

Stenographic Transcript
Before the

Subcommittee on
Readiness and Management Support

COMMITTEE ON
ARMED SERVICES

UNITED STATES SENATE

HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON
MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, ENERGY, INSTALLATIONS,
ENVIRONMENTAL, AND BASE CLOSURE PROGRAMS IN
REVIEW OF THE DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST FOR
FISCAL YEAR 2024 AND THE FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE
PROGRAM

Wednesday, April 19, 2023

Washington, D.C.

ALDERSON COURT REPORTING
1111 14TH STREET NW
SUITE 1050
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005
(202) 289-2260
www.aldersonreporting.com

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6 Wednesday, April 19, 2023

7
8 U.S. Senate

9 Subcommittee on Readiness

10 and Management Support,

11 Committee on Armed Services,

12 Washington, D.C.

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14 The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 1:31
15 p.m., in Room 232A, Russell Senate Office Building, Hon.
16 Mazie Hirono, chairman of the subcommittee, presiding.

17 Subcommittee Members Present: Senators Hirono
18 [presiding], Shaheen, Kaine, Kelly, Sullivan, Fischer, and
19 Mullin.

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

3 Senator Hirono: I would like to begin by thanking our
4 witnesses for your service and for your testimony today.
5 We will try not to beat you up too much. And I thank
6 Ranking Member Sullivan, who will be arriving shortly for
7 his continued bipartisan cooperation.

8 Today, we will hear about the Defense Department and
9 the service's commitment to our service members and their
10 families, as well as how our military installations project
11 power around the world.

12 These priorities are vital to our readiness, but I do
13 worry that the Department's actions are not in line with
14 its stated goals. So, funding for our installations and
15 facilities rarely receive the commitment in funding or
16 resources from the Department when compared to other
17 accounts like procurement and R&D.

18 This disparity has only grown in recent years, further
19 exacerbating our construction and maintenance backlogs.
20 Facility funding backlogs are compounding every year, with
21 communities in Hawaii and across the country paying the
22 price.

23 When our installations don't get the funding they
24 need, we end up facing crises like the fuel spill at Red
25 Hill and Haleakala, the power outages at Schofield

1 Barracks, the wastewater spills into Pearl Harbor, and the
2 list goes on for facilities around the country and indeed
3 the world.

4 Not only do these failures damage our forces
5 readiness, they undermine the trust and faith of the
6 surrounding community. Our service members and our
7 communities deserve better. Further, while we repeatedly
8 hear the Department talk about keeping up with the pacing
9 threat of China in the Indo-Pacific, we have yet to see the
10 Department make the facility investments necessary to do
11 so.

12 Instead, this committee has had to significantly
13 increase the number of military construction projects above
14 what has come over in recent budget requests. In addition
15 to failing to invest in new projects, we are also failing
16 to maintain existing facilities. The deferred maintenance
17 backlog for DOD facilities is significant and grows each
18 year.

19 While the Department's stated goal is to meet 90
20 percent of the existing requirements, it has recently only
21 budgeted up to 80 percent, requiring Congress to step in
22 and raise questions about the Department's commitment to
23 addressing the backlog. The Department must get serious
24 with the facilities plan, a maintenance plan, backed by
25 adequate resources to make it achievable.

1 Elsewhere on our installations, the hazards of
2 privatized housing remain persistent. The Department must
3 step up its oversight and vastly improve the quality of its
4 Government owned enlisted barracks as well. Today, we will
5 focus on the challenges that still remain and what DOD can
6 do to address them.

7 I want to especially thank Elizabeth Field with the
8 GAO for her ongoing work on barracks improvements, and I
9 look forward to her testimony on her findings. Finally, I
10 look forward to hearing more about how the Department is
11 investing in operational energy to improve combat
12 capability for our troops.

13 And I would like to know how the Department is
14 planning for more resilient designs in our military
15 construction projects, under what specific timelines DOD
16 will update its guidance, and what resources are needed to
17 accomplish this.

18 I look forward to hearing from our witnesses on these
19 important issues, and what more this committee and the
20 Department can do to strengthen our military installations
21 in Hawaii and around the world. When Senator Sullivan
22 arrives, he can put a statement into the record. So today
23 we are joined by the Honorable Brendan Owens, who is
24 Assistant Secretary of Defense for Energy, Installations
25 and Environment.

1 The Honorable Rachel Jacobson, Assistant Secretary of
2 the Army for Energy, Installations and Environment. The
3 Honorable Meredith Berger, Assistant Secretary of the Navy
4 for Energy, Installations and Environment. The Honorable
5 Ravi Chaudhary, Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for
6 Energy, Installations and Environment.

7 So, we have not only the DOD, but all of the services
8 present today. Thank you. And then Elizabeth Field,
9 Director of Defense Capabilities and Management, GAO. We
10 will start with Secretary Owens.

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1 STATEMENT OF HON. BRENDAN M. OWENS, ASSISTANT
2 SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR ENERGY, INSTALLATIONS, AND
3 ENVIRONMENT

4 Mr. Owens: Thank you, Chairman Hirono, and Ranking
5 Member Sullivan, when you get here. Distinguished members
6 of the subcommittee, on behalf of myself and my military
7 department colleagues, thank you for the opportunity to
8 discuss the President's Fiscal Year 2024 budget for the
9 Department's Energy, Installations and Environment
10 programs.

11 I look forward to working with you in the coming
12 months to continue aligning our policies and resources to
13 support the National Defense Strategy. The 2022 NDS is
14 clear, we are operating in an increasingly complex global
15 threat environment characterized by significant
16 geopolitical, technological, economic, and environmental
17 challenge.

18 The People's Republic of China remains the
19 Department's pacing challenge, with its increasingly
20 aggressive efforts to undermine U.S. alliances and security
21 partnerships in the Indo-Pacific region. We also face
22 threats from actors like Russia, North Korea, and Iran, as
23 well as climate change and other transboundary challenges.

24 Together, these threats not only pressure the Joint
25 Force's power projection and maneuver capabilities, but

1 also put the safety and security of the homeland at risk.
2 Countering these threats requires a resilient Joint Force
3 and defense ecosystem that can operate in contested
4 environments at home and abroad.

5 As such, we are ensuring that our installations and
6 infrastructure are resilient to a wide range of challenges
7 by implementing policy updates, innovation in how we plan,
8 design, and build, and deployment of technology to counter
9 the diversifying threats we face.

10 In the Indo-Pacific specifically, there are two key
11 priorities that will be critical to the success of this
12 effort, retaining vital mission capabilities in the State
13 of Hawaii --

14 Senator Hirono: Mr. Secretary, I am sorry to
15 interrupt. I should have mentioned that we are needing to
16 observe some time constraint, and so I would appreciate it
17 if all of you could do your remarks in three minutes
18 instead of the usual five. I would appreciate that very
19 much.

20 Mr. Owens: Thank you.

21 Senator Hirono: Please continue.

22 Mr. Owens: So, my countdown clock is now two minutes.
23 So, when three minutes left, I will be done, or work to do
24 it. Thank you. So, Indo-Pacific, specifically in Hawaii
25 and Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana

1 Islands, so that they remain on track by extending the
2 exemption of the H-2B visa temporary need requirement
3 through 2029.

4 More broadly, we are requesting \$14.7 billion in the
5 budget for military construction across the Department,
6 which is an increase of 44 percent from last year's
7 request. In addition, we are requesting \$3.5 billion for
8 installation energy and \$3.3 billion for operational energy
9 to enhance resilience and reduce demand to improve joint
10 lethality, support distributed operations, and reduce
11 sustainment risks in contested environments.

12 We are also improving our approach to facility
13 management to increase the efficacy of the \$20 billion we
14 are requesting for sustainment restoration and
15 modernization investments. These efforts will enhance our
16 facilities, direct mission support capabilities.

17 They will also enhance the health, well-being, and
18 readiness of our service members and their families. We
19 remain committed to maintaining a robust environmental
20 cleanup program, improving the safety and efficiency of our
21 facilities, and improving the quality of life for our
22 military personnel and their families by ensuring access to
23 safe, quality, and affordable housing.

24 So, while we implement new technology to avert future
25 risk, we are requesting \$1.5 billion to support clean-up

1 efforts intended to safeguard the health and well-being of
2 our people. Finally, the Department continues to focus on
3 ensuring that service members have access to safe, quality,
4 affordable family and unaccompanied housing.

5 We are requesting \$1.9 billion for family housing to
6 sustain our increased focused on ensuring the delivery and
7 maintenance of quality housing for military families. An
8 additional \$463 million to modernize unaccompanied
9 personnel housing, to improve privacy and provide greater
10 amenities.

11 Nothing is more important than our people, our
12 Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines, Guardians, and
13 their families. The investments we make to improve the
14 built and natural environments where they live and work are
15 our investments that pay off by improving their health and
16 well-being. We appreciate Congress's and the
17 subcommittee's continued support for these efforts, and we
18 look forward to your questions.

19 [The prepared statement of Mr. Owens follows:]
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1 Senator Hirono: Thank you very much. Secretary
2 Jacobson.

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1 STATEMENT OF HON. RACHEL L. JACOBSON, ASSISTANT
2 SECRETARY OF THE ARMY FOR INSTALLATIONS, ENERGY, AND
3 ENVIRONMENT

4 Ms. Jacobson: Chairman Hirono, and Ranking Member
5 Sullivan as he arrives, and the distinguished members of
6 the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify
7 on Army readiness. I am grateful to the committee for its
8 continued support and for its commitment to Army soldiers,
9 families, civilians, and soldiers for life. Installations
10 are at the epicenter of everything we do in the Army.

11 They are the core of our Army readiness. To realize
12 the Army's 2030 readiness goals, the future of
13 installations must be now. Installations are where we
14 train, work, learn, and live. To strengthen Army's
15 readiness and build the force of the future, we must be
16 laser focused on providing state of the art resilient
17 installations.

18 We must keep moving forward. The focus on readiness
19 is reflected in our budget request for Fiscal Year 2024.
20 Significantly, our budget request plus future planned
21 funding includes critical investments in the Indo-Pacific
22 region.

23 Quality barracks and housing are essential to
24 readiness. I am pleased to report that with the help of
25 Congress, we are contributing -- continuing our investments

1 in barracks with over \$1 billion a year planned over in the
2 next decade.

3 We are building on Congressional directives to deliver
4 high quality family housing and strengthen our oversight of
5 the private housing providers. We are conducting
6 comprehensive inspections of 100 percent of privatized
7 housing, and we are conducting financial audits of the
8 entire program.

9 Most important, we are making sure residents' concerns
10 are heard and responded to promptly, and we are mindful of
11 the recommendations in the recent GAO report and we will
12 address them expeditiously. A key component of readiness
13 is improving our infrastructure and tackling our deferred
14 maintenance backlog. These challenges require strategic
15 spending to slow the progression of deteriorating
16 facilities.

17 We are grateful to Congress for increasing funding for
18 facilities' sustainment, restoration, and modernization in
19 Fiscal Year 2023. This funding will slow the facility --
20 pace of facility degradation. Our Fiscal Year 2024 budget
21 request seeks to continue this momentum. Resilient
22 installations foster ready soldiers, beginning with
23 reliable access to energy.

24 We have all witnessed threats to the electric grid,
25 whether from cyber-attacks, physical attacks, or severe

1 weather events. Installations can't afford to lose power
2 when the commercial grid goes down. That is why we are
3 developing on-site carbon free power generation, battery
4 storage, and a microgrid to support critical missions at
5 all Army installations.

6 Thanks to Congressional authorities, we are
7 collaborating with third parties to guarantee energy
8 resilience without the need for upfront expenditures by the
9 Army. The Army bears responsibility for cleaning up
10 pollution at current and former Army sites. We are taking
11 our obligations to address PFAS seriously and in a
12 transparent manner.

13 We appreciate the certainty that will result from
14 EPA's ongoing Safe Drinking Water Act rulemaking, and the
15 Army will be ready to comply once the regulation is final.
16 As we invest in installations to support the army of the
17 future, we must use cutting edge technologies, innovative
18 public private, partnership, and streamlined processes to
19 accelerate results.

20 Each of these investments will help us recruit and
21 retain soldiers and families, and importantly, these
22 investments will improve the quality of life which will pay
23 future dividends in immeasurable ways. Thank you for your
24 continued support of our soldiers, families, civilians, and
25 soldiers for life. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Jacobson follows:]

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1 [Technical problems]

2 Senator Sullivan: No, that is okay, Madam Chair. No,
3 that is all right.

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1 STATEMENT OF HON. MEREDITH A. BERGER, ASSISTANT
2 SECRETARY OF THE NAVY FOR ENERGY, INSTALLATIONS, AND
3 ENVIRONMENT

4 Ms. Berger: Chairman Hirono, Ranking Member Sullivan,
5 and distinguished members, thank you for the opportunity
6 today, and thank you for the inclusion of the Fallon Range
7 Training modernization in the NDAA in 2023. We remain
8 committed to the important commitment that you have made
9 there.

10 I will return to Fallon this weekend to celebrate
11 Earth Day with our tribal partners as we approach our first
12 milestone under the modernization. Thank you for your
13 attention to Red Hill for ensuring drinking water continues
14 to be safe, and once the Joint Task Force certifies that it
15 has been de-fueled, the Navy is prepared to execute the
16 permanent closure of that facility.

17 I will return to Hawaii next week to continue my focus
18 on the health and safety of the people, environment, and
19 communities in Oahu. In my portfolio, my work spans three
20 cross-cutting areas, critical infrastructure, communities,
21 and climate action.

22 Critical infrastructure, as you noted, Madam Chairman,
23 is the means to our end. Worldwide, Navy and Marine Corps
24 installations are power projection platforms from which
25 naval forces train, deploy, and maintain our forward

1 presence. They are also where our people recover, resupply
2 and rest.

3 They are home to service members and their families.
4 Historically, the Department has accepted significant risk
5 in the resourcing of naval installations. This year's
6 budget represents a first step in fundamentally changing
7 that approach.

8 We are developing a 30-year infrastructure plan that
9 will design and deliver the requirements and resources to
10 support the missions at of our naval installations,
11 warfighting, readiness, and quality of life. This budget
12 request supports new platforms and weapons systems,
13 modernizes aging utilities, demolishes obsolete facilities,
14 and enhances the quality of life for Sailors and Marines.

15 Additionally, you will see our commitment to the
16 shipyard infrastructure optimization program, SIOP, and our
17 focus in the Indo-Pacific region, and the commitments that
18 we have made there. To keep these commitments, the
19 Department of Defense does need a stable workforce in Guam
20 through long term relief from the H-2B visa requirement
21 through at least 2029.

22 Next, communities, where people come together. Your
23 districts are installations and the environment, economy,
24 and people that connect us. This budget request sustains
25 our enhanced oversight of privatized housing and continues

1 our proactive environmental stewardship of installations
2 and ranges.

3 It supports the Department of Defense's comprehensive
4 approach to address PFAS and other emerging chemicals of
5 concern. The Department of the Navy protects our
6 communities and critical infrastructure with a third C
7 climate action.

8 No matter what we call it, extreme weather,
9 temperatures, a rising sea and depleting water sources are
10 threatening our installations and the infrastructure that
11 supports our critical missions.

12 This budget request makes Navy and Marine Corps
13 installations our power to projection platforms more
14 resilient and survivable, and it makes our forward deployed
15 forces have the operational advantage by untethering them
16 from long and contested logistics tails.

17 I would like to thank this committee for your
18 steadfast commitment to our Sailors, Marines, civilians,
19 and their families, and I look forward to continuing to
20 work with you to make our Marine Corps and Navy the world's
21 greatest maritime fighting force. Thank you.

22 [The prepared statement of Ms. Berger follows:]

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1 Senator Hirono: Thank you, Madam Secretary.

2 Secretary Chaudhary. Am I pronouncing your name correctly?

3 Mr. Chaudhary: Absolutely, Chairman.

4 Senator Hirono: Thank you. Please proceed.

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1 STATEMENT OF HON. RAVI I. CHAUDHARY, ASSISTANT
2 SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE FOR ENERGY, INSTALLATIONS, AND
3 ENVIRONMENT

4 Mr. Chaudhary: Absolutely. Chairman Hirono, Ranking
5 Member Sullivan, and distinguished members of the
6 subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to discuss the
7 Department of the Air Force's Energy, Installations and
8 Environment programs.

9 In just the opening week since coming on board at the
10 Department, I have seen countless examples of the
11 dedication and devotion of our Airmen and Guardians, and I
12 remain clear eyed on their support and devotion, and their
13 families, and the critical missions they execute.

14 In the Department of the Air Force, our installations
15 are the platforms from which we project combat power.
16 Nearly every DAF mission starts and ends on an
17 installation. DAF installations also serve as key nodes in
18 a global network that ensures Joint Force mission success
19 around the world.

20 For nearly 80 years, we have operated our
21 installations with unprecedented freedom of action, yet our
22 nation faces complex security challenges, most notably the
23 rise of great power competition with China and Russia.
24 Today's reality is that our installations are no longer a
25 sanctuary.

1 We must ensure they are resilient and ready to deter
2 aggression. And if that fails, be prepared to win
3 decisively. In the face of these challenges, we
4 prioritized our effort to deter aggressive competitors and
5 their intent on shaping the security environment.

6 To accomplish this, the DAF remains focused on seven
7 operational imperatives, which includes ensuring resilient
8 forward basing and bed down of critical weapons systems. In
9 support of these imperatives, the DAF military construction
10 program continues to prioritize our nuclear triad and
11 combatant command infrastructure, including one of the
12 largest investments in the Indo-Pacific and in Europe in 20
13 years.

14 Furthermore, we remain ever committed to the quality
15 of life of our service members and their families through
16 investments in housing, dormitories, and child development
17 centers. Nothing is more important than the health and
18 safety of our service members and their families.

19 As a former military member, myself, no issue is more
20 personal than this one. My lived experiences on our
21 installations over the course of two decades have served as
22 anchors to my passion and commitment in this arena.

23 On this month of the military child, I am committed to
24 having our families' backs just as they have ours, with the
25 largest investment in dormitories in over a decade, with

1 more oversight in prioritized housing, and elimination of
2 our backlog on CDC projects, with 11 more designs in the
3 works.

4 But there is more work to be done. We also fund
5 highly innovative operational installation energy
6 initiatives which increase our readiness and provide more
7 combat capability as multiple energy sources that ruggedize
8 our bases and reduce vulnerabilities.

9 As a former Air Force pilot, I spent most of my career
10 understanding one thing, energy is life. Learning to
11 manage, conserve, and discharge energy in order to be
12 decisive is critical to ensuring victory when needed.

13 In this vein, I remain committed to accelerating our
14 power projection capabilities and delivering operational
15 energy at the point of effect for theater commanders. Like
16 many of our Airmen and Guardians, I believe that
17 operational and installation energy could prove to be the
18 margin of victory in the Pacific if needed.

19 In the DAF, we can no longer afford to move at the
20 speed of Government. Rather, our Airmen and Guardians are
21 moving at the speed of imagination with game changing
22 technologies that will shape this decade and beyond. In
23 the midst of great power competition, we recognize that
24 this is an endeavor in which we dare not come in second
25 place.

1 As such, we appreciate the continued partnership and
2 leadership from Congress to ensure Air and Space Forces are
3 ready to deter aggression, and if called upon fly, fight,
4 and win decisively. Thank you, and I look forward to your
5 questions.

6 [The prepared statement of Mr. Chaudhary follows:]

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1 STATEMENT OF ELIZABETH A. FIELD, DIRECTOR OF DEFENSE
2 CAPABILITIES AND MANAGEMENT, GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY
3 OFFICE

4 Ms. Field: Chairwoman Hirono, Ranking Member
5 Sullivan, Senators Shaheen and Kaine, and other
6 distinguished members and staff of the subcommittee, thank
7 you for the opportunity to testify today on GAO's work
8 regarding DOD's management of its infrastructure and
9 environmental challenges.

10 I would like to briefly offer three points. First,
11 the significant challenges that DOD faces in this area
12 require urgent attention because they are in many, if not
13 most cases, on track to worsen in coming years. Chairwoman
14 Hirono, you eloquently spoke about the deferred maintenance
15 backlog of \$137 billion, which is only compounding, so I
16 won't belabor that point.

17 GAO has made a number of recommendations to address
18 DOD's infrastructure and environmental challenges,
19 including for the Department to improve data reliability,
20 strengthen internal oversight, and report more transparent
21 information to Congress and the public.

22 Implementing these recommendations should make
23 tackling these challenges easier, but by no means does that
24 mean it will be easy, which brings me to my second point.
25 Improving DOD's financial management practices should be

1 part of this conversation.

2 DOD's deferred maintenance backlog equates to roughly
3 a seventh of its total budget. Department officials
4 responsible for reducing the backlog will point to limited
5 resources as one of the biggest problems they face. That
6 is absolutely a fair point, and it is a challenge that is
7 not easily addressed.

8 But some relief could come through better management
9 of resources. GAO has found that each year, DOD doesn't
10 obligate and eventually returns to the U.S. Treasury
11 billions of dollars in operation and maintenance funding,
12 the same type of funding that can be used to fund
13 facilities' sustainment.

14 By improving its financial management practices,
15 including by continuing to work toward achieving a clean
16 opinion on the financial audit, DOD can better budget for
17 and use its resources where they are needed.

18 My third and final point is simply to underscore what
19 I think we all agree on and have said today, which is that
20 the resource needs and challenges we are talking about are
21 fundamentally about people.

22 When we conducted our review of DOD's deferred
23 maintenance backlog, we found that the facilities that are
24 so often the first to lose out on funding are the ones most
25 directly tied to quality of life, barracks where junior

1 enlisted service members live, for example, or childcare
2 centers.

3 The effects of this are clear. In discussion groups
4 we have held in military installations around the country,
5 service members have consistently told us that the
6 condition of their housing, whether Government owned or
7 privatized, impacts their perception of the military and in
8 some cases their decision on whether to re-enlist.

9 As one young soldier said to us, if we get the bare
10 minimum in the barracks, the Army will get the bare minimum
11 from us. The readiness implications of this problem are, I
12 think, obvious. That concludes my statement, and I look
13 forward to your questions.

14 [The prepared statement of Ms. Field follows:]

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1 Senator Hirono: Thank you very much. I will start
2 the questioning. For all of our witnesses, the Department
3 of Defense has a troubling pattern of not adequately
4 funding modernization and required infrastructure, as
5 noted.

6 The results of this continued negligence are broken
7 water pipes, electric grid outages, hazardous spills, and
8 damage to the environment. By the way, what happened at
9 Red Hill impacted over 90,000 people -- 90,000.

10 That is a lot of people. Thousands of them had to be
11 moved outside of housing, Navy housing, and into hotels and
12 other places. So, over the last few years, Hawaii in
13 particular has borne the brunt of the impact of this
14 underinvestment, in my view. So, for the panel, how do
15 each of you plan to invest in the DOD's often forgotten
16 infrastructure?

17 And as noted by Ms. Field, there are others -- yes,
18 you can point to scarce resources, but she actually noted,
19 that it is the use of the resources -- you can better
20 manage the resources you currently have.

21 So, for each of you, what can you do better with what
22 you have that will address the deferred maintenance issues?
23 We will start with Mr. Owens -- Secretary Owens.

24 Mr. Owens: Thank you, Senator Hirono. And thank you
25 for linking underinvestment in infrastructure to concrete

1 examples of the risks that we take when we do that. We are
2 in the beginning of a transition to a new way to address
3 FSRM.

4 We have requested funding to accelerate the
5 implementation of an enterprise sustainment management
6 system that is going to give us the ability to change the
7 way that we manage facilities going forward.

8 And what I mean by that is, we have taken an approach
9 that the way that we sustain our facilities is by
10 calculating the total number of dollars that is required
11 based on a percentage of the plant replacement value. And
12 that, while it might have served DOD in the past, I don't
13 think that is a way ahead that is sustainable.

14 We have got a backlog that is paralyzing large and we
15 have a method of calculating funding that is not aligned
16 with the way that buildings fail. Because buildings don't
17 fail linearly. They fail in sort of episodic functions
18 over the course of time in a downward degradation.

19 And if you allow that degradation to begin, you never
20 get those buildings back up to what they were or what they
21 should have been again without a major recapitalization.
22 And that is not a linear thing. It is a capital
23 reinvestment strategy.

24 So, the sustainment management system that we are
25 developing and will be implementing is something that I

1 think the Marines have done a very good job of
2 understanding, that facilities optimization is not a total
3 pounds of dollars game.

4 It is much more about how we look at recapitalization
5 over time, and then at a high level making sure that we
6 have the sustainment of facilities so that the degradation
7 doesn't begin.

8 Senator Hirono: Does the rest of you agree with
9 Secretary Owen's description of how the approach should be
10 changed so that you are able to address this huge backlog,
11 ever growing backlog? Secretary Jacobson. Well, I would
12 like each of you to respond briefly as you can if you are
13 changing the way you are doing things.

14 Ms. Jacobson: Senator Hirono, the question is an
15 excellent one. I agree with what Secretary Owens just
16 said. What we have to do is improve our planning and
17 improve our assessment of the need.

18 So, is not just necessarily the age of the building,
19 is what are the facilities within that building? What is
20 their condition? What is the use of that building right
21 now, and are we making the best use of it?

22 So, we have to make sure we are planning and making
23 sure that those plans reflect accurately our assessment of
24 need. We have so many facilities and buildings within the
25 Army, that it is a very hard thing to get a hold of, but we

1 are trying -- we are improving our facilities investment
2 planning, which then in turn helps us understand better how
3 to rank our projects and our needs.

4 But we also, sustainment is so important to prevent
5 the degradation. And we are making the best use of those
6 sustainment dollars --

7 Senator Hirono: I am running out of time, excuse me.

8 Ms. Jacobson: I am sorry.

9 Senator Hirono: So, for -- particularly for Secretary
10 Field, the DOD is -- well, the Marine Corps, I should say,
11 is only requesting funding for 54 percent of its FSRM
12 program, and that is this year. And it was just 56 percent
13 last year.

14 It seems like the Department is playing a game of
15 chicken, hoping that Congress will correct the issue. How
16 can you justify such a shortfall in this funding? Now,
17 that is to Ms. Berger.

18 And before we get to Secretary Chaudhary, I would like
19 to ask Ms. Field that as we are sitting here being told
20 that they are going to change how they use the resources, I
21 would ask the GAO to -- the word monitor comes to mind, to
22 tell us if you actually see improvements to how they are
23 managing their resources.

24 So. Ms. Berger, and then we will go to Mr. Chaudhary.

25 Ms. Berger: Chairwoman, to your point on the Marine

1 Corps, I will pick up where Secretary Owens made a quick
2 reference to the Marine Corps approach. And it is
3 different, and it does result in some lower sustainment
4 percentages than you would be used to seeing.

5 This is something called the readiness maximization
6 tool. It is a deviation from the traditional percentage
7 that you would see things funded towards.

8 But what it does is it looks at the whole pile of the
9 FSRM money that is there and allows -- puts a little money
10 towards sustainment where it will actually sustain,
11 allowing more money to go towards the restoration and
12 modernization parts of that pile of funding so that there
13 is more good money going towards good, so towards the
14 facilities that count more, as my colleagues were talking
15 about.

16 This is a tool that we are looking at, learning from
17 it. It is a tool that informs the way the decisions are
18 made, but it will help us as we think about the 30-year
19 infrastructure plan that I mentioned in my opening to make
20 sure that we are aligning the best dollars in the best
21 places.

22 So, we are putting those appropriate dollars where
23 they count, and then aligning risk, mission assurance, all
24 of the other considerations so that we have a holistic
25 approach that anticipates what we need in this, like we

1 would fund another platform.

2 Senator Hirono: So, are you saying that while the
3 percentage looks really low, that you are addressing the
4 needs in a more critical or as you say, holistic way and
5 that should give you better results? And so that is the
6 Navy. Air Force?

7 Mr. Chaudhary: Thank you, Chair Hirono. I could sum
8 it up in three words strategy, strategy, strategy. We have
9 launched an installation investment plan, installation
10 investment strategy, which launched in 2019, and we are
11 getting ready to refresh that.

12 And what that does is going to take a look at what our
13 right size is going to be and what type of facilities need
14 to go way to scale and start getting at this maintenance
15 issue. One of the areas that I want to focus in on and I
16 can give you an example of is in our unaccompanied housing,
17 and we have had a lot of discussion on that. But currently
18 we have launched a dormitory master plan to take a look at
19 what our program schedule is going to be to do that.

20 And what we found when we did that is that we need to
21 invest a lot more. Not hard to discern, but right now we
22 are targeting to correct that \$1.7 billion in FSRM from
23 Fiscal Year 2022 to '26, and that is a four-fold increase.

24 So, we have identified it, characterized it, and now
25 we are putting in the right investments to get us to where

1 we need to be.

2 Senator Hirono: Thank you. Ms. Field, just very
3 briefly, since the services are making these kinds of
4 changes, and I hope as I said, that you will be able to
5 assess whether or not they are better utilizing the
6 resources that they have been provided. Senator Sullivan.

7 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Madam Chair. Assistant
8 Secretary Berger, I am concerned about the priorities that
9 the Navy has right now. With all due respect to the
10 obsession on climate change, the Secretary had a disastrous
11 hearing in front of the full committee yesterday,
12 disastrous.

13 So, he goes to the Bahamas and makes it that -- states
14 to the world, climate change is one of his top priorities
15 and it clearly seems to be his climate action plan was
16 released before his 30-year shipbuilding plan. Yesterday,
17 I took him and so did several other Senators to task for
18 not even producing a plan to produce 31 amphib ships, which
19 is required by law.

20 He looked at the Armed Services committee and said,
21 essentially, he is not going to do it. That is not going
22 to fly. Let him know that, by the way, not going to fly.
23 The U.S. Congress told him the number of ships he has to
24 maintain and produce, that is in our Constitutional
25 responsibilities right here in the Senate.

1 And he was ignoring us, right. But he sure does a lot
2 on climate change. It is a real, real unbelievable focus
3 in the wrong area. The Chinese military is not worried
4 about climate change. It is worry about ship building,
5 hypersonics, and conducting a successful military invasion
6 of Taiwan.

7 Russia is not worried about climate change, is worried
8 about pushing its aggression deeper into Ukraine. And yet
9 we have a Secretary who is releasing his climate action
10 plan before he does anything on shipping. It is
11 remarkable. It is outrageous. The only one who is excited
12 about it is Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin. Let me go into
13 some of your climate change action plan.

14 You are going to get to 100 percent zero emission
15 vehicles by 2035, including 100 percent zero emission light
16 duty vehicle acquisition by 2027. Is that including the
17 Marine Corps? And is that remotely possible? I am pretty
18 sure the answer is no, but that is in your plan. Can you
19 speak to that?

20 Ms. Berger: Senator Sullivan, climate change is a
21 threat to our installations and the investments that we
22 make.

23 Senator Sullivan: Do you think it was smart to get
24 the climate action plan out before the 30-year shipbuilding
25 plan out for the U.S. Navy? Was that a good use of

1 priorities?

2 Ms. Berger: One of the primary responses that
3 amphibious ships provide are humanitarian assistance and
4 disaster relief.

5 Senator Sullivan: But you didn't answer my question.
6 Answer my question, respectfully. Did it make sense from
7 the priority of the U.S. Navy to get your climate action
8 plan out before you got your 30-year shipbuilding plan out?
9 Is that a good prioritization of what the Navy stands for
10 and our national defense?

11 Ms. Berger: Ranking Member Sullivan, my
12 responsibilities center on this portfolio, which does not
13 include shipbuilding. And so, I would leave that to the
14 Secretary's response.

15 Senator Sullivan: Okay, that is an okay response.

16 Ms. Berger: But where I do focus in on the mission is
17 readiness of our sailors and marines. And so, I do think
18 that climate change is a threat that we need to be ready
19 for. That includes threats to our energy infrastructure,
20 as you noted.

21 Senator Sullivan: Okay, what about my question on
22 2027 for vehicles in the Marine Corps? Is that remotely
23 doable?

24 Ms. Berger: We are on track to make sure that we are
25 acquiring vehicles. And the reason that we are doing that

1 is to be untethered from logistics tails. You noted
2 Russia. Russia uses energy as both a tool and --

3 Senator Sullivan: But is that remotely doable? Four
4 years from now?

5 Ms. Berger: We are on a track and we are working
6 along with our sister services to make sure that we are
7 acquiring electric vehicles that are able to support all of
8 our mission sets. And so, through a partnership, yes, sir,
9 I think that we are on track.

10 Senator Sullivan: Another thing in your climate plan
11 is to have the entire Navy achieve net zero emissions by
12 2050. What is the statutory basis of that rule?

13 Ms. Berger: We have set a goal. I don't think there
14 needs to be a statutory basis.

15 Senator Sullivan: There is none, by the way, just for
16 everybody's -- there is no statutory basis in any law to
17 achieve net zero by 2050. Let me turn to you, Mister or
18 Assistant Secretary Chaudhary.

19 We have a significant buildup of the Air Force and the
20 Army in Alaska, 100 fighters, 5th-gen fighters at Eielson
21 and JBER, the new -- this is for Assistant Secretary
22 Jacobson as well, the new 11th Airborne Division throughout
23 the State. It gets very cold in Alaska and we are going to
24 need significant supplies of energy.

25 Can you commit to me and this committee to work with

1 me on different opportunities for energy to power these
2 bases, including natural gas, including our abundance of
3 oil that can turn into jet fuel, which we need very
4 significantly with regard to the energy needs in Alaska.

5 Mr. Chaudhary: Ranking Member Sullivan, I can commit
6 to you to do that. I think we need to work together to
7 come up with a diverse set of options to make sure we are
8 meeting our operational needs in the Pacific.

9 The strategic importance of JBER is -- it goes without
10 saying, it is that critical. So having a diverse
11 capability of energy supplies is going to be critical.
12 More broadly, I think redundancy is going to be key as
13 well, because as we understand what the challenges are in
14 this region, there are a number of logistic areas that we
15 need to address.

16 So absolutely, and I know we have committed to working
17 on more innovative solutions than what you just described,
18 including microgrids and opportunities at Eielson for
19 nuclear and things like that of that sort.

20 So, yes, I commit to you. I raised that in an EPW
21 committee hearing today with the Nuclear Regulatory
22 Commission, all the commissioners, on what is happening at
23 Eielson. I think it is exciting. Assistant Secretary
24 Jacobson, do you want to add as well?

25 Army is expanding in Alaska. 11th Airborne is doing

1 great work, fantastic work. But we need energy. It gets
2 very cold. You know, Eielson gets 40, 50 below zero in the
3 winter.

4 Ms. Jacobson: Ranking Member Sullivan, it is nice to
5 see you again --

6 Senator Sullivan: Nice to see you.

7 Ms. Jacobson: Thank you for all of your support. And
8 we are making significant investments in Alaska. Notably
9 to your point, we right now have the draft EIS to replace
10 our coal fired power plant at Wainwright with a gas plant
11 -- a gas plant.

12 And I have expressed an enormous interest in exploring
13 a nuclear energy in Alaska. And we are going to be
14 watching very carefully what is happening at Eielson,
15 because I believe it is a good option for us in Alaska and
16 elsewhere. I want to look at small micro-nuclear reactors
17 to power bases wherever.

18 It makes sense, particularly in remote locations where
19 the energy challenges are as they are. I will be visiting
20 Alaska in about two weeks, and I hope some of your staff
21 and maybe you will be there and we can --

22 Senator Sullivan: Great. We will coordinate. Good.
23 I am glad you are coming. Thank you. Thank you, Madam
24 Chair.

25 Ms. Jacobson: Thank you.

1 Senator Hirono: Senator Shaheen.

2 Senator Shaheen: Thank you all for being here. Ms.
3 Field, over the past several years, Congress has
4 appropriated over \$1 billion in funding for PFAS related
5 activities, including testing and remediation at more than
6 100 contaminated military sites across the country,
7 including in New Hampshire at the former Pease Air Force
8 Base, which is now a National Guard base.

9 But from the perspective of oversight, do you think it
10 would be helpful for the Department to consolidate all of
11 their PFAS related funding requests into a single budget
12 item to be submitted as part of the annual appropriations
13 process?

14 Ms. Field: Based on the work that we have done at
15 GAO, I think we always welcome any way for the Department
16 to provide more transparent information about the total
17 cost associated with PFAS cleanup.

18 We conducted a review just a few years ago of
19 anticipated costs associated with PFAS in groundwater,
20 soil, and drinking water at or near current and former
21 installations. At the time, the estimated cost of clean-up
22 was around \$1 or \$2 billion.

23 It has since gone up to \$6 billion. And so that is
24 quite possible that that could provide greater
25 transparency. I think the key question that we are focused

1 on is how the Department is thinking about the EPA's
2 proposed rule that would lower the threshold for PFAS from
3 70 parts per trillion down to 4 parts per trillion for PFOA
4 and PFAS.

5 In the past, DOD cleaned up, even when there was just
6 an advisory. I am not sure now that the Department is
7 preparing to clean up or is currently taking action to
8 clean up, even though now there is a proposed rule.

9 Senator Shaheen: Well, as you point out, the longer
10 we delay, the more expensive this becomes. So, Secretary
11 Owens, I actually have a question related to PFAS for you,
12 and probably for Secretary Chaudhary, because it has to do
13 with the former Pease Air Force Base, which is now the
14 National Guard site in New Hampshire.

15 And I should say at the outset that the Air Force has
16 been very helpful over the years since we first discovered
17 PFAS in 2013 at working with the community on the clean-up.
18 However, we now have an issue that has come up, and I am
19 extremely concerned, Secretary Owens, with the Department's
20 interpretation of Section 345(a) of the 2022 NDAA. It is a
21 provision that was designed to increase transparency for
22 PFAS testing with affected communities.

23 Instead, the Department has interpreted that provision
24 as one that requires that they curtail data sharing. We
25 worked, some of you may remember, in the last NDAA we

1 worked to try and address this. We had an -- I had an
2 amendment that was sponsored by the committee, which I was
3 assured by DOD officials that that issue would be fixed as
4 the result of that amendment.

5 However, what we have seen in the last year that DOD
6 has walked back those assurances, that issue remains
7 unchanged. It has become a real concern not just for
8 members living in the community who feel like they don't
9 have access to information now, but also to the regulatory
10 bodies in New Hampshire who don't have the information that
11 they need.

12 So, do you have an update or can you give us an update
13 on this committee of what the Department is planning to do
14 to address this transparency issue?

15 Mr. Owens: Senator Shaheen, I will get you an update.
16 I don't have one right now.

17 Senator Shaheen: Okay. I hope the update comes with
18 a commitment to work with us to address the underlying
19 concern, because I see this as ongoing, and as we know with
20 over 700 sites around the country, this is an issue not
21 just in New Hampshire, but it is going to be an issue
22 everywhere.

23 Mr. Owens: I agree. And I think that the regulatory
24 -- the proposed regulatory action that EPA has put out is
25 the type of forcing function that requires DOD to rethink

1 what we have been doing.

2 So, we are taking preparation -- we are taking steps
3 in preparation for understanding that that reduced level is
4 coming. And in the process of doing that, we can also
5 address the transparency questions that you have.

6 Senator Shaheen: Thank you. I appreciate that. I
7 also want to go back to Senator Sullivan's questions about
8 the climate initiative and whether it is within the Navy,
9 or the Army, or the Air Force. And I certainly support
10 those initiatives.

11 But I was talking with the National Guard Association
12 in New Hampshire on Saturday, and one of the concerns that
13 was raised to me by a member of the association was that he
14 was worried that the effort to get us off of fossil fuels,
15 we are going to leave some of our men and women in the
16 military without the energy support they might need in case
17 of conflict or other situations.

18 Now, I tried to reassure him that there was nobody on
19 the Armed Services committee who was going to see that as a
20 viable option. But can any of you address that concern?
21 And how should we respond to people who raise that concern?

22 Mr. Chaudhary: Senator Shaheen, I will take that
23 since it is National Guard, please tell your constituent, I
24 am not trading an ounce of thrust to sacrifice our National
25 Security. That being said, on the issue of what we need to

1 do to make sure we are more resilient when we are making
2 sure that we are taking care of our operational
3 capabilities, demand reduction is going to be important
4 going forward.

5 We have got logistical challenges that are in the
6 Pacific that we have got to address. And to me, I view
7 this in the same light as I do any operational situation.
8 As a former pilot, before you go fly, what is the first
9 thing you do? You check the weather and make sure that you
10 can adapt to any environment that you are in.

11 So, we have got to learn to adapt to this new
12 environment, and please share and hopefully give some
13 comfort to your constituent to let them know that we are
14 going to stay focused on and be clear-eyed on our National
15 Security responsibilities.

16 Senator Shaheen: Thank you very much. Thank you,
17 Madam Chair.

18 Senator Hirono: Senator Kaine.

19 Senator Kaine: I will just follow up and say I am
20 also a huge supporter of the military's efforts to combat
21 climate change, both to make us more resilient, but also to
22 deal with challenges I am seeing in my own State. So, the
23 Hampton Roads area is next to New Orleans, second most
24 vulnerable to sea level rise.

25 We can't fix that immediately, but we can be part of a

1 solution. And the resilience investments we are going to
2 have to put in, just like raising roads to get into the bay
3 so that there can be access are really expensive.

4 And so, I am a supporter of the mission that you are
5 embracing with respect to climate change. I will, though,
6 weigh in with Senator Sullivan on the shipbuilding plan.
7 And I have an assessment of what is going on, but I am not
8 happy with it --

9 Senator Sullivan: Or the amphibs --

10 Senator Kaine: Yes. And I will use the amphibs as an
11 example. We had sea power hearing here on the 28th of
12 March. It was noticed well in advance. We were told we
13 get the shipbuilding plan before we held all the press up
14 there to ask them questions about it.

15 But we didn't have the plan, so we couldn't ask them
16 questions about it, which was kind of a waste. We told
17 them it would come in a day or two and it didn't. And we
18 got it 24 hours before the hearing with the Commandant,
19 CNO, and SECNAV, which means most of us didn't really have
20 a chance to look at it.

21 And I can tell you why it was late. It was late
22 because those parties who were going to deliver to us
23 didn't like what was in it. It is the President's budget,
24 not the SECNAV's budget. And at the end of the day, the
25 shipbuilding plan, I don't think is really a reflection of

1 what either the Secretary or the Commandant or the CNO
2 want, because they have testified to us unequivocally, 31
3 amphibs is the number.

4 And we said 31 amphibs is the number. But Commandant
5 Berger, yesterday, he said in this budget, in this
6 shipbuilding plan, there is no way to get to 31. He
7 mentioned something else to me, which he didn't mention in
8 the hearing. He said, you know, the only reason that we
9 would be within sight of 31 has been Congress, because
10 successive Administrations have not asked for amphibs and
11 then Congress has added them in.

12 And he was like, thank God for Congress because we
13 would be at like 10 or 12 right now if it hadn't been for
14 Congress doing this. So, I think that the delay in getting
15 us the shipbuilding plan, the inadequacy of the budget, is
16 that a number of levels above the even the high-ranking
17 officials that we had us there yesterday.

18 This is either at the SecDef level or in the White
19 House and OMB. And Congress is going to do in the NDAA
20 what we always do, which is if they are not asking for what
21 we really believe is needed, then we do have the
22 opportunity to fix it. But we were just, we were
23 disappointed in that. And, you know, and particularly for
24 us, if we are supposed to, you know, have a hearing.

25 And this is our one chance to talk to the CNO and the

1 Commandant of the SECNAV until the next year in a hearing,
2 and the important component is the shipbuilding plan. And
3 one of my staffers got it before anybody else and had to
4 share it with everybody.

5 Nobody had a chance to really review it and then
6 meaningfully use our five minutes of questions time to get
7 what we needed. So that sends a message that is not a
8 respect, one, to committee members.

9 That is not on you all, but a lot of you folks are
10 listening to us and I hope that you may take this back. I
11 would like to ask you, Secretary Owens, just on my Hampton
12 Roads challenge, this sea level rise challenged.

13 The good news in Hampton Roads is stakeholders,
14 whether it is the different service branches or the Army
15 Corps of Engineers or the local government, State
16 Governments report there is a pretty good stakeholder group
17 trying to work at this and figure out how to make
18 investments so that we are not reducing our capacity of the
19 largest Navy base in the world.

20 Talk a little bit about how you think about that
21 challenge and ways we can work together to address it, and
22 like challenges.

23 Mr. Owens: Thank you for your question, Senator
24 Kaine. Thanks for the focus on Hampton Roads in
25 particular, but then on resilience to changing weather

1 patterns and more extreme weather in general.

2 From my perspective, from an OSD perspective, this
3 starts with enabling the defense climate assessment tool as
4 a tool that military departments can use to identify what
5 their risks are.

6 So, the DECAT allows for Navy, Army, Air Force, Space
7 Force, Marines to put in -- to use the GIS based system to
8 be able to say, this is what is happening, these are the
9 projections that we see under high, medium, and low
10 conditions under this scenario, under this scenario, and
11 under this scenario, and then plan accordingly.

12 And I think that one of the things that has been great
13 about the partnership around DECAT is that it has been --
14 it has had tangible changes. It has produced tangible
15 results, particularly in the Hampton Roads area, that the
16 Navy has implemented.

17 Beyond that, Office of Local Defense Community
18 Cooperation is another program that reports up through the
19 EINE office, and they have the ability to resource
20 resilience projects outside defense line.

21 So, understanding that there is a critical
22 interdependence between, you know, our ability to complete
23 the mission inside defense, and our reliance on all of the
24 activities that happen outside defense. DCIP, through all
25 DCC, gives us the ability to address some of those

1 challenges.

2 Senator Kaine: Very important. I used to feel really
3 nervous about the sea level rise issue in Hampton Roads
4 because I thought, well, if there is ever another BRAC
5 round, you know, this is going to be really tough for us.

6 And it could be. But I mentioned it once to Secretary
7 Gertz, who was the Secretary in the previous
8 Administration, acquisition and installations. He did a
9 very good job and he said, look, you are not the only one.
10 Imagine being a base in an area that is subject to drought.

11 You know, sea level rise is bad, but you have 50,000,
12 60,000 people a day on a base living there, working there,
13 contractors in an area where there is persistent drought
14 and challenges with not enough water.

15 That is not an easy one to solve either. There is a
16 lot of challenges that we have in this space, so we have
17 got to be creative. There is not enough resources to do it
18 as fast as we want. We got to be creative in dealing with
19 it. So, thank you.

20 Mr. Owens: I agree, and I would be remiss if I didn't
21 mention wildfire as well, is another challenge. A
22 significant and growing challenge for all of our
23 installations.

24 Senator Kaine: Yes.

25 Senator Hirono: Thank you. I am going to begin the

1 second round. So just as the members of SASC have been
2 very concerned about our ability to meet the shipbuilding,
3 authorized ships, number of ships authorized, that there
4 are a lot of us who are also concerned about the state of
5 our shipyards because of -- it is one thing to build new
6 ships.

7 It is another to make sure that we can maintain and
8 repair the ships we already have. So this is directed to
9 Secretary Berger and also Secretary Owens, that in light of
10 the ongoing concerns that we have about the need to
11 modernize our shipyards, for public shipyards, including,
12 of course, a dry dock replacement, especially for my -- in
13 my case at Pearl Harbor, we want to make sure that the Navy
14 can ensure that the shipyard infrastructure optimization
15 program, SIOP, is going to be continue to be pushed and
16 funded.

17 So, this is something that we have been continuing to
18 push, and I just want to note this rather than asking a
19 question about it, I just want the continuing commitment
20 that that is going to happen. Here is a question for all
21 of the witnesses.

22 The safe and timely removal of unexploded ordnance, or
23 UXO, is critical not only for the safe repurposing of land
24 for new military purposes, as we are seeing in locations
25 like Guam, but also for the communities impacted by these

1 sites.

2 It is critical that the DOD take all steps necessary
3 to responsibly turn over land like at the Waikoloa Maneuver
4 Area, WMA, where families continue to wait to build on
5 Hawaiian homelands for the Department to slowly clear the
6 land. And my understanding is that UXO removal is not just
7 a matter of funding.

8 So, I would like to ask whoever wants to take -- wants
9 to comment first, what steps do you need to take to resolve
10 this complex cleanup effort? And when can we expect a
11 resolution on returning specifically the Waikoloa Maneuver
12 Area land to the native Hawaiians? Who wants to take this?

13 Ms. Jacobson: Chairman Hirono, I would be happy on
14 behalf of the Army to at least start the response to that
15 question with some very good news. Literally, on Tuesday,
16 April 11th, by General Spellman, who is the Chief Engineer
17 for Army Corps of Engineers, sent me a note with good news
18 that the Pacific Ocean Division of the Army Corps has
19 completed the remedial investigation for the critical area
20 there at Waikoloa with 11,000 acres where these are
21 intended to be returned as Hawaiian homelands.

22 That is -- the completion of that has been submitted
23 to the Hawaii Department of Health for approval and for
24 comment. I believe, on the initial comments, there has
25 been some interaction back and forth with the Hawaii

1 Department of Health.

2 And now that the formal remedial investigation and
3 responses have been submitted, the State has 30 days, we
4 hope to issue no further action, which will then enable HUD
5 to allow the area to be eligible for mortgages so it can
6 finally be used by the people of Hawaii. So, I do have
7 some good news on that front. I know it has been a long
8 haul.

9 Senator Hirono: So, does that mean that for all of
10 you that you are developing some other -- some kind of way
11 to really move things along on UXO removal? Because the
12 need is great.

13 I mean, there is like billions and billions, so there
14 needs to be a much more critical way that you assess how
15 you can meet the needs of the community in terms of this
16 kind of removal. So did you come up with some new way to
17 do this so we can move things along in Waikoloa, for which
18 I am happy to hear the news, by the way.

19 Ms. Jacobson: One thing that is important for us as
20 we engage in the UXO removal, particularly in Hawaii, is we
21 want to make sure we are engaging the local communities so
22 that we are prioritizing the areas that are of most
23 cultural value and otherwise.

24 And we also want local, the local community, to be
25 hired as part of the teams to participate in the UXO

1 removals. This takes a little bit of extra training.
2 Obviously, it is highly skilled training in this regard.

3 We also have some new technology, some new equipment,
4 and we will possibly be using drones and other new
5 equipment where we can identify where that UXO is and then
6 more quickly resolve it.

7 But this is one of our top priorities, as we look
8 broadly at all of the potential suite of projects that we
9 can accomplish in Hawaii generally, in furtherance
10 hopefully of our land retention leases that are expiring in
11 2029. UXO removal is one of the critical top priorities,
12 and the Army Corps of Engineers is very focused on it.

13 Ms. Field: Madam Chairman, may I --

14 Senator Hirono: Any of you want to add? Yes --

15 Ms. Field: If I may offer, we released a report just
16 recently looking at environmental cleanup at formerly used
17 defense sites. To give you a sense, there are about a
18 quarter of the costs associated with environmental cleanup
19 at FUDs are related to environmental contaminants like
20 PFAS.

21 But about three-quarters are related to munitions to
22 include unexploded ordnance. And what we found is that DOD
23 has cleaned up only about 45 percent of FUD sites
24 contaminated with military munitions, compared to 85
25 percent of the FUD sites with hazardous substances and

1 contaminants.

2 And so, we have a recommendation to the Department to
3 set a target for FUD sites with military munitions to try
4 to get that momentum that you are talking about.

5 Senator Hirono: Thank you. I will be very interested
6 in the progress made in this regard. Any of the rest of
7 you want to add to this?

8 Mr. Chaudhary: Chair Hirono, the only thing I would
9 like to add is this is top priority. As I get briefed on
10 it, I am actually coming to Hawaii in the next nine days,
11 and I would love to meet with community leaders and discuss
12 this in depth.

13 Senator Hirono: Thank you.

14 Senator Sullivan: Assistant Secretary Chaudhary, I
15 want to follow up on Senator Shaheen's point and then make
16 another point. What was your -- what was the phrase that
17 you used? Not one ounce of trust or -- unpack that a
18 little bit for me because I think I agreed wholeheartedly
19 with you, but I don't exactly understand what you are
20 saying. What did you say again?

21 Mr. Chaudhary: Senator Sullivan, we have got
22 priorities that we need to meet, National Security
23 priorities. When it comes to operational energy, our goal
24 is to reduce demand, to increase agility, to be more agile
25 in the theater.

1 If we can build that agility through drag reduction,
2 through innovations in advanced coatings of engine design,
3 through really leading-edge innovations like blended wing
4 body that increase our range, we meet the pacing threat.
5 That is my goal. That is my number one priority.

6 Now, if we get benefits from it as the largest
7 producer or largest user of fossil fuels, that is
8 fantastic. That is great for the climate. We want to
9 support that. But I am clear, I know what my priorities
10 are.

11 And to me, if I am given the choice between clearing
12 the trees as an aircraft is taking off and the climate, I
13 am going to take clearing the trees because I know what the
14 crews are going through every single day.

15 So, I am going to support them in that endeavor and
16 make sure that as we go through, there is a lot of puts and
17 takes in this, but we have got to make sure that we have
18 got those priorities set appropriately.

19 But demand reduction is going to be very, very helpful
20 to us with logistics challenges. And we are trying to
21 stretch every mission capability we can do in order to
22 improve that.

23 Senator Sullivan: Okay. I appreciate that.
24 Assistant Secretary Berger, related to that, I just want
25 you guys to be clear, right, where you are talking about

1 these very aggressive zero emission, light duty, that means
2 electric vehicles for Marines.

3 Are you familiar with the chosen reservoir battle in
4 the Korean War? Okay, so it got down to like 30 below
5 zero. I want to make sure that you guys think through all
6 of these kind of battles. First Marine Division surrounded
7 by 120,000 communist Chinese, 30 below zero. Marines did
8 remarkably well, okay.

9 What I want to make sure is we are not doing some kind
10 of innovation that sounds good in your 2030 climate
11 strategy that ends up hurting the force, that ends up
12 having Marines fighting maybe the North Koreans in 30 below
13 zero and their vehicles don't work because they are EVs and
14 nobody thought about it.

15 Can you make sure you commit that to me? 2027 is
16 right around the corner and I got really nervous when you
17 get some of the climate zealots who care more about climate
18 action, like the Secretary of the Navy, than warfighting
19 and keeping Marines and Sailors and Airmen safe, lethal,
20 and ready to win wars.

21 That is what you guys are all about, winning wars, not
22 net zero 2050 emissions. It has nothing to do with winning
23 wars. So, can you make that commitment to me?

24 Ms. Berger: Senator Sullivan, absolutely, mission
25 comes first. And I will share --

1 Senator Sullivan: Mission, not emissions, right?

2 Mission?

3 Ms. Berger: Yes, Ranking Member, mission comes first.

4 But I will share with you just a quick story, because the
5 Marines are actually leading in this in quite an impressive
6 way, because, as you noted, it is critically important to
7 make sure that they are always going to win.

8 I went up to General Motors with the Commandant just
9 at the end of last year, and this is the conversation that
10 we had with clarity, with focus, that was every question
11 that we had.

12 And we have continued that conversation with industry
13 leaders who are thinking about this that understand what it
14 means to be forward deployed, competing, and that this is
15 where we gain that innovation.

16 Senator Sullivan: And lethal -- and lethal, right?

17 Ms. Berger: Yes, sir.

18 Senator Sullivan: That is your mission, lethality.

19 Ms. Berger: Yes, sir.

20 Senator Sullivan: Lethality. That is every one of
21 your missions, correct?

22 Ms. Berger: And I will borrow a phrase that my
23 colleague here uses, but it applies no matter where we are
24 when we are talking about operationally energy, and its
25 lethality per gallon. And so, no matter where we are, how

1 are we getting the most out of every gallon that we are
2 using of whatever it is.

3 And then as we look at other options, it is mission
4 assurance, and that lethality as well, per megawatt hour,
5 per any way that you are measuring energy, because we want
6 to create that unfair advantage, any time a Marine, any
7 time a Sailor -- and I am confident speaking for my
8 colleagues here for their services, encounters an enemy.

9 It is our job to think about every way to create that
10 competitive advantage, to make it unfair so that we are
11 winning every time.

12 Senator Sullivan: Okay. So, Secretary Chaudhary and
13 Assistant Secretary Jacobson, I have -- I just want a
14 commitment from both of you. You know, we have had this
15 buildup of the Army and particularly the Air Force,
16 particularly in interior Alaska, with the two squadrons, F-
17 35.

18 We have had some housing challenges that I know I have
19 spoken to you about, and those are important. There is a
20 lot of kind of -- I don't know, I don't say blame, but
21 there is a lot of -- we weren't fully ready in interior
22 Alaska to fully house the new Airmen coming with those two
23 squadrons, and their families, very importantly.

24 The Air Force and the Army both have certain statutory
25 authorities that they can use with regard to housing. We

1 are still dealing with this. We are still struggling with
2 it a little bit, particularly in interior Alaska. We want
3 to make sure the Airmen coming up to Eielson are able to
4 bring their families.

5 That is really, really important to have a good
6 experience. So, can I get your commitment to work with me
7 in this community on using your existing authorities that
8 you have and helping us work through some of the housing
9 challenges, both of you?

10 It is more of the Air Force issue in interior Alaska,
11 but it is a bit of an Army issue at JBER, and an interior,
12 Fort Wainwright as well. Can I get both of your
13 commitments to work on base and off base?

14 You have authorities and we need to get on this. We
15 don't want -- the Air Force, as you know, is contemplating
16 one-year unaccompanied tours for the F-35 contingent. And
17 I think we can all agree that would be a disaster.

18 We don't want that, and they don't want that. It is
19 just the challenge of the housing. Can I get your
20 commitment on that?

21 Mr. Chaudhary: Senator Sullivan, I have been to
22 Eielson a long time ago as a cadet. I know what it is like
23 there. It is an interior Alaska, one of the most beautiful
24 places on earth. But it is a great place to have a family.

25 And you have my commitment to make sure that we work

1 through this together, to come up with the right solution.
2 And to me, I err towards accompanied because it is
3 something that I have lived through.

4 Being accompanied with your family is -- it impacts
5 the mission every single day. And executing that mission
6 is dependent -- and a lot of times great that you can come
7 home and spend time with your family rather than being far
8 away, which can wear on the mission.

9 So, you have my commitment to work through that and
10 use our existing authorities.

11 Senator Sullivan: Great. Assistant Secretary
12 Jacobson?

13 Ms. Jacobson: Senator Sullivan, as I say, I will be
14 there with in the next couple of weeks and I will make sure
15 I get a full assessment of the housing needs. Also, of the
16 barracks needs. We are investing in Fiscal Year 2024 in
17 barracks, but that too, and many other investments in
18 Alaska infrastructure, but I will specifically ask about
19 family housing.

20 Senator Sullivan: Madam Chair, do I have time for one
21 more question?

22 Senator Hirono: I am going to ask one more question,
23 so go ahead --

24 Senator Sullivan: My final one, and it is related to
25 the -- so in the Army, as you know in Alaska, we have had

1 this really horrendous surge in servicemember suicides.
2 And it is just heartbreaking. And it is still continuing.

3 You know, I think the leadership from Secretary
4 Austin, you know, General McConville, the leadership in
5 Alaska are very focused on it. These are, I think, in some
6 ways generational challenges with this generation of men
7 and women serving, way beyond our military's capability.

8 But there is still a lot we can do. I think the Army
9 is doing a lot on quality-of-life issues, in places like
10 Eielson that can be very remote and dark in the winter and
11 stuff. So can you just touch on both again, the Army, in
12 terms of Assistant Secretary Jacobson and Assistant
13 Secretary Chaudhary, what you are doing on some of the
14 installation elements of building out morale, welfare
15 centers, childcare centers.

16 And are you coordinating all with mental health
17 providers on what those kind of facilities can do to
18 address what is actually a real severe crisis in the Army
19 in Alaska right now with regard to suicide?

20 Ms. Jacobson: Senator Sullivan, suicide is really
21 such a major concern for Army senior leadership, as you
22 know, across the board, and particularly in Alaska, because
23 of some of those isolated conditions and other. And we
24 recognize fully the connection between quality of life and
25 morale.

1 And we are very focused on that particular issue in,
2 as you say, these quality-of-life facilities, fitness
3 centers, recreation centers, child development centers to
4 make sure that they accommodate not just the physical need,
5 but the emotional, spiritual, and mental needs of soldiers
6 and families.

7 Senator Sullivan: Thank you. Assistant Secretary
8 Chaudhary, do you have anything to add to that?

9 Mr. Chaudhary: Senator Sullivan, all I can say is
10 this is personal to me. I lost wingman over this issue.
11 And so, I take it very, very seriously. In fact, there is
12 -- one of my classmates from the academy who works in the
13 petroleum industry North of Eielson, and so he tells me a
14 little bit about what it is like up there.

15 So, making sure we have those facilities taken care
16 of. If I could, I would like to make sure I stay focused
17 on this issue by taking this back and working with my
18 manpower reserve affairs counterpart to make sure we
19 address Eielson specifically.

20 Because having visited there a long time ago as a
21 cadet, I know exactly what you are talking about and I want
22 to address it.

23 Senator Sullivan: Great. Thank you very much. Thank
24 you, Madam Chair.

25 Senator Hirono: Thank you for raising the issue of

1 suicides. I just have one question that I would like to --
2 Secretary Owens, the military installations face increasing
3 threats from extreme weather and climate change.

4 And Hurricane Michael in 2018 devastated Tyndall Air
5 Force Base, costing billions to rebuild and continues to
6 impact the readiness of our forces there. In 2019, the GAO
7 found that the DOD was not taking extreme weather
8 projections into account when designing resilient
9 construction projects.

10 Last month, DOD's Inspector General found that DOD
11 does not require resilience consideration in its
12 construction design criteria, and recently this committee
13 received notification that the scope of Army barracks in
14 Alaska needed revision because it did not take into account
15 unique considerations for a facility being located in
16 Arctic conditions. How do you like that?

17 Senator Sullivan: Well, I go back to the focus of the
18 Navy, right. The Navy should be focused on shipbuilding,
19 warfighting. I think it is outrageous -- the Secretary of
20 the Navy came to the hearing yesterday totally unprepared.
21 This is --

22 Senator Hirono: How about livable conditions?

23 Senator Sullivan: It is his climate action plan out
24 before anything else. It was pathetic. And it is not what
25 the Navy needs. So, that is my point, Madam Chair. You

1 can raise all the points you want.

2 Senator Hirono: Okay, that is --

3 [Laughter.]

4 Senator Hirono: Yes, Senator, I will. Well, I think
5 it is taken in totality because it is not either or. And
6 so, the conditions in which our service members live and
7 they operate are very important.

8 And I tell you, with all of the huge climate change
9 issues facing us, you would think that our military in
10 designing installations would not put installations where
11 there is going to be a tsunami, etcetera.

12 So, you know, this is something that I would ask all
13 of you to include in your design. Is that what you are --
14 is that what is happening, Secretary Owens?

15 Mr. Owens: Chairman Hirono, so I mentioned the
16 defense climate assessment tool earlier, and that is a
17 primary source of data that will allow for the type of
18 resilience planning that you are talking about.

19 But we are developing policy that addresses integrated
20 installation resilience, and we will be getting that out.
21 That is not to say that it is not happening organically
22 already based on the use of DECAT by the military
23 departments, but we can certainly do better and be more
24 specific in terms of accountability.

25 Senator Hirono: Yes, Secretary Jacobson.

1 Ms. Jacobson: Chairman Hirono, that was a big
2 mistake, that we didn't plan for our conditions in the
3 design.

4 Thankfully, we hadn't started building the place yet,
5 in those barracks. And part of our Fiscal Year 2024 budget
6 is because we have to increase the cost because we had not
7 planned for that. Big mistake.

8 Terrible, horrible mistake. On my watch, it won't
9 happen again. But I will tell you, what we are doing is we
10 are mindful of -- we have just delivered a report to
11 Congress as required by the Fiscal Year 2023 NDAA on
12 installation resilience including, and we are using
13 installation climate resilience plans in order to design
14 climate resilience, whatever the climate happens to be, to
15 make sure that whatever we are building is going to be able
16 to withstand those conditions.

17 And the next -- we have completed them at Carson and
18 Anniston. But for Fiscal Year 2023, Wainwright and Greeley
19 are part of that climate resilience planning, and we are
20 going to do that everywhere, among many other planning
21 tools that we are going to insist go into all construction
22 design.

23 Senator Hirono: And is there that kind of attention
24 and emphasis in the Army, than -- yes, the Army, the Navy,
25 the Air Force, are you going to design for resilience?

1 Ms. Berger: Yes, Senator Hirono. We have two
2 examples that were NDAA mandated. So, both San Diego and
3 Parris Island were identified as bases that we were
4 concerned about resilience on and have incorporated
5 planning there.

6 Specifically, as Senator Kaine raised earlier,
7 flooding is a problem in Virginia. So, as we focus on our
8 building up our public shipyard there and doing that
9 recapitalization, we are actually building to a 300-year
10 flood plain level, versus a 100-year flood plain level.

11 And then I will note that as we go towards the uniform
12 facility criteria that set that into the standards, as the
13 Chief Sustainability Officer for the Department of the
14 Navy, I have issued several memos that help to bridge that
15 and make sure that we are including and contemplating these
16 pieces so that not only are we using materials and planning
17 that is sustainable, but also that when we put that dollar
18 down, it counts for what we are making it for.

19 Senator Hirono: Secretary Chaudhary.

20 Mr. Chaudhary: Chairman Hirono, two examples that
21 come to mind are areas where we have incorporated UFC. One
22 is Tyndall, of course, you just mentioned, and also, if you
23 look at Offutt where we made sure that the runway is built
24 above where it needed to be.

25 But more importantly, as I mentioned earlier,

1 strategy, strategy, strategy. In our installation
2 investment strategy, we are going to codify that and make
3 sure that we have the right injects, so that when we do
4 this across the board, it is institutionalized.

5 Senator Hirono: Thank you. Thank you, Ranking
6 Member. Well, this hearing is adjourned. Thank you, each
7 of you, for being here.

8 [Whereupon, at 2:46 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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