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Before the

Subcommittee on  
Readiness and Management Support

COMMITTEE ON  
ARMED SERVICES

## **UNITED STATES SENATE**

TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON THE CURRENT READINESS OF  
THE JOINT FORCE

Wednesday, May 1, 2024

Washington, D.C.

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2 JOINT FORCE

3  
4 Wednesday, May 1, 2024

5  
6 U.S. Senate  
7 Committee on Armed Services  
8 Subcommittee on Readiness and  
9 Management Support  
10 Washington, D.C.

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12 The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:00 p.m.  
13 in Room SR-232A, Russell Senate Office Building, Hon. Mazie  
14 Hirono, chairman of the subcommittee, presiding.

15 Committee Members Present: Hirono [presiding],  
16 Blumenthal, Kaine, and Sullivan.

1           OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. MAZIE HIRONO, U.S. SENATOR  
2 FROM HAWAII

3           Senator Hirono: Good afternoon and welcome to today's  
4 hearing of the Subcommittee on Readiness. This afternoon we  
5 are joined by the Vice Chiefs of the Army, Navy, Marine  
6 Corps, Air Force, and Space Force. I thank each of you for  
7 your meaningful military service and experience. Thank you  
8 all for being here.

9           We are also joined by Diana Maurer of the GAO. Ms.  
10 Maurer, the work of the GAO has been invaluable to this  
11 Committee over the years, and I thank you for taking time  
12 away from your many ongoing GAO reviews to be here with us.

13           This hearing is an important opportunity for us to  
14 engage in a wide-ranging dialogue regarding the readiness of  
15 our armed forces, a topic of paramount importance for the  
16 security and well-being of our nation. Over the past few  
17 years, the global security landscape has evolved rapidly,  
18 presenting new and complex challenges to military readiness.  
19 From ongoing conflicts in various regions to emerging  
20 threats and resource challenges, our armed forces must  
21 remain agile, adaptive, and prepared to address the full  
22 spectrum of operations. In this context, there are a number  
23 of areas I would like to highlight in particular.

24           Continued access to training ranges across all domains  
25 remains critical. I know the Army is focused on the

1 upcoming land lease renewals in Hawaii. During questions  
2 today, I would like to hear more specifics regarding how the  
3 Army intends to weigh necessary training requirements while  
4 respectfully engaging with the Native Hawaiian community.

5 Separately, the Navy has begun one of the most complex  
6 military construction projects in recent history to replace  
7 Dry Dock 3 at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam. I have  
8 serious concerns about the significant cost increases this  
9 important project has already incurred and whether Navy  
10 leadership is taking the necessary steps to avoid future  
11 increases. My concerns with the Navy continue, ranging from  
12 the backlog of ship maintenance, lack of accountability for  
13 senior leaders in the wake of Red Hill, to allowing mission  
14 critical portions of the runway and facilities at Joint Base  
15 Pearl Harbor-Hickam to deteriorate. As you can see, just  
16 within the Indo-Pacific theater alone, there are no shortage  
17 of readiness issues that require timely solutions.

18 More broadly, in the area of quality of life issues, I  
19 would like to hear more from the witnesses on two topics.  
20 The first relates to how senior leaders are implementing the  
21 oversight and management reforms related to unaccompanied  
22 housing that were included in the fiscal year 2024 NDAA.  
23 Taking care of our people by giving them a safe, clean place  
24 to live not only helps retention, but also our recruiting  
25 efforts, which are challenged recently. The second topic

1 relates to a troubling report the GAO released earlier this  
2 year that found fatigue and sleep deprivation among  
3 servicemembers continues to be a significant challenge.  
4 Chronic fatigue is directly related to the readiness of our  
5 forces, and it can lead to accidents, injuries, death, and  
6 monetary costs.

7 Today I encourage all witnesses to provide candid  
8 assessments, share best practices, and offer constructive  
9 recommendations. Together, we can ensure that our armed  
10 forces remain the world's preeminent fighting force, capable  
11 of defending our nation's interests with unparalleled skill  
12 and resilience.

13 I would once again like to thank each of you for coming  
14 forward today, for your leadership and insights, and I look  
15 forward to your testimony and a productive discussion.

16 Now turning to Senator Sullivan for your remarks.

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1           OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. DAN SULLIVAN, U.S. SENATOR  
2 FROM ALASKA

3           Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Madam Chair, and I really  
4 appreciate the witnesses and their decades of service to our  
5 country. It is a very impressive group here. And thank you  
6 to your and your families and all the men and women that you  
7 lead. I also want to thank Diana Maurer. I think the GAO,  
8 in a lot of these issues, does a really good job, so I  
9 appreciate GAO being here, as well.

10           I had a really long opening statement that I was going  
11 to read, but since this is readiness hearing with  
12 essentially our military vice chiefs of staff, I am just  
13 going to be a little bit more direct. I do not think our  
14 services are in a state of readiness that they need to be  
15 given the threats.

16           I think the one thing that everybody who focuses on our  
17 national security challenges would agree with is that we are  
18 in one of the most dangerous periods that we have seen  
19 facing the United States and our allies since World War II.  
20 The Secretary of Defense says this. The Chairman of the  
21 Joint Chiefs of Staff says this in their posture hearings.  
22 The President of the United States says this in his State of  
23 the Union. I agree with that assessment. We have  
24 authoritarian dictators working together -- China, Russia,  
25 North Korea, Iran, a little bit more junior jockey

1 Venezuela. They are not at all adverse to literally  
2 militarily invading their neighbor and slaughtering  
3 thousands and thousands of innocent civilians. We are  
4 seeing that, of course, in Israel. We are seeing that in  
5 Ukraine. We could see that any day in Taiwan. They are  
6 massively building up their militaries, massively, and we  
7 are not. I think the analogy to the mid- to late-1930s is  
8 probably the closest thing that I have seen that is directly  
9 relevant to the situation we are seeing today.

10 The big difference is, of course, a lot of people  
11 forget to note, in the late 1930s, our country, under  
12 President Roosevelt, did start building up our military.  
13 The Navy fleet, between 1937 and right before Pearl Harbor,  
14 was almost tripled in size.

15 President Biden puts forward inflation-adjusted cuts to  
16 our military every year. This budget this year shrinks the  
17 Army, shrinks the Navy, shrinks the Marine Corps. That is  
18 not what will impress Xi Jinping and Putin.

19 The difficulty you gentlemen have is that you are  
20 motivated, honest, military members, with four stars,  
21 credible service. I have the deepest respect for all of  
22 you. These are hard hearings for you. Here is why.  
23 Because in my assessment, you do not agree with the budget  
24 that the President put forward. You do not agree with  
25 shrinking the Army, shrinking the Navy, shrinking the Marine

1 Corps. And yet you are military members, you have civilian  
2 control of this great republic that we have oversight of, so  
3 you have to salute sharply and say, "Roger that. I can do  
4 this." You are can-do military members. You do not want to  
5 do this. You do not think we need to cut defense spending.

6 Next year we could be on the pathway to below 3 percent  
7 of our GDP for the Department of Defense budget. My team  
8 and I have done some research on that. There has been, I  
9 think, four or five time in the last 80 years we have been  
10 below 3 percent of GDP. Again, it is not a target. Anyone  
11 who is serious about national security thinks we should be  
12 hitting, but we might be hitting that due to the President's  
13 lack of seriousness on national security issues, lack of  
14 leadership on Pentagon issues.

15 Finally, I think there has been a lack, with the  
16 civilian leadership, of this Administration on lethality.  
17 You know, the Secretary of the Navy does his climate change  
18 action plan, and he cannot build ships. That is not  
19 serious. The Navy, in my view, is in a crisis. It cannot  
20 build ships. The Chinese are cranking out 10 to 12 high-end  
21 surface warships every year, and we cannot build one.

22 So our readiness is tanking. It is our job, as the  
23 Congress, to try to get to the reasons why -- I think I know  
24 the big reason why. This Administration is not serious on  
25 it -- but to help you, to ask probing questions, to ask



1 difficult questions, some of which are really hard for you,  
2 gentlemen, because again, I do not think any of you agree  
3 with cutting the budget and shrinking the Navy and shrinking  
4 the Army and shrinking the Marine Corps. But that is the  
5 direction we are going, and it is dangerous. And we are  
6 sending the wrong signal to our adversaries.

7 So I thank the Chair for holding this hearing. It is a  
8 really important hearing. I have a ton of questions, so I  
9 hope we can go at least until about 4:00, whether any other  
10 Senators are going to be here or not, because this is really  
11 important. Our job, as a Congress, in terms of Article I,  
12 raise an army, provide and maintain a navy, that is our  
13 number one job, in my view, and we need to get on it because  
14 it is a dangerous world right now. And my view is our  
15 forces are not ready, that is what this Subcommittee is  
16 supposed to be all about.

17 Thank you, Madam Chair.

18 Senator Hirono: I thank my Ranking Member for raising  
19 the serious concerns he has. The fact is, of course, is  
20 SASC is one of the few committees where we are able to come  
21 up with pretty much a bipartisan approach to what the  
22 military needs. And in addition, the Department, DoD, is  
23 the only department that has what is known as unfunded  
24 priority lists, that runs into the billions. So we have any  
25 opportunity to weigh in on those spending issues that may

1 not have made the cut, so to speak.

2 So, you know, this is already the biggest Department,  
3 and we spend the most money on defense than on anything  
4 else, so we obviously have a lot of areas to disagree on as  
5 well as to agree. So I think the Ranking Member for his  
6 observations.

7 With that why don't we start with General Mingus, the  
8 Vice Chief of Staff for the Army. Would you give your  
9 testimony, please?

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1           STATEMENT OF GENERAL JAMES J. MINGUS, USA, VICE CHIEF  
2 OF STAFF OF THE ARMY, DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

3           General Mingus: Thank you. Chair Hirono, Ranking  
4 Member Sullivan, other folks that are here today, thank you  
5 for the opportunity to discuss the readiness of the United  
6 States Army.

7           The Army is ready now to protect our nation and prevail  
8 in the toughest moments of combat. We are expanding the  
9 competitive space by increasing our lethality through our  
10 modernization efforts, strengthening American alliances  
11 through combined operations and training, and maximizing  
12 opportunities to improve the readiness of our soldiers and  
13 their families.

14          The Army's readiness needs mirror the rapidly emerging  
15 changes in the character of war, driven by network  
16 centricity, advances in sensors, hypersonics, robotics,  
17 quantum computing, and artificial intelligence. Armies can  
18 now increasingly see further, sense further, shoot further,  
19 engage remotely, and with increasing accuracy. Time is not  
20 on our side. And if we can quickly integrate and fuse these  
21 emerging technologies into advanced methods of warfare we  
22 will maintain our decisive advantage in the current and  
23 future joint operating environment.

24          Central to this effort is the health and effectiveness  
25 of our organic industrial base. During my visit to Scranton

1 Army Ammunition Plant I witnessed firsthand the success of  
2 our OIB modernization investments through the production of  
3 our new yield 155 round. And since Russia invaded Ukraine  
4 in 2022, we have doubled the monthly production of 155 from  
5 14,000 to 30,000, and by summer of 2025, thank you to the  
6 supplemental, we will get to 100,000 rounds per month.

7 As the Army invests in our warfighting capacity we are  
8 simultaneously contributing to the integrated deterrence by  
9 supporting global campaigns and strategic partnerships,  
10 especially in the Indo-Pacific. While visiting the 25th  
11 Infantry Division in Hawaii, I was impressed by the scale of  
12 preparation and meticulous efforts our soldiers are taking  
13 to build and maintain relationships, ensure  
14 interoperability, and foster integration with our allies and  
15 partners at the Joint Pacific Multinational Readiness  
16 Center, or JPMRC. A recent example going on right now is  
17 that capability is in the Philippines right now, training  
18 our partners.

19 In Europe, the ongoing conflict in Ukraine highlights  
20 the pressing need to modernize our defensive capabilities,  
21 especially in the fields of unmanned systems and electronic  
22 warfare. The use of UAS in Ukraine for reconnaissance and  
23 offensive roles have been a game-changer. We are committed  
24 to enhancing our capabilities in these areas to ensure that  
25 we remain at the forefront of military innovation.

1           We recently delivered both the Integrated Defeat  
2 System, commonly known as the Coyote, and the Directed  
3 Energy M-SHORAD, the 50-kilowatt laser to bolster our  
4 counter-UAS defenses in USCENTCOM.

5           That said, the Army's fiscal year 2025 budget request  
6 continues to prioritize our most ambitious transformation  
7 efforts and prioritizing critical areas like long-range  
8 precision fires, integrated air and missile defense, command  
9 and control, and contested logistics.

10           Finally, our greatest strength is the readiness of our  
11 people. We take care of our people by ensuring our soldiers  
12 are ready for combat, with viable doctrine, equipment,  
13 realistic training, and simultaneously providing for their  
14 families with the resources they need to thrive at home.

15           A key part of that responsibility is providing safe,  
16 high-quality housing and barracks. During my recent visit  
17 to the 11th Airborne Division in Alaska I witnessed  
18 instances of positive impact of our barracks arrangements.  
19 The initiatives that we are exploring are not just about  
20 physical changes, but it is about fostering stronger bonds  
21 amongst soldiers, their leaders, and promoting a culture of  
22 care.

23           I want to emphasize that the Army is fully committed to  
24 funding our barracks, sustaining that at 100 percent, and we  
25 are also exploring the optimization of privatized barracks,

1 starting at Fort Irwin, California, and other installations  
2 where that makes sense.

3 We have also achieved historic progress in our  
4 retention, and we are optimistic about recruitment. We are  
5 transforming our recruiting enterprise to better compete  
6 with the job market that is out there, and our Innovative  
7 Future Soldier Prep Course ensures that those that may not  
8 otherwise will meet the Army standard.

9 In the end, I am confident that if called upon tonight,  
10 our Army can fight and win, and we are making the right  
11 choices to ensure we can also win in the future. That said,  
12 there is still a great deal of work to be done, and it is  
13 absolutely critical that we succeed in our transformation  
14 efforts to remain the most agile, lethal, and feared ground  
15 combat force in the world.

16 Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

17 [The prepared statement of General Mingus follows:]

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Senator Hirono: Thank you, General. Admiral Kilby?

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1 STATEMENT OF ADMIRAL JAMES W. KILBY, USN, VICE CHIEF  
2 OF NAVAL OPERATIONS, DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

3 Admiral Kilby: Chair Hirono, Ranking Member Sullivan,  
4 good afternoon. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss  
5 Navy readiness. I appreciate the recent passing of the  
6 Security Supplemental, which will help us address unbudgeted  
7 operational costs affecting the United States Navy.

8 Your Navy, as part of the Joint Force, and alongside  
9 our allies and partners, remains postured and ready to fight  
10 and win. Today, with over 100 ships and 43,000 sailors  
11 deployed, your Navy operates around the world and around the  
12 clock, from seabed to space and in cyberspace. Our active  
13 and reserve shipmates and our Navy civilians are ready to  
14 preserve the peace, respond in crisis, and win decisively in  
15 war.

16 The work requires a commitment to readiness, and I  
17 appreciate your efforts to ensure America's Navy remains the  
18 most powerful navy in the world.

19 We are strengthening our Navy by focusing on three  
20 priorities: warfighting, warfighters, and the foundation  
21 that supports them. We place a primacy on warfighting.  
22 When Iranian-backed Houthis sought to disrupt the flow of  
23 global maritime trade, the Gerald R. Ford, Dwight D.  
24 Eisenhower strike groups and the Bataan Amphibious Ready  
25 Group forward deployed destroyers from Rota, Spain, were



1 there. Our sailors and Marines are effectively countering  
2 these threats. We are adapting in the Red Sea and applying  
3 lessons learned to prepare for a future high-end fight.

4 Our ability to succeed in warfighting is inextricably  
5 tied to warfighter readiness. We are committed to improving  
6 the quality of service, and that begins with taking care of  
7 our sailors, our civilians, and their families. In fiscal  
8 year 2025, we are investing \$1.4 billion in quality of  
9 service. This augments the \$165 million reprioritized in  
10 fiscal year 2024, to improve unaccompanied housing.

11 We are at a historically high levels of retention, but  
12 we face recruiting challenges this year, as we did in 2023.  
13 The talent exists in every ZIP code, and our efforts will  
14 help recruit and retain those who wish to answer our  
15 nation's call to service.

16 Finally, the foundation. It underpins our warfighting  
17 and warfighter readiness. This includes our installations,  
18 which we must view as warfighting platforms, a point made  
19 clear in Guam. The devastation brought on by Typhoon Mawar  
20 is significant. I would appreciate your support for  
21 national disaster relief funding to address a number of  
22 challenges affecting our Navy.

23 Readiness challenges exist in our shipyards, as well.  
24 Since last November, I visited three of our four public  
25 shipyards. In fiscal year 2025, we will invest \$2.8 billion

1 in our Shipyard Infrastructure Optimization Program to  
2 recapitalize those key components of Navy industry.

3 Additionally, we are investing in the submarine  
4 industrial base as we ramp up production of the Columbia-  
5 class and Virginia-class submarines. These investments are  
6 vital to sustaining our undersea fleet and supporting our  
7 commitment to the AUKUS partnership.

8 Our Navy has a culture that strives to think, act, and  
9 operate differently. We are committed to transparency,  
10 continuous learning, and working together to deliver the  
11 Navy our nation needs.

12 Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

13 [The prepared statement of Admiral Kilby follows:]

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Senator Hirono: Thank you. General Mahoney.

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1           STATEMENT OF GENERAL CHRISTOPHER J. MAHONEY, USMC,  
2 ASSISTANT COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS, DEPARTMENT OF THE  
3 NAVY

4           General Mahoney: Good afternoon Chair Hirono Ranking  
5 Member Sullivan, and distinguished members of the Committee.  
6 I am honored to present your Marines this afternoon and  
7 discuss our current readiness and plans to remain ready in  
8 the future.

9           The Commandant has outlined his priorities, the first  
10 of which is to balance readiness with modernization. He  
11 does so as we confront a very difficult context, as has been  
12 brought up earlier. On the one hand, in the Pacific we are  
13 witnessing the greatest arms buildup that our nation has  
14 seen since World War II. The scope, scale, and pace of the  
15 PRC's military expansion presents a formidable challenge  
16 that we must contend with deliberately. Our pace of  
17 modernization must reflect this reality.

18           On the other hand, we operate in a time of increased  
19 global tensions, emerging conflicts, and increasingly brazen  
20 challenges to the order which has underwritten the  
21 prosperity of our country, and the world, in fact, for the  
22 better part of the last century. It is essential that we  
23 meet the demand for the Marine Corps to maintain a high  
24 state of readiness today so that we continue to generate the  
25 forces necessary to campaign, deter, respond to crisis, and

1 when required, fight.

2 But we must do so while budgeting for the future  
3 readiness generated through modernization, our training  
4 enterprises, our installations, and the quality of life for  
5 our personnel. Fortunately for the Marines, we identified  
6 this challenge early, and are already fielding many of the  
7 modernized capabilities developed through our Force Design  
8 Initiative.

9 Our fiscal year 2025 budget request highlights our  
10 commitment to maintaining a balance between current and  
11 future readiness. We are requesting \$17.4 billion for  
12 operations and maintenance in fiscal year 2025. That is 32  
13 percent of our total fiscal year request. That is to  
14 sustain our current and projected operational requirements  
15 in support of the Joint Force and national tasking. This  
16 operations and maintenance account funds our FSRM account,  
17 that ensures our Marines have quality spaces in which to  
18 work and adequate barracks in which to live.

19 But we are also seeking to gain momentum toward  
20 modernization. Sixty-five percent of our budget request,  
21 \$35.2 billion, supports our four pillars of force design.

22 And I would also be remiss if failed to mention the  
23 service's receipt of a clean audit opinion. While there is  
24 much to celebrate in being the first service in the DoD to  
25 accomplish this feat, the greater part of that victory is to

1 be able to precisely tell you what we have done with every  
2 dollar and to show the American people that we are true  
3 stewards of every dollar that is accorded to us.

4 The Marine Corps is appreciative of Congress'  
5 assistance and sustained support to take care of our  
6 Marines, to build our capacity, and guarantee lethality.  
7 Your Marines are ready.

8 Thank you for the opportunity to speak, and I look  
9 forward to the questions.

10 [The prepared statement of General Mahoney follows:]

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1 Senator Hirono: Thank you very much. General Slife.

2 Am I pronouncing your name correctly?

3 General Slife: You absolutely are.

4 Senator Hirono: Okay. Please proceed.

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1           STATEMENT OF GENERAL JAMES C. SLIFE, USAF, VICE CHIEF  
2 OF STAFF OF THE AIR FORCE, DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

3           General Slife: Thank you, ma'am. Good afternoon,  
4 Chair Hirono, Ranking Member Sullivan, distinguished members  
5 of the Committee.

6           The beginning and end of my testimony today is that  
7 your Air Force remains ready. Nevertheless, as Senator  
8 Sullivan pointed out in his opening comments, the strategic  
9 landscape is as complex and dynamic as it has ever been,  
10 demanding the Air Force be ready for a spectrum of threats  
11 across differing time epics. The rapidly evolving  
12 capabilities of the People's Republic of China demand our  
13 full attention. Meanwhile, Russia, North Korea, Iran,  
14 violent extremist organizations cannot be ignored.

15           At its most basic, the budget being considered by the  
16 Committee today represents our best judgment of how to  
17 allocate risk over time, given the realities of the fiscal  
18 constraints and inflationary pressure inherent in today's  
19 environment.

20           Could we retain greater force structure or additional  
21 platforms intended to be divested? You bet, but it would  
22 come at the expense of today's readiness levels or  
23 tomorrow's modernization, which is a proxy for tomorrow's  
24 readiness. Could we improve upon today's readiness?  
25 Absolutely, at the expense of force structure or



1 modernization. And finally, could we modernize faster? We  
2 could, but it would come at the expense of either force  
3 structure or readiness.

4 Such is the inescapable logic of allocating risk over  
5 time. While the budget before you may not be ideal in an  
6 absolute sense, we judge it to be ideal given the relative  
7 set of options and the strategic environment in which we  
8 exist.

9 The Air Force's fiscal year 2025 budget request makes  
10 several strategic adjustments that will help us maintain  
11 satisfactory readiness rates while investing in emerging  
12 technologies and modern systems to preserve future  
13 capability and capacity.

14 Our personnel retention and accession rates are stable.  
15 Updated programs and policies aligned to DoD-wide standards  
16 are already resulting in a steady flow of new airmen. We  
17 are modifying incentive programs and investing in better  
18 infrastructure and support systems to make the decision to  
19 stay, for airmen and families, easier.

20 We are also updating the way we train. We are rolling  
21 out immersive simulation technology and flight training  
22 improvements, maximizing the effectiveness of our pilots  
23 while airborne and providing realistic training for airmen  
24 on the ground. These new training methods are already  
25 increasing pilot production and helping our airmen prepare

1 for operations in a contested environment.

2 Our force presentation around the world is sufficient  
3 for the operational environment which has prevailed since  
4 the end of the Cold War, but the agile response needed  
5 tomorrow is going to require a more flexible approach. So  
6 our investment in agile combat employment will help us meet  
7 those challenges and train our airmen to execute hub-and-  
8 spoke models that enables the speed and lethality the future  
9 conflict will require.

10 The Air Force's nuclear enterprise is undergoing much-  
11 needed recapitalization, and we look forward to bringing our  
12 system upgrades and new platforms to the front lines as soon  
13 as possible. Our fiscal year 2025 requests will enhance our  
14 present nuclear capabilities and offer increased  
15 flexibility.

16 The demand for finite resources is fierce, and we  
17 strive to be good stewards of the taxpayers' dollars while  
18 delivering on our highest responsibility -- air power in  
19 defense of our nation. The Air Force's fiscal year 2025  
20 budget request is not without risk, but it is acceptable  
21 risk to ensure our readiness today and tomorrow.

22 On behalf of the 677,000 total force airmen and  
23 civilians as well as their families, thank you for your  
24 support and steadfast devotion to ensuring that the Air  
25 Force maintains its place as the preeminent provider of air

1 power, anytime, anywhere. Thank you.

2 [The prepared statement of General Slife follows:]

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1 Senator Hirono: Thank you. General Guetlein.

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1 STATEMENT OF GENERAL MICHAEL A. GUETLEIN, USSF, VICE  
2 CHIEF OF SPACE OPERATIONS, DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

3 General Guetlein: Chair Hirono, Ranking Member

4 Sullivan, distinguished members of the Subcommittee, thank  
5 you for the opportunity to testify before this body and the  
6 American public on the military readiness of the United  
7 States Space Force and our continued efforts to sustain such  
8 readiness into the future. On behalf of the Secretary of  
9 the Air Force, the Honorable Frank Kendall, and the Chief of  
10 Space Operations, General Chance Saltzman, I am honored to  
11 share with you our readiness vision for fiscal year 2025.

12 Let me begin by saying that the context for any  
13 discussion on the readiness of the Joint Force lies on the  
14 nation's ability to achieve and maintain freedom of action  
15 in space through space superiority. The repeated actions by  
16 both the Russian Federation and People's Republic of China  
17 underscore the urgency for action. Although we still  
18 maintain control of the space of our adversaries, we are  
19 working hard to close the gap and assert their dominance in  
20 space. We cannot afford to let this happen.

21 Space is the foundation for the Joint Force, and it is  
22 fundamental to our peaceful way of life. GPS alone is an  
23 essential part of every aspect of our daily lives, from our  
24 cellphones to our banking systems and even our ability to  
25 get the crops out the field and the groceries on the

1 shelves. We cannot let our near peer competitors overtake  
2 us or we will lose what we hold dear, and the world will  
3 become a far more dangerous place.

4 The investments provided in the President's budget  
5 maintain our marginal advantage. However, we must seriously  
6 consider future budgets in order to counter adversary  
7 investments and ensure our Joint Force remains the dominant  
8 Joint Force defending this great nation.

9 As we look ahead it is clear that the resources  
10 necessary to maintain the space capabilities the nation  
11 depends on are significantly outpaced by the demand. Our  
12 near peer competitors have not only made space a contested  
13 domain, but their activities in space reveal that their  
14 intentions differ profoundly from our own. Rather than  
15 ensuring peaceful access to space for all, they strive to  
16 seize control of space for their own aggressive purposes.

17 The pace of their progress will only continue to  
18 accelerate because they are determined to close the  
19 capability gap, and they are not subject to the same  
20 resource constraints we have, they are not subject to the  
21 same processes that we follow, and they do not share our  
22 values of protecting our environment both on earth and in  
23 space for generations to come.

24 Our Guardians clearly demonstrated the capability, the  
25 resolve, and the experience necessary to face the challenges

1 posed by our competitors, but there is more to do. As  
2 Secretary Kendall and General Saltzman recently unveiled,  
3 the Department is launching an effort to reoptimize how we  
4 organize, train, and equip our forces in light of great  
5 power competition and the looming threat.

6 As part of this reoptimization, the Space Force is  
7 implementing a series of key initiatives that will directly  
8 impact readiness. First, we are standardizing the way we  
9 present space capabilities to the combatant commanders, and  
10 we are completing the standup and the resourcing of our  
11 service components at each of the combatant commands. This  
12 will ensure seamless integration of space capabilities into  
13 the Joint Force when called upon by the nation during times  
14 of crisis or conflict.

15 Secondly, we are building joint warfighting leaders and  
16 preparing them for modern warfare. We are redesigning  
17 career paths, changing our readiness standards, and  
18 increasing the scope, tempo, and realism of our operational  
19 assessments and exercises in order to build the culture and  
20 proficiency necessary to prevail against the threat. This  
21 is the task that you created the United States Space Force  
22 for.

23 Lastly, we are establishing a new field command,  
24 focused on preparing the Space Force for future warfare.  
25 Space Futures Command will focus on developing future

1 warfighting concepts and testing these concepts in modern,  
2 live, virtual, and constructive environments against  
3 realistic threats, and focusing our investments on science  
4 and technology to counter the emerging threats. Space  
5 Futures Command will channel these lessons learned and  
6 technologies developed into a robust objective architecture  
7 and force design that will drive future resourcing decisions  
8 and readiness.

9 I truly appreciate Congress' and this Committee's  
10 continued support for our Guardians and the mission. Your  
11 steadfast fiscal provisions have made us the force we are  
12 today, and every Guardian appreciates it.

13 I look forward to working with you as we defeat  
14 tomorrow's challenges together, and I look forward to your  
15 questions.

16 [The prepared statement of General Guetlein follows:]

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Senator Hirono: Thank you. Ms. Maurer?

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1           STATEMENT OF DIANA C. MAURER, DIRECTOR OF DEFENSE  
2 CAPABILITIES AND MANAGEMENT, GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY  
3 OFFICE

4           Ms. Maurer: Good afternoon, Chair Hirono, Ranking  
5 Member Sullivan, other members and staff. I am pleased to  
6 be here today to discuss key findings and recommendations  
7 from GAO's recent work on military readiness, and as you  
8 just heard, the services face difficult decisions about how  
9 to address continuing operational demands while preparing  
10 for future challenges.

11           Today we see that readiness is increasingly strained.  
12 Across the services we have seen common challenges in three  
13 areas: sustaining weapons systems, generating ready forces,  
14 and balancing mission and resources.

15           First, all too often the sustainment enterprise is not  
16 delivering mission capability. Less than 40 percent of  
17 ships completed maintenance on time. The F-35 and most  
18 aviation systems failed to meet annual mission-capable or  
19 availability goals, and missile defense sustainment is  
20 optimized for specific systems rather than across the  
21 enterprise.

22           Second, the services have, at times, struggled to align  
23 new equipment, units, and training to generate ready forces.  
24 For example, the Army and Space Force, to their credit,  
25 leaned forward in developing and fielding new technology,

1 but they sometimes did not ensure units were trained,  
2 organized, and staffed to utilize these new capabilities.  
3 The Army and Marines also face several personnel,  
4 sustainment, and organizational challenges establishing new  
5 multidomain units. And shortfalls in training capability  
6 and other challenges hinder the Space Force's ability to  
7 generate space readiness.

8 Third, we are increasingly concerned about a growing  
9 imbalance between mission and resources. The Navy does not  
10 have enough sailors for the current fleet, much less the  
11 fleet of the future. As we reported earlier this week, the  
12 Navy has 16 percent fewer sailors than required in the  
13 battle force. The Space Force is short 2,000 uniformed  
14 guardians, plus an undetermined number of civilians.  
15 Aviation and ship sustainment suffers from the lack of spare  
16 parts and shortages of trained maintenance personnel. And  
17 the Marine Corps faces a significant gap between the number  
18 and current condition of the amphibious fleet and near-term  
19 operational needs.

20 To fill gaps like these, services have been doing more  
21 with less. They have prioritized mission and modernization,  
22 but to the detriment of facilities, housing, and barracks.  
23 Servicemembers also face daunting tradeoffs, sacrificing  
24 training, maintenance, and rest to meet operational needs.  
25 We recently reported that most servicemembers consistently

1 sleep 6 hours or less per day, for months at a time, and  
2 that level of sleep deprivation can be like working while  
3 intoxicated. This overtaxing of military personnel creates  
4 safety problems, hinders readiness, and undercuts retention.

5 The recommendations from our reports can help DoD  
6 enhance readiness. The 30 reports in my statement have 114  
7 recommendations, and nearly all of those are open. Now to  
8 be fair, most of those are directed to OSD, not the  
9 services, many are relatively new, and few involved simple  
10 fixes. And prior to today's hearing, I had the opportunity  
11 to meet with everyone on the panel, and I can tell you they  
12 are committed to using the results of GAO's work to enhance  
13 readiness and improve conditions for servicemembers.

14 In fact, one of the best things about working at GAO is  
15 going to bases and units and talking to people at all levels  
16 of the military. We see servicemembers and civilians  
17 consistently demonstrating professionalism and dedication to  
18 the mission.

19 Your continued oversight, supported by our independent  
20 work, bolstered by DoD's actions to implement our  
21 recommendations, will help those servicemembers address  
22 readiness challenges across the Joint Force.

23 Madam Chair, thank you for the opportunity to testify.  
24 I look forward to your questions.

25 [The prepared statement of Ms. Maurer follows:]

1 Senator Hirono: Thank you very much.

2 As long as Ms. Maurer pointed out the fact that their  
3 report suggested 114 recommendations and that you had met  
4 with the testifiers today, so I would like to ask all of  
5 you, starting with General Mingus, of the 114  
6 recommendations that GAO made, which one did you consider  
7 the most important to implement, and did you implement it?  
8 We will just go down the list.

9 General Mingus: Yes, ma'am. It is hard to prioritize  
10 because they are all important, and we agree with all the  
11 findings and the recommendations. But if I were to pick one  
12 it would probably be our fleet readiness, our weapons  
13 readiness is one of the areas that we acknowledge ourselves  
14 and are keenly focused on reversing that trend.

15 Senator Hirono: When you talk about fleet readiness,  
16 are you talking about -- there are a lot of elements that go  
17 into fleet readiness, such as --

18 General Mingus: Our Bradleys, our Howitzers. Our  
19 fleet readiness currently is below the standards that we  
20 hold for ourselves, and part of that is a confluence of  
21 cascading of equipment from one unit to other, back to  
22 depot. Some of it is equipment that we have given to  
23 Ukraine and the supply parts that have to go to Ukraine. So  
24 it has been a host of things that have caused this. And our  
25 standard for most of our fleet is about 90 percent

1 operational readiness rates, and if you aggregate across the  
2 fleet it is sitting at about 80 percent.

3 Senator Hirono: So, General, I would be interested to  
4 know how you are doing with the fleet readiness aspect of  
5 the GAO recommendations, so we will follow up with you on  
6 how you are doing with that.

7 General Mingus: Yes, ma'am.

8 Senator Hirono: Admiral?

9 Admiral Kilby: Thanks, Chair Hirono. I think I agree  
10 with General Mingus. We do take the GAO reports very  
11 seriously, read them, and try to really understand where we  
12 can make progress in a forward direction.

13 I would say three reports stand out. One, the latest  
14 report on fatigue, which applies to all the services, but  
15 the GAO has done reports for the Navy fatigue. So that is a  
16 serious report for us, especially given the manning  
17 situation that Ms. Maurer described. That is the second  
18 area, and that report was released on Monday. I have not  
19 had a chance to completely digest the report, but there is  
20 much, much of it that we agree with and concur.

21 And then finally the readiness report on availability  
22 and modernization and maintenance. Those reports are  
23 impactful to us, and we are taking those very seriously.

24 Senator Hirono: So as we go down the list, my  
25 intention is that for the recommendations that have been

1 suggested, and as you point out to this Committee, what you  
2 consider to be an important recommendation that you are  
3 going to implement, my intention is to follow up to enable  
4 you to make those changes, as suggested.

5 So we will continue down the list. General Mahoney?

6 General Mahoney: Thanks, Senator, and I agree  
7 thematically with my shipmate and my fighting mate over  
8 here. The one that stood out to me, as a leader of Marines,  
9 was the report on the condition of the barracks. If we are  
10 going to say that the bedrock of our fighting capability is  
11 the individual Marine we have to ensure that there is a  
12 safe, sanitary, and secure place for them to come back after  
13 a hard day of training. That is the one that sticks out to  
14 me, ma'am.

15 Senator Hirono: General Slife?

16 General Slife: Senator, thanks. So as I look through  
17 the work that GAO has done, the portions that were most  
18 compelling to me was the work that the GAO has done,  
19 actually several reports, on the F-35 specifically. This  
20 is, of course, the backbone of the Air Force's future strike  
21 fighter fleet. In many ways it is a fantastic platform. It  
22 is a fantastic capability we have. But it is  
23 extraordinarily complex, and it is complex in a number of  
24 ways. Number one, the structure of the program office,  
25 where we have multiple partners and allies that are involved

1 in operating the platform, have a voice in how the platform  
2 is developed, clearly the Department of the Air Force and  
3 the Department of the Navy operate the U.S. fleets, and so  
4 there are differences in the way the Navy and the Marine  
5 Corps do supply and the way the Air Force does supply. So  
6 anything that is a shared resource becomes very difficult  
7 for us to manage, just inside the Department of Defense,  
8 much less with our partners and allies.

9 And then finally, as we have found that we become more  
10 and more interdependent with our partners and allies, the  
11 interoperability at the platform itself, we have to be able  
12 to share data. We have to be able to use common weapons.  
13 We have to service each other's airplanes. There are  
14 bureaucratic impediments in place that we are working hard  
15 to knock down, that will allow us to get the maximum value  
16 out of that platform.

17 But I would just tell you that the short answer to your  
18 question is that the things that I find most compelling in  
19 the GAO's work is that related to the F-35.

20 Senator Hirono: Well, good, because we have had issues  
21 with F-35 and its capabilities for what seems like a long  
22 time. So I would be interested to know how you are going to  
23 make the kinds of changes that you just described.

24 Okay. General Guetlein.

25 General Guetlein: Thank you, Senator. We have had a



1 pretty strong partnership with the GAO going forward since  
2 we stood up in 2019. One of the major pivots that we have  
3 been doing in the United States Space Force is pivoting to  
4 an employed-in-place approach to warfighting. Whereas the  
5 other services fight forward, we fight from the homeland,  
6 and facilities that are heavily driven by software, we have  
7 to combine both our men and women in uniform, our civilians,  
8 and our contractor to get after our mission, and that  
9 requires us to change the way we measure readiness.

10 For example, we have to measure the power and cooling  
11 of our facilities. We have to balance FSRM resources with  
12 weapons systems sustainment resources. So we needed a  
13 completely new model to measure our readiness so that we  
14 could accurately report to the combatant commanders what  
15 they could guarantee to be provided by United States Space  
16 Force during times of crisis or conflict.

17 We are in the middle of that pivot. We will finish  
18 that pivot by this fall. And what you have seen in our  
19 readiness numbers, because we are changing the way we do it,  
20 is a significant decline in our readiness report. It is not  
21 necessarily because we have changed anything other than the  
22 fact that we are actually looking at what does it take to go  
23 to a fight, which is different than the system that we  
24 inherited from the United States Air Force. Over.

25 Senator Hirono: I think as the newest entity to be set

1 up, it remains to be seen how you are going to measure your  
2 attainment of mission.

3 Senator Sullivan.

4 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Madam Chair, and, you  
5 know, I want to begin just because a lot of these hearings  
6 are all about challenges and problems. I want to begin by  
7 just complimenting you, gentlemen, and the forces you lead.  
8 I mean, there are a million reasons to compliment you, but I  
9 will just throw out a couple anecdotal ones.

10 The Navy, Admiral, with regard to the Eisenhower  
11 deployment, the Carney, I got a report saying it shot down  
12 close to 80 incoming missiles and drones fired by the  
13 Houthis. I know they are heading home right now, but those  
14 sailors did an amazing job.

15 The Marine Corps, General Mahoney, the full audit, I  
16 think that is actually a really big deal and a great  
17 example.

18 Air Force, General Slife, the work that you did the  
19 last year and a half, General Van Herck called it Super  
20 Bowl-level actions up in Alaska, when we had these spy  
21 balloons and the Russian Bear bombers coming in, and we were  
22 shooting down spy balloons, intercepting them, intercepting  
23 Russian Bear bombers, Young, 25-year-old Female F-22 pilots  
24 doing -- I mean, the work that was going on up there, which  
25 you make look so simple, was remarkable.

1           General Mingus, I think you are giving pride and hope,  
2 just that 155 millimeter ammo. Look, some of my colleagues  
3 here are saying, "Hey, our industrial base can't produce  
4 like we used to." That is baloney, right. The Army is  
5 showing that right now, the way you are taking that curve on  
6 the production of our ammo is remarkable.

7           And with the Space Force, General Guetlein, some of us  
8 were skeptical, myself included, the way you have stood up.  
9 I think a lot of people have a lot of pride in the Space  
10 Force. Your uniforms are almost as sharp as the Marine  
11 Corps', so that is another thing that I think is quite  
12 impressive. It is hard to do that.

13           So thank you. There is a lot going on here that is  
14 very important.

15           But I do want to get some of the challenges. Let me  
16 start, General Mingus, with you and the Army's recruiting  
17 goals and the struggle to meet those. One of the reasons  
18 the Army is shrinking, which it is, is because we cannot get  
19 enough Americans to volunteer. We are working on some of  
20 the issues. Senator Blumenthal and I actually are working  
21 on issues of access. We are probably going to legislate  
22 that, high schools and other places, where we have much  
23 better, stronger, open access for recruiters.

24           How are you feeling about that, General? What more can  
25 we do? Are we finally kind of hitting the bottom and coming

1 up? I mean, if we keep missing recruiting goals at the  
2 level that some of the services have been, that is going to  
3 be the ultimate crisis because we cannot man our force.

4 General Mingus: Thank you, Senator. We acknowledge  
5 the last two years we missed the mark, and not by a little  
6 bit.

7 Senator Sullivan: Yeah. The numbers were huge.

8 General Mingus: The Secretary and the Chief and the  
9 entire Army have taken this on as a mission that we have to  
10 succeed, for all the reasons you have pointed out. So our  
11 benchmarks this year are 55,000 in the door and another  
12 5,000 in the delayed entry program for next year, and given  
13 the trajectories we are on right now, we had a very good  
14 spring and we are optimistic that we will meet those goals.

15 Senator Sullivan: So what did you do different? Like  
16 what happened? What are the corrective measures that you  
17 can learn from, that other services could learn from?

18 General Mingus: And I think many of these lessons are  
19 universal, but where I will start is the restructuring of  
20 our recruiting command. We made it a direct report to the  
21 Army. We are going to up-gun that to a three-star. We are  
22 professionalizing our recruiting force, both on the warrant  
23 officer side and the NCO side, increasing the numbers that  
24 are actually in the field, looking at their locations.  
25 Expanding the population is probably one of the biggest

1 things. Instead of focused on juniors and seniors in high  
2 school we are expanding that into college age.

3 Senator Sullivan: And are you getting access to those  
4 institutions, to your satisfaction, high schools and  
5 colleges?

6 General Mingus: We believe, for the most part, yes,  
7 sir. There are some challenges in certain parts of the  
8 country, but the receptiveness is getting better.

9 And then the last thing that we have done is what I  
10 mentioned in my remarks, and that is the Future Soldiers  
11 Prep Course. We have brought 18,000 through that program  
12 that would have not otherwise been able to meet the  
13 standard. We bring them in, and whether it is an academic  
14 or a cognitive or a physical issue, and we bring them up to  
15 our standard before we let them come through. And the folks  
16 that have gone through that program, that 18,000, in excess  
17 of 90 percent of them have met the standard on the back end  
18 of that.

19 Senator Sullivan: Good. Great. Well, look, if there  
20 is more that we can do as we are looking to mark up the  
21 NDAA, let us know.

22 Madam Chair, I have a bunch of other questions, but my  
23 time has expired so I will turn it over to my colleagues.

24 Senator Hirono: Senator Kaine?

25 Senator Kaine: Thank you, Madam Chair and Ranking

1 Member Sullivan. I will follow up with you, General Mingus,  
2 on the Future Soldier because I am intrigued with that. You  
3 say about 18,000 folks have come through. I spent some time  
4 down at Fort Eustis, talking about this, and I was really  
5 impressed, maybe 18 months ago. Ninety percent were able to  
6 get to the standard by the end of that course.

7 It has not been in place that long, but I hope we are  
8 going to longitudinally follow this group to see what we  
9 learn about retention. Did it not only enable them to meet  
10 the standard but maybe prepare them to, hey, I really want  
11 to stick with this. It is probably a little bit too early  
12 to draw conclusions about that. Am I right about that?

13 General Mingus: You are, sir, and we are absolutely  
14 going to track everyone, from a longitudinal perspective,  
15 just to make sure we have not created another problem. So  
16 far the data suggests that it is not. First term is on par  
17 with other first termers, and so as a result we are  
18 considering the expansion, instead of just doing it in South  
19 Carolina maybe expanding it to other basic training  
20 locations.

21 Senator Kaine: Well, it will be interesting over time  
22 to compare folks who went through Future Soldier with those  
23 who did not, and see if there is a different kind of  
24 stickiness to their desire to stay. So I will look forward  
25 to following that. And I know that many of the other

1 services are watching carefully what you are doing and maybe  
2 others are implementing too. So thanks for that.

3 Here is an issue that I have raised with a number of  
4 you, and we have talked in the past. I am really worried  
5 about the inadequacy of the labor supply in our industrial  
6 base. You know, the 45-day shipbuilding analysis that was  
7 done, Admiral Kilby, you and I have talked about this work  
8 done by the SECNAV directed to look at why are we so late on  
9 the Columbia, why are we so late on the Ford-class,  
10 Virginia-class. And there are a number of reasons, but the  
11 workforce is a key one. And even when it is workforce plus  
12 supply chain, often the challenge on the supply chain is the  
13 workforce. So we see this really spread throughout, and I  
14 am really nervous about it.

15 Here is what I am finding, though, that troubles me.  
16 Every year, military recruiters turn away thousands of young  
17 Americans who are disqualified from military service for one  
18 reason or another, and I have had interactions with some in  
19 the last 90 days, "I wanted to serve my country, and I  
20 passed through all the vetting and security check. But I  
21 had asthma in my background," or "I had something else in my  
22 background that meant I was a no-go for entering the  
23 service."

24 And I said, "Okay, when they tell you no, how did you  
25 feel?" "I was really disappointed." "And then did they

1 say, hey look, if you want to serve your country you can  
2 still serve your country. Just because you cannot come into  
3 the uniformed service there are DoD civilian positions.  
4 There is an industrial base that are essentially in the  
5 foxhole with our active service, in terms of the critical  
6 nature."

7 And my interaction with people who have recently been  
8 turned away is, no, they were given nothing other than an,  
9 "I'm sorry, we can't let you in." I would hope that our  
10 services would direct patriotic people who want to serve  
11 this nation, who for one reason or another may not meet a  
12 qualification, I would hope that they might be directed to  
13 other parts of our defense ecosystem, because we need an  
14 awful lot of people. We need the tens of thousands who exit  
15 military service every year, who are going to go out into  
16 the big, wide world and do anything. There are all kinds of  
17 opportunities for them to continue serving. And I think  
18 many of them know that, but an awful lot of people, based on  
19 my son's experience when he was a really green first  
20 lieutenant and had his first Marine platoon, and his  
21 sergeant came and said, "I am retiring in 60 days. What  
22 should I do to find a job?"

23 I mean, there ought to be ways to direct people into  
24 filling up these positions serving our country, in the  
25 industrial base or the DoD civilian side, and I do not know



1 that we are doing that. And I just would encourage you to  
2 see if we might be able to do that better. There is not a  
3 question there, but it is an encouragement.

4 I do have a question about counter-UAS in my last  
5 minute. We have been having some testimony and some  
6 hearings, some open, some classified, about UAS challenges,  
7 and obviously they are a threat in combat. But increasingly  
8 they are also a threat to our installations, both at home  
9 and overseas.

10 Addressing this threat requires an awful lot of  
11 coordination. If it is at home it is usually between a city  
12 or county and a state and local law enforcement agency, and  
13 maybe the DHS or the FBI as well as a base commander and  
14 others. And I worry a little bit that we are maybe not  
15 really coordinating as we are thinking about how to deal  
16 with the UAS threat around our own bases, both domestically  
17 and those that are overseas, where you have a foreign  
18 government also to deal with in terms of what you can do.

19 Are you satisfied with the degree of coordination that  
20 we are seeing in trying to get after and solve this problem?  
21 Any of you.

22 General Guetlein: Senator, I will answer that in 17  
23 seconds, I can give you about 15 back because the answer is  
24 no, not satisfied. And the reason we are not satisfied is  
25 because although the services coordinate effectively

1 together and leverage each other's capabilities, every  
2 single locale is its own story. So there is no national  
3 approach to this counter-small UAS issue. It is local issue  
4 by local issue.

5 Senator Kaine: I do not want to go over my time, but  
6 let me ask one other question really quick. Is there  
7 somebody in the Pentagon who I could grab by the shoulders  
8 and say, "Hey, you are responsible for this, the  
9 coordination part of it. Admittedly it is complicated with  
10 all the levels, but you are responsible for this. Tell me  
11 what we are doing to really develop strategies." Who would  
12 I go to who is that person?

13 General Mingus: I could be one of them. Dr. Bill  
14 LaPlante, Under Secretary of Defense for A&S, he and I co-  
15 chair the session that kind of leads this on behalf of the  
16 Secretary of Defense.

17 Senator Kaine: Okay.

18 General Mingus: He stood up a tiger team, and that  
19 tiger team is still in place, Bill LaPlante and I, and there  
20 are a couple other forums that do this. And all the  
21 services are part of that forum that Bill and I co-chair.  
22 But we would love to come back over and give you a deep dive  
23 on that, sir.

24 Senator Kaine: I would appreciate that. Thank you.  
25 Thanks, Madam Chair.

1 Senator Hirono: Senator Blumenthal.

2 Senator Blumenthal: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you  
3 to you and the Ranking Member for having this Subcommittee  
4 hearing. And just to pursue the line of questioning that  
5 Senator Sullivan began, I think this recruiting issue will  
6 continue to challenge us, bedevil us, vex us, for years to  
7 come, looking at the long-range trends and the attitudes  
8 among young people. He and I are working to try to make  
9 high schools more accessible to your recruiters, and it is  
10 in their interests, our young people's interests, to know  
11 about what great opportunities there are for careers -- not  
12 just jobs, but careers -- in the military, and for their  
13 parents and their teachers to understand it, as well. So I  
14 think we need to put together a broader program, as Senator  
15 Sullivan and I have discussed.

16 Just to ask a question about this, General Mahoney. Is  
17 the Marine Corps still hitting its recruiting targets?

18 General Mahoney: We made mission last year. We will  
19 make mission this year. The other part of gaining and  
20 maintaining a skilled force is retention, and our retention  
21 mission is very, very strong this year. For career Marines  
22 we are over 100 percent, at 110 percent, and for first-term  
23 enlistments we are in the mid 90s. We will make those  
24 numbers. Interestingly and importantly, the numbers that we  
25 are keeping have a 95 percent specialty match against grade.

1 So we are not keeping people that are not in the specialties  
2 that we want, at the grade they want.

3 So they are headwind, and it is hard, and your  
4 recruiting forces out there are working hard every day. But  
5 we will make mission.

6 Senator Blumenthal: I have 3 minutes left. I have a  
7 big question, which I would appreciate you answering in  
8 writing. What have we learned from Ukraine? If you could  
9 give that answer to me in writing. I would not have time,  
10 and I know we would be putting you on the spot. I would  
11 appreciate you addressing that issue to us in writing.

12 Let me ask you, Admiral Kilby, I am intensely  
13 interested in submarine production. I know Senator Kaine  
14 shares that interest. We have reduced, according to the  
15 Navy's proposal, the number of submarines per year from two  
16 to one. I think that reduction, without any disrespect, is  
17 unacceptable. I do not know whether the Navy went along  
18 with it. I understand all the complexities of internal  
19 consideration.

20 But I know the Secretary of the Navy has focused on  
21 workforce as a major constraint. So I am interested that in  
22 your testimony you do not really address that issue in  
23 detail. There is a sentence or paragraph on page 4 that  
24 says, "To this end, we are investing in public  
25 infrastructure in the industrial base, aligned with the DoD

1 National Defense Industrial Strategy. The Navy is in the  
2 midst of a generational change," et cetera.

3 You know, one thing I did on the Armed Services  
4 Committee was to insert an apprenticeship program -- this  
5 was 5 years ago -- and other kinds of training. My  
6 colleagues at the time said to me, "This is education. This  
7 should be in the Department of Education." I said, "No. It  
8 is a matter of national security."

9 So if that is the constraint on our building two  
10 submarines a year, we need to do something fairly dramatic  
11 about it. And I know you are operating within the DoD  
12 National Defense Industrial Strategy, and then the Shipyard  
13 Infrastructure Optimization Program. But the focus here  
14 seems to be mainly on capital investment, recapitalizing dry  
15 docks, et cetera.

16 I want to see something on training and something  
17 major, something that meets this moment, because whether it  
18 is munitions or artillery or submarines, we have a real  
19 challenge ahead.

20 Admiral Kilby: Senator, thank you. I agree with you.  
21 The investments in the submarine industrial base are  
22 significant. Thank you for the supplemental. That is \$3.4  
23 billion. Our request that you are reviewing now is \$2.3  
24 billion in fiscal year 2025, and almost \$9 billion across  
25 the FYDP. That is not just buying parts and things. It is

1 workforce development. It is supplier base. It is all the  
2 things we think we need to do to bolster that base to  
3 produce those submarines.

4 Our goal is to produce a Columbia and 2.33 Virginia-  
5 class submarines by 2028. In order to do that we feel we  
6 need to make these investments.

7 Senator Blumenthal: Well, thank you for your answer.  
8 Thank you for your service. Thank you all for your  
9 dedication and your great work for our country. And I will  
10 be following up on a number of these issues. Thanks so  
11 much.

12 Senator Hirono: Thank you. I am going to call on  
13 myself for a second round of 5-minute questions, and then at  
14 that point I believe votes will be called. And then I will  
15 turn the hearing over to Senator Sullivan. And as long as  
16 all of you are here, he can continue with the questions that  
17 he has.

18 I have mentioned this before to others who have  
19 testified before the full Committee, but Admiral Kilby, I do  
20 have significant concerns about the cost overruns associated  
21 with the replacement of Dry Dock 3 in Hawaii. It is a  
22 critically important project, and no sooner did I speak at  
23 one of the important segments of the construction that I got  
24 a cost increase of almost \$900 million, over \$400 million of  
25 which was due to poor planning on the Navy's part, meaning

1 that \$400 was due to the need to increase or to shorten the  
2 amount of time that it would take for this dry dock to be  
3 completed by almost 1 year.

4 I would say that that is poor planning. So Admiral  
5 Kilby, what assurances can you give me and this Committee  
6 that the Navy has cost overruns under control and that  
7 accountability steps are being taken to address this issue?

8 Admiral Kilby: Chair Hirono, thanks for that question.  
9 I share your concern. I am part of the SIOP Oversight  
10 Committee. We meet quarterly. To your specific question  
11 about Hawaii supervision we have an officer in charge of  
12 construction activity at Pearl Harbor now in place to watch  
13 the QA and execution of that performance of that work on Dry  
14 Dock 5.

15 I do think it is a big effort, a once-in-a-century  
16 effort, to update these dry docks. They are complex. We  
17 are applying lessons learned. We are bringing industry in  
18 earlier to make sure we understand their voice and that is  
19 captured in our estimates to you. That is from Portsmouth  
20 applied to Pearl Harbor.

21 So I cannot assure you that it will not happen again.  
22 I can assure you that you have my attention and focus on it  
23 to try to ensure that this program is delivered as we would  
24 like it to be delivered, and at the cost that we predicted  
25 it to be delivered at.

1           Senator Hirono: I know that a large part of that cost  
2 is attributable to other things such as supply chain issues,  
3 et cetera, but to have almost half of that increase amount  
4 attributable to lack of planning is very, very concerning.  
5 So I am asking for some level of assurance that that will be  
6 attended to.

7           And I am hard pressed to identify a single large  
8 project that the Navy has undertaken that has come in on  
9 time and on budget. And if you can identify a project that  
10 has met those requirements I would like to know what they  
11 are. But in the meantime, for Ms. Maurer, do you have  
12 anything to add from the GAO perspective, on what is going  
13 on with this massive cost overrun, as far as I am concerned,  
14 on Dry Dock 5 in Hawaii?

15          Ms. Maurer: Yeah, absolutely, Madam Chair. We have  
16 some open recommendations to the Navy that they fully adopt  
17 some of the best practices that GAO has established over  
18 many years on cost estimation and scheduling large projects  
19 like the project at Pearl. Our most recent report on the  
20 SIOP effort last year, we had a couple of new  
21 recommendations that I think would be helpful. One is  
22 encouraging the Navy to take a look at design and risk  
23 analysis throughout the lifecycle of large projects like  
24 what is going on at Pearl, as well as to ensure that they  
25 are seeking out the opportunity for independent cost



1 estimates, as well.

2 Senator Hirono: Admiral Kilby, are you taking those  
3 considerations to heart?

4 Admiral Kilby: Yes we are, ma'am.

5 Senator Hirono: Thank you. I will certainly follow  
6 up.

7 For General Mingus, the Army is negotiating renewals  
8 for several training areas and land leases in Hawaii, very  
9 critical. Pohakuloa comes to mind. And if we do not  
10 negotiate that land lease successfully I think that it would  
11 very much compromise the Army's and the Marines' ability to  
12 conduct these very needed exercises.

13 But one of the requirements that I put into last year's  
14 NDAA is there should be an official designated responsible  
15 for coordinating the lease negotiations and reaching out to  
16 particularly the Native Hawaiian community. And as far as I  
17 know, such a person has not been designated, even if I  
18 believe the time has passed. Can you update me on whether  
19 or not a person has been identified, and if not, when is  
20 that going to happen?

21 General Mingus: Ma'am, the bottom line is I think it  
22 is going to be very soon. The DepSecDef directed the  
23 standup of the cell itself in January. They have not  
24 identified a lead, but I think it is very close.

25 But we, in the Army, are taking this very seriously.

1 As you know, General Flynn has been very engaged since the  
2 beginning, held several town halls. We have had the initial  
3 environmental impact studies done. He has got another town  
4 hall coming up this month. We are attuned to the cultural  
5 sensitivities of this particular issue, absolutely, and we  
6 also are attuned to the fact that 2029 seemed a long way  
7 away, but it is going to take us every day between now and  
8 then to get us there. And we look forward to working with  
9 you on this, and your team, as well.

10 Senator Hirono: I cannot make it any clearer how  
11 important this aspect of the negotiations is, especially if  
12 there are groups, particularly I would say the Native  
13 Hawaiian community, for whom that mountain, on which  
14 Pohakuloa is located, is a sacred mountain to them. And to  
15 not take that into consideration is going to be, in my view,  
16 at our risk.

17 Admiral Kilby, the Navy submitted a legislative  
18 proposal to Congress seeking authority to send up to six  
19 U.S.-based ships a year to foreign yards, i.e., in Japan, for  
20 repairs, to prepare for potential contingencies. While I am  
21 in favor of keeping the ships we have in optimal conditions,  
22 I think it is shortsighted to outsource maintenance,  
23 especially when the Navy's own shipyards are in such  
24 disrepair, why SIOP is so important.

25 For example, the surface ship repair piers in Pearl

1 Harbor are in poor shape, with only 4 of the 13 berths  
2 available to conduct ship maintenance. I would think that  
3 we should be bringing those berths up to par as opposed to  
4 sending U.S.-based ships to other places to be maintained.

5 Instead of asking for authority to do overseas  
6 maintenance on U.S.-based ships, why isn't the Navy simply  
7 sending the ships already based overseas into these foreign  
8 yards for maintenance and repair? My understanding is there  
9 are dozens of ships already, for example, in Japan, that  
10 could be repaired. Why ask to have ships that are in the  
11 U.S. sent off to these foreign places to be repaired? Can  
12 you respond to that, Admiral Kilby?

13 Admiral Kilby: Yes, I can, Chair Hirono. Thank you.  
14 The concept behind the legislative proposal is to try to  
15 understand where we have places outside the United States in  
16 time of war that we could rely on for the repair of our  
17 ship. The general concept is short duration availabilities  
18 for those ships that are on deployment from CONUS, not to at  
19 all diminish the work we need to do at our domestic yards  
20 and for work packages.

21 So I do not see any impact. If anything, we can get  
22 some work done and do more work, deeper, when those ships  
23 return to their normal schedules. So there is no desire  
24 here to impact our own industrial base at all and their  
25 ability to repair our ships. We would like to know, though,

1 who our partner nations and their repair facilities are, who  
2 we can trust to send our ships should we need to do that.  
3 So it is meant to just explore and understand where we have  
4 partnerships.

5 For your specific question about forward-deployed  
6 ships, they deploy on a different cycle. It is called a  
7 patrol cycle, both in Japan and Rota. So they typically go  
8 out for 3 months and come back for 3 months. And they have  
9 an ecosystem within their own shipyards, whether they are in  
10 Japan or Rota, to take care of those ships. So we  
11 understand how those work right now, from a forward-deployed  
12 naval force perspective.

13 Senator Hirono: Well, frankly, before I would be  
14 convinced that we should authorize these six ships, so I  
15 would definitely like to engage with you further so that we  
16 can be on the same page. Thank you.

17 Senator Sullivan.

18 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Madam Chair. Admiral, I  
19 want to continue following on shipbuilding. You know, the  
20 Secretary of the Navy's statement from April 9th was kind of  
21 a shocker. All four of the major programs, including the  
22 first Columbia-class sub, the new block of Virginia-class  
23 subs, the USS Enterprise carrier class, and the first  
24 Constellation-class frigate are all several years behind in  
25 terms of shipbuilding. That is kind of as bad as it gets,

1 in my view, particularly when, as I mentioned in my opening  
2 statement, the PLA is cranking out 10 to 12 high-end ships a  
3 year.

4 So more specifically, only 66 percent of the attack  
5 submarine fleet in the U.S. Navy is available for  
6 operations. Amphibious ship readiness is at 32 percent,  
7 which is stunning. That impacts your United States Marine  
8 Corps. The latest fiasco with the USS Boxer deployment  
9 underscores a huge problem with amphibs.

10 So my question, Admiral, and I know you and I have  
11 talked about it, let's assume there are no cost restraints.  
12 Let's assume there is no -- I mean, we have workforce issues  
13 -- budget limitations. If you had a magic wand, and you are  
14 very smart and have a lot of experience in this world, what  
15 would you do to kind of start to fix this problem?

16 One of the things I was disappointed in, when the  
17 Secretary puts out this statement, shocking statement to  
18 everybody -- by the way, great statement if you are an  
19 American adversary, like holy cow, look at that. These guys  
20 can't do anything right. But there was not a plan to fix  
21 it. So if you had a magic wand, what would you do to fix  
22 it?

23 And here is the reason why I am asking the question.  
24 This Committee, we just had a strategy session this morning,  
25 all the Republican Senators, we are ready to do big stuff

1 -- new shipyards. You know, I happen to think the idea that  
2 Senator Hirono was critical of you on might make sense  
3 during wartime. But what do we need to do? Because we are  
4 in kind of willingness mode. Everybody sees this as a  
5 crisis. But we need leadership from the Navy, and to be  
6 honest, I do not think we have it.

7 So what would be the top three or four things? Again,  
8 no budget constraints, no nothing. Given your experience,  
9 here is what we should do.

10 Admiral Kilby: So two different parts to this question  
11 or this answer for you, Senator. Thank you for that. There  
12 is a ship production piece of that --

13 Senator Sullivan: Yeah.

14 Admiral Kilby: -- and there is a ship repair piece to  
15 that.

16 Senator Sullivan: Correct.

17 Admiral Kilby: So let's start out with the ship  
18 production piece. That is what the submarine industrial  
19 base investments are designed to get after, and they will  
20 also affect our repair business, as well. But specifically,  
21 that will address our nuclear force. Those are what nuclear  
22 investments are made to get after. We also have a surface  
23 ship investment, where we have invested almost \$1 billion to  
24 try to get suppliers and vendors to help our conventional  
25 surface ship, as well.

1           You have highlighted the issues, at least at some of  
2 the production yards, our workforce, and I would say  
3 experienced workforce. In some yards we have a very green  
4 workforce, so we have lost years of experience through a  
5 number of things and we have to build that up, which comes  
6 from workforce development and the investments we are trying  
7 to make.

8           So I think there is a piece of that where we just have  
9 to make those investments and let them take, and monitor and  
10 watch it take hold and see if it is trending the way we  
11 think it should trend.

12           From the repair perspective, we need to get after the  
13 business of how we do shipyard maintenance, both in our  
14 private yards and in our public yards.

15           Senator Sullivan: Do we need more shipyards, either  
16 private or public shipyards, for the U.S. Navy?

17           Admiral Kilby: I think it would be helpful to have  
18 -- this is an indirect answer -- I am not sure if I need  
19 more shipyards to make ships. I need more yards that can  
20 outsource work if those shipyards cannot handle it. And we  
21 are doing --

22           Senator Sullivan: On the maintenance side or on the  
23 production side?

24           Admiral Kilby: I think both. I think both, sir.

25           Senator Sullivan: Okay.

1           Admiral Kilby:  And I think some of those yards could  
2 help our nuclear community, as well, as long as they are  
3 qualified and pass standards.

4           Senator Sullivan:  How about the disaggregation?  I  
5 have been digging into shipbuilding a lot, as much as I can,  
6 my team has.  But, I mean, does it make sense to build subs  
7 and carriers?  I mean, should our yards be, hey, this is  
8 only subs, this is only carriers, this is only frigates.  
9 Can we do that?  Is that kind of specialization helpful in  
10 terms of the ability to crank out ships?

11          Admiral Kilby:  I am not sure.  I will have to take  
12 that question and get back to you, Senator.  You know,  
13 Huntington Ingalls in Pascagoula does a great job.  They  
14 have a wonderful plant, where they are able to produce  
15 multiple ships.  So it can be done.

16          I think there is a real estate piece to that, the size  
17 of the yard and their ability to be able to handle multiple  
18 lines, and are they facilitized to use computer-aided  
19 design.  I think that is ultimately helpful to them, as  
20 well.

21          Senator Sullivan:  Okay.  Well, I will tell you this,  
22 Admiral.  There is a lot of interest in helping the Navy, a  
23 lot.  And if you guys have big ideas, my own view is this  
24 Committee would embrace them, big ideas.  Because we have  
25 got to get by this.  If the Chinese keep cranking out 10 to



1 12 ships a year, and we are struggling the way the  
2 Secretary, you know, in his statement, put it out, we are  
3 going to be in a real big hurt locker, if we are not already  
4 in one.

5 Let me ask General Mahoney a related question. The  
6 ARG/MEU team is one of the most important elements of  
7 American readiness. I mentioned the amphibious readiness at  
8 32 percent. I mean, holy cow. No ARG has been ready on  
9 time in the past 2 years in the INDOPACOM theater, our most  
10 important theater. Again, that makes the Chinese happy.

11 And then, General, the Marine Corps has said, in terms  
12 of force design, the Marine littoral regiments need about  
13 nine LSMs per MLR. The Navy, I think, is on budget to  
14 produce eight LSMs by the early 2030s. So that is a giant  
15 disconnect with what you guys say you need in terms of force  
16 design and what the Navy is producing.

17 Publicly, the Marine Corps has been saying, well, the  
18 LSM procurement plan seems fine, but the LSM procurement  
19 plan, from my math, does not seem to add up at all. If you  
20 need nine LSMs for each Marine littoral regiment and there  
21 are three Marine littoral regiments, that is 27 LSMs. The  
22 Navy right now is saying you will get 8 by the mid 2030s.  
23 So isn't that undermining the amphibious readiness in terms  
24 of the Marine Corps' new force design, as well, General?

25 General Mahoney: Senator, thanks. The LSM, as you

1 rightly noted, is a key enabler for the movement, mobility,  
2 and sustainability of the MLR in the littorals. It is late  
3 to need. The initial procurement year was supposed to be  
4 '22. The way it is programmed right now is a single ship in  
5 '25, one in '26, and then two each in '27, '28, and '29, for  
6 a total of eight. You are correct. We will not see  
7 critical mass until the early '30s in pursuit of our  
8 requirement of 35.

9       Between then and now, what we have done to fill that  
10 gap, vice just stare at it, have invested in leased vessels,  
11 invested in alternate platforms, expeditionary fast  
12 transport --

13       Senator Sullivan: But those are clearly suboptimal to  
14 the LSM. Correct?

15       General Mahoney: They are not ideal, Senator. As a  
16 bridging solution they are not ideal.

17       Senator Sullivan: I mean, I appreciate the Marine  
18 Corps getting on the issue and having a bridging solution,  
19 but, you know, as I have said in many hearings -- and I am  
20 going to ask about force design here in a second -- but if  
21 the Navy is not investing in force design, Marine Corps  
22 force design will fail. I think that is just a fact. And I  
23 just worry that on a basic concept as important as LSMs, as  
24 it relates to Marine littoral regiments, it does not look  
25 like the Navy is invested.

1           General Mahoney: We have the investment in this  
2 budget, sir, but I will say we need to go faster. As you  
3 pointed out in your opening statement, we cannot have our  
4 adversaries putting 10, 12 ships in the water, and we are  
5 worried about building, you know, less than that.

6           Senator Sullivan: So General, let me pivot directly to  
7 some of the Marine Corps force design issues. The Marine  
8 Corps recently decided to reactivate HMLA-269, which was  
9 deactivated in 2022, in accordance with initial force design  
10 plans. One of the major criticisms of force design was  
11 General Berger's "divest now to invest later" strategy,  
12 where there was a very significant divestment of proven  
13 combat power for future weapons systems to come on board,  
14 leaving a gap in combat capability.

15           General Smith has said that he would recalibrate force  
16 design to meet emerging threats. Obviously, this HMLA-269  
17 decision is a recalibration, which I think it is good to see  
18 him doing that.

19           What other examples of recalibration can you provide  
20 the Committee with, with regard to force design, that the  
21 Marine Corps is either undertaking or contemplating, and are  
22 you still focused on three MLRs or is that now going to two?

23           General Mahoney: Senator, one of the parts of the  
24 force design thesis was to take your assumptions, challenge  
25 them, validate them, wargame them, test them, learn from

1 them, and refine. In the case of HMLA, which went from  
2 seven squadrons, originally envisioned to five, and then we  
3 adjusted in that calibration of our assumption cut us too  
4 thin, back to six, four on the West Coast and two on the  
5 East Coast.

6 We are looking at the same for a soft support capacity  
7 with our heavy lift, when CH-53K comes aboard.

8 Senator Sullivan: So that is another force design  
9 recalibration that you are looking to add back, heavy helo  
10 lift capability that was cut as part of force design?

11 General Mahoney: As part of inventory management, yes,  
12 Senator.

13 Senator Sullivan: What about your F-35 cuts that were  
14 pretty dramatic?

15 General Mahoney: Just as a matter of clarity, none of  
16 the programs were cut. We have bought the HMLA program, 369  
17 airplanes, 189 AHs, 160, I think H-1s. We have bought out  
18 the V-22 program, we have bought out KC-130s, and we will  
19 buy out 200 CH-53Ks. What we are doing within that buy is  
20 managing the inventory based on global force management,  
21 based on mag cap training, based on individual and organic  
22 training, making sure that we can make that demand and  
23 managing the fleet accordingly. We did not divest any  
24 tails, so to speak.

25 Senator Sullivan: Right, but they were not going out

1 to the fleet, or some of them were not going out to the  
2 fleet.

3 General Mahoney: That would be correct. The fleet  
4 would drive the demand, and then we would adjust the  
5 inventory to meet that demand. We started flying F-18s, and  
6 they were engineered for 5,000 hours.

7 Senator Sullivan: Let me ask real quick. The Boxer,  
8 how significant is that to West Coast MEU/ARG readiness?

9 General Mahoney: All the big decks are critical. We  
10 are out of balance right now. The statute calls for 10 and  
11 we have 9. When Bougainville delivers we will have 10.

12 Senator Sullivan: Okay. And have you been in contact  
13 with your Navy comrades here on this very critical topic,  
14 that is the Navy-Marine Corps team?

15 General Mahoney: Yeah, constant contact, sir.

16 Senator Sullivan: Okay. Let me ask General Mingus. I  
17 am going to get back to you. 11th Airborne Division, as far  
18 as I can tell, and maybe you can provide me an update,  
19 morale is good. We love this unit in Alaska. One of the  
20 things, though, that I have been a little bit concerned  
21 about is the MTOW recognition of the higher costs of  
22 operating in the Arctic, just across the board, the ability  
23 to do anything, the ability to have weapons systems that  
24 work in 20 below, the ability to have the equipment, the  
25 gear, snow tires, right. I mean, these are all big issues,

1 and they cost more.

2 So you and I have talked about it. I just want to kind  
3 of, in this hearing, get your commitment that as you are  
4 looking at the cost requirements, the MTOW of the 11th  
5 Airborne, that it is going to reflect the additional costs  
6 that would be appropriate for the operations that this unit  
7 is doing in Alaska, and don't just cookie cut, hey, you have  
8 got the 11th Airborne in Alaska, the 82nd Airborne on the  
9 East Coast, we are going to make the costs the same. Well,  
10 they are not the same. To have success in Alaska it is  
11 probably going to cost more with that airborne unit. Can  
12 you comment on that, General?

13 General Mingus: Yes, sir. Thank you. Not only do you  
14 have my commitment to you but I also have no choice because  
15 the Chief of Staff of the Army has directed me to fix it, so  
16 that is my goal.

17 Senator Sullivan: Good.

18 General Mingus: That is one of the reasons why I  
19 personally went up there, here just a little while ago.

20 Senator Sullivan: And would you agree with my  
21 assessment that the costs of just operating in that  
22 environment is not going to be what the 82nd Airborne deals  
23 with?

24 General Mingus: Yes, sir, and it is going to be more  
25 because they still have to be able to go fight in the jungle

1 too. So they have to have equipment to go to the  
2 Philippines, or go to Japan, or go to South Korea, but they  
3 also have to be able to operate in Alaska. And so they are  
4 going to have a very unique MTOW, and it is not just the  
5 equipment. It is the mechanics and all the other things  
6 that go with it to sustain it, to maintain it, and ensure  
7 that it operates in that environment.

8 So it is physically in the building with me now. We  
9 are working that. When I was up there I told Brian Eiffler,  
10 who had personally sent it to me. I have got it, because we  
11 do not want this to be a bottom-up. We want it to be a top-  
12 down driven process, and that is what we are doing now, sir.

13 Senator Sullivan: Thank you. And how is morale up  
14 there, when you were there with that unit? I think General  
15 Eiffler has done a great job up there, but, you know, we  
16 have had this very high-level rash of suicides, shockingly  
17 high, that you never want to jinx it but it seems to be  
18 under control. Do you think that is because these soldiers  
19 have a really good mission, really good training, you know,  
20 a really good unit. The 11th Airborne is a very storied  
21 unit that you guys reactivated, which I think was great.

22 What is your sense of the morale there, and do you  
23 think we have -- again, you never want to jinx it, but do  
24 you think we have that very troubling issue of high suicides  
25 rates more under control in Alaska?

1           General Mingus: Sir, the data suggests the trends are  
2 all moving in the right direction, and I do not want to  
3 over-characterize based on a single visit, but my sense,  
4 when I was up there, is that that unit is in very good  
5 shape. Probably the single biggest thing, beyond the  
6 leadership, which is the biggest thing, the leadership up  
7 there has really taken ahold of this and owned it. But just  
8 the conversion into a mission that they can actually  
9 accomplish, as they move from a striker to a light brigade,  
10 they have embraced that. The climate and the culture  
11 associated with a light infantry brigade, it really fits  
12 much, much better for them up there.

13           Senator Sullivan: It is tough training, hard training.

14           And then that headquarters now is a warfighting  
15 headquarters versus an admin headquarters. Correct?

16           General Mingus: That is correct, sir.

17           Senator Sullivan: Okay. Thank you very much.

18           General Slife, I wanted to follow up on our  
19 conversation just the other day. I appreciated all the time  
20 you gave me 2 days ago in my office. On the 18th Fighter  
21 Interceptor Squadron, I appreciate, again, the pressures  
22 that the Air Force is under. As I mentioned, that is  
23 actually a pretty motivated dual mission, with some great  
24 airmen, who are doing great work, both as Red Air for the  
25 JPARC RED FLAG exercises, and then they are going out and



1 intercepting Bear bombers, which does not make the news down  
2 here in the Lower 48, but the Russians are doing Bear bomber  
3 runs against Alaska every month now, sometimes with armed  
4 escort fighters. And your young men and women are going out  
5 and intercepting these guys, that unit.

6 How are we optimizing that, given the cuts that the Air  
7 Force had? I just was chatting with General Nahom this  
8 morning. The plans that seem to make a lot of sense, even  
9 though you are trying to get rid of these F-16s, can we be  
10 assured that that unit will stay there, in that dual-  
11 capacity role, and do you think that is the appropriate  
12 dual-capacity role? As you know, it frees up our fifth-gen  
13 fighters to do the high-end fight as opposed to sitting  
14 alert, you know, F-22 sitting alert mission, getting ready  
15 to go intercept Russian Bear bombers in Alaska. But what is  
16 your assessment on that, General?

17 General Slife: Senator, we think it is a winning idea.  
18 We intend to keep that unit there. And I expect that we  
19 will be able to retain 12 aircraft there. I believe what  
20 you and I talked about was 10, which we judged to be the  
21 minimum. But, you know, budgets are a snapshot in time, and  
22 as we have gotten more experience operating that squadron in  
23 the new mission we believe that we can maintain it at 12  
24 aircraft, and we will continue to evaluate what the right  
25 size of that unit is in future budget cycles. But yes, we

1 intend to keep it there.

2 Senator Sullivan: Great. You know, I asked Secretary  
3 Kendall about the KC-135 down at Eielson. You know, I have  
4 been talking about this issue for a long time with the KC-  
5 46s. I am a big fan of Secretary Kendall. Surprisingly, to  
6 me, in his posture hearing he seemed to walk that commitment  
7 back a little bit, which kind of surprised me.

8 I take very much your good counsel you provided me in  
9 our meeting recently about, hey, this is an all-in and we  
10 have got to make sure we deal with the housing and schools.  
11 I get that. I think it is a really important point that you  
12 were raising, and I have already raised that with some of  
13 our leadership back home in Alaska. But we are going to  
14 keep working the housing issue. That is really important,  
15 and we understand that.

16 Can you reaffirm that commitment on the KC-135? That  
17 is an important issue. It strategically makes complete  
18 sense, as you know, given how strategically positioned  
19 Alaska is. Again, I was a little surprised Secretary  
20 Kendall, who had made several commitments to me on this,  
21 seemed to be walking that commitment back in his posture  
22 hearing, which I am concerned about.

23 General Slife: Yes, sir, I can. I can reaffirm the  
24 commitment. We have already moved one additional KC-135  
25 there, and as soon as we can work through some of the

1 infrastructure issues and so forth, as we talked about,  
2 remain committed to putting the other three there, as well,  
3 just as soon as we can.

4 Senator Sullivan: Great. Thank you on that.

5 General Mahoney, I want to go back to force design.  
6 You know, one element that was moving forward under General  
7 Berger, then it kind of got dropped -- I am sorry, under  
8 General Neller -- and then it kind of got dropped, was this  
9 idea of kind of much more high-end Marine Corps training in  
10 Alaska. I had a good phone call with General Smith the  
11 other day. As you know, he and I were planning on going up  
12 to Alaska to walk the ground.

13 But in terms of training, which is second to none in my  
14 state, the ability to do littoral regiment training on the  
15 Aleutian Island chain, that is a very real-world mission.  
16 You have got Russian and Chinese joint naval task force  
17 coming off the coast of Alaska the last two summers, big  
18 ones, 12-ship joint naval task force last summer. Putting  
19 an MLR on the Aleutian Islands with capable weapons systems  
20 to take out Chinese and Russian ships would have been nice  
21 to have. The ability to train year-round -- at one point  
22 General Berger told me you can only train 6 months out of  
23 the year in Alaska. I am still wondering what 6 months he  
24 was talking about. It is the best training in the world.  
25 You have joint forces that would love to train with you.

1 JPARC is the best air training probably on Planet Earth that  
2 you can do combined and joint operations.

3 The Marine Corps, in my view, certainly needs to get  
4 back to cold weather training. Of course, we do some in  
5 Norway, but high-end stuff you can do in Alaska. And then  
6 you are close, right, to Japan, to Korea, to Taiwan, if the  
7 balloon goes up. So my discussion with General Smith was  
8 really positive on that.

9 Can you give me an update, from your perspective, on  
10 the potential of this issue? Like I said, it was something  
11 that seemed to have a lot of momentum under General Neller.  
12 It was not even something I was involved in. It was just  
13 what the Marine Corps was doing. Then it lost momentum  
14 under General Berger. And I think it makes sense,  
15 strategically, training-wise, for the Corps to look hard at  
16 this.

17 General Mahoney: Senator, thanks, and I agree with  
18 you. As a fighter pilot who did the old Cope Thunder days  
19 of old in Alaska, then Red Flag, Northern Edge, Arctic  
20 Response, that training range is outstanding.

21 General Smith has reenergized our ops section, and I  
22 think he is committed to sending our PP&O, DC Aviation, and  
23 importantly, Marine Forces Reserve, to look at our reserve  
24 component and how they can also align to exercising in  
25 Alaska.

1           Senator Sullivan: Great. Well, I look forward to  
2 working with you and General Smith and the entire leadership  
3 team on that issue, so thank you on that.

4           General Guetlein, I wanted to mention, in terms of the  
5 facilities and infrastructure that are critical to the Space  
6 Force mission, I know that you are in the process of, and I  
7 think you have already handed off the Long Range  
8 Discrimination Radar System at Clear Air Force Base in  
9 Alaska, that is now fully Space Force. What do you need  
10 from the Congress, if anything, on transitioning not just  
11 those kinds of facilities, the ones in Alaska, but also any  
12 other place in the U.S. that relates to infrastructure to  
13 the Space Force's needs, that may have been or might still  
14 be Air Force infrastructure, and how is that going?

15          General Guetlein: Senator, we have taken  
16 responsibility for all of our FSRM and MILCON globally.

17          Senator Sullivan: So are you done with that, like that  
18 transition with the Air Force is complete?

19          General Guetlein: From a funding perspective and the  
20 ownership, yes, sir.

21          Senator Sullivan: Including Clear?

22          General Guetlein: Including Clear. But we still rely  
23 on the Air Force for the non-core space functions. So our  
24 CE members are Air Force members.

25          Senator Sullivan: And do you plan on changing that, or

1 that is just going to be a joint kind of capability that you  
2 are now sharing with the Air Force?

3 General Guetlein: Sir, for the foreseeable future that  
4 will be the arrangement and the relationship that we have  
5 with the United States Air Force. When we stood up the  
6 Space Force we intentionally stood it up to be lean and  
7 flat. We only took on the core space functions of space  
8 operations, intelligence, cyber, and force modernization.

9 Senator Sullivan: Can I ask, one issue I have raised  
10 it with the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, and I just want  
11 to put it on your radar. My understanding is that the  
12 deployments still out at Clear are 1 year unaccompanied  
13 deployments.

14 General Guetlein: Correct.

15 Senator Sullivan: You know, you might have an intrepid  
16 young captain who wants to bring her husband and her three  
17 kids to Alaska for a 2-year deployment, or a 3-year  
18 deployment. There is a wonderful community, Nenana, that is  
19 only about 15 miles away, that would love to host Air Force  
20 families.

21 The last time I checked into this, the Air Force, and  
22 now I guess the Space Force, has said that if there is a  
23 desire for not a forced unaccompanied tour but a 2-year tour  
24 or 3-year tour with family that you would consider it on a  
25 case-by-case basis. Am I describing that policy correctly?

1 Or do you know, or do you want to get back to me on that?

2 General Guetlein: You are, but I would like to get  
3 back to you with the full details. We have both Guardians  
4 and airmen at Clear, and I want to make sure our policies  
5 are aligned. But I do believe that is the way we are  
6 approaching it.

7 Senator Sullivan: So I think it would be best for the  
8 community and the airmen. Look, nobody likes doing 1-year  
9 unaccompanied tours. They are hard on families. If there  
10 was a way that you could start looking at that -- again, do  
11 not force it, but if a young captain wants to come up with  
12 her husband and kids, you know, I know certain groups would  
13 love that. It is adventurous, beautiful, and the  
14 communities there would love to embrace them. So it is just  
15 a thought that we want to kind of build on.

16 General Guetlein: Yes, sir. I appreciate that. It is  
17 a beautiful area.

18 Senator Sullivan: Yeah. And by the way, another great  
19 thing that you guys did, I mean, you tell me. That is the  
20 most sophisticated ground-based radar site on the Planet  
21 Earth, and you guys built that on time, under budget.

22 General Guetlein: Correct. That was one of my  
23 responsibilities at the Missile Defense Agency was building  
24 that site, and it is an amazing radar, the best on the  
25 planet.

1 Senator Sullivan: It is amazing, so thank you on that.

2 And then finally, Ms. Maurer, you have got 120  
3 recommendations. Give me your top three for readiness and  
4 lethality and the ability to beat the Chinese in a war.  
5 Your top three.

6 Ms. Maurer: Sure. I am going to talk in clusters of  
7 recommendations.

8 Senator Sullivan: You are kind of cheating, but that  
9 is okay.

10 Ms. Maurer: I know. I know. So I would put F-35  
11 sustainment in that bucket.

12 Senator Sullivan: As number one?

13 Ms. Maurer: As number one, because that is vital not  
14 only to the Air Force but it is a critical part of what the  
15 Marine Corps and Navy want to accomplish and need to  
16 accomplish, not just today but obviously in the future.

17 The second bucket has to do with fixing Navy ship  
18 sustainment, and more specifically Navy ship maintenance.  
19 There are a lot of different aspects of that. I think that  
20 is going to be a critical thing to keep following on.

21 Senator Sullivan: And does your report have big think,  
22 bold ideas on that issue?

23 Ms. Maurer: We think that we have had a whole series  
24 of report, with a number of recommendations, to fix Navy  
25 maintenance, at the depot level, the intermediate level. We



1 have a draft report we are doing right now on sailor-led  
2 maintenance that has some big, bold recommendations, that  
3 will be coming out later on this year.

4 Senator Sullivan: Great.

5 Ms. Maurer: And the third cluster is around this issue  
6 of force generation sort of writ large. You know, there is  
7 a lot of talk and a lot of focus on developing and deploying  
8 new technology, and that is tremendous. But the real  
9 challenges start once the new technology is available. So  
10 recommendations around making sure there are sufficient  
11 facilities, sufficient training, that there is a sufficient  
12 logistics system and structure put in place to fully enable  
13 the services to take advantage of those technologies. And  
14 that theme cuts across a lot of different reports and  
15 recommendations.

16 Senator Sullivan: Great. Great work.

17 Well, again I want to thank all the witnesses for your  
18 testimony. I want to thank all the witnesses for your  
19 literally decades of service to our country. We very much  
20 appreciate it for your leadership.

21 The members of the Committee will have 2 weeks in which  
22 to submit additional questions for the record. We  
23 respectfully request that you get those back to this  
24 Committee in short order. I do not know what the official  
25 timeline is but some quick turnaround. And we look forward

1 to working with the leadership of all the services and GAO  
2 on these important issues. Again thank you, gentlemen and  
3 Ms. Maurer, for your exception service and excellent  
4 testimony today.

5 This hearing is adjourned.

6 [Whereupon, at 3:42 p.m., the subcommittee was  
7 adjourned.]

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