

Stenographic Transcript  
Before the

COMMITTEE ON  
ARMED SERVICES

## **UNITED STATES SENATE**

HEARING TO CONSIDER THE NOMINATIONS OF:  
LIEUTENANT GENERAL DANIEL R. HOKANSON, ARNG  
TO BE GENERAL AND CHIEF OF THE NATIONAL GUARD  
BUREAU; AND  
GENERAL GUSTAVE F. PERNA, USA  
FOR REAPPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE OF GENERAL AND  
TO BE CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER,  
PROJECT WARP SPEED

Thursday, June 18, 2020

Washington, D.C.

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1 HEARING TO CONSIDER THE NOMINATIONS OF:

2 LIEUTENANT GENERAL DANIEL R. HOKANSON, ARNG

3 TO BE GENERAL AND CHIEF OF THE NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU; AND

4 GENERAL GUSTAVE F. PERNA, USA

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6 TO BE CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER,

7 PROJECT WARP SPEED

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9 Thursday, June 18, 2020

10  
11 U.S. Senate

12 Committee on Armed Services

13 Washington, D.C.

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15 The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:30 a.m. in  
16 Room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. James M.  
17 Inhofe, chairman of the committee, presiding.

18 Committee Members Present: Senators Inhofe[presiding],  
19 Wicker, Fischer, Cotton, Rounds, Ernst, Tillis, Perdue,  
20 Cramer, McSally, Scott, Blackburn, Hawley, Reed, Shaheen,  
21 Gillibrand, Blumenthal, Hirono, King, Warren, Peters, and  
22 Jones.

1           OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES M. INHOFE, U.S.  
2 SENATOR FROM OKLAHOMA

3           Chairman Inhofe: Good morning. The committee meets  
4 today to consider the nominations of Lieutenant General  
5 Daniel Hokanson to be Chief of the National Guard Bureau and  
6 General Gustave Perna to be Chief Operating Officer of the  
7 Project Warp Speed.

8           I thank both of you for being here today, particularly  
9 under the current circumstances, what we are facing now. We  
10 are doing things differently. I know you are down there. I  
11 can barely see you.

12           [Laughter.]

13           Chairman Inhofe: Anyway, we enjoy meeting the families  
14 and all of that. We are not going to be able to do it the  
15 same way. When you do your opening statement, you may want  
16 to introduce families that may be looking on, if that sounds  
17 all right.

18           You have both been nominated for positions at the  
19 forefront of the current challenges, and as we consider your  
20 nominations, we will be looking to ensure that you can  
21 provide the solutions, expertise, and reassurance needed for  
22 these circumstances.

23           General Hokanson, as our nation demands more from our  
24 National Guard, your expertise is extensive in the National  
25 Guard Bureau, NORTHCOM, and as a State Adjutant General will

1 be essential. Across the country, tens of thousands of  
2 guardsmen are on the front lines of the coronavirus  
3 response. They deserve strong, measured, and mature  
4 leadership from their advocate on the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

5 General Perna, we are facing down a virus that has  
6 tested our health system, our economy, our military, and  
7 every other part of our everyday life. President Trump has  
8 tasked you and the team of others with an ambitious mission  
9 to not only develop a vaccine, but also to manufacture and  
10 distribute some 300 million doses by January of 2021. Your  
11 extensive expertise in logistics and leading the U.S. Army  
12 Materiel Command will be key to complete this mission.

13 I speak for the committee when I say that we appreciate  
14 your willingness to serve and are looking forward to serving  
15 with you.

16 Now, it is standard for this committee -- we have kind  
17 of seven required questions. It is standard for the  
18 committee to ask certain questions in order to exercise its  
19 legislative and oversight responsibilities.

20 But before I begin, General Perna, I commend the  
21 integrity that you have shown in bringing to the committee's  
22 attention the fact that while continuing to serve in your  
23 current position as Commander, U.S. Army Materiel Command,  
24 you have ensured that AMC provided all necessary support to  
25 Operation Warp Speed as directed. In addition, you have

1 taken prudent steps to prepare for the new duties and  
2 responsibilities that you would assume to be the Chief  
3 Operating Officer of Operation Warp Speed. The committee  
4 has reviewed the information provided and deems your actions  
5 appropriate under these circumstances.

6 So, gentlemen, when I ask these questions, we want an  
7 audible yes or no.

8 I guess what we are saying, General Perna, is we  
9 appreciate the fact that you pointed out some of the things  
10 you have done, but that would not be a violation of a no  
11 answer. Okay?

12 Number one, have you adhered to applicable laws and  
13 regulations governing the conflicts of interest?

14 General Perna: Yes.

15 General Hokanson: Yes, sir.

16 Chairman Inhofe: Will you ensure that your staff  
17 complies with deadlines established for requested  
18 communications, including questions for the record in  
19 hearings?

20 General Hokanson: Yes.

21 General Perna: Yes.

22 Chairman Inhofe: Will you cooperate in providing  
23 witnesses and briefers in response to congressional  
24 requests?

25 General Hokanson: Yes.

1 General Perna: Yes.

2 Chairman Inhofe: Will those witnesses be protected  
3 from reprisal for their testimony or briefings?

4 General Hokanson: Yes.

5 General Perna: Yes.

6 Chairman Inhofe: And do you agree, if confirmed, to  
7 appear and testify upon request before this committee?

8 General Hokanson: Yes.

9 General Perna: Yes.

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

16 General Hokanson: Yes.

17 General Perna: Yes.

18 Chairman Inhofe: And lastly, have you assumed any  
19 duties or undertaken any actions which would appear to  
20 presume the outcome of the confirmation process?

21 General Hokanson: No.

22 General Perna: No.

23 Chairman Inhofe: Very good.

24 I do not have to tell either of you about the many  
25 challenges that face the nation here and across the world.

1 Every year, it seems that this committee has focused on  
2 turning -- turned to an emerging issue. Last year, it was  
3 the privatization -- privatized housing crisis, which we  
4 handled in, I thought, really a great way, and people did  
5 respond to the satisfaction, I believe, of those who had  
6 brought the problems to our attention. Throughout it all,  
7 we also remained focused on ensuring that DOD has the  
8 authorities and resources it needs to implement the National  
9 Defense Strategy, the book that we quite often refer to.

10 As senior leaders of the Department of Defense today  
11 and in the positions for which you have been nominated, you  
12 have and would continue to play key roles both in winning  
13 the great power competition and in taking care of the  
14 people. We are talking about the great power competition,  
15 of course, with China and Russia.

16 We look forward to hearing from you and your views.

17 Senator Reed?

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

3           Senator Reed: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.  
4 I want to join you in welcoming our nominees this morning.  
5 I appreciate their flexibility, along with the cooperation  
6 of our colleagues as we continue to do the important work of  
7 the committee under these challenging circumstances.

8           I would like to thank the families of the nominees.  
9 General Hokanson is joined today by his wife Kelly, and they  
10 are the proud parents of Victoria, an Air Force Space  
11 Operations officer; Danny, an Army Special Forces officer;  
12 and McKinnon, an Army infantry officer serving in the Ranger  
13 Regiment.

14           General Perna's family is not here in the room, but I  
15 would like to acknowledge his wife Susan; their son Cody,  
16 who is a Navy lieutenant with three children in Norfolk; and  
17 their son Ryan, who is Department of the Navy civilian.

18           Thank you for all the support and sacrifices that your  
19 families have given to you and to the nation.

20           Lieutenant General Hokanson, you have been nominated to  
21 be Chief of the National Guard Bureau and come to us with  
22 extraordinary qualifications for this position. Currently  
23 serving as the Director of Army National Guard, you have  
24 also served as the Vice Chief of the National Guard Bureau,  
25 Deputy Commander of NORTHCOM, and as the Adjutant General of



1 Oregon. You check every box one would want for a nominee  
2 for this position.

3 The Chief of the National Guard Bureau is a member of  
4 the Joint Chiefs of Staff and is a principal advisor to the  
5 Secretary of Defense through the Chairman on matters  
6 involving the non-federalized National Guard forces in  
7 support of homeland defense and civil support missions. In  
8 this role, the Chief of the National Guard Bureau plays a  
9 critical role in facilitating and mediating the interests of  
10 the States with the missions and programs of the Department  
11 of Defense.

12 The unique role of the National Guard has been more  
13 visible than ever in the past few months. In March, members  
14 of the Guard were called to assist the health care system as  
15 the coronavirus pandemic swept the country while on the  
16 front lines of the pandemic, they have risked their own  
17 health, and the infection rates of the Guard have been high.  
18 We thank those Guard members and their families for their  
19 sacrifice and their dedication.

20 While Covid-19 is still a very real threat that we are  
21 battling, many Guard members have also been called in recent  
22 weeks to assist governors in law enforcement during recent  
23 nationwide protests. For this mission, the Guard has had to  
24 strike a fine balance between performing their duties while  
25 ensuring that they do not engage in any unlawful acts or

1 even the perception of unlawful acts against the citizens of  
2 our nation.

3 Recent weeks showed just how difficult the position of  
4 the Chief of the National Guard Bureau is and will remain  
5 perhaps throughout your tenure in this position. So,  
6 Lieutenant General Hokanson, I look forward to hearing your  
7 thoughts on how you plan to approach this job in these  
8 trying times.

9 General Perna, you have been nominated to serve as the  
10 Chief Operating Officer of Operation Warp Speed, the public-  
11 private partnership created to develop, manufacture, and  
12 distribute a safe and effective Covid-19 vaccine to the  
13 American people by January 2021. You bring an important  
14 skill set and expertise to this endeavor, having served your  
15 entire career as an Army logistician. Notably, you most  
16 recently served as the Commander of the Army Materiel  
17 Command, overseeing more than 190,000 military, civilian,  
18 and contractor employees and managing a global supply chain  
19 that provides material and sustainment to Army forces around  
20 the world.

21 General Perna, I want to commend you for being within  
22 weeks of retirement and yet you did not hesitate to accept  
23 another position and a challenging one at that.

24 The committee, indeed the entire country, are still  
25 waiting for more details about Operation Warp Speed. We are

1 interested in hearing from you about what role the Defense  
2 Department will play in this effort, the resources it will  
3 need, and the way in which a vaccine will be equitably  
4 distributed among the American people, to include DOD  
5 military and civilian personnel. We have great confidence  
6 in your skill and your integrity and your dedication to the  
7 Constitution.

8 I look forward to hearing from both the nominees.

9 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

10 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Reed.

11 This will be the committee's first hearing with some  
12 Senators attending remotely. So I want to let everyone know  
13 how we are going to run this thing. Since it is impossible  
14 to know exactly when our colleagues who will be joining us  
15 via computer arrive, we will not be following the normal  
16 standard that we do on first come/first served, early bird,  
17 and so forth. Instead, we will handle the order of  
18 questions by seniority, alternating with sides. Once we  
19 reach the end, if there is anyone who we have missed, we  
20 will start back at the top until we reach everybody.

21 Finally, to allow for everyone to be heard, whether in  
22 the room or on computer, I ask all colleagues to please be  
23 sure to mute your microphone.

24 So, Senator Wyden, I assume you are down there  
25 someplace. Oh, I see. Remote. You are recognized for an

1 introduction.

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1 STATEMENT OF HON. RON WYDEN, U.S. SENATOR FROM OREGON

2 Senator Wyden: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and  
3 Ranking Member Reed. And I want to thank my colleague, my  
4 classmate, Senator Reed, for an extraordinarily good  
5 statement with respect to the exemplary role the National  
6 Guard is playing right now.

7 And I thank both of you, Chairman Inhofe and Senator  
8 Reed, for the chance to come. It is a privilege to be able  
9 to introduce a longtime friend, General Dan Hokanson. And I  
10 understand that his wife Kelly is there, and I think perhaps  
11 even his four kids. They are all military all the time, and  
12 Oregonians are just thrilled that he has been nominated to  
13 serve as the next Chief of the National Guard Bureau. And I  
14 will tell you, you all have got the right guy for the job.

15 As both the chairman and Senator Reed have touched on,  
16 we need sensible leaders with sound character and strong  
17 morals now more than ever. And if you look at General  
18 Hokanson, what you will see is somebody who embodies those  
19 values. He is a West Pointer with a long and distinguished  
20 career. He has led our troops in Iraq. He has led them in  
21 peaceful missions at home in Oregon, and he has served at  
22 some of the highest levels of National Guard leadership.

23 At home in Oregon, I can tell my colleagues on the  
24 committee we really do not have the big military bases that  
25 you see so often, for example, say, in the East and the

1 South, but we have got so many Oregonians expressing their  
2 patriotism through the National Guard. And many of them  
3 serve two, three, four tours of duty, and we are so proud of  
4 them. And, General Hokanson, I can tell you has been a  
5 source of inspiration for many of those Oregonians who serve  
6 in the Guard.

7 Now, I am going to wrap up with just one kind of simple  
8 statement. If I were to go through, Chairman Inhofe and  
9 Senator Reed, the list of awards and decorations that  
10 General Hokanson has earned, I would still be talking at  
11 breakfast time tomorrow. So I do not want to be accused of  
12 filibustering you all, and we want to get this good man  
13 confirmed. And I will just close by way of saying I believe  
14 he will be a superb Chief of the National Guard Bureau.

15 Thank you for giving me the opportunity to come, and I  
16 certainly hope that the committee will report this  
17 outstanding public servant favorably and the Senate will  
18 confirm him in short order. Thank you.

19 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Wyden.

20 We now recognize Senator Jones to introduce General  
21 Perna. Senator Jones?

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1 STATEMENT OF HON. DOUG JONES, U.S. SENATOR FROM ALABAMA

2 Senator Jones: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and  
3 Ranking Member. It is my honor today to introduce my  
4 friend, General Gus Perna to this committee, someone who  
5 probably really needs no introduction. But I am honored and  
6 humbled to be here with him today.

7 I first met General Perna in 2018, shortly after my  
8 election to the Senate. He was kind enough early on to  
9 arrange an in-depth tour of Redstone Arsenal where he is  
10 based as the Chief of the Army Materiel Command. It was an  
11 amazing experience for me. And shortly after that, he came  
12 up to Washington and met with me in my office to talk with  
13 me about the important role of Redstone and how it plays to  
14 Alabama but also importantly to our nation's security.

15 To say that I was impressed early on would be an  
16 understatement. And I was impressed not with just his  
17 command of his command, but also with his commitment,  
18 commitment to service, commitment to his command, commitment  
19 to the people that serve under him, and commitment to the  
20 United States of America.

21 Now, he came to Huntsville as the Deputy Chief of Staff  
22 of the Army Materiel Command where he served for a couple of  
23 years before taking the helm and answering the call to be  
24 the Chief of the Army Materiel Command there in Redstone  
25 Arsenal in Huntsville, Alabama where he has done a

1 magnificent job. And I will tell you candidly, Mr.  
2 Chairman, that over the last 2 years of my tenure on this  
3 committee, I and my staff have quietly tried to slip into  
4 the NDAA language that would prevent his retirement so that  
5 we could keep him in Alabama. Unfortunately, your staff and  
6 the ranking member's staff were able to catch that very  
7 quickly. But we did not want to lose him from Alabama.

8 But I am getting a half a loaf. He is not retiring at  
9 this point, but will take on the duties of the COO of  
10 Operation Warp Speed. And I am very proud of him and there  
11 is not a better man for the job. I am happy to say, though,  
12 that he has assured me that he and his wife Susan and their  
13 labradoodle will be retiring to Alabama eventually and  
14 taking up residence on beautiful Smith Lake in Cullman  
15 County.

16 I will tell you, as everyone should know, Gus Perna is  
17 a problem solver. He is a logistics expert. The Army  
18 Materiel Command is one of the Army's largest commands with  
19 almost 200,000 military, civilian, and contractor employees  
20 with impacts in all 50 States and 152 countries. He is not  
21 only a logistics expert in my opinion, he is a logistics  
22 wizard with an unparalleled depth and breadth of experience  
23 in acquisitions, procurement, and sustainment. As I said,  
24 simply put, he delivers.

25 And as I think important as this position is, there was



1 another position that he had also undertaken in the last year  
2 or so since I have been on this committee, which indicates  
3 the Army's and the United States' confidence in him. When  
4 as the committee knows, the military encountered problems  
5 with privatized housing, which became crisis proportions in  
6 2019, it was General Perna who the Army turned to to help  
7 solve the crisis and was appointed as the officer in charge  
8 of correcting the deficiencies of the Army's installations.  
9 While still a work in progress, he answered that command.  
10 General Perna has brought together civilian agencies,  
11 military personnel, contractors, corporations, senior  
12 leaders, and other stakeholders in order to correct the  
13 military housing problem and ensure that adequate housing is  
14 available on all military bases. Again, that was in  
15 addition to his duties as Materiel Commander.

16 Now, the country needs a vaccine. The country needs  
17 countermeasures for the novel coronavirus. We needed it  
18 yesterday, but I know and I am confident that with General  
19 Perna at the helm, we will receive that vaccine and it will  
20 be distributed as soon as practical, as soon as possible in  
21 a fair and efficient way. He has answered the call again,  
22 and I believe that the President has made absolutely the  
23 right call and I commend not only the President for this  
24 nomination, I commend General Perna for his, once again,  
25 answering the call to service and leading this effort.

1 Gus, congratulations on your nomination. Thank you for  
2 your service and your willingness to tackle this critical  
3 challenge for not just our families but for all America and  
4 in fact the world. Thank you. Good luck.

5 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Jones.

7 Gentlemen, we will begin with opening statements. As  
8 you are aware, we would like to keep those brief. Your  
9 entire statement will be made a part of the record. And we  
10 will start with you, General Hokanson.

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1           STATEMENT OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL DANIEL R. HOKANSON,  
2 ARNG, TO BE GENERAL AND CHIEF OF THE NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU

3           General Hokanson: First of all, I would like to thank  
4 Senator Wyden for that kind introduction.

5           Chairman Inhofe, Ranking Member Reed, and distinguished  
6 members of the committee, thank you for your longstanding  
7 support of America's National Guard and our soldiers,  
8 airmen, civilians, families, and employers. I am truly  
9 humbled to be before this committee as you consider my  
10 nomination.

11           I would like to take a moment to recognize my family,  
12 those most responsible for making my appearance today  
13 possible. Kelly, the love of my life and wife of over 30  
14 years, is with me today. She is the youngest daughter of a  
15 Navy sailor who served in both World War II and Korea, is a  
16 tireless advocate for military families, and was always the  
17 first to make sacrifices for our family.

18           Our children, who could not be here today, all wear the  
19 cloth of our nation. Our daughter Victoria is an Air Force  
20 space operations officer, and her husband Dan is a Marine  
21 Corps officer. Our son Danny is an Army Special Forces  
22 officer and his wife Jenna, and our son McKinnon is an Army  
23 infantry officer with the Ranger Regiment.

24           And my parents Bob and Diane Hokanson, who still live  
25 in the small logging town of Happy Camp, California where I

1 was born and raised and where my father taught high school  
2 for over 36 years.

3 God has blessed me beyond words with my family and  
4 their unwavering support.

5 As you are well aware, this is an important and pivotal  
6 time in the history of our National Guard. We face complex,  
7 dynamic missions overseas and here at home. The next Chief  
8 of the National Guard Bureau must continue to effectively  
9 navigate this unprecedented landscape and work closely with  
10 stakeholders at the international, federal, State, and local  
11 levels.

12 Over the past 34 years, I have been shaped by  
13 incredible opportunities and experiences and have been  
14 fortunate to work with amazing and selfless people, the sum  
15 of which brings me before you today. And if confirmed, I  
16 will work with this committee to ensure our National Guard  
17 is manned, trained, equipped, and ready whenever and  
18 wherever we are needed.

19 In recent months, the National Guard has been on the  
20 front lines of the Covid-19 pandemic response. In every  
21 State, territory, and the District of Columbia, Guard  
22 members are helping their communities fight this invisible  
23 enemy. They are supporting key functions in their  
24 communities at testing sites, long-term care facilities,  
25 hospitals, and food banks. We have delivered personal

1 protective equipment, sewn face masks, turned convention  
2 centers into alternate care facilities, and so much more.

3 At the same time, our National Guard responded to civil  
4 unrest in several States and the District of Columbia. As  
5 part of a national call for justice and racial equality, our  
6 soldiers and airmen were there to protect our First  
7 Amendment rights and preserve public safety in the  
8 communities where we live.

9 Our citizen soldiers and airmen responded to these and  
10 other events in the homeland while simultaneously meeting  
11 all overseas deployment requirements in support of combatant  
12 commands and the National Defense Strategy. As a result, we  
13 reached a new peak earlier this month of over 120,000  
14 citizen soldiers and airmen mobilized worldwide.

15 What makes this possible has not changed since the  
16 founding of our National Guard in 1636, and that is the  
17 incredible men and women in our formations. They have and  
18 will always be my highest priority. They balance their  
19 military careers, civilian careers, and their families and  
20 know the sacrifices they must make so we can live true to  
21 our motto, "always ready, always there."

22 I would like to thank President Trump and Secretary  
23 Esper for their confidence and support in nominating me for  
24 the position of Chief of the National Guard Bureau.

25 I would also like to recognize General Joe Lengyel and

1 his wife Sally for their 39 years of selfless service. The  
2 example they set will have a lasting impact on the National  
3 Guard, and we wish them the absolute best as they prepare to  
4 return home to Texas.

5 Thank you again for the opportunity to be before this  
6 committee. I look forward to your questions.

7 [The information referred to follows:]

8 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, General Hokanson.

2 Now we will hear from the wizard, General Perna.

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1           STATEMENT OF GENERAL GUSTAVE F. PERNA, USA, FOR  
2 REAPPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE OF GENERAL AND TO BE CHIEF  
3 OPERATING OFFICER, PROJECT WARP SPEED

4           General Perna: Chairman Inhofe, Ranking Member Reed,  
5 distinguished members of this committee, I am grateful and  
6 deeply humbled by the opportunity to be with you and my  
7 fellow nominee this morning. I greatly appreciate your  
8 continued support and advocacy for our service members,  
9 their families, and our nation.

10           I would like to thank Senator Jones for introducing me  
11 today and for his very kind and generous remarks. It has  
12 been my privilege to work with him as a Senator in Alabama  
13 in support of Redstone Arsenal, our workforce, our Army, and  
14 I am very grateful.

15           While my family could not be here today, they remain my  
16 number one supporters. My wife Susan -- today, our 37th  
17 anniversary -- married me and made the journey with me  
18 throughout our career, over 23 moves, always in support,  
19 always my right hand, always there for me.

20           My son Cody, a supply corps officer in the Navy  
21 stationed in Norfolk with his wife Ashley, a daughter of an  
22 Army non-commissioned officer with three lovely daughters,  
23 Adriana, Priscilla, and Gia. And our son Ryan, who serves  
24 the Navy as a GS-13 contracting officer. Without them, I  
25 would not be here today for it is their support that I am



1     incredibly grateful and will always love for them.

2             Nor could I be here without the friends or the mentors  
3     who have been with me and helped me over the years. Thank  
4     you.

5             I want to thank Defense Secretary Mark Esper and Health  
6     and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar for their trust and  
7     confidence in me and for supporting the President's  
8     nomination for me to lead Operation Warp Speed Task Force as  
9     the Chief Operating Officer.

10            My nearly 39 years in uniform, culminating as the  
11    Army's senior logistician and Commander of Army Materiel  
12    Command, has cemented my strategic operational and tactical  
13    logistics and sustainment foundation. And this has prepared  
14    me for this opportunity. Leading AMC's highly skilled and  
15    talented workforce that is located around the world, all  
16    190,000-plus soldiers, civilians, and contractors across 11  
17    subordinate commands, was challenging but incredibly  
18    rewarding.

19            If confirmed, I am confident that my personal and  
20    professional experience will enable me in my new  
21    responsibilities.

22            Chairman and members of the committee, if confirmed, I  
23    am 100 percent committed to supporting the efforts of our  
24    nation's best scientists and researchers to develop a safe  
25    and effective vaccine and to leverage the nation's strategic

1 strength of manufacturing and distribution to deliver  
2 effects by the end of the year.

3 This will require everyone to do more than their best.  
4 We must do what is required. We must win. Embracing a  
5 whole-of-government approach and collaborating daily with  
6 industry and academia partners, we will prioritize our  
7 efforts on potential candidates that are determined to be  
8 safe and effective that can be ready by the end of the year  
9 with quality, and can be distributed accordingly at the  
10 right numbers.

11 The key to our success is to ensure we rely on science  
12 to assess our options, effectiveness, and risk, ensure that  
13 all medical protocols are executed to standard while  
14 simultaneously executing production at risk. I am confident  
15 that we, the whole of government, industry, and academia,  
16 can and will reduce time to delivery by months, if not  
17 years.

18 I swore an oath to defend our Constitution against all  
19 enemies. This virus is our enemy and is impacting our way  
20 of life. If confirmed, I will dedicate myself to defeating  
21 this enemy.

22 Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you this  
23 morning, and I look forward to your questions.

24 [The information referred to follows:]

25 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

1 Chairman Inhofe: Very good, General, both of you,  
2 excellent statements.

3 I am going to go ahead and start with you, General  
4 Hokanson. The biggest problem that we have that I have seen  
5 and we have experienced is retention and recruiting. In  
6 fiscal year 2018, we were not able to meet our goals. We  
7 got to 97.6 percent. And then in fiscal year 2019, we had  
8 kind of the same situation.

9 Now, it has to be more difficult now with what you have  
10 gone through with the Covid. The word gets out. It is a  
11 lot of hard work. It is a lot of -- recruiting and  
12 retention has to be more difficult now than it was. So if  
13 we were unable to meet our goals in fiscal year 2018 and  
14 2019, are you confident that something has changed and you  
15 would be able to do that now? And if so, what is it?

16 General Hokanson: Senator, thank you for the  
17 opportunity to address that important question.

18 And, Chairman, when I look at the National Guard, if  
19 you go prior to Covid, in February we had one of our best  
20 recruiting months in the past 5 years. And obviously, since  
21 Covid-19, our ability for our recruiters to interact with  
22 potential recruits has been greatly reduced. However, we  
23 have really leveraged the Internet and other social media to  
24 reach out to those individuals.

25 Now, if you look at March, April, and May, in March we

1 were still at 99 percent. April and May, it descended below  
2 that. And so when you look at the remaining months of the  
3 year, July, August, September, they usually are lower  
4 recruiting months. But from what I am hearing from our  
5 recruiters when they have seen the great work that our  
6 National Guardsmen have done with respect to Covid-19 and  
7 other events, they feel like that they will be able to make  
8 up a lot of that, the shortages. However, it will be close  
9 for us to get there by the end of the year.

10 Chairman Inhofe: You mentioned you met the goals in  
11 February. Did you do anything different then than you did  
12 subsequent to that?

13 General Hokanson: No, Chairman. Well, we work at our  
14 marketing with both the active Army and Air Force and  
15 looking at using social media to get in contact with  
16 potential recruits. That has been very beneficial.

17 Chairman Inhofe: Okay. I do have another question if  
18 there is time, but I have a question for General Perna.

19 It is a very ambitious program that we are talking  
20 about doing. Everybody up here knows that, and people are  
21 concerned. All the expectations on the victory of this  
22 program are predicated on the assumption that we are going  
23 to have the necessary vaccine and all that by year end. I  
24 would like to have you kind of give us your assurance, if  
25 you have assurance, that we are going to have it by then and

1 what that is based on. Would you do that for us?

2 General Perna: Chairman, what I thought was an  
3 aspirational goal 30 days ago when I was announced by the  
4 President, I have recently come to the conclusion that it is  
5 more and more likely to occur. I believe this is so based  
6 on the updates that I have received and the partnerships  
7 that we are doing with industry. Their efforts to get out  
8 in front of this problem and their presentations to myself  
9 and Dr. Slaoui have indicated that they do have the right  
10 formula to produce, to execute clinical trials, to mass  
11 produce for the nation, and then distribute accordingly.

12 At this time, what we are still working our way  
13 through, of course, is that we must make sure that science  
14 leads us to our conclusions -- right -- and that we assess  
15 the risk accordingly so that we can determine the  
16 effectiveness of the vaccine because it must be safe first  
17 and foremost and then effective.

18 Once trials are concluded and the FDA makes a decision,  
19 we will have better grounds to understand how much can be  
20 distributed and when.

21 Chairman Inhofe: Well, you know, General Perna, you  
22 know more about the progress that is being made than  
23 probably anyone at the dais up here. And so it is  
24 reassuring to me to hear that you are confident of that, and  
25 we thank you for that.

1           Just one quick question for you, General Hokanson.  
2   These guys -- they have been overworked now for the last 3  
3   months. Have you learned anything from that that gives you  
4   some hope that we will have others wanting to follow in  
5   those footsteps?

6           General Hokanson: Chairman, thank you for that  
7   question.

8           And when I look over the past 3 months and all that we  
9   have asked our guardsmen to do and still perform all their  
10   missions overseas, I think they have proven that they are  
11   just a tremendous value to America, and there are some  
12   amazing American men and women in our communities who  
13   volunteer to do this.

14          And I think going forward, their experiences -- a lot  
15   of them have really appreciated the opportunity to help  
16   within their communities. I think it is going to help our  
17   recruiting and retention, and also I think it will help  
18   retain them within our formations.

19          Chairman Inhofe: Well, that is good and I hope that is  
20   right. We love them all. Let them know that.

21          Senator Reed?

22          Senator Reed: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

23          And thank you, gentlemen, for your excellent  
24   statements.

25          General Perna, we had a great discussion yesterday

1 afternoon, and I think we talked about particularly the way  
2 the military -- and we spent a little -- I spent a little  
3 time in there. You spent your whole life. The model is  
4 plan for the worst and hope for the best. Here in D.C. --  
5 and this is a bipartisan model -- it is usually a plan for  
6 the best and ignore the worst. And you are going to be  
7 caught right in the middle of that, and I think it goes back  
8 to the point you have reiterated. You have to base your  
9 activities on science, on facts, on committing to speak  
10 truth to power, to say not only the good news but also to  
11 bring us the bad news. And I hope you will do that. Can  
12 you commit to that?

13 General Perna: I 100 percent will commit to that,  
14 Senator.

15 Senator Reed: Thank you very much, General Perna.

16 General Perna, I also hope given our experience with  
17 PPE particularly, the protective equipment, that we will  
18 rely significantly on the Defense Production Act. It is, I  
19 think, the most powerful tool that you will have to organize  
20 the production and distribution. And as we mentioned, that  
21 is a very complicated process. Distribution involves every  
22 health department in every State in the United States.  
23 Production involves multiple manufacturers. Do you  
24 anticipate that the Defense Production Act will be the  
25 primary tool that you use?

1           General Perna:  Senator, I do not think it is going to  
2 be our primary tool.  I feel confident, based on mission  
3 analysis, that we have capability and capacity in our  
4 authorities to use now.

5           With that said, I do have direct access to the Defense  
6 Production Act through HHS and the Department of Defense,  
7 and I feel 100 percent confident that I can access when I  
8 need.

9           Senator Reed:  We do not want to replicate the PPE  
10 situation --

11          General Perna:  I acknowledge.

12          Senator Reed:  -- in which States were out  
13 internationally trying to hustle equipment -- and that is  
14 not an exaggeration -- from China, paying extraordinary  
15 prices for equipment that they could have had.  And I think  
16 the essence of the Defense Production Act is the ability of  
17 the Federal Government to establish reasonable prices and  
18 also to control distribution, so it is not a first  
19 come/first served or the favorite son or daughter gets the  
20 supplies versus somebody else.  So let me just make that  
21 point once again.

22          General Perna:  Your point is clear, and I acknowledge  
23 and will comply.

24          Senator Reed:  Thank you.

25          As you indicated in your response to the chairman, the



1 FDA will make the call when the vaccine is ready. The  
2 question there -- and that is out of your lane, but I think  
3 we want to put it on the table -- is that they could make a  
4 call, even if there is relatively low efficacy of the drug,  
5 maybe to say it is ready. And we saw a little of that in  
6 this issue of the hydroxychloroquine situation where they  
7 had a temporary approval and then just recently they pulled  
8 it back, discovering that it was actually causing serious  
9 collateral damage by its use. Again, we do not want to find  
10 ourselves in the PPE position or the hydroxychloroquine  
11 position too. That is why I am not a doctor, by the way --

12 [Laughter.]

13 Senator Reed: -- among many other reasons.

14 So I think we want to be very, very careful. I know  
15 that is not your lane, but we should understand, all of us,  
16 that the FDA has to demand rather significant efficacy for  
17 this drug before they say it is okay. We want a vaccine,  
18 not a headline. Thank you.

19 Now let me turn to General Hokanson. Again, I think  
20 you have a remarkable background, General. In a very few  
21 seconds remaining, a difficult question. How do you view  
22 the parameters of the use of the National Guard in these  
23 cooperative efforts with law enforcement in terms of civil  
24 disturbance? And I know it so much depends upon the  
25 specific facts, but could you give us just your general view

1 of how you are going to approach this problem?

2 General Hokanson: Yes, Senator. Working closely with  
3 the governors -- and if you look over the past few weeks,  
4 the ability of the National Guard to mobilize 43,000  
5 soldiers and airmen in support of their governors' needs  
6 within their States and the District, I think it is a good  
7 news story. The key here is we have to make sure that our  
8 soldiers are trained and equipped and the whole intent is to  
9 deescalate. And if you look at we were at 43,000 a couple  
10 of weeks ago, we are down to 4,000 today, I think that shows  
11 their ability to help their communities.

12 Senator Reed: Thank you very much. Gentlemen, thank  
13 you both for your extraordinary service to the nation.

14 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Reed.

15 Senator Wicker?

16 Senator Wicker: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is a  
17 good hearing and impressive presentations from both of our  
18 nominees.

19 General Hokanson, congratulations on your nomination.  
20 I want to thank the President, Secretary Esper, and also  
21 Secretary McCarthy for working with us to arrive at a truly  
22 consensus nominee. So I look forward to working with you  
23 and want to congratulate both of you as a matter of fact.

24 Let us talk, first of all, General Hokanson, about the  
25 mobilization and annual training equipment site, MATES, at

1 Camp Shelby. You are familiar with this. We have had a bit  
2 of problem with the unfunded requirements. Right now, the  
3 MATES facility would not be funded because it is a little  
4 low on the UFR list. This benefits, of course, Camp Shelby  
5 if we can get it done but also the entire National Guard and  
6 the entire nation. The proposed MILCON project would expand  
7 the MATES facility to add 12 vehicle bays at a cost of \$16  
8 million.

9 I cannot ask you to absolutely commit that you will  
10 move this up, but tell us your view of the MATES facility  
11 and the importance of getting this done sooner rather than  
12 later.

13 General Hokanson: Senator, thank you for that  
14 question.

15 We look at our MATES facilities across the country.  
16 They provide tremendous value not just to the National Guard  
17 but to our nation and their ability to maintain the  
18 equipment that our country has provided for our National  
19 Guard forces. And I think it is absolutely critical that we  
20 do everything we can in a transparent process to get that  
21 funded so that they can repair and maintain the equipment so  
22 it is ready whenever our nation calls.

23 Senator Wicker: Okay. Well, I hope you will work with  
24 us. This is our number one priority down in Mississippi,  
25 and I think you will agree it benefits everybody not just

1 the one State there.

2 Let me ask you also, General Hokanson, to talk about  
3 the effort underway to align all National Guard brigade  
4 combat teams with a National Guard division. This is  
5 something that is gaining support, and I just wondered if  
6 you could give us your thoughts on that idea of aligning  
7 these long-term programs.

8 General Hokanson: Senator, thank you.

9 So if we go back prior to World War I, our National  
10 Guard was throughout the country, and then regionally we  
11 created divisions. And all 17 deployed to World War I, and  
12 then we had 19 that deployed to World War II. And in 2018,  
13 when we came up with a new National Defense Strategy, it  
14 stressed great power competition. And within the Army  
15 National Guard, we had division headquarters that were  
16 solely just that, a division headquarters, with no down  
17 trace units.

18 However, if you look across the entire Army National  
19 Guard, we have virtually all of the down trace units. And  
20 so the proposal we brought up within the Army National Guard  
21 is to develop a training association not only for our  
22 brigade combat teams but for all formations so that instead  
23 of just having 10 active Army divisions, we would have a  
24 total of 18 Army divisions. And, Senator, as you know, that  
25 provides not only great deterrent value, but it provides the

1 opportunity from some of our smaller States who have  
2 outstanding leaders to get opportunities to serve at higher  
3 levels.

4 Senator Wicker: So this idea would promote long-term  
5 growth and prosperity for the Guard. Would it not?

6 General Hokanson: Yes, Senator, it would.

7 Senator Wicker: And let me then quickly turn to  
8 General Perna. You have quite a task ahead of you in a  
9 short time frame. The ranking member asked you about the  
10 Defense Production Act. That is a tool, but not your  
11 primary tool we are learning.

12 You may not have looked at this and you may not be  
13 aware. I have been an advocate, sometimes a voice crying in  
14 the wilderness, for prize competitions. Let me just suggest  
15 that you and your team consider that as you are trying to  
16 get something done big, to scale in a small time. Humankind  
17 responds to incentives. Innovators have been shown over  
18 time, over the centuries, to respond to financial  
19 incentives. And I would just ask you not to rule out among  
20 your bag of tools some sort of prize competition to  
21 financially incentivize these competitors to get there when  
22 we need them to get there, and if they do so, the award of a  
23 prize would be money well spent because the taxpayer would  
24 be well served. Do not rule that out. You may not want to  
25 comment on that. It may be a matter of first impression.

1 But I hope you will consider it and use it as one of the  
2 ideas.

3 General Perna: I fully agree with you, Senator.

4 Senator Wicker: Thank you, sir.

5 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you.

7 Senator Gillibrand?

8 Chairman Inhofe: Okay. We are going to be going down  
9 a list here, and we do not know for sure who might be here  
10 remotely. And so I will just go down on the Democrat side  
11 until we have someone here. Senator Shaheen? Senator  
12 Blumenthal?

13 Senator Blumenthal: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

14 Thank you both for your service and happy anniversary,  
15 General Perna. Your families I think show something very  
16 enduring and important about our men and women in uniform,  
17 which often it is a family tradition, family affair. I  
18 congratulate you as well on your children. And it  
19 emphasizes to me, General Hokanson, how the multiple tours  
20 of duty of our National Guard over these 20 years have taken  
21 a toll on our families, and I know that you will be mindful  
22 of the enormous sacrifice made by military families as well  
23 as the men and women who actually serve in uniform. That is  
24 particularly true, I have found, in Connecticut, and I know  
25 our National Guard leaders in Connecticut think highly of

1 you and so do I and I thank you for your service. I look  
2 forward to working with you.

3 General Perna, I know you have one of the most  
4 challenging and important tasks in our nation today, and it  
5 is made all the more difficult I think by the  
6 administration's refusal to work with other countries in  
7 developing vaccines. Are you not working with one hand tied  
8 behind your back because the administration has, in effect,  
9 rejected and spurned combined world efforts to develop an  
10 effective vaccine?

11 General Perna: Senator, as we are working right now,  
12 we are open to all ideas that will allow us to achieve our  
13 mission of obtaining a safe and effective vaccine. And I  
14 have not been constrained to a decision to eliminate  
15 somebody from that competition.

16 Senator Blumenthal: Will you commit to the committee  
17 and to the nation that you will work with any nation that  
18 offers cooperation or information relevant to developing  
19 vaccines or therapeutics?

20 General Perna: I commit to working with all nations  
21 that we deem are friendly to our national security.

22 Senator Blumenthal: Well, but we often work with  
23 nations that are sometimes hostile in certain arenas. We  
24 trade with them. We work out agreements with them. Will  
25 you commit that you will urge both diplomats and fellow

1 leaders in this effort to develop a vaccine that we work  
2 with every nation that offers promise in the world of  
3 medicine?

4 General Perna: Senator, I commit that I will give my  
5 best military advice so that we can achieve our mission of  
6 obtaining a safe and effective vaccine to that end.

7 Senator Blumenthal: Well, I do not want to dwell on  
8 it, but I regard that answer, with all due respect, as  
9 insufficient. I would like to see a much more robust  
10 commitment to cooperation with other nations which I think  
11 serves our national interests.

12 I am very concerned about the use of non-FDA vaccines  
13 on service members without effective informed consent. As  
14 Attorney General of Connecticut, I was active in writing a  
15 letter to then-Secretary of Defense Don Rumsfeld and Acting  
16 FDA Deputy Commissioner Bernard Schwetz in response to the  
17 military's mandatory anthrax vaccination program. I  
18 understand trials are beginning in July. Is that correct?

19 General Perna: Correct, Senator.

20 Senator Blumenthal: And the vaccine may be used in  
21 tests on service members. Is that correct?

22 General Perna: I am not tracking that right now,  
23 Senator.

24 Senator Blumenthal: Well, I would like you to commit  
25 that you will offer a robust policy of informed consent



1 without any kind of coercive influence so far as service  
2 members are concerned if there is testing applied to them.

3 General Perna: I do commit to that, Senator.

4 Senator Blumenthal: My understanding is that your goal  
5 is to have 100 million doses ready in November of 2020 and  
6 an additional 200 million January 2021. Is that realistic?

7 General Perna: Right now as I see the numbers, I do  
8 think it is potentially possible. With that said --

9 Senator Blumenthal: Potentially possible.

10 General Perna: It is possible.

11 Senator Blumenthal: It is possible but --

12 General Perna: But we have to work through the trials.  
13 The trials can be lengthy as they work through the science  
14 of the effectiveness of the vaccine, and only after the  
15 science is provided to the FDA and the FDA makes their  
16 independent assessment will we be able to distribute the  
17 vaccines that we are producing.

18 Senator Blumenthal: That may be, in effect, months  
19 from July of this year.

20 General Perna: Correct, Senator.

21 Senator Blumenthal: And those numbers of doses are a  
22 possibility and a hope, but you cannot make any promises or  
23 commitments as to the number or when they will be actually  
24 available.

25 General Perna: I am working on the goal to achieve as

1 you articulated, but I cannot promise its end state right  
2 now.

3 Senator Blumenthal: I thank you for your candor and  
4 again to both of you for your service. Thank you very much.

5 Chairman Inhofe: Senator Fischer?

6 Senator Fischer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank  
7 you for holding the nomination hearing today.

8 General Perna, you mentioned leveraging the work being  
9 done at universities for Operation Warp Speed in your  
10 written responses. In Nebraska, we are very proud of the  
11 work that the University of Nebraska Medical Center has done  
12 performing clinical trials of treatment candidates and also  
13 for caring for some of the very first Covid-19 patients to  
14 arrive in the United States.

15 Given the unique talent and capabilities of such  
16 universities, how specifically do you see them fitting into  
17 this effort?

18 General Perna: Senator, we are open to all  
19 recommendations on how to potentially solve this problem. I  
20 am personally taking phone calls on a daily basis from  
21 academia and industry, meeting with groups accordingly to  
22 assess their ideas, understand the practicality of their  
23 ability to deliver. At the end of the day, we must have a  
24 safe and effective vaccine. It must be speedy enough with  
25 quality to achieve our goal. And then we must ensure that

1 we can garner a capability for quantity. So we work through  
2 those assessments, but I am open to any conversation with  
3 anybody who wants to contribute.

4 Senator Fischer: Well, in addition to seeking a new  
5 vaccine, one of the goals of Operation Warp Speed is to  
6 develop new treatments for those infected with Covid-19, and  
7 as you know, the very limited surge capacity of our national  
8 health care network has been a complicating factor in care.  
9 And that is one of the reasons that I worked to include an  
10 expansion of a DOD pilot on medical surge capacity in the  
11 Senate's NDAA that we passed out of committee. So I hope  
12 that you do take a look at initiatives such as this pilot  
13 when exploring how to speed the delivery of new treatments  
14 for patients.

15 General Perna: Ma'am, we are looking at therapeutics,  
16 and we believe that we have a great opportunity to introduce  
17 new therapeutics to the nation potentially as early as  
18 October or November as we work through the medical  
19 protocols, which I will not allow to be shortcutted and then  
20 final decision accordingly. So I acknowledge and agree with  
21 you.

22 Senator Fischer: Thank you, sir.

23 And, General Hokanson, the National Guard does play a  
24 very unique role in the realm of our security cooperation.  
25 By linking State forces with the international partners, we

1 capitalize on the Guard's very unique ability to build those  
2 lasting relationships, and it does provide numerous benefits  
3 for both the United States and the forces when we do  
4 collaborate.

5 With these benefits in mind, sir, how do you see a  
6 State partnership program evolving to meet the needs of the  
7 National Defense Strategy?

8 General Hokanson: Senator, thank you for highlighting  
9 one of the great programs within the National Guard. If you  
10 look at our State Partnership Program, we have partnerships  
11 with 89 nations around the globe, and it not only helps with  
12 our combatant commanders but also with our National Guard  
13 because it gives them the opportunity to train with allies  
14 and partners and develop long-term relationships. Many of  
15 these go back to 1993 with the original State Partnership  
16 Program countries that have gone on to become NATO members.

17 When we look at the National Defense Strategy with  
18 respect to allies and growing partners, this provides us  
19 another avenue to do that by developing those low-level  
20 relationships that usually start out with humanitarian  
21 assistance and disaster response but then grow to not only  
22 help their militaries improve but also we learn from them,  
23 and it gives us another opportunity to create additional  
24 partners around the globe.

25 Senator Fischer: You know, one of the core principles

1 of the NDS is that we must work to attract new partners, new  
2 allies, something that you have highlighted. How  
3 specifically can you offer that you are going to work to be  
4 able to advance those partnerships in the near future?

5 General Hokanson: So, Senator, if you look at the last  
6 year, in 2020 we added five new State partners, and we  
7 worked very closely with the combatant commanders and our  
8 State Department, as well as our State National Guard, to  
9 identify those best candidates that provide benefit not just  
10 to our nation but also to the relationship between our  
11 National Guard and those countries. And so I promise that  
12 we will continue to do that and look for future partnership  
13 opportunities.

14 Senator Fischer: Thank you, sir, very much.

15 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

16 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you.

17 Senator Hirono?

18 Senator Hirono: [Audio failure] before any of the  
19 committees on which I sit.

20 The first question is since you became a legal adult,  
21 have you ever made unwanted requests for sexual favors or  
22 committed any verbal or physical harassment or assault of a  
23 sexual nature?

24 General Perna: No.

25 General Hokanson: No.

1           Senator Hirono: Next question. Have you ever faced  
2 discipline or entered into a settlement related to this kind  
3 of conduct?

4           General Perna: No.

5           General Hokanson: No.

6           Senator Hirono: I have a series of questions for  
7 General Perna. General, you are nominated to be Chief  
8 Operating Officer of Operation Warp Speed, which aims to  
9 deliver 300 million doses -- 300 million doses -- of a  
10 vaccine to the American public by January of 2021. That is  
11 a very ambitious goal, and while I certainly commend this  
12 goal, I am concerned about the lack of transparency and  
13 accountability for Operation Warp Speed. This is a massive  
14 use of taxpayer dollars and a mission that is of intense  
15 importance to all of us. I know that hundreds and hundreds  
16 of millions of taxpayer money has already gone out in  
17 various contracts for the development, manufacture, and the  
18 distribution of a vaccine. So there is little clarity,  
19 though, about the division of responsibilities within this  
20 project, how contracts are being awarded or have been  
21 awarded, what safeguards are in place to ensure Americans'  
22 health and safety is the first priority.

23           So, General, can you explain to me the specific  
24 responsibilities you will undertake as COO in Operation Warp  
25 Speed specifically with regard to decisions relating to the

1 development, the manufacturing, and the distribution of a  
2 vaccine?

3 General Perna: Senator, at the end of the day, I am  
4 responsible and accountable for all decisions made in  
5 execution of our mission. I commit to you that it will be  
6 legal, ethical, and moral as I prioritize, assess, and  
7 determine what courses of action we do as we move forward.  
8 It is a challenge, of course, because as you have  
9 highlighted, rightly so, it is a monumental task, but we  
10 will bring to bear capabilities from Health and Human  
11 Services, Department of Defense, and industry to --

12 Senator Hirono: Thank you.

13 I am running out of time, but I know that you said that  
14 you would commit to work with all nations that we consider  
15 friendly to our national security interests in the  
16 development of an effective vaccine. Does that include  
17 China?

18 General Perna: Right now for me it does not, but as I  
19 said, it would be my best military advice and then --

20 Senator Hirono: Thank you. It could very well be,  
21 General, that China might be the one that actually develops  
22 an effective vaccine, and then where does that put us?

23 So once a vaccine is developed, it is vital that  
24 distribution be done equitably and efficiently nationwide.  
25 And the administration has already had major problems with

1 the distribution of test kits, swabs, PPEs and the drug  
2 remdesivir. Okay, this is not hydroxychloroquine.

3 What are you doing now to learn from past mistakes in  
4 the Covid-19 response to make sure that they are not  
5 repeated when it comes to this vaccine?

6 And by the way, you are going to need to prioritize the  
7 distribution of this vaccine to seniors, to first-line  
8 responders, et cetera. So are you already developing those  
9 priorities, and are those going to be made public?

10 General Perna: Senator, your latter point first. The  
11 priority will be a policy decision, and we will execute  
12 based on guidance from that policy.

13 The first point is we are already working on our plans  
14 for distribution of the vaccine. We are working several  
15 courses of action which go from all-government approach to  
16 mixed government and commercial approach to just commercial  
17 approach. And we are working through the pros and cons  
18 accordingly.

19 Senator Hirono: Of course, when we talk about phase 3  
20 trials, I am glad that you mentioned that these decisions  
21 relating to the effectiveness of the vaccine is going to be  
22 based on science, but I understand that there will be  
23 production at risk. In other words, manufacturing of the  
24 vaccine will take place before we complete phase 3 trials  
25 that should involve about 30,000 people.



1           One question. Can you give me a commitment this  
2 morning, General, that you will brief Congress and the  
3 public every 2 weeks on Operation Warp Speed? Because  
4 billions of dollars in contracts have already been let and  
5 we do not know how that would be done and what the terms of  
6 the contracts are. Would you commit to letting Congress  
7 know and the public know what is happening with Operation  
8 Warp Speed every 2 weeks or some similar time frame?

9           General Perna: Senator, I will report as directed.

10          Senator Hirono: That is not a particularly  
11 satisfactory response. So what I am hearing is you are not  
12 making a commitment --

13          General Perna: I commit to you that I will report  
14 accordingly.

15          Senator Hirono: Thank you.

16          Chairman Inhofe: What we are going to do is go down  
17 the line but give adequate time for each member to get the  
18 equipment working. So we will now go to Senator Rounds.

19          Senator Rounds: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

20          Gentlemen, thank you both for your service to our  
21 country.

22          I would like to begin just a little bit with General  
23 Hokanson. Jeff Marlette, who is our TAG in South Dakota,  
24 speaks very highly of you, and he believes that you have the  
25 appropriate concepts regarding the division realignments

1 that he believes are consistent with long-term growth within  
2 the National Guard units.

3 We have also discussed -- and I appreciated the time  
4 that you spent speaking with me earlier. It is necessary  
5 that our National Guard men and women receive the best  
6 equipment that is available and that if they are expected to  
7 fight right alongside our full-time regular men and women in  
8 the Army, that they have the similar training and that they  
9 have access to similar equipment.

10 I think one of the challenges that anyone in the  
11 position that you will be assuming -- one of the challenges  
12 that you will find is making certain that you have access to  
13 the appropriate equipment for Guard members' equivalent to  
14 what our service members in the regular Army would have.  
15 You take a look at what we are looking at in terms of the  
16 improvements, such as the UH-60M Black Hawk, the Joint Light  
17 Tactical Vehicle, the AH-64E Apache, the F-35A Lightning  
18 II, the KC-46 Pegasus, and the AH-60W Jolly Green II, most  
19 certainly these are all items that the Guard will need to  
20 have access to as well.

21 I would just simply ask, would it be your understanding  
22 that as part of the job description that you have is to be a  
23 champion and to make certain that for the long-term good of  
24 the country, when we send Guard units in, that they also  
25 have the opportunity to have access to and are fairly

1 treated in acquiring that equipment?

2 General Hokanson: Yes, Senator. And when I look at  
3 the National Guard equipment, I want to make sure that at  
4 every opportunity, our equipment is not only deployable and  
5 sustainable, but it is actually interoperable with the  
6 active components and in many cases our allies as well. And  
7 when we look at the current global situation, of course, we  
8 want to make sure that those in first contact have the  
9 absolute best equipment that our country can provide. And  
10 we cannot always know who that first unit is going to be.  
11 And so I will advocate at every opportunity to make sure  
12 that the National Guard is modernized alongside with its  
13 active components.

14 Senator Rounds: Thank you, General.

15 General Perna, you have the opportunity here to perhaps  
16 make a difference in saving thousands of lives, and this  
17 particular project, Warp Speed, I do not think has received  
18 the credit that it duly deserves. I know that there is  
19 always a question as to whether or not we sacrifice safety  
20 in order to expedite the development of a vaccine. And my  
21 understanding is, number one, there is nothing in the Warp  
22 Speed planned project that would delay the safe deployment  
23 of a vaccine but rather to do two steps at the same time, to  
24 number one, go through all of the trials necessary to assure  
25 the efficacy and the safety of the vaccine, but the

1 importance of Warp Speed is that the Federal Government has  
2 taken upon itself the financial costs of looking at multiple  
3 vaccine possibilities in advance and prefunding the  
4 development of those vaccines prior to the determination of  
5 their efficacy and safety but having them available should  
6 one or two of them actually be found to have the efficacy  
7 and the safety and be ready immediately for production --  
8 not for production but for distribution.

9 Can you get into a little bit what you find in terms of  
10 right now the position we find ourselves in, the current  
11 situation, the current place that you walk into and either  
12 confirm or agree with us in terms of what that might mean in  
13 terms of how much time that actually saves us in the  
14 delivery of those vaccines?

15 General Perna: So, Senator, you are 100 percent  
16 correct in your analysis of what we are doing. Our great  
17 scientists and researchers have already made great strides  
18 working with industry to determine which vaccines we think  
19 are most probable to be successful. They have to go through  
20 trials. As I have said, science will determine the  
21 effectiveness, and then there will be a decision by the FDA.

22 Simultaneously, we are already working on the mass  
23 production of the vaccines to determine the right capacity  
24 and capability we need to achieve the volume of vaccines we  
25 need for the nation. And I feel very good that we will have

1 -- likely that we will have a vaccine. And then we are  
2 working through the manufacturing now to ensure the quantity  
3 that will be available to the American public on approval.

4 Senator Rounds: Very quickly. Any doubt in your mind  
5 at all that we will be saving months in this development  
6 process using Warp Speed?

7 General Perna: Absolutely months if not years.

8 Senator Rounds: Thank you.

9 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

10 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator.

11 I have been informed that two of our members were  
12 actually on but had mechanical problems. So I am going to  
13 go back to Senator Gillibrand and then to Senator Cotton,  
14 then our regular rotation. Senator Gillibrand?

15 Senator Gillibrand: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

16 General Perna, thank you for being here today and thank  
17 you for your answers.

18 I just want to go back over some testimony that you  
19 said earlier. I am concerned that Operation Warp Speed will  
20 be under pressure to release a vaccine before the election  
21 but before adequate testing and research trials have been  
22 completed. Please walk me through again the metrics and  
23 requirements that will be in place before the FDA approves a  
24 vaccine for public use, and could any sort of emergency use  
25 authorization be invoked to release a vaccine even if

1 limited capacity before those requirements have been met?

2 General Perna: Senator, so to answer your question  
3 directly, my requirement is to make sure that we can  
4 develop, produce, and then deliver the vaccine. The  
5 decision on the efficacy of the vaccine is strictly an FDA  
6 responsibility, and I will personally commit to ensure that  
7 we will execute all medical protocols in accordance with  
8 requirements today.

9 The decision to provide an emergency relief capability  
10 and/or deliver early is not my decision, and that will be a  
11 policy decision.

12 Senator Gillibrand: You may not know the answer to  
13 this question then, but what efforts have been made to  
14 ensure that diversity in trial participants -- are you  
15 involved at all in making sure that the vaccines are safe  
16 for mass deployment with women, children, older adults,  
17 people with disabilities?

18 General Perna: Senator, I have been in updates where I  
19 have given special guidance to that end where we need to  
20 assess diversity, elderly population, those with other  
21 ailments that may cause greater illness because of the  
22 virus. So, yes, we are looking at all those.

23 Senator Gillibrand: Okay.

24 And what criteria are you using currently in selecting  
25 vaccine candidates to support and develop under Operation

1 Warp Speed?

2 General Perna: So we are working now with industry  
3 partners who will be responsible to execute the clinical  
4 trials with guidance from NIH, National Institutes of  
5 Health. And so we are working through the determination of  
6 how they go and select the persons that they will require  
7 for the trials. I do not have the specificity that you  
8 deserve, and I can come back and talk to you at a later  
9 date.

10 Senator Gillibrand: Well, we would like if you could  
11 update the committee, to be able to keep the Armed Services  
12 Committee apprised with detailed public updates with  
13 specificity on certain scientific milestones as stated by  
14 HHS. Is that something you are planning on doing?

15 General Perna: I am committed to do that, Senator.

16 Senator Gillibrand: Great.

17 And then what is the variance in cost for developing  
18 for each of these drugs? Which is the most expensive and  
19 why? Two candidates being developed by Moderna and  
20 AstraZeneca are being tested in early phase clinical trials  
21 sponsored by the National Institute of Allergy and  
22 Infectious Diseases and the University of Oxford,  
23 respectively. NIAID tells NPR its study of the Moderna  
24 vaccine has cost taxpayers \$4.2 million to date. Do you  
25 have information about costs?

1           General Perna:  Senator, we have already worked with  
2 both AstraZeneca and Moderna to be a part of their research  
3 and development.  We are in negotiations to expand into  
4 production.  So we have put monies into them accordingly.  
5 The variance of how much the vaccine will cost is under  
6 negotiation, and I am unable to talk to you about that right  
7 now but I can.  You have my commitment and assurance that I  
8 am putting due diligence into holding people accountable to  
9 make sure that the vaccine is priced within reasonable means  
10 of execution, i.e., producing and delivering.

11           Senator Gillibrand:  Are these vaccines in human  
12 trials?  Three of the companies that got funding have not  
13 started clinical trials for their vaccine candidates.  
14 According to the World Health Organization, only 10 Covid  
15 vaccines are currently in human trials.  When are the first  
16 and last human trials expected to conclude?

17           General Perna:  So AstraZeneca is currently executing  
18 trials over in England, but for us, they have not started  
19 yet.  Trials will begin for us 9 July with Moderna, followed  
20 by AstraZeneca, and then Janssen throughout the months of  
21 July, August, September.

22           Senator Gillibrand:  Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

23           Chairman Inhofe:  Senator Cotton?

24           Senator Cotton:  Thank you very much.

25           General Perna, can you hear me?



1           General Perna: I can, Senator.

2           Senator Cotton: I would like to talk to you about the  
3 balance that you intend to strike between ensuring that we  
4 have a safe, effective, FDA-approved vaccine on the one hand  
5 but also getting that vaccine as quickly as possible out to  
6 our citizens. Could you speak to that issue a little bit?

7           General Perna: Senator, first of all, I am remarkably  
8 proud of our scientists and researchers both in Health and  
9 Human Services and Department of Defense, and I count on  
10 them to be the medical experts and I rely on them heavily  
11 and their recommendations and advice to ensure that we are  
12 executing all medical protocols appropriately and that we  
13 will hold ourselves accountable to that end.

14           Simultaneously, though, while all those are going on,  
15 recommendations accordingly from the Chief Medical Advisor,  
16 Dr. Slaoui, and the other scientists and researchers have  
17 allowed us to assess capability of potential vaccines and  
18 begin to coordinate initiation of contracts to establish  
19 production.

20           The key to that is we need to buy forward materials  
21 needed for the vaccine. We need to buy forward the space we  
22 will need for production, and we want to buy forward the  
23 fill finish capability after production. And then we want  
24 to coordinate the distribution. All those things, instead  
25 of waiting in a sequential method -- i.e., FDA approves and

1 then we do it -- we are doing them in parallel, which is how  
2 we will save months, if not years, in time.

3 Senator Cotton: So that is obviously very different  
4 than the way most vaccines are developed and produced. I  
5 just want to make it clear, because I believe this is the  
6 right approach, that when you are taking full-scale  
7 production risk, that means we might end up buying lots and  
8 lots of vaccines that end up not working that, in  
9 retrospect, some might appear to say it was wasteful. But  
10 the reason we are doing that is to accelerate the production  
11 timeline so for whatever vaccine or vaccines are effective,  
12 we can develop and produce that on an accelerated timeline  
13 that I think you told Senator Rounds would save months, if  
14 not years. Is that correct?

15 General Perna: That is 100 percent correct, Senator.

16 Senator Cotton: So I just want to highlight that right  
17 now that we are taking production risks that, in retrospect,  
18 might appear to have squandered lots of money, but that is a  
19 risk we are bearing upfront precisely so we can get vaccines  
20 out to our people that are effective and FDA-approved as  
21 quickly as possible given the limitations of scientific  
22 research, testing, and our manufacturing capability.

23 General Perna, you mentioned Dr. Slaoui. He is the  
24 chief advisor for Operation Warp Speed. Can you explain a  
25 little bit about his role and what your relationship with

1 Dr. Slaoui will be?

2 General Perna: Dr. Slaoui was brought in to be the  
3 Chief Medical Advisor by Secretary Azar. I have a very,  
4 very close relationship with him. I did not know him until  
5 the 13th of May when I met him in the White House. Since  
6 then, I have spoke with him every single day about what we  
7 are doing. I rely on him heavily, recommendations and  
8 advice, as he really is a renowned expert in vaccine  
9 development. Currently 14 vaccines are contributed directly  
10 to him, and his efforts, selfless, are going to help us  
11 achieve our goal.

12 Senator Cotton: Okay. Thank you very much, General  
13 Perna.

14 Congratulations to you both on your nominations. I  
15 hope the committee and the Senate can move forward with them  
16 in a prompt fashion.

17 Chairman Inhofe: Senator Kaine.

18 Senator King: Did you say Kaine or King?

19 Chairman Inhofe: No. This is Kaine. King is next.

20 [No response.]

21 Chairman Inhofe: Okay. Senator King?

22 Senator King: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

23 General Hokanson, first I want to say I have a very  
24 warm spot in my heart for the National Guard. As governor,  
25 I had one of the largest call-ups in our State's history

1 when we had a disastrous ice storm that knocked about half  
2 of our people off the electric grid. The Guard was  
3 absolutely indispensable. So I have a very strong belief in  
4 the efficacy and the importance of the Guard.

5 A specific question. The Guard is now being called  
6 upon, as you mentioned in your testimony, in areas of these  
7 protests around the country. Do the Guard units that are  
8 being called up in that regard have any special training in  
9 the area of crowd control and training to deal in these  
10 kinds of very difficult situations where we weigh civil  
11 liberties against public order?

12 General Hokanson: Senator, thank you for that  
13 question.

14 And yes, they do, and we rely on our State adjutants  
15 general to make sure that any of our soldiers that are  
16 employed in that manner are trained and equipped prior to  
17 them assuming those duties.

18 Senator King: Thank you.

19 General Perna, you have got one of the most important  
20 assignments in the United States Government right now, and I  
21 wanted to touch just on a couple of points that have been  
22 made previously.

23 This administration rather famously has some disdain  
24 for international cooperation and international  
25 organizations. It left the World Health Organization. I

1 hope that you will continue to cooperate with international  
2 efforts to find a virus. This virus does not care whether  
3 you are Brazilian or American or English. So it just  
4 strikes me that there may be additional science and wisdom  
5 being developed in other parts of the world that we should  
6 take advantage of. One of my mottos is all of us are always  
7 smarter than one of us. And can you commit that you are  
8 open to working with international partners on this project?

9 General Perna: I do commit to that, Senator.

10 Senator King: All the questions today have revolved  
11 around the relationship between safety and speed. I think  
12 it is very important to refer back to 1955 and the Cutter  
13 vaccine which was administered to 200,000 children in the  
14 Midwest and West, 40,000 of whom ended up contracting polio.  
15 If we are going to inject something into the arms of 300  
16 million Americans, we better be damn sure that it is  
17 efficacious and also safe. There is going to be tremendous  
18 pressure to do this in a hurry. I hope that you will  
19 exercise all possible efforts to be sure that the vaccine  
20 that is being used will, in fact, protect us and also not  
21 make us sick.

22 General Perna: I give you my personal assurance on  
23 that. I every day think about my three granddaughters and  
24 my parents to that end.

25 Senator King: Have you been offered Defense Production

1 Act authority? Have you been explicitly told if you need  
2 it, you have it?

3 General Perna: I do not have authority at this time,  
4 but I feel 100 percent that I have immediate access to it  
5 through Secretary Azar and Secretary Esper.

6 Senator King: I hope that you will ensure that that is  
7 the case so that when the moment comes, there is not a long  
8 delay waiting for that authority to be granted.

9 Final question. How is the price going to be  
10 determined of this vaccine, bearing in mind that the United  
11 States taxpayers have already or will already have made  
12 significant investments in these private companies in order  
13 to enable them to develop the vaccine?

14 General Perna: Senator, we are in negotiations with  
15 each company to make sure that we are going to obtain the  
16 right price for the vaccine. I commit to you that I will  
17 personally be involved in those conversations and that we  
18 will not be gouged to taking care of the American people.

19 Senator King: Thank you for that, and I hope you will  
20 really pay close attention to that.

21 And the other piece is, of course, who pays for the  
22 vaccine for those millions, 25 million, 30 million, 40  
23 million Americans who do not have health insurance? We have  
24 got to be able to discuss that issue as well because already  
25 this disease is not an equal opportunity killer, and we do

1 not want the vaccine to be anything but equal opportunity  
2 for all Americans who need it.

3 Thank you, General. I look forward to working with you  
4 and appreciate your willingness to take on this incredibly  
5 important project.

6 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator King.

7 Senator Ernst?

8 Senator Ernst: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

9 And, gentlemen, thank you very much for being with us  
10 today.

11 And, General Hokanson, I am going to start with you,  
12 sir. Obviously, I am a very proud retired National  
13 Guardsman, and so our National Guard forces remain near and  
14 dear to my heart. Whenever Americans are needed in a time  
15 of crisis, it is our National Guardsmen that step up to that  
16 call. So I applaud them for their service and dedication.

17 Sir, how many National Guard troops have been mobilized  
18 this month alone?

19 General Perna: Senator, when we look at the height,  
20 which was around June 6-June 7, we had over 120,000, and  
21 that includes not only those within the United States but  
22 those deployed overseas.

23 Senator Ernst: 120,000 National Guardsmen.

24 Can you tell us a little bit about the various mission  
25 sets that our National Guardsmen are involved in?

1           General Hokanson:  Senator, that is a great question.

2           So if we look at that time frame, we had about 40,000  
3 working on the Covid-19 at the time.  We had close to 40,000  
4 with civil unrest.  We were also mobilized for Tropical  
5 Storm Cristobal at the time.  We also have guardsmen on the  
6 Southwest border.  We have numerous other events ongoing,  
7 remediation in some States with respect to previous natural  
8 disasters, and then we have many in support day to day if we  
9 look at our air control alert sites around the nation, as  
10 well as our ground-based mid-course defense, all run by  
11 National Guardsmen, and that is not even counting the folks  
12 deployed, about 29,000 at that time, deployed overseas in  
13 support of our combatant commanders.

14           Senator Ernst:  That is extraordinary.  And beyond  
15 those missions that you just listed, of course, there are  
16 others that National Guardsmen have performed in the past,  
17 wildfire fighting activities, just as Governor King just  
18 stated, ice storms and so forth.  So they do truly respond  
19 to so many different incidents and crises across the United  
20 States.

21           General, what would our governors do if they did not  
22 have the National Guard?

23           General Hokanson:  Senator, I hesitate to think about  
24 that because our governors realize the tremendous value that  
25 our National Guard provides every single day.  It would



1 require really a significant investment and many other  
2 capabilities, as you mentioned, wildfires today in Arizona  
3 and annually we have hurricanes, the potential for  
4 earthquake at any time. And the great value the National  
5 Guard brings is they are in our 2,800 communities across the  
6 nation every day. They are usually the closest, and we  
7 consider them the Department's first responder for anything  
8 that occurs.

9 Senator Ernst: Yes. And so my point is that we have  
10 citizen soldiers that are at the ready, ready to respond to  
11 support our public and their needs. So I do hope that we  
12 all continue to show great respect and admiration for those  
13 troops.

14 You mentioned that we do have a number of National  
15 Guardsmen that are responding to Covid-19. In the State of  
16 Iowa, we have had many wonderful folks out there on the  
17 front lines.

18 And so Senator Manchin and I have called for a 6-month  
19 extension of TRICARE after those National Guardsmen's last  
20 day of activation. And additionally, I do believe that  
21 personnel who served in close proximity to the Covid-19  
22 should receive hazardous duty pay. I truly believe they  
23 have earned it.

24 So, General, how does the National Guard plan to  
25 address medical issues that come up after the deployments

1 for those that were working on the coronavirus and civil  
2 unrest missions?

3 General Hokanson: So, Senator, when we look at for  
4 those on 502(f) federal orders, what we have done is we have  
5 built in an additional 14 days so they can quarantine or  
6 self-isolate to make sure that they have no existing  
7 conditions when they come off orders. And if they do at  
8 time, we will obviously address that with the individual to  
9 make sure that they get the care that they deserve -- they  
10 and their families.

11 Senator Ernst: Thank you very much.

12 And just in a very brief period of time, General Perna,  
13 I had a provision that was to support important work that is  
14 being done in the nanovaccine area, some of which is  
15 happening at the Nanovaccine Institute of Iowa State  
16 University. It was placed into our Senate version of the  
17 NDAA, which passed committee last week.

18 And for those universities that are already performing  
19 this type of work and would like to join in your efforts,  
20 does your project have the proper tools and authorities to  
21 leverage those universities, or do they have to go through  
22 private partners?

23 General Perna: No, ma'am. We can access them and  
24 execute accordingly if they have a vaccine or a  
25 recommendation that will be able to meet our end state.

1 Senator Ernst: Outstanding. Thank you, gentlemen. My  
2 time has expired.

3 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

4 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you.

5 Senator Heinrich? I know who is next. I am trying to  
6 give enough time for people to get their operations going  
7 there.

8 Okay. Senator Warren? Senator Warren, going twice.

9 [No response.]

10 Chairman Inhofe: All right. Senator Peters?

11 [No response.]

12 Chairman Inhofe: Senator Manchin?

13 [No response.]

14 Chairman Inhofe: Okay. We are going to go back to the  
15 Republican side. Senator Tillis.

16 Senator Tillis: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you  
17 for allowing us to do this through video access, and also  
18 thanks to Leah Brewer on your staff. She is doing a great  
19 job. She is really the one in the hot seat right not, not  
20 our two generals that I have every intention of supporting.

21 So, gentlemen, thank you both for being here and your  
22 decades of service.

23 General Perna, I want to talk a little bit about the  
24 plumbing that you are already putting into place for  
25 ultimately manufacturing and distributing a vaccine. It is

1 my understanding that through some of the BARDA authorities,  
2 you have already got manufacturers who have figured out a  
3 way to create chipless vials, and that gives them the  
4 ability to increase the capacity of their lines by, I think,  
5 as much as 50 percent. I have heard reports that there is  
6 another BARDA approval that is increasing the size of the  
7 vial so that you can get as many as 10 doses in a single  
8 vial.

9 Can you give me an idea of what positive steps we are  
10 already taking to get the plumbing in place before we have a  
11 vaccine?

12 General Perna: Senator, so to the specificity that you  
13 just talked, I cannot address at this time, but I can come  
14 back to you.

15 With that said, what we have done through BARDA is we  
16 are working and funding the advance purchase of materials --  
17 right -- so that we garner them all and we have them in the  
18 right place to establish production. And then we are  
19 working through execution or buying forward the production  
20 capacity needed to mass produce but then as well as fill  
21 finish, as you articulated with the vials, key steps that  
22 have to be worked through.

23 Additionally, we have worked through the efforts to  
24 make sure that the tech data is transferred properly within  
25 all protocols so that all organizations are ready to execute

1 to standard.

2 And then last, we have smoothed out where we are doing  
3 production and fill finish, so we are not bouncing back and  
4 forth between companies and different types of vaccines and  
5 we can maintain the same protocols accordingly to ensure  
6 that we have the right capacity and capability in a smooth  
7 transition.

8 Senator Tillis: Thank you. If I have time, I am going  
9 to come back to you, General Perna.

10 General Hokanson, in your opening statement, you said  
11 that you are implementing initiatives that encourage further  
12 integration between the National Guard and the active  
13 components. How are you going to balance that against the  
14 dual role that the National Guard plays? I incidentally  
15 think that that is an important objective, but how do you  
16 balance that against the work that we need to do with the  
17 National Guard focusing on the States and civil authorities?

18 General Hokanson: Senator, thank you for the question.

19 And so we work very closely with our State adjutants  
20 general to find that right balance between our federal and  
21 State requirements, and a lot of times, we will have a  
22 conversation with them if they need additional assistance or  
23 if their State needs additional help because we always want  
24 to make sure that they have what they need within their  
25 State to meet any requirements but also balance that with

1 our federal mission requirements overseas.

2 Senator Tillis: Thank you very much.

3 I think you know that North Carolina Guard has a rich  
4 tradition in doing the kinds of things that you want the  
5 guard to be prepared to do with our active service members.  
6 So just making sure we keep our eye on the ball of that dual  
7 responsibility that they have.

8 General Perna, a quick question for you. Is Warp Speed  
9 focused exclusively on the vaccine, or are you also tracking  
10 therapeutics that could get into the supply chains and used  
11 in the same distribution network that you are creating for  
12 the vaccine?

13 General Perna: Senator, that is correct. We are  
14 working on therapeutics, and we have some very promising  
15 candidates that could available as early as October-  
16 November.

17 Senator Tillis: Yes. And I have been tracking that as  
18 well, General Perna. I hope that if we get a promising  
19 therapeutic, we have to understand the timeline. We are  
20 talking about drugs that have already proven their efficacy,  
21 that have already identified side effects. Now we are  
22 testing them for efficacy in this space. I hope that if it  
23 starts getting distributed in September and October, that we  
24 do not hear people say they should look at the science and  
25 not say it is just timing associated with the election. I

1 do not expect you to respond to that question.

2 My question for you. Number one, I do think that the  
3 American people have all eyes on you, and so reporting to us  
4 is important. An arbitrary date of 2 weeks does not make  
5 sense to me, but I believe that as rapidly as possible if  
6 you can give us a briefing on just how you are building out  
7 that plumbing, that is going to give a lot of Americans a  
8 lot of confidence. You have got to figure out the right way  
9 to do it, and I know that you will.

10 Last question and I have only got 20 seconds. Just  
11 quickly, what role do you think with the VA, VA health being  
12 the largest purchaser of syringes and other materials --  
13 what role could the VA play in the distribution system once  
14 we have a vaccine or a therapeutic?

15 General Perna: I think they are going to be a  
16 potential to help us augment audible and deliver rapidly as  
17 required. So we are working through those courses of action  
18 now.

19 Senator Tillis: Thank you.

20 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

21 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you.

22 Senator Warren?

23 Senator Warren: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

24 And, General Hokanson, congratulations on your  
25 nomination.

1 I would like to have your views on the use of the  
2 military in response to peaceful protests and other acts of  
3 civil disobedience on American streets.

4 I was very troubled that the National Guard soldiers  
5 were deployed in Washington on June 1st to disperse people  
6 who were protesting systemic racism. That response included  
7 using D.C. National Guard helicopters, one of which was a  
8 medical evacuation helicopter, and using them to fly  
9 dangerously low over protesters. This tactic blew debris  
10 everywhere. It kicked up dirt. It snapped trees. I know  
11 this incident is under investigation, but I am raising this  
12 with you because you have been nominated to be the Chief of  
13 the National Guard Bureau.

14 So, General Hokanson, engaging in peaceful protests is  
15 protected by our Constitution. If the National Guard is  
16 deployed in an area involving peaceful protests in the  
17 future, how would you ensure that guardsmen clearly  
18 understand the type of orders under which they have been  
19 activated and the activities that are within the scope of  
20 their mission?

21 General Hokanson: Senator, thank you for that very  
22 timely question.

23 So when we look at our National Guardsmen when they are  
24 called to duty by their governors, we rely heavily on our  
25 States' adjutants general to make sure that they are



1 properly trained and equipped for anything that they are  
2 asked to do. And one of those includes deescalatory  
3 measures. And if you look at the height of where we were at  
4 almost -- we had over 43,000 in 34 States just a couple of  
5 weeks ago, and we are now down below 4,000. I think that  
6 shows the ability for us to help deescalate those  
7 situations.

8 But, Senator, my pledge to you is that we will always  
9 operate in accordance with laws and policies and frankly  
10 the expectations of our citizens.

11 Senator Warren: Well, thank you very much. I  
12 appreciate this, General.

13 Let me ask you. I just want to stay on this June 1st  
14 incident in Lafayette Square for just a minute.

15 Federal law enforcement officers used rubber bullets  
16 and tear gas against peaceful protesters so that the  
17 President could take a photo op in front of the church. And  
18 I was troubled when I saw the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs  
19 of Staff dressed in battle fatigues walking with the  
20 President to participate in this photo op.

21 I also found it disturbing when General Milley was  
22 walking on a D.C. street later that night to observe  
23 National Guard operations.

24 I believe these actions were highly inappropriate and  
25 that they undermine civilian military relations.

1           So I raise this example because, if confirmed, you will  
2 become one of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, which are the  
3 President's most critical military advisors. So it is  
4 important for all of us to know if you can resist political  
5 interference.

6           General Milley apologized for his presence in Lafayette  
7 Square, and here is part of what he said. I just want to  
8 read it. We who wear the cloth of our nation come from the  
9 people of our nation, and we must hold dear the principle of  
10 an apolitical military that is so deeply routed in the very  
11 essence of our republic.

12           So, General Hokanson, a simple yes or no will do. Do  
13 you agree?

14           General Hokanson: Yes, Senator.

15           Senator Warren: Thank you.

16           The killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor at the  
17 hands of police, as well as the brutal murder of Ahmaud  
18 Arbery, have underlined the urgency of confronting racism  
19 against black Americans. Some of our military leaders have  
20 used this moment as an opportunity to remind their ranks  
21 about what our country and our military stand for.

22           In a recent letter titled, quote, "We Must Do Better,"  
23 the current Chief of the National Guard Bureau, General  
24 Joseph Lengyel, said if we are to fulfill our obligation as  
25 service members, as Americans, and as decent human beings,

1 we have to take our oath seriously. We cannot tolerate  
2 racism, discrimination, or casual violence. We cannot abide  
3 divisiveness and hate. We cannot stand by and watch."

4 So, General Hokanson, do you agree with General Lengyel  
5 that, if confirmed, what message you will send to our  
6 citizen soldiers, our airmen, and our communities they  
7 protect about the values of the Guard especially as the  
8 country works to make real change to address systemic  
9 racism?

10 General Hokanson: Senator, I agree with General  
11 Lengyel's comments, and if confirmed, I would follow the  
12 same.

13 Senator Warren: Thank you very much, General. I  
14 appreciate it. If confirmed, you will be responsible for  
15 training our next generation of leaders. At this critical  
16 moment in our nation's history, it is important to send a  
17 clear message that diversity and inclusion make our military  
18 and our country stronger. So I appreciate your commitment.  
19 Thank you very much, General.

20 And thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

21 Chairman Inhofe: Senator McSally?

22 Senator McSally: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

23 And thank you both for your service.

24 General Perna, what is the normal timeline to develop a  
25 vaccine these days?

1           General Perna:  Senator, as I understand it, somewhere  
2 between 5 and 10 years.

3           Senator McSally:  Thanks.  And I know your expertise is  
4 more in the logistics side of things.  But this task and  
5 this goal that we have set that within possibly a year of  
6 this virus being unleashed on us, that we would put all of  
7 the brain power, all the innovation, all the strength and  
8 leadership of our government agencies, our industry, our  
9 researchers together in order to develop this vaccine for  
10 the American people in Warp Speed, I mean this is a pretty  
11 Herculean task but really shows the best of America coming  
12 together.  Do you not agree?

13          General Perna:  100 percent.

14          Senator McSally:  It is unprecedented, and I think we  
15 have snarky cynics out there that are trying to take pot  
16 shots at any little effort.  I mean, this is us really  
17 reaching for the stars in order to defeat this virus and  
18 protect the American people, and it comes with challenges  
19 for sure but we have got to give all we have.  So I really  
20 appreciate your leadership in this very important endeavor.

21          One thing that the coronavirus has awakened us to is  
22 our reliance on our adversary, Communist China, for  
23 pharmaceuticals, for our PPE, and for many other elements of  
24 our supply chain.  So as we are increasing the manufacturing  
25 capability in parallel to the testing here for Operation

1 Warp Speed, both for the vaccine and for the potential  
2 treatments, can you talk about whether you are holistically  
3 looking at the industrial base of America and the supply  
4 chain holistically for not just these treatments and  
5 vaccines, but really bringing that home?

6 We saw with testing it was not just developing the  
7 test, for example. Then it was about we do not have the  
8 swabs here. We do not have the transport fluid and the  
9 vials and the reagent. And so there are all elements of the  
10 supply chain for these treatments and this vaccine. So is  
11 your team looking into bringing home the supply chain for  
12 all elements of this effort back to America and away from  
13 our adversary, China?

14 General Perna: Senator, my responsibilities, if  
15 confirmed, on a team would not be about corralling all the  
16 supply chain and bringing it back to America as you  
17 articulated. It would be focused primarily to ensure that  
18 we are able to enable manufacturing and then delivery and  
19 administration, so buying forward to meet that requirement.

20 Senator McSally: When you say manufacturing, what I am  
21 getting at is not just manufacturing of the vaccine. If we  
22 are going to be successful here with these treatments and  
23 the vaccine, we need everything that goes with it, the  
24 vials, the syringes, all that. So are they holistically  
25 looking at the manufacturing of all of it is what I am

1 asking.

2 General Perna: Senator, they are. I just specified  
3 that my responsibility is not about enabling the country to  
4 have all that capability. It is about the execution to the  
5 vaccine, I just wanted to say.

6 Senator McSally: Okay. No. I appreciate that, but as  
7 part of the leadership team, I just want to make sure that  
8 that is part of the focus so it is not just manufacturing  
9 the vaccine but everything we need in order to deliver it,  
10 as well as the treatments.

11 Are you aware -- I mean, there are ongoing efforts on  
12 this same topic of the domestic industrial base, not defense  
13 industrial base for medical supplies and pharmaceuticals.  
14 The Defense Production Act is being used for some of that.  
15 Do you know how Project Warp Speed might be coordinating and  
16 leveraging with these existing efforts?

17 General Perna: So absolutely I do know that they are  
18 being executed, and as far as Operation Warp Speed, I have  
19 direct access to the Defense Planning Act through Secretary  
20 Azar or Secretary Esper.

21 Senator McSally: Okay, great. Thank you. I  
22 appreciate it.

23 General Hokanson, the National Guard has been  
24 absolutely vital to help Arizona, and they still are as we  
25 confront and we deal with this pandemic. I personally

1 volunteered at various food banks and worked alongside them.  
2 And I am just so proud of the men and women of the Guard and  
3 them stepping up to do so many different things in order to  
4 be able to help Arizona in this very challenging time.

5 Just yesterday, Governor Ducey announced that 300 more  
6 Arizona guardsmen will be involved in contact tracing as  
7 well in Arizona. So we could not be getting through this  
8 time without the men and women of the Arizona Guard. Again,  
9 I am so proud of them.

10 Is there anything else that you need in order for our  
11 guardsmen and women to be able to conduct the various  
12 missions that they are being asked to by the governors to  
13 get us through this challenge?

14 General Hokanson: Senator, not at this time. We just  
15 greatly appreciate your continued support and that of the  
16 committee.

17 Senator McSally: Fantastic. I appreciate it. All  
18 right.

19 Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, gentlemen, for  
20 your service.

21 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator McSally.

22 Senator Jones?

23 Senator Jones: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

24 And again, gentlemen, thank you for your service and  
25 for being here today.

1           General Perna, as I mentioned in my opening remarks  
2     introducing you, you have integrated so well into the  
3     Huntsville community but also our State, your adopted State  
4     now of Alabama. And I am really proud of some of the  
5     variety of resources that Alabama is offering up to  
6     Operation Warp Speed. It is my understanding that the  
7     University of Alabama system is working on this, as well as  
8     some other folks across the State involved in developing and  
9     manufacturing a vaccine and I think some therapeutics as  
10    well.

11           Could you just detail for the committee a little bit  
12    the contribution that folks in Alabama are making and what  
13    it means to the success of your efforts going forward?

14           General Perna: Senator, we are working with a variety  
15    of industry and academia, and clearly Alabama is  
16    contributing to those thoughts and recommendations. And all  
17    that demonstrate the potential we are really paying  
18    attention to.

19           Senator Jones: Great. Thank you.

20           Following up a little bit, I was reading through the  
21    Explaining Operation Warp Speed, which is a great document,  
22    but there are some aspects of it that I am not clear on.  
23    And at one point in that document, it states manufacturing  
24    capacity developed will be used for whatever vaccine is  
25    eventually successful, if possible, given the nature of the



1 successful product, regardless of which firms have developed  
2 the capacity.

3 Now, am I to understand from that that -- let us just  
4 by way of example say that there are five firms that are  
5 working on a vaccine. If only one is successful out of the  
6 five, does that mean that we are going to try to get the  
7 other four to also produce and manufacture that vaccine, or  
8 are we simply going to rely on the one firm that was  
9 successful?

10 General Perna: Right now, Senator, the strategy is  
11 that we have each industry partner that has potential  
12 scientifically to be successful -- we are having them each  
13 manufacture. And we are using the capacities for all of  
14 them to achieve our end state of the 300 million. So  
15 failure would only be determined at the end primarily by the  
16 FDA, of course. So at this time, there is no plan to jump  
17 capabilities, as you just suggested but something worthy for  
18 me to look into as we go forward.

19 Senator Jones: All right. So right now, they are all  
20 beginning to ramp up manufacturing of what they are working  
21 on. Correct?

22 General Perna: Correct.

23 Senator Jones: So then if there is more than one, we  
24 have that capacity.

25 General Perna: That is correct, Senator.

1           Senator Jones: It has not been determined yet whether  
2 or not if we only had one or two successful, that we would  
3 then share that information so that there could be more  
4 manufactured. That has not been determined at this point?

5           General Perna: Not yet.

6           Senator Jones: Okay, very good. Thank you.

7           General Hokanson, again thank you very much for your  
8 service. I am very proud of the Alabama National Guard. We  
9 have had some incredible success down there. Scott Grant in  
10 particular, who is unfortunately retiring from the 117th  
11 this time -- we are going to miss him a lot.

12           But I want to talk for just a minute, and it is kind of  
13 a follow-up for an earlier question about what the country  
14 is facing and trying to end systemic racism and  
15 discrimination in our country. So I want to talk about it  
16 from a little bit different angle and that is diversity in  
17 the National Guard.

18           Back in 2011, the military leadership diversity  
19 commission did a report on diversity in the military, which  
20 included several recommendations for the National Guard. I  
21 have been working on that with NDAA language for all of our  
22 military because I am concerned about that not only in the  
23 enlisted ranks but also the officer ranks.

24           Could you tell us, to your knowledge, to what extent  
25 the National Guard Bureau has implemented any of those

1 recommendations, and if confirmed, are there specific steps  
2 or initiatives that you would like to take to see to help  
3 build diversity within the National Guard ranks?

4 General Hokanson: Yes, Senator. And if confirmed, my  
5 intent would be to make sure that all of our formations  
6 reflect the diversity of the communities which they come  
7 from, and that is not just overall but within the rank  
8 structure as well, that the diversity in ethnicity of our  
9 nation is reflected at every level in our organization.

10 Senator Jones: Have you got any specifics that you  
11 have got in mind to try to do that, or is that something  
12 that is going to be a work in progress?

13 General Hokanson: So, Senator, it is working with the  
14 States' adjutants general and particularly when we look at  
15 some of the branches within the Army and the Air Force that  
16 have a tendency to have higher promotion rates to make sure  
17 that the soldiers and airmen entering those formations  
18 reflect our communities in terms of ethnicity and diversity  
19 so they are given the same level of opportunity at the  
20 highest ranks.

21 Senator Jones: Great. Well, thank you, sir. And  
22 thank you both again for your service. I look forward to  
23 confirming you both. Take care.

24 Senator Jones: Thank you.

25 Chairman Inhofe: Senator Blackburn?

1           Senator Blackburn: I think I may be the last one in  
2 the queue, Mr. Chairman.

3           Chairman Inhofe: Well, I understand that Senator  
4 Hawley may be last, but you are recognized, Senator  
5 Blackburn.

6           Senator Blackburn: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

7           And, General Hokanson, I want to talk with you just a  
8 little bit about what you have done with the --

9           Chairman Inhofe: Let me interrupt for just a moment.  
10 You are coming through very, very quietly here. Let me ask  
11 the two generals. Can you hear Senator Blackburn? Yes.  
12 Well, go ahead and proceed. I am sorry to interrupt.

13          Senator Blackburn: No. That is perfectly fine.

14          As I was saying, as the director of the Guard,  
15 realigning the divisions and the 2018 NDS I think is  
16 important to look on. And we are thinking about this  
17 realignment as we look at what is happening with the 278th  
18 ACR in Knoxville. So what I wanted to hear from you, as we  
19 talk about these division level commanders and their being  
20 responsible for cross-State training plans and events, the  
21 review of readiness reports, the development of mobilization  
22 plans, are your plans still on line for the 2023  
23 realignment? And talk to me a little bit about how that  
24 would affect units like the 278th ACR that is there in  
25 Knoxville.

1           General Hokanson:  Senator, thank you for that  
2 question.

3           And so the decision is now with the Secretary of the  
4 Army, and once approved, we think we could be able to  
5 execute that actually potentially before 2023, which would  
6 be our intent.  And if we look at our brigade combat teams  
7 across the nation, as you mentioned, the 278th, the intent  
8 there would be to align those with the division headquarters  
9 for multiple reasons, one of those being in the States where  
10 they do not have a division headquarters if our officers and  
11 senior NCOs with the highest potential, it gives them the  
12 opportunity to go higher really levels of authority that is  
13 commensurate with their potential.  So that is one thing.

14           The second thing is the coordination at the division  
15 level.  It gives them that training and experience that, if  
16 we look at a near-peer threat, it is really critical that we  
17 are able to execute at that level.  And so I think by  
18 aligning our divisions, it does not only a great deterrent  
19 value for our nation, but it also standardizes all divisions  
20 across all components within the U.S. Army.

21           Senator Blackburn:  Are there any other additional  
22 authorities or tools that you need to complete this on time  
23 or hopefully complete it early?

24           General Hokanson:  Senator, not at this time.  It has  
25 been very coordinated with our States' adjutants general,

1 and we really look to supporting them and the effectiveness  
2 of the National Guard.

3       Senator Blackburn: Let us talk a little bit about  
4 cyber. And as you know, the 118th Airlift Wing that is  
5 there in Nashville -- we have the permanent cyber unit that  
6 is there, and they are quite engaged. We are really proud  
7 of the work that they are doing, and programs like the Cyber  
8 9-Line are allowing these Guard units to more effectively  
9 communicate with CYBERCOM and really to strengthen the  
10 entire network.

11       So address what you see as the role that units like the  
12 118th Wing would play as we talk about the Guard adapting to  
13 high-end warfare?

14       General Hokanson: So, Senator, I think you bring up a  
15 great point with respect to the National Guard, and cyber is  
16 one of those fields where the National Guard can provide  
17 great benefit to our nation because what it allows us to do  
18 is to hire those cyber professionals or have them be part of  
19 our military organizations where they also do that in their  
20 civilian capacity. And so they bring a lot of the skill  
21 sets that they have learned to the formations that we use.  
22 And going forward, we think it is absolutely critical as we  
23 saw in Texas and Louisiana last year to help mitigate cyber  
24 attacks on public systems or schools or any other part of  
25 our communities. We think it is critical that we have them

1 available and there to help our communities whenever they  
2 are needed and also on the high-end fight because if you  
3 look at near-peer competitors, the skill set that they bring  
4 from their civilian job is absolutely beneficial with their  
5 military positions as well.

6 Senator Blackburn: Well, we appreciate that. We think  
7 that the Guard in Tennessee is doing a tremendous job.  
8 General Holmes is doing a wonderful job leading the  
9 Tennessee National Guard, and we are appreciative for the  
10 service that they have provided in Covid during the  
11 tornadoes that have hit Tennessee this year, and also they  
12 recently made a trip to D.C. and were here to help defend  
13 the capital.

14 So thank you so much. We look forward to your  
15 confirmation.

16 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Blackburn.

17 Senator Shaheen?

18 Senator Shaheen: Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

19 Hopefully I am the last person. So, Generals, we are  
20 almost done.

21 General Perna and Lieutenant General Hokanson, thank  
22 you both for your service and congratulations on your  
23 nominations. And I very much appreciate your willingness to  
24 take on these roles.

25 General Hokanson, thank you for your phone call

1 yesterday. I appreciated our conversation, and of course, I  
2 am going to begin with what is in the interest of New  
3 Hampshire and our parochial interest which I think is also  
4 very important to the country, and that is the KC-46's. And  
5 Pease, as we discussed, is the first Air National Guard base  
6 to get the KC-46's. And we are excited about that. We are  
7 concerned about the issues that have affected the 46's and  
8 their ability to do their refueling missions and hope those  
9 get resolved soon.

10 But one of the challenges, as we discussed, that we  
11 have in New Hampshire with the 157th Refueling Wing is that  
12 about 120 of the airmen have been assigned to other bases.  
13 As we discussed, it is very important, we think, that there  
14 is a commitment to their return as soon as that is possible  
15 and that, in the meantime, if there are ways to provide  
16 missions that include air medical evacuations or whatever  
17 that can keep those teams working out of the 157th, we think  
18 that would be very important.

19 Can you agree that that is something that you will work  
20 on in this new position?

21 General Hokanson: Senator, if confirmed, I absolutely  
22 would work with the Air Force. As Pease is getting the  
23 final aircraft later this fall for their full complement of  
24 12, I think it is important that we get our personnel there  
25 and work with the Air Force to get the issues resolved on



1 the KC-46 as quickly as possible.

2 Senator Shaheen: Well, thank you very much. And we  
3 hope you will come up and see those new planes when they get  
4 on the tarmac at Pease.

5 As we also discussed, many of our States are  
6 experiencing financial challenges right now, and as we try  
7 and address the infrastructure needs of our National Guard  
8 to ensure their readiness, are there things that you think  
9 that can be done to help address the readiness piece?

10 General Hokanson: Senator, absolutely. When we look  
11 at the State expenditures over the last couple of months,  
12 particularly for some of the smaller States, we want to work  
13 with our States' adjutants general to make sure that we have  
14 and they have the right resources available so they can  
15 maintain the required levels of readiness within their  
16 formations.

17 Senator Shaheen: Great.

18 And can you talk about your views on the role of the  
19 National Guard in the newly created Space Force, how you see  
20 that playing out?

21 General Hokanson: Yes, Senator. Thank you for that  
22 opportunity.

23 When you look at the space capabilities within the  
24 National Guard, we have been doing that mission for over 25  
25 years, and we currently have 18 units in eight States and

1 one territory doing that. As the United States Space Force  
2 is stood up, we have been staunch advocates that those  
3 National Guard units, the surge-to-war capability of unit-  
4 equipped space units, that they should also be part of that  
5 as a Space National Guard.

6 Senator Shaheen: Great. Thank you.

7 General Perna, thank you very much for taking on the  
8 leadership of Operation Warp Speed. Obviously, I think we  
9 all appreciate that life is not really going to get back to  
10 normal until we have a vaccine and the sooner that that  
11 happens, the better.

12 One of the challenges, once we get that vaccine, is  
13 going to be delivering it efficiently and effectively making  
14 sure that we can immunize people against the coronavirus.  
15 And I have heard from a company in New Hampshire that makes  
16 syringes that they need to order in advance of when their  
17 syringes are going to be needed because of the supply chain  
18 issues that we have.

19 So is that something that Operation Warp Speed is  
20 looking at? Can you talk about how you are working with  
21 other agencies on planning how to get any vaccination out to  
22 people once we actually have a vaccination that works?

23 General Perna: So, Senator, exactly right. Three  
24 quick points.

25 One, we are already engaged in figuring out the

1 distribution plan, working through the mission analysis and  
2 the courses of action to determine the best, efficient, and  
3 effective way to that end.

4 Two, we do need to buy forward the secondary items, the  
5 needles, the syringes, alcohol pads, the PPE necessary to  
6 administer, and we have already put in a mass order to that  
7 end. So it is being coordinated and tracked.

8 And then the third thing, most important, is the  
9 communications with the States to inform them on how we are  
10 going to do both, and we have not started that yet, but we  
11 are going to begin it in the very near future.

12 Senator Shaheen: Thank you very much.

13 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

14 Chairman Inhofe: Thank you.

15 Senator Hawley?

16 Senator Hawley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

17 General Perna, if I could just start with you and come  
18 back to this question of our critical medical supply chains.  
19 As of February, there were reports that as many as 150  
20 pharmaceutical drugs in the United States were threatened by  
21 the shutdown of Chinese factories, and then with Chinese  
22 export controls, that severely complicated our ability to  
23 get important inputs such as our diagnostic kits and the  
24 materials that we needed for those.

25 Now, I appreciate we have got to try and get supplies

1 wherever we can get them currently. But let me just ask  
2 you, with all of this in mind, how do you assess our current  
3 reliance on China for critical medical supplies in your  
4 estimation? Can you give us a sense of what the biggest  
5 vulnerabilities are?

6 General Perna: Senator, I am not in a position or  
7 informed well enough to provide you the answer that you  
8 deserve to that question.

9 Senator Hawley: Well, can I follow up with you and get  
10 an answer once you have had a chance to study it a little  
11 further?

12 General Perna: I commit that I can and I will be able  
13 to present to you in reflection to what we are trying to  
14 achieve in Operation Warp Speed, if that is appropriate.

15 Senator Hawley: Great.

16 And I also want to ask you about our over-reliance on  
17 Chinese suppliers and how it affects our ability to get  
18 active pharmaceutical ingredients and other inputs that we  
19 may need to develop vaccines both now and in the future. So  
20 expect questions from me on all of those fronts. I look  
21 forward to your answers.

22 General Hokanson, let me shift to you and talk a little  
23 bit about the 139th Airlift Wing in my home State of  
24 Missouri. We are very proud of it, obviously. You and I  
25 had a chance to chat a little bit about it. It provides

1 tactical airlift that, as you know, that is absolutely  
2 critical for maintaining deterrence all over the world,  
3 including in the Indo-Pacific, which the National Defense  
4 Strategy identifies are our priority theater.

5 I am wondering if you could talk a little bit about  
6 what other unique capabilities or capacities the Guard can  
7 provide to support the Department's implementation of the  
8 NDS.

9 General Hokanson: Senator, thank you for that  
10 question.

11 And with respect to the National Defense Strategy, in  
12 addition to providing trained and ready forces whenever and  
13 wherever they are needed, another great opportunity as we  
14 look at the growth of allies and partners and that is  
15 through our State Partnership Program, which currently  
16 exists with 89 nations around the globe and we added five  
17 this year. And so we look forward to working with the  
18 combatant commanders and the State Department and our  
19 National Guard organizations around the United States to  
20 continue to develop those State partnerships, which gives us  
21 one more connection to a lot of those countries around the  
22 globe that are facing challenges from other countries as  
23 well.

24 Senator Hawley: Very good.

25 Can you give us a sense of what some of the ways are

1 that the Guard can help strengthen our relationships with  
2 allies and partners in PACOM in particular?

3 General Hokanson: Yes, Senator. And I can actually  
4 refer back to my experience as the adjutant general of the  
5 State of Oregon where we had State partnerships with  
6 Bangladesh and Vietnam. It initially started out as  
7 humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. We helped them  
8 plan for disasters within their communities, and we also  
9 learned from them as well. And by building that  
10 relationship over time, it allows us to train with them on  
11 events or issues within their military that they want to  
12 improve, and we learn a lot from that process as well.

13 But one of the great things it does is it starts to  
14 build an enduring relationship between us and them, which  
15 helps us show the great values that America brings as a  
16 trusted partner.

17 Senator Hawley: Very good. Thank you for that.

18 Let me ask you while I have you here, General, and come  
19 back to a topic that I think Senator King touched on, which  
20 is the very large sustained mobilization of the Guard that  
21 we are seeing now, both in response to Covid-19 and then  
22 also in response to recent civil unrest across the country.  
23 Can I just follow up on his line of questioning by asking  
24 you how this very extensive mobilization is affecting Guard  
25 training and deployment cycles, particularly in support of

1 the combatant commands?

2 General Hokanson: Senator, the great news story on  
3 that is if you go back to earlier this month when we had  
4 120,000 mobilized, it had no impact on our ability to meet  
5 all of our combatant commander and National Defense Strategy  
6 requirements around the globe. And we have been able to  
7 look forward to all of those units scheduled to deploy and  
8 make sure that they were still able to meet their deployment  
9 timelines throughout this process and going forward.

10 Senator Hawley: Very good.

11 Final question for me. If current mobilization levels  
12 persist for whatever reason, do you anticipate needing to  
13 make any adjustment or adjustments plural in order to  
14 maintain readiness levels?

15 General Hokanson: Senator, not at this time, but we  
16 remain in close communication with our States' adjutants  
17 general to make sure that we can meet those, and if we  
18 identify issues, we try and resolve them at the lowest level  
19 as quickly as possible.

20 Senator Hawley: Thank you.

21 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

22 Chairman Inhofe: Yes. Thank you, Senator Hawley.

23 I have been informed that that will conclude the  
24 numbers of Senators that will be asking questions.

25 So let me just thank both of you. It is a little

1 longer than I thought it would end up, but it does show the  
2 interest that we all have in the missions that you are  
3 taking on. And we appreciate the fact that we have the two  
4 of you. I cannot think of two people more qualified to  
5 carry on these missions than the two of you. So thank you  
6 very much for your time and your effort and your service.

7 We are adjourned.

8 [Whereupon, at 11:41 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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