

Stenographic Transcript
Before the

COMMITTEE ON
ARMED SERVICES

UNITED STATES SENATE

HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON
THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE BUDGET POSTURE
IN REVIEW OF THE DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST
FOR FISCAL YEAR 2022

Thursday, June 10, 2021

Washington, D.C.

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7 U.S. Senate

8 Committee on Armed Services

9 Washington, D.C.
10

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

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

3 Chairman Reed: I would like to call this hearing to
4 order. The committee meets today to receive testimony on
5 the President's Defense Budget Request for Fiscal year 2022.

6 Witnesses this morning are Secretary Lloyd Austin,
7 Secretary of Defense; Mr. Michael McCord, Under Secretary of
8 Defense (Comptroller); and General Mark Milley, Chairman of
9 the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I welcome each of you and thank
10 you for your service and willingness to appear before us
11 today.

12 Two weeks ago, President Biden released his Defense
13 Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2022, with a top line of \$715
14 billion. The request focuses on several key areas:
15 defeating COVID-19, prioritizing China as the pacing
16 challenge, addressing advanced and persistent threats,
17 innovating and modernizing DoD, and tackling the climate
18 crisis.

19 The President's Defense Budget Request is a starting
20 point for Congress, and must always be viewed in the broader
21 context of the national security and fiscal challenges we
22 face. It is important that we ensure we have the right
23 strategies and resources to keep the American people safe
24 now and in the future, with a keen eye toward evolving
25 threats around the globe.

1 I am pleased to see that this budget request places a
2 priority on taking care of the men and women who serve in
3 uniform and the civilians who serve alongside them in the
4 Department, by including an across-the-board pay raise for
5 military and civilian personnel of 2.7 percent. While this
6 pay raise is required by law for military personnel, too
7 often DoD civilians have been overlooked. This increase in
8 civilian pay sends an important message to the workforce and
9 begins to reverse years of pay freezes and benefit cuts.

10 Notably, the budget request includes \$112 billion in
11 research, development, test, and evaluation funds, the
12 largest ever requested in this area. This includes
13 significant funding for modernization areas such as
14 microelectronics, artificial intelligence, hypersonic
15 missiles, and 5G. Building our strength in these areas will
16 be critical to the modernization of our national security.

17 But as the recent SolarWinds, Microsoft Exchange, and
18 Colonial Pipeline server breaches painfully illustrated, our
19 traditional "perimeter-based" cyber defenses are simply
20 inadequate to deal with sophisticated adversaries that are
21 clearly advantaged in the cyber domain. I hope our
22 witnesses will expand on what activities DoD is taking to
23 accelerate and expand our cybersecurity and what resources
24 are needed to accomplish them.

25 With regard to the President's transition strategy in

1 Afghanistan, the budget request includes \$3.3 billion for
2 the Afghan Security Forces Fund. This will ensure our
3 continued support for the sustainment, infrastructure,
4 equipment, and training requirements for Afghan security
5 personnel. I ask that our witnesses update the committee on
6 this transition.

7 Last year, this committee led the way in establishing
8 the Pacific Deterrence Initiative, or PDI, to serve as a
9 means for improving the capabilities, design, and posture of
10 our joint forces in the Indo-Pacific region. The PDI was
11 intended to strengthen the presence and resiliency of our
12 armed forces; improve logistics and maintenance
13 capabilities; support exercises, training, experimentation,
14 and innovation for the joint force; and build the defense
15 and security capabilities and cooperation of allies and
16 partners. I am concerned that the Department's budget
17 request takes a heavily platform-centric approach to PDI,
18 and I look forward to working collaboratively with the
19 Department of Defense leadership to more appropriately align
20 resources in the DoD budget with our intent for PDI.

21 Similarly, the budget request proposes an \$800 million
22 reduction to the European Deterrence Initiative, the EDI.
23 The Initiative, which was also established by this
24 committee, has seen budget decreases for the past 3 years.
25 The Department has suggested that this is part of

1 "transitioning to a steady state" in the European Command
2 AOR. I would ask that our witnesses further explain the
3 reasoning behind the reduced EDI budget, and specifically,
4 whether you believe this level of investment in
5 infrastructure, force posture, and capabilities is
6 sufficient to deter Russian aggression.

7 With regard to our nuclear strategy, I understand that
8 the budget request before us supports important steps toward
9 nuclear modernization. Our allies and partners depend on
10 the U.S. nuclear umbrella, and modernization of our
11 strategic forces is needed to reassure them of our
12 dependability. One thing I think everyone would agree on,
13 and often gets lost in the discussion, is the fact that arms
14 control and the modernization of our nuclear forces are
15 inherently linked together. Even as we modernize, we should
16 seek ways to promote strategic stability, like the extension
17 of the New START agreement and follow-on talks to cover new
18 strategic weapons and further nuclear stockpiles.

19 Lastly, I would note that fiscal year 2022 is the first
20 year in 10 years that we will not be constrained by the
21 Budget Control Act. Eliminating arbitrary spending caps
22 means that every department's budget can, and should, be
23 argued on its merits. Taxpayers should not have to pay for
24 programs or systems that are wasteful or ineffective, and
25 Congress must not shirk its responsibilities to get rid of

1 outdated systems in favor of more advanced, effective, new
2 technologies and capabilities. Belt-tightening in any
3 department, particularly defense, is always a challenge, but
4 it is also an opportunity to evaluate what is necessary and
5 what drives innovation. The Department has taken the first
6 difficult step in proposing \$2.8 billion worth of
7 divestments and retirements of platforms, and I will work
8 with my colleagues to evaluate these proposals and make hard
9 but necessary choices.

10 Finally, as we progress through this legislative year,
11 the committee will tackle many important policy issues, none
12 bigger than how we prevent and prosecute sexual assault and
13 harassment in the ranks. Change is coming to the Department
14 and the military services. More than anything, cultural
15 change within the force is critical to reducing the number
16 of sexual assaults and related offenses. The President
17 directed a review earlier this year, and I know the Dept has
18 been hard at work. I look forward to receiving the
19 administration's recommendations to incorporate into the
20 committee's important work on this issue.

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

23 Now let me now recognize the ranking member, Senator
24 Inhofe.

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1 STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES INHOFE, U.S. SENATOR FROM
2 OKLAHOMA

3 Senator Inhofe: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I
4 would like to thank all three of our witnesses for
5 dedicating their lives to securing our nation. Secretary
6 Austin told us, along with nearly every witness who has come
7 before this committee, China is our pacing threat. It is a
8 global, long-term competition, and it is across every arena
9 of the national power, but the military balance of power
10 concerns me most.

11 In 2018, the National Defense Strategy gave us a
12 blueprint for pushing back on China. The bipartisan NDS
13 Commission said that 3 to 5 percent real growth was needed
14 to implement that strategy. It does not look like we are
15 going to get that. Since then, the threats have gotten
16 worse. The administration gave us a budget that cuts
17 spending when we need real growth. They want the military
18 to do more on climate change and pandemic response, more
19 mission, but with fewer resources.

20 We have been asking our military to do too much with
21 too little for too long. President Biden's budget cuts
22 would make it even harder. It barely treads water while we
23 face all these threats. These budget cuts shift aircraft,
24 munitions, and more. We have nearly \$25 billion of unfunded
25 priorities. These are not wish lists. These are risk

1 lists. The budget cuts aircraft procurement by 20 percent,
2 backslides on Army readiness, and starves Navy shipbuilding.
3 This budget forces our military leaders to choose between
4 being ready for today's fight or the fight of the future.

5 The Chinese military leaders, they are not making that
6 choice. On Tuesday, I read in the press about the memo by
7 Acting Secretary of the Navy on next year's budget. He says
8 the Navy must choose between modernizing ships, subs, and
9 aircraft. Does anyone think the Chinese have to make that
10 decision?

11 The Chinese defense budget has grown by 450 percent
12 since 2001. They added \$200 billion in the last decade,
13 while we cut \$400 billion. So we are behind in some of the
14 areas and we are falling behind in some of the other areas,
15 and as a result I am worried deterrence will fail. Maybe
16 today or 5 years or 10 years. And when it does, the cost
17 will be much higher than any investment we could be making
18 today to prevent that. And we are not making hard choices.
19 We are making bad choices and short-sighted choices.

20 The administration tells us that the Pentagon budget is
21 cut because of fiscal realities, but they are spending
22 trillions of taxpayer dollars on everything else under the
23 sun. We all agree, and even the administration agrees, that
24 a strong military improves all other tools of national
25 power. I just cannot understand this short-sighted

1 underfunding of our troops. We make a sacred compact with
2 our servicemembers. We tell them we will take care of them
3 and their families, and we do that very well. We also tell
4 them that we will give them the tools that are necessary to
5 defend the nation and come home safely, but we are not
6 holding up our end of the bargain with this proposed budget.
7 We are failing to give them the resources they need to
8 implement that strategy, and, Mr. Chairman, we need to do
9 better.

10 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

11 Chairman Reed: Well, thank you very much, Senator
12 Inhofe. Secretary Austin, please.

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1 STATEMENT OF HONORABLE LLOYD J. AUSTIN III, SECRETARY
2 OF DEFENSE

3 Secretary Austin: Thank you, Chairman Reed, Ranking
4 Member Inhofe, and distinguished members of the committee,
5 thank you for the opportunity to testify today about the
6 President's budget request for fiscal year 2022.

7 I am pleased to appear before you alongside General
8 Milley, whose advice and counsel has been crucial to us as
9 we developed our budget, and as we continue to defend this
10 nation, which is our chief responsibility and my top
11 priority. I am also glad to be joined by our Comptroller
12 and our CFO, Mr. Mike McCord.

13 Let me say at the outset that I believe that our budget
14 requests will help us match resources to strategy, strategy
15 to policy, and policy to the will of the American people.
16 Informed by the President's Interim National Security
17 Guidance and my own message to the force, it funds the right
18 mix of capabilities that we need most to defend this nation,
19 now and in the future. It invests in hypersonic weapons,
20 artificial intelligence, microelectronics, 5G technology,
21 space-based systems, shipbuilding, and nuclear
22 modernization, to name a few. In fact, this budget asks you
23 to approve nearly \$28 billion to modernize our nuclear
24 triad, and \$112 billion for research, development, test, and
25 evaluation, the largest R&D request ever put forth by this

1 Department.

2 Our request also gives us the flexibility to divest
3 ourselves of systems and platform that no longer adequately
4 meet our needs, including older ships, aircraft, and ISR
5 platforms that demand more maintenance, upkeep, and risk
6 than we can afford.

7 As you know, we have commissioned a Global Posture
8 Review and a new National Defense Strategy which will
9 further inform and guide our resource decisions.

10 The Department must be ready to meet and keep pace with
11 our competitors, and if necessary, to fight and win the next
12 war, and not the last one. And that is why this budget
13 stays true to our focus on matching the pacing challenge
14 that we clearly see from the People's Republic of China, to
15 include more than \$5 billion for the Pacific Defense
16 Initiative. And I would just add that our China task force
17 has also completed its work, and yesterday I issued an
18 internal directive kicking off several Department-wide
19 efforts that will, among other things, help bolster our
20 deterrence against the PRC and revitalize our network of
21 regional allies and partners and accelerate the development
22 of cutting-edge capabilities and new operational concepts.

23 However, we recognize that China is not our only
24 challenge. Our budget also includes \$617 million to counter
25 the damaging effects of climate change and additional funds

1 to prepare for future challenges like another pandemic. It
2 also helps us counter the belligerence that we face from
3 Russia, especially in the cyber realm. And you will see
4 more than \$10 billion here devoted to cybersecurity,
5 cyberspace operations, and cyber research and development.

6 With this emphasis on space, missile defense, and more
7 sophisticated sensors, our budget will also help us counter
8 the increasing ballistic missile capabilities of nations
9 like North Korea and Iran. It funds a troop presence and
10 counterterrorism capabilities in the Middle East and South
11 Asia to meet the threats posed not only by Iran but also by
12 terrorist networks like ISIS and al Qaeda, and in Africa
13 like those posed by Al-Shabaab.

14 I am also confident that this budget will help us
15 maintain the integrated deterrent capability and global
16 posture necessary to back up the hard work of our diplomats
17 and demonstrate our resolve in leadership all over the
18 world, alongside our allies and partners.

19 I know that Afghanistan remains at the top of all of
20 our minds, and today I can report that the retrograde
21 remains on pace. We have accomplished the mission for which
22 our troops were sent to Afghanistan 20 years ago, and I am
23 very proud of the men and women who made it possible and of
24 those who gave their lives for this mission. I am also
25 deeply grateful to the families of our servicemembers who

1 have endured as much, as they sent their sons and daughters
2 and husbands and wives into battle.

3 And so we will now transition to a new bilateral
4 relationship with our Afghan partners, one that continues to
5 help them meet their responsibilities to their citizens, but
6 one that will not require a U.S. footprint larger than what
7 is necessary to protect our diplomats. And that is one
8 reason why we are asking to move overseas contingency
9 operations funding inside the budget. This will give us and
10 you greater transparency, accountability, and predictability
11 in the budgeting process. This is the right thing to do,
12 and frankly, it is overdue.

13 Now taking care of our people is also the right thing
14 to do. Our budget request increases funding to support in-
15 home care and support, which has become increasingly
16 important during the pandemic. We will also be seeking
17 funds to improve military base pay, retention bonuses, and
18 other incentives that will help us attract and retain the
19 best talent, and we will be working hard to combat
20 challenges that make service in the ranks more difficult for
21 the men and women of the Department, from getting a better
22 handle on the extent to which we experience extremist
23 behavior to combating sexual assault and harassment.

24 As you know, my first directive as Secretary of
25 Defense, issued on my first full day in the office, was to

1 Service leadership about sexual assault. I made it clear
2 then, and I still believe that we must not be afraid to try
3 new approaches and to change our minds so that we can truly
4 and fully address the scourge of sexual assault in our
5 force. And clearly what we have been doing has not been
6 working, and one assault is too many. The numbers of sexual
7 assaults are still too high, and the confidence in our
8 system is still too low.

9 The Independent Review Commission that we established
10 has provided me with an initial set of recommendations,
11 starting around the issue of accountability, and this line
12 of effort is focused on how these crimes are investigated
13 and prosecuted. I shared these recommendations with General
14 Milley and the civilian military leaders of the Service
15 branches, and I am carefully reviewing the feedback that
16 they provided me.

17 There will be additional recommendations coming to us
18 from the IRC on prevention, culture, and victim support, and
19 I look forward to receiving them as well, and making my full
20 recommendation to the President later this month. As I have
21 said before, what we are doing is not working, and we need
22 to fix it. And I want to be sure that whatever changes to
23 the UCMJ that I recommend to the President, and ultimately
24 to this committee, that they are scoped to the problem that
25 we are trying to solve and have a clear way forward on

1 implementation and ultimately restore the confidence of the
2 force and the system. You have my commitment to that and my
3 commitment to working expeditiously as you consider
4 legislative proposals. So whatever changes we make, I
5 believe we need to focus on effective implementation and
6 resourcing, and I know I will need your help.

7 Chairman Reed, members of this committee, we field the
8 greatest military in human history, made up of the finest
9 men and women who have ever donned the cloth of their
10 nation. We also enjoy a civilian workforce deeply committed
11 to every mission that they take on. And for all the things
12 that we know we need to do better, no adversary can match
13 the quality of our people. I am immensely proud of them and
14 humbled to be of service to them, and privileged to be able
15 to serve again with them and their families. I know the
16 values they espouse and the oath that they took, I know what
17 they are capable of, and I believe I have a very good sense
18 of what they need to do their jobs. And I can assure you
19 that President's budget request for fiscal year 2022
20 fulfills that obligation.

21 And I look forward to answering your questions, and
22 thank you for the steadfast support that you continue to
23 provide to the Department of Defense, and for all the
24 efforts that you make every day to ensure that we remain
25 ready to defend this nation. Thank you, sir.

[The prepared statement of Secretary Austin follows:]

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1 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary.
2 Before I recognize General Milley, since a quorum is present
3 I would ask the committee to consider seven nominations, the
4 nominations of the Honorable Frank Kendall III to be
5 Secretary of the Air Force; the Honorable Heidi Shyu to be
6 Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering; Ms.
7 Susanna V. Blume to be the Director of Cost Assessment and
8 Program Evaluation, Department of Defense; Ms. Jill M. Hruby
9 to be Under Secretary of Energy for Nuclear Security and
10 Administrator, National Nuclear Security Administration; Mr.
11 Frank A. Rose to be Principal Deputy Administrator, National
12 Nuclear Security Administration; Ms. Deborah G. Rosenblum to
13 be Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear, Chemical, and
14 Biological Defense Programs; and Mr. Christopher P. Maier to
15 be Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and
16 Low-Intensity Conflict.

17 Is there a motion to favorably report these seven
18 nominations to the Senate?

19 Senator Inhofe: So moved.

20 Chairman Reed: Is there a second?

21 Senator Kaine: Second.

22 Chairman Reed: All in favor?

23 [Chorus of ayes.]

24 Chairman Reed: The motion carries. Thank you very
25 much.

1 General Milley, your comments, please.

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1 STATEMENT OF GENERAL MARK A. MILLEY, USA, CHAIRMAN OF
2 THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

3 General Milley: Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Inhofe,
4 distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the
5 opportunity to testify before you today, and it remains my
6 distinct honor and privilege to represent the soldiers,
7 sailors, airmen, marines, and guardians of the United States
8 Joint Force, the most capable military in the world. Our
9 troops are the best led, best equipped, and best trained
10 force anywhere. And I want to personally thank Secretary
11 Austin for his steady leadership and wise guidance.

12 Your Joint Force is standing watch, protecting American
13 interests in all domains around the globe. Alongside our
14 allies and partners, American troops are currently training
15 or conducting combat operations or other operations in 165
16 countries, to keep America safe. We are conducting major
17 exercises as we speak in Europe; we are monitoring the DMZ
18 in Korea; we are conducting freedom of navigation operations
19 in the strategic waterways of the global commons; we are
20 sustaining operations in space, in cyberspace; we are
21 supporting our allies and partners in Africa, Asia, and
22 Europe; and we are patrolling the skies of the Middle East,
23 and as we speak our Joint Force is conducting a safe,
24 responsible, and deliberate strategic retrograde from
25 Afghanistan in good order, while ensuring continued support

1 to the Afghan National Security Forces.

2 The purpose of the United States military is simple.

3 It is to protect and defend the Constitution of the United
4 States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic,
5 and with that comes two key tasks. Task one is to fight and
6 win America's wars, if necessary, and key task two is to
7 prepare to fight and win America's wars.

8 The United States military is a critical component of
9 national power, which in concert with our diplomatic
10 efforts, economic engine, and overring hope of the American
11 message that will deter adversaries and preserve the peace.
12 We are prepared to fight, however, and fight and win, if
13 those who seek to attack the United States and our allies
14 and partners are undeterred. But force must always be a
15 last resort when other means of achieving our ends have been
16 exhausted.

17 We are in an era of increased strategic competition.
18 The current strategic landscape is witnessing rapid change,
19 and the potential for increased threat to the peace and
20 stability of various regions, and indeed, for the world.
21 States and non-state actors are rapidly transforming
22 technologically, and we are bearing witness to a fundamental
23 change in the character of war. In particular, China is
24 increasing its military capability at a very serious and
25 sustained rate, and we must ensure that we retain our

1 competitive and technological edge against this pacing
2 threat, as Secretary Austin has directed.

3 Readiness, modernization, and combat power are key to
4 deter war and maintain the peace, and equally important are
5 the combat multipliers of teamwork, cohesion, and well-led
6 units. We must resolve the issue of sexual assault and
7 confront the issue of extremism. Both are corrosive to the
8 very essence of what it means to be in the military, and
9 they destroy cohesion, they destroy teamwork, and they
10 reduce combat power.

11 Additionally, we must continue to invest in leader
12 development and talent management required for the future
13 operating environment. And finally, we must continue to
14 nurture and sustain a key strategic source of our strength,
15 which is our network of many close allies and partners
16 around the world.

17 The Joint Force appreciates the work that our elected
18 representatives do to ensure that we have the resources
19 needed to train, equip, and man the force in order to be
20 ready. The days of the Budget Control Act, as noted, are
21 over, and repeated, continuing resolutions which eroded
22 readiness are hopefully behind us for good.

23 The Joint Force will deliver modernization with this
24 budget of our armed forces and security to the people of the
25 United States at the fiscal year 2022 budget request of \$715

1 billion. While it is a modest increase from the enacted
2 fiscal year 2021 budget, it is a significant commitment of
3 treasure that the American people have entrusted to us, and
4 we will work diligently to ensure it is spent prudently and
5 in the best interest of the nation.

6 The fiscal year 2022 presidential budget is a result of
7 very hard choices, in a year in which the nation has
8 suffered economic hardship due to COVID-19 pandemic. In
9 alignment with the Interim National Security Strategic
10 Guidance, this budget delivers a ready, agile, and capable
11 Joint Force that will compete, deter, and win, across all
12 domains, and which is postured for continue dominance in the
13 future.

14 This budget prioritizes nuclear modernization, long-
15 range fires, hypersonic technology, artificial intelligence,
16 shipbuilding, microelectronics, space, cyber, and 5G. These
17 investments, in concert with our recently developed joint
18 warfighting concept will pave the way for a Joint Force of
19 the future. The PB 2022 budget request increases the
20 readiness of the force by developing the Joint Force of the
21 future, ensuring our people are our number one priority, and
22 positioning us to achieve through teamwork.

23 Many enemies, historically, have grossly underestimated
24 the United States and our people. They have underestimated
25 our national resolve. They have underestimated our

1 capability, our skill, and our combat power, and each, in
2 the past, has made a fatal choice, which ended in their
3 enrollment in the dustbin of history. The same will be true
4 of any enemy that makes that mistake today or tomorrow. We
5 are ready now and will remain so in the future, and we are
6 also facing tough strategic choices, and we are being
7 increasingly challenged with very capable, potential
8 adversaries clearly acting in opposition to our interests.

9 Consistent, predictable budgets, informed by the will
10 of the people, are critical to our nation's defense, and the
11 passage of this budget in a timely way is important. The
12 fiscal year 2022 presidential budget strikes an appropriate
13 balance between preserving present readiness and future
14 modernization. It is a down payment on investments for the
15 future, with a bias toward the future operating environment.

16 It is now that we must set ourselves on a path to
17 modernize the Joint Force, and this budget contributes to
18 doing that. Our job, as your Joint Force, our contract with
19 the American people, is that we, the United States military,
20 will be able to fight and win when called upon. We will
21 support and defend this Constitution always and forever, and
22 I look forward to your questions.

23 [The prepared statement of General Milley follows:]

24

25

1 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Mr. Milley. I
2 understand Mr. McCord does not have a statement. Is that
3 correct? Thank you, Mr. McCord.

4 Secretary Austin, we are in the process of withdrawing
5 our combat forces, save for embassy protection personnel.
6 It is going rapidly. The projections, I think I have read,
7 are perhaps July we could have all forces out. I think
8 also, too, the Taliban are aware that if they would encroach
9 upon our forces that would not only delay our departure but
10 re-engage us in active operations.

11 So the questions, I think, now are after the departure
12 of our forces, do you believe you have the appropriate
13 authorities and funding to continue to support the Afghan
14 National Security Forces and to conduct counterterrorism
15 operations after the transition?

16 Secretary Austin: Thank you, Chairman. As you know,
17 what we have said is that we intend to maintain a good and
18 productive relationship with the Afghans post our
19 retrograde, and that entails making sure that, with your
20 support, we can continue to provide funding for their
21 military and support for the government as well. And I
22 think that support is critical in ensuring that the
23 government retains the ability to function and that their
24 military remains intact. And so, again, we will need your
25 support to be able to do that.

1 In terms of authorities, I do think that we have the
2 authorities that we need to be able to focus on a discrete
3 set of threats, and that threat is those threats that could
4 conduct operations against the United States of America that
5 would emanate from that space in Afghanistan. So our CT
6 threat is focused on al Qaeda, and we are confident that we
7 will have the authorities to continue operations.

8 Chairman Reed: Are you also confident that given the
9 significant drawdown of personnel that you will be able to
10 effectively distribute the resources to the Afghan National
11 Army and other security institutions?

12 Secretary Austin: As you know, Senator, our plan is to
13 keep our embassy there, and hopefully as we continue to work
14 with the Afghan government we will establish those
15 capabilities and procedures necessary to be able to
16 effectively distribute funds and track the movement of those
17 funds and capabilities.

18 Chairman Reed: Well, at any point in your review, as
19 the situation develops and you feel you need additional
20 authorities, please do not hesitate to contact the
21 committee. And I think both myself and the ranking member
22 would be very eager to provide those authorities.

23 You mentioned in your opening statements the scourge of
24 sexual assault in the military and the ongoing efforts to
25 reform the UCMJ. The last time we did a major military

1 reform, in 2017, the Defense Bill required a 2-year
2 implementation time frame, and every bit of which was used.
3 Critical to this process is the fact that the President must
4 republish the Manual for Courts Martial and ensure that
5 ongoing investigations and prosecutions are not jeopardized
6 by rushed implementation.

7 When you forward the administration's recommendation,
8 will you include your assessments of the time, resources,
9 and the qualified personnel necessary to effectively
10 implement those changes?

11 Secretary Austin: We will, Chairman, and to your
12 point, any proposed change to the UCMJ is a very serious
13 issue. We will need adequate time to implement the change
14 in a very responsible way, and we will also need resources
15 to make sure that we can effectively implement it. And we
16 will need flexibility to ensure that if there is something
17 that needs to be adjusted we can adjust.

18 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary.
19 Thank you, General Milley and Mr. McCord. Senator Inhofe?

20 Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Because of
21 the interest we have here I just have two brief questions.
22 One, General Milley, in 2018, you testified that it is hard
23 to compare the U.S. and Chinese defense budgets because
24 China's budget is very different, and for a better
25 comparison we need to make some adjustments, and we have

1 done that, little things like the cost of labor and all of
2 that. But making those adjustments is not easy, and that is
3 why we required, in last year's Defense Authorization Bill,
4 that the Pentagon do a study to try to make this comparison.

5 China and Russia combined probably spend more than we
6 do. I made that point in an op-ed piece last May. But I
7 would ask you, General Milley, the Chinese and Russian
8 economies in defense spending are unique, and given this, do
9 you think that their relative combined effort is similar to
10 ours, and do you think that they understate the spending
11 that they are doing?

12 General Milley: Senator, both of our analyses, DoD's
13 analysis and the intelligence community's analysis of
14 budgets for both Russia and China are classified. At an
15 unclassified level I would tell you that, combined, the
16 Russian and Chinese budgets exceed our budgets, if all the
17 cards are put on the table. Both governments do not put all
18 their cards on the table when it comes to their budget. It
19 is a very difficult thing to discern, that which is being
20 spent on their defense versus other priorities.

21 With respect to China, they have put significant levels
22 of effort, of their economy, and, of course, their economy
23 is second only to ours, significant levels of resources into
24 building the Chinese military. And the Chinese military, as
25 we have noted many times before, is on a significant

1 increasing rise in capability over the last 20 or 30 years,
2 and they continue to invest heavily in that.

3 Senator Inhofe: That is right. And Secretary Austin,
4 during your confirmation hearing in January you said, and
5 this is a quote, you said, "I see China, in particular, as a
6 pacing challenge for our Department," and that you need our
7 help to deter China. I am worried that if we underfund the
8 military, our military, we will undermine our alliances and
9 weaken deterrence.

10 And in your opinion -- well, me just state this. We
11 have felt for some time, and have said that when we
12 countries, and it happened that Senator Rounds and I went to
13 six different countries last week, and one of those was
14 Romania. And they reminded us that we talked to them about
15 2 percent, they should get 2 percent for defense spending,
16 and they did that, and they told us that they did that. And
17 yet they are looking at us actually reducing our funding,
18 and I would just like to have you comment on what kind of
19 effect that might have to other countries too.

20 Secretary Austin: Well, thank you, Senator. I would
21 say that when you look at our overall contributions to NATO,
22 we contribute a substantial amount to the NATO effort, and
23 we will continue to do so going forward. I think the budget
24 gives us the right mix of capabilities and the flexibility
25 to be very effective in our efforts to deter China going

1 forward, and Russia, or anyone else who would want to take
2 us on.

3 So I am confident that this budget will allow us to
4 match our resources to our strategy and our strategy to our
5 policy.

6 Senator Inhofe: My concern has been that our
7 insistence in the previous administration, which I agreed
8 with, that we reach the 2 percent in these other countries,
9 and they see that it appears that our expectations are much
10 less in this administration.

11 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

12 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator Inhofe.
13 Before I recognize Senator Shaheen, we have a room reserved
14 for a closed session after this open session. So any
15 questions that the panel feels would be best addressed in a
16 closed session, we will retire there. If there are no such
17 questions then we will conclude with the open session.

18 Senator Shaheen, please.

19 Senator Shaheen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank
20 you to all three of you for your service to the country and
21 for being here this morning.

22 Secretary Austin, there is an interesting article in
23 The New York Times today that suggests that our plan in
24 Afghanistan is to not just provide for some sort of over-
25 the-horizon troops to address counterterrorism but that we

1 might also be looking at ways that we can provide air
2 support to the Afghan forces if they are in danger, or if we
3 are in danger of losing Kabul or another major city in the
4 country. And it also quotes Afghan officials as saying that
5 they have been told by their American counterparts that the
6 U.S. would stop any takeover of a major city. Obviously,
7 who knows what the source of that is.

8 But can you tell me if we are, in fact -- first of all,
9 where we are in our plans to develop an over-the-horizon CT
10 force, and if we are, in fact, contemplating any other
11 actions in support of the Afghan troops should the Taliban
12 be in danger of taking over Kabul?

13 Secretary Austin: Thank you, Senator. As you know, we
14 continue to provide support to the Afghan Security Forces as
15 we retrograde. Once we have completed our retrograde that
16 will be very difficult to do, because our capabilities will
17 have diminished in country.

18 I really will not speculate about any potential
19 outcomes or any potential future actions. I will just say
20 that the President has been clear that our mission in
21 Afghanistan has been accomplished and we are focused on
22 retrograding our people and equipment out. And again, going
23 forward, in terms of our CT efforts, those CT efforts will
24 be focused on those elements that can possibly conduct
25 attacks against our homeland.

1 And in terms of our efforts to establish over-the-
2 horizon capability, I would just point to the fact that as
3 we have retrograded a lot of our capability out of country
4 we are doing a lot of things over the horizon now. ISR is
5 being flown from GCC, a lot of our combat aircraft missions
6 are being conducted from platforms in the Gulf. And so we
7 have the capability now to do that. What we are looking for
8 is the ability to shorten the legs going forward by
9 stationing some capability in neighboring countries. That
10 is still a work in progress.

11 Senator Shaheen: So do you have a timetable for when
12 that plan might be completed?

13 Secretary Austin: I do not have a timetable. I will
14 tell you that we will move as quickly as we can, in
15 conjunction with State Department efforts.

16 Senator Shaheen: In talking with some of the women
17 leaders of Afghanistan in the last weeks, one of the things
18 that they have asked and said they thought was very
19 important would be for high-level American officials -- the
20 President, certainly you as Secretary of Defense -- to speak
21 out against the Taliban's attacks against women and girls in
22 the country and to make it clear that that is a violation of
23 international norms of behavior and human rights.

24 I would urge you to do that, along with other members
25 of the administration. I think that is the least we can do

1 at this point is to make a point of the violation of norms
2 and human rights that the Taliban are conducting in
3 Afghanistan, especially when it comes to women and girls.

4 I want to go on to another issue in my time that is
5 left, because one of the things you talked about in your
6 opening statement was the importance of taking care of our
7 people. And as we know, one of the challenges that we are
8 facing, not just among DoD employees but intel agencies, at
9 State, has been attacks what has come to be known as the
10 Havana Syndrome. The National Academy of Science report
11 that was released in December calls these directed energy
12 attacks.

13 It is my understanding that DoD is the department that
14 is taking the lead on treating individuals suffering from
15 these attacks. Can you tell us if that is the case, and if
16 you have the resources that you need to continue to do that,
17 and then what steps you are taking to protect DoD personnel
18 from future attacks.

19 Secretary Austin: Well, the health and welfare of our
20 people is of utmost importance to me, and we are working as
21 one element, a larger whole-of-government effort to really
22 try to determine the cause of these injuries, and also we
23 are working as hard and as fast as we can to expand our
24 medical capabilities. And we have done that, expanded our
25 capabilities to treat TBI and ABI injuries. And so we will

1 have the ability to treat more people going forward, but
2 again, we will remain sighted on this and we are working as
3 a part of a whole-of-government effort.

4 Senator Shaheen: And you factored that into your
5 budget request?

6 Secretary Austin: We did not ask for additional funds
7 for this specific, but we have sufficient funds to do what
8 is necessary.

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

10 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Shaheen. Let me
11 recognize Senator Wicker, please.

12 Senator Wicker: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr.
13 Secretary, thank you for being with us today. We had a
14 Seapower Subcommittee hearing just this week, and the Navy's
15 vice admiral witness before that subcommittee said this, and
16 I quote: "We have done many studies over the last 5 years
17 that say we need a larger Navy. The Navy we can afford now
18 is roughly 300 to 305 ships. So if we are going to pace the
19 adversary we need to have a bigger Navy."

20 Mr. Secretary, did the vice admiral misspeak in saying
21 that?

22 Secretary Austin: What I would say, Senator, and, you
23 know, I think certainly we have the most capable and
24 dominant navy in the world, and it will continue to be so
25 going forward. And when you talk about naval power,

1 certainly size matters, but what also matters is having the
2 right mix of capabilities in the force. And so our goal is
3 to make sure that we maintain a ready, capable, and
4 sustainable force in the future.

5 Senator Wicker: Okay. Did the Navy vice admiral
6 misspeak in saying that we need a larger Navy? He said that
7 two days ago in testimony before the Seapower Subcommittee.
8 Can you just answer that?

9 Secretary Austin: What I will say, Senator, is that
10 for some time we have had a goal of a 355-ship Navy, and I
11 think that goal is a good goal to shoot at. So I think that
12 is probably what he is referencing.

13 Senator Wicker: And this budget does not get us
14 anywhere near back on the path to do that. I also have
15 concerns about the Navy's plans for amphibious war ships.
16 Last year, Congress authorized, in the NDAA, a multi-ship
17 procurement bundle for three LPDs and one LHA. This would
18 result in a \$700 million cost savings. And at that hearing
19 on Tuesday, Acting Secretary of the Navy for Research,
20 Development, and Acquisition testified that although the
21 Navy had reached a handshake agreement to execute the block
22 buy, the Department of Defense was unlikely to approve it.

23 Why does it make sense that knowing that we are going
24 to have to buy these amphibious ships, why does it make
25 sense that the Department of Defense might oppose saving the

1 taxpayers over \$700 million by procuring the ships in a
2 block buy?

3 Secretary Austin: As we said at the top, Senator, and
4 you well know, we are always faced with making tough
5 choices. And so as we looked at what we could do in this
6 budget, and what was best to do in this budget, we are
7 making those choices.

8 Senator Wicker: All right. Well, let me just say
9 this. This is an inadequate defense budget. And I sit
10 here, and while I very much admire our Constitution and the
11 fact that we have one commander-in-chief, so the military
12 members, no matter how many stars they have on their
13 shoulders, under our Constitution they salute that
14 commander-in-chief, and he appoints a Secretary of Defense
15 and he appoints Cabinet officials, and based on the best
16 advice that you and others give him, the commander-in-chief
17 makes the decision. And the OMB that he appoints apparently
18 has decided that we could do just fine in a world where
19 China is expanding in the Pacific, where Hamas is still
20 raining rockets down on Jerusalem, where Russia is not
21 quitting at all, and where we have just heard that the
22 combined budgets of Russia and China are greater than ours,
23 we have decided, based on what some budget crunchers in OMB,
24 and bean counters in OMB have decided that we ought to be
25 able to do, and that we can have massive increases in

1 domestic spending, but a cut in purchasing power for the
2 national defense budget.

3 Let me just say to my colleagues, the Constitution of
4 the United States also gives us the power of the purse, and
5 while we appreciate the suggestion by OMB budget crunchers,
6 it is our obligation to defend this nation, and this
7 proposed budget does not do so, in the two respects that I
8 have mentioned, and in the respect that the ranking member
9 mentioned earlier on, and it is incumbent on us to reverse
10 this and to get our troops and our nation the national
11 security budget that they need.

12 Thank you very much.

13 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Wicker. Let me
14 recognize Senator Gillibrand, please.

15 Senator Gillibrand: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank
16 you to our witnesses for your service, your dedication, and
17 your integrity.

18 As you both know, I have been fighting against sexual
19 assault in the military for the last 8 years. I, along with
20 now 66 co-sponsors on the legislation from the U.S. Senate,
21 are proposing that we draw a bright line at all serious
22 crimes, take them out of the chain of command. And that one
23 change, we believe, will create more transparency, more
24 accountability, a higher professionalization, and will
25 create less bias within the system.

1 General Milley, I would like to ask you about your
2 thoughts on this proposal. It is my understanding that you
3 are now open to removing sexual assault and related crimes
4 from the chain of command. Can you please confirm that to
5 the committee today?

6 General Milley: Thank you, Senator, and thank you for
7 your leadership on this issue. I have said publicly before,
8 and I will say it here, I think that this issue has been out
9 there for quite a long time, and we, in uniform, generals
10 and members of the chain of command, et cetera, we have not
11 successfully moved the needle in resolving sexual assault.
12 And in addition to that, I have some evidence, some studies,
13 some anecdotal evidence, that junior members of the chain of
14 command, or junior members in the military, primarily women,
15 have lost faith and confidence in our chain of command to
16 resolve sexual assault through the chain of command.

17 So I am very open-minded to some significant and
18 fundamental change in the area of sexual assault and sexual
19 harassment. What you mentioned was the bright line of all
20 the other -- all felonies, for example. I think that
21 requires some detailed study before we completely overhaul
22 the entire UCMJ. But the focused area of sexual assault and
23 sexual harassment, completely open-minded to some very
24 significant change, and I think that is also true of most of
25 the senior leaders in uniform.

1 Senator Gillibrand: Thank you very much, General. As
2 you and I discussed, in recent years we have seen some very
3 chilling statistics about bias in the military justice
4 system against people of color. Black servicemembers were
5 at last 1.29 times, and as much as 2.16 times more likely to
6 have disciplinary action taken against them in the average
7 year across all branches, from 2006 to 2015.

8 These disparities largely do not improve, and in some
9 cases got worse, in the most recent years. As an example,
10 the December 2020 Air Force Inspector General's review found
11 that black servicemembers, quote, "voiced a consistent lack
12 of confidence," end of quote, in Air Force discipline
13 processes. Three in 5 black servicemembers said they would
14 not receive the same benefit of the doubt as their white
15 peers if they got into trouble, and 1 in 3 said they
16 believed the military justice system is biased against them.

17 The problem, however, is even more chilling when you
18 look at military capital cases. One 2012 death penalty
19 study found that 41 percent of defendants were people of
20 color, but 67 percent of those that actually received the
21 death penalty were people of color.

22 So the reason why we wrote our bill 8 years ago to draw
23 bright lines against all serious felonies, all serious
24 crimes, anything that carried more than a year of penalty,
25 was not just to professionalize the systems and remove bias

1 against survivors of sexual assault but also to remove
2 biases across the board and to professionalize the entire
3 military justice system. That is what all military experts
4 in criminal justice recommended, and it is what our allies
5 actually did over the last 40 years -- UK, Germany, Israel,
6 Canada, Netherlands, Australia.

7 And so as a result, we mirrored that in our
8 legislation, and we carve out all uniquely military crimes.
9 So I would like to know, General Milley, will you remain to
10 have an open mind as you review these statistics and this
11 additional data before you make your recommendation to the
12 committee?

13 General Milley: Totally, and I am very sincere. I
14 have a complete open mind on this. As I said up front in my
15 opening statement, the United States military has a singular
16 purpose, to support and defend the Constitution, and we have
17 two tasks, to fight and win our nation's wars and to prepare
18 to fight and win our nation's wars. And unit cohesion is a
19 significant contributor -- in fact, it is probably the most
20 important contributor -- to combat power. And sexual
21 assault, sexual harassment, any kind of deviance from any
22 sort of good order and discipline rips apart at that.
23 Central to the concept is also the commander's personal
24 responsibility and accountability for the good order and
25 discipline of the unit, and they are personally responsible

1 for the cohesion.

2 So I am absolutely open-minded to suggestions to
3 improve the system, because what we want to do is fix the
4 problem and improve the combat power of the U.S. military.

5 Senator Gillibrand: Secretary Austin, we have also had
6 the benefit of having a conversation about these details,
7 and I would like to ask you the same question. Will you
8 remain an open mind as you look at new data about racial
9 disparities as well as the data you will receive from the
10 panel that you requested, advice on specifically sexual
11 assaults and related crimes? And I ask that you remain an
12 open mind as you look at the full version of the details and
13 facts that the DoD has compiled over many years and the work
14 of this committee over the last 8 years.

15 Secretary Austin: Before I answer that, Senator
16 Gillibrand, just let me thank you for your incredible work
17 that you have done over the years on this issue, on the
18 issue of sexual assault and sexual harassment. Whatever
19 changes occur going forward will be largely due to your
20 incredible dedication to this issue. So on behalf of the
21 Department of Defense, thank you for what you have done.

22 As you know, Senator, first of all, yes, I always have
23 an open mind to solving any tough problem. But as you know,
24 the commission that the President tasked me to stand up, and
25 has stood up and provided me some initial recommendations,

1 and still owes me more recommendations, has been focused on
2 the issue of sexual assault and sexual harassment. And so
3 those are the problems that we are trying to resolve and
4 improve.

5 But yes, I always maintain an open mind with any tough
6 problem, but we are focused on the issue of sexual assault
7 and sexual harassment, and again, thank you for all the work
8 that you have done on this issue.

9 Senator Gillibrand: Thank you, Secretary. Thank you,
10 Mr. Chairman.

11 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Gillibrand. Now let
12 me recognize Senator Fischer, please.

13 Senator Fischer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome,
14 gentlemen. I too want to thank you for your patriotism,
15 your years of service, and your years and years of caring
16 for those who serve with you in protecting this nation.

17 Secretary Austin, I appreciate the way the budget has
18 prioritized nuclear modernization and kept important
19 programs like GBSD, LRSO, and the Columbia-class submarine
20 on track. I am also happy to see it invest in NC3 and
21 finally begin moving forward on replacing the E4B with
22 survivable, airborne operations center.

23 During your confirmation you talked about the need for
24 a review of our nuclear posture and modernization programs.
25 Has the Department begun a formal nuclear posture review,

1 and when do you expect it to be complete?

2 Secretary Austin: We have not begun that review yet,
3 Senator, but it will begin very shortly, and it will take us
4 several months to conduct the review.

5 Senator Fischer: Well, I think that review process is
6 so very important. These systems are the most important
7 military capabilities that we possess, and decisions about
8 our nuclear policies and programs must be considered in a
9 thorough, deliberative process that allows stakeholders from
10 across the Department of Defense, as well as other Federal
11 agencies, like the Department of Energy, and our allies to
12 provide their input so that decisions can be made with a
13 full understanding of the consequences. We cannot be
14 careless about this.

15 Which is why I was very concerned to see a news story
16 that put forth a copy of the memo from the Acting Secretary
17 of the Navy, Thomas Harker, in which he directed the Navy to
18 defund the sea-launched cruise missile program. This memo
19 was signed June 4th. That is just one week after the
20 Department of Defense submitted a budget request that asked
21 for \$5 billion to continue to study that concept, and NNSA
22 requested \$10 million to conduct its own assessment.

23 Based on what you just said, it seems like this
24 decision was made outside of any kind of posture review
25 process. Is that correct?

1 Secretary Austin: Senator, I have not seen the memo,
2 but I would say that, you know, all of us, all the Services
3 and the Department are, again, making tough choices in terms
4 of what to prioritize and where to accept risk. That memo
5 has to be pre-decisional because of where we are in the
6 process. And so I do not feel comfortable in commenting on
7 his memo. I would just say that again, I am committed to a
8 posture review, to make sure that we adequately analyze what
9 our capabilities are, what is needed in the future, that we
10 maintain the right balance in our nuclear forces, going
11 forward.

12 Senator Fischer: So you were not consulted on that at
13 all?

14 Secretary Austin: That is an internal department memo,
15 I believe, based upon what has been said.

16 Senator Fischer: General Milley, were the Joint Chiefs
17 consulted at all, to your knowledge?

18 General Milley: I am not familiar with the memo, nor
19 was I consulted, but as soon as we are done here I will go
20 find that memo and get consulted.

21 Senator Fischer: Thank you, sir. I find it very
22 concerning that an Acting Service Secretary, who has not
23 been confirmed by the Senate, is making a decision like
24 this, outside of any review process, without analysis or
25 input from OSD policy, from nuclear matters, the Joint

1 Chiefs, or STRATCOM, and without taking to other agencies,
2 or having, it seems, any discussions with our allies.

3 I would also point out that the analysis of
4 alternatives for the missile is still ongoing. And so it
5 would seem very, very premature to reach any conclusions
6 about it being feasible, or infeasible.

7 I do think this is the right way to make decisions
8 about nuclear policy. Do you agree with that, Secretary
9 Austin?

10 Secretary Austin: I do, Senator.

11 Senator Fischer: Should a decision like this be made
12 through that review process?

13 Secretary Austin: I have every confidence that it will
14 be, Senator.

15 Senator Fischer: Thank you. I hope you will follow up
16 with the Acting Secretary to make sure that it is a posture
17 review that makes a decision on this.

18 Does the Department still support the President's
19 fiscal year 2022 budget request for this program?

20 Secretary Austin: It does.

21 Senator Fischer: Thank you. Happy to hear that.
22 Thank you again.

23 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Fischer. Now let me
24 recognize Senator Kelly, please.

25 Senator Kelly: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to

1 Secretary McCord and Secretary Austin and General Milley for
2 being here today.

3 General Milley, this question is for you, and it is
4 specific to the A-10. I think you would agree that properly
5 balancing the need to sustain America's military with the
6 need to modernize is paramount to ensuring our adversaries
7 are unable to outpace the United States. Having the right
8 equipment available to our troops on the battlefield is
9 critical, which is why I am very concerned, very concerned
10 by the proposed divestment of 42 A-10 aircraft in the fiscal
11 year 2022 budget.

12 As you know, the A-10 is a combat-proven asset that is
13 unmatched in its ability to provide close air support to
14 troops on the ground. The Air Force has not been able to
15 establish a convincing replacement to carry out this
16 mission, and it has not demonstrated a replacement that can
17 match the A-10's cost effectiveness.

18 Budget analysts have estimated a modest cost savings if
19 the A-10s are divested, but those savings are quite small
20 when you consider the scope of the Department's \$715 billion
21 budget. And it is critical that we consider the real costs
22 of what we would be trading away if we were to take this
23 action before an effective, close air support replacement is
24 in place. American troops rely on close air support in the
25 most dire of circumstances. The A-10 has saved the lives of

1 many men and women because of its unique capabilities.
2 Everyone I speak to, everyone, who has had experience with
3 the A-10 in combat wants that to be the plane that shows up
4 when they are in trouble.

5 So when I think about the tradeoffs we would be making
6 by divesting, I just do not see that the risk has been
7 properly accounted for. And I expect that you have had some
8 of these same conversations and experiences as you talk to
9 our troops.

10 So, General, do you feel that we have adequately
11 assessed the risk that these retirements could pose for our
12 troops on the ground?

13 General Milley: Thanks, Senator, and as a ground
14 soldier who has been in a lot of firefights, I know exactly
15 what you are talking about with the A-10 or attack
16 helicopters or any other munitions delivered by air. It is
17 a very, very important capability, and personally I am a big
18 fan of the A-10.

19 However, we are talking about 42 aircraft. We are
20 still going to have 239. We have got enough for five
21 squadrons. What we have to do -- we, collectively,
22 Congress, the Department of Defense, we in uniform -- we
23 have got to recognize and begin to shift toward the future
24 operating environment and the changing character of war, and
25 we must shift the capabilities that are going to be

1 relevant, survivable, and effective against a Tier 1
2 adversary sometime in the future. This is a modest decrease
3 in the number of A-10s. I think it is an acceptable risk,
4 and I support the Air Force's recommendation.

5 Senator Kelly: So, General, we often think about these
6 things as, you know, what does day one of the war look like.

7 General Milley: Sure.

8 Senator Kelly: I am also concerned about future
9 conflict on day 30, 60, day 180. And in a former life I
10 used to be a test pilot. I have flown close air support
11 missions myself in an airplane that does not do the job
12 well. And I do not see another airplane in our inventory --
13 not the F-16, not the F-35 -- that can do the mission like
14 the A-10 can. And when you combine the fact that it is far
15 superior in that role, and protects troops on the ground
16 when they need it the most, and at the same time is cheap
17 compared to the flight-hour cost of an F-35 or even an F-16,
18 and we do not have an airplane that can do this mission like
19 the A-10 can, and I am seriously concerned that if we go
20 down this road and we remove 42 airplanes from the
21 inventory, that if we wind up in a conflict, and we wind up
22 at day 30, 60, 90, we are going to be regretful that we do
23 not have that platform.

24 So thank you, General, and I yield back the remainder
25 of my time.

1 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Kelly. Now let me
2 recognize Senator Cotton, please.

3 Senator Cotton: Mr. Secretary, I received, along with
4 Congressman Crenshaw, several hundred whistleblower
5 complaints about Pentagon extremist and diversity training.
6 I want to share just a small selection of what your own
7 troops are saying. And, Mr. Chairman, I have a longer list
8 I would like to submit for the record.

9 Chairman Reed: Without objection.

10 [The information follows:]

11 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 Senator Cotton: Again, this is just a few examples.
2 One Marine told us that a military history training session
3 was replaced with mandatory training on police brutality,
4 white privilege, and systemic racism. He reported that
5 several officers are now leaving his unit, citing that
6 training.

7 Another servicemember told that their unit was required
8 to read *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo, which claims --
9 and this is a quote -- "white people raised in western
10 society are conditioned into a white supremacist world
11 view."

12 A member of the Special Operations community has told
13 us that they are being instructed that, quote, "The U.S.
14 Special Operations community is racist."

15 One Army officer related to us the words of his general
16 officer, who told him that the entire U.S. Army is racist.

17 A midshipman at the Naval Academy said classmates are
18 calling America a fundamentally racist place, and that this
19 sentiment is not contested by school administrator.

20 An airman told us their unit was forced into a racist
21 exercise called a "privilege walk," where members of the
22 wing were ordered to separate themselves by race and gender
23 in order to stratify people based on their perceived
24 privilege.

25 One African American officer disparagingly said, and I

1 quote, "The Navy thinks my only value is as a black woman,"
2 and not the fact that she is a highly trained military
3 specialist.

4 Soldiers have come forward to tell us they are being
5 forced to watch videos about systemic racism, and
6 documentaries that rewrite America's history as a
7 fundamentally racist and evil nation.

8 One Space Force officer told me that two guardians left
9 his ranks in a short period of time. One was a young
10 African American who said that after the training she would
11 never have joined the military had she known that it was
12 such a hotbed of racism. The other was a white airman who
13 said he did not sign up to be indoctrinated, and filed
14 separation paperwork.

15 Mr. Secretary, we are hearing reports of plummeting
16 morale, growing mistrust between the races and sexes, where
17 none existed just six months ago, and unexpected retirements
18 and separations based on these trainings alone. And again,
19 these are not my words. These are the words of your own
20 troops.

21 So I want to ask a few simple but vital questions. Mr.
22 Secretary, do you believe that our military is a
23 fundamentally racist organization? Yes or no, please.

24 Secretary Austin: Well, I will not give you a yes or
25 no answer or that, sir, because it deserves more than a yes

1 or no. The military, like any organization, will have its
2 challenges, but I do not believe it is a fundamentally
3 racist organization. We --

4 Senator Cotton: Thank you. I am sorry to cut you off
5 but our time is limited. I think it is a pretty simple
6 question. I am glad that you agree it is not fundamentally
7 racist.

8 Do you believe that any member of the military should
9 be treated differently based on their skin color and sex?
10 Again, yes or no will do.

11 Secretary Austin: Again, this question deserves more
12 than a yes or no answer. It is --

13 Senator Cotton: Mr. Secretary, I am sorry to cut you
14 off. Our time is limited. It is a very simple question.
15 Should a member of the organization you lead be treated
16 differently, in violation of the Constitution, I would add,
17 based on their sex or the color of their skin?

18 Secretary Austin: No, I do not believe that, and that
19 why we have diversity, equity, and inclusion focus in the
20 military.

21 Senator Cotton: And the military, for decades, has
22 been one of the institutions in this society where you are
23 most likely to get ahead based on your own performance, on
24 your own merit, irrespective of the color of your skin or
25 where you came from or who your parents were.

1 Secretary Austin: Sir, I absolutely agree with that,
2 and I am an example of that.

3 Senator Cotton: Your distinguished career --

4 Secretary Austin: But I would say that --

5 Senator Cotton: Mr. Secretary, Mr. Secretary, your
6 career is an excellent example of that, but I have more
7 questions, based on the reports we have seen.

8 The military has included the works of critical race
9 theories on its reading list by authors like Ibram Henry
10 Rogers, who now calls himself Ibram Kendi, and Robin
11 DiAngelo. Mr. Kendi has written, quote, "The only remedy to
12 past discrimination is present discrimination. The only
13 remedy to present discrimination is future discrimination,"
14 end quote. Do you agree with that proposition?

15 Secretary Austin: I have not read that and I do not --
16 you know, I certainly do not agree with what you just said,
17 but --

18 Senator Cotton: Mr. Secretary --

19 Secretary Austin: -- it is always important to have
20 the full context of anything that you are being asked to
21 evaluate.

22 Senator Cotton: Mr. Secretary, do you believe that
23 race and sex should be the key factor when selecting combat
24 leaders, rather than, say, operational excellence, technical
25 proficiency, leadership, agility, and integrity?

1 Secretary Austin: I do not, Senator. I think what you
2 just said should be key components in making any selection.

3 Senator Cotton: Thank you. I am glad we agree on all
4 this. So let me just wrap up by saying this. If troops are
5 subjected to the kinds of training drawing on critical race
6 concepts like America and our military is inherently racist,
7 or certain races are inherently privileged, other races are
8 inherently victimized, given what you have said, should they
9 report it up their chain of command or to the inspector
10 general or to other appropriate channels?

11 Secretary Austin: Yes, they should. They have always
12 had that ability to do that, and I would recommend that in
13 the future. I would also say that diversity, equity, and
14 inclusion is important to this military now, and it will be
15 important in the future. And so we are going to make sure
16 that our military looks like America and that our leadership
17 looks like what is in the ranks of the military, and I
18 appreciate your support on that.

19 Senator Cotton: And I agree with that, and like I
20 said, the military always been one of the most diverse
21 institutions in our society, where you can get ahead
22 irrespective of the color of your skin or who your parents
23 are or where you came from. And I am glad that we agree on
24 that. This is not about diversity, in general, though.
25 This is about a very specific kind of anti-American

1 indoctrination that is seeping into some parts of our
2 military, based upon the whistleblower complaints we have
3 received.

4 Thank you. My time has expired.

5 Chairman Reed: Thank you. Let me recognize Senator
6 Kaine, please.

7 Senator Kaine: Mr. Secretary, I want to give you a
8 chance to explain the context. Senator Cotton asked you a
9 question about your own career, and you indicated that your
10 career is an indication that the military can be welcoming
11 to all kinds of people. But you were then going to explain
12 the context of what your own personal experience has shown
13 you during your time in the military, about why we need to
14 take seriously these issues of diversity and inclusion. The
15 Senator had other questions, but I would like to hear how
16 you were going to answer that question, giving the full
17 context.

18 Secretary Austin: I think the leadership has a
19 responsibility to create a climate where -- first of all, we
20 should be welcoming to everyone who can qualify and who is
21 fit to serve and who can maintain the standards. And
22 secondly, you know, we ought to look like the America that
23 we support and defend, and our senior leadership should look
24 like what is in the ranks. And where we have done a great
25 job in recruiting very highly qualified and capable people,

1 I think we need to do a bit better in terms of making sure
2 that we are absolutely inclusive and making sure that we
3 create pathways, or pathways are available for everybody
4 that in the ranks to realize their full potential.

5 And so that is what that diversity, equity, and
6 inclusion is all about. It is about cohesion. It is about
7 making sure that we remain the most effective and lethal
8 fighting force in the world. And we have been in the past
9 and we will be in the future.

10 Senator Kaine: And when we move toward diversity in
11 the military it has always made us stronger. When President
12 Truman integrated the military it was not uniformly popular.
13 In fact, I believe his Secretary of the Army ended up
14 resigning after refusing to desegregate units about a year
15 after the order.

16 But moves like that, where the military has often led
17 society in building cohesion, the military does it well.
18 They are not always immediately popular but they end up
19 paying dividends not just for the military but for American
20 society. It has to be done sensibly, carefully, by people
21 who understand it, but I applaud you and other leaders who
22 are trying to do that.

23 Let me now move to questions that have been asked about
24 the top line of the budget, and I have gotten some handouts
25 from folks who have not yet asked questions, and so I can

1 see some more questions on this are coming.

2 So, General Milley, if I recall you became head of the
3 Joint Chiefs of Staff in late 2018. Is that correct?

4 General Milley: 2019.

5 Senator Kaine: 2019.

6 General Milley: 1 October.

7 Senator Kaine: And so were you involved in the
8 discussions around the submission of President Trump's
9 fiscal year 2021 budget, which came to this committee in
10 February of 2020?

11 General Milley: Sure. Absolutely.

12 Senator Kaine: So I guess I want to just compare the
13 Biden proposal, President Biden's proposal for defense to
14 President Trump's proposal. And my argument is, to some of
15 my colleagues who are trying to attack the Biden budget, it
16 is exactly what President Trump proposed. President Trump
17 gave us a future year defense plan in February of 2020, and
18 it called for a top line of \$721 billion for this year. Now
19 President Biden has submitted a top line of \$715 billion.

20 So it would suggest that maybe the Trump budget
21 projection for this year was \$6 billion higher than the
22 Biden budget, but that is actually not the case, because
23 under the Trump administration, there was a practice of
24 taking money out of the Pentagon budget for non-military
25 emergencies. Over an 11-month period, between March of 2019

1 and February of 2020, the Trump administration took \$10
2 billion out of the top line. That straddled two fiscal
3 years, so divided that in half -- about \$5 to \$6 billion a
4 year was taken out of the Pentagon's budget by President
5 Trump. So the difference between the \$715 billion and \$721
6 billion is essentially erased, so long as President Biden
7 doesn't take money for non-military purposes.

8 I have asked the OMB director, I have asked everybody
9 that I know in the Biden White House, is it the intention of
10 this White House to take Pentagon dollars for non-military
11 purposes, and the answer to that is no. President Biden
12 says if Congress appropriates, I am going to respect the
13 appropriation, and I am not going to spirit monies out of
14 the Pentagon and use them for non-military emergencies.

15 So my belief is this is a budget that was essentially
16 identical to the budget that we would have seen under
17 President Trump, based upon the Trump numbers that were
18 submitted to us over a year ago. And when those numbers
19 were submitted to us, I did not hear anyone on this
20 committee complain about President Trump did not have a high
21 enough top line. We ultimately control what the number will
22 be, but in terms of the difference between the two
23 administrations and their budget submissions to this body, I
24 would argue that they are identical. President Biden has
25 submitted a top line that is essentially identical to what

1 President Trump would have submitted, based upon the
2 documents they gave us a year ago.

3 With that, Mr. Chair, I yield back.

4 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator King. And
5 now let me recognize Senator Rounds.

6 Senator Rounds: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Gentlemen,
7 thank you for your service to our country. I would like to
8 follow up a little bit and continue the discussion that
9 Senator Kaine has begun, and that is with regard to the top
10 line of the budget. I do believe that this defense budget
11 request, on the whole, is moving in a very similar direction
12 that we had before, with regard to trying to follow through
13 with the National Defense Strategy, the NDS. I think, and I
14 would like confirmation, and I will begin with General
15 Milley, that this particular budget is focused on achieving
16 the major goals that are found in the NDS from 2017.

17 General Milley, could you share a little bit about, in
18 terms of what those major goals are and the priorities are
19 in the NDS that this particular budget is trying to achieve?

20 General Milley: Sur, Senator. The NDS, as it was
21 written, and that was under Secretary Mattis and I was, at
22 that point, Chief of Staff of the Army, and all the Joint
23 Chiefs participated in that, that is a rigorous document, it
24 is well thought out, and it stood the test of time. And we
25 all still use it as a guiding light. And we are under a

1 review with Secretary Austin and we will see how that comes
2 out, but there will be modifications. The document is 4 or
3 5 years old now, so there will be some modifications to
4 that.

5 But it is still good, and the fundamentals of it
6 emphasize readiness, modernization, lethality, allies,
7 partners, irregular warfare. It calls out China, Russia,
8 Iran, North Korea, counterterrorism. So the main structures
9 are more or less still valid, and perhaps China is a little
10 bit more advanced now that they were, say, 5 years ago. So
11 it is still a fundamentally solid document.

12 But I would tell you, as I said in my opening
13 statement, the \$715 billion budget requires hard choices in
14 terms of prioritization, but I think it adequately meets the
15 needs in terms of the priorities of the current, existing
16 NDS and the one that we are working on modify under
17 Secretary Austin's signature. So I am very comfortable that
18 we can provide an adequate defense of the United States of
19 America with a \$715 billion budget.

20 Senator Rounds: I understand the direction and the
21 fact that you have been involved in establishing and that
22 your input has been involved in the development of this
23 budget. But I also note that I think nuclear command and
24 control upgrades are critical, and would be recognized under
25 this as well, would it not?

1 General Milley: Yes, absolutely.

2 Senator Rounds: And the continued development and
3 modernization of the nuclear triad would also be involved,
4 would it not?

5 General Milley: Absolutely. In fact, we have said
6 that the recapitalization of the nuclear triad is the number
7 one priority in terms of the actual programs, programmatic
8 spending. It is critical that we have the air, sea, and
9 land components of that triad in order to maintain the
10 security of the United States going forward.

11 Senator Rounds: See, General, I think that the basic
12 goals of the NDS are represented within this. I do not
13 disagree with that. My concern that I will express is that
14 it is based on being able to handle those goals but also
15 being able to maintain and not expect the members of the
16 armed services to continue to do the day-to-day operations
17 if we have increases in inflation, whether it be for fuel or
18 for other supplies, for health care, and so forth.

19 General, I think there were some very hard choices
20 made, and I guess my question to you, sir -- and I do not
21 intend this to be a gotcha question -- the hard choices that
22 had to be made in order to achieve the top-line goals of the
23 NDS, where are the reductions or the limitations that have
24 to recognized when we do have a very similar -- in terms of
25 the total number of dollars -- when we do expect that

1 inflation will run perhaps between 3 and 5 percent, and at
2 the same time the NDS expected to have, and in order to meet
3 its goals, an ongoing increase of between 3 and 5 percent
4 over inflation, which clearly is not reflected in the
5 budget, and I know is not news to you, sir.

6 General Milley: Sure. I mean, you could do the
7 numbers a lot of different ways, and we have Mike McCord
8 here, and he knows it better than anyone else. But this
9 budget is about \$11 billion more than the fiscal year 2021
10 enacted budget. If you factor in inflation, you normalize
11 the dollars, it is more or less flat, or I think it is 0.5
12 less, or something like that. So it depends on which way
13 you look at the numbers.

14 But in terms of the key capabilities, Senator Kelley
15 mentioned 42 A-10s getting divested. We had to make a
16 choice between buying two subs, one destroyer and a frigate
17 versus two destroyers, and things like that. So there are
18 hard choices in all of the domains. And this is my sixth
19 budget. In every single budget I have seen we are always
20 making hard choices. We always have UFA lists. We always
21 have ways to spend more money effectively for the defense of
22 the country. But in my professional opinion, a \$715 billion
23 budget, as long as we are disciplined in its application and
24 we adhere to the priorities that we have established, will
25 provide for the defense of the United States.

1 Senator Rounds: Thank you, sir. Mr. Chairman, my time
2 has expired. Thank you, gentlemen, for your service to our
3 country.

4 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Rounds. Now let me
5 recognize Senator King.

6 Senator King: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Secretary,
7 I want to discuss just for a moment one of those hard
8 choices. The top Navy unfunded priority is a destroyer that
9 was eliminated from the budget, that was already committed
10 to under the multiyear procurement. That has several
11 problems, one national security. These DDG destroyers are
12 the workhorse of the Navy, eyes and ears around the world,
13 very important part of our assets. But it also sent a
14 shudder through the industrial base. It is unprecedented,
15 in my experience, that a multiyear has been breached, which
16 would actually cost the government money in penalties. I
17 hope, Mr. Secretary, that you and Admiral Gilday can work
18 with us to restore that ship, because I think it has
19 importance beyond just the one ship. But the symbolism of
20 breaking a multiyear and also pulling back on our commitment
21 to increasing the capacity of the Navy is, I think, a very
22 important priority.

23 That is not really a question. It is an entreaty to
24 you to work with us to try to find the funds to restore that
25 ship and restore the Navy's number one unfunded priority.

1 Will you commit to working with us on that?

2 Secretary Austin: Absolutely, Senator. We will do
3 everything we can to make sure that we maintain a good
4 working relationship with Congress, and I appreciate your
5 tremendous support throughout, and especially now. We want
6 to make sure that we maintain a ready, capable, and
7 sustainable force. We also want to make sure that the
8 industrial base has the ability to produce what we have
9 asked them to produce. Current plans are to buy that DDG in
10 2023.

11 Senator King: Thank you. The importance of the
12 industrial base -- I live within 8 miles of the industrial
13 base in Maine, and the industrial base is not something you
14 can just turn off and on. It has got to be something that
15 is sustained and maintained over time.

16 Let me turn to a different topic. I believe one of the
17 most serious risks this country faces today is accidental
18 conflict with China, some kind of conflict in the South
19 China Sea, the Strait of Taiwan, and the danger of
20 escalation from that accidental conflict of some kind. It
21 is concerning to me that we do not seem to have an effective
22 hotline, direct line, whatever you want to call it, with
23 China, officials at your level and also at the Presidential
24 level. I understand the Chinese are reluctant about this,
25 but I believe this should be a national security priority.

1 I looked up yesterday and I find that Amazon has 11 copies
2 of The Guns of August in Chinese, and I think what I might
3 do is buy those and send them to the Politburo in Beijing,
4 because this is a very clear and distinct danger.

5 Do you agree with me that a better deconfliction link
6 between mil-to-mil and also government-to-government with
7 China would be an important mitigation of this risk?

8 Secretary Austin: I absolutely agree with you. As we
9 look at some of the aggressive behavior that we have
10 witnessed from China in the Indo-Pacific, you know, I am
11 concerned about something that could happen that could spark
12 a crisis. And I think we need the ability to be able to
13 talk with both our allies and partners but also our
14 adversaries, or potential adversaries. And so I think there
15 needs to be a direct line of communication, between the
16 military and also between government officials as well. So
17 I share your concern and I absolutely agree with you that
18 this is critical.

19 Senator King: Thank you. One other area that has come
20 to my attention. In fact, we had a hearing yesterday on
21 missile defense, and General VanHerck said he had to pry the
22 data out of another agency. We had Goldwater-Nichols, which
23 has enabled joint operations. We do not necessarily have a
24 joint capability acquisition, particularly in the area of
25 software. And I hope that we might work with you and

1 General Milley and others on how to rationalize, if you
2 will, the joint acquisition of things like software so that
3 we do not have silos within the military, that are analogous
4 to the silos that we had pre-Goldwater-Nichols. Is that
5 something that you will be willing to work with us on?

6 Secretary Austin: Absolutely. I think it is critical,
7 and you have my commitment to do so.

8 Senator King: General Milley, I am sorry I did not get
9 my questions to you but perhaps we will have a second round.
10 Thank you very much.

11 General Milley: I am okay with that Senator. Thank
12 you very much.

13 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator King. Senator
14 Ernst, please.

15 Senator Ernst: Thank you, Chairman, and gentlemen,
16 thank you very much for being here today and for your
17 continuing service to our great United States of America.

18 Superior weapons personnel and technology ensure that
19 we won the 20th century, but of course, now our adversaries
20 have adapted their technologies, they have improved their
21 operating concepts, and they have expanded their challenges
22 into the new domains of cyber and space. And, in fact,
23 President Biden has stated, "The world is at an inflection
24 point with shifting global dynamics and emerging crises that
25 demand attention."

1 We, of course, know that we face emboldened adversaries
2 such as Vladimir Putin in Russia and President Xi Jinping in
3 China. Both are actively seeking to disrupt a stable and
4 prosperous global order. And then, of course, we have other
5 actors like Iran and North Korea presenting their own
6 significant threats. And as we are withdrawing from
7 Afghanistan we do not see the removal of terrorist threat.
8 Instead, we see, as the President has stated, the threat has
9 become more dispersed, metastasizing around the globe.

10 So of course we want to make sure that we are funding
11 and resourcing our troops appropriately, but going along
12 with taking care of our own troops is working with other
13 allied nations. Secretary Austin, in a March editorial the
14 Washington Post, you wrote about the importance of joint
15 partnerships with other nations, and called them force
16 multipliers. I do agree with you, Secretary. You wrote,
17 "It would be a huge strategic error to neglect these
18 relationships, and it is a wise use of our time and
19 resources to adapt and renew them, to ensure there are as
20 strong and effective as they can be." Yet, the President's
21 defense budget guts our partner nation joint exercise budget
22 compared to the pre-COVID levels by over 50 percent.

23 So how do you square your advocacy for improving our
24 interoperability with our NATO allies and theater partners
25 around the world with those proposed cuts?

1 Secretary Austin: Well, certainly with respect to NATO
2 we are encouraging the members of NATO to do more, to invest
3 in air defense and also to do more to contribute to NATO
4 overall.

5 What we have been focused on is making sure that -- you
6 know, you have heard me say that China is our pacing
7 challenge, and so we really weighted our main effort there
8 to the Indo-Pacific region, and you will note that my first
9 trip overseas was out to the region, along with Secretary
10 Blinken, and we visited South Korea, we visited Japan, and
11 also made a visit to India as well.

12 Again, we truly value the importance of strong
13 relationships with our allies and partners. I think there
14 is a great capacity that can be leveraged there. And so in
15 some areas those partnerships, while still strong, are not
16 as strong as they could possibly be, so we will remain
17 focused on that.

18 Senator Ernst: I do hope so, Secretary. I think this
19 is a really important area to focus on, making sure that we
20 are able to leverage them and continue to use our allies as
21 this force multiplier.

22 And, Mr. Secretary, I also wanted to just make a brief
23 statement. I do appreciate that you have stated your
24 commitment to making changes to how the military handles and
25 prevents sexual assault, and I am concerned about the

1 continued delay that we continue to face, though. Certainly
2 if any of our adversaries were attacking members of our
3 military, as we have seen within our own ranks, members
4 attacking other members within our own ranks, if it had been
5 an adversary we would have responded immediately. We must
6 respond immediately as well. So I am encouraging both you
7 and the chairman to continue to push on this issue, to make
8 sure we bring resolution and justice for our members of the
9 military, those very important survivors.

10 Just a brief statement, and I am sorry, General Milley,
11 I did not get to my questions for you either. And,
12 Secretary McCord, I will follow up with you later on the
13 audit. But I do want to echo concerns that were raised by
14 Senator Fischer about the Navy's intent, whether it was an
15 interoffice memo, whatever it was. I do also want to stress
16 my concern that the Navy intends to cancel develop of the
17 sea-launched nuclear cruise missile. I think this is very,
18 very concerning, especially coming from an Acting Secretary
19 that has yet to be confirmed, and I hope that that is truly
20 not reflective of the overall attitude of the Department of
21 Defense.

22 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

23 Secretary Austin: It is not, Senator, and as we said,
24 we will be true to our posture review and make sure that
25 that drives the process.

1 Senator Ernst: Thank you.

2 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Ernst. Now let me
3 recognize, via Webex, Senator Warren.

4 Senator Warren: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you
5 all for being here today.

6 Secretary Austin, during your confirmation process you
7 disclosed that you were on the board of Raytheon
8 Technologies, one of the nation's largest defense
9 contractors, and that caused me to ask you for some
10 commitments about ethics issues that you would face.
11 Existing ethics laws already require some commitments but
12 they do not go nearly far enough. And this matter a lot
13 because the Pentagon spends \$360 billion every year on goods
14 and services provided by contractors, and those contractors
15 have a revolving door with the DoD.

16 So that is why I have introduced legislation to
17 strengthen ethics rules for all public officials. But it is
18 also why I asked you during your hearing to extend your
19 recusal from matters involving Raytheon for the duration of
20 your government service. I asked you to pledge not to seek
21 a waiver of that recusal, and to refrain from seeking
22 compensation from a giant defense contractor within 4 years
23 of leaving government service. And you agreed to make those
24 commitments, and I want you to do, I appreciate that. I
25 think the American people appreciate that too.

1 Secretary Austin, as I recall, you explained that you
2 voluntarily made these commitments because you think it is
3 important that the American people have concrete assurance
4 so that they never doubt that you are working for them and
5 not for giant defense contractors. Right?

6 Secretary Austin: Yes. That is true.

7 Senator Warren: Good. And I just want to say, I also
8 asked several Trump nominees to make the same commitments,
9 and they refused. You, by contract, demonstrated
10 considerable leadership in making those commitments.

11 Now, since your confirmation, the Senate has confirmed
12 five additional nominees to go to work at the Pentagon. Not
13 a single one of them was on the board of a major defense
14 contractor, none of them reported that the bulk of their
15 income came from our most powerful contractors, and I
16 appreciate that and I supported all of their nominations.

17 But this committee is now being asked to consider
18 nominees who do not meet that test, and in these cases, when
19 nominees report the vast majority of their income from major
20 defense contractors, either through direct employment or
21 consulting, or when they are on those companies' boards, I
22 plan to ask nominees to make the same voluntary ethics
23 commitments that you did during your confirmation.

24 So let me ask you, Secretary Austin. Do you agree that
25 the people working for you, who have similar or even more

1 extensive ties to industry, should be living up to the same
2 ethics commitments that you made? Do you think it is
3 important that the American people have confidence, as you
4 put it, that these Pentagon officials are working for the
5 American people and not for their former employers in the
6 defense industry?

7 Secretary Austin: Well, Senator, you have heard me
8 say, on a number of occasions, that sound, ethical behavior
9 is important to us, important to me, and important to the
10 Department. I have every reason to believe that those who
11 have been nominated to serve will conduct themselves
12 properly and exercise sound, ethical behavior, and I am
13 truly appreciative of your support in getting our nominees
14 confirmed as quickly as possible. We absolutely need them
15 on the team.

16 Senator Warren: Well, let me say, though, I recognize
17 the importance of filling these important Defense Department
18 positions, but I am asking for commitments that they are
19 going to avoid conflicts of interests, and I have laid out
20 what they are, and you have agreed to them. So the question
21 I am asking is whether you think that the people who are
22 going to be working for you who have these ties should make
23 the same kind of commitments that you make.

24 Secretary Austin: Senator, again, I believe that they
25 will conduct themselves appropriately. I have no concerns

1 about their ethical behavior. I think that they are
2 committed to doing the right things.

3 Senator Warren: Well, look. I appreciate that you do
4 not want to step into this, but this is what leadership is
5 about. I am still in conversation with the current
6 nominees, where I think these commitments are warranted, and
7 I hope that we can come to an understanding as their
8 nominations progress. And if we can, I will support their
9 nominations. But in these cases and going forward, if
10 nominees with significant ties to the defense industry
11 refuse to make the commitments you made, then I will vote no
12 in this committee, on their nominations, and I will ask for
13 a roll call vote on the floor where I will vote no again.

14 So let me be clear. I am asking for these commitments,
15 not because I am challenging anyone's integrity but because
16 I think it is critical that the American people have total
17 confidence that our public officials are truly working for
18 them and not for the defense industry that has paid them so
19 well.

20 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

21 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Warren. Let me
22 recognize Senator Tillis, please.

23 Senator Tillis: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you,
24 gentlemen, for being here. I want to go back to the
25 discussion of the UCMJ and what is described as military

1 sexual assault. It is an area I am frustrated with. I have
2 spent a lot of time with Senator Gillibrand. But, Secretary
3 Austin, I am concerned that even when we have the discussion
4 here people think we are just talking about military sexual
5 assault. But we are talking about alleged crime that would
6 have a sentence of over 1 year. So that is a sweeping
7 change to the UCMJ.

8 I am also concerned with some of the technical aspects
9 that have not been spelled out in the bill. It is more of a
10 framework. We have not seen the details. But one of the
11 things that I am most troubled by is the 6-month
12 implementation time frame. In your judgment, to the extent
13 that you know the details of Senator Gillibrand's proposal,
14 is that even possible to be implemented?

15 Secretary Austin: I don't know all of the specific
16 details of her proposed timeline. What I would tell you is
17 -- and I would echo what I said to the chairman a couple of
18 minutes ago, is that any change that we make, Senator, I
19 would hope that we would be provided ample time to make sure
20 that we properly and appropriately implement these changes,
21 because a change to the UCMJ is a very significant issue in
22 the military. And we want to make sure we get this right,
23 and we will get it right if a change is required.

24 Senator Tillis: General Milley, do you think maybe
25 taking crimes that could be barracks larceny out of the

1 chain of command is a good idea, and would put us in a
2 position where good order and discipline on the part of the
3 command would be undermined?

4 General Milley: As I mentioned to Senator Gillibrand
5 before and some others earlier, I think the commander is
6 essential to maintaining good order and discipline in the
7 military. We are a military that is built to fight. The
8 UCMJ is there to support combat power. At the same time,
9 cohesion is critical, and I am very, very open to
10 significant change in the area of sexual assault and sexual
11 harassment. When we get beyond that, at this point my
12 position is I need to study it more. I am open-minded, but
13 I think we would be really -- it needs a lot of due
14 diligence before we bundle all the 1-year felonies and take
15 them away from the commander. So I think it is right to
16 study it further.

17 Senator Tillis: General Austin, I think you have heard
18 from some of us about the need for a timely report back on
19 the commission findings and the DoD recommendations. With
20 the mark-up coming up next month, I think it is very
21 important that we get that feedback if it is to have any
22 impact on what may likely be in the NDA mark.

23 Secretary Austin: You are right, Senator, and I
24 understand your sense of urgency. I share that sense of
25 urgency. As you know, the Independent Review Commission is

1 still evaluating the other three lines of effort, that
2 include prevention, victim care, and also climate. I will
3 get those shortly, and when I do I will make my
4 recommendations to the President, and those recommendations
5 will be based upon what I get from the IRC, plus my
6 consultations with the leadership of the Services.

7 Senator Tillis: Thank you. Jumping to budget matters,
8 the immediate response force -- I know you know; you have
9 spent some quality time, you and General Milley, down at
10 Fort Bragg -- it was deployed back in 2019, after the
11 Iranian-backed Hezbollah attacked our embassy in Iraq. The
12 reports that I have got on the ground there is the folks
13 from the 82nd Airborne that would be a part of the response
14 spent pretty much the day going over what you all know is a
15 big complex, getting ready to do it, at the expense of
16 briefings and preparation.

17 The strategic deployment complex is not yet even on the
18 unfunded priorities list. Why is that?

19 Secretary Austin: I will look into that, Senator. I
20 do not know why the Army has not put that on their unfunded
21 requirements list, but I am sure that the Army's choice is
22 based upon the input they have gotten from the 18th Airborne
23 corps commander and others. But I will engage the Army on
24 that.

25 Senator Tillis: I will submit a question for the

1 record, because I am concerned that in an instance where we
2 may have to once again send out an immediate response
3 deployment request that they are not the best prepared that
4 they could be for it. And I would like to get that reported
5 back, and I will submit other questions for the record.

6 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

7 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Tillis. Senator
8 Hirono, please.

9 Senator Hirono: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have had a
10 number of opportunities, Secretary Austin, to raise my
11 concerns about the fact that HDR-H Hawaii, the missile
12 defense radar for Hawaii, has been zeroed out over the last
13 two fiscal year requests. And so in response to some of my
14 concerns raised about the fact that there is no funding
15 requested for this radar, which was told to us that it was
16 going to be very important as part of our system to protect
17 Hawaii, I am told that under the current situation,
18 currently protected against today's threats, that is the
19 response I have gotten, Secretary Austin.

20 But what we are looking at is we need to protect
21 against future threats, i.e., 2025 threats. So I am going
22 to want to have further discussions with you and your team
23 as to what the projected dangers are, going to 2025. I
24 recognize that Hawaii is protected under today's threat but
25 not necessarily 2025, and that was the time frame in which

1 this radar was determined to be necessary for our national
2 security. So I do not want to get into further discussion
3 with you on the explanation as to why it was zeroed out.

4 Let me move on to support for the Pacific Deterrence
5 Initiative. The PDI was enacted last year to ensure that
6 DoD prioritizes and invests in an often overlooked but
7 critical components of joint readiness. In fact, with
8 regard to the PDI, the previous commander of INDOPACOM,
9 Admiral Davidson, identified five areas of focus in the PDI.
10 One, the Joint Force technology; two, force design and
11 posture; three, strengthen allies and partners; four,
12 exercises, experimentation, and implementation; and five,
13 logistics and security enablers.

14 Looking at your budget request, though, I do not see
15 requested items in the five areas that Admiral Davidson had
16 identified as being supportive of the PDI, and, in fact,
17 your request identifies platforms like a Navy destroyer,
18 fleet oiler, and items related to the F-35 aircraft as PDI
19 investments.

20 So I would like to know, why is the vast majority of
21 funding identified to support PDI unrelated to the lines of
22 effort outlined in the INDOPACOM Section 1251 report?

23 Secretary Austin: Senator, let me say, off the top,
24 that our intent was to align our PDI investment with
25 congressional intent, and so my staff is currently working

1 with the committee to clarify and adjust any perceived
2 misalignments, and, in fact, make sure that we answer any
3 and all questions. And so we will continue to work that.

4 As you know, we have dedicated some \$5.1 billion to
5 PDI, and again, our intent was to align our investments with
6 congressional intent.

7 I will go further to say that a great deal of the
8 Department's budget is invested in capabilities and
9 activities that concentrate on deterring China, and I would
10 further say that I am committed to working with the
11 committee to making sure that we get it right and answer the
12 needs of the commander out in PACOM.

13 Senator Hirono: Mr. Secretary, I appreciate that
14 commitment toward aligning to congressional intent with what
15 the combatant commanders are requesting, and I think that
16 alignment needs to be much better. For example, the DoD is
17 only partially funding INDOPACOM's top three priorities that
18 are important to deterring China, since you mentioned that
19 just now.

20 Moving on to the importance of military construction,
21 and funding, of course, is very critical to what we need to
22 be doing. And I have had conversations with your team
23 regarding the need for a shipyard modernization and
24 infrastructure support for that, including a new dry dock
25 for Hawaii. Now I know that there is a request for dry

1 docks in Portsmouth, and there is money also for saltwater
2 purification system in Norfolk. This is in front of
3 requested funding to move the dry dock for Hawaii along.

4 And so I would request that you take a look at that.
5 It is very clear that the dry dock in Hawaii is very
6 necessary for the Hawaii Pearl Harbor shipyard to be able to
7 take care of the Virginia-class submarines that are there.
8 We have no capacity to do that right now, and so that dry
9 dock needs to be moved along. So I request that you look at
10 the funding request to see whether you can move the
11 appropriation request for the dry dock in Hawaii along.

12 My time is up, but I hope that you will continue to
13 discuss that particular concern with us and address my
14 concern.

15 Secretary Austin: I understand, Senator, and we are
16 committed to making sure that we maintain the ability to
17 maintain and sustain our force. And so I will take a look
18 at that.

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

20 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Hirono. Let me now
21 recognize Senator Cramer, and also alert all of my
22 colleagues there will be two votes beginning at 11:30, and
23 also I believe the panel sought a break around that time.
24 So in talking with the ranking member we will figure out a
25 strategy to accomplish all those objectives.

1 Senator Cramer, please.

2 Senator Cramer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thanks to
3 all of you for your service and for being here. Good to see
4 you.

5 I want to start, Secretary Austin, by following up from
6 an answer that you gave to Senator Shaheen earlier about
7 further support for the Afghan forces, and you specifically
8 mentioned ISR support from the GCC, and I am wondering if
9 you could tell me specifically what kind of ISR support that
10 is, what system.

11 Secretary Austin: Certainly we are flying our MQ-9s
12 from there, and essentially the vast majority of ISR is
13 being provided from other places outside of Afghanistan.
14 You know, as we have retrograded we have had to make sure we
15 protect our key platforms and systems there.

16 Senator Cramer: Are Global Hawk Block 30s part of
17 that?

18 Secretary Austin: That is correct, yes.

19 Senator Cramer: You realize the Block 30s are slated
20 for retirement in this budget? And you and I have had this
21 discussion before. I am concerned about the lack of a
22 bridge between where we are today and where we are going to
23 get to eventually with new systems. And you have tough
24 choices, and we have heard all about the difficult
25 priorities you have to set. But I remain concerned about

1 the retirement of Block 30s prematurely, to benefit our
2 combatant commanders everywhere, but I think the Afghan
3 stand presents a rather unique example of the threat.

4 With that, General Milley, could I ask you, are the
5 combatant commanders getting all of the ISR support that
6 they need, in every theater?

7 General Milley: I would tell you that as Chief of
8 Staff for the Army for 4 years and Chairman for almost 2, no
9 combatant commander has ever gotten all the ISR they wanted.
10 It is one of those commodities that is a high demand all the
11 time, and no one is completely ever satisfied. Every
12 commander wants perfect knowledge, and that is what ISR does
13 is feed you with knowledge. But we are never going to get
14 enough ISR to fill all the demand.

15 Having said that, it is all a function of risk. It is
16 all a function of where you take risk, what your priority
17 is, are you going to support the main effort, and what do
18 you for the supporting effort, and so on and so forth. And
19 in this budget, I think that we are adequately funding ISR
20 as we go forward, for the main effort relative to China, and
21 with respect to the Block 30s and the MQ-9s, again, it has
22 to do with relevance and pivoting to the future. This
23 budget biases future operating environment, change in the
24 character of war, and against the pacing threat of China.
25 That is not to say we are going to stop everything with

1 respect to A-10s or MQ-9s or some of these systems. We have
2 got to make that turn.

3 Senator Cramer: So since we are on the topic, if you
4 could list the top three threats to America's national
5 security, in order, what would they be?

6 General Milley: From a military standpoint, strictly
7 military standpoint, I think China is the number one
8 military threat as we go forward, but I also know that
9 Russia is a considerable great power competitor, and those
10 two, in the NDS, and in the current strategic environment,
11 from a military perspective. There are many, many threats,
12 but from a military perspective I put those two up there.

13 Senator Cramer: I understand. One of the things I
14 want to get at, because I think it was just yesterday
15 President Biden announced, when he announced America is
16 back, in Europe, to military men and women Air Force in UK,
17 that according to the military leaders that the number one
18 threat facing America's national security is climate change.
19 Six weeks ago today, the European Union Parliament, speaking
20 of NATO and allies which are a prominent part of your
21 testimony in this budget, EU Parliament passed a resolution,
22 569-67, urging the EU institutions and member states to do
23 everything they can to stop the completion of the Nord
24 Stream 2 pipeline. Three weeks ago today, President Biden
25 lifted the sanctions on completing the Nord Stream 2

1 pipeline.

2 And I am just kind of wondering -- that flies in the
3 face both of America's back and it flies in the face of
4 building NATO alliances, rebuilding, as the budget document
5 states -- I am not sure which ones we lost -- but I know
6 that there are at least eight European union allies,
7 including Ukraine, who strongly oppose Nord Stream 2 for
8 national security reasons, and certain from climate change
9 standpoint. If climate change is the number one threat
10 facing America's national security, allowing Nord Stream 2
11 to be built is not good for the climate.

12 So I have some great concerns, and I think we ought to
13 get them straightened out. And I do not know, for the life
14 of me, how completing Nord Stream 2 helps our alliance with
15 the European Union, other than maybe with the current
16 Chancellor of Germany.

17 General Milley: Senator, if I could just --

18 Senator Cramer: Please.

19 General Milley: -- make a comment on your piece about
20 threats. Climate change is a threat. Climate change has
21 significant impact on military operations, and we have to
22 take it into consideration. Climate change is going to
23 impact natural resources, for example. It is going to
24 impacted increased instability in various parts of the
25 world. It is going to impact migrations and so on. And, in

1 addition to that, we have infrastructure challenges here at
2 home -- witness some of our hurricanes. So climate change
3 does impact.

4 But the President is looking at it at a much broader
5 angle than I am. I am looking at it from a strictly
6 military standpoint, and from a strictly military standpoint
7 I am putting China-Russia up there. That is not, however,
8 in conflict with the acknowledgement that climate change or
9 infrastructure or education systems -- national security has
10 a broad angle to it. I am looking at from a strictly
11 military standpoint.

12 Senator Cramer: I just think it is peculiar that the
13 President would go to another continent and tell our
14 servicemembers there that the number one threat is climate
15 change, albeit a threat.

16 My time has expired. Thank you.

17 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator Cramer.

18 In collaboration with the ranking member, and at the
19 request of the panel to take a short break at this time, I
20 would move to recess for 10 minutes. It also would allow
21 people to go to the vote, which has just been called. And
22 so with that I would ask for a 10-minute recess.

23 [Recess.]

24 Chairman Reed: Let me call the hearing back to order
25 after the short recess, and recognize Senator Blumenthal for

1 his questions.

2 Senator Blumenthal: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. Thank you,
3 Mr. Secretary, Chairman Milley, for your extraordinary
4 service, and thank you for being here today.

5 I have been very concerned about the ship that
6 apparently has been sent from Iran to Venezuela. Apparently
7 two Iranian vessels are believed to be carrying arms
8 intended to transfer to Venezuela. As you know, these ships
9 are thought to be carrying weapons that would fulfill a deal
10 that Iran and Venezuela made a year ago. We do not know the
11 types of weapons, at least as far as I know. There were
12 reports that Venezuela was considering purchasing missiles
13 from Iran, including long-range ones. Commercial satellite
14 imagery of one of the ships shows fast-attack boats loaded
15 on the deck, but it is still unclear whether those boats
16 were aboard when the ships began their journey.

17 I was pleased to see that a senior administration
18 official stated that delivery of these weapons would be a,
19 quote, "provocative act and understood as a threat to our
20 partners in the western hemisphere," end quote, and that the
21 United States would reserve the right to take appropriate
22 measures, quote, "in coordination with our partners to deter
23 the transit or delivery of such weapons."

24 Secretary Austin, allowing this ship to dock seems
25 significant to me on many different levels. It would be the

1 first time that Iranian vessels have made such a transit,
2 and the precedent of allowing Iran to provide weapons to the
3 region causes me grave concern. Do you share that concern,
4 and how would such delivery effect the region, in your view?

5 Secretary Austin: Well, Senator, thanks for the
6 question. I am absolutely concerned about the proliferation
7 of weapons, any type of weapons, in our neighborhood. And
8 so I share your concern.

9 Senator Blumenthal: Can you tell me whether the
10 administration knows exactly what is on those Iranian
11 vessels?

12 Secretary Austin: I would like to take that
13 conversation, either that question for the record or we
14 could take that conversation in another forum.

15 Senator Blumenthal: I would be glad to do it in
16 another setting. Have you had any communication with your
17 colleagues in other nations in this hemisphere?

18 Secretary Austin: I have not had any discussions with
19 any other nations in our hemisphere on this issue.

20 Senator Blumenthal: Let me ask you, on the topic of
21 white supremacy and violent extremism, which you and I have
22 discussed both in your confirmation hearings and privately,
23 I understand that there will be a task force report. Can
24 you tell us when that report will be released?

25 Secretary Austin: I am sorry, Senator. I did not

1 quite hear the question.

2 Senator Blumenthal: Can you provide an update as to
3 the status of the extremism task force that you announced
4 recent and when this committee can expect to be briefed on
5 the results?

6 Secretary Austin: As you recall, Senator, early on in
7 my tenure I asked the force to conduct a brief standdown to
8 discuss the issue of extremism in our ranks, and let me
9 preface what I am going to say by saying that, you know, I
10 am totally convinced that 99 percent of our troops are
11 focused on the right things and doing the right things and
12 embracing the right values each and every day. But as I may
13 have mentioned to you earlier, I believe that small numbers
14 can have an outsized effect regarding this issue.

15 So we did gain some insights from the standdown, and it
16 was a great opportunity for leaders to have discussions with
17 other leaders, and leaders to have discussions with
18 subordinates, and talk about those behaviors, and we are
19 focused on behaviors, those behaviors that are not supported
20 by the values that we embrace.

21 In addition to that, we stood up a counter-extremism
22 working group which routinely monitors our efforts across
23 the Department in terms of what we are doing to make sure
24 that we counter extremism or extremist behaviors. They are
25 refining our policies and also gaining a better

1 understanding of the complete challenge. And certainly, you
2 know, I can have the leadership of that working group come
3 to brief you, upon request, or any time you want.

4 Senator Blumenthal: I would very much appreciate that,
5 Mr. Secretary, and I applaud the efforts that you are making
6 against that probably less than 1 percent, as you said, 99
7 percent. But I think it is an even more overwhelming
8 majority who adhere to the basic values and are dedicated
9 patriots, and the focus on that less than 1 percent is well
10 warranted, because they may have an outsized effect. And so
11 I would welcome an opportunity to learn more from the task
12 force whenever it is appropriate to do so. I will be in
13 touch with your office, if that is okay.

14 Secretary Austin: And I would absolutely agree with
15 you, Senator, that it is less than 1 percent. We will gain
16 better insights, and also equip our force with better
17 policies and definitions.

18 Senator Blumenthal: Thank you.

19 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Blumenthal. Senator
20 Blackburn, please.

21 Senator Blackburn: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I
22 appreciate that you all are here today.

23 Secretary Austin, I want to come to you on the issue of
24 nuclear deterrence. And when you went through your
25 confirmation hearing we had a discussion about that, and in

1 your advance policy questions you had made a statement, and
2 I am quoting you, "The tipping point where we must
3 simultaneously overhaul these forces is now here." That was
4 your comment in reference to nuclear deterrence. And while
5 we are looking at this budget that is before us, we see that
6 modernization is fully funded. But then when you look at
7 deferred maintenance, you see that it cuts hundreds of
8 millions of dollars from the enacted level, the NNSA's
9 deferred maintenance budget.

10 So we know that more than half of the NNSA facilities
11 are over 40 years old. Thirty percent date back to the
12 '40s. So to me, this sounds like we are at a tipping point
13 when we discuss these facilities. So was that deferred
14 maintenance cut coordinated with DoD, and realistically,
15 what effect will it have on the ability of the NSNA to meet
16 the DoD requirements?

17 Secretary Austin: To my knowledge it was not
18 coordinated with DoD, and what I would say to you though,
19 Senator, is that it is very important to me and to our
20 Department to make sure that we work with the Department of
21 Energy to ensure that we achieve our common goal of
22 maintaining a robust nuclear deterrent. And you have my
23 commitment to make sure that I remain engaged with DOE to
24 make sure that the right things are happening in this
25 regard.

1 Senator Blackburn: Okay. Then let me ask it like
2 this. What are the consequences that happen if we do not
3 modernize and bring this infrastructure, maintain this
4 infrastructure?

5 Secretary Austin: You have heard me say before,
6 Senator, that, you know, I am absolutely committed to the
7 modernization of the triad, and you know that we have
8 dedicated \$28 billion in this 2022 budget to that effort.
9 Maintenance is also important, and again, with respect to
10 NNSA, we will remain engaged with DOE to make sure that the
11 right things are happening and gain a better understanding
12 of what DOE's objectives are.

13 Senator Blackburn: Well, you all frequently will say
14 that infrastructure is a part of what you need to retain
15 talent, and I would expect that the enterprise's invaluable
16 workforce, as they are, as we look at 21st century warfare,
17 that it is difficult for them to continue to work in
18 dilapidated and sometimes unsafe conditions. And I would
19 assume that that is a concern to you also.

20 Secretary Austin: It absolutely is a concern, both for
21 what the issues that DoD controls and also, you know, I am
22 sure it is a concern for all the things that DOE is
23 responsible for as well.

24 Senator Blackburn: Senator Fischer brought up to you
25 the action of the Acting Secretary of the Navy cancelling

1 the nuclear sea-launched cruise missile. So why was this
2 decision made before completion of the nuclear posture
3 review?

4 Secretary Austin: Again, Senator, I have not seen the
5 memo, but like the Chairman, I will see it very shortly
6 after this hearing. And, you know, as I understand the
7 purpose of that memo was to issue some guidance for planning
8 and evaluation to the Navy. But again, I am committed to
9 conducting a nuclear posture review that we talked about
10 earlier, and that will be conducted, and that will drive our
11 activities going forward.

12 Senator Blackburn: Well, I think that memo sent a
13 message we did not want to send to Russia and China, when it
14 comes to great power competition.

15 I did appreciate the Department being on pace to fully
16 fund the PDI, and the concern is the number one PDI ask was
17 the Guam defense system to be fully funded at \$350 million.
18 But when you look through this, the funding totals for the
19 defense of Guam procurement and the Guam defense development
20 line items in the budget was \$118.3 million, and that is
21 less than half of the money that is required for this, which
22 is the number one unfunded priority, if you will.

23 So I would like to hear you speak to that. You know,
24 we know that these fusion centers are vitally important. I
25 have done a good bit of work on these multilateral fusion

1 centers, and they serve a critical function of really
2 enhancing our intelligence, our information, our logistical
3 coordination. And future fusion centers are the commanders'
4 number 11 unfunded priorities. These fusion centers also
5 support investments in mission partner environments, the
6 number 2 unfunded priority. So it seems like we have got a
7 pattern that is going there, and I would love for you to
8 address it. I know I am over and there are other waiting
9 for questions, and I would be happy to take that response in
10 writing.

11 Secretary Austin: We will most certainly get it to
12 you, Senator. Thank you very much.

13 Senator Blackburn: Thank you.

14 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Blackburn. Let me
15 recognize Senator Peters, please.

16 Senator Peters: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and each of
17 our witnesses here today, thank you for your service, and
18 thank you for being here today.

19 But I want to start first by saying how disappointed --
20 and I will just say, actually, quite angry -- at a recent
21 decision made by the Air Force to not award Selfridge Air
22 National Guard Base the F-35 international training mission,
23 and my feelings are based on the data and the criteria that
24 was presented by each of the installations that competed as
25 well as what the Air Force put forward. It is clear, from

1 my review of that, and others, that Selfridge was clearly
2 the superior choice in the matter, and this is clearly a
3 problem that, as we have seen before with the Air Force, as
4 all of you know, the GAO is now investigating strategic
5 basing decisions being made by the Air Force over the last
6 few years. And without question this committee, this body,
7 needs to retain confidence that the choices made by the U.S.
8 Air Force are based on data and based on criteria and not at
9 a whim, or whatever may be behind it.

10 So my question for you, Secretary Austin, is, do I have
11 your commitment that you will review the Air Force's F-35
12 international training mission decision and we will have an
13 opportunity to talk about that?

14 Secretary Austin: You do have my commitment that I
15 will review it, as I do all of those types of decisions over
16 time. And I would also offer to have the Air Force come in
17 and brief you on their decision. Air Force typically uses a
18 very detailed process to make those kinds of decisions, and
19 I would offer that politics has no place in this decision-
20 making process, this type of decision-making process.

21 And so, you know, if you desire for the Air Force to
22 come and do a lay-down for you, I am sure that they will be
23 willing to do that.

24 Senator Peters: Well, I appreciate that. I have had
25 some of those discussions already, but to make sure that the

1 process is indeed an objective process, it is critically
2 important there is full transparency so that we can see not
3 only how Selfridge ranked, based on that data and the
4 criteria, but also how the one that was selected also
5 ranked, so there could be a true objective comparison of
6 that criteria. We tend to just get one side and not hear
7 the other side. I want to make sure that all of our
8 questions are asked. That is something I assume you would
9 certainly support.

10 Secretary Austin: Thanks, Senator. My guidance and
11 requirement is that we always try to be as transparent as
12 possible.

13 Senator Peters: I appreciate that. While I understand
14 the fiscal year 2022 budget continues to fund PFAS
15 remediation, the reality is that the funding requested is
16 not anywhere close to being sufficient to address the
17 contamination that we continue to find in Michigan, and
18 unfortunately hundreds of other sites all across the
19 country. And the price tag to address PFAS contamination
20 comes on top of what is already a staggering backlog of
21 environmental remediation needs facing the Department.

22 This is why I have joined my fellow Armed Services
23 Committee members in introducing legislation to expedite
24 cleanup of some of the most contaminated sites and why I
25 will continue to work to implement clear and enforceable

1 standards to guide those.

2 So Secretary Austin, how does the Department's budget
3 address the management challenge presented by these
4 literally forever chemicals? I know this is not a problem
5 that we are going to be able to solve in a year or, quite
6 frankly, even in the next decade. But the longer we wait to
7 address these toxic contaminations, the higher the eventual
8 cost is to our servicemembers, to our communities, and,
9 quite frankly, to the U.S. taxpayers.

10 Secretary Austin: Yeah. As you know there are
11 provisions in this budget to address remediation for
12 contaminated sites, and, you know, this will extend
13 obviously well beyond this budget. And so you have my
14 commitment to continue to work this going forward.

15 I just recently met with EPA Administrator a couple of
16 weeks ago to focus on this and a couple of other issues. It
17 was a very good meeting. We committed to working together
18 and making sure that we met the standards of remediation and
19 we had good procedures for remediation.

20 This is a significant challenge to our country, as you
21 pointed out. You know, DoD is an element of a larger
22 challenge. Obviously, we are not the only source of this
23 contaminant. But I would tell you that DoD is committed to
24 doing its part to remediating whatever damage has been done
25 in every part of this country where we have contributed to

1 this.

2 Senator Peters: Well, thank you, Secretary Austin. I
3 appreciate your attention to both of the matters that I
4 raised, and I look forward to working with you.

5 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Peters. Senator
6 Sullivan, please.

7 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and
8 gentlemen, thank you for your service. Thank you, Mr.
9 Secretary. General Milley, you know how much respect I have
10 for both of you. You have a hard job, especially coming
11 here to defend a budget you probably do not like or did not
12 support internally, but you have got to do it, and that is
13 tough job.

14 But let me just mention, budgets are a reflection of an
15 administration's priorities. Take a look at this chart. I
16 handed this chart out to you as well, this chart here. The
17 Biden administration, in its \$6 trillion budget blowout,
18 clearly prioritizes defense and homeland security dead last.
19 Dead last. If you look at in terms of inflation adjusted it
20 is actually a cut.

21 Now I think a lot of us here, Democrats and
22 Republicans, think national security should be prioritized
23 first, not last. I think you gentlemen probably believe
24 that. But importantly, how can we tell the troops that you
25 are leading that we are prioritizing their mission, which is

1 defending America, when it is clear that the Biden
2 administration's prioritization of their mission is last, a
3 declining defense budget when almost every other agency in
4 the Federal Government is getting a massive, double-digit
5 increase?

6 Mr. Secretary, do you want to try to take that one on
7 first?

8 Secretary Austin: Thanks, Senator. What I will tell
9 our troops, and what I have told them and will continue to
10 tell them, is that I truly believe that the President's
11 budget gives us the flexibility to go after the right mix of
12 capabilities to defend the nation and to deter aggression.

13 Senator Sullivan: No, I mean, I understand that. I
14 have been watching the hearing. I get it. I am just
15 talking about the -- and again, it is tough question for you
16 because you are not in charge of these other agencies like
17 OMB and the White House is. But they are clearly not
18 prioritizing the military and national defense relative to
19 any other agency at all. I mean, look at this chart. They
20 are putting the national security mission dead last in terms
21 of the prioritization of budgets. How do we tell our troops
22 that, hey, we are putting you first?

23 Secretary Austin: Our troops are always first. They
24 are first now and they will always be first going forward.
25 And again, I do believe that we have what we need to go

1 after the right capabilities.

2 Senator Sullivan: Okay. There has been a lot of
3 focus, Senator Cramer talked about this issue of climate
4 change. Clearly our country needs to address this issue.
5 This is a big issue in Alaska. I am always puzzled, though,
6 how our military is task-organized to do this. You know, I
7 had the honor of serving with you at CENTCOM. General
8 Milley, we overlapped briefly in Afghanistan. I do not
9 think in any of my military service I heard climate change
10 as a phrase mentioned once. I heard the Taliban, Iraq,
11 Iran, IEDs.

12 Nevertheless, Mr. Secretary, in your opening statement
13 you mentioned climate change 15 times and lethality twice,
14 which I think is a bit of a mismatch.

15 I was just in South Korea and Taiwan. You guys also
16 mentioned China is our pacing threat. Let me ask a simple
17 question that relates to these two priorities. What is a
18 more immediate threat to our national security interests
19 that DoD has the capability of responding to, particularly
20 in the Asia-Pacific, a Chinese communist invasion of Taiwan
21 or the challenge of climate change? I think it is a pretty
22 simple question. I think it is actually a really simple
23 answer.

24 Mr. Secretary, do you have a comment on that?

25 Secretary Austin: Well, first, I do not recall

1 mentioning climate change 15 times. I will go back and do
2 my word count.

3 Senator Sullivan: I think it was in your written
4 statement.

5 Secretary Austin: Okay. And let me also be clear,
6 Senator, that lethality is important. This is the most
7 lethal force that has ever occupied the planet, and it will
8 remain so going forward. And that is what we remain focused
9 on in the Department of Defense, defending this nation, and
10 we will go after the capabilities required to do that.

11 Senator Sullivan: So Taiwan invasion by the Chinese
12 Communist Party or climate change? I think it is very
13 simple. What is the most immediate threat DoD can respond
14 to?

15 Secretary Austin: The most significant military threat
16 that we are focused on, and you have heard me say this
17 probably 100 times, Senator, is China. It is our pacing
18 challenge, and that is what we have asked you, a number of
19 times, to help us resource our efforts on that challenge,
20 and I appreciate what you have done thus far, and I know
21 that you will continue to help us going forward.

22 Senator Sullivan: Let me ask one final question.
23 Sorry, Mr. Chairman. It is related to that. I have another
24 chart here. It shows that our budget increases or decreases
25 relative to the Chinese. The Chinese have dramatically and

1 consistently increased their defense budget annually by at
2 least 6 percent, sometimes as much as 13 percent. We have
3 increased ours, during the Trump administration, when the
4 Republicans controlled the Senate. You see during the Biden
5 administration, Obama-Biden, it was dramatically cut. Now
6 we are looking at cuts again.

7 What message does this chart send to China and our
8 allies in the region, and can we sustain our declining
9 comparative advantage over China, militarily, if these
10 trends continue? And this both for the Secretary and
11 General Milley.

12 Secretary Austin: Well, a message that I am concerned
13 about is the message that we send to the world, and that is
14 that we are going to continue to go after the capabilities
15 and develop the operational concepts to be able to deter
16 anyone who would venture to take on the United States of
17 America. So we will have the capabilities necessary to
18 defend this nation.

19 Senator Sullivan: General?

20 General Milley: So, Senator, a couple of things. I
21 want to go back and make two points on the budget piece,
22 explaining it to the soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines,
23 guardians out there. We are getting \$715 billion if this is
24 passed. That is a lot of money. That is 50 percent of the
25 entire President's budget. That is 1 out of every 2 dollars

1 in the discretionary spending of the Federal Government.
2 That is not a small amount of change. The increases that
3 you show on your chart, those are factually correct, but
4 relative to the whole and in context, we are getting a lot
5 of money. So that is the first thing.

6 The second thing is relative to climate change.
7 Paragraph one of every operations order I have ever seen for
8 41 consecutive years says enemy situation to include weather
9 and terrain. We always consider weather, and climate change
10 is weather at the strategic level. It has military impact.
11 We are not going to change climate change. The Department
12 of Defense is not going to change climate change. But we
13 must consider it in on our strategic calculations, all the
14 time, because it is going to increase instability overseas
15 and it has impact on our infrastructure here. So climate
16 change is real.

17 The military threat is China, as the Secretary just
18 said, is the pacing threat. We are calculating all of our
19 calculations relative to that as the pacing threat, and
20 others are second in nature.

21 And the third piece, relative to the China versus U.S.
22 spending. This is a disturbing trend -- there is no
23 question about it -- with respect to China. They have made
24 a major economic investment in developing their military.
25 It has been going on for 20 or 30 years. The gaps that used

1 to exist, say 20, 30 years ago, were like this. Today they
2 are like that. And the Chinese have a deliberate plan to be
3 a global challenger to the United States of America,
4 militarily, by mid-century. Now we have got to continue
5 strong investments in our military, and I think this budget,
6 for this year, is an adequate investment right now. We have
7 to set the conditions, though, to pivot to the future
8 character of war with the pacing threat of China.

9 Senator Sullivan: Thank you.

10 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Sullivan. Let me
11 now recognize, via Webex, Senator Duckworth.

12 Senator Duckworth: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good
13 morning, gentlemen. Thank you so much for being here today.
14 Thank you for your service to our country.

15 While responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, natural
16 disasters and civil unrest, or seamlessly integrating with
17 the Joint Forces and overseas operations, the National Guard
18 and reserve component continues to answer the call. Over
19 the past 20 years, the high demand for reserve component
20 forces has necessitated a shift from a strategic reserve to
21 an operational force. In fact, last June, over 120,000
22 National Guard troops were mobilized, more than at any time
23 since World War II.

24 In short, our nation relies on our reserve component
25 forces, the reserves and the National Guard, to defend the

1 United States and fulfill the DoD's national security
2 responsibilities. However, even though the National Guard
3 and reserves are serving in critical capacities and in
4 dangerous duty assignments, they are not receiving the same
5 pay and benefits as their active duty counterparts. The
6 complexity of the current slate of duty statuses adds
7 unnecessary confusion to activating reserve component
8 forces. The disparity in pay and benefits between different
9 duty statuses can also incentivize manipulating orders to
10 minimize the servicemembers' access to benefits.

11 I believe duty status reform is necessary to ensure the
12 National Guard and reserve forces receive equal pay and
13 access to the health care and educational benefits they
14 deserve for the work that they do. Bottom line:
15 servicemembers doing the same job in the same place should
16 not earn different pay and benefits based on their duty
17 statuses.

18 General Milley, could you please update me on the DoD's
19 plans to address reserve component duty status reform, and
20 when do you anticipate releasing your findings?

21 General Milley: Thanks, Senator. As part of the Joint
22 Force, active duty, reserve, and National Guard, it is a
23 total force, and we have a commitment to ensure that we have
24 appropriate and fair pay and benefits given to our National
25 Guard troops and our reservists. That reform effort is

1 underway. We are reviewing that. I cannot give you the
2 exact date of when we will have that to you, but we are
3 working it, and we are working it very hard, and we are
4 working it with both the National Guard Bureau and each of
5 the Services. But we do recognize the need to ensure that
6 it is evenly applied in terms of pay and benefits to the
7 soldiers in the reserve component, or the troops in the
8 reserve component.

9 Senator Duckworth: Well, will you also commit to
10 making sure that whatever the reform proposal is that is
11 appropriated shaped to eliminate orders manipulation and
12 current pay and benefit disparities?

13 General Milley: Sure. Absolutely. You know, our
14 commitment is to ensure that everyone who wears the cloth of
15 our nation, whether they are active, Guard, or reserve, no
16 matter where they are, are treated equally in all respects,
17 to include pay and benefits. And I commit that to you and I
18 will get you the answer on the exact date of when the reform
19 proposals are due in.

20 Senator Duckworth: Thank you. Secretary Austin,
21 reserve component servicemembers are required to maintain
22 the same proficiency in certain critical skill sets as their
23 active component counterparts, even though they do not
24 necessarily put on the uniform every day. This is
25 especially true for pilots, for example. They only received

1 incentive pay at a fraction of the amount of active
2 servicemembers.

3 I believe every servicemember, whether active or
4 reserve, deserve to be fairly compensated for maintaining
5 mission-essential skills. And the RAND Corporation has
6 shown that incentive pay can help improve retention and is
7 far more cost effective than training new servicemembers to
8 replace those who separate.

9 As we continue to strengthen our National Guard and
10 reserve forces, we must retain our talented servicemembers.
11 That is why I introduced the bipartisan National Guard and
12 Reserve Incentive Pay Parity Act, to help ensure that
13 reserve component servicemembers in high-skill roles are
14 compensated at the same rates as they active duty
15 counterparts.

16 Secretary Austin, will you commit to exploring options
17 such as the Incentive Pay Parity Act, to help improve
18 retention, especially of those servicemembers with critical
19 skills?

20 Secretary Austin: I will, Senator, and for all the
21 reasons that General Milley, you know, our Guard and reserve
22 have done amazing work. The skill sets that you are talking
23 about in many cases are warfighting or combat-related
24 skills, and so it is absolutely important that they are
25 proficient, and they should receive the same proficiency

1 pay.

2 Senator Duckworth: Thank you. I have one final
3 question I will submit for the record, but it has to do with
4 modernization efforts to continue across the Joint Force,
5 and wanting to know whether DoD and the military services
6 are factoring in program performance into decisions about
7 how to prioritize budget requests to adequately resource
8 successful programs such as future vertical lift. But I
9 will submit that for the record.

10 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

11 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Duckworth. Let me
12 recognize Senator Scott.

13 Senator Scott: Thank you, Chairman. First off, I want
14 to thank each of you for your willingness to serve. You
15 have very significant roles for our country. Probably the
16 most important thing we can be doing is making sure we
17 defend our freedoms.

18 Would any of you disagree that when you are thinking
19 about Communist China you are thinking about a party that
20 either wants world domination or, in the worst case, wants
21 to absolutely control the Indo-Pacific?

22 Secretary Austin: I do believe that their goal is to
23 control the Indo-Pacific, and I also believe that they
24 desire to be the dominant to preeminent country in the
25 world. And so I think they are working towards that end.

1 Senator Scott: So would you all disagree that their
2 goal is to eventually take back Taiwan, a great American
3 ally? You wouldn't disagree with that, right?

4 Secretary Austin: I would not disagree with the point
5 that they have a goal of eventually uniting Taiwan with
6 China.

7 Senator Scott: And that would be whether they do it
8 voluntarily or involuntarily, through the military.

9 Do you all believe that we are going to just continue
10 to see more surveillance by the Communist Party of China of
11 American citizens and our allies around the world? We are
12 seeing more surveillance all the time. You agree with that,
13 right?

14 Secretary Austin: I mean, it stands to reason that
15 whatever level of surveillance that is ongoing now will
16 continue, and quite possibly increase going forward.

17 Senator Scott: So if you look at this, you saw what
18 Senator Sullivan brought up. You saw the fact that year
19 after year they are investing more in their military. Their
20 goal is to have an economy bigger than ours. And you seem
21 to agree that if they have an economy bigger than ours they
22 are going to increase their defense spending. And as
23 General Milley says, it is getting closer and closer.

24 And if China is able to pull this off, then our
25 opportunities all over the world, opportunities of American

1 citizens and our way of life, is going to change, right? If
2 they can do fulfill their goals, then our opportunities will
3 be diminished. Would you all agree with that?

4 Secretary Austin: You know, I would describe our
5 relationship with China currently is one of competition.
6 Again, you have mentioned that they desire to be the
7 preeminent country on the planet, and that is, in fact, the
8 case. Their mid- to long-term goal is to do that. They
9 look to compete with us, not only militarily but across a
10 spectrum of activity. And what you see us doing, the
11 military and in other sectors in our government, is making
12 sure that we remain competitive, economically, making sure
13 that we are developing the best -- we continue to develop
14 the best scientists in the world, and we do the most
15 comprehensive research. So it is a competition across a
16 broad spectrum of activity.

17 Senator Scott: So if you follow through the reasoning,
18 if China wants to be either Indo-Pacific or world dominant,
19 if they build an economy bigger than ours, if they continue
20 to out-invest us in the military, which they are, at least
21 growing faster than we are, then what are you all doing to,
22 one, inform American citizens of the risk, because, you
23 know, we all do a budget based on what the American citizens
24 believe the priority is -- that is how we elect our elected
25 leaders. So what are you all doing to, one, inform the

1 public of the risk of Communist China, and ensure them that
2 we have the budget we need to make sure that in 5 or 10 or
3 15 years we are not sitting here, saying we wish we would
4 have done more, we all saw this threat but we didn't do
5 enough about it?

6 Secretary Austin: Yeah, just about every time you hear
7 me speak, Senator, I know you probably grow tired of me
8 taking about the competition with China. But that is my
9 focus. My number one focus is to defend this nation and
10 protect our interests. Our pacing challenge is, and will
11 continue to be, China. And again, we are going after the
12 capabilities that can match the operational concepts that we
13 are putting into play and allow us to be not only
14 competitive but actually dominant in this competition.

15 So that is what the Department of Defense is doing, and
16 I think you see activity across the entire government that
17 is focused on making sure that we not only can compete with
18 China but maintain our edge with respect to China.

19 Senator Scott: Do you think it is important that in
20 your role that you inform the American public of the risk of
21 Communist China so everybody will be more focused on making
22 sure we have the military budget we need?

23 Secretary Austin: We do so, routinely, and we will
24 continue to do that, Senator Scott.

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

1 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator Scott.

2 Let me recognize Senator Rosen, please.

3 Senator Rosen: Thank you, Chairman Reed, Ranking
4 Member Inhofe, for holding this hearing. I would like to
5 thank the witnesses for your service to our great nation.
6 Thank you for being here today.

7 Right before the break, Senator Cramer was talking to
8 you about our ISR requirements and his concerns, and I am
9 concerned as well about the MQ-9. So, Secretary Austin, the
10 MQ-9 Reaper, I do not have to tell you, it is critical to
11 supporting our current intelligence, surveillance, and
12 recognizance requirements. A key part of the MQ-9
13 architecture is the mission at Nevada's Creech Air Force
14 Base. Last year, CENTCOM Commander, General McKenzie,
15 included additional MQ-9 funding at the top of his unfunded
16 priorities, and in April he told this committee of the MQ-
17 9's importance and his need for more of them, not fewer.

18 The Air Force today still lacks the ISR capacity to
19 meet combatant commanders' requirements contained in the
20 2018 National Defense Strategy. Despite this, the
21 Department has previously proposed cutting this platform,
22 their most cost effective, without a program of record to
23 replace it, which would further risk widening the ISR
24 capability gap that General Milley talked about.

25 So Secretary Austin, what is the Department's plan for

1 the MQ-9, and given its importance, cost effectiveness, and
2 the requirement for combatant commanders for more ISR
3 assets, why has the Air Force cut funding for this program
4 without a program of record to replace it?

5 Secretary Austin: Well, thank you, Senator. I think
6 you heard General Milley talk earlier about the way
7 combatant commanders view ISR, having been a combatant
8 commander in a former life. I can tell you I agree with
9 him. There is never enough ISR -- I will always want more.

10 The Air Force has committed to taking off a number of
11 lines of ISR, but they are not reducing the tails, the
12 aircraft, that go with those lines. What they are doing is
13 making sure that they upgrade and modernize their aircraft,
14 where possible, and so that they can network the aircraft
15 better. So the number of tails is not being reduced. The
16 number of lines is being reduced slightly.

17 Senator Rosen: So can you get to us some information
18 about that so we know what the program of record will be
19 going forward and how it can impact us?

20 Secretary Austin: Absolutely.

21 Senator Rosen: Thank you. I appreciate that.

22 I would like to move on to talking a little bit about
23 Iranian aggression, how we combat that, because Iranian-
24 backed militias, of course, are increasingly targeting U.S.
25 installations, our servicemembers in Iraq, via rocket and

1 drone attacks. Iran continues to be the world's leading
2 state sponsor of terrorism, a threat to the U.S. allied
3 interests all across the world, be its ballistic missile
4 program, its support for terrorist proxies like Hezbollah,
5 Hamas, KH, AAH, and many others.

6 And so according to a recently released annual threat
7 assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Committee, and I quote,
8 "Iran-supported Iraqi Shia militias will continue to pose
9 the primary threat to U.S. personnel in Iraq."

10 So to Secretary Austin and General Milley, with the
11 constant threat to the U.S. and coalition forces in the
12 Mideast posed by Iran and Iran-backed militia groups, what
13 are we doing to counter them, and how are we proactively
14 protecting our forces and personnel? Do we have what we
15 need to do that and prevent them, prevent these militias and
16 terrorists from targeting our U.S. troops in the region?

17 Secretary Austin: Yeah. We certainly continue to
18 demand that Iran cease its malicious behavior in the region,
19 in terms of its support of the Iranian-backed Shia militia
20 groups, and we demand that they cease providing them
21 modernized equipment so that they can conduct these kinds of
22 attacks. We are doing everything within our power and our
23 capability to make sure that our troops that are forward
24 deployed have adequate protection. We are engaging the
25 Iraqi leadership to make sure that the Iraqi leadership does

1 what is necessary to help protect our citizens, who are
2 there to help the Iraqi government.

3 General Milley: So I would say, in addition to
4 everything the Secretary said, is think offense-defense. So
5 in terms of defense, the force protection of the force, the
6 disposition of exactly where they are at, how many they are
7 at, what the hardening of those sites, we are doing all of
8 those measures. In addition to that, we have air defense
9 capabilities -- SeaRAMs, counter-rocket and mortar, and
10 counter-UAS systems that were put in place. Those have been
11 proven quite effective, actually, against some of the Shia
12 militia groups' capabilities. We are going to continue to
13 reinforce all of that.

14 On the offense side, I will not discuss it here but I
15 can discuss it in some detail in a classified session as to
16 what we can do, what we are prepared to do, and what we have
17 already done. All of that in combination we think is
18 mitigating the risk. It certainly does not reduce it to
19 zero. It is a dangerous environment. We all recognize
20 that. But we have got to continue to work by, with, and
21 through the Iraqi government, because they are the first
22 line of defense for the protection of our forces in their
23 country.

24 Senator Rosen: Thank you. I just want to be sure that
25 we have assets on the ground to defend American

1 installations in Iraq and Syria --

2 General Milley: We do.

3 Senator Rosen: -- and other places in the Middle East.

4 General Milley: We absolutely do.

5 Senator Rosen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Rosen. Senator
7 Hawley, please.

8 Senator Hawley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thanks to
9 the witnesses for being here. Thank you for your service,
10 as always.

11 Mr. Secretary, if I could just start with you. I asked
12 you earlier this year if you agreed with the National
13 Defense Strategy assessment that the U.S. military needs to
14 be postured, and here is the quote, "to deter and prevent a
15 fait accompli by an agile, opportunistic adversary." You
16 responded to me in writing, which I appreciated, and I
17 appreciated the response you gave, which was, you said, and
18 I am quoting you now, "Yes, I agree with the Commission's
19 finding. A combat-credible, forward deterrent posture is
20 instrumental to our ability to deter, and if necessary, deny
21 a fait accompli scenario." I assume you still agree with
22 that.

23 Secretary Austin: I do, Senator.

24 Senator Hawley: Very good. And would you also agree
25 then, I assume that this would apply to our ability to

1 maintain the ability to defeat a Chinese fait accompli
2 against Taiwan. Is that accurate?

3 Secretary Austin: That is accurate, Senator. I think
4 nobody wants to see a unilateral change of the status quo
5 with respect to Taiwan. You have heard us say that we are
6 committed to helping Taiwan defend itself, in accordance
7 with the Taiwan Relations Act, the three communiques, and
8 the six assurances. And so our position has not changed in
9 that regard, and we will continue to help them develop the
10 capability.

11 Senator Hawley: General Milley, if I could just get
12 you on this as well. Would you agree that the U.S. should
13 maintain its ability to defeat a Chinese fait accompli
14 against Taiwan, if necessary?

15 General Milley: I absolutely would, but, Senator,
16 frankly, I am not sure what a Chinese fait accompli in
17 Taiwan is. If you are talking about a military invasion of
18 Taiwan, crossing the straits, the Taiwan Straits, with a
19 sizeable military force to seize an island the size of
20 Taiwan against the military that they have and with the
21 population that they have, that is an extraordinarily
22 complex and difficult operation. Even against an unopposed
23 force that is a very hard thing to do. But I can assure you
24 that we have the capabilities if there were political
25 decisions made in accordance with the Taiwan Relations Act

1 and so on. But we do have military capabilities.

2 Senator Hawley: To defeat such an attempted invasion
3 is what you are saying, General Milley.

4 General Milley: Yes.

5 Senator Hawley: Got it. Good. Would you agree, Mr.
6 Secretary, if I can just come back to you, would you agree
7 that we need to be, when we think about deterring China,
8 that we need to be as focused on deterring China in the next
9 3, 5, 7 years as we are 10 to 15 years from now? I am
10 asking this -- the context for this is we have heard now
11 from the outgoing PACOM Commander, from the incoming PACOM
12 Commander, we just heard earlier this week from the former
13 Deputy National Security Advisor that China is increasingly
14 aggressive and that the window to deter that aggression may
15 be shorter than we had thought.

16 So thus my question. Would you agree that we need to
17 be focused on deterring them in the short to medium term, 3,
18 5, 7 years, including the longer term?

19 Secretary Austin: We do, and I would say that those
20 two issues are not mutually exclusive, Senator. As you
21 know, they complement each other. While we are developing a
22 future capability, we certainly have to bridge to that
23 capability, and that is absolutely our focus.

24 Senator Hawley: Great. Great.

25 General Milley: Senator --

1 Senator Hawley: Yeah, General.

2 General Milley: -- I would say the key here is
3 deterrence. We are in a condition of strategic great power
4 competition. It needs to stay at competition, and
5 deterrence is key to prevent it from going from competition
6 to incident or competition to war.

7 Senator Hawley: Yeah, very good. I am glad you
8 mentioned that, and if I could just follow up on that,
9 General. The adversary, the competitor in this case, China,
10 knowing that we have the ability to deter them, we have the
11 ability to do what you said a minute ago, which is if they
12 should choose military aggression, we have the ability,
13 should we choose, to deny that aggression, that is important
14 for deterrence, is it not, them knowing we have the
15 capability?

16 General Milley: Yeah. I mean, in simple terms, I
17 mean, deterrence is actually a very complex thing, but in
18 simple terms you have to have the capability, your opponent
19 has to know you have the capability, you have got to
20 communicate that capability to your opponent and he has to
21 know it, you have to communicate your will to use it, if
22 necessary, and both actors have to be rational. If all of
23 those components are there, in simple terms, you will be
24 able to achieve a state of deterrence. Thus far, it is
25 achieved.

1 Senator Hawley: Very good. Thank you for that.

2 Mr. Secretary, let me just ask you in this context then
3 about the Department's request for the Pacific Deterrence
4 Initiative. In your request you include, if I understand it
5 correctly, \$23 million for force design and posture
6 improvements, out of the \$2.2 billion that is required. I
7 am trying to understand how providing our forces in the
8 Pacific with just 1 percent of the funding they need for
9 posture improvements to support those combat-credible,
10 forward deterrent posture that we are talking about, how can
11 we do that and say that we are going to maintain the ability
12 to deter or deny a fait accompli?

13 Secretary Austin: Yeah. So Senator, I would flag for
14 you just a couple of issues. The first issue is that, as I
15 said earlier, that our intent is to make sure that with
16 respect to the PDI investment that we meet the congressional
17 intent, and we believe we have invested in a number of
18 things that meets that intent, and we will meet with your
19 staff and explain where the investments are, to make sure
20 that the language is not confusing.

21 The second thing is we have invested \$5.1 billion in
22 the PDI.

23 The third thing I would flag for you is that, you know,
24 much of what we are investing in, in terms of capability is
25 really focused on our efforts to counter the challenge

1 presented by China. And I would also say that when we speak
2 of deterrence, we are not talking about just air, land, and
3 sea. We are talking about using every capability across all
4 domains, to include cyber and space. We are talking about
5 integrating the capabilities of our allies, which I believe
6 is very, very important. And we are talking about using
7 every lever that the United States Government has available
8 to it to, in fact, effect that deterrence.

9 Senator Hawley: Thank you very much. I have got some
10 more questions for you on this, Mr. Secretary. I will
11 follow up with you in writing. But I appreciate the
12 opportunity to engage with you on it. Thank you, General.

13 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Hawley. Senator
14 Tuberville, please.

15 Senator Tuberville: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank
16 you for being here today.

17 Chairman Reed: Put your microphone on, please.

18 Senator Tuberville: Hello. Hello. Does that work?
19 Good. Thank you. I thought mine was worn out after this
20 long day, Mr. Secretary.

21 I want to take a little different angle here. I have
22 been a team-builder all my life, and I am on the Veterans'
23 Affairs Committee, and I have been talking my first 6 months
24 here with recruiters out in the field for the military. I
25 am huge military person, military brat, and I grew up in a

1 military family. We talk about missiles and bombs and
2 ships, and you have got to have all of those. But if we do
3 not have the people, the best people we can possibly get, we
4 are going to be in trouble. It is like winning a football
5 game -- the best players win games. There is no doubt the
6 same thing within the military, and we have always had a
7 strong military.

8 I hear a lot of comments about, "Why should I get in
9 the military? They did not look out for the people in Iraq
10 and Afghanistan on the burn pits." Gentlemen, we have got a
11 huge problem. We are getting ready to spend hundreds and
12 hundreds and hundreds of billions of dollars for veterans
13 that have gone over and breathed that smoke and chemicals
14 and all those things. We have got to make better decisions
15 than that. You know, all that money we are going to get
16 ready to spend, you know, it could have gone to you guys, to
17 defense. But to me it is going to be hard to recruit good
18 people, the best people.

19 And I hear all this extremism stuff, and again, I have
20 dealt with people all my life. You know, you don't have to
21 like each other to be on the team. A lot of my players
22 could not stand other guys on the team. You know, they just
23 had personality conflicts. But at the end of the day, you
24 have got to learn respect. You have got to earn the trust
25 and dedication and all that from your teammates. I mean,

1 you have got to learn that. And so I just hate for us to
2 get off on this tangent of the people that we have in the
3 military.

4 Now in football, for instance, it is your coaches, when
5 you bring players in you have got to build a team. You have
6 got to bring them together. Same thing in the military.
7 You have got lieutenants, captains, drill sergeants,
8 corporals, all those. Everybody's responsibility is to
9 bring that team together. And the things that I am hearing
10 and seeing in the military bases I have been going to the
11 last six months, and talking to recruiters, we are going to
12 have a tough time. And then we have got to face the people
13 in big tech of taking the best and brightest, because cyber
14 is one of the things that we have really got to get into in
15 the military and continue to grow and to build in all of our
16 technology.

17 You know, that being said, I just want to make sure
18 that we understand, you know, that when we talk about all
19 this equipment and budget and all that -- and I understand,
20 we have got to have that. But if we do not have the people
21 it does not make any difference.

22 We had the Selective Service here a few months ago.
23 They sat right here and they told us that if we had a draft
24 today we would have 35 million people that we could draft
25 from, 35 million. Only 450,000 of those 35 million are

1 eligible to be in the military, for one form or another.
2 That is not enough. That is not enough. We cannot build a
3 killing machine, which is what our military is -- you can
4 say anything else. We have got to be able to kill the enemy
5 when they come at us.

6 And so that is just something I have watched and
7 listened, I have been on the road talking, and I want us to
8 have the best military in the world, and we probably do. I
9 want us to fund the best military, but we have got to fund
10 our young men and women that are going to get in the
11 military, and they have got to want to come in. They have
12 got to want to be there. They have got to want to be there
13 for the simple fact that they want to fight for the best
14 country on the face of the earth.

15 Just one question I have got for you, Secretary Austin.
16 I wrote you a letter, me and Senators Wicker and Cramer, and
17 our concern was disturbing, about training materials coming
18 from our military. And let me be clear. Like you, we want
19 to see good order and discipline in the ranks, for our
20 military to remain the nonpartisan institution that
21 Americans trust more than any other. But what emerged from
22 some of the Services revealed is a disappointing partisan
23 slant and a poorly defined First Amendment rights for
24 military members.

25 This year we have seen multiple senior military

1 leaders, in uniform, from official DoD channels, criticize
2 individual members of the press. That ain't got nothing to
3 do with the military. To me, you have just got to go about
4 your business.

5 We have seen the National Guard march on elected
6 officials here, just down from this building. Senator
7 McDonough, we ask you to provide a report on what steps your
8 office will take to reprimand officers who inappropriately
9 engage in partisan behavior to ensure that the standdown
10 training materials comply with the guidance issued by your
11 office. We asked for that report no later than May 7th, and
12 we still have not gotten it. And I know you have been busy,
13 but we would just like to know, you know, the steps that we
14 are going to take to clamp down on people that do not
15 deserve to be in our military.

16 I did not want to get up here and rant, but I have been
17 a recruiter all my life, and we have got to be able to
18 recruit people, to spend this money that we are going to
19 appropriate you in the right way, because we are in dire
20 straits. Secretary Austin, could I get that commitment?

21 Secretary Austin: You certainly have that commitment,
22 and I would also like to offer a thought on what you just
23 said, Senator, and thanks for your continued support of our
24 great military. And again, you have heard me say this a
25 couple of times today. I do not want our force, or anybody

1 else in this country, to be confused. It is the most lethal
2 organization on the face of the planet, and it will remain
3 so, and it will remain the most cohesive organization on the
4 face of the planet.

5 You know, when I came in as the Secretary of Defense, I
6 issued guidance to the force, and that guidance included
7 three things. My focus is on defending this nation and
8 protecting our interests, the second thing is taking care of
9 our people, and the third thing is teamwork. And like you I
10 have put a couple of teams together too, and I have employed
11 those teams into combat, and I have watched these youngsters
12 do amazing things, in support of their country and in
13 support of each other. It is unbelievable.

14 And so, you know, I have a pretty good feel in terms of
15 what it takes to create that kind of cohesion, and cohesion
16 is what is most important to me, just like it is to you,
17 Senator. I know you absolutely understand that, and you
18 have demonstrated that you understand that with some
19 tremendous success over the years.

20 Regarding the burn pits, you know, the welfare of our
21 veterans is foremost in my mind. I mean, that is something
22 that me and the Chairman both really care about. And I
23 would tell you that the Secretary of the VA, Secretary
24 McDonough, shares that concern. And he and I worked
25 together closely on a number of issues, and we have vowed to

1 make sure that we do not lose our veterans as a transition
2 from active duty to retirement or get out of the military
3 and go do something else.

4 I have inhaled those fumes from burn pits. The
5 Chairman has inhaled those fumes from burn pits. We know it
6 is important to take care of our troops, and you have our
7 commitment to remain focused on that.

8 But I would also say that this is not just the Army's
9 problem. It is not just the military's problem. This is
10 the issue for the United States of America. These are our
11 troops, and we are going to do everything we can to take
12 care of them. And I know that all the great resourcers and
13 authorizers that are in this room share that same
14 commitment, and we have felt that commitment going forward.
15 And I know that it is the reason that you asked that
16 question.

17 But the question you have is, are we committed to it?
18 And, Senator, I am absolutely committed to making sure that
19 we do what we can to ensure that this issue is addressed,
20 and I know that Secretary McDonough is working this issue
21 very hard, as well.

22 Senator Tuberville: Thank you. Thank you for your
23 service. Thank you very much.

24 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator
25 Tuberville.

1 This is the second round. I will recognize Senator
2 King, who will ask one question, and he will also preside
3 and conclude the hearing, and then he will recognize Senator
4 Sullivan for one question. I would ask both the questions
5 and the responses be as concise and eloquent as they have
6 been all morning. Thank you very much.

7 Senator King: [Presiding.] Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
8 First, just a very brief observation. There has been a lot
9 of talk about budgets and comparisons of budgets and budgets
10 with China. I yield to no one in terms of my determination
11 to successfully compete with China on all fronts. I would
12 point out, though, even though they have had significant
13 increases lately, their budget this year is still less than
14 one-third of ours. I think that is important just to have
15 that context, because we have been talking about growth, but
16 they were showing significant growth from a much lower base.

17 General Milley, I am gravely concerned about the men
18 and women in Afghanistan who support and aided our troops,
19 and that we are not moving fast enough to be sure that they
20 are brought to safety. I think this is an essential moral
21 commitment of this country, and also a practical one. If we
22 leave these people to the tender mercies of the Taliban, I
23 do not know who is ever going to cooperate and help us again
24 in another setting.

25 So I hope that both the Pentagon, the White House, and

1 all the agencies of the U.S. Government are committed to
2 this as an urgent priority, an urgent priority, and that if
3 we cannot repatriate all of these people to this country
4 that we at least make arrangements to get them safely out of
5 Afghanistan. Can you give me your thoughts on that, please?

6 General Milley: Well, Senator, first I think the
7 President, SecDef, the Secretary of State, myself, others,
8 have all commented on the importance of making sure that we
9 keep faith with those that have supported us over the last
10 two decades in Afghanistan, and that clearly is our intent,
11 and we will do that.

12 In terms of specific actions, Department of State has
13 the lead on the Special Immigrant Visa program and some
14 other programs with respect to those Afghans that have
15 supported us. That planning is working through the system
16 right now. But I can commit to you that it is my belief
17 that the United States Government will do what is necessary
18 in order to ensure the safety and protection of those that
19 have been working with us for two decades.

20 Senator King: Thank you. The term "working through
21 the system" is what gives me some concern.

22 General Milley: Sure. I understand.

23 Senator King: This is an absolutely urgent priority
24 over the next 6 to 8 weeks, I would say, as our troops draw
25 down. So I appreciate your commitment on that.

1 And, Mr. Secretary, I assume you will make absolutely
2 the same commitment?

3 Secretary Austin: You are correct, Senator. This is
4 very important to us, and we are pushing as hard as we can
5 on our end to move as fast as we can. I know Secretary
6 Blinken has asked for an increase in authorizations in terms
7 of numbers to move into the SIV process, and I would ask
8 your support in providing that authorization. And again,
9 anything that you can do to expand our current capabilities
10 in terms of authorizations would be very, very much
11 appreciated.

12 Senator King: I am sure the members of this committee
13 will work to that end, and look forward to working with you.

14 Senator Sullivan.

15 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I share
16 your views, and I know most of the members of the committee
17 do, on keeping faith with those who supported us in
18 Afghanistan. And, gentlemen, I appreciate you running the
19 gauntlet today. It is an important element of our
20 constitutional oversight responsibilities.

21 I have one final question. A growing and critical area
22 of great power competition with Russia, certainly, but also
23 with China is our strategy interests in the Arctic. And,
24 Mr. Secretary, as you know, and General, each of the
25 military services, in some ways prompted by this committee,

1 have now published an Arctic strategy. I think all of us
2 view this as a positive development. Both of you, during
3 your confirmation hearings, had committed to focus on this
4 area of our national security, to fully resources each of
5 the Service Arctic strategies. Deputy Secretary Hicks,
6 through her confirmation process, did the same.

7 In a Strategic Forces Subcommittee hearing yesterday I
8 had the chance to ask General VanHerck, who is the NORTHCOM
9 Commander, in his role as the designated advocate for Artic
10 capabilities, how he saw each of the Services implementing
11 their respective strategies in the President's new budget
12 submission. And he told me that DoD resourcing for the
13 various Service Arctic strategies was, quote, "inching
14 along" but that DoD, quote, "did not move the ball very far
15 down the field with the FY 2022 budget."

16 So I want to ask both of you, do you share this view,
17 and how can we work to fully resource the Service strategies
18 that have been out, the DoD strategies that have been put
19 out in this important area of great power competition?

20 Secretary Austin: Thank you, Senator. You know, when
21 we talked before, I indicated to you that the Arctic and
22 Arctic strategy was important to me, and that has not
23 changed. It remains so.

24 As you know, we are working on developing our National
25 Defense Strategy overall, and also working through to refine

1 our force posture globally. As we develop that National
2 Defense Strategy, certainly the Arctic will be an area that
3 we will take into consideration and make sure that we have
4 the right emphasis, the right focus, and that strategy will
5 drive our resourcing.

6 Senator Sullivan: Thank you. General Milley, do you
7 have a view?

8 General Milley: Yeah, absolutely. We are committed to
9 the Arctic strategy, and, you know, this whole issue with
10 the Arctic is a classic example of the strategic military
11 impact of climate change. As the snowcaps melt, the ice
12 packs melt, it is exposing further resources. The Russians
13 and Chinese are realizing that, so they are clearly trying
14 to exploit some of that. And we are going to see increased,
15 not decreased, great power competition in the Arctic over
16 time, and we do need to resource, full resource the Arctic
17 strategy.

18 Senator Sullivan: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

19 Senator King: Thank you. I would like to associate
20 myself with Senator Sullivan's questions on the Arctic. It
21 is an incredibly important strategic area. I appreciate
22 your commitments.

23 With no further questions, and I understand the
24 decision has been made not to go to an additional closed
25 session, so I want to thank our witnesses for their

1 testimony today, for your forthrightness, for the
2 information that you have shared, and most of all, for your
3 service to our country.

4 With that this hearing is adjourned.

5 [Whereupon, at 12:55 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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