

Stenographic Transcript  
Before the

COMMITTEE ON  
ARMED SERVICES

## **UNITED STATES SENATE**

HEARING TO CONSIDER THE NOMINATIONS OF:  
HON. JAMES E. MCPHERSON  
TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF THE ARMY; AND  
CHARLES A. WILLIAMS  
TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE NAVY FOR  
ENERGY, INSTALLATIONS, AND ENVIRONMENT

Thursday, January 16, 2020

Washington, D.C.

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6 ENERGY, INSTALLATIONS, AND ENVIRONMENT

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9  
10 U.S. Senate

11 Committee on Armed Services

12 Washington, D.C.

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14 The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:04 a.m. in  
15 Room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Roger F.  
16 Wicker, presiding.

17 Committee Members Present: Senators Wicker  
18 [presiding], Fischer, Cotton, Rounds, Sullivan, Perdue,  
19 Cramer, McSally, Scott, Hawley, Reed, Shaheen, Gillibrand,  
20 Blumenthal, Hirono, Kaine, King, Peters, Manchin, and Jones.

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

3           Senator Wicker: Good morning. The committee meets  
4 today to consider the nomination of the Honorable James E.  
5 McPherson to be Under Secretary of the Army and Mr. Charles  
6 A. Williams to be Assistant Secretary of the Navy for  
7 Energy, Installations, and Environment. Thank you both for  
8 being here today, gentlemen.

9           Both of our nominees may want to introduce family  
10 members who are present. During their opening statements,  
11 they are encouraged to do so.

12           Mr. Williams, I understand that Senator Blunt is a huge  
13 supporter of yours and perhaps will be able to join us in a  
14 few moments to say some words of support.

15           Mr. McPherson, you have served in this administration  
16 as the Army General Counsel, and from June through December  
17 of 2019, you performed the duties of the Under Secretary of  
18 the Army. In addition to your lengthy service as the Navy's  
19 top military lawyer, you have extensive experience in the  
20 Army and in the specific position for which the President  
21 has nominated you. I speak for the committee when I say  
22 that we appreciate your willingness to continue serving DOD  
23 in positions of increased responsibility.

24           Mr. Williams, you are a retired Navy admiral with the  
25 extensive experience in both the active and reserve

1 components. In your civilian career, you are the principal  
2 of Commercial Realty, a successful real estate firm in St.  
3 Louis, and you are a naval aviator and have logged numerous  
4 hours as an airline transport pilot and flight instructor.  
5 We are grateful that, if confirmed, you will be willing to  
6 bring your diverse military and private sector experience to  
7 bear as the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Energy,  
8 Installations, and Environment.

9 It is standard for this committee to ask certain  
10 questions in order to exercise its legislative and oversight  
11 responsibilities. I ask that you provide an audible yes or  
12 no response to the following questions. And so I ask both  
13 of you and please answer verbally.

14 Have you adhered to applicable laws and regulations  
15 governing conflicts of interest?

16 Mr. McPherson: Yes, I have.

17 Mr. Williams: Yes.

18 Senator Wicker: Will you ensure that your staff  
19 complies with the deadlines established for requested  
20 communications, including questions for the record in  
21 hearings?

22 Mr. McPherson: Yes.

23 Mr. Williams: I will.

24 Senator Wicker: Will you cooperate in providing  
25 witnesses and briefers in response to congressional

1 requests?

2 Mr. McPherson: Yes.

3 Mr. Williams: Yes.

4 Senator Wicker: Will those witnesses be protected from  
5 reprisal for their testimony or briefings?

6 Mr. McPherson: Yes.

7 Mr. Williams: Yes.

8 Senator Wicker: Do you agree, if confirmed, to appear  
9 and testify upon request before this committee?

10 Mr. McPherson: Yes.

11 Mr. Williams: Yes.

12 Senator Wicker: Do you agree to provide documents,  
13 including copies of electronic forms of communication, in a  
14 timely manner when requested by a duly constituted committee  
15 or to consult with the committee regarding the basis for any  
16 good faith delay or denial in providing such documents?

17 Mr. McPherson: Yes.

18 Mr. Williams: Yes.

19 Senator Wicker: Have you assumed any duties or  
20 undertaken any actions which would appear to presume the  
21 outcome of the confirmation process?

22 Mr. McPherson: No.

23 Mr. Williams: No.

24 Senator Wicker: Thank you very much.

25 And, Senator Blunt, we are delighted to have you join

1 us today, and I understand you have a particular interest in  
2 the nomination of Mr. Williams.

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1           STATEMENT OF HON. ROY BLUNT, U.S. SENATOR FROM  
2 MISSOURI

3           Senator Blunt: Well, I do, Senator Wicker. And thanks  
4 to you and Senator Reed and my other friends on the  
5 committee, which would include everyone on the committee,  
6 for letting me come and spend just a few minutes to talk  
7 about Chuck Williams to be the next Assistant Secretary of  
8 the Navy for Energy, Installations, and Environment. I am  
9 honored to be here with him and his family. He is joined by  
10 his wife Laurie, their son Ryan, Ryan's fiancée Alicia, his  
11 brother Tim, and two sisters, Jamie and Patty. And I am  
12 pleased to be here with all of them, and I know they are  
13 glad to be here with Chuck.

14           Admiral Williams is eminently qualified I think for  
15 this job. His career in the U.S. Navy was characterized by  
16 dedication and strong leadership. I think he can do this  
17 job and do it well.

18           After receiving his MBA at St. Louis University, Chuck  
19 Williams earned a commission in the U.S. Navy as an aviator  
20 where he began a successful career that spanned nearly 3  
21 decades in uniform. His commitment to duty and pursuit of  
22 knowledge really were the trademarks of his work.

23           During his Navy career, he had multiple command tours.  
24 He was skilled at management and oversight of billions of  
25 dollars of naval supplies and equipment. He did

1 international relations work involving a number of foreign  
2 military services, and he was appointed to critical jobs all  
3 over the world.

4 After his career in uniform, he has been an active part  
5 of the St. Louis community. He served on committees for the  
6 Regional Commerce and Growth Association. He is a member of  
7 the St. Louis Realtor Association for Economic Development  
8 and a member of the Education Committee for the Special  
9 School District of St. Louis. He served as President of the  
10 St. Louis Navy League. He has invested hours in our local  
11 schools. He is really a good guy, and I think he will be  
12 able to do this job well.

13 I am pleased that the President has nominated him. I  
14 am pleased you are having this hearing today and glad to  
15 have a few minutes to be here with you, with Chuck, and with  
16 his family to encourage his continued service to our  
17 country.

18 So thank you for letting me come by.

19 Senator Wicker: And thank you very much, Senator  
20 Blunt. I think that is a wonderful perspective and we  
21 appreciate the information you provided to us.

22 Gentlemen, as we begin this hearing, let me mention  
23 that our chairman, Senator Inhofe, and our ranking member,  
24 Senator Reed, have stressed over the past months and even  
25 years the importance of the National Defense Strategy, which

1 makes it clear that strategic competition with China and  
2 Russia is our primary national security concern. I think  
3 that view is widely held on both sides of the dais on this  
4 committee. Countering the bad acts of rogue regimes like  
5 Iran, which has been the subject of much of the President's  
6 focus over the past weeks, is also essential.

7 This committee has spent most of its time and effort  
8 this past year ensuring that DOD has the authorities and  
9 resources it needs to implement the National Defense  
10 Strategy.

11 Further, the committee has been working for more than a  
12 year on the privatized housing crisis that has directly  
13 impacted family morale and therefore readiness, retention,  
14 and health.

15 As senior leaders in the Army and Navy, each of you  
16 will play a key role in setting this situation to right. We  
17 look forward to hearing your views on these and other  
18 important matters.

19 And I now turn to my friend, the ranking member,  
20 Senator Reed, for any remarks he may wish to offer. Senator  
21 Reed?

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

3           Senator Reed: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I  
4 join you in welcoming our nominees to this morning's  
5 hearing. Mr. McPherson is joined by his wife Jennifer and  
6 his children, Amanda and Philip. Likewise, Mr. Williams is  
7 joined by his family, including his wife Laurie and family  
8 members, Tim, Ryan, and Alicia. And we are pleased that you  
9 could be with us.

10          Mr. McPherson, you have most recently served as General  
11 Counsel of the Army and, prior to that, had a long and  
12 distinguished career in the United States Navy. If  
13 confirmed as the next Under Secretary of the Army, you will  
14 play a critical role in ensuring that the Army continues to  
15 modernize and innovate in order to support the National  
16 Defense Strategy. As the NDS highlights, our technological  
17 edge compared to our near peer adversaries has eroded over  
18 the past several years. In order to address this challenge,  
19 the Army has made major structural changes to expedite  
20 modernization across the force. These changes include the  
21 creation of cross-functional teams and exercising new  
22 acquisition authorities provided by Congress. If confirmed,  
23 I expect that you will work closely with Secretary McCarthy  
24 and the Army's senior military leadership on these  
25 modernization efforts. Mr. McPherson, I welcome your

1 thoughts on the Army's modernization plans and how the Army  
2 will expedite the fielding of new platforms.

3 While modernizing military equipment is critical to our  
4 soldiers, readiness must remain the Army's highest priority.  
5 The Army has made great strides in rebuilding readiness  
6 while simultaneously making targeted investments in  
7 modernization. Mr. McPherson, please share with this  
8 committee what will you do to ensure the Army remains  
9 focused on unit readiness.

10 Finally, the men and women who serve in uniform, as  
11 well as the civilians working for the Department of the  
12 Army, are the foundation of the Army's success. As the Army  
13 grows its end strength, it should remain focused on the  
14 quality of our soldiers rather than quantity. In addition,  
15 the Army must redouble its efforts to eradicate sexual  
16 assault, sexual harassment, domestic violence, and child  
17 abuse within its ranks. Mr. McPherson, if confirmed, I  
18 trust that these issues will be among your highest  
19 priorities.

20 Mr. Williams, you are nominated to serve as the  
21 Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Installations, Energy,  
22 and the Environment. If confirmed, you will have a timely  
23 opportunity to improve the quality of military housing for  
24 families along with restoring their confidence at Navy and  
25 Marine Corps bases throughout the world. The fiscal year

1 2020 National Defense Authorization Act has dozens of new  
2 provisions, as well as increased funding, to help the  
3 department hire additional and qualified personnel to  
4 perform much needed oversight of military housing.

5       If confirmed, I strongly urge you to use the tools at  
6 your disposal in order to improve military readiness, as  
7 well as I mentioned previously the military housing. First,  
8 the Navy and Marine Corps must rely upon surface ships,  
9 which depend upon vulnerable fuel supplies. As the  
10 Department implements the National Defense Strategy, the  
11 Navy should pursue multiple operational energy improvements  
12 to its fleet. For example, a recent analysis by the Navy  
13 found that installing a hybrid electric drive uses 37  
14 percent less fuel than ships without an HED. Obviously,  
15 this would give the Navy a significant combat capability in  
16 the Pacific and elsewhere.

17       On the shore, the Department of the Navy relies upon a  
18 network infrastructure that requires uninterrupted access to  
19 electricity, and we face increasing vulnerabilities if we do  
20 not change the way we use power in our missions. The  
21 Resilient Energy Program Office allows the Navy to leverage  
22 non-DOD funds, at no cost to the taxpayer, to pursue energy  
23 resilience projects. However, the Navy has recently slowed  
24 progress in this important area. If confirmed, I strongly  
25 urge you to correct that.

1           Additionally, for fiscal year 2020, the Department  
2 received an additional \$75 million for planning design  
3 activities to support military installation resilience  
4 projects. If confirmed, I intend to follow up with you on  
5 how the Navy and the Marine Corps plan to use these  
6 important funds in order to restore readiness.

7           Finally -- and I think this is an important point --  
8 the "Washington Post" reported this week that the Trump  
9 administration plans to cut another \$7.2 billion from DOD  
10 accounts in order to fund construction of the border wall.  
11 In addition, it is likely that the President will request  
12 several billion dollars in new MILCON projects that DOD has  
13 and will continue to argue are urgent and necessary to  
14 improve readiness and implement the National Defense  
15 Strategy. That argument is undermined if the administration  
16 shifts MILCON funding dedicated for critical defense  
17 infrastructure for a border wall that was supposed to be  
18 paid by Mexico, not the American taxpayer. And the  
19 Department should not pursue this path in my view.

20           Again, thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this  
21 hearing, and I look forward to hearing from our nominees.

22           Senator Wicker: Thank you, Senator Reed.

23           And, gentlemen, your full statements will be included  
24 in the record at this point. We recognize each of you now  
25 to summarize your testimony for a period not to exceed 5

1 minutes. And, Mr. McPherson, we will begin with you, sir.

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1 STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES E. MCPHERSON TO BE UNDER  
2 SECRETARY OF THE ARMY

3 Mr. McPherson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

4 Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Reed, and members of the  
5 committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before  
6 you today and a special thank you to members of your staffs  
7 who met with me prior to this hearing.

8 I would also like to thank President Trump for  
9 nominating me and Secretary Esper and Secretary McCarthy for  
10 their trust and confidence in recommending me for the  
11 opportunity to serve again.

12 Joining me today are the three most important people in  
13 my life: my wife Jennifer, who also served in the United  
14 States Navy; and our two children, both of whom serve in the  
15 education field. Amanda teaches children with special needs  
16 in Fairfax County Public Schools in Virginia, and Philip is  
17 a software engineer with Pearson, an education company. We  
18 are very proud of both of them. My family gives me the  
19 strength, support, love, and encouragement to serve and be  
20 the best husband and father I can be.

21 I would also like to pause and recognize those three  
22 members of the Army staff who really helped me prepare for  
23 this hearing today: Colonel Bavarnik, Major Quintana, and  
24 Major Frye. Thank you, gentlemen.

25 Both my parents passed away years ago. They were part

1 of what Tom Brokaw coined "the greatest generation." On 6  
2 June, 1944, my father crawled ashore on Omaha Beach on the  
3 Normandy coast. At the same time, my mother was running a  
4 drill press at Douglas Aircraft in Los Angeles helping to  
5 build Dauntless dive-bombers. She truly was a "Rosie the  
6 Riveter." They instilled in my brother Scott and I a spirit  
7 of service that we both live by today. My brother Scott is  
8 a deputy sheriff in Wyoming.

9 Finally, I want to thank this committee for the  
10 unwavering and bipartisan support you provide to our total  
11 Army: our soldiers, our civilians, and their families.

12 Since January 2, 2018, it has been my honor to serve as  
13 the 22nd General Counsel of the Army. When Secretary  
14 McCarthy assumed the duties of the Secretary of the Army in  
15 July of 2019, I was entrusted to perform the duties of the  
16 Under Secretary until my formal nomination about a month  
17 ago.

18 It has been the privilege of a lifetime to serve with  
19 Secretary McCarthy and the entire Army leadership team,  
20 including Chief of Staff of the Army, General McConville;  
21 Vice Chief, General Martin; and Sergeant Major of the Army,  
22 Michael Grinston. This has reinforced my perspective of the  
23 vital importance of the Army to achieve all of its top  
24 priorities, priorities derived from the National Defense  
25 Strategy which is the foundation for the Army's strategy and

1 the Army's vision. The Army's leadership team remains  
2 laser-focused on the Army's priorities of readiness,  
3 modernization, and reform.

4 Also, the Army's senior leadership has adopted General  
5 McConville's bedrock philosophy that the Army is a people  
6 business, and our people, our soldiers, civilians,  
7 civilians, and their families, are the Army's greatest  
8 strength. This philosophy has been a critical driver to  
9 numerous initiatives discussed at improving the quality of  
10 life for our people.

11 If confirmed, in addition to my role as the Chief  
12 Management Officer of the Army, I will focus on confronting  
13 four challenges I believe we face: suicide, sexual assault  
14 and harassment, domestic violence, and family housing.

15 In 2018, our annual suicide report documented the  
16 highest suicide rate in our ranks since the Department of  
17 Defense began tracking such data. As the General Counsel, I  
18 see every report of a soldier who takes his or her own life.  
19 Although we have numerous programs to address this problem,  
20 we must do more.

21 Likewise, in 2018 a DOD biennial survey found an  
22 increase in the prevalence of sexual assault primarily  
23 against female service members ages 17 to 24. As I  
24 testified before this committee 2 years ago, one sexual  
25 assault is one too many. We must do more. We must do

1 better.

2 Today 113,000 soldiers are deployed to 140 countries  
3 worldwide. They defend our nation. They partner with our  
4 allies. They protect all Americans. They are the very best  
5 of our nation. If confirmed, I will do my best to support  
6 them.

7 It has been my great privilege to serve again. If  
8 confirmed, I pledge to you that I will assist Secretary  
9 McCarthy in fulfilling his Title 10 responsibilities of  
10 providing the best manned, trained, and equipped armed force  
11 for our nation.

12 I am grateful for your consideration of my nomination,  
13 and I welcome your questions. Thank you.

14 [The prepared statement of Mr. McPherson follows:]  
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1 Senator Wicker: Thank you very much, Mr. McPherson.

2 And before turning to Mr. Williams, since a quorum is  
3 now present, I ask the committee to consider a list of 157  
4 pending military nominations. Of these nominations, 109  
5 nominations are 4 days short of the committee's requirement  
6 that nominations be in the committee for 7 days before being  
7 reported out. We hope to report out these nominations  
8 before taking up the articles of impeachment on the Senate  
9 floor, which will preclude other Senate business. No  
10 objection has been raised to these nominations, and I  
11 recommend the committee waive the 7-day rule.

12 Is there a motion to favorably report this list of 157  
13 pending military nominations to the Senate?

14 Senator Reed: So moved.

15 Senator Wicker: Is there a second?

16 Senator Ernst: Second.

17 Senator Wicker: There is a second.

18 Are you ready to vote? All in favor, say aye.

19 [Chorus of ayes.]

20 Senator Wicker: All opposed, no?

21 [No response.]

22 Senator Wicker: The ayes appear to have it and the  
23 ayes do have it, and the motion carries.

24 Thank you for bearing with us there, Mr. Williams. And  
25 now you are recognized for your testimony, sir.

1           STATEMENT OF CHARLES A. WILLIAMS TO BE ASSISTANT  
2 SECRETARY OF THE NAVY FOR ENERGY, INSTALLATIONS, AND  
3 ENVIRONMENT

4           Mr. Williams: I want to thank Senator Blunt for his  
5 kind remarks. Missouri is proud of the work Senator Blunt  
6 does for the State, and I am personally appreciative for his  
7 help.

8           Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed, distinguished  
9 Senators of the Armed Services Committee, I am appreciative  
10 of your time and the opportunity to be considered for an  
11 Assistant Secretary of the Navy position responsible for  
12 energy, installations, and environment.

13           I am pleased to have with me today my wife Laurie of 45  
14 years and an accomplished educator in her own right; my son  
15 Ryan, an engineer; his partner Alicia; and my brother Tim, a  
16 former prosecuting attorney and judge in Utah and in New  
17 Mexico.

18           I entered naval service shortly after graduating from  
19 college in 1972. It was during the Vietnam War, and I  
20 served 32 and a half years in an active and reserve  
21 capacity. As a 22-year-old kid from a St. Louis blue collar  
22 union family, the Navy educated me, gave me an opportunity,  
23 and introduced me to a world that was beyond my dreams. I  
24 owe who I am to the Navy.

25           My real estate career spanned 4 decades in property

1 management, brokerage, investment, construction,  
2 development, environmental issues, and teaching as an  
3 adjunct professor. Real estate creates an opportunity for  
4 financial gain, but money was not my primary motivation. My  
5 greatest sense of joy, of pride, and of accomplishment came  
6 from serving my country in the United States Navy. I  
7 believe in and have written and spoken often of service  
8 above self. All of us serve because we believe and care  
9 about this country and want to make it better for the next  
10 generation.

11 With your approval, it would be a privilege to serve my  
12 country and the Navy again. This is a position where I can  
13 make a difference and, if confirmed, I want to immediately  
14 engage with others, other services, and OSD to address  
15 critically important issues such as military housing and  
16 PFAS. As a former commanding officer, I know what it means  
17 to take care of our sailors and their families. We can do  
18 better and we must do better. A CNO once told his flag  
19 wardroom not all recruited will stay in the Navy, but it is  
20 up to us as flag officers to create an environment for a  
21 sailor who leaves to be able to say I am a better citizen, I  
22 am glad I served, and I would recommend it to others.

23 I am ready to get started and pleased to answer your  
24 questions and work with you on problems facing us. Thank  
25 you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Williams follows:]

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1           Senator Wicker: Well, thank you very, very much. And  
2 we will now begin questions under the 5-minute rule.

3           Mr. McPherson, the fiscal year 2020 National Defense  
4 Authorization Act authorized 2,000 additional troops in the  
5 active component. Will the Army meet that recruiting goal,  
6 and how are we going to do it?

7           Mr. McPherson: We are confident, Mr. Chairman, that we  
8 will meet that goal. We are doing that as we did last year  
9 by continuing to focus on the marketing aspects of our  
10 recruiting. We have shifted it from here to Chicago, our  
11 marketing enterprise office now under the command of a very  
12 well qualified general who has a background in marketing.  
13 In addition, we hired a new marketing firm, DBB, in Chicago.  
14 We bring the synergy of having those two located in Chicago  
15 will bring great energy to the effort. We have also  
16 identified 22 of what we call target cities that we want to  
17 focus our recruiting efforts upon.

18           In 2018, over half of our marketing budget was spent on  
19 television ads. We recognize that is not where our target  
20 audience, 18 to 22-year-olds, spend their time. They spend  
21 their time on social media. So we are shifting our  
22 marketing to social media. We rolled out our new social  
23 media advertising campaign, What's Your Warrior? We are  
24 getting tremendous results from that, hits on that, and hits  
25 on our website goarmy.com. And we are confident that we

1 will make our recruiting goal this year.

2 End strength is a factor of both recruiting, attrition,  
3 and reenlistment, and we must carefully balance those three  
4 as we work toward the end strength goal that was given to us  
5 by this committee and by this Congress. And we will do that  
6 very, very carefully.

7 I will say very happily that in the first quarter of  
8 this fiscal year, we are at 94 percent of our reenlistment  
9 rate, which indicates to us a number of things. Soldiers  
10 want to stay in even though there is great opportunity in  
11 the marketplace and in the civilian world because we provide  
12 them a sense of service, a sense of fulfillment and that  
13 they can make a difference in our Army.

14 Senator Wicker: That is encouraging to hear.

15 Let me turn to Mr. Williams. In my remarks, I  
16 mentioned the housing crisis.

17 Mr. Williams: Yes, sir.

18 Senator Wicker: I assume you are already pretty  
19 familiar with this, Mr. Williams.

20 Mr. Williams: Yes, sir.

21 Senator Wicker: So do you have some conclusions about  
22 the root cause of this problem and of the distrust families  
23 have toward housing contractors and the Navy in general?

24 Mr. Williams: The private side would have a profit  
25 motive. We have a motive to take care of our people. And

1 this is all about taking care of our people. We took our  
2 eye off the ball. Housing is not a core competency of the  
3 Navy. When this happened in the 1990s, I was serving then.  
4 I thought it was a good idea and I still believe it is a  
5 good idea. But we just took our eye off the ball.

6 Most of my career on the real estate side was on the  
7 commercial sector, office buildings, retail, warehousing,  
8 but I did some residential, apartment deals. And I remember  
9 owning some housing units. One standard I used when I  
10 refurbished the property to get it ready for the next  
11 tenant, would I live in that property? Would I have my  
12 family live in that property?

13 I have seen some pictures of some housing that I cannot  
14 believe that any professional property manager would allow a  
15 tenant to live like that or would make a correction, a  
16 maintenance action, and not do a better job than the  
17 pictures I have seen. I am kind of livid about this because  
18 as a commanding officer, it is about taking care of our  
19 people and we have let them down. The last thing we need is  
20 a young sailor to be on a destroyer in the South China Sea  
21 standing watch and, prior to going on watch, gets a message  
22 that his family has gone to an emergency room because of  
23 respiratory problems for a spouse and a child. And now he  
24 is distracted. He is mad at the Navy. And he is supposed  
25 to be out there looking for ships so we do not have another

1 collision like we had with the Fitzgerald and McCain. That  
2 cannot happen.

3 Senator Wicker: Well, Mr. Williams, it is not just the  
4 Navy, though. Do you think there is something about the  
5 concept? Because it has happened in the other branches  
6 also. It is just hard for us to put our finger on exactly  
7 where this started going wrong.

8 Mr. Williams: I think they have a captive audience on  
9 a base and more so than they do on the outside where they  
10 have to compete. This is my take. You know, I am kind of  
11 new to this. I have been away from this. I mean, I have  
12 been prepped. I have been prepping to come up here and talk  
13 to you all. But I have got a lot to learn about it yet to  
14 really get to know all the issues, read the agreements,  
15 understand what they say, what our options are. But it will  
16 be the first thing that I do is understand what we can do,  
17 how we fix it, and I will add a plan of how I am going to do  
18 that in fairly short order, if confirmed.

19 Senator Wicker: Well, thank you very much, sir.

20 And, Senator Reed, I think we have a lot to learn on  
21 this, still have a lot to learn on this committee about this  
22 DOD-wide problem.

23 And, Senator Reed, you are now recognized.

24 Senator Reed: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I concur. We  
25 do have a lot to learn, and I think these gentlemen will

1 help us in that process.

2 Let me just qualify one question to both of you  
3 gentlemen. In your advance policy questions and responses  
4 to the standard questions of appearing before the committee  
5 offering documents, there were qualifications initially.  
6 You just responded verbally to the chairman's questions  
7 unqualified.

8 So, Mr. McPherson, we can assume for the record and for  
9 your tenure your response is unqualified in terms of  
10 appearing before the committee and providing documents when  
11 requested.

12 Mr. McPherson: Yes, sir.

13 Senator Reed: Mr. Williams, the same question.

14 Mr. Williams: Yes, sir. The response is unqualified.  
15 It was yes.

16 Senator Reed: Thank you very much, gentlemen.

17 Mr. McPherson, I outlined a host of issues you are  
18 going to confront, and I want to focus in on one. That is  
19 the -- we talked about it -- domestic abuse and child abuse.  
20 You have extraordinary experience as a JAG officer, as a  
21 Navy JAG now in your present capacity. Is the program  
22 working in the Army to balance the need for punishment for  
23 abuse but also the support and the counseling to prevent it?  
24 What more can we do, should we do? Any thoughts on that?

25 Mr. McPherson: Yes, sir, Senator. Thank you.

1 I think the program to combat domestic abuse, child  
2 abuse is working in the Army. Our statistics are down-  
3 trending over the last 2-3 years, but nevertheless, we  
4 cannot take our eye off that ball. We cannot declare  
5 victory and walk away from it. We need to continue to focus  
6 upon it.

7 A couple of things we do is through the training of our  
8 prosecutors and our defense counsel through expanding the  
9 special victims program to victims of spouse abuse and child  
10 abuse, in addition, utilizing the program that this Congress  
11 has given to us in transitional compensation. It was my  
12 experience as a prosecutor that oftentimes an abused victim,  
13 a wife, dependent, would be very reluctant to testify  
14 against her husband because that was the breadwinner. And  
15 if I testify against him in a court martial and he receives  
16 confinement and he is discharged, what am I going to do with  
17 my family, my kids? Where are we going to live, those sorts  
18 of questions. The transitional compensation program answers  
19 that question. We will continue to take care of that family  
20 while taking appropriate action against that soldier.

21 Senator Reed: Well, thank you very much. And I must  
22 say, Admiral, I am tempted to ask you what side of the field  
23 you will be sitting on at the Army-Navy game, but I will  
24 not.

25 Mr. McPherson: I would love to answer that question.

1 Senator Reed: I know.

2 [Laughter.]

3 Senator Reed: Mr. Williams, again you will have some  
4 significant responsibilities. Your housing experience will  
5 be invaluable I think and we look forward to your efforts in  
6 that regard.

7 One of the areas that I mentioned in my opening  
8 statement was energy resilience. Operationally it is a  
9 critical factor in terms of just normal operations. As well  
10 as military operations, it is critical. What can you do to  
11 help, first, installations to be less dependent on the local  
12 grid, more resilient, et cetera?

13 Mr. Williams: Sir, I am relatively new to this, so I  
14 am not sure how much I will be able to add. But I do know,  
15 having talked to a few members of the staff, that resiliency  
16 is a big issue. They are working on it right now. There  
17 has been a lot of emphasis on redundancy with electrical  
18 generation, generators. We have looked at three different  
19 -- or they have looked at, I should say -- the Navy has --  
20 three different areas where they can provide a backup  
21 generation source. So I want to get involved in that and  
22 learn more about that. But there are plans for backup  
23 generation, and they have proven some of the -- some of the  
24 initiatives have been proven.

25 Senator Reed: And in that venue -- and I understand

1 also too that this is a topic of not as extensive knowledge  
2 on your own part as real estate and other matters. But not  
3 only installations but also the operation of our ships at  
4 sea. To the extent that they are less reliant on energy,  
5 the longer they can operate. And that is one of the first  
6 areas I think we would anticipate being attacked, not the  
7 ship itself but the logistical base and support. And there  
8 are programs like hydroelectric drives. So I would ask you  
9 to look very closely at those programs and try to accelerate  
10 the deployment within the Navy.

11 Mr. Williams: Yes, sir.

12 Senator Reed: Thank you very much.

13 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

14 Senator Wicker: Thank you, Senator Reed.

15 Senator Cotton?

16 Senator Cotton: Congratulations, gentlemen, on your  
17 nominations. Thanks for your continued willingness to serve  
18 our country.

19 Mr. McPherson, how would you rate the performance of  
20 the Army Futures Command thus far, and what are your  
21 concerns going forward?

22 Mr. McPherson: I think the performance to date has  
23 been outstanding -- Army Futures Command and General Murray  
24 is our Futures Officer. The key to Army Futures Command is  
25 the cross-functional teams, that teamwork that exists

1 between the acquisition community and the requirements  
2 community. Bringing those two entities together in one  
3 place, those officers together in one place, in the CFTs has  
4 created tremendous synergy. Several examples of that exist.

5 The one that I have seen most recently was IVAS, the  
6 integrated visual augmentation system. I went to a use case  
7 down in Fort Pickett, along with the Vice Chief, a couple of  
8 weeks ago. And to watch the requirements and the  
9 acquisition team together with the vendor, Microsoft in this  
10 case, working closely together was almost magical. And the  
11 result of that, as well as the soldier touch points that  
12 take place -- that is, our soldiers are the ones that test  
13 them in those use cases and bring back to the individuals  
14 that are creating the item, the IVAS, is a tremendous step  
15 in the right direction. I would rate the efforts so far by  
16 AFC as outstanding.

17 Going forward, we need to continue to fund those  
18 modernization efforts, and we are doing that through a  
19 continuation that is known colloquially as Night Court. As  
20 Secretary McCarthy recently has said, we are going to  
21 continue that effort through the next POM cycle that we  
22 build for 2022, identifying those programs that do not meet  
23 the criteria of the National Defense Strategy for our  
24 modernization, and either trimming them down or even ending  
25 those programs and transferring those funds to programs that

1 we need to modernize and to equip our Army into the future,  
2 with the goal being 2028 of fielding that multi-domain  
3 operations capability.

4 Senator Cotton: Thank you.

5 Let us talk about long-range fires. For much of the  
6 last decade -- the previous decade I should say -- we turned  
7 artillerymen into infantrymen conducting manpower intensive  
8 counterinsurgency operations. The National Defense Strategy  
9 has put a renewed and overdue emphasis on artillerymen doing  
10 the job of artillerymen, neutralizing, suppressing, and  
11 destroying the enemy with extended long-range fires.

12 Talk to us about how the Army's fiscal year 2021 budget  
13 request will continue this focus and properly prioritize  
14 this critical capability.

15 Mr. McPherson: Long-range precision fires is our  
16 number one modernization priority. The 2021 budget request  
17 that you will see will reflect that. That is where the  
18 majority of our funding is going in a number of areas, both  
19 in PRISM and in hypersonics. You will see an increased  
20 emphasis upon hypersonics. We are now building the glide  
21 body for that. It is a tri-service effort. We are  
22 partnering with both the Air Force and the Navy in that  
23 endeavor, and we look forward to partnering with the Air  
24 Force and the Navy going forward in other weapon systems as  
25 well. But you are going to see in the fiscal year 2021

1 budget that long-range precision fires remains our number  
2 one priority.

3 Senator Cotton: I long advocated for the United States  
4 to withdraw from the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces  
5 Treaty since it only bound the United States and Russia, and  
6 Russia had blatantly violated the treaty over the years.  
7 President Trump, thankfully, withdrew from that treaty last  
8 year. From a strategic standpoint, though, the threat of  
9 intermediate range missiles comes as much from China in the  
10 Western Pacific as it does from Russia in the European  
11 theater.

12 Can you talk to us about the need for those kinds of  
13 intermediate range fires to neutralize or at least reduce  
14 the threat from China in particular in the western Pacific?

15 Mr. McPherson: Yes, Senator. Our withdrawal from the  
16 INF opened the opportunity for us to just what you  
17 articulated. Our main thrust in there is our hypersonics.  
18 We will be fielding our first hypersonics battery in 2023.  
19 We have decided to station it on the west coast. There is a  
20 reason for that. That sends a message.

21 In addition, with regard to the INDOPACOM area, we are  
22 making efforts right now to partner with our allies through  
23 various ways of gaining a footprint, a rotational footprint,  
24 not a permanent footprint, in those first island chains so  
25 that with our PRISM and other long-range precision fires, we

1 can counter the Chinese threat in that region.

2 Senator Cotton: Thank you.

3 Senator Wicker: Thank you, Senator Cotton.

4 Senator Shaheen?

5 Senator Shaheen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6 Mr. Williams, Secretary McPherson, congratulations to  
7 both of you on your nominations. Thank you to you and your  
8 families for your willingness to stand in consideration for  
9 these roles.

10 I want to start by being parochial here. I have  
11 appreciated, Mr. McPherson, the opportunity to sit down with  
12 you, and I hope that you will consider coming to New  
13 Hampshire to meet with our Army National Guard and also to  
14 visit the Cold Regions Research and Engineering Lab in  
15 Hanover, New Hampshire.

16 And, Mr. Williams, as we discussed before this hearing,  
17 I hope you will come and visit the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard  
18 and see firsthand how efficient the shipyard workers are and  
19 also the energy innovation that is going on there as you  
20 think about energy in the Navy and what we need to do. They  
21 have some great examples of what they have been able to do  
22 to save on energy.

23 Mr. Williams: Yes, ma'am.

24 Senator Shaheen: I want to start, Secretary McPherson,  
25 with you because over the past year we have had a dredge

1 project going on with the Army Corps of Engineers, and I  
2 would congratulate Lieutenant General Todd Semonite and R.D.  
3 James, Assistant Secretary James, for the work that they  
4 have done with us in New Hampshire and how expeditiously  
5 they have taken on that project. As I am sure you know, we  
6 have many small harbors and rivers across this country that  
7 have safety and other issues, economic issues, around  
8 dredging that present a real challenge for the communities  
9 and the States that they are in. We have two other projects  
10 that are pending in the queue in New Hampshire, one for Rye  
11 Harbor and one of the Piscataqua River, which has got one of  
12 the fastest currents in the United States and presents a  
13 real safety hazard. So I hope now that Congress has  
14 allocated the money for 2020 that you will work very closely  
15 with the Army Corps and encourage them to be as expeditious  
16 as I know they are trying to be to address these small  
17 harbor projects like the ones in New Hampshire.

18 Mr. McPherson: Yes, ma'am. If confirmed, I will to  
19 exactly that. After our conversation the other day, I  
20 called General Semonite and we spoke about the dredging  
21 project that you mentioned. He was very pleased with how  
22 well it went. And we also talked about the two that are  
23 currently pending and how they are prioritized. And I told  
24 General Semonite that if I am confirmed, I would like to  
25 discuss with him that priority and how soon they can start

1 those projects.

2 Senator Shaheen: That is great. I really appreciate  
3 that, and I know, as I said, that we have projects across  
4 this country that are in the same difficult shape and really  
5 need to be addressed.

6 Mr. Williams, as I said, we work very closely with  
7 Senator King and the delegations in both Maine and New  
8 Hampshire around issues affecting the shipyard, and they  
9 have a significant modernization effort underway at the  
10 shipyard to increase their dry dock capacity, which is  
11 important as we are trying to keep our subs operating.

12 The Navy's shipyard infrastructure optimization plan  
13 was released in February of 2018. And as you may know, the  
14 plan focuses on increasing dry dock capacity and improving  
15 facility layout to improve efficiency at our shipyards.

16 Can you talk about how important you think it is for us  
17 to continue these shipyard optimization projects so we can  
18 keep our Navy operating as efficiently as possible?

19 Mr. Williams: Yes, Senator. And if you would allow me  
20 -- I forgot to and it would be wrong for me not to  
21 acknowledge a shipmate from my first deployable squadron is  
22 here. Naval Academy grad, CEO of a company, Jeff  
23 Millenetti, is down here. So I do want to acknowledge. I  
24 should have earlier.

25 With respect to the shipyards, I am kind of an

1 operational guy. I believe in getting ships ready to  
2 deploy. It is all about defending the nation. If we cannot  
3 deploy -- and we kind of saw this recently in the Arabian  
4 Sea where we had to extend a carrier because we did not have  
5 another carrier strike group ready to go. And it is because  
6 of maintenance activity and maintenance in the shipyards.

7 I am relatively new. I have been away from this for a  
8 while. I retired in 2005. I know there is a plan. I am  
9 not all that well versed in it.

10 But it really comes to readiness, and we have got to  
11 have these ships, be able to turn them faster. I mean, you  
12 can have the most technologically advanced ship, the most  
13 capable ship, but it is sitting in a shipyard, it cannot  
14 deploy. It is not doing any good for anybody. So we have  
15 got to focus on that, and that will be one of my focuses.

16 Senator Shaheen: Well, thank you. I appreciate that.

17 Another issue that we are very concerned about in New  
18 Hampshire is PFAS, the chemicals that have contaminated our  
19 water. We were one of the first bases. The former Pease  
20 Air Force Base was one of the first in the country to see  
21 challenges from PFAS contamination in water in the  
22 community. And I was very pleased when Secretary Esper on  
23 his first day as Secretary of Defense created a PFAS  
24 taskforce. I understand you are going to be serving on that  
25 in your new capacity, if you are confirmed.

1           Can you discuss what you would like to see the Navy do  
2 to address PFAS?

3           Mr. Williams: Well, we want to identify all the naval  
4 installations where it is a problem and how it has affected  
5 the community. We want to be good citizens and work with  
6 the community as well. My understanding is no one is  
7 drinking water that is above the EPA hazardous advisory. I  
8 know it is a top priority with SECDEF. He did set up a  
9 committee. It was one of the first things he did. I would  
10 be on that committee. We want to work with EPA and all the  
11 government agencies that are involved in this. It is a  
12 national problem. It is used in many places well beyond  
13 Navy installations.

14           But we have a Navy research lab. Anybody who would be  
15 invited -- I would like to go down there myself. I think  
16 you might even be interested in going to visit that Navy  
17 research lab. Perhaps we could do that together.

18           Senator Shaheen: I will take you up on that.

19           Mr. Williams: Okay. And see what the technologies are  
20 because we own that MILSPEC -- the Navy. And we need to get  
21 that problem fixed, and I will spend some time. So housing  
22 is number one and PFAS is number two, and that is where I am  
23 really going to put some effort.

24           Senator Shaheen: Thank you very much.

25           Senator Wicker: Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

1 Senator Rounds?

2 Senator Rounds: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

3 And thank you to both of you for taking the time to  
4 visit with us in our office. I think that adds a lot to be  
5 able to visit personally with you.

6 I would like to follow up a little bit on what Senator  
7 Shaheen was discussing with regard to shipyards. And, Mr.  
8 Williams, I would like to just put it in a little bit  
9 different perspective. It would appear that there have been  
10 decades of under-investment in Navy shipyards, and this has  
11 resulted in a situation where the current condition,  
12 configuration, and location of supporting facilities, dry  
13 docks, and equipment, severely impacts the Navy's ability to  
14 execute its depot level maintenance. This includes not only  
15 nuclear carriers but also nuclear submarines. And as  
16 described in the 2018 shipyard infrastructure optimization  
17 plan, this needs to be addressed.

18 There were six fiscal year 2019 Navy deferred  
19 availabilities, and by that I mean six separate vessels that  
20 were deferred because they could not get in and get out of  
21 depot maintenance appropriately. They included the USS  
22 Boise and the USS Hartford. In fact, the Boise returned  
23 from a patrol in 2015 and it has not been back to sea since.  
24 Inactivity has caused the Boise and two other attack subs to  
25 lose their dive certification. That does not even begin to

1 address the challenge for our seamen who lose the ability to  
2 train at sea and to maintain their qualifications.

3 Understanding the roles of research, development, and  
4 acquisition, NAVSEA, NAVFAC, and other stakeholders, can you  
5 tell me how, if confirmed, you would see your role in  
6 supporting the Navy's depot level maintenance mission with  
7 respect to its four public shipyards?

8 Mr. Williams: Yes, sir. If confirmed, the shipyards  
9 will be an important aspect for me. But one thing I learned  
10 as a flag officer, there are these swim lanes, and you do  
11 not like to swim in somebody else's lane because you can  
12 offend somebody else. So most of the requirements for the  
13 shipyards would come under the systems command, RDT&E,  
14 Assistant Secretary Gertz, working with the Secretary of the  
15 Navy. So I am going to put a lot of emphasis working with  
16 those folks. But it will be our job to build those  
17 facilities based on the requirements they give us. And I do  
18 want to see that happen, as I mentioned earlier how  
19 important these shipyards are.

20 When I would give speeches, I would often talk about  
21 not just presence but presence that is visible so that an  
22 adversary sees the Navy and knows we are there and we are  
23 capable and we are ready and for an ally who sees the Navy  
24 that is present is ready because it gives them support.

25 So I will do whatever I can to make sure these

1 shipyards can do a better job.

2 Senator Rounds: And I think you hit on an important  
3 part of this, swimming in our own lanes. If the job is not  
4 getting done, then somebody has got to take responsibility  
5 for identifying it and fixing it. And I would like your  
6 commitment that you want to be a part of making it very  
7 clear that this cannot continue on.

8 Mr. Williams: Absolutely, Senator.

9 Senator Rounds: Thank you, sir.

10 Mr. McPherson, if confirmed, and during the period that  
11 you will perform the duties of the Under Secretary, you will  
12 oversee the assistant secretaries on behalf of the Secretary  
13 of the Army, to include the Assistant Secretary of the Army  
14 for Civil Works. I would like your commitment to provide a  
15 robust oversight on the Corps of Engineers in general and  
16 their rulemaking in particular.

17 As you know, I am especially concerned about the  
18 implementation on the proposed surplus water rule which, as  
19 announced in September, has been delayed for a period of 6  
20 months. That decision is expected to be made within the  
21 next 2 months. It was never the intention of Congress to  
22 federalize all of the water in the country's major rivers,  
23 and I would like to emphasize that fact to you today as you  
24 assist the Secretary of the Army in the execution of his  
25 Title 10 responsibilities for civil works and national water

1 resources.

2 This is critical to States that have always maintained  
3 their constitutional responsibility and authority on waters  
4 within their jurisdiction. I would like your commitment to  
5 do just exactly that, to provide robust oversight on the  
6 Corps of Engineers in general and on their rulemaking in  
7 particular.

8 Mr. McPherson: Senator, if confirmed, you have my 100  
9 percent to that.

10 Senator Rounds: Thank you, sir.

11 Mr. McPherson: When I became the Executive Director of  
12 the National Association of Attorneys General, I remember  
13 the Attorney General of Colorado telling me that west of the  
14 Mississippi, it is all about water, and I remember that  
15 distinctly and I remember that as I work with the Corps of  
16 Engineers.

17 There are two areas that I look forward to working with  
18 Mr. R.D. James, General Semonite, and his replacement, and  
19 that is in both rulemaking and permitting. I am going to  
20 make sure that those are transparent, that they are being  
21 done efficiently, and I look forward to working with you and  
22 your staff in ensuring that that occurs.

23 Senator Rounds: Thank you, sir.

24 Senator Wicker: Thank you, Senator Rounds.

25 Senator Blumenthal?

1 Senator Blumenthal: Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

2 Thank you both for your service and your willingness to  
3 continue to serve.

4 Mr. McPherson -- Secretary McPherson, I welcome your  
5 continued service particularly after your work at the  
6 National Association of Attorneys General where you provided  
7 very distinguished work.

8 Mr. McPherson: And you were one of my bosses, Senator.

9 Senator Blumenthal: Correct.

10 [Laughter.]

11 Senator Blumenthal: Let me ask you both on this topic  
12 of military housing. And I welcomed your statement, Mr.  
13 Williams, that you are livid, to use your word. Anger is  
14 good. Action is even better. So I am going to ask you to  
15 come back to us within -- both of you -- say, 2 months, 3  
16 months and give us an update on what has been accomplished  
17 in these areas. I recognize it is a big problem.

18 The NDAA this year has a number of very specific  
19 provisions on accountability and prioritizing families and  
20 so forth. I think it will take more than just warnings and  
21 words. I think it will take legal action to force some of  
22 these contractors to do the right thing. Mr. Williams, you  
23 very correctly observe that as an ethical business person,  
24 you would not tolerate these kinds of conditions, but  
25 obviously some business people have. And so I would like to

1 ask both of you whether you are willing to take legal action  
2 including, as I have advocated, recommending potential  
3 criminal charges in the event that fraud and other  
4 wrongdoing is found.

5 Mr. McPherson: Yes, Senator, I am. We will be taking  
6 a very careful look at that, and if confirmed, I look  
7 forward to coming back to this committee and to you and your  
8 staff and updating you as frequently as you desire on how we  
9 are doing correcting this housing problem.

10 Mr. Williams: Yes, sir. If confirmed, one of the  
11 things I want to do is go out and visit these sites. I want  
12 to understand what our options both legally and just  
13 professionally. There ought to be some pride in doing this  
14 kind of work. But I am going to put some people on notice.  
15 I am going to give them probation. You got to fix this.  
16 You got so much time. If I do not see improvement, that  
17 accountability may go beyond that to whatever I can possibly  
18 do. I do not want to go too far because I do not know  
19 enough right now to probably say what I can do, but once I  
20 learn what I can do, I am going to take some action.

21 Senator Blumenthal: Thank you.

22 Well, I welcome your visiting the sub base in  
23 Connecticut where I visited a number of times to see the  
24 quality of housing there and the complaints that we have  
25 received not just about the housing conditions but also

1 about retaliation against complaints, which I think remains  
2 a significant problem.

3 Mr. Williams: There should be no retribution. We  
4 should not make a sailor afraid to complain about his  
5 quarters when they are unsatisfactory.

6 Senator Blumenthal: I want to join Senator Shaheen in  
7 expressing an interest in the PFAS problem and a potential  
8 visit with you to look at what the research shows.

9 I also want to follow up on the issue of backup fuel  
10 supplies, particularly the use of energy efficient and  
11 climate resilient sources like fuel cells, which I  
12 understand have been pioneered and championed on many of our  
13 Navy vessels. Are you familiar with fuel cells, and what do  
14 you think their potential is?

15 Mr. Williams: Sir, I have not been briefed on that. I  
16 do not know that I would know enough right now to add really  
17 value, but I would be happy to get back to you at a later  
18 time, if confirmed. We could spend some time on that.

19 Senator Blumenthal: Thank you. I would appreciate  
20 that.

21 And I am also very concerned about the situation in  
22 Puerto Rico. The National Guard there has done very, very  
23 significant work, and unfortunately some of the MILCON  
24 projects there have been delayed because money has been  
25 diverted to the border wall. We could talk for much longer

1 than a minute, which is all I have left on my time. But I  
2 would like a commitment from both of you that you will  
3 prioritize the National Guard MILCON projects in Puerto Rico  
4 and around the country because taking money away from our  
5 National Guard and Reserves and any of our military in my  
6 view is unacceptable and unwise.

7 Mr. McPherson: You have my commitment, Senator.

8 Mr. Williams: Yes, sir. I am a big believer in naval  
9 advocacy. I think that is what part of this job is, and I  
10 will be a naval advocate.

11 Senator Blumenthal: Thank you.

12 Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

13 Senator Wicker: Thank you, Senator Blumenthal.

14 Senator Hawley, Mr. Williams was quite generous in  
15 discussing how invaluable Senator Blunt was to the people of  
16 Missouri. He did not say a thing about you.

17 Senator Hawley: I noticed that.

18 Senator Wicker: And I just wondered if you might want  
19 to begin your questioning along those lines.

20 Senator Hawley: I noticed that, Senator. Thank you  
21 for pointing that out.

22 [Laughter.]

23 Senator Hawley: Mr. Williams, is there anything you  
24 would like to say? No. I am just kidding.

25 Mr. Williams: Senator Hawley is my favorite other

1 Senator from Missouri.

2 [Laughter.]

3 Senator Hawley: It was good to talk with you  
4 yesterday, Mr. Williams, and thank you for your service. It  
5 is always good to see a Missourian here, and I look forward  
6 to supporting your nomination.

7 Mr. McPherson, let me ask you. Fort Leonard Wood in my  
8 home State has faced serious personnel shortages over the  
9 last year. And while the fiscal year 2020 NDAA contained  
10 language that I think is going to help prevent those kind of  
11 shortages in the future, this is still a major concern.

12 So could you just walk us through your understanding of  
13 how those shortages arose in the first place and what steps  
14 the Army is taking to make sure that this does not happen  
15 again?

16 Mr. McPherson: Thank you, Senator. I did look into  
17 that. I asked questions about that. I was told that, once  
18 again, we took our eye off a very important part of what we  
19 do and that is personnel transfers. And as a result of  
20 those personnel transfers, some unpredicted ones, we fell  
21 below in some staffing areas at the hospital. Those were  
22 corrected through a rotational basis. We put some people in  
23 there temporarily. I am also told that by this summer it  
24 will be fully staffed again with incoming medical  
25 individuals, both support and physicians. So I was assured

1 that by this summer rotation, those shortages will be  
2 remedied.

3 Senator Hawley: That is helpful. Thank you.

4 Let me ask you about a related matter, the Defense  
5 Health Agency. I am concerned about reports that it is not  
6 doing what it needs to do to ensure again that Fort Leonard  
7 Wood service members and their families have the health care  
8 that they need in the years ahead.

9 So let me just ask you, if you are confirmed, what are  
10 you planning to do to ensure that service members and their  
11 families at Fort Leonard Wood will have access to the care  
12 they need as DHA assumes control of the medical treatment  
13 facilities there?

14 Mr. McPherson: If confirmed, I will continue what I  
15 was doing when I was performing the duties of with -- the  
16 Vice Chief of Staff, General Martin, and I were the two  
17 senior leaders from the Army that sat in on that governance  
18 over that, if you will. We met very frequently with both  
19 Health Affairs and DHA.

20 We do have some concerns, and I think Secretary  
21 McCarthy spoke about those the other day and it was in the  
22 press. Our concerns are ensuring that we have the  
23 marketplace, if you will, right because the plan that has  
24 been put on the table and is moving forward is we are going  
25 to downsize some military treatment facilities. Indeed, we

1 may close some military treatment facilities and outsource  
2 that to the civilian community, the market in the immediate  
3 area. Our concern is that we need to assure that sufficient  
4 market analysis has been done to know that that market can  
5 assume those patients, both our soldiers and their families  
6 and our retirees as well.

7 Our concern is that if we outsource that like we  
8 outsourced housing 20 years ago, that 20 years from now,  
9 individuals who are in these seats will be facing a medical  
10 crisis as we are facing a housing crisis today. That is the  
11 red flare that we have sent up.

12 I will be meeting with Secretary McCaffrey very soon,  
13 as well as General Place, along with General Martin, and we  
14 are going to be discussing that very thing, including the  
15 concerns that Secretary McCarthy put in his letter and that  
16 he voiced publicly yesterday.

17 Senator Hawley: Well, that is encouraging. And I have  
18 to say that for my part, my concern is not so much that the  
19 people who sit in your seats in 20 years will be facing a  
20 crisis, but that the service members and their families will  
21 be facing a crisis before then. So I appreciate the steps  
22 that you are going to take to make sure that does not  
23 happen.

24 Let me shift gears. Let us talk about long-range  
25 precision fires again for a moment if we could, back to a

1 line of questioning Senator Cotton started.

2 How is the Army working with the other services to  
3 ensure that the long-range fires teams have access to timely  
4 ISRT that is needed to deliver the fires against mobile  
5 targets in the Indo-Pacific in particular?

6 Mr. McPherson: We are looking forward to partnering  
7 with the Air Force who right now is stepping out in their  
8 JADC2. We are working closely with them and the Navy in  
9 ensuring that JADC2 can scale to the shooters that we will  
10 have in the theater. The goal is to have sensors to the C2  
11 node to the shooter, including that would be the kill chain.

12 What we want to ensure is that our shooters -- and they  
13 will number in the thousands -- have access to that same  
14 information, that same capability as the shooters of the Air  
15 Force and the Navy.

16 So that is the concern we bring to the table. We are  
17 confident now that we will be able to do that. We had very  
18 senior representatives out at Nellis Air Force Base earlier  
19 this week to talk about JADC2 with the Air Force and Navy  
20 senior officials. So we are working very closely partnering  
21 with them. We view that going forward, if we can be assured  
22 that we will have that scalability, that that will be, if  
23 you will, the C2 node of the future.

24 Senator Hawley: Thanks for that.

25 Last question still on the long-range precision fires.

1 Do you think that the Army's long-range precision fires  
2 ought to be able to reach inside the Chinese mainland?

3 Mr. McPherson: I only hesitate because I do not want  
4 to step in any area that I should not be stepping into.  
5 That is our long-range goal.

6 Senator Hawley: Thank you.

7 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

8 Senator Wicker: Thank you, Senator Hawley.

9 Senator Kaine?

10 Senator Kaine: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

11 And congratulations to both of you for your  
12 nominations.

13 Mr. Williams, I am going to start with you. I was so  
14 happy to see your background in real estate, not only your  
15 Navy service but your background in real estate because of  
16 the issues that we are dealing with on housing. And while  
17 you said you need to study it more, your quick assessment,  
18 when the chair asked you about where is the source of the  
19 problem, I think was accurate.

20 On the private provider side, they treat our folks like  
21 they are a captive audience. You have done work in the  
22 field and you know if you are out in the commercial space  
23 and if you allow the conditions of your properties to  
24 degrade, then your occupancy rate goes down because there is  
25 a lot of competition out there. But the same companies that

1 know that principle because they operate commercial  
2 divisions in the apartment market were treating our men and  
3 women in uniform like they were captives or hostages, that  
4 they did not have to do anything good for them because where  
5 are they going to live anyway. And that attitude, as you --  
6 say, you have seen pictures that make you livid. That  
7 attitude makes me livid and it is infuriating.

8       The other thing that you got right is you said we took  
9 our eye off the ball. You can blame all you want the  
10 private providers, but if we are not exercising the  
11 supervision that we should, then some of the blame is -- in  
12 fact, I really think most of the blame should go on our side  
13 of the aisle. People do not enlist to be somebody's tenant.  
14 They enlist to be a sailor. And so that means they have to  
15 have a chain of command that is paying attention.

16       I am not trying to be a Debbie Downer here, but I would  
17 say the committee probably has to own a little bit of this  
18 too. We have had budgetary dysfunction. That has been a  
19 challenge.

20       But even a couple years ago, we mandated 25 percent  
21 headquarter cuts in this committee. We had this discussion  
22 as part of the NDAA a couple years ago. And I argued just  
23 mandating across-the-board personnel cuts in headquarters  
24 could likely lead to some real bad things. Let us make  
25 cuts. Let us be efficient.

1           We had a hearing last month on military housing, and I  
2 asked a follow-up question. And the only branch that has  
3 yet answered my question has been the Army. But the  
4 question I asked is, in implementing the cuts, the  
5 headquarters cuts mandated in the NDAA, how many cuts came  
6 out of your housing operation? The Army answered 33 percent  
7 of the housing section staff was reduced because of the  
8 headquarters cuts that we mandated in the NDAA. And no  
9 wonder people cannot get something done and they cannot get  
10 the work overseen to make sure that the work order is  
11 actually done and the place is habitable.

12           That same headquarters cut also mandated reductions in  
13 the number of general officers just to a percentage, not  
14 particularly strategic. We just did a Space Force that  
15 added back way more general officers than we mandated cut 2  
16 years ago.

17           So I think we have to think about our downstream  
18 consequences too. Headquarters was seen as, oh, we can cut  
19 headquarters because that is somebody sitting in a big  
20 office somewhere. But actually a lot of the headquarters  
21 cuts came out of programs. Senator Hawley was asking about  
22 DHA. I bet we are going to see something similar on the DHA  
23 side. And I am really interested to see both the answers of  
24 both the Navy and the Air Force about whether their own  
25 housing programs were shrunk because of the headquarters

1 cuts that we mandated in two NDAA's a couple years ago.

2 Mr. Williams, I want to recommend something to you as  
3 you tackle the work for the Navy on this installation  
4 question, and that is pay attention to what the Army has  
5 done. The Army has really led the way, and Secretary  
6 McPherson, I have enjoyed working with Secretary Esper as  
7 Army Secretary now. And the Army has led the way on things  
8 like tenants bill of rights and things like that.

9 But they also did something really powerful. They  
10 appointed General Perna, who is the commanding general of  
11 the Army's Materiel Command. They put him in charge of the  
12 housing issues. I am not aware yet that the Air Force and  
13 the Navy/Marines have said here is somebody who is in charge  
14 of this. Putting General Perna who does materiel and  
15 acquisitions is the one who -- he is going to be responsible  
16 for it. He is the person that the Secretary and the service  
17 chief will hold responsible. And I would encourage the Navy  
18 and Marines to look at a similar -- you know, this is the  
19 boss of this operation. So that would just be a  
20 recommendation.

21 Finally, I want to ask each of you, if you could  
22 briefly. How are you going to absorb a 33 percent cut in  
23 MILCON? The President has announced he wants to take \$7.2  
24 billion to use for what all our military witnesses have said  
25 is a non-military emergency at the border. That \$7.2

1 billion -- \$3.7 billion is coming out of the MILCON budget.  
2 Congress provided \$11 billion for MILCON in this fiscal year  
3 2020. So \$3.7 billion is a third of the MILCON budget. How  
4 are you each going to absorb a third cut in the MILCON  
5 budgets in the Army and in the Navy/Marines?

6 Mr. McPherson: Senator, if I may. We will do what we  
7 did last time we had to go through this. We prioritized  
8 those MILCON projects that we had left that were as yet  
9 unobligated. And we applied the funds that we had toward  
10 them.

11 We have not received word yet that there has been a  
12 decision with regard to that transfer of around \$7 billion,  
13 and obviously, nor have we been told what our share of that  
14 will be in the Army. But if that happens, we will  
15 prioritize that, and our priorities will be the same as we  
16 used last time. We will look first to the National Defense  
17 Strategy, and those MILCON projects that directly affect  
18 that will have the highest priority. But I would also add  
19 that the MILCON projects concerning military treatment  
20 facilities will have a high priority as well. We did not  
21 cut any of the funding for the hospital at Fort Leonard  
22 Wood. That is going to continue on. We turn a shovel this  
23 summer. And so that is the method that we will use in  
24 identifying those individuals.

25 But we are also not going to end those projects. We

1 will defer those projects. That has meaning for us with  
2 regard to funding later on, and we hope that later on, when  
3 we receive that funding, we can actually begin those  
4 projects.

5 Senator Kaine: Thank you.

6 Senator Wicker: Senator Scott?

7 Senator Scott: First, I want to thank each of you for  
8 your service. One thing I have learned up here -- I have  
9 only been here a year, but you could ask people for things  
10 when you have this job and you guys have to seem to agree to  
11 it.

12 So Senator Kaine is here, and I know he has got a lot  
13 of ships in his State. And I would like you to consider  
14 moving as many of those as you can to Florida. I do not  
15 think that would be a big concern. Would that be?

16 Senator Wicker: We are going to have a show of hands.

17 [Laughter.]

18 Senator Scott: So I wanted to follow up on something  
19 Senator Kaine was talking about.

20 This is I guess for Mr. Williams. But on the housing,  
21 has anybody ever done an analysis on whether these companies  
22 even could comply? Has anybody ever done an analysis and  
23 say, you know, could a company even comply with the terms  
24 that we have given them? Could they generate enough cash  
25 flow to be able to invest in these facilities, enough cash

1 flow that they could have the right number of employees that  
2 they need to provide us services we all expect? Has anybody  
3 ever done that?

4 Mr. Williams: Senator, one of the things I would like  
5 to do is participate in a budget meeting with these folks.  
6 The easy money is made early on. When you build these  
7 buildings, they are shiny. They are new. Everything works.  
8 And as time passes, things begin to decay. You get  
9 depreciation.

10 I am worried about the capital, the amount of reserve  
11 for capital investment, capital improvements down the road  
12 for roofs and sidewalks and HVAC systems, things like that.  
13 I am hoping money is being set aside. I am not privy to  
14 that kind of information at this point. It is something I  
15 would look at, if I am confirmed. But looking at the  
16 budgets and having a reserve for any real estate  
17 organization that owns property, it is critical.

18 Senator Scott: If you think about that, you know, back  
19 when I was in business, they required us to do that in some  
20 financings. And we could do the exact same thing, if  
21 somebody is going to take over any capital project, that  
22 they have to put so much in a reserve that we can audit.

23 Have you looked at the terms of the contracts at all to  
24 see if there is any limitation on them doing their job?

25 Mr. Williams: I have not had a chance to see the

1 contracts. I am not allowed to see those at this point. I  
2 would like to look at default provisions, responsibilities,  
3 the partnership agreements. I think I am safe in saying  
4 this, but I would like to -- since we are on public record.  
5 I have worked with a couple of these firms, Lincoln and Lend  
6 Lease specifically. These are professional firms. They are  
7 international firms. They ought to be embarrassed that this  
8 kind of property management goes on. Our sailors should not  
9 have to put up with that and their families. I do not get  
10 it. I mean, these people are professionals. They ought to  
11 know how to manage a property, particularly an apartment  
12 building. Sorry.

13 Senator Scott: So will you take the time, assuming you  
14 are confirmed, to go back and look at can they even comply  
15 and look at the provisions to make sure they actually are  
16 not limited in what they can do?

17 Mr. Williams: Yes, sir, I will.

18 Senator Scott: Mr. McPherson, I just finished 8 years  
19 about a year ago as Governor of Florida. And so I dealt  
20 with the Corps of Engineers. They have a lot of projects in  
21 the State. And my experience with General Semonite -- when  
22 I actually got elected, he was in Jacksonville -- has been  
23 very positive.

24 But one thing, it seems to me that the Corps has taken  
25 on so much responsibility. The Federal Government never

1 gives them the resources they need. Has anybody ever looked  
2 to see should they just pass some of those responsibilities  
3 on to either State or local governments and not take that  
4 responsibility? Because as hardworking as the Corps is --  
5 and I know they are -- they get criticized constantly for  
6 how long it takes them to make a decision, and it is often a  
7 black hole. And I can tell you it is not because the Corps  
8 does not want to do their job. People who work for the  
9 Corps are really good people. Has anybody ever stepped back  
10 and say why does the Corps do this so we do not have  
11 continued complaints from people?

12 Mr. McPherson: We have. During one of my meetings  
13 with one of your colleagues -- I will not call him out --  
14 his first question to me was, Jim, does the Corps of  
15 Engineers work for the Army or not? My answer was, yes,  
16 they do and I understand the thrust of your question,  
17 Senator. I understand the trust of your question as well.

18 Last summer I recall that there was a study done. I am  
19 not sure it was in-depth, but there was a proposal that was  
20 made that we transfer the Corps of Engineers to some other  
21 federal agency. And I think the decision was made is, no,  
22 we need to keep it in the Army because that is where  
23 leadership is located.

24 The Corps is a crown jewel, if I may. Not only are  
25 they in charge of the navigable waterways of this country,

1 they do tremendous work with regard to disaster relief.  
2 They do tremendous work bringing civil engineer capability  
3 to our combatant commanders, and that is a connection that  
4 we need to maintain as well. So although it is a large  
5 agency, every once in a while things go sideways.

6 I think that this committee and this Congress needs to  
7 have the Army as the bellybutton for the Corps of Engineers  
8 and that needs to continue because, if confirmed, you are  
9 looking at one of the individuals that would be responsible,  
10 and you can pick up the phone and call me and we can work  
11 through those issues.

12 Senator Scott: I just think they get a lot of  
13 criticism for things that they could pass on. I know when I  
14 was Governor of the State, we would take it on. Actually  
15 they are working on it right now with the 404 delegation on  
16 some of those things.

17 And I still want to finish, but I would like some of  
18 those ships that are in Norfolk.

19 Senator Kaine: I will deliver you a ham but no ships.

20 [Laughter.]

21 Senator Scott: Thank you.

22 Senator Wicker: Thank you, Senator Scott.

23 Senator Jones?

24 Senator Jones: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

25 Thank you both for being here today and for your

1 service to this country and to your families for their  
2 sacrifices as well.

3 Mr. Williams, I was going to ask a couple of questions  
4 about housing, but given your answers, I am very comfortable  
5 that this is a priority for you and how it is going to go.  
6 So thank you very much for that. It has been a problem some  
7 in my State and it is very important. So thank you for  
8 that.

9 Admiral McPherson, I want to ask real quickly about the  
10 Army's -- you know, the Army decision to select Anniston  
11 Army Depot in my home State as the depot source of repair  
12 for the armored multipurpose vehicle, which right now is in  
13 kind of a low rate initial production -- but I am concerned  
14 about the possible effects of depot maintenance backlogs on  
15 our readiness in general. And if you would just address  
16 what the steps is the Army taking to avoid or reduce depot  
17 maintenance backlogs.

18 Mr. McPherson: General Perna, who was mentioned  
19 earlier and is now in charge of housing, also keeps a very  
20 careful eye on our depots. Our second crown jewel are our  
21 depots. In the past several years, there has been a  
22 downturn in the amount of work that the depots have  
23 received. My understanding is that has now flattened out  
24 and we can safely say that the amount of work that the  
25 depots will receive that portion of the funding and the

1 personnel that are there will probably remain the same over  
2 the next several years even though we may go to flat  
3 budgets. And we can talk about that as well.

4 I have been assured that our depots will remain the  
5 focus of General Perna, as well as Dr. Jette, our ASA ALT,  
6 and General Murray, our AFC Commander, knowing that those  
7 depots -- the ability to do the rapid repairs, the ability  
8 to do the continuing maintenance of our equipment internal  
9 to us is vitally important.

10 Senator Jones: Awesome. Thank you.

11 The second thing and you mentioned it in your  
12 testimony. My office has focused a lot on military families  
13 not just in the housing space, but the sexual assaults,  
14 domestic violence. And one of the issues that I have talked  
15 a lot about is suicides. The rate is getting -- well, it is  
16 always too high. Even one, as you note. What are we doing  
17 right now to address suicides? Because we are seeing it at  
18 increased rates not only in the military but also among  
19 veterans. And there has got to be a connection there and we  
20 have got to solve this problem.

21 Mr. McPherson: There, indeed, must be a connection  
22 there. What we have noticed is the same thing you have,  
23 that is, the continuing trend is upward, which is very  
24 disturbing. As I said in my opening statement, one of the  
25 ways I start my day is to read the reports of the last 24

1 hours of a suicide that has taken place in our formations.  
2 It is very sad.

3 We have a number of pilot projects that are ongoing.  
4 One that I find is probably the most promising is we will  
5 provide a series of levers, if you will, a series of tools  
6 to leadership, both NCO and officer leadership, that gets  
7 back into the lives of a soldier, able to identify things  
8 that may be impacting upon them. As we do the forensics of  
9 a suicide, we see some commonality among them. The  
10 commonality is it is generally 20 to 24 years old, a male.  
11 Generally they have had some precipitating event in their  
12 life, either it is a relationship that has gone bad or  
13 something happened in their career that has gone bad.  
14 Oftentimes it is accompanied with alcohol.

15 And so the tools that we are developing that we are  
16 now, if you will, testing at three different facilities asks  
17 the questions. It is a questionnaire, if you will, that  
18 NCOs and officers can use that gets into the lives of their  
19 soldiers and find out what is going on with them. Leaders  
20 need to know what is going on in the lives of their  
21 soldiers. They need to be able to identify a soldier who is  
22 at risk, take them off the playing field for a necessary  
23 period of time, and get them the help they need.

24 The other part of that is a sufficient number of  
25 behavioral health professionals. We have them in many of

1 our formations down to the brigade level. That is having  
2 tremendous dividends for us as well.

3 One of the problems that we face and that I intend to  
4 address, if confirmed, is the stigma that a soldier feels by  
5 raising their hand and saying I have got a problem,  
6 sergeant, I need some help. We need to find ways to remove  
7 that stigma, and that is one of the things that this toolkit  
8 is looking at as well.

9 Senator Jones: All right. Thank you.

10 Lastly more of a comment than a question, and it is  
11 following up with Senator Blumenthal and Senator Kaine about  
12 the diversion of MILCON funds. The ink was just not even  
13 dry on the budget before the President has announced that he  
14 was going to do this. The concern is not border security  
15 because we have all got a concern about border security.  
16 But the concern for me is in fact the diversion of  
17 congressionally appropriated funds because I am going to  
18 tell you our budgets are hard fought up here. It takes a  
19 lot to get these budgets done with all the priorities from  
20 50 States from around this country. And Congress makes  
21 decisions and they put that budget in there. And I am  
22 concerned about the diversion of funds.

23 And just as we were talking, Mr. Chairman, the GAO  
24 issued a report concerning the withholding of funds to  
25 Ukraine, and they make this comment. Faithful execution of

1 the law does not permit the President to substitute his own  
2 policy priorities for those that Congress has enacted into  
3 law. And I am not asking for commitments or whatever, but I  
4 am just hoping that you guys will advocate for spending  
5 congressionally appropriated monies in the way that  
6 representatives from all 50 States in this union have asked  
7 that it be spent. So thank you.

8 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

9 Senator Wicker: Thank you, Senator Jones.

10 Senator Manchin?

11 Senator Manchin: Thank you.

12 And thank you, both of you all, for your continued  
13 desire to serve. I appreciate it very much.

14 Mr. McPherson, if I can start with you as far as on the  
15 suicide rates that we have just spoken about. And I notice  
16 in the National Guard they are even higher than the  
17 military. Do you look at the endless wars that we are in as  
18 a factor that is redeployment by a professional Army? And  
19 your thoughts on the draft, reimposing the draft.

20 Mr. McPherson: Yes, sir. We have looked at that  
21 connection between deployments and being in combat  
22 operations with redeploying and suicide, and the studies  
23 that have been done that I have seen the results of do not  
24 see a connection there, which is kind of surprising. The  
25 connection seems to be more towards the factors I mentioned

1 earlier of young, male, a crisis in their life, combined  
2 with alcohol. We have done those studies. We do not see  
3 that connection, but we do want to be very careful, when a  
4 unit redeploys back here, that they are utilizing -- the  
5 leadership -- NCOs and officers are utilizing those tools  
6 that we are going to be giving to them.

7 With regard to the draft, the all volunteer force is  
8 working. We are doing quite well in our recruiting. It is  
9 an effort, but through our recruiters, our individual  
10 recruiters out there, and the leadership of them, we are  
11 meeting --

12 Senator Manchin: Do you all discuss the draft? Do you  
13 all have those discussions at high levels?

14 Mr. McPherson: That has been discussed in the past,  
15 and we have come to the conclusion that we are fine with the  
16 all volunteer force.

17 Senator Manchin: And your thoughts on AUMF,  
18 authorization to use military force. Would that be a factor  
19 in people believing that, hey, it is never going to end? It  
20 is the futile, endless wars that we are in.

21 Mr. McPherson: Yes, sir. It has been a while since I  
22 touched the AUMF, as a matter of fact, since back in my  
23 uniform days with regard to 2001 and 2002. So I have not  
24 done the deep dive research, but I think the fact that we do  
25 see a war that has been continuing now for a number of

1 years, that does have an impact not upon the recruits but  
2 upon their parents. And I certainly understand that being a  
3 parent.

4 Senator Manchin: Thank you.

5 Mr. Williams, if we could talk about the climate, the  
6 ravaging effects it has on our bases especially on the Navy.  
7 And even in FEMA when we have re-occurring climate  
8 disasters, if you will, we are going to basically move  
9 people in different directions. We are not going to  
10 continue to pay for the same house over and over.

11 How can I go back home and explain to the people in  
12 West Virginia their money is being well spent when we stay  
13 in the same places we do or we do not fortify against the  
14 changes and the ravages of climate?

15 Mr. Williams: I believe weather is changing, and it is  
16 having an impact on our forces. One comes to mind in  
17 Virginia, Norfolk. I know that the water levels have risen.  
18 For a ship to deploy, if you are pier-side, you need to load  
19 material on that ship or off that ship to get it to go  
20 forward. And if that pier is underwater, you cannot do it.  
21 You cannot deploy that ship. So I am concerned, and I think  
22 there has been some discussion about building higher level  
23 piers to keep them further out a rising water level.

24 Probably beyond that, Senator, I do not know if I know  
25 enough right now to address. I mean, I am aware that China

1 Lake has an issue, that Camp Lejeune has an issue because of  
2 weather-related instances, but I do not know that I know a  
3 whole lot more beyond that at this point. But if confirmed,  
4 I would be happy to sit down and talk to you further about  
5 this.

6 Senator Manchin: I mean, we are all concerned about  
7 the housing conditions that our military people are expected  
8 to live in, and we do not condone that whatsoever. And I  
9 think we all agree that you have the passion for that and we  
10 hope you change it immediately.

11 But still, the concern that we have is the weather is  
12 ravaging a lot of our infrastructure and the cost is  
13 prohibitive if we do not make the necessary changes. So I  
14 would hope that you would use that as a high concern to give  
15 us some answers. And I would be happy to meet with you,  
16 which I would love to do, after your confirmation.

17 Mr. Williams: Yes, sir.

18 Senator Manchin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

19 Senator Wicker: Thank you.

20 Senator Peters?

21 Senator Peters: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

22 Mr. McPherson, the next generation combat vehicle  
23 program is one of the Army's most important modernization  
24 priorities, as I know you are full aware. In fact, I think  
25 specifically it is the number two priority, which puts it

1 very high on the list.

2 Mr. McPherson: Yes, sir.

3 Senator Peters: But within the combat vehicle, I would  
4 like to discuss the optionally man-fighting vehicle. This  
5 is the Army's third attempt at replacing the Bradley, which  
6 has been in service since the 1980s. The other two attempts  
7 were costly and ultimately failed, spending billions of  
8 dollars without achieving a suitable replacement.  
9 Critically these failures also wasted an awful lot of time,  
10 which we cannot get back.

11 I was pleased to see the Army put out a very aggressive  
12 timeline for the OMFV. I traveled with then-Secretary of  
13 the Army, Mark Esper, to the Detroit arsenal in Warren,  
14 Michigan where we were briefed on the game-changing  
15 technology that the ground vehicle system was developing,  
16 the center was developing there for potential inclusion in  
17 programs like the OMFV. That visit was around the same time  
18 that Secretary Esper accelerated the timeline for the next  
19 generation vehicle.

20 But even though industry and observers all agree the  
21 Army has an accelerated timeline and it is extremely  
22 aggressive, it will not result in equipping the first units  
23 until 2026. So given that the Army has been attempting to  
24 replace the Bradley for 20 years now, any delay to a  
25 schedule that already will not put a new vehicle in Army

1 units for 6 more years is simply unacceptable.

2 I want to be sure that we can continue with this  
3 aggressive timeline laid out by Secretary Esper and the  
4 Army's Futures Command.

5 So my question for you, sir, is can you please discuss  
6 the plans for the OMFV and what are the next steps. When do  
7 you expect them to occur? And do you anticipate any changes  
8 whatsoever that would delay equipping the first units at  
9 some point later than 2026?

10 Mr. McPherson: Yes, sir. Thank you, Senator.

11 As you indicated, we are on our fourth try. The  
12 previous attempts were ill-fated. We do not want to repeat  
13 that at all, so we are being very, very careful with regard  
14 to the source selection.

15 As the media has reported, the RFI resulted in just one  
16 vendor putting forward a prototype.

17 The source selection process has been ongoing for a  
18 couple of months now. The purpose of that is making certain  
19 that we do not get it wrong. And I hate to use the words,  
20 but if we fail, we fail early so that we do not have a lot  
21 of money invested before we perhaps have to make some  
22 changes.

23 At the same time, you have articulated one of the  
24 primary criteria is that timeline. 2026 is a long way out  
25 there, although it could happen in the blink of an eye. We

1 recognize that that time is going to be important. That is  
2 one of the factors that the source selection committee is  
3 looking at as well.

4 As far as a decision goes, I would anticipate that we  
5 will have a decision -- a recommendation from the source  
6 selection process and a decision by senior leadership very,  
7 very soon. It has been a long time that they have been  
8 reviewing the documentation that has been provided by the  
9 vendor. And again, I think we are going to have a decision  
10 here very quickly.

11 Senator Peters: Well, it is good, encouraging to hear.

12 Mr. McPherson, I would also like to ask about our  
13 robotic combat vehicle. I see that the Army has picked two  
14 teams to develop base platforms for light and medium class  
15 RCVs.

16 I recently visited Pratt and Miller Engineering in New  
17 Hudson, Michigan who is working on the light LCV team with  
18 Kinetic North America. I saw firsthand these very promising  
19 capabilities utilizing robotics and autonomy. And I am  
20 certainly very proud that work is being done in Michigan in  
21 a pretty direct way.

22 I also think it is important, as we develop these  
23 platforms, that we are developing the doctrine and tactics  
24 to shape the use of this revolutionary new technology. We  
25 have seen in the past, though, how doctrine can dominate in

1 the battle space even with forces that may have advanced  
2 technology that looks great, performs well, but does not  
3 fight as effectively because of the lack of doctrine.

4 During World War II, as you know, France had very  
5 highly developed tanks. Their tanks were considered the  
6 best in the world. And yet, German use of blitzkrieg  
7 tactics ran circles around them and was decisive on the  
8 battlefield.

9 So with that in mind, when developing something like a  
10 robotic combat vehicle, which could be revolutionary for  
11 warfare, how are the concepts and doctrines being developed?  
12 How does that work occur simultaneously with the  
13 technological development and your acquisition strategy?  
14 Are you putting these all together in an effective way?

15 Mr. McPherson: We think we are, Senator. And as you  
16 have indicated, it is important that our doctrine be  
17 modernized as well. That is one of the touchstones we have  
18 with regard to our acquisitions.

19 Secretary Esper the other day, in response to the most  
20 recent military operations in Iraq -- he articulated that we  
21 wage hostilities in accordance with the law of armed  
22 conflict, and the law of armed conflict dictates that there  
23 be a commander in that loop that decides to release weapons.  
24 There will always be a commander responsible for that  
25 happening. And although AI -- and perhaps our adversaries

1 will apply AI to take humans out of that kill chain, that  
2 loop. It is not our intent nor will we do that because the  
3 law of armed conflict requires that there be a human that  
4 actually pulls that trigger.

5 Now, through AI, through modernization, that decision  
6 can be made much quicker, and that is what we look forward  
7 to doing. But I will say now that we will always keep a  
8 human in that loop.

9 Senator Peters: Thank you.

10 Senator Wicker: That is a good reassurance.

11 Senator Sullivan?

12 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

13 And gentlemen, thanks for your service to our nation  
14 and your continuing service with these positions you are  
15 getting ready to embark on.

16 I always ask the nominees, including Secretaries of  
17 Defense, have you ever read this book, This Kind of War, by  
18 T.R. Fehrenbach? Either of you?

19 Mr. Williams: I have not, sir.

20 Mr. McPherson: Yes, sir. I have, sir, and you gave me  
21 your copy last time we had --

22 Senator Sullivan: I have a lot of copies.

23 Mr. McPherson: I still have it.

24 Senator Sullivan: And you read it.

25 Mr. McPherson: I read it. And with your permission, I

1 would like to hang onto it for just a bit longer.

2 Senator Sullivan: You can have it. I am glad you read  
3 it.

4 Well, I do that because -- I give this to all the  
5 marines and I think Army officers who go through infantry  
6 training, and it is about the Korean War. And it is about  
7 how essentially in 1950 the United States was not ready. We  
8 were the biggest, strongest military power in the history of  
9 the world in 1945, and 5 years later, we could not stop a  
10 third world peasant army from defeating us almost. So it is  
11 a good book because it talks about training, talks about  
12 readiness, and if we are not ready, then our military  
13 members die and their families and everybody else suffer.

14 So, Admiral Williams, I actually have an extra copy.  
15 So maybe I will just give this to you after the hearing.  
16 And can you submit to me to read it?

17 Mr. Williams: Yes, sir. I have a lot of interest in  
18 Korea and I have spent some time over there.

19 Senator Sullivan: But it is actually instructive of  
20 what is going on in Korea now. In all seriousness, this is  
21 a great book. But I will provide you this.

22 I want to talk about the Arctic real quick. This is a  
23 document I have submitted for the record many, many times  
24 here in Armed Services. This is just in the last 4 months,  
25 all the different headline articles in every paper you can

1 imagine, every media, "Wall Street Journal," "Newsweek,"  
2 "New York Times," "Bloomberg," "National Geographic." It is  
3 all about the great power competition in the Arctic.

4 Senator Wicker: Why do we not go ahead and put it in  
5 the record?

6 Senator Sullivan: I will do it one more time, Mr.  
7 Chairman. It has probably been in 15, but we will do that.

8 Senator Wicker: Without objection.

9 [The information follows:]

10 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1           Senator Sullivan: And it is an issue that we have a  
2 lot of interest in. Senator King certainly does and a bunch  
3 of others. We have taken a lot of action in this committee.

4           One of my concerns consistently -- and this is both  
5 Democrat and Republican administrations -- is that the last  
6 agency in town that seems to get the strategic importance of  
7 the Arctic is the Pentagon. And the middle bureaucracy of  
8 the Pentagon just cannot think about this as a strategic  
9 area for our nation. We are an Arctic nation because of my  
10 great State, the State of Alaska.

11           So can I get the commitment of both of you early in  
12 your tenure to come up to Alaska either with me or others to  
13 see the training and see the Arctic and see how important it  
14 is to our nation?

15           Mr. McPherson: Yes, sir, you can.

16           Mr. Williams: Yes, sir. I have been to Alaska. I  
17 would be happy to travel with you, if confirmed, and visit.

18           Senator Sullivan: Great. I like to say we constitute  
19 three pillars of America's military might in Alaska. We are  
20 the cornerstone of missile defense which, by the way, is the  
21 Army's 49th missile defense battalion. We are the hub air  
22 combat power. We will have over 100 fifth gen fighters in  
23 Alaska in the next year and a half. And we are an  
24 expeditionary platform for important forces like the 425 1st  
25 Stryker brigade, which is actually in Iraq right now.

1           So I would also like for you gentlemen to take a look  
2 at our training up there. The JPARC has -- that is the  
3 Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex -- some of the best  
4 training in the country, airspace the size of Florida, sea  
5 space the size of Virginia, and land maneuver areas bigger  
6 than Delaware. So can I get your commitment to go to JPARC  
7 with me?

8           Mr. McPherson: I would be happy to.

9           Mr. Williams: Yes, sir.

10          Senator Sullivan: I just want to mention one other  
11 issue, and Mr. McPherson, it is really for you. You know,  
12 one of the things that has not come out too much in this  
13 hearing last week with General Milley and Gina Haspel, the  
14 Secretaries of Defense and State is General Milley's  
15 testimony I thought was quite good where, in essence, he  
16 said in his over 35 years of active duty service, Gina  
17 Haspel's over 30 years of CIA service, they both saw an  
18 imminent threat. They are professionals. They are not  
19 political. And General Milley, in essence, said it would  
20 have been a dereliction of duty not to act. I think he said  
21 something along those lines on the intel they had in his  
22 professional opinion.

23          There are over 2,000 Alaskan based military forces in  
24 Iraq right now. I am just trying to figure out the counter-  
25 factual. Could you imagine they did not act? Soleimani

1 carries out what he was trying to do. We all know he was  
2 not there on vacation. He was planning to kill Americans,  
3 maybe a lot of Alaskan based troops. Can you imagine the  
4 hearings we would be having right now if that happened, say,  
5 100 killed and we knew about this intel? Just food for  
6 thought. Any thoughts on that, Mr. McPherson?

7 Mr. McPherson: Yes, sir. I think that the briefing  
8 that you received by leadership captured it all, and I think  
9 you shared some very important parts of that briefing. Yes,  
10 sir.

11 Senator Sullivan: Thank you.

12 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

13 Senator Wicker: Thank you, Senator Sullivan.

14 Senator King?

15 Senator King: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

16 I would like to follow up briefly and then discuss  
17 several questions on the comments made by Senator Kaine and  
18 Senator Jones.

19 I like to think about decisions by looking at how will  
20 this look 10 years from now. And I believe when  
21 commentators and historians are looking back on this period,  
22 the name of the book will be The Great Abdication because  
23 over the past 50 years, Congress has essentially abdicated  
24 three of its most important powers: one, the power to  
25 declare war. We have not declared war since 1942.

1 Secondly, the power over trade, which is expressly delegated  
2 to Congress in the Constitution. But now we are about to  
3 delegate the power of the purse.

4 I cannot understand any member of this committee of  
5 either party countenancing any President taking funds from a  
6 congressionally appropriated account to use for another  
7 purpose. We may as well just forget about the whole  
8 appropriations process. Why not let the President's budget  
9 be the budget? Why have Congress intervene at all?

10 And I am not directing these comments at you except to  
11 the extent that you are going to have to carry out what I  
12 consider an illegal order. I commend to you the case  
13 decided in December of 2019, El Paso v. Trump, where the  
14 judge found in an incredibly well researched and thorough  
15 opinion that the utilization of these funds for the purpose  
16 of the border wall, which was not appropriated by Congress,  
17 was illegal. I think you fellows are being instructed to  
18 carry out an illegal order.

19 Now, I am aware that the Fifth Circuit stayed that  
20 decision, but the legal reasoning is so powerful, I find it  
21 very hard to believe that it is going to be overturned  
22 ultimately.

23 But the idea that this Congress is allowing the most  
24 fundamental power to be turned over to the executive in  
25 total contravention of the whole scheme of the Constitution

1 to me is just unbelievable that either party would allow  
2 that to happen. And the Framers assumed that institutional  
3 jealousy and rivalry and protection of the prerogatives of  
4 each institution would balance one another. That is the  
5 whole theory of checks and balances. And yet, here we are  
6 again, as Senator Kaine pointed out, looking toward the  
7 executive reappropriating one-third of the military  
8 construction funds for a purpose that Congress has not  
9 approved.

10 Sorry, but I just had to make that point.

11 Admiral Williams, I have to ask you -- I notice your  
12 career in naval aviation. Did you ever have the happy  
13 privilege of working out of the Brunswick Naval Air Station?

14 Mr. Williams: I have been there. We went up there.  
15 It was a reserve squadron up there. It had I believe  
16 C-130's. I think it was more of a mobility aviation  
17 command.

18 Senator King: I was hoping perhaps you had been  
19 stationed there. Unfortunately, that station was closed due  
20 to a BRAC decision, which is one of the reasons I will  
21 probably never vote for a BRAC proposal because it was such  
22 a poor decision in my opinion.

23 Mr. McPherson, you talked and I was delighted to hear  
24 that the very first words out of your mouth in terms of your  
25 priorities was suicide. I hope that you will do a

1 comprehensive review because there are a number of programs,  
2 which you have mentioned, but they do not appear to be  
3 working. A basic principle of military thinking is the  
4 after-action review, and I would hope that you would look at  
5 all the programs, all the facts, all the data, which you  
6 suggested is becoming available, to try to do something  
7 about this. This is a scourge on our military, and it is a  
8 tragedy for these individuals and for their families. And  
9 these people are putting their lives on the line for their  
10 country and then taking their own lives. That is something  
11 that I think needs to be addressed. I was delighted to hear  
12 you say that.

13 Will you commit to me to doing that kind of thorough  
14 review?

15 Mr. McPherson: Absolutely, Senator. Statistics show  
16 that every other day I read a report of a suicide.

17 Senator King: That is a great tragedy for this  
18 country.

19 Mr. McPherson: It is heartbreaking.

20 Senator King: A great tragedy.

21 Mr. McPherson: I pledge to you that that is exactly  
22 what I am going to do.

23 Senator King: One other question. You talked about  
24 recruiting. And we have fallen below our goals in the last  
25 several years.

1 I am worried about the geography of recruiting. I was  
2 on a panel at the Reagan Forum a year ago about the  
3 disconnection between the general public and the military in  
4 part because of the professional military which we have  
5 discussed. But within that is a disconnect between regions  
6 of the regions of the country. The Northeast has virtually  
7 no military facilities anymore. And if you look at the  
8 geography, the demographics of the military, as you know it  
9 is concentrated in the South and Southwest.

10 Will you commit to me that you will look in terms of  
11 recruiting strategy at broadening the geographic base of the  
12 Army?

13 Mr. McPherson: I can commit to that, Senator. One of  
14 the things that we have done -- Secretary McCarthy and  
15 Secretary Esper did -- was identify 22 cities, the majority  
16 of which are not in what we call the "smile" -- 22 target  
17 cities that we will focus our recruiting efforts on both  
18 last year, this year, and going forward at recruiting more  
19 individuals from those geographical areas that are under-  
20 represented in our formations. The goal is, if confirmed, I  
21 will be on the road pretty quickly because senior  
22 leadership, either Secretary McCarthy or myself, General  
23 McConville, General Martin will visit each of those 22  
24 cities and the recruiting offices in those cities to bolster  
25 that effort.

1           Senator King: I appreciate that because that is  
2 important not only in terms of the demographics within the  
3 military, but in terms of the connections and relationships  
4 between our society generally and the military. We do not  
5 want a military caste that is separate from the rest of the  
6 country.

7           Mr. McPherson: We are of the same mind, Senator.

8           Senator King: Thank you. Thank you, gentlemen.

9           Senator Wicker: Gentlemen, this has been a very good  
10 hearing. I think it is clear that the President has sent us  
11 two very thoughtful and qualified nominees.

12           There being no further questions -- Mr. Williams?

13           Mr. Williams: Yes, sir. If I could make just one  
14 comment. I complimented Senator Sullivan on his State. I  
15 have been in every State in the union. I have always  
16 enjoyed my time in every State. I do not want to look like  
17 I singled one out and was adverse to the others. So I love  
18 all your States.

19           Senator Wicker: You are already in trouble in  
20 Missouri.

21           Senator Sullivan: Mr. Chairman, I think I want to  
22 strike that remark from the record.

23           [Laughter.]

24           Senator Sullivan: You can keep that original statement  
25 just about Alaska in the record.

1           Senator King:  At least, Admiral, you did not have to  
2 hear about --

3           Senator Sullivan:  Billy Mitchell?

4           Senator King:  -- Billy Mitchell.

5           [Laughter.]

6           Senator Sullivan:  That will be in the next hearing.

7           Senator Wicker:  Okay.  We got to end this thing.  This  
8 hearing is adjourned.  Thank you very much, gentlemen.

9           [Whereupon, at 10:41 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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