

Stenographic Transcript
Before the

COMMITTEE ON
ARMED SERVICES

UNITED STATES SENATE

TO CONSIDER THE NOMINATION OF: LIEUTENANT
GENERAL JOHN D. CAINE, USAF (RETIRED) TO BE GENERAL
AND CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

Tuesday, April 1, 2025

Washington, D.C.

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6
7 U.S. Senate
8 Committee on Armed Services
9 Washington, D.C.

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11 The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:35 a.m. in
12 Room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Roger
13 Wicker, chairman of the committee, presiding.

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

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

3 Chairman Wicker: The Committee will come to order.
4 Our eager members of the fourth estate are welcome to clear
5 away, thanking them for their presence. This morning, the
6 committee meets to consider the nomination of retired
7 Lieutenant General Dan Caine for the position of Chairman of
8 the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

9 General Caine has a tremendous responsibility before
10 him. I believe President Trump has made an excellent choice
11 in selecting him to meet the challenges. So I thank General
12 Caine for his willingness to serve our country, especially
13 in this hour of need. We live in the most dangerous
14 national security moment since World War II. An axis of
15 aggressors led by the Chinese Communist Party, and Vladimir
16 Putin's Russia means us harm. This axis does not want this
17 century to be an American-led century or a freedom led
18 century.

19 Our adversaries have started two wars against Ukraine
20 and Israel. They threaten to open a third front against
21 Taiwan. We must restore peace and we could do that only
22 through strength. Since his nomination was announced, some
23 people have written that General Caine is unqualified. They
24 point out that he has not served as a combatant commander,
25 as a service chief or as a vice-chairman, roles which are

1 contemplated in 10 USC 152.

2 I would suggest these same people read or reread the
3 Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986. Those who read that law and
4 then read General Caine's resume will see that the
5 architects of that legislation would conclude that their
6 reforms were successful. The driving force behind
7 Goldwater-Nichols was to inspire, and in some cases, require
8 jointness. So, let's talk about jointness with regard to
9 Lieutenant General Caine.

10 They believed that when our military services work
11 together, those services are greater than the sum of their
12 parts. General Caine agrees and his record reflects that.
13 He began his career as an Air Force fighter pilot in 1992.
14 By the time he was done, General Caine had operated in every
15 domain, and he had developed relationships with every
16 service. That would not have been true 40 years ago.

17 General Caine flew and committed aircraft, but he's
18 also worked for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, having
19 helped in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, in the midst of a
20 bird flu outbreak. At the White House, General Caine wrote
21 early homeland security strategies. He deployed and
22 commanded repeatedly to Iraq and Syria, serving within
23 various special operations forces units. He ran our most
24 secretive programs for all military services. General Caine
25 worked extensively as the CIA's senior military officer,

1 again, collaborating with every military service and
2 combatant command.

3 It's difficult to imagine a better joint and
4 interagency background for a nominee of this position. Our
5 threat environment is complex, and General Caine understands
6 how the services can work together to meet today's dangers.
7 We have much work to do as this committee knows. We need to
8 grow our defense budget. We need to reform the Pentagon's
9 processes drastically. If confirmed, General Caine would
10 play a significant role in providing military advice to the
11 Secretary of Defense and the President of the United States
12 on both of those topics.

13 In particular, the chairman plays a significant role in
14 the requirements process. I hope he will make a priority to
15 modernize this critical aspect. The statutory role of the
16 chairman may be limited, but the position is explicitly the
17 voice of the combatant commanders. That voice matters
18 because the commanders are largely absent from our
19 requirements and budgeting processes. The chairman can and
20 should also be an advocate for a more agile planning
21 process, one that considers the problems -- and I'm going to
22 use two big words here, the problems of simultaneously and
23 protracted warfare. I guess that's three big terms, three
24 big words, and two big terms.

25 These are technical terms for fairly straightforward

1 facts. First, that our adversaries are likely to act
2 against us in a coordinated fashion; simultaneously. And
3 secondly, that once that war breaks out, it tends to take on
4 a life of its own; protracted warfare.

5 Lastly, a chairman is responsible to deliver a serious,
6 honest chairman's risk assessment to this committee as soon
7 as possible. I look forward to General Caine's thoughts on
8 each of these points. Based on my conversations with the
9 nominee and based on his actions in uniform, I'm confident
10 that General Caine will give President Trump his best
11 military advice.

12 He will do so without bias as he's required to do. He
13 would not consider whether the President may like or dislike
14 that advice. That's exactly what a United States President
15 deserves. I'm convinced that General Caine sees this role
16 as absolutely nonpartisan. We can argue politics up here on
17 this dais, but I expect General Caine to stay out of it no
18 matter the subject.

19 I thank the nominee for his service and for appearing
20 today, and I turn now to my friend and colleague, ranking
21 member Reed for his opening remarks.

22 STATEMENT OF HON. JACK REED, U.S. SENATOR FROM RHODE
23 ISLAND

24 Senator Reed: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Lieutenant
25 General Caine, welcome and congratulations on your

1 nomination.

2 Also, I would like to extend my appreciation to your
3 family because I know they've been with you throughout your
4 entire career and they're with you today. I also want to
5 offer my deepest condolences to the families of the U.S.
6 Army soldiers who tragically lost their lives in Lithuania
7 during a mission last week.

8 General Caine, you have been nominated to be Chairman
9 of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I'm going to start by
10 acknowledging the unusual conditions around your nomination.
11 Six weeks ago, President Trump abruptly dismissed General CQ
12 Brown, who was not even halfway into his tenure as Chairman
13 of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Secretary of Defense Hegseth,
14 also dismissed several other senior officers, including
15 Admiral Lisa Franchetti, the chief of Naval Operations,
16 General James Slife, the Air Force Vice Chief of Staff, and
17 all three Judge Advocate Generals for the Army, Navy, and
18 Air Force.

19 To this day, no explanation has been given for the
20 dismissal of these officers. As such, I remain deeply
21 concerned that they were dismissed for political reasons,
22 which sends a chilling message throughout the ranks. I
23 would take a moment to salute General CQ Brown, who served
24 this nation honorably for more than four decades and led the
25 joint chiefs with dedication and skill. He and each of the

1 officers who were dismissed had outstanding careers in the
2 military and represented our nation with great courage,
3 honor, and distinction. We all owe them a debt of gratitude
4 for their service and sacrifice.

5 General Caine, I trust that you understand the fraught
6 situation within which you have been nominated to be the
7 Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. In this regard, your
8 distinguished record of service is encouraging. As an F16
9 pilot with thousands of flight hours and multiple combat
10 deployments, you have served with distinction in the Air
11 Force and the Air National Guard. You have also served in
12 senior leadership roles at the Pentagon, the White House,
13 and overseas, including in the special operations and
14 intelligence communities.

15 General, if confirmed, you will serve as the principal
16 military advisor to the President, the National Security
17 Council, the Secretary of Defense and Congress. You'll be
18 expected to be an effective strategist, advisor, and
19 manager, and your counsel will be relied upon as we confront
20 the multitude of national security issues before us.
21 Indeed, we face significant challenges.

22 China clearly remains our primary competitor as the
23 only nation with both the intent and capability to challenge
24 the interest of the United States and our allies and
25 partners. At the same time, Russia remains a violent

1 destabilizing force, and nations like Iran and North Korea
2 continue to push the boundaries of military brinkmanship.

3 To succeed in this environment, the US military must
4 better develop its joint capabilities across all domains,
5 including space, cyber, and information. Moreover, we must
6 not lose the combined strength of our allies, nor can we
7 abandon the soft power of our diplomatic and humanitarian
8 efforts. To retreat to Fortress America will encourage our
9 adversaries to exert their influence throughout the world.

10 General Caine, I'm interested to know how you would
11 ensure our military remains the world's premier fighting
12 force. If confirmed, you'll be responsible for identifying
13 new joint capabilities and performing net assessments to
14 ensure each of the services are procuring the right
15 capabilities needed for the joint force. The chairman must
16 review capabilities holistically across the total force,
17 which can conflict with the priorities of individual
18 services. The committee would be interested to learn how
19 you plan to manage this dynamic.

20 In addition, the National Defense Strategy, the
21 National Military Strategy, and the annual chairman's risk
22 assessment of vital documents, this committee relies upon to
23 perform its oversight functions. As the administration
24 begins its work to review and revise these documents,
25 General Caine, I would like your assessment of the current

1 strategy and whether you would recommend any changes to
2 these documents.

3 Finally, the joint force is fundamentally about people.
4 As the nation's senior most military officer, it will be
5 your responsibility to understand the needs of America's
6 service members and to be their greatest advocate. If
7 confirmed, you'll be the most visible military officer in
8 the nation. It'll be critical for you to represent the
9 force with total professionalism and trustworthiness.

10 Frankly, I'm concerned about the health of civilian
11 military relations in our country. Over the past several
12 months, the military has been dragged into dangerous
13 political fights, public trust in the military is eroding,
14 and I fear that the military's trust in civilian leadership
15 has been shaken. Civilian control of the military is a
16 sacred duty that must be carried out responsibly and not
17 exploited. General, I'd like to know how you work to help
18 improve civil military relations and demonstrate this ethos
19 yourself every day.

20 Above all else, I expect you to pledge to always
21 provide your best military advice to the President and the
22 Secretary of Defense, even if that advice is not what they
23 want to hear. The safety of our service members and the
24 American people depends upon such candor. General Caine, if
25 confirmed, you will lead the joint force at a momentous

1 time. I thank you and I look forward to your testimony.

2 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

3 Chairman Wicker: Thank you. Thank you, Senator Reed.

4 General Caine, we will now hear your testimony. You're

5 recognized.

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1 STATEMENT OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL JOHN D. CAINE, RETIRED,
2 NOMINEE FOR APPOINTMENT TO GRADE OF GENERAL AND TO THE
3 POSITION OF CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

4 General Caine: Well, thank you, Senator Chairman
5 Wicker, ranking member Reed, members of this committee. My
6 name is Dan Caine and I am honored and humbled to sit before
7 you today as the President's nominee to be the 22nd chairman
8 of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

9 I'd like to start by thanking the President and the
10 secretary for their trust and confidence in me and if
11 confirmed, allowing me to again, serve our great nation.
12 I'd also like to thank General CQ Brown and his wife Shereen
13 and their family for their more than 40 years of selfless
14 service to our nation. I'd like to thank the team that
15 helped prepare me for this hearing today.

16 And finally, I'd like to thank my family and friends
17 who have given me so much. It is my family who has made my
18 service possible always at their own expense. They have
19 given more than I have and there are not words to express my
20 thanks to each of them, especially my family in our nation's
21 Midwest.

22 I sit here before you the proud son of an Air Force
23 fighter pilot who flew F4 Phantoms in Vietnam. My mom was a
24 pediatric critical care nurse who worked nights so she could
25 be home when my sister and I got up in the morning and when

1 we got home in the afternoon. I learned about service from
2 my parents and the other members of my family who served,
3 not because it was easy, but because it was the right thing
4 to do.

5 In our family, we serve. When asked, we always say
6 yes. Senators, I acknowledge that I'm an unconventional
7 nominee. These are unconventional times. It is 9:48 p.m.
8 in Beijing, 6:48 p.m. in Tehran, 4:48 p.m. in Moscow, and
9 10:48 p.m. in Pyong Yang. As we sit here now, our nation
10 faces an unprecedented rising global risk. Our adversaries
11 are advancing, global nuclear threats are on the rise and
12 deterrence is paramount. Our national defense requires
13 urgent action and reform across the board. We must go
14 faster. We must move with a sense of urgency.

15 We can never forget that our number one job is to
16 create peace through overwhelming strength and if need be,
17 fight and win our nation's wars. I realize for many
18 Americans I'm an unknown leader and it is with a heart full
19 of gratitude that I've been given a given a truly unique set
20 of experiences that I believe have prepared me to be the
21 22nd chairman.

22 For the past 34 years, I've served in the active Title
23 10 Force, in the Title 32 National Guard Force, in the Title
24 50 Force at the CIA. I've served in the interagency and at
25 the White House, and I've deployed in combat as a fighter

1 pilot, a special operations officer, and a CIA officer, and
2 I've been an entrepreneur and investor in the business
3 sector while a citizen soldier in the National Guard.

4 As a general officer, I've had the privilege of serving
5 three Presidents from both political parties and most
6 recently was the associate director for military affairs at
7 the CIA, a job where I was charged to provide military
8 advice to the director of the CIA and globally integrate DOD
9 and CIA activities across the world.

10 Along the way, I've proudly served alongside some of
11 America's most incredible warriors and civilian teammates
12 and their families, and I've witnessed them do awe-inspiring
13 things in the service of our nation and to a person they've
14 poured more into me than I could ever have poured into them,
15 especially our non-commissioned officer corps. And sadly,
16 I've been there with them as they made the ultimate
17 sacrifice on the fields of battle and been with their
18 families as we told them of their loved one service and
19 sacrifice. I think of our fallen every single day.

20 These experiences help me to better understand how our
21 nation considers and uses military force to achieve our
22 national security objectives, and they directly inform my
23 views of the importance of carefully considering the use of
24 that force and the risks associated with it beforehand, and
25 always asking the important question, and then what, before

1 we do, and if the decision is made to use military force
2 crushing our enemies and winning.

3 I've also had the privilege of serving alongside
4 incredible business leaders, starting and scaling companies
5 as an entrepreneur. And along the way I learned what a
6 different kind of grit looks like. Our American
7 entrepreneurial spirit is a force multiplier, and my time as
8 an entrepreneur has made me a better general officer and
9 leader, and if confirmed, I'll bring more of that spirit
10 into the joint force.

11 Senators I'm here today to earn your trust and the
12 trust of the American people. If confirmed, I'll continue
13 to work as I have for my entire 34 years in uniform, always
14 focused on the mission and our incredible people. If
15 confirmed, I'll continue the traditions and standards of my
16 oath of office and my commissioned as a non-partisan leader
17 who will always strive to do the right thing.

18 Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed, and members of
19 the committee, thank you for your time and your
20 consideration. As we gather here today, let us never forget
21 our deployed forces and their families, and may we always
22 remember our fallen and their families, especially those
23 three that Senator Reed mentioned and our one missing. I
24 look forward to your questions.

25 [The prepared statement of General Caine follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very, very much General
2 Caine. I am required to ask you some standard questions
3 that we ask of all nominees in your situation. And so if
4 you'll just answer yes or no to these questions, keep your
5 talk button pressed. Have you adhered to the applicable
6 laws and regulations governing conflicts of interest?

7 General Caine: Yes, Senator, I have.

8 Chairman Wicker: Have you assumed any duties or taken
9 any actions that would appear to presume the outcome of the
10 confirmation process?

11 General Caine: No. Senator, I have not.

12 Chairman Wicker: Exercising our legislative and
13 oversight responsibilities makes it important that this
14 committee, its subcommittees, and other appropriate
15 committees of Congress receive testimony, briefings,
16 reports, records, and other information from the executive
17 branch on a timely basis. Do you agree, if confirmed, to
18 appear and testify before this committee when requested?

19 General Caine: I do, Senator.

20 Chairman Wicker: Do you agree when asked before this
21 committee to give your personal views even if your views
22 differ from the administration?

23 General Caine: I do, Senator.

24 Chairman Wicker: Do you agree to provide records,
25 documents, and electronic communications in a timely manner

1 when requested by this committee, it's subcommittees or
2 other appropriate committees of Congress and to consult with
3 the requester regarding the basis for any good faith, delay
4 or denial in providing such records?

5 General Caine: I do, Senator.

6 Chairman Wicker: Will you ensure that your staff
7 complies with deadlines established by this committee for
8 the production of reports, records, and other information
9 including timely responding to hearing questions for the
10 record?

11 General Caine: I will, Senator.

12 Chairman Wicker: And two more General. Will you
13 cooperate in providing witnesses and briefers in response to
14 congressional requests?

15 General Caine: Yes Senator, I will.

16 Chairman Wicker: Will those witnesses and briefers be
17 protected from reprisal for their testimony or briefings?

18 General Caine: They will, Senator.

19 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very, very much. Now let
20 me just start out by asking about some hyperbole that may
21 have been out there in the press. General Caine, did you
22 wear a MAGA hat in front of the President?

23 General Caine: No, sir.

24 Chairman Wicker: Did you wear a MAGA hat at any time?

25 General Caine: No, sir.

1 Chairman Wicker: Would you like to elaborate on that
2 answer?

3 General Caine: Sir, for 34 years, I've upheld my oath
4 of office and my commitment to my commission and I have
5 never worn any political merchandise.

6 Chairman Wicker: Thank you for that answer. Now
7 previous chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of staff have somewhat
8 equivocated when asked about top line spending issues I
9 think you know about the proposals that will soon be before
10 this Senate and this Congress.

11 Is it in your best military advice based on your
12 experience, is it your opinion that we need real growth in
13 the defense budget to maintain deterrence against the very
14 capital cities and interests that you mentioned in your
15 testimony?

16 General Caine: Well, Senator, thank you for that
17 question. We definitely must have a sense of urgency
18 related to the budget. I think it comes down to ultimately
19 finding more deployable or allocatable capital, and there's
20 really three ways to do that. We can find greater
21 efficiencies in the budget through cost savings. We can
22 reprogram from different programs, or we can get a higher
23 top line, I think of it in terms of a business model where
24 we get more revenue. So we have to move quickly and figure
25 out how we can get real purchasing growth over time.

1 Chairman Wicker: Well, let's talk about efficiency.
2 In the special operations community and with the CIA, you've
3 worked with some of the most innovative and risk-taking
4 parts of national security enterprise. You also mentioned
5 your experience in the private sector, which I think can
6 serve you well. Startup ventures in the private sector. Is
7 that right, General Caine?

8 General Caine: Yes, sir.

9 Chairman Wicker: And if confirmed, you will conduct
10 oversight on the military's requirement processes. We hear
11 constantly from our combatant commanders that it takes years
12 for their military needs to be converted into requirements.
13 Based on your experience, do you believe the requirements
14 process needs to be fixed and do you agree with those who
15 say it needs to be entirely torn down and rebuilt to get our
16 war fighters what they need according to a timeline in which
17 they need it?

18 General Caine: Well, Senator, I definitely agree
19 something has to be done. The solution is probably
20 somewhere in the middle. I don't know that we need to tear
21 the whole thing down. I definitely agree that we need to
22 improve the speed and agility of our requirements process.
23 Technology is evolving so fast, our requirements process
24 does not evolve at the same time, and we have to have our
25 combatant commander's voice in the requirements process.

1 The one area that I think we also need to do is to keep
2 a global picture on those requirement processes. No two
3 combatant commands have the same requirements, and only the
4 joint staff has the global view on those requirements along
5 with OSD. So, you know, if confirmed, I'd like to continue
6 to work with you and the rest of the Congress to sort
7 through this, so I appreciate it.

8 Chairman Wicker: Will have you had a chance to read my
9 white paper on the FORGED Act and that proposed legislation?

10 General Caine: Yes, sir.

11 Chairman Wicker: Don't you agree that it's a masterful
12 piece of legislation?

13 [Laughter.]

14 General Caine: I do, sir. It was a beautiful read,
15 sir. Yeah.

16 Chairman Wicker: Would you like to elaborate on that?

17 General Caine: Yeah. Well, sir, I mean, I think it
18 certainly lays out a lot of good markers for improvement in
19 the requirements process.

20 Chairman Wicker: Well, it seems to me you've worked in
21 the private sector and you work with startups. The number
22 of people in DOD who have to touch something, touch an idea
23 sign off on an idea to actually get something done, is far
24 different from those people who are actually making
25 innovative changes in the private sector. Is that correct?

1 General Caine: Yes, sir.

2 Chairman Wicker: And do you agree then that we need to
3 move in the direction of efficiency and that a lot of the
4 top line money that I mentioned in my second question can be
5 found by efficiencies and moving things faster, and also we
6 could get to the war fighter what they need in a timely
7 manner?

8 General Caine: Yes, sir.

9 Chairman Wicker: Well, let me ask -- I've got 12
10 seconds. I might do a follow up at the end there, but thank
11 you very much for your testimony. Senator Reed.

12 Senator Reed: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.
13 General Caine, as you're aware, it was recently revealed
14 that Senior Trump administration officials, including the
15 Secretary of Defense, were sharing sensitive information
16 about upcoming strikes in Yemen on a Signal group chat.

17 In your professional opinion, should a member of the
18 joint chiefs or the relevant combatant commander been
19 included in that discussion?

20 General Caine: Senator, thanks for that question. I,
21 I understand that the voice of the joint force had been
22 expressed through the incredible work of the acting chairman
23 and current vice chairman. I understand he put a statement
24 out yesterday or the day before saying that they'd consulted
25 with the secretary. And, you know, from what I understand

1 of that chat, that was a partisan political chat, and so the
2 joint force should not have been represented in there, sir.

3 Senator Reed: In your professional opinion, should the
4 Yemen strengths have been discussed in a Signal group chat
5 on an unclassified platform?

6 General Caine: Well, Senator, I understand that both
7 you and the Chairman have asked for an inquiry into that.
8 So I don't want to comment specifically on that matter.
9 What I will say is that we should always preserve -- we
10 should always preserve the element of surprise, and that
11 should translate across every information domain and format
12 and never put our war fighters in any harm's way.

13 Senator Reed: Well, let me ask you, if you were on
14 that conversation, would you have objected to the fact that
15 it was being conducted on Signal?

16 General Caine: Well, Senator, I, you know, I was not
17 in that chat. I would --

18 Senator Reed: I know that, that's why I asked, if you
19 were.

20 General Caine: Senator, I've always communicated
21 proper information in the proper channels.

22 Senator Reed: Thank you, sir. Immediately following
23 the announcement -- and this is a follow up to Chairman
24 Wicker's, first question. Immediately following the
25 announcement of your nomination press stories started to

1 circulate about comments President Trump made about you in
2 your past relationship. And according to the reports, the
3 President tells a story where he spoke to you while you were
4 serving in Iraq on active duty, and you said that you loved
5 him and, "I'll kill for you, sir."

6 The President then said that you followed up these
7 comments by putting on a Make America Great Again hat.
8 General Caine, is any of this true?

9 General Caine: Senator, as I mentioned to the
10 Chairman, for 34 years, I've upheld my oath of office and
11 the responsibilities of my commission. I think I went back
12 and listened to those tapes and I think the President was
13 actually talking about somebody else, and I've never worn
14 any political merchandise or said anything to that effect.

15 Senator Reed: Thank you. General Caine, during the
16 consideration of your nomination, were you ever asked who
17 you voted for in the last election or 2020 election?

18 General Caine: Senator, I was not.

19 Senator Reed: Are you aware of any presently serving
20 service members or senior civilians in DOD being asked
21 questions like this?

22 General Caine: I'm not, Senator.

23 Senator Reed: Do you agree that it's the utmost
24 importance to keep the military apolitical and questions
25 like this should not be asked?

1 General Caine: I agree with you. Yes, Senator.

2 Senator Reed: And what steps will you'll take to guard
3 against potential politicization?

4 General Caine: Senator, I think the question was what
5 steps will I take to guard against politicalization. I
6 think it starts with being a good example from the top and
7 making sure that we are nonpartisan and apolitical and
8 speaking the truth to power every day.

9 Senator Reed: General Caine, do you believe there's
10 any situation where it would be appropriate for you not to
11 be consulted prior to a military operation?

12 General Caine: Well, Senator, I'm not in the job yet,
13 so I can't imagine any hypothetical situation where I would
14 not be in the conversation, if that's what you're asking.
15 You know, I believe the joint force, if confirmed, and even
16 if I'm not in the job, the joint force has a responsibility
17 to provide best options to the Secretary, the NSC, and the
18 President. So I can't imagine a case where the joint force
19 would not be in the conversation.

20 Senator Reed: Final question. If confirmed -- and
21 you've got 40 seconds and this probably will take longer
22 than that. So just brief thoughts. How are you going to
23 ensure that the parochialism, which is endemic in every
24 organization, but certainly also in the Department of
25 Defense is curtailed or focused to a more joint effort?

1 General Caine: Well, Senator, I appreciate that and
2 I'll be quick and come back to you with more if need be, but
3 you know, I'm encouraged by the 648 years of experience that
4 currently exist in the Joint Chiefs of Staff and in the
5 joint staff, and I think they're all absolute professionals.

6 Senator Reed: Thank you very much, sir.

7 General Caine: Thank you, Senator.

8 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Reed. Senator
9 Fisher.

10 Senator Fischer: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Welcome
11 General. Thank you for putting yourself forward to continue
12 to serve your country. As you are aware, there's ongoing
13 efforts to force the Department of Defense to vacate
14 portions of key bands of the electromagnetic spectrum,
15 particularly the lower three gigahertz and the seven to
16 eight gigahertz bands.

17 General Caine, do you agree that the Department of
18 Defense should have a meaningful co-leadership in any inter-
19 agency determinations about the future use of federal
20 spectrum?

21 General Caine: Senator, thanks for that question. You
22 know, there are certain elements of the spectrum that have
23 unique physics associated with them that can impact our
24 combat capabilities. So we certainly want to have a voice
25 in the conversation.

1 Senator Fischer: Do you believe that it should be a
2 co-leadership, though, not just a seat at the table, but
3 because of the exquisite assets that the department has and
4 your knowledge of what those are that you would need to have
5 that co-leadership position?

6 General Caine: Senator, you know, you asked what the
7 views of the department was. Mindful that I'm not in the
8 job yet, and if confirmed, I'd have that conversation with
9 the Secretary about co-leadership related to that.

10 Senator Fischer: What are the risks to national
11 security if the department is forced to vacate those
12 spectrum bands?

13 General Caine: Well, Senator some of that may be
14 reserved for a conversation in closed session at some point
15 in the future, but certainly if we lose portions of that
16 spectrum, we'll lose some exclusivity related to our combat
17 capability. And certainly one, don't want to tip that off
18 to our adversaries who might be listening, but two, would
19 rather talk about that in closed session.

20 Senator Fischer: I look forward to having those
21 discussions with you if you are confirmed, sir. General
22 Caine, for the first time in history of the United States
23 faces two nuclear peer adversaries in China and in Russia.
24 And yet our planned nuclear force was decided back in 2010
25 when the threat environment looked very, very different and

1 it hasn't been reconsidered since then.

2 For example, just over the past few years, China
3 surpassed the US in the number of ICBM launchers it
4 possesses. Russia has suspended the New START treaty and
5 nuclear saber rattling has been a defining feature of its
6 invasion to Ukraine. North Korea has claimed to test the
7 first solid fuel ICBM. I'm concerned that our current
8 programs or record may not be sufficient to address these
9 future threats or these current threats, let alone future
10 threats.

11 So if confirmed, how would you work with the Secretary,
12 the services, STRATCOM, to identify and address any
13 insufficiencies so that our nuclear deterrent would remain
14 credible?

15 General Caine: Well, Senator and it must remain
16 credible. We must invest in the deterrent side of our
17 nuclear triad, and there's a lot of work to be done there.
18 And if confirmed, you know, I look to work with the
19 incredible leadership at STRATCOM. We have a great
20 commander out there who's very smart, dedicated, and
21 technically all over the program out there. And you know,
22 this will be an area of significant emphasis to make sure
23 that we're fielding the capabilities that we need.

24 Senator Fischer: Have you had an opportunity to review
25 the Strategic Posture Commission's 2023 report?

1 General Caine: Senator, I've not.

2 Senator Fischer: I would highly recommend that you do.
3 So, it very clearly articulates projected threats. It
4 identifies potential gaps in our capabilities, and it makes
5 a number of actionable recommendations, many of which were
6 included in last year's NDAA.

7 Finally, General Caine, the Nuclear Arms Sea Launch
8 Cruise Missile or SLCM-N, is a Navy program of record that
9 has been supported by this committee on a strong bipartisan
10 basis. I was pleased to see you affirm the importance of
11 SLCM-N in your advanced policy questions.

12 Can you explain to this committee the importance of
13 providing the President with additional theater nuclear
14 options such as SLCM-N?

15 General Caine: Well, Senator, when we look at the
16 global lay down of nuclear weapons that you alluded to, the
17 United States, having an additional option is a key and
18 essential component to our overall deterrence. And that's
19 where SLCM-N fits into the equation.

20 Senator Fischer: So it's important that our commander-
21 in-chief would have those options?

22 General Caine: Well, I won't get out in front of the
23 President. It may be a decision that he has a different
24 view on, but certainly the Joint Force should offer him that
25 option for his consideration based on the needs of the

1 deterrent capabilities.

2 Senator Fischer: And it's a program of record?

3 General Caine: Yes, ma'am.

4 Senator Fischer: Thank you, sir. Thank you, Mr.
5 Chairman.

6 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Fisher. Senator
7 Shaheen.

8 Senator Shaheen: General Caine, congratulations on
9 your nomination and thank you for your willingness to
10 continue to serve the country. I appreciated the time we
11 spent in my office talking about this role and the
12 challenges that you will be facing.

13 One of the things that we discussed was the Women,
14 Peace, and Security legislation that was signed by President
15 Trump during his first term. And it mandates that women
16 should be at the table in conflict resolution and peace
17 negotiations. And at DOD, that's meant having women
18 involved in security cooperation programs that really give
19 us, I think, an advantage our adversaries like China and
20 Russia.

21 Just for the record, are you familiar with the WPS
22 program, General Caine?

23 General Caine: I am Senator, yes.

24 Senator Shaheen: And do you believe that's a DEI
25 program?

1 General Caine: I do not.

2 Senator Shaheen: Thank you. Can you provide some
3 examples of the operational advantage that from your
4 perspective, this gives us?

5 General Caine: Well, Senator, I can just give you my own
6 personal recollections from being deployed. Before this was
7 precursors of the program, but when we would go out into the
8 field and after concluding an assault, we would have female
9 members who would, you know, speak with those women and
10 children who are on the objective, and they would help us to
11 understand the human terrain in a new and novel way.

12 And so WPS is I think a program that really help us to
13 understand the full spectrum of challenges that are in front
14 of us.

15 Senator Shaheen: Thank you for that. One of the
16 combatant commands that has been most effective in using the
17 WPS law has been INDOPACOM. Can you talk about how this
18 contributes to the mission that INDOPACOM has?

19 General Caine: Well, Senator, I'm not familiar with
20 the INDOPACOM specific example. If confirmed, I'll look
21 into it and come back to you with my thoughts on that
22 matter.

23 Senator Shaheen: Great, thank you. I appreciate that.
24 We've been hearing some rumors that have suggested that the
25 administration is considering ending the dual-hat policy

1 under which our commander of European command serves as the
2 Supreme Allied Commander of NATO. The commander of EUCOM
3 has served as the Supreme Allied Commander since Eisenhower,
4 and part of the reason is to ensure that U.S. command and
5 control of nuclear weapons on the continent also prevents
6 nuclear proliferation in Europe.

7 So I'm not going to ask you to comment on what the
8 policy of this administration may or may not be since I
9 assume it's not been determined. But can you talk about the
10 importance of U.S. leadership in NATO as a result of this
11 dual-hat arrangement? And how would you approach mil-to-mil
12 obligations with NATO partners?

13 General Caine: Well, Senator, allies and partners are
14 a critical component to our ability to protect and defend
15 our values and virtues around the world. NATO is a key
16 component to that. The President's been clear on his views
17 of, of the importance of NATO, as has the Secretary. You
18 know, related to whether or not SACEUR stays a US military
19 officer, I'll defer to the President on that.

20 I think that's a discussion that he currently is
21 ongoing. But, you know, for me in particular, I value our
22 allies and partners and if confirmed, that'll be a
23 significant portion of the job that I have ahead of me.

24 Senator Shaheen: Well, and I appreciate that that's a
25 policy decision, but what I'm really asking is what the

1 advantage is for the United States in having the SACEUR be
2 an American.

3 General Caine: And, you know, Senator, as always,
4 anytime we have US forces deployed, we generally have wanted
5 them under a US commander. And that was the history behind
6 the establishment of SACEUR and putting the dual-hat EUCOM
7 commander and SACEUR together. And I think it is an
8 opportunity for global leadership in particular in Europe
9 but again, would defer to the President as he considers what
10 the future policy may look like.

11 Senator Shaheen: And I know that Senator Reed asked
12 you this question, and it was part of your official
13 questions from Senator Wicker, but when you have situations
14 where your military advice may be different from the
15 direction that the administration is heading on policy, how
16 do you intend to approach those situations and how would you
17 continue to make sure that the military perspective that
18 you're supposed to represent is actually being presented?

19 General Caine: Well, Senator, the same way I have for
20 34 years, with candor. Candor has gotten me here today, and
21 candor will continue to allow me to do my job moving
22 forward. The President doesn't have to accept the military
23 advice or the Secretary of the NSC, but we owe it to them
24 for us to deliver that military advice.

25 Senator Shaheen: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1 General Caine: Thank you.

2 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Shaheen. Senator
3 Cotton

4 Senator Cotton: General Caine, congratulations on your
5 nomination and thank you for your 34 years of service.
6 Thank you also for your service at times in the intelligence
7 community where your reputation is as strong as it is in the
8 Department of Defense.

9 Let's continue on the theme of Senator Shaheen's
10 question about providing your candid military advice. I
11 think as the chairman and Senator Reed pointed out, a lot of
12 people don't understand the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs is
13 not in the chain of command. Is that correct?

14 General Caine: Yes, sir.

15 Senator Cotton: By law, your role is the principal of
16 military advisor. So if the President makes a decision on
17 this, that, or the other, policy or operation about this,
18 that, or the other country that goes from him to the
19 Secretary of Defense down to some other commander, say the
20 CENTCOM commander or the Secretary of the Army or what have
21 you. You're on the side giving advice to everyone, but
22 you're not actually carrying out decisions in the chain of
23 command.

24 General Caine: That's correct, sir.

25 Senator Cotton: And I think, you know, Congress gave

1 the chairman that role because we wanted someone who was
2 free from those day-to-day demands of operational or
3 managerial duties to provide that candid military advice.
4 And as Senator Shaheen said it, it's important that you
5 provide that advice even when you think the principal
6 doesn't want to hear it, the Secretary of Defense, or the
7 NSC, or the President.

8 But I think you said in your opening statement that you
9 were an unusual or an unconventional nominee, which was it?

10 General Caine: I think it was unconventional, sir.

11 Senator Cotton: Unconventional. I agree with that. I
12 think most people would as well. You don't strike me as the
13 kind of guy who has been angling for this job for 34 years.
14 Is that a fair statement?

15 General Caine: That would be a fair statement,
16 Senator.

17 Senator Cotton: And did you expect to get this job as
18 recently as, I don't know, three or six months ago?

19 General Caine: I did not, Senator.

20 Senator Cotton: So is there any reason to think that
21 you're not going to be providing your candid and best
22 professional military advice even, and maybe especially,
23 when you've gotten wind, say a little birdie has tipped you
24 off that maybe the Secretary or the President doesn't want
25 to hear what you have to say?

1 General Caine: Senator, no. And you know, I went to
2 VMI where I lived in the new barracks for four years and
3 looked out on a statue of George Catlett Marshall for four
4 years. And sir, if I failed to provide my candid advice to
5 the Secretary, or the NSC, or the President, I think General
6 Marshall would climb out of his grave and hunt me down.

7 Senator Cotton: Good, thank you. Because I think
8 every President, every NSC, every Secretary of Defense needs
9 that, especially from a chairman. Not to give them their
10 candid advice when it's welcome, but even when they know
11 it's unwelcome.

12 Now, as you said, though, you're advisor, you're not a
13 decider, you're not a commander. Once the Secretary in some
14 cases, or the President probably in most cases has made the
15 decision, then you're on the side making sure that decision
16 is going to be carried out by the relevant commanders,
17 right?

18 General Caine: Yes, sir.

19 Senator Cotton: Thank you. Let's look at something
20 specific in this area now, and that's the threat of Iran's
21 nuclear program. By some estimates say it could be just
22 weeks away from having at least testable of not workable
23 nuclear devices, maybe as few as a couple years away from
24 having missiles that could hit us here in the United States.
25 The President has said repeatedly that he wants a peaceful

1 resolution to this crisis, but he is also said, I think as
2 recently as last week, "If they don't make a deal, there
3 will be bombing".

4 He said, for at least a decade I've known him, that
5 Iran cannot be allowed to get a nuclear weapon. Do you
6 agree with the President's assessment that Iran cannot be
7 allowed to get a nuclear weapon?

8 General Caine: I do, sir.

9 Senator Cotton: And do you agree that because of their
10 missile programs, especially the flimsy cover of the space
11 launch program, that this is not just a threat to our troops
12 in the region or Israel or our Arab friends in the region,
13 this could be an imminent and existential threat to the
14 United States itself in just a few short years?

15 General Caine: Senator, I think that's an accurate
16 statement.

17 Senator Cotton: If the President asks for military
18 options to support what he has said publicly, that if Iran
19 is not willing to make a deal that there will be bombing, do
20 you commit to provide him the best and candid advice you can
21 about viable military options and the likely consequences of
22 each?

23 General Caine: Senator, I think that's what the job of
24 the joint staff is to do. Is to provide a range of options
25 for the President to consider and then allow him to select

1 whatever those options work best for him.

2 Senator Cotton: Thank you. And finally, there's some
3 hysteria about the prospect of the President ordering these
4 strikes, or someone like you in uniform providing him advice
5 that is going to lead to another forever war or another
6 endless war.

7 Are you aware of operations, maybe operations against
8 Iran, like the Tanker Wars in 1988, in which the forceful
9 but discriminate application of military power did not lead
10 to a forever war or an endless war, but rather led to peace
11 and stability?

12 General Caine: Yes, sir. Those examples in our history
13 do exist, yes.

14 Senator Cotton: Maybe the Qasem Soleimani strike in
15 2020 as well that caused Iran to pull in its horns for the
16 rest of President Trump's first term. Thank you, General
17 Caine.

18 General Caine: Thank you, Senator.

19 Chairman Wicker: You can answer that question verbally.
20 I noticed you nodded. General Caine, you nodded your head.

21 General Caine: Yes, sir. I wasn't sure exactly what
22 the question was, but I agree with you, Senator.

23 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Cotton and, and
24 thank you General. Senator Blumenthal.

25 Senator Blumenthal: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank

1 you, General Caine for visiting my office, for your service
2 and your families to our nation. You have a record that is
3 exemplary and lengthy. You've served in the Air Force, the
4 Air National Guard, and within the intelligence community
5 with extraordinary distinction. This position is not one
6 that you sought, is it?

7 General Caine: No, sir.

8 Senator Blumenthal: Or ever expected?

9 General Caine: No. No, sir.

10 Senator Blumenthal: And the reason is quite simply that
11 the President of the United States decided to fire the
12 Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for political and
13 personal reasons, and I must say that I find that abhorrent,
14 and I know that you are not going to comment in those terms
15 on the treatment of your potential predecessor, but would
16 you agree with me that politicization of the military is
17 something that should be avoided at all costs?

18 General Caine: Yes, sir. The nation and the
19 Constitution all require a non-partisan military.

20 Senator Blumenthal: And would you agree with me that
21 this apparent myth, because you've credibly denied it, that
22 you wore a MAGA hat, is extremely regrettable and
23 unfortunate?

24 General Caine: Sir, I just know that I have always
25 upheld my oath of office and don't believe the President

1 said I was wearing a MAGA hat from what I've listened to the
2 tapes.

3 Senator Blumenthal: You don't believe he ever said it,
4 but it has been attributed to him.

5 General Caine: Sir, I think maybe he was talking about
6 somebody else when I went and listened to the tapes.

7 Senator Blumenthal: Let me ask you because of your
8 extraordinary service General, and I can't imagine anyone
9 better qualified to answer this question. If you heard that
10 a mission of a kind that was discussed on an unsecure
11 platform, Signal, and you were in one of those planes about
12 to launch on that mission against the Houthis, knowing what
13 you do about the substance of that conversation, how would
14 you feel?

15 General Caine: Senator, I stand by what I said before.
16 I think we all can agree that we need to always protect the
17 element of surprise.

18 Senator Blumenthal: And that element of surprise was
19 very likely lost if there had been any intercept by one of
20 our enemies or adversaries that could be conveyed to the
21 Houthis, correct?

22 General Caine: I mean, sir, that's a little bit of a
23 hypothetical question, but I am thankful as always that we
24 protect our service men and women who are going into combat
25 operations.

1 Senator Blumenthal: But there are a lot of pilots and
2 other military men and women who are understandably angry
3 about that call, correct?

4 General Caine: Sir, I've not had anybody come to me
5 and tell me that they're angry about it. So I can't comment
6 on that.

7 Senator Blumenthal: Have you read reports about that
8 reaction to the call?

9 General Caine: I have not, Senator. No.

10 Senator Blumenthal: Would you agree that that kind of
11 reliance on Signal for that kind of conversation should be
12 avoided in the future?

13 General Caine: Senator, I just know that I have always
14 used the right system for the right kinds of communications.
15 I don't know in particular you know, what information was
16 classified in what way on that Signal chat. I know that we
17 must preserve the element of surprise.

18 Senator Blumenthal: That platform is not a hardened
19 and secure platform?

20 General Caine: That platform is encrypted but not
21 secure, I believe in the definition of the term secure.

22 Senator Blumenthal: Let me ask you quickly on another
23 topic. Would you agree that the Columbia-class program is
24 the Navy's -- should continue to be an acquisition priority
25 along with the Virginia-class?

1 General Caine: Senator, I do think Columbia needs to
2 continue forward at a pace and tempo equal to the threat.

3 Senator Blumenthal: My time has expired. Thank you,
4 Mr. Chairman.

5 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Blumenthal.
6 Senator Rounds.

7 Senator Rounds: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General
8 Caine, once again, thank you for taking the time in my
9 office to visit with me about a number of the items that
10 you're hearing about today. I want to go back specifically
11 to an item that Senator Fischer began talking with you
12 about. And that is with regard to the spectrum and the
13 challenges surrounding it.

14 And the reason why I want to use that as an example is
15 because I know that General Milley and General CQ Brown,
16 both in their role as the chief of staff and providing their
17 best military opinion and advice were put in a position
18 literally of saying to other people within other
19 administrations, that this particular part of the
20 electromagnetic spectrum, which is currently controlled by
21 the Department of Defense, is critical to our national
22 defense.

23 And in fact, over the last several years, I have asked
24 in front of this particular committee, well over two dozen
25 uniformed officers to specifically discuss the need to

1 maintain control of specific portions of the electronic
2 spectrum. In particular, I've asked whether or not the 3.1
3 to 3.45 gigahertz band, if we were to lose that from DODs
4 specific use, if that would negatively have or would have
5 negative consequences for our war fighting capabilities.

6 And I have had 100 percent agreement that if we lost
7 that it would have negative consequences. Would you agree
8 with that assessment?

9 General Caine: I would, Senator.

10 Senator Rounds: Thank you. You will be asked at some
11 point, because this is a valuable commodity. There's a
12 limited amount of electromagnetic spectrum available, but
13 there are interests within the United States that would love
14 to have access to this without regard to what it would do or
15 would not understanding what the impact would be on our
16 national defense.

17 Are you aware that under President Trump's proposed
18 concept of a Golden Dome or a missile protection system,
19 that a number of the radar systems that would be required to
20 be in effect for that to move forward, are found within the
21 3.1 to 3.45 portions of the spectrum because of their unique
22 physics competencies?

23 General Caine: Senator, I'm familiar with the basics
24 of that frequency spectrum. I don't know what particular
25 radars Golden Dome has brought into their mix of equipment,

1 but that would not surprise me.

2 Senator Rounds: Thank you. I just think part of the
3 discussion that's been here today has been a concern by the
4 committee that any person that has the role of the Chairman
5 of the Joint Chiefs recognize just how serious their role is
6 with regard to providing to a very, very group of powerful
7 individuals, the best professional military advice that they
8 can provide, and recognizing that while you don't control
9 the policy that is set, your role as this committee sees it
10 is in many cases, the last resort to providing the right
11 types of advice that elected leaders have to hear regardless
12 of whether or not they want to hear it. My understanding,
13 and once again, I'll ask you to just confirm it, you
14 recognize that that is your primary responsibility,

15 General Caine: Senator, I think that's the most
16 important part of this job and the essential part of this
17 job. And if confirmed, you have my commitment that I'll
18 always speak truth to power.

19 Senator Rounds: Well, I think you'll find that this
20 committee will be very supportive of you in that role.
21 General, the B-21 Raider is one of the most capable military
22 platforms in the world has ever seen. It will play a
23 crucial role in any conflict the US faces against a near
24 peer adversary because of its ability to operate in a highly
25 contested environment. The Air Force has committed to at

1 least 100 B-21s.

2 But given its dual missions of conventional long-range
3 strike and nuclear deterrence, many of us believe that we
4 will need a number closer to 200 bombers. If confirmed,
5 would you be prepared to advocate for more than 100 and
6 perhaps as many as 200 of these platforms if a review of our
7 war plan suggested that that is what required for our
8 operational plans moving forward?

9 General Caine: Senator, the last part of your
10 question, I think is the key part for me. After the
11 analysis portion, and, you know, mindful that I've not been
12 confirmed for this job yet, I'd like to speak to the other
13 joint chiefs and the combat commanders whose requirements
14 Raider will fulfill before I commit to supporting any
15 particular number of B-21s.

16 It's an essential part of our nuclear and conventional
17 program, and certainly a key component of it. But before I
18 commit to any number, I'd like to study the matter and come
19 back to you.

20 Senator Rounds: But if that appears to be the case,
21 you would not hesitate to recommend more if those studies
22 warranted it?

23 General Caine: I would not hesitate.

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

25 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Rounds. Senator

1 Hirono.

2 Senator Hirono: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General
3 Caine, with all due respect to you, we should not be here
4 today. This hearing is happening only because of the
5 unprecedented dismissal without cause of General Brown as
6 chairman. As a highly respected military leader, general
7 Brown faithfully served our country for decades. He
8 provided exactly what the Constitution asked of him, the
9 best non-partisan military advice to civilian leadership.

10 However, for an administration that is claiming to be
11 the most "transparent in history," no reasonable
12 justification has been provided for General Brown's
13 termination. Instead, General Brown's dismissal reveals
14 once again, President Trump's intention to install yes men
15 and women with fealty to him and not to the Constitution or
16 the American people.

17 Now, General Caine, you said you will always speak
18 truth to power in your responses to advanced questions, and
19 you indicated that you would provide independent advice.
20 But let me just mention what happens to people who stand up
21 to President Trump. General Milley was a former Chair of
22 Joint Chiefs, stood up to President Trump, and here's what
23 happened to him.

24 President Trump took away his security detail, his
25 security clearance. He even took down his portrait in the

1 Pentagon. That's not all. General Milley is now under
2 investigation by the department's Inspector General to see
3 if you'll be able to retire as a four-star general. It's
4 always a challenge to stand up to this President.

5 Let me just start with the two initial questions, and
6 I'll get to some of the questions that have to do with your
7 fitness to serve. I ask these questions of all nominees on
8 any of the committees on which I sit. Since you became a
9 legal adult, have you ever made unwanted requests for sexual
10 favors or committed any verbal or physical harassment or
11 assault of a sexual nature?

12 General Caine: I have not, Senator.

13 Senator Hirono: Have you ever faced discipline or
14 entered into a settlement relating to this kind of conduct?

15 General Caine: I have not, Senator.

16 Senator Hirono: General, you've been asked a number of
17 questions regarding what the President attributed to you,
18 that it's always been reported that you wore a MAGA hat.
19 You testified you did not. If you did wear a MAGA hat,
20 would that constitute partisan political activity by a
21 uniform officer?

22 General Caine: Senator, I did not wear any political
23 merchandise.

24 Senator Hirono: If you wore such a hat, would that
25 constitute partisan political activity by a uniform officer?

1 Yes or no?

2 General Caine: I think it probably would. Yes,
3 Senator.

4 Senator Hirono: Thank you. General Caine, you've been
5 asked also a number of questions about what's being referred
6 to as Signal Gate, and I commend the Chair of this committee
7 and the Ranking Member for asking for an IGA inquiry. You
8 were the director for special access programs at the
9 Pentagon, an office that manages our nation's most
10 classified programs. Have you ever discussed classified
11 information on an unclassified medium, such as Signal?

12 General Caine: No, Senator. I have not.

13 Senator Hirono: What would be the consequences for
14 discussing a special access program on Signal?

15 General Caine: Well, Senator, we'd have to first do an
16 investigation. We'd have to look into the particular
17 matters associated with it. We'd have to consult with
18 counsel to determine what the way forward was, and then
19 ultimately turn it over to the leadership in the department.

20 Senator Hirono: And you wouldn't just let this matter
21 drop, which is basically what this administration wants to
22 do?

23 General Caine: Well, Senator, I think that it's a
24 little bit of a hypothetical situation asking me about what
25 would happen if a SAP was dropped into Signal.

1 Senator Hirono: It's really not a hypothetical. It is
2 what is confronting this administration and what's
3 happening. You know, that we need to preserve the element
4 of surprise. Is discussing the kinds of matters that were
5 discussed on signal preserving the element of surprise?

6 General Caine: Senator, I don't want to -- given the
7 fact that the chairman and ranking member of an ask for an
8 investigation, I don't want to comment on the particulars.
9 I do want to stay at the strategic altitude and say that we
10 should always preserve the element of surprise.

11 Senator Hirono: I think it was a very simple question,
12 whether or not talking about the things that have been
13 reported, whether that preserved the element of surprise. I
14 would say that if you're truly speaking truth to power, that
15 the answer would obviously be, no, it does not preserve the
16 element of surprise. That is why we need to have an
17 inquiry. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

18 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Hirono. Senator
19 Ernst.

20 Senator Ernst: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I first
21 would like to acknowledge the loss of three soldiers from
22 the Third Infantry Division, and pray for a speedy recovery
23 on the fourth.

24 General Caine, thank you so much for being in front of
25 this committee today, and we all understand that there's a

1 little bit of political theatrics that always occur on this
2 committee, but I would like to thank you very much for your
3 integrity and your measured responses to the questions
4 today. You are carrying yourself with dignity and respect,
5 and that's what we would anticipate and expect of anyone
6 that will be serving as the Chairman of our Joint Chiefs of
7 Staff. So thank you very much for that.

8 You stated that you are an unconventional leader moving
9 forward, and I in particular, am very excited about that
10 because you have served on active duty and active duty Air
11 Force. But also in regards to my own service, you are a
12 national guardsman, and thank you. It gives you a very
13 well-rounded perspective when it comes to the men and women
14 that serve in various capacities for our great Armed
15 Services.

16 But also very important to me is the fact that you have
17 served as an entrepreneur, and this brings a different level
18 into the position that you are hoping to attain. And that
19 leads me into my question. I've been very focused on our
20 defense budget, efficiency, and auditability. And we spoke
21 about this in my office. Because you have the eye of a
22 businessman, you know that your investment dollars are very
23 important going into a business.

24 So you will understand that every dollar going into our
25 Department of Defense is also going to be very important for

1 our war fighters and those that support them. The
2 Department of Defense despite managing the largest
3 discretionary budget of the federal government, has yet to
4 pass a full financial audit. We understand that this
5 failure is eroding public trust in the department and
6 hinders our ability as Congress to allocate those resources
7 effectively, and our frustrations just continue to grow.

8 So, General Caine, if you are confirmed, what steps
9 will you take to ensure the DOD finally passes a full audit
10 by 2028 as required by the law or ideally if at all
11 possible, even sooner?

12 General Caine: Well, Senator, thanks for that
13 question. Is not only as an entrepreneur alum, but also an
14 American taxpayer, we owe it to the nation for the
15 department to pass an audit. There are very few levers that
16 the chairman, if I'm confirmed, that the chairman can throw
17 other than to encourage the services to be prepared for that
18 audit. And that's something that I'll take on if I'm
19 confirmed for the job.

20 Senator Ernst: Yeah, thank you very much for that.
21 And in regards to our Special Operations Forces, I serve as
22 the chair of the Emerging Threats and Capabilities
23 subcommittee, and we'll continue to advocate on behalf of
24 our SOF. They're a very cost-effective force multiplier,
25 and they deliver those high impact results with a very small

1 footprint. And I know we have spoken about this, you do get
2 that.

3 Cuts to SOF funding risk ceding ground to our
4 adversaries. So, General Caine, given SOF's proven role in
5 great power competition, do you believe a justification
6 exists for reducing their footprint and their budget at a
7 time when unconventional threats are on the rise?

8 General Caine: Well, Senator mindful that I'm not in
9 the job yet, I do understand and appreciate the exponential
10 value that SOF can bring to the competition phase that we're
11 in right now. And if confirmed, I'd like to take that on
12 and come back to you with my thoughts on it.

13 Senator Ernst: Yeah, thank you. And I will expect
14 that as well.

15 General Caine: Yes, ma'am.

16 [The information referred to follows:]

17 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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24 Senator Ernst: And I know we could go on, I'll submit
25 a question for the record on recruitment and retention

1 challenges.

2 [The information referred to follows:]

3 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 Senator Ernst: But I just want to close by saying I'm
2 very grateful that President Trump has nominated you to
3 serve as our Chairman for the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I do
4 think that you will bring a different level into this
5 position, a different eye, a different way of looking at
6 things. And we are in very challenging times. We all
7 recognize this. We need a change. You are that change. So
8 thank you very much for being willing to continue to serve
9 in this capacity. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

10 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator. Senator King.

11 Senator King: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General,
12 congratulations on your nomination. We've discussed almost
13 every member of this panel has discussed the importance of
14 giving straight advice to the President and the Secretary of
15 Defense. These are two very strong personalities. The Oval
16 Office is probably the most intimidating room in the world.
17 And I hope you'll reiterate. You mentioned you owe it to
18 them to give you the best advice. You also owe it to the
19 country that you give them the best advice.

20 You mentioned to me when we discussed this before, you
21 have been retired, you didn't expect this job, you don't
22 need this job. Give me your straight-ahead commitment that
23 when the chips are down, you're going to argue for your best
24 military advice.

25 General Caine: Senator, I don't know any other way to

1 operate as a leader. My job, if confirmed, is to always
2 provide best military advice to the President, the Secretary
3 of the NSC, and to Congress, and to do so with candor every
4 day.

5 Senator King: That, as everybody has mentioned,
6 particularly Senator Rounds mentioned, that this is really
7 the principle responsibility of the job. And we are in a
8 very dangerous moment, as you know, there are potential
9 conflicts and conflicts all over the world. So you're going
10 to be called upon probably in a matter of weeks to make
11 these kind of calls and to provide that advice to the
12 President.

13 So I look forward to your honoring that commitment that
14 you just made, and making clear not only providing advice
15 that sounds sort of neutral, but advocating for advice,
16 saying, this is what we believe the best military advice is.
17 Let me move on.

18 It worries me sometimes that we have a tendency
19 particularly in national security, to move our focus from
20 one area to the other, and then we neglect the area that
21 we're missing. What I'm very worried about now is a
22 resurgence of terrorism. Syria potentially could become
23 another base for ISIS. There are thousands of ISIS fighters
24 in jails in Syria, if they're released, that could be a
25 major challenge. West Africa is now a major area of Al-

1 Qaeda activity.

2 Talk to me about the terrorism threat and the fact that
3 we can't forget it because 19 people changed American
4 history on September 11th, and it doesn't take many
5 terrorists to create serious problems for this country and
6 for people around the world.

7 General Caine: Well, sir, I think you -- I don't know
8 that I could say it any better than you just did. We have
9 to keep our pressure on the terrorists who would continue to
10 like --

11 Senator King: Can you be sure that you got that in the
12 record what he just said? Go ahead.

13 General Caine: It's not something Senator,
14 unfortunately, we can ever take our eyes off of completely.
15 The challenge that somebody who would want to do harm to us
16 or to our interests around the world is not going to go away
17 anytime soon.

18 Senator King: And one of the concerns that I have, we
19 always talk about deterrence. That's the main spring of our
20 defense strategy. But deterrence doesn't work with a
21 terrorist, with a nuclear weapon. They don't have a capital
22 to blow up. They don't care about dying. The defense
23 against that eventuality, which I think is absolutely
24 terrifying, is intelligence. And I hope that you will
25 continue to focus the forces in the Pentagon on intelligence

1 and intervening if there's any threat of nuclear material
2 getting into the hands of a terrorist organization.

3 General Caine: Yes, sir.

4 Senator King: Finally, in terms of your leadership
5 within the military, and I know that you're a passionate
6 advocate for our war fighters. One of the things that
7 concerns me, and I'm going from this meeting to a meeting of
8 the Veterans Affairs Committee, is the transition from
9 active duty military to retired, which you have experienced.

10 And the testimony that we've had at numerous hearings
11 is it's inadequate. It's improved in recent years, but
12 there are still gaps that it's very complex and military
13 active duty people going into the, into veteran status, it
14 turns out it's the highest propensity for suicide in the
15 first couple of years after the transition from active duty.

16 So I hope that's something that you'll pay some
17 attention to. I believe that as much money, effort, and
18 time should be spent on transition out as we spend on
19 recruiting in.

20 General Caine: Well, Senator, it is a bit of an
21 arduous process. I can personally attest to that. And so I
22 appreciate your leadership on helping the veterans of the
23 nation to transition appropriately. And it is an area of
24 risk for sure, and I'll keep my eye on it if confirmed.

25 Senator King: I hope you will. Thank you very much

1 General, and again, congratulations on your nomination.

2 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator.

3 Senator King: Thank you.

4 Chairman Wicker: Senator Cramer.

5 Senator Cramer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you
6 General for your service and for your willingness to step
7 back into the gap. And while I agree that the dismissal of
8 your predecessor was unfortunate, it's behind us, and I
9 cannot think of a better person to replace General Brown
10 than you. And frankly, the unconventionalness of you as
11 the President's pick is in and of itself brilliant in my
12 view.

13 But when you look at your actual history and your
14 actual service and the diversity of it, I just can't imagine
15 a better choice. So congratulations on that and I look
16 forward to supporting you strongly. In your opening
17 statement, you said some things that we hear a lot from
18 people that come before the committee and your response to,
19 to Chairman Wicker's legislation dealing with the
20 acquisition reform stuff. Very welcoming.

21 But everyone says that. Everyone says that. And yet I
22 find it -- and this is why, frankly, you being you know,
23 unconventional is encouraging to me because they all mean
24 it, by the way, when they say it. I believe that at the
25 moment they mean it. They mean it until the particular

1 service that they served in or the particular agency within
2 the service they served in, it was disrupted by the very
3 thing they say they support.

4 Who we're dealing with the situation right now, perhaps
5 the most disruptive innovator taking over, becoming the
6 first director of the most disruptive innovative agency, The
7 Space Development Agency, has been on leave for three months
8 during a witch hunt that's began on the last day of the last
9 administration. And everybody that that says they're an
10 innovator, is an innovator, except in this case, maybe we
11 should, you know, check further into it.

12 All the while, satellites don't go up, all the while
13 China goes at the speed of China. So I believe there's a
14 cultural problem as well as we have some work to do as
15 Congress, policy makers have work to do, the administration
16 has work to do, but we have a culture challenge as well.

17 General, I'd like you to elaborate a little bit on how
18 we can really make the difference that you say you want to
19 make, and I believe you do want to make, so that we aren't
20 just consolidating all of our industry into a couple of
21 giants, whether it be a land, airspace, sea.

22 General Caine: Well, Senator, you're hitting on an
23 area that that is a point of passion for me. We have to stop
24 admiring the problem and we have to start executing. And I
25 do think your point about culture is where it all starts. I

1 think we have to take an, an ownership and an
2 entrepreneurial mindset to all of these reforms that are in
3 front of us. And we can't do this alone. We have to do it
4 with you here in the Congress in order to actually make
5 these changes.

6 I'm encouraged by the leaders who are coming into the
7 department who have deep substantive business background
8 that are not known as people who admire problems. And so,
9 if confirmed, I look forward to working with the various
10 leaders in order to actually move the ball. And of course,
11 working with the Congress to execute these things without
12 continuing to admire these challenges in front of us.

13 Senator Cramer: Well, and I appreciate your reference
14 to the new style of leaders coming in the entrepreneurs and
15 whatnot. And I have the same optimism as a result of it,
16 but I am getting anxious about actually seeing it happen.
17 So, maybe you're the leader that can make that a reality for
18 us now.

19 You know, we get to talk to the combatant commanders.
20 You'll get to talk to them a lot. One of the things we hear
21 over and over from commanders, of course, is that
22 intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, ISR, is in great
23 need and low supply these days. And the Air Force,
24 specifically, has been on a mission to eliminate ISR as one
25 of their key missions. It's disappeared even as a term in

1 several of their documents in recent years.

2 And it's not just their fault. I mean, we have a -- as
3 we've all been talking about, we have a resource challenge
4 in our defense department, and we're trying to work on that.
5 I just think we all have to do a lot more. For sure, I want
6 to recognize that. But I also worry that there's this
7 divide between what the commanders say they need in the
8 field and frankly what we're seeing and where we're
9 investing.

10 And I would just love you to, your remaining seconds
11 with me, expound a little bit on ISR, where you see it, you
12 know, landing as a mission set. And maybe it's everybody
13 has their own form, but I don't think that's very practical.

14 General Caine: Well, Senator, just in my remaining
15 five seconds. You know, ISR, and the ability to have
16 indications and warnings to make decisions for commanders
17 who hold risk is a key and essential part of our overall
18 ability to execute the missions that we must do.

19 Senator Cramer:

20 And I think that Air Force should keep it as a, as a, a
21 mission. I get that. Other services will have some form of
22 it. But anyway, thank you. I look forward to supporting
23 you.

24 General Caine: Thank you, Senator.

25 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Cramer. Senator

1 Kaine.

2 Senator Kaine: Thank you, General. Good to see you.
3 I enjoyed our visit. I would encourage my colleagues not to
4 hold your last name against you. I share comments that some
5 of my colleagues have made about the unfortunate
6 circumstances with General Brown, but you didn't have
7 anything to do with that.

8 And I know from our conversations and my own due
9 diligence VMI is very proud of you and folks who've worked
10 with you in the past who I hold in high regard, are very
11 proud of you. And a lot of the questions that have been
12 asked, kind of trying to really drill into the, your ability
13 to give the best candidate advice, I think your career has
14 demonstrated to my satisfaction that you will do so.

15 One of the things that I really like about your
16 background, and I think Senator Ernst and others have
17 commented on it, is, you know, active and guard, DOD and
18 private sector at the Pentagon, at the White House, at the
19 CIA. You've seen pretty deep interaction with allies.

20 You've really seen the breadth of our military mission
21 in a way that I think is the kind of experience that would
22 inform that judgment that you need to provide. And in fact,
23 in a way, the role of the Head of the Joint Chiefs, the
24 Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, as Senator Cotton was walking
25 you through the work that you did at the CIA, was a little

1 bit the same role.

2 Why don't you describe in a little more detail that
3 posting to the CIA

4 General Caine: Yes, sir.

5 Senator Kaine: And what your job was in that, because
6 I think it's almost analogous, the advice you are providing
7 to the CIA director, best military advice, is pretty
8 analogous to the advice you'd be providing to SEC DEF and
9 the and the commander-in-chief.

10 General Caine: Well, Senator, thank you for that
11 question. You know, I do agree. The ADMA, the Associate
12 Director for Military Affairs, was actually established by
13 the Congress to detail a three star military officer over to
14 the CIA under Title 50 authorities in order to provide best
15 military advice to the director, the deputy director, and to
16 work daily with the secretary, the chairman, the combatant
17 commanders, and the service chiefs in order to globally
18 integrate same functions that the chairman has in order to
19 globally integrate CIA and DOD activities.

20 And if confirmed, I'll continue to do that, working
21 with the best of the Title 10 forces, the best of Title 50,
22 what the state department can bring to the table, what the
23 rest of the interagency can bring to the table, along with
24 our allies and partners. And so, while I'm mindful that
25 I've not led at the four-star level, this is not a command

1 job that I'm being considered for. It's an advisory job,
2 and there's very similar traits to the last job in this one

3 Senator Kaine: And the posting that you had to the CIA
4 for this important role, was that a -- were you delegated by
5 the SEC DEF to do that, or did you like interview with the
6 CIA to get that post?

7 General Caine: I was nominated by the department and
8 interviewed by the CIA. And as far as I understand it, the
9 CIA made the selection.

10 Senator Kaine: But you were the nominee of the
11 department. So, I do think that the role is an important
12 one. The one thing I don't see in your resume, but I
13 suspect it's probably there, and I just -- your resume's too
14 long, is interaction that you've had with the State
15 Department over the course of your career. Could you talk
16 about that a little bit?

17 General Caine: Yes, sir. My first real substantive
18 interaction with the State Department was actually when I
19 was a White House fellow at USDA, and we were charged with
20 working on the Global Pandemic Plan surrounding avian
21 influenza H5N1.

22 Senator Kaine: During the Bush administration?

23 General Caine: Yes, sir. During the Bush
24 administration. And, you know, that really began my
25 substantive appreciation for what the diplomatic element of

1 power can do. And that continued through my time in the
2 military overseas, and have deep regard and appreciation for
3 what the State Department can do for us.

4 Senator Kaine: I think all of us at times have been
5 frustrated with silos. You know, the states and their silo,
6 intel and theirs, DOD Pentagon, and their own silo. And
7 sometimes having the different perspectives is great. If
8 everybody's just singing, you know, the exact same note, you
9 sometimes wonder whether it's groupthink. So, getting some
10 different perspectives can be helpful. The fact that you've
11 been in all parts of the kind of broad national security
12 family gives me some real confidence in your judgment coming
13 into this position.

14 Last thing I'll just ask is what would you say has been
15 your signature achieve or experience of the course of your
16 career in terms of interacting with our allies?

17 General Caine: Probably sir the scud hunt in 2003,
18 where I had the opportunity to work very closely with our
19 British, UK, and Australian allies, which was absolutely a
20 coalition effort from day one. And we went to war alongside
21 them. And I've thankfully sustained all of those
22 relationships. Now, I have deep relationships with our
23 closest allies, and if confirmed, look forward to continuing
24 those.

25 Senator Kaine: I'm a strong promoter of the AUKUS

1 framework and the fact that you've had those relationships
2 in the past and maintain them, that's a positive.

3 I yield back. Thank you.

4 General Caine: Thank you, sir.

5 Chairman Wicker: Where were you exactly during that
6 scud operation, sir?

7 General Caine: Well, sir, the location that we flew
8 out of, I think is still classified. Happy to talk about
9 that in closed session.

10 Chairman Wicker: Okay. Thank you very much. Senator
11 Scott.

12 Senator Scott: Thank you, Chairman.

13 So, General, congratulations. You've got the right
14 background. I think you're going to do a great job. Always
15 like to see business guys succeed. So, that's fun. This is
16 all doable. I mean, you look at where we are. We've got
17 Communist China's, built a military to defeat us. We've got
18 allies that have not invested like they should have. We've
19 got Iran, which appears to have, you know, enough money now
20 to continue to support the Houthis, Hamas.

21 You know, we've got China all over Latin America. I
22 mean, what we have to do to defend the freedom of this
23 country and try to do our best to police a world. Does that
24 mean it -- is this actually doable? Do are you optimistic?
25 Are you pessimistic

1 General Caine: Senator, I'm always an optimistic
2 leader.

3 Senator Scott: And why do you believe that we can do
4 it?

5 General Caine: There's a lot of reasons, but the power
6 of the American spirit is what leaps out to me right off the
7 bat. There are very few things that we set our mind to that
8 we can achieve. And despite some of the very serious
9 challenges in front of us, we've always stood up to those
10 challenges.

11 Senator Scott: Do you think the budget that we're
12 going to be able to provide is going to allow you to be able
13 to do the things you need to do?

14 General Caine: Well, Senator, I won't get in front of
15 the President, or OMB, on what budget markers they set.
16 What I will do confirm to you and commit to you, is that
17 whatever capital we're given will make the best out of it.

18 Senator Scott: So, in Florida, you know, we have 20
19 military bases and three unified commands. One is
20 Homestead, and we talked about this a little bit. You know,
21 it's not that far from Cuba. You know, it's just Homestead
22 is a little bit north of Key West, and it hasn't had a
23 dedicated flying mission in a while. It seems like it's, it
24 would be an important base. Do you see a future for
25 Homestead? And do you think it ought to have a flying

1 mission?

2 General Caine: Well, Senator, I won't get out in front
3 of the service, but if confirmed, I'll definitely talk to
4 the Air Force Reserve Command and the Air Force to see what
5 they're thinking around flying mission at Homestead.

6 The history of that unit, and that base is exemplary.
7 They were with us in the Scud Hunt, a small component of
8 them were there with us back in 2003. And I've got deep
9 appreciation for the culture and history of that unit.

10 Senator Scott: This is the first time I have the
11 opportunity to be the chairman of the Subcommittee on
12 Seapower. And as you know, we have not been able to build
13 ships, maintain ships, keep ships ready. How do you think
14 that's going to change?

15 General Caine: Well, I think it's a, it's a
16 significant challenge for us, and we've got to up our game.
17 I'm encouraged by the SEC Navs focus on this, and we've got
18 to get to our Congressionally mandated number of 355 ships
19 as soon as possible, which includes our ability to sustain
20 them and repair them around the world. And we've got real
21 limits right now,

22 Senator Scott: According to the Navy, they provide the
23 combatant commanders with 40 percent of their requirements.
24 Didn't make much sense in business. If one division need,
25 well, you know, they need to deliver 40 percent, but it's

1 work, we'd based the budget on the requirements needed. Do
2 you think there's a different way we ought to be allocating
3 resources?

4 General Caine:

5 Senator, I'm sorry, could you repeat the question again? The

6 Senator Scott: Command and commanders that, you know,
7 they're only getting a portion of what they're asking. Is
8 there a better way to allocate the resources?

9 General Caine: Well, Senator, I appreciate the
10 question. You know, that the challenge is that we have to
11 globally integrate all the combatant commands, and there's
12 never a loss for tension between the COCOMs. What I trust
13 is that the joint staff and the joint chiefs are looking
14 carefully and thoughtfully considering where that balance
15 is, and then passing those options to the secretary for him
16 to decide on where that allocation may be. Until we have
17 such capacity that there's no need to do that, I think we're
18 going to continue to balance those capabilities and
19 capacities across all the COCOMs.

20 Senator Scott: So, my final question is, what drives
21 you? Why do you want to do this? And let's say you did
22 this for four years, what would your goal be at the end of
23 those four years that you said we got this accomplished?

24 General Caine: Well, Senator, doing my part to make
25 sure that we have a safe and prosperous United States of

1 America. That the military element of power has delivered
2 the deterrence capability that we needed, and we've taken
3 care of our families and our force along the way.

4 Senator Scott: Thank you. You'll do a great job.

5 General Caine: Thank you, Senator.

6 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much. Senator Mullin.

7 Senator Mullin: Thank you, Chairman. And thank you,
8 General, for wanting to step back into service. Your
9 retirement didn't last too long, and the idea that you're
10 willing to jump back and serve just speaks volume to the
11 true inner spirit that you have. And I want to thank you
12 for doing that. You have made a tremendous amount of
13 sacrifice already and, you know, eyes wide open what this
14 job is going to entail. You have some real challenges ahead
15 of you.

16 And I want to start first talking about the defense
17 industry. I know you're familiar with the so-called last
18 Supper in 1994 to where we basically encouraged our defense
19 industry to consolidate. I'm a firm believer in looking
20 back and looking at things of where it went wrong. Because
21 since then, our defense industry really hasn't been to
22 deliver on time and on budget on some of the most critical
23 needs we have.

24 We've seen from our planes in the air, to our ships in
25 the shipyards, to the equipment that we're needing is

1 constantly behind what we're needing today. When we ask for
2 technology that's being used against us or that our
3 adversaries have already may achieved. When we ask our
4 defense industry to deliver, it's five to seven years, if
5 we're lucky, it's three. And yet, it's never on time.

6 Now, you come from a unique position, being active,
7 being reserved, and being in the private sector. I feel
8 like that this is one of the biggest threats that we have.
9 We have a technology need today, and it's being delivered
10 five years from now. We are five years behind. How do you
11 plan on tackling this? Because I do feel like this is the
12 biggest threat to our military today.

13 General Caine: Well, Senator, I agree. It's a huge
14 problem. Technology is evolving so quickly that every time
15 we field capabilities, they're obsolete oftentimes when they
16 hit the force. And that's not acceptable. I think it goes
17 back to something that the chairman and I talked about at
18 the beginning of the hearing, and that's related to having
19 agility in our requirements and building a system of
20 acquisition that allows us to take advantage of the current
21 technologies, not those of the past.

22 And so, if confirmed, you know, I'll work with the
23 joint staff, the joint chiefs, and of course OSD to pick up
24 the speed, pace, and tempo of fielding the capabilities that
25 we need that are not obsolete.

1 Senator Mullin: How do you plan on bringing private
2 industry back in to actually go around some of our primes
3 that are incapable of delivering in a quick fashion?

4 General Caine: Well, Senator, I think we need a mix of
5 both startups that are new entrants to the industry, but we
6 also do need the primes. The answer is all of the above.
7 There are components that the primes can only do, and we
8 have to leverage that capability. And then there's a bunch
9 of things that new entrants will do to move forward. So,
10 you know, I think the answer is, as I mentioned, all of the
11 above.

12 Senator Mullin: I agree that the primes are important,
13 but they have felt they have failed miserably on staying on
14 budget and on time and being adequate to delivering today's
15 needs. I don't like rewarding those that have not delivered
16 on adequately when we've asked. And we know that's been a
17 problem. So, holding them accountable is important.

18 Now, I want to switch gears real quick about
19 Afghanistan. It's deeply personal to me, and I know it is
20 to you and anyone else that had the privilege of serving the
21 nation in Afghanistan. But because our disastrous
22 withdrawal, I feel like there's a hesitation in our military
23 and our military family to actually step forward and make
24 that sacrifice again.

25 I think there's a lot of doubt that the United States

1 is able to stand behind what our first mission is, and then
2 to be able to bring pride to those that sacrificed with,
3 that brings a morale issue to those that are still serving.
4 Those are sometimes with the most experience in there. And
5 I feel like we may be having a drain in knowledge of those
6 that that have sacrificed so much.

7 How do you plan on retaining those and restoring that
8 trust back in the military that says, Hey, we got you.
9 We're not going to leave you on the battlefield. We're not
10 going to let your sacrifice die, but we're going to let you
11 walk away with a tremendous amount of pride knowing that
12 your sacrifice meant something to this country.

13 General Caine: Well, Senator, I appreciate the
14 question. I think that's one of our most important jobs as
15 leaders, whether it be at the chairman level or all the way
16 down to the platoon leader level, is inspiring those who
17 serve. Taking care of them always, but also making sure
18 they know how much we appreciate them, and their families,
19 and their service.

20 Senator Mullin: But that doesn't address what
21 happened.

22 General Caine: Well, Senator, you mean in Afghanistan?

23 Senator Mullin: Yes.

24 General Caine: You know, that withdrawal was not what
25 anyone would've wanted. Very difficult circumstances. I

1 think the officers on the ground did the best that they
2 could with the policy decisions that were made. We mourned
3 the loss of the 13 at Abbey Gate, and we have to hold those
4 accountable if there was something for them to be held
5 accountable for. And I know the Department is looking into
6 that. But again, most of those professional military
7 officers were executing the direction and orders of
8 policymakers above them.

9 Senator Mullin: Thank you.

10 Chairman Wicker: General, is it accurate to say that
11 Afghanistan was a forever war ?

12 General Caine: I'm not sure what the doctrinal
13 definition of a forever war is, but it certainly took a --
14 it was a long, long time.

15 Chairman Wicker: What was the engagement of NATO and
16 American troops at the time of our disastrous withdrawal?

17 General Caine: Well, sir, I think there were still
18 U.S. forces on the ground and still NATO forces on the
19 ground. I'm not exactly sure what your question is.

20 Chairman Wicker: Were there casualties?

21 General Caine: At the very end, there were. Yes, sir.

22 Chairman Wicker: Oh, no, in the last year before the
23 disastrous withdrawal. There were no American casualties?

24 General Caine: Not that I'm aware.

25 Chairman Wicker: Thank you. Senator Gillibrand.

1 Senator Gillibrand: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

2 Thank you, General Caine, for being here. Thank you
3 for your family, for their support of this appointment.
4 Based on your understanding of relevant classification and
5 authorities, do you believe that any of the information that
6 was shared on the Signal chat was classified at the time it
7 was sent, particularly the details about timing of the
8 target and the for the manned U.S. aircraft and other
9 details related to the exact plan?

10 General Caine: Senator, I didn't see the original
11 CONOP. As I mentioned earlier in my testimony, I think we
12 should always preserve the element of surprise. And that's
13 a key and essential thing that we owe our warfighters.

14 Senator Gillibrand: What would you have done if you
15 were on that text chain?

16 General Caine: Well, first, I wasn't and I think that
17 was a political partisan text chain with policymakers at the
18 political level only. So, I can't hypothetically guess what
19 I would've done, but I would not have -- we would not have

20 Senator Gillibrand: I wouldn't call that a political
21 or partisan text chain. It had the head of intelligence, it
22 had the head of CIA, it had our Secretary of Defense, it had
23 the National Security top advisors for the President, and to
24 share that type of information. From a military
25 perspective, I can't imagine if a subordinate of yours

1 shared that type of military information in an unclassified
2 setting, such as a Signal text chain, they would be fired,
3 would they not?

4 General Caine: Well, Senator, as I mentioned earlier,
5 I think, you know, the chairman and ranking member have
6 called for an investigation. And so, I feel like it's
7 appropriate for me to withhold comment until such time that
8 it's either determined that there will be an investigation
9 or not.

10 Senator Gillibrand: Well, what would you do in a
11 different scenario if you see classified information or war
12 plans, information, or tactical information on an
13 unclassified chain? What would you do to stop the
14 conversation?

15 General Caine: Well, I think I would weigh in and stop
16 it if I was a, a part of it, but in this case, I wasn't.

17 Senator Gillibrand: Thank you. The worldwide
18 proliferation of unmanned aerial systems is an undeniable
19 national security threat, creating challenges in both
20 funding and capability. How do you believe the department
21 and joint force should approach these two challenges of
22 funding and capability?

23 General Caine: Well, Senator, it's definitely a big
24 challenge in front of us. The mass and simultaneity of
25 especially small UAS is one that is concerning to me, both

1 from a technical standpoint, but also from a policy
2 standpoint. You know, as I'm sure you're aware, we have
3 somewhat limited capabilities in some cases inside the
4 domestic U.S. to stop some of these UASs. I think we have
5 to continue to fund the research and development to counter
6 them.

7 Senator Gillibrand: Well, let's make it more direct to
8 you. When you have drones hovering over Langley for a two-
9 week period, appearing and disappearing without our
10 technology being able to track or trace it, without having
11 the authorities to follow the UAS to its point of departure
12 and its point of return, that creates a serious national
13 need being operated by Russia, China, or Iran. So, what
14 will you do to protect the military bases and the military
15 secrets that are under your purview?

16 General Caine: Senator, if confirmed, I'll continue to
17 put the appropriate amount of pressure and interest on that
18 to work in conjunction with the Commander of NORAD,
19 NORTHCOM, General Guillot, who's doing a fantastic job on
20 this issue and others to continue, to work with the private
21 sector to find the capabilities that we must have, that we
22 currently don't have to prevent this from happening again.

23 Senator Gillibrand: Which capabilities don't you have,
24 do you have the, do you lack the authorities or do you lack
25 the technological capability,

1 General Caine: Senator, I think it's a little bit of a
2 mix of both. There are some authorities issues related to
3 airspace directly over U.S. military bases, and then
4 transitioning outside of the geographical boundaries of that
5 military base and who has cognizant authority over those
6 small UASs at that point. And then, I think there's some
7 technological challenges in the states around stopping them
8 and actually downing them. There's always collateral damage
9 concerns in those types of things.

10 Senator Gillibrand: Will you seek the authority to be
11 able to take down UASs above military bases?

12 General Caine: If confirmed, I'll speak with the
13 Commander of NORAD, NORTHCOM, and the relevant state and
14 local authorities to make sure that we're illuminating those
15 discussion points.

16 Senator Gillibrand: Senator Cotton and I have
17 legislation to do exactly that, and I would request that you
18 review that legislation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

19 Chairman Wicker: Do you have co-sponsors, Senator?

20 Senator Gillibrand: I don't know yet, but I can ask.

21 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much. Senator
22 Tuberville.

23 Senator Tuberville: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

24 Thank you General, for being here, your service, and
25 congratulations on your nomination. You're nominated to be

1 the senior military advisor to the President of the United
2 States. What a chore. I remember a time when generals and
3 retired senior officers would avoid political discussions.
4 It was extremely uncommon for a former senior officer to
5 even endorse a candidate for political office.

6 Lately, that approach seems to be an exception, not to
7 rule. You know, some of your predecessors even appear to
8 support political positions while in uniform. Your
9 predecessor was deeply involved in politics, which should
10 not be part of this approach.

11 General Caine, in your own words, how would you
12 describe to this committee the importance of your
13 responsibility and commitment to provide the best military
14 advice, even when that advice might differ from what the
15 President of the United States believes?

16 General Caine: Well, Senator, thank you for that
17 question. It ultimately is the whole job is to be the
18 principal military advisor to the President, and pursuant to
19 that job, provide the President with best military advice
20 even when the President may have different feelings about
21 it. And that is exactly what the nation pays me to do. So,
22 if confirmed, that is exactly what I'll do.

23 Senator Tuberville: General, when you take this job,
24 what's your number one concern?

25 General Caine: Senator, right now, the number one

1 concern is the passage of time and ensuring that the joint
2 force is ready, properly armed with the right capabilities
3 out at the tactical edge, properly globally integrated with
4 the services themselves, with the other elements of the
5 interagency, with our allies and partners, and with the
6 private sector. And ready to go tonight. And that means
7 their families are ready, they're ready, they're properly
8 trained and equipped. So, we have much to do.

9 Senator Tuberville: We all know that the machines that
10 we build, the guns and the bullets that we have, everything
11 at the disposal of the warfighter, but it's usually the
12 people involved. Our recruiting has much improved in the
13 last couple of months. What do you see your role as an
14 advisor to the President in recruiting for our all of our
15 military?

16 General Caine: Well, Senator, we don't have much of a
17 military without the incredible 2.8 million members of the
18 joint force that selflessly join the service to do something
19 more important than themselves. And, you know, to answer
20 your question, if confirmed, I think it's an opportunity for
21 me to be another voice of encouragement for those young men
22 and women who have the capability and meet the standards to
23 come into the service and do something that they will
24 forever hold so high in their past history. The chance to
25 serve this nation is a special privilege for those of us

1 that have come into the cloth of our nation and served. And
2 I hope that I'll be able to encourage others to do so.

3 Senator Tuberville: Being the chairman of the
4 Subcommittee on Personnel of the Armed Services, we had a
5 hearing last week with our West Point, or Academies, Naval
6 Academy and Air Force Academy. I would hope in the future,
7 and I know your job is to inform our President and keep him
8 advised of everything, but I think that your job, too, would
9 be able to work with our academies in terms of our
10 leadership, help build that leadership to a higher standard,
11 to keep it to a higher standard and let our young men and
12 women know that that's where it all starts.

13 If we don't have leadership, we don't have anything.
14 And I think that's a good point, you know, that it pass on
15 to the President. Obviously, your information you give to
16 the President is going to be number one, but also build and
17 help build our military is going to be a huge part of you, I
18 think, a part of your job. What do you think?

19 General Caine: I agree, Senator.

20 Senator Tuberville: Thank you. Thank you, Mr.
21 Chairman.

22 Chairman Wicker: You're here. Senator Duckworth.

23 Senator Duckworth: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

24 I want to begin by expressing my deep gratitude for the
25 outstanding service of General Brown and so many other

1 dedicated military leaders who were unjustly dismissed as
2 part of a politically motivated purge of senior Department
3 of Defense officials.

4 General Caine, I really enjoyed our conversations we've
5 had recently over the last couple of weeks. If you are
6 confirmed as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, you will serve as
7 the President's principal military advisor, and be expected
8 to bring your military judgment to bear, to advise against
9 illegal, immoral, and advisable courses of action,
10 regardless of partisan pressure.

11 However, we are in a moment where that very principle
12 is under strain, such as with the dismissal of Judge
13 Advocates General responsible for providing critical legal
14 expertise because their counsel did not align with the
15 political preferences of Secretary Hegseth. This pattern
16 has had a chilling effect on the open, honest discourse
17 essential to national security decision-making at the
18 highest level.

19 Now, the lives of self service members and future of
20 our national security depend on expert qualified leaders who
21 understand that their decisions have real life or death
22 consequences. How will you insulate and empower general
23 officers across the force to remain professional and
24 importantly nonpartisan and provide unbiased advice to
25 civilian policy makers without fear of coercion, undue

1 partisanship, or retaliation?

2 General Caine: Well, Senator, I thank you. I also
3 enjoyed our time together. This is the whole job. This is
4 why you and I both took our oath of office. It's what is
5 contained in our commission and aligned with the
6 Constitution. And so, that is what the nation expects out
7 of our professional officer corps, I'm sure what we'll
8 continue to do moving forward in history.

9 Senator Duckworth: And will you do your best to ensure
10 that the general officer corps, those who give that advice,
11 remain unbiased and non-partisan?

12 General Caine: Always

13 Senator Duckworth: Well, maybe bias on the side of the
14 service members and national security.

15 General Caine: Well, yes, ma'am, but

16 Senator Duckworth: Thank you. And it's great to see a
17 guard guy at that table going through the confirmation
18 hearing, so.

19 General Caine: Thank you, ma'am.

20 Senator Duckworth: You'll also be the senior most
21 uniformed officer entrusted with being a model and a leader
22 for the joint force. Recently, we've witnessed troubling
23 signs, signs of blurred lines between private power and
24 public trust. A striking lack of regard for protecting
25 vital national security secrets and the absence of

1 accountability for top leadership; from Elon Musk receiving
2 invitations for briefings on China, to a pattern of
3 mishandling classified information, to Secretary Hegseth
4 bringing family members into sensitive meetings with allies
5 and partners. Very concerningly.

6 We have also seen a concerted effort to skirt
7 transparency to the American people on the use of force with
8 decision-making being done over disappearing Signal chat.
9 It seems like this administration is more interested in
10 keeping secrets from the American people than protecting
11 national security secrets for the American people. You have
12 experience running some of our most sensitive operations.
13 So, you know that even the need for secrecy to enable
14 mission success does not mean skirting accountability to the
15 American people.

16 Do you commit to providing the legally required
17 transparency to Congress and the American people over
18 decisions related to the use of force even in the face of
19 pressure from civilian leadership?

20 General Caine: I do, Senator.

21 Senator Duckworth: Thank you. Another concerning
22 focus of this administration has been to distract the
23 military from its core mission approval of protecting the
24 American people from external threats by redirecting
25 military personnel assets and platforms to domestic law

1 enforcement missions.

2 President Trump may have learned from his first term
3 that asking one of your Presidents to deploy the military to
4 fire on civilian protestors was a no-go. So, instead, he
5 has turned to form insidious tactics linking criminal
6 activities or undesired political speech to hostile
7 governments like Venezuela or terrorist groups like Hamas in
8 order to legitimize military involvement.

9 In fact, this kind of threat inflation is exactly what
10 dictators do. The separation between military missions and
11 civilian law enforcement is a core tenet of our democracy,
12 and exists not only to protect the rights of American
13 citizens, but also to preserve the integrity of our armed
14 forces.

15 When military personnel are thrust into law enforcement
16 missions, it places them at risk of moral injury of being
17 asked to enforce partisan concerns rather than to defend the
18 nation. It compromises not just their mission, but their
19 conscience. What steps will you take to ensure that U.S.
20 military personnel or assets are not inappropriately used in
21 law enforcement capacities that distract the military from
22 its core mission undermine readiness and threaten public
23 trust?

24 General Caine: Well, Senator, thank you for that
25 question. I think there's, you know, strong systems in

1 place legal systems in place that prevent any missteps
2 there. You know, it ranges from Title 32 authorities to
3 Title 10 authorities and have no reason to believe at this
4 point that those are insufficient in any way.

5 Senator Duckworth: Thank you. I enjoy working with
6 you, General.

7 General Caine: Thank you.

8 Senator Duckworth: Mr. Chairman.

9 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much, Senator.
10 Senator Sullivan.

11 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

12 I want to begin by agreeing with our ranking member and
13 others, you, Lieutenant General Caine on commending General
14 C.Q. Brown for his exceptional four decades of service. I
15 fully agree with the accolades he's receiving in this
16 committee, and wish him and his family the best.

17 You know, I've worked, served under, met with hundreds
18 of flag officers in my positions as a U.S. Senator, as a
19 U.S. Marine, and I will say, General, I think you are one of
20 the most impressive flag officers I've met with. And I
21 don't say that lightly. Like I said, I've met with
22 hundreds. I think it's the combination of all the
23 experiences, to Senator Duckworth's point, guard, reserve
24 private sector. I mean, you're bringing a lot in here, and
25 I think that's going to be very, very important.

1 I do want to touch on this topic that we're playing up
2 a lot here on keeping politics out of our military. I
3 couldn't agree more with that. I think it's really
4 important. Big part of my career here. I've tried to make
5 sure that happens, but I will say we're not talking about
6 what just happened the last four years. I think the
7 military was politicized in a huge way, particularly from
8 the civilian leaders who were pushing left wing theories on
9 the military, pushing climate change over a ship building.

10 The Under Secretary for Policy came before this
11 committee and told us that our military is, systemically
12 racist. It's ridiculous, right? Do you believe our
13 military is systemically racist? Is that what you saw in
14 your 30-plus years of service?

15 General Caine: No, sir.

16 Senator Sullivan: So, do you agree, just to make 100
17 percent sure, what the Secretary of Defense's testimony when
18 he came here, that our are military professionals, uniform
19 professionals, need to remain apolitical and committed to
20 our Constitution identified not as Republicans or Democrats,
21 but warriors and leaders. Is that your commitment?

22 General Caine. It is, Senator.

23 Senator Sullivan: And will you commit to this
24 committee to doing that?

25 General Caine: I will, Senator.

1 Senator Sullivan: Thank you. I'm not going to let
2 this hearing go by without a famous quote from the father of
3 the U.S. Air Force, Billy Mitchell, who was talking about a
4 certain place in the world. He said, Whoever controls this
5 place controls the world. It is the most strategic place in
6 the world. What place was Billy Mitchell talking about,
7 General?

8 General Caine: Alaska.

9 Senator Sullivan: Do you agree with Billy Mitchell's
10 incredibly insightful analysis?

11 General Caine: And Mitchell was a brilliant airpower.

12 Senator Sullivan: That's a yes, I assume, you're
13 saying?

14 General Caine: Yes, sir.

15 Senator Sullivan: Okay. Well, look, our adversaries
16 agree. You and I talked about this in my office. Again, I
17 appreciate the hearing. We've had huge incursions, huge
18 number of incursions in the last two years. Russian and
19 Chinese. Joint Russian and Chinese strategic bomber task
20 forces into our ADIZ, joint Russian and Chinese naval task
21 forces into our EEZ up in Alaska. We are on the front lines
22 of great power competition.

23 With regard to our adversaries, you and I talked about
24 infrastructure in Alaska for our military. The President
25 after his election said, we will ensure Alaska gets even

1 more defense investments as we rebuild our military,
2 especially as Russia and China are making menacing moves in
3 the North Pacific. That's from the commander-in-chief.

4 The INDOPACOM, NORTHCOM commander recently said that
5 this very vital naval base, former naval base, and ADAK, is
6 a former sub base, air base, huge fuel depot, one of the
7 biggest fuel depots for our Navy in the world. We have a
8 Navy team there right now this week looking at reopening
9 that. Can I get your commitment to work with this committee
10 and me on infrastructure that can protect our northern
11 flying -- because as the NORTHCOM commander recently
12 testified, these incursions are only going to increase.

13 General Caine: Yes, sir.

14 Senator Sullivan: Let me talk about another issue. It
15 doesn't come up a lot. You talked about urgent action
16 reform to go faster with greater efficiency. I think one of
17 our unsung success stories in this regard is 8(a)
18 contractors working with the Department of Defense. DOD can
19 use these 8(a) contractors if they want. They don't have
20 to, but they bring efficiency, speed, low-cost contracts,
21 and quality services.

22 I was saw a recent example of an integrated request
23 from DOD to have a wheeled vehicle that can put a harpoon
24 anti-ship system on it. This 8(a) a contractor got it
25 designed in two weeks, got it produced in a month -- or I'm

1 sorry, with inside of 12 months. They're already in Taiwan.
2 They're going to produce 20 more in 18 months. The OEMs,
3 big primes, if they tried to do that, would've taken them 10
4 years.

5 Can you commit to me to continue to work with these
6 small businesses that I think deliver readiness, efficiency,
7 and modernization?

8 General Caine: I will, Senator.

9 Senator Sullivan: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

10 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Sullivan.

11 Without objection, that chart will be copied into the
12 record.

13 [The information referred to follows:]

14 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 Chairman Wicker: Senator Rosen.

2 Senator Rosen: Well, thank you, Chairman Wicker,
3 Ranking Member Reed for holding this hearing. My thanks to
4 you, General Caine, for meeting with me. We had a great
5 conversation about Nevada. And for your willingness to
6 serve.

7 But I'm going to keep on the subject of Nevada assets
8 and documenting exposure at classified locations. And so,
9 from your time as a director of special access programs and
10 from your own experience serving at a data mass location, a
11 duty station whose location and existences classified you're
12 familiar with the delicate balance between protecting
13 sensitive information and ensuring that service members
14 records actually reflect their service-connected injuries at
15 those sensitive or data mass locations.

16 And so, I've heard from constituents who served at such
17 locations like the Nevada Test and Training Range, who
18 believe they were exposed to radiation from our days of
19 conducting explosive nuclear weapons testing and to burn
20 pits, which dispose of classified waste.

21 However, DOD does not classify the range as a place
22 where exposure occurred despite the Department of Energy
23 providing a presumption of exposure for their personnel who
24 served there at these exact same locations within the range.
25 And because their service records are data masked, as you

1 know, these veterans can't even prove to the VA that they
2 were ever actually stationed there.

3 And so, in fact, Nevada, there are six DOE covered
4 facilities, most of most of which are within the Nevada Test
5 and Training Range, where DOE employees presumed to have
6 been exposed to a radiation. But for our service members,
7 the VA only recognizes one of the Nevada test site as a
8 presumed exposure location. So, one such facility that is
9 covered for DOE, but not for DOD, which is both A DOE and
10 Air Force installation, portions of the range are still
11 fenced off and contaminated.

12 A 1975 environmental assessment acknowledged the
13 contamination and the harm it would cause, but the airmen,
14 they were never told, they do not have a presumption of
15 exposure as their DOE counterparts they served alongside
16 with due and further adding insult to this, they can't even
17 show that they were there. All of this have prevented them
18 from being able to receive their well-deserved veterans
19 benefits.

20 And I know we talked about this. We need to make this
21 right, and I'm committed to fixing this problem in this
22 year's NDAA. I hope that I can count on your support to
23 making it happen. So, will you commit to working with me,
24 of course, and the committee to find a solution that
25 provides DOD, the presumption of exposure at such data mass

1 locations and provides those who served and are serving at
2 these locations document sufficient documentation so they
3 can submit their health-related issues without ever
4 compromising the security of their service details?

5 General Caine: Senator, thank you for raising this in
6 our office call, and thank you for your leadership on this
7 matter. I do think we owe our service members a way forward
8 through these important jobs that they have, that they can
9 never talk about. And so I do commit to staying close with
10 you on this matter and trying to sort out a way that we can
11 help them transition, take the credit and the risk that
12 they've bought in the service of their nation with them into
13 the next chapter of their lives.

14 Senator Rosen: Thank you. I appreciate it. And I
15 know the men and women who serve there will be very pleased
16 if we're able to do this. It really means a lot to them.

17 I just have about a minute we left. So, I want to just
18 ask about the force of the future, because over the course
19 of your service, you've gone through the rigors of actually
20 training in Nevada skies while stationed at Dallas Air Force
21 Base.

22 You know, personally, our military readiness depends on
23 meeting immediate warfighting needs while preparing for
24 potential conflict our country might face. It requires
25 evolving and changing how we train to fight, which is one of

1 the reasons I fought so hard to make sure Nevada's military
2 training regions are modernized, keeping pace with emerging
3 threats.

4 So, if confirmed, how would you prioritize investments
5 in readiness, in modernization, in force structure so
6 especially in these emerging domains like cyber warfare and
7 AI?

8 General Caine: Well, Senator, we've got to train to
9 the realistic threat in order to ensure that we're prepared
10 if we ever do go into conflict. Part of that is making sure
11 that our training ranges either live virtual or constructive
12 accurately replicate the threat so that our warfighters can
13 train to the realistic threat. And I think we still have
14 some work to do both in our fiscal range, at physical
15 ranges, and in our virtual ranges. And, if confirmed,
16 that'll be an area along the readiness line of effort that I
17 spend some time on.

18 Senator Rosen: Thank you. I look forward to working
19 with you on that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

20 General Caine: Thank you, Senator.

21 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Rosen. Senator
22 Budd.

23 Senator Budd: Thank you, Chairman. General, it's good
24 to see you, again. Thanks for your willingness to serve. I
25 enjoyed our meeting in my office last week. It was a great

1 discussion.

2 Let's talk for a minute about China. You know, their
3 strategy for expanding their power, it's operated a lot in
4 using gray zone tactics or military and civil action,
5 somewhere between the boundaries of peace and war, and it's
6 difficult to confront with conventional military force.
7 Admiral Paparo, he stated that special operations forces are
8 crucial for competing in the gray zone, and that is under
9 invested in the Pacific command.

10 Can you talk about your views on the role of SOF at all
11 stages of conflict and what investments should be made to
12 grow these capabilities?

13 General Caine: Well, Senator thanks for that question.
14 You know, as somebody who's proudly been a part of the
15 special operations forces, I appreciate greatly the
16 exponential return that those forces can provide to the
17 nation. And when I think about creating multiple dilemmas
18 for Xi Jinping, many of those dilemmas are created through
19 America's special operations forces where we build great
20 partnerships, we help train our allies and partners when
21 required, we're able to execute sensitive missions that help
22 us to illuminate the threat in a more thoughtful way.

23 And so, I would agree with Admiral Paparo's views on
24 soft forces in the Pacific, but would defer to General
25 Fenton who probably has strong views on that. And if

1 confirmed, I'll consult with him on these matters.

2 Senator Budd: Thank you.

3 I appreciate your commentary that they deliver an
4 exponential return, I believe indeed they do. In your
5 advanced policy questions, you underscore the importance of
6 synchronization between the DOD and the intelligence
7 community. How do you propose we do that?

8 General Caine: Well, Senator, it really starts with
9 trusting and deep relationships. You know, I am fortunate
10 in my last job to have learned the value of making sure that
11 the best of the Title 10 community is linked up with the
12 best of the Title 50 community to get to almost Title 60-
13 like outcomes.

14 I realize that there is no Title 60, but I put that in
15 quotation marks. You know, and if confirmed, I'll continue
16 with that pathway forward. We have an incredible associate
17 director for military affairs at the CIA now Lieutenant
18 General Mike Downs, who carries on and is probably doing a
19 much better job than I ever did over there.

20 And so, if confirmed, will continue to build on those
21 relationships. And I think it extends beyond just the DOD
22 and CIA relationship. It extends into the relationship that
23 we have with the State Department. It extends into the
24 relationship that we have with the other elements of the
25 interagency as well.

1 Senator Budd: Thank you.

2 Also, in your advanced policy questions, you mentioned
3 that the service chiefs and combatant commanders, they use
4 their unfunded priorities list as essential tools in
5 communicating to us here in Congress the ideas where, or in
6 the areas where additional resources could significantly
7 enhance military readiness and capabilities. You also state
8 that unfunded priority lists, they're not the only tool to
9 build a strategy informed defense budget. So, where do you
10 think the DOD is currently leveraging to align the defense
11 budget and the defense strategy, and where's there room for
12 improvement on that?

13 General Caine: Well, Senator, you know, I'm not yet
14 back in the service, so I need to read the current version
15 of the National Defense Strategy. If I'm --

16 Senator Budd: Best guess outside looking in, sir.

17 General Caine: I think we need to continue our efforts
18 in the Pacific, and that would be my early read without
19 actually being into the Intel record.

20 Senator Budd: Thank you. Last year, combatant
21 commanders, they testified before this committee speaking to
22 the value and the relevance of the F-15E Strike Eagle and
23 their respective areas of responsibility. So, as a fighter
24 pilot with extensive experience in combat and homeland
25 defense missions, can you speak to the value and utility of

1 the fourth-generation fleet, specifically the F-15E and the
2 F-16, which you flew, and whether you find it wise to reduce
3 these inventories prior to taking delivery of the potential
4 replacements? I guess it's the divest to invest strategy.
5 If you'd comment on that, please?

6 General Caine: Yes, Senator, thanks for that question.
7 You know, what we can't do is leave something uncovered in
8 the interim. And when I think about at least the F-16, for
9 example, they're predominantly tasked with homeland defense
10 at this point in time. And, you know, we can't ever let
11 another 9/11 happen.

12 So, we have to make sure that we do not divest so much
13 that we lose coverage in places that we must have to sustain
14 that combat capability. We obviously need a probably
15 fourth, and fifth gen, and sixth gen mix for a while until
16 we get to the point where we're all where we need to be in
17 sixth gen.

18 Senator Budd: Thank you.

19 General Caine: Thank you, sir.

20 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much. Senator Warren.

21 Senator Warren: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And
22 congratulations.

23 So, if confirmed, you would serve as the principal
24 military advisor to the President and swear an oath to
25 defend the Constitution of the United States. President

1 Trump once described your predecessor, General C.Q. Brown
2 as, an outstanding leader. And it's true, C.Q. Brown
3 served for 40 years in seven assignments across four
4 combatant commands.

5 The President's removal of the only Black officer and
6 removal of the only female officer from the Joint Chiefs of
7 staff has sent a chilling message about who is and who is
8 not welcome in our military. This worries me deeply about
9 the future of our military and the defense of our nation.

10 I am also concerned that President Trump wants to turn
11 the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs into just another political
12 position. Last year, President Trump claimed that you once
13 said you would kill for him and then you slapped a MAGA hat
14 on. I know that others have disputed that story, but it
15 raises questions about whether you were selected because
16 Donald Trump thinks that you would be loyal to him rather
17 than to the Constitution of the United States.

18 Secretary Hegseth has now removed the top legal
19 advisors for military services and recommended replacements
20 at a lower rank. So, Lieutenant General Caine, if
21 confirmed, your job will be to present your best military
22 advice. Do you agree that in order to be able to comply
23 with the law and make sure that your advice complies with
24 the law that military commanders need legal advisors with
25 both enough expertise and a high enough rank that they will

1 be listened to during this process?

2 General Caine: I do, Senator. I know I've always had
3 great legal advice regardless of what rank they were, but I
4 do agree.

5 Senator Warren: So, you think that you need people who
6 have good advice, but do you think it helps in making sure
7 that others -- I'm glad that you listen to good advice no
8 matter where it comes from -- but that others are more
9 willing to listen if the people offering legal advice have
10 high enough rank to carry some weight in the room when those
11 decisions are taking place?

12 General Caine: I do, Senator. Although, as I
13 mentioned, I've sincerely had great legal advice from O-5s
14 to O-7s. And I think it's the officer and their
15 professionalism and intellect versus what rank they have. I
16 do appreciate the efforts to ask the question about what
17 rank they should be, but would defer to the secretary on
18 what rank he would want them to be.

19 Senator Warren: I have to say that that gives me some
20 real concern because the whole point of elevating the rank
21 was the concern that not enough people were listening to
22 good legal advice. And while I appreciate that you say you
23 listen, we need people to listen who are making decisions up
24 and down the line.

25 I understand Lieutenant General Caine that the

1 circumstances of your nomination are beyond your control,
2 but they also place a significant burden on you to show
3 leadership, to restore public confidence in the military,
4 and to show that you work for the American people. I've
5 long been concerned by senior Pentagon leaders who trade on
6 their time in public service to cash out afterwards to work
7 for defense contractors. And that is why during his
8 confirmation hearing, General Brown agreed that he would not
9 become a lobbyist or join the board of a defense contractor
10 after he resigned.

11 Lieutenant General Caine, are you willing to
12 demonstrate that you're taking this job to serve the
13 American people and commit that after you leave this job,
14 you'll not work for any major defense contractors or
15 companies that are affected by your official actions?

16 General Caine: Senator, for myself, I've got no intent
17 to do so.

18 Senator Warren: Okay. So, you can commit to that?

19 General Caine: Yes, Senator. That's not my intent.

20 Senator Warren: President Trump's removal of highly
21 qualified and talented military leaders is a permanent stain
22 on this nation's history, as well as a blow to our ability
23 to recruit the force that we need to compete with China.

24 If confirmed, you will have an important responsibility
25 to show the American people that you will defend our nation

1 with integrity, that you will follow the law, and that you
2 will lead our men and women in uniform with integrity.

3 Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

4 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much, Senator. And
5 we'll now move to Senator Schmitt.

6 Senator Schmitt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's good
7 to see you again, General. Congratulations.

8 Let me first by start by saying I think the people who
9 talk the most about making sure you give advice to President
10 Trump have no experience with President Trump and
11 interpersonally, I should say. And he does seek out advice
12 among a lot of people.

13 And I think that your background and your experience
14 will be invaluable to him as he asks tough questions, and
15 you give honest advice as you've committed here today. And
16 so anyway, I think the dynamic's going to be great. I think
17 your background and experience really prepare you very well
18 for this important role.

19 So, I wanted to ask you about a couple of things where
20 I think that your experience will play an important role in
21 specific decisions. So, this great powers competition that
22 we are, you know, with China, I was really happy to see
23 President Trump and Secretary Hegseth move quickly on NGAD
24 and not just deciding that we were going to move forward
25 with next generation air dominance, but actually selecting

1 the F-47 so we can move forward on this.

2 I think that was a bold stroke of leadership and
3 decisiveness that we need right now. That aircraft will see
4 further, go faster, carry bigger payloads, which matter a
5 lot in the Indo-Pacific. And with your experience, I know
6 that you can appreciate that.

7 But one of the big challenges we have, has been
8 mentioned by a few already, is just the inability for us to
9 go from point A to point B. When we recognize a problem,
10 how do we solve the problem? Everyone recognizes that it's
11 an issue. But we haven't made a whole lot of progress up
12 until this point. I believe there is a commitment to do
13 something about it.

14 And you and I talked about this at our office. In your
15 view, what would we do differently if we were at war right
16 now? Like, if we're at war, what would we do differently
17 than we're doing right now on the procurement side and the
18 execution side?

19 General Caine: Well, Senator, thanks for the question.
20 You know, the chairman's bill builds on a book that was
21 written about the defense industrial base back in the mid-
22 30s. And I think if we were in a gunfight at this point in
23 time, we'd be doing a lot more with a greater sense of
24 urgency than we probably have right now. And if I'm
25 confirmed, I'll carry that sense of urgency that I think we

1 share into the department and into the joint force to make
2 sure that we do not end up in a case where our young war
3 fighters do not have the kit that they need prior to them
4 needing it.

5 Senator Schmitt: Yeah. That overwhelming force that
6 we need to have that advantage that we have is just
7 critical. And the concern that I have is that we talk a lot
8 about it, but it's we have to move forward on this. We have
9 to move forward.

10 So, again, before I run out of time. Again, your
11 varied experience in the military and now outside, I think,
12 give you a glimpse of one of the challenges that we face,
13 too. So, Missouri is -- sort of a Missouri asset. Here is
14 the home of Whiteman Air Force Base, which is more broadly
15 known as the home of the B-2 stealth bomber and soon to be
16 the B-21. But the 442nd Fighter Wing is also there. And
17 the 442nd Fighter Wing like many of these units punch above
18 its weight class, has flown the A-10 in combat missions for
19 decades.

20 The A-10's going away, and I think there's a
21 frustration that there hasn't been a follow-on mission named
22 here. And we talked about this in my office, and there's
23 opportunities, whether it's in the short-term, you know, the
24 F-15E and eventually the F-15EX.

25 The real danger is that because we've delayed these

1 decisions, these experienced maintainers, and pilots, they
2 go somewhere else, right? They just don't have the
3 certainty of knowing that there's going to be a follow-on
4 mission.

5 Will you work with my office and the folks that are
6 responsible for these decisions we just have to start making
7 these decisions more decisively and timely. And I think
8 that Whiteman stands right in the front of that line.

9 General Caine: Sure, I will. But, you know, I want to
10 make sure I bring the Air Force leadership

11 Senator Schmitt: Absolutely.

12 General Caine: -- into that conversation as well.
13 I've got very little throw weight on those decisions.

14 Senator Schmitt: No, I know. But you're going to be
15 in an important spot.

16 General Caine: Yes, sir.

17 Senator Schmitt: And I think, sir, recognizing
18 strategically that this is important and we've had
19 conversations with the Air Force about this -

20 General Caine: Yes, sir.

21 Senator Schmitt: -- As well. I guess with the last
22 remaining seconds I have. Just sort of your view of this
23 great powers competition with China. What are some things
24 that we need to get better at? What are some things that we
25 need to do to prepare for the end as we shift and pivot to

1 Asia so many people have talked about of the Pacific?

2 General Caine: Sir, that's with deep respect for the
3 question. That's a pretty big question.

4 Senator Schmitt: What s the most important thing? The
5 one thing?

6 General Caine: Probably taking advantage of the time
7 that we have. As I mentioned earlier in my testimony,
8 making sure that we're moving with the speed, precision,
9 sense of urgency to get the kit that we need. The
10 challenges range from contested logistics, to long range
11 fires, to command and control. So, it's a much deeper
12 conversation.

13 Senator Schmitt: Thank you. Look forward to working
14 with you. Congratulations.

15 Chairman Wicker: Well, will you supplement that on the
16 record then, General, because it was a very intricate
17 question that was sprung on you with 10 seconds to go.

18 General Caine: Yes, sir. And you want me to do that
19 now, I assume?

20 Chairman Wicker: No. Just take it for the record.

21 [The information referred to follows:]

22 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

23

24

25

1 General Caine: Yes, sir. Got it. Thank you very
2 much. I'm getting some signals from behind you.

3 Chairman Wicker: All right. And Senator Kelly.

4 Senator Kelly: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

5 And I'm going to follow-up on Senator Schmitt's
6 question in my second part, if I have time, because I think
7 that is the big question of the day; how do we handle the
8 challenges we'll face in the Western Pacific.

9 General Caine, first of all, congratulations on your
10 nomination. It's a very important role. First, I want to
11 talk a little bit about General Milley. So, as a career
12 military officer, lifelong public servant who served in this
13 role as Chairman under President Trump and President Biden,
14 he's now facing an investigation by this administration and
15 possible demotion. This is allegedly because he, in
16 coordination with the then Secretary of Defense, Mark Esper,
17 made phone calls to Chinese military officials to reassure
18 them that the United States was not going to launch an
19 attack preventing unnecessary conflict.

20 General Milley did this out of a deep respect and
21 commitment to the Constitution of the United States, in my
22 view. I asked about this in my office when we met
23 privately, but I want to ask, in this public setting, if you
24 are confirmed and sworn into this position, to whom or what
25 do you swear an oath to?

1 General Caine: Senator, I as I have for 34 years, it's
2 to the Constitution.

3 Senator Kelly: Thank you. And setting aside the
4 specifics of this scenario, if necessary, will you choose
5 the right thing to do, even if it's hard over the easier,
6 wrong option?

7 General Caine: Senator, I've always strived to do the
8 right thing, and that's not going to change now.

9 Senator Kelly: Thank you, General. And are you
10 willing to get fired from this job for doing the right thing
11 and following the Constitution?

12 General Caine: I am.

13 Senator Kelly: Thank you, General. So, back to what
14 Senator Schmitt was getting at, a part of what he wanted to
15 discuss. So, I want to gears here and go back to INDOPACOM
16 force projection, repositioning of forces and resource
17 requirements. I think you mentioned TRANSCOM. They play a
18 pivotal role in projecting forces from the United States
19 into INDOPACOM.

20 And that's why I'm reintroducing the SHIPS for America
21 Act, which is a bipartisan bill aimed at strengthening our
22 commercial shipping base, which would have the added benefit
23 of giving our combatant commander's additional capability so
24 we can rapidly respond in crisis and in conflict.

25 If confirmed, what will you recommend to the Secretary

1 of Defense and the President to ensure our industrial ship
2 belt building base from forging supply chains and production
3 are ready for competition in crisis?

4 General Caine: Well, Senator, I'm not in the job yet
5 and I'm, I'm not back in the service yet, but if confirmed,
6 I'd like to take that one for study and come back to you.

7 Senator Kelly: It's a logistical problem. 5,000 miles
8 of ocean. The Chinese, if we wind up in a conflict in the
9 Western Pacific, they've got to go just hundreds of miles to
10 resupply their forces. So, I appreciate you being willing
11 to take a look at it.

12 One last topic. I want to talk about efforts across
13 the department to modernize our acquisition process. And
14 this is a topic that I'm focused on as the co-chair of the
15 Defense Modernization Caucus. Our system is too slow, it's
16 too unwieldy, and it can't modernize currently at the pace
17 of China. We currently cannot match them on how fast we can
18 innovate.

19 So, we need to foster an ecosystem change that
20 encourages some risk from small businesses so they can
21 innovate faster and ensures that if a technology meets a
22 current demand signal, we have an effective mechanism to
23 bridge the testing and evaluation gap that often exists to
24 get that stuff over to production.

25 So, General, if confirmed, what changes will you

1 recommend to the Secretary and the President to ensure that
2 we take advantage of smaller, innovative companies, and
3 acquire at the speed that technology is moving forward?

4 General Caine: Well, Senator, it's we've got to have
5 everyone weighing in small businesses, new entrants, and
6 even the primes. The ability to bring advanced technologies
7 from new companies, startups into the joint force and make
8 it easier for them to bring their products and services into
9 the military is something that I'm passionate about. Given
10 my background and experience, if confirmed, I think that
11 that'll be an area where I spend some time on. I know I'm
12 out of time.

13 Senator Kelly: Thank you, General. Thank you, Mr.
14 Chairman.

15 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much. Senator Banks

16 Senator Banks: General Caine, congratulations on your
17 nomination, and thank you for being willing to come out of
18 retirement and serve your country in this most significant
19 way. I look forward to having a Chairman of the Joint
20 Chiefs whose only focus is national security, but you have a
21 hard road ahead of you.

22 As you and I discussed before, General Milley modeled
23 inappropriate and political behavior to a whole generation
24 of officers. And it's why I fully support President Trump's
25 decision to relieve General C.Q. Brown and the

1 unconventional decision to go beyond the usual four-star
2 choices and pick an outsider like you for this most
3 important role.

4 You spent much of your military career outside of
5 Washington, DC not exclusively inside of the Pentagon. And
6 because of this, you have a much better understanding of
7 what's important to our warfighters and to the average
8 American. You also know that the National Guard often gets
9 the short end of the stick and the budget fights. And
10 having a chairman who properly appreciates the importance of
11 the guard is critical. So, because of all of that, I can't
12 wait to get you confirmed as soon as possible.

13 And I want to go back and talk for a moment. As I said
14 before, General Milley was the most political Chairman of
15 the Joint Chiefs that I believe that we've ever had. He
16 actively undermined his commander-in-chief. General Milley
17 admitted to calling Speaker Pelosi and disparaging President
18 Trump's mental fitness and questioning his nuclear command
19 authority. That was completely inappropriate and
20 unacceptable. And, General Caine, I want to ask you, how
21 will you communicate differently than that with
22 congressional leadership?

23 General Caine: Well, Senator, I'm committed to open
24 and transparent communication, but the first duty of the
25 chairman is the advisor to the President. And so, you know,

1 I would flow through that chain of command, while providing
2 always options to the President.

3 Senator Banks: General Milley admitted that under his
4 watch, the Pentagon wasted nearly 6-million-man hours on DEI
5 and woke trainings. Milley also testified to me before the
6 House Armed Services Committee that he wanted to read more
7 about critical race theory and understand white rage. Under
8 your leadership, General Caine, what kind of training can we
9 expect our service members to be focused on?

10 General Caine: Warfighting, lethality, and readiness?

11 Senator Banks: General Milley was also the chairman
12 during the disastrous Afghanistan withdrawal, and as a
13 veteran of the war in Afghanistan, this is very personal to
14 me. Under his watch, there was no accountability at all for
15 the deaths of American heroes at Abbey Gate, no
16 accountability for the chaos at the Kabul Airport, and no
17 accountability for leaving Americans behind when military
18 failure and incompetence result in the death of U.S. troops.
19 Do you agree that the officers in charge must be held
20 accountable?

21 General Caine: Well, Senator, I appreciate the
22 question. You know, the Afghanistan withdrawal was not
23 anything anybody would've wanted. It was very difficult
24 circumstances, and the officers on the ground had very
25 little to do with the policies that they were directed to

1 follow. And we all mourned the 13 lost at Abbey Gate.
2 Those officers, I'm sure did the best in a situation that
3 was not of their making. Certainly, accountability is an
4 important tenant in the United States, but I hope that we
5 consider the fact that those officers were just doing the
6 duties that they were assigned to do.

7 Senator Banks: You do agree, though, accountability
8 matters?

9 General Caine: I do.

10 Senator Banks: We should always learn from our
11 mistakes and hold those --

12 General Caine: I do, Senator.

13 Senator Banks: -- accountable who made those mistakes?
14 General Milley told his aides that President Trump was
15 preaching, the gospel of the furher. I asked General C.Q.
16 Brown last year before the House Armed Services Committee,
17 if that was inappropriate. And even General C.Q. Brown
18 agreed publicly, under oath before that committee, that that
19 was a very inappropriate statement by General Milley. Do
20 you agree with General Brown that the Chairman of the Joint
21 Chiefs should never disparage the commander-in-chief, the
22 President of the United States of America?

23 General Caine: I do, Senator.

24 Senator Banks: When he was Chairman, General Milley
25 testified that he, does interviews regularly with print

1 media, books, documentaries, video, on TV because it is a
2 part of a senior official's job. Milley also said he talked
3 to the media 2, 3, 4 times a week. Do you think that's an
4 appropriate use of the chairman's job,

5 General Caine: Senator, if confirmed, I'll spend my
6 time focused on the essential tasks in front of me.

7 Senator Banks: And my last question. General Milley
8 promised Chinese generals without the President's knowledge
9 that he'd warn them if the United States was about to
10 attack. Do you think it's inappropriate, were appropriate
11 for the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to warn our
12 greatest adversary when we're about to attack or what we
13 might do?

14 General Caine: No, sir.

15 Senator Banks: Thank you. I yield back.

16 Chairman Wicker: Thank you. I guess that does no,
17 Senator Slotkin. Thank you. You're recognized.

18 Senator Slotkin: Thank you, Chairman.

19 I apologize for being late. I just got off a plane.
20 We've had some weather issues and some follow-up weather
21 issues. I apologize. Congratulations. Happy to see you
22 here. You're almost done. I'm between you and being done.
23 So, I'm aware of that. I just wanted to make sure we all
24 are on the same page.

25 The Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 is what established

1 in law that the chairman is the principal, military advisor
2 to the President, also to the Secretary of Defense, the
3 National Security Council. It mandates that you provide
4 strategic direction to the armed forces, oversee strategic
5 planning program recommendations, budget proposals. It
6 gives you a very big purview. And I think the President
7 Trump even issued a memorandum on Inauguration Day that the
8 chairman be a part of the National Security Council meetings
9 at the highest level in the White House.

10 So, that's an extremely important role, especially now.
11 We've talked -- I've heard that other members talked about
12 the fact that there was no joint chief representative in
13 this Signal chain about military operations, imminent
14 military operations. And I want you in those rooms giving
15 your best military advice to anyone. I was keenly aware
16 that all the decision-makers on that chain were all
17 political appointees. There was not a single person there
18 that was there just as a representative, as a military
19 officer. There was no COCOM Commander. There was nothing.
20 And that I don't think missed anybody's notice.

21 Will you, if confirmed, make a point to get into the
22 rooms where military operations are being discussed, planned
23 at the strategic level, and when advice to the President is
24 being given about the confidence in those military plans,
25 will you push to be in that room?

1 General Caine: Yes, ma'am.

2 Senator Slotkin: Good. We want you there. You know,
3 I've asked a number of folks who have come up here, very
4 similar questions and former people who have sat in that
5 chair about the importance that I put in swearing an oath to
6 the Constitution of the United States. Not to any one
7 President not to any political leader. You will swear an
8 oath. You've done it many times before. This is not
9 uncommon for you in your extensive experience.

10 And I have asked all of these appointees or these
11 nominees to say, if the President asked you to do something
12 that was unconstitutional, to use the military in a way that
13 was unconstitutional to put military into the streets of our
14 cities or policing and performing law enforcement roles,
15 which they are not trained for, et cetera, et cetera. If he
16 asks you to do that, will you push back and lay down the law
17 on behalf of the Constitution, not for the President's
18 whims?

19 General Caine: I will, Senator. I don't expect that
20 to happen, but of course I would.

21 Senator Slotkin: Well, we don't expect it to happen,
22 but it did happen under the Trump administration. The first
23 time Secretary Esper was asked to bring in the 82nd Airborne
24 active-duty military troops to put down a peaceful protest
25 in Washington, DC. And in his own book, he wrote that he

1 convinced President Trump in the dark of night not to do
2 that.

3 I don't need it to be public. I don't need you to have
4 a public fight with President Trump. I'm not asking that.
5 I'm asking in the same exact situation, would you act
6 honorably in the same way and protect the rules and the of
7 the road for the U.S. military to protect the institution
8 you've given your life for and make sure that this country
9 doesn't see their uniform military as a political arm of any
10 one party. Will you stand up and push back similarly to
11 Secretary Esper?

12 General Caine: Senator, I think that's the duty and
13 job that I have.

14 Senator Slotkin: Yes. Well, I appreciate that. I
15 think there's lots of other important work. We all want you
16 to be focused on the warfighter. Can you confirm for me,
17 though, because these reports that keep coming out of
18 Department of Defense and uniform military press outlets
19 taking down Jackie Robinson's page on and his service to the
20 country, the Tuskegee Airmen, which have such a connection
21 to Detroit, Michigan. They're taken down, they're putting
22 back up. Can you confirm that war heroes, no matter what
23 their color, should be recognized by the Department of
24 Defense. And it's not some DEI thing to recognize warriors
25 of color.

1 General Caine: Ma'am, I think we should always
2 recognize warriors. Period.

3 Senator Slotkin: Okay. Well, I hope you uphold that
4 as this ridiculousness continues of taking people and
5 erasing them from our military history. It's really, to me,
6 offensive. But we look forward to you standing up for those
7 good values. Thank you for your work. And I yield back

8 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator. And this
9 concludes today's hearing. I want to thank our
10 distinguished witness for his testimony. And without
11 anything further, we are indeed adjourned.

12 [Whereupon, at 12:08 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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