

Stenographic Transcript  
Before the

COMMITTEE ON  
ARMED SERVICES

## **UNITED STATES SENATE**

HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON THE POSTURE OF THE  
DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE IN REVIEW OF THE  
DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024  
AND THE FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM

Tuesday, May 2, 2023

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4 YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM

5  
6 Tuesday, May 2, 2023

7  
8 U.S. Senate

9 Committee on Armed Services,  
10 Washington, D.C.

11  
12 The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:28 a.m.,  
13 in Room G-50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Jack  
14 Reed, chairman of the committee, presiding.

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

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

3           Chairman Reed: Good morning. The committee meets  
4 today to receive testimony on the president's budget  
5 request for the Department of the Air Force for Fiscal Year  
6 2024. I would like to welcome Secretary of the Air Force,  
7 Frank Kendall, Chief of Staff for the Air Force, General  
8 Charles Brown, and Chief of Space Operations, General  
9 Chance Saltzman.

10           Thank you, gentlemen, for your leadership, and please  
11 share the committee's gratitude with the men and women  
12 under your command for their service and to their families  
13 for their continued support. The Air Force and Space Force  
14 play a fundamental role in our strategic competition with  
15 China and other adversaries. The United States air and  
16 space power remains the finest in the world, and the entire  
17 joint force relies on these capabilities each day.

18           This is a challenging mission, as the Air Force must  
19 strike a balance between supporting its continuous global  
20 operations, while providing adequate resources to modernize  
21 its aircraft and maintain our technological edge.

22           To that end, President Biden's defense budget request  
23 for Fiscal Year 2024 includes approximately \$260 billion in  
24 funding for the Air Force, an increase of \$12.4 billion  
25 over the 2023 enacted budget. This budget request includes

1 considerable investments in platforms such as advanced  
2 battle management systems, Air Force joint all domain  
3 command and control, next generation air dominance, the B-  
4 21, hypersonics, and air and ground moving target  
5 indication.

6         These are important initiatives that will contribute  
7 significantly to modernizing the service. Indeed, the Air  
8 Force's success in the coming decades will be its ability  
9 to manage and control data. The initiatives outlined in  
10 this budget would enable the Air Force to detect, analyze,  
11 and act on information across the battlespace quickly using  
12 automation, artificial intelligence, and predictive  
13 analytics.

14         In turn, these systems will help our forces acquire  
15 targets as early as possible and rapidly deliver  
16 information to the best shooter on air, land, or sea. The  
17 committee would appreciate an update on these and other  
18 programs that are receiving increased emphasis and  
19 resourcing.

20         The budget request also proposes to retire or realign  
21 various elements of the Air Force with a net reduction of  
22 roughly 214 aircraft in Fiscal Year 2024. This would  
23 include reducing or altering the force structure for F-22s,  
24 A-10s, F-16s, F-15s, C-130s, KC-135s, KC-10s, JSTARS  
25 aircraft, AWACS aircraft, HH-60 helicopters, and training

1 aircraft. Any proposal of this sort deserves careful  
2 consideration.

3 Discussions must be had about whether any of these  
4 weapons system retirements are necessary or appropriate in  
5 the near term. We also need to evaluate our domestic  
6 industrial base to avoid making decisions that undercut our  
7 production and manufacturing capabilities. I would ask the  
8 witnesses to provide us with reasoning for the proposed  
9 retirements and assure us that any decisions are well  
10 thought out before any changes to the force structure  
11 begin.

12 General Saltzman, Congress established the Space Force  
13 in order to consolidate the numerous space activities in  
14 the Department of Defense. Given that the Space Force is  
15 only three years old, I understand it is still becoming  
16 institutionalized within the Department and there are many  
17 challenges in that process.

18 General, I would like to know how you are growing the  
19 service in terms of personnel and structures like the Space  
20 Development Agency, and how you are working to foster a  
21 service culture that can succeed in the dramatically  
22 evolving space environment.

23 Finally, now that the Space Force is up and running,  
24 it is important to present a trained force with substantive  
25 capabilities to the combatant commanders. One of the

1 capabilities for the combatant commands now under  
2 discussion is tactical space intelligence, surveillance,  
3 and reconnaissance, or ISR.

4 As our satellite constellations and sensors continue  
5 to improve, space based on ISR technologies will be able to  
6 provide global continuous information to units operating in  
7 every domain. Space is a rapidly evolving domain for the  
8 Defense Department. I want to ask the witnesses to discuss  
9 what resources are necessary to ensure its success.

10 Secretary Kendall, General Brown, and General  
11 Saltzman, thank you again for appearing today. I look  
12 forward to your testimony. And as a reminder for my  
13 colleagues, there will be a closed session immediately  
14 following this hearing in room SVC-217. Let me now turn to  
15 the ranking member, Senator Wicker.

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

3           Senator Wicker: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I join you  
4 in welcoming our distinguished witnesses, and I want to  
5 thank them for their years of service. This past year has  
6 highlighted several growing challenges confronting both the  
7 Air Force and the Space Force.

8           For example, Vladimir Putin's brutal and unprovoked  
9 war in Ukraine has demonstrated the significance of air and  
10 missile defense in denying the effective use of air power.  
11 Russia maintains a high level of capability in space, but  
12 communist China is much further ahead in comparison.

13           Meanwhile, the state of competition to use or deny the  
14 use of space capabilities is rapidly evolving, and Beijing  
15 rapidly continues to develop and field capabilities that  
16 could test our own assets in the air and in space.  
17 Although we face challenges, there are good signs of  
18 progress in this year's budget request. For example, I am  
19 encouraged to see that the Department of Air Force continue  
20 to modernize.

21           In particular, the Air Force is finally building out  
22 its fleet of fighter aircraft at a much -- at a rate much  
23 closer to what we need. It does so while continuing to  
24 develop the next generation of advanced fighters and  
25 bombers.

1 I hope our witnesses will provide an update regarding  
2 plans for the next generation of tanker aircraft,  
3 considering that the KC-46 delivery is still in progress.  
4 I am also glad to see adequate resourcing for programs such  
5 as the Sentinel B-21 and Long Range Standoff Missile.  
6 However, there are alarming reports that indicate the ICBM  
7 replacement program could be delayed.

8 We simply cannot afford to fall behind on nuclear  
9 modernization. So perhaps we will talk about that. I  
10 commend the Space Force for the effort it has put into  
11 building a hybrid architecture for missile warning, secure  
12 communications, and resilient navigation. I hope our  
13 witnesses will identify steps Congress can take to improve  
14 space capabilities more rapidly.

15 I am concerned that the Air Force is still assuming  
16 risk in the near term, particularly -- in the air domain,  
17 particularly during the years of concern to operational  
18 commanders and the national defense strategy. Mr.  
19 Secretary, there remains a large gap between warfighting  
20 needs and capability.

21 Many of the platforms Congress has supported continue  
22 to be delayed, including the F-35 Block 4 upgrades, and T-7  
23 trainer aircraft. This is particularly troubling since  
24 those delays indicate we may not have these assets to  
25 deploy them when we would need them the most. I am also



1   bothered by -- excuse me, I don't want to have a ring tone  
2   here.

3           I am also bothered by potential failure to accelerate  
4   programs such as the E-7 command and control aircraft,  
5   despite the clear Congressional signal of support last  
6   year. Other challenges stand in the way of agile combat  
7   employment.

8           To make that a reality, we need to make progress in  
9   the electromagnetic spectrum, in munitions production, and  
10  in building out the posture of basing and logistics.  
11  Further delays in these programs could have disastrous  
12  consequences.

13          The Air Force and Space Force have essential roles to  
14  play in deterring conflict in the Western Pacific. As I  
15  have said in other posture hearings, complacency is not an  
16  option. Complacency undermines deterrence. We need to  
17  proceed with urgency to get our forces the capabilities  
18  they need.

19          So, thank you for our witnesses, and I look forward to  
20  an important discussion. Thank you, sir.

21          Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator Wicker.  
22  And now let me recognize the Secretary of the Air Force,  
23  Secretary Kendall.

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

3           Secretary Kendall: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Chairman  
4 Reed --

5           Chairman Reed: Could you please pull that microphone  
6 as close as possible and ensure it is turned on?

7           Secretary Kendall: How is that?

8           Chairman Reed: Better.

9           Secretary Kendall: Chairman Reed and Ranking Member  
10 Wicker, members of the committee, thank you for the  
11 opportunity to testify today on the Department of the Air  
12 Force's Fiscal Year 2024 budget submission.

13           Approximately one year ago, I began my testimony  
14 before this committee with a quote from General Douglas  
15 MacArthur, reminding us that the history of failure in war  
16 can almost always be summed up in two words, too late.

17           That warning is even more valid today. Over the past  
18 year, under the rubric of seven Department of the Air Force  
19 operational imperatives, the Department of the Air Force  
20 has worked to define the capabilities and technologies we  
21 need, along with the programs and resources required, to  
22 deter, and if necessary, prevail over our pacing challenge,  
23 China, China, China.

24           In Fiscal Year 2024, we are requesting approximately  
25 \$5 billion as a direct result of this work, and over \$25

1 billion for operational imperative related investments.

2 War is not inevitable, but successfully deterring conflict  
3 is heavily dependent on our military capabilities.

4 In our Fiscal Year 2024 budget request, there are  
5 approximately 20 completely new or significantly reskilled  
6 program elements, some of which are classified, that we  
7 must develop, produce, and field if we desire to maintain  
8 the air and space superiority that America and our allies  
9 have counted on for decades.

10 In order to proceed with any of these programs, the  
11 Department of the Air Force needs timely authorizations and  
12 appropriations. The Department of the Air Force is ready  
13 to move forward with the next generation of capabilities we  
14 need, and there is no time to lose.

15 In addition to these new start or enhanced efforts,  
16 therefore, our training for budget includes request for  
17 additional resources to increase production and accelerate  
18 development of programs essential to the problem of the Air  
19 Force's missions, as defined in the National Defense  
20 Strategy.

21 For the Strategic Triad, we have fully funded the  
22 Sentinel ICBM, the B-21 radar bomber, the long range  
23 standoff weapon, and our nuclear command and control  
24 programs. For the conventional force, we are increasing  
25 production of both the F-35 and the F-15EX. The next

1 generation air dominance program is funded to move forward,  
2 and as indicated last year, an uncrewed collaborative  
3 combat aircraft program of record is fully funded in Fiscal  
4 Year 2024 request.

5 We are also continuing the acquisition of essential  
6 programs like the E-7 Wedgetail and the new resilient  
7 missile warning and tracking space system. As we indicated  
8 last year, hard choices have been required to move the  
9 Department into the future. We deeply appreciate the  
10 support of Congress for the divestitures we requested last  
11 year. This year, we must continue the divestment of our  
12 over 40 year old A-10 Warthog.

13 This program has served us well, but it is becoming  
14 increasingly obsolete and absorbing resources needed for  
15 higher priorities. We ask for Congress continued support  
16 for this and other identified changes we must make to field  
17 the forces we need to be successful against our pacing and  
18 other challenges.

19 But of course, it isn't all about the equipment we  
20 need to perform our missions. It is also about the men and  
21 women who serve in the total force, active, guard, reserve,  
22 and those who support them. We appreciate Congress's  
23 support for a 4.6 percent pay raise last year. This year  
24 we are asking for a 5.2 percent pay increase, the largest  
25 one year increase we have ever requested.

1           In line with Secretary Austin's taking care of people  
2 initiative, we are continuing to invest in child  
3 development centers and housing to meet the highest  
4 priority needs of our Airmen, Guardians, and their  
5 families. Like the other services, with the exception of  
6 the Space Force, the Air Force faces challenges in  
7 recruiting in a generation where the propensity to serve is  
8 the lowest that we have seen in decades.

9           We are removing barriers to service to ensure that  
10 anyone with the capability and desire can serve to their  
11 full potential. Under the National Defense Strategy, we  
12 are also strengthening teams, both in the joint force and  
13 with our allies and partners. Building these relationships  
14 and investing in our ability to work together is the  
15 essence of integrated deterrence.

16           The effectiveness and importance of these  
17 relationships are on display in Europe today, where NATO is  
18 stronger than ever. I recently returned from the Pacific,  
19 where I met with a number of our teammates who participated  
20 in the groundbreaking event for the Enhanced Defense  
21 Cooperation Agreement Air Bases in the Philippines.

22           Our budget request also supports strengthening our  
23 partnerships around the world, especially when we confront  
24 our pacing challenge and most acute threats. I started by  
25 talking about the value of time, and I will finish by

1 highlighting a legislative proposal that can save up to two  
2 years of that valuable time.

3 Our proposal would expand rapid acquisition authority  
4 so that military Departments can more quickly respond to  
5 emerging threats and take advantage of evolving technology.  
6 Within reasonable constraints, this legislative proposal  
7 would allow progress on compelling National Security needs  
8 that would otherwise be delayed until the next submission  
9 and approval of the President's budget.

10 I have been pushing this reform for many years and we  
11 look forward to working with the Congress on this proposal.  
12 In closing, I believe the Department of the Air Force is  
13 well-postured to move into the future. Our work to define  
14 that future is not complete but has produced compelling  
15 results that are reflected in our Fiscal Year 2024 budget  
16 submission.

17 We look forward to your questions today. I would like  
18 to offer a more complete briefing on the classified details  
19 of our submission. And, Chairman, I appreciate the  
20 opportunity to do that after we finish this session. Thank  
21 you.

22 [The prepared statement of Secretary Kendall follows:]  
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1 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary.  
2 General Brown, please.

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1           STATEMENT OF GENERAL CHARLES Q. BROWN, JR. USAF  
2 CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE AIR FORCE

3           General Brown: Good morning, Chairman Reed and  
4 Ranking Member Wicker, and distinguished members of this  
5 committee. I am proud to represent the 689,000 total force  
6 Airmen serving our nation. I want to thank you for your  
7 steadfast support for our Airmen and their families. It is  
8 an honor to join Secretary Kendall and General Saltzman to  
9 testify on the Fiscal Year 2024 budget submission.

10           This budget builds on the progress made in Fiscal Year  
11 2023 and marks the next milestone towards the  
12 transformation of the Air Force to address the evolving  
13 security challenges outlined in the National Defense  
14 Strategy. As I emphasized last year, we must continue to  
15 accelerate change or risk losing our strategic advantage.

16           The Department of Air Force's operational imperatives  
17 describe key capabilities that must be attained to enable  
18 the Air Force's modernization in the face of a rapidly  
19 changing threat environment.

20           Remain dedicated to ensuring our investments and  
21 resources outlined in this budget submission are in line  
22 with the National Defense Strategy so the Airforce can  
23 continue to deter adversaries, prevail in conflict, and  
24 execute our mission to fight, fight, and win air power  
25 anytime, anywhere -- not some time, in some places, but



1 anytime, anywhere.

2 This budget ensures the Air Force continues to provide  
3 the nation the assurance of air superiority, the advantage  
4 of global strike, the agility of rapid global mobility, and  
5 you combine that with the adaptability of intelligence,  
6 surveillance, and reconnaissance, and authority in our  
7 command and control capabilities, providing the ability to  
8 sense, make sense, and act.

9 This is what we must be do today and we must be  
10 prepared to do tomorrow. In order to provide these core  
11 functions to the nation, we must accelerate development of  
12 programs essential to our mission with this budget  
13 submission.

14 To provide the assurance of air superiority, we are  
15 increasing production of the F-35 and F15EX while the next  
16 generation air dominance program and family assistance  
17 continues development.

18 To provide the advantage of global strike, we have  
19 fully funded ICBM and the B-21 bomber. To provide the  
20 agility of rapid mobility, we instituted recapitalization  
21 of KC-135 fleet, KC-46 --

22 [Technical problems.]

23 General Brown: -- thank you for the opportunity to be  
24 here with you today. I look forward to your questions.

25 [The prepared statement of General Brown follows:]

1           The Chairman: Thank you, General Brown. General  
2 Saltzman, please.

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1 STATEMENT OF GENERAL B. CHANCE SALTZMAN, USSF  
2 CHIEF OF SPACE OPERATIONS

3 General Saltzman: Chairman Reed, Ranking member  
4 Wicker, distinguished members of the committee, thank you  
5 for your continued support and for the opportunity to  
6 testify on the Fiscal Year 2024 budget submission --

7 [Technical problems.]

8 General Saltzman: Sorry. I will be as loud as I can  
9 --

10 [Technical problems.]

11 Chairman Reed: We had a coup.

12 General Saltzman: No, no --

13 [Laughter.]

14 General Saltzman: How is that?

15 Chairman Reed: Much better.

16 General Saltzman: That is why he is the Secretary of  
17 the Air Force.

18 Chairman Reed: No, no, that is right.

19 General Saltzman: As the Fiscal Year 2024 budget will  
20 allow us to further efforts to develop a resilient space  
21 order battle and prepare for rapid transition to a wartime  
22 posture against any potential adversary to fight and win a  
23 high intensity conflict.

24 In conjunction with ongoing modernization projects,  
25 the Space Force has several new starts for Fiscal Year 2024

1 to support those efforts. Investing in these modernization  
2 projects will allow us to execute our assigned missions as  
3 we move forward to better posture for the emerging  
4 complexities of the space domain.

5 Space is now undeniably a contested warfighting  
6 domain. China and Russia define space as such and are  
7 investing in technology meant to undermine U.S. advantage  
8 in the domain. China, our pacing challenge, is our most  
9 substantial threat into and from space. But Russia also  
10 remains an acute threat.

11 Both present serious challenges with space  
12 capabilities that can track and target U.S. military forces  
13 on land, at sea, and in the air. Both can hold U.S. space  
14 assets at risk with cyber and electronic warfare, lasers,  
15 ground to space missiles, and space to space orbital  
16 engagement systems.

17 These systems threaten the space architecture the  
18 nation relies on for prosperity and security. To meet this  
19 challenge, the Space Force will prioritize three lines of  
20 effort. First, we will field ready, resilient, and combat  
21 credible forces. Second, we will amplify what I am calling  
22 the Guardian spirit.

23 And third, we will partner to win. These are directly  
24 in line with Secretary Austin's mission, people and team  
25 priorities. In sum, this budget request is designed to

1 deliver the forces, personnel, and partnerships the Space  
2 Force requires to preserve U.S. advantages in space.

3 To build resilient, ready, combat credible space  
4 forces, we are accelerating the pivot towards modern, more  
5 defendable satellite constellations and support  
6 infrastructure. We are conducting transformational force  
7 design analysis based on threats, operational needs, and  
8 costs so that we can maximize our budget while investing in  
9 effective missile warning, space domain awareness,  
10 communication and navigation systems.

11 Additionally, we are investing to ensure our networks  
12 are hardened to defeat cyber threats, and that we have the  
13 operational test and training infrastructure necessary to  
14 prepare Guardians for high intensity conflict.

15 With our second line of effort, we are amplifying the  
16 Guardian spirit by recruiting, developing, and retaining  
17 the best talent and empowering Guardians to succeed.  
18 Investment in space centric curriculum for entry level  
19 schools will build Guardians laser focused on space  
20 operations in both competition and conflict.

21 Guardians will be empowered through mission command to  
22 innovate and execute in those scenarios. Notably, and with  
23 Congressional support, we plan to integrate the space  
24 mission elements of the Air Force reserve into the Space  
25 Force to offer Guardians flexible career paths, including

1 both full time and part time duty to retain talent and  
2 bring private sector experience to the force.

3 The third line of effort acknowledges that the Space  
4 Force relies on partnerships to accomplish our mission. We  
5 are investing in training, education, data sharing, and  
6 integrated capabilities with our allies and partners. The  
7 Space Force will strengthen our presence in all combatant  
8 commands where Guardians are already making solid  
9 connections with allies and partners.

10 Because of its critical importance, the Space Force is  
11 collaborating with commercial space partners to build  
12 resilient capacity and leveraging emerging technologies.  
13 To enhance this partnership, the Space Force is working to  
14 eliminate barriers to such collaboration so that we can  
15 build enduring advantages and field these capabilities more  
16 rapidly.

17 In conclusion, thank you for the opportunity to  
18 discuss the Space Force's Fiscal Year 2024 budget request.  
19 The Space Force continues to be the preeminent military  
20 space organization in the world.

21 Our adversaries seek to challenge our advantage in  
22 space, but with the support of this committee, our  
23 Guardians will be able to outwork, out-innovate, and  
24 outcompete our potential adversaries to ensure that we  
25 maintain that advantage.

1           The Fiscal Year 2024 budget request will make this  
2 possible, but only if the Congress passes timely  
3 appropriations. I look forward to your questions.

4           [The prepared statement of General Saltzman follows:]

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1 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, General. I have  
2 been informed we have something more than just a microphone  
3 issue. We have a system issue. So, they are working on it  
4 right now.

5 But in the interim, we will have to share microphones.  
6 So, you can sit close together, or -- let me begin my  
7 questioning by touching on a point that was raised by  
8 Senator Wicker. That is the E-7. All of my trips to the  
9 Pacific particularly have emphasized the importance of  
10 getting this system.

11 Last year, we were able to include \$200 million extra  
12 to accelerate the production, and it was hoped that we  
13 would get one aircraft in testing by 2027. But Secretary  
14 and General Brown, that is -- what is the earliest point we  
15 think we can get the E-7 into testing?

16 Secretary Kendall: We looked hard at trying to  
17 accelerate the program, Mr. Chairman, to move the initial  
18 stages faster. We didn't find a way to do that. So, I  
19 think we are basically on track with the same schedule that  
20 we showed you last year.

21 The one thing that could be done would be to add  
22 funding that would accelerate the production of the follow-  
23 on units, not the first one, but the follow-on ones. But  
24 we were not able to afford that in our budget.

25 Chairman Reed: Now, there was, I think, a presumption



1 that we would buy the Australian version of the E-7. They  
2 are already flying the aircraft. Have we abandoned that  
3 approach?

4 Secretary Kendall: No, we are still using -- there  
5 are some modifications that have to be made for use in U.S.  
6 airspace, to comply with some of our communications  
7 requirements and so on, but they are relatively modest. We  
8 are also working with the Australians on follow on upgrades  
9 to the E-7 that would enhance its capabilities.

10 Chairman Reed: And we are -- you are asking for \$633  
11 million this year, which will be, as you indicated, to  
12 acquire long lead time items and accelerate the production  
13 of succeeding aircraft. I mean, again, I think this is  
14 absolutely essential program, given what I have heard out  
15 in the Pacific. And General, Brown, I think, would you  
16 concur?

17 General Brown: I would. And one of the things I  
18 would highlight is that in our relationship with the  
19 Australians, we are going to be able to send here in June,  
20 close to 50 to 60 of our airmen to actually start training  
21 on the E-7s. When we do get the aircraft, we will have  
22 trained operatives and maintainers to help accelerate  
23 bringing the E-7 to the -- into our inventory.

24 Chairman Reed: Very good. Another issue is the  
25 collaborative combat aircraft, which I think makes a great

1 deal of sense. That essentially a manned aircraft would be  
2 operating unmanned aircraft.

3 One of the constraints I think we have is the number  
4 of missiles available for our aircraft right now. And  
5 creating this autonomous capability with multitudes of  
6 other aircraft would compound our missile problem. Can you  
7 just comment, Secretary and General Brown, on the missile  
8 issue?

9 Secretary Kendall: We are trying to do a balanced set  
10 of investments, and that includes the weapons as well as  
11 the platforms. The budget request includes three multi-  
12 year requests for weapons systems, for missiles, for  
13 AMRAAM, JASSM, and LRASM.

14 We are also trying to increase the production capacity  
15 that you have when we get it in production. So, we added,  
16 I think, about \$1.5 billion for munitions procurement in  
17 this budget over last year's just for the reasons that you  
18 stated.

19 Chairman Reed: Thank you. And General Brown, any  
20 further comments?

21 General Brown: That extra funding will help the  
22 facilitate, so we actually -- as we, you know, funding, we  
23 can actually increase the production rate not only for  
24 AMRAAM, but JATM, which is the follow on to AMRAAM, is also  
25 going to be important aspect to support the collaborative

1 combat aircraft.

2 Chairman Reed: And this has sent a positive signal to  
3 the industrial base that you are here for the long run?

4 Secretary Kendall: Absolutely.

5 General Brown: That is correct.

6 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Mr. Secretary. General  
7 Saltzman, you referred to this in your testimony, but can  
8 you give us a quick update on the status -- and please try  
9 a microphone. I think --

10 General Saltzman: Did it work?

11 Chairman Reed: Thank you. It was the Air Force and  
12 the Space Force that combined in a few seconds and fixed  
13 it, so, here we go. Question, tests and training ranges.  
14 You are at a point now where you have to develop them.

15 They will be quite different than hundreds of acres of  
16 land someplace in the Midwest or the far West. Can you  
17 give us an idea of where you are on your range and your  
18 infrastructure for range testing?

19 General Saltzman: Yes, sir. Thank you, Senator. We,  
20 of course, have simulators and we have some very nascent  
21 early models of what I will call virtual ranges to  
22 accomplish our training. I just don't think they are  
23 sufficient yet. And primarily because they don't replicate  
24 the threat effectively.

25 And so, the budget proposal adds several hundred

1 million, about \$340 million across the FYDP in order to  
2 increase the fidelity of our simulators and allow us to  
3 inject threats into the environment so that our crews can  
4 validate their tactics and validate their training against  
5 a thinking adversary.

6 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much. Senator Wicker,  
7 please.

8 Senator Wicker: Okay. Thank you very much.  
9 Secretary Kendall, thank you for starting off with the  
10 MacArthur quote about too late. It does segway right into  
11 a number of things I mentioned in my opening statement,  
12 sir.

13 The ICBM replacement program could be delayed. That  
14 would cause us to fall further behind on nuclear  
15 modernization. Delays in the F-35 Block 4 upgrades. The  
16 T-17 train or aircraft.

17 And then the chairman has also -- has already gone  
18 into the E-7 command and control aircraft, which would  
19 replace the 1975 era AWACS. What happened to the \$200  
20 million that we provided last year to accelerate this  
21 program, which ended up not getting accelerated?

22 Secretary Kendall: Sir, are you referring to the E-7?

23 Senator Wicker: Yes, the E-7, command and control  
24 aircraft. I am sorry, did not make that clear.

25 Secretary Kendall: That program has been moving as

1 fast as we are able to move it. The -- I did a personal  
2 review of the steps that are necessary to get it into the  
3 first phase of testing, and we couldn't find a way to do  
4 that. I am not sure about the \$200 million that you are  
5 referring to and what was done with that --

6 Senator Wicker: All right, well, the chairman  
7 mentioned in his question that at the Air Force's request  
8 we provided -- we appropriated another \$200 million above  
9 the president's budget request to accelerate this program.  
10 It did not get accelerated, and we wonder why -- where the  
11 \$200 million went.

12 And then there is a larger question that the chairman  
13 alluded to, there is the E-7 Wedgetail that is being used  
14 by our allies in Australia. That is being used very  
15 effectively by them. And so, General Brown, where did the  
16 \$200 -- do you know where the \$200 million went?

17 General Brown: Some of that aspect, the money went  
18 into the initial development and getting things on  
19 contract. So, you start -- also the long lead items to  
20 develop the aircraft.

21 Senator Wicker: Okay. Well, now, Secretary Kendall  
22 was asked when this E-7 will now be ready, and I don't  
23 think we got an answer to that, Secretary Kendall. You  
24 said it would just still be on the original schedule. When  
25 would that be ready?

1 Secretary Kendall: 2027, is the year we will be  
2 fielding, because it takes two years to build the new  
3 airplane. Then we have to take another two years, roughly,  
4 to modify it and put it into testing --

5 Senator Wicker: Okay. And why --

6 Secretary Kendall: -- so the first aircraft -- 2027.

7 Senator Wicker: Why is it necessary for an aircraft  
8 that is already functioning well for one of our allies?

9 Secretary Kendall: Because we are getting new  
10 production aircraft. So, their commercial aircraft but  
11 then modified to put the radar system and the command and  
12 control systems inside them.

13 So, in order to preserve airworthiness, you have to  
14 actually acquire the commercial aircraft and then open it  
15 up to insert the other things that you need to put in it.

16 Senator Wicker: Okay.

17 Secretary Kendall: -- and that whole process takes a  
18 period of time.

19 Senator Wicker: Okay. Well, it is a fact, though,  
20 that Congress at the request of the service provided an  
21 extra \$200 million for acceleration, and we didn't get any  
22 acceleration. That is correct, is it not?

23 Secretary Kendall: I think what General Brown  
24 indicated, what you got with that was some long lead items  
25 being purchased to reduce risk in the program.

1           Senator Wicker: We didn't get any acceleration, did  
2 we?

3           Secretary Kendall: I would have to check that for the  
4 record. I am not aware that you got acceleration.

5           Senator Wicker: Okay. You get back to us on the  
6 record. But, Secretary Brown, how important is this T-7  
7 air training aircraft and to what sort of a disadvantage  
8 are we at that this has been delayed once again.

9           General Brown: The importance of the T-7 is to  
10 replace an aircraft for a 60s era T-38 aircraft. And so,  
11 as we bring it on, one of our challenges is continue the  
12 maintainability of the T-38 or the delays that right now we  
13 have with the T-7.

14           So, it is a better aircraft, the T-7 is a better  
15 aircraft. I had a chance to personally fly it in a  
16 simulator to see how it operates, but that is going to help  
17 us reduce our pilots at a -- because of a glass cockpit as  
18 well, at a better rate and to be able to transition to the  
19 current capabilities we have today.

20           Senator Wicker: Another delay. Thank you, Mr.  
21 Chairman.

22           Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Wicker. Senator  
23 Shaheen, please.

24           Secretary Kendall: Could I clarify a point for  
25 Senator Wicker? When we have talked about acceleration of

1 E-7, generally we have talked about getting more inventory  
2 sooner, not getting the first airplane sooner.

3 So, I think there may have been some confusion because  
4 of the way we have used the word accelerate. We get more  
5 inventory in the hands of people faster than we would have  
6 with the profile we initially proposed, but you don't get  
7 the first airplane faster.

8 Senator Wicker: Inventory. What do you mean by that?

9 Secretary Kendall: We, instead of going a profile of  
10 one, two, three, for example, we go one, three, three. So,  
11 you get additional aircraft sooner than you would have  
12 otherwise. So, the total deliveries are accelerated, but  
13 not the first aircraft.

14 Senator Wicker: Thank you, sir.

15 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Secretary. Senator  
16 Shaheen.

17 Senator Shaheen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Secretary  
18 Kendall and General Brown -- Secretary Kendall, you talked  
19 about timely authorizations and appropriations in your  
20 opening statement.

21 And General Brown, you also referred to on time  
22 appropriations as being critical. What will happen to your  
23 role, the role of the Air Force and the Space Force, for  
24 that matter, if the United States defaults on its debt?

25 Secretary Kendall: That is a very big question,



1 Senator. I am not an economist. I am trained in business.  
2 For any creditors to default on their debt causes a number  
3 of reactions, right. It is more expensive for you to get  
4 money.

5 Your creditors aren't as willing to lend money. You  
6 are people are not as willing to lend money to you. All  
7 the economists that I have seen suggest that it would be an  
8 absolutely devastating impact.

9 When you have -- the closest thing I have seen to this  
10 is the 2008 crisis, when the Congress was asked to pass  
11 several billion of funds to shore up the financial system.  
12 And I remember watching the screen as the stock market  
13 completely collapsed as that bill was being voted down in  
14 the Congress.

15 That is the sort of thing that we are talking about.  
16 And I think most people would predict a severe recession,  
17 at least. And then going forward, one of the biggest parts  
18 of our Federal budget is the interest on the debt.

19 If those interest rates go up, which is what happens  
20 to you when you default, if you can borrow money at all,  
21 then that expense becomes much greater and the interest on  
22 the debt is already roughly at the level of defense budget.

23 So, the short answer to your question is, it would be  
24 devastating.

25 Senator Shaheen: And you talked about the threat from

1 China, which I think we would all agree is our major  
2 competitor. What would China's reaction be to that kind of  
3 catastrophic financial outcome in the United States?

4 Secretary Kendall: That is probably beyond my  
5 expertise to comment on intelligently. But obviously,  
6 anything that damages us would be a benefit to China.

7 Senator Shaheen: Thank you. So, it is probably not  
8 good for us to default on our debt.

9 Secretary Kendall: That is a significant  
10 understatement, I think.

11 Senator Shaheen: Thank you. General Brown, during  
12 the recent appearance before the Appropriations Defense  
13 subcommittee, we had a conversation about the deficiency  
14 with the KC-46's slow guidance system, and you said you had  
15 not heard anything about that. Have you had a chance to  
16 look into that? And do you have an answer for what the  
17 impact of that will be?

18 General Brown: I regret that I haven't been able to  
19 dig into the details on that. But just in my conversations  
20 with our operators and also with AMC, the aircraft is going  
21 fairly well right now despite some of the deficiencies that  
22 we are finding. And as I think, I highlighted before, is  
23 operating and supporting all of our aircraft with the  
24 exception of the A-10.

25 Senator Shaheen: Well, I will continue to ask you, so

1 hopefully you will be able to get an answer for how that is  
2 affecting the operations of the KC-46. General Salzman, in  
3 Ukraine, we have seen the role of commercial satellite  
4 companies and how important those are, and obviously that  
5 is going to continue to be critical in terms of the Space  
6 Force.

7       You talked a little bit about the training and how to  
8 incorporate addressing -- dealing with those commercial  
9 satellites. Can you talk about how important it is to  
10 adapt our training and to really make use of the commercial  
11 innovation that is going on?

12       General Saltzman: One of the areas that I think is  
13 ripe for exploitation is the idea of virtual augmentation  
14 or virtual reality as we have seen it.

15       And there is a lot of very promising technologies  
16 associated with how you could do virtually augmented  
17 reality training so that the operators can experience  
18 something that day to day they don't get to experience in  
19 space.

20       Sometimes the orbital mechanics are hard to visualize,  
21 but you can use these tools to help you understand  
22 proximity between spacecraft, proximity of how solar arrays  
23 are turned. So, there is a lot of exploitation that we can  
24 do with those kinds of technologies, and we are looking  
25 into those with commercial industry.

1           Senator Shaheen: Good. I have actually had one of  
2 those demonstrations. They are very impressive. You also,  
3 General Salzman talked about the opportunities for full and  
4 part time availability in Space Force to bring private  
5 sector talent to the force.

6           As the co-chair of the National Guard Caucus, I know  
7 that the National Guard has a lot of interest in  
8 participating in Space Force in some capacity, and there is  
9 still a fair amount of confusion about how that is going to  
10 work. Can you talk about the progress that we have been  
11 -- we have made on how we are going to incorporate the  
12 National Guard into Space Force?

13          General Saltzman: Well, it is two different things at  
14 this juncture. First is the legislative proposal that we  
15 have put forward that helps establish the Air Force reserve  
16 space elements into the Space Force proper, a single  
17 component that would have both full time and part time.

18          We think that is a very innovative way to establish  
19 this career path flexibility that will have retention  
20 impacts for us. The second situation is the Space National  
21 Guard or the Air National Guard capabilities that are  
22 performing space, separate and distinct from the  
23 legislative proposal.

24          The most important thing to me is that we retain the  
25 capabilities that are currently in the Air National Guard.

1 It is about a 1,000 people. It is seven different states  
2 with tremendous space capabilities that we rely on every  
3 day.

4 And so, it is important that we maintain that  
5 expertise and those capabilities. What we have said is  
6 there is probably multiple ways where we can retain those,  
7 but we have to move away from the status quo because we  
8 have got this disconnect between my responsibilities for  
9 the mission, but General Brown's responsibilities to  
10 currently OT&E those space capabilities in the Air National  
11 Guard.

12 So, where status quo causes problems, there are other  
13 ways to evaluate those, and we are going through all the  
14 costing and analysis to make sure that we can provide  
15 decision makers with the right balance between the two.

16 Senator Shaheen: Well, thank you. I look forward to  
17 hearing the outcome of those discussions. Thank you, Mr.  
18 Chairman.

19 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Shaheen. Senator  
20 Fischer, please.

21 Senator Fischer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr.  
22 Secretary, I want to ask you about an underappreciated but  
23 absolutely integral part of our nuclear enterprise, and  
24 that is NC3 modernizations. Senator King often refers to  
25 that as the fourth leg of our triad, and I agree with him

1 on the absolute importance of that. Can you please  
2 describe how this budget request supports NC3 modernization  
3 and why it is so important that we get this effort right?

4 Secretary Kendall: Thank you, Senator. The NC3 is an  
5 essential part of the triad. It actually has to be secure  
6 and resilient so they can function in an emergency. What  
7 we are doing is we are replacing and getting the next  
8 generation of AEHF satellites for secure communications.  
9 We are investing in that.

10 We are also investing in the radios that are carried  
11 by some of our aircraft that are nuclear capable. And we  
12 are investing in some of our software systems that are used  
13 to manage nuclear functions.

14 So, we have fully funded investment accounts in each  
15 of those areas to make sure we stay current and provide the  
16 secure nuclear communications that are necessary.

17 Senator Fischer: Would you say we are on schedule in  
18 that modernization? Do you feel pretty confident that we  
19 are where we need to be?

20 Secretary Kendall: I am never 100 percent confident  
21 in schedules. Every new program, every development program  
22 in particular, entails risk. I am not aware of anything  
23 that -- there is nothing that is keeping me up at night in  
24 that area right now.

25 Senator Fischer: Okay. Good to hear. General Brown,

1 I would like to ask you about the Sentinel program. The  
2 Sentinel in placement is one of the largest and most  
3 complex projects that the Department has undertaken in  
4 decades. What efforts are currently being undertaken to  
5 ensure that this program remains on schedule?

6 General Brown: There are several things that we are  
7 doing to keep Sentinel on schedule. And part of that is  
8 the dialog between the Department of the Air Force with our  
9 industry partners. I meet with the CEO on a quarterly  
10 basis where we walk through where they are.

11 One of the key aspects we are looking at is trying to  
12 be more proactive than reactive on this and really thinking  
13 ahead to ensure we are doing things to drive down risk as  
14 far as supply chains, workforce. To stay ahead of, and  
15 then on top of that, as we are working through right now  
16 for the land acquisition, our working that process as well.

17 So right now, I think the dialog is important and that  
18 is what is really helping us keep things on track. So,  
19 there are no surprises or minimizes surprises, and being  
20 able to engage and mitigate well in advance of any type of  
21 event that might impact the critical path.

22 Senator Fischer: As you look ahead, and you are  
23 talking about mitigation on disruptions that can occur,  
24 what keeps you up at night?

25 General Brown: Well, just the size of -- you know,

1 the size of this particular program and the aspect of how  
2 important is to our strategic deterrence. And because of  
3 the size of the program and the time it is going to take,  
4 you know, those are the things that concern me, because  
5 there is a lot of things going to happen between now and  
6 when we fully field. But our goal here is to stay ahead of  
7 those and ensure that we mitigate any type of challenge.

8 Senator Fischer: Are we on track for that goal?

9 General Brown: We are now, and that is part of the  
10 yard work between ourselves and industry partners.

11 Senator Fischer: Okay, thank you. Secretary Kendall,  
12 I was with you on the rollout for the B-21 Raider. Can you  
13 provide us with any updates or new developments on that  
14 program?

15 Secretary Kendall: There haven't been any fundamental  
16 changes since we were there, Senator. We are still, as far  
17 as I know, on track to have our first flight later this  
18 year.

19 Senator Fischer: And can you tell me how the budget  
20 request this year is going to help to expand munitions  
21 production capacity?

22 Secretary Kendall: Yes. We are asking for multiyear  
23 production for three systems, JASSM, LRASM, and AMRAAM. We  
24 are also entering production, hopefully for JDAM, the new  
25 air to air missile. And we are going to be asking for



1 funds to increase the size of that production line, the  
2 capacity of that production line from what we had  
3 originally planned.

4 Senator Fischer: Okay, good. Also, Secretary Kendall  
5 and General Brown, I was pleased to see that there is full  
6 funding for the RC-135 program in the budget request for  
7 this year.

8 The RC-135 is highly capable IRS platform that  
9 provides critical intelligence to decision makers and  
10 enables the United States to maintain a strategic advantage  
11 over potential adversaries.

12 We see those efforts and how important they are in  
13 Ukraine and also with our NATO adversary -- or NATO's  
14 allies. Thank you for getting that in there. And I expect  
15 to see continued full support for the RC-135 fleet in  
16 future years as well. So, thank you both very much. Thank  
17 you, Mr. Chair.

18 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Fischer. Senator  
19 King, please.

20 Senator King: Thank you. Secretary Kendall, what do  
21 you -- which do you consider a more serious immediate  
22 threat to National Security, China, or the failure of this  
23 Congress to pass a budget and go with a one-year continuing  
24 resolution?

25 Secretary Kendall: They are not the same category,

1 Senator, but I take your point. We -- I mentioned time in  
2 my opening statement. It is the thing that I am most  
3 obsessed about. We can't get it back. That is  
4 irreplaceable.

5 Senator King: And how serious would it be if we had a  
6 yearlong continuing resolution instead of the passage of  
7 the budget?

8 Secretary Kendall: It would be very serious. All the  
9 new starts that I talked about earlier, all the increased  
10 efforts that I talked about, all the work -- we spent a  
11 year roughly working on what we called operational  
12 imperatives, which were the seven operational problems that  
13 we needed to solve given what the threat is doing,  
14 particularly China.

15 Senator King: Would it compromise National Security?

16 Secretary Kendall: Absolutely.

17 Senator King: You mentioned earlier, and this is sort  
18 of in the same lane, in your testimony, in your opening  
19 statement about an advanced procurement or an advanced  
20 approval for some of the work that you are undertaking.  
21 Could you expand on that a bit?

22 Secretary Kendall: Senator King, you are of an age  
23 similar to mine, I think, and when I make a reference to  
24 the movie Casablanca, you will know what I am talking  
25 about. But the movie starts --

1 Senator King: I am shocked, shocked that there is --

2 Secretary Kendall: There you go.

3 Senator King: -- going on.

4 Secretary Kendall: The movie starts with a comment  
5 about refugees who come to Casablanca and wait and wait and  
6 wait. I am waiting right now. We spent the first year I  
7 was in office defining what we needed to do to stay ahead  
8 of the pacing challenge, ahead of China.

9 And I had to wait a year to get that into the budget,  
10 get the budget submitted. Now I am waiting another roughly  
11 a year for, under normal circumstances, that budget to be  
12 passed. If there is a year continuing resolution, I will  
13 wait yet another year.

14 And that is all time that we are giving away to  
15 someone who is racing to be ahead of us technologically and  
16 field the capability. We cannot afford that time.

17 Senator King: And you are proposing a technique --

18 Secretary Kendall: What I am proposing is we wouldn't  
19 have to wait even the normal one, one year and a half. We  
20 will be able to do the low-cost initial stages of a  
21 program, do the system engineering, do the planar design  
22 work, do maybe a little risk reduction, maintain  
23 competition, make no long-term commitments, only go up to  
24 the point of preliminary design review, one of the earliest  
25 milestones.

1 All that is relatively inexpensive, but it takes time.  
2 And then Congress would have full authority to decide  
3 whether we could proceed beyond that point or not. We  
4 would probably use reprogramming for this and Congress would  
5 have authority over that.

6 So, there wouldn't be any real loss of the authorities  
7 that the Congress has over what we do, but we will gain a  
8 year and a half at least of time, lead time to getting  
9 things fielded.

10 Senator King: We are headed for a markup of the  
11 National Defense Authorization Act in about a month. I  
12 hope that you will submit your suggestion so that we can  
13 consider it as part of that process.

14 Secretary Kendall: It has been submitted, Senator.  
15 We came over from OMB. It was approved by OMB.

16 Senator King: So, you have it in our process. Thank  
17 you. General Brown, Senator Cramer and I submitted a  
18 letter some time ago to the uniformed leadership about the  
19 transition program in the military from active duty to  
20 veteran status. We got a response from the Secretary, but  
21 I view this as a uniformed issue.

22 I want the senior leadership to take this issue very  
23 seriously. Transition for veterans is an incredibly  
24 important situation because we have learned that suicide,  
25 for example, is most likely in the first two or three years

1 after separation.

2 So, I hope I can have your commitment to pay  
3 particular attention to this process. We should be  
4 attending to be sure that our soon to be veterans have all  
5 the information and contacts that they need to reintegrate  
6 into the larger society.

7 General Brown: You have my commitment. And, you  
8 know, I do take it very seriously because as you might  
9 imagine, I have a number of friends that have served, and  
10 at some point, I will also transition into -- as a veteran.

11 So, you know, the aspect of how we do a very smooth  
12 handoff in collaboration with the Veterans Affairs. But it  
13 is not only how we transition into new careers, it is also  
14 how they emotionally transition into a new life out of  
15 uniform, and I think that is a key aspect that helps. If  
16 we focus on that, I think it will also help us prevent the  
17 suicides of our veterans.

18 Senator King: Thank you. I will be submitting a  
19 question for the record in the classified session with  
20 regard to GPS denied environment. I think that is  
21 something we really need to pay close attention to.

22 The first step in any conflict is going to be an  
23 attempt to blind us, so I hope that -- I have the same  
24 recommendation to the Navy that they will relearn how to  
25 use sextants. Space Guard, General Salzman. Where does

1 that stand? We have been discussing that on the committee.  
2 What is your recommendation with regard to a reserve force  
3 or space guard to augment the capabilities of your  
4 organization?

5 General Saltzman: My recommendation at this point is  
6 to make sure we have good, validated numbers that can help  
7 us assess each of the various courses of action that would  
8 allow me to retain the kinds of capabilities that currently  
9 live inside the Air National Guard. Again, that is my most  
10 important point.

11 The expertise and the capabilities that are currently  
12 in the Air National Guard need to be harvested so we can  
13 don't create an operational gap in any kind of transition.  
14 So, my recommendation is, make sure that the costing, the  
15 number of billets, all of that data is assessed and  
16 evaluated as we look at the course of actions.

17 Senator King: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

18 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator King. Senator  
19 Cotton, please.

20 Senator Cotton: Gentlemen, thank you for your  
21 appearance here and your decades of service to our nation.  
22 Secretary Kendall, you have spoken some about accepting  
23 near term risk to fund the future force. I have gone back  
24 and looked historically at Air Force budgets for about 20  
25 years. Are you aware that the Air Force has received \$1.3

1 trillion less than the Army since 2002?

2 Secretary Kendall: I was not aware of that.

3 Senator Cotton: And almost \$1 trillion less than the  
4 Navy since 2002.

5 Secretary Kendall: No, I was not aware of that  
6 either, Senator.

7 Senator Cotton: That is after accounting for the so-  
8 called pass through budget, which I believe causes many  
9 people to include members of Congress to misperceive the  
10 Air Force's total budget. Could you share with us your  
11 thoughts about how that works?

12 Secretary Kendall: The passage of budget is budget  
13 that is included in the submission under the Department of  
14 the Air Force, but it is money that doesn't actually go to  
15 the Air Force. It is about \$40 billion.

16 For people who are familiar with the budget and used  
17 to working with it understand that they realize what that  
18 is. So, for people who are not as familiar, it can be a  
19 little confusing in terms of what our total budget is.

20 Senator Cotton: And to be clear, this is passed  
21 through budget is not for Air Force classified programs,  
22 are not only for Air Force classified programs. It is  
23 simply your budget is used as the vehicle to fund these  
24 other programs.

25 Secretary Kendall: That is correct. It goes to

1 different Departments.

2           Senator Cotton: That is why I say, I think some  
3 people misperceive the top line Air Force budget, and I  
4 worry that that might be contributing in part to why your  
5 service has had to accept this near-term risk now to fund  
6 the future force. And I think we as a Congress should try  
7 to address this situation to make sure this misperception  
8 doesn't continue.

9           Secretary Kendall: General, what I look at is the  
10 adequacy of our budget to allow us to meet our missions.  
11 And I am comfortable with the money that we are asking for  
12 this year to be able to do those functions. There is risk  
13 always, and we have tried to balance that risk, taking into  
14 account the pacing challenge in particular and trying to  
15 respond to that.

16           Senator Cotton: I want to return to both your opening  
17 statement and a question from Senator Reed about  
18 collaborative combat aircraft or CCAs. You called them an  
19 operational imperative. Can you discuss in a little more  
20 detail about how significant these CCAs are for both  
21 deterrence and your combat capability?

22           Secretary Kendall: Our analysis shows that they are  
23 very cost effective. That they basically, by augmenting  
24 crewed aircraft with relatively inexpensive CCAs, you get a  
25 net combat capability, which is much more significant than



1 if you tried to do it with all fully crewed aircraft.

2 And we -- our current anticipation is that the cost  
3 with CCA will be a fraction of the cost of, say, an F-35.  
4 The other advantages for overall affordability, it can make  
5 the force much more affordable. You get a lot more combat  
6 power for the same total dollars that you might be  
7 committing. So, it has big benefits in both ways.

8 Senator Cotton: And you said again today in your  
9 opening statement that the history of failure in warfare  
10 can almost always be summed up in two words, too late, a  
11 famous Douglas MacArthur quote, but I think you have said  
12 it enough that maybe one legacy of your tenure is that  
13 people think it is a Frank Kendall quote, and I think that  
14 is apt today as it was in MacArthur's time.

15 What would be the significance if China were to field  
16 such unmanned aircraft along with its manned fleet before  
17 the United States? How could delays in CCA funding impact  
18 that possibility?

19 Secretary Kendall: China is aggressively trying to  
20 field the capability to defeat our ability to project  
21 power. They have been working on it for at least 20 years.  
22 Their long range weapon systems targeting our airfields,  
23 our carriers, our satellites, etcetera, are a threat that  
24 we really have to cope with.

25 But they are also modernizing their air capability.

1 And I think, Senator Cotton, you have seen the classified  
2 briefing that we have been providing. I can't go to great  
3 details here, but they have analyzed carefully how we fight  
4 and what we fight with, and they have been thoughtful about  
5 what they need to invest in to try to circumvent that or  
6 defeat it.

7 And that is the reason that I am so obsessed with  
8 getting on with the next generation capabilities. Holding  
9 onto things that are becoming obsolete over time just  
10 doesn't make any sense. We have got to get to the next  
11 generation.

12 Senator Cotton: It is my understanding that this  
13 fleet of unmanned aircraft would be a mix of aircraft with  
14 both weapons, kinetic weapons, let's say missiles, bombs,  
15 that sort of thing, but also other sensors or electronic  
16 warfare systems. Is that correct, Mr. Secretary?

17 Secretary Kendall: Yes, that is correct. One way to  
18 think about it is that the pod or the weapon that might  
19 have been under the wing of a crewed aircraft is now flying  
20 in a separate aircraft and managed by that that commander  
21 of that aircraft.

22 The analysis that we have done shows that the  
23 adversary has to honor each of those aircraft as it is a  
24 full threat. And that gives you a great advantage relative  
25 to the cost of having those things in the air.

1           Senator Cotton: So, it creates a targeting problem  
2 for our adversary to have so many aircraft up in the air.

3           Secretary Kendall: It both increases the targeting  
4 problem, but also gives them tactical dilemmas that he  
5 doesn't have to face right now. We can sacrifice one of  
6 these aircraft, put it well out in front, use it to draw  
7 fire and force the other side to expose itself and then be  
8 subject to engagement. So, they are -- we call them  
9 attritable.

10           They are not expendable, but we can afford to lose  
11 some of them operationally. There is nobody in them that  
12 we are going to lose. So, it changes our tactical options  
13 substantially.

14           Senator Cotton: While therefore enhancing  
15 survivability of our manned aircraft.

16           Secretary Kendall: Exactly right.

17           Senator Cotton: Thank you.

18           Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Cotton. Senator  
19 Hirono, please.

20           Senator Hirono: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Joint  
21 Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam faces significant infrastructure  
22 challenges due to consistently deferred maintenance.

23           For the Air Force specifically, Hickam airfield is in  
24 urgent need of almost \$1 billion over the next several  
25 years to repair the taxiways our planes take off and land

1 on. Secretary Kendall, is this budget request adequately  
2 prioritizing maintaining Air Force facilities in the  
3 Pacific?

4 Secretary Kendall: We are prioritizing our facilities  
5 in the Pacific, largely because of the threat that we face  
6 out there. And one of the operational imperatives was  
7 resilient forward basing.

8 So, the thing that we are prioritizing is improving  
9 the hardening and the equipment, if you will, of our bases  
10 so that we can make agile combat employment a reality. I  
11 believe that Hickam specifically falls under our Joint Base  
12 construct, which is operated by the Navy. And we are  
13 working with the Navy to try to have our priorities funded.

14 Senator Hirono: That is why I have a question for  
15 General Brown. Repairing the Hickam airfield will require  
16 support from the Navy and the Joint Base. Are there issues  
17 of prioritizing Air Force needs of the Joint Base?

18 General Brown: You know, having served as the  
19 Commander of Pacific Air Forces and being stationary at the  
20 Joint Base, there has to be collaboration between the Air  
21 Force and the Navy.

22 We have been able to highlight more recently our real  
23 concerns with the airfield pavement. And so, it has gotten  
24 the attention of the Navy and other parts of the  
25 Department, so I think we are on a good path to actually

1 ensure that aspect because it is going to help us project  
2 combat power.

3 Senator Hirono: Thank you. The Agile Combat  
4 Employment Strategy requires the appropriate posture and  
5 supporting infrastructure at locations throughout the  
6 Pacific, like the islands of the Compact of Freely  
7 Associated States.

8 That will be Palau, Marshall Islands, Micronesia,  
9 Guam, and Northern Australia. Secretary Kendall, does the  
10 Air Force have the appropriate forward air basing it needs  
11 to execute agile combat employment?

12 Secretary Kendall: We are working to increase that  
13 air basing in places that you mentioned, in Japan, wherever  
14 we are based in the Pacific. Our operational success out  
15 there depends on making the concept of agile combat  
16 employment a reality.

17 And that includes, and it is a priority for us in the  
18 budget because it is something we can do fairly quickly  
19 relative to other things that we might want to do that  
20 would take a development program, for example.

21 So, we do have quite a bit of money in the budget  
22 focused on adding capability to support agile combat  
23 employment, including in the locations that you just  
24 mentioned, Senator.

25 Senator Hirono: General Brown, what would be the

1 impact to deterrence capabilities in the Pacific if  
2 dispersed infrastructure in the places that I am mentioning  
3 are not prioritized?

4 General Brown: It decreases their options. And by  
5 having more and more options to be able to operate, that  
6 complicates the calculus for our adversaries. And by  
7 having and being able to show different locations we can  
8 operate from, project combat power from, a credible combat  
9 force that adds to deterrence. And having that ability is  
10 important.

11 Senator Hirono: I am sure both of you acknowledge the  
12 importance of the compacts of free association that we are  
13 currently concluding.

14 And I just want the two of you to be aware that not  
15 only should we be funding the appropriate amounts to the  
16 compact nations themselves, but when their citizens come to  
17 our country and they are living in states throughout the  
18 U.S., that they are able to access the social service  
19 programs that they should be entitled to, and I would like  
20 those kinds of provisions to be included in the compact.

21 And I mentioning this to you because the compacts  
22 involve not just the DOD, but Interior, as well as State.  
23 General Saltzman, the Department of Defense is increasingly  
24 turning to space-based systems for its ballistic cruise and  
25 hypersonic missile defense sensing needs. This is of

1 particular interest to Hawaii.

2 So, what are you doing to ensure that these programs  
3 remain on time and on budget? And also, these space  
4 systems come with their own unique risks. How is the Space  
5 Force ensuring these capabilities are resilient in the face  
6 of disruption, whether through a cyber or kinetic attack?

7 General Saltzman: Yes, Senator, I think you will see  
8 that this particular budget submission addresses those  
9 concerns. First, the missile warning, missile tracking  
10 layer that we are pivoting to is a proliferated  
11 constellation, which means it is more resilient by design  
12 as there are more satellites performing the mission.

13 Because they are in lower Earth orbit, they are  
14 actually more high fidelity, so it is better tracking for  
15 some of the threats that we are seeing come out of our  
16 pacing challenge. Also, we are investing heavily in the  
17 cyber defense capabilities of the networks that are  
18 required to maintain and operate those systems as well.  
19 So, this budget definitely addresses your concerns.

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

21 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Hirono. Senator  
22 Rounds, please.

23 Senator Rounds: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Gentlemen,  
24 first of all, thank you all to you and to your families for  
25 your service to our country. I would also like to thank

1 General Brown and Secretary Kendall for your most recent  
2 visit to Ellsworth Air Force Base.

3 Ellsworth is very excited to be the first bed down for  
4 the B-21 training squadron and the first operational  
5 squadron in the entire community. In fact, the entire  
6 State of South Dakota is very excited to see that coming  
7 their way.

8 I would also like to take this opportunity to  
9 recognize the Tigers of the 37th Bomb Squadron in their  
10 recent win of the STRATCOM's coveted Omaha Trophy. Shows  
11 that they are the best of the best and we are proud of  
12 them.

13 General Brown and General Salzman, there have been  
14 efforts most recently regarding an attempt to utilize a  
15 part of the electromagnetic spectrum for purposes other  
16 than DOD purposes, and specifically the 3.1 to 3.45  
17 gigahertz band or the S-band of the spectrum.

18 I would like for the record, if you could confirm for  
19 us that your forces do utilize that portion of the spectrum  
20 and that, at this unclassified level, could you share with  
21 us just how significant that part of the spectrum is to  
22 your forces regarding radar communications and so forth?  
23 General Brown.

24 General Brown: Senator Rounds, we do use that part of  
25 the spectrum for our operational capabilities, and there is



1 a number of weapon systems that operate within that band.  
2 And I will just give you one example, our C-130 station  
3 keeping.

4 If we -- that band was actually moved and we had to  
5 redesign, it would cost roughly about \$2 billion just for  
6 that one platform. And we have a number of platforms that  
7 operate within that -- within the S-band, so it is critical  
8 that we understand the impact on our security, not only for  
9 us to be able to operate, but also having to -- if we had  
10 to redesign systems, if we lost access to that part of the  
11 electromagnetic spectrum.

12 Senator Rounds: Thank you, General. General  
13 Saltzman.

14 General Saltzman: We have a -- that particular band  
15 is a radar band that allows us to look into deep space.  
16 And we currently have a developmental radar that is going  
17 to significantly enhance our ability to do space domain  
18 awareness.

19 If we were not able to use that piece of spectrum, not  
20 only would we lose the time that we have already invested  
21 in, as much as several hundred million dollars that we have  
22 already put into development, but it would also mean that  
23 we have to use a different portion of the electromagnetic  
24 spectrum, which isn't as capable in determining and  
25 discriminating capabilities in deep space.

1 Senator Rounds: Physics still count, don't they?

2 General Saltzman: They do, sir.

3 Senator Rounds: Thank you. General Brown, multiple  
4 independent studies, as well as at least one by the Air  
5 Force, indicate the numbers of bombers needed to meet  
6 requirements greatly exceed the minimum number currently  
7 being planned for.

8 In your professional military judgment, what is the  
9 approximate number of bombers needed to maintain a credible  
10 deterrent against two near-peer competitors?

11 General Brown: Senator, the couple of things I think  
12 about is not only the number but also the capability of the  
13 bombers. And the two bombers that we are -- right now, the  
14 three bomber fleet, going to two bomber fleet, the B-21, as  
15 you highlighted that will start out at Ellsworth, but also  
16 as we upgrade the B-52, and so there will be 100 B-21s and  
17 75 B-52s.

18 We will continue to do analysis. I mean, that is what  
19 we -- the analysis we have right now, based on the threat.  
20 We will continue to pay attention to the threat, and that  
21 will also influence if we have to go beyond those numbers  
22 from a bomber capacity standpoint.

23 Senator Rounds: It sounds like a lot of bombers until  
24 you realize that not all of them are capable at all times.  
25 They are all undergoing maintenance at one point or

1 another. What percentage of the bombers would you normally  
2 expect to be operational at that point?

3 General Brown: You know, ideally, you know, when we  
4 look at our day-to-day operations, not only for our  
5 bombers, but really all of our fleet, you know, an 80  
6 percent aircraft availability because you are going to have  
7 some aircraft down for maintenance, down for depot type  
8 operations. That is the goal of what we want to get to or  
9 above, not only for our bombers, but really across all of  
10 our platforms.

11 Senator Rounds: Thank you, sir. General Saltzman, as  
12 you know, I have concerns about the DOD's approach to  
13 providing space based, ground moving target indication  
14 capabilities to tactical DOD users following the divestment  
15 of the JSTARS platform.

16 Can you share with me how you are making sure that the  
17 JROC validated requirements are captured in the  
18 acquisitions process of a platform whose acquisition is  
19 executed by the intelligence community? And will the DOD  
20 maintain milestone authority?

21 General Saltzman: Currently milestone decision  
22 authority, obviously that is acquisitions, and it will be a  
23 collaborative effort with the IC. But Mr. LaPlante in USD  
24 A&S does have that milestone decision authority, or  
25 portions of it.

1           From my vantage point, in terms of requirements and  
2 meeting those requirements, the Space Force is responsible  
3 for writing the capabilities development document, which  
4 documents those high-level requirements to make sure that  
5 the JROC validated requirements are satisfied in the  
6 program.

7           And then perhaps most importantly is the concept of  
8 employment. U.S. Space Force has responsibility to right  
9 that concept of employment to make sure that operationally  
10 it is a DOD mission that meets the warfighter requirements  
11 regardless of who develops the sensor.

12           Senator Rounds: Thank you. And Secretary Kendall,  
13 just one very quick comment. I hope that in the future,  
14 with the help of this committee, when asked what keeps you  
15 up at night, I hope there will be a point here shortly  
16 where you can respond the same way that Secretary Mattis  
17 did, Secretary of Defense Mattis did, and said, it is not  
18 things that keep me up at night. I keep other people up at  
19 night. And I think that is our goal. Thank you.

20           Secretary Kendall: I share that with you, Senator.

21           Senator Rounds: Thank you, sir. Thank you, Mr.  
22 Chairman.

23           Chairman Reed: Thank you, Stand Rounds. Senator  
24 Ernst, please.

25           Senator Ernst: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. And

1 thank you, gentlemen, for your testimony and your service  
2 to our great nation. I want to continue the discussion  
3 about our bomber force and the future of it.

4 And in a conflict with China, Air Force bombers will  
5 need to go after hundreds of targets over the vast  
6 distances of the Pacific. And yet today's Air Force is  
7 very much centered on fighters, with about 15 fighters for  
8 every one of our bombers.

9 If you look back to the 1960s, the Air Force had to  
10 deliver long range strikes against the Soviets, and the  
11 make-up of the Air Force at that time was about three  
12 fighters to every bomber. So, we just need to make sure  
13 that the mix is appropriate for today's fight. And again,  
14 if we are looking at a fight with China, we want to make  
15 sure that we are appropriately balanced.

16 So General Brown, we will start with you. Tell us a  
17 little bit more about the critical role of the bomber in  
18 projecting power, especially as we are looking towards the  
19 east and a potential fight with China.

20 General Brown: Excuse me -- one of the key areas when  
21 you think about our bomber fleet, is that to be able to do  
22 -- come from long distances away from where the airfields  
23 that you would take off from, would be under attack by and  
24 large.

25 The overall capacity of our bombers to do a number of

1 missions, to be able to carry how long they will be able to  
2 stay airborne. And so, it provides that capability to  
3 carry a number of long range standoff weapons in support of  
4 operations.

5 That is the viability of the bomber, and it is the  
6 capability that provides to be able to help us generate  
7 combat power.

8 Senator Ernst: Yes, very important. Thank you, sir.  
9 And to the extent you can speak to it, how would the B-21  
10 modular design allow the bomber to take on a wider range of  
11 missions, whether it is a strike, mission, ISR, or even  
12 electronic warfare?

13 General Brown: I think one of the areas as we start  
14 going down the path of digital engineering and looking at  
15 how we do mission systems, many things are more software  
16 based today than they were back in history.

17 And so that ability to be able to rapidly reprogram  
18 these to be the threat, to bring in additional capability  
19 from a weapon standpoint as well, that is a part of the  
20 modular aspect and how we are able to work, you know, the  
21 aspects of the engineering to bring in capability much  
22 faster than we have in the past.

23 Senator Ernst: Yes, exactly. I am intrigued by  
24 modular designs in this platform and many others as well.  
25 Secretary Kendall, with our major increases in the Air

1 Force budget, then would increasing the B-21 buy require  
2 divesting legacy aircraft?

3 Secretary Kendall: Senator, I share your concern  
4 about the future size and structure of the Air Force. I am  
5 not sure that the future Air Force will look all that much  
6 like the one we have today.

7 And one of the things that may change, this shift in  
8 the balance that you talked about between shorter range  
9 tactical air capabilities and longer range strike  
10 capabilities the bombers provide. Within whatever  
11 constraint we have, we will probably end up, I think, at  
12 some point talking about adjustments to what the current  
13 ratio is.

14 We don't have many options to make those changes right  
15 now. We are preserving the bomber fleet pretty much as  
16 much as we can. We are fortunate that the B-52 was so  
17 robustly designed that we can keep it pretty much forever.  
18 So, we are using it as a bus, essentially, and we keep  
19 upgrading it, putting new engines on it, new radar.

20 The B-1 continues to service. It has got a lot of  
21 capacity. B-2s have been harder to maintain. B-21 is our  
22 option in the near-term to bring in new capability, and we  
23 are just starting to get it into production. Current  
24 numbers 100. I don't know what it will end up being. It  
25 may be larger than that. I would not be surprised by that.

1           Senator Ernst:   And Secretary, thank you for that.  Is  
2   there a way that the Air Force could control unit costs if  
3   it ramps up production of the B-21?

4           Secretary Kendall:  Cost and quantities are always  
5   connected, and you do reduce cost by increasing the  
6   production rate, definitely.

7           Senator Ernst:  Okay.

8           Secretary Kendall:  The B-21 is being built on a line  
9   that was built for the development program and just be  
10   continued to use for production at a relatively modest  
11   rate.  I think if we were going to significantly increase  
12   our production, we have to go relook at how we retool for  
13   manufacturing B-21.  But that is not a near-term decision.

14          Senator Ernst:  Wow.  Well, I appreciate it,  
15   gentlemen.  My grandfather built bombers in Middle America  
16   during World War II.  And it is amazing that here we are  
17   all those years later, and yet we are still heavily reliant  
18   upon its capabilities.  But thank you all very much for  
19   being here today.  Thank you for your service.

20          Chairman Reed:  Thank you, Senator Ernst.  Senator  
21   Cramer, please.

22          Senator Cramer:  Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  And thank  
23   you to all of you for your service and for being with us  
24   today.  Since bombers are the topic of the moment, General  
25   Brown, I want to talk a little bit about not so much



1 bombers, but disbursement of bombers and taking advantage  
2 of some opportunities, particularly as it relates to BASE,  
3 or bomber agile combat employment, and the distribution of  
4 the nuclear capabilities.

5 As you know, of course, there used to be six big bases  
6 in the northern tier between Michigan and Montana. Today,  
7 there are two and one of them being Minot, the other one  
8 being Grand Forks in North Dakota.

9 The Grand Forks course was a bomber base. It had a  
10 300-foot-wide runway. It has been reduced to 150-foot  
11 runway, based on the movement of the lights. It is due for  
12 improvement in 2025, and I am just wondering if you would  
13 be open to looking carefully at perhaps widening that  
14 runway for, you know, base type of use in the future.

15 Again, keeping in mind that in 2025, it is due for  
16 some improvements anyway. Because it really sets -- we are  
17 down to the last two in that tier.

18 General Brown: Senator, we can definitely look at  
19 that. Particularly as you said that they are already going  
20 to be doing some modifications. It is probably -- and any  
21 time you are doing, it is probably a good time to take a  
22 look at and make sure we do not miss any options to provide  
23 us opportunities and capabilities in the future.

24 Senator Cramer: Well, I always like it when my  
25 state's interests match up with common sense and the

1 military. So, all I can ask is you take a good look at it.  
2 Thank you. General, I also want to talk to you about, you  
3 and I a couple of years ago talked about the deliveries of  
4 the MH-139A helicopter.

5 Secretary Kendall happened to be in Minot around  
6 Christmas time, and so he saw those drafty old, you know,  
7 Vietnam era helicopters that our Airmen, and particularly  
8 the security forces, have to use in Minot. And we couldn't  
9 go for a ride that day because of weather. Not uncommon in  
10 Minot.

11 The delay at that time, couple of years ago, the delay  
12 in delivery was due to FAA certification, as you no doubt  
13 recall and know. That is now done, but we see that there  
14 may be a delay again, and I am just wondering if you have  
15 some sort of an update on the MH-139As and when we might  
16 expect to see them?

17 General Brown: Yes, we just finished up the  
18 production development phase and then in Fiscal Year 2024,  
19 we expected four of the MH-139s. They start their initial  
20 operational testing as well, so we will be beyond that FAA  
21 certification and then that will help us start to the path  
22 of a follow-on procurement to start fielding the aircraft.

23 Senator Cramer: Well, is four enough? I mean, is  
24 there a way to escalate? Is there any chance we can  
25 accelerate that? I mean, I would even question whether the

1 Hueys, the old ones, are mission capable at this point.

2 General Brown: We will always take a look to see if  
3 there are ways to accelerate, you know, bringing on a  
4 capability and at the same time balance the rest as we  
5 bring that capability on to the force.

6 Senator Cramer: I understand. Maybe one of the  
7 things that could help and inspire you would be a ride in  
8 February. But anyway, we will work on that another time.  
9 Thank you very much. Thank you, all three of you. Thank  
10 you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

11 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator Cramer.  
12 Senator Tuberville, please.

13 Senator Tuberville: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thanks  
14 for being here today, gentlemen, and your service. General  
15 Saltzman, U.S. policy is to have at least two space launch  
16 vehicles to launch DOD and NRO satellites. Space has  
17 changed a lot in 20 years. That law was written in 2004.

18 Meanwhile, the demand for launch vehicles, commercial,  
19 civil, and defense, has skyrocketed. Given the dramatic  
20 changes that have occurred in space, the increase in demand  
21 and the need for greater resiliency, redundancy, and  
22 responsiveness, what would be your best military advice for  
23 policymakers when it comes to space launch vehicles? Would  
24 you like to see at least three?

25 General Saltzman: Well, assured access to space is a

1 critical capability that we have. The way I would  
2 characterize it is for me to say that we have assured  
3 access to space, I need at least two providers capable of  
4 putting satellites on orbit.

5 But it is to the advantage of the U.S. Government, it  
6 is to the advantage of the U.S. Space Force to have as many  
7 viable launch providers as possible. It creates a level of  
8 agility. It creates a level of resiliency that is  
9 important, which is why our NNSL, National Security space  
10 launch phase three contract that we have out for comments,  
11 is looking at two lanes.

12 One that maximizes the number of emerging launch  
13 providers to participate, while preserving that assured  
14 access that are our most highly risk averse mission sets.  
15 And so, I think we have struck that balance appropriately.

16 Senator Tuberville: Thank you. Secretary Kendall,  
17 the U.S. Air Force wants its next generation air refueler  
18 tanker KC-Z to reach additional operational capabilities by  
19 2040. Clearly, that creates a gap in critical wartime  
20 capability. Where are we on the KC-46 Pegasus procurement  
21 to ensure we have full capabilities?

22 Secretary Kendall: Senator, we have fundamentally  
23 changed our tanker acquisition strategy, where we need to  
24 move to a next generation taking capability which is  
25 resilient enough to survive against a pacing challenge.

1           So basically, the current plan is to go from the KC-46  
2 into what we call the next generation aerial refueling  
3 system, or NGAS, which will be a new design, designed to be  
4 resilient enough to survive in the environment that we  
5 anticipate. We want to get to that design as quickly as we  
6 can.

7           So, there will be some gap between the currently  
8 contractual options that we have for KC-46, to when we can  
9 get the NGAS system into production. We would like to make  
10 that gap as small as possible. So, what we are requesting  
11 in this budget is the funding to start down the road  
12 towards this program and do the analysis of alternatives to  
13 define that design and its requirements.

14           But we need to get on with this as quickly as we can.  
15 It is one of the areas in which time is very important to  
16 us. It won't be 2040. It is going to be much sooner than  
17 that. But we don't know -- until we define the design and  
18 move it forward, we don't know exactly what that date will  
19 be. I am shooting for the early 2030s.

20           Senator Tuberville: General Brown, your thoughts on  
21 that?

22           General Brown: As the Secretary described it, you  
23 know, our tankers are very important to be able to generate  
24 that combat power. And the aspect of -- by changing the  
25 strategy to move things further left and get to next

1 generation air refueling system is a way to move a bit  
2 faster to -- that capability is going to be a bit more  
3 survival and to be able to create greater combat power.

4 Senator Tuberville: Yes, especially for the Indo-  
5 Pacific. I mean, it is going to be a, you know, we are  
6 going -- a greater need, obviously. Secretary Kendall, it  
7 wouldn't be a hearing if I hadn't asked you about Space  
8 Command.

9 You and I have talked about this quite a bit. Are we  
10 getting closer? You know, I would hate that this, you  
11 know, we are getting -- you know, we are on the verge in  
12 our lifetime of a dangerous world.

13 And, you know, we might be fighting this thing from  
14 space if we don't watch it, and we want to make sure that  
15 we are doing the right things. I hope this thing doesn't  
16 get political. It looks like it is. You know, we have  
17 been waiting for two years for a decision.

18 Give me your thoughts on what is going on with the  
19 Space Command. General Dickson said in his last hearing  
20 here that he needed a decision. So, what are your  
21 thoughts?

22 Secretary Kendall: I don't have anything new to  
23 report today, Senator. I am really hopeful that we will be  
24 able to get a decision out as soon as possible, but I don't  
25 have any new information to provide.

1           Senator Tuberville:  None whatsoever?  Are we even  
2 thinking about it or was this -- we just -- it just goes in  
3 and out?  I mean, it is --

4           Secretary Kendall:  I just don't have anything more to  
5 provide.

6           Senator Tuberville:  But do you do you think it is  
7 important for us to have a permanent base?

8           Secretary Kendall:  Yes.

9           Senator Tuberville:  Yes.  And, you know, I think we  
10 all do.  And Nebraska, who is on the list, number two, and  
11 then San Antonio, number three, I think we all are kind of  
12 sitting around waiting to see what is going to happen.

13           But we sure would like to get this decision made and  
14 moved on down the road and have the opportunity to build on  
15 it instead of having guesswork.  So, thank you.  Thank you  
16 very much.

17           Chairman Reed:  Thank you, Senator Tuberville.  
18 Senator Warren, please.

19           Senator Warren:  Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  And thank  
20 you to our witnesses for your service.  We often talk about  
21 the role of bombers and fighter jets in National Security,  
22 but our greatest strength as a nation is our people.

23           The Senate approves thousands of military promotions  
24 every year, and typically this vote is a formality.  But  
25 the Senator from Alabama has weaponized a policy

1 disagreement about abortion to politicize the military and  
2 place holds on all, all military nominations.

3 This brings the careers of nearly 200 officers, people  
4 who have served their country for decades, to a screeching  
5 halt. General Brown, can you explain what steps does a  
6 colonel or a brigadier General have to go through before  
7 the president sends a promotion over to the Senate for  
8 approval?

9 General Brown: Well, each one of those offers goes  
10 through a thorough review that actually starts initially in  
11 the Department of the Air Force. We ensure there is no  
12 adverse information.

13 That same process gets repeated through the Joint  
14 Staff, through the Office of Secretary of Defense, over at  
15 the White House, before that member's record comes and is  
16 delivered to the Senate for promotion. So, it takes  
17 several months before it actually gets to here to the  
18 Senate.

19 Senator Warren: Okay. So, you are not just sending  
20 these promotions over on a whim -- it looked like a good  
21 idea. I take it that these individuals are being  
22 recommended for higher rank because they are our military's  
23 best, and they have proven themselves to the highest  
24 degree. Is that fair?

25 General Brown: It does. It also it shows that they



1 have future potential.

2 Senator Warren: Future potential as well. Now,  
3 recruitment has been a challenge for most of the military  
4 services, but retention levels have stayed quite high. The  
5 Air Force currently retains about 90 percent of its people  
6 at critical decision points.

7 That means that they complete a commitment, and the  
8 vast majority are choosing to re-enlist and stay with the  
9 Air Force. That is really good news. Secretary Kendall,  
10 does it worry you that if our men and women in uniform see  
11 that their promotions can get held up indefinitely because  
12 one Senator has an issue with one DOD policy, that that  
13 might hurt your ability to retain the best and the most  
14 qualified people in the Air Force?

15 Secretary Kendall: Senator Warren, it does have an  
16 impact, definitely. I also want to mention it has an  
17 impact on families, too. We generally rotate people  
18 through the summer months and people need to plan for that.

19 They have to plan to get their children to schools,  
20 where they are going to be established and in their new  
21 homes. So, there is a very personal toll this takes as  
22 well. One of the things that motivates our people in terms  
23 of retention or not is how they feel that their families  
24 are being treated.

25 Things like childcare and education and health care

1 are all very important factors. And we ask our military  
2 families to move multiple times during their career. It is  
3 something that they accept. But when they are planning for  
4 that, and it is disrupted, it has very negative impact and  
5 it definitely impacts on retention as well.

6 Senator Warren: And do you think these families want  
7 to be made a political football?

8 Secretary Kendall: I know that they do not.

9 Senator Warren: So, Secretary Kendall, what is the  
10 National Security impact of these holds for the Air Force?

11 Secretary Kendall: The biggest impact is that people  
12 who should be coming into leadership roles don't arrive on  
13 time. So, someone who is already there has to step up,  
14 either someone -- Generally people, if they are going to  
15 retire, they are still going to retire. So, a junior  
16 person will step up and be acting for a period of time.

17 Those people are limited in what they can do. They  
18 generally are not going to make any major initiatives or  
19 make any major changes because they know they are not going  
20 to be there very long. They expect that they will be  
21 replaced very shortly.

22 So, they will keep the trains running, but they are  
23 not going to move the organization forward as much as they  
24 might be otherwise.

25 Senator Warren: Well, the Senator from Alabama is

1 holding up promotions across all of the services. But I  
2 took a look at the Air Force nominees in particular, and  
3 one thing that was really striking to me is that the vast  
4 majority of them studied at the Air War College in Alabama.

5 The State of Alabama has invested a lot in these  
6 leaders and the Senator from Alabama doesn't seem to care  
7 about that. So, Secretary Kendall, unlike many of the  
8 other services, the Space Force is meeting its recruiting  
9 goals.

10 The Space Force is obviously still very young. These  
11 are defining years for your service. What are the  
12 readiness impacts of these holds on Space Force?

13 Secretary Kendall: I am not aware of any General  
14 officers that are being held for the Space Force at this  
15 time. But the same generic impact would happen there as  
16 would happen on the Air Force. The Space Force is meeting  
17 its recruiting goals because it is an exciting new  
18 opportunity for people, and it is relatively small, and it  
19 is relatively modest numbers that it is seeking.

20 Senator Warren: Well, thank you very much. You know,  
21 holding the promotions of every single senior military  
22 nominee is not democracy, it is extortion, and this kind of  
23 extortion has serious consequences for our national  
24 defense.

25 This actively hurts our ability to respond quickly to

1 threats around the world. And as you point out, Secretary  
2 Kendall, this is really painful for military families who  
3 have already been called on to give so much. We need to  
4 lift these holds. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

5 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Warren. Senator  
6 Budd, please.

7 Senator Budd: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And again,  
8 thank you all for being here, for those behind you and  
9 those you represent as well. And considering the Senator  
10 from Massachusetts's remarks, Secretary Austin can solve  
11 this with a single stroke of the pen.

12 So, I was able to make that several weeks ago very  
13 clear. So, change the policy, solve the problem.  
14 Secretary Kendall, based on the president's budget, the Air  
15 Force is requesting \$2.9 billion, or about \$317 million  
16 more than last year to purchase 24 F-15EXs, and that is to  
17 replace the remaining C and D model F-15s. Does that sound  
18 about right? Thank you --

19 Secretary Kendall: Yes, sir. It is replacing another  
20 incremental of F-15Cs.

21 Senator Budd: Yes, sir. Thanks. I think the Air  
22 Force budget makes it very clear, so, again, I appreciate  
23 you clarifying that. What is not clear to me is the Air  
24 Force's plan for the F-15E, Echo, fleet, including the  
25 squadrons at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in North

1 Carolina.

2 I know Ranking Member Wicker was able to spend time  
3 there during his service, though it is a special place for  
4 many of us. The Air Force just completed major upgrades to  
5 the F-15E fleet, including replacing the outdated radars.

6 This investment by Congress and the Air Force  
7 drastically improves the aircraft's air to air, and air to  
8 ground targeting capabilities. Does that sound about  
9 right?

10 Secretary Kendall: Yes, sir.

11 Senator Budd: Thank you. The Air Force is now in the  
12 process of adding the Eagle passive active warning and  
13 survivability system, or E-PAWSS, to these aircraft, which  
14 will offer improved defensive situational awareness and  
15 electronic attack capability. Correct?

16 Secretary Kendall: Yes, Senator.

17 Senator Budd: So now, reading from page 261, this is  
18 volume two of the aircraft -- excuse me, the Air Force's  
19 Aircraft Procurement Justification book, which states that  
20 F-15 E-PAWSS procurement plans have been applied to the Air  
21 Force F-15E divestment plan and will result in 99 E-PAWSS  
22 modified aircraft.

23 Now, one can read this to mean, and it has been  
24 reported that the Air Force plans to shrink the size of the  
25 F-15E fleet from 218 aircraft to just 99 aircraft by Fiscal

1 Year 2028. Is that a correct interpretation of the Air  
2 Force divestment plan for the F-15E?

3 Secretary Kendall: I would have to check to confirm  
4 that, Senator, but I have no reason to believe it is not  
5 correct.

6 Senator Budd: Thank you. I would ask you to check.  
7 And Mr. Secretary, will you commit, after you check, to  
8 providing my staff a detailed briefing on the Air Force  
9 long term plan for the F-15E within the next two weeks?

10 Secretary Kendall: I can promise to give you that. I  
11 can't assure you that it will be within two weeks. But I  
12 will do my best to do that.

13 Senator Budd: As soon as able, thank you. So, in  
14 addition to the F-15E divestment, you want to divest 32 F-  
15 22s Block 20 aircraft, all of the U-2s, all MQ-9 Reapers,  
16 all RQ-4 Global Hawks of the Block 40 aircraft, and F-16  
17 modernization would be cut. The F-15EX procurement  
18 objective was 144 aircraft, but now it is just 104  
19 aircraft. Sound right?

20 Secretary Kendall: Some of that is correct. I am not  
21 sure about some other parts. We are not divesting all the  
22 MQ-9s, for example.

23 Senator Budd: Okay.

24 Secretary Kendall: And I believe your numbers on the  
25 EX were correct.

1           Senator Budd:  If you would check on those numbers, if  
2 you would, please.  What is going to replace -- what is  
3 going to replace all these fighter aircraft in the ISR  
4 platforms?  And the question really is on what schedule?

5           Secretary Kendall:  Over the FYDP, we do come down  
6 about 14 percent in total number of fighters.  The problem  
7 we have is that the oldest fourth generation fighters are  
8 just not capable against the threat.  And when they go up  
9 against fifth generation aircraft, they do not do well at  
10 all.  We have got a lot of exercises that demonstrate that  
11 to us.

12           The F-15E, which you are concerned about, we are going  
13 to be keeping that for some time.  And as you mentioned,  
14 there is some upgrades still underway.  We are not as with  
15 the numbers I think that you indicated.

16           As far as you mentioned, Seymour Johnson, I am not  
17 aware of any near-term plans to change anything at Seymour  
18 Johnson, but we can give you more details on that when I  
19 give you the details that you asked for.

20           Senator Budd:  The question, please.  Fiscal Year  
21 2028, if you would.  Thank you.

22           Secretary Kendall:  I will let you know.  Overall, we  
23 are trying to move towards a next generation set of  
24 capabilities.  So F-35, NGAD to replace the F-22s, and F-  
25 15EX, and F-16s, more modern F-16s are basically going to

1 be the fighter fleet of the future. We are going to add to  
2 that the CCAs that we talked about earlier in the  
3 testimony.

4 Senator Budd: Thank you. So, I understand the  
5 divesting to invest concept, but I am alarmed at the risk  
6 and the timing. Roughly you have about 5,100 aircraft and  
7 it is going to shrink to about 40 -- a little over 4,400 by  
8 2028.

9 And most of those reductions are fighters. So, my  
10 concern is that this represents an invitation to China to  
11 be even more aggressive. Any comments on that or concerns?

12 Secretary Kendall: We look at total combat capability  
13 of the fleet and we are increasing that as we buy fifth  
14 generation aircraft.

15 Senator Budd: Thank you. I yield --

16 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator Budd.  
17 Senator Rosen, please.

18 Senator Rosen: Well, thank you, Chairman Reed. And  
19 thank you for all of you for being here, for your service  
20 to the nation, and for everyone that works with you. And I  
21 want to build on what Senator Warren was talking about a  
22 little bit, about our military families, about how much  
23 they sacrifice, how much they do to really keep us safe and  
24 protect us, and it is important that we take care of them,  
25 too.



1           So, Nellis Air Force Base in Southern Nevada, there is  
2 a housing shortage. So, General Brown, I have raised this  
3 before in committee several time. Our wonderful junior  
4 enlisted Airmen and Airwomen station in Nevada's Nellis Air  
5 Force Base, their average only 12 months in the  
6 dormitories, being forced to move off base into very  
7 expensive private housing in the community due to these on-  
8 base housing shortage.

9           And in Nellis, the dormitory master plan reflects a  
10 shortage of about 500 rooms. And the base has identified a  
11 need for two more dormitories. So, I am really  
12 disappointed that neither a new dormitory is in the Air  
13 Force's Fiscal Year 2024 budget, or in the Future Years  
14 Defense Program, or even on your unfunded priorities list.

15           So, General Brown, how are you going to help our  
16 youngest service men and women here at Nellis, and of  
17 course at other places around the country, provide more  
18 support for them to do their jobs and serve our country?

19           General Brown: Senator, as you highlighted, it is  
20 very important. We need to take care of our -- most  
21 importantly, our junior Airmen, because that actually  
22 impacts our retention. We do have two dorm projects that  
23 were going through the initial stages for Nellis, in  
24 addition to money we are putting into renovating the many  
25 of the dorms that already exist.

1           Having been in Nellis several times, most recently in  
2 January, and the conversation on not only the dorm capacity  
3 but how we work as well with the community to find  
4 affordable housing. One of the areas that I would also  
5 highlight as we focused on not only affordable housing, but  
6 the difference in how we raised the basic allowance for  
7 housing for a junior Airmen.

8           It was raised by about 21 percent. I mean, this is  
9 something we are paying close attention to, not only at  
10 Nellis, but I would say around the Air Force as we are  
11 seeing areas from housing standpoint, housing prices have  
12 gone up. But really working closely with the communities  
13 to try to find opportunities, particularly when we have a  
14 bit of a deficit in our dorms at specific locations.

15           But we are going to continue to work to put more  
16 energy into the dorms at Nellis to do those renovations,  
17 but also the couple of dorm projects that I mentioned.

18           Senator Rosen: And I would be remiss if I didn't say  
19 thank you in responding to our letters, for improving the  
20 speed and access for the base housing allowance when  
21 servicemen, Airmen do transition to off base housing.

22           Getting that money quickly, faster. They are paid the  
23 least among everyone and they are often the youngest, so it  
24 is very challenging. So, I appreciate the cooperation and  
25 attention you have been paying to that. And then I want to

1 move on to some of our military families that actually have  
2 children.

3       They need childcare. It is really important.  
4 Missions go 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, right. In the  
5 military, doesn't rest. And so, Secretary Kendall, our  
6 Airmen stationed at Creech Air Force Base just outside Las  
7 Vegas, now they do the MQ-9 Reaper program, amongst other  
8 things. They struggle to find adequate childcare because  
9 their shifts are often outside the normal business hours  
10 due to the drone programs and other things they do.

11       It is 24-hour support. And the DOD's new in-home  
12 childcare fee assistance pilot program, it was launched to  
13 help provide in-home childcare solutions for our service  
14 members, especially in regions with high demand. I am  
15 happy to see that you extended this pilot program to Las  
16 Vegas. However, I am understanding now that the program  
17 has a lot of red tape, that it is really difficult  
18 requirements, and essentially is rendering in-home  
19 childcare reimbursement unavailable to Nevada's military  
20 families.

21       So, Secretary, can you commit to me to work to make  
22 this program better for Nevada families? They have to show  
23 up 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to complete the mission.  
24 We have to be there for their families. What can we do?

25       General Brown: Senator, I couldn't agree with you

1 more. I have made that commitment. I have driven from  
2 Nellis off to Creech, so I know what those people have to  
3 do, and I can really appreciate the childcare difficulties  
4 associated with having to provide childcare near your home  
5 and then make that commitment to go back and forth.

6 We have the pilot program, as you mentioned. I was  
7 not aware of the red tape issues until you highlighted  
8 them. But we will take a look at that and see if we can do  
9 something to make it much more accessible to people.

10 Childcare is the problem that I hear most about from  
11 our families. There is a shortage of childcare staff  
12 around the country. We are trying to address that with a  
13 number of initiatives to improve our paying compensation,  
14 provide, in the case of the Air Force, free childcare for  
15 staff members, first child, and then deductions for the  
16 rest.

17 We are working hard to have more in-home childcare  
18 providers to increase the availability of childcare. So,  
19 we are doing a number of things in that area. But I will  
20 take a specific look at the problem you mentioned about the  
21 pilot program and see if we can reduce the red tape.

22 Senator Rosen: Perfect, thank you. We will look  
23 forward to following up. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I  
24 yield.

25 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Rosen. Senator

1 Schmitt, please.

2 Senator Schmitt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would  
3 like to, from the outset here, ask unanimous consent to  
4 submit for the record this Washington Post investigative  
5 story entitled, Pentagon Buries Evidence of \$125 Billion in  
6 Bureaucratic Waste from 2016.

7 Chairman Reed: Without objection.

8 [The information referred to follows:]

9 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1           Senator Schmitt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Secretary  
2 Kendall, I would want to ask you about this, because you  
3 play a starring role in this article, as it turns out.  
4 There was a report that the Pentagon actually commissioned  
5 in the business -- or the Defense Business Board, as you  
6 are aware, as you are nodding here, identified over \$125  
7 billion worth of bureaucratic waste.

8           And you were instrumental in burying that report. And  
9 I want to ask you about this, but before I do, and you  
10 deserve an opportunity to sort of explain yourself here,  
11 but fundamentally, in this report or the reporting on the  
12 report that was buried, DOD employed -- employs more than 1  
13 million people in back-office positions, and we have 1.3  
14 million troops on active duty.

15           That is almost a 1 to 1 ratio. The report also laid  
16 out that there was a clear path to saving over \$125 billion  
17 in the next five years by trimming that bureaucracy. The  
18 greatest contributors to the savings are early retirements  
19 and reducing services from contractors.

20           But that \$125 billion, whether it is \$125 billion or  
21 some factor below that is a startling number. And just to  
22 put that in context, that amounts to 50 Army brigades, ten  
23 naval carrier strike group deployments, or 83 F-35 fighter  
24 wings for a full five years.

25           I want to ask you, what was your role in this? And is

1 there anything to be learned from this report that never  
2 saw the light of day?

3 Secretary Kendall: The report definitely saw the  
4 light of day. It was published, and nobody tried to  
5 suppress it, Senator. So, that is completely incorrect.

6 Senator Schmitt: Well, there is some emails from you,  
7 actually, that you were very aggressive in making sure that  
8 this wasn't given any credibility.

9 Secretary Kendall: It has no credibility.

10 Senator Schmitt: Okay.

11 Secretary Kendall: I am very familiar with that  
12 report. It was a very amateurish effort. It essentially  
13 made analogies between the Government and the Department of  
14 Defense, and companies that were selected in the commercial  
15 role, which had no real valid comparison.

16 And then it said that because these companies could  
17 save x percent of their cost, therefore, the Department of  
18 Defense must be able to save the same percentage. It was  
19 nonsense.

20 Senator Schmitt: Okay. So, you were in that  
21 procurement role -- when you were in that procurement role  
22 -- you are now Secretary of the Air Force. I want to ask  
23 you, let's just say you are right. Let's say that it has  
24 no validity, which I don't believe.

25 Whether it is 100 percent or 20, whatever that number

1 is, what are you doing right now as the Secretary to cut  
2 out waste? Are you doing anything? If you identified  
3 anything, have you done anything?

4 Secretary Kendall: We have set a number of management  
5 initiatives in place to try to introduce well-defined  
6 metrics for each part of the Air Force, each part of the  
7 enterprise -- all the different functional pieces.

8 Senator Schmitt: Have you realized any savings from  
9 this? Have you realized any savings from this?

10 Secretary Kendall: Yes, we have.

11 Senator Schmitt: Okay. I would like to follow up  
12 then to find out exactly what that is.

13 Secretary Kendall: Certainly.

14 Senator Schmitt: Okay. And the reason why I am  
15 asking is we are clearly, whether you want to call it a  
16 pacing challenge or a chief adversary with China, they are  
17 not messing around.

18 And I just don't think there is -- we have to have a  
19 sense of urgency, I think, in making sure that every dollar  
20 the taxpayers are putting forward, and I am somebody that  
21 is going to be advocating for, you know, an aggressive  
22 posture here, that we are not letting any of that go to  
23 waste.

24 And sort of following up on that, in March, I sent a  
25 letter to Secretary Austin asking him some fairly simple



1 questions about civilian workforce. There are recruitment  
2 issues. There is ready -- you know, readiness challenges.

3 And I was asking him specifically how many DEI related  
4 positions exist in the Department of Defense. And I want  
5 to ask you, how many DEI positions exist under your  
6 purview?

7 Secretary Kendall: I would have to get you that for  
8 the record.

9 Senator Schmitt: Okay. Will you be responsive?  
10 Secretary Austin has not been responsive, so I want to just  
11 find out what we are dealing with here, the number of jobs.  
12 And I also want to ask you, how many mandatory DEI training  
13 sessions were conducted last year?

14 Secretary Kendall: I would have to get that for the  
15 record also. Our DEI training sessions are prescribed by  
16 law. I think they are in the NDAA from 2019, if I  
17 remember. They are prescribed certain numbers of hours in  
18 different aspects of our training.

19 Senator Schmitt: Okay. We would like to get those  
20 materials actually too. We have had a hard time actually  
21 getting those materials.

22 Secretary Kendall: We can get that for you.

23 Senator Schmitt: Okay. Thank you. And then  
24 Secretary Kendall and General Brown, lastly, I do want to  
25 ask, I saw today actually it was reported that the Air

1 Force announced that the Davis-Monthan Air Force Base will  
2 be fielding a new special operation wing that will offset  
3 the impact of the loss of the A-10 mission there.

4 I know you mentioned the A-10 in your introductory  
5 comments, Mr. Secretary. You are aware that the 442nd  
6 fighter wing out of Whiteman Air Force Base in Missouri  
7 houses some of the best and most experienced fighter pilots  
8 and maintainers in the world, yet we and they have yet to  
9 learn what their follow-on mission will be once the A-10 is  
10 divested.

11 Given the ongoing pilot shortage and recruitment  
12 challenges we have, it is important to ensure that the  
13 442nd get a follow-on mission. Secretary Kendall, do you  
14 agree it makes sense to leverage those existing talents,  
15 the fighter aircraft experience, the fighter pilots, the  
16 maintainers at the unit, the 442nd, as you divest in the A-  
17 10 -- divest from the A-10?

18 Secretary Kendall: Senator, our approach to divesting  
19 the A-10 is to try to replace fighter mission -- another  
20 fighter mission, if possible. And if not, then a flying  
21 mission. And if we can't do that, there are a number of  
22 other missions that are very important to the Department.

23 We have talked about electronic warfare here. Cyber  
24 is another one. ISR, intelligence. All of those things  
25 matter. So, in every case where we are taking aircraft

1 out, we are trying to make sure that a viable long term  
2 mission replaces that mission.

3 Senator Schmitt: When do you expect to announce that  
4 follow on mission for the 442nd?

5 Secretary Kendall: I would have to get that for you.  
6 I don't know when --

7 Senator Schmitt: Okay. We are very interested in  
8 that. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

9 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Schmitt. Senator  
10 Kelly, please.

11 Senator Kelly: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Secretary  
12 Kendall and General Brown, General Salzman, good morning.  
13 Thank you for being here. For Secretary Kendall and  
14 General Brown, I want to thank you for your continued  
15 collaboration as we secure a long-term future for the  
16 Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Tucson.

17 I have lost count of all the meetings that we have  
18 had, but I think our work together has brought real  
19 progress, and I am encouraged by the current plan to bring  
20 new, enduring missions to Davis-Monthan that would keep the  
21 base at the center of our National Security for years to  
22 come, as it should be.

23 The new plan would bring in additional search and  
24 rescue presence and brand-new electronic warfare platforms  
25 to DM that are important as the Air Force modernizes. The

1 electronic warfare platforms, which is the new Compass Call  
2 aircraft, would be entirely based at DM, and the new  
3 Special Ops power projection wing would bring additional  
4 new flying missions and some exciting capabilities to DM  
5 under this plan.

6 General Brown, can you comment on this wing's  
7 importance in the context of the Air Force's overall  
8 strategy?

9 General Brown: Sure, Senator. Just as the name  
10 implies, the aspect of power projection. And with our SOF  
11 force from Air Force Special Operations Command, that will  
12 be part of the base, in addition to the electronic warfare  
13 capability from the EC-37B, helps us be able to execute  
14 that power projection aspect.

15 I think the other beauty of the -- of coming into  
16 Davis-Monthan is being able to bring special operation  
17 capability out to the Southwestern United States, and the  
18 range capability, and the ability -- they are able to train  
19 in the Western United States, not only in Arizona, but in  
20 other parts of the United States, will also help us with  
21 that power projection.

22 Senator Kelly: Yes, thank you. We have, you know, a  
23 very unique kind of weather situation, combination of  
24 weather and ranges. And also, this plan does have  
25 important aspects for our National Security.

1           And importantly, it retains the same number of  
2   quality, high paying jobs in Tucson. And I am glad to see  
3   that the site activation task force has now begun its work  
4   at DM to make preparations for these new missions, and I  
5   know you requested some site and environmental review  
6   funding in the budget request.

7           And for my part, I will be working to ensure that that  
8   gets over the finish line in this committee, as well as  
9   strong funding to advance the procurement of our new  
10  electronic warfare aircraft for DM and other assets in this  
11  plan.

12          Secretary Kendall, this is -- this plan is ambitious,  
13  and I support that, but bringing this new mission and  
14  modernizing the others has a lot of moving parts here.  
15  What assurances can you provide me that you will be able to  
16  manage all these elements and stick with the timeline?

17          Secretary Kendall: I can assure you that we will be  
18  paying a lot of attention to this and doing everything we  
19  can to assure that it happens as planned. I was just at  
20  Davis-Monthan. Got some great people there, and we want to  
21  make sure we do what we have laid out in order to support  
22  them.

23          Senator Kelly: And anything specifically that you are  
24  doing to avoid any potential delays?

25          Secretary Kendall: I think we are working with all

1 the affected organizations right now to make sure that that  
2 planning is in place. I know the Special Operations people  
3 in particular are leaning forward to try to be prepared for  
4 this. And we talked about the E-37s earlier and what is  
5 going on there. So, I think we are in generally good  
6 shape, Senator.

7 Senator Kelly: So full transparency is very important  
8 for me. So, could you please make sure you highlight any  
9 potential issues to Congress, to this committee, as soon as  
10 they are encountered? That would help us get through this  
11 as expeditiously as possible.

12 Secretary Kendall: I will do that. General Brown,  
13 are you aware of anything that is --?

14 General Brown: No particular issues. And having just  
15 finished the first SAG activation task force, I think we  
16 will be able to identify if there is any critical aspects  
17 that we need your support on. And also, we also  
18 appreciated the opportunity to meet with the community  
19 leaders as well. That happened roughly about the same time  
20 frame.

21 So, I think a good dialog, and we want to continue  
22 that dialog, and work -- collaborate to make sure we make  
23 DM successful.

24 Senator Kelly: Right. Thank you. I look forward to  
25 working with you both through this process and making sure

1 we stay on track. I also want to flag a totally separate  
2 issue in, you know, the SOUTHCOM region that I think could  
3 become a serious problem.

4 So, China is looking to sell fighter aircraft to  
5 Argentina, potentially use that sale to create a foothold  
6 for future military basing in the Western hemisphere, and I  
7 think we need to be very vigilant on this.

8 We can counter their pitch here by facilitating the  
9 transfer of Danish F-16s to Argentina. That is a  
10 possibility. This is not just a transfer of aircraft. You  
11 know, it has real geopolitical and strategic importance.

12 And so, I just want to make you aware of this and just  
13 get your thoughts. I am already over my time, but I have  
14 had a series of conversations about this with U.S. Southern  
15 Command, with a number of our allies, and I think the Air  
16 Force has a real role to play here.

17 And if I could just get another 30 seconds, if  
18 Secretary Kendall or General Brown can comment.

19 Secretary Kendall: I am aware of the case, Senator  
20 Kelly, and I agree with you that it is important. I think  
21 it is working its way through the interagency process right  
22 now. But I think there is an understanding of the  
23 importance of it for the reasons that you said.

24 Senator Kelly: All right. Thank you. Thank you, Mr.  
25 Chairman.

1 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Kelly. Senator  
2 Scott, please.

3 Senator Scott: Thank you, chair. Secretary Kendall,  
4 can you just want to talk about what you do, you know,  
5 every day to try to save money and how the process works  
6 and -- because I assume it is part of what you have to do  
7 every day, because you have you probably have a lot of  
8 requests. So how do you go through the process?

9 Secretary Kendall: We try to discipline ourselves,  
10 obviously, about how we operate. Generally speaking, we  
11 are operating the current force at what I would call an  
12 acceptable level, and we look at things like sustainment  
13 and readiness and so on.

14 There is no place that I can think of, frankly, where  
15 we are fat. The number that was mentioned earlier, if I  
16 could just find -- it assumed there was a \$25 billion  
17 saving per year over the five years to get the \$125  
18 billion. If I could find \$5 billion, I would be just so  
19 -- I would be thrilled.

20 We had to work very, very hard to find the \$5 billion  
21 that we put in with the operational imperatives. The  
22 Department of Defense is not sitting there with a lot of  
23 excess cash lying around waiting to be found. That is not  
24 the way we are operating. I don't think there is any part  
25 of the Department that isn't operating on the edge of where



1 it would like to be.

2 I know General Brown or Saltzman may talk about that,  
3 but when you look at weapons systems sustainment accounts,  
4 you look at facility sustainment, you know, we are doing, I  
5 think, reasonably well by our people. In terms of  
6 compensation, we have got the pay increase and I don't  
7 think anyone should fault us for that.

8 That comes first. But we are operating in a way which  
9 is designed to use our funds as efficiently as we possibly  
10 can. We are constantly looking for efficiencies and  
11 savings, but when we find them, there are many uses for  
12 those funds that are immediately available in a reasonable  
13 priority.

14 So, there isn't -- the perception that there is a lot  
15 of waste in the Department and there is money laying around  
16 to be found is just simply not valid. I would let my  
17 colleagues comment if they would.

18 Senator Scott: Do you guys want to add anything?

19 General Brown: You know, what I find is we have more  
20 requirements than we have on resources. And so, you know  
21 --

22 Senator Scott: It is like running a company. Same  
23 thing.

24 General Brown: Same -- and this is the part where the  
25 Secretary, myself, and General Saltzman spend a lot of time

1 with our staff determining how best to apply those  
2 resources to get us to not only take care of Airmen,  
3 Guardians, and their families, but the broadest, the most  
4 combat capability that each of those dollars will buy.

5 Senator Scott: Yes.

6 General Saltzman: I would just add, it is a  
7 continuous process to scrub requirements, whether that is  
8 hardware software requirements, whether that is personnel  
9 requirements, whether that is policy requirements.

10 We are in a continuous evaluation of those. And one  
11 thing I will give Secretary Kendall for is we don't show up  
12 to his conference rooms without data to support our  
13 decision-making process.

14 And so, I think that has been valuable as we have  
15 -- as we look at different alternatives or different ways  
16 of doing our day to day business, we have to show up with  
17 data to make sure we get it right.

18 Senator Scott: Thanks. Secretary Kendall, first off,  
19 I appreciate what you said about A-10s, so hopefully we are  
20 making progress on that. I think it is the right thing to  
21 do for the country. Can you talk about homestead? I guess  
22 there are rumors that there is an interesting closing  
23 homestead. Is there anything happening on that?

24 Secretary Kendall: I have not heard that rumor,  
25 Senator Scott. I am not aware of any -- homestead.

1           Senator Scott: All right. If there is, if somebody  
2 would just call me and let me know. It is a big deal, as  
3 you expect. It is a big deal for Florida, right. Next,  
4 could you guys just talk about, do you have adequate  
5 resources to deter just two things if you want, and I know  
6 we don't have a lot of time, so two things.

7           Do you have adequate resources to deter China? All  
8 right. And when you talk to your friends and try to  
9 explain why we should help Ukraine and why should we be in  
10 position to deter China and Taiwan, what do you say to  
11 them?

12           I mean, this -- you know, the global order doesn't  
13 sound very interesting to people. So, how do you say it to  
14 the just a layperson.

15           Secretary Kendall: The answer to the first question  
16 is yes, but we are being challenged. I have not seen as  
17 aggressive or as capable a strategic competitor ever and  
18 that includes the Soviet Union. I had 20 years as a cold  
19 warrior.

20           So, we have got to stay ahead of China. And our  
21 deterrence in the region depends upon our relative  
22 capabilities. And China has been pretty smart about their  
23 investments and trying to attack what they see as our  
24 dependencies.

25           As far as Ukraine is concerned, China is watching

1 Ukraine, and they are watching to see if Russia can get  
2 away with naked aggression and if there is a united  
3 response against it that is effective or not.

4 They are watching the economic consequences. They are  
5 watching how the alliance plays out in terms of its  
6 solidarity and other support. I have a litany of things  
7 that I think Xi Jinping that I would like him to learn from  
8 the Ukraine experience.

9 One is that the short war you expect may not be the  
10 war you get. One is that your military may not be as good  
11 as they think -- as they are telling you they are. Another  
12 is the economic consequence of aggression may be more than  
13 you can stand.

14 I hope those are all lessons he is getting, but we are  
15 not through this yet. We have a ways to go. And I think  
16 it is admirable that the NATO alliance is now stronger  
17 rather than weaker. That is not what Mr. Putin expected to  
18 have happen. And we need to continue down that path.

19 And it is definitely being watched by China very  
20 carefully, and we want them to get the right lessons from  
21 this.

22 Senator Scott: Anybody else want to add anything?

23 General Brown: Senator, I think we just take a look  
24 at history, and you think about the global order. It was  
25 in the interwar years and into World War II. Small events

1 of any type of crisis can start a firestorm and this is  
2 something we have got to pay attention to.

3 And this is why it is important for our own security,  
4 for economic security, and our National Security, that we  
5 pay attention to what is going on around the world.

6 And it is probably, as the Secretary highlights,  
7 probably the most complex environment we have been in, in a  
8 number of years.

9 General Saltzman: Just very quickly, I would add, as  
10 Secretary Kendall mentioned, that it is one of the  
11 asymmetric advantages of the United States that it can  
12 build a coalition of like-minded nations. It is a  
13 tremendous power, strength, and showing a demonstrated  
14 commitment to our allies and partners, and I believe China  
15 is taking notice.

16 Senator Scott: Right. Thanks for what you guys do.

17 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Scott. Senator  
18 Peters, please.

19 Senator Peters: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Secretary  
20 Kendall, during Operation Desert Storm, the Air Force  
21 fielded 139 fighter squadrons spread out across the entire  
22 service, 49 of those squadrons belonged to the National  
23 Guard.

24 And according to Air Force numbers, the total fighter  
25 fleet has been reduced now to 81 squadrons, with the Air

1 Guard only fielding 26 of those. That means that over the  
2 past 30 years, we have seen nearly a 50 percent reduction  
3 in Air Guard fighter fleet.

4 And this comes at a time when global tensions are at  
5 their highest in 50 years, and as we just heard from your  
6 answers to the previous Senator, the complexity is  
7 significant. We have a hot war in Eastern Europe.

8 We have a looming threat of conflict in the Pacific.  
9 So bottom line, I am concerned about the fact that we have  
10 a declining fighter plane fleet, and we are at a time where  
11 we need every single plane that we can possibly get our  
12 hands on. We have let our fighter fleet shrink  
13 significantly and are now continuing to reduce the number  
14 of fighters in order to, "divest to invest."

15 As you are aware, Selfridge Air National Guard Base is  
16 home to A-10s that will be divested by the end of the  
17 decade with no replacement mission yet stated. You and I  
18 have spoken considerably about this issue and will continue  
19 to do that in the future. But my question is a little  
20 broader about procurement and actually having aircraft that  
21 will be stationed in various places, and certainly related  
22 to modernization.

23 So, I have a specific question is, how is the Air  
24 Force actually budgeting for the procurement of aircraft  
25 across the service necessary to ensure the full

1 recapitalization of the Air National Guard fighter fleet?  
2 And what support specifically do you need from Congress in  
3 order to accomplish that procurement budgeting that you are  
4 working on?

5 Secretary Kendall: Thanks, Senator Peters. The  
6 -- now, I was in the Pentagon for the first Gulf War, and  
7 what we had at the time was a legacy force essentially left  
8 over from the Cold War. So, the numbers were quite a bit  
9 higher than they ultimately came down to be.

10 The way we are budgeting is to try to balance the  
11 near, mid, and long term capabilities of the Air Force.  
12 And what we look at is total combat capability. And what  
13 we are trying to get to is the next generation of  
14 capabilities as quickly as we can, while we sustain the  
15 current force which is adequate to meet our needs.

16 The A-10 in particular is an aircraft that has been  
17 -- it is over 40 years old now. It was a fantastic  
18 aircraft in its day, but it is aging out and we are going  
19 to have to replace it. And we are working with you and the  
20 other communities to try to do that in a way which has a  
21 minimal impact and preserves some of our capabilities.

22 You mentioned the Guard. I have had a job opportunity  
23 now to visit a lot of Guard units, including yours in  
24 Michigan. They are highly capable units, and they are very  
25 important and cost-effective part of the force. We want to

1 sustain the right balance between active guard and reserve  
2 and have the right mix of mission capabilities.

3 That mix is changing over time. And as war becomes  
4 more about information dominance than it does necessarily  
5 about kinetic power, we need things like ISR and  
6 intelligence and cyber and EW, electronic warfare.

7 So, we are trying to move towards that world and get  
8 that mix right. So, the recapitalization of the fighter  
9 fleet, if you will, is one part of a much deeper and richer  
10 fabric of things that we are trying to do.

11 We also, of course, have the Space Force, which  
12 introduces a whole new set of capabilities as well. And in  
13 some cases, space capabilities are going to be taking over  
14 for some of the traditionally air capabilities that we have  
15 had. Areas like communications and surveillance, for  
16 example.

17 So that is the picture that we are dealing with, and  
18 we are trying to get to the new capabilities that we want  
19 to field in greater numbers in the future as quickly as we  
20 can. That is a priority for us. While we sustain a  
21 reasonable sized current fleet. Does that help?

22 Senator Peters: It is. Thank you. Secretary, for  
23 more than 13 years, the Air Force has been investigating  
24 PFAS contamination at the former Wurtsmith Air Force Base  
25 in Oscoda, Michigan.



1           As a result of the contamination, the Michigan  
2 Department of Health and Human Services has issued five  
3 separate public health warnings to the community, unsafe  
4 fish, venison, small game, as well as for unsafe shoreline  
5 foam -- and foam, as well as unsafe drinking water.  
6 However, there is still, still no cohesive cleanup plan in  
7 place, and the residents of Oscoda are understandably  
8 frustrated at what they perceive as being unnecessarily  
9 dragged-out process on the part of the Air Force rather  
10 than dealing with the problem directly.

11           And so instead of waiting for additional studies to be  
12 completed by either the Air Force or the EPA, and before  
13 seeing any progress, the community is right now seeking  
14 urgent action to stop the flow of PFAS contaminated  
15 groundwater into the public waterways in the Oscoda area.

16           These are called interim remedial actions, and there  
17 is a plan that has been submitted by the State of Michigan  
18 and local experts outlining exactly what needs to happen.  
19 So, my question for you, sir, is, can I get your commitment  
20 to taking these interim remedial actions now, now without  
21 any further delays?

22           Secretary Kendall: Senator, I would have to take a  
23 look at that plan. I am not aware the details of it. What  
24 we have been doing with PFAS is, first of all, making sure  
25 people have safe water to drink. And we have had a program

1 to make sure that that was the case. In some cases,  
2 providing bottled water to people.

3 We have stopped the use of PFAS for the most part. We  
4 are getting it out of all of our installations where it has  
5 been a fire suppressant. We haven't found a replacement  
6 for PFAS to put out fires yet, aqueous firefighting foam,  
7 but we are still doing research on that.

8 And as you know, I think EPA has come out with what we  
9 think will be a final criteria, four parts per trillion,  
10 which would then be the basis for cleanup efforts. And in  
11 the meantime, we have been trying to understand the extent  
12 of pollution around our bases so that we could fully  
13 appreciate the depth of that as far as a health hazard, but  
14 also so that we could do cleanup effectively.

15 So, we are making progress, even though it seems very  
16 slow. I am not aware of the interim plan that you  
17 described, but we will take a look at that. And if there  
18 is an Air Force responsibility there, we will meet that  
19 responsibility.

20 Senator Peters: Could you make a commitment to look  
21 at that plan so that we can have another discussion in the  
22 near future?

23 Secretary Kendall: I will look at it and have a  
24 follow up conversation with you, yes, sir.

25 Senator Peters: Thank you.

1 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Peters. Senator  
2 Sullivan, please.

3 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
4 Gentlemen, thank you for your testimony. General Brown and  
5 Secretary Kendall, I want to just get your assessment. I  
6 am going to do a little bragging here on behalf of the  
7 active duty and Guard forces in Alaska, with the spy  
8 balloons and the Russian bear bomber incursions, and the  
9 rescue mission, and the search and rescue mission on some  
10 really challenging weather events where they are saving  
11 lives.

12 Our Air Forces in Alaska have just been, in my view,  
13 doing exceptional work over the last several months. They  
14 do it all the time. These are hard missions, right, going  
15 to intercept a, you know, spy balloon or unidentified  
16 aircraft in the middle of the night over the North Slope of  
17 Alaska.

18 It takes a lot of work in darkness and crummy weather.  
19 Can you talk to the importance of how they are doing, and  
20 including the JPARC training ranges and the future you see  
21 for them in the Air Force?

22 Secretary Kendall: I have had a privilege to visit  
23 Alaska bases multiple times in my tenure, and I am  
24 incredibly impressed by the quality and capabilities up  
25 there. And I also hear about missions people do, and as

1 you mentioned, in extreme conditions to do rescues and to  
2 do intercepts and so on.

3 So, it is an enormously effective part of our force.  
4 Alaska's strategic position matters a great deal, too. You  
5 have got good access to a lot of parts of the globe that  
6 are very important to us. And your forces participate in  
7 some key missions, both for homeland defense and to support  
8 in the Indo-Pacific region.

9 So Alaskan JPARC in particular, is a range kind of  
10 capability that we don't have anywhere else in the U.S.  
11 So, all very, very valuable to us. And we are investing in  
12 these capabilities. There are investments in our budgets  
13 to improve JPARC, to make it more effective as a training  
14 range.

15 And I am looking forward to coming up there in the  
16 summer and being there for one of those exercises.

17 Senator Sullivan: Good. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.  
18 General, do you want to talk -- any lessons learned on  
19 -- maybe you can't do it in the hearing right now. But,  
20 you know, our active duty forces were quite busy, the F-  
21 22s, the F-35s, with these bare bomber incursions, which  
22 are kind of normal. But the Russian -- the spy balloons  
23 and things like that. Any lessons learned that you can  
24 reveal right now or maybe in the closed session?

25 General Brown: Senator, what I would like to, and you

1 have you have already addressed it in some of your comments  
2 here, just the value of the teamwork across the force,  
3 because it is not just the fighter mission, but it is also  
4 our maintainers that get the aircraft in some pretty tough  
5 weather conditions, as well as our early warning with the  
6 E-3 and how all that command and control comes together to  
7 be able to execute the missions.

8 You know part of that, you know, skill set comes from  
9 their day to day training they are able to get on JPARC, a  
10 very, you know, capable range that we continue to invest  
11 in. And so, it is a combination of all those together that  
12 provide us that capability, that is in a very important  
13 part of the country.

14 Senator Sullivan: Right. Thank you. Let me turn to  
15 kind of a related question. This year's budget includes a  
16 request for 72 new fighters, 48 F-35As, 24 F-15 Eagles.  
17 You know, we have over 100 5th Gen fighters in Alaska, F-  
18 22s, F-35s.

19 In the event of a conflict with the PRC, probably  
20 most, if not all of those aircraft, would be deployed there  
21 under the INDOPACOM's control, currently INDOPACOM  
22 Commander's control. This would require other aircraft to  
23 backfill the homeland defense mission in Alaska, which we  
24 just saw was so important.

25 How will the Air Force fighter acquisition plan

1 improve homeland defense, and what risks will the Air Force  
2 incur if the procurement timeline is interrupted, given  
3 that scenario I just kind of talked about?

4 General Brown: Senator, it would -- as we have looked  
5 at not only the procurement aspect but also how we would  
6 execute the mission. I do think we are on a good path for  
7 procurement for this particular budget.

8 It is something we want to continue to pay attention  
9 to, not only the aspect of the aircraft themselves, but  
10 also the capabilities that support and complement those  
11 aircraft, whether it is munitions, whether it is command  
12 and control.

13 You know, as we have operational scenarios that is the  
14 beauty of air power, the flexibility that we would have to  
15 do in order to move some of our 5th Gen capability and  
16 munitions to combat our adversaries.

17 At the same time, how we would flex our total force to  
18 take care of the homeland mission, the homeland defense  
19 mission as well. So, this is where, you know, I think we  
20 have pretty good capability to be able to be responsive in  
21 a crisis with air power.

22 Senator Sullivan: Thank you. And, Mr. Chairman, just  
23 a real quick final question for General Saltzman. General,  
24 you know, Alaska is also the cornerstone of America's  
25 missile defense in terms of ground-based missile

1 interceptors at Fort Greely, and the radar systems that we  
2 have throughout the State.

3       Recently, NORTHCOM completed its testing of the long-  
4 range discrimination radar system at Clear Space Force  
5 Station in Alaska. Can you talk to the committee about how  
6 this LRDR system has dramatically improved our missile  
7 defenses and domain awareness? And is it on track, the way  
8 in which you want it to be?

9       General Saltzman: Well, it is a very important radar  
10 in a very important location. It is highly discriminating  
11 in terms of target. It produces high fidelity tracks,  
12 that enable our missile defense system and secure the  
13 homeland from missile threats.

14       Day to day, it also will be capable of supporting the  
15 space domain awareness mission, which I am heavily invested  
16 in. And so, the number of tracks from that part of the sky  
17 is a significant contribution to our overall space domain  
18 awareness.

19       Senator Sullivan: Thank you. Thank you, Mr.  
20 Chairman.

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

23       Senator Duckworth: Thank you, and good morning to  
24 each of our witnesses. I had a very engaging 20 whole  
25 minutes, actually, thanks to the subcommittee Chairman

1 Kelly discussion with -- on Air Force design at the Airland  
2 subcommittee hearing last week. As the entire Joint Force  
3 reorganizes and modernizes, Congress has to play an active  
4 role in oversight to ensure that the DOD is equipped for  
5 competition with the best weapon systems and the most  
6 effective organization of our troops.

7 The Marine Corps published a Force Design 2030  
8 document, which provides a detailed roadmap and vision of  
9 what its future force will look like. The Navy published  
10 its Force Design 2045 document, which looks -- which goes  
11 through its shipbuilding aspirations.

12 And I understand from today's testimony that the Space  
13 Force is also working on a force design effort, though it  
14 doesn't sound like that has been completed quite yet. In  
15 contrast, the Air Force published its future operating  
16 concepts, which does not feature the level of detail that  
17 the other forces have articulated -- that the other  
18 services have articulated.

19 Mr. Secretary, I know that the Department of the Air  
20 Force has operational imperatives to help orient it to  
21 services' investments, but if neither service has an  
22 explicit roadmap for force design, the Air Force or Space  
23 Force, what is informing recruiting and retention goals, or  
24 specific RDT&E investments? And Mr. Secretary, is your  
25 Department truly organized for competition?



1 Secretary Kendall: That is a great question, Senator.  
2 The short answer is yes, but we have basically limited  
3 maneuverability over the next few years in terms of what  
4 the ultimate force structure will be. But there are some  
5 efforts -- General Brown and I have talked about this  
6 several times, and I have had a similar conversation with  
7 General Saltzman.

8 We need to be thinking about the long-term future and  
9 what the future looks like given the strategic competitors  
10 that we have, particularly China. And as you can see from  
11 the initiatives we started with the operational  
12 imperatives, we are moving towards modernization that will  
13 be effective against that threat, but that is a dynamic  
14 threat. It is constantly changing. It will respond to  
15 what we do.

16 So, we need to think very carefully about the future,  
17 what our future posture might look like, and create some  
18 options at this point that will be fleshed out as we move  
19 further along. We also need to look at how we are  
20 structured.

21 I have asked my scientific advisory board to take a  
22 look at this. The posture the Air Force has evolved into  
23 over time is one that was essentially derived from the  
24 kinds of operations it was conducting, which were largely  
25 counterinsurgency, with a lot of deployments overseas for

1 people, and a certain kind of tactical combat operations.

2 That is not what our future looks like. And so, we  
3 have got to look at how we are training the R-4 Gen. The  
4 R-4 Gen model that General Brown is using is a piece of  
5 that to get us to a better cycle for how we utilize the  
6 force and how we prepare for next -- more stressing  
7 operations.

8 But we have also got to look at how we are structured  
9 to do acquisition. We are not transitioning science and  
10 technology as quickly in the products as we should be, or  
11 as efficiently as we should be. So, there are a number of  
12 things that we need to take a look at.

13 And on my list of to do is at this point in time is to  
14 work with my teammates here to try to define the structure  
15 we are going to need for the long-term strategic  
16 competition we are in, and that is a work that we really  
17 haven't completed yet.

18 I am very comfortable with where we are going over the  
19 next few years, but we need to posture ourselves for a  
20 longer-term competition.

21 Senator Duckworth: So, there will be some sort of a  
22 document in the future, because you understand, we have to  
23 do our jobs here, right. And so, at some point, decisions  
24 are required to shape these investments going into the  
25 future. And for example, the Marine Corps says that they

1 required 31 amphibious ships.

2 And Congress and this committee can authorize and  
3 advocate for those ships and hold leaderships at all levels  
4 accountable. And I do think that Air Force and Space Force  
5 needs to work constructively with Congress to appropriately  
6 allocate the resources and measure its modernization  
7 success.

8 But how can we do that if neither the Air Force nor  
9 the Space Force has an explicit modernization roadmap based  
10 on some sort of future looking force design effort?

11 Secretary Kendall: There is a well-known aphorism,  
12 Senator that plans are nothing and planning is everything.  
13 We have started the planning work, but we don't have the  
14 plan yet. But I think, I agree with you that would be a  
15 valuable document to have, to lay out where we are going to  
16 go.

17 And we will be working on that for our own purposes,  
18 but I agree with you that it will be valuable probably for  
19 the Congress as well.

20 Senator Duckworth: Thank you. I am going to follow  
21 up on this and keep at it, just so you know. I wanted to  
22 also talk about recruiting, retaining, and effectively  
23 leveraging the organic talent within the services.

24 For example, we have the ability for service members  
25 to test out on a language and say, I am a native Spanish

1 speaker, I am a native Thai speaker, I speak French, and  
2 you can actually get that designation by taking the  
3 language test and then the force knows that you have those  
4 Airmen -- those Guardians that have those resources, those  
5 capabilities.

6 But I believe that we risk overlooking the skills of  
7 service members, particularly those in the reserve  
8 component, who have critical digital skills from their  
9 civilian careers. And I introduced the Managing Active and  
10 Reserve Tech Talent Effectively Act -- it is a mouthful, I  
11 know -- to fix that.

12 And my bill directly directs the services to establish  
13 career field policies and processes to identify members  
14 across the total force who have skill sets in advanced  
15 technology areas such as computer programing, coding, AI,  
16 ML.

17 It gives the Department discretion and flexibility to  
18 figure out the best way to do that. But my bill requires  
19 that the reserve component service members be able to use  
20 their skills and experiences from their civilian jobs to  
21 qualify for these military career fields.

22 General Brown, General Saltzman, I would like to hear  
23 from each of you about the benefits to your services that  
24 come from leveraging the digital skills of its total force  
25 service members, particularly those in the reserve

1 component who have tech skills from their civilian careers.

2 General Brown: They are very important. And there  
3 are a couple of programs that we are looking at to deal  
4 -- one was out of DIU back in December entitled Gig Eagle.  
5 It is an aspect of identifying those who have those  
6 specific skill sets that you can bring on for a short  
7 period of time to work for you.

8 A complex issue because of their civilian expertise.  
9 The other part we are also looking at is how we get better  
10 visibility on their certifications, and how we use that  
11 information and for promotion boards and other areas. Not  
12 just your academic degrees, but you are certified in areas  
13 that don't require an academic degree.

14 How we have better visibility on those and how we  
15 track that particular talent with the special experience  
16 identifiers so we can tap into and provide those  
17 opportunities for those outstanding service members that  
18 can help us in areas, just because of the work they do in  
19 the civilian sector.

20 Senator Duckworth: Thank you.

21 General Saltzman: I agree, they are critical. In  
22 fact, they are so critical, I am trying to make sure that  
23 the Space Force has a reserve, has the part time workforce  
24 integrated into it, so that we can continue to leverage it.

25 One of the things I have found is that those part time

1 Guardians, Airmen now, Guardians in the future, would be  
2 able to stay at the highest levels of those competencies  
3 because they are integrated into the commercial sector, and  
4 they can bring those skills readily in when we need them.  
5 So, it is a critical effort that I support.

6 Senator Duckworth: I mean, you need to know where all  
7 you're MCSCs or CCNAs are, and know how many you have and  
8 say, hey, I need that guy. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

9 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Duckworth. Mr.  
10 Secretary, General Saltzman, and General Brown, thank you  
11 for your testimony and for your service. At this point,  
12 let me, for the benefit of my colleagues, remind them there  
13 is a vote ongoing. We will reconvene at 12:15 p.m. in  
14 SVC-217 for the closed session. And with that, I will  
15 adjourn the open session.

16 [Whereupon, at 11:47 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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