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Before the

COMMITTEE ON
ARMED SERVICES

UNITED STATES SENATE

UNITED STATES MILITARY SMALL ARMS REQUIREMENTS

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

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UNITED STATES MILITARY SMALL ARMS REQUIREMENTS

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

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

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 3:31 p.m. in Room SR-232A, Russell Senate Office Building, Hon. Tom Cotton, chairman of the subcommittee, presiding.

Present: Senators Cotton [presiding], Inhofe, Sullivan, King, McCaskill, Donnelly, and Peters.

Also Present: Senator Ernst.

1 OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. TOM COTTON, U.S. SENATOR
2 FROM ARKANSAS

3 Senator Cotton: The hearing will come to order. Good
4 afternoon, everyone. Today, we are being joined by some of
5 our colleagues from the Emerging Threats and Capabilities
6 Subcommittee, so a warm welcome to all. Our topic is small
7 arms modernization.

8 Usually in these kinds of hearings, the attention goes
9 to big-ticket items, things like missiles, ships, and tanks.
10 But just because they have the highest price does not mean
11 they have the greatest value. I think we would all agree
12 the most precious thing in our arsenal is the lives of our
13 troops. And yet, in spite of that, our planning process
14 does not devote all that much time to the individual
15 soldiers and their needs.

16 So today, we are going to put them front and center.
17 This is not sentimentality talking. I am afraid it is
18 deadly practical. For years, our rivals have been
19 developing new tactics, new small arms, and new body armor,
20 all while we have been largely asleep at the switch.

21 We should be especially concerned, I think, about our
22 enemies' advances in anti-access and area-denial weapons.
23 The thinking seems to be, if they cannot match our manpower,
24 our firepower, or our brainpower, they can at least make it
25 exceedingly treacherous for our troops to power through

1 their defenses.

2 These weapons are now so far advanced that our troops,
3 if engaged in battle, could call for fire support only for
4 their call to go unanswered. This makes it all the more
5 important for each infantry squad to be as resilient and
6 lethal as possible.

7 So we need to take a closer look at what the individual
8 soldier is working with -- the standard-issue rifle for both
9 Army and Marine infantry, the M4 carbine, which is a
10 modified version of the Vietnam-era M16.

11 The M4 has come a long way since the 1960s, but it
12 still has limitations. Specifically, I am talking about the
13 5.56 millimeter round it fires. There are lots of reports
14 about enemy combatants surviving being hit by multiple 5.56
15 rounds.

16 In Afghanistan, meanwhile, the Taliban uses a larger
17 and longer range 7.62 millimeter round, which can hit
18 coalition targets beyond the effective range of the 5.56.

19 Now there is a new challenge. Everyone from Russia and
20 China to Hezbollah and ISIS is using advanced body armor,
21 which risks making the 5.56 round essentially obsolete.

22 Now, we have tried to improve the 5.56 round by
23 developing different versions with greater range and
24 firepower, but I am not convinced this gives our troops the
25 edge they need, especially if our enemies continue making

1 advances in technology.

2 That said, there are certain advantages to the 5.56.
3 It is lightweight, which allows the average soldier to carry
4 twice the ammunition capacity of the larger 7.62 round. In
5 addition, it has less recoil compared to the 7.62. This
6 means more shots can be fired downrange in quicker
7 succession and with greater accuracy.

8 The key is finding the right combination of weight,
9 recoil, impulse, range, and lethality, and that is what we
10 will be talking about today. I am especially interested to
11 hear our witnesses take on three questions: What small arms
12 threats do we face? What technologies can we use to
13 mitigate them? And how can we keep our combat forces ahead
14 of our adversaries?

15 I thank our witnesses for their testimony today.
16 Lieutenant General John Bednarek is the former chief of the
17 Office of Security Cooperation in Iraq. Major General
18 Robert H. Scales is the former Commandant of the U.S. Army
19 War College.

20 Gentlemen, thank you for your testimony.

21 Senator King?

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1 STATEMENT OF HON. ANGUS KING, U.S. SENATOR FROM MAINE

2 Senator King: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for
3 holding this important hearing.

4 I also want to thank our witnesses for appearing today
5 to discuss the small arms requirement of the U.S. military.
6 You both possess extensive experience not only leading the
7 soldiers in combat but also filling leadership positions
8 within the Army responsible for ensuring the readiness of
9 the force. I thank you both for your service and I look
10 forward to hearing your well-informed perspectives on these
11 issues, which have been shaped by your nearly 70 years of
12 combined military experience. I am sure you probably were
13 not all that happy to hear that particular figure.

14 The lethality of soldiers in combat is based on a
15 variety of interrelated factors, including but not limited
16 to the soldiers' training and fitness combined with the
17 accuracy, reliability, durability, and stopping power of the
18 weapons they carry.

19 With regard to small arms, the U.S. military forces
20 dating back to the Revolutionary War have always sought the
21 optimal weapon or mix of weapons while also accounting for
22 the cost and supportability of such weapons. The same story
23 holds true for today's services.

24 Today's adversaries, including nonstate actors like Al
25 Qaeda, the Taliban, and ISIS, also continue to seek

1 qualitative advantage over U.S. forces in combat by adopting
2 weapons that have greater range and stopping power.

3 The U.S. military must continue to incorporate the
4 lessons learned based on the experience of our warfighters
5 over the past 16 years of combat around the globe.

6 Potential state adversaries also continue to improve their
7 small arms and body armor that are used by their military
8 forces, and they are proliferated around the world.

9 I understand the Army and Marine Corps have led efforts
10 to modify and accelerate the development and fielding of
11 next-generation small arms capabilities, and we have to
12 continue to make progress for our warfighters.

13 I hope today's witnesses can provide their perspectives
14 on how the U.S. military selects, tests, and procures small
15 arms for the use of our military personnel. I would like
16 them to explain how the Department of Defense balances
17 tradeoffs in cost, weight, lethality, supportability, and
18 performance in making these decisions and any
19 recommendations you, our witnesses, can make in how we
20 should evaluate future procurements.

21 I also hope our witnesses can illuminate the debate
22 surrounding the possible requirement for a so-called
23 intermediate caliber that falls between the NATO standard
24 currently used by the U.S. and our partners.

25 Finally, I would be interested in stepping back to get

1 your thoughts on where upgrading our small arms capability
2 should be prioritized with the Army's other modernization
3 requirements.

4 I appreciate it, Mr. Chairman, and I look forward to
5 the hearing.

6 Senator Cotton: I will now recognize Senator Ernst,
7 who played a critical role in this hearing, as well as
8 raising this issue to the attention of all the committee
9 members.

10 Senator Ernst?

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

2 Senator Ernst: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

3 And thank you, Major General Scales. Thank you,
4 Lieutenant General Bednarek. It is very good to see you
5 again.

6 I have pushed for action on small arms modernization
7 since I entered the Senate. This hearing is extremely
8 important to me and to our servicemembers. I was pleased to
9 receive commitment from Secretary Mattis during his
10 confirmation hearing to work with me on this issue, and I
11 look forward to the discussion today.

12 In the fiscal year 2016 National Defense Authorization
13 Act, I secured a provision requiring a report from the
14 Secretaries of the Navy and Army explaining their plan to
15 modernize Marine Corps and Army infantry weapons. What I
16 got back earlier this year confirmed what we all know. The
17 military has plans to replace its small arms, but it is
18 going to take decades.

19 Meanwhile, Russia rapidly upgrades its rifles and
20 invests in advanced body armor. China continues to field
21 superior sniper rifles. And terrorist groups like ISIS get
22 their hands on advanced weapons systems and protective
23 equipment.

24 When we have the Army Chief of Staff Mark Milley in
25 front of the Armed Services Committee telling us he would

1 rather take the money to buy those new handguns and go to
2 Cabela's to procure them, we know that we are facing a
3 failing defense acquisition system.

4 Unfortunately, the struggle to field the best weapons
5 for our infantry is nothing new. U.S. Army troops at war
6 against Mexico in 1845 carried muzzle loaders nearly 80
7 years after the breach-loading rifle was invented. The
8 United States entered World War I with a Springfield 1903
9 rifle, which held five rounds. The British carried the
10 famous Lee- Enfield rifle, which held 10. Both were still
11 inferior to the German rifle that was capable of firing more
12 rounds per minute. In the 1960s, for Vietnam, the Army
13 initially refused the AR15 that became our M16 and M4
14 because they lacked any military requirement.

15 Despite it all, our servicemembers have continued to
16 win on the battlefield. But at what cost? How many
17 firefights could have been one with better suppressive fire
18 or a more lethal bullet? It is simply unacceptable that we
19 continue to deny our servicemembers the best weapons
20 available.

21 This is the year that we need to take action. With the
22 support of the Secretary of Defense and supportive service
23 chiefs, it is time we upgrade our military's small arms as
24 we rebuild our military.

25 In this year's National Defense Authorization Act, I

1 will be pressing the departments to prioritize the
2 replacement of our small arms, and I look forward to your
3 comments on how we can best do so.

4 Thank you, gentlemen.

5 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

6 Senator Cotton: General Bednarek?

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1 STATEMENT OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL JOHN M. BEDNAREK, USA
2 (RET.), FORMER CHIEF, OFFICE OF SECURITY COOPERATION-IRAQ

3 General Bednarek: Mr. Chairman, thanks to you and all
4 the members for the opportunity to discuss this very
5 important topic.

6 I would like to give a few insights not only on the
7 weapons systems but also, Mr. Chairman, that you have
8 highlighted and, Senator King, some of the questions that
9 you have kind of highlighted and asked us to address.

10 The bottom line is, with our known threat environments
11 that we have, the current weapons systems that we have, I
12 want to share some thoughts and some potential options for
13 us to consider.

14 From a broader perspective, the committee has a
15 tremendous opportunity here, and that is to reinforce what
16 we all know is a higher priority not only in the Department
17 of Defense budget and procurement activities to influence
18 what the heck it is that we buy, but also to ensure that the
19 lethality across our infantry formations, regardless of
20 service, is exactly what we need for the threats that we
21 know that we are going to face in the future.

22 In our current formations that we have, Army, Marines,
23 but our infantry combat troops clearly remain the most
24 formidable ally on the planet. Our troops and our
25 individual weapons are a system, and are a system of systems

1 designed with one purpose in mind that, quite honestly, we
2 often lose sight of, and that is to close with and defeat
3 our adversaries.

4 They have to be lethal. Lethality is the primary
5 factor that guides whatever it is, the capabilities that we
6 need to develop. It is all about this lethality, and it is
7 all about ensuring that we can operate in all types of
8 environments. It is all about readiness.

9 Senator Ernst, you have highlighted our Chief of Staff
10 of the Army Mark Milley highlighting his number one
11 priority. It is really all about readiness.

12 But the bottom line, again, from our infantry
13 formations, it is all about killing our enemy. Again, all
14 of our collective energies have to be focused on whether it
15 is research, development, costs, et cetera, we have to
16 highlight those future fights that we know are going to
17 come.

18 We do not want near-peer competitors. And our Nation
19 expects our ground combat formations to be the best-equipped
20 force on the Earth. We want overmatch. And I certainly, as
21 a prior leader and certainly having an opportunity to guide
22 the architect of our forces in the future, I am not looking
23 for a fair fight anywhere, and I want to make sure that our
24 troops are appropriately equipped.

25 The current M4 carbine, a lot of discussions about

1 that, has served our Army and Marine forces pretty well over
2 the past decade-plus. Product improvements, as you have
3 highlighted, have had incremental upgrades and changes that
4 allow this to be, again, a well-serving caliber weapon
5 system put in the hands of our infantrymen. I have trained
6 with and I have been in firefights with that M4 carbine
7 system of systems across Iraq over the past 9 years, and it
8 has performed pretty well.

9 However, as this committee has heard, multiple studies
10 have shown that it is time to upgrade to a higher, more
11 lethal caliber weapons system for infantry ground troops.
12 Regardless of service or component, regardless of color of
13 uniform, that is the challenge that we see faced.

14 It is time to modernize our infantry weapon
15 capabilities, and it is my opinion that our service chiefs,
16 and you have highlighted both our Commandant of the Marine
17 Corps Bob Neller and certainly Mark Milley, as already
18 highlighted, they get it. They acknowledge it, and they are
19 moving to get what they need.

20 I would like to highlight a few factors in the time
21 remaining. Number one -- and, Senator King, you highlighted
22 this and asked us to discuss this -- about the threat
23 environment and our adversaries. At the start of our
24 current conflict, OIF, OEF, pick a named operation, we were
25 shooting enemy wearing T-shirts and baggy pants. Well, we

1 are still shooting enemy wearing T-shirts and baggy pants,
2 but now they are approaching with level II and level III
3 body armor that precludes our lethality that we once
4 dominated that infantry battlefield with regardless of
5 range.

6 We can get into the details, although that is not the
7 purpose of this hearing, about the range and effective range
8 of different caliber munitions. But with this near level II
9 or level III body armor of our adversary, regardless of what
10 country that is coming from, as adversaries of the United
11 States of America, our capability to eliminate that threat
12 at medium or long range is almost gone. So we must have
13 small arms systems that can stop and can penetrate that
14 increased enemy protection.

15 So it is not just an AK-47 or PKM rifle with our
16 adversaries. It is well-known across the planet. It is the
17 force protection capability that our adversaries now have
18 that they did not have just a decade ago.

19 The second point is procurement. We have talked about
20 this as well, and you asked us, both General Scales and I,
21 to highlight this. All of our service chiefs, and you
22 highlighted the discussion, Senator Ernst, about Mark Milley
23 in taking several million dollars and going to Cabela's or
24 wherever it is just to buy something to preclude this
25 bureaucratic unique procurement process that we have. So

1 both of the service chiefs, they are on public record on the
2 excessive bureaucracy in our current processes.

3 While I am certainly not a procurement and contracting
4 expert, I certainly, and I know I share General Scales'
5 comments on this, do not want to look another soldier in the
6 eye and tell him or her that our leaders have not provided
7 them the best weapons system available because it is tied up
8 in acquisition red tape and masking tape. A 5- to 7-year
9 acquisition cycle to procure anything, especially the
10 weapons that we are talking about, Mr. Chairman, is
11 unconscionable.

12 The third and final thing I highlight is about the
13 systems approach. I mentioned this before, and I think it
14 is important to underscore. While our discussion today in
15 this subcommittee is principally focused on the small arms
16 weapons, we must remember that our services' strategic
17 approach that gives the United States combat forces our
18 decisive edge is an overall holistic approach.

19 It is not just the weapons. It is not just a higher
20 caliber bullet. It is not just caseless or polymer
21 munitions. It is about the system. It is about our human
22 dimension. It is about the training, the leader development
23 that we provide our infantry soldiers, again, the Army and
24 Marines, that make them the best close combat formations
25 anywhere.

1 This term of mission command, the trust, the
2 leadership, the decentralization and the fact that we train
3 our infantry combat formations to operate without specific
4 instructions and to trust their leaders, marines, soldiers
5 fighting together in teams, this holistic approach is real
6 important.

7 You know, I think, Senator King, you highlighted it,
8 about the combination of all of our services, whether that
9 is fighter aircraft, whether that is close air support,
10 whether that is attack helicopters. A soldier with a radio,
11 sites, optics, embedded laser rangefinders on his or her
12 weapons system, these capabilities all put together is what
13 makes the U.S. ground combat forces important and gives us
14 the overmatch.

15 We need to sustain that for the long-term future and
16 the systems approach with the capabilities that I have
17 highlighted.

18 And I appreciate the opportunity to take questions
19 later.

20 [The prepared statement of General Bednarek follows:]

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1 Senator Cotton: General Scales?
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1 STATEMENT OF MAJOR GENERAL ROBERT H. SCALES, JR., USA
2 (RET.), FORMER COMMANDANT, U.S. ARMY WAR COLLEGE

3 General Scales: First of all, Mr. Chairman, thank you
4 so much for the opportunity to allow me to address the
5 committee.

6 I have a written statement here, but let me just begin
7 by going off the statement and say my passion for this
8 subject goes back almost 50 years. On the 13th of June
9 1969, my unit was overrun by elements of 29th NVA Regiment.
10 Three of my soldiers, Privates Waddell, Worrell, and
11 Fuentes, when I rolled their bodies over, they were lying on
12 top of M16s that were broken at the hinge.

13 If you are familiar with the rifle, it breaks at the
14 hinge. Anytime you find a dead soldier with the rifle
15 broken at the hinge, it meant he died trying to clear a jam.
16 I have never forgotten that.

17 So this has been something that, as all of you know,
18 that has been with me for a long time. The answer is that
19 the M4 rifle and its antecedent, what I carried in Vietnam,
20 the M16, is a terribly flawed weapon. It is a standard
21 carbine in use by the infantry today.

22 But its operating system is fundamentally flawed. All
23 the things that we can do to marginally improve it are not
24 going to make a big difference because operating system is
25 literally dependent on a puff of gas that blows a floating

1 bolt back and slides it back into position, and any amount
2 of dust, in my case, dirt in our soldiers' rifles fouling
3 from the round will cause the weapon to jam.

4 Russian systems and, in fact, systems of most other
5 Western militaries, use a solid operating system where the
6 bolt does not float, but the mass of the moving parts are
7 solid enough to cycle through the firing of the bullets
8 without having to jam. Thus, the M4 is far more likely to
9 jam than the Russian weapons.

10 This risk of jamming affects every aspect of a fight.
11 A Russian infantryman can fire about 140 rounds a minute
12 without stopping in sustained fire. The M4 fires at roughly
13 half that rate.

14 So Mick and I both, I think, are arguing for a new
15 generation weapon. But the question is always, what should
16 this new generation weapon look like? Let me just give you
17 a few characteristics.

18 First, it should be modular. Multiple weapons can now
19 be assembled from a single receiver or a chassis, if you
20 will. So before a mission, let's just say a squad leader
21 can allow his men to customize their weapons to make it a
22 light machine gun, a carbine, a rifle, or an assault rifle.

23 This ability to modularize means that you do not have
24 to suboptimize the weapons that you take into the field. If
25 you are in a city, you use the short barrel version. If you

1 are out in the open area, you use a longer barrel version
2 for longer range.

3 As we said, the M4's 5.56 millimeter cartridge is just
4 too small for modern combat. It is lack of mass limits its
5 range to less than 400 meters.

6 I believe that tomorrow's rifle should be something in
7 a midrange caliber between 6.5 and 7 millimeters.

8 Also, as Mick alluded, the cartridge could be made
9 almost as light as the 5.56 in this heavier caliber by using
10 a polymer shell or a plastic shell casing.

11 This is interesting. The Army can achieve an infantry
12 version of stealth by attaching sound suppressors to every
13 rifle. So instead of merely muffling the sound of firing by
14 trapping gases, this technology redirects the firing gases
15 forward, capturing most of the blast and flash well inside
16 the muzzle. I saw 3/5 Marine demonstrate this in November
17 at 29 Palms.

18 Look, no weapon is quiet, but when you come under fire
19 and you go to ground and you return fire, as a rule, you do
20 not shoot at the site of something. You always shoot at the
21 sound. If your sound is one-fifth the decibel level of the
22 enemies', that is a huge combat multiplier.

23 A computer miniaturization now allows precision to be
24 sort of squeezed into a digital size, about 2.5 ounces. All
25 an infantryman has to do with this new technology is merely

1 place a red dot on the target and push a button at the front
2 of the trigger guard. The weapon quite literally fires
3 itself. The computer automatically fires when a hit is
4 guaranteed. Hunters have been using this technology for
5 years. The Army refuses to adopt it.

6 The Army argues that, in an era of declining resources,
7 a new rifle will cost more than \$2 billion. But if we only
8 buy rifles for the infantry, a force that today, Army,
9 Marine, and special forces of about 50,000, that total would
10 be reduced to as little as \$50 million. The Army and Marine
11 Corps can keep their current stocks of M4s and M16s because
12 the vast majority of men and women in the ground services
13 are not infantrymen.

14 Frankly, for other MOSes like artillery and the admin
15 services, the M4 works just fine.

16 Now, there is some good news in this doleful saga.
17 Reports about the fighting effectiveness of Putin's well-
18 equipped little green men is changing the minds about the
19 effectiveness of the M4. I think the Army universally
20 realizes that the 5.56 bullet cannot defeat Russian body
21 armor, and it is easily out-ranged by the latest Russian
22 small arms. Senior leaders now, I think in both ground
23 services, are calling for this middle caliber bullet.

24 As a historian, I will tell you very briefly, the Army
25 discovered the value of the middle caliber bullet in 1927

1 and was going to make the grand in a middle caliber bullet,
2 but we had such a huge stockage of 306, the Chief of Staff
3 at the time said no.

4 The problem with all of this, Mr. Chairman, is the
5 Army's acquisition executives tell me that they need 7 years
6 to develop a new rifle. Mr. Chairman, 7 years is too long.
7 With your help, we can develop and field a rifle in about a
8 year.

9 Here is what we should do. I think we need to find a
10 way to wire around the acquisition system, to use something
11 like we used with the Rapid Fielding Initiative in the early
12 2000s that we used to develop the MRAP.

13 I think Congress should authorize some amount of money,
14 I say \$100 million, to support a competition between many
15 different makers. This could be gun makers. It could be
16 weapons makers from other nations. I think it should be run
17 or that the tests should be conducted by officers and NCOs
18 in the closed combat arms, not acquisition community. I
19 think the executive for managing this should be a consortium
20 of ground service chiefs and perhaps the Commander of the
21 Special Operations Command.

22 I would say competition would be open to anyone,
23 because what is so interesting are the technologies that I
24 mentioned to you exist individually all across this
25 enterprise. What I guess we are suggesting is, if we can

1 bring all of them together into a single system, that will
2 give us dominance. I think the winner should be awarded
3 enough money to manufacture 100,000 rifles over a reasonable
4 period of time. And this would allow not only the
5 infantrymen to have this new weapon but also those who fight
6 with the infantry, like sappers and fire support teams and
7 intelligence specialists.

8 Let me end my statement by just saying that my grandson
9 is 10 years old, and I am very proud of him. Both of his
10 parents were soldiers. He tells me he wants to be a soldier
11 someday. If we leave the Army's acquisition bureaucracy in
12 charge of developing our next generation of small arms, I am
13 fearful that he will be walking point some day with the same
14 weapon that failed my soldiers so tragically 50 years ago in
15 Vietnam.

16 Mr. Chairman, please do not allow that to happen.
17 Thank you.

18 [The prepared statement of General Scales follows:]

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1 Senator Cotton: Thank you, gentlemen, for your
2 testimony.

3 General Scales, why is this so hard? It is not a
4 ballistic missile defense system. It is not a new stealth
5 bomber. It is not a new aircraft carrier. It is a rifle.
6 Why is it so hard? Why is the Acquisition Corps saying it
7 is going to take 7 years to get a new rifle?

8 General Scales: I think the reason is just the system.
9 I hate to say it, but some of the people I have talked to in
10 the Army staff recently are telling me that the same
11 regulations that dictate building a F-35 fighter are at play
12 in trying to design and build a little 7-pound piece of
13 plastic and steel.

14 But here is another important point to make, Mr.
15 Chairman. When the military tries to build something, they
16 want to build it internally.

17 But you are from Arkansas. There are a lot of hunters
18 in Arkansas. You know as well as I do that a lot of the
19 technologies that we are talking about are craft
20 technologies. They come from weapons makers, civilian
21 firms. They come from people who are not in the government
22 but who are making cutting-edge advances. And it is
23 extremely hard for the military, particularly the Army
24 acquisition system, to wire around the regulations and apply
25 common sense very quickly and develop a rifle very quickly.

1 There are always people in the Army who say that it is
2 just too expensive. The other common objection I hear from
3 the Army is, well, you know the logistical system cannot
4 support another bullet. My point is, that is what
5 Westmoreland said in 1965, that we could not support another
6 bullet. But, you know, you cannot support another bullet
7 until suddenly you can.

8 As I said, we are not trying to design and build a
9 weapon for everybody who wears a uniform, just for those who
10 use it, as Mick says, to do the nasty business of intimate
11 killing. If we are a military that can field 31 varieties
12 of MRAPs in the most inhospitable region of the world,
13 Afghanistan, I do not understand why our logisticians cannot
14 add another bullet.

15 Senator Cotton: Is the Acquisition Corps that said
16 this would take 7 years the same Acquisition Corps that
17 wrote a 350-page request for proposals for a new pistol?

18 General Scales: Exactly the same.

19 Senator Cotton: General Bednarek, do you have anything
20 to add to the question of why this is so hard?

21 General Bednarek: Mr. Chairman, I echo what General
22 Scales highlighted. But also, you may recall, just years
23 ago, in mobilizing the 39th Brigade Combat Team there in
24 Arkansas similar challenges with not just weapons systems
25 but other kit.

1 General Scales highlighted the Rapid Fielding
2 Initiative that the Army has done pretty darn well with the
3 MRAP type of capability.

4 So the bottom line is, although some of our procurement
5 and acquisition challenges faced, whether that is just a
6 simple bureaucracy of rules, regulations, et cetera, we know
7 we can do this, because we have shown that we can do this
8 with much larger capabilities that our soldiers need for the
9 future.

10 Senator Cotton: General Bednarek, General Scales
11 suggested that not every soldier, not every branch, maybe
12 not every service, would need this kind of weapon, but it
13 would be only the core frontline fighting troops in the
14 infantry. Would you agree with that opinion?

15 General Bednarek: Senator, I do, but let me caveat.

16 Right now, the Army, the system of record, as Senator
17 Ernst highlighted earlier, the M4 carbine family, is on the
18 glide path of what we call pure fleeting, which means that
19 every soldier in the United States Army, that will be their
20 individual weapons system. That pure fleeting will go
21 through and including fiscal year 2022.

22 As General Scales highlighted, we have to have a start
23 point, and that start point must be our frontline combat
24 formations.

25 Again, regardless of component, and the Chief of Staff

1 of the Army is adamant and I 100 percent agree, particularly
2 with my prior privilege in our Army responsible for the
3 training, readiness, and oversight of our National Guard and
4 Reserve forces across the United States, those soldiers,
5 those infantrymen brigade combat teams, just like your 39th
6 there in Arkansas, they have to have the same type of
7 infantry capabilities as our frontline troops.

8 But you have to start somewhere. You have to have a
9 line of departure. That obviously is our special operations
10 forces on the frontlines. Those are our infantrymen, again,
11 regardless of component, and as General Scales highlighted,
12 those who accompany those frontline troops, our fire
13 supporters, are engineer sappers, et cetera. That has to be
14 the first to fight.

15 Senator Cotton: So 11 Bravo riflemen, whether they are
16 in the 101st Airborne or in the National Guard, need this
17 enhanced capability. But finance clerks, whether they are
18 in the 101st or the National Guard, maybe can do with the
19 M4?

20 General Bednarek: Chairman, I agree with that. But
21 the bottom line also is the service chiefs and their staff
22 are pretty smart individuals, and I am very confident that
23 given that decision space that they hold pretty close, they
24 will make the right decisions for those prioritized
25 formations heading out the door for our next deployers to

1 get the capability in the hands that they need.

2 Senator Cotton: General Scales, one final question.
3 With an enhanced rifle, what are the implications for the
4 infantry squad automatic weapon, the M249 and the grenade
5 launcher, the M203?

6 General Scales: That is a great question. I have
7 spent some time over the last year talking particularly to
8 the Marines about this.

9 I think we are in a transition zone, Senator. I think
10 that the Marines have given up on the SAW. They have just
11 found it to be too unreliable. Many are saying that an
12 intermediate caliber like this will allow one rifle to do
13 all those things, to include a grenade launcher, because you
14 have a bullet, probably more than you want to know, but an
15 intermediate caliber bullet stays supersonic longer when you
16 fire it, which means it has a flatter trajectory. So a
17 lighter bullet, when compared with say the 7.62 that you are
18 familiar with, actually has about 90 percent of the range
19 and lethality of that bullet even though it is much lighter.
20 And yet, it is small enough to be used in an automatic
21 weapon that you can fire from the shoulder.

22 So I think the Marines are certainly going in that
23 direction, perhaps the Army too. The day is going to come
24 when you can have one bullet, one family of weapons to
25 perform all functions that you just mentioned. When that

1 day comes, we will have a truly, truly lethal squad.

2 Senator Cotton: Thank you.

3 Senator King?

4 Senator King: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

5 Do we need to replace all the weapons in a squad or can
6 it be a mix of weapons that can meet different requirements?
7 Do you see what I am saying?

8 General Scales: Yes, sir. I do. Boy, that is a great
9 question. Again, it is under heavy debate right now.

10 I think what I hear from, again, from the Marines
11 principally is that the squad has to have a way to not only
12 shoot flat trajectory fire inside the squad but also to get
13 behind obstacles and fire through windows in cities. So
14 many of our enemies today hide behind mud walls or they hide
15 in urban terrain.

16 And what most of the people I talk to tell me is that
17 the old grenade launcher is not sufficient. We need an
18 additional weapon.

19 There are some, Senator, inside the Marine Corps who
20 also argue for a heavier automatic weapon actually inside
21 the squad. That, of course, is a debate that sort of
22 transcends services.

23 But I would say the starting point is to have this
24 universal weapon, and then to augment it within the squad,
25 kind of depending on the mission.

1 Mick used the term "pure fleeting." Five, 6 years ago,
2 when we started off on this crusade, inevitably, the hands
3 went up and people said, "Bob, that is great idea. We would
4 like to do it, but we have a policy in the Army of pure
5 fleeting." I would hope that the number one decision that
6 the Army and Marine Corps would make upfront is to give up
7 on this idea of pure fleeting.

8 Senator King: Can you define that term of "pure
9 fleeting"?

10 General Scales: Sir?

11 Senator King: Define "pure fleeting"?

12 General Scales: "Pure fleeting" means that every
13 soldier in the Army, regardless of whether he uses his rifle
14 or not, has to have the same one. He has to have the same
15 boots, the same uniform, the same rucksack.

16 Senator King: But every soldier does not have the same
17 function.

18 General Scales: Bingo. That is exactly right. Most
19 soldiers in the Army, 85 percent of the soldiers in the Army
20 perform functions like every other civilian does. God bless
21 them, they are great human beings. Only the infantry close
22 with and destroy the enemy.

23 As an example, a soldier shoots 80 rounds a year. At
24 the Battle of Wanat in 2009, evidence indicates that some
25 soldiers were cycling 5,000 to 7,000 rounds through a single

1 weapon. An M4 is just not robust enough to do that.

2 Senator King: What do the SEALs use now for a weapon?

3 General Scales: They use many things. They use the
4 HK416, which is the Heckler & Koch weapon, the one that
5 killed Osama bin Laden.

6 Senator King: Would that be a suitable weapon that
7 would meet the needs that you have described?

8 General Scales: It would.

9 Senator King: Why don't we just buy that?

10 General Scales: Great question. I did not come here
11 before the committee to advocate for a weapons maker, but
12 let me say this. Most people will tell you that the H&K
13 system is the best in the world.

14 The Marines just bought -- they call it the M27, but it
15 is really the H&K 416. It is the most reliable action in
16 the world.

17 Senator King: You have used the term a couple times
18 "wiring around the current acquisition process."

19 General Scales: Yes, sir.

20 Senator King: One way to wire around it is to buy
21 something that is already available --

22 General Scales: Amen.

23 Senator King: -- without going through all the process
24 of reinventing the --

25 General Scales: The only thing that would have to be

1 -- a couple things. Number one is, you have to ask a
2 company like H&K, can you make it modular? I think the
3 answer is yes. Number two, obviously, you would have to
4 rebore it for a slightly larger bullet, and I understand
5 that the magazine H&K makes actually will accept both the
6 mid-caliber and the lighter caliber bullet. And then you
7 would have to make it suitable for the other things that I
8 talked about, a silencer and a site.

9 Senator King: If we change the caliber, General
10 Bednarek, if we change the caliber, does that create
11 problems with NATO? What is the constraint there?

12 General Bednarek: Senator, a couple things, and I am
13 going to address the NATO issue and the caliber weapons
14 systems, and this term that many of us are very familiar
15 with of interoperability with our partners, both coalition
16 and allies, et cetera.

17 Number one, and to get back to General Scales' comment
18 about the Heckler & Koch 417, the Army is purchasing, based
19 on their current small arms strategy, a variant of the H&K
20 417, which is a 7.62 rifle.

21 It is part of the earlier question, Senator, that you
22 asked about, does everybody in a rifle squad have the same
23 kit? The answer is no. They have the baseline weapon, but
24 they also have specialty weapons. The H&K 417 is one of
25 these of a "squad-designated marksman." So you have one

1 individual who is a little bit higher trained, certainly
2 designated as a marksman based on that team leader or squad
3 leader. They also have a precision sniper rifle embedded
4 within that squad or platoon.

5 They also have -- now the Army has already fielded, and
6 more to come with additional variants, a larger caliber,
7 what is called the Carl Gustaf. It is an M3 84 millimeter
8 recoilless rifle that fielded back -- when I first fired it
9 was back in 1991. They have adjusted it since then.

10 But to your point of capabilities within a squad,
11 within a rifle platoon, there are some capabilities that the
12 Army and the Marines already have embedded within their
13 formations now that provide them, as General Scales,
14 highlighted based on the mission set at hand, based on what
15 their requirement is to accomplish that particular day,
16 night, or mission set, they can accomplish what they need to
17 get done.

18 Senator, to your question on NATO, it gets complex in
19 the sense of ammunition stocks, stockpiles, locations, where
20 they are, who we are partnered with, et cetera. I will just
21 give you some near-term examples.

22 Senator King: I am going to urge you to be brief,
23 because I have a clock running.

24 General Bednarek: Yes. For our partners in Iraq, most
25 of those have, obviously, AK-47 7.62. As we start working

1 with them in foreign military sales with our Iraqi partners,
2 certainly the system that we are using is the M4 carbine.
3 But for our NATO allies, 62 countries involved with the
4 coalition effort in Operation Enduring Freedom and Iraqi
5 Freedom, the challenges associated with stockpiles and
6 working through those weapons is a challenge because you are
7 working with different systems. The spare parts, breakage,
8 ammunition, caliber weapons do not fit all weapons, and it
9 is problematic for the ground force commanders.

10 Senator King: General Scales, one more very quick
11 question. Does the current M4 bullet penetrate current body
12 armor on our adversaries?

13 General Scales: Sir, it does not.

14 Senator King: Isn't that the end of the discussion?
15 If it doesn't, we have to have a new weapon.

16 General Scales: Let me just build off what Mick said
17 in about 20 seconds or less. He mentioned commonality.

18 Well, the NATO countries, that enemy they all face is
19 Russia. I will guarantee you that, over time, if the NATO
20 armies realize that the weapons, the 5.56 weapons that they
21 have, will not penetrate Russian body armor, and they will
22 not, that it is inevitable that, spontaneously, the other
23 armies of the world will have to upgrade their weapons to a
24 heavy caliber. Otherwise, they will be defeated by the
25 Russians in the close infantry fight.

1 Senator Cotton: Senator Ernst?

2 Senator Ernst: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

3 Gentlemen, thank you again. Again, Secretary Mattis
4 committed to me during his confirmation hearing that he
5 would work with us to modernize our small arms.

6 General Scales, you note how it took strong support
7 from President Kennedy and Secretary of Defense McNamara to
8 consider the M16. As we see our adversaries modernize, I
9 believe we are going to need this type of pressure from this
10 administration as well to ensure that this actually happens.

11 That is why I have requested this hearing.

12 Do you agree that we need to pressure the
13 administration and signal that it is taking way too long?
14 Seven to 10 years is way too long. Would you agree we need
15 pressure to make this happen?

16 General Scales: Absolutely, but I will also say, from
17 my long association with General Mattis, working on this
18 specific project beginning in 2004, that as far as the
19 Secretary of Defense is concerned, you are pushing on an
20 open door. This has been a passion of his.

21 I remember, a quick war story, in 2004, we started off
22 on what was called the national program for small unit
23 excellence when he was commander of MCCDC, Marine Corps
24 Development Command, and later Joint Forces Command.

25 Secretary Mattis is passionate about this because he

1 remembers the second battle of Fallujah, and several Marine
2 who were killed, needlessly killed, by suicide bombers who
3 cannot be stopped with the M4. He has that, I believe,
4 embedded in his brain.

5 So I believe that the best advocate for this is going
6 to be the man at the top. That is why this hearing is so
7 important, to let him know that Congress is behind him, that
8 you understand the nature of the problem, and that you
9 hopefully will be able to give him the support he needs to
10 press forward with this.

11 Having said that, there are a lot of people in OSD that
12 would rather make antiballistic missiles and supersonic
13 aircraft than rifles. Lockheed Martin does not have a rifle
14 division in their corporation.

15 Senator Ernst: What a great point, General. Thank you
16 very much.

17 Continuing with that same line of thought as well,
18 General Bednarek, we have committed to fielding platforms
19 like the F-35, very complicated systems out there. Why is
20 it that we cannot field a rifle?

21 General Bednarek: The answer is there is no good
22 reason why we cannot, and we absolutely should.

23 In the broader scheme of things, Senator, to your
24 point, reinforced by General Scales, with the broader,
25 complicated, billions of dollars of systems that the United

1 States has a signature platform to accomplish our Nation's
2 bidding, there is absolutely no reason why we should not
3 have a capable, higher caliber, modular weapons system in
4 the hands of our infantry combat troops.

5 Senator Ernst: And I know that General Miller had told
6 me this as well when we were visiting about small arms
7 modernization, that, of course, the marine is very emotional
8 about their rifle.

9 You know that, General Scales, as well.

10 And so do you, Senator Sullivan. You understand that.

11 And for our warfighters like Senator Cotton, we need
12 the best available small arms for our infantrymen. This
13 should not be an issue. This should not be an issue. I
14 think we are signally loud and clear to the man at the top
15 that this needs to happen.

16 Now, General Bednarek, you also say in your opening
17 statement that troops and their individual weapons are a
18 system of systems and that they are designed with one
19 purpose, to close with and defeat our adversaries, and they
20 must be lethal.

21 So do you believe the answer to a more lethal weapons
22 system is a commercial off-the-shelf product, as we have
23 discussed earlier? Or something that maybe we should have
24 industry specifically develop?

25 General Bednarek: Senator, thank you for the question.

1 Again, I think a COTS system, a commercial off-the-
2 shelf, certainly is one course of action, as General Scales
3 highlighted. He and I talked about this before.

4 Competition is always good, but it cannot be tied up in
5 absolute bureaucratic masking tape for years. It is
6 absolutely unconscionable, in my view.

7 We can do this. It was shown in the Rapid Fielding
8 Initiative it should not take so long. We have to continue
9 to press this really hard.

10 I think the service chiefs are behind this, as I
11 highlighted in my opening statement. And they want the best
12 thing for our infantrymen as well, to defeat our
13 adversaries.

14 Senator Ernst: Thank you, gentlemen.

15 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

16 Senator Cotton: Senator Sullivan?

17 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

18 General Scales, I think your opening statement, your
19 first sentence here, "Since the end of World War II, the
20 richest and most technologically advanced country in the
21 world has sent its soldiers and marines into combat with
22 inferior small arms. So inferior, in fact, that thousands
23 have died needlessly." I think that kind of opens and shuts
24 the point of the hearing.

25 I think Senator King's point is also worth

1 reemphasizing. You mentioned that the 5.56 caliber ammo
2 cannot pierce the Ratnik soldier system of the Russian body
3 armor? What else cannot the 5.56 penetrate? I noted in one
4 of your testimony that six different States have outlawed
5 its use because when you shoot a deer with it, it is
6 considered cruel.

7 General Scales: It is not lethal enough to take down
8 an animal, Senator, so there are several States that have
9 banned its use.

10 In fact, when Mr. Stoner first developed the AR-15, in
11 those days, in the 1950s, it was called a 223. If you look
12 on the box of ammunition, it is called a varmint, a varmint
13 shell. In other words, it is intended for rabbits and small
14 animals rather than something big like a deer or a human
15 being, for that matter.

16 Senator Sullivan: I think I want to commend Senator
17 Ernst for being the motivator behind this hearing. But I
18 think this should be an issue that is that not difficult.

19 When the Army is talking about cost, if it is going to
20 save thousands of lives of frontline troops, then it should
21 not even be debatable.

22 Let me ask another kind of related question. Have you
23 looked at all in terms of our sniper rifles and their
24 ranges? In the Marine Corps, there is some concern about
25 the M40A5, which is the Marine sniper rifle right now. I

1 think the range is about 1,000 yards. I know that 50 cal
2 Barrett sniper rifle has a much greater range.

3 But are you also concerned with regard to our snipers,
4 Army and Marine Corps snipers, that our ranges are such that
5 we cannot compete against their snipers?

6 General Scales: I know Mick knows more about this than
7 I do, but this is a great point.

8 The technology today, particularly in the technology of
9 the bullets and some of the great refinements made in
10 telescopic sites, particularly night sites, the standard
11 now, Senator, for the British and for JSOC, the standard now
12 on flat terrain is 1,600 yards.

13 Senator Sullivan: Right.

14 General Scales: In fact, the world record, which is
15 claimed by a British SAS sniper, is something like 1,850.
16 My gosh, that is a mile.

17 So the technology has come a long way. And, sadly,
18 until very recently, the Army's standard sniper rifle, they
19 are changing it now, but the Army's standard sniper rifle
20 was invented in 1907. It is an adaptation of the Remington
21 Model 70 that I used in Vietnam.

22 Senator Sullivan: So do you think we need to look at
23 that, not just the caliber issue, but do you think we need
24 to look at the sniper rifle? I know that SOCOM, and as you
25 mentioned JSOC, has a different rifle, but I am talking

1 about Marine, Army snipers who should be having the ability
2 to range the enemy at the same distance other members of the
3 U.S. military have.

4 Should we be looking at that as well?

5 General Scales: Mick probably will get mad at me for
6 saying this, but I get a little upset sometimes when I hear
7 from people who argue with me, that say, "Well, that is just
8 for JSOC. That is for the SEALs. That is for the Rangers.
9 That is for Delta. Not for infantrymen." I get angry when
10 I hear that.

11 Senator Sullivan: Just for the record, the Marine
12 Corps thinks it is special without the name "special."

13 General Scales: Well, okay, I'm not going to go there,
14 Senator.

15 Senator Sullivan: You don't need to you, General.

16 General Scales: I guess my point is, when you have a
17 dead soldier on your hands who gets shot from an enemy
18 firing at long range, no one really puts him in a body bag
19 and worries about what insignia he has on his collar. I get
20 pretty -- if it is good enough for -- if it something like a
21 rifle that is good enough for JSOC, it should be good enough
22 for a Marine rifleman and an Army rifleman.

23 Senator Sullivan: Agreed.

24 General Bednarek: Senator, just a couple points. You
25 hit it right on the head about the lethality of distance.

1 Regardless of service, to include our special operations
2 forces brothers, the bottom line, I agree with General
3 Scales, it does not matter what the hell color uniform it
4 is. You have to have the best in your hand.

5 If you are a designated marksman or a sniper, you are
6 going to reach out and touch somebody, and the rest of your
7 mates expect you to do that.

8 But I highlight back to what I mentioned earlier with
9 Senator King of the system of systems, because it is also,
10 as you well know, it is the training. It is the discipline.
11 It is firing your weapon all the time, confidence and
12 competence, with whatever capability that you have. It is
13 about use of sensor to shooter. It is drone technology. It
14 is communication. It is somebody with an overwatch position
15 being able to dial in at that particular range, whether that
16 is 1,600 yards where the marine is currently at 1,000 yards
17 with their M4085, whatever, the 110 from the Army. You have
18 to train and be confident and comfortable with whatever
19 system that you have, but it has to be the best.

20 General Scales: One final thing, Senator. I was at
21 Fort Benning 2 weeks ago. I said I am going to testify
22 before the Senate. Just give me a template of what I should
23 tell them. They told me something really -- this is the
24 two-star head of the infantry center.

25 He said 1,000 yards, 1,000 meters. I said, what does

1 that mean? He said 1,000 meters, to Mick's point, with the
2 ability to not only see but to identify your target, in
3 other words, not just motion but an actual soldier out
4 there, and 1,000 yards to reach them with weapons that are
5 organic to the squad.

6 He said take that to the bank. If we have that
7 capability, he told me, regardless of the system at hand,
8 then we dominate the close fight.

9 That is something that I think we need to embrace as we
10 go into the future.

11 Senator Sullivan: Great. Thank you.

12 Thank you, Madam Chair.

13 Senator Ernst: [Presiding.] At this point, we will go
14 ahead and take another round of questions, if Senators have
15 additional questions they would like to ask.

16 Senator King?

17 Senator King: The HK416, which I understand is also
18 the M27, that is a 5.56. Can that be modified to take a
19 larger caliber?

20 General Scales: Yes, sir, it can, and it already is.
21 HK, which is the company we were talking about earlier, has
22 that rifle, that system, in many, many different calibers,
23 so it is not a big deal.

24 Senator King: So that is not a big deal.

25 General Scales: No, sir, it is not.

1 Senator King: Because larger caliber seems to be part
2 of what we are coming away from this meeting with.

3 General Scales: Yes, sir.

4 Senator King: Both for body armor and for distance.

5 General Scales: Yes, it comes down to physics. Energy
6 equals mass times velocity. If you do not have the mass,
7 then you do not have the energy.

8 Senator King: Do either of you have any idea how many
9 M4s there are deployed in the services today?

10 General Scales: No, sir. I have no idea.

11 Senator King: We have not talked about cost, and the
12 HK is something like three times more expensive, however, if
13 we are buying them 100,000 at a time, I do not know what the
14 number is, presumably, that would bring the price down.

15 General Scales: Sir, the Chief of Staff of the Army
16 was very successful in negotiating with Sig Sauer. That is
17 the company that we finally decided should make our pistol.
18 He was able to reduce the price from the commercial price,
19 the wholesale price, by a factor of two-thirds.

20 I think if a gun maker knew that the world standard was
21 going to be made at his company, he would be more than happy
22 to get that price down.

23 General Bednarek: That also, Senator, goes to your
24 question earlier about our allies and our coalition
25 partners. If they know the United States is purchasing a

1 higher caliber weapons system, that has gone through the
2 rigorous testing, et cetera, that General Scales has
3 highlighted, there will be additional sales and a marketing
4 perspective. So it is, again, total quality and quantity,
5 the price will come down.

6 Senator King: I do not want to get too dramatic, but
7 it seems to me, if we are fielding a weapon as the standard
8 weapon that cannot penetrate the body armor of our
9 adversaries in a close fight, that is unethical.

10 General Scales: You are absolutely right.

11 Senator King: It is wrong to put our people in that
12 position.

13 General Scales: And could I just amplify what you
14 said?

15 We are not talking about killing from a distance here,
16 Senator. We are talking about what some psychologists call
17 intimate killing, where you see your enemy, where you kill
18 him, and you watch him bleed out. I remember in Vietnam in
19 my unit, I noticed there was a period in 1969 when some of
20 my soldiers were carrying AK-47s. I mean, what type of
21 condemnation is that?

22 So a rifle is as much a moral instrument as it is a
23 physical instrument. If you believe that what you were
24 carrying out the 50-meter fight is inferior to your enemy's,
25 that affects everything.

1 Senator King: That affects your mental state.

2 General Scales: Audacity, courage, initiative, elan,
3 as Mick says, the human characteristics that make our
4 infantry dominant. If you really believe what you are
5 holding is the best damn assault rifle in the world, that
6 changes the whole equation of close combat. And I think
7 that is important.

8 Sometimes, acquisition people just do not understand
9 that. That is why I think close combat soldiers and marines
10 should be the ones to dictate what this rifle is going to
11 look like.

12 Senator King: It is more than just physics.

13 In terms of the time, Madam Chair, we have to do
14 something about that. I mean, 7 years, during World War II,
15 Bath Iron Works in Bath, Maine, built a destroyer every 2
16 weeks. Why? Because we needed them.

17 And I think this is a case that we need this weapon,
18 and we should not have to wait. We need a skunkworks or
19 something, a way to get around this acquisition problem.

20 By the way, this is a problem throughout the Federal
21 Government. We had a hearing this morning in the Budget
22 Committee. The same problem with acquisition for computers
23 for the FBI or whatever. The Federal acquisition process is
24 a nightmare. I would call it byzantine, but that would be
25 an insult to the Byzantine Empire.

1 Thank you, Madam Chair.

2 Senator Ernst: Thank you, Senator King, very much.

3 I do think we have an immediate need here. We need to
4 fulfill our obligation as Congress to our young men and now
5 women who are serving in our combat arms.

6 I am going to close with a question for you, General
7 Scales. In your statement, you had mentioned that the 50
8 cal Ma Deuce is coming up on its 100th anniversary.

9 General Scales: Yes, in 2 years.

10 Senator Ernst: Hundredth anniversary, that is pretty
11 incredible.

12 And the Marine Corps recently came out with new
13 upgrades for the 50 cal putting on a flash suppressor that
14 reduces the gun signature by 95 percent at night. That is
15 incredible.

16 General Scales: Right. Think of the implications of
17 that. I mean, the Navy and the Air Force have spent
18 hundreds of billions of dollars to build stealth fighters.
19 Well, the ground analogy to a stealth fighter is a stealth
20 sniper rifle or a stealth rifle that has no flash at night.
21 The 50 caliber has virtually no flash, if it is properly
22 suppressed, is a better word, not silenced. And the sound,
23 in terms of decibels, is one-fifth of the enemy.

24 I think I mentioned earlier, when you are in a
25 firefight and the IED goes off or the enemy opens up with an

1 ambush, you bury your face in the ground. And when you look
2 up, you should at sound. You do not shoot at people.

3 I think it would be transformational -- oh, and I asked
4 the Commander of 3/5 Marines back in November when I visited
5 29 Palms, I said, it must have been -- this is so typical of
6 my friends the Marines. I said it must have been expensive
7 to put a suppressor on every one of your rifles. He said,
8 damn, sir, 20 bucks apiece. It was really expensive.

9 Senator Ernst: Isn't that something,

10 General Scales: Twenty bucks apiece.

11 Senator Ernst: Isn't that something? So is that
12 something our industry is working on, cheap suppressors?

13 General Scales: No.

14 Senator Ernst: Inexpensive suppressors?

15 General Scales: Not that I know of.

16 Senator Ernst: Isn't that something that we should be
17 demanding?

18 General Scales: Yes.

19 Senator Ernst: Okay.

20 General Scales: Absolutely.

21 Senator Ernst: That is my belief is well.

22 Do we see this happening with our adversaries or other
23 countries? Are they suppressing the larger caliber rifles
24 like that?

25 General Scales: I do not know about the larger

1 caliber. I know that the Russian sniper rifle, the
2 Dragunov, and they have a new one.

3 If you look at pictures of the little green men in the
4 Ukraine, you can see several things. You can see this new
5 heavy, stiff, metal-backed body armor. You can see the
6 Russians' new helmet. They have squad-size radios that are
7 smaller than ours. And they have their use of sensors. As
8 Mick said, their use of tactical UAVs is exceptional. And
9 their rifle bullet will penetrate our body armor.

10 In fact, Senator King and I were talking yesterday, the
11 analogy is very much similar to World War II in tank-on-tank
12 warfare. It was not until we went up against the Germans
13 that we realized that our M4 tanks could be penetrated by
14 the German guns, and we could not penetrate the Panther
15 tanks. General Bradley lost 3,380 tanks in tank-on-tank
16 engagements in 11 months of warfare because the Army did not
17 discover until too late that our tank guns were outmatched
18 by the German tank guns.

19 This is just an infantry analogy to the same problem.
20 The only difference is, by my calculations, in wars since
21 World War II, over 58,000 infantrymen have died in close
22 combat -- 58,000. Why not make sure when they go to war
23 next time, our bullets penetrate their body armor and their
24 bullets do not penetrate ours? There is nothing complicated
25 about any of this.

1 General Bednarek: Senator, what we do know on, again,
2 emerging threats, et cetera, particularly with the variants
3 of the AK-47, as General Scale highlighted, and you asked
4 the question, not only the AKM, the AK-74, but also the AK-
5 12, which came out of recent technology, and it is similar
6 to what our industry has already been looking at, but it is
7 a modular system. It is kind of like the plug-and-play, not
8 only suppressors but different folding stocks, weapon
9 systems, upper receivers, sites, and also the modular
10 adjustable caliber weapon capability.

11 Senator Ernst: Any closing thoughts, Senator King?

12 Okay, gentlemen, I will close by thanking you very much
13 for your testimony today. Your input has been very
14 important. This is an important topic for many of us in the
15 United States Senate and one that we will continue to pursue
16 through fruition. That is the goal, to make sure that we
17 have advanced small arms weapons in our infantrymen's hands,
18 Marines and Army.

19 God bless you for the work that you are doing. We will
20 continue the good fight, and I look forward to having many
21 more discussions as we work through the hopefully soon
22 acquisition process. So thank you very much, gentlemen.

23 General Scales: Thank you very much, Senator.

24 Senator Ernst: We will close this Senate hearing.

25 [Whereupon, at 4:35 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]