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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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U.S. Senate
Committee on Armed Services
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The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:30 a.m. in Room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Jack Reed, chairman of the committee, presiding.

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

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

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

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

The President's Defense Budget Request is a starting point for Congress, and must always be viewed in the broader context of the national security and fiscal challenges we face. It is important that we ensure we have the right strategies and resources to keep the American people safe now and in the future, with a keen eye toward evolving threats around the globe.
I am pleased to see that this budget request places a priority on taking care of the men and women who serve in uniform and the civilians who serve alongside them in the Department, by including an across-the-board pay raise for military and civilian personnel of 2.7 percent. While this pay raise is required by law for military personnel, too often DoD civilians have been overlooked. This increase in civilian pay sends an important message to the workforce and begins to reverse years of pay freezes and benefit cuts.

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

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

With regard to the President's transition strategy in
Afghanistan, the budget request includes $3.3 billion for the Afghan Security Forces Fund. This will ensure our continued support for the sustainment, infrastructure, equipment, and training requirements for Afghan security personnel. I ask that our witnesses update the committee on this transition.

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

Similarly, the budget request proposes an $800 million reduction to the European Deterrence Initiative, the EDI. The Initiative, which was also established by this committee, has seen budget decreases for the past 3 years. The Department has suggested that this is part of
"transitioning to a steady state" in the European Command AOR. I would ask that our witnesses further explain the reasoning behind the reduced EDI budget, and specifically, whether you believe this level of investment in infrastructure, force posture, and capabilities is sufficient to deter Russian aggression.

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

Lastly, I would note that fiscal year 2022 is the first year in 10 years that we will not be constrained by the Budget Control Act. Eliminating arbitrary spending caps means that every department's budget can, and should, be argued on its merits. Taxpayers should not have to pay for programs or systems that are wasteful or ineffective, and Congress must not shirk its responsibilities to get rid of
outdated systems in favor of more advanced, effective, new technologies and capabilities. Belt-tightening in any department, particularly defense, is always a challenge, but it is also an opportunity to evaluate what is necessary and what drives innovation. The Department has taken the first difficult step in proposing $2.8 billion worth of divestments and retirements of platforms, and I will work with my colleagues to evaluate these proposals and make hard but necessary choices.

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

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

Now let me now recognize the ranking member, Senator Inhofe.
STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES INHOFE, U.S. SENATOR FROM OKLAHOMA

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

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

We have been asking our military to do too much with too little for too long. President Biden's budget cuts would make it even harder. It barely treads water while we face all these threats. These budget cuts shift aircraft, munitions, and more. We have nearly $25 billion of unfunded priorities. These are not wish lists. These are risk
lists. The budget cuts aircraft procurement by 20 percent, backslides on Army readiness, and starves Navy shipbuilding. This budget forces our military leaders to choose between being ready for today's fight or the fight of the future.

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

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

The administration tells us that the Pentagon budget is cut because of fiscal realities, but they are spending trillions of taxpayer dollars on everything else under the sun. We all agree, and even the administration agrees, that a strong military improves all other tools of national power. I just cannot understand this short-sighted
underfunding of our troops. We make a sacred compact with our servicemembers. We tell them we will take care of them and their families, and we do that very well. We also tell them that we will give them the tools that are necessary to defend the nation and come home safely, but we are not holding up our end of the bargain with this proposed budget. We are failing to give them the resources they need to implement that strategy, and, Mr. Chairman, we need to do better.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Reed: Well, thank you very much, Senator Inhofe. Secretary Austin, please.
STATEMENT OF HONORABLE LLOYD J. AUSTIN III, SECRETARY
OF DEFENSE

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

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

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

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

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

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

However, we recognize that China is not our only challenge. Our budget also includes $617 million to counter the damaging effects of climate change and additional funds
to prepare for future challenges like another pandemic. It also helps us counter the belligerence that we face from Russia, especially in the cyber realm. And you will see more than $10 billion here devoted to cybersecurity, cyberspace operations, and cyber research and development.

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

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

I know that Afghanistan remains at the top of all of our minds, and today I can report that the retrograde remains on pace. We have accomplished the mission for which our troops were sent to Afghanistan 20 years ago, and I am very proud of the men and women who made it possible and of those who gave their lives for this mission. I am also deeply grateful to the families of our servicemembers who
have endured as much, as they sent their sons and daughters
and husbands and wives into battle.

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

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

As you know, my first directive as Secretary of
Defense, issued on my first full day in the office, was to
Service leadership about sexual assault. I made it clear then, and I still believe that we must not be afraid to try new approaches and to change our minds so that we can truly and fully address the scourge of sexual assault in our force. And clearly what we have been doing has not been working, and one assault is too many. The numbers of sexual assaults are still too high, and the confidence in our system is still too low.

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

There will be additional recommendations coming to us from the IRC on prevention, culture, and victim support, and I look forward to receiving them as well, and making my full recommendation to the President later this month. As I have said before, what we are doing is not working, and we need to fix it. And I want to be sure that whatever changes to the UCMJ that I recommend to the President, and ultimately to this committee, that they are scoped to the problem that we are trying to solve and have a clear way forward on
implementation and ultimately restore the confidence of the force and the system. You have my commitment to that and my commitment to working expeditiously as you consider legislative proposals. So whatever changes we make, I believe we need to focus on effective implementation and resourcing, and I know I will need your help.

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

And I look forward to answering your questions, and thank you for the steadfast support that you continue to provide to the Department of Defense, and for all the efforts that you make very day to ensure that we remain ready to defend this nation. Thank you, sir.
[The prepared statement of Secretary Austin follows:]
Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary.

Before I recognize General Milley, since a quorum is present I would ask the committee to consider seven nominations, the nominations of the Honorable Frank Kendall III to be Secretary of the Air Force; the Honorable Heidi Shyu to be Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering; Ms. Susanna V. Blume to be the Director of Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation, Department of Defense; Ms. Jill M. Hruby to be Under Secretary of Energy for Nuclear Security and Administrator, National Nuclear Security Administration; Mr. Frank A. Rose to be Principal Deputy Administrator, National Nuclear Security Administration; Ms. Deborah G. Rosenblum to be Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear, Chemical, and Biological Defense Programs; and Mr. Christopher P. Maier to be Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict.

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

Senator Inhofe: So moved.

Chairman Reed: Is there a second?

Senator Kaine: Second.

Chairman Reed: All in favor?

[Chorus of ayes.]

Chairman Reed: The motion carries. Thank you very much.
General Milley, your comments, please.
STATEMENT OF GENERAL MARK A. MILLEY, USA, CHAIRMAN OF
THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

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

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

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

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

We are in an era of increased strategic competition. The current strategic landscape is witnessing rapid change, and the potential for increased threat to the peace and stability of various regions, and indeed, for the world. States and non-state actors are rapidly transforming technologically, and we are bearing witness to a fundamental change in the character of war. In particular, China is increasing its military capability at a very serious and sustained rate, and we must ensure that we retain our
competitive and technological edge against this pacing threat, as Secretary Austin has directed.

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

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

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

The Joint Force will deliver modernization with this budget of our armed forces and security to the people of the United States at the fiscal year 2022 budget request of $715
billion. While it is a modest increase from the enacted fiscal year 2021 budget, it is a significant commitment of treasure that the American people have entrusted to us, and we will work diligently to ensure it is spent prudently and in the best interest of the nation.

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

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

Many enemies, historically, have grossly underestimated the United States and our people. They have underestimated our national resolve. They have underestimated our
capability, our skill, and our combat power, and each, in the past, has made a fatal choice, which ended in their enrollment in the dustbin of history. The same will be true of any enemy that makes that mistake today or tomorrow. We are ready now and will remain so in the future, and we are also facing tough strategic choices, and we are being increasingly challenged with very capable, potential adversaries clearly acting in opposition to our interests.

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

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

[The prepared statement of General Milley follows:]
Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Mr. Milley. I understand Mr. McCord does not have a statement. Is that correct? Thank you, Mr. McCord.

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

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

Secretary Austin: Thank you, Chairman. As you know, what we have said is that we intend to maintain a good and productive relationship with the Afghans post our retrograde, and that entails making sure that, with your support, we can continue to provide funding for their military and support for the government as well. And I think that support is critical in ensuring that the government retains the ability to function and that their military remains intact. And so, again, we will need your support to be able to do that.
In terms of authorities, I do think that we have the authorities that we need to be able to focus on a discrete set of threats, and that threat is those threats that could conduct operations against the United States of America that would emanate from that space in Afghanistan. So our CT threat is focused on al Qaeda, and we are confident that we will have the authorities to continue operations.

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

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

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

You mentioned in your opening statements the scourge of sexual assault in the military and the ongoing efforts to reform the UCMJ. The last time we did a major military
reform, in 2017, the Defense Bill required a 2-year implementation time frame, and every bit of which was used. Critical to this process is the fact that the President must republish the Manual for Courts Martial and ensure that ongoing investigations and prosecutions are not jeopardized by rushed implementation.

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

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

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

Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Because of the interest we have here I just have two brief questions. One, General Milley, in 2018, you testified that it is hard to compare the U.S. and Chinese defense budgets because China's budget is very different, and for a better comparison we need to make some adjustments, and we have
done that, little things like the cost of labor and all of that. But making those adjustments is not easy, and that is why we required, in last year's Defense Authorization Bill, that the Pentagon do a study to try to make this comparison. China and Russia combined probably spend more than we do. I made that point in an op-ed piece last May. But I would ask you, General Milley, the Chinese and Russian economies in defense spending are unique, and given this, do you think that their relative combined effort is similar to ours, and do you think that they understate the spending that they are doing?

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

With respect to China, they have put significant levels of effort, of their economy, and, of course, their economy is second only to ours, significant levels of resources into building the Chinese military. And the Chinese military, as we have noted many times before, is on a significant
increasing rise in capability over the last 20 or 30 years, and they continue to invest heavily in that.

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

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

Secretary Austin: Well, thank you, Senator. I would say that when you look at our overall contributions to NATO, we contribute a substantial amount to the NATO effort, and we will continue to do so going forward. I think the budget gives us the right mix of capabilities and the flexibility to be very effective in our efforts to deter China going
forward, and Russia, or anyone else who would want to take us on.

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

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

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator Inhofe.

Before I recognize Senator Shaheen, we have a room reserved for a closed session after this open session. So any questions that the panel feels would be best addressed in a closed session, we will retire there. If there are no such questions then we will conclude with the open session.

Senator Shaheen, please.

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

Secretary Austin, there is an interesting article in The New York Times today that suggests that our plan in Afghanistan is to not just provide for some sort of over-the-horizon troops to address counterterrorism but that we
might also be looking at ways that we can provide air support to the Afghan forces if they are in danger, or if we are in danger of losing Kabul or another major city in the country. And it also quotes Afghan officials as saying that they have been told by their American counterparts that the U.S. would stop any takeover of a major city. Obviously, who knows what the source of that is.

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

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

I really will not speculate about any potential outcomes or any potential future actions. I will just say that the President has been clear that our mission in Afghanistan has been accomplished and we are focused on retrograding our people and equipment out. And again, going forward, in terms of our CT efforts, those CT efforts will be focused on those elements that can possibly conduct attacks against our homeland.
And in terms of our efforts to establish over-the-horizon capability, I would just point to the fact that as we have retrograded a lot of our capability out of country we are doing a lot of things over the horizon now. ISR is being flown from GCC, a lot of our combat aircraft missions are being conducted from platforms in the Gulf. And so we have the capability now to do that. What we are looking for is the ability to shorten the legs going forward by stationing some capability in neighboring countries. That is still a work in progress.

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

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

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

I would urge you to do that, along with other members of the administration. I think that is the least we can do
at this point is to make a point of the violation of norms and human rights that the Taliban are conducting in Afghanistan, especially when it comes to women and girls.

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

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

Secretary Austin: Well, the health and welfare of our people is of utmost importance to me, and we are working as one element, a larger whole-of-government effort to really try to determine the cause of these injuries, and also we are working as hard and as fast as we can to expand our medical capabilities. And we have done that, expanded our capabilities to treat TBI and ABI injuries. And so we will
have the ability to treat more people going forward, but again, we will remain sighted on this and we are working as a part of a whole-of-government effort.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Secretary Austin: What I would say, Senator, and, you know, I think certainly we have the most capable and dominant navy in the world, and it will continue to be so going forward. And when you talk about naval power,
certainly size matters, but what also matters is having the right mix of capabilities in the force. And so our goal is to make sure that we maintain a ready, capable, and sustainable force in the future.

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

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

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

Why does it make sense that knowing that we are going to have to buy these amphibious ships, why does it make sense that the Department of Defense might oppose saving the
taxpayers over $700 million by procuring the ships in a block buy?

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

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

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

Thank you very much.

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

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

As you both know, I have been fighting against sexual assault in the military for the last 8 years. I, along with now 66 co-sponsors on the legislation from the U.S. Senate, are proposing that we draw a bright line at all serious crimes, take them out of the chain of command. And that one change, we believe, will create more transparency, more accountability, a higher professionalization, and will create less bias within the system.
General Milley, I would like to ask you about your thoughts on this proposal. It is my understanding that you are now open to removing sexual assault and related crimes from the chain of command. Can you please confirm that to the committee today?

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

So I am very open-minded to some significant and fundamental change in the area of sexual assault and sexual harassment. What you mentioned was the bright line of all the other -- all felonies, for example. I think that requires some detailed study before we completely overhaul the entire UCMJ. But the focused area of sexual assault and sexual harassment, completely open-minded to some very significant change, and I think that is also true of most of the senior leaders in uniform.
Senator Gillibrand: Thank you very much, General. As you and I discussed, in recent years we have seen some very chilling statistics about bias in the military justice system against people of color. Black servicemembers were at least 1.29 times, and as much as 2.16 times more likely to have disciplinary action taken against them in the average year across all branches, from 2006 to 2015.

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

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

So the reason why we wrote our bill 8 years ago to draw bright lines against all serious felonies, all serious crimes, anything that carried more than a year of penalty, was not just to professionalize the systems and remove bias...
against survivors of sexual assault but also to remove biases across the board and to professionalize the entire military justice system. That is what all military experts in criminal justice recommended, and it is what our allies actually did over the last 40 years -- UK, Germany, Israel, Canada, Netherlands, Australia.

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

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

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

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

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

As you know, Senator, first of all, yes, I always have an open mind to solving any tough problem. But as you know, the commission that the President tasked me to stand up, and has stood up and provided me some initial recommendations,
and still owes me more recommendations, has been focused on the issue of sexual assault and sexual harassment. And so those are the problems that we are trying to resolve and improve.

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

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

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

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

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

During your confirmation you talked about the need for a review of our nuclear posture and modernization programs. Has the Department begun a formal nuclear posture review,
and when do you expect it to be complete?

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

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

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

Based on what you just said, it seems like this decision was made outside of any kind of posture review process. Is that correct?
Secretary Austin: Senator, I have not seen the memo, but I would say that, you know, all of us, all the Services and the Department are, again, making tough choices in terms of what to prioritize and where to accept risk. That memo has to be pre-decisional because of where we are in the process. And so I do not feel comfortable in commenting on his memo. I would just say that again, I am committed to a posture review, to make sure that we adequately analyze what our capabilities are, what is needed in the future, that we maintain the right balance in our nuclear forces, going forward.

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

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

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

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

Senator Fischer: Thank you, sir. I find it very concerning that an Acting Service Secretary, who has not been confirmed by the Senate, is making a decision like this, outside of any review process, without analysis or input from OSD policy, from nuclear matters, the Joint
Chiefs, or STRATCOM, and without taking to other agencies, or having, it seems, any discussions with our allies. I would also point out that the analysis of alternatives for the missile is still ongoing. And so it would seem very, very premature to reach any conclusions about it being feasible, or infeasible.

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

Secretary Austin: I do, Senator.

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

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

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

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

Secretary Austin: It does.

Senator Fischer: Thank you. Happy to hear that.

Thank you again.

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

Senator Kelly: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to
Secretary McCord and Secretary Austin and General Milley for being here today.

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

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

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

Everyone I speak to, everyone, who has had experience with the A-10 in combat wants that to be the plane that shows up when they are in trouble.

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

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

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

However, we are talking about 42 aircraft. We are still going to have 239. We have got enough for five squadrons. What we have to do -- we, collectively, Congress, the Department of Defense, we in uniform -- we have got to recognize and begin to shift toward the future operating environment and the changing character of war, and we must shift the capabilities that are going to be
relevant, survivable, and effective against a Tier 1 adversary sometime in the future. This is a modest decrease in the number of A-10s. I think it is an acceptable risk, and I support the Air Force's recommendation.

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

General Milley: Sure.

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

So thank you, General, and I yield back the remainder of my time.
Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Kelly. Now let me recognize Senator Cotton, please.

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

Chairman Reed: Without objection.

[The information follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]
Senator Cotton: Again, this is just a few examples.

One Marine told us that a military history training session was replaced with mandatory training on police brutality, white privilege, and systemic racism. He reported that several officers are now leaving his unit, citing that training.

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

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

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

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

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

One African American officer disparagingly said, and I
quote, "The Navy thinks my only value is as a black woman,"
and not the fact that she is a highly trained military
specialist.

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

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

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

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

Secretary Austin: Well, I will not give you a yes or
no answer or that, sir, because it deserves more than a yes
or no. The military, like any organization, will have its challenges, but I do not believe it is a fundamentally racist organization. We --

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

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

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

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

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

Senator Cotton: And the military, for decades, has been one of the institutions in this society where you are most likely to get ahead based on your own performance, on your own merit, irrespective of the color of your skin or where you came from or who your parents were.
Secretary Austin: Sir, I absolutely agree with that, and I am an example of that.

Senator Cotton: Your distinguished career --

Secretary Austin: But I would say that --

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

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

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

Senator Cotton: Mr. Secretary --

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

Senator Cotton: Mr. Secretary, do you believe that race and sex should be the key factor when selecting combat leaders, rather than, say, operational excellence, technical proficiency, leadership, agility, and integrity?
Secretary Austin: I do not, Senator. I think what you just said should be key components in making any selection.

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

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

Senator Cotton: And I agree with that, and like I said, the military always been one of the most diverse institutions in our society, where you can get ahead irrespective of the color of your skin or who your parents are or where you came from. And I am glad that we agree on that. This is not about diversity, in general, though. This is about a very specific kind of anti-American...
indoctrination that is seeping into some parts of our military, based upon the whistleblower complaints we have received.

Thank you. My time has expired.

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

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

Secretary Austin: I think the leadership has a responsibility to create a climate where -- first of all, we should be welcoming to everyone who can qualify and who is fit to serve and who can maintain the standards. And secondly, you know, we ought to look like the America that we support and defend, and our senior leadership should look like what is in the ranks. And where we have done a great job in recruiting very highly qualified and capable people,
I think we need to do a bit better in terms of making sure that we are absolutely inclusive and making sure that we create pathways, or pathways are available for everybody that in the ranks to realize their full potential.

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

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

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

Let me now move to questions that have been asked about the top line of the budget, and I have gotten some handouts from folks who have not yet asked questions, and so I can
see some more questions on this are coming.

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


General Milley: 1 October.

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

General Milley: Sure. Absolutely.

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

So it would suggest that maybe the Trump budget projection for this year was $6 billion higher than the Biden budget, but that is actually not the case, because under the Trump administration, there was a practice of taking money out of the Pentagon budget for non-military emergencies. Over an 11-month period, between March of 2019
and February of 2020, the Trump administration took $10 billion out of the top line. That straddled two fiscal years, so divided that in half -- about $5 to $6 billion a year was taken out of the Pentagon's budget by President Trump. So the difference between the $715 billion and $721 billion is essentially erased, so long as President Biden doesn't take money for non-military purposes.

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

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

With that, Mr. Chair, I yield back.

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

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

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

General Milley: Sur, Senator. The NDS, as it was written, and that was under Secretary Mattis and I was, at that point, Chief of Staff of the Army, and all the Joint Chiefs participated in that, that is a rigorous document, it is well thought out, and it stood the test of time. And we all still use it as a guiding light. And we are under a
review with Secretary Austin and we will see how that comes out, but there will be modifications. The document is 4 or 5 years old now, so there will be some modifications to that.

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

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

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

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

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

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

General, I think there were some very hard choices made, and I guess my question to you, sir -- and I do not intend this to be a gotcha question -- the hard choices that had to be made in order to achieve the top-line goals of the NDS, where are the reductions or the limitations that have to recognized when we do have a very similar -- in terms of the total number of dollars -- when we do expect that
inflation will run perhaps between 3 and 5 percent, and at
the same time the NDS expected to have, and in order to meet
its goals, an ongoing increase of between 3 and 5 percent
over inflation, which clearly is not reflected in the
budget, and I know is not news to you, sir.

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

But in terms of the key capabilities, Senator Kelley
mentioned 42 A-10s getting divested. We had to make a
choice between buying two subs, one destroyer and a frigate
versus two destroyers, and things like that. So there are
hard choices in all of the domains. And this is my sixth
budget. In every single budget I have seen we are always
making hard choices. We always have UFA lists. We always
have ways to spend more money effectively for the defense of
the country. But in my professional opinion, a $715 billion
budget, as long as we are disciplined in its application and
we adhere to the priorities that we have established, will
provide for the defense of the United States.
Senator Rounds: Thank you, sir. Mr. Chairman, my time has expired. Thank you, gentlemen, for your service to our country.

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

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

That is not really a question. It is an entreaty to you to work with us to try to find the funds to restore that ship and restore the Navy's number one unfunded priority.
Will you commit to working with us on that?

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

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

Let me turn to a different topic. I believe one of the most serious risks this country faces today is accidental conflict with China, some kind of conflict in the South China Sea, the Strait of Taiwan, and the danger of escalation from that accidental conflict of some kind. It is concerning to me that we do not seem to have an effective hotline, direct line, whatever you want to call it, with China, officials at your level and also at the Presidential level. I understand the Chinese are reluctant about this, but I believe this should be a national security priority.
I looked up yesterday and I find that Amazon has 11 copies of The Guns of August in Chinese, and I think what I might do is buy those and send them to the Politburo in Beijing, because this is a very clear and distinct danger.

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

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

Senator King: Thank you. One other area that has come to my attention. In fact, we had a hearing yesterday on missile defense, and General VanHerck said he had to pry the data out of another agency. We had Goldwater-Nichols, which has enabled joint operations. We do not necessarily have a joint capability acquisition, particularly in the area of software. And I hope that we might work with you and
General Milley and others on how to rationalize, if you will, the joint acquisition of things like software so that we do not have silos within the military, that are analogous to the silos that we had pre-Goldwater-Nichols. Is that something that you will be willing to work with us on?

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

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

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

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

Senator Ernst: Thank you, Chairman, and gentlemen, thank you very much for being here today and for your continuing service to our great United States of America. Superior weapons personnel and technology ensure that we won the 20th century, but of course, now our adversaries have adapted their technologies, they have improved their operating concepts, and they have expanded their challenges into the new domains of cyber and space. And, in fact, President Biden has stated, "The world is at an inflection point with shifting global dynamics and emerging crises that demand attention."
We, of course, know that we face emboldened adversaries such as Vladimir Putin in Russia and President Xi Jinping in China. Both are actively seeking to disrupt a stable and prosperous global order. And then, of course, we have other actors like Iran and North Korea presenting their own significant threats. And as we are withdrawing from Afghanistan we do not see the removal of terrorist threat. Instead, we see, as the President has stated, the threat has become more dispersed, metastasizing around the globe.

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

So how do you square your advocacy for improving our interoperability with our NATO allies and theater partners around the world with those proposed cuts?
Secretary Austin: Well, certainly with respect to NATO we are encouraging the members of NATO to do more, to invest in air defense and also to do more to contribute to NATO overall.

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

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

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

And, Mr. Secretary, I also wanted to just make a brief statement. I do appreciate that you have stated your commitment to making changes to how the military handles and prevents sexual assault, and I am concerned about the
continued delay that we continue to face, though. Certainly
if any of our adversaries were attacking members of our
military, as we have seen within our own ranks, members
attacking other members within our own ranks, if it had been
an adversary we would have responded immediately. We must
respond immediately as well. So I am encouraging both you
and the chairman to continue to push on this issue, to make
sure we bring resolution and justice for our members of the
military, those very important survivors.

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

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

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

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

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

So that is why I have introduced legislation to strengthen ethics rules for all public officials. But it is also why I asked you during your hearing to extend your recusal from matters involving Raytheon for the duration of your government service. I asked you to pledge not to seek a waiver of that recusal, and to refrain from seeking compensation from a giant defense contractor within 4 years of leaving government service. And you agreed to make those commitments, and I want you to do, I appreciate that. I think the American people appreciate that too.
Secretary Austin, as I recall, you explained that you voluntarily made these commitments because you think it is important that the American people have concrete assurance so that they never doubt that you are working for them and not for giant defense contractors. Right?

Secretary Austin: Yes. That is true.

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

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

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

So let me ask you, Secretary Austin. Do you agree that the people working for you, who have similar or even more
extensive ties to industry, should be living up to the same ethics commitments that you made? Do you think it is important that the American people have confidence, as you put it, that these Pentagon officials are working for the American people and not for their former employers in the defense industry?

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

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

Secretary Austin: Senator, again, I believe that they will conduct themselves appropriately. I have no concerns
about their ethical behavior. I think that they are committed to doing the right things.

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

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

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Senator Tillis: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, gentlemen, for being here. I want to go back to the discussion of the UCMJ and what is described as military
sexual assault. It is an area I am frustrated with. I have spent a lot of time with Senator Gillibrand. But, Secretary Austin, I am concerned that even when we have the discussion here people think we are just talking about military sexual assault. But we are talking about alleged crime that would have a sentence of over 1 year. So that is a sweeping change to the UCMJ.

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

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

Senator Tillis: General Milley, do you think maybe taking crimes that could be barracks larceny out of the
chain of command is a good idea, and would put us in a position where good order and discipline on the part of the command would be undermined?

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

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

Secretary Austin: You are right, Senator, and I understand your sense of urgency. I share that sense of urgency. As you know, the Independent Review Commission is
still evaluating the other three lines of effort, that include prevention, victim care, and also climate. I will get those shortly, and when I do I will make my recommendations to the President, and those recommendations will be based upon what I get from the IRC, plus my consultations with the leadership of the Services.

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

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

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

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

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

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

But what we are looking at is we need to protect against future threats, i.e., 2025 threats. So I am going to want to have further discussions with you and your team as to what the projected dangers are, going to 2025. I recognize that Hawaii is protected under today's threat but not necessarily 2025, and that was the time frame in which
this radar was determined to be necessary for our national security. So I do not want to get into further discussion with you on the explanation as to why it was zeroed out.

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

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

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

Secretary Austin: Senator, let me say, off the top, that our intent was to align our PDI investment with congressional intent, and so my staff is currently working
with the committee to clarify and adjust any perceived
misalignments, and, in fact, make sure that we answer any
and all questions. And so we will continue to work that.

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

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

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

Moving on to the importance of military construction,
and funding, of course, is very critical to what we need to
be doing. And I have had conversations with your team
regarding the need for a shipyard modernization and
infrastructure support for that, including a new dry dock
for Hawaii. Now I know that there is a request for dry
docks in Portsmouth, and there is money also for saltwater
purification system in Norfolk. This is in front of
requested funding to move the dry dock for Hawaii along.

And so I would request that you take a look at that.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Secretary Austin: That is correct, yes.

Senator Cramer: You realize the Block 30s are slated for retirement in this budget? And you and I have had this discussion before. I am concerned about the lack of a bridge between where we are today and where we are going to get to eventually with new systems. And you have tough choices, and we have heard all about the difficult priorities you have to set. But I remain concerned about
the retirement of Block 30s prematurely, to benefit our
combatant commanders everywhere, but I think the Afghan
stand presents a rather unique example of the threat.

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

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

Having said that, it is all a function of risk. It is
all a function of where you take risk, what your priority
is, are you going to support the main effort, and what do
you for the supporting effort, and so on and so forth. And
in this budget, I think that we are adequately funding ISR
as we go forward, for the main effort relative to China, and
with respect to the Block 30s and the MQ-9s, again, it has
to do with relevance and pivoting to the future. This
budget biases future operating environment, change in the
character of war, and against the pacing threat of China.
That is not to say we are going to stop everything with
respect to A-10s or MQ-9s or some of these systems. We have
got to make that turn.

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

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

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

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

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

General Milley: Senator, if I could just --

Senator Cramer: Please.

General Milley: -- make a comment on your piece about threats. Climate change is a threat. Climate change has significant impact on military operations, and we have to take it into consideration. Climate change is going to impact natural resources, for example. It is going to impacted increased instability in various parts of the world. It is going to impact migrations and so on. And, in
addition to that, we have infrastructure challenges here at home -- witness some of our hurricanes. So climate change does impact.

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

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

My time has expired. Thank you.

Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator Cramer.

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

[Recess.]

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

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

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

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

Secretary Austin, allowing this ship to dock seems significant to me on many different levels. It would be the
first time that Iranian vessels have made such a transit, and the precedent of allowing Iran to provide weapons to the region causes me grave concern. Do you share that concern, and how would such delivery affect the region, in your view?

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

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

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

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

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

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

Secretary Austin: I am sorry, Senator. I did not
Senator Blumenthal: Can you provide an update as to the status of the extremism task force that you announced recent and when this committee can expect to be briefed on the results?

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

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

In addition to that, we stood up a counter-extremism working group which routinely monitors our efforts across the Department in terms of what we are doing to make sure that we counter extremism or extremist behaviors. They are refining our policies and also gaining a better
understanding of the complete challenge. And certainly, you
know, I can have the leadership of that working group come
to brief you, upon request, or any time you want.

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

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

Senator Blumenthal: Thank you.

Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Blumenthal. Senator

Blackburn, please.

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

Secretary Austin, I want to come to you on the issue of
nuclear deterrence. And when you went through your
confirmation hearing we had a discussion about that, and in
your advance policy questions you had made a statement, and
I am quoting you, "The tipping point where we must
simultaneously overhaul these forces is now here." That was
your comment in reference to nuclear deterrence. And while
we are looking at this budget that is before us, we see that
modernization is fully funded. But then when you look at
deferred maintenance, you see that it cuts hundreds of
millions of dollars from the enacted level, the NNSA's
deferred maintenance budget.

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

Secretary Austin: To my knowledge it was not
coordinated with DoD, and what I would say to you though,
Senator, is that it is very important to me and to our
Department to make sure that we work with the Department of
Energy to ensure that we achieve our common goal of
maintaining a robust nuclear deterrent. And you have my
commitment to make sure that I remain engaged with DOE to
make sure that the right things are happening in this
regard.
Senator Blackburn: Okay. Then let me ask it like this. What are the consequences that happen if we do not modernize and bring this infrastructure, maintain this infrastructure?

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

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

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

Senator Blackburn: Senator Fischer brought up to you the action of the Acting Secretary of the Navy cancelling
the nuclear sea-launched cruise missile. So why was this
decision made before completion of the nuclear posture
review?

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

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

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

So I would like to hear you speak to that. You know,
we know that these fusion centers are vitally important. I
have done a good bit of work on these multilateral fusion
centers, and they serve a critical function of really enhancing our intelligence, our information, our logistical coordination. And future fusion centers are the commanders' number 11 unfunded priorities. These fusion centers also support investments in mission partner environments, the number 2 unfunded priority. So it seems like we have got a pattern that is going there, and I would love for you to address it. I know I am over and there are other waiting for questions, and I would be happy to take that response in writing.

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

Senator Blackburn: Thank you.

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

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

But I want to start first by saying how disappointed -- and I will just say, actually, quite angry -- at a recent decision made by the Air Force to not award Selfridge Air National Guard Base the F-35 international training mission, and my feelings are based on the data and the criteria that was presented by each of the installations that competed as well as what the Air Force put forward. It is clear, from
my review of that, and others, that Selfridge was clearly
the superior choice in the matter, and this is clearly a
problem that, as we have seen before with the Air Force, as
all of you know, the GAO is now investigating strategic
basing decisions being made by the Air Force over the last
few years. And without question this committee, this body,
needs to retain confidence that the choices made by the U.S.
Air Force are based on data and based on criteria and not at
a whim, or whatever may be behind it.

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

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

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

Senator Peters: Well, I appreciate that. I have had
some of those discussions already, but to make sure that the
process is indeed an objective process, it is critically important there is full transparency so that we can see not only how Selfridge ranked, based on that data and the criteria, but also how the one that was selected also ranked, so there could be a true objective comparison of that criteria. We tend to just get one side and not hear the other side. I want to make sure that all of our questions are asked. That is something I assume you would certainly support.

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

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

This is why I have joined my fellow Armed Services Committee members in introducing legislation to expedite cleanup of some of the most contaminated sites and why I will continue to work to implement clear and enforceable
standards to guide those.

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

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

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

This is a significant challenge to our country, as you pointed out. You know, DoD is an element of a larger challenge. Obviously, we are not the only source of this contaminant. But I would tell you that DoD is committed to doing its part to remediating whatever damage has been done in every part of this country where we have contributed to
Senator Peters: Well, thank you, Secretary Austin. I appreciate your attention to both of the matters that I raised, and I look forward to working with you.

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

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

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

Now I think a lot of us here, Democrats and Republicans, think national security should be prioritized first, not last. I think you gentlemen probably believe that. But importantly, how can we tell the troops that you are leading that we are prioritizing their mission, which is
defending America, when it is clear that the Biden
administration's prioritization of their mission is last, a
declining defense budget when almost every other agency in
the Federal Government is getting a massive, double-digit
increase?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Secretary Austin: Well, first, I do not recall
mentioning climate change 15 times. I will go back and do my word count.

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

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

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

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

Senator Sullivan: Let me ask one final question.

Sorry, Mr. Chairman. It is related to that. I have another chart here. It shows that our budget increases or decreases relative to the Chinese. The Chinese have dramatically and
consistently increased their defense budget annually by at least 6 percent, sometimes as much as 13 percent. We have increased ours, during the Trump administration, when the Republicans controlled the Senate. You see during the Biden administration, Obama-Biden, it was dramatically cut. Now we are looking at cuts again.

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

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

Senator Sullivan: General?

General Milley: So, Senator, a couple of things. I want to go back and make two points on the budget piece, explaining it to the soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, guardians out there. We are getting $715 billion if this is passed. That is a lot of money. That is 50 percent of the entire President's budget. That is 1 out of every 2 dollars
in the discretionary spending of the Federal Government. That is not a small amount of change. The increases that you show on your chart, those are factually correct, but relative to the whole and in context, we are getting a lot of money. So that is the first thing.

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

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

And the third piece, relative to the China versus U.S. spending. This is a disturbing trend -- there is no question about it -- with respect to China. They have made a major economic investment in developing their military. It has been going on for 20 or 30 years. The gaps that used
to exist, say 20, 30 years ago, were like this. Today they are like that. And the Chinese have a deliberate plan to be a global challenger to the United States of America, militarily, by mid-century. Now we have got to continue strong investments in our military, and I think this budget, for this year, is an adequate investment right now. We have to set the conditions, though, to pivot to the future character of war with the pacing threat of China.

Senator Sullivan: Thank you.

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

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

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

In short, our nation relies on our reserve component forces, the reserves and the National Guard, to defend the
United States and fulfill the DoD's national security responsibilities. However, even though the National Guard and reserves are serving in critical capacities and in dangerous duty assignments, they are not receiving the same pay and benefits as their active duty counterparts. The complexity of the current slate of duty statuses adds unnecessary confusion to activating reserve component forces. The disparity in pay and benefits between different duty statuses can also incentivize manipulating orders to minimize the servicemembers' access to benefits.

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

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

General Milley: Thanks, Senator. As part of the Joint Force, active duty, reserve, and National Guard, it is a total force, and we have a commitment to ensure that we have appropriate and fair pay and benefits given to our National Guard troops and our reservists. That reform effort is
underway. We are reviewing that. I cannot give you the exact date of when we will have that to you, but we are working it, and we are working it very hard, and we are working it with both the National Guard Bureau and each of the Services. But we do recognize the need to ensure that it is evenly applied in terms of pay and benefits to the soldiers in the reserve component, or the troops in the reserve component.

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

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

Senator Duckworth: Thank you. Secretary Austin, reserve component servicemembers are required to maintain the same proficiency in certain critical skill sets as their active component counterparts, even though they do not necessarily put on the uniform every day. This is especially true for pilots, for example. They only received
incentive pay at a fraction of the amount of active servicemembers.

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

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

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

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

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

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

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

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

Secretary Austin: I do believe that their goal is to control the Indo-Pacific, and I also believe that they desire to be the dominant to preeminent country in the world. And so I think they are working towards that end.
Senator Scott: So would you all disagree that their goal is to eventually take back Taiwan, a great American ally? You wouldn't disagree with that, right?

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

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

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

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

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

And if China is able to pull this off, then our opportunities all over the world, opportunities of American
citizens and our way of life, is going to change, right? If they can do fulfill their goals, then our opportunities will be diminished. Would you all agree with that?

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

Senator Scott: So if you follow through the reasoning, if China wants to be either Indo-Pacific or world dominant, if they build an economy bigger than ours, if they continue to out-invest us in the military, which they are, at least growing faster than we are, then what are you all doing to, one, inform American citizens of the risk, because, you know, we all do a budget based on what the American citizens believe the priority is -- that is how we elect our elected leaders. So what are you all doing to, one, inform the
public of the risk of Communist China, and ensure them that
we have the budget we need to make sure that in 5 or 10 or
15 years we are not sitting here, saying we wish we would
have done more, we all saw this threat but we didn't do
enough about it?

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

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

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

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

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

Let me recognize Senator Rosen, please.

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

Thank you for being here today.

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

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

So Secretary Austin, what is the Department's plan for
the MQ-9, and given its importance, cost effectiveness, and
the requirement for combatant commanders for more ISR
assets, why has the Air Force cut funding for this program
without a program of record to replace it?

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

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

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

Secretary Austin: Absolutely.

Senator Rosen: Thank you. I appreciate that.

I would like to move on to talking a little bit about
Iranian aggression, how we combat that, because Iranian-
backed militias, of course, are increasingly targeting U.S.
installations, our servicemembers in Iraq, via rocket and
drone attacks. Iran continues to be the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism, a threat to the U.S. allied interests all across the world, be its ballistic missile program, its support for terrorist proxies like Hezbollah, Hamas, KH, AAH, and many others.

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

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

Secretary Austin: Yeah. We certainly continue to demand that Iran cease its malicious behavior in the region, in terms of its support of the Iranian-backed Shia militia groups, and we demand that they cease providing them modernized equipment so that they can conduct these kinds of attacks. We are doing everything within our power and our capability to make sure that our troops that are forward deployed have adequate protection. We are engaging the Iraqi leadership to make sure that the Iraqi leadership does
what is necessary to help protect our citizens, who are
there to help the Iraqi government.

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

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

Senator Rosen: Thank you. I just want to be sure that
we have assets on the ground to defend American
installations in Iraq and Syria --

General Milley: We do.

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

General Milley: We absolutely do.

Senator Rosen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

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

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

Secretary Austin: I do, Senator.

Senator Hawley: Very good. And would you also agree then, I assume that this would apply to our ability to
maintain the ability to defeat a Chinese fait accompli against Taiwan. Is that accurate?

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

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

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

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

General Milley: Yes.

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

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

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

Senator Hawley: Great. Great.

General Milley: Senator --
Senator Hawley: Yeah, General.

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

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

General Milley: Yeah. I mean, in simple terms, I mean, deterrence is actually a very complex thing, but in simple terms you have to have the capability, your opponent has to know you have the capability, you have got to communicate that capability to your opponent and he has to know it, you have to communicate your will to use it, if necessary, and both actors have to be rational. If all of those components are there, in simple terms, you will be able to achieve a state of deterrence. Thus far, it is achieved.
Senator Hawley: Very good. Thank you for that.

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

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

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

The third thing I would flag for you is that, you know, much of what we are investing in, in terms of capability is really focused on our efforts to counter the challenge
presented by China. And I would also say that when we speak of deterrence, we are not talking about just air, land, and sea. We are talking about using every capability across all domains, to include cyber and space. We are talking about integrating the capabilities of our allies, which I believe is very, very important. And we are talking about using every lever that the United States Government has available to it to, in fact, effect that deterrence.

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

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

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

Chairman Reed: Put your microphone on, please.

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

I want to take a little different angle here. I have been a team-builder all my life, and I am on the Veterans' Affairs Committee, and I have been talking my first 6 months here with recruiters out in the field for the military. I am huge military person, military brat, and I grew up in a
military family. We talk about missiles and bombs and
ships, and you have got to have all of those. But if we do
not have the people, the best people we can possibly get, we
are going to be in trouble. It is like winning a football
game -- the best players win games. There is no doubt the
same thing within the military, and we have always had a
strong military.

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

And I hear all this extremism stuff, and again, I have
dealt with people all my life. You know, you don't have to
like each other to be on the team. A lot of my players
could not stand other guys on the team. You know, they just
had personality conflicts. But at the end of the day, you
have got to learn respect. You have got to earn the trust
and dedication and all that from your teammates. I mean,
you have got to learn that. And so I just hate for us to
get off on this tangent of the people that we have in the
military.

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

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

    We had the Selective Service here a few months ago.
They sat right here and they told us that if we had a draft
today we would have 35 million people that we could draft
from, 35 million. Only 450,000 of those 35 million are
eligible to be in the military, for one form or another.

That is not enough. That is not enough. We cannot build a killing machine, which is what our military is -- you can say anything else. We have got to be able to kill the enemy when they come at us.

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

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

This year we have seen multiple senior military
leaders, in uniform, from official DoD channels, criticize individual members of the press. That ain't got nothing to do with the military. To me, you have just got to go about your business.

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

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

Secretary Austin: You certainly have that commitment, and I would also like to offer a thought on what you just said, Senator, and thanks for your continued support of our great military. And again, you have heard me say this a couple of times today. I do not want our force, or anybody
else in this country, to be confused. It is the most lethal organization on the face of the planet, and it will remain so, and it will remain the most cohesive organization on the face of the planet.

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

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

Regarding the burn pits, you know, the welfare of our veterans is foremost in my mind. I mean, that is something that me and the Chairman both really care about. And I would tell you that the Secretary of the VA, Secretary McDonough, shares that concern. And he and I worked together closely on a number of issues, and we have vowed to
make sure that we do not lose our veterans as a transition from active duty to retirement or get out of the military and go do something else.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

So I hope that both the Pentagon, the White House, and
all the agencies of the U.S. Government are committed to
this as an urgent priority, an urgent priority, and that if
we cannot repatriate all of these people to this country
that we at least make arrangements to get them safely out of
Afghanistan. Can you give me your thoughts on that, please?

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

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

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

General Milley: Sure. I understand.

Senator King: This is an absolutely urgent priority
over the next 6 to 8 weeks, I would say, as our troops draw
down. So I appreciate your commitment on that.
And, Mr. Secretary, I assume you will make absolutely the same commitment?

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

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

Senator Sullivan:

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

I have one final question. A growing and critical area of great power competition with Russia, certainly, but also with China is our strategy interests in the Arctic. And, Mr. Secretary, as you know, and General, each of the military services, in some ways prompted by this committee,
have now published an Arctic strategy. I think all of us view this as a positive development. Both of you, during your confirmation hearings, had committed to focus on this area of our national security, to fully resources each of the Service Arctic strategies. Deputy Secretary Hicks, through her confirmation process, did the same.

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

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

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

As you know, we are working on developing our National Defense Strategy overall, and also working through to refine
our force posture globally. As we develop that National Defense Strategy, certainly the Arctic will be an area that we will take into consideration and make sure that we have the right emphasis, the right focus, and that strategy will drive our resourcing.

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

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

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

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

With no further questions, and I understand the decision has been made not to go to an additional closed session, so I want to thank our witnesses for their
testimony today, for your forthrightness, for the information that you have shared, and most of all, for your service to our country.

With that this hearing is adjourned.

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