

Stenographic Transcript
Before the

COMMITTEE ON
ARMED SERVICES

UNITED STATES SENATE

HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON THE POSTURE OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY IN REVIEW OF THE DEFENSE
AUTHORIZATION REQUEST FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023 AND THE
FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM

Thursday, May 12, 2022

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

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12 The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:30 a.m.,
13 in Room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Jack
14 Reed, chairman of the committee, presiding.

15 Committee Members Present: Senators Reed [presiding],
16 Shaheen, Gillibrand, Blumenthal, Hirono, Kaine, King,
17 Peters, Rosen, Kelly, Inhofe, Wicker, Fischer, Cotton,
18 Rounds, Ernst, Tillis, Sullivan, Cramer, Scott, Blackburn,
19 Hawley, and Tuberville.

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

3 Chairman Reed: Good morning. The committee meets
4 today to receive testimony on the plans and programs of the
5 Department of the Navy in review of the President's Fiscal
6 Year 2023 defense budget request. I would like to welcome
7 the Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro, Chief of Naval
8 Operations, Admiral Michael Gilday, and the Commandant of
9 the Marine Corps, General David Berger.

10 We are grateful for your service, for the service of
11 the men and women under your command, and for the support
12 of all Navy and Marine families. The Administration's
13 defense budget request for Fiscal Year 2023 includes
14 approximately \$231 billion in funding for the Department of
15 the Navy, an increase of \$10.6 billion from the Fiscal Year
16 2022 enacted budget. As the leaders of the Navy and Marine
17 Corps, I understand you face significant challenges as you
18 strive to balance current operations and readiness
19 alongside broad modernization efforts.

20 Our naval forces continue to maintain extremely high
21 operations tempo across all areas. Demand is overwhelming
22 for attack submarines, air and missile defense cruisers,
23 destroyers, and strike fighter inventories. As a result,
24 our ships and the fleet are not meeting maintenance
25 requirements on time or within budget. A number of ships

1 have been waiting several years for maintenance, including
2 the USS Boise, which will spend another year at pier side
3 without diving certifications because of deferred
4 maintenance.

5 I am also concerned that the Navy will not be able to
6 maintain a larger fleet of ships when it is struggling to
7 maintain its current fleet of 294 ships on a consistent
8 schedule. Deferred ship maintenance, reduced steaming and
9 flying hours, and canceled training and deployments have
10 created serious readiness problems within the Navy. These
11 problems are not limited to one sector but are also being
12 experienced by private shipyards and Navy shipyards.

13 The 2022 National Defense Authorization Act directed
14 the Navy to study how to improve the capacity in our
15 shipyard industrial base. And the Navy has since begun the
16 shipyard infrastructure optimization program to modernize
17 and improve the efficiency of the public sector shipyards.
18 We look forward to seeing the results of that effort.

19 Looking ahead, I am pleased that the USS Gerald Ford
20 has conducted full ship shock trials, and we understand
21 that she may be deployed later this year. Looming on the
22 horizon, over the next decade, the Navy will need to buy
23 new Columbia class ballistic missile submarines to replace
24 the Ohio class fleet. This is an expensive undertaking on
25 a very tight schedule, and I trust the Navy is making every

1 effort to keep this program on track. I would ask our
2 witnesses for an update on these plans.

3 This year, the Navy is proposing to retire a number of
4 ships before the end of their useful service lives. This
5 includes a plan to retire nine littoral combat ships early,
6 one of which would only be three years old. I understand
7 the LCS program showed promise when it was first conceived,
8 but the threats we face have changed, and the Navy no
9 longer believes these vessels would contribute much to a
10 high end conflict.

11 The Navy made a difficult choice to retire some of the
12 ships now and free up more resources in the future. On the
13 other hand, it seems that this plan would take us in the
14 opposite direction of the Navy's goal for 355 ship fleet.
15 This committee will want an update on this issue. Turning
16 to the United States Marines, the Marine Corps is
17 restructuring around two concepts, littoral operations in a
18 contested environment and expeditionary advanced base
19 operations.

20 The key element of these concepts is the more flexible
21 amphibious force that can support a broader naval fight
22 once ashore. Rather than simply acting as a landing force,
23 the Marine Corps hopes to help control the sea and air
24 around them in support of the Navy and the other services.
25 To accomplish this, I understand the Marine Corps is

1 prioritizing modernization of its ground vehicles,
2 including partnership with the Army and the joint light
3 tactical vehicle, or the JLTV, to replace the Humvee, and
4 targeted investments in the high mobility artillery rocket
5 system, or HIMARS, to provide Marines with ground based
6 indirect fire support.

7 In addition, programs like the amphibious combat
8 vehicle, the ground based anti-ship missiles, and long
9 range precision fires will provide critical modernization,
10 increased force protection, and enhanced lethality to the
11 Marines. General Berger, I appreciate your consultations
12 and discussions with the members of this committee as you
13 began this restructuring, and I appreciate your continued
14 engagement with the committee as this process proceeds.

15 There also may be discussions this morning about the
16 appropriate amphibious force structure. I understand that
17 the Commandant says he needs 31 large amphibious ships to
18 meet his requirements, in addition to any smaller vessels
19 invented to support the expeditionary advanced base
20 operations concept. Others in the Defense Department have
21 determined that only 24 to 28 large amphibious ships are
22 needed, and I would ask for an update on these discussions.

23 Again, I want to thank the witnesses for appearing
24 today, and I look forward to their testimony. Let me now
25 recognize the Ranking Member Senator Inhofe.

1 STATEMENT OF HON. JIM INHOFE, U.S. SENATOR FROM
2 OKLAHOMA

3 Senator Inhofe: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
4 And I join you in welcoming these three great leaders. For
5 four years, this committee has used the 2018 National
6 Defense Strategy Commission as our roadmap to meet the
7 threats. It has operated very well during this time.

8 Unfortunately, the Administration has sent to the
9 Congress a budget request that does not provide the
10 resources required to combat that threat and other threats.
11 The Department of Navy budget provides an increase of only
12 4 percent, and more troubling, the Marine Corps portion
13 includes just 1.8 percent increase.

14 That is nowhere close to the real growth in -- for the
15 Marines, once again, if you account for inflation, it is
16 actually a cut. Given the inadequate budget requests, it
17 is no surprise that Admiral Gilday and General Berger in
18 their unfunded priorities, that we call those the risks
19 list, total \$7.5 billion. More broadly, I am concerned
20 about the state of our Navy and its downward trajectory.

21 And I actually had four items I was going to mention
22 on here. However, all four of them ended up being in the
23 chairman's opening remarks so I won't use those. The real
24 growth is going to have to be a part of the programs that
25 move the needle. On that topic, I would like to note

1 General Berger's initiative in implementing the National
2 Defense Strategy and his efforts to keep this committee
3 informed of his plans.

4 So I look forward to discussing these topics and --
5 from our witnesses and -- that we have. Thank you, Mr.
6 Chairman.

7 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator Inhofe.
8 Secretary Del Toro, please.

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1 STATEMENT OF CARLOS DEL TORO, SECRETARY OF THE NAVY,
2 DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

3 Mr. Del Toro: Good morning --

4 Chairman Reed: Could you bring that microphone as
5 close as possible, Mr. Secretary --?

6 Mr. Del Toro: Good morning, Chairman Reed, Ranking
7 Member Inhofe, distinguished members of the committee. It
8 is an honor to be here alongside General Berger and Admiral
9 Gilday to discuss the posture of the Department of the
10 Navy. I look forward to working with you to ensure that
11 our sailors and Marines are equipped, trained, and prepared
12 to the best of our ability so they can fulfill our vital
13 role to provide combat ready forces in support of the Joint
14 Force.

15 The United States requires a strong Navy and Marine
16 Corps. Our global economy and the self-determination of
17 free nations everywhere depends on sea power. Our National
18 Security depends on sea power. That is particularly true
19 in the Indo-Pacific, where Beijing's aggression threatens
20 the rules based international order that protects us all.

21 To answer that challenge, your Navy and Marine Corps
22 must have the resources and the power to maintain credible,
23 integrated deterrence by campaigning forward, forward from
24 the sea, on the shore, and in the air. Thanks to the
25 leadership of President Biden's Secretary Austin, this

1 budget does provide the right balance of capacity,
2 lethality, modernization, and readiness that we need to
3 execute the National Defense Strategy.

4 We will invest these resources through the execution
5 of a concise, clear, and transparent strategy rooted in
6 three guiding principles. First, maintain and strengthen
7 our maritime dominance so that we can deter potential
8 adversaries and fight and win decisively. Second, empower
9 our sailors and Marines by fostering a culture of
10 warfighting excellence founded on strong leadership,
11 dignity, and respect for each other.

12 And third, strengthen our strategic partnerships
13 across the Joint Force, industry, and our international
14 partners around the globe. We are executing this strategy
15 through the integrated visions of the Marine Corps Force
16 Design 2030 and the Navy Navigation Plan. I strongly
17 support these visions, and I am committed to feeling the
18 ready, capable, and modernized force required to ensure
19 their success.

20 To maintain and strengthen maritime dominance, we have
21 to be serious about fielding and maintaining the right
22 capabilities to win wars. That is why our budget strongly
23 invested in nimble, networked, and survivable Navy, with
24 platforms like Columbia, DDG Flight III, with enhanced
25 cyber and autonomous capabilities that enable our fleet to

1 campaign forward in a distributed manner.

2 This budget invests in a truly expeditionary and
3 persistent Marine Corps with the mobility and readiness to
4 respond in force wherever and whenever needed. For
5 advancing cyber security and resilience efforts across the
6 Department with investments to expand the cyber mission
7 force teams, harden networks, and leverage artificial
8 intelligence and machine learning to defend information
9 infrastructure.

10 To ensure the combat readiness of our platforms, we
11 are more than doubling shipyard infrastructure optimization
12 programs, SIOP, investments over the previous budget. This
13 budget invests in the climate resiliency of our force and
14 our facilities, while continuing efforts to substantially
15 reduce our impact on climate change. We are also investing
16 in facilities that promote the quality of life of our
17 personnel and their families. We owe it to our military
18 families to ensure their safety and well-being.

19 And when we do fall short, we look our problem square
20 in the eye, and we take actions to fix those problems. We
21 are investing in our efforts to recruit, retain, train, and
22 promote the best from all of America. And we are
23 increasing funding for naval and cyber education, enhanced
24 shipboard training, and enabling sailors and marines to
25 build their careers wherever the service takes them.

1 We appreciate the committee's interest in ensuring our
2 forces have the right facilities to train, fight, and win,
3 including the potential expansion of the Fallon Training
4 Range Complex. We also appreciate the committee's efforts
5 to include new tools within the NDAA to deter destructive
6 behavior and prosecute sexual assault, domestic violence,
7 and other offenses.

8 At every level of leadership, we are determined to
9 prevent sexual assault and sexual harassment, hold
10 offenders accountable, and create a safer, stronger, and
11 more inclusive Navy Marine Corps team. I want to close by
12 noting the importance of strategic partnerships, from the
13 Joint Force and our industrial base, to our allies and
14 partners around the world.

15 I have seen our partnerships and alliances personally
16 in action, from F-35b operations in the Indo-Pacific to
17 NATO exercises in Norway and the Mediterranean. But our
18 most important partnership is indeed with the American
19 people.

20 And that is why I am grateful for the oversight and
21 interest of this committee, and I look forward to
22 continuing to work with you in the years ahead. Thank you.

23 [The prepared statement of Mr. Del Toro follows:]

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1 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Mr. Secretary. Admiral
2 Gilday, please.

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1 STATEMENT OF ADMIRAL MICHAEL M. GILDAY, CHIEF OF
2 NAVAL OPERATIONS, DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

3 Admiral Gilday: Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Inhofe,
4 distinguished members of the committee. Good morning and
5 thank you for the opportunity to appear this morning with
6 Secretary del Toro and General Berger.

7 For nearly eight decades, America's naval superiority,
8 maritime superiority has guaranteed security and prosperity
9 across the world's oceans and has played a unique and
10 predominant role in protecting our Nation's most vital
11 national interests. Maintaining maritime superiority is
12 fundamental to implementing our new National Defense
13 Strategy.

14 Global competition is heating up, the pace of
15 innovation is accelerating, and the environment our naval
16 forces are operating in every day is growing more
17 transparent, more lethal, and definitely more contested.
18 Everyone in this room is familiar with these trends,
19 particularly China's massive investment in highly capable
20 forces designed to deny our access to the oceans.

21 Our Navy's role has never been more consequential or
22 more expansive. America needs a combat credible naval
23 force that can protect our interests in peace, and that can
24 prevail in war. Not just today, but tomorrow, and for the
25 long term competition that lies ahead.

1 Our budget submission for PB23 reflects that
2 imperative. It fully funds the Columbia class submarine to
3 ensure continuity for our Nation's most survivable
4 strategic deterrent. It keeps our fleet ready to fight
5 tonight, funding maintenance accounts, filling magazines
6 with ammunition, putting spare parts in storerooms, and
7 giving our sailors the steaming days and the flying hours
8 they need to hone their skills.

9 It modernizes our fleet by investing in weapons with
10 increased range and speed, integrated systems to improve
11 fleet survivability, and a resilient, cyber secure network
12 infrastructure. And it invests in affordable, capable
13 capacity, building towards the goal of a larger,
14 distributed hybrid fleet in the decade ahead, and taking
15 into account the insights that we are gaining on a monthly
16 basis from our fleet battle problems with the United States
17 Marine Corps, with exercises like large scale exercise
18 2021, the largest in the world, last summer, and also just
19 a few months ago, the world's largest international
20 unmanned maritime exercise in the Middle East.

21 These exercises and analysis and many others are
22 helping us to refine our warfighting concepts, experiment
23 with unmanned systems at speed -- at the speed of
24 innovation and grow the fighting power of our Navy Marine
25 Corps team across all domains. The need to field a ready

1 fleet today, as we are some simultaneously modernizing for
2 the future, has forced us to make difficult decisions,
3 including the decommissioning of platforms that do not
4 bring the needed lethality to a high end fight in contested
5 areas.

6 While building this capacity at the expense of
7 readiness and modernization can sound like an attractive
8 option, it is not one that I endorse. We have been there
9 before, and we have seen tragic results. I refuse to
10 repeat it again. We cannot field a fleet larger than one
11 we can sustain, and at today's fiscal levels, quantity
12 simply cannot substitute for quality, especially as our
13 adversaries are building advanced warfighting systems.

14 Failing to modernize to meet those threats would erode
15 America's maritime superiority at a time when command of
16 the seas will decide the global strategic balance and power
17 for the rest of this century. The stakes in this
18 competition are extremely high, which is why U.S. sailors,
19 active and reserve, uniform and civilian are committed to
20 strengthening our naval power every single day.

21 Thank you again for inviting me to testify, and I am
22 grateful for the committee's support to our Navy and Marine
23 Corps team. I look forward to answering your questions.

24 [The prepared statement of Admiral Gilday follows:]

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1 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Admiral Gilday. General
2 Berger, please.

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1 STATEMENT OF GENERAL DAVID H. BERGER, COMMANDANT OF
2 THE MARINE CORPS, DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

3 General Berger: Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Inhofe,
4 and distinguished members of the committee, as we sit here
5 this morning in a backdrop of a war raging in Ukraine and
6 the malign activities that are ongoing in the Indo-Pacific,
7 it is a good reminder for me that we don't have the luxury
8 of building a Joint Force for one threat, for one region,
9 for one form of warfare. We have to be prepared for the
10 full range of operations, in places we might not expect,
11 and probably on timelines we didn't anticipate.

12 That is why your Marine Corps' ability to respond to
13 crisis in any time and place is essential to our National
14 Security. Three years ago, as the chairman and ranking
15 mentioned, we embarked on an ambitious program of
16 modernization in an effort to ensure that your Marine Corps
17 could continue to meet its statutory role as America's
18 force in readiness. And with the bipartisan support of the
19 members of this committee, that modernization effort is on
20 track and is building momentum.

21 Over the past three years, your Marine Corps has self-
22 funded \$17 billion worth of modernization. Today, I would
23 like to offer you an update in three areas where we have
24 seen significant progress over the past 12 months. First,
25 over the last 18 months, out in Twentynine Palms,

1 California, which is our live fire maneuver training site,
2 we have conducted nine force on force exercises over the
3 past year and a half. Here is what we have learned, and
4 these lessons -- these learned lessons have really
5 validated what we thought from the beginning.

6 Basically, that smaller, more mobile, more distributed
7 units, if they can employ 21st century combined arms and
8 they have organic ISR and they have loitering munitions,
9 they are more lethal than larger units that employ
10 traditional sort of force structures and traditional
11 concepts.

12 And that is entirely consistent so far with what we
13 have seen in Ukraine. In less than two years, we
14 formalized a concept for standing forces and we built a
15 capability that has dramatically expanded what we can
16 achieve in support of both land and maritime operations.
17 One of those standing forces is now forward deployed in
18 Europe. And as the Yukon Commander recently testified here
19 in D.C., his words, that force is precious for effective
20 deterrence.

21 Second, we have achieved some important operational
22 milestones. This year, we are going to deploy the
23 amphibious combat vehicle for the first time aboard ship on
24 a marine expeditionary unit. And we will retire the AAV,
25 the aging AV, ahead of schedule. And we are doing that

1 because of the support of this committee. This year marked
2 the first deployment of an F-35b squadron aboard an allied
3 carrier, the first deployment of an F-35 sea squadron
4 aboard a Navy carrier, U.S. Navy carrier.

5 In fact, some of you will probably heard debris from
6 VMFA-211 aboard the HMS Queen Elizabeth. That was, in our
7 opinion, significant advancement in not just
8 interoperability, but interchangeability with both UK Jets
9 and Marine Corps U.S. Jets F-35s on board the Queen
10 Elizabeth. That is how you commit to allies and partners.

11 The Marine Expeditionary Unit, the MEU, enabled by
12 amphibious ships, is the crown jewel of our naval
13 expeditionary forces. No naval vessel in our inventory is
14 capable of supporting a wider set of missions than the
15 amphibious warship. And Secretary Del Toro, the CNO, and I
16 all agree that the minimum number of L-class traditional
17 warships, amphibious warships the U.S. needs is 31, and
18 your support for sustaining that minimum capacity is
19 essential to National Security.

20 Finally, this past year, we published a plan to
21 modernize our personnel system. That will allow us to
22 better recruit, train, align the skills of individual
23 Marines, retain them, match them with the needs of the
24 Marine Corps. All that said, what the Marine Corps does
25 for this Nation will not change.

1 We remain America's force in readiness. We are
2 capable of a diverse set of missions across the operational
3 spectrum. But how we accomplish those missions is
4 changing, and your support is critical to our collective
5 success.

6 And in closing, just like to offer to Ranking Member
7 Inhofe, our sincere gratitude for the three of us for your
8 50 years of public service. Army veteran, State
9 Legislator, Mayor, U.S. Representative, Senator, just on
10 behalf of the sailors and Marines and all of us here at
11 this table, thank you, sir, for your years of service.

12 And with that, I look forward to your questions.

13 [The prepared statement of General Berger follows:]

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1 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, General Berger.
2 Secretary Del Toro, one of the issues that is arising is
3 the performance of shipyards. We saw, for example, on the
4 attack submarines that the slippage in terms of both
5 delivery time and increase in costs, the reason that most
6 people give is the difficulty of securing the appropriate
7 labor and workers. What can you do and what can the
8 industrial base do to get back on track?

9 Mr. Del Toro: Thank you, Senator. I am also deeply
10 concerned about the pace with which both our public
11 shipyards and our private shipyards keep up with the
12 maintenance that is required by both our submarine fleet,
13 as well as our surface fleet as well. I have visited most
14 of the yards, all four public shipyards, and most of the
15 private yards as well. I have met with the leadership of
16 those shipyards to try to better understand the challenges
17 that they face. Without question, that the impact of COVID
18 on the last three years has been significant.

19 We continue to cooperate very collaboratively, thanks
20 to the support of the Congress as well, and making
21 investments in those shipyards, both capital investments
22 and also investments with regards to the talent management
23 that is necessary to run those shipyards. I believe that
24 there is still a lot of work that needs to be done, and it
25 does take a team to work this through, obviously.

1 But the other message that I have also relayed to the
2 leadership of these shipyards is that they also have a
3 responsibility to deliver these platforms on time and on
4 schedule, and they need to divert the proper resources
5 necessary to do so in terms of capital equipment and also
6 in terms of hiring the necessary workforce at those
7 shipyards in order to increase the pace at which these
8 maintenance cycles are taken.

9 And let me, if I could ask the CNO to just weigh in as
10 well on this issue.

11 Chairman Reed: Could I?

12 Mr. Del Toro: Yes, sir. Forgive me.

13 Chairman Reed: I thank you because -- General Berger,
14 Force Design 2030 recognizes this is a much different world
15 than 10 years ago, 20 years ago, certainly 30 years ago.
16 Since World War II, we have basically had guaranteed air
17 superiority but if we choose to fight. We also had
18 relatively uncontested logistics.

19 We have had uninterrupted communications. And the
20 concept of joint operations has been evolving for a long
21 time, but it is now more critical than ever. So when you
22 look at all of these factors, lack of air superiority,
23 logistics difficulties, communications that might be
24 disrupted, and the need to operate as a truly Joint Force,
25 I assume that has informed your view of what you want to do

1 with the Marine Corps in terms of your new design.

2 General Berger: That is entirely accurate, Chairman.
3 I don't think any of the Joint Chiefs, if all of us were
4 lined up here, would see it any different. Especially on
5 the high end, we will fight, we will operate as a Joint
6 Force. And we have to have a pretty keen understanding of
7 the joint capabilities involved there and where each one of
8 us where the overlaps are and where the gaps are.

9 The areas that you highlighted, air superiority,
10 command and control logistics, absolutely are part of the
11 focus. We also know that we are not going to match the --
12 a country like the PLAN in number for number, but that is
13 not actually how we are going to deter and how we are going
14 to dissuade them. It is going to be asymmetric.

15 Lastly, I would say the need to operate forward as the
16 Secretary and CNO highlighted, paramount. You have got to
17 know what they are doing. You have to paint a picture for
18 the Joint Force Commander 24/7 and that is our role.

19 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much. A question I
20 will address to Admiral Gilday, and with time to General
21 Berger, is that the Navy's unfunded priority list is \$4
22 billion this year. Marine Corps is \$3.5 billion. Last
23 year, because of the committee's support for Senator
24 Inhofe's initiative, we were able to cover all of your
25 unfunded priorities.

1 We can't assume that this year. So I assume that
2 these unfunded priorities are really in priority order.
3 That if we go to the first one, that is the most critical.
4 The second one, the second most critical. Is that
5 accurate, Admiral?

6 Admiral Gilday: It is absolutely accurate, sir. And
7 so my priorities -- everything on the unfunded list were
8 high regrets that we couldn't get into the budget and are
9 primarily readiness related. So as an example, for weapons
10 arranged in speed, LRASM, JASSM-ER, Maritime Strike
11 Tomahawk, SM-6, what we are trying to do is maximize
12 domestic production lines to send a demand signals so we
13 can fill our magazines with weapons, and make sure that if
14 the fight does go down tonight or in the 2027 timeframe,
15 that we are ready to go.

16 Likewise, those priorities include flying hours,
17 steaming days, maintenance, spare parts in both the
18 aviation side and for our ships as well. It is funding for
19 people. And so those are all -- those all have to do with
20 needed midterm readiness. There are also some
21 modernization priorities there as well.

22 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much. General Berger,
23 I will ask for your response in writing and for the record
24 so that we can recognize Senator Inhofe. Senator Inhofe,
25 please.

1 Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We -- and
2 General Berger, thank you very much for your nice remarks.
3 As noted in my opening remarks, the unfunded priorities
4 total \$7.5 billion, approximately \$4 billion for the Navy
5 and \$3.5 billion for the Marine Corps. The question I
6 would ask you, is a yes or no question, is everything on
7 your list executable today?

8 General Berger: Yes, sir. Same for the Marine Corps,
9 yes, sir.

10 Senator Inhofe: Yes. All right. Thank you very
11 much. Secretary Del Toro and Admiral Gilday, it has been
12 three and a half years now since I visited the USS Gerald
13 Ford. And at that time, they had just completed their --
14 everything has been late on that effort. The catapult and
15 the arresting gears, I think at that time, three and a half
16 years ago were just about completed. And my understanding
17 is that the elevators now, which the last thing, are
18 finally done, albeit seven years later and \$2.8 billion
19 over budget.

20 The burden that this seven year delay of the Ford has
21 placed on the rest of the aircraft fleet can't be
22 overstated. And I would like to get from all three of you
23 who -- in whatever order you would like the -- a couple of
24 things, several things here. One is, what kind of a burden
25 has that placed, that seven year delay placed, and when

1 will it deploy, and probably the lessons learned.

2 That seems to be the significant thing, I believe, the
3 lessons learned. And I have talked to each one of you over
4 a period of time on the, you know, how much of this could
5 be a result of this sole source situation. So any comments
6 you want to make just on the Ford now that we have reached
7 this important time zone. I would like to hear from you.

8 Mr. Del Toro: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, I
9 would like to say that you charged me at my confirmation
10 hearing to fix the elevators on the Ford. I am at least
11 pleased to say that they are fixed on the Ford now. I
12 think when acquiring ships of this nature, which are
13 extremely complicated, it is very important to ensure that
14 we fully understand the whole -- we fully understand the
15 maturity of the technologies that we are going to put on
16 those platforms before we actually acquire them.

17 And I think that those are some of the key lessons
18 that are being learned as we look at DDG Flight III, as we
19 look at our future DDGX or SSGX, as well as the
20 Constellation class frigate. And so I would like to say
21 that the mistakes that were made in the past are being
22 applied very aggressively to these new acquisition programs
23 that are going to be rolled out in the future.

24 I think the criticality of land based testing, for
25 example, for the engineering plans is also very critical to

1 this and the submodules that are necessary to go on to
2 these platforms. And I will ask the CNO to continue the
3 conversation in the limited time we have.

4 Admiral Gilday: Sir, the biggest lesson learned from
5 Ford and other platforms is that we need to drive down
6 technical risk in these programs. And so we do that with
7 land based prototyping, we do that with plenty of testing
8 upfront before we become an informed customer and come to
9 you for the money to scale these platforms, like we have
10 LCS would be another example.

11 If I take a look at the Columbia class submarine, we
12 are at 85 percent design right now as we are building that
13 submarine. If I compare that to the Ohio class, we were at
14 4 percent, Seawolf 25 percent, Virginia class 40 percent.
15 And so we are learning our lessons with respect to Ford and
16 putting in the good work now.

17 We have money in the budget with respect to unmanned
18 to actually have land based prototyping, significant land
19 based prototyping in Philadelphia as we have had with other
20 ships so that, again, we can make informed decisions before
21 we scale platforms.

22 Senator Inhofe: Let me comment, before a third -- I
23 wasn't being critical in terms of certainly any of the
24 three of you, but the fact that it did take a longer period
25 of time does have implications on other vehicles that are

1 out there.

2 Admiral Gilday: Yes, sir, it has. Obviously, funds
3 have been diverted in order to keep, you know, Ford moving
4 along track. We are very pleased to get her deployed later
5 on this year and likely again the following year. I want
6 to keep her on a high -- high degree of up tempo. This
7 past year, she has had the highest, probably the highest up
8 tempo of any ship in the Navy. She was our carrier --
9 aircraft carrier off the east coast of the United States.

10 She was qualifying our new pilots with their cats and
11 traps. And so we are going to continue that high degree of
12 up tempo with her, keeping in mind, of course, stress in
13 the crew. But they want to go to sea, they are proud of
14 their ship, and it is operating to our expectations right
15 now.

16 Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

17 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Inhofe. Senator
18 Shaheen, please.

19 Senator Shaheen: Thank you. Good morning to each of
20 you. Thank you for being here and thank you for your
21 service to the country. Secretary Del Toro, I would like
22 to begin with you and Admiral Gilday, because the Navy's
23 request includes \$503 million in funding for the SIOP
24 Multi-Mission Drydock Project at the Portsmouth Naval
25 Shipyard in New Hampshire and Maine.

1 And I know that you have both been up there to see
2 this project. But given the cost overruns that we saw last
3 year, are you confident that that \$503 million is going to
4 be enough to keep the project on schedule this year?

5 Mr. Del Toro: Senator, I think I am confident that we
6 are moving in the right direction. These are extremely
7 complicated programs, as you well know. It is our largest
8 capital projects in the Department of Navy. And I think
9 that there are going to be more discoveries that will be
10 made. But I don't think that they will be of the nature
11 and increases of the past mistakes that were made
12 previously.

13 One of the charges that I have given our acquisition
14 force is to ensure that we actually do take the necessary
15 time to come up with accurate cost estimations for the
16 projects, so what you have going on now, we will propose in
17 the future. That takes some time, additional time to reach
18 those answers. And so I would like to think that we are
19 actually moving in the right direction with the necessary
20 discipline to make accurate cost estimations.

21 Senator Shaheen: Well, I appreciate that. I guess --
22 I am trying to understand then why the Navy hasn't adopted
23 the GAO recommendations from the 2017 report that just --
24 this GAO report just came out recently that identified
25 concerns with SIOP. Planning, including adopting best

1 practices for cost estimation.

2 And it also points out that the performance metrics
3 that were expected to be done by now are not going to be
4 done until 2025. So can you talk about why the delay there
5 and what needs to happen in order to get things back on
6 track?

7 Mr. Del Toro: Yes, ma'am. I can't make -- look, I am
8 not going to make excuses for deals of the past. I do know
9 that certainly since I have become Secretary we are taking
10 this responsibility very seriously and trying to come up
11 with very accurate cost estimations and being allowed to be
12 given the time to come up with those cost estimations so
13 that we are not just flying by the cuff.

14 Senator Shaheen: And I recognize that the war in
15 Ukraine has happened since the budget was developed, and
16 that along with inflation have added to costs. So do you
17 have any estimate on how that is going to affect the budget
18 numbers that you -- we have before us now?

19 Mr. Del Toro: So I don't today, but that is an
20 accurate assessment that increasing inflation and the
21 shortages in the supply chain as well too will have an
22 impact on costs as we continue to evolve these projects.

23 Senator Shaheen: And so how soon will you be back to
24 the committee?

25 Mr. Del Toro: So I promise you in the next several

1 months we will have more accurate numbers. We have been
2 working on this very aggressively in the time that I have
3 been Secretary. I have demanded that we have an accurate
4 accounting of projected costs for the SIOP program so that
5 we are on track.

6 We have also made some additional adds to the program
7 management team as well to make sure that we have the right
8 skill sets on that program management team to address all
9 the necessary risks that are involved.

10 Senator Shaheen: Thank you. General Berger, both the
11 chair and ranking member talked about the challenges, and
12 you all have talked about the challenges of recruitment and
13 retention in the Marine Corps. The Marines historically
14 have had the smallest percentage of women compared to the
15 other services.

16 Obviously, that is one place where there is talent
17 that the Marine Corps could look to for the future. So can
18 you talk about how talent management 2030 is going to look
19 at more gender inclusivity in the Marine Corps and how you
20 expect to incorporate more women?

21 General Berger: You know, a system that we have had
22 since the all-volunteer force was put in place, largely
23 replaced 75 percent of the Marines every year, very young
24 force. That is what we needed at that time, and it suited
25 us fine. But going forward, as you have highlighted and

1 others, this is a competitive market for people, and the
2 requirements that we are going to have for Marines and
3 sailors, all service members, is going to be even more
4 demanding, even more challenging.

5 So the change for talent management is instead of the
6 view them as a whole body, each person matching their --
7 what they have coming in, and we have to do a better job of
8 assessing that when they come in, matching that with what
9 the Marine Corps needs, and then a path for each individual
10 to go forward. That is the difference.

11 Senator Shaheen: And do you expect to have any
12 particular focus on recruiting women, or how do you expect
13 to get those numbers up?

14 General Berger: The recruiters across the country, as
15 you have highlighted, the last two years of not being in
16 high schools has been a real challenge during COVID because
17 their exposure and the high school students' exposure to
18 recruiters is really tough. You have to have the right
19 recruiters out there and they have to have access to the
20 high schools, which now they are back in.

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

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

24 Senator Fischer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good
25 morning, gentlemen. Thank you for being here today.

1 General Berger, how is the Marine Corps looking to change
2 existing logistics, processes, and procedures to better
3 align with the Force Design 2030 initiative, particularly
4 looking at the Indo-Pacific theater?

5 General Berger: The framework we have for logistics
6 in the Indo-Pacific theater that you highlight largely
7 assumed a protected backside. It assumed that we would not
8 be contested. We don't assume that going forward. So the
9 large depo style like hub and spoke of parts and all
10 classes of supply and from there would be distributed, that
11 has got to change. Because we assume that it is going to
12 be contested all the way from the most forward units back
13 to the factory, all the way.

14 And not just physically, of course, but in cyber as
15 well. So what does that mean for us? We have to have
16 organically the means to move that -- move that sustainment
17 supplies up tactically to operationally, in other words, at
18 that level organically. That is why things like the 53K,
19 CH-53K, the MV-22, unmanned systems that are going to allow
20 us to push supplies laterally, that is what we have to
21 have, that we don't have in numbers yet.

22 Everything that we do logistics has to be -- has to
23 assume that they are going to try to contest it. Which
24 means we got a decoy. We have to camouflage it. We have
25 to move it in smaller numbers. We have to just operate in

1 a different way. But that is -- this is natural for
2 Marines to do. It is not a new thing, but the change
3 probably is an assumption that all of that will be
4 contested.

5 Senator Fischer: Thank you. Mr. Secretary, do you
6 have anything to add?

7 Mr. Del Toro: Yes, ma'am. We are actually making
8 major investments over the FD Op in additional -- adding
9 additional oilers, for example, to support the ships that
10 will be necessary and the sealift that is necessary. We
11 are also making investments in sealift, buying more used
12 sealift as well, too.

13 All of this is integrated into Force Design 2030,
14 along with the addition of additional amphibious lift and
15 as well as the wires to provide the shore to shore
16 connectors that are necessary for the Marines to be able to
17 effectively execute their expeditionary mission.

18 Senator Fischer: Thank you. General Berger, since
19 Russia's invasion of Ukraine, we have seen how small groups
20 of war fighters armed with missiles and loitering
21 munitions, they have real impacts on the ground.

22 While I agree it is too early to draw definitive
23 conclusions from the ongoing conflict, how do you expect
24 the Marine Corps to incorporate any insights that are
25 gained so far into future exercises as you test out new

1 concepts of operations?

2 General Berger: One advantage that we have, and the
3 Army is the same, as we are deployed, we have deployed
4 units in Europe right now. So they can see firsthand, a
5 lot closer than you and I from Washington, D.C., what is
6 working and what is not. We have a built in model within
7 the Marine Corps to feed that back in through our
8 warfighting laboratory at Quantico into the ideas, the
9 concepts, the capabilities of forces design 2030. There is
10 no filter. It is a constant feedback loop.

11 I think, as you hinted, although you got to be patient
12 in terms of jumping on lessons learned too early while
13 conflict is going on, I think the two for me, the character
14 versus the nature of warfare, some things in other words,
15 are enduring, and those lessons learned haven't changed,
16 frankly. Some of them that my counterparts have
17 highlighted in terms of the importance of small unit
18 leaders and decentralized command and control, speed,
19 momentum, inside the operating decision cycle of an
20 adversary, those are enduring things.

21 But the things that are changing, of course, the
22 character of war, as you highlighted, the unmanned, the
23 sensors, the growing importance of instilling confidence in
24 those junior leaders to make decisions on their own
25 quickly. So some things are staying the same and

1 validated, some things in terms of the character of war, we
2 need to absolutely feed back into the modernization effort,
3 and we have a means to do that.

4 Senator Fischer: Have you started any kind of
5 consultation with our allies, especially within NATO,
6 looking ahead at situations that are currently ongoing or
7 that may develop in the near future?

8 General Berger: In NATO specifically, yes. Yesterday
9 I met with the Chief of Defense of Norway. We traveled to
10 Norway last month, met with my counterparts and the Vice
11 Chad in Norway. In Poland right now, we have Marine units
12 operating in Poland, Latvia, and Estonia. We have a good
13 exchange back and forth about what is working and what is
14 not.

15 Senator Fischer: Okay. Thank you very much. Thank
16 you, Mr. Chairman.

17 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Fisher. Senator
18 Kaine, please.

19 Senator Kaine: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And thank you
20 to the witnesses. General Bergner, in his opening
21 statement said, we are all on the same page, we need 31
22 amphibious ships. I just want to make sure Secretary Del
23 Toro and Admiral Gilday, that is, he was putting, not
24 putting words in your mouth, but stating a consensus
25 opinion.

1 Mr. Del Toro: Thank you, Senator. This
2 Administration is very committed to amphibious lift without
3 any question. As you all know, there is over \$2 billion in
4 the budget this year alone in support of LHA and LPD-32 as
5 well too.

6 I commissioned an amphibious study when I became
7 Secretary of the Navy to try to get at what the right
8 requirements are. That was coordinated closely between the
9 Navy and the Marine Corps, and we informed the Cape as well
10 of all of our progress.

11 That amphibious study is today being reported out here
12 in the next couple of weeks within the Department. The
13 findings of that amphibious study will also be included in
14 the ongoing force naval structure analysis that takes place
15 -- is taking place right now in preparation for PLM '24.
16 And I suspect that as we conclude all those assessments, we
17 will see considerable support for amphibious lift moving
18 forward.

19 Senator Kaine: Admiral Gilday.

20 Admiral Gilday: Yes, sir. So the study that we just
21 completed concluded 31, and we actually took a look at
22 three cases that are consistent with the NDS, the new NDS
23 strategy. We took a look at traditional amphibs by
24 themselves, looking across the spectrum of war and what
25 they contribute, both in deterrence and also in the fight.

1 We took a look at light amphibious warships in the
2 future with those vessels in expeditionary advanced bases.
3 And then we took a look at traditional amphibs and light
4 amphibs together.

5 And so we tried to take a look at it holistically, not
6 just in the first two cases, but at the total amphibious
7 fleet, postulating as best we can how we use them in the
8 future. That is informing both the final number and then
9 our acquisition path to field them.

10 Senator Kaine: Well, this is good news that -- you
11 know, there have been mixed messages about this and the OSD
12 Cape had numbers as low as 12 or 24. So I know the study
13 will be out formally soon. Based on the testimony today,
14 we expect to see that at 31, and I appreciate your
15 testimony.

16 Secretary Del Toro, I want to ask you about the George
17 Washington. There has been a series of deaths, but also
18 the underlying conditions that sailors endure while a
19 carrier is undergoing an overhaul. These overhauls are
20 unlike others, which might be months at a time. They take
21 several years. The GW has been in overhaul since 2017, and
22 that means that some sailors will spend their entire career
23 on a ship that never goes to sea, and they will never
24 perform the duties that they trained for after graduating
25 from boot camp.

1 I wonder if that fact, the length of these berths in
2 the shipyard, is a challenging factor. And I know that you
3 were in a shipyard with one of the ships you commanded for
4 18 months during your active duty career. Talk a little
5 bit about how the Navy is looking at this George Washington
6 situation, not only the particular instances, but the
7 particular challenges that result from these very lengthy
8 shipyard berths.

9 Mr. Del Toro: Yes, sir. And thank you for your
10 question, Senator. Without question, there is no greater
11 responsibility than our safety of our sailors and our
12 Marines, and particularly when sailors go into an extended
13 overhaul in a shipyard. Shipyard life itself is
14 challenging enough.

15 When you are in the shipyard that long, it presents
16 additional challenges. And I think institutionally, the
17 Department of the Navy, we need to collectively do a better
18 job to provide the necessary resources to the ship itself
19 in the contracts that are negotiated with the shipyard
20 itself, to provide a higher quality of life for those
21 sailors in the shipyard.

22 There are two investigations that are ongoing right
23 now, command investigation, as well as an additional
24 investigation by the Navy to look at some of these
25 additional quality of life factors that perhaps play a role

1 in this very unfortunate situation.

2 But we need to develop a plan that is more robust than
3 what we are currently doing for especially aircraft
4 carriers, because you are introducing upwards of 2,500
5 sailors into an already challenging environment.

6 Senator Kaine: Thank you, Mr. Secretary. And
7 finally, General Berger, I am just going to conclude. My
8 wife and I are moving this weekend from the family home of
9 30 years into a condo, and everything, every drawer we open
10 is a memory and everything we throw away is a memory, and
11 everything we give to the kids or to refugee families is a
12 memory. We are excited, but change is hard. Change is
13 hard.

14 And I have been thinking about that a little bit in
15 connection with some of the comments about Force Design
16 2030. I, for one, appreciate the fact that you have
17 rethought fundamental assumptions and recognized the great
18 things we have been doing, but also that the realities of
19 the world mandate a Marine Corps that can perform the same
20 mission but in very different ways, and that you are
21 willing to embrace some significant change. I appreciate
22 it. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

23 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Kaine. Senator
24 Cotton, please.

25 Senator Cotton: Good morning, gentlemen. Welcome.

1 Thank you all for your testimony and for your service to
2 the country. Mr. Secretary and Admiral, I want to thank
3 you two for taking the time recently to discuss the
4 findings of the report that I commissioned with a few House
5 members about the state of culture and warfighting in the
6 Navy, especially the surface Navy.

7 I want to thank you for your thoughts on what you are
8 doing to try to address some of those challenges. Mr.
9 Secretary, I want to raise one of those specifically with
10 you. The -- what the report found was the so-called zero
11 defect mentality in the Navy, especially among the officer
12 corps in the surface fleet.

13 Could you talk to us about the specific policies that
14 you have enacted since you took over to counteract that
15 zero defect mentality?

16 Mr. Del Toro: Yes, sir. It is more about an approach
17 to our cultural approach in the Navy with regard to the
18 command. As you know, the CNO, with my support and
19 collaboration, have initiated a policy of get real, get
20 better. And part of getting real is coming to a very
21 honest determination of the challenges that you face and
22 things that has to improve in order for us to get better.

23 Part of that cultural dynamic is not having a zero
24 defect mentality so that we can actually encourage our
25 leadership at all levels, not just within the officer

1 corps, but also within the noncommissioned officer corps,
2 which is critical to our mission, so that they can honestly
3 face the challenges that they have and provide
4 recommendations that actually make things better.

5 So it is more cultural change to just the issuance of
6 individual policies.

7 Senator Cotton: Okay. Do you think that Lieutenant
8 Halsey or Lieutenant Nimitz would have made it past
9 Lieutenant Commander in today's Navy?

10 Mr. Del Toro: Probably not.

11 Senator Cotton: Admiral Gilday, what about you?

12 Admiral Gilday: So one of the things that we did
13 recently is, I issued a new charge of command. So this is
14 a direction to our Commanders. And I specifically
15 addressed some areas where we have a Navy where we don't
16 have tolerance, drug use would be an example, but we
17 certainly can't be a no defect Navy.

18 And so one of the things that, in terms of changing
19 the culture that I am trying to -- that we together trying
20 to institute is this idea of embracing the red. So as you
21 see slides in the Pentagon where there are usually
22 stoplight slides and people like to focus on things that
23 are green, things that are going well, swimmingly well,
24 when what we really need to focus on and create an
25 environment to address is to embrace the red and to fix the

1 red.

2 So this gets right to the fundamental need to be able
3 to self-assess and then to self-correct, as individuals is
4 and as an institution. When we took a look at a major
5 fires review and we took a look at 15 different fires over
6 the course of 12 years, and we took a look at the variance
7 between units that perform very well and units that don't,
8 it came down to the ability to self-assess and an
9 environment that allow that to happen without being
10 punished for basically communicating fearlessly up the
11 chain of command.

12 That is what we are looking for fundamentally, sir, in
13 terms of changing the culture, not just in the surface
14 Navy, but across the Navy. It is going to take us a while,
15 but I think we are on -- we are in the beginning of a right
16 path that has been well received by the fleet.

17 Senator Cotton: Okay. Thank you both. Again, that
18 was just one issue from that report. And I thank you all
19 for the time you took to discuss that and the other issues,
20 and I look forward to continue to work with you to
21 implement those reforms, make sure our surface Navy is
22 strong and healthy and ready to fight and win wars in the
23 future.

24 General Berger, I heard a lot today about your Force
25 2030 concept and you have heard some support for it from

1 the committee as well. I just want to be direct about it,
2 though. You seem to have kicked over a hornet's nest among
3 a lot of your fellow retired Marine -- I guess you are not
4 retired, but fellow Marines who are retired.

5 Even among a former Marine who was Secretary of the
6 Navy and a member of the Senate. So I just want to give
7 you a chance in plain English to respond to their many
8 public critiques of your plan. Why do you think they are
9 wrong in those critiques?

10 General Berger: The genesis, the start point was
11 really General Dunford during -- when he was Commandant and
12 then followed by General Neller when they, in a setting
13 like this, articulated that the Marine Corps, although is
14 very healthy and capable at that time, was not organized,
15 wasn't trained, wasn't equipped for what the National
16 Defense Strategy called for.

17 I agree with that. I also think that the speed at
18 which we have to change is not necessarily driven by
19 ourselves, it is driven by the adversary. It is driven by
20 the pace of change of the threats. The level of risk is
21 probably where it boils down to between those who feel like
22 we should go at a more conservative, slower pace. I am
23 driven by the pace at which the adversary is moving. We
24 have to stay in front of that.

25 And my job, like the CNO's, is not just to make sure

1 that the Marine Corps is capable today, but five years from
2 now that we have a margin of advantage over the PLAN or
3 whatever the pace and challenge is five years from now.
4 That is our job.

5 Senator Cotton: Thank you for the testimony and thank
6 you for all the hard work you put into that. I hold you
7 and the Marine Corps in high esteem. I hold many of your
8 critics in high esteem as well, though, and I know the
9 committee will be working through all of those arguments
10 about what has happened, because we share the same goal
11 about a Marine Corps that is ready not just to fight today,
12 but back tomorrow as well.

13 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Cotton. Senator
14 Hirono, please.

15 Senator Hirono: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Secretary
16 Del Toro, thank you for your support and commitment to deal
17 with the Red Hill fuel installation situation in a way that
18 helps restore Hawaii's confidence in the Navy. So the
19 President's decision to include \$1 billion for the Red Hill
20 Recovery Fund in his Fiscal Year 2023 request to
21 permanently close Red Hill, not only protects the island's
22 drinking water, but ultimately benefits our operations in
23 the INDOPACOM.

24 The closure rate is going to be a multiyear and multi-
25 faceted endeavor and will require the Department of Defense

1 to work closely with the Hawaii Department of Health and
2 the EPA. Secretary Del Toro, can you explain how the Navy
3 is planning for the execution of these funds, and any
4 concerns you have related to safety fueling of the tanks
5 and closing of the facility?

6 Mr. Del Toro: Thank you, Senator. Thank you, Senator
7 -- and thank you for your leadership on this issue. It
8 means a great deal to our sailors, our Marines, our Air
9 Force, our Army soldiers, and, of course, all the people of
10 Hawaii as well, too.

11 And I am pleased that the Department of Navy has
12 collaborated very closely with all the agencies in Hawaii,
13 on Oahu and elsewhere, on this very important task. We
14 will continue to collaborate and work very aggressively
15 with all the appropriate agencies. As you know, I have a
16 requirement to submit to the Secretary of Defense a POA&M.

17 We are currently in the assessment stage of putting
18 together that plan of objectives analysis memorandum to
19 come up with the right steps that are necessary. At the
20 same time, there are several investigations that are
21 underway that are going to be revealing on matters and
22 issues that have to be corrected as well too. Those
23 findings will be included in our overall plan.

24 There is a third party assessment, as you know, that
25 has concluded and is being reviewed right now in the

1 Department of Defense so that we can properly make the
2 investments that are necessary to determine what steps have
3 to be taken to properly and safely defuel Red Hill. And we
4 will be collaborating very closely in accordance with the
5 Executive Order that was just issued -- revised Executive
6 Order.

7 As you know, we have appealed the right to a hearing
8 on that, and we wish to continue to collaborate very
9 closely with Hawaii and all the involved agencies to get to
10 the right result, so that we could also inform the Congress
11 in terms of the investments that have to be made to
12 properly execute the plan.

13 Senator Hirono: Well, what started off, from my
14 perspective, as a situation where the State of Hawaii, the
15 Navy, DOD writ large, we were definitely not on the same
16 page, and that is why your commitment to collaborating, and
17 where I have seen that the State of Hawaii is withdrawing
18 probably some concerns they had about the third party
19 assessment, and the Navy holding back on some appeals
20 processes that they could pursue, I think that is what we
21 have to do. That everybody needs to get on the same page
22 and work together, so that is what I am looking for because
23 this is a very complicated situation, as you well know.

24 General Berger, we have heard a lot about the 30 --
25 commitment to 31 amphibious ship situation, and this is a

1 new number. So how would terminating the LPD line and
2 having fewer than 31 ships impact the Marine Corps' ability
3 to respond globally?

4 What I am getting at is I too am committed to 31 ships
5 and there are people who don't think that that is the right
6 number, but what if you -- if you have fewer than 31 ships,
7 what does that do to your ability to respond globally?

8 General Berger: I will start off, and if there is
9 time, ask the CNO if he has additional thoughts. But from
10 my perspective, with the rest of the Joint Force
11 modernizing as it is, the Marine Corps is probably one of
12 the best hedges you have right now in the next four or five
13 years. We have to be forward. We have to be ready.

14 This study that came to the result of 31 Incorporated,
15 as a CNO highlighted, not just scenarios that OSD uses, but
16 how to deter, how to respond quickly. 31 is a floor. Even
17 with 31, there is risk. Of course there is. If we don't
18 have 31, there are places -- and there are things that are
19 going to happen in the next four or five six years where
20 the U.S. cannot respond. In the worst cases, somebody else
21 gets there first and they are not a friend of ours.

22 Senator Hirono: Admiral Gilday, do you have anything
23 to add?

24 Admiral Gilday: I do. Thank you, ma'am. So this is
25 all about speed. It is about flexibility. It is about

1 agility. It is about having options, not just in one
2 theater, but around the globe. And so the fleet Marine
3 force afloat provides options to every single combatant
4 Commander, whether it is in the high North, where we see
5 those forces exercising today, or whether it is in the
6 Middle East or whether it is in the Western Pacific,
7 everything from humanitarian assistance to they are perhaps
8 our best platforms for working together with allies and
9 partners.

10 Why? Because they are like F150 trucks filled with
11 hundreds of Marines with K bars in their teeth. They are a
12 motivator for our allies and partners. There is hundreds
13 of different uses, almost -- you are almost only limited by
14 your imagination in terms of how you can use that force.

15 So, again, they provide options, agility, speed. And
16 I think the number 31 allows you to get more ships at sea
17 and allows you to have -- allows you to have more options.

18 Senator Hirono: Thank you. And, Mr. Chairman, if I
19 could just make two very short observations or comments.
20 Regarding SIOP, we better to do a much better job of
21 estimating the cost of the dry docks and all of that,
22 because that is -- that was a huge difference in what was
23 happening with Portsmouth.

24 The cost estimate was \$750 million and then the
25 contract came in at \$1.7 billion. Huge difference. We

1 need to not have that. And then for -- I brought up the 15
2 ship multiyear procurement, and I checked with the
3 shipbuilders, and they said that they could build an
4 additional ship.

5 So we need to come together on whether or not 15 ships
6 is what we can actually get to. So I just wanted to make
7 that observation, Mr. Chairman.

8 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Hirono. Senator
9 Rounds, please.

10 Senator Rounds: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Gentlemen,
11 first let me begin by saying thank you to all of you for
12 your years of service to our country. Admiral Gilday, let
13 me once again thank you for the time that you have taken to
14 visit with us most recently on Tuesday of this week, and
15 your explanation of the movement that you are making within
16 the cyber operations for the Navy and the improvements that
17 you envision making as well.

18 I would like to pivot from that a little bit and move
19 back in along a similar line to what some other members
20 here have talked about, and that is with regard to the
21 maintenance and the operations within our shipyards. In
22 particular, I come back down to the same boat that I have
23 talked about in the past , the USS Boise, I believe a Los
24 Angeles class attack submarine.

25 This is an item which has been up for, and it was

1 supposed to be in the shop for its overhaul in 2015, 2016
2 time period. It has been delayed for a number of reasons
3 since that time, and there has been a constant discussion
4 about moving forward. I understand that you are now moving
5 forward and that you have decided to begin that process.

6 Could you share with the committee the thinking that
7 you are using and the thought process that goes into the
8 decision that rather than scrapping that piece of machinery
9 and actually rehabbing it, and the other ones, which are
10 also behind it in line, for their upgrades?

11 Admiral Gilday: Yes, sir. So I think everybody in
12 this room understands the utility of our submarine force
13 and its importance on a day to day basis in not only
14 deterring adversaries, but when it comes to fight and win,
15 they are absolutely essential as our most survivable,
16 stealthy, strike -- effective strike platform that we have
17 in the Navy, perhaps in the entire Joint Force. And so
18 giving away any single submarine should only be -- that
19 decision should be made after great deliberation and
20 exhaustion of other options.

21 And so in the case of some of our newer 688 -- 688
22 submarines or 688i's, which have a VLS capability, we have
23 seven of them planned for engineering overhauls as an
24 example, to keep what some might refer to as a legacy
25 platform, continue to get four or five deployments out of

1 these submarines so that we can continue to keep them in
2 the fight, if you will. The challenge with Boise really
3 rests inside the private shipyard that is doing that work.

4 So we have two private yards that do that work and we
5 need their capacity. So based on the fact that we continue
6 to build a viable submarine force, and we know that we
7 don't have the capacity in our public shipyards to handle
8 all of that maintenance, we need Electric Boat, and we need
9 Huntington Ingalls to be able to do that work.

10 They are underperforming. They are over cost and way
11 over schedule. But because we need them, we need to hold
12 their feet to the fire to those contracts. They need to
13 pay penalties when they don't meet their requirements. But
14 we need them to be all in with us and the Nation that they
15 are supporting in this critical effort. But we need to
16 continue sort of to press them to do a better job. We need
17 that capability. It is a national imperative.

18 Senator Rounds: Thank you, sir. General Berger, I
19 have looked at your Force Design 2030, and I know that
20 Senator Cotton led into this a little bit. There are some
21 very well-respected former officials within the Marine
22 Corps that had questioned whether or not it was the right
23 direction to go.

24 I appreciate the fact that you have continued to move
25 forward, but I think perhaps just for the committee, we

1 could walkway back a little bit in terms of all of the
2 reasons for the need to move in this direction.

3 And I think back to perhaps, and I may be off on this,
4 but in the Nagorno Karabakh war between Armenia and
5 Azerbaijan, which was caught between September of 2020 and
6 November of 2020, we saw two countries that really did not
7 have huge armies, and yet in a very short period of time,
8 Azerbaijan was able to have a very decisive victory using
9 21st century weapons systems, including loitering
10 munitions, long range precision fire, a lot of the items
11 that you are identifying as being necessary for the Marine
12 Corps.

13 Could you talk a little bit about the way that you
14 envision the Marines fighting, not just when it comes to
15 PRC, but other areas around the world that some people
16 think, well, we are looking at PRC. It appears to me that
17 you are looking at lots of different scenarios here, but in
18 particular, the reason why you have moved in the direction
19 of loitering, ammunitions, and so forth.

20 General Berger: Some folks have written about the
21 precision strike regime, the evolution of that over the
22 past 15 years, 20 years. I am in full agreement there.
23 Combine that with the proliferation of sensors, makes it a
24 very different battlefield than we had 20 years ago. So we
25 have to be able to operate inside the threats collection

1 range, inside their weapons range, and be lethal, both.

2 That meant adjusting the construct, the warfighting
3 concepts of the Marine Corps and our own structure within,
4 to make sure that we can operate inside there persistently,
5 strip away the adversary's ability to collect against the
6 Joint Force and collect against them all at the same time.
7 That is where we are headed. It is a different force than
8 we had in Desert Shield, Desert Storm. It is not a
9 persistent -- it is not a second land army. It is what the
10 Nation needs us to be able to do.

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

12 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Rounds. Senator
13 King, please.

14 Senator King: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to
15 start with an observation. Senator Cramer and I the other
16 night had dinner with a former member of the Ukrainian
17 parliament from Odessa, and he told us, this is a side
18 effect of this war that I thought reflected well on our
19 support of the Ukrainians, apparently a common name for a
20 new male Ukrainian baby these days is Javelin.

21 And for female babies, it is Javelina. And I thought
22 that was an indication of the importance of the support we
23 are providing to the Ukrainian people. Mr. Secretary, I
24 want to start with a complement which often doesn't occur
25 at these hearings. I want to compliment you because, as I

1 see it, your largest single increase in your budget is R&D.

2 And I think that is absolutely essential. Looking
3 back through history, technology often wins wars or
4 certainly has an important influence on the outcome of
5 wars. In World War II, radar and of course the invention
6 of the atomic weapon, which was pure R&D, ended World War
7 II. Going back to the Battle of Agincourt was the longbow.

8 And even the homely stirrup, many historians believe
9 was the basis of Genghis Khan's ability to conquer the
10 known world at that time because it provided stability to
11 his archers on horseback. So I want to thank you for that.
12 Now, here' is the question. I believe the technological
13 breakthrough of this moment in time is the hypersonic
14 missile. And my question is, are we dealing with that
15 issue both from a defensive and an offensive capability
16 point of view with the requisite sense of urgency?

17 My concern is that our, for example, our forward
18 presence in the Pacific is based upon aircraft carriers.
19 And I realize this is an unclassified setting, but I want
20 some assurance that this is a hair on fire issue at the
21 Pentagon to deal with what could be a strategic game
22 changing technology, the hypersonic missile.

23 Mr. Del Toro: Thanks for the question, Senator. And
24 let me assure you wholeheartedly that this is a hair on
25 fire type of investment in terms of developing the

1 necessary, not just developing the R&D for it, but also as
2 it applies to all our platforms and ensuring that we can
3 quickly acquire that technology from the R&D to
4 capabilities that we can actually put in the hands of the
5 warfighters across the board.

6 And with regard to hypersonic, yes, we are making
7 major investments in hypersonic. I feel quite confident
8 that we are going to be seeing some of these tremendous
9 capabilities, particularly CPS on Zumwalt class destroyers,
10 be deployed within the next couple of years. And then we
11 will be aggressively deploying those ships in the Indo-
12 Pacific where they will be most needed.

13 Senator King: Admiral Gilday, are you comfortable
14 with our progress in dealing with the strategic
15 applications of hypersonic?

16 Admiral Gilday: No, sir. I am not. But I will tell
17 you what we are taking a look at. With respect to terminal
18 defense, layered terminal defense, right now we have -- we
19 are deploying directed energy systems on some of our ships.
20 We are testing it real time against both swarming surface
21 vessels as well as a ballistic missile defense system,
22 which gets your point about hypersonics.

23 High powered microwave is another critical technology
24 that we are investing in, and a critical enabler for any of
25 those terminal defense systems is going to have to be

1 quantum computing, another area where the Secretary has us
2 making additional advances with respect to R&D.

3 So in terms of giving us decision superiority over the
4 adversary and understanding, applying both quantum
5 computing with AI capabilities, helping us put a defensive
6 weapon on a target like a fast moving hypersonic missile is
7 going to be key. So those are some of the things that we
8 are working on right now, sir, inside that R&D --

9 Senator King: I like it that you started your answer
10 to my question with no rather than bland assurances,
11 because that indicates to me that you recognize the
12 seriousness of this issue. A quick final point, Mr.
13 Secretary, on an entirely different subject. There is data
14 that indicates the most dangerous point for veteran suicide
15 is in the first two or three years after they separate from
16 the service.

17 I believe that the services should be putting as much
18 money and time and effort and thought into transition out
19 as it is to recruiting in, because this veteran suicide
20 issue is serious. It is an embarrassment, and it is a
21 tragedy to be losing something in the number of 20 veterans
22 a day.

23 But since we know from the data that that first year
24 or so after leaving active duty is a moment of maximum
25 danger, I hope that you will think about how to make that

1 handoff from after active duty to the VA warmer. And think
2 about not only the physical pieces but also the mental and
3 the stressors that impact our veterans as they become
4 veterans.

5 Mr. Del Toro: Senator, I have, and I do actually,
6 having personally made that transition myself. I know the
7 challenges that one faces with regards to suicide and
8 depression and things of that matter. I talk about it just
9 about everywhere I go.

10 I talk about how important it is for our sailors to
11 take care of each other, to really care for each other
12 throughout, when a sailor shows up to the ship, to the
13 squadron, wherever it may be, while they are there, and
14 actually as they transition from their command to another
15 command or to the civilian sector as well, too.

16 So we are focused on that, and we actually do work
17 with the Department of Veterans Affairs on this issue.

18 Senator King: Thank you. I hope that will be an
19 urgent priority as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

20 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator King. Senator
21 Blackburn, please.

22 Senator Blackburn: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And
23 thank you to each of you for your service and for being
24 here with us today. I want to start with the nuclear
25 posture review. And Admiral Gilday, yesterday in the House

1 Armed Services committee hearing, you were asked about
2 support for continuing SLCM, and your quote was you
3 supported continuing it while we get a better understanding
4 of the world we live in with two nuclear capable peer
5 competitors.

6 And this is something that I have talked about with
7 our Commanders as they have come before us for their
8 hearings. And I have mentioned it to our Chairman of the
9 Joint Chiefs. And they have all expressed concern with the
10 Administration's decision to cancel the sea launched cruise
11 missile and have -- the Administration's position of that
12 is redundant with our other capabilities.

13 That is something that causes me concern. And so,
14 Admiral Gilday, I appreciated your remarks on this. So
15 Secretary Del Toro, let me ask you, what is your position
16 on this?

17 Mr. Del Toro: Yes, ma'am. I agree with the
18 President's budget. I believe that we should zero out the
19 SLCM line. I believe the President has all the tools in
20 his toolkit necessary to deter and deal with the threat of
21 a tactical nuclear missile --

22 Senator Blackburn: So you are not worried about our
23 capabilities?

24 Mr. Del Toro: I am not. I believe that the President
25 has all the tools in his toolkit, whether W-76 weapons --

1 Senator Blackburn: And your assessment of China as a
2 -- with their push on great power competition, that doesn't
3 keep you up at night or worry you?

4 Mr. Del Toro: That absolutely keeps me up at night
5 and worries me. But as far as deterring China's nuclear
6 capability, I believe that we far exceed what we have right
7 now in terms of being able to deter the use of a tactical
8 nuclear missile with the W-76 warhead --

9 Senator Blackburn: Okay. What message do you think
10 it sends to our competitors if we are going to reduce
11 rather than bolster our nuclear capabilities?

12 Mr. Del Toro: I think the message that it sends is
13 that we are actually using those resources and to the tune
14 of about \$30 billion to make the necessary investments in
15 hypersonics --

16 Senator Blackburn: So you completely agree with the
17 President?

18 Mr. Del Toro: Excuse me, ma'am?

19 Senator Blackburn: You completely agree with the
20 President?

21 Mr. Del Toro: I completely agree with the President
22 and Secretary of Defense.

23 Senator Blackburn: That is what I wanted to know.
24 Admiral Gilday, you also referenced a, in your words, a
25 particular gap in capabilities which SLCM could fill. So

1 tell me, what is that particular gap?

2 Admiral Gilday: So the gap specifically is the
3 tactical nuclear capability of specifically Russia, but
4 gaining steam is China. And the question is, how do you
5 best close that gap? SLCM-N has been offered as a single
6 point solution. I would offer that there are others to
7 think about, including low yield nuclear weapons that we
8 deploy right now and had support of the Congress, making
9 those changes based on the previous NPR.

10 I also think hypersonics are an important capability.
11 The Army is fielding that capability this year. The Navy
12 is going to follow suit in 2025, as the Secretary
13 mentioned, with that same capability.

14 Senator Blackburn: Yes. Let me ask you about
15 hypersonics because -- and by the way, thank you for
16 mentioning quantum computing. I totally agree with you and
17 Oak Ridge National Lab is doing some great work in quantum
18 research. When we look at hypersonics and we look at
19 Arnold Engineering Development Center in Tennessee, which
20 has the capability to support this hypersonic supply chain,
21 talk to me about where you think we are with modernization
22 for our testing facilities, where we are with outsourcing,
23 when it comes to our hypersonic capabilities.

24 Admiral Gilday: We continue to make investments in
25 the testing facilities, including the testing facilities

1 that allow us to take out hypersonic weapon and to refine
2 its capabilities so that it is actually able to be launched
3 from a submerged submarine, because we want to put that
4 capability aboard our new subs as early as 2028. So that
5 is an example of continued investment.

6 As I look at the hypersonics program, that is a joint
7 program among the services, we are meeting every benchmark
8 and milestone in that program. So I am confident, I have a
9 pretty high degree of confidence that in the army system
10 that we will field this year, in a mobile system, and then
11 the Navy system will follow suit.

12 Now, I think with the continued support of Congress in
13 those funding lines, and last year you actually doubled the
14 Navy's funding for hypersonics, which we are grateful for.

15 Senator Blackburn: Well, I spoke to General Brown
16 during the Air Force posture hearing about this issue and
17 the capabilities that we have at Arnold, and also about
18 looking at how we leverage risk and how we take more risk
19 in pushing forward in this sector. Thank you, Mr.
20 Chairman. I yield back.

21 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator
22 Blackburn. Senator Kelly, please.

23 Senator Kelly: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General
24 Berger, I have got a question about Marine Corps Air
25 Station in Yuma. Arizona is really proud to host the

1 Marines in Yuma, including F-35 squadrons. I have had the
2 opportunity to fly the F-35 simulator a couple of times.
3 It is nice to know that our fighters, our premier fighters,
4 outmatch those of our adversaries, and we are happy to have
5 them in Arizona.

6 So we have got this premier fighter, but we also have
7 a base that has some infrastructure problems, critical
8 infrastructure. And Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, they
9 are currently planning to upgrade the water treatment
10 facilities on the installation. And my understanding is
11 that the current treatment plant was built in 1947, so it
12 is nearly 80 years old. And this treatment plant supplies
13 water for a large part of the base, bases, the bases'
14 systems, but also supplies water for family housing and
15 tenant commands, and the water doesn't meet water quality
16 standards.

17 And I understand that the current budget plans would
18 seek funding for this project -- would not seek funding for
19 this project until Fiscal Year 2026. So I am concerned
20 that the system is not able to meet these water quality
21 regulations for potable water. And this cannot be -- with
22 the current plan will not be addressed for a number of
23 years.

24 So General, are you looking to expedite projects like
25 Yuma's water treatment plant that affect the health and

1 safety of our Marines and their families?

2 General Berger: Thanks, Senator. Having lived at
3 Marine Corps Air Station Yuma in 1991 to '94, I think, I
4 know exactly what you are talking about. If you will allow
5 me, Senator, I would like to look into this problem and
6 come back to you individually with where that project is in
7 funding, and to your point, what might be done to
8 accelerate it.

9 But you are never going to -- I don't think you expect
10 us to shoot from the hip. So if it is okay with you, I
11 will do the homework and I will come back to your office
12 with here is where it lays right now and we -- and this is
13 what it would take to accelerate it.

14 Senator Kelly: I appreciate that. I have spent a lot
15 of time down there on the base looking at facilities. You
16 know, I really love looking at the airplanes and spending
17 time there, but it is as important as the airplanes are,
18 you know, things like enlisted housing, which also we, my
19 office would like to follow up on that issue as well. Got
20 a totally different question for Secretary Del Toro and
21 Admiral Gilday.

22 So in April, the State Department announced that the
23 United States and India had agreed at their recent two plus
24 two dialog to explore possibilities of utilizing Indian
25 shipyards for repair and maintenance of ships of the U.S.

1 Maritime Sealift Command. I was in India just a few weeks
2 ago and had discussions about this with Indian officials,
3 deputy National Security advisor, their secretary of
4 defense, and they were really interested in this
5 opportunity and optimistic about it.

6 So in connection with this possibility, Mr. Secretary,
7 to what degree would doing this work enhance Navy and DOD
8 operations in the Indo-Pacific region, and would doing this
9 work in Indian shipyards strengthen U.S., Indian relations?

10 Mr. Del Toro: Thanks, Senator. And thanks for your
11 dedication to this issue, because what distinguishes us
12 from the Russians and the Chinese is the alliances, the
13 strength of the alliances that we have with our partner
14 nations around the globe. And that is no better example of
15 our relationship with India as it continues to grow.

16 And while the specifics of this deal is being
17 negotiated, I think overall that it is a perfect
18 representation of what we need to continue to do around the
19 globe as well in order to support our ships deployed in the
20 Indo-Pacific. The CNO has been very engaged in this, and
21 with your permission, I would like to ask him to discuss
22 the matter further.

23 Admiral Gilday: Thank you, sir. So I visited India
24 and I specifically asked to go to Mumbai to take a look at
25 their civilian shipyards, to see for myself what their

1 capabilities are. This is a quick win for the United
2 States, India relationship. We are just sending now a team
3 over there to do a more detailed survey. My goal is to get
4 a ship in there this summer to do voyage repairs.

5 So, it gives us more flexibility, more opportunities
6 in theater to get ships fixed. They have a high degree of
7 confidence in their ability to do that. I think we are on
8 the right track, sir, and I will follow up with you as we
9 nail down that deal.

10 Senator Kelly: All right. And if there is any other,
11 you know, gaps and authorities that you need from Congress,
12 please let us know. And I would like to figure out a way
13 to get this done. India and the United States, we have the
14 same strategic problem in the region, and that is China.
15 So it is -- wherever we can look for opportunities to work
16 jointly with the Indian government, the Indian military, I
17 think it benefits us. Thank you.

18 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Kelly. Senator
19 Tuberville, please.

20 Senator Tuberville: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank
21 you very much, gentlemen, for being here today and your
22 service. Admiral Gilday, after the fall of Afghanistan, we
23 didn't see a single senior officer lose their job. I think
24 that surprised many, many people here in the United States.

25 You know, we have heard a lot today about current

1 culture problems plaguing the military, but I want to
2 commend something that the Navy does exceptionally well,
3 accountability. The Navy has a huge culture and
4 accountability -- for example, the USS Connecticut hit an
5 underwater mountain last fall. Am I correct that you
6 removed the Commander, Executive Officer, and the Senior
7 Enlisted Boat Chief?

8 Admiral Gilday: Yes, sir, we did.

9 Senator Tuberville: In your words, why is the Navy's
10 culture of holding senior officer accountable more
11 important in maintaining standards and performance? Could
12 you give me your thoughts?

13 Admiral Gilday: Well, sir, I think standards of
14 command are very important. They are grounded in the law.
15 They are also grounded in Navy regulations. But more
16 importantly, there is the expectation that our sailors have
17 that we hold our seniors accountable.

18 And perhaps even more important than that, the
19 confidence of the American people. That they send their
20 youth to serve for their country and that they be well-led.
21 And if they are not well-led, then we change those leaders
22 out.

23 Senator Tuberville: Thank you. In your opening
24 statement, there was a couple things that struck me, and
25 this is also for General Berger. Recruiting, training, and

1 accountability. You said that you would much prefer
2 quality over quantity, and I think we all agree with that.
3 21st century military. I think that we all need to open
4 our eyes about what just happened in the last 70, 80 days,
5 Russia going into Ukraine.

6 Russia had every hand up in Ukraine, except Russia
7 didn't realize, they hadn't been in a war in a while, and
8 their mid-level officers failed, their leadership failed.
9 They had all kind of weapons, and they got their tails
10 handed to them. I think it is very, very important that we
11 understand this is a different era. I just came from
12 coaching. The kids, young men and women have changed over
13 the last 20, 30 years, and we need to change with it.

14 Now, I take my hat off to General Berger of what he
15 has done in terms of changing his philosophy of the weapons
16 that they might use in certain ways. What do you think
17 about the future of recruiting and training and the
18 accountability of today's young men and women in our armed
19 forces?

20 Senator Tuberville: Well, sir, I think our recruiting
21 -- there are definitely recruiting challenges based on the
22 fact that the pool of qualified recruits is getting
23 smaller, is not getting larger. I will say this, I think
24 it is important for the country to celebrate what a great
25 military that we have so that our youth actually see that

1 as a viable, attractive option for them to serve their
2 country with pride and to make their families proud.

3 But it is something that, you know, all too often, you
4 know, there are plenty of cheap shots out there, it is easy
5 to be negative. But, boy, the further you get away from
6 D.C., the better things look with respect to the United
7 States Navy and the United States Marine Corps, and the
8 quality of people that we have serving and the quality
9 leaders, the dedication, the passion, the commitment, it is
10 a great outfit with a great future for anybody that wants
11 to join.

12 Senator Tuberville: Thank you. General Berger.

13 General Berger: Sir, you mentioned Russia and other
14 folks in here have mentioned China. I think in the same
15 way as some people contrast the democracy versus, you know,
16 autocracy, we have an all-volunteer force. Not lost on us,
17 right. In other words, sort of like democracy is an
18 experiment. All volunteer force is not on autopilot. I
19 mean, that is where you are driving it.

20 We have to work at an all-volunteer force. It is not
21 on autopilot. Now all of us, every recruiter, all of you
22 are part of the health of that force. They come into the
23 military for a lot of reasons. Money is an incentive, but
24 that is not why they joined the Navy, that is not why they
25 joined the Marine Corps. They want to be part of something

1 bigger. They want to be challenged. They want to
2 contribute to the U.S. We all have to be proactive, I
3 think, in how we bring them into the military. It is not
4 on autopilot. It is not on cruise control.

5 Senator Tuberville: And we can't lose our hard nose
6 training because you just saw what happened with Russia's
7 military. Social media, to those men and women fighting
8 for Russia was a problem. They all had phones and they are
9 able to read those. It is a different era.

10 And we need to make sure we can adjust to this era
11 along with it, because if we don't, then it doesn't make
12 any difference how much money we spend or how we go about
13 recruiting. If we don't look at the problems that we just
14 saw from a superpower, then we will not learn ourselves and
15 we could end up on the same side of the boat. Thank you
16 very much, Mr. Chairman.

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

19 Senator Peters: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Secretary
20 Del Toro, in February of this year, a Federal judge
21 approved a settlement agreement in the class action lawsuit
22 Manker v. Del Toro. The lawsuit alleged that the Navy had
23 systematically denied discharge status upgrades to Corporal
24 Manker and thousands of other Marines and sailors who were
25 suffering from PTSD or TBI at the time of their discharge.

1 These denials were in direct contravention of statute,
2 as well as internal DOD memoranda. That both a Federal
3 judge and the Department of Navy agreed to a settlement
4 demonstrates the veracity of the claims put forward by
5 Corporal Manker. This agreement is also in line with the
6 earlier settlement agreement from Kennedy v. McCarthy,
7 which dealt with nearly the same issue but for the
8 Department of the Army.

9 As a sponsor of the Fairness for Veterans Act, the
10 issue of bad paper discharges and ensuring our veterans are
11 getting the benefits they have earned through their service
12 is a priority for me, and the allegations leveled in Manker
13 v. Del Toro are certainly extremely troubling for these
14 folks who were suffering from PTSD and was not diagnosed at
15 the time of their discharge.

16 My question for you, sir, is why did the Navy choose
17 to ignore the Fairness for Veterans Act as well as
18 protections laid out in Hagel, Kurta, Wilkie, and Carson
19 memos when dealing with veterans appearing before the Naval
20 Discharge Review Board?

21 [Technical problems.]

22 Chairman Reed: Mr. Secretary, could you bring the
23 microphone close, please?

24 Mr. Del Toro: Thank you, Senator, for your support of
25 the Fairness for Veterans Act. As to the question -- and

1 thank you for your support of our veterans in general. I
2 am committed to ensuring that our veterans receive the
3 appropriate due process through the Navy's Discharge Review
4 Board, and I am pleased that we were able to settle on this
5 matter. As I understand it, the Department of the Navy did
6 not endorse the Fairness for Veterans Act, or the
7 protections laid out in these memos.

8 Though Department of Navy did not clearly articulate
9 that the memos were taken into consideration during the
10 adjudication process itself. The memos provide that not
11 all misconduct can be mitigated. However, there are
12 nuances, including when the memos were issued, and which
13 entities and classes of veterans were subject to them.

14 And I would be happy to set up a specific briefing
15 with your offices to discuss these nuances and your
16 concerns but let me assure you that we will continue to
17 cooperate to the fullest extent as we actually execute the
18 details of the agreement itself.

19 Senator Peters: Do you do you see any difficulties in
20 fully complying with this settlement, and what are the
21 timelines you have?

22 Mr. Del Toro: I do not. And I will have to get back
23 to you on the exact timeline, Senator.

24 Senator Peters: Well, I appreciate it. I would love
25 to work with your office on this issue going forward.

1 Mr. Del Toro: Yes, sir.

2 Senator Peters: General Berger, Force Design 2030
3 calls for, among many things, the Marine Corps to more
4 enthusiastically embrace the use of drones, both at the
5 tactical level, through the use of Ravens and Pumas, but
6 also at the operational level with a recent procurement of
7 MQ-9s.

8 If INDOPACOM is the theater a priority, which it is,
9 and increasing the Marines' organic ISR is a priority of
10 yours as well, that I understand, I am curious though, how
11 you plan to embrace these new platforms as you also at the
12 same time simultaneously seek to divest yourself of roughly
13 10,000 Marines over the -- for the next decade.

14 So my question for you is, in an era of constrained
15 budgets and static or declining personnel levels, how do
16 you plan to leverage the manpower resources available to
17 you in the Marine Corps Forces Reserves to bolster the
18 Marine Corps ISR capabilities and use of drones?

19 General Berger: A couple of thoughts, sir. First,
20 the divestments for the Marine Corps are largely done.
21 That is what the last three years was focused on, including
22 the structure. We are about where we are leveled off at
23 177,000 plus or minus, and that is about where we were
24 before 9/11. So that part is complete.

25 The modernization of the Marine Corps, as you

1 highlighted, will amplify the role of unmanned systems,
2 air, surface, ground, and closing -- organically close in
3 kill chains and kill webs is what enables that forward
4 force to do what it is going to need to do. So what is the
5 difference?

6 Well, some of it is the change in the way that we
7 operate. In other words, unmanned systems for the last 15
8 years had a big footprint on the ground in terms of ground
9 control stations, infusion. All of that, I think
10 artificial intelligence and the modernization of the
11 network will shrink that.

12 Second, frankly, the folks who operate those systems
13 now, they are digital natives. This is the world they grew
14 up in. So we are not teaching somebody something from
15 scratch. This is something they have lived with since they
16 were a teenager.

17 Senator Peters: That is correct. Thank you so much.
18 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

19 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Peters. Senator
20 Sullivan, please.

21 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And
22 gentlemen, thank you for your service. General, I want to
23 stay focused on Force Design. Again, I appreciate, like a
24 lot of Senators, bold initiatives pursuant to the 2018 NDS
25 that you have undertaken with Force Design. I do want to

1 go into a couple of the bigger issues that have emerged,
2 one in which I see probably the biggest risk to the force
3 and the mission of the Marine Corps that I am concerned
4 about is the rate of divestiture compared to the rate of
5 new capability development being fielded.

6 It is in essence building on what Senator Peters
7 mentioned. In particular, a lot of the experts view one of
8 the most dangerous periods in U.S., China relations as in
9 the late 2020s. And as you have executed Force Design, the
10 Marine Corps has reduced the number of -- the number and
11 size of infantry battalions, divested all its tanks,
12 reduced the number of aviation squadrons and canon,
13 artillery batteries.

14 Additionally, just last month, the light amphibious
15 warship, a central piece to the concept of standard forces
16 in Force Design was announced will be further delayed until
17 2025. First shipment is not expected till 2027.

18 Can you explain how the rate of divestiture and the
19 rate of new capability development integration keeps the
20 Marine Corps optimally prepared for conflict today and in
21 the future? And is there risk and how do you mitigate it?
22 I believe there is risk.

23 General Berger: There absolutely is risk. I think in
24 any organization that goes through Force Design, civilian
25 sector or military, if you are going through that effort,

1 there is absolutely some risk. The challenge is making
2 sure you can see it, you can understand it, that you share
3 it with the stakeholders, including this committee.

4 And you have ways to offset that risk while you are
5 modernizing at speed. If we had waited -- for example,
6 Senator, if we had waited three years, let's say we have
7 waited this year to start divestment, we would never be
8 able to stay in front of China. That is the assumption
9 going forward.

10 At the rate that they are modernizing and expanding,
11 if we had waited, we never could have closed the gap, never
12 would have stayed in front.

13 Senator Sullivan: Can I ask you, General, just to
14 your comments that you just made, to work with this
15 committee to ensure that this -- again, there is a lot of
16 divestment going on right now, pretty dramatic, and
17 capability development is further out. The laws are
18 delayed. Some of these systems haven't been fully
19 developed.

20 Can you provide to this committee a timeline and a
21 chart that anticipates year by year between now and 2030,
22 or maybe even looking back when Force Design 2030 began, to
23 what we are divesting and what we are gaining and how will
24 that make sure that the gap in the trough between
25 divestment in combat capability is not so big that it poses

1 risk to the force or mission? Can you provide that to the
2 committee?

3 General Berger: I can absolutely do that. And that
4 is the rationale, that is the reason behind publishing each
5 year, this is where we are with Force Design, this is what
6 we have learned today, the actions taken, this is the plan
7 ahead, which we published last month for this year.

8 Senator Sullivan: Yes. No, I saw that.

9 General Berger: That is the goal.

10 Senator Sullivan: I appreciate you working with us on
11 that. Let me go to another issue and you mentioned it in
12 your testimony, but some of the criticisms of Force Design
13 is that it is so China focused that it undermines the
14 Corps' capability to be a lethal force in readiness, to
15 meet any contingency anywhere in the world, which, of
16 course, is a hallmark of the Marine Corps.

17 Can you describe in detail how the Marine Corps of
18 2030 will apply to combat -- combined arms across a range
19 of global conflict scenarios, and how that compares and
20 enhances your current combined arms and MAGTF capabilities
21 anywhere in the world, not just China.

22 General Berger: The distinction -- the understanding
23 of what pacing means matters, of course. And the term
24 pacing, of course, predates 2018 when the National Defense
25 Strategy first came out. Pacing, that is that level, that

1 is the bar at which the capabilities, if you have to either
2 match or overmatch that in order to compete and win.

3 It is not about invading China. It is not about
4 fighting China. It is about that is the level of
5 capabilities that the Joint Force and the Marine Corps has
6 to have, has to have a relative advantage over. So the
7 whole Force Design effort, in fact, the modernization of
8 the Joint Force is meant with that in mind.

9 Not us, what is the likelihood of us fighting China,
10 but what is the level of capabilities that we will need in
11 order to have a relative advantage now and into the future?
12 Combined arms in the past the course worked very well for
13 the Marine Corps, has ensured our success. It will be the
14 foundation going forward. But how we fight combined arms
15 will change. The integration of sensors to shooters was
16 step number one.

17 The second one is the shortening the steps from the
18 data to the shooting element. This is a progression of
19 combined arms, this natural, this is evolution. Again,
20 driven by technology on the one hand, and the threat on the
21 other hand.

22 Combined arms in 2030 or combined arms in 2027 will
23 look a little bit different than today, and it is
24 necessary, but it is still combined arms, and it is in
25 support of or in conjunction with maneuver always.

1 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

2 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Sullivan. Senator
3 Rosen, please.

4 Senator Rosen: Well, thank you, Chairman Reed, for
5 holding this hearing. Thank you, the witnesses, for being
6 here today, for your service. And Secretary Del Toro, it
7 is really good to see you again. Thank you for meeting
8 with me recently. And of course, I am going to talk about
9 our Fallon Naval Air Station today. And Secretary Del
10 Toro, as you well know, we are so proud, Nevada is so proud
11 to host Fallon Naval Air Station. It is home to Top Gun,
12 our Nation's premiere carrier Air Wing, and our SEAL
13 training centers.

14 And the Navy is seeking to expand Fallon by over
15 650,000 acres. And as we have discussed on several
16 occasions, this proposal would impact our local
17 communities, our tribes, sportsmen, ranchers, and others
18 who currently access and operate on these lands. And I
19 really appreciate the visits you and Admiral Gilday have
20 made to Fallon. Your continued collaboration with me and
21 the Nevada delegation.

22 Thank you to all the local stakeholders, as we all
23 work to reach consensus on a proposal that both supports
24 the military modernization requirements you are speaking
25 of, keep up with our current and emerging threats, while

1 maintaining Nevada's natural and cultural resources through
2 land mitigations in the northern parts of our State.

3 And I know we have been working with the Department of
4 Interior to improve the original expansion request, and
5 that OMB has just cleared the legislative proposal on
6 Tuesday for Congressional review. So now that it has been
7 released to Congress, could you speak a little bit about
8 the specifics and how you think it addresses the concerns
9 raised in the original Fallon proposal, Mr. Secretary?

10 Mr. Del Toro: Yes, ma'am. Thank you for your
11 leadership and the leadership of the entire delegation on
12 this critically important issue to our combat readiness
13 across to the Department of the Navy, both Marine Corps and
14 Navy.

15 Obviously, the expansion of Fallon is simply critical
16 to our combat readiness in the future to be able to deter
17 our aggressors and China, Russia, and anywhere else around
18 the globe with modernized aircraft and missile systems and
19 weapon systems.

20 It is just simply critical that our warfighters be
21 able to train like they fight in order to create a culture
22 of warfighting excellence.

23 And I am very pleased the Department of Navy has been
24 able to come to agreement with all the stakeholders that
25 are involved in a very respectful way across the entire

1 community to try to come to a better place so that this
2 legislative proposal can move forward here in the Congress.

3 And we do look forward to its possible passing this
4 coming year.

5 Senator Rosen: Thank you. I want to talk critically
6 about -- a critical housing shortage, though, at the Naval
7 Air Station, because it is the only naval base in the
8 continental United States that is designated as a critical
9 housing area.

10 So the housing shortage has just been -- we have been
11 briefed to leadership for future construction. Little
12 progress has been made. And the shortage, of course, is
13 only getting worse. So as we modernize and expand, this is
14 going to place a bigger strain on housing.

15 So I understand that there is about 400 acres of land
16 adjacent to the current base housing at Fallon, which was
17 once housing that was demolished years ago. Are there
18 plans to re-utilize this, and can I have your commitment to
19 really increase housing in Fallon and surrounding areas?

20 Mr. Del Toro: So Senator, this is another issue that
21 is incredibly important to the quality of life of our
22 sailors across all the Nation, and specifically to Fallon
23 as well too. Allow me to come back to you with answers
24 that regards a specific issue there at Nevada in terms of
25 the timeline.

1 But we are deeply committed to providing not just
2 family housing to our sailors who have families, but also
3 to our single sailors as well too in order to provide them
4 the quality of life that they deserve. Admiral, would you
5 like to comment any further on that or --?

6 Admiral Gilday: Just a quick comment, ma'am. Fallon
7 is a national treasure. What we -- what it provides for
8 our warfighters is absolutely unmatched. If you take a
9 look at Russia showing up to a fight untrained, it gives
10 you -- that is a reason why we need Fallon.

11 The first time we use these weapons with these
12 aircraft can't be in conflict. With respect to housing, we
13 are making an investment in Fallon, and we hope to put, we
14 are on track to put a contract for 172 new units in place
15 about a year from now.

16 Senator Rosen: Well, that is terrific, because we
17 know Fallon, of course, is a small area surrounding there.
18 There is a housing shortage already. And you can't expand
19 and modernize and bring the kind of staff that we need,
20 even the workforce for the surrounding community to support
21 everyone, unless we have at least affordable housing for
22 our servicemen and women.

23 So I appreciate you getting on this and thinking about
24 it as quickly as we can and get it on the board. Because I
25 -- we can't have homeless servicemen and women. That is

1 for sure. Thank you. I yield back.

2 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator Rosen.

3 Senator Scott, please.

4 Senator Scott: Thank you, Chair, for holding speed.

5 And I want to thank each of you for your service, your hard
6 work in trying to make sure we have the most lethal
7 military in the world. Can you talk about how, you know,
8 it doesn't seem like our risk are going down? China is
9 continuing to be belligerent. They are trying -- they are
10 building a big navy. Russia is not getting better.

11 You know, there is no place in the world that seems
12 like it is getting safer right now. So the President
13 budget has a shrinking our naval battle force from 298
14 ships today to 280 in Fiscal Year 2027.

15 So talk about how you are going to -- how you are
16 going to deal with the reduced capacity, how -- you know,
17 what plans do you have to be able to continue to provide
18 the same support around the world where it might be needed?

19 Mr. Del Toro: Good morning, Senator. It is an
20 incredibly important question. Yes, capacity does dip down
21 in the next five years, but then it steadies out again five
22 years later in according to the shipbuilding plan. But
23 what is more important is that although the size of the
24 Navy may dip, the capabilities of the Navy are actually
25 going to be greater than they ever have been before.

1 And we are actually bringing online just over the next
2 set of 50 battleships and supply ships that are going to be
3 far more capable of deterring our aggressors, China,
4 Russia, anywhere else that we face aggressors around the
5 globe than we have been able to in the past with the type
6 of R&D investments in modernization that is critical to
7 deter them in every way.

8 Senator Scott: Admiral Gilday.

9 Admiral Gilday: Sir, we have underinvested in the
10 United States Navy for two decades, for a good reason,
11 based on our priorities in Afghanistan and Iraq. As you
12 know, getting the industrial base, putting that rudder over
13 and generating new capability at speed, that is a
14 challenge, particularly when you think about the complexity
15 of the warships, the best warships in the world that we put
16 to sea manned by the best sailors in the world. And so it
17 is going to take time.

18 And we have -- I would draw a parallel to the
19 Commandant's challenge with Force Design 2030, when new
20 capabilities always lag the divestment. But based on the
21 top line that we have, and based on the threat that we
22 face, particularly with respect to China, we have to make
23 sure that based on the budget we have, we are fielding the
24 most lethal, capable, ready force that we can.

25 You mentioned in your comments upfront that lethality

1 matters. So I think we are 100 percent aligned with
2 respect to that. And we are trying to make sure that both
3 the Navy that we have today, the Navy we have in the
4 future, has the best capabilities, but also is the best
5 trained force that we can put on those ships.

6 Senator Scott: And can you explain what happened with
7 the littoral combat ships that we just commissioned a
8 couple of years ago, now we are talking about -- I mean,
9 what happened? Did we just -- did our needs change or did
10 we pick the wrong ship before? I mean, it is a pretty big
11 investment to get rid of.

12 Admiral Gilday: Yes, sir. So the Navy's enduring
13 missions are sea control and power projection. And we
14 should never, ever lose sight of the capabilities that we
15 are going to invest in, contribute to those two missions.
16 I would offer that LCS was an idea 20 or 25 years ago that
17 just did not consider those two missions with respect to
18 those two enduring missions, with respect to a high end
19 peer competitor like we face right now with China.

20 With respect to the nine ships we have right now on
21 the table in this budget proposal to retire, that is
22 primarily driven by the fact that the systems that we were
23 going to put on that ship just did not pan out in terms of
24 technical capability against the threat that we are facing.

25 And my best advice would be not to put another dollar

1 against those systems, but to reinvest that in systems that
2 really make a difference in the future and in weapons that
3 we need today in the fleet.

4 Senator Scott: Okay. Thank you. General Berger, as
5 you revamp what the Marine Corps is doing, can you talk
6 about how you are going to have to change your working
7 relationship with the other branches of Government to be
8 able to fulfill your mission?

9 General Berger: I don't know that it is a fundamental
10 shift, or are you talking about outside the Department of
11 Defense, Senator? Is that what you mean or --?

12 Senator Scott: No, the other branches of the
13 military.

14 General Berger: Oh, the other branches. Here, I
15 think no fundamental change, no, but I think a more
16 realistic view of where overlaps are between the services
17 that are healthy and where they are redundant and
18 excessive. In certain areas, for the Joint Force to do
19 what it needs to do, overlap is healthy -- overlap is a
20 good thing. But where it gets to be excessive,
21 inefficient, okay, there we have to be able -- we have to
22 make the hard decisions. And that is part of what is
23 driving Force Design.

24 Senator Scott: All right. Thank you. Thank each of
25 you for what you are doing.

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

3 Senator Wicker: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I
4 understand there has been a lot of discussion about LPDs.
5 Let me just see if we can summarize. General Berger, your
6 requirement for traditional amphibious ships is 31, is that
7 right?

8 General Berger: That is correct, sir.

9 Senator Wicker: And Admiral Gilday, you agree with
10 that, is that correct?

11 Admiral Gilday: Yes, sir. Our joint analysis
12 supports that.

13 Senator Wicker: Okay. Now, there is a study that the
14 CNO, Admiral Gilday, has told us today confirms that 31 is
15 the requirement. So, Mr. Secretary, that is a fact, is it
16 not?

17 Mr. Del Toro: The study has concluded. The findings
18 of the studies are now being reported out and being
19 discussed in the Department of Defense, as well as by
20 myself, as well as in the Department of Navy. And that has
21 - the findings of that study now has to be balanced by the
22 force structure assessment that is being conducted for PLM
23 2024 that is aligned to the National Defense Strategy. So
24 there is some additional work that needs to be done before
25 the final determination is made.

1 Senator Wicker: Mr. Secretary, do Admiral Gilday and
2 General Berger know what they are talking about?

3 Mr. Del Toro: Yes, sir, they do.

4 Senator Wicker: Okay. So have they made a
5 misstatement today?

6 Mr. Del Toro: No, sir, they have not made a
7 misstatement today.

8 Senator Wicker: Okay. And we were told we would have
9 this study before today's hearing. Assistant Secretary
10 Stefany said that. So why do we not have the study yet?

11 Mr. Del Toro: I don't know why the Assistant
12 Secretary told you that, sir. He may have misspoken, but
13 certainly he did not consult with me in releasing that
14 study because it hasn't been reviewed yet by senior leaders
15 of the Department of Defense.

16 Senator Wicker: When do you think we will have that
17 study, when all of these extra steps you mentioned are
18 done?

19 Mr. Del Toro: It should be, if required, it should be
20 released in the next several weeks, sir.

21 Senator Wicker: Let me just say also, during the
22 chairman's opening statement, he talked about the 355 ship
23 Navy, and that is I think he may have mentioned it as a
24 goal. You are aware, Mr. Secretary, that that is in the
25 statute, the law of the land passed by both houses of

1 Congress and signed into law by the President of the United
2 States. Are you aware of that?

3 Mr. Del Toro: Yes, sir, I am. Okay.

4 Senator Wicker: And are you guided at all by the fact
5 that the statute actually says 355 ships?

6 Mr. Del Toro: Yes, sir, I am guided by that. And if
7 you actually look at the, one of the alternatives in our
8 shipbuilding plan, it actually meets the requirements of
9 that statute.

10 Senator Wicker: Okay. General Berger, would you
11 elaborate on the update to Force Design 2030. What does it
12 mean in layman's terms about the hider-finder emphasis and
13 its ability to support lethality and our ability to win
14 future fights?

15 General Berger: Hider-finder reconnaissance, counter
16 reconnaissance, goes by different names, but it is the same
17 idea, Senator, in that if you have the lethal means to
18 engage your target, hold them at risk. There is a
19 presumption there you can find them. And there is also a
20 presumption that you can find them first and get the first
21 round down range.

22 So more and more as from satellites down to
23 terrestrial, down to subterranean sensors are allowing not
24 just great powers but a lot of powers to see what is going
25 on around them. So winning that -- when I say, when we say

1 winning the higher-finder competition, it means the ability
2 to detect, track, and conceal your own location or stay
3 within a displacement cycle that moves you more rapidly
4 than they can target you.

5 Winning that stays in front of the adversary. Losing
6 that means they can engage you, means you are held at risk.
7 So it doesn't decrease the importance of lethality.
8 Absolutely, it is important as it always has been.

9 But more and more and more important is the
10 realization that we have to have the means to detect, to
11 track, to hold at risk the adversary and do it first.

12 Senator Wicker: Thank you very much. Mr. Chairman, I
13 don't -- in six seconds, I don't have time to ask about the
14 failure of the USS Sioux City and the reason for the class
15 wide failure of the ship's engineering plan. So I will see
16 if I can take a second round or ask that on the record, and
17 I yield.

18 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator Wicker.
19 Let me recognize Senator Tillis, please.

20 Senator Tillis: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Gentlemen,
21 thank you for being here. Admiral Gilday, I enjoyed the
22 time that Senator Gillibrand and I spent with you and
23 Admiral Joiner. Thank you for giving us that time.

24 I want to talk a little bit about Finland and Sweden
25 for a moment, because we have a number of members I think

1 that need to increase their level of understanding as we
2 move into what will likely be an invitation from NATO, to
3 join NATO after they express their desire to do so in the
4 coming days or weeks. Just for our edification purposes,
5 Finland is a Nation of 5 million people.

6 Right now they have 62, F-18s. They have 64, F-35s on
7 order. They are already spending 2 percent as a percentage
8 of GDP on military. And they have announced putting out
9 another \$2.2 billion. In Sweden, they have 80 Gripen
10 fourth generation, somewhere between an F-16, F-18
11 capability. They are spending 1.3 as a percentage of GDP
12 today, and they have expressed a commitment to getting to 2
13 percent by 2028.

14 We know that they embrace Western norms. They have
15 the rule of law. They check all the boxes with respect to
16 what would be a welcomed member of NATO. Number one, would
17 you refute any of that? And number two, can you tell me a
18 little bit about your relationships with your counterparts
19 in both Sweden and Finland and your observations on their
20 participation in various joint exercises that we have had?

21 And we will start with Admiral Gilday, and then, Mr.
22 Secretary, you are more than welcome to opine, but I am
23 really interested in the mil to mil relationships first and
24 how you would assess their capabilities. I, for one, think
25 they would be a net exporter of security if they were able

1 to achieve accession into NATO. I would like to get your
2 view on that for the record.

3 Admiral Gilday: Yes, sir. I have a relationship with
4 both heads of the navy. In terms of the Swedish CNO, she
5 was just at my home last month for dinner. And so we have
6 ongoing dialog with her. Both of those militaries, as you
7 stated, are very capable. We like their geography as well.
8 They are in a key position.

9 I would also just reiterate what the committee already
10 knows and that is they both enjoy a special partnership as
11 a near ally near ally status. And so we exercise and work
12 very, very closely with those militaries.

13 I would characterize our ability to work together with
14 them in exercises as highly interoperable. And so I see
15 this transition into NATO, if it happens, as virtually
16 seamless from a military perspective.

17 Senator Tillis: General Berger.

18 General Berger: Sir, I would probably like the CNO
19 and some others. I have trained with both countries and
20 also from Kosovo to Middle East, fought with them combat,
21 in combat, served with them in units. They are phenomenal,
22 both countries. Both are very focused, very dedicated,
23 disciplined, and well-trained, well-led.

24 Second part, I would say Finland, because of the long
25 border that they have with Russia and the decades since

1 World War II, have a unique insight into Russia, very
2 valuable for us, just because of the length of the shared
3 border and I would just call it a unique relationship that
4 is very valuable.

5 Norway just has a little short border with them, but
6 Finland a long one. Third, I would say the unique
7 relationship between Norway and Finland and Sweden will be
8 hugely valuable to us, because Norway being a founding
9 member of NATO, and us working with them for 70 years,
10 their relationship with Finland and Sweden will be a
11 tremendous benefit to the U.S. and to the mil to mil
12 relationship.

13 Senator Tillis: Thank you. Mr. Secretary.

14 Mr. Del Toro: The only thing I will add, Senator, is
15 I think there is tremendous opportunities for collaboration
16 among all four of those nations that were mentioned in the
17 high North and in the Baltic.

18 Senator Tillis: Okay. I am going to submit a lot of
19 questions for the record about FRC East and resource
20 requirements, things like that. Admiral Gilday, I
21 appreciate your comment when we had breakfast about getting
22 back down there again, and Commandant, I appreciate your
23 focus on that area.

24 The last thing I want to focus on is whether or not
25 you all believe that Admiral Mullen's concerns about our

1 national debt back in 2011, when it was just approaching
2 \$12 trillion, is every bit as much a threat to us today in
3 terms of National Security now that we are approaching \$30
4 trillion?

5 Now, he didn't stated, if you read all that he spoke
6 on and wrote there, it wasn't because of a dollar value, it
7 was because of how disruptive that becomes with the ebbs
8 and flows of investment for defense, for modernization.

9 And am I correct in assuming that at least some of
10 what is driving you all to rethink how we counter the
11 threat in an effective way in the future is driven by the
12 ebbs and flows and the lack of certainty that you get from
13 Congress with respect to short and long term investments?

14 And, Mr. Secretary, I will start with you, and then I
15 will have either the two opine as well. Thank you, Mr.
16 Chair.

17 Mr. Del Toro: Senator, I am always concerned about
18 the Nation's deficit and the Nation's national debt as
19 well, and the impact it has on the economy. Those are
20 challenging economic issues that have to be well balanced
21 among all the other concerns that the Nation faces. And
22 certainly our Nation has faced great challenges since 2001,
23 economic, militarily, and with regards to COVID as well.

24 Admiral Gilday: Yes, sir, quickly. I would say that
25 a key piece of that is lack of predictability and

1 stability. And so not just inside the military and not
2 just for the U.S. industrial base, but also what we project
3 to our allies and partners and potential adversaries.

4 General Berger: The CNO captured it. And I think
5 things like a continuing resolution hurt both internally
6 and externally, just the way that Admiral Gilday
7 highlighted. So working closely with this committee to
8 make sure we do get a budget on time in October, absolutely
9 instills the confidence that we need.

10 Senator Tillis: And, Mr. Chair, I know I have run
11 over, and I try not to most of the time. And, you know, I
12 just want to say that when, we excuse me, we have
13 discussions about our disappointment with progress on
14 certain systems, progress on implementing certain
15 strategies, that from time to time we have to look at
16 ourselves and recognize that decisions we make here are a
17 part of the root cause for some of the challenges that you
18 have to deal with.

19 Not that they are error free, but I think this is a
20 joint -- we are jointly responsible for doing a better job
21 and helping you all be more successful. Thank you.

22 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Tillis. Senator
23 Blumenthal, please.

24 Senator Blumenthal: Thank you very much, Mr.
25 Chairman. Thank you all for your leadership and your

1 service. Commandant, you know, I was very interested in
2 one of your responses to an earlier question about the
3 enduring lessons of war and the new lessons, the technology
4 changes, but some of the enduring facts about military
5 strength remain. One of them has always seemed to me, and
6 it is a strength of the Marine Corps, our noncommissioned
7 officer leadership.

8 And if what we hear and see is true about the Russian
9 military right now, one of their central weaknesses has
10 been lack of leadership on the ground among the equivalent
11 of our noncommissioned senior leadership -- not so senior,
12 probably. For us, it is men and women in their 20s and
13 early 30s who command units and are able to drive them in
14 times of danger and need.

15 And I think that is one of the enduring facts about
16 the Marine Corps that is a source of its strength for the
17 Nation. And I am assuming that you are focused on
18 developing that kind of leadership wherever it may be,
19 regardless of geography, race, religion, and gender.

20 General Berger: Two thoughts to offer back to you,
21 Senator, absolutely yes. And I am so grateful that my
22 predecessors, like General Gray and others, put the
23 emphasis and the resources on the training and the
24 education of the noncommissioned officers, because without
25 that -- they didn't have the tools. He and others focused

1 on that 25, 30 years ago, where we are reaping the benefits
2 of that now.

3 The second part of that, I would say the NCO Corps
4 itself is the officers have to have confidence in them and
5 delegate to them without micromanaging, trust that they are
6 going to lead, trust that they are going to make decisions
7 on their own, and that is the way that the Marine Corps
8 operates. That is, as you have captured it, that is the
9 strength of what we do, is the NCO Corps.

10 Senator Blumenthal: Thank you. Admiral Gilday, I
11 know you made reference to earlier in response, I think, to
12 Senator Rounds, the value of having a private shipyard do
13 submarine maintenance work.

14 I think that Electric Boat has been a source of great
15 strength in terms of maintenance. The Navy has not yet
16 awarded the contract for work on the Hartford, and I hope
17 that it will do so fairly promptly. I understand it may be
18 in June. Am I correct in that understanding?

19 Admiral Gilday: Sir, I will get back to you in the
20 exact timeline. But yes, I would just like to double down
21 on my comments on how important both Electric Boat and
22 Huntington Ingalls are from a repair -- not only from a
23 production standpoint, but from a repair standpoint. They
24 are absolutely critical.

25 Senator Blumenthal: I also want to focus on a

1 somewhat arcane, but I think important, question about the
2 unusually hazardous risk indemnity. This issue is complex,
3 but again, for contractors, it is a very important one. I
4 have recently voiced my concerns over a change in the
5 unusually hazardous risk indemnity policy in an exchange
6 with Assistant Secretary Stefany, last week, as a matter of
7 fact.

8 I am not going to have time and I know we are at the
9 end of a lengthy hearing, but I would be interested in
10 comments that you may have in writing. The Navy risks
11 losing its private partners and thus its ability to build
12 major weapons systems and technologies for future conflict
13 if it fails to take account of the risks that they
14 undertake by reversing a decades old indemnification policy
15 to no longer cover those kinds of risks involving
16 conventional weapons that rely on high energy propellants.

17 It may seem like a technical issue, but it is one of
18 great concern to the companies that manufacture these
19 weapons, and I would appreciate you looking into it.

20 Admiral Gilday: Yes, sir.

21 Senator Blumenthal: Thank you very much. Thank you,
22 Mr. Chairman.

23 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Blumenthal.
24 Senator Hawley, please.

25 Senator Hawley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thanks, all

1 of you, for being here. Thank you for your service.
2 General Berger, I just want to start by saying that I was
3 particularly pleased to see in Force Design 2030 annual
4 update your continued focus on China as the Nation's pacing
5 threat, on the Taiwan scenario, and your continued use of
6 those scenarios and that threat to benchmark the, what the
7 Marine Corps efforts are, and your strategic design.

8 I think it is a bold vision which you have been doing,
9 much overdue. And I just want to say, I think you have
10 done it in a very rigorous and thoughtful way. So I think
11 it is a model. Keep up the good work.

12 Mr. Secretary, if I could come to you, you said in
13 response to a question a minute ago that one of the
14 shipbuilding profiles, this is on a shipbuilding plan, one
15 of the profiles of three of them, one of them supports the
16 statutory requirement of a 335 ship Navy. Is that profile
17 three, I assume?

18 Mr. Del Toro: Yes, sir.

19 Senator Hawley: Okay. On the same plan, Admiral,
20 Navy officials told me earlier this week and last week that
21 profiles one and two of the shipbuilding plan do not meet
22 the Navy's operational requirements for the pacing scenario
23 in PACOM with regard to Taiwan. Can you confirm that
24 profile three would meet the Navy's operational
25 requirements?

1 Admiral Gilday: Sir, three does a better job. The
2 constraint -- constraint is still faced three is the
3 ability of the industrial base to produce those for, the
4 production line to actually produce those ships at pace to
5 meet our requirements. So the warfighting requires in the
6 Navy Marine Corps are what -- they are best reflected in an
7 alternative three.

8 Senator Hawley: So are you telling me, Admiral, we
9 would get there in three, but we might, it might still be a
10 push, even under three. Am I hearing you right?

11 Admiral Gilday: We would get there with three, but
12 that would require real growth in the budget.

13 Senator Hawley: Let me just ask you how long it would
14 take to get to the point under three where the Navy would
15 be able to meet its operational requirements?

16 Admiral Gilday: So with respect to 355, sir, that
17 would be out in the 2040s in order to put us on that path,
18 which I think is probably, you know, physically reasonable,
19 given, again, the constraints of the industrial base.

20 Senator Hawley: What about the operational
21 requirements for the pacing scenario in PACOM -- that is
22 defeating a fait accompli against Taiwan.

23 Admiral Gilday: So capacity does give you, obviously
24 gives you greater capability. And based on the way we are
25 going to fight, which we believe is to be distributed, a

1 distributed fleet rather than amassing forces, we would
2 mass effects. We want -- we need more ships of every
3 different type.

4 And so I am not ignoring the need for capacity but
5 given the top line that we have and dealing with reality,
6 what we are trying to do, Senator, is make sure that the
7 ships that we have and that we are building are the most
8 capable and high quality that we can field.

9 Senator Hawley: I just want to say again, for the
10 record, that I think it is disturbing, and this is no
11 reflection on you, Admiral, but I think it is disturbing
12 that of the three profiles in the shipbuilding plan, only
13 one of them comes close, and you were saying even then it
14 will be a push but comes close to meeting the operational
15 requirements that the Navy has to deal with the pacing
16 challenge and the pacing theater.

17 I mean, if that is not a wakeup call to this
18 committee, I don't know what is. Let me ask you about the
19 danger of simultaneous conflicts, Admiral, in multiple
20 theaters. So what would happen if the Navy -- well, let me
21 ask it this way. What would the impact be on the Navy's
22 ability to meet its operational requirements in EUCOM if we
23 had to withhold Navy forces from Europe in order to deter
24 Chinese aggression in PACOM?

25 Admiral Gilday: I think we would be challenged. We

1 would have to take a look at how you squeeze the most are
2 the Joint Forces have and use it in the best possible way.
3 But I think we would be challenged. You know, right now,
4 the force is not sized to handle two simultaneous
5 conflicts. It is sized to fight one and to keep a second
6 adversary in check. But in terms of a two -- two all-out
7 conflicts, we are not sized for that.

8 Senator Hawley: Can you give us a sense of what kind
9 of capabilities that the Navy provides that would be in
10 high demand, are in high demand in both EUCOM and PACOM?

11 Admiral Gilday: First of all, submarines. I think
12 secondly would be carrier air through, would be amphibious
13 ships, and then you need destroyers with multiple weapons
14 in order to protect those assets. So across the board, you
15 need more of everything.

16 Senator Hawley: Yes. Thinking about the constraints
17 that we would face in either theater, but particularly in
18 EUCOM, what are some of the capabilities you would say that
19 the Navy is currently providing in Europe that maybe our
20 allies in that region could be doing more to provide on
21 their own, should we need them in PACOM or elsewhere?

22 Admiral Gilday: I think submarines are a key
23 capability in any fight. And so that would be one message
24 I would give the Europe to invest more heavily in those
25 kinds of platforms.

1 Senator Hawley: Yes. Thank you. In my few remaining
2 seconds here, Mr. Secretary, let me ask you about an
3 interesting article I read from former Undersecretary of
4 the Navy, Robert Work, who recently said, I want to make
5 sure I get this right, he is talking about forward
6 presence, and he said, over time, an emphasis on forward
7 presence could lead to a decline in warfighting readiness
8 with potentially dire results.

9 Do you agree with the Former Secretary that the
10 presence operations can trade off with proficiencies that
11 are critical to combat?

12 Mr. Del Toro: I don't agree with his assessment that
13 we need less forward presence. I think we need greater
14 access to bases and logistics, bases in particular across
15 the globe, wherever we can find them.

16 Senator Hawley: Let me just -- last question here,
17 Mr. Chairman. I will finish with this. Let me ask if you
18 agree with this statement. This is Work again. The Navy
19 warfighting materiel readiness should no longer be
20 sacrificed on the altar of forward presence and the Navy
21 should no longer confuse that with winning a war. Do you
22 think that that is right, wrong, oversimplified?

23 Mr. Del Toro: I don't think we have sacrificed our
24 wartime time capabilities in exchange for presence. I
25 think the two go together. I think what we need is the

1 right capacity, the right capabilities to deliver the right
2 lethality. And that also demands access to those
3 logistical bases throughout the globe, working with our
4 partners and allies.

5 Senator Hawley: I am not so sure about that, but we
6 will follow up. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

7 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Hawley. We have
8 concluded the first round. Members have requested a second
9 round. We will also -- we will have a classified session
10 in SBC-217.

11 So, I will recognize Senator King first and then go to
12 the other side. I would ask you to keep your questions
13 concise and necessary for this open session, because you
14 will have another opportunity to talk to these gentlemen in
15 a closed session. Senator King, please.

16 Senator King: Just several quick points. Number one,
17 I want to associate myself with Senator Hirono's comments
18 about the 15 ship multi-year for destroyers. And I know
19 there is some discussion about whether the industrial base
20 has the capacity to meet that. I think there is a bit of a
21 circular argument.

22 My experience, working with Bath Iron Works is you
23 give them the signal and they can meet it. If they don't
24 get the signal of the longer term multi-year, then there is
25 -- then it makes it less likely that they will meet it.

1 So I don't think there should be a constraint. I
2 think everyone realizes from this discussion that, number
3 one, multi-years are better for the taxpayers, they are
4 better for the industrial base, and a longer multiyear
5 sends a strong signal to the industrial base that the
6 business will be there. They can make the investments and
7 meet that requirement. That is number one.

8 Number two, on the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, we have
9 been talking a lot about readiness, and I want to thank you
10 for the investment that the budget makes in completing or
11 at least moving forward the capital improvements at the
12 shipyard.

13 And already with that new dry dock, Mr. Secretary, as
14 you and I saw, the USS Cheyenne is in that dry dock
15 successfully. So the next step, of course, is to double
16 the capacity of that dry dock. But I want to mention a
17 sort of a side issue, in talking to the people of the
18 Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, they are talking about all the
19 investments in the infrastructure, that is really
20 important. But they also have investments in the people.

21 And every worker, every business in America is short
22 of workers. And they told me that the way to attract
23 additional workers to Portsmouth Naval Shipyard is
24 childcare and parking. And, you know, you don't really
25 think about parking as a naval function. But if we want

1 good people, and they are competing for the best in the
2 region, we have got to think about those kind of quality of
3 life things, and that we were talking a lot today about new
4 requirements of younger workers.

5 And those are the two things that have been brought to
6 my attention. So I wanted to mention those to you as you
7 think about the investment in the Portsmouth Naval
8 Shipyard. And finally, Mr. Secretary, you have indicated
9 in an excellent report about the collaboration and joint
10 development that is going on between Huntington Ingalls,
11 Bath Iron Works, and the Navy on the new DDG-X.

12 And I want to commend you for that report. And just,
13 if you could just state for the record, why it is important
14 in the development of this new platform, because where we
15 have had problems in the past is on new platforms. And
16 this is a case where I think we are moving down a very
17 beneficial path. And if you would just state for the
18 record your conclusions on that subject.

19 Mr. Del Toro: Yes, Senator. And obviously, given the
20 power constraints on our current classes of DDG Flight IIs
21 and Flight IIIs due to the size of the whole DDG-X, or sort
22 of that next transition to new technologies that will take
23 us above and beyond, such as the utilization of laser
24 systems, is one example. And so it is important to have
25 that transition. As we stated earlier today, is also

1 important to ensure that the technologies that are going to
2 go on that platform are mature, well understood
3 technologies that work so that we don't make the mistakes
4 of the past.

5 And finally, I would argue that we also need to ensure
6 that DDG-X's, the concept of operations for its employment
7 as well thought out, so that we could also integrate the
8 autonomous or semi-autonomous technologies that we look
9 forward to integrating well into the future as well.

10 Senator King: And in order to do that successfully,
11 working with the yards to be sure that what we design and
12 set for requirements can be built, I think, is an important
13 part of that process. Do you agree?

14 Mr. Del Toro: It is, Senator.

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

16 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator King. Senator
17 Wicker is recognized. And I, just for the benefit of
18 everyone, I am going to enforce the five minute rule. I
19 don't do it usually.

20 Senator Wicker: Okay. Very good. And I think we can
21 do this in less than 5 minutes. Secretary Del Toro, just
22 last Friday, it was reported that the USS Sioux City would
23 be headed to the Arabian Gulf. It has been spending time
24 in the Mediterranean. This is a Freedom variant LCS ship.
25 The Navy has announced it will decommission a total of 24

1 battleships, including the first 10 Freedom variant LCSs.

2 The Sioux City is reportedly going to be
3 decommissioned only four and a half years after it was
4 commissioned, and in part due to a class wide failure in
5 the ship's engineering plan. So I want to ask this, how
6 many ships have this class wide failure in the ship's
7 engineering plan?

8 And if the failure is that serious, why is it capable
9 of being sent to the Arabian Gulf for serious duty? Either
10 it is not reliable and not capable, or it is capable enough
11 to send it -- to be sent into harm's way. And then we will
12 leave time for Admiral Gilday to help answer that question
13 also.

14 Mr. Del Toro: Yes, sir. It is my understanding that
15 the USS Sioux City being of the Freedom variant with the
16 ASW module on it, and that is particularly the reason why
17 it is going to be decommissioned. As to the class-wide
18 failure, there are operational restrictions that were put
19 on the utilization of the ships in general, which keeps
20 them safe to operate, but not in their most extreme
21 fashion. And perhaps I could ask the CNO to further
22 elaborate on that.

23 Admiral Gilday: Secretary is right, sir. We have
24 operating limitations on those ships based on a known
25 problem in the engineering plant that needs to be replaced.

1 Over time, you know, we are replacing the combining -- it
2 is called the combining gear. It gives you more
3 flexibility with your engineering plan configuration and
4 allows you -- it allows you to operate at high speeds.

5 To your point, we believe the risk is -- we can
6 mitigate the risk using that vessel forward, given the
7 operating constraints that we have identified and the
8 guidance that we have given to the commanding officers. So
9 we have trained that ship for combat and sending her
10 forward to be able to provide the capability needed by the
11 CENTCOM Commander.

12 Senator Wicker: Is the failure in, Admiral, is the
13 failure in the engineering plan the same in all of these
14 ships -- in all of this class?

15 Admiral Gilday: No, sir. Just in the Freedom -- just
16 in the Freedom variant.

17 Senator Wicker: And how many are -- how many of those
18 are there?

19 Admiral Gilday: So, sir, there are about between 15
20 and 20.

21 Senator Wicker: And so the failure is the same in
22 those 15 or 20?

23 Admiral Gilday: The fix needs to occur in those 15 or
24 20. But one of the proposals is to decommission nine,
25 right. And so as the Secretary mentioned, it is not just

1 the combining gear, but also we were making an investment
2 in an anti-submarine warfare module for that ship that is
3 technically has not met its requirements. It is incapable,
4 in other words --

5 Senator Wicker: What about the others that are going
6 to be -- that are going to not be decommissioned?

7 Admiral Gilday: So 15 of those will have a mine
8 countermeasures module. So that particular capability is
9 on track to be IOC this year. And so those 15 ships are
10 going to be required to replace our existing minesweepers
11 that operate out of both the coast of Japan and Bahrain.
12 Additionally, there are six LCS that we would have the
13 existing anti-surface module on those ships, and that is a
14 proven capability that went IOC three years ago.

15 Senator Wicker: Mr. Chairman, I yield back 49
16 seconds.

17 Chairman Reed: We appreciate it. And that is the
18 challenge for our other colleagues. So, Senator Sullivan,
19 you are recognized.

20 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General
21 Berger, you mentioned that the rate of divestiture and the
22 rate of new combat capability development pose a risk, and
23 you have got to manage that risk.

24 One of your assumptions on the overall Force Design
25 was flat budgets, that you had to make these difficult

1 choices. Unfortunately, I think you are seeing that that
2 is actually true. And if you actually had a more robust
3 budget, it would help mitigate some of the risk in
4 modernization, wouldn't it, General?

5 General Berger: It would, absolutely. Everything on
6 the unfunded priority list for us accelerates
7 modernization. Correct.

8 Senator Sullivan: So, Mr. Secretary, I was
9 disappointed, and I have raised this with Secretary Austin
10 and General Milley, we have clearly a more dangerous
11 National Security situation around the world, and yet the
12 budget that was being put forward by the President for the
13 Department of the Navy, that is the Navy and Marine Corps
14 combined, is a 4 percent increase from the enacted budget,
15 we bolstered that.

16 Again, the President put forward a weak budget last
17 year. But with 8 percent inflation, that is actually a 4
18 percent inflation adjusted cut. So do you support a 4
19 percent inflation adjusted cut? The Commandant just showed
20 that this would help mitigate the Force Design risks if we
21 had a more robust budget.

22 But I am concerned, very concerned. And Congress is
23 likely to have to do cleanup like we did last year and
24 significantly increase the budget despite the President
25 putting forward a weak budget. He has done it again. So

1 how do you support such a budget -- 4 percent inflation
2 adjusted cuts?

3 Mr. Del Toro: Senator, I do support the President's
4 budget completely. It is actually the first time in quite
5 some time where we have actually proposed a budget that is
6 greater than the previously enacted budget, and I applaud
7 the President for doing that.

8 Senator Sullivan: 4 percent increase with 8.3 percent
9 inflation is a 4 percent inflation adjusted cut, correct?

10 Mr. Del Toro: So it is today. However, budgets, as
11 you well know, Senator, are prepared well in advance of
12 when they are executed. And inflation is always a
13 difficult thing to predict in the future.

14 And it is part of the reason why in the President's
15 2023 budget, we actually also enacted 4.6 percent increase
16 for our sailors and Marines across the board, and a 5
17 percent increase in NBAH --

18 Senator Sullivan: Again, I appreciate all those, but
19 the reality is even those don't keep up with inflation.
20 But let me -- I am going to try to keep to my five minutes.
21 I want to turn to Force Design, but to you, Mr. Secretary
22 and Admiral.

23 I was struck by the Navy's documents, strategy
24 documents, which my team and I read the tri-service
25 strategy, CNO's navigation plan, the surface warfare

1 competitive edge plan, and how they don't articulate how
2 the Navy will support the survivability and sustainability
3 of Marine Corps stand in forces and otherwise facilitate
4 the execution of the expeditionary advanced base
5 operations.

6 And those are all key parts of the Marine Corps Force
7 Design strategy. So here is my question. Actually, when
8 you look at the Navy documents, stand in forces, forces
9 that I don't even think they are mentioned, they are
10 alluded to, but much of these documents describe how stand
11 in forces will enable the fleet to control the seas and
12 reposition to conduct naval strikes from a myriad of
13 different directions.

14 But there is little, if anything, in these documents
15 about support in the reverse. And what I mean by that is
16 the fleet support to enabling successful EABO or stand in
17 forces. So, Mr. Secretary, maybe start with you, Admiral,
18 a fleet Commander is ready to help execute this part of
19 Force Design and stand in forces to execute the EABO
20 concept and other things, which would put ships at risk.

21 And if so, how come none of that is articulated in the
22 Navy strategies that at least I have been reading thus far?

23 Admiral Gilday: I would offer, sir, that you can get
24 an inaccurate picture by just judging our commitment to
25 Force Design based on the tri-service strategy and the

1 navigation plan, and the reason I say that --

2 Senator Sullivan: You do see my question though --

3 Admiral Gilday: I do. But the reason I say that is
4 because most of what has been written publicly about stand
5 in forces has been produced after the production -- after
6 the release of both of those documents.

7 Now, if you take a look at the concept of operations
8 that are cosigned by both fleet Commanders and MEF
9 Commanders, whether it is in the Western Pacific or whether
10 it is in Europe, they both rely heavily on stand in forces
11 as part of the war -- as part of the warfighting concept.

12 I would also offer that today the Naval Commander in
13 Europe, the Component Commander under General Walters, has
14 marine elements, I would characterize them as EABO, EBAs in
15 terms of what they are doing, in terms of sensing and
16 making sense of the environment, in terms of helping
17 understand what affects that we can produce in theater.
18 They are right now on the ground in places like Estonia, in
19 Iceland, and in Norway.

20 And so I would offer, sir, that is very much alive at
21 the fleet level in terms of how we are integrating with the
22 Marine Corps. I will have an update to my navigation plan
23 within the month, and I will take special note to make sure
24 that I footnote stand in forces.

25 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Sullivan -- Senator

1 Sullivan. Thank you very much. Senator Hawley, do you
2 request recognition? Please.

3 Senator Hawley: Yes, sir. Briefly. Admiral, just a
4 question for you on aircraft carriers. I realize that by
5 statute, by law, Navy is required to maintain at least 11
6 operational carriers, but absent that statutory
7 requirement, my question is, is it the best use of the
8 Navy's allocation to maintain 11?

9 Here is where I am going with this. If you had 8 or
10 even 10, that would free up a lot of resources to invest in
11 other capabilities that might be more effective in
12 deterring China and our pacing theater. So do you have a
13 thought on it?

14 Admiral Gilday: Yes, sir. Honestly, I think 11 is a
15 conservative estimate. Based on the demand signal from
16 combatant Commanders now, there is no more survivable
17 airfield in the world than an aircraft carrier. And in
18 terms of what it brings to the fight, in terms of sortie
19 generation, in terms of our move now with unmanned
20 refueling that extends the range of the airwing by hundreds
21 of miles.

22 My unfunded list tries to top off on domestic
23 production of weapons with range and speed principally for
24 the airwing. They remain, along with our submarine force,
25 the main batteries of the United States Navy with respect

1 to offensive weapons. And so, sir, I remain very bullish
2 on aircraft carriers, and I can't think of anybody out
3 there in the Joint Force that is not.

4 Senator Hawley: How survivable, though, is the
5 carrier, admiral, if it is parked in the Taiwan Strait? I
6 mean, I know they are survivable off the coast of Hawaii,
7 but doesn't it depend on where they are?

8 Admiral Gilday: So based on how we use those
9 carriers, sir, we are going to put them in a place where
10 they can be most effective. And we also are leveraging
11 both space and cyber in terms of how we position those
12 units. I will tell you that if you take a look at an
13 airfield on an island in the middle of the Pacific that was
14 targeted when the lava cooled, you can move an aircraft
15 carrier to tomorrow, but Reagan National is going to be the
16 same place that is today.

17 If that were an aircraft carrier, tomorrow it would be
18 West of the Mississippi and Missouri, or it could be off in
19 Newfoundland, or it could be off of Key West, Florida. So
20 we can move them around. That is one of the real value of
21 naval forces in general.

22 Senator Hawley: Fair enough. Thank you, Mr.
23 Chairman.

24 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Hawley. Thank you,
25 gentlemen. We will recess or adjourn the open session and

1 let us attempt to reassemble at SBC-217 at 12:20 p.m. For
2 my colleagues, there is a vote pending right now.

3 We will vote and then we will attempt to get together
4 again at 12:20 p.m. at SBC-217. Again, gentlemen, thank
5 you for your testimony. The open hearing is adjourned.

6 [Whereupon, at 12:07 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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