

RECORD VERSION

STATEMENT BY

**GENERAL JAMES C. MCCONVILLE
VICE CHIEF OF STAFF UNITED STATES ARMY**

BEFORE THE

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SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

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Introduction:

Chairman Inhofe, Ranking Member Kaine, distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on the readiness of our Army. On behalf of our Secretary, the Honorable Mark Esper, and our Chief of Staff, General Mark Milley, thank you also for the support and commitment you continually demonstrate to our Soldiers, Army Civilians, Families, and Veterans.

In the face of an unpredictable, competitive global environment, our Army stands ready to compete, deter, and win tonight. Our focus on readiness over the last several years has paid dividends: our Soldiers are resilient, physically and mentally fit leaders of character. They are well trained, well led, and well equipped professionals who represent the diversity and strength of America. While there are challenges facing our Army, we remain poised to accomplish our essential mission: to fight and win our nation's wars.

The single greatest challenge to maintaining and sustaining our Army's readiness is the lack of timely, predictable, sustained funding. For the past nine years, the Army began the fiscal year under a continuing resolution. The legacy of those consecutive continuing resolutions has been deferred readiness. Our inability to start new procurement programs and military construction projects, to enter into multi-year contracts, to increase production rates, or reprogram funds resulted in deferring investments in modernization to maintain support to the ongoing fight.

Beyond current readiness concerns, we are at an inflection point where we can no longer afford to defer modernizing our capabilities and developing new ones without eroding competitive advantages of our technology and weapon systems. While we remain the most capable fighting force in the world, without immediate action, we may not be able to make that same statement in five years. With that challenge in mind, we have undertaken a sweeping reform of the Army acquisition process, and made modernization a top priority. In order to make these efforts successful, we need your support. We are grateful to be in a position where Army end strength is increasing, with the FY18 National Defense Authorization Act authorizing Total Army end strength growth above 1,018K. We also appreciate the enactment of the bipartisan budget agreement which will fully fund Army readiness through FY19. Despite our positive

near-term outlook, the potential future effects of Budget Control Act caps on Defense spending could undermine our previous readiness gains.

Readiness: Manning, Training, Equipping/Sustaining, and Leader Development

Readiness remains our number one priority. In today's terms, readiness means the preservation of a lethal conventional force that can also conduct irregular warfare as a core competency, and ensuring the Army can project appropriate units at the time and place they are needed. We build unit readiness by ensuring our formations are fully manned, highly trained, well equipped and superbly led. In order to maximize unit readiness across the Army, we focus resources on those units likely to respond to a potential contingency, increase integration between the Regular Army and early deploying units of the Army National Guard and Army Reserve, and decrease our non-deployable population to ensure optimal manning in critical operational units.

Manning:

Again, we appreciate Congress' efforts to grow the Army in accordance with the FY18 NDAA prescribed end strength. As we grow, our first focus is on ensuring our formations are filled with deployable personnel. Initial increases in end strength were used to increase manning-levels within combat units and address gaps in air-defense and long-range fires. To further mitigate risk, the Army adjusted the mix of brigade combat teams to increase armor capacity, reduce the number of infantry brigade combat teams, and balance Stryker brigade combat teams within the Regular Army and the Army National Guard. This increased armor capacity provided us with increased flexibility to meet threats around the world.

Another way we are mitigating risk is with the introduction of Security Force Assistance Brigades. The first Security Force Assistance Brigade was activated in August 2017, and the second in January 2018. A total of six Security Force Assistance Brigades will be activated, with five in the Regular Army, and one in the Army National Guard. The mission of the Security Force Assistance Brigade is to provide well-trained forces to partner, train, advise, assist, and accompany developing allied Armed Forces. In addition to their core mission, these veteran Security Force Assistance Brigades can also form the nucleus of brigade combat teams, which can

be expanded by assigning entry-level Soldiers to rapidly produce additional brigade combat teams if urgently required.

Recognizing that cyber threats will be an enduring part of modern warfare, the Army is rapidly training and fielding a total of sixty-two Cyber Mission Force Teams: forty-one in the regular Army, eleven in the Army National Guard, and ten in the Army Reserve. The Army continues to employ innovative solutions to increase the Cyber training pipeline and expand the cyber career path for the entire Army. This capability will support both Army and Joint operations, as well as protect our homeland.

Training:

The FY17 National Defense Authorization Act and increased funding positioned the Army on a positive readiness recovery glide path. Today we have more units at the highest levels of readiness than we did at this time last year, and we will continue to build readiness the longer we stay on this glide path. However, our readiness recovery gains are perishable, and our readiness recovery plan depends on timely, predictable, sustained funding.

The Army is implementing objective measures to assess training readiness and ensure standardization across the force. These standards include proficiency on Mission Essential Tasks; qualification on individual, crew, and platform weapons; unit live fire proficiency; and days required to be fully trained. Combat training center rotations continue to serve as culminating training events for our brigade combat teams. By FY20, 90% of all Regular Army brigade combat teams will have completed three decisive action combat training center rotations during this decade. These iterative combat training center rotations build institutional readiness at echelon, reinforcing and refining our Soldiers' experience. In addition to training on decisive action, combat training centers routinely challenge units with increased exposure to electronic warfare, enemy unmanned aerial systems, cyber-attacks, more lethal indirect fire, and enemy use of precision guided munitions. Such realistic and relevant training will ensure our Army maintains a lethal conventional force while retaining irregular warfare as a core competency.

Equipping/Sustaining:

In addition to training, we recognize that we must provide our Soldiers with the

equipment they need to fight and win. The Army Modernization Strategy will enable us to deliver advanced capabilities to our warfighters on a substantially decreased timeline. We identified six modernization priorities, stood up cross-functional teams in support of those priorities, and realigned science and technology funds accordingly. Institutional reforms will establish unity of command, effort and purpose by consolidating the modernization process under one new command, the Army Futures Command. The cross-functional teams are key to rapidly developing requirements, and ensuring that these future capabilities transition quickly from concept to prototyping to fielding.

Leader Development:

Soldiers remain our most valuable asset, and leader development remains the foundation of the Army's ability to rapidly respond to the changing nature of war. The Army is committed to accessing and retaining quality Soldiers and leaders through improved talent management processes, incentives, and promotion opportunities. We remain a standards-based organization, and our leaders continue to enforce those high standards.

The Army is committed to ensuring all Soldiers are provided full career opportunities to reach their highest potential and enhance Army readiness. In the past year, we continued to execute a methodical approach to opening all positions and occupations for women. Currently, every infantry, armor, and field artillery battalion in a Regular Army brigade combat team has women assigned, and 10 female officers have graduated from Ranger School - our premier tactical small unit leadership course.

Closing:

Our Army remains ready today to fight tonight. However, sustaining readiness while finally addressing long-deferred modernization requires timely, predictable, sustained funding. We need your continued assistance to ensure your Army remains the best-trained, best-equipped and best-led fighting force in the world. We thank Congress for its steadfast support of our exceptional Soldiers.