we are better than the targets that we have been given. So, that's not good enough. And we will talk about our global sustainment system reset, and the areas that we're going after and not just capacity.

First, I will say currently there are over 1,300 operational F-35s out there, 832 of which are inside the U.S. inventory, and the other ones are with our partner nations. If you look in numbers of bases, there are currently 42 different sites. I happen to have gone to Poland just a week before last for the -- that new base stand up and for their first aircraft arrival. And in addition to that, there are 13 ships, 3 of which are international or in other nations. The rest are ours.

But if I look back in perspective, when somebody sat here, it would have been General Bogdan in 2016, we had 12 global participants in the program. Today, we have 20. We had flight hours then at about 60,000, now we're over 1.2 million. We have learned a lot across this time frame. There were a lot of aircraft. Then there were 170. And I already pointed out we've delivered and have out there flying and operating over 1,300.

We had hundreds of pilots, 300 then, we have over 3,000, almost 3,500 pilots trained, and almost 21,000 maintainers trained as opposed to the 2,700 we had then.

One service happened to have been the Marine Corps had achieved IOC in, 2016, we're up to 14 different services. So, well beyond our 3 in our country, and several of those countries have received their entire program of record and 2 of which have declared FOC, the Netherlands and Australia.

I mentioned the site activations. There were nine were now out there across the globe. That's a significant footprint. So, why do I talk about it that way? This program is truly joint, not just across the Departments of Air Force and the Navy, and our three U.S. services in development, and sustainment, and production, and operationally in development. We had our partner nations early on contributing that way.

In training today, just last week, we had an international force in the High North training in Norway, landing their jets on the highways in Finland, U.S. jets, as well as Italian and other nations preparing as a joint force. That is not something I'm sure we envisioned in 2016. We have the same in the Pacific, and we share a global spares pool that I'm sure we will talk about. It has its advantages, which we will talk about.

In some cases, I'd like to talk about some specifics in that in our closed session. In this session, I think I can say one of our challenges, and you talked about it, is if I have over 1,300 operational aircraft out there. I believe

we have set and enabled a sustainment system for about 700 to 800. So, there is our challenge in readiness. We have a North Star for 80 percent MC across the entirety of the fleet, and we need to figure out how to do that.

That leads me to the generational investment in the President's Budget 2027. I see I'm almost out of time, but I will close the opening statement with operationally significant for those that have been briefed and understand what the aircraft can do, and you both certainly have. But the operations in Rough Rider, Absolute Resolve, Midnight Hammer and Epic Fury demonstrate the unique capabilities, and I have been told by many operators this is the only aircraft that can hit some of the targets that it was able to hit and see everything that it could be to actually act as a quarterback of that Joint Force.

It's not just us. I know other nations that I mentioned. I know of a Norwegian pilot falling in on a Dutch aircraft and flying combat air patrol over Poland. That is not something we envisioned before, but it should show the inextricable link of this global nature of the program, and the challenges, and the benefits that that brings for us.

So, with that, I will finish my closing statement. And so, I don't forget here, I'll close that statement with a happy birthday to Creighton Green sitting behind you. I

appreciate his support as well, and how pleased he is that I mentioned that.

[The prepared statement of General Masiello follows:]

Senator Cramer: Well, thanks for that. And as long as you brought it up, let's just get right into the pain for it piece of it. Because, you know, we're in this moment now where your Fiscal Year 2027 budget included considerable amount of money and mandatory spending for the for the F-35, in fact, over $13 billion. Some of it some of this is additional aircraft and associated initial spares, but a lot of it is fully funding and accelerating existing mission critical programs, to include $1.3 billion for the Block 4 engine and power thermal management upgrade. Can you give us a sense of how you break that out between the -- you know, the requested budget, and appropriations, and possible reconciliation 3.0., and if there's a contingency plan if one or the other doesn't work out, because, as you know, we're rather famous for not funding things on time.

General Masiello: Yes, sir, I appreciate that. First, I will start for -- I appreciate the reconciliation last year, $1 billion was allocated towards the F-35 program. That's going under contract. That will enable us to help stabilize some of the support that we mentioned in spare parts. For the 2027 budget, I'll be clear, that we submitted our budget for the F-35 program in its entirety. And so, what is in the base budget as well as, you know, whether you call it discretionary or mandatory, the totality is what we believe is required. It gets after -- it does

have an increase in aircraft. It's a buy of 85 aircraft for the U.S., and that combines with the international partners and friends out there as well.

So, if we did not get the totality of the budget or only got one portion of it, there's a significant impact for the production line and the number of aircraft, as well as in the details of how that budget was split. So, I understand, I am obviously supportive of the budget in its entirety. It will fund the Block 4. It will fund the engine core upgrade, as well as the PTMU upgrade, the EPM in its entirety, and both of those are essential for the engine to enable even the full capabilities of the Block 4 as we do it.

And I will tell you, it's not my first lap in the F-35 program, a decade ago, I started in here with the beginning of what was Block 4. So, I'm both happy to be back and a little, you know, surprised that we haven't fielded as much as we had planned, so I understand the importance of it. I do recognize that we have of the original requirements. We have fielded 22 of them, and we continue in the incremental software upgrades. We delivered seven of the Block 4 capabilities in last year's upgrade. There's another six planned for this summer in the software upgrade. But to fully do the development work, we do need that budget.

Senator Cramer: Okay. So, thanks for that. And it

gets a little bit into maybe what I wanted to bring up next. And that is what problems do you see in the deployment pipeline there most readily fixable to achieve, you know, to achieve the goal to get up to speed as you describe it?

General Masiello: Yes, sir. Well, I will tell you -- I'll talk about sustainment first. I think in my job, I think I work for the aviation maintainers, and I think if I look at it, our job is to deliver combat readiness. It is sustainment first of our existing fleet and the ability to maintain the fleet that we get. So, we looked and did a very detailed analysis across our whole sustainment system, came across five areas that we now call in our global GSS reset and sustainment system, and we're going to go through and start executing that.

That is not just solely about buying spare parts, it is inclusive of that, making a catch up on the investment that we have failed to make in the past, and then a keep up in that. But it is also relooking at our entire maintenance plan all the way through from the very low level, all the way to the depot level with a million plus flight hours. We have learned on the aircraft; we can make some adjustments.

With over 13 countries operating the aircraft, we have lessons learned from people that are from different countries and why they have time on wing and some components that we don't have, and we can apply that. So, we will go

through and do that and the optimization of the entirety of our maintenance system.

Senator Cramer: So, one of the things you talked about in your opening statement, I think you highlighted that the sort of the global nature of this airplane, and the opportunities that presents for the industrial base and for alliances. Maybe give us a sense of how are our allies, you know, other potential customers viewing what we're going through right now in terms of whether it's wariness about the on-time procurement, or lessons, these lessons learned that, you know, that you're learning. How are they feeling about it? How is that? How do you handle all of that?

General Masiello: Well, sir, it's quite a large program, as you talk about. I'll tell you, they do pay attention to the U.S. budget and the support that we get and are looking forward to the approval of the President's Budget 2027, because it puts in place stability across our industrial base. And that is international. It certainly is across 49 States in our country and Puerto Rico, and it's thousands of suppliers across Lockheed Martin, as well as Pratt & Whitney, and others. But it's also international.

So, they are certainly watching that. The aircraft is assembled in Texas, in Japan, or in Italy. They are looking at those impacts and the flow of all those parts and pieces. They certainly need to know that we are fully in and

supportive as well as the development.

Senator Cramer: Great. All right. Thank you.

General Masiello: If I could, you asked me about multi-year.

Senator Cramer: Yeah, yeah, I did earlier. If you want to answer, that's fine. It looks like we're going to have plenty of time. So, Senator Kelly, I'll give him one more minute than you take from me. Go ahead.

General Masiello: Okay. I was just going to say on the multiyear procurement, the most important thing for me, and that is we do have a stable aircraft. We have stable design. We are mature. We're now looking at our lot 20 aircraft. It doesn't mean that there isn't change, and it doesn't mean that there aren't challenges. But we now know what they are and we have the ability in a long-term contract.

So, I'm very appreciative of the committee's support for the multi-year. And I know that our ledge prop has made it over that asks up to a 10-year time frame with procurement that is not just of the production line aircraft, but also the initial spares also of the mod kits. All the hardware that we would buy would aggregate that demand across the entirety of the program. We have not done that before. I think, Senator, that gets after some of the cost objectives because you have aggregated demand, which is

really good. It's also the stability that industrial base that you just talked about. There is a companion to that in sustainment that we need to make sure we have, and that will also feed into how we transition, which is another question you had into the services as that continues to mature.

Senator Cramer: Excellent. All right. Ranking member Kelly, you're recognized for at least 7.5 minutes.

Senator Kelly: Thank you. So, the GAO FMC rate is they said 25 percent. Your office claims it's 56 percent. So, let's say it's somewhere between -- or maybe I'll we'll go with your number 50 percent. So, half of the airplanes are not fully mission capable, and I think it's the Marine Corps that has been accepting airplanes with no radar in it. Is that correct?

General Masiello: We have accepted six aircraft for the Marine Corps that do not have a radar installed. That is correct.

Senator Kelly: And because they want to wait for the APG-85, is my assumption?

General Masiello: They do.

Senator Kelly: Yeah. So -- and I get it, and we could talk downstairs some more about the capability of the radar and what the challenges are going forward. So, I assume that those airplanes can't count as fully mission capable with no radar?

General Masiello: I don't think I would count them as fully mission capable. But in your early statement on the numbers, 2556 is what we say for the mission capability as opposed to FMC, full mission capability. And I know you understand the differences.

Senator Kelly: But you say you don't think. I can't imagine a scenario where an F-35 with no radar could be an FMC airplane.

General Masiello: I understand, sir.

Senator Kelly: Okay. So, part of it is that what is the other issues? I remember early on you were having turbine blade cracks from FOD. Is that one of the other bigger problems?

General Masiello: That is not one of the bigger problems in production, the IBR, the integrally, it's the blade inside of the engine that you're talking about had some production challenges. They've now triple sourced the production to help on that, and we have improvement across the engine production as well as the reliability.

Senator Kelly: So, what's the top three things that takes an airplane out of being fully mission capable?

General Masiello: I would say the top three are the software capability enabled things. TR-3 that you mentioned earlier is not a degrader, that is mission capable in there, but that is the backbone that we plug in all of the other

bits and pieces. So, the radar, as you pointed for a subset, the 81 radar that is in the preponderance of the fleet is up and operating fine. So, that's not the major driver. We do have some challenges with the time on wing for our canopies. That is a major degrader that some will rate or it's a low observable aircraft, and therefore, that piece is integral part of it.

Senator Kelly: Is there would just skin issues like low observable repairs that need to be done? Does that tend to take airplanes out of --

General Masiello: Yes, sir.

Senator Kelly: -- flying condition?

General Masiello: Yes, sir. But that is also one where I say there's an opportunity. Some of our different countries or different squadrons have better time on wing, and we go and we look at that. We've done that. It's maintenance. It is taking care of the issue when it arises, as opposed to noting it, flying the aircraft, coming back, and having a larger issue, if that makes sense.

Senator Kelly: So, if the sustainment system out there is sized, I think you said for 700 to 800 aircraft, that means the parts and other depot level maintenance and other things, but there's 1,300 operational airplanes, how do you get to a sustainment system that is for 1,300, and how long will that take?

General Masiello: Yes, sir. So, that is part of our GSS reset. And I will tell you what we have done about that. We went back and looked at the modeling that we had for the spares that we were asking folks to buy, and we have remodeled and baselined. We have made sure -- you mentioned both of the other services as far as the Air Force and the Navy, and gone through to make sure it's the same thing. And that is now what we're putting forth is the requirement, which is the reason why, in this generational investment of the 2027 budget will help us. So, we will fill up the available parts.

I think that is the main driver. It's not a systemic issue with the system having the ability. It's the fact that we didn't put enough parts and pieces on the shelf. And we've increased the demand exponentially with the number of aircraft fielded, and we didn't do the same thing with the spare parts and the system.

Senator Kelly: And then earlier, you said there were five areas in sustainment that you needed to focus on. You said one, it wasn't just not buying enough spares, as you mentioned. So, that has to be one.

General Masiello: That is one.

Senator Kelly: Depot level maintenance was two. What were the other three?

General Masiello: The other three, I have that. By

the way, when we talk about the depot level maintenance, I would say one of the things that's important you talked about our organic capability. Over 56 percent of our depot repair today is done in our U.S. services, the Navy and the Air Force industrial base. So, we already have significant participation. It is ramping up. That depot capability as well as the optimization of the maintenance plans, those are different, if you will.

Having said that, let me tell you about the Global Spares Pool, optimized maintenance program, right sizing that. It's expanding both the depot, the organic, as well as our supplier capacity. Told you 56 percent is in organic. The rest is in the industrial base that we need to go back and maintain.

And I will highlight another point for us. It's important for us to get our log IT, the logistics IT in place so that what -- the way this program was formed originally under TISPA, if you recall from that. We now are going through and getting the access that will enable not just our right to repair, but the actual insight into the entire repair capacity. It will help us not just on the audit, but it's fundamental in getting -- right-sizing that industrial base.

Senator Kelly: And then, finally, does the Air Force regret not buying the Navy version that carries more gas

because it has a bigger wing?

General Masiello: I probably would defer --

Senator Kelly: Loaded question.

General Masiello: -- to the Air Force on that, but I don't find many people that are sad if they have more fuel to fly in their aircraft.

Senator Kelly: Right. Thank you.

Senator Cramer: Thank you. I don't have a whole lot more before we go into the closed session. But you speak so articulately about -- again, back to my point about the global nature of this airplane. And maybe if you would just elaborate a little bit more first of on how that impacts. Well, there's a lot of favorability for the United States, but how it impacts the industrial base. And then sort of the other part, if you will, the allied nature of being an ally that shares the operation, if you will. Speak to that from a human standpoint, as a warfighter standpoint, as much as from the machinery itself?

General Masiello: Yes, sir. Well, I will tell you that sitting on the flight line in Poland just a few weeks ago and having their first with the Polish markings on the aircraft arrive, the enthusiasm in their -- of being so close to the United States as well as the global partners, was evident, and their President and their defense minister announced in their statements they're going to double their

program of record. It was 32, they're going to buy an additional.

Now, I have not seen the money or the contract yet, but that's significant, you know, context. If I look in a few years, in Europe, as an example, we will have almost 800 F-35s distributed across multiple nations. Less than 10 percent of that number will be U.S. aircraft. So, when we talk about burden sharing, interoperability, you know, both in cost and in the actual warfighting capability, that's demonstrated to a different scale because of the number of countries. We have that in the Pacific as well, whether it's the Koreans, and the Japanese, Singapore, and Australia, there will be hundreds of aircraft. And for the U.S., depending on basing and deployment over there, we'll have less than a quarter of those aircraft.

So, it is large in the program, but it's also shared in the industrial base and the funds that go in there. We do get parts and pieces from their industrial base that go into the aircraft as well as ours that go throughout. I will tell you, I would never have envisioned that we would have had a British pilot flying Australian aircraft. Maybe you would say that because they're English speaking, but we've had that in deployments. We've had Marine aircraft deploy on British ships going around the globe.

It is different. Our aircraft even -- we have language

barriers as humans. The aircraft do not have language barriers when they talk to each other. The way they -- interoperability of the aircraft itself amongst its flight. But it's really global. We will field starting next year a beyond line of sight, receive capability across. And you figure out of the network. We get that across the globe.

Senator Kelly: So, right now, you're cooling. You got about 30kW. Block 4 requires 32, is what I have here. But to get to the cooling needed to -- for the full capability of the APG-85, needs to be somewhat higher, it seems like 62kW of cooling?

General Masiello: Yes, sir. The requirement that we have for the program going forward is 62 to 80. We can talk specifics about the radar downstairs that is incorporated into the Block 4 requirements. The challenge I see is if the totality of Block 4, when it's installed, and on the aircraft, it takes the complete power available, which is 32. It's a cooling really is what we're looking at, the ability, and there's no margin, which as you know, is not a smart way to go. So, we have an incremental approach to increase that. And we have an ongoing program to look at a more systemic and affordable upgrade to the power thermal management across the program.

Senator Kelly: So, when the APG-85 radars start to get delivered, I imagine some airplanes are going to come with

them installed and others they'll go back to the depot, I imagine, depot level maintenance to get the radar installed in those six Marine Corps jets. Is the PTMS going to be available at the same time to get full --

General Masiello: It will neither be required at the same time nor be available. So, for the engine core upgrade that we anticipate and have asked for additional funding on that, we anticipate that being fielded in 2031, and it will come with a marginal increase in the power thermal management, but the actual system that's under review and looking for the forward program will come a few years later into the system, which is when we would have the additional capabilities beyond Block 4, not yet to be determined that will require that.

Senator Kelly: So, will you be able to talk downstairs about what limited capability the APG-85 is going to have if it doesn't have all the cooling?

General Masiello: We will be able to talk details downstairs.

Senator Kelly: Thank you.

Senator Cramer: Senator Moody, welcome.

Senator Moody: Well, thank you and I get to sit closest to you.

Senator Cramer: Thank you.

Senator Moody: Don't be intimidated because I'm

sitting so close. I am the newest member of this committee. It is so nice to meet you. Thank you for your long service to this country. Florida, which is my home State, is home to the 125th Fighter Wing where we train the F-35 pilots. And so, important to our State, and so many jobs, and so many people that rely on the program. And one of the things that my team and I have been discussing is I get to know more about -- you know, we have numerous bases and numerous combatant commands in Florida, and I'm learning more about the programs that, rely a lot on our state and the military service members that are in our State.

And this month, the Government Accountability Office reported on persistent readiness and management problems in the F-35 program, and because Florida is such a large part of that program, I wanted to ask you a little bit about that. Fleetwide, the mission capable rate fell from 67 percent to 44 percent since 2021, and the GAO found that the Department couldn't fully account for its spare parts or track the funds that it spends on them. And they recommended that the Department build a system with quality control safeguards to properly track those parts, costs, and incentive payments.

And I just wanted to kind of hear from you. We were talking about that, and we wanted to hear what was being done to address that, and how those involved in the program

in Florida might be able to follow track and rely on what you're being -- what's being done to address those concerns?

General Masiello: Yes, ma'am. Well, first, I will say, as a legal resident of the State of Florida, although have been living elsewhere for quite some time, I appreciate your comments and the support --

Senator Moody: So, you are my constituent?

General Masiello: -- across the State -- it would be apparently so.

Senator Moody: Yes.

General Masiello: Now, with respect to the GAO, I know that those reports are controlled, unclassified data, but I have spent time with the with the auditors, the investigators for that, hours, sitting, through walking through details. I understand how they came to their data. I would tell you context matters, and I might have a -- I don't dispute their numbers and how they do it as opposed to how we might articulate it, if that's part of the differences.

We are aligned that there are areas to change. I will tell you, I am fully committed for audit, ability of F-35. It's not just the way I dress. It's inherent in what we should be doing being good stewards of not just our taxpayers, but as we just discussed, global processes. I believe we do have the ability. We have done a physical

inventory of all of those parts and pieces, so I'm quite confident in our ability to track our gear today. Some of their data is backwards-looking, and we have made some changes. They have a series of recommendations which we embrace, and are in action, and working on them now.

Senator Moody: In terms of the number of recommendations or what would you say percentage-wise you've accomplished or completed?

General Masiello: I would say they're probably all to some degree in process, because even the one that we think is closed out, that's over forwarded for review. Lots of actions. And I previously discussed about our global sustainment system reset that I think will address when I talk to both of the auditors and getting after whether it's the maintenance program, the spares, the processing through there, the organic and the commercial depot repair, will align greatly to resolve some of what they have identified.

Senator Moody: Thank you, sir.

Senator Cramer: Thank you. I think all of my questions remaining will be better for the closed session. Did you have any more either of you that you wanted to take up any more? If not, then we'll close this portion of the hearing, and we'll take it up and we'll say 10 to 15 minutes downstairs.

[Whereupon, at 4:55 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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