

Stenographic Transcript  
Before the

COMMITTEE ON  
ARMED SERVICES

## **UNITED STATES SENATE**

HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON THE DEPARTMENT OF  
DEFENSE BUDGET REQUEST FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024 AND THE  
FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM

Tuesday, March 28, 2023

Washington, D.C.

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1 TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE BUDGET  
2 REQUEST FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024 AND THE FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE  
3 PROGRAM

4  
5 Tuesday, March 28, 2023

6  
7 U.S. Senate

8 Committee on Armed Services,

9 Washington, D.C.

10  
11 The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:30 a.m.,  
12 in Room G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Jack  
13 Reed, chairman of the committee, presiding.

14 Committee Members Present: Senators Reed [presiding],  
15 Shaheen, Gillibrand, Blumenthal, Hirono, Kaine, King,  
16 Warren, Peters, Manchin, Duckworth, Rosen, Kelly, Wicker,  
17 Fischer, Cotton, Rounds, Ernst, Sullivan, Cramer, Scott,  
18 Tuberville, Mullin, Budd, and Schmitt.

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

3           Chairman Reed: I would like to call a hearing to  
4 order. And since we have a quorum, I would ask the  
5 committee to consider Tuesday's nominations and a list of  
6 27 pending military nominations.

7           First, I ask the committee to consider the following  
8 civilian nominations. Mr. Ronald Keohane to be Assistant  
9 Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, and  
10 the Honorable Nickolas H. Guertin to be the Assistant  
11 Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development and  
12 Acquisition. Is there a motion to favorably report these  
13 --

14          Senator Wicker: So, moved.

15          Chairman Reed: Is there a second?

16          Voice: Second.

17          Chairman Reed: All in favor, say aye.

18          [Chorus of ayes.]

19          Chairman Reed: Finally, I ask the committee to  
20 consider a list of 27 pending military nominations. All of  
21 these nominations have been before the committee for the  
22 required length of time. Is there a motion to favorably  
23 report this list of 27 pending military nominations?

24          Senator Wicker: So, moved.

25          Chairman Reed: Is there a second?

1 Voice: Second.

2 Chairman Reed: Thank you. All in favor, say aye.

3 [Chorus of ayes.]

4 Chairman Reed: The ayes have it. Thank you very

5 much. Welcome, Secretary Austin, General Milley, and

6 Secretary McCord. Before I get into my statement, I want

7 to take a moment to recognize the tragic disasters that

8 struck Mississippi and Alabama this weekend.

9 Our hearts are certainly with the people of

10 Mississippi and Alabama after tornadoes caused terrible

11 loss of life and intense damage. And I know Senator

12 Wicker, Senator Tuberville are doing everything they can to

13 help their States, and we are thinking about the families

14 and loved ones who were suffering.

15 Senator Wicker: Thank you very much.

16 Chairman Reed: Good morning. The committee meets

17 today to receive testimony on the President's budget

18 request for the Department of Defense for Fiscal Year 2024.

19 Witnesses this morning are Secretary of Defense Lloyd

20 Austin, Under Secretary of Defense Controller Michael

21 McCord, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General

22 Mark Milley.

23 Thank you for appearing before us today and please

24 extend the committee's thanks to the servicemembers and

25 Defense civilians in the Department. I would like to take

1 a moment to recognize that this will be General Miller's  
2 final posture hearing before his retirement later this  
3 year. General, you have served this nation for 43 years  
4 with honor, skill, and steadfast leadership, and we are  
5 deeply grateful.

6 We thank your family for their support throughout your  
7 service, and we congratulate you on a very well-deserved  
8 retirement. Thank you, sir. Earlier this month, President  
9 Biden released his Fiscal Year 2024 budget request for the  
10 Department of Defense with a top line of \$842 billion. As  
11 the President's budget recognizes and as his national  
12 defense strategy makes clear, China is our primary  
13 competitor.

14 The PRC is the only nation with both the intent and  
15 the capability to challenge the security and economic  
16 interests of the United States and our allies and partners.  
17 At the same time, Russia remains a violent, destabilizing  
18 force. Putin's assault on Ukraine is inflicting horrific  
19 suffering on innocent civilians, threatening European  
20 stability, and harming the global economy.

21 However, if Putin thought his war would drive a wedge  
22 between NATO members and the international community, he  
23 was badly mistaken. The international community has united  
24 in a way not seen in decades, and our potential adversaries  
25 around the world are taking note.

1           The Biden Administration and the witnesses before us  
2 today deserve great credit for leading this effort. In  
3 addition to the threats posed by Russia and China, nations  
4 like Iran and North Korea continue to push the boundaries  
5 of military brinksmanship and issues like terrorism and  
6 climate change remain persistent.

7           Prevailing in this environment will require thoughtful  
8 strategies and a budget that is structured to meet the  
9 challenges we face. During today's hearing, I would ask  
10 our witnesses to update us on the strategic planning  
11 documents published over the past year, including the  
12 National Defense Strategy, National Military Strategy,  
13 Nuclear Posture Review, and Missile Defense Review, and how  
14 the 2024 budget will execute this strategies.

15           An essential element for the United States long term  
16 strategic competition will be our ability to build a joint  
17 capabilities of our armed forces across all domains,  
18 including space, cyber, and information operations. As the  
19 Defense Department's recently released Joint Concept for  
20 Competing makes clear, the object of our nation's  
21 adversaries is to win without a fight.

22           The concept warns that if we do not adapt to the  
23 realities of long-term competition, "the United States  
24 risks ceding strategic influence, advantage, and leverage  
25 while preparing for war that never comes." I am interested

1 to hear from our witnesses how this budget supports joint  
2 capabilities to ensure our military remains the world's  
3 premier fighting force.

4 To that end, I am encouraged that the budget includes  
5 the largest ever request for research, development,  
6 testing, and evaluation, a total of \$145 billion. The  
7 budget would provide significant funding for modernization  
8 areas such as microelectronics, artificial intelligence,  
9 hypersonics, and 5G, technologies that will be critical for  
10 our national defense.

11 Our strategy towards China and Russia should not be  
12 solely defined in dollars by how much, but rather where and  
13 why we are investing to achieve the greatest comparative  
14 advantage. Keeping our competition with China front and  
15 center, this budget request includes \$9.1 billion for  
16 priorities covered by the Pacific Deterrence Initiative, or  
17 PDI.

18 I am encouraged by the progress we have made through  
19 PDI thus far, and this committee will continue working to  
20 help improve the design and posture of the Joint Force in  
21 the Indo-Pacific region.

22 This should include strengthening logistics,  
23 modernizing infrastructure, conducting exercises, and  
24 training and building the capabilities of our allies and  
25 partners. Indeed, our approach to the Indo-Pacific should

1 be informed in part by lessons drawn from the European  
2 Defense and Deterrence Initiative, or EDI, which has played  
3 a decisive role in strengthening Ukraine for the last nine  
4 years.

5 The Department's 2024 budget request wisely includes  
6 \$3.4 billion for EDI related investments and \$300 million  
7 for the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative. I am also  
8 pleased to see that this budget request prioritizes taking  
9 care of our men and women in uniform and the civilians who  
10 serve alongside them by providing an across the board pay  
11 raise of 5.2 percent.

12 This pay increase sends an important message to the  
13 workforce at a time when recruiting is particularly  
14 challenging. The budget request also includes \$16.7  
15 billion for military construction projects, and I am  
16 particularly pleased to see increases in barracks  
17 sustainment. The improvements to our facilities' repair  
18 and modernization will go a long way toward the Joint  
19 Force's readiness and quality of life for military  
20 personnel.

21 With regard to our nuclear strategy, I understand that  
22 the budget request supports important steps for the  
23 modernization of our nuclear triad. Given the reckless  
24 behavior of Putin over the past year, our allies and  
25 partners depend on our extended deterrence now more than



1 ever.

2 We must also be acutely aware of China's rapidly  
3 growing arsenal. Modernization of our strategic forces is  
4 needed to reassure not only our allies but deter any attack  
5 on our homeland by any of our nuclear armed competitors.  
6 Even as we modernize, we should seek ways to promote  
7 strategic stability, reduce the risk of miscalculation,  
8 and, if possible, reduce nuclear stockpiles when verifiable  
9 for all parties.

10 Given these strategic threats, the proposed  
11 investments in tried-and-true platforms like the Columbia  
12 and the Virginia class submarines is a prudent decision.  
13 Similarly, this budget supports the further development of  
14 long-range stealth bombers, strengthening the fighter fleet  
15 and building up the defense industrial base, including  
16 upgrades to the Navy's public and private shipyards.

17 At the same time, taxpayers should not have to pay for  
18 programs and systems that are wasteful or ineffective, and  
19 Congress must not shirk its responsibility to divest  
20 outdated platforms in favor of more effective new  
21 technologies. We are engaged in a struggle between  
22 autocracy and democracy, and we cannot fail in succeeding  
23 in that struggle.

24 Again, I would like to thank the witnesses for their  
25 participation today. I look forward to the testimony and

1 let me now recognize Ranking Member Senator Wicker.

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

3           Senator Wicker: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I, too,  
4           want to thank our distinguished witnesses for being here.  
5           For the third year in a row, President Biden has sent  
6           through Congress a budget request that cuts military  
7           spending amid a more dangerous and complex threat  
8           environment.

9           We are in the most crucial years of our efforts to  
10          prevent aggression by our peer adversary, the Chinese  
11          Communist Party. The cost of failure in this effort would  
12          be nearly unthinkable. Despite international efforts to  
13          the contrary, Russia was not deterred from invading  
14          Ukraine, and that invasion has already cost the global  
15          economy well over \$1 trillion, in addition to untold  
16          suffering and loss of life.

17          And these costs will continue to mount unless we give  
18          the Ukrainians every single tool they need to win as soon  
19          as possible. Our intelligence community tells us a  
20          deterrence failure over Taiwan would make the economic  
21          effect of Ukraine conflict look vanishingly small. This  
22          year's budget is the last one that funds capabilities that  
23          are likely to be fielded before 2027.

24          That is the year by which Xi Jinping says he wants the  
25          People's Liberation Army to be ready to take Taiwan. That

1 makes our work here very urgent. I am heartened to see  
2 that the budget request prioritizes some programs of  
3 critical importance to near-term deterrence and  
4 warfighting, including the Strategic Capabilities Office,  
5 DARPA led Assault Breaker II, electronic warfare and cyber  
6 programs, and the emerging efforts to deliver real  
7 warfighting capability out of the JAC2 program.

8       These near-term high return investments are crucial.  
9 Even so, I remain concerned that we are not moving fast  
10 enough on some of these efforts. At the same time, while  
11 the National Defense Strategy emphasizes the importance of  
12 our posture in the Western Pacific, I note this budget  
13 actually cuts the level of spending on key planning and  
14 design activities.

15       This is despite the clear Congressional signal sent by  
16 Senators Reed and Inhofe in the statute when they created  
17 the Pacific Deterrence Initiative several years ago. We  
18 cannot successfully deter XI with a brittle basing and  
19 logistics infrastructure. Further, we must work together  
20 to think bigger and more creatively about the scale of  
21 investment and focus needed to compete with Beijing in the  
22 decades to come.

23       Our current nuclear modernization efforts are moving  
24 too slowly and will produce a force ill-equipped to deter  
25 multiple nuclear armed adversaries. The current approach

1 to rebuilding our shipbuilding industrial base is also  
2 woefully insufficient. The Department of Defense has  
3 failed our shipbuilders by promising stability and then  
4 pulling the rug out from under them.

5 This has hit amphibious shipbuilders particularly  
6 hard. This budget also fails by actually shrinking the  
7 U.S. Navy this year and in future years, instead of  
8 growing the fleet as is required by law. Congress again  
9 will need to rectify these failures. Yet even where  
10 Congress and the Department of Defense have agreed on our  
11 approach, such as with the submarine industrial base,  
12 progress has been too slow or nonexistent.

13 We need to make generational investments across our  
14 basic defense infrastructure, including shipyards,  
15 munitions, and ammunition plants, advanced test ranges and  
16 even barracks for our service members. And I do appreciate  
17 the Chair emphasizing that in his statement.

18 Similarly, we cannot effectively compete with and  
19 deter our adversaries with the recruiting deficiencies we  
20 have heard about, for example, at last week's hearing, I  
21 hope our witnesses will address this issue and state  
22 whether this budget contains every single possible  
23 investment that could alleviate the recruiting crisis.  
24 Lastly, I want to discuss the Department's relationship  
25 with Congress.

1 I think we have some work to do on this front. And  
2 let me mention two instances. First on February 8, I sent  
3 the Secretary of Defense a letter asking some simple  
4 questions about the facts and decision making surrounding  
5 the Chinese spy balloon. This was signed by Senator Rubio,  
6 the co-chair of the Senate Intelligence committee. Three  
7 weeks later, a Deputy wrote back with a non-answer, which I  
8 can only describe as dismissive. So, I sent another letter  
9 reiterating my request.

10 Yesterday afternoon, the day before this hearing, I  
11 finally received a response to my letter from the  
12 Secretary. I have significant questions about that  
13 response, and I will address that in questions for the  
14 record. So, that is one thing. Also, early last Thursday  
15 morning, an Iranian backed attack killed one American  
16 contractor and injured several U.S. servicemembers in  
17 Syria.

18 These troops are there to ensure that ISIS does not  
19 pose a threat to the United States. That very day, the  
20 Senate was considering several significant votes relating  
21 to the use of force against Iran. And yet no member of the  
22 Senate, to my knowledge, was told that day about an attack  
23 by this very adversary while we were voting on issues  
24 involving them.

25 Given the number of legislative affairs personnel that

1 the Office of the Secretary has, I find it hard to believe  
2 that no one in the Executive Branch was tracking the votes  
3 on the Senate floor or thought of the nexus between our  
4 decisions and the very acts that were going on, on the  
5 other side of the globe. It is unacceptable that no one  
6 informed the Senate of this attack in a timely manner.

7 Mr. Secretary and Mr. Chairman, we are all in this  
8 together. We are all on the same side here. I would  
9 strongly prefer that the Biden Administration treat the  
10 Congress as a partner moving forward, and I thank the  
11 witnesses for appearing today.

12 And again, I thank them for their service and I look  
13 forward to their testimony. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

14 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator Wicker.  
15 And let me recognize Secretary Austin. Mr. Secretary,  
16 please.

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

3 Secretary Austin: Chairman Reed, Ranking Member  
4 Wicker, and distinguished members of the committee, at the  
5 outset, let me echo your comments, Chairman, regarding the  
6 tragedies that we have just witnessed in Mississippi and  
7 then Alabama, and our condolences go out to all. I am glad  
8 to be here with you today to testify in support of the  
9 President's budget request for Fiscal Year 2024.

10 I am joined, as always, by General Milley, and I  
11 remain grateful for his leadership. I am also glad to be  
12 joined by the Department's Comptroller and CFO, Michael  
13 McCord. This is a strategy driven budget and one driven by  
14 the seriousness of our strategic competition with the  
15 People's Republic of China. At \$842 billion, it is a 3.2  
16 percent increase over Fiscal Year 2023 enacted, and it is  
17 13.4 percent higher than Fiscal Year 2022 enacted.

18 And this budget will help us continue to implement our  
19 national defense strategy and the President's National  
20 Security Strategy. Now I have three key priorities, to  
21 defend our nation, to take care of our outstanding people,  
22 and to succeed through teamwork. The PRC is our pacing  
23 challenge and we are driving hard to meet it.

24 Our budget builds on our previous investments to deter  
25 aggression. We are investing in a more resilient force



1 posture in the Indo-Pacific and increasing the scale and  
2 the scope of our exercises with our partners. And this  
3 budget includes a 40 percent increase over last year's  
4 budget for the Pacific Deterrence Initiative, and it is an  
5 all-time high of \$9.1 billion.

6 And that will fund a stronger force posture, better  
7 defenses for Hawaii and Guam, and deeper cooperation with  
8 our allies and partners. And this budget also makes the  
9 Department's largest ever investments in both R&D and  
10 procurement. We are investing -- we are requesting more  
11 than \$61 billion to sustain air dominance. That includes  
12 funding for our fighters and extraordinary B-21 strategic  
13 bomber that I helped unveil last December.

14 We are also seeking more than \$48 billion for sea  
15 power, including new construction of nine battle force  
16 ships. And we are boosting capacity in America's shipyards  
17 to build the ships that our strategy demands. We are  
18 investing a total of \$1.2 billion in the submarine  
19 industrial base, and we are buying two Virginia class  
20 attack submarines and one Columbia class missile submarine.

21 On land, we are investing in air and missile defense  
22 and in defenses to counter unmanned aerial vehicles. We  
23 are also requesting \$11 billion to deliver the right mix of  
24 long-range fires, including major investments in  
25 hypersonics. We will also continue to modernize all three

1 legs of our nuclear triad and bolster our strategic  
2 deterrence. And we put forward the largest budget, largest  
3 space budget in Pentagon history.

4 We have requested \$33.3 billion to improve our  
5 capabilities in our resilience in space. Well, let me  
6 again thank Congress for providing the Department with  
7 multi-year procurement authorities and appropriations for  
8 critical munitions.

9 In this budget, we are requesting more multi-year  
10 procurement authorities, and we are asking for more than  
11 \$30 billion to further invest in the industrial base, and  
12 to buy the maximum number of munitions that American  
13 industry can produce.

14 This budget also moves us away from aging capabilities  
15 that aren't relevant to future conflicts so we can focus on  
16 the advances that our warfighters will need. Now our  
17 national defense strategy calls out Putin's highly  
18 aggressive Russia as an acute threat. And under President  
19 Biden's leadership, the United States has rallied the world  
20 to help Ukraine fight Russia's indefensible invasion.

21 We have reinforced NATO's defense and deterrence on  
22 its Eastern flank. Our allies and partners have provided  
23 crucial security assistance coordinated through the Ukraine  
24 Defense Contact Group that I lead. And we will support  
25 Ukraine's defense for as long as it takes. Meanwhile, the

1 Department remains vigilant against other persistent  
2 threats, including North Korea and Iran.

3 And we will take all necessary measures to defend our  
4 troops and our interest overseas, as seen in our recent air  
5 strikes against facilities linked to Iran's Islamic  
6 Revolutionary Guard Corps. And we are also investing in  
7 over the horizon counterterrorism capabilities. Mr.  
8 Chairman, our Joint Force stands ready to meet any  
9 challenge.

10 You can see the forces readiness after Russia's  
11 unprovoked invasion of Ukraine, when we swiftly deployed  
12 elements of the 3rd Infantry Division to Poland to shore up  
13 NATO's Eastern flank. And we closely monitor readiness at  
14 the unit level and maintain response forces at our highest  
15 state of readiness, while the rest of the force, by design,  
16 is preparing for future contingencies.

17 So, this budget will help us maintain our readiness  
18 with \$146 billion in funding for operations, training, and  
19 maintenance. This budget also invests in improving our  
20 readiness and resilience in the face of climate change and  
21 other 21st century threats. Mr. Chairman, we are going to  
22 remain the strongest military in the world.

23 And as we mark the 50th anniversary of our all-  
24 volunteer force, I am enormously proud of the brave men and  
25 women who choose to wear the cloth of our nation. We owe

1 it to them and to their families to take the best possible  
2 care of all of our people. And over the past two years, we  
3 have made moves easier, we have cut commissary prices, and  
4 we have made childcare more affordable.

5 And this budget funds other key steps to increase the  
6 quality of life of our teammates, including the largest  
7 military and civilian pay raises in decades. Now, we are  
8 also pushing hard to help eliminate suicide in our ranks,  
9 including immediate steps to hire more mental health  
10 professionals and improve access to mental health care.  
11 And meanwhile, we are working toward a military that's free  
12 of sexual assault.

13 We worked with Congress to improve the response of  
14 sexual assault and related crimes under the Uniform Code of  
15 Military Justice, and those reforms will be fully  
16 implemented by the end of this year. The Department is  
17 also investing in a specialized workforce to combat sexual  
18 assault, harassment, suicide, and more.

19 Now, the Department's third priority is succeeding  
20 through teamwork, and our rival network of allies and  
21 partners magnifies our power and expands our security. And  
22 in recent months, our friends in the Indo-Pacific have  
23 taken major steps forward. The Philippines has agreed to  
24 nearly double the number of sites where we cooperate  
25 together. Japan is committed to double its defense

1 spending.

2           And through the historic AUKUS partnership, we will  
3 work with our Australian and British allies to build game  
4 changing defense advantages that will deter aggression and  
5 boost our defense industrial capacity. In sum, Mr.  
6 Chairman, this is a budget that will meet this moment, and  
7 I respectfully ask for your support.

8           And the single most effective way that this committee  
9 can support the Department and our outstanding troops is  
10 with an on time full year appropriation. So, I look  
11 forward to working with all of you so that we can continue  
12 to defend our democracy and support the forces of freedom  
13 in this hour of challenge. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

14           [The prepared statement of Secretary Austin follows:]

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1 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary.

2 General Milley, do you have a statement?

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

3           General Milley: I do, Chairman. And Chairman Reed,  
4 Ranking Member Wicker, and distinguished members of the  
5 committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before  
6 you today. And I want to echo the condolences, about the  
7 Secretary and the chairman, for the great people of  
8 Mississippi and Alabama. Tragic losses.

9           Our hearts go out to them. And many, many soldiers  
10 and Sailors, Airmen, Marines in uniform come from your two  
11 great states, so our hearts go out to you. I have been  
12 privileged to defend this country for 43 consecutive years  
13 in uniform, and as the chairman said, this is likely my  
14 last set of posture hearings.

15           But I do want to thank the Congress for your continued  
16 support to our military, not only on this budget, but for  
17 the last four decades. And I ask that you support this  
18 year's request with an on-time budget approval. I am  
19 honored to represent here today the soldiers, Sailors,  
20 Airmen, Marines, Guardians, and families of the United  
21 States Joint Force, along with Secretary Austin and Mike  
22 McCord. I want to publicly thank them both for their  
23 leadership.

24           Our Joint Force, as the Secretary says, is the most  
25 lethal and capable military in the world because of your

1 support. Our purpose, the military's purpose, the  
2 uniformed military, is simple. It is to defend the United  
3 States, and our task is to fight and win in all the domains  
4 of combat to secure America and prevent a great power war.

5 Readiness for us in uniform, and readiness now and  
6 readiness in the future, through modernization, is our  
7 number one priority, and there is no other number one other  
8 than the readiness for combat. The joint boards will  
9 accomplish this at the Fiscal Year 2024 budget request of  
10 \$842 billion.

11 Right now, as pointed out by Senator Wicker, the  
12 international system is under stress. For the first time,  
13 the United States is facing two major nuclear powers whose  
14 vital National Security interests are in competition with  
15 the United States. Both the People's Republic of China and  
16 Russia have the means to threaten our interests and our way  
17 of life. But war with either one is neither inevitable nor  
18 imminent.

19 A great power war has not happened in the last 80  
20 years, in large part because of the rules put in place at  
21 the end of World War II and the capabilities of the United  
22 States military, along with our allies and partners. We  
23 must remain the most powerful nation and the great power  
24 peace then will be prevailing.

25 The People's Republic of China remains our number one



1 long term geostrategic security challenge. The PRC intends  
2 to be the regional hegemonic Asia within the next 10 years  
3 and to exceed the United States overall military capability  
4 by mid-century, and they have publicly said 2049. The  
5 PRC's actions are moving it down the path towards potential  
6 confrontation with its neighbors and the United States.

7 But again, war with China is neither inevitable nor  
8 imminent. Additionally, Russia is an acute threat and  
9 remains quite dangerous. Over a year ago, Russia undertook  
10 an illegal and unprovoked war against Ukraine, threatening  
11 the peace on the European continent and global stability.

12 We are supporting Ukraine to protect its sovereignty  
13 and supporting NATO with the United States force presence  
14 in every single nation on NATO's Eastern flank. This fight  
15 is not just in Ukraine's interest. It is in the United  
16 States interest to protect the system that has prevented a  
17 great power war. In Iran, Iran threatens to push the  
18 Middle East into regional instability by supporting  
19 terrorists and proxy forces, as we recently saw.

20 Just last week, Iranian aligned groups killed one  
21 American and injured seven in attacks on coalition bases in  
22 Syria. We acted immediately to defend our troops and we  
23 will continue to counter terrorist threats in the region  
24 and anywhere else we find them.

25 And Iran has taken actions also to improve its

1 capabilities to produce a nuclear weapon. From the time of  
2 an Iranian decision, Iran could produce enough fissile  
3 material for a nuclear weapon in less than two weeks and  
4 would only take several months thereafter to produce an  
5 actual nuclear weapon.

6 The United States remains committed as a matter of  
7 policy that Iran will not have a nuclear weapon. The  
8 United States military has developed multiple options for  
9 our national leadership to consider if or when Iran decides  
10 to develop a nuclear weapon.

11 North Korea's continued ballistic missile testing and  
12 nuclear weapons development pose threats to our homeland  
13 and our allies and partners, but we stand together,  
14 shoulder to shoulder with the Republic of Korea, to deter  
15 North Korean aggression, as we have for seven decades.

16 Terrorists continue to operate around the globe,  
17 threatening fear, destruction, destabilization, and this  
18 budget supports our continued counterterrorism effort. In  
19 short, the United States military stands ready to protect  
20 our nation's interests and the American people. We are  
21 currently standing watch on freedom's frontier with nearly  
22 a quarter of 1,250,000 troops in Europe, Asia, Africa, the  
23 Middle East, and South America.

24 The United States never fights alone. The key source  
25 of our strength is our large global network of alliances

1 and partnerships. Just this month, we conducted 63  
2 operations and joint combined exercises globally with our  
3 allies and partners. And lastly, our operational readiness  
4 rates are higher now than they have been in many years.

5       Currently, 60 percent of our active force is at the  
6 highest state of readiness and could deploy to combat in  
7 less than 30 days, well exceeding our minimum standard of  
8 one-third of the force. 10 percent, in fact, could deploy  
9 in less than 96 hours. This military, the United States  
10 military is ready.

11       The Joint Force is at an inflection point, and we must  
12 balance operations, readiness, and modernization. We must  
13 not allow ourselves to create the false trap that we can  
14 either modernize our forces for the future or focus only on  
15 today. We must do both. We must integrate advancing  
16 technologies, including precision long range fires,  
17 hypersonic weapons, quantum computing, artificial  
18 intelligence, robotics, and all domain sensors.

19       The time is now. We have very little margin to wait,  
20 and the common thread critical to accomplish all of this is  
21 our people. We must continue investing in training,  
22 education, and talent management to be prepared for future  
23 operating environment.

24       I urge Congress to support this budget's significant  
25 pay raise, health care, housing, and childcare initiatives.

1 This budget sustains our readiness and adapts the Joint  
2 Force to the future warfighting requirements. There is  
3 nothing more expensive than fighting a war. Preparing for  
4 war is very expensive, but nothing more expensive than  
5 fighting it, and preparing a war, preparing for war will  
6 deter a war, and that is our goal.

7 We must act with clear eyed urgency in order to deter  
8 a great power war. By doing so, no adversary should ever  
9 underestimate the resolve of our nation and the strength of  
10 our military. Thank you, and I look forward to your  
11 questions.

12 [The prepared statement of General Milley follows:]

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1 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, General Milley.  
2 Secretary McCord, do you have a statement?

3 Mr. McCord: No, Mr. Chairman, other than to wish your  
4 staff director a speedy recovery.

5 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much. Secretary Austin  
6 and General Milley, logistics is not the most exciting  
7 topic, but in many cases, it is one of the most crucial  
8 topics, particularly in the Pacific where distances are  
9 much an enemy as our opposing forces.

10 First, Mr. Secretary and then General Milley, can you  
11 comment upon the investments we are making in modernizing  
12 our logistics, particularly INDOPACOM area, Command and  
13 control activities that would help deliver these resources  
14 to our troops?

15 Secretary Austin: Thanks, Chairman. As I stated  
16 earlier, we in this budget, we are asking to invest some  
17 \$9.1 billion in the Pacific Deterrence Initiative. That  
18 will enable us to strengthen forward infrastructure so we  
19 can continue to forward deploy troops.

20 So that will enable us to deter further forward in  
21 theater. In addition to that, we have pushed a number of  
22 our sustainment elements like fuel further in into the  
23 theater, and we continue to make sure that we have a  
24 diverse and agile footprint so that we can rapidly respond  
25 to any challenge.

1           But I think that we are investing in the right things  
2 and going after the right capabilities to make sure that we  
3 can operate further forward.

4           Chairman Reed:   And General Milley, please.

5           General Miley:   Yes, Senator.   Thank you.   You know,  
6 the key here is -- one of the keys here is ammunition.   And  
7 the Secretary has directed that we analyze all of our  
8 ammunition stoppages in light of what is going on in  
9 Ukraine.

10          Well, that is a key area that we need to increase our  
11 capabilities here in the coming years, is ammunition.   The  
12 second piece there is lift.   In the area of lift, both  
13 sealift and airlift, there is a lot of investments in this  
14 budget and previous budgets.

15          That will be an area that requires continued sustained  
16 levels of effort, is in order to move the force, projecting  
17 power is a key attribute of the U.S. military, and we do  
18 that through sealift and airlift.

19          So that is the second key point.   And the last one, I  
20 would say, is the posture.   The Secretary has initiated a  
21 series with the INDOPACOM Commander, a series of posture  
22 adjustments in the Pacific, which should better position us  
23 for sustainment, logistical sustainment, if any conflict  
24 ever happens.

25          Chairman Reed:   Thank you very much.   Mr. Secretary,

1 we are in a moment where we are having a challenge getting  
2 general officers off the floor of the Senate and to their  
3 assigned stations after they have been recommended by the  
4 Department of Defense and cleared in terms of their  
5 performance and their capabilities.

6 Can you tell us what the cumulative effects of this  
7 would be in terms of denying promotions to people who are  
8 going to take key jobs?

9 Secretary Austin: Thanks, chairman. The effects are  
10 absolutely critical in terms of, you know, the impact on  
11 the force. This is one of the busiest times or one of the  
12 most complex times that we have seen lately.

13 We see a war, the largest conflict in Europe since  
14 World War II. We see an aggressive China operating in the  
15 Indo-Pacific. We see Iranian backed elements going after  
16 our troops. And there are a number of things happening  
17 globally that indicate that we could be in a contest on any  
18 one given day.

19 Not approving the recommendation for promotions  
20 actually creates a ripple effect through the force that  
21 makes us far less ready than we need to be. If you look at  
22 what we have coming up, I mean, there are three, I think --  
23 well, five, three-star promotions that are near term, and  
24 one of those is a Commander of our fleet out in the Gulf.  
25 And that is a critical position, and then that starts to

1 multiply, 70 more positions, three- and four-star positions  
2 over time.

3 They include the chiefs of the Army, the Marine Corps,  
4 the Navy, and also the Chairman's replacement at some point  
5 in time, although nobody wants to see that happen. So, the  
6 effects are cumulative and it will affect families, it will  
7 affect kids going to schools because they won't be able to  
8 change their duty station. And so, it is a powerful effect  
9 and will impact on our readiness.

10 Chairman Reed: As I look forward, I have never in my  
11 almost three decades here seen so many key military  
12 positions coming up for replacement. We have the  
13 Commandant of the Marine Corps, the Chief of Staff for the  
14 Army, the CNO, the Navy, and as you mentioned, the Chairman  
15 of the Joint Chiefs of Staff by law has to leave in  
16 September.

17 And if we cannot resolve the situation, we will be, in  
18 many respects, leaderless and at a time of great conflict.  
19 So, I would hope we would expedite and move quickly on this  
20 front. Thank you. With that, let me recognize Senator  
21 Wicker.

22 Senator Wicker: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me just  
23 start with a couple of short answers -- I hope these will  
24 be. Secretary Austin, first, would you agree that this is  
25 the most complex and dangerous threat environment since



1 World War II?

2 Secretary Austin: Yes, Senator, I would say that is  
3 one of the most complex periods that we have seen.

4 Senator Wicker: General Milley.

5 General Miley: Yes, Senator.

6 Senator Wicker: Over the past two years, Congress has  
7 added nearly \$30 billion to the President's request in  
8 Fiscal Year 2022 and \$45 billion to the President's request  
9 in Fiscal Year 2023 -- \$75 billion added over the request  
10 of the President. Have these additional resources  
11 increased our National Security and decreased military  
12 risk? Mr. Secretary.

13 Secretary Austin: They have, Senator. It always  
14 helps when you get additional resources, but if you get  
15 additional resources with additional requirements, it  
16 doesn't help as much.

17 And also, if we can stop doing some of the things that  
18 create a drag on our force in terms of causing us to spend  
19 money on things that are not relevant in a future fight,  
20 that also helps as well. So, we appreciate Congress's  
21 support in the past for allowing us to get rid of things  
22 that are no longer relevant.

23 Senator Wicker: And you are welcome on that. General  
24 Milley, same question. Has the \$75 billion added to our  
25 national defense expenditures -- have those funds increased

1 our National Security?

2 General Miley: Yes, I believe they have.

3 Senator Wicker: And decreased military risk?

4 General Miley: Correct.

5 Senator Wicker: Okay. Thank you very much.

6 Secretary Austin, the Biden Administration has authority to  
7 send \$1 billion worth of U.S. weaponry to Taiwan. That is  
8 similar to the policy and the authority we authorized with  
9 regard to Ukraine. Will the Biden Administration exercise  
10 this \$1 billion and draw down the authority that Congress  
11 provided last year?

12 Secretary Austin: We will, Senator. My team is  
13 working diligently to make sure that we have the right  
14 capabilities in that particular draw down. And of course,  
15 we have the authority. We will need the appropriations as  
16 well.

17 Senator Wicker: Okay, you will need an appropriation  
18 to replenish that. Is that correct?

19 Secretary Austin: That is correct, sir.

20 Senator Wicker: And the Administration will be  
21 requesting a replenishment funding for the transferred  
22 defense articles. Is that correct?

23 Secretary Austin: That is correct.

24 Senator Wicker: Okay. Let me then talk about your  
25 assessment with regard to Ukraine, I believe you told me,

1 Secretary Austin, that you believe Ukraine now has the  
2 upper hand in the war against Russia. Is that correct?

3 Secretary Austin: That is correct. This is a highly  
4 contested fight, Senator, as you know. And we have seen  
5 the tide move back and forth. Most recently we have seen  
6 some pretty significant fighting in the Bakhmut area.

7 Senator Wicker: Right. But just with regard to your  
8 optimism about Ukraine having the upper hand, that is what  
9 you told me yesterday.

10 Secretary Austin: It is now -- what I was about to  
11 say, Senator, is that the Ukrainians have inflicted  
12 significant casualties on the Russians and they have  
13 depleted their inventory of armored vehicles in a way that  
14 no one would have ever imagined.

15 And so now we see Russia reaching for T-54 and T-55  
16 tanks because of the level of damage that the Ukrainians  
17 have inflicted on them. And we have in the meantime --

18 Senator Wicker: But that means reaching for those  
19 tanks demonstrates what to you, sir?

20 Secretary Austin: It demonstrates that their  
21 capability is waning. And we have continued to witness  
22 them being challenged in the -- with artillery munitions  
23 and other things, and are reaching out to Iran, are  
24 reaching out to North Korea.

25 So, I think, you know, we will see an increase in the

1 fighting in the spring as conditions for maneuver improve.  
2 And based upon the things that we have done and continue to  
3 do, I think Ukraine will have a real good chance --

4 Senator Wicker: Do you believe -- yes, we are pressed  
5 for time, sir. Do you believe there is a real chance for  
6 significant Ukrainian advancements between now and the  
7 beginning of winter?

8 Secretary Austin: I believe that there is a chance  
9 and we are doing everything that we can do to ensure that  
10 they have their best opportunity to be successful, Senator.

11 Senator Wicker: Thank you. And if the chair will  
12 indulge me, Mr. Secretary, you have got a pretty big  
13 Congressional relations office in your shop, do you not?

14 Secretary Austin: I do.

15 Senator Wicker: Do you agree that it should have  
16 occurred to someone in that office to inform Senators who  
17 were debating about Iran last Thursday about what had  
18 occurred with regard to attacks in Syria?

19 Secretary Austin: Senator, I think you know that we  
20 take the War Powers Act very, very seriously. And, you  
21 know, after every operation, we are required to debrief  
22 Congress and we lean forward and try to ensure that  
23 Congress is briefed before we conduct an operation.

24 And we also -- in this case, we had an attack in --  
25 and we launched an attack on the adversaries in the same

1 time period, same short period of time. And so, because of  
2 that compressed time, we did both notifications at the same  
3 time. We should have notified you earlier, and we will  
4 endeavor to do so --

5 Senator Wicker: Well, as a matter of fact, Mr.  
6 Chairman, if I might, the attack occurred and counterattack  
7 occurred in the wee hours of the morning, and members of  
8 the Senate were not notified until very late in the  
9 afternoon or early evening. That is the fact, is it not?

10 Secretary Austin: No, sir. The attack occurred in  
11 the morning and the counterattack occurred evening, our  
12 time, eastern time.

13 Senator Wicker: Okay. And so, after the attack  
14 occurred, it did not dawn on anybody in Congressional  
15 Affairs to notify members who were debating this very issue  
16 on the Senate floor. I think that is correct.

17 Secretary Austin: Senator, our goal is that is to  
18 make sure that we keep you informed. And we will do  
19 everything within our power to make sure that we improve  
20 our performance.

21 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator Wicker.  
22 Senator Shaheen, please.

23 Senator Shaheen: Thank you. Secretary Austin,  
24 General Milley, thank you both for being here this morning  
25 and for your service. And General Milley, thank you,

1 especially for all of the years that you have given to this  
2 country and to all of us.

3 And we will miss you, even if you may not miss these  
4 posture hearings. General -- Secretary Austin, I  
5 understand that the Department may be in the final stages  
6 of the review of information operations that was required  
7 by the 2020 NDAA.

8 Can you give us any insights into what that may show  
9 and how important you think information operations are as  
10 we look at the modern defense and whether there is money in  
11 the budget requested to address expanded information  
12 operations?

13 Secretary Austin: Thanks, Senator. I think what we  
14 will find is that that work will show that information  
15 operations is increasingly relevant and increasingly  
16 valuable in terms of enabling our operations, and also  
17 understanding and countering what our adversaries are  
18 doing.

19 And so, we will continue to work to refine our  
20 policies and procedures and develop talent in this area as  
21 well. But this is a key area, and we see it every day as  
22 we watch the Ukraine, Russia fight and the relevance of  
23 those operations in that fight.

24 Senator Shaheen: Well, one of the areas where  
25 information operations have been important is in the Black

1 Sea region. And certainly, we saw with the downing of the  
2 drone just how important that region is to our National  
3 Security.

4 Can you talk about what the most pressing threats are  
5 that Russia poses in the Black Sea and what we are thinking  
6 about going forward as a strategy to respond to that?

7 Secretary Austin: Well, certainly, Senator, Russia  
8 would aim to completely control the Black Sea and deny our  
9 allies and partners the ability to have continuous access  
10 to the sea. You know, I was in the region before this  
11 fight started and had engaged with our allies and partners  
12 and talked to them about the importance of the access to  
13 the Black Sea, encouraged them to work together.

14 And also wanted to make sure that we were doing  
15 everything within our power to help them strengthen their  
16 capability and strengthen their interoperability. So, this  
17 is critical and this is something that I think we need to  
18 continue to put energy into.

19 Senator Shaheen: Well, thank you. I was in the  
20 region in February, and I can tell you and the countries  
21 that I visited, Georgia, Romania, that there was a great  
22 deal of interest in the fact that we might have a more  
23 comprehensive approach to the region that deals not just  
24 with National Security, but also with economic and  
25 democratic initiatives there.

1 Over the past several years alone, Congress has  
2 appropriated over \$1 billion in funding for PFAS related  
3 activities, testing, remediation. My -- the most recent  
4 information I have seen suggests that there are more than  
5 700 contaminated military sites across the country,  
6 including the former Pease Air Base.

7 Congress has shown a willingness to accelerate testing  
8 and clean up by increasing funding, and yet the Department  
9 claims that it is unable to execute those increased funding  
10 levels. We appropriated \$517 million or authorized it in  
11 Fiscal Year 2020.

12 Can you speak to what needs to happen in order for the  
13 Department to make better use of the funds that Congress  
14 appropriated to -- appropriates to address PFAS?

15 Secretary Austin: We will continue to make every  
16 effort to make best use of those funds. I think you see in  
17 this budget, we have asked for another \$400 million.

18 And to your point, Senator, if funds are not executed  
19 in one particular year, I think they roll over to the next  
20 year. So, we have the benefit of using the funds that were  
21 not completely executed last year, plus the \$400 million we  
22 are asking for this year.

23 And we will make every effort to make sure that we are  
24 doing everything within our -- that is possible to utilize  
25 the funds, and where we need more, we will come back and



1 ask you for more.

2 Senator Shaheen: Well, thank you. I appreciate that.  
3 I hope you will also take a look at our willingness to be  
4 transparent with the public where sites have been  
5 contaminated because there is a great deal of distrust, I  
6 think, about information sharing from the Department of  
7 Defense, and least we have seen that in the site in New  
8 Hampshire.

9 And I think that undermines our ability to address  
10 what needs to be done in those sites to clean up the  
11 contamination and to encourage the communities to do what  
12 they need to do to address the problem. Thank you, Mr.  
13 Chairman.

14 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Shahee. Senator  
15 Fischer, please.

16 Senator Fischer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For years,  
17 we have underinvested in our munitions production and we  
18 are starting to reverse that trend but more needs to be  
19 done to increase production. Secretary Austin, what is the  
20 Department currently doing to increase munitions production  
21 capacity and what more does it seek to do in Fiscal Year  
22 2024?

23 Secretary Austin: Well, thank you, Senator. Let me  
24 thank Congress for what you have done to authorize a  
25 multiyear procurement capability. That sends a strong

1 signal to the industrial base.

2 Also, the numbers that you see reflected in our budget  
3 request for procurement sends a strong signal as well. In  
4 this particular budget, we are asking for \$30 billion to  
5 invest in munitions and that helps us go after the right  
6 kinds of munitions that we think we need to replenish  
7 stocks and to make sure that we get ahead as well. And  
8 also, it allows us to invest a bit in the industrial base.

9 Now, we are engaging the, you know, our partners in  
10 the industry and trying to do everything we can to work  
11 with them, to expand their capacity and their capability.  
12 But to your point, there's a lot more work that needs to be  
13 done.

14 Senator Fischer: The committee has worked to modify  
15 or remove older and unnecessary contracting requirements so  
16 we can get contracting officers to move faster on replacing  
17 munitions in Ukraine. Would it be useful to be able to  
18 remove or modify these unnecessary requirements for weapons  
19 related to most, really our most pressing challenges in the  
20 Western Pacific and in Taiwan as well?

21 Secretary Austin: Absolutely. Absolutely, it would.

22 Senator Fischer: Thank you. General Milley, the  
23 current U.S. nuclear modernization plan was originally  
24 designed in 2010 when nuclear threats were much less severe  
25 than they are today. However, since then, every DOD

1 modernization program, along with every Department of  
2 Energy infrastructure project and warhead program, has been  
3 delayed or it has been reduced in its scope.

4 Can you tell me how we are going to meet the rapidly  
5 growing threats from China and Russia with a force that is  
6 smaller and with a force that delivers later than we  
7 planned for more than a decade ago? Basically, I am asking  
8 you, how are we going to recognize challenges we have today  
9 and meet them?

10 General Miley: Thanks, Senator. As you know, the  
11 nuclear capability of China is growing, and we can cover  
12 that in some detail in a classified session, if you so  
13 desire.

14 The recapitalization of the nuclear triad is the  
15 Secretary and President's number one defense priority.  
16 That is what has been one of the most significant  
17 contributors to great power peace in the last eight  
18 decades. So, it is imperative for us, the United States,  
19 to recapitalize that entire system with the silos, the  
20 bombers, as well as the subs, but also the NC3 system.

21 That is really critical, and it does bother me that  
22 some of these programs are behind and they are coming in at  
23 over cost, over budget. But we are going to get there and  
24 it will be a safe, secure, reliable system, guaranteed  
25 that, and we will maintain the strategic deterrence that we

1 have kept for 80 years.

2 Senator Fischer: Last year, you, along with nearly  
3 every other senior U.S. military officer, testified that we  
4 need to provide Presidents with more nuclear options than  
5 we have today. Do you still agree with that sentiment?

6 General Miley: I do. I believe that --

7 Senator Shaheen: Okay, thank you. Yes, is fine.

8 General Miley: Sure.

9 Senator Fischer: As a member of this committee and  
10 also as a member of the Senate Commerce committee, I have  
11 worked for years to promote efficient spectrum management  
12 by the Federal government without endangering the mission  
13 critical operations of the Department of Defense.

14 Coordination among the agencies can be difficult, and  
15 it can be slow. Proactive communication among all  
16 stakeholders, I believe, is key for that better  
17 coordination. And that is why I, as ranking member of the  
18 Strategic Force subcommittee, I send a letter to the  
19 subcommittee chairman -- with the subcommittee chairman,  
20 Angus King, to the Department of Defense last year that  
21 asked for more details about the Department's concerns with  
22 proposed spectrum reallocation in the lower 3G.

23 DOD's response pointed to the 2020 IDA report, but  
24 there are still far more details that we need to learn  
25 about what may or may not work for reallocation in this

1 band. Fortunately, there is an ongoing study, and I  
2 appreciate that, the Path study that should provide those  
3 details.

4 General Milley, my time is almost up and I expect my  
5 friend from South Dakota will have a conversation with you  
6 about this as well. But for the record, and please answer  
7 yes or no, is it your best military advice that the ongoing  
8 Path study as currently authorized, as currently  
9 authorized, should be completed in order to inform the  
10 ongoing spectrum negotiations?

11 General Miley: Yes.

12 Senator Fischer: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

13 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Fischer. Before I  
14 recognize Senator Gillibrand, let me just remind all my  
15 colleagues, there will be a classified hearing in the sciff  
16 SCV-217 at the conclusion of this open hearing. Senator  
17 Gillibrand.

18 Senator Gillibrand: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr.  
19 McCord, I was disappointed that for the second year in a  
20 row, the All-domain Anomaly Resolution Office, or AARO, was  
21 not fully funded in the Department's budget request.  
22 Understanding that we cannot get into specific budget  
23 figures in this form, can you discuss why AARO was not  
24 fully funded?

25 Mr. McCord: Senator, I don't have any information

1 from my colleague, Under Secretary Moultrie, that he needed  
2 additional funding in this area. It is a relatively new  
3 office we are standing up, so I was under the impression, I  
4 am under the impression that we have adequate funding for  
5 the relatively new state of this. But I will double back  
6 with him if there is a concern.

7 Senator Gillibrand: I need you to send a letter to  
8 this committee in writing about why it wasn't fully funded.  
9 Several Senators signed a letter to Secretary Hicks asking  
10 that it be fully funded in this budget and we specified in  
11 a classified index exactly what funding wasn't being met  
12 and its operational funding, its basic operational funding,  
13 so I am highly concerned about this.

14 Secretary Austin, the incidents last month involving  
15 the Chinese high-altitude balloon and the three unknown  
16 objects highlighted the need for us to continue to improve  
17 our understanding of UAPs over U.S. airspace. Do you  
18 intend to ensure AARO receives full funding in the future?

19 Secretary Austin: I will, Senator. And we-- in this  
20 project, we have asked for \$11 million in support of the  
21 office, of that initiative.

22 Senator Gillibrand: That is not the budget request.  
23 Will you investigate why the budget request isn't being met  
24 and be part of the response --

25 Secretary Austin: I will. I will.

1           Senator Gillibrand: Thank you. Secretary Austin, on  
2 March 17, Gong, the Chinese Foreign Minister said that the  
3 U.S. and China are heading toward inevitable "confrontation  
4 and conflict."

5           This comes as the STRATCOM Commander testified that  
6 "the PRC seeks to match or in some areas surpass  
7 quantitative and qualitative parity with the United States  
8 in terms of nuclear weapons."

9           During the Cold War, the U.S. and the Soviet Union  
10 developed lines of communication to prevent escalation or  
11 outright hostilities during heightened tensions and  
12 developed norms and mechanisms to avoid miscalculations.

13           How would you characterize your relationship with your  
14 PRC counterpart, and what steps are you taking to reduce  
15 the risk of miscalculations during a period of heightened  
16 competition between our countries?

17           Secretary Austin: Well thanks, Senator. I think you  
18 have heard me say two things. The first thing is that  
19 Chairman -- what the chairman said earlier that I don't see  
20 conflict as being imminent or inevitable.

21           But I do think it is important that leaders and great  
22 powers have the ability to talk to each other, to manage  
23 escalation, to manage crises. You have seen me reach out  
24 to my former counterpart, Minister of Defense Wei, who has  
25 now moved on, and encourage him to keep the lines of

1 communication open.

2 He has now been replaced by a new minister and I have  
3 yet to have the have the ability to engage him, but I will  
4 continue to make sure that we reach out. I do think that  
5 is critical.

6 Senator Gillibrand: Secretary Austin, we have  
7 international legal structures to address the conduct of  
8 our forces in war. While we have international treaties  
9 that govern the use of space, there is ongoing debate about  
10 whether these treaties would apply during an armed  
11 conflict, and what types of counterspace weapons are  
12 permissible.

13 What steps is the Department taking in coordination  
14 with Department of State to reinforce international norms  
15 and whether we can safely rely on our use of space assets,  
16 both legally and lethally during a conflict?

17 Secretary Austin: Well, this is an issue that the  
18 interagency of our Administration, we continue to engage  
19 on. And Secretary Blinken, as you know, also has engaged  
20 our allies and partners on this issue at the UN and in  
21 other fora. We think it is important. The Administration  
22 thinks it is important, and this is something that we will  
23 continue to work on.

24 Senator Gillibrand: Thank you, Mr. Secretary. I  
25 appreciate the policies you issued on March 22nd supporting



1 our military families, and it is critical to their well-  
2 being and ability to retain strong military force. DOD's  
3 own surveys show that 24 percent of our servicemembers  
4 experience food insecurity.

5 Last year, I met with military families on Staten  
6 Island who spoke about the challenges they face in  
7 basically putting food on the table to feed their kids.  
8 However, very few service members are considered eligible  
9 for basic needs allowance or the BNA, under existing BNA  
10 programs since BHH is included in family income  
11 calculations.

12 Can you tell me how you intend to ensure that food  
13 insecurity in military families have access to the BNA or  
14 other measures?

15 Secretary Austin: Well, we will have the authority  
16 next year to move to a higher number, a higher percentage,  
17 150 percent will actually move before we are required to  
18 move. We plan to move in July.

19 That will allow us to help more families. But you  
20 have seen this with your support, Senator. You have seen  
21 us ask for a pay raise last year, 4.6 percent. You have  
22 seen us raise BHH amounts.

23 And you have seen us work to get childcare costs down.  
24 So, we are trying to increase the resources and reduce the  
25 strain on families and hopefully that total equation will

1 create benefits for our families and our troops.

2 Senator Gillibrand: But will you consider removing  
3 BHH from the calculation for BNA?

4 Secretary Austin: We will do whatever what is ever  
5 feasible, what we are allowed to do by law.

6 Senator Gillibrand: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

7 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Gillibrand.  
8 Senator Cotton, please.

9 Senator Cotton: Mr. Secretary, I want to return to  
10 the issue of the strikes in Syria last week and Senator  
11 Wicker's line of questioning about the timing of  
12 notification to Congress. You said that you "should have  
13 notified Congress earlier."

14 These attacks happened against our troops, killing one  
15 contractor early in the morning eastern time. Do you  
16 believe that you should have notified us that morning while  
17 we were voting on amendments directly related to this kind  
18 of attack?

19 Secretary Austin: Again, there is no connection  
20 between when we notified you, Senator, and your vote. The  
21 chairman and I were testifying that morning as well, so as  
22 soon as we came out of testimony, we began work on crafting  
23 response options.

24 Senator Cotton: Secretary Austin, I don't believe  
25 you. I believe that your office specifically withheld

1 notification of this deadly strike against Americans  
2 because the Rubio amendment, on which we voted midday,  
3 directly touched on exactly this scenario, not repealing  
4 these use of force resolutions if the President couldn't  
5 certify that Iran was no longer attacking us in Iran, in  
6 Syria.

7 That is what I believe. Nothing you can say is going  
8 to change my belief about that. And I got to say, I think  
9 I speak for a lot --

10 Secretary Austin: I just want to say, Senator, that  
11 is absolutely not true.

12 Senator Cotton: Maybe you didn't personally do it,  
13 maybe you didn't personally do it, but I believe entirely  
14 that people in your office did that. You have a vast  
15 legislative operation, as Senator Wicker pointed out. Do  
16 you really expect us to believe that they didn't know that  
17 we were voting on a Rubio amendment that directly, directly  
18 covered exactly this kind of attack? I don't believe that.

19 I don't believe it. I believe there was a conscious  
20 decision made not to inform Congress because you fear that  
21 it might lead to the passage of the Rubio amendment, which  
22 would kill the entire bill.

23 But I want to move on to a more important part, which  
24 is these attacks in the first place. How many attacks has  
25 Iran or its proxies launched against American positions in

1 Iran and Syria since Joe Biden took office?

2 Secretary Austin: There has been about 83 attacks, I  
3 think, since -- in the last several years.

4 Senator Cotton: That is a lot of attacks over two  
5 years. How many times have we retaliated against Iran or  
6 its proxies?

7 Secretary Austin: We have launched four major  
8 strikes, Senator. But an attack can consist of a number of  
9 things. It can consist of, you know, a rocket that is  
10 fired in the direction of one of our bases but not  
11 effective.

12 Senator Cotton: Mr. Secretary, I am well aware of  
13 what an attack could entail. So, we are -- so 79 and 4 is  
14 Iran's record right now. And our four attacks have not  
15 been against Iran, right, they have been against Iran's  
16 proxies in Iraq or Syria or elsewhere.

17 Secretary Austin: That last attack was against IRGC,  
18 Quds force infrastructure and --

19 Senator Cotton: Okay. And after we retaliated, Iran  
20 attacked us again, injuring another American, didn't it?

21 Secretary Austin: They did.

22 Senator Cotton: And we retaliated for that attack on  
23 Friday.

24 Secretary Austin: We have not yet, Senator.

25 Senator Cotton: So, what kind of signal do we think

1 this sends to Iran when they can attack us 83 times since  
2 Joe Biden has become President, we only respond 4.

3 Maybe it is because they know that until -- that we  
4 will not retaliate, until they kill an American, which  
5 emboldens them to keep launching these attacks which kill  
6 Americans.

7 What are our rules of engagement for on the ground  
8 Commanders throughout the region? Are they allowed to  
9 engage immediately if their position has been attacked?

10 Secretary Austin: They can and they do. And there  
11 have been several instances of that.

12 Senator Cotton: I have got to say, I have heard from  
13 company and field grade Commanders who have been in the  
14 region very recently, and they say there is a lot of  
15 confusion over that.

16 Let me move to a related topic, and that is our  
17 operations of unmanned aircraft in the Black Sea. Russia  
18 down one of our Reaper aircraft a couple of weeks ago.  
19 Have we flown those aircrafts into the exact same space  
20 since it was downed?

21 Secretary Austin: We have flown on the path that we  
22 want to fly in the Black Sea to collect intelligence  
23 information.

24 Senator Cotton: So that is a far -- that is far from  
25 a yes answer. I said, have we flown in the same airspace?

1 You have said we have flown in the path we want to fly to  
2 collect intelligence. So, if we adjusted our flight  
3 patterns, have we moved down of that airspace?

4 Secretary Austin: We will fly the pass that we feel  
5 necessary to collect intelligence information.

6 Senator Cotton: So according to an Administration  
7 official from an article in CNN on March 21st, we are not  
8 flying in that airspace "to avoid being too provocative."  
9 So, are we removing our aircraft out of the space from that  
10 which that Reaper flew because we don't want to be too  
11 provocative towards Russia?

12 Secretary Austin: Sir, you may have heard me say  
13 immediately after this incident to -- that I told my  
14 counterpart that we are going to fly the skies, the  
15 international skies, and sail the seas as we wish. And so,  
16 we continue to fly in that airspace.

17 Senator Cotton: In the exact same airspace where that  
18 Reaper was downed?

19 Secretary Austin: Again --

20 Senator Cotton: You haven't pulled back from Crimea  
21 or from the Ukrainian or the Russian coasts?

22 Secretary Austin: I recommend we take this to a  
23 closed --

24 Senator Cotton: And I think it answers the question,  
25 though, and it gets to the point I am trying to make here.

1 We continue to deter ourselves against our adversaries. We  
2 let Iran launch 83 attacks against us and we only respond 4  
3 times.

4 Russia downs one of our aircraft and we pull back from  
5 that airspace just like we have been delaying ballistic  
6 missile tests over the last two year, or over the last  
7 year. Just like we let a Chinese spy balloon float across  
8 the country when we could have done it across the  
9 Aleutians.

10 Now, I don't necessarily think these are Secretary of  
11 Defense calls. I think these are Commander-in-Chief calls.  
12 But we shouldn't be surprised when our adversaries get  
13 emboldened and more aggressive in all these theaters when  
14 we continue to deter ourselves.

15 Chairman Reed: Have you finished, sir? Thank you,  
16 Senator Cotton. Let me recognize Senator Blumenthal.

17 Senator Blumenthal: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. Thank you  
18 all for being here. Thank you for your service, not only  
19 over many decades, but in this role, and particularly at a  
20 time when the threats are as great as any time that most of  
21 us can remember.

22 I have been to Ukraine three times over roughly the  
23 last year visiting Kyiv and President Zelenskyy, and  
24 recently followed you, Mr. Secretary, to visit our base in  
25 Bavaria, where we are training Ukrainian fighters in the

1 use of Bradley armored vehicles and combined arms.

2 And the bond between our soldiers and their fighters  
3 is extraordinary because of our respect for their will to  
4 fight. And that is what I have seen in the Ukrainian  
5 people. They will fight with pitchforks, if necessary, but  
6 they need a lot more.

7 And I want to thank you and the President for  
8 committing to do whatever it takes. I think I am almost  
9 quoting exactly. And in my view, whatever it takes  
10 includes airplanes, aircraft. Would you agree that as a  
11 strictly military matter, and you know a lot more about  
12 this than most of us at this side of the table, that that  
13 kind of air support from the United States is going to be  
14 necessary, and the sooner, the better?

15 Secretary Austin: Thanks, Senator. First of all,  
16 thanks for your continued support and for the support of  
17 Congress. It is phenomenal what we have been able to do in  
18 what we have helped Ukraine be, the kinds of effects they  
19 have been able to achieve based upon our support.

20 And as you know, the United States of America leads  
21 the way on that. We talk to our counterparts every week,  
22 sometimes multiple times a week, you know, and I meet with  
23 them in person every month.

24 And what they need right now more than anything else  
25 is air defense. And that is the critical need on the



1 battlefield, and they also need long range fires in armored  
2 capability. And we are providing them a real substantial  
3 package of capability in terms of platforms, but not just  
4 that, we are also providing training and we are providing  
5 sustainment.

6 And sir, you witnessed some of that coming together  
7 when you were in Grafenwohr, and I really appreciate you  
8 going out there and visiting our troops. But I think those  
9 capabilities will make the biggest difference in the near  
10 term. And they must be successful, you know, going  
11 forward.

12 You know, we know the spring fighting seasons in front  
13 of us here and we want to make sure that they have what  
14 they need to be successful.

15 Senator Blumenthal: And I apologize for interrupting,  
16 Mr. Secretary, but I want to come back to the aircraft,  
17 because as you have identified it very clearly and I agree  
18 totally, air defense is critical.

19 We have a narrow window of time, and in fact, this  
20 spring will be crucial. And some of our allies are  
21 providing planes, but we have the resources, and only we  
22 really have the resources to provide the aircraft necessary  
23 for fully robust air defense.

24 Secretary Austin: So, if you are talking to F-16s,  
25 whenever you make that decision, in order to put together

1 what needs to be put together, to provide that capability,  
2 is going to be 18 months or so in the making.

3 And that won't help them in this current fight. And  
4 will they have a capability at some point down the road?  
5 We all believe that they will. And what that looks like,  
6 it could look like F-16s. It could look like some other  
7 fourth generation aircraft. But we will continue to work  
8 with our allies and partners to make sure that Ukraine has  
9 what it needs.

10 Senator Blumenthal: Thank you. Thank you, Mr.  
11 Secretary. And again, I want to thank you and the  
12 President for your commitment, which I think is deeply  
13 appreciated by the people of Ukraine as well. I want to  
14 focus on a very narrow issue relating to procurement, which  
15 is the helicopter acquisition and development for the FLRAA  
16 contract.

17 A number of my colleagues and myself had asked the  
18 Army for an explanation for the award of that contract --  
19 it is under challenge right now. Will you commit to  
20 provide us with an adequate explanation? So far, the Army  
21 has been totally unforthcoming.

22 Secretary Austin: I will commit, Senator, once the  
23 protest is resolved, we will make sure you get a thorough  
24 briefing on this issue.

25 Senator Blumenthal: Shouldn't we have it now rather

1 than at some indefinite point in the future?

2 Secretary Austin: Well, sir, you know that it is  
3 inappropriate to once -- while this is under protest, to do  
4 that. So, I commit to you that as soon as we can, we will  
5 provide you that information.

6 Senator Blumenthal: Thank you. I want to ask one  
7 last question. Suicide among our service members continues  
8 to be a desperately important problem. I will be meeting  
9 later today or this week with the family of Master of Arms  
10 Seaman Recruit Xavier Mitchell Sandor, who took his own  
11 life while he was stationed on the USS George Washington.

12 He was among three who committed suicide while that  
13 ship was under maintenance and repair. Similar kinds of  
14 suicides have happened on other ships under similar  
15 circumstances. The report is still outstanding. There  
16 have been no completion of the investigation a year after  
17 that event. I know you are very concerned about the  
18 troops.

19 Nobody cares more than you do about the well-being.  
20 And I include the chairman in that sentiment. Can you tell  
21 us that additional measures will be taken and that there  
22 will be a report forthcoming about Xavier Sandor?

23 Secretary Austin: I will. I will make sure that  
24 Secretary Del Toro ensures that this investigation moves on  
25 a timely fashion and in a very thorough fashion.

1 I would also tell you that I have asked Secretary Del  
2 Toro to make sure that he is personally focused on this  
3 issue, specifically related to ships that are in  
4 maintenance and the berthing associated with those ships.

5 He has, in this budget, Senator, asked for some \$258  
6 billion to address that issue. And I think that is a good  
7 start, but I think we need to continue to make sure our  
8 leadership is doing the right thing, that we have adequate  
9 housing for our young men and women. They are our national  
10 assets. And I truly believe that he will remain focused on  
11 this, but I will as well, so.

12 Senator Blumenthal: Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

13 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Blumenthal.

14 Senator Rounds, please.

15 Senator Rounds: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me  
16 begin by thanking all of you for your service to our  
17 country, recognizing Secretary Austin, not just for your  
18 time in uniform, but your time as Secretary as well.

19 General Milley, recognizing your time as Chairman of the  
20 Joint Chiefs, but not only that, but the amount of time  
21 that you and your family have served our country, we  
22 sometimes gloss over that.

23 And I recognize I don't have a lot of time, but I just  
24 want to make this clear, it is not just the time that you  
25 spend in the Pentagon, it is the time that you have spent

1 boots on the ground.

2 You have had operational deployments, including the  
3 Multinational Force Observer, Sinai, Egypt, Operation Just  
4 Cause in Panama, Operation Uphold Democracy in Haiti,  
5 Operation Joint Endeavor, Bosnia, Operation Iraqi Freedom  
6 in Iraq, and three tours during Operation Enduring Freedom  
7 in Afghanistan.

8 You have also deployed to Somalia and Colombia. We  
9 thank you for your service to our country, sir, and your  
10 family as well, because when you deploy there, deployed as  
11 well. Thank you.

12 Gentlemen, both for Secretary Austin and Chairman  
13 Milley, last week you both clarified that you support  
14 waiting until the conclusion of the ongoing study before  
15 any decision should be made on auctioning parts of or any  
16 of the 3.1 to 3.45 gigahertz spectrum band.

17 My question is, should an auction occur before the  
18 study is complete, what are the real-world impacts on  
19 National Security from a defense and budgetary perspective?

20 Secretary Austin: It would be devastating, Senator,  
21 and it would take us somewhere north of 20 years to try to  
22 recover from a loss of that spectrum. Parts of that  
23 spectrum are vital to our national defense and the  
24 protection of the homeland.

25 And in, you know, in order to describe exactly --

1 well, you know, what the specific platforms are, but we  
2 would have to go to a classified section to speak in detail  
3 about this. But I would tell you that this is not  
4 something you can fix overnight once you break it. It will  
5 take 20 years plus to recover from that.

6 Senator Rounds: Thank you, General Milley.

7 General Miley: Same thing, Senator. I firmly believe  
8 that we should wait till the study is measured twice, that  
9 one sort of thing. But we don't want to vacate because of  
10 the severe National Security implications to that.

11 The sharing is obviously a goal for everybody, but it  
12 is how you share and the technical capability to do that,  
13 and that is what the study should tell us. We want to make  
14 a fully informed decision, and the Secretary and I will be  
15 making those recommendations and writing to the President  
16 when the time comes.

17 Senator Rounds: Thank you, sir, once again, for  
18 Chairman Milley, as the principal military adviser to the  
19 President, would you say that it's essential for you to be  
20 able to provide an independent recommendation about  
21 spectrum sharing and its impact on National Security to the  
22 President?

23 General Miley: Yes, I do. I would also say, though,  
24 that every recommendation I make to the President is an  
25 independent military best military advice, no matter what

1 the topic. The Secretary is very good about that, and I  
2 will always inform the Secretary if I disagree with the  
3 Secretary ahead of time.

4 But he and I were always in there together with the  
5 President and I will always make it independent best  
6 military advice recommendation. That is why I signed, when  
7 I was confirmed, that I would do that with the Senate as  
8 part of this committee, as part of becoming the  
9 confirmation process. So, I will always do that and every  
10 chairman should always do that.

11 Senator Rounds: Thank you, sir. Secretary Austin,  
12 INDOPACOM has listed an unfunded requirement of \$147  
13 million for the development of a missile defense system for  
14 Guam.

15 Can you discuss how that decision by the Department  
16 not to fund this INDOPACOM requirement comports with the  
17 Department's priority to defend Guam?

18 Secretary Austin: Thanks, Senator. As you know, we  
19 have and we continue to invest heavily in the defense of  
20 Guam, and that work is ongoing. Again, there is always  
21 choices that we have to make in a specific time horizon.  
22 And in this case, that is a capability that I think we can  
23 and will consider going forward.

24 Senator Rounds: I think part of the reason for the  
25 question is because there has been some criticism on the

1 Department providing a list of unfunded requests. Would  
2 you agree that this one should be very seriously considered  
3 by Congress?

4 Secretary Austin: As you know, Senator, we are  
5 required, or the Service Chiefs and Commanders are required  
6 by law to submit those unfunded requests. And I do believe  
7 that all of our Commanders and Chiefs believe that what is  
8 on there is important.

9 Now, I have asked our Commanders and our Chiefs to  
10 make sure that they build their requirements for readiness  
11 and also combat capability into their base budget. And so,  
12 we try to do that at every turn. But at some point, in  
13 time, there are choices that you have to make.

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

15 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Rounds. Senator  
16 Hirono, please.

17 Senator Hirono: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank all  
18 three of you for being here today, and especially for  
19 General Milley. Thank you very much for your 43 years of  
20 continuous service. I extend to you my thanks and respect.

21 For Secretary Austin, investments in the military's  
22 infrastructure are directly correlated to our readiness and  
23 ability to execute deterrence. However, as the people of  
24 Hawaii saw from the disaster at Red Hill, military  
25 infrastructure also impacts our cities and towns. Fuel,



1 chemical, and sewage spills have lasting impacts on our  
2 lands and erode the trust of service members and their  
3 communities.

4 We must invest in the systems they rely on each day.  
5 Basic things like pipelines, power grids, and barracks.  
6 Yet this year, in Hawaii alone, there is over half a  
7 billion in unfunded infrastructure improvements on the  
8 service's unfunded priorities list.

9 Secretary Austin, how is the Department ensuring that  
10 infrastructure maintenance and modernization needs are met  
11 before disasters like Red Hill occur? And basically, don't  
12 we need to get more of these projects off unfunded  
13 priorities lists?

14 Secretary Austin: These are, to your point, Senator,  
15 requirements that are critical and they should be met as  
16 soon as possible. And in my budget, I have asked for \$5.1  
17 billion to increase operational effectiveness and  
18 survivability. You know, part of that has to do with the  
19 effects that are caused by climate.

20 But nonetheless, you know, those are facts or real  
21 facts. And so, we will continue to invest in this, but to  
22 your point, services should invest in this to make sure  
23 that the infrastructure they need to support them is, in  
24 fact, you know, first rate.

25 Senator Hirono: Secretary Austin, you know that I

1 have been very much focused on those kinds of  
2 infrastructure needs. What comes out of our pipes, whether  
3 electricity -- those continue to capture my attention and  
4 be assured that I will continue to focus on these issues  
5 and the needs being met.

6 Mr. Secretary, in your tenure, you have issued several  
7 policies that increase servicemembers access to childcare,  
8 which you have mentioned, institute parental leave, which  
9 is very popular, and ensure access to reproductive health  
10 care for all women no matter where they are stationed.

11 These are prudent changes that put our people first,  
12 and I appreciate your leadership on these issues. Senator  
13 Austin, how did you identify these servicemember needs?  
14 And once those requirements were a record, what was the  
15 process to implement updated policies?

16 Secretary Austin: Well, I talked to our troops. I  
17 talked to the family members. I, you know, as I go around  
18 the country and around the world, you know, I am very much  
19 interested in what their challenges are and how we can do  
20 things to make life better for them. And with your help,  
21 we have been able to do some things.

22 That includes the things that you have mentioned,  
23 Senator, but also the pay raises, the raise in BAH and BAS.  
24 And we are asking you for another pay raise this year.  
25 Probably the biggest pay raise for our troops and civilians

1 in decades. But that is how I get the input by engaging  
2 the troops and the family members.

3 Senator Hirono: You have been heavily criticized for  
4 your decisions to enable particularly women servicemembers  
5 to attain reproductive health. And I, for one, commend you  
6 for that.

7 And I want you to stay the course. In the same vein  
8 of wanting to support our service members, I do want to  
9 mention that there is the potential for significant cuts to  
10 the cost of living of Hawaii's servicemembers. And I have  
11 noted this before. And I think that these are huge cuts  
12 for Hawaii servicemembers are unjust and unfair, and I hope  
13 that there will be a reconsideration of that decision.

14 I also want to note, I have been asking about missile  
15 defense of Hawaii for quite some time. I had a productive  
16 meeting yesterday with leaders from your staff about their  
17 roles in and plans for the current and future missile  
18 defense of Hawaii. While there is certainly more work to  
19 be done to establish and execute a long-term plan for the  
20 missile defense of Hawaii, I am encouraged to see the  
21 Department treating this issue with the seriousness it  
22 demands. I remain focused on it, on the issue, as I  
23 request updates from your staff.

24 Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

25 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Hirono. Senator

1 Ernst, please.

2 Senator Ernst: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I just want  
3 to state for the record that I am adamantly opposed to the  
4 DOD's new policy on allowing travel expenses for those that  
5 are going to other states to seek abortions.

6 I think it is incredibly important that we remain  
7 adherent to the Hyde Amendment, which prohibits taxpayer  
8 dollars from going towards abortions. I know this is an  
9 extension of travel services for family members and those  
10 service members, but again, those are taxpayer dollars  
11 being spent to fund the extension of an abortion.

12 I am adamantly opposed. I know that there are others  
13 that are on this committee that agree as well. We are not  
14 saying that women can't seek abortions. They can do that,  
15 but that is to be privately funded.

16 So, thank you both, gentlemen, for being here this  
17 morning. And Secretary, I do worry that there is a  
18 mismatch between strategy and resources at the heart of the  
19 President's budget. The national defense strategy calls  
20 this a "decisive decade" and commits to act urgently to  
21 strengthen deterrence against the pacing threat of China.

22 So General Milley, would investments in posture  
23 presence and lethal capabilities like long range fires  
24 reduce our risk in the Western Pacific?

25 General Miley: Absolutely, long range fires would

1 reduce our risk. Not only -- anywhere, but for sure yes --  
2 That is correct.

3 Senator Ernst: Thank you, General Milley. So, I know  
4 that you addressed this with Senator Rounds, but Secretary  
5 Austin, as we discuss those unfunded requirements, we see  
6 that we are three and a half billion dollars short in the  
7 INDOPACOM, which includes critical strike capabilities and  
8 posture enhancements.

9 So, I do hope that this is something we can work with  
10 those Commanders on those requirements. I think it is  
11 incredibly important and I know my colleague from Alaska  
12 may address our requirements in defending Taiwan, but it is  
13 incredibly important.

14 If we are saying in the national defense strategy that  
15 this is a decisive decade, we need to act accordingly. And  
16 as Congress, we must fund accordingly. Chairman Milley, as  
17 you know, our special operations forces are a strategic  
18 capability. And how can soft help deter and defeat great  
19 power competitors?

20 General Miley: Well for Special Forces, regardless of  
21 theater, relative to a great power competitor, there is  
22 ongoing intense competition in the so-called gray space.  
23 They play a key role in that area. In addition to that,  
24 they can provide tremendous capability in train, advise,  
25 assist in indigenous partners and allies and region.

1 That's important.

2 Also, I would argue that irregular warfare is often an  
3 overlooked component. And as you start looking at larger  
4 conventional war, irregular warfare plays a very key role  
5 in all forms of war. And that will play a key role in any  
6 great power war as well.

7 So those are some of the key things, that strategic  
8 reconnaissance, there is development of the battlespace  
9 events force operations, the whole litmus test or a litany  
10 of capabilities that special operations forces bring that  
11 have a direct role prior to the onset of hostilities and  
12 can contribute to the deterrence of war with any great  
13 power.

14 Senator Ernst: Very good. And I appreciate that  
15 because you answered my next question about surrogate  
16 forces and partnering with those forces and indigenous  
17 actors, and they do help soft compete against great powers,  
18 so I do appreciate that. Secretary Austin, will the  
19 Department's guidance to the SOF enterprise place our great  
20 power competition above counterterrorism and crisis  
21 response mission?

22 Secretary Austin: I am sorry, Senator, I missed the  
23 question --

24 Senator Ernst: Yes, SOF, as it applies to great power  
25 competition, will you be placing their mission with great

1 power competition over the other mission of deterring  
2 terrorism?

3 Secretary Austin: We have to strike a balance, and we  
4 see our SOF forces doing that. I know you have talked to  
5 our special operations force Combatant Commander. He is  
6 looking at this in a very methodical way and making sure  
7 that he maintains a balance of capability that can serve  
8 both challenges there.

9 And they are doing a great job. And I have seen some  
10 of our Tier 1 forces very rapidly transition and start  
11 thinking about, you know, how they are going to be  
12 relevant, not just thinking about it, but developing  
13 capability to be relevant in great power competition. At  
14 the same time, keeping a good handle on transnational  
15 terrorist organizations.

16 Senator Ernst: Thank you. I appreciate it. I think  
17 it is incredibly important that we continue to fund our SOF  
18 as necessary because they do strike a balance between great  
19 power competition, working in that gray zone, and also  
20 deterring terrorism around the globe.

21 So, I would just encourage members of this committee  
22 to continue to focus on the strength within our SOF forces.  
23 Chairman Milley, thank you very much for your service to  
24 our great United States Army, as well as the Joint Force.

25 And also, my best wishes to Hollyanne. We know that

1 behind every great leader is someone who supports them  
2 thoroughly, and she has been a tremendous force in working  
3 with our Gold Star families, with all of the members of  
4 their service and their families. So, my best wishes to  
5 you and your entire family. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

6 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Ernst. Senator  
7 Kaine, please.

8 Senator Kaine: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And thank you  
9 to the witnesses. General Milley, I also want to  
10 compliment you on your stellar career, and I also offer the  
11 congratulations of your college classmate, my wife, Anne,  
12 who I mentioned I would see you today, and she wanted me to  
13 extend her congratulations as well.

14 On the 15th of the month, during our personnel  
15 subcommittee hearing, Senator Kelly and I asked Secretary  
16 Cisneros and Martinez Lopez about implementation of the  
17 Brandon Act. I appreciate both of you in your opening  
18 statements talked about the need to get a hold of military  
19 suicide issues and resources that are being devoted to  
20 this.

21 We asked the Secretaries about Brandon Act  
22 implementation and also about a report on Brandon Act  
23 implementation that we were supposed to receive that is  
24 overdue. I don't really want to get into that with you  
25 here today, but just to put it on the radar screen, that



1 during the course of the development of the NDAA, we really  
2 want to get into the implementation of the Brandon Act that  
3 we passed.

4 Make sure that it's being implemented. Find out if  
5 there are things, we can do to make that implementation  
6 easier. And I really want to work on that between now and  
7 the time that we take up the NDAA in committee. It is  
8 possible that we don't need to do anything more on that  
9 space if we are convinced that implementation is moving  
10 out.

11 If we are not convinced of that, we will need to do  
12 more, and I just wanted to kind of put that on the record  
13 to begin. Secretary, I also want to ask you about your  
14 recent trip to Iraq.

15 I think it was either two or three weeks ago that you  
16 were there and reports suggest you had productive meetings,  
17 both with political leadership, Prime Minister Al Sudani,  
18 but also with military leadership. Could you describe that  
19 visit for the committee?

20 Secretary Austin: Well, first of all, let me tell you  
21 that our troops are doing well there, and they are enabling  
22 and helping their host, the Iraqi security forces, and they  
23 are very much valued by the Iraqi leadership. The prime  
24 minister was very complimentary of their performance and  
25 the value that they add.

1           Good meeting with the prime minister and his  
2 leadership. You know, I think, you know, it is not only  
3 me, but other leaders in the region are also saying that  
4 that, you know, the prime minister shows a lot of promise  
5 in terms of a person that is willing to work with others to  
6 move things forward.

7           Senator Kaine: Describe the current state of the mil-  
8 to-mil relationship. So, talking about the prime minister  
9 discussions, but we have got about 2,500 U.S. troops in  
10 Iraq, as you point out. We are being hosted. They are  
11 there at the invitation of the Iraqi government because  
12 they value the United States as a partner. Describe a  
13 little bit about the current mil-to-mil relationship.

14           Secretary Austin: I think the mil-to-mil  
15 relationship, Senator, is good, really good. And again, I  
16 think our partners understand the value that we add to  
17 their overall effort. And if you unplug that, then what  
18 happens with their efforts to maintain pressure on ISIS?

19           What happens with their efforts to continue to develop  
20 their professional force? And so, I think we are very much  
21 appreciated. And what I saw was goodness. You know, I  
22 think, you know that the Commander there is doing all the  
23 right things and working in conjunction with the Ambassador  
24 to continue to move things forward. So, I was really  
25 encouraged by what I saw.

1           Senator Kaine: You have had a number of chapters in  
2 Iraq, in '03, and then in 2010, and then as CENTCOM  
3 Commander, and some of these chapters are with an Iraq that  
4 was an adversary of the United States. How would you  
5 characterize this relationship where they are at their  
6 invitation and now, we seem to be working in partnership to  
7 help them advance security in their country and in the  
8 region.

9           Secretary Austin: It truly is remarkable. And you  
10 cheated me on one of the rotations there. I had three  
11 rotations to Iraq --

12          Senator Kaine: I left one out.

13          Secretary Austin: But, you know, this is something  
14 that has developed over time and it is developing in a very  
15 meaningful way. It hasn't always been easy. It has been  
16 lumpy from time to time. But I think we are in a pretty  
17 good place now, and this is something that we are going to  
18 have to work on each and every day.

19          And we know, Senator, that not every person in Iraq  
20 believes that, you know, that Americans ought to be there.  
21 But the government is very much appreciative of what we  
22 bring in and what we are doing to train and enable their  
23 forces. So, you know, I think we are in a pretty good  
24 place.

25          Senator Kaine: Well, I appreciate that, Mr.

1 Secretary. I think that is important, that one of the  
2 capacities the U.S. has shown throughout our history is  
3 the, to use a biblical phrase, to beat a sword into a  
4 plowshare.

5 To take a nation that was an enemy, and over time, and  
6 as you point out, bumpy, not always smooth, but over time  
7 turn the relationship into one of partnership, not one of  
8 being an adversary.

9 And that is an important aspect of the U.S., Iraq  
10 relationship, and it also sends a message to others that  
11 that is something that the United States can do and we can  
12 be proud of. I appreciate your testimony. I yield back.

13 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator Kaine.  
14 Senator Cramer, please.

15 Senator Cramer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you  
16 both, all three, for your service. A special thank you,  
17 General Milley, for your decades of service. I want to  
18 jump down to talking back about Ukraine a little bit.

19 There have been a lot of reasons, rationale, excuses,  
20 perhaps for not providing certain advanced weapons systems,  
21 some legitimate I am sure, maybe all of them, I don't know.  
22 But of course, oftentimes that leads to eventually  
23 providing them. But one system we have never offered, and  
24 I haven't heard a lot of talk about are the MQ-9s.

25 But since we just lost one recently in the Black Sea,

1 where it is probably more likely to be recovered by Russia  
2 than the United States, and the fact that the Air Force  
3 wants to retire 48 older MQ-9s, is there any chance that  
4 the United be a reasonable system to offer Ukraine, either  
5 one -- or maybe start with Secretary Austin.

6 Secretary Austin: Yes. As we look at this, Senator,  
7 as you know, that air domain is a very hostile airspace  
8 because of the, you know, the capability that the Russians  
9 have for air defense. And it is not a survivable platform  
10 if they try to use that in that environment.

11 Senator Cramer: General Milley.

12 General Miley: Yes, that is -- one, it is not  
13 survival. It is big and slow. It is going to get nailed  
14 by the Russian air defense systems. And in terms of its  
15 capabilities, I am not sure what it will get you beyond the  
16 smaller, faster, more nimble UAV systems that we are  
17 providing, as well as some other countries are providing.  
18 So, I think that it is a good system for certain uses in  
19 certain environments, but in the current situation in  
20 Ukraine, it may not be the best system.

21 Senator Cramer: Thank you. Secretary Austin, I want  
22 to now go to back to China a little bit. And you are  
23 probably familiar with the what I consider the nearly year  
24 and a half of torment that the city of Grand Forks went  
25 through while considering an investment by the Chinese

1 Communist Party investors for Fufeng, which would have  
2 provided a wet corn milling facility 12 miles from the  
3 Grand Forks Air Force Base, 12 miles from the 319th  
4 Reconnaissance Wing, and now an SDA ground station for low-  
5 Earth orbiting satellites.

6 And after sort of cutting a deal and then going to  
7 CFIUS, where CFIUS has spent 60 days determining they  
8 didn't have jurisdiction. And finally, after, I don't  
9 know, 14 months or so of all of this, the Air Force finally  
10 came out and said it would present a significant risk.

11 And that, I think, has helped kill the project,  
12 although I understand there is now a 90 day pause. My hope  
13 for all of that is not only that Grand Forks avoided an  
14 unfortunate situation, but that many other communities  
15 might have avoided as well.

16 Could you talk to us just a little bit about either in  
17 the context of Fufeng and Grand Forks, or the broader  
18 context of are we giving adequate cover and information and  
19 coaching perhaps to other communities around the country?  
20 Because it is my understanding that this is not necessarily  
21 a unique circumstance to Grand Forks.

22 Secretary Austin: Well, first of all, Senator, let me  
23 thank you for your personal leadership on this issue. And  
24 to the point that you are making, this applies to  
25 installations all around the United States of America.

1           And we will continue to emphasize to the Service  
2 Chiefs, Commanders, secretaries, and that we have to be  
3 vigilant about what is going on outside of our fences. We  
4 have got to work with the communities to make sure that we  
5 do have some kind of a situational awareness.

6           And we have to advocate for the protection of our, you  
7 know, our bases and installations. And again, every one of  
8 these cases will be complex, but there are cases that we  
9 must take on. But again, for your leadership in area.

10          Senator Cramer: Well, I appreciate you saying it that  
11 way, actually, because I think you are right. I think we  
12 need to, "take them on," and rather than sort of punt them  
13 to the CFIUS process or some other political process,  
14 particularly when it comes to the Chinese Communist Party  
15 and their involvement, and their ability -- not just  
16 ability, but obvious willingness to do recon in all sorts  
17 of matters and ways, and so I appreciate that.

18          And I my hope, like I said, is that the experience  
19 that ground force went through is not just in vain to the  
20 rest of the country, but rather perhaps sheds light on this  
21 issue throughout the country. So, thank you for that.

22          And again, thank you, General Milley, for your decades  
23 of service. And I yield. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

24          Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Cramer. Senator  
25 Warren, please.

1           Senator Warren: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank  
2 you all for your service to our nation. This year's  
3 Department of Defense requests an \$842 billion budget, one  
4 of the largest budgets in history.

5           Now, despite the massive size of this budget request,  
6 the committee is already receiving letters from various  
7 parts of DOD saying that they need billions of dollars  
8 more. DOD calls these unfunded priority lists, I call them  
9 wish lists, and I am concerned about how they distort our  
10 budget process.

11           So, Secretary Austin, if I could let me ask this  
12 directly, are you comfortable with the figure in the  
13 President's proposed budget that it is sufficient to meet  
14 our defense and National Security objectives?

15           Secretary Austin: I am, Senator. As you know, we  
16 made this budget request based upon our strategy. Our  
17 request is directly linked to the capabilities that we need  
18 to execute our strategy. And we spent a lot of time on  
19 that.

20           I have asked the Commanders and Service Chiefs to make  
21 sure that they go after warfighting capability and  
22 readiness in their base budget, and for the most part, you  
23 know, we have done that. But again, we are required by law  
24 --

25           Senator Warren: I understand. So, we are going to go



1 there. We are going to go there, Mr. Secretary. Now,  
2 Secretary Gates understood that leaders at DOD can always  
3 find a gap or a requirement to justify asking for what he  
4 called however many billions dollars more you want.

5 He reduced wish list by about 90 percent, and he was  
6 able to do this during the surge in Afghanistan. Secretary  
7 Austin, you have a unique perspective here because before  
8 you were Secretary of Defense, you were the Commander of a  
9 major Combatant Command, a job that is now held by the  
10 people who are asking for unfunded priorities.

11 When Secretary Gates cut these unfunded lists down,  
12 you were Commanding General of U.S. forces in Iraq.  
13 Secretary Austin, did our National Security suffer when  
14 Secretary Gates cut down the service wish lists?

15 Secretary Austin: I can say that, you know, while we  
16 were in Iraq and Afghanistan, we based upon the support of  
17 Congress, we had what we needed to be able to prosecute our  
18 operations. And so, we didn't go for -- we didn't want for  
19 much of anything.

20 Senator Warren: Okay. So, let's talk then about the  
21 budget process. Each Combatant Commander thinks about how  
22 they could spend more money than you have allocated to them  
23 in this process that you describe.

24 I assume these Combatant Commanders act in absolute  
25 good faith, but they have a narrow perspective. Secretary

1 Austin, in putting together the overall budget, you have to  
2 weigh our global National Security priorities. Do the  
3 Commanders submitting these wish lists have to do the same?

4 Secretary Austin: They are primarily focused on their  
5 region and in what they would like to have for their region  
6 in order to be successful. But again --

7 Senator Warren: I take that as a no. Yes, all right.  
8 You know, as my colleagues on this committee are well  
9 aware, I have been using these budget posture hearings to  
10 ask Combatant Commanders, folks who occupy the roles like  
11 the one you used to serve, about these lists.

12 And almost all of them have defended their requests,  
13 although the justifications vary. Three of them said they  
14 needed the items on this list to address unexpected threats  
15 that couldn't be considered in the budget process.

16 But these same Commanders often repeat the same  
17 requests year after year after year, suggesting that if  
18 there were a real need, they would have worked it into the  
19 underlying budget. Secretary Austin, does DOD have  
20 sufficient tools to address emerging threats without  
21 relying on the unfunded priorities list?

22 Secretary Austin: We do. And again, we account for  
23 that as we build the budget.

24 Senator Warren: Okay. And one last question. Do you  
25 support removing the statutory requirement to send Congress

1 these lists every year? And if so, are you confident that  
2 we could do so without jeopardizing National Security?

3 Secretary Austin: I would support that, Senator.

4 Senator Warren: Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary.  
5 I would also like to submit a letter for the record from  
6 Under Secretary McCord supporting my bill with Senator  
7 King, Senator Lee, and Senator Braun to end the statutory  
8 requirement for these lists. As he notes in the letter  
9 these lists are, "not an effective way to illuminate our  
10 joint priorities."

11 We don't let any other part of Federal Government  
12 behave this way, and it is for a good reason. The budget  
13 process requires making tough choices. I appreciate that  
14 the Secretary leads in that, and I would like to submit  
15 this for the record, Mr. Chairman.

16 Chairman Reed: Without objection.

17 [The information referred to follows:]

18 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 Senator Warren: Thank you.

2 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Warren. Senator  
3 Tuberville, please.

4 Senator Tuberville: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General  
5 Milley, thanks for being here. Thank you for your service.  
6 Secretary Austin, thank for your service, and your call  
7 last week. Secretary McCord, thanks for being here today.  
8 You are not getting a lot of questions but thank you for  
9 being here.

10 You know, I ran for Senate to serve on this committee.  
11 I ran because my dad, he was a World War II veteran. He  
12 earned five Bronze Stars and a Purple Heart, and he died on  
13 active duty. And I ran to support the warfighter. You  
14 know, we owe our freedom to our troops.

15 For 50 years, our all-volunteer force has answered the  
16 call. I think you would agree to that. Since 1973, we  
17 have asked a lot of our Americans, young volunteers, to  
18 fight in Vietnam, Grenada, Bosnia, Somalia, Iraq, Libya,  
19 Syria, and Afghanistan. They have never wavered. In boom  
20 times and bust, young Americans have raised their right  
21 hands to defend the Constitution with their lives, if  
22 necessary.

23 War is hell. You know that better than anybody.  
24 Every recruit should know that. But in the last few years,  
25 we have put them through a different kind of hell. In one

1 of your first acts, Mr. Secretary, you put our military,  
2 every single member, active duty and reserve, through a  
3 mandatory training to root out extremists.

4 That sent a message, Mr. Secretary, that our military  
5 is filled with extremists. Our military is one of the most  
6 diverse organizations in the world. It is full of  
7 patriots. Eight months later, we watched the collapse of  
8 Afghanistan. It was the worst defeat of the United States  
9 in my lifetime and agony for most Americans who watched on  
10 the 20th anniversary of September 11th.

11 That defeat gutted our troops who served there. The  
12 President called it an extraordinary success. That is not  
13 what our veterans of Afghanistan call it. Our withdrawal,  
14 a big letdown to our allies, a military disaster, and  
15 national disgrace. I have talked to leaders all over the  
16 world, they have told me the same thing. Not one general  
17 or political appointee has been held accountable.

18 Senator Tuberville: Now, I want to give you an  
19 example of accountability. General Milley, May 2021, I  
20 sent you a letter asking for, why did we give up Bagram?  
21 Now, you did answer, but it was a few months later. Now  
22 you have 4,500 people, you know, for the next person in  
23 line on the joint staff and a budget of \$250 million. We  
24 have got to find ways to get information back to Congress.

25 Secretary Austin, I sent you a question on September

1 2021. It took almost four months. Congress deserves  
2 better. America deserves better. We all deserve better.  
3 Now we are on the brink of a world war with Russia.

4 China is openly violating our airspace. But it took  
5 Congress to step in and tell our military leaders, you, to  
6 stop throwing our troops out who objected to a vaccine.  
7 Most of them on a religious factor. Given what we put our  
8 troops through in the past two years, it is no wonder that  
9 the Army missed its goal of 15,000 soldiers. And General,  
10 you know, that is an entire division.

11 We can't afford that. And it is getting worse. The  
12 Navy and Air Force will probably miss their numbers this  
13 year. Yet some of my colleagues claim that the real crisis  
14 is my hold on the promotion of 158 general flag officers.  
15 Mind you, these were promotions that the majority leader  
16 can bring to the floor at any time.

17 Those same people claim expanding abortion will make  
18 our military stronger. You know, I want to be clear on  
19 this. My hold has nothing to do with the Supreme Court  
20 decision to the access of abortion. This is about not  
21 forcing the taxpayers of this country to fund abortion.  
22 That has been a bipartisan consensus for more than 40  
23 years.

24 The military has performed abortions for years. All  
25 were cases of rape, incest, and the harm to the mom. Over

1 the past 40 years, I don't recall one military person ever  
2 complaining that we weren't performing enough abortions.

3 Nor did the military raise alarm that our service men  
4 and women were being placed in areas that had restrictive  
5 policies on abortion. Poland's restrictive policies.  
6 Japan. Djibouti. All these theaters have abortion policy.

7 Yet our military changed the policy to do this job in  
8 these different theaters. As of 12 days ago, you all got  
9 the American taxpayer on the hook to pay for travel and  
10 time off for elective abortions.

11 And you did not make this with anybody in this room or  
12 Congress taking a vote. In fact, this contradicts what  
13 Congress has actually voted for. Most of us, some of us in  
14 the room, if not all Senators that have been complaining  
15 about this, have voted for the Hyde Amendment many, many  
16 times.

17 But now, my colleagues on the left, like this abortion  
18 issue is good for a campaign. And that is what this  
19 shouldn't be about. I am not going to let our military be  
20 politicized. I want our military to be the strongest and  
21 deadliest it has ever been. But I also want the  
22 Administration to follow the law. As long as I have a  
23 voice in this body, Congress will write the laws. Not  
24 Secretary Defense, not the Joint Chiefs.

25 General, you said nothing is more expensive than

1 preparing for war or fighting a war. I truly agree. That  
2 is the reason, if we want something to spend money on,  
3 let's pass it and let's put it in the NDAA.

4 You know, I represent Alabama, but I also represent  
5 everybody in this country. Everybody, all 320 million.  
6 All of us do. Y'all represent the military. But you also  
7 are responsible and represent every citizen in this  
8 country. That is the reason this country is so strong and  
9 we all need to understand that.

10 Get on the same page. I am willing to work with you.  
11 I am not here to fight. I am here -- we are all on the  
12 same team. And I want to work with you to make this  
13 happen. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

14 Chairman Reed: I think it is appropriate that the  
15 Secretary and, or the General -- need to respond.

16 Secretary Austin: Well, thank you, sir. And first of  
17 all, let me just say thanks for the support you have given  
18 us to this point. And I really implore you to reconsider  
19 and allow our nominations to move forward. It will make a  
20 significant difference for our force. Just to address a  
21 couple of things that you mentioned.

22 First of all, you said that, you know, I had our  
23 troops focus on rooting out extremism and nothing could be  
24 further from the truth. You know, each of our units,  
25 troops spent a couple of hours talking about a number of



1 things.

2 Now, we have always had regulations against extremist  
3 behavior. And you have heard me say that 99.9 percent of  
4 our troops are focused on the right things each and every  
5 day. But in this case, a small set of actions can have  
6 outsized impact.

7 On the vaccine mandate, the vaccine mandate, in my  
8 view, saved lives and it saved a lot of lives. And so, you  
9 know, I -- we don't see a strong correlation between  
10 vaccine mandate and recruiting. And we don't see that  
11 because we have done the surveys that indicate that that is  
12 just not true, that there is not a strong correlation.

13 Now, on the issue of providing non-covered  
14 reproductive health care for our women, I would just say,  
15 Senator, almost one in five of our troops are women and  
16 they don't get a chance to choose where they are station.

17 So almost 80,000 of our women are stationed in places  
18 that -- where they don't have access to non-covered  
19 reproductive health care. And I heard from our troops, I  
20 heard from our senior leaders, I heard from our Chiefs and  
21 also our Secretaries.

22 And this policy is based on strong legal ground. And  
23 it is not a law, it is a policy. And so, you know, we  
24 obviously don't pass laws in the Department of Defense.  
25 But again, I assure you that we have great respect for this

1 body, Congress, and we will do everything within our power  
2 to make sure that we continue to work with Congress.

3 Again, you supported us in a number of ways, Senator.  
4 I am personally grateful for that support. And I know my  
5 colleagues are as well. Thank you.

6 Chairman Reed: Let me recognize Senator Manchin.

7 Senator Manchin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to  
8 thank all of you for your service and for being here today  
9 to testify. I first want to say to General Milley, I want  
10 to take a moment to thank you for your 43 years of service,  
11 the commitment to our country, and the dedication and  
12 sacrifice your family has made for that with you able to  
13 serve. And I look forward to you have an enjoyment  
14 retirement and your second career.

15 I know whatever it will be, it will be something  
16 special, and we look forward to continuing to work with  
17 you. Secretary Austin, multiple sources, including retired  
18 General Officers, and National Defense Industrial  
19 Association, American Enterprise Institute, and your  
20 colleague, Mr. McCord, have all recognized the damage  
21 failing to pass a budget on time has both in our National  
22 Security and the taxpayers.

23 What I am trying to get to, and Mr. McCord, no one  
24 knows better than you how damaging delays and CRs, have  
25 they been. Previously, you noted that from Fiscal Year

1 1991 to 2010, the average delay for defense appropriation  
2 was 29 days. That was between 1991 and 2010, and that has  
3 since ballooned out to 118 days.

4 Also, we are talking about the American Enterprise  
5 Institute. They threw out a rough estimate of \$200 million  
6 per day, \$200 million per day under the latest continuing  
7 resolution that covered the start of Fiscal Year 2023.  
8 That has a total of \$18 billion.

9 So, I guess what I am asking is both of yours and Mr.  
10 McCord's commitment to get Congress, all of you, to do  
11 accurate. I mean, I know you come in here and you preach  
12 the high heavens, and we seem to not take it seriously at  
13 all.

14 We are talking real dollars now, real dollars. And  
15 they think that basically the budget keeps ballooning out  
16 of sight and we have no oversight whatsoever. If we as  
17 Congress just did our job on time, we are told that  
18 overall, you could save anywhere between 5 to 10 percent of  
19 the request you have. That is \$40 to \$80 billion a year.  
20 Is that an accurate statement?

21 Secretary Austin: I think so. And I defer to  
22 Secretary McCord for exact --

23 Senator Manchin: Well, let him respond also.

24 Secretary Austin: But you are absolutely right,  
25 Senator. And you heard me say in my opening statement

1 that, you know, the best way that Congress can help us in  
2 this year going forward is to try to get an on-time  
3 appropriation done. You know, without that, we can't do  
4 new starts. We can't do a number of things. And you can't  
5 get that time back. You know, it is gone. And so that  
6 puts us further behind in terms of our competition with  
7 adversaries like China.

8 Senator Manchin: Secretary McCord.

9 Mr. McCord: Yes, I would concur. Your figures are  
10 accurate, Senator. And as the Secretary said, we can't buy  
11 back time with money. And that goes on the readiness side  
12 if a missed training rotation due to shortage of funds.

13 But especially harmful on the contracting side, where  
14 we have got areas like the triad where we are trying to  
15 move the bomber into lower production, that we can't take  
16 those next steps under CRs, as you know, and that is the  
17 biggest lost opportunity when it comes to moving forward.  
18 We are very constrained legally.

19 Senator Manchin: So basically, we have nonproductive  
20 money that we are appropriating that is used basically to  
21 make up for the inefficiencies of Congress because of our  
22 budget process.

23 Without you having to say anything or confirm that,  
24 that is what I am taking away from this little conversation  
25 that we have had. And I am doing everything I can to make

1 sure we do our job on time. You know, by April 1st, by  
2 law, House and Senate was supposed to have a budget.

3 By April 15th, by law, we are supposed to have one  
4 reconciled. By September 30th, by law, we are supposed to  
5 pass. That would change the course of what we are doing  
6 how we are spending right now, tremendously, rather than  
7 cutting anything, just being efficient. So, I would hope  
8 that we would all take that seriously.

9 General Milley, as you know, since the beginning of  
10 the Putin's illegal war in Ukraine, the United States has  
11 provided over \$76 billion in justified funding to support  
12 Ukraine in both the military defense of their people in  
13 freedom, but also in humanitarian and infrastructure  
14 support.

15 Can you speak to your confidence in the U.S., NATO,  
16 Ukrainian weapons accountability, and possibly elaborate on  
17 the Joint Strategic oversight plan that was announced by  
18 this year by the Inspector Generals of the DOD, State  
19 Department, USAID. You know, they all --

20 General Milley: As you know, Senator, we do not have  
21 any uniformed troops or civilians, for that matter,  
22 accompanying Ukrainian forces in the front line. We do  
23 have folks working out of the embassy, so they are working  
24 at the Ministry of Defense level. And that is as far as  
25 our own hands-on accountability goes.

1           We do have some other means through reporting that the  
2 Ukrainians report to us, and I will be happy to talk about  
3 that in a classified session. But there are some means  
4 and mechanisms of doing some accountability. It is not as  
5 rigorous as you might think. But I think the biggest way  
6 to measure the accountability is effectiveness on the  
7 Russian forces.

8           These are anti-tank munitions, this artillery is  
9 having a devastating effect on the Russians. As you know,  
10 publicly, the Russians have well over 200,000 casualties.  
11 Their offensive aspirations have come essentially to a  
12 halt.

13           Their capabilities have been -- their ground forces  
14 have been absolutely impaled on this Ukrainian bayonet, so  
15 to speak. And that is largely due to the resources that  
16 the United States and other countries have provided. So,  
17 although we don't have by name DODIC sort of  
18 accountability, shell number accountability, you can see  
19 the accountability on the battlefield.

20           Senator Manchin: Yes, my time is running out. I  
21 would love to ask you about the AUMF, but I am sure you  
22 probably talked about the AUMF before I got here. But  
23 thank you so much. I appreciate it.

24           Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Manchin. Senator  
25 Schmitt, please.

1           Senator Schmitt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Secretary  
2 Austin, by the way, for both of you, thank you for your  
3 service to the country. We really do appreciate it. I do.  
4 I know I do.

5           The folks back home do. Secretary Austin, I wanted to  
6 ask you a couple of questions sort of along the lines of  
7 what Senator Tuberville asked.

8           You mentioned earlier that you didn't want to spend a  
9 lot of time and you thought that there was a drag on our  
10 force, and spending money on things that don't make us a  
11 fighting force. You just mentioned that you don't get the  
12 time back.

13           With the stand down day to address extremism, that  
14 cost the military and taxpayers nearly 5.4 million man  
15 hours. And as we talk about recruitment, I think it is  
16 completely naive to, when we talk about the numbers, to  
17 separate the challenges that we have now from the politics,  
18 the divisive politics that have been injected now into the  
19 military.

20           The military stands as this great meritocracy where  
21 people can achieve great things. But by infusing divisive  
22 DEI trainings, by infusing abortion politics, by infusing  
23 COVID vaccine mandates, it has created division in the  
24 ranks.

25           And we have heard from those military members. And I

1 sent you a letter last week, and I want to ask you, we  
2 talked about in the letter, referenced the \$86.5 million  
3 for dedicated diversity and inclusion activities. I want  
4 to ask you here today, how many DEI related positions exist  
5 in the Department of Defense?

6 Secretary Austin: I can't speak to that specific  
7 number. I will take that question for the record, with  
8 your permission, Senator.

9 Senator Schmitt: Sure.

10 Secretary Austin: In terms of that number, it is a  
11 small percentage of an \$842 billion budget. And I would  
12 just further point out with respect to DEI, I think, you  
13 know, Senator, that Congress requires that we have a DEI  
14 program. In the 2020 NDAA, it states the Secretary of  
15 Defense shall design and implement a five-year strategic  
16 plan for diversity and inclusion in a Department of  
17 Defense.

18 Senator Schmitt: Yes, I don't -- but I don't know  
19 what these activities are, which is the purpose of the  
20 letter. I don't know what materials are being submitted.  
21 We looked, so hopefully the response to the letter will be  
22 in fact be responsive to what actually is being pushed with  
23 these so-called trainings. And then I do want to ask you,  
24 so there were nearly 17,000 -- well there are over 8,000  
25 military men and women who lost their jobs because of the



1 COVID vaccine mandate. Is that correct?

2 Secretary Austin: That is about right.

3 Senator Schmitt: Okay. So, when we talk about  
4 recruitment challenges, are you actively going after to try  
5 to get those 8,000 people back?

6 Secretary Austin: They have the ability to --

7 Senator Schmitt: Well, right. No, I am asking, what  
8 are your efforts?

9 Secretary Austin: They have the ability to reapply  
10 for readmission --

11 Senator Schmitt: Are you recruiting these folks?

12 Secretary Austin: We are not recruiting, but they  
13 have the ability to --

14 Senator Schmitt: -- 8,000 well-trained folks.

15 Secretary Austin: We are recruiting new recruits.

16 Senator Schmitt: Okay. And so, what happens now to  
17 the remaining several thousand who didn't get the vaccine?  
18 Are you intending to fire them as well? There are several  
19 folks that weren't immediately dismissed who refused the  
20 vaccine. They are still in the military. Are you planning  
21 to fire those folks as well?

22 Secretary Austin: The vaccine mandate, Senator, has  
23 been rescinded.

24 Senator Schmitt: So, you don't -- now, even though  
25 they were refusing when you did have the policy?

1 Secretary Austin: That is right.

2 Senator Schmitt: So, your commitment here today is  
3 those folks are not going to lose their jobs.

4 Secretary Austin: Not for a vaccine mandate, Senator  
5 --

6 Senator Schmitt: Okay. Well, I would submit that  
7 with --

8 Secretary Austin: If I could, like would like to go  
9 back to the --

10 Senator Schmitt: Sure.

11 Secretary Austin: -- 5 million hours that you  
12 mentioned. And I would like to ask the chairman, who  
13 submitted that number, where that number came from.

14 Senator Schmitt: We would be happy to back it up. If  
15 you take the stand down day by the number of folks that  
16 didn't work that day, that is where we get the numbers.  
17 So, we would be happy to follow up specifically. I do have  
18 a question --

19 Secretary Austin: That is not accurate, Senator.

20 Senator Schmitt: Okay. Well, how -- maybe you can  
21 answer, how many man hours were sacrificed that day? You  
22 just testified you can't get those hours back. How many  
23 hours were sacrificed on the stand down day?

24 Secretary Austin: Let me ask you and tell you where  
25 the numbers came from.

1           Senator Schmitt: Okay. Well, maybe you can get us  
2 those numbers when you respond to the letter also.

3           Secretary Austin: As simple as this. You know, when  
4 asked to provide that number, his approach was, there are  
5 2.1 million troops, each one each troop spent 2 hours, and  
6 that is where the number comes.

7           Senator Schmitt: Okay. Well, you can't get the time  
8 back, right. Whatever that number was, you can't get that  
9 time back. General Milley, I do want to ask you a  
10 question, because I am limited on time. I do want to ask  
11 you about the Philippines, which I think you had mentioned  
12 in your previous remarks about that strength, that  
13 relationship continues to grow, which I personally think is  
14 critical in the Indo-Pacific.

15           Can you talk about what some of those efforts, where  
16 you think that is headed? I think as we, you know,  
17 obviously the allies that are talked about the most, Japan,  
18 Australia, and India, but I think the Philippines are  
19 critical. Could you talk about the strategic value of  
20 strengthening that relationship?

21           General Milley: Again, Senator, but just a point of  
22 clarification. It is 2.1 million, 2 hours, in fact, 2  
23 hours per person. That is with where the 5.4 million.  
24 That is out of 2.8 billion man hours available, in fact, on  
25 a 10-hour workday, 5 days a week for the U.S. military.

1           Senator Schmitt: Okay. Well, whether we are talking  
2 about dollars or hours, millions still matter. No, no, I  
3 folks, I represent they a million is a big number.

4           General Milley: I am just saying where the math came  
5 from. And on the Philippines, but in broad -- more broadly  
6 than the Philippines, generally the Western Pacific. It is  
7 my view that China is, you heard it in the opening  
8 statement, is trying to become the regional hegemon within  
9 perhaps 10 or 15 years or so.

10           And part of that, of course, is putting the  
11 Philippines and other countries in the region at a  
12 disadvantage. Those countries want the United States  
13 presence there. They clearly do. There is a really an  
14 underreported arms race going on in the Western Pacific  
15 right now. These countries are arming themselves up and  
16 they very much, with very few exceptions, want the United  
17 States there.

18           And that is why the Secretary traveled to the  
19 Philippines. That is why we are looking at access, basing,  
20 and oversight. That is why we are looking at a  
21 repositioning in the Western Pacific. It is a design there  
22 to be forward deployed in order to deter armed conflict  
23 with a great power, great power being China in this case,  
24 and deter Chinese aggression, not only in the Western  
25 Pacific, perhaps elsewhere.

1           So, these are all linked together, tied together.  
2   There are many other initiatives ongoing by the services  
3   and also by other countries as well. But it is really  
4   critical and it is really critical that we get it done  
5   right, and we need to move out with a sense of urgency  
6   because the next five years, I think, are going to be  
7   determinative of really what comes in the future with our  
8   relationship with China.

9           Senator Schmitt: Thank you, General.

10          Chairman Reed: Senator Peters, please.

11          Senator Peters: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And to the  
12   three of you, thank you for your testimony here today and  
13   thank you for the work you do. I also want to begin by  
14   commending the Department's efforts to invest in and  
15   incentivize funding to build semiconductor manufacturing  
16   facilities and advanced research and development activities  
17   at both the national and the regional levels.

18          Under Secretary McCord, could you speak to how the  
19   Fiscal Year 2024 DOD budget request takes advantage of the  
20   CHIPS Act that Congress passed recently, that funding, and  
21   makes the necessary investments to ensure that we have both  
22   a resilient and a robust domestic microelectronics  
23   manufacturing ecosystem for both state of the art as well  
24   as legacy chips.

25          Mr. McCord: Thank you, Senator. First, I just want

1 to say that the Department really appreciates Congressional  
2 leadership on the CHIPS Act. It really speaks to the  
3 recognition of the whole of Government approach needed with  
4 China.

5 CHIPS is separate from our budget in the sense that it  
6 is now a stand-alone authorization. We had prior to that  
7 in the '22 and '23 budget started a pretty robust  
8 microelectronics effort, Under Secretary Austin, that was  
9 really tied to defense specific capabilities like radiation  
10 hardening.

11 What we are doing with CHIPS on top of that then is  
12 really that broader industrial base, the fabrication, labs  
13 to fabs. I understand that that is now -- we are now in  
14 our request for solution source selection for the proposals  
15 that went out in that first year of CHIPS that Congress  
16 created last year.

17 So, we are moving out now with source selection to  
18 actually build out that capability. And then that --  
19 again, that sits on top of the more defense specific  
20 microelectronics, which is over \$2 billion in our budget.

21 Senator Peters: Thank you. And Secretary Austin, the  
22 development of Taiwan's reserve military capacity is  
23 without question a key component of ensuring that their  
24 military is well prepared to deter, and if needed, to  
25 defeat a potential PRC invasion of the island.

1           However, I remain concerned that the Department is not  
2 sufficiently addressing the hardships that exist at the  
3 authority and funding level with increased mil-to-mil and  
4 civ-mil interactions between the United States and Taiwan.  
5 Current policy restricts the level of interaction that U.S.  
6 forces, particularly the National Guard, have with Taiwan,  
7 both CONUS and OCONUS.

8           And additionally, current restrictions do not allow  
9 the Guard to consistently engage with Taiwan under the same  
10 authority that the State partnership program utilizes.  
11 Rather, other authorities must be utilized to justify and  
12 to fund National Guard's involvement in this strategic  
13 relationship.

14           Essentially, what is happening is creating this maze  
15 of funding and authorities that restricts consistent  
16 engagement that is so important. And it creates undue  
17 processes and procedures to coordinate and fund  
18 cooperation.

19           So, my question for you, sir, is how is the Department  
20 reassessing the relevant authorities and lines of funding  
21 to help streamline the National Guard's ability to support  
22 security cooperation efforts with Taiwan?

23           Secretary Austin: We are taking a hard -- thanks for  
24 Senator. We are taking a hard look at, you know, all the  
25 things that we can do to increase the capability in the

1 reserve forces. You are right, Senator, this is a -- this  
2 is critical for them going forward.

3 Our guard has done amazing work with other countries  
4 across the globe. Most recent example, as you know, is the  
5 work that they did in Ukraine prior to this invasion. And  
6 so that kind of engagement, we think, is critical. So, we  
7 are going to continue to find ways to make sure that we are  
8 we are helping as much as we can in accordance with the  
9 Taiwan Relations Act.

10 And so, we will relook all of our policies and  
11 authorities to make sure that we can streamline this as  
12 best possible. In the meantime, we are going to continue  
13 to do what we are doing to increase our capability.

14 Senator Peters: Secretary Austin, on Saturday, Russia  
15 accused Azerbaijan of violating the cease fire, which ended  
16 the 2020 war with Armenia. This comes as Azerbaijan has  
17 blockaded the Lachin corridor, and more than three months -  
18 - for more than three months, leading to what is a  
19 humanitarian crisis in Karabakh.

20 I recently wrote to you and Secretary Blinken  
21 regarding the use of Section 907 waiver authority and the  
22 potential effects of U.S. support in that conflict. My  
23 question for you is the military, is U.S. military aid  
24 supporting the Azerbaijani military in enabling their  
25 aggression against Armenia?



1 Secretary Austin: We are clearly not enabling  
2 aggression, Senator. And as you know, we have had a  
3 relationship with them and we have provided assistance in  
4 some cases, but in all cases, in use monitoring is really  
5 important and we have been focused on that. So, we have we  
6 have taken a responsible approach to this. And again, we  
7 do not support will not support aggressive activity.

8 Senator Peters: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

9 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much. Senator Peters.  
10 Senator Mullin, please.

11 Senator Mullin: Sorry, my microphone came off there.  
12 Thank you, Chairman. And thank you all for being here.  
13 General Milley, I want to thank you again for the phone  
14 call and the conversation we had yesterday. I greatly  
15 appreciate your time on that. And as we stated in that  
16 conversation, I wanted to have something for the record.

17 And so, before I begin with the rest of my questions,  
18 I would like to touch base on the disastrous withdrawal  
19 from American -- from Afghanistan with American troops.  
20 Will you commit to providing a complete after-action report  
21 on the withdrawal to Congress that provides accountability  
22 and transparency for the American people, for the closure  
23 of lives that were lost and the people left behind?

24 General Milley: Absolutely. And the Secretary of  
25 defense has directed that we do that, and that is done by

1 the Joint Staff in CENTCOM as well. But also, the  
2 Department of Defense is doing that, so I absolutely commit  
3 to that.

4 Senator Mullin: Thank you. General, as you know, the  
5 industrial base is going through some changes right now.

6 And prior to the Russian invasion of the Ukraine  
7 sites, or invasion of Ukraine, sites like McAllister's Army  
8 ammunition plant, we are planning on seeing to see a  
9 decrease in productivity.

10 And since this invasion, there's obviously been a new  
11 emphasis on where we are moving. And can you speak to what  
12 we are seeing with plans like McAllister and the ammunition  
13 depots, what the plan is and the future looks like for the  
14 industrial era?

15 General Milley: Yes, the -- thanks, Senator. The  
16 defense industrial base, as the Secretary said, has had  
17 several different sessions to include the SecDef and others  
18 within the Department to really go over the defense  
19 industrial base in some detail.

20 One of the big lessons coming out of Ukraine is the  
21 incredible consumption of conventional munitions and the  
22 conduct of what is really a limited regional war. So, a  
23 great power war, if that were to ever happen, God forbid it  
24 does, the consumption rates would be incredible.

25 So, the Secretary tasked us to go back and review all

1 of the various operational plans and the COCOMS to  
2 determine if our estimates are correct, because if those  
3 estimates then feed into these budgets to buy the  
4 ammunition, that study is ongoing.

5 But we can tell you that, for example, 155 ammunition,  
6 which is in high demand in the Ukraine fight, we report out  
7 daily in a written report to the Secretary defense on all  
8 the various ammunition statuses that we have.

9 I won't go over that in an open session, but in a  
10 closed session, we can do that if you would like. The  
11 bottom line is the defense industrial base is critical to  
12 the defense of the United States, and our ability to  
13 produce, manufacture and produce the logistical capability,  
14 especially munitions, is fundamental.

15 You mentioned McAllister. I had an opportunity to  
16 visit McAllister. That is an incredible facility with  
17 incredibly skilled workers that are highly motivated and it  
18 is really a one of a type facility. It is an amazing  
19 place.

20 Places like that exist elsewhere in the United States  
21 as well, and we need to pay great attention to that defense  
22 industrial base if we are ever going to successfully  
23 compete and hopefully not actually have a war with the  
24 great power.

25 Senator Mullin: What is interesting is the

1 relationship between the public and private service there.  
2 A lot of our industrial areas around the country,  
3 especially in McAllister, where we have the public sector  
4 working with the private sector and delivering missions on  
5 time.

6 And so, I think there is a great amount of pride  
7 there, that I think the communities that have the ability  
8 and actually the desire to help are standing ready. And  
9 McAllister is no different.

10 General Milley: That is great. The workers there are  
11 off the charts incredible. Skilled workers, highly  
12 motivated.

13 Senator Mullin: Focus on Fort Sill just second.  
14 General Rainey stated recently, the Army Futures Command  
15 will be reviewing their use of cross-functional teams.  
16 Fort Sill in Lawton, Oklahoma is currently home to two  
17 cross-functional teams. As the original architect of this  
18 system, while serving as Army Chief of Staff, can you speak  
19 to the usefulness of the future of these programs, sir?

20 General Milley: Yes, they the Army Futures Command  
21 and the priorities that the Army laid out for modernization  
22 six, seven years ago are still what they are working on.  
23 They have had the most successful modernization programs  
24 they have had in decades as a result of that Futures  
25 Command.

1 Key to that was the cross-functional teams led by  
2 General Officers in each case. Those cross-functional  
3 teams were designed intentionally to be temporary until  
4 those programs are brought online. For example, long range  
5 precision fires, feature vertical lift, the next generation  
6 combat vehicle, those are programs that once they get  
7 brought online and brought into the force, those cross-  
8 functional teams will go away.

9 But it has been a highly successful and innovative  
10 organizational concept. What General Rainey is talking  
11 about now is the next step, getting it to the next level,  
12 because those programs are well underway. So, he is not  
13 talking about getting rid of those CFTs. He is talking  
14 about looking at the next set of CFTs.

15 For example, all the main sensing would be one. There  
16 is several of these others that they are looking at, and  
17 they have not made any decisions yet. The Army hasn't.  
18 But Secretary of the Army will make those decision in due  
19 time.

20 But it is an excellent program, it is an excellent  
21 Command, and they are really moving out very, very well in  
22 the modernization of the U.S. Army.

23 Senator Mullin: Thank you for clarifying that. I  
24 yield back.

25 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Mullin. Senator

1 King is recognized and will take over as I go vote. And  
2 the vote is on, for those who have not yet voted.

3 Senator King: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Secretary  
4 Austin, I just want to clarify a couple of things about  
5 vaccines and vaccine mandates. I am told that a routine  
6 mustering into the service requires something like 13  
7 vaccinations. Is that accurate?

8 Secretary Austin: I think it is nine, Senator.  
9 Depending on where you are going. At any one point in  
10 time, that number can increase up to about 13, sir.

11 Senator King: Depends on the on where the soldier,  
12 Sailor, Marine, or Guardian will be assigned.

13 General Milley: Right.

14 Senator King: And that is just routine. That is part  
15 of the military for as long as we can remember. Is it  
16 true, General, that -- or sorry, Mr. Secretary, that  
17 General Washington mandated vaccination against smallpox in  
18 the Continental Army at the time of the Revolutionary War?

19 Secretary Austin: That is true.

20 Senator King: And the purpose of this vaccination  
21 mandate had nothing to do with politics. It had to do with  
22 saving lives and maintaining readiness, did it not?

23 Secretary Austin: That is exactly right.

24 Senator King: And I remember being on a call when we  
25 were in sort of lockdown here with regard to the USS Teddy

1 Roosevelt, where the -- in early March, April, and May of  
2 2020, the virus ripped through the ship.

3 I think over 1,000 people tested positive because of  
4 the nature of their close military proximity. Doesn't that  
5 make vaccinating against an infectious disease all the more  
6 important in the military?

7 Secretary Austin: To me and to all of my colleagues,  
8 it absolutely does, Senator. You know, I told chairman a  
9 number of times that in my lifetime, the only thing that I  
10 have seen that has been able to disable a carrier is this  
11 vaccine.

12 Senator King: It is interesting because General  
13 Washington said that, when it alerted John Hancock about  
14 the vaccine, he said, this is the most dangerous thing to  
15 our troops, more dangerous than the sword of the enemy.

16 Exactly what you just said. General Milley, I want to  
17 thank you for the integrity that you have demonstrated in  
18 your position. I remember, and I am sure you, too, to  
19 questioning you at your confirmation hearing.

20 And my question was, will you tell the truth, will you  
21 give your best military advice, even if it doesn't suit the  
22 leadership that you were working with at the time? You  
23 have done that, and I want to thank you for that and for  
24 the extraordinary service that you have provided to this  
25 country throughout your career, but over the last four

1 years.

2 I appreciate your keeping your word to me and this  
3 committee from the date of your confirmation. General  
4 Austin, allowing the intelligence about the imminence of  
5 the Russian invasion was, I think, a brilliant move by the  
6 Administration at the beginning.

7 However, why are we telling everybody in the world  
8 what we are sending and when we are sending it? This  
9 morning I learned on National Public Radio, and I suspect  
10 Putin did, although I don't know if he listens to National  
11 Public Radio, how many tanks have arrived in Ukraine and  
12 when they are going to be deployed. Why do we -- why do we  
13 broadcast that information?

14 Secretary Austin: Well, we certainly try not to,  
15 Senator. As you know, as various countries provide  
16 contributions, they are proud of those contributions, and  
17 sometimes we find our colleagues providing a bit too much  
18 information. But I --

19 Senator King: You understand my question?

20 Secretary Austin: I do. I do. So, and when I meet  
21 with our colleagues here, and I meet with them every month,  
22 this is a point that I will continue to drive home that,  
23 you know, the Russians are absolutely focused on where this  
24 equipment is and what it is doing. So, we have got to help  
25 ourselves.



1           Senator King: I fully agree. A couple of questions.  
2 I am going to submit for the record about ISR capability,  
3 both in NORTHCOM and SOUTHCOM, which was in their unfunded  
4 priority list. But you can make a strong case that should  
5 have been in the base budget if it is so important,  
6 particularly in counter-drug, where people are being killed  
7 every day. I think my calculation is about 20 people have  
8 died in this country of overdoses since this hearing  
9 started this morning.

10           And to not have sufficient ISR and resources to  
11 interdict what we can find, I think is a -- is a  
12 misallocation of resources. I am going to submit that for  
13 the record. Finally, General Milley, probably the word  
14 that has been used the most today is readiness.

15           And the question I have is, are we preparing for the  
16 right war in terms of the change nature of war that you  
17 have seen over the course of your career. If a conflict  
18 comes, it is going to start with cyber, electronic,  
19 directed energy space.

20           Are we adequately taking account of the changing  
21 nature of conflict so that we are not preparing for the  
22 last war, but for hopefully there won't be another one, but  
23 if there is another conflict, that is where our effort  
24 should be going?

25           General Milley: Really briefly, Senator, I think we

1 are in a pivotal period here, a transition period, where we  
2 have a method of war that is based out of an industrial age  
3 sort of thing, and we are moving to a different operational  
4 environment sometime in the future.

5 So, think about things like robotics, artificial  
6 intelligence, hypersonics, cyber. There is a wide variety  
7 of technologies that are coming at us very, very quickly.  
8 And the country that maximizes and optimizes those  
9 technologies for the conduct of warfighting is going to  
10 have a decisive advantage, at least at the outset of the  
11 next war.

12 Now, at the same time, you can't throw the baby out  
13 with the bathwater. We are in a transition period, so we  
14 are still going to need ships and planes and tanks,  
15 etcetera. But we are in that transition period, and I  
16 think this budget, and the last one, and future budgets are  
17 going to have to move us in the direction of modernizing  
18 the force, transforming this force into a future operating  
19 environment that is probably not very far away, probably  
20 about 10 years or so, and we need to move all with a sense  
21 of urgency.

22 Senator King: Thank you. I agree. And the R&D  
23 emphasis in the last budget, in this budget, I think is one  
24 of the most important policy directions that this budget  
25 represents. On behalf of the chairman, Senator Sullivan.

1           Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I  
2 want to thank our witnesses, General Milley, in particular,  
3 for your service, and General Austin, as well General -- I  
4 am sorry, Mr. Secretary. I appreciate you highlighting the  
5 suicide issue in your opening statement. As you know, that  
6 is hitting the forces in Alaska particularly hard.

7           Still having a hard time getting our arms around that.  
8 It is still happening, so working together on that one is a  
9 high priority of mine, and I appreciate you putting a lot  
10 of attention to that. I first want to begin by quickly  
11 covering an oversight issue deeply concerning to members of  
12 this committee, which was an abuse of the President's  
13 Commander-in-Chief authority when he gave a campaign speech  
14 last fall with active-duty Marines as political props.

15           This wasn't a speech about Veterans Day or Memorial  
16 Day or speech about the heroic actions of the Marines in  
17 Iwo Jima or the chosen reservoir. It was the most partisan  
18 political speech of the President's two years in office  
19 where he disparaged tens of millions of Americans that he  
20 claimed threaten the Republic, did not respect the  
21 Constitution, on and on and on. Really harsh partisan  
22 campaign speech, and there flanking the President of the  
23 United States were two active-duty marines.

24           Shameful, outrageous, infuriating. I have raised this  
25 issue with both of you and other military leaders and how

1 inappropriate this image was to our republic. General  
2 Milley, you have talked about how the military needs to  
3 stay out of politics. I assume in good faith on both of  
4 your parts that you didn't know this.

5 But what I want is a commitment from both of you the  
6 next time some White House staffer thinks it is a good idea  
7 to politicize the military with a political speech like  
8 this, with two active-duty Marines or anyone else standing  
9 by the President, that both of you will put your foot down  
10 and not only say no, but say hell no. Can I get your  
11 commitment on doing that to this committee?

12 Secretary Austin: Senator, I think you know that I am  
13 opposed to any type of politicization of the military. And  
14 I will not comment on my President's actions.

15 Senator Sullivan: You think that was appropriate, Mr.  
16 Secretary?

17 Secretary Austin: Again, Senator --

18 Senator Sullivan: Do you think that was in your  
19 personal opinion, General Milley -- you have been speaking  
20 about this. Look, I thought both you were just -- you guys  
21 are going to go, no. I have got a bunch more questions.  
22 But if we are debating this, let's have the debate. Do you  
23 think that was appropriate, General Milley?

24 You have spoken about not politicizing the military.  
25 That is just outrageous. And by the way, Democrats and

1 Republicans agree with me. So, this isn't even that  
2 controversial. The President made a mistake and  
3 politicized -- go read the speech. What do you think,  
4 General Milley?

5 General Milley: I am firmly committed to a  
6 nonpartizan, nonpolitical military.

7 Senator Sullivan: Okay, so if the White House has an  
8 idea to do something like that again, will both of you  
9 commit to this committee to tell whoever the staff is, hey,  
10 don't do that. Bad idea. Marines shouldn't be --

11 General Milley: I will speak for myself. I have been  
12 asked in the past in two different Administrations on  
13 things just like that, and I have always said, keep the  
14 military out of politics.

15 Senator Sullivan: I am surprised we are having a  
16 debate on this. Unfortunately. I am burning a lot of  
17 time. It is an important issue, though. I think we all  
18 would agree. I am going to next turn to Senator Wicker's  
19 point on the budget. Budgets are a reflection of an  
20 Administration's priorities.

21 This Administration is now three different times in a  
22 row, submitted inflation adjusted cuts to the Department of  
23 Defense, while many other Federal agencies have gotten  
24 double digit increases. This was the 2022 budget. You  
25 see, the DOD was last, second last with a 3 percent cut.

1 The 2023 budget, same kind of issue.

2 We are down there last. That was actually a 4 percent  
3 cut. In this budget, once again, one of the down here with  
4 3 percent cut, while other agencies, EPA almost 20 percent.  
5 Both of you said this is the most dangerous time since  
6 World War II. This current budget shrinks the Army,  
7 shrinks the Navy, shrinks the Marine Corps.

8 Doesn't that embolden our allies like Xi Jinping and  
9 Putin, not deter them? And General Milley, in your  
10 personal opinion, do you support a budget that actually  
11 shrinks three of the four services, particularly the Navy?  
12 The Congress here has been very clear that we want to grow  
13 the Navy. The Chinese are looking at our Navy naval fleet  
14 and we are shrinking it.

15 That is the budget. The President probably assumes  
16 correctly that this committee will bump it up  
17 significantly. But do both of you support a budget that  
18 shrinks three of the four services?

19 And what would you say to the issue of emboldening our  
20 allies when they see budgets like this that we three years  
21 in a row have to rectify by adding significant funding to  
22 them. I will ask both of you, gentleman.

23 Secretary Austin: Well, Senator, first of all, let me  
24 thank you for your continued support for DOD. We really  
25 appreciate what you and your colleagues have done over the

1 years. I think you heard me say earlier that we went  
2 through great pains to link our budget request to our  
3 strategy.

4 We are going after the capabilities that we think we  
5 need to be successful in any endeavor. And so, I am  
6 satisfied that this budget gives us what we need. It is an  
7 \$842 billion budget. And again, I think it allows us to go  
8 after the right capabilities.

9 Senator Sullivan: General.

10 General Milley: Sir, as I said in my opening  
11 statement, I think the uniformed military can defend this  
12 country with an \$842 billion budget. That is a lot of  
13 money, and I think if we put it in the right place against  
14 the right priorities, we will be able to adequately defend  
15 this country.

16 Senator Sullivan: In your personal opinion, do you  
17 agree with shrinking the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps?

18 General Milley: The size of the forces -- I will go  
19 one into one here. When I was Chief of Staff of the Army,  
20 I had advocated for about a 525 to 50 size ground --

21 Senator Sullivan: This budget takes it to 450.

22 General Milley: Right. And so, I advocated for that  
23 because my analysis of future combat indicated that. This  
24 strategy, though -- this is a strategy informed budget.  
25 This strategy and starting under General Mattis, or

1 Secretary Mattis and now Secretary Austin, this strategy  
2 takes us to an essentially a one war strategy, a one war  
3 strategy with a main effort being China.

4 So, the question is, what forces are going to be  
5 required to confront or potentially fight China? I think  
6 the Army and Marines definitely have a role to play, but  
7 the weight of the effort is going to be the Navy and the  
8 Air Force -- the Navy and the Air Force.

9 Senator Sullivan: Budget shrinks the Navy.

10 General Milley: It does buy a couple of ships for a  
11 temporary period of time. I talked to the CNO last night  
12 at length about this to make sure that I was clear on the  
13 Navy piece of it. The ships that are being decommissioned  
14 and divested of are having significant maintenance -- in  
15 fact that the ships for the amphibs, they have been in the  
16 yard for years. They are costing way more money just a  
17 repair than are worthwhile.

18 So, they are trying to shift to the next generation of  
19 amphib. You will see the curve, I think, when they submit  
20 their shipbuilding plan, you will see the curve going up in  
21 the not-too-distant future. So, there is a temporary  
22 downward spiral of a couple of ships in the overall  
23 shipbuilding program.

24 But this budget buys nine. If you are down two, the  
25 net effect is you down two ships out of a 296 ship Navy.



1 Then it goes down to 293, and then it starts coming back  
2 up. Now, is that huge? I think the capability of those  
3 ships matters. As we all know, the capability of our ships  
4 are different than the capability of the Chinese ships.

5 I know that the Chinese have a lot of ships. However,  
6 we not only have the United States Navy, we have the United  
7 States Navy working with the Japanese Navy, working with  
8 the Australian Navy, working with the British Navy, work  
9 with the French Navy.

10 If you start adding up these navies, China is not only  
11 outnumbered, but they are outgunned. And in terms of  
12 capabilities, if you look at just what I think is the most  
13 lethal capability in the United States Navy today is the  
14 submarine.

15 And our subs, the Chinese Navy or the Russian Navy are  
16 not even in the same ballpark as our submarine force. Our  
17 submarine force can bring people to their knees just by  
18 themselves. So, our Navy and this budget -- we never have  
19 enough things that we always-- we always want something  
20 else. But this budget adequately protects the American  
21 people.

22 I am not going to -- I can't compare it against the  
23 rest of the President's priorities. But this \$842 billion  
24 budget buys a lot of kit, a lot of training. And we are  
25 focused on two things, lethality and readiness, lethality

1 and readiness, that is all we do every day. 24,000 live  
2 fires last year. The 24,000 of those -- you talked about a  
3 continuing -- I am sorry, Senator.

4 Senator Sullivan: No, no, I thought it was a good  
5 answer. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Secretary, General,  
6 appreciate your service. Again, thank you.

7 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Sullivan. Senator  
8 Duckworth, please.

9 Senator Duckworth: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr.  
10 Chairman, earlier this month a former soldier was sentenced  
11 to 45 years in prison for attempting to murder U.S.  
12 servicemembers, for attempting to provide material support  
13 to terrorists, and illegally transmitting national defense  
14 information.

15 In fact, Mr. Metzler, the convicted gentleman,  
16 provided sensitive details about his unit, including  
17 information about its location, movement, and security to  
18 members of the extremist organization Order of the 9  
19 Angles, a white supremacist, neo-Nazi and pro-jihadist  
20 group.

21 Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to enter into  
22 the record a RAND report dated 2021 that is entitled  
23 Reducing the Risk of Extremist Activity in the United  
24 States Military.

25 Chairman Reed: Without objection.

1 [The information referred to follows:]

2 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1           Senator Duckworth: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This  
2 report states, and I will just briefly say this, the vast  
3 majority of military personnel and their families are not  
4 extremists, but even a small number of people engaged in  
5 extremist activities could damage the United States  
6 military's reputation, its force, its members, and the  
7 larger community.

8           Extremist activities can also be harmful to  
9 individuals who are radicalized and their friends and  
10 family. That said, as someone who wore the uniform for 23  
11 years, I mean, I was just a reservist and a guardsman, did  
12 not reach the ranks of the gentleman here or even some of  
13 my colleagues on the other side of the aisle.

14           I have to say I am offended at the implication that  
15 conducting extremist training means that our military is  
16 filled with extremists. Just as I personally am  
17 appreciative of the fact that we have sharp training and by  
18 conducting sharp training, we are not saying that every  
19 member of the military is a harasser or a perpetrator of  
20 military sexual assault.

21           Similarly, my entire time since I have left the  
22 military has been spent working on mental health for our  
23 troops. And by providing mental health training and  
24 resiliency training, we are not saying that the military is  
25 filled with people who are about to commit suicide.

1           This is simply part of readiness. So, that said, I am  
2 going to switch. I just want to put this on record because  
3 it is very offensive to me to very politically say that  
4 extremism in the military and training against it is saying  
5 that the military is full of extremists.

6           The military is full of the bravest, most amazing men  
7 and women who do the best job that they can, and they need  
8 to be equipped to do their jobs. And that means that they  
9 need to be equipped with the training to recognize sexual  
10 harassment when it occurs, to recognize extremism when it  
11 occurs, to recognize signs of hidden wounds of war, when it  
12 occurs so that we can keep our units in the highest levels  
13 of readiness.

14           Okay, I am done with that. Last month, I led a CODEL  
15 to Japan in Indonesia, and I am planning to going back to  
16 the region twice more in just the next few months. And  
17 this, in June, Senator Sullivan and I will be leading a  
18 delegation to the Shangri-La Dialog.

19           And, Mr. Secretary, I believe you are going to be  
20 speaking there, and I look forward to hearing your remarks  
21 there. And in August, I am planning to take a bipartisan  
22 group of my colleagues to visit the Philippines, Indonesia,  
23 and Thailand to spotlight the importance of opportunities  
24 that our nations have to partner together.

25           Mr. Secretary, in your testimony, you highlighted the

1 DOD's enhanced maritime security with the Philippines and  
2 exercises with Thailand. In what other ways does the  
3 Department's budget request support our allies and partners  
4 in Southeast Asia? And how are you program to achieve  
5 integrated deterrence in this area of the Indo-Pacific?

6 Secretary Austin: Well, thanks, Senator. And  
7 certainly, you know, you with a PDI, Pacific Deterrence  
8 Initiative, we are asking you for some \$9.1 billion to  
9 improve infrastructure in the region so that we can  
10 position our troops further forward and we can be more  
11 interoperable. You know, presence matters.

12 We see a significant investment in the AUKUS  
13 agreement, Australia, and the UK, and the U.S. are working  
14 together to provide the Australians a conventionally armed  
15 nuclear powered submarine capability. And another pillar  
16 of AUKUS calls for us to work together on key technologies  
17 like AI and hypersonics and long-range fires.

18 And so, I think that kind of thing, building  
19 interoperability is really, really key. We are doing some  
20 of the same things with the Japanese as we work to become  
21 more interoperable with them. We are helping our partners  
22 and allies strengthen their capabilities in terms of cyber.

23 And I think all of those things will add value. But  
24 we are seeing things in the region now that we weren't  
25 seeing two years ago, the Japanese doubling its defense

1 investment, you know, more access to the Philippines.

2 As you know, two years ago, we were about to get  
3 kicked out of the Philippines. But we have moved to  
4 strengthen our relationship. And, you know, I just think  
5 that is powerful.

6 Senator Duckworth: Thank you. I just want to touch  
7 on the cyber piece. In fact, last year, I included -- I am  
8 sorry, in 2021 NDAA, I included legislation that authorized  
9 the Department of Defense to establish a pilot program to  
10 enhance cybersecurity, the resilience and the readiness of  
11 the military forces of Vietnam, Thailand, and Indonesia.

12 General Milley, next month I will introduce  
13 legislation to expand this important program to include  
14 Malaysia and the Philippines. Can you comment on the value  
15 of direct engagement with our overseas partners to help  
16 build their cyber skills?

17 General Milley: I can. Not only cyber skills but any  
18 of the military skills. We have excellent military to  
19 military relations with so many countries. If you look at,  
20 for example, the contact group in Europe that the Secretary  
21 has organized, 54 countries show up to support Ukraine and  
22 obviously there is only 30 and NATO's so many countries  
23 from around the world in Asia.

24 It is particularly important, I think, given the  
25 dynamic nature of the geostrategic environment in Asia.

1 So, the more countries excuse me, the more countries that  
2 we have with us, whether it is cyber or anything else, is  
3 critically important.

4 In the world of cyber, though, we know that cyber and  
5 space are two domains now of armed conflict, including the  
6 traditional ones of land, sea and air. So, as we modernize  
7 the force and move into cyber space, those two domains are  
8 going to be fundamental to success in any kind of conflict.

9 So, working with our allies and partners in the region  
10 and developing their capabilities along with ours, I think  
11 will go a long way to deterrence. And if necessary, if  
12 deterrence fails and it is necessary, then it will go a  
13 long way to prevailing in the armed conflict.

14 Senator Duckworth: Thank you. And thank you for your  
15 remarkable career of service to this nation and also that  
16 of your wife. She not only directly saved lives herself in  
17 a very hands-on way, quite literally, but also her work on  
18 mental health for our troops is continuing to pay off  
19 dividends. Thank you.

20 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Duckworth. Senator  
21 Budd, please.

22 Senator Budd: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And again,  
23 thank you all for being here today and for your time. It  
24 has been very helpful. You know, this week, the Senate  
25 will likely vote to repeal the 1991 and the 2000 to



1 authorizations of use of military force against Iraq.

2 Now, one of the amendments considered was whether to  
3 replace the 2000 to AUMF with an authorization for the use  
4 of force against Iranian backed militias in Iraq.

5 And that vote failed but I think there is an important  
6 issue here that needs to be addressed. Now, despite the  
7 likely repeal of the 2002 AUMF, the U.S. still has forces  
8 in Iraq at the invitation of the Iraqi government to train,  
9 advise, and to assist Iraqi forces. We also have forces in  
10 Syria conducting operations against ISIS.

11 Now, given Iran's continuing malign activities in the  
12 region, our forces are at risk of attack from Iranian  
13 backed militias, and in fact have been attacked by those  
14 militias more than 80 times, including just last week,  
15 resulting in the death of a U.S. contractor and injuries to  
16 U.S. servicemembers.

17 So, Secretary Austin and General Milley, a brief yes  
18 or no, please. Do you agree that the President has both  
19 the authority and the responsibility under Article 2 of the  
20 Constitution to protect the United States and our forces  
21 from attack and the threat of imminent attack? Again, yes  
22 or no, Secretary Austin

23 Secretary Austin: I do, Senator.

24 General Milley: Yes, same --

25 Senator Budd: Yes. Thank you. But despite the more

1 than 80 attacks by Iranian backed militias, the United  
2 States has only responded with force just a handful of  
3 times. In my view, that is unacceptable. Secretary  
4 Austin, earlier you told my colleague, Senator Cotton, that  
5 our last the retaliatory strikes against IRGC  
6 infrastructure, it was against infrastructure doing.

7 Now, does that mean a building or a warehouse? The  
8 question behind the question is really why not target the  
9 IRGC leadership or officers directing these attacks?

10 Secretary Austin: Thank you, Senator. We can be more  
11 specific in closed session, but it included a headquarters  
12 element building and also storage sites where key munitions  
13 were being stored and other capabilities were being  
14 developed. And there were people in those in those  
15 facilities.

16 Senator Budd: Thank you for that. The point being  
17 that we need to reassert deterrence and our current  
18 responses don't seem to effectively do that. Weakness only  
19 breeds more aggression. Weaknesses are provocative.

20 And if we only respond when they kill an American,  
21 they will continue attacking, hoping to injure as many as  
22 possible. There is no reason why this Administration  
23 should not respond more forcefully should Iranian backed  
24 militias threaten U.S. forces in Iraq or in Syria. It is  
25 important for the American people to know that it is not

1 because the Administration doesn't have the legal authority  
2 to do so. This Administration simply seems to lack the  
3 will.

4 So, Secretary Austin, another issue that needs to be  
5 addressed is the Department's use of taxpayer dollars to  
6 facilitate abortions. Now, I join my colleagues in  
7 publicly denouncing the policy changes, unfortunately made  
8 at your direction, to authorize unmasked, uncharged absences  
9 and travel pay for those seeking abortions.

10 So, the military is not a place for social agendas.  
11 So, I will ask you here, will you rescind those abhorrent  
12 policies?

13 Secretary Austin: What I will say, Senator, is,  
14 number one, this policy does not fund abortions, and I want  
15 to be clear on that. This policy provides access to non-  
16 covered reproductive health care. You know, as I said  
17 earlier, you know, one -- almost one in five of my troops,  
18 our troops are women.

19 Senator Budd: Very aware. But I understand that  
20 ultimately it is taxpayer dollars that are for this  
21 uncharged absences and the travel expenses related to that.  
22 I understand your point, but I still think that is not the  
23 right answer.

24 And until these policies are rescinded, I am going to  
25 also have to consider holds against DOD nominees in

1 solidarity with my colleagues. Mr. Secretary, you can fix  
2 this. 158 holds, in essence, are there. You can fix this  
3 in nearly in an instant, so I would encourage that.

4 Shifting gears, a bit --

5 Secretary Austin: Sir, I would encourage you to help  
6 us make sure that we have the leadership in place to lead  
7 our magnificent --

8 Senator Budd: And I would agree with you, completely  
9 agree with you, and you can fix that nearly instantaneously  
10 with a change in policy. So, thank you. We understand,  
11 Secretary Austin, that the committee has heard from most of  
12 the Combatant Commanders so far earlier this year.

13 And I have asked each of them about foreign military  
14 sales and how that's working in their areas of  
15 responsibility. And each have said that the process is not  
16 fast or flexible enough to meet our partners' defense  
17 requirements and that we are at risk of losing our security  
18 of partner of choice status to China.

19 So what efforts are the Department taking internally  
20 to streamline the FMS process, and are there issues that  
21 you think need to be addressed by Congress?

22 Secretary Austin: A year ago, I put together a tiger  
23 team to address this specific issue, and you are right. I  
24 mean, there are a number of our allies and partners who  
25 clearly want to see capability be provided quicker.

1           And I fully understand their concerns. So, we are  
2 doing everything we can to identify logjams and work  
3 through those to speed up things. Industry is coming out  
4 of a two-year trough there because of COVID, as you know,  
5 sir. And, you know, it will take a little time for our  
6 industry to catch up.

7           But we are going to do everything we can to make sure  
8 that, you know, the bureaucracy is not slowing things down.  
9 And we will continue this work. But I don't disagree with  
10 you that this is something that requires consistent focus  
11 on, and we are going to do that.

12           Senator Budd: Thank you both. I yield.

13           Chairman Reed: Thank you. Senator Kelly.

14           Senator Kelly: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Secretary  
15 Austin, earlier today at this hearing, Senator Ernst asked  
16 General Milley about conflict in the INDOPACOM region, and  
17 the General's response referenced the importance of  
18 irregular warfare. So, Secretary Austin, I have been  
19 rather disappointed with the halting and repetitive process  
20 that DOD has exhibited as it attempts to establish the  
21 irregular warfare center.

22           As you may recall, the IW Center was authorized by  
23 this committee back in 2020, and the project was intended  
24 to honor Arizona Senator and former Armed Services  
25 Committee Chairman John McCain's legacy of support for the

1 concept of a whole society approach to our National  
2 Security.

3 He knew that traditional military strength isn't  
4 enough in today's geopolitics and that we also need to  
5 succeed in the irregular and in the competition spaces, not  
6 just in conflict. In recognition of the original intent  
7 for this project, this committee supported naming the  
8 Center for Senator John McCain. Now, I have also been  
9 working closely with this committee and the Department to  
10 ensure that we leverage expertise and ideas from  
11 universities to help our nation get after these significant  
12 challenges.

13 And the original authority identified the McCain  
14 Institute at Arizona State University as a site to be  
15 reviewed as a location for the establishment of the center.  
16 And I appreciate your memo, Mr. Secretary, from July of  
17 2022 affirming your decision to create the Center for  
18 Security Studies in irregular warfare and directing DOD to  
19 act expeditiously, including in determining allocation.

20 But now we are nearly three years down the road and we  
21 have had numerous duplicative site reviews and we are still  
22 waiting for a final decision. And what I don't think we  
23 need is a new basing process. We need a decision.

24 And it is clear to me that it is time to move forward  
25 with Arizona State University and ensure that the IW Center

1 can deliver on its promise for DOD and the nation. So, Mr.  
2 Secretary, can I have your commitment that you will look  
3 into these delays and push the Department to come to a  
4 final decision on this?

5 Secretary Austin: Certainly, Senator, you have my  
6 commitment that I will look into the delays. You know,  
7 what I have required the team to do is to make sure that we  
8 have a process that is transparent and also that avoids  
9 outside influence and to make sure that we are aboveboard.  
10 But I will certainly look into it and get a brief back to  
11 you on specific delays that we have encountered.

12 Senator Kelly: Well, thank you. Thank you, General,  
13 because three years is just, it is too long. And this is,  
14 as General Milley pointed out, is just as important if we  
15 wind up in a conflict in the Western Pacific. So, thank  
16 you, Mr. Secretary. General Milley, last year, Congress  
17 authorized multi-year procurement contracts as a way to  
18 boost our nation's dwindling supply of munitions and to  
19 purchase additional systems in support of Ukraine.

20 And this has had a meaningful impact on a lot of  
21 Arizona businesses who produce some of these critical  
22 munitions. Multi-Year procurement can save the Government  
23 a lot of money. It can save it a lot of money over the  
24 long run and provide much needed stability for  
25 manufacturing business, while also ensuring that our

1 military and our key partners and allies have the munitions  
2 that they need.

3 General Milley, can you please, in the time I have  
4 remaining, just talk about the impact that multi-year  
5 procurement has had so far in securing weapons, both for  
6 the United States but also for Ukraine. Has this been  
7 beneficial? And do you think that the munitions that  
8 Congress authorized for multi-year procurement is enough,  
9 or should we have more products being considered for multi-  
10 years?

11 Chairman Reed: You have 19 seconds.

12 General Milley: So first, multi-year contracts are  
13 essential, and passing a budget on time with no continuing  
14 resolution is essential to ensure we have multi-year  
15 contracts. So, those two things are linked, and I cannot  
16 emphasize that enough. That is important. And it has had  
17 a big impact, positive impact on Ukraine, and it will help  
18 to replenish our stocks as well.

19 Senator Kelly: Do you think we should expand it to  
20 some other products?

21 General Milley: I do.

22 Senator Kelly: Thank you. Thank you.

23 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Kelly. I would  
24 ask, I have been very tolerant of the time, but I ask  
25 people to stay within five minutes. We are running quite



1 late. Senator Scott, please. Thank you.

2 Senator Scott: Only for Senator Rosen and me. Only  
3 for us two. Thank you. Thank you for -- thank you guys  
4 for your service. Thank you for all the men and women that  
5 serve. On the Personnel subcommittee for Armed Services,  
6 Senator Warren and I had a presentation on how bad we are  
7 doing on recruiting.

8 And our recruiting numbers are pretty pathetic right  
9 now. It seems like, I remember I joined in 18 and joined  
10 the Navy. We knew who our enemies were, we knew what the  
11 military's role was and I think unfortunate.

12 A lot of Americans are a little concerned. There is  
13 recent polling data from the Reagan Institute and the  
14 National Independent Panel on Military Service and  
15 Readiness, showing us that many Americans and majority of  
16 active-duty service members find the military to be  
17 politicized and focused on what divides us instead of what  
18 unites us.

19 So, if that is true, what do you -- what can you do  
20 and what are you doing to make sure, because I think  
21 Senator Sullivan was bringing up the fact that we shouldn't  
22 have Marines in pictures like that and with speeches.

23 What do you what are you doing to make sure our  
24 military is not perceived to be a political arm of whoever,  
25 whoever the President is, doesn't matter whether the

1 Republican or Democrat.

2 Secretary Austin: Well, first of all, I would just do  
3 two things. First, in terms of the satisfaction of the  
4 troops that are in the ranks and how we view ourselves,  
5 Senator, I would just point to the fact that we have the  
6 highest reenlistment rates probably that we have seen in  
7 several decades.

8 You know, what that means is that people are satisfied  
9 with the opportunities they are provided and with the  
10 development that they are receiving. The second thing is  
11 with respect to recruiting, as you know, there are a number  
12 of things that have combined to create headwinds, and they  
13 include the lowest jobless rate that we have seen in many,  
14 many years. Also, two years of COVID.

15 And, you know, Senator, without recruiters not having  
16 access to high schools and centers of influence for two  
17 years will have a profound impact on our ability to  
18 recruit. Our leadership in the services is doing the right  
19 thing. I mean, our Secretaries, our Chiefs are doing the  
20 right things.

21 They are they are investing, beginning to invest the  
22 right monies in advertising and encouraging their  
23 recruiters to be in the right spaces. They are hiring the  
24 right people to be recruiters.

25 And I used to be a recruiter, so I am not guessing at

1 what this takes. I know how hard this is and what you need  
2 to do to be successful. They are beginning to do those  
3 things again, and I think we will see this -- we will see  
4 the trends move in a different direction.

5 Senator Scott: So, the next year, we will have good  
6 numbers?

7 Secretary Austin: Next year, you will have better  
8 numbers. We will be where we want to be probably the year  
9 after that. It took two years to get us to where we are  
10 because of COVID. It will take a little bit longer to get  
11 to get turned around.

12 General Milley: Senator, I have had many thanks and  
13 conversation with all the chiefs on this whole topic. Yes,  
14 we have a recruiting challenge, no question about it. I do  
15 think there is a cause-and-effect link to COVID and I am  
16 not blaming that. But we do know that recruiting numbers  
17 are directly linked to contact time.

18 And because kids have been in high schools and we  
19 haven't had the recruiters in high schools, contact time is  
20 very, very low. So, consequently, you have much lower  
21 recruiting numbers as one key factor. Another key factor  
22 is just the familiarity with the American citizenry, with  
23 their military.

24 Now we are at an all-time high, 50 year high of re-  
25 enlistment, which is incredible, actually. That indicates

1 that the people in the military service like what they are  
2 doing every day.

3 So that is an all-time 50 year high. But 80 percent,  
4 70 to 80 percent in that range, depending on the service,  
5 of our folks in uniform are in uniform who have a family  
6 member in uniform, either a father, mother, brother,  
7 sister, uncle, grandfather, grandmother, something along  
8 those lines.

9 So, it is familiarity with the military that makes a  
10 difference, I think, in terms of recruiting. And that is  
11 what we got to get out. We have to get out more into the  
12 society. We got to make sure we increase our contact time  
13 significantly.

14 And on the politicization piece, look it, I have tried  
15 from day one to make sure that we have an apolitical,  
16 nonpartisan U.S. military. If we have anything other than  
17 that, that is a danger to the Republic.

18 We must remain a nonpartisan, apolitical military that  
19 is fundamental to this country and that is what I am  
20 committed to. That is what all the generals are committed  
21 to. And that is what you have right now, and that is what  
22 we want to continue to keep.

23 Senator Scott: General Milley, I like your answer to  
24 Senator Sullivan on you being able to compete against  
25 China. Do you actually believe that all the countries you

1 named will show up if China invades Taiwan?

2 General Milley: I think in different ways, yes.

3 Perhaps not all with combat forces and that sort of thing.

4 I think allies operate differently. Every country operates  
5 in its own strategic interest at the moment in time. But I  
6 do know that we have an incredible network of allies and  
7 friends around the world.

8 And in the Pacific, we have a series of bilateral  
9 defense treaties that are ratified by the Senate, and those  
10 are ironclad, you know, with the Republic of Korea, Japan,  
11 Philippines, Thailand, Australia. These are treaties that,  
12 you know, we are committed to fight on their behalf sort of  
13 thing. So, I think we have a network of allies and  
14 partners that gives us a strategic advantage over China or  
15 Russia, for that matter. If you look at who China's  
16 friends are, it is not very many.

17 They are operating in a purely transactional way  
18 around the world. They are trying to garner as many  
19 natural resources as they can from around the world. But  
20 there is not a lot of people who are "friends" with China.

21 There are many, many countries that are very tight,  
22 very close with the United States, and that is a great  
23 strength of ours, and I do think they would be there in  
24 time of need.

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

1 very much. Senator Rosen, please.

2 Senator Rosen: Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I  
3 really appreciate holding this hearing. I want to thank  
4 each of the witnesses today for testifying for your service  
5 to the country.

6 And General Milley, I know this is going to be your  
7 last time before the committee, and I want to thank you for  
8 your decades of distinguished service leading the brave men  
9 and women of our armed forces and really navigating so many  
10 challenges worldwide. We all appreciate your service.

11 And so, we are going to -- I am going to talk a little  
12 bit about combating Iranian aggression, because attacks on  
13 the U.S. installations and service members by Iran's  
14 terrorist proxies are increasing, particularly by rocket  
15 and drone attack.

16 The Pentagon estimates that hundreds of American  
17 troops have been killed by Iranian backed militias,  
18 including, as we have discussed already today, a deadly  
19 attack last week on a U.S. base in Syria.

20 There are families across the country without their  
21 loved ones as a direct result of Iranian aggression. I  
22 can't repeat that enough, a direct result of Iranian  
23 aggression. Yet Iran's regime has never been held  
24 accountable for orchestrating attacks against Americans.  
25 So, Secretary Austin, I appreciate that in this latest

1 instance, last week, the U.S. responded with airstrikes  
2 against individuals connected with the IRGC.

3 But just as you told my colleague, Senator Cotton,  
4 Senator Budd, we know there have been about 83 such attacks  
5 by Iranian proxies on U.S. forces in Syria in the past two  
6 years alone. We have only retaliated four times.

7 And so why has the United States responded so  
8 infrequently, particularly when these militias are most  
9 pervasive threat, the most pervasive threat to U.S. and  
10 coalition forces in the region?

11 Secretary Austin: Well, first of all, as was stated  
12 earlier, our troops have the ability to certainly protect  
13 themselves. And there have been responses, local responses  
14 to certain types of activity in those -- our troops always  
15 have the ability to do that. In terms of major responses,  
16 strikes, you are right, there has only been four of those.

17 You know, at the three tours I spent in Iraq, you  
18 know, I can tell you that me and my troops received a lot  
19 of attacks from Iran. But when we respond, we want to make  
20 sure that, Iranian backed militias, we want to make sure  
21 that that we are going after the element that is  
22 responsible for whatever that activity is. So, it takes a  
23 little time to develop, you know, attribution.

24 And then we want to make sure that we are holding the  
25 right element accountable, and we are doing everything that

1 we can to protect our troops. And so, all of those things  
2 go into, you know, our consideration when we plan a  
3 response option.

4 Senator Rosen: Well, I have two questions. One for  
5 you, General Milley, another one for you, Secretary Austin.  
6 So, the first one is for General Milley to follow up. What  
7 can we do proactively to counter these militias before they  
8 injure and kill American service members? And then,  
9 Secretary Austin, can you tell us, do our Commanders who I  
10 know want to do more, have the necessary authorities to  
11 target Iran's proxies other than the ability for self-  
12 defense? So, General Milley, we will start with you.

13 General Milley: In terms of proactive measures, what  
14 we are looking at is force protection in all of the various  
15 camps and outposts in the Central Command area of  
16 operations, specifically in Iraq and Syria, where these  
17 attacks occur. They have, we think, adequate force  
18 protection in terms of the kind of rocket and missile  
19 defenses.

20 They are able to, in fact -- forward responses is  
21 probably an understatement because we end up shooting down  
22 a lot of these incoming UAVs, for example. If a rocket or  
23 a 107 rocket or something like that is going to miss the  
24 compound by two or three or four or five kilometers, that  
25 is a significant amount.



1           So really what we owe you is some better numbers  
2 actually on attacks that I would categorize as actual  
3 attacks on the compound, and missing a compound by two or  
4 three kilometers, that may or may not -- we don't know what  
5 that was necessarily. So, we owe you some better numbers.

6           But to get to your point about proactively, we have to  
7 work closely with the Iraqi government for those Shia  
8 militia groups that are inside Iraq. And we have to  
9 continue to work with our partners in the region for the  
10 attacks that are occurring in Syria. So, working with our  
11 indigenous allies and partners is key.

12           And then also putting these groups on notice, the  
13 various Shia militia groups who know who they are, letting  
14 them know that we will respond affirmatively and forcefully  
15 if they attack our troops.

16           We have done that. There are some of these groups  
17 that are much more aggressive than others, and we have  
18 actually in the past done some things to those groups that  
19 are not necessarily on the front page of the paper.

20           So, there are activities that are occurring that do  
21 act as a proactive measure. The last thing I would say  
22 with respect to Iran. Messaging Iran is critically  
23 important. The Iranian government is a complex, large  
24 organization, and the supreme leader may or may not be  
25 making every single decision.

1           We do know that the Iraqi or the Iranian Revolutionary  
2 Guard force and specifically their Quds force, which is  
3 designated a terrorist organization, that group there is  
4 what we need to be targeting and targeting them very  
5 harshly or harshly over time, and that is exactly what we  
6 plan on doing.

7           Senator Rosen: Thank you. I know my time is up. But  
8 Secretary Austin, just asked if we have the necessary  
9 authorities, quickly.

10          Secretary Austin: You know, I think we do, Senator.  
11 And this is something that we need to continue to review as  
12 we go forward. And, you know, we certainly have the right  
13 to self-defense. We have authorities under the 2001 AUMF,  
14 and that enables us to do what we need to do to in or  
15 counter ISIS efforts.

16          But again, as we go forward, it is always good to look  
17 at the authorities and make sure that we evolve them if  
18 that is required. And so, you have my commitment to work  
19 with leadership and with you to continue to do that.

20          Senator Rosen: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

21          Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Rosen. The  
22 committee will stand in recess until 12:55 p.m., and we  
23 will reconvene in closed session in SVC-217. Thank you,  
24 gentlemen.

25          [Whereupon, at 12:38 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]