

Stenographic Transcript  
Before the

COMMITTEE ON  
ARMED SERVICES

## **UNITED STATES SENATE**

TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON THE POSTURE OF THE  
DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE IN REVIEW OF THE  
DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025  
AND THE FUTURE YEARS

Tuesday, April 16, 2024

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1 TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON THE POSTURE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF  
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4

5 Tuesday, April 16, 2024  
6

7 U.S. Senate

8 Committee on Armed Services,

9 Washington, D.C.  
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11 The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:00 a.m.,  
12 in Room 216, Hart Senate Office Building, Hon. Jack Reed,  
13 chairman of the committee, presiding.

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

3           Chairman Reed: Let me bring the hearing to order.  
4 For my colleagues' awareness, we intend to conclude today's  
5 hearing by 12:00 noon due to possible floor proceedings,  
6 and also the possibility that any one of our colleagues may  
7 object to proceeding past 12:00 noon.

8           So, this will require us ending the open session at  
9 -- by 11:00 a.m. and then moving immediately to a closed  
10 session at SVC-217. I ask that members strictly adhere to  
11 the five minute timeline, and I will have my gavel to  
12 remind people. In that spirit, I will submit my opening  
13 statement for the record. Senator Fischer.

14          Senator Fischer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would  
15 submit my statement for the record as well.

16          Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator Fischer.  
17 Let me recognize Secretary Kendall. Mr. Secretary.

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1           STATEMENT OF HON. FRANK KENDALL III, SECRETARY OF THE  
2 AIR FORCE

3           Secretary Kendall: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Chairman  
4 Reed, Senator Fischer, members of the committee, General  
5 Saltzman, General Allvin, and I thank you for the  
6 opportunity to testify today on the Department of the Air  
7 Force's Fiscal Year 2025 budget submission.

8           The Department of the Air Force budget request  
9 supports the National Defense Strategy. We appreciate the  
10 committee's support for the recently enacted Fiscal Year  
11 2024 budget and your efforts to secure timely passage. As  
12 you are aware, the six month delay has had a real impact.

13           That time cannot be recovered, but at least we can now  
14 move forward with our urgent modernization priorities. As  
15 I have testified before this committee repeatedly, time is  
16 my greatest concern.

17           We are in a race for military technological  
18 superiority with a capable pacing challenge. Our cushion  
19 is gone. We are out of time. As we have briefed the  
20 committee on the classified level, the pacing threat moves  
21 steadily forward. I appreciate the opportunity to have a  
22 classified session today, Mr. Chairman, as well.

23           Continued failure to provide on time authorities or  
24 appropriations will leave the Air Force and Space Force  
25 inadequately prepared. We know the committee recognizes

1 this, and we appreciate your strong bipartisan support.

2 Our Fiscal Year 2025 budget request complies with the  
3 Fiscal Responsibility Act. We are requesting \$217.5  
4 billion for the Department of the Air Force, which includes  
5 \$188 billion for the Air Force and \$29.4 billion for the  
6 Space Force.

7 The Fiscal Year 2025 budget reflects an increase of  
8 about 1.5 percent over the enacted Fiscal Year 2024 budget  
9 and does not keep pace with inflation, or with the 7  
10 percent publicly acknowledged growth of China's military  
11 budget.

12 To stay within the levels of the FRA, the Department  
13 of the Air Force had to adjust our previous plans. The '25  
14 budget request seeks to preserve the momentum behind our  
15 modernization efforts, particularly the work on operational  
16 imperatives that we initiated, and that this committee  
17 supported in Fiscal Year 2024.

18 In order to preserve modernization, we have marginally  
19 reduced procurement and we have sustained our foundational  
20 accounts at levels we deemed acceptable but no more.  
21 Because the Space Force budget is dominated by research and  
22 development accounts, we have had to marginally reduce the  
23 pace and scope of our Space Force modernization programs.

24 Our first priority in the National Defense Strategy  
25 remains differential homeland, which the Department of the

1 Air Force primarily supports through investments in domain  
2 awareness, air and space defense, early warning, and  
3 cyberspace defense programs. Our second National Defense  
4 Strategy priority is to deter strategic attack against the  
5 United States, our allies, and our partners.

6 The Department of the Air Force's '25 budget request  
7 prioritizes nuclear modernization to maintain a safe,  
8 secure, and effective nuclear deterrent. Notably, the  
9 Sentinel ICBM program has experienced unacceptable cost and  
10 schedule increases and is currently undergoing a Nunn-  
11 McCurdy review.

12 The Department Air Force will work closely with the  
13 committee as that review reaches its conclusions. The  
14 third National Defense Strategy priority is to deter  
15 aggression and be prepared to prevail in conflict when  
16 necessary.

17 The Department of the Air Force needs immediate and  
18 significant capability and modernization to keep pace with  
19 the growing military capabilities of the PRC. The  
20 Department of the Air Force operational imperatives and the  
21 closely related cross-cutting operational enablers continue  
22 to guide our modernization program.

23 The Fiscal Year 2025 budget request includes \$6.1  
24 billion for these efforts. Finally, the fourth National  
25 Defense Strategy priority is to build a resilient Joint

1 Force and enduring advantages.

2 This budget request invests to ensure that we can  
3 recruit and retain the force we need, so that our Airmen  
4 and Guardians, and their families, have the quality of life  
5 they deserve and can serve to their full potential.

6 As we have briefed the committee, the Department of  
7 the Air Force is also currently undertaking a department  
8 wide effort to re-optimize to meet the needs of great power  
9 competition.

10 The intent is to minimize both cost impacts and  
11 personnel or unit movement. We will work closely with the  
12 committee as we develop detailed plans. We do not  
13 anticipate any significant impact on the Fiscal Year 2025  
14 budget, and we have not requested funds for this purpose.

15 The DAF also appreciates the committee's support for  
16 the DOD Quick Start Initiative that was enacted last year.  
17 The Department of the Air Force has obtained approval from  
18 the Secretary of Defense for two programs that will be  
19 initiated under this new authority.

20 They are, a more resilient national GPS position and  
21 navigation and timing capability, and C-3 battle management  
22 for moving target indication. Time matters, but so do  
23 resources. The United States is facing a competitor with  
24 national purchasing power that exceeds our own, a challenge  
25 we have never faced in modern times.

1           China is actively developing and expanding  
2 capabilities to challenge strategic stability, attack our  
3 critical space systems, and defeat our ability to project  
4 power, especially airpower. Conflict is not inevitable,  
5 but it could happen at any time.

6           General Allvin and I just returned from a trip to some  
7 of our key bases in the Indo-Pacific. We should all be  
8 very proud of our men and women serving in harm's way and  
9 doing everything they can to deter and to be ready for a  
10 conflict unlike any we have seen before.

11           The Department of Air Force's Fiscal Year 2025 budget  
12 request is focused on addressing these realities. We  
13 commit to working with the committee to secure timely  
14 enactment of this budget request. Thank you. We look  
15 forward to your questions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

16           [The prepared statement of Secretary Kendall follows:]

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

2 General Allvin, please.

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1           STATEMENT OF GENERAL DAVID W. ALLVIN, USAF, CHIEF OF  
2 STAFF OF THE AIR FORCE

3           General Allvin: Good morning, Chairman Reed, Senator  
4 Fischer, and distinguished members of this committee.

5           Today, I am proud to represent the 677,000 total force  
6 Airmen serving our nation. I want to thank you for your  
7 unyielding support, not only for those Airmen, but for  
8 their families as well. I would like to open by stating my  
9 immense pride in the exemplary performance of our Airmen  
10 this past weekend.

11           As part of a joint coalition effort, they successfully  
12 thwarted the massive air attack by Iran on Israel's home  
13 soil. Their professionalism and skill turned a potentially  
14 catastrophic event for Israel into a strategic defeat for  
15 Iran and its proxies. As we look across the strategic  
16 landscape, we find ourselves in a time of significant  
17 consequence.

18           The simultaneous demands of strategic competition with  
19 an aggressive and increasingly capable PRC, and persistent  
20 acute threats from around the globe, require the Air Force  
21 to maximize the readiness of today's forces, while adapting  
22 our structures and processes to offer the best opportunity  
23 to prevail in an environment of enduring competition. Time  
24 is not on our side.

25           The Fiscal Year 2025 Air Force budget request reflects

1 difficult choices. We have made tradeoffs to keep the Air  
2 Force's operational readiness today at the minimum  
3 acceptable to meet the nation's demands, while seeking to  
4 preserve the previous years' advances in modernization.

5 The Air Force budget request also invests in the Air  
6 Force's most precious asset, its Airmen, to ensure they  
7 remain the decisive advantage upon which the nation  
8 defends. Strategic deterrence is a key priority in our  
9 National Defense Strategy, and the United States Air Force  
10 remains committed to the recapitalization of our nuclear  
11 force.

12 We are actively supporting the process triggered by  
13 the Nunn-McCurdy breach of the Sentinel program and will  
14 continue to pursue the path of a safe, secure, reliable,  
15 and effective ground leg of the nuclear triad well into  
16 the future.

17 Our ability to support the National Defense Strategy  
18 priority of deterring aggression and prevailing in conflict  
19 demands a modern Air Force that is connected to the Joint  
20 Force and can close multiple kill chains in minimal time to  
21 control the tempo of a complex fight with a competitor.

22 To that end, the Fiscal Year 2025 budget proposes  
23 continued investments in the F-35 and F-15EX, albeit with  
24 fewer than preferred quantities dictated by the constraints  
25 of the Fiscal Responsibility Act.

1           We remain committed to the Advanced Battle Management  
2 System, C3 Battle Management, and to the NGAD family of  
3 systems, particularly collaborative combat aircraft, which  
4 will allow the Air Force to deliver the affordable mass  
5 required to be effective against a very capable PRC.

6           We are also committed to building forward based  
7 resiliency enough to enable continued sortie generation  
8 even while under attack. To arrest the decline in our  
9 readiness, we have proposed modest increase investment in  
10 flying hours and the weapon system sustainment funding to  
11 support them, while prioritizing investments in critical,  
12 physical, and cyber infrastructure.

13           Our Airmen are and will always be the deciding factor  
14 in any conflict our Air Force faces, and we are committed  
15 to their health, development, and quality of life. We have  
16 made significant progress thanks to Congress's support to  
17 increase basic pay, adjust the basic allowance for housing  
18 and subsistence, to account for macroeconomic factors.  
19 There is still work to be done.

20           During our recent trip to the Indo-Pacific, Secretary  
21 Kendall and I saw dedicated Airmen eager to accomplish the  
22 mission despite infrastructure degradation caused by  
23 natural disaster and persistent environmental challenges,  
24 as well as limited access to the health care enjoyed by  
25 many CONUS spaces.

1           The job of your Air Force has not changed since its  
2 inception, support and defend this nation through credible  
3 deterrence and unmatched combat prowess. To preserve that  
4 level of deterrence, we must maintain our readiness today,  
5 modernize our forces for tomorrow, and provide the absolute  
6 best support for our Airmen.

7           Success on any battlefield is a team effort. I want  
8 to thank the members of Congress and this committee for  
9 your past and continued support. Thank you, and I look  
10 forward to your questions.

11           [The prepared statement of General Allvin follows:]

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1 Chairman Reed: Thank you, General. General Saltzman,  
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1           STATEMENT OF GENERAL B. CHANCE SALTZMAN, USSF, CHIEF  
2 OF SPACE OPERATIONS

3           General Saltzman: Chairman Reed, Senator Fischer,  
4 distinguished members of the committee, thank you for your  
5 continued support and for the opportunity to testify on the  
6 Space Force's posture for Fiscal Year 2025.

7           As the Space Force prepares to celebrate its fifth  
8 birthday, we are wholly dedicated to the work of forging a  
9 service purpose built for great power competition. Space  
10 has never been more critical to the security of our nation,  
11 and the success or failure of the Joint Force depends  
12 heavily upon the capabilities we present.

13           It is our responsibility to contest and control the  
14 domain, to defend U.S. space capabilities, and to protect  
15 the Joint Force from space enabled attack. Gaining and  
16 maintaining space superiority is the purpose for which the  
17 Space Force was established. With about 3 percent of the  
18 Department of Defense's budget, the Space Force offers a  
19 tremendous value proposition to the nation.

20           Every dollar invested in space brings asymmetric  
21 returns, but that means every dollar cut creates asymmetric  
22 risk. Against a near peer adversary, space superiority is  
23 the linchpin. Without it, we cannot deter conflict.  
24 Without it, we cannot provide vital effects. Without it,  
25 we cannot protect the Joint Force.

1           Until we have built the infrastructure to achieve  
2 space superiority, the Space Force is a work in progress.  
3 The Space Force's theory of success includes three parts,  
4 avoiding operational surprise, denying the benefits of  
5 attack in space, and conducting responsible counter space  
6 activities.

7           The Space Force budget request is designed to support  
8 the National Defense Strategy by building, training, and  
9 equipping the forces the nation needs to perform each  
10 activity, preserving freedom of action in space, while  
11 deterring and denying adversarial objectives.

12           Avoiding operational surprise requires us to maintain  
13 an accurate understanding of the space domain at all times.  
14 8.3 percent of our budget is dedicated to the same.  
15 Operating across disaggregated sensor frameworks, the Space  
16 Force provides the maximum information possible to decision  
17 makers from the tactical to the strategic level.

18           Denying the benefits of attack in space demands that  
19 we make any attack against U.S. space capabilities  
20 impractical and self-defeating. 43.4 percent of our budget  
21 is devoted to this objective. Investing in resiliency for  
22 missile warning and tracking, satellite communications, and  
23 precision navigation and timing.

24           Hybrid architectures and proliferated constellations  
25 impose a heavy cost on aggression. Finally, responsible



1 counter space activities describes the mechanism by which  
2 the Space Force contests and controls the space domain.  
3 The Fiscal Year 2025 budget dedicates 24.7 percent of the  
4 Space Force's budget to space superiority.

5       Within the constraints of the FRA, Fiscal Year 2025  
6 Space Force budget reflects hard choices to maintain legacy  
7 space services and preserve current readiness, but it also  
8 slows the fielding of a modernized force. Addressing these  
9 challenges depends on Guardians that are trained and ready  
10 to meet the high tech demands of space operations.

11       For that reason, I would like to personally thank the  
12 committee for its support for the Space Force Personnel  
13 Management Act. This will be a major force multiplier in  
14 the Space Force's efforts to modernize the way we recruit,  
15 build, and retain talent. Thank you for the opportunity to  
16 discuss the Space Force's Fiscal Year 2025 budget and  
17 posture.

18       Even in the face of accelerating threats, the Space  
19 Force remains the preeminent military space organization in  
20 the world. With the support of this committee, our  
21 Guardians will preserve and expand our strategic advantage,  
22 and we will step up to meet the challenge of our facing  
23 threat.

24       So as long as you continue to trust and invest in your  
25 space service, the Space Force will respond with

1 unparalleled value for the nation. I look forward to your  
2 questions.

3 [The prepared statement of General Saltzman follows:]

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1 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, General Saltzman.  
2 Mr. Secretary, we have been endeavoring for the last  
3 several years to replace the E-3, AWACS, aircraft, which  
4 has certainly served well but is reaching its limits.  
5 Could you fill us in on the progress towards getting the E-  
6 7 in the air to replace the E-3?

7 Secretary Kendall: Yes, we are still moving ahead  
8 with the E-7. It is funded in the '25 budget. We had a  
9 slip production of one more aircraft a year to the right.

10 The price that we got from the prime came in much  
11 higher than we had anticipated, and we have been involved  
12 in negotiations to try to get it down. We have come much  
13 closer, but we are not really at closure yet, so we have  
14 some additional work to do there.

15 So, I am anticipating -- I am maybe being optimistic  
16 here, but hopefully that will get to an agreement very  
17 shortly and then be able to move on with the program. We  
18 are still committed to the program, but we have got to have  
19 an affordable aircraft.

20 Chairman Reed: The Australians, among others, have  
21 the E-7. Our version would be more sophisticated or quite  
22 different?

23 Secretary Kendall: It would be. It would have to  
24 include all of our communication systems and so on. So,  
25 there are a number of modifications from the original E-7,

1 which are several years old, that have to be made to meet  
2 our requirements. So that is part of the problem with the  
3 cost.

4 Chairman Reed: Thank you. General Allvin, a  
5 significant part of the lifecycle cost of an aircraft is  
6 sustainment cost. And I think around here, we -- our first  
7 reaction is the sticker shock. You mean, it costs x?

8 But we don't realize how much it really cost to keep  
9 flying. For example, the F-35 is, I think, about \$39,000  
10 per hour for flying. Can you tell us what progress the Air  
11 Force has made in reducing the lifecycle cost of the F-35  
12 system in particular?

13 General Allvin: Thank you, chairman. And of course,  
14 the F-35 will be the backbone of our force into the future.  
15 So, having it sustainable is certainly required for us to  
16 be able to afford it and all the other things.

17 The Joint Program Office has been undertaking this,  
18 what they are referring to is a war in readiness, trying to  
19 understand each of the individual elements and segments  
20 that are driving the cost up. And I think that program is  
21 underway. We expect to see some results from that in the  
22 very near future.

23 The other thing is that when you purchase the new  
24 weapon systems, you also have to purchase the contract  
25 logistics supply system as well, which adds a bit of an

1 additional cost to it. So, digging into that and  
2 understanding how we might be able to transition to this  
3 performance based logistics is another way into the future.

4 As you know, we have been working back and forth with  
5 the prime on how to do that. We couldn't come to a  
6 conclusion that was satisfactory for both sides to be able  
7 to have all of the things that we needed, so we are going  
8 to reenter that as well to ensure that in the future we can  
9 have a performance based logistics system that will drive  
10 down the cost of sustainment as well.

11 Chairman Reed: And there has been a determination, I  
12 presume, over time that contractor based sustainment is  
13 more efficient than uniform sustainment by military  
14 personnel?

15 General Allvin: That was certainly the premise when  
16 they put it into the CLS. And so, now we are looking at  
17 adjusting that to the current environment, how we may be  
18 able to adapt to ensure that we can get some of the  
19 efficiency and affordability, but also the operational  
20 responsiveness that we need.

21 Chairman Reed: Thank you. General Saltzman, your  
22 chief task is to provide the trained and equipped Space  
23 Force Guardians. And you can you sort of give us a sense  
24 of what are the obstacles you are facing in that?

25 General Saltzman: Yes. Thank you, Senator. The

1 conditions have changed radically in space over the last  
2 ten years or so. One of the analogies Secretary Kendall  
3 and I use is it is akin to going from a merchant marine and  
4 transforming into a U.S. Navy. That requires different  
5 equipment, that requires different training.

6 And so, what we are working on currently is advancing  
7 the training of our Guardians. We have invested in Fiscal  
8 Year 2025 about \$438 million to enhance the training  
9 infrastructure. This includes new simulators, new ranges,  
10 aggressor forces to simulate the threat, all to give them  
11 realistic training for the competitive environment they are  
12 going to face.

13 But maybe more importantly, and certainly more in  
14 terms of investments, is giving them the equipment they  
15 need, resilient architectures that are going to be more  
16 capable, more effective in the contested environment, and  
17 looking for the counter space capabilities to deny an  
18 adversary the ability to use space enabled targeting  
19 against our Joint Force.

20 Chairman Reed: Well, thank you very much. Gentlemen,  
21 thank you for your testimony. Senator Fischer, please.

22 Senator Fischer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome,  
23 gentlemen. I share with many of my colleagues a deep  
24 concern regarding the future of the United States Air  
25 Force. Its fighters, bombers, tankers, and cargo aircraft

1 are in constant rotation around the world, ready to combat  
2 any threat.

3 I understand that we must modernize our forces and  
4 divest when it makes sense to do so. However, many of the  
5 aircraft that the Air Force has requested to divest in this  
6 year's budget, such as the F-15Es, are among the most  
7 combat capable, with expensive upgrades and thousands of  
8 flight hours remaining on the aircraft. In the event of  
9 conflict, we need not only capability but also capacity.

10 Not every place in which the Air Force is expected to  
11 operate is a high end threat environment. I am especially  
12 concerned about the impact of these budget caps on the  
13 Space Force, whose programs form the backbone of every  
14 other services combat capability.

15 Communications, command and control, and guidance for  
16 weapon systems all rely on space, and more vital mission  
17 sets are expected to move to space in the near term, though  
18 not fast enough to justify such rapid divestment of  
19 airborne programs.

20 Yet, this budget request does not include the  
21 resources necessary for the Space Force to grow its  
22 capability at scale and at the speed of relevance. Indeed,  
23 your request for Space Force is \$600 million less than what  
24 the department requested last year.

25 General Saltzman, in your opening statement, you

1 stated, "the Space Force lacks similar trade off options,  
2 forcing delays in needed systems, especially counter space  
3 systems." I am concerned about the level of risk we are  
4 accepting by delaying development of these systems.

5 If Congress were to provide additional funding for  
6 development of these counter space systems, would you be  
7 able to execute that funding?

8 General Saltzman: Yes, ma'am. We have a series of  
9 programs that are still in R&D, but there is a good, solid  
10 program that with additional resources, we would be able to  
11 accelerate and deliver capability in this FYDP.

12 Senator Fischer: We have also heard a lot about what  
13 the Air Force is doing related to re-optimizing the great  
14 power competition, General Saltzman. What does that look  
15 for -- look like for the Space Force, please.

16 General Saltzman: Thank you for that. We are very  
17 excited about the re-optimization. And like I started in  
18 the previous question to Senator Reed, it is about  
19 recognizing that the environment has shifted and that we  
20 have to train differently.

21 So, we have reestablished new advanced training  
22 standards for our Guardians to be able to respond in this  
23 contested environment. We have also created a new force  
24 presentation model, which creates both the time and the  
25 tools for our Guardians to be able to train against this



1 adversary.

2           Most importantly, probably most recognizable, you will  
3 see the establishment of a space futures command. This is  
4 in recognition that there is a great many efforts that are  
5 going on in science and technology, in operational  
6 concepts, new missions, and we wanted to make sure we could  
7 get our arms around that as quickly as possible and really  
8 focus delivery of the right kind of systems with the right  
9 prioritization in time, so that we can continue to have an  
10 enduring advantage over our threats as we go into the  
11 future.

12           Senator Fischer: Thank you, sir. General Allvin or  
13 Secretary Kendall, what are additional updates that you can  
14 share in this setting on new developments in the B-21  
15 program?

16           Secretary Kendall: The B-21 is moving forward. I am  
17 always very careful about saying positive things about  
18 programs in development. They all have risk. But at this  
19 stage, the B-21 has been performing close to original  
20 scheduling and costs, and delivering capability is in  
21 testing. We just had the milestone CE approval to enter  
22 low rate production. So, the program is moving forward.  
23 At this point in time at least, we are pretty happy with  
24 the progress.

25           Senator Fischer: Great. Thank you. General Allvin,

1 it is my understanding that one of the changes at the Air  
2 Force Nuclear Weapons Center is establishing that two star  
3 general as PEO for international ballistic missiles. What  
4 benefits will this bring to the Air Force's capability to  
5 help them execute that Sentinel program?

6 General Allvin: Thank you, Senator. And this is  
7 really part and parcel to what things we were looking at  
8 with the re-optimization, understanding -- keeping the main  
9 thing, the main thing. Nuclear deterrence is the  
10 cornerstone of our national defense.

11 And so, the ability to oversee at the right level,  
12 with the right authorities to do integration of the ICBM  
13 leg of the triad is very important. So, elevating that to  
14 the two star level gives more seniority and more authority  
15 to be able to integrate the nuclear material management and  
16 all of the systems that will be able to support the ICBM.

17 Like we think that is going to be pivotal regardless  
18 of what comes out of the Nunn-McCurdy review. And going  
19 forward, that ground leg of the triad, that  
20 recapitalization is going to take years upon years, and so  
21 we want to ensure we have the right level of leadership and  
22 oversight to see this massive program.

23 Senator Fischer: Correct. We need to make sure we  
24 have what we need and continue to move forward on that  
25 program. Thank you.

1 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Fischer. Senator  
2 Hirono, please.

3 Senator Hirono: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you  
4 all for testifying today. This is for General Allvin. The  
5 agile combat employment strategy requires the appropriate  
6 posture and supporting infrastructure at locations  
7 throughout the Pacific. For example, just last week, the  
8 Air Force awarded a \$409 million contract to rebuild an  
9 airfield used during World War II on the island of Tinian.

10 General Allvin, does the Air Force have the  
11 appropriate forward basing it needs to execute agile combat  
12 employment? And are there plans for more reclamation  
13 efforts at Pacific airfields similar to Tinian and the  
14 runway upgrade of -- Air base, Basa Air Base in the island  
15 of Luzon?

16 General Allvin: Well, Senator, thank you for that  
17 question. And Secretary Kendall and I were there for about  
18 two weeks ago. We are on the island of Tinian, and  
19 certainly it holds not only a historic place, but it also  
20 is going to be part of the future as far as our agile  
21 combat employment scheme of maneuver.

22 So direct answer to your question, Senator, is we are  
23 on the path. We have the wing commanders and the Commander  
24 of Pacific Air Force with a very strong understanding of  
25 what it takes to do our agile combat employment, and they

1 continue through their wing level exercises to sort of to  
2 build that out, at least intellectually and conceptually.

3 And as we continue to fight for the resources to do  
4 that, we do have designs on several of these clusters,  
5 these spoke bases to include Tinian, that the Secretary and  
6 I were on. You mentioned a couple of the other ones but  
7 building out not only the runway but the necessary, not  
8 overly necessary, just what we need to operate those hub  
9 and spoke locations.

10 We have a ways to go in the funding, but we are  
11 designing the requirements, prioritizing them, and we do  
12 intend to exercise to ensure we have everything we need to  
13 execute that that scheme of maneuver that is going to be  
14 required.

15 Senator Hirono: But as part of the -- or maybe a  
16 major part of the reason that we need to have these  
17 facilities in the Indo-Pacific is because of recognizing  
18 that China is definitely having -- they are reaching out to  
19 a number of these island nations to influence them. Is  
20 that one of the reasons that we want to do this?

21 General Allvin: Senator, that is correct. We want to  
22 ensure that we have the agility and be able to complicate  
23 their targeting calculus to ensure survivability and  
24 success in that theater.

25 Senator Hirono: Thank you. I support your effort.

1 Secretary Kendall, last year's NDAA included a provision  
2 directing the Secretary of Defense to conduct a feasibility  
3 study regarding the advisability of transfer --  
4 transferring all covered space functions of the National  
5 Guard to the Space Force.

6 The results of this study have not been released, but  
7 I am concerned that you are already pursuing, apparently,  
8 or DOD is, a provision in this year's NDAA that would move  
9 all space missions out of the National Guard.

10 So, how does this change -- by the way, I think it is  
11 important for us to actually have the results of this  
12 analysis, and I would hope that the analysis is also  
13 including outreach and the input of these National Guard  
14 units that are performing some of the space functions that  
15 I am sure you know, Mr. Secretary, there are about 1,000  
16 National Guardsmen in states, not just Hawaii but there are  
17 about 100 in California, Colorado, Florida, New York, Ohio,  
18 Alaska.

19 So, while that study has not even been completed, I  
20 hope that you have gotten -- reached out to these National  
21 Guard units. Have you, in conducting this study that we do  
22 not have the results of yet?

23 Secretary Kendall: The study is in final draft.  
24 First of all, let me just say that we deeply value the  
25 units that are part of essentially our space capabilities.

1 We are looking at which ones will be covered under the act.

2 Consulting with General Saltzman, and we have looked  
3 at the functions of those units to see if they fit into the  
4 Air Force or Space Force architecture more appropriately.  
5 Most of them do fit within the Space Force, or a couple  
6 that I think may be more appropriate in the Air Force, but  
7 they are all valued and they are all important.

8 We want to have them continue to serve. We are  
9 looking at how to best make that happen. General Saltzman  
10 and I are both very strongly of the opinion that the right  
11 way to do that, from the point of view of national  
12 capability and for the ability to manage the Space Force,  
13 is to bring those units into the Space Force, ultimately  
14 under the Space Force Personnel Management Act that was  
15 just passed by the Congress last year.

16 The Space Force is incredibly small, and it was  
17 designed to be lean and mean I guess is a way to put it to  
18 be very efficient in how it operated and to have as minimal  
19 amount of bureaucracy associated with it.

20 And we are very grateful that this committee and your  
21 colleagues on the other side of the Hill supported the  
22 Space Force Personnel Management Act that allows the Space  
23 Force to have full time and part time people in it, and to  
24 be very flexible in how it manages people. So, we want to  
25 bring these hard units into that same structure. And that

1 is clearly, from the point of view of the Space Force, the  
2 best solution.

3 Senator Hirono: Mr. Secretary, I am glad to hear  
4 that. Although transferring these units into the Space  
5 Force might mean transferring these part time people who  
6 are located in all the States that I mentioned away from  
7 their States and other functions, so I have a concern about  
8 that.

9 And, you know, General Saltzman just testified today  
10 that it is very important in terms of the recruiting and  
11 retention of the people who are going to be doing these  
12 functions. So, I have concerns that -- of the movement. I  
13 do have other questions, Mr. Chairman, that I will submit  
14 for the record. Thank you.

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

17 Secretary Kendall: Mr. chairman, if could have one  
18 minute to respond to Senator Hirono.

19 Chairman Reed: Yes. The only one minute you will  
20 get.

21 Secretary Kendall: Thank you. Thank you, Mr.  
22 Chairman. There is no intention to move anyone. So, there  
23 is some concerns out there that I think are overblown.

24 People will basically have stability if they  
25 transition. We are doing this now with some of the

1 reserves. There are about a thousand people in the  
2 reserves, essentially, that are going to be moving under  
3 the Space Force Personnel Management Act.

4 We are going to handle the Space Guard people the same  
5 way, basically. So, they would have stability, and they  
6 will be able to continue to serve in the way generally that  
7 they currently would serve.

8 So, there should not be a lot of concern about  
9 dramatic changes as far as any of them are concerned.  
10 General Saltzman may want to add a quick word on it.

11 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary.  
12 That helps clarify the issue very much. Senator Rounds,  
13 please.

14 Senator Rounds: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Secretary  
15 Kendall, General Allvin, General Saltzman, thank you for  
16 your service, and thank you for being with us today to  
17 share your testimony. I would also like to take this  
18 opportunity to acknowledge the actions of the pilots and  
19 aircrews of the 494th and the 335th Fighter Squadrons, who  
20 performed so magnificently over the weekend.

21 We are all proud and humbled by their clear  
22 excellence. And to the entire Joint Force for the job,  
23 they did in responding very, very quickly. Secretary  
24 Kendall, given the events over this past weekend, it seems  
25 clear to me that there is no substitute for military



1 hardware and that divesting platforms in the short term to  
2 pay for future capabilities is not necessarily the most  
3 desirable option or choice.

4 Congress must fund the Department at levels  
5 commensurate to the global threat environment. Broadly  
6 speaking, in this open setting, where does your Fiscal Year  
7 2025 budget assume the most risk?

8 Secretary Kendall: If I were to look over at the  
9 Department of the Air Force's budget, I am most concerned  
10 about the pace at which we are moving forward in space,  
11 particularly counter space. I am not uncomfortable with  
12 where the Air Force is in terms of force structure or  
13 capabilities globally.

14 We have a large Air Force, and it is very capable. It  
15 is not as large as it once was, but we have a lot of units,  
16 and the two you mentioned I think did a fantastic job, but  
17 we have a lot of other units who could do very similar  
18 things if called upon to do that.

19 Our average aircraft is about 30 years old, and we  
20 need to move forward with the next generation of  
21 capabilities as quickly as we can. On the Space Force  
22 side, though, as General Saltzman mentioned, we are going  
23 from a country that had space capabilities designed to  
24 operate in space with impunity and very little in the way  
25 of counter space capabilities.

1           So, we are moving from a merchant marine like  
2 arrangement to a military naval force arrangement, which  
3 means we have got to have resilient assets in space that  
4 will survive and attack and provide the services that are  
5 so important to the Joint Force. And we have got to  
6 protect the Joint Force from similar systems that the other  
7 side has that would threaten us and target us.

8           So, we need to do both of those things, and those are  
9 transformational capabilities compared to what we currently  
10 have in the Space Force for the most part. So, my greatest  
11 concern, again, is time and moving forward as quickly as  
12 possible with the kind of space capabilities we need,  
13 particularly counter space.

14           Senator Rounds: And I guess just to follow up on  
15 that, and once again I suspect this is one that all of you  
16 would probably participate in responding to, but ISR is  
17 critical, and right now we have got platforms that do a  
18 great job, but they are not necessarily space based.

19           Space based is critical long term, but it would appear  
20 that right now, we are still building those ISR  
21 capabilities for the Combatant Commander to have in order  
22 to finish that kill web. General Allvin, would it be clear  
23 -- would you, at least in your professional military  
24 opinion, would you share with this committee where we are  
25 right now with regard to our ISR platforms that the

1 Combatant Commanders are requesting at this time?

2 General Allvin: Absolutely, Senator. Of course, you  
3 know, intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance absolutely  
4 critical to be able to close those kill chains and have the  
5 situational awareness that Combatant Commanders need.

6 I would say that where we are is we are in a  
7 transition. I think there is a comfort with the level of  
8 the capacity that airborne ISR has been able to provide.  
9 And during our transition to space, air mix I think is,  
10 from air --

11 Senator Rounds: General Allvin, I am going to I am  
12 going to cut right to the chase on this. Fair to say we  
13 are assuming risk in this transition?

14 General Allvin: Senator, I would say we assume risk  
15 in any of the transitions. We are trying to manage that  
16 risk to the platforms we have, retaining the platforms that  
17 we have through the RQ-4 through 2029 and those that we  
18 have in the airborne layer until we get more resilience  
19 through the spaceborne layer, because that is where the  
20 future is.

21 Senator Rounds: Thank you. General Allvin, also with  
22 regard to the family, the B-21 family. Right now, the  
23 actual platform itself, we have ordered or were prepared to  
24 purchase 100. Would you say that that is the minimum  
25 number needed of the base platform?

1           General Allvin: It certainly is the future of our  
2 bomber force. Before -- 100 is the program of record. I  
3 think we are not going to reach that number until probably  
4 the mid 2030s and beyond.

5           And before we commit to that as being the platform  
6 beyond that, I think there are other technological  
7 advancements that we would see to be able to augment that  
8 and have a better mix because, as you know, there, there  
9 also -- there is a price to pay for them. They are going  
10 to be very capable.

11          Senator Rounds: But the 100, sir, is the minimum?

12          General Allvin: That is the program of record,  
13 absolutely.

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

15          Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Rounds. Let me  
16 recognize Senator King, please.

17          Senator King: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr.  
18 Secretary, you began your testimony talking about the Nunn-  
19 McCurdy process and Sentinel. Very expensive program  
20 designed years ago. Make the case for the ground based leg  
21 of the triad.

22          Secretary Kendall: I should mention that I am recused  
23 on Sentinel itself, but I can definitely answer your  
24 question about ground based leg. For as long as I have  
25 been in this business, about 50 years, the country has

1 relied upon the triad for nuclear strategic deterrence. It  
2 presents an adversary with a very difficult problem if it  
3 is contemplating an attack against the United States.

4 The ICBM leg in particular, which is our largest and  
5 most responsive leg of the triad, presents a dilemma  
6 because if it is attacked, it basically can be very  
7 responsive and respond immediately with a large scale  
8 counterattack.

9 The submarine part of the fleet provides a more secure  
10 reserve, if you will, that is smaller in size but more  
11 survivable. And then, of course, the bomber leg provides  
12 additional flexibility and the ability to present an  
13 adversary with another way in which they can be attacked.

14 That triumvirate, that triad has been enormously  
15 effective in preventing a nuclear war for more than half a  
16 century -- almost approaching a century now. At one point,  
17 I think you could have had a debate when the only nuclear  
18 powers were Russia and the United States and our arsenals  
19 were declining, that we could have gone to some other  
20 arrangement.

21 But the thing that has happened in the last few years  
22 that really reinforces the need for the ICBM leg is China's  
23 breakout and their expansion of their nuclear force, which  
24 is truly the progress --

25 Senator King: China is making huge investments in a

1 land based --

2 Secretary Kendall: China is making a large  
3 investment, and they are going to an inventory within the  
4 next few years that is comparable to that of the United  
5 States and Russia.

6 So, for the first time in our history, we are going to  
7 live in a world in which there are three large scale  
8 nuclear powers. That is a very dangerous world. And I  
9 think reducing our capability, reducing our options in the  
10 face of that would be a serious mistake.

11 Senator King: Of course, the fundamental of our  
12 entire defense policy is deterrence.

13 Secretary Kendall: Exactly.

14 Senator King: And in order to maintain deterrence,  
15 the ground leg is an important factor. Thank you. When we  
16 buy a major weapon systems, B-21, F-35, do we acquire the  
17 IP?

18 And what I am leading to here is the ability of our  
19 military to 3D print parts so that we are not subject to a  
20 long supply chain delays and also potentially additional  
21 cost.

22 Do we have the -- I believe that every hangar should  
23 have a 3D printer and every Navy ship should have a 3D  
24 printer so that we are not tied to that long tail of parts.  
25 What is the status of our acquisition of the IP so that

1 that can be effectuated.

2 Secretary Kendall: Our history is mixed on IP  
3 acquisition. The F-35 is a good example of a program where  
4 we didn't do that. It was acquired initially under a  
5 philosophy of total system procurement, which essentially  
6 left in the hands of the prime contractor a lot of control  
7 of the program.

8 Makes it very hard to upgrade. It makes it very hard  
9 to make changes and do them in a cost effective way, and to  
10 take advantage of competition. Our more modern programs  
11 generally are built where we acquire the intellectual  
12 property we need to control both upgrades and maintenance  
13 so that we have a lot more flexibility in how we manage.  
14 The B-21 is being done that way.

15 The NGAD program is being done that way. It is one of  
16 the lessons we have learned very painfully over our history  
17 in acquisition. I am not sure that we always get it right  
18 today, but my -- I am not doing acquisitions anymore. I am  
19 in a different role now.

20 But my guidance, when I was doing that, was that when  
21 we still have the benefits of competition, we need to get  
22 the intellectual property rights we are going to need for  
23 the life of the program.

24 And if we can get reasonable prices for those rights  
25 at that time, and then be in a position to manage the

1 program effectively going forward. That is the way we  
2 should be doing this. I can't say that we do it in every  
3 case.

4 Senator King: General Saltzman, we may need to talk  
5 about this in a classified setting, but you used the term  
6 denying the benefits of attacks in space. Secretary  
7 Kendall used counter space. Clearly we are playing catch  
8 up in this situation. And is there anything you can say in  
9 the open setting to provide some reassurance that we are  
10 not totally vulnerable in space right now?

11 General Saltzman: Yes, Senator. Thank you for that.  
12 The Fiscal Year 2025 budget, I think, continues to advance  
13 us on a pretty solid timeline for adding resilient  
14 architectures to the critical missions like missile  
15 warning, satellite communications, data transport.

16 And so, I am pretty comfortable with where we are  
17 headed in terms of denying the benefits of an attack on our  
18 systems to some degree. The problem, again, as the  
19 Secretary mentioned, was the fact that the PRC, in  
20 particular, has built a very robust, space enabled  
21 targeting system and have continued to do so at a very  
22 rapid rate.

23 And so, scaling up to develop not just the type of  
24 counter space capabilities that we need, but the quantity  
25 of those capabilities to hold those targets at risk is



1 where we are falling behind in the timeline. And we are  
2 not just moving as quickly as I think we should.

3 Senator King: Thank you. General Allvin, I am going  
4 to submit this question for the record, but I would like  
5 some thoughts from you about the Transition Assistance  
6 Program and how it is being implemented in the Air Force.

7 I worry about the transition process from active duty  
8 to veteran status. Very dangerous moment. And so, you  
9 don't need to respond now, but I will look forward to your  
10 response on that question. Thank you. Thank you, Mr.  
11 Chairman.

12 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator King. Senator  
13 Tuberville, please.

14 Senator Tuberville: Good morning, gentlemen. General  
15 Saltzman, Fiscal Year -- the President's Fiscal Year 2025  
16 budget contains a new program for space access, mobility,  
17 and logistics. It is only \$20 million. What is your plan  
18 for this?

19 General Saltzman: Sir, that type of money is used to  
20 study to figure out if there is military utility. And so,  
21 for example, we are looking at a concept called dynamic  
22 maneuvering, if we can have unlimited fuel in our  
23 spacecraft because we have the ability to service them on  
24 orbit, then we can have more dynamic orbits which are  
25 harder to target.

1           That is the concept, that is the idea, but we really  
2 need to evaluate that to figure out if there is serious  
3 military utility there before we invest heavily in a  
4 program, and the \$20 million gets us along that line.

5           Senator Tuberville: Yes, \$20 million for five years,  
6 that is not a lot of money. I mean, is that going to get  
7 the job done?

8           General Saltzman: I believe we will have the answers  
9 to our basic questions on military utility with that, and  
10 then we can make a determination whether we need more  
11 funding.

12          Senator Tuberville: How is your recruiting and  
13 retention?

14          General Saltzman: We are doing great. We still get  
15 thousands of applicants for hundreds of positions, and we  
16 are above 90 percent in terms of the people that we want to  
17 retain.

18          So, I am not, you know, convinced that that is going  
19 to last forever. And so, we are working hard to make sure  
20 we provide our Guardians with high levels of challenges and  
21 opportunities to enhance their own competencies, to make  
22 sure we can retain that workforce.

23          Senator Tuberville: Thank you. Secretary Kendall,  
24 recently, I guess you decided to cut in half to MH-139s,  
25 and we have got 1 or 2. I think we got eight total

1 eventually coming to Montgomery, in Maxville. What is your  
2 plan on this?

3 Secretary Kendall: I Maxville has one already, and  
4 another later this year, and then the full eight about a  
5 year after that. We did cut the buyback. We cut it from  
6 about 80 to about 40. And the reason for that was that the  
7 threat change and the areas in which we expect to operate  
8 have changed.

9 So, it is a fairly expensive special purpose  
10 helicopter that isn't -- doesn't have that much utility in  
11 some of the theaters where we would have to operate given  
12 the threats are there. And there are a number of other  
13 assets and in many cases can be used for personnel  
14 recovery.

15 So, we basically downsized it to have what we think is  
16 a reasonable force to meet our needs given the changes in  
17 the threat. That has been the fundamental driver.

18 Senator Tuberville: Yes. I was at the Tyndall Air  
19 Force Base recently. How is that coming? That was a  
20 disaster, what happened to Tyndall, but we are rebuilding  
21 it back. Is it coming along pretty good?

22 Secretary Kendall: I would have to get your detailed  
23 answer for the record, but yes, is a basic answer to your  
24 question. A lot has been put into Tyndall to restore it.

25 Senator Tuberville: Thank you. General Allvin, F-

1 35s. We are putting a lot of eggs in a basket on this.  
2 Are we getting enough flying time knowing the cost of F-  
3 35s, of operating and maintaining?

4 General Allvin: Well, Senator, we are certainly  
5 trying to manage that to get as many as we can. You know,  
6 we -- as the weapons system sustainment accounts and the  
7 flying our program accounts are very much interrelated.

8 And so, as we try and drive down the costs of what it  
9 costs to sustain that, we can put more of that into flying  
10 hours. No pilot thinks he or she ever has enough flying  
11 hours, but we certainly are augmenting that with our  
12 synthetic training.

13 Our joint synthetic environment is also helping us  
14 understand the things that we don't necessarily want to do  
15 an open air because of security. I would say, though, that  
16 every pilot wants to fly more, but we are trying to manage  
17 that well to keep that proficiency up, to keep up with the  
18 pace and threat.

19 Senator Tuberville: We want to make sure our pilots  
20 are safe, obviously. In the confrontations we have been  
21 having lately, the F-35 have been used, that you know of?

22 General Allvin: The F-35 has been a part of -- some  
23 of the recent ones, like over the weekend, it was not  
24 required for that capability, and it actually wasn't in the  
25 theater. But the assets that we had in the theater, they

1 come through request from the Combatant Commander, and we  
2 provide the assets for which they request.

3 And those were satisfactory in that permissive  
4 environment. In the highly contested environment, the  
5 contested environment, that is really where this fifth  
6 generation capability of the F-35 provides today, but even  
7 more so into tomorrow with the Tech Refresh 3 and Block 4  
8 capability to upgrade capabilities.

9 Senator Tuberville: General, how is our recruiting in  
10 the Air Force?

11 General Allvin: Recruiting in the Air Force is doing  
12 quite well. It is really improving. On the active duty  
13 side, we actually just recently increased our goal, and we  
14 think we are going to make that increased goal.

15 On the reserve side, they are going to be within 1  
16 percent. They think they may actually make it as well.  
17 The National Guard had a deeper deficit to recover from. I  
18 think last year they were well below. They are going to be  
19 within 5 percent. So, we are gaining on all fronts. We  
20 are certainly not resting on our laurels.

21 In the '25 budget, we asked for another \$50 million to  
22 be able to distribute out to more recruiting centers to  
23 have more digitization of records and things so we can also  
24 have the recruiters do more recruiting rather than just  
25 admin work.

1           So, we are not giving up that we have got it all  
2 linked right now, but we certainly are on the right path.

3           Senator Tuberville: We are increasing numbers?

4           General Allvin: Absolutely.

5           Senator Tuberville: Is that what you said?

6           General Allvin: Yes.

7           Senator Tuberville: What percentage, do you know?

8           General Allvin: Well, I would say right now we are --

9           Senator Tuberville: The goal.

10          General Allvin: What percent of the goal? The active  
11 duty Air Force right now is reaching 100 percent of its  
12 goal -- 101 percent, quite frankly, which allows us to bank  
13 a few. The reserves, 99 percent. And the Air National  
14 Guard, about 95 percent.

15          Senator Tuberville: Thank you.

16          Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Tuberville.

17          Senator Peters, please.

18          Senator Peters: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Gentlemen,  
19 welcome. It is good to see all of you here today.

20          Secretary Kendall and General Allvin, as you know, this  
21 past January, the Air Force announced that Selfridge Air  
22 National Guard Base will be receiving 12 new KC-46  
23 refueling tankers in 2029.

24          And, I just want to say, I don't think I can emphasize  
25 enough how grateful I am to the Air Force for making this

1 announcement. Certainly, a very big deal for our area, and  
2 the community is very excited to receive these critical  
3 refueling tankers that will continue to play really a  
4 tremendous strategic role for us for decades to come.

5 At the same time, and I have talked to both of General  
6 Allvin and Secretary Kendall, I also remain committed to  
7 securing a future fighter replacement for the retiring A-  
8 10s that are currently flying at Selfridge.

9 The Air Force basing announcement clearly stated at  
10 the time that the KC-46 decision does not preclude  
11 Selfridge from "being considered for a future fighter  
12 aircraft mission or other potential missions in the  
13 future."

14 And I would just like both of you, if you would, could  
15 reaffirm and commit on the record that Selfridge is still  
16 in consideration for a future fighter basing decision at  
17 some point. Secretary Kendall.

18 Secretary Kendall: Senator, thank you. Selfridge  
19 would be in consideration for future fighter basing  
20 decision, potentially. But at the current time, we don't  
21 have an option to do that. And the reason we made the  
22 programmatic decision to put the KC-46 there was in part at  
23 least because of the divestiture of the A-10.

24 So, those two are linked together. Our general policy  
25 is to replace a flying mission that is divested with a like

1 flying mission where we can. If we can't do that, we try  
2 to apply it with another flying mission. And then if we  
3 can't do that, we try to replace it with an enduring  
4 mission. In the case of Selfridge, the KC-46s are  
5 basically to replace the combination of the KC-135s and the  
6 A-10s.

7 And in the future we may be at a very different place.  
8 General Allvin mentioned in his opening statement the CCAs  
9 that we are acquiring. We don't know the final inventory  
10 number there, but we expect it to be large, so there is a  
11 possibility there.

12 And we are looking as we build our '26 budget at our  
13 overall fighter modernization plan overall. So, there is a  
14 possibility in the future, but none that we can point to  
15 right at this time.

16 Senator Peters: General Allvin, you want to add any  
17 to that comment?

18 General Allvin: I, just to answer the specific  
19 question, it does not preclude, but the Secretary has  
20 really laid out with respect to the basing decision and  
21 criteria.

22 Senator Peters: Right. But it doesn't preclude  
23 future, as we continue to work. And General Allvin, and I  
24 appreciate the time that we took yesterday, or last week  
25 rather, to meet. And as part of that conversation, we



1 discussed the critical importance of the collaborative  
2 combat aircraft, which Secretary Kendall just referred to.

3 We also talked about a potential pilot program to  
4 study drone operations in medium and high intensity  
5 airspace, which right now is problematic with unmanned  
6 aircraft. This pilot program would allow the Department of  
7 Defense to experiment with existing unmanned systems like  
8 the MQ-9 Reaper, to pave the way for the employment of  
9 future platforms like CCA.

10 So, my question for you, sir, is what benefits and  
11 lessons learned would the Air Force -- would the Air Force  
12 gain from this kind of pilot program? And would you  
13 support a pilot program of that nature?

14 General Allvin: Thank you, Senator. I certainly  
15 would. I think as we look forward to the arc of where the  
16 contested environment in which we are going to need to  
17 fight, that arc is one that requires us to really  
18 investigate all the options for how we maintain  
19 survivability at the right risk, to be able to penetrate,  
20 to be able to survive and to be able to close these kill  
21 chains.

22 And it has increasingly become apparent to me that  
23 there is ripe for study how we do it in the uncrewed area  
24 where we are developing the autonomy as well. We have a  
25 current program in parallel that we are looking at the

1 length of -- the portfolio to which you can put autonomy in  
2 these collaborative combat aircraft, as well as how we  
3 utilize them and base them. So, we are trying to go as  
4 fast as we can into the human, machine teaming play.

5 Senator Peters: Yes, if I can build on that. We  
6 discussed last week the importance of the KC-46 refueling  
7 tanker, as well as the need for some out-of-the-box  
8 thinking when it comes to collaborative combat aircraft  
9 employment.

10 As part of that discussion, you mentioned the  
11 possibility, the possibility of employing KC-46s a command  
12 and control node for future CCA aircraft. You know, I  
13 understand that those decisions are in the very early  
14 stages, but what steps with the Air Force needed to explore  
15 this KC-46 and CCA command and control concept?

16 General Allvin: Senator, I think the first step that  
17 we need to do is to get better situational awareness on the  
18 KC-46s. And that is something that we are looking into  
19 very strongly.

20 General Minihan has done some experiments out in the  
21 Indo-Pacific showing that if you just have a C2 node, the  
22 ability to communicate in ways that the tanker right now  
23 can't, that starts your ability to have a more resilient  
24 command and control network.

25 Now, whether that next step is to go from just being a

1 communications node relay to actually doing airborne battle  
2 management is something that can be investigated. But the  
3 first start is to ensure that you have the connectivity of  
4 your mobility platforms in a way that you didn't before.

5 That opens up the opportunity to do more than just  
6 being a comms relay, but maybe doing more command control.

7 Senator Peters: Right. Thank you. Appreciate it.

8 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Peters. Senator  
9 Schmitt, please.

10 Senator Schmitt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Secretary  
11 Kendall, a sort of a follow up on Senator Peters' question.  
12 Missouri is home to Whiteman Air Force Base, and the 442nd  
13 Fighter Wing is there.

14 And the A-10, you know, the Air Force is moving on  
15 from the A-10, and that will be -- really come to fruition  
16 in four years. You know, it has some really experienced  
17 pilots and maintainers, and we are already starting to see  
18 the retention issues because there hasn't been a follow on  
19 mission.

20 What can you tell me today about how you are  
21 approaching that? Because there are some options, but  
22 there has really just not been a lot of movement.

23 Secretary Kendall: I don't think we have an option  
24 yet for the A-10 replacement.

25 Senator Schmitt: Can I make a suggestion?

1 Secretary Kendall: Yes.

2 Senator Schmitt: The F-15EX would be a great option.

3 Secretary Kendall: We will take that under  
4 consideration, Senator.

5 Senator Schmitt: Okay. Secondly, Rosecrans, which is  
6 in Saint Joseph, Missouri, is home to the aging fleet of C-  
7 130Hs. Interestingly -- and, you know, some have said that  
8 the last round was pretty political based on where they  
9 went. And I just want to make the point, Rosecrans trains  
10 people from all around the world.

11 For example, the Indian Air Force comes in with their  
12 C-130Js to be trained by the folks at Rosecrans who have Hs  
13 from the 1980s. There have been eight, you know,  
14 appropriate in this next round. So, I guess just for  
15 either one of you, where do you see this headed?

16 General Allvin: Senator, those eight Hs that were  
17 appropriated, certainly they go through the basing process.  
18 And the candidate bases, I understand that Rosecrans is  
19 going to be considered as one of, I believe, four candidate  
20 bases for those.

21 Obviously, it meets the criteria. That is the first  
22 part of the strategic basing process, and it does meet the  
23 criteria, obviously, because they are flying 130 -- but the  
24 expectation is it will be under consideration. The  
25 Director of our Air National Guard Bureau works closely

1 with the Secretary on making those decisions, but it should  
2 be in the consideration.

3 Secretary Kendall: Let me just add that I delegated  
4 the last C-130 trade basing decision to the head of the Air  
5 National Guard, and I will probably do the same with this  
6 one.

7 Senator Schmitt: Okay. Secretary. Kendall, I do  
8 want to ask you, I sent a letter to Secretary Austin, you  
9 know, asking for some accountability with these DEI  
10 positions that have found their way throughout the Pentagon  
11 and our Armed Services. Secretary Kendall, do you know how  
12 many DEI positions exist in the Air Force -- full time  
13 positions?

14 Secretary Kendall: It is a relatively small number,  
15 Senator. We are in the process of complying with the law,  
16 and we will comply with it. I think the due date to have  
17 this done is about the middle of June, if I remember right.  
18 So, we will get you the exact --

19 Senator Schmitt: Well, the answer is 70 -- 70. The  
20 Navy has 18. The Army has 19. Those are 18 and 19 too  
21 many, as far as I am concerned. But 70, what do these  
22 people do all day long? Like I am asking because what do  
23 these DEI coordinators do all day long, 70 of them, in the  
24 Air Force?

25 Secretary Kendall: I think -- I thought the number

1 was higher than that, actually.

2 Senator Schmitt: Well, that is full time position, so  
3 maybe -- I am actually very curious now what you are going  
4 to -- what your report might show. But 70 full time  
5 positions, what do they do?

6 Secretary Kendall: They oversee programs that are in  
7 that area. They oversee our training in that area. They  
8 are responsible for some of our data collection that will  
9 be related to that. We did two disparity reports in the  
10 department that were started before I came in, and probably  
11 shortly afterwards.

12 They are responsible for that. Those report showed  
13 pretty significant disparities in results of things like  
14 the criminal justice system, in promotions and command  
15 selection rates, and then senior school selection. And  
16 those pointed us at actions we could take to try to address  
17 some of those concerns.

18 Senator Schmitt: Okay. Well --

19 Secretary Kendall: They had they have done, I think,  
20 valuable work --

21 Senator Schmitt: Well, I look forward to your full  
22 report. And I could make a suggestion how you could be a  
23 real leader for the country. You should fire them all,  
24 every single one of them. It is so divisive.

25 And Senator Tuberville has talked about recruiting.

1 The elephant in the room is, the truth is that this is  
2 dividing our folks in the military by race. It is taking  
3 us backwards. It is cultural Marxism and somehow you are,  
4 you know, you are here today defending this. So, you know,  
5 I have got legislation to get rid of them all.

6 You could take a real leadership position by firing  
7 everybody tomorrow. That would be great. I do have time  
8 for one quick question. I know that we are moving a lot of  
9 ISR capability to space, and I am generally supportive of  
10 that.

11 But are you guys concerned at all that we are maybe  
12 moving too quickly away from some more traditional  
13 capabilities?

14 Secretary Kendall: Just as a quick comment on -- I  
15 think we have a fundamental difference of opinion about  
16 DEI.

17 Senator Schmitt: We do. We certainly do.

18 Secretary Kendall: Regarding ISR, we are moving, we  
19 are transitioning into space because of the vulnerability  
20 of some of our airborne platforms. AWACS and JSTARS are  
21 great examples of that.

22 The same is true with some of our UAVs, unmanned  
23 aerial vehicles that operate -- can operate in a contested  
24 environment. We will always have a balance between  
25 airborne capabilities and space based capabilities.

1           We want to confront our adversaries with a more  
2 difficult problem than just having to deal with one of  
3 those. But because of the range at which -- and the  
4 sophistication of which our adversaries are reaching out to  
5 engage some of those platforms, they are pushed back so far  
6 that they can't be effective in many cases, or they have to  
7 operate in a way which limits their effectiveness in order  
8 to be survivable.

9           So, we are moving a lot of that capability in the  
10 space, and we are doing it with the resilient architectures  
11 that General Saltzman talked about earlier.

12           Chairman Reed: Thank you, Schmitt. Senator Warren,  
13 please.

14           Senator Warren: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Our  
15 military is the best and the strongest in the world, so it  
16 is no surprise that foreign governments have been  
17 recruiting both active duty and retired officers.

18           The Washington Post found that hundreds of foreign  
19 governments have hired hundreds of retired officers, from  
20 Saudi Arabia, to Libya, to the United Arab Emirates.  
21 General Allvin, is there a National Security risk when our  
22 trained military personnel work for foreign governments?

23           General Allvin: Senator, there certainly is.

24           Senator Warren: So retired officers working for  
25 foreign governments could endanger our military



1 competitiveness. That is why we require retired officers  
2 who want to work for foreign governments to receive  
3 approval from their military service and from the Secretary  
4 of State.

5 Now, we tightened up that process last year in the  
6 National Defense Authorization Act, but there are still  
7 some loopholes in this space. For example, active duty  
8 service members are allowed to start negotiating employment  
9 with foreign governments before they leave the military.

10 General Allvin, could allowing active duty Airmen to  
11 negotiate work on behalf of another government while still  
12 wearing their U.S. uniform pose risks to our National  
13 Security?

14 General Allvin: Well, Senator, there is -- while they  
15 are still in uniform, they are still subject to the  
16 policies, the restrictions, and the UCMJ --

17 Senator Warren: I understand that, but they are also  
18 permitted to negotiate with foreign governments for their  
19 future employment. And what I am asking is, does that  
20 potentially pose a conflict of interest that threatens our  
21 security, at least potentially?

22 General Allvin: I say potentially, could, yes.

23 Senator Warren: All right, I agree. You know, we  
24 need to strengthen our rules so that active duty personnel  
25 aren't selling their services to foreign governments while

1 they are still in uniform.

2 There is another loophole that we need to close. Last  
3 year, the Air Force issued a memo raising concerns about  
4 China's recruitment of both current and recently retired  
5 Air Force personnel like pilots, maintainers, and other  
6 technical experts that have a lot of insight into U.S. air  
7 tactics.

8 Now, in many cases, these individuals are hired by  
9 private entities and actually may not know that they are  
10 signing up to work for a foreign government, and our laws  
11 requiring retired personnel to get approval before working  
12 for a foreign government are much less clear if the  
13 officers are hired by a private company that is doing work  
14 for that foreign government.

15 General Allvin, from your perspective, are we in a  
16 better position to protect classified information and U.S.  
17 National Security when we know if a retired officer is  
18 working for a contractor that works for a foreign  
19 government?

20 General Allvin: Senator, we are. And I think, as you  
21 know, my predecessor, now Chairman Brown, put out that  
22 NOTAM really to raise awareness, and also to serve as a  
23 deterrent. Both of those I think are having good effect.

24 The -- our AFOSI is getting good reports back, but it  
25 is not only about educating those within the force, but

1 also the mandatory now as you transition out -- also that  
2 we are making sure we do that as well.

3 Senator Warren: Yes. And I appreciate that and treat  
4 this as awareness is raised on this. You know, these  
5 arrangements can pose serious conflicts of interest. And  
6 in fact, the Air Force rejected two retired generals'  
7 requests to work for an Azerbaijani cargo carrier because  
8 it would raise concerns about potential conflicts given  
9 previous contracts the Air Force had awarded to the  
10 airline.

11 So last year I secured a position -- a provision in  
12 the Senate version of the National Defense Authorization  
13 Act to require work on behalf of foreign governments, even  
14 indirectly through a private company, to be approved by the  
15 U.S government.

16 I think it is foolish not to use our National Security  
17 expertise to help retired service members identify if their  
18 potential employer is asking them, potentially, to break  
19 the law here. So, I look forward to working with my  
20 colleagues and the Air Force to close any additional  
21 loopholes that allow foreign governments to target and  
22 exploit our service members.

23 Thank you all. And thank you in particular, General  
24 Allvin, for your work in this area.

25 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Warren. Senator

1 Ernst, please.

2 Senator Ernst: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And thank you,  
3 gentlemen, very much for your service to our nation and to  
4 your teams as well. We appreciate you being here today.

5 And first, Secretary Kendall, we know the Iowa  
6 National Guard is really important to me, and so I am going  
7 to address to you some of the questions coming from our  
8 great Iowa Air Guard.

9 Secretary Kendall, when the National Guard's 185th Air  
10 Refueling Wing in Sioux City, Iowa, converted from its F-16  
11 fighters to the KC-135 tankers way back in 2003, the United  
12 States Air Force said that they would upgrade the airfield  
13 at the Iowa National Guard facility.

14 Now the 185th Air Refueling Wing might, nothing  
15 confirmed, but might lose its mission because the runway,  
16 which has not yet been upgraded, here we are 20 plus years  
17 later, is insufficient for the KC-46s, which will  
18 eventually replace the 135s.

19 So, Secretary Kendall, why do you feel that it has  
20 taken so long to begin the airfield expansion? And do I  
21 have your commitment to work with the National Guard to  
22 assess the runway upgrade situation of the airfield at the  
23 Iowa National Guard facility in Sioux City?

24 Secretary Kendall: Thank you, Senator. So, we have  
25 started the architectural and engineering activities

1 associated with three projects at the airfield, and I think  
2 the Congress has been notified of that. So, we are moving  
3 forward with those upgrades.

4 There is a runway repair project at \$45 million,  
5 runway extension at \$47 million, and an aircraft parking  
6 apron at \$45 million. They are not all the way through the  
7 process yet. This is the earlier phases, but the process  
8 has begun, and we will work with you on that.

9 Senator Ernst: Okay. Can you outline maybe the  
10 timeframe that we might see some of that work done? Walk  
11 me through that assessment and when we could actually see  
12 work begin --

13 Secretary Kendall: I will get you the details for the  
14 record, but essentially we have to get to a 35 design,  
15 percent design maturity before we put a MILCON project  
16 down. So, we are in the earlier stages of that process,  
17 and I will get you the dates as to when different phases of  
18 it might be completed.

19 Senator Ernst: Okay. Thank you so much, Secretary.  
20 And I do understand the importance of transitioning to a  
21 more capable aircraft like the 46. Do we also have your  
22 commitment that any change to the 185th Air Refueling  
23 Wings' mission set will be on pause until a full and proper  
24 MILCON assessment is completed?

25 Secretary Kendall: I am not aware of any changes that

1 would be -- would occur in the interim. I will double  
2 check that and get back to you on that, but I am not aware  
3 of any.

4 Senator Ernst: Thank you, Secretary. It is just  
5 important that I get that on the record. So, again, we  
6 have got such a great unit. The 185th has been so engaged  
7 around the globe, we want to make sure that they are taken  
8 care of.

9 So, Secretary Kendall, as we are now in an era of  
10 great powered competition, the urgency of modernizing and  
11 recapitalizing our air refueling and strategic airlift  
12 capabilities is absolutely paramount.

13 And if you could walk us through how you are ensuring  
14 our transition from the older KC-135s to the newer 46s is  
15 conducted without compromising mission readiness.

16 Secretary Kendall: Essentially, as we retire 135s, we  
17 are replacing them with 46s on a one for one basis,  
18 generally speaking. It is not always exactly the case. We  
19 are trying to make sure we have a smooth transition so that  
20 we don't have a gap in capability for the tanker fleet, and  
21 we are required to maintain the general fleet at a certain  
22 level. So, we have to stay within those statutory  
23 constraints.

24 Senator Ernst: Okay. Thank you. And General Allvin,  
25 SOF continues to play a vital role in strategic

1 competition, particularly in irregular warfare. So, what  
2 is your view on the role of the Air Force Special Warfare  
3 and AFSOC in great power competition and future conflicts?

4 General Allvin: Yes, thank you for that, Senator. I  
5 think they are doing a tremendous job in really adapting.  
6 That is one of the things Special Operations has always  
7 done. They have really adapted to the missions that have  
8 been laid out in front of them. But in their transition  
9 really also to great power competition, they have adjusted  
10 some of their AFSCs to be more relevant.

11 And so, the -- what was the Special Operations Weather  
12 Team, now they are more special reconnaissance. And they  
13 are part of this newly formed Special Tactics Team, which  
14 includes the combat control teams, the pararescue, the  
15 tactical air control party, and now the strategic  
16 reconnaissance.

17 They are really forming -- sort of the way they did  
18 when they used to be in the old great power competition,  
19 understanding how to operate ahead of main force elements,  
20 in this case in a more electromagnetic spectrum contested  
21 environment.

22 They are really doing some pathfinding work in helping  
23 to find those -- take their niche capabilities and do  
24 things at speed and agility that maybe the standard,  
25 conventional forces couldn't do. I think I am really

1 impressed with how they are moving along.

2 Senator Ernst: Yes. Thank you. And General, and I  
3 was excited to learn from you about the Air Force special  
4 reconnaissance, Airmen and Airwomen, and we appreciate  
5 their service. It is a great opportunity for them and for  
6 us. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

7 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Ernst. Senator  
8 Kelly, please.

9 Senator Kelly: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And  
10 Secretary Kendall, General Allvin, General Saltzman, thank  
11 you for being here today. Secretary Kendall and General  
12 Allvin, I want to thank you for your continued  
13 collaboration as we secure a long term future for Davis-  
14 Monthan Air Force Base in Tucson.

15 During last year's hearing, I asked you about the  
16 stand up of the new power projection wing at DM, and I  
17 would like to follow up on that today, and also follow up  
18 on Senator Ernst's discussion with you, General Allvin.

19 In the last year, we brought new search and rescue and  
20 advanced electronic platforms to DM, and I would like to  
21 hear any updates on the power projection wing that you can  
22 provide. So, General Allvin, starting with you, you have  
23 just embarked on this ambitious plan to reoptimize the Air  
24 Force for great power competition.

25 A key component of this is the creation of deployable



1 combat wings. The power projection wings provides just  
2 such a force for Air Force Special Ops command. Can you  
3 talk about the wing's overall importance in the Air Force's  
4 strategy?

5 General Allvin: Yes, thank you for that, Senator. In  
6 some ways, some of the things that the Special Operations  
7 community have been doing have been a little bit of  
8 pathfinders with our deployable combat wings, reorienting  
9 to where you have the ability to train with support teams  
10 in garrison in the way you expect to deploy with that unit  
11 together.

12 Training together, doing individual training, then  
13 consolidated training, certification training, all those  
14 things are paving the way. With this power projection wing  
15 at Davis-Monthan, it is oriented towards the Indo-Pacific.

16 So not only in its structure is it designed to be able  
17 to address the pacing challenge, but in its orientation as  
18 well. And I think there will be lessons that we learn in  
19 the structure and the make up of those sort of wings that  
20 will apply to the larger Air Force.

21 Senator Kelly: Right. Thank you. And Secretary  
22 Kendall, your new strategic strategy here is ambitious and  
23 I support your efforts. But there are a lot of moving  
24 parts here and still a lot to be done to get all the units  
25 in place at Davis-Monthan.

1           Can you provide assurances that you will still be able  
2 to manage all of these movements and stick with the  
3 timeline to stand up the power projection wing?

4           Senator Kelly: Senator, we got to do everything we  
5 can to make that happen. Right now, we are on track. The  
6 site activation task force -- I was out there in February,  
7 as I think you know, and the EIS is on track for completion  
8 in 25, through quarter 25.

9           Those are kind of the governing events. So, I think  
10 we are moving forward on schedule, but we will continue to  
11 monitor that and make sure that we do.

12          Senator Kelly: So, you are not anticipating any new  
13 delays?

14          Secretary Kendall: Not at this time.

15          Senator Kelly: And do I have your continued  
16 commitment here to ensure full transparency on this  
17 process?

18          Secretary Kendall: Absolutely, Senator. I will work  
19 closely with you on it.

20          Senator Kelly: And if any issues come up, would you  
21 please bring them to my attention as soon as you possibly  
22 can?

23          Secretary Kendall: Yes, I will.

24          Senator Kelly: Thank you. And on electronic warfare,  
25 Secretary Kendall, it is -- EW is a cornerstone of any

1 modern conflict, and it is only going to increase in  
2 importance as we prepare for great power competition.

3 The Air Force and DOD need to continue to focus on  
4 electronic warfare, because achieving EW superiority is  
5 going to be the key to getting air superiority. I am  
6 encouraged by systems like the new Compass Call airplane  
7 that is being deployed at Davis-Monthan. But also, the new  
8 F-15 EW systems.

9 But I am also concerned that our training ranges  
10 aren't able to replicate the threat sufficiently. And if  
11 we want to succeed in the Indo-Pacific, we need to ensure  
12 that our military is prepared for operations that are  
13 realistic because of the training being realistic. The  
14 emitters available for training, and our ranges, aren't  
15 quite realistic enough to fool a fifth generation aircraft.

16 This is -- so it is no way to train for pacing  
17 challenges. In my view, the exercises and the training we  
18 do should be the hardest thing we do here, so that when it  
19 is time to fight, we are more than ready to go. And it is  
20 imperative that DOD expand its training ranges to provide  
21 more realistic training.

22 Achieving that level of readiness is going to require  
23 coordination across the branches. That is why I have  
24 advocated for DOD to assess the capacity for testing and  
25 training of EW operations and identify areas where multiple

1 ranges can be used to simulate the Pacific Deterrence  
2 Initiative.

3 For example, at the Fort Huachuca's Electronic Proving  
4 Ground with its restricted airspace, favorable terrain,  
5 access to frequencies and spectrum, and bands of spectrum,  
6 and the authorities required to conduct EW training, it  
7 offers great potential for advanced and dynamic electronic  
8 warfare testing, experimentation, and training.

9 So, Secretary Kendall, how important is it to find  
10 opportunities for realistic EW training, and how can the  
11 Air Force benefit from EW testing and training in an  
12 environment like Fort Huachuca?

13 Secretary Kendall: It is critical, Senator. I  
14 haven't looked at Fort Huachuca specifically. General  
15 Allvin may have some information on that, but for Nellis  
16 and for JPARC in Alaska, and for the exercises, I think you  
17 are aware of that we really see -- down in the Pacific.

18 Having ability to emulate both the threat and the  
19 space and time constraints that are applicable against the  
20 pacing challenge are really important to us. So, if  
21 Huachuca offers some additional opportunities there, we  
22 would be happy to pursue those.

23 Senator Kelly: Yes --

24 Secretary Kendall: I am not familiar exactly with  
25 what we are doing there.

1           Senator Kelly: What it offers is it has got  
2 geography. It is a bowl. You can emit at orders of  
3 magnitude, I think a couple orders of magnitude power  
4 compared to what you can emit on the Barry Goldwater range.  
5 So, it offers -- you know, F-35s can detect the sensor at a  
6 much greater range, more realistic training. Thank you.

7           Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Kelly.

8           Secretary Kendall: We will take a look at it.

9           Chairman Reed: Let me recognize now, Senator Budd.

10          Senator Budd: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And good  
11 morning, gentlemen. Secretary Kendall, we have spoken at  
12 length regarding the Air Force budget, my concerns with the  
13 Air Force plan divestment of fighter aircraft, including  
14 the F-15 Strike Eagles from Seymour Johnson, my State of  
15 North Carolina.

16          So, I am deeply concerned about what a growing fighter  
17 capacity gap could mean for the fight in the Indo-Pacific.  
18 But also, as was made clear over this past weekend, our  
19 fighter aircraft are also playing major roles in other  
20 regions, including U.S. Central Command every single day.  
21 So, I would like to turn to you, General Allvin, for just a  
22 moment. And again, thank you for being here.

23          The committee heard from the Commander of INDOPACOM  
24 this year, and just recently in fact, that there is a role  
25 for Strike Eagles in scenarios in the Indo-Pacific. And

1 the head of NORTHCOM also told this committee the F-15E is  
2 in many ways unmatched air to ground, and in many ways, it  
3 is unmatched air to air.

4 It also has a phenomenal radar that can pick out low  
5 and slow moving, and it has got a great radar cross-  
6 section, which is useful for drones and other threats like  
7 cruise missiles. It was the 335th Squadron at North  
8 Carolina's Seymour Johnson Air Force Base to prove that out  
9 on Sunday when they helped shoot down dozens of drones  
10 fired at Israel from Iran.

11 The Supreme Allied Commander of Europe told the House  
12 Armed Services Committee last week that Strike Eagles and,  
13 I quote, "figure heavily in his plans at EUCOM." He also  
14 said it would be very important not to have a gap between  
15 the retirement of one aircraft and the arrival of the next.

16 Most recently, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs agreed  
17 with these assessments of the F-15E and asserted that it is  
18 indeed a very capable aircraft. General Allvin, do you  
19 agree with these officers' assessments of the capability  
20 and importance of the Strike Eagles in scenarios across the  
21 Combatant Commands, yes or no, sir?

22 General Allvin: I absolutely do agree with those  
23 assessments. I would offer that those assessments are part  
24 of -- first of all, I want to echo what you said about what  
25 happened over the weekend. Brilliant cruise skill and

1 courage. That skill and courage in those aircraft also had  
2 a connection with a command and control system.

3 Brilliant stuff done in the AOC, an air battle  
4 management system. And all of those systems are what made  
5 it successful. And so, the platform is very capable, but  
6 it has to have the systems around it in order to be  
7 effective and combat effective. And so going into the  
8 future, we would imagine that that platform is going to  
9 have to fire weapons longer range.

10 That range has to have target custody for that  
11 munition to be able to track the target all the way. It  
12 needs to be able to be -- to defend itself in that theater.  
13 It needs to be able to have a base from which it can move  
14 around.

15 All those things are what is going to make it  
16 successful against a pacing challenge. So that capability  
17 in and of itself is very impressive. But when you are in a  
18 fiscally constrained environment, we try and manage how  
19 many of those.

20 And those with respect to other platforms, what is the  
21 mix of the entire system beyond just the weapon and the  
22 aircraft to make it effective against -- in the highly  
23 contested environment against the PRC? But it is a highly  
24 capable aircraft.

25 Senator Budd: Thank you, General. And I will just

1 note that many of those, including those at Seymour  
2 Johnson, have been upgraded or soon to be upgraded, or can  
3 be upgraded to be useful into the 2030s or 2040s.

4 Secretary Kendall, turning to you, sir, where is the  
5 fighter roadmap required by the NDAA. We have heard,  
6 Secretary, that it is sitting with you.

7 Secretary Kendall: It is in final review. Should be  
8 over here shortly, Senator.

9 Senator Budd: We look forward to receiving that  
10 report. When should we expect the Congressionally required  
11 report on divestment of F-15 aircraft? And will it be  
12 compliant with Section 131 of last year's NDAA?

13 Secretary Kendall: Right now, our plans are to take  
14 out additional F-15s in the out years, but of course we  
15 will be complying with the current law and our '25 budget  
16 is consistent with that.

17 Senator Budd: Hopefully in compliance with 131 of  
18 last year's NDAA. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I hope the  
19 committee takes note of the testimony it has received this  
20 year and seriously considers prohibiting divestment of the  
21 F-15 Strike Eagles, particularly 26 F-15 Strike Eagles next  
22 year. Thank you, sir.

23 Thank you very much, Senator Budd. Senator Rosen, please.

24 Senator Rosen: Thank you, Chairman Reed, for holding  
25 this important hearing. I would also like to thank



1 Secretary Kendall, General Allvin, and General Saltzman,  
2 for testifying today, and of course, for your service to  
3 our country.

4 So, Secretary Kendall, I really -- I know we have had  
5 so many meetings, but I really appreciated our phone call  
6 last week, and I just want to take a moment to emphasize  
7 the importance of the Nevada Air National Guard and their  
8 mission, which they do so well.

9 Not only does 152nd Airlift Wing in Reno provide rapid  
10 global mobility and are currently preparing for deployment,  
11 but they are also -- they also protect the homeland by  
12 fighting those horrific wildland fires in Nevada and  
13 throughout the West with legacy C-130Hs.

14 This mission is extremely dangerous as they fly heavy,  
15 low, and slow over these fires in challenging mountainous  
16 terrain. Upgrading to the C-130Js would provide increased  
17 power and cargo capacity for fire retardant, which would  
18 result in increased flight safety, and of course,  
19 firefighting capability.

20 So, Mr. Secretary, now that the Fiscal Year 2024  
21 Defense Appropriations Act has provided funding to procure  
22 eight additional C-130Js, funding that I fought to secure,  
23 can I have your commitment to seriously consider Reno when  
24 making a basing decision due to their obvious operational  
25 need?

1 Secretary Kendall: Yes, Senator, I think we are  
2 proceeding with that basing selection. And I believe Reno  
3 is one of the units being considered.

4 Senator Rosen: Thank you. And can I have your  
5 commitment that the Air Force will strongly consider  
6 location and the mission served in particular regions of  
7 the country when making their basing decisions to ensure  
8 that the Air National Guard is best equipped to respond to  
9 these emergencies?

10 Secretary Kendall: I think we have a list of basing  
11 considerations that will be consistent with what we have  
12 done in the past.

13 Senator Rosen: Thank you. I am going to move on now  
14 to housing and our dorm shortages, because at Nellis and  
15 Creech, we have -- actually, Senator Kelly was talking a  
16 little bit about Nellis over there.

17 But in Nevada, home to Nellis and Creech Air Force  
18 bases, I have observed firsthand the unique challenges that  
19 each base faces, particularly when it comes to affordable  
20 housing and dorm availability for our Airmen and our  
21 Guardians.

22 Given the widespread and distinct nature of these  
23 shortages across the Department and the Air Force, a one  
24 size fits all solution is really insufficient to address  
25 the issues. So, Secretary Kendall, what additional

1 authorities, if any, could be granted to Service  
2 Secretaries to address the current housing and dormitory  
3 shortages, thereby improving really the welfare and  
4 readiness of our personnel across the force?

5 Secretary Kendall: We are looking at some innovative  
6 ways to do that through public, private partnerships in  
7 various forms. The Navy has a project in San Diego, I  
8 think, which is an example of how to do that. I am not  
9 aware of additional authorities we need at this time, but  
10 if there are any, then I will get back to you with that.

11 Senator Rosen: Thank you. Appreciate that. I am  
12 going to stay on you and stay on Creech Air Force Base a  
13 little bit. We love Creech, and with the experimental  
14 operations unit considering Creech Air Force Base as the  
15 eventual deployment of the collaborative combat aircraft  
16 -- I am going to say CCA.

17 That is a little bit easier. We must address the  
18 complexities of the new systems' basing. Decisions about  
19 where to house these systems needs considerations beyond,  
20 again, conventional requirements such as employment  
21 options, infrastructure adaptations, airspace control, and  
22 of course, electromagnetic spectrum availability.

23 So, given the challenges posed by these new systems,  
24 could you elaborate on the variables that the Air Force  
25 might -- that you might be considering in the CCA basing

1 decision? And specifically, what unique characteristics  
2 and complications might we anticipate?

3 Secretary Kendall: Senator, that work is going on now  
4 to decide what the considerations will be. We are a little  
5 bit early in the process. Creech is, I think, a very  
6 reasonable candidate, however.

7 Senator Rosen: Thank you. Thank you. Well, I am  
8 going to move on. We are going to keep on Creech in  
9 particular, but Nellis as well, to General Allvin. You  
10 know the sacrifices, each one of you really know the  
11 sacrifices and challenges that Airmen and their families  
12 make during their permanent change of station.

13 And one of the difficulties that is really challenging  
14 for us is finding and accessing childcare at each new  
15 location. And so, you know, childcare remains one of the  
16 most needed services for our military members, but it is  
17 still in such short supply, it is too expensive and  
18 difficult.

19 So currently, General, in your role as Chief of Staff  
20 of the Air Force, what can you do to help increase access  
21 to affordable childcare that is flexible, particularly  
22 Creech, they go to 24 -- well, all of them, they go 24/7,  
23 365. We need some help out there.

24 General Allvin: Well, thank you, Senator. And I  
25 couldn't agree with you more. A lot of times we put things

1 into a band called quality of life, but it is actually a  
2 readiness issue as well, to make sure that our Airmen can  
3 focus on the mission at hand, understanding that they know  
4 that their families and children are well cared for.

5 Specifically, I think we -- what I can do as Chief of  
6 Staff is continue to advocate for the programs at the  
7 Department of Air Force is really already undertaking with  
8 respect to going above and beyond staffing those child  
9 development centers that we actually have. We have  
10 increased the staffing through the incentivization of 100  
11 percent reduction -- free for the first child, 25 percent  
12 off for the other children, for those are working on staff  
13 there.

14 That has actually increased our staffing from 61 -- 63  
15 percent to 81 percent. So that is helping staff the  
16 existing one. But to your point, Senator, specifically in  
17 some of these nontraditional areas where you have not  
18 normal business hours, this requirement, the increase in  
19 the family childcare centers, the ones that can be done at  
20 home, are those that are actually certified to do such.

21 We have increased funding and incentives for that,  
22 about 21 percent from where it was in Fiscal Year 2023.  
23 So, we continue to do that. And in other areas for  
24 facility restoration and modernization, we have put a lot  
25 of money into that as well.

1           And on the MILCON side, overall, sometimes we just  
2 need more facilities. On the MILCON side, we have had 35  
3 MILCON projects under consideration. Already 11 of them  
4 are at appropriation and design -- or and delivery. The  
5 other 24 in design.

6           Senator Rosen: Well, thank you. I look forward to  
7 continuing to work with you on all of that. Thank you.

8           Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Rosen. Senator  
9 Cramer, please.

10          Senator Cramer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you,  
11 gentlemen, for your service and for being here. And I look  
12 forward to the next session as well, the classified  
13 section.

14          No hearing with the Air Force would be complete  
15 without me sort of jumping on board with some of my other  
16 friends who have asked about ISR. Secretary Kendall, I am  
17 going to go more at it from the re-optimization plans that  
18 were released in February, and my office has sent an RFI  
19 asking about how the new Air Force structure might affect  
20 the 319<sup>th</sup> Reconnaissance Wing in Grand Forks, specifically.

21          I mean, this is a very high demand air force base with  
22 very few people and assets. At least how do -- I guess to  
23 put it pointedly, how do these low density, high demand  
24 units like the Global Hawk Wing in Grand Forks, or other  
25 ISR units, for that matter, on the Air Force fit into the

1 plan for re-optimization.

2 And I just add, you know, I mean, I read all 12 pages  
3 on the airplane this morning. There is not a mention of  
4 ISR. There is lots of mentions, you know, 16 of China RPC,  
5 8 -- anyway, no ISR in 12 pages. So, how does Grand Forks  
6 fit into re-optimization?

7 Secretary Kendall: It doesn't directly. The re-  
8 optimization of great power competition is largely about  
9 focusing our readiness units on readiness, creating units  
10 who are focused on the future, and sustaining advantage  
11 over time.

12 Developing our people. Some of the things we are  
13 going to do in terms of their skill sets and so on, their  
14 readiness for that kind of conflict. And also, some  
15 changes in the Secretariat. So, specific units are not  
16 directly addressed.

17 As we form units of action that are either deployable  
18 or fight in place or are supporting, there may be some  
19 changes on the margin as a result of that. That is work  
20 that is going to take place over some time. There is no  
21 direct correlation between what we are doing under re-  
22 optimizing and specific units.

23 Senator Cramer: Okay --

24 Secretary Kendall: Yes, we do have plans --

25 Senator Cramer: I understand but maybe not specific

1 units, but ISR at large is not even mentioned as a  
2 priority, where it used to be always mentioned as a  
3 priority.

4 Secretary Kendall: ISR is a very high priority under  
5 our operational imperatives and under cross-cutting  
6 operational enablers. So, it is a very big part of our  
7 modernization program, which is separate from the re-  
8 optimization.

9 As we talked about earlier, we are moving a lot of our  
10 ISR capacity into space because our airborne platforms,  
11 many of them are too vulnerable to attack. They are not  
12 survivable enough. We want to keep a balance. We want to  
13 keep some airborne platforms and some space base  
14 capabilities as well. We have requirements to have ISR for  
15 less contested environments, more benign environments, as  
16 well as highly contested environments.

17 So, we are trying to have a balanced mix of  
18 capabilities and sustain that while we move forward. Some  
19 of our legacy capabilities, if you will, are less valuable  
20 to us against the pacing challenge. We are just not  
21 effective against a pacing challenge --

22 Senator Cramer: You know, I get all -- I understand  
23 all that. Modernization is important everywhere and in  
24 every mission, and space is obviously critical to it.  
25 Obviously, I am -- I have a bias for space.



1           But I also have talked to enough people both in space  
2 and especially COCOMS, especially recently, especially very  
3 recently, who are frightened to death about the gap  
4 between, their ability to find a target, identify a target,  
5 hit a target, today, or over the course of the next few  
6 years, and the day that space is not so vulnerable that it  
7 can stand alone.

8           General Allvin, did you want to speak to that? And  
9 then I do have a question about --

10          General Allvin: Yes. The only thing I will add to  
11 what the Secretary said is specifically within reference to  
12 a great power competition. We are aligning our wings in  
13 order to be able to deploy how we expect to fight.

14          So, there will be three different types of wings. One  
15 will be deployable combat wings, one will be in place  
16 combat wings, think missile wings, but the other are combat  
17 generation wings. And these are very, very important, and  
18 this is where the 319th falls in.

19          It needs to be able to generate the combat power that  
20 can fall into a wing, because you are not going to deploy  
21 the entire wing at once. That wouldn't be it. That would  
22 be, for some of the other types of wings.

23          So, while ISR may not be mentioned specifically,  
24 neither is probably air mobility, or neither is maybe air  
25 refueling, those are the parts -- they are called the

1 combat generation wings because they will feed into the  
2 larger deployable construct, but we wouldn't expect the  
3 entire 319 to take -- to be able to go and deploy the  
4 entire wing because it is such a HTLD asset, right. It  
5 needs to be able to be distributed all across.

6 So that is why it is part of these combat generation  
7 wings. And I am ready to talk at length, and I am going to  
8 go with my time.

9 Senator Cramer: Yes. And as an I. So, real quickly  
10 then speaking of modernization, and I will just cut to it.  
11 I mean, we picked up some rumors in the last couple of days  
12 that the commercial engine replacement program might be in  
13 some doubt.

14 Of course -- that would be the reengineer of things  
15 like the B-52, which has only been around about 60 years,  
16 and we expect to be around another 30 or so. Just to just  
17 confirm for me that that is just a vicious lie that  
18 somebody is spreading, then I will be happy.

19 Secretary Kendall: No, the commercial -- the  
20 reengineering of the B-52 is proceeding, if that is what  
21 you are asking about, Senator.

22 Senator Cramer: That is what I am asking, thank you.

23 Secretary Kendall: It is proceeding --

24 Senator Cramer: Appreciate it. Thank you, Mr.  
25 Chairman.

1           Senator Cramer: Thank you, Senator Cramer. Senator  
2 Cotton, please.

3           Senator Cotton: Secretary Kendall, General Allvin,  
4 thank you for appearance today. I want to add my  
5 congratulations to the brave men and women of the force who  
6 were involved in the defense of Israel over the weekend, to  
7 include two former Senator Cotton defense fellows, Budd and  
8 Raldy. I am told I am not supposed to say anything more  
9 than that, but I am glad to see that their skills have not  
10 atrophy while they were desk molesters up here for me.

11           Now, it is very important that we not just have our  
12 own capabilities, but that we train our foreign partners  
13 and capabilities. We can't be everywhere all the time at  
14 once.

15           So, I want to respond to Senator Warren's questions,  
16 General Allvin, about retired flag officer supporting  
17 foreign militaries. I have a slightly different  
18 perspective.

19           I think it is a great thing when America's retired  
20 generals and admirals go overseas, take the skills and the  
21 knowledge they have learned, and help train foreign  
22 military partners to be more proficient, to be more  
23 respectful of the laws of war, to be more professional in  
24 their own services.

25           So far from taking steps to restrain retired flag

1 officers serving under contractual relationships with  
2 nations like Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, or  
3 emerging nations in Eastern Europe who are recent NATO  
4 members, I think we should encourage it. General Allvin, I  
5 don't know what you plan to do in retirement.

6 Maybe you plan to just go fishing all the time, but if  
7 you want to do that, I think that would be a great thing  
8 for you to do. And this committee carefully considered  
9 that matter last year in our markup. And those markups  
10 aren't public. You don't know what happened.

11 But this was a serious debate then. And Senator  
12 Warren called one of these measures a loophole. It is not  
13 a loophole. It is specifically how we wrote it, because we  
14 think it is a good thing for our retired flag officers to  
15 be advising partner nations whose militaries may not yet be  
16 as skillful or as professional as ours, but whose  
17 militaries we should want to be as skillful or professional  
18 as ours.

19 So, General Allvin, can I get your commitment that we  
20 will continue to ensure retired flag officers can, in fact,  
21 work with partner and allied nations?

22 General Allvin: Yes, Senator. I certainly don't want  
23 to weigh into the -- how the legislative process works, but  
24 I think that those two positions are not necessarily  
25 mutually exclusive, which is why we have the approval

1 process.

2 There are only certain nations against which you are  
3 disapproved, and those -- we understand which those are.  
4 But there is still, that stopgap requires the approval of  
5 the Secretary and Secretary of State in order to do that.

6 So, I believe that stopgap helps to mitigate your  
7 position, from Senator Warren.

8 Senator Cotton: Secretary Kendall, you look like you  
9 had something you wanted to add on this topic.

10 Secretary Kendall: I just want to say, I think we are  
11 talking about apples and oranges here. I think Senator  
12 Warren is concerned about, very understandably, pilots who  
13 were hired by China, for example, indirectly through --

14 Senator Cotton: Let me stop you there because we are  
15 not talking about apples and oranges. She raised two  
16 different topics.

17 I do want to say I am concerned about the second topic  
18 she raised, which is the practice of not just American, but  
19 Western trained pilots, mechanics, maintainers, and others  
20 going to work, often indirectly, through private military  
21 contractors for, say, China and South Africa, let's say.  
22 And that is something we definitely need to crack down on  
23 and something that we took steps with.

24 Senator Kelly and I have worked on this challenge as  
25 well. We need to make sure that all those pilots and those

1 maintainers and mechanics that we have trained are not  
2 using their skills that the taxpayers paid for to  
3 indirectly or directly help our adversary.

4 So, I am glad to hear that you are counseling all  
5 those people as they leave the service to be aware of their  
6 obligations. I mean, I frankly think should be strictly  
7 prohibited if not made a crime to work for a foreign  
8 military like China's.

9 The contrast to her first point, which is, again,  
10 military officers, usually flag officers, sometimes field  
11 grades, going to work for friendly nations like Saudi  
12 Arabia or Jordan or the United Arab Emirates, some fruits  
13 of which we saw over the weekend.

14 So, I just want to say, it is good when they go to  
15 work for pro-American countries. It is bad when they go to  
16 work for anti-American countries. It is pretty simple. I  
17 don't see what the complication is here.

18 Secretary Kendall: We don't have any disagreement  
19 with that, Senator.

20 Senator Cotton: Thank you. One final point, since we  
21 are talking about making sure that foreign partners have  
22 strong capabilities, so we don't have to carry the load  
23 everywhere. Secretary Kendall, General Allvin, you know  
24 that a top priority for Senator Boozeman, for me is,  
25 foreign military sales training mission at Ebbing Air

1 National Guard base in Fort Smith, Arkansas.

2 We know that they are still working out a few things  
3 in terms of the construction in the airspace. Secretary  
4 Kendall, you have committed me in the past on several  
5 occasions you are going to make sure that this stays on  
6 time and that we have the sound of freedom return to the  
7 river valley later this fall.

8 Can I get your commitment again, given whatever the  
9 latest developments on your end, that that is still going  
10 to happen on time this fall?

11 Secretary Kendall: Before I give you a commitment  
12 about on time, let me go double check and see exactly where  
13 we are. I know we are moving forward on this, and I  
14 haven't had any reports that we are just slipping schedule  
15 but let me --

16 Senator Cotton: I haven't either, but you never know  
17 when you are dealing with the real world of building this  
18 thing or moving that thing. I just don't want to have  
19 -- not dealing with the real world, but the bureaucratic  
20 world of red tape. So, I just want to make sure that you  
21 have got a sword over the Gordian knot. You are ready to  
22 cut if you have to.

23 Secretary Kendall: We will do whatever we can to stay  
24 on schedule, absolutely.

25 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Cotton. Senator

1 Mullin, please.

2 Senator Mullin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank  
3 you, General Saltzman, Secretary Kendall, and General  
4 Allvin, for being here.

5 And for everybody that is your support staff that we  
6 know does the heavy lifting behind you, thank you for  
7 sitting through this hearing. I obviously showed up late,  
8 so I am back to clean up here.

9 Secretary Kendall, I just want to tell you thank you  
10 for your attention to the cadet that you and I visited  
11 about. It seems like it is working out. I know that seems  
12 like a small thing for what you deal with, but it is  
13 important, and I appreciate you taking the time to visit  
14 with me about it.

15 Secretary Kendall: That is good to hear, Senator.  
16 Thank you. I am glad it is working out.

17 Senator Mullin: I hope one day you get a meeting, and  
18 you understand why I want to do everything I can. Great,  
19 great young man. And, like I said, you guys, your  
20 attention really pushed things.

21 Secretary Kendall: He has been through quite an  
22 ordeal, and he is doing really well. It is encouraging to  
23 see. Amazing story.

24 Senator Mullin: Really, it is. Secretary Kendall, I  
25 want to stay with you for just a second. Listen, I know



1 you are up against a budget, and ideally, everybody at the  
2 table right now, you guys would like to have as many  
3 airframes as you possibly can in the air. Because of  
4 budget overruns with the E-7s -- you know, we are divesting  
5 to invest. I think that is the term you guys are using.  
6 Is that correct, General Allvin?

7 General Allvin: I would say to modernize.

8 Senator Mullin: Divest, invest, modernize. But we  
9 are going from -- I mean, just what is on you all's docket  
10 right now. You are going from 250 airframes to 91  
11 airframes. We know during time of war, attrition plays a  
12 huge role.

13 We have got our new planes that are coming out that  
14 is, you know, double the cost at \$2.5 billion per plane  
15 that is going to be in the air. And we are talking about  
16 the maintenance of the E-3s, which is why we are bringing  
17 them out of the sky.

18 If I understand correctly, the chairman and I, we were  
19 at Tinker Air Force Base this last Saturday and Friday  
20 both, and they brought up the concerns about being to  
21 continue their mission. They say, you know, we will do  
22 what is handled to us, but just to keep their mission  
23 capabilities right now, it takes 16 planes in the sky.

24 And to secure the current mission, there is going to  
25 be a lag between the delivery of the E-3s and the E-7s. We

1 are not even talking about the fighting jets right now, but  
2 just in that frame alone, what are we -- is it just about  
3 the money, or we are divesting ourselves of so many  
4 airframes and going to so few, and it seems like we are in  
5 a -- pretty interesting times right now, and I am really  
6 concerned, and I am not trying to just get on to you and  
7 tell you how to do you all's jobs. I am saying, what do we  
8 -- what do you need from us? Mathematically looking at  
9 this, it doesn't make any sense.

10 General Allvin: So, Senator, I think specifically  
11 with the E-3, they are starting to divest themselves. This  
12 is one of those where just in order to keep them flying is  
13 a challenge. And we also -- the capabilities that we are  
14 anticipating in the future -- this is the constant that we  
15 have, trying to understand how do we maintain the readiness  
16 for today and still not leave my successors or my  
17 successor's successor in this seat saying, why don't you  
18 have an Air Force that can compete with, you know, where  
19 China is right now?

20 And so, we are trying to skate to where the puck is  
21 going to be with China. At the same time, preserve the  
22 readiness. And so, this is some of the challenge that we  
23 have. And so that managing this readiness is never easy,  
24 but I will tell you that, at some point the statement of,  
25 you know, quantity has a quality on its own, it is only

1 good if that quantity can survive. It is only good if that  
2 quantity can be effective.

3 Now, we saw over the weekend it can be effective  
4 against one type of adversary, in one type of environment,  
5 in one area. But in order to meet what our National  
6 Defense Strategy wants us to do in the highly contested  
7 environment against a pure adversary, some of those  
8 capabilities, it really is just you have more quantities  
9 that might be left in the bottom of the Pacific Ocean.

10 We need to ensure that those crews can survive. They  
11 can execute their mission. So that is where this tension  
12 between retaining enough for today and preserving enough  
13 for the pacing threat.

14 Senator Mullin: And I totally understand that. And  
15 when you start talking about, you know, what is going down  
16 to E-3s -- they referred to us as the motors, which I know  
17 frames, airframes can be upgraded with new motors put on  
18 the side of them constantly. Is it even a possibility?

19 You don't have to answer that. I am just trying to  
20 think outside the box. But still yet, when we start  
21 talking about just sheer numbers, we start looking at what  
22 our adversaries are doing, they are coming out with planes  
23 with a lot less technology on them, but the sheer numbers  
24 can overwhelm what we have.

25 And when we are dropping this many airframes, we are

1 not going to have the numbers. And I don't care -- it is  
2 like a drone swarm. I don't care what you have in defense,  
3 eventually they are going to start poking through because  
4 ours do end in the bottom of the Pacific, and we cannot  
5 replace a \$2.5 billion plane fast enough.

6 Secretary Kendall: Senator, the problem we have is  
7 that these aircraft -- E-3 is a really good example. I was  
8 on one at Nellis a couple of years ago, and it was built in  
9 1972.

10 Senator Mullin: Sure.

11 Secretary Kendall: The radar on it is an obsolete  
12 radar, basically. And our crews are working very, very  
13 hard to try to keep these airplanes operational, and it is  
14 a really uphill fight.

15 So, by retiring some of the E-3s, we are able to free  
16 up some parts to at least keep some of the remaining  
17 aircraft more operational. But they are not effective  
18 against the pacing threat, and they are going to die very  
19 quickly. They just don't have the resilience or the  
20 capability to survive.

21 So, we have really got to get to the next generation.  
22 So, keeping airplanes around that are going to be  
23 ineffective and are essentially very vulnerable to attack  
24 in the early stages of the conflict, this is not putting us  
25 in a better position.

1           Senator Mullin: But -- and Chairman, I will wrap up  
2 right here, excuse me. But the gap between the delivery of  
3 the new plane and the old plane is what has me concerned.  
4 We are divesting faster than we are getting them in, and  
5 the cost runs continue to go mind blowing over cost. I  
6 mean, double.

7           At some point, the math actually doesn't add up  
8 either. But how are we going to keep the mission  
9 capability there all the way through the transition? I  
10 mean, we haven't got to the Air Guard that we are going to  
11 be losing and not be able to control our homeland by  
12 divesting of them too.

13           But there is a real concern there. And I know that is  
14 a lot more to unpack than we have time here, but I don't  
15 want to be part of the problem and I don't want to try  
16 telling you how to do your job. I want to work with you to  
17 make sure that we can stay mission capable.

18           So, I look forward to working with everybody here.  
19 Thank you again for your time. Really appreciate the work.

20           Secretary Kendall: Thank you, sir.

21           Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Mullin. Senator  
22 Sullivan, please.

23           Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

24           Gentlemen, thank you for your testimony today. Mr.

25           Secretary, I want to compliment you. You have been one of

1 the voices. It's, put it pretty bluntly about the  
2 challenges with China, and we need to be ready actually for  
3 a war with China, if they choose to do so.

4 So, I appreciate your, your directness on that. Let  
5 me ask, so, you know, this is a tough question for all of  
6 you generals, tough question for you. The President talks  
7 a big game on the challenges, and then four years in a row,  
8 he puts forward inflation adjusted cuts to the Department  
9 of Defense -- four years in a row. That is the Biden  
10 legacy. Now, he always expects us to boost it up.

11 The left wing of his party doesn't like defense  
12 spending. So, they, you know, double digit increases in  
13 every other Federal agency. I think this year, \$7.5  
14 trillion. But once again, the Biden Administration, the  
15 Commander In Chief says, nope, you guys get a cut.  
16 Shrinking the Army, shrinking the Navy, shrinking the  
17 Marine Corps.

18 This budget right now does that. I don't think it  
19 shrinks the Air Force. But do you think inflation adjusted  
20 cuts to the Department of Defense is what Xi Jinping and  
21 Putin should be seeing? I mean, is that how you prepare  
22 for war or enhance deterrence, by cutting you guys?

23 Secretary Kendall: Senator, we have been very pleased  
24 to have significant increases in the Air Force budget,  
25 Department of the Air Force budget, in '23 and '24 in

1 particular. The two year budget deal that we have, you  
2 know, does limit -- the Fiscal Responsibility Act in '25.

3 Senator Sullivan: General, I am in -- look, these are  
4 hard questions for you guys, I know, because I know our  
5 military leaders. You go in there. You fight for a bigger  
6 budget. OMB, the President, they tell you, sorry, I am  
7 going to increase Department of Interior by 25 percent.  
8 You guys get a cut. But in terms of our adversaries.  
9 China is building out a huge military. They keep saying 7  
10 percent increases.

11 We all know that is not true. I was in a classified  
12 hearing. I am going to just mention it because the DNI and  
13 the DIA head, the Lieutenant General, won't get back to me.  
14 They actually said in that hearing -- it was a classified  
15 hearing.

16 I am just going to publicly say that it was about \$700  
17 billion that China puts towards its military, all in. It  
18 is a pretty big number. I think the American people should  
19 know that which is why I am saying it right now.

20 But what do you think in terms of our adversaries when  
21 they see defense cuts. What do you think that does for  
22 deterrence?

23 Secretary Kendall: We are continuing to move forward,  
24 Senator, with our modernization program. Not quite at the  
25 rate that we would like to have this year because of the

1 Fiscal Responsibility Act, but we are moving forward.

2 We are trying to manage the risk across time with the  
3 current force, the more immediate force, and the future  
4 force, but I think we are at acceptable risk with the  
5 budget that we are presenting to the Congress.

6 Senator Sullivan: Let me turn to one of my favorite  
7 topics. Billy Mitchell, the father of the U.S. Air Force,  
8 called Alaska the most strategic place in the world. I  
9 appreciate the Air Force's focus on that, on our State and  
10 how important it is. There has been a significant build up  
11 in Alaska.

12 We have over 105th Gen fighters located in Alaska now.  
13 The Air Force's Fiscal Year 2025 budget requests \$250  
14 million for the Joint Integrated Test and Training Center  
15 at JBER. This represents a significant new training  
16 capability in how it will enable the Air Force to plug in  
17 to live fire exercises at JPARC, probably the most advanced  
18 training range in the world, to give pilots across the U.S.  
19 military an unrivaled training venue.

20 Can you just talk a little bit about why that JITTC is  
21 so important? And -- that is to you, General, as well.

22 General Allvin: You know, Senator, I will start by  
23 saying it is -- like many of our fifth generation capable  
24 testing training centers, it is providing the opportunity  
25 to test advancements in a synthetic environment in ways you



1 couldn't actually do in a physical environment.

2 But with this increase, we are able to look at the  
3 models for how we believe that the threat is going to act.  
4 We take these models, we can validate them in the JPARC,  
5 which is why the integration of these two, between the live  
6 environment and the synthetic environment, it allows you to  
7 test some hypotheses and maybe in a place where you  
8 wouldn't want -- the adversary to see you in open air.

9 Senator Sullivan: So that is a top priority in our  
10 preparation for a China conflict?

11 General Allvin: Absolutely. And when you can  
12 replicate those through the JPARC modernization that we are  
13 doing with those emitters, then you can have a better  
14 chance of looking at those models, validating those, and  
15 maybe tweaking them back in. And between the two, the  
16 synthetic and the live, you get better than either of them  
17 individually when you can connect them.

18 Senator Sullivan: Let me ask one final question. My  
19 time is up, but Mr. Chairman, if I may. We have been back  
20 and forth, this committee, me, the Air Force, on tankers  
21 and the strategic importance of having them located not  
22 just in one place in the lower 48.

23 I was a little bit disappointed that after many years,  
24 I go back and forth with Air Force leadership, the final  
25 decision was, well, we are going to put all our tankers in

1 the lower 48 at certain bases.

2 I can't remember which ones, but it seems to be more  
3 of a budget driven idea than a strategic driven idea. Mr.  
4 Secretary, you and I, and the previous Chief of Staff of  
5 the Air Force, who is now the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs,  
6 got to a resolution on that where we said, well, we are  
7 going to be bringing more KC-135 tankers to Eielson.

8 How are we doing on that? And I want to make sure in  
9 this hearing you are still committed to that. It seems  
10 like that timeline has kind of moved to the right. And it  
11 is really important not just for Alaska, but for the  
12 strategic ability to move aircraft anywhere in the world,  
13 but particularly to the INDOPACOM theater, if there is a  
14 conflict.

15 Secretary Kendall: Sir, you know, that capability is  
16 important to us, but as you are aware and we have  
17 discussed, we have an issue with housing at Eielson that we  
18 are trying to address, and we are concerned about the  
19 quality of life of our people that we have to assign there.  
20 So, that is an issue that we are working as we try to move  
21 forward on the tankers, I think.

22 Senator Sullivan: But you are still committed to move  
23 those tankers there, as you and I --

24 Secretary Kendall: We have to address -- the  
25 situation for our people as part of that process.

1           Senator Sullivan: Are you walking this commitment  
2 back to me, Mr. Secretary?

3           Secretary Kendall: I don't think so, Senator.

4           Senator Sullivan: Okay. You have committed to this  
5 to me like several times. So, this is a little concerning.  
6 We are going to work on the housing issue, but can I just  
7 get a commitment again? I got it from the -- heck, he is  
8 the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs now, to be four KC-135s at  
9 Eielson.

10          Secretary Kendall: We haven't changed our plans as  
11 far as I know. Do you have anything to add to that? I  
12 think we are still in the same place, but we do need to  
13 address this issue.

14          Senator Sullivan: General.

15          General Allvin: That is still on our plan, Senator.  
16 But as we were just at Eielson as well, we know we do need  
17 to ensure that we don't have the aircrew and the support  
18 going up there, as it is an austere location, because we  
19 know the quality of life, we need to be able to retain  
20 those families up there as well.

21          So, the plan is, as it is written, hasn't changed, but  
22 the determination of how and when we can get housing and  
23 quality of life is going to be dispositive on how fast the  
24 pacing can go up --

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

1 Chairman.

2 Chairman Reed: Gentlemen, I thank you for your  
3 testimony. At this point, we will recess the open portion  
4 of the hearing and reconvene SVC-217. Let's try to be  
5 there in about -- between 11:05 a.m. and 11:10 a.m., which  
6 would allow for a moment to recollect and refresh. With  
7 that, I will adjourn the open portion.

8 [Whereupon, at 10:52 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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