

Stenographic Transcript
Before the

COMMITTEE ON
ARMED SERVICES

UNITED STATES SENATE

HEARING TO CONSIDER THE NOMINATION OF:
GENERAL CHARLES Q. BROWN, JR., USAF, FOR
REAPPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE OF GENERAL AND TO BE
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

Tuesday, July 11, 2023

Washington, D.C.

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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., in
13 Room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Hon. Jack
14 Reed, chairman of the committee, presiding.

15 Committee Members Present: Senators Reed, Gillibrand,
16 Blumenthal, Hirono, Kaine, Warren, Peters, Manchin,
17 Duckworth, Rosen, Kelly, Wicker, Fischer, Cotton, Rounds,
18 Ernst, Cramer, Scott, Tuberville, Mullin, Budd, and Schmitt.

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

3 Chairman Reed: Good morning. Let me call the hearing
4 to order. Good morning. The Committee meets today to
5 consider the nomination of General Charles "CQ" Brown to be
6 Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. General,
7 congratulations on your nomination and thank you for
8 stepping forward to lead at this critical time.

9 I would like to welcome your wife, Sharene who is with
10 us today, and thank your sons, Sean and Ross, who I am sure
11 are watching proudly. We thank your family for their
12 continued support of your service over many years.

13 I would also like to thank the current Chairman,
14 General Mark Milley, who will retire later this year.
15 General Milley has served this nation honorably for more
16 than four decades and has led the Joint Chiefs with skill
17 and vision. We are grateful for his service, and we
18 congratulate him on his retirement.

19 General Brown, you are well qualified to serve as
20 Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. As the current Chief
21 of Staff of the Air Force, you have led the service as it
22 adapts to a rapidly changing global security environment.
23 You bring a record of success for leadership around the
24 globe and command experience at all levels of our military.
25 This expertise will serve you well.

1 If confirmed, you will serve as the principal military
2 advisor to the President, the National Security Council, the
3 Secretary of Defense, and Congress. You will be expected to
4 be an effective strategist, advisor, and manager, and your
5 counsel will be relied upon as we confront the multitude of
6 national security issues before us.

7 Indeed, we face significant challenges. First and
8 foremost, as the National Defense Strategy makes clear,
9 China is our primary competitor. China is the only nation
10 with both the intent and the capability to challenge the
11 interests of the United States and our allies and partners.
12 At the same time, Russia remains a violent, destabilizing
13 force, and nations like Iran and North Korea continue to
14 push the boundaries of military brinksmanship.

15 To succeed in this environment, the U.S. military must
16 better develop its joint capabilities across all domains,
17 including space, cyber, and information. As the Defense
18 Department recently released Joint Concept for Competing
19 makes clear, the objective of our nation's adversaries is to
20 win without fighting. The document warns that if we do not
21 adapt our approach to competition more effectively, the
22 United States risks ceding strategic influence, advantage,
23 and leverage while preparing for war that never comes.

24 General Brown, I am interested to know how you would
25 promote the development of joint capabilities to ensure our

1 military remains the world's premier fighting force. While
2 it is the purview of the military services to equip our
3 soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, and Guardians, if
4 confirmed as Chairman you will be responsible for
5 identifying new joint capabilities and performing net
6 assessments to ensure the services are procuring the right
7 capabilities needed for the Joint Force. The Chairman must
8 review capabilities holistically across this total force,
9 which can conflict with the priorities of individual
10 services. The Committee would be interested to learn how
11 you plan to manage this dynamic, if confirmed.

12 In addition, the National Defense Strategy, the
13 National Military Strategy, and the annual Chairman's Risk
14 Assessment are vital documents this Committee relies upon to
15 perform its oversight functions. General Brown, I would
16 like your assessment of the implementation of the National
17 Defense Strategy and the National Military Strategy and
18 whether you would recommend any changes or updates to those
19 strategic documents. Further, it is imperative that these
20 documents be submitted to Congress on time. I look forward
21 to working with you to ensure these statutory deadlines are
22 upheld.

23 The Joint Force is fundamentally about people. As the
24 nation's senior-most military officer, it will be your
25 responsibility to understand the needs of America's

1 servicemembers and to be their greatest advocate. Our
2 military is facing its most difficult recruiting environment
3 in decades. Fewer and fewer young Americans are eligible
4 for or interested in service, and issues such as
5 discrimination and harassment too often push current members
6 out.

7 While recruiting is one of the primary duties of the
8 military services, if confirmed as the Chairman, you will be
9 responsible for advising the Secretary on comprehensive
10 joint readiness, which includes assessing the effect of
11 manpower shortfalls across the total force. Therefore, I
12 would like to know your thoughts on the current recruiting
13 crisis and the impact it may have on the readiness of the
14 Joint Force.

15 Finally, if confirmed, you will be the most visible
16 military officer in the nation. It will be critical for you
17 to represent the force with total professionalism and
18 trustworthiness. Frankly, I am concerned about the health
19 of our nation's civil and political military relationships.
20 More and more, the military is being dragged into political
21 fights, and public trust in the military is eroding because
22 of it. Civilian control of the military is a sacred duty
23 that must be carried out responsibly, not be exploited.
24 General, I would like to know how you will work to help
25 improve civil-military relations and demonstrate this ethos

1 yourself.

2 General Brown, if confirmed, you will lead the Joint
3 Force at a momentous time. I am grateful for your
4 willingness to step forward to meet this challenge. Thank
5 you, and I look forward to your testimony.

6 Now let me recognize the Ranking Member, Senator
7 Wicker.

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

3 Senator Wicker: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for that fine
4 statement, and General Brown, welcome to this Committee. I
5 welcome your nomination to serve as Chairman of the Joint
6 Chiefs of Staff. It is great to see that you are
7 accompanied by your wife, Sharene, and the Chair has also
8 acknowledged your sons, Sean and Ross, who are supporting
9 their daddy throughout the confirmation process.

10 As you testify before us and prepare to assume the
11 senior-most position in the U.S. military, you are
12 continuing with a profound concept that dates back to the
13 founding of our republic. It dates back to before our
14 Constitution, to the days of George Washington, where we
15 established and we maintain the proposition that the
16 military, in our country, is answerable to the civilian
17 elected leadership of our country. You have been nominated
18 by our commander in chief for the senior-most position, and
19 I believe you are exceptionally qualified for this position.
20 And certainly, Mr. Chairman, we need an exceptionally
21 qualified officer during this perilous national moment.

22 Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, multiple
23 senior national defense leaders have told this Committee we
24 are in the most dangerous global security environment since
25 World War II, and I agree. During that pivotal time 70

1 years ago, our country faced two great military powers
2 across different oceans, with a capability and intent to
3 threaten American domestic security directly. We see a
4 similar dual threat today, which the Chair has already
5 alluded to. The Chinese Communist Party is conducting the
6 largest and most rapid military buildup in modern history,
7 surpassing our own military in many places. It is a
8 military built for a single purpose -- to undermine Indo-
9 Pacific and American security and prosperity by expanding
10 the Chinese Communist Party's totalitarian influence to the
11 entire globe.

12 In Europe, the Kremlin's brutal war in Ukraine is the
13 most dangerous crisis we have faced in half a century, and
14 their self-defeating war of aggression has brought China,
15 North Korea, and Iran all closer together.

16 This dangerous moment demands an exceptionally
17 competent set of uniformed leaders. Regrettably, many
18 Americans have lost confidence in our senior military
19 leadership, which, for the past 20 years, had been very
20 high. While we all may debate the reasons, I believe that
21 the lack of accountability for failures among military
22 leadership being thrust into the spotlight of politically
23 divisive issues, like critical race theory and abortion,
24 have significantly contributed to this decline in trust.

25 General Brown speaks often of accelerating innovation

1 in the Air Force. He recognizes the difficulties of doing
2 so amid an entrenched bureaucracy. And he is open about how
3 he has learned in his job and improved his approach. That
4 candor and self-accountability should serve him well in this
5 new role, including, as an example, to other officers.

6 I am hopeful that General Brown's detailed focus on
7 innovation and culture change will bring new thinking and
8 action to the massive problems that our Joint Force faces.
9 I hope General Brown will continue to focus on restoring a
10 culture built on meritocracy in the U.S. military that
11 continuously fosters new approaches to readiness and
12 warfighting.

13 Make no mistake. The next few years will be critical
14 for our national security. As General Brown has stated, we
15 cannot wait for a crisis to drive change for our Joint
16 Force. Years of lackluster budgeting for our national
17 defense has put us far behind where we need to be. We have
18 a bureaucracy and an industrial base that is clunky, and a
19 military promotion system geared toward risk aversion. It
20 will take honest and realistic threat and capability
21 assessments from our senior uniformed leaders to empower
22 lower-level personnel to fix the many problems we face. I
23 expect General Brown will offer his most frank, unreserved
24 military judgment both to the President and to Congress, if
25 confirmed.

1 During a similarly decisive moment for our national
2 defense in 1980, then-candidate Reagan spoke of the need for
3 a renaissance in American military superiority, to avoid war
4 with the Soviets -- to avoid war. Reagan said, "Our best
5 hope of persuading them to live in peace is to convince them
6 they cannot win at war." We avoided war then, but only
7 because we had leaders who were bold enough to pursue the
8 wisdom of peace through strength, with alacrity. That
9 timeless advice still applies today, and I am hopeful our
10 nominee agree.

11 Thank you, General Brown, for being here, and thank
12 you, Mr. Chairman.

13 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Wicker.

14 General Brown, your statement, please.

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1 STATEMENT OF GENERAL CHARLES Q. BROWN, CHIEF OF STAFF,
2 U.S. AIR FORCE

3 General Brown: Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Wicker,
4 and distinguished members of the Committee, I am honored by
5 the opportunity to appear before you this morning. I want
6 to thank the President and Secretary of Defense for their
7 trust and confidence in nominating me to be the Chairman of
8 the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I also thank General Mark Milley
9 and Hollyanne as they conclude their decades of remarkable
10 and honorable service to our nation. We wish them the very
11 best.

12 I would like to take a few moments to acknowledge my
13 family. Joining me today is my wife of 34 years, Sharene.
14 She has been committed to our family and to my journey and
15 has also tirelessly advocated for the families of our
16 airmen. I am also extremely proud of our two sons, Sean and
17 Ross. They are outstanding young men, excellent in their
18 own right. I would not be here today if not for their
19 sacrifice, love, and support.

20 I would like to thank my number one fan and my most
21 vocal supporter who played a lead role in my development
22 into the man I am today, my mother Kay. I also want to
23 thank the most influential leader in my career, who
24 commissioned me, my father Charles, a Vietnam veteran who
25 retired from the United States Army is a colonel after 30

1 years of service. I am also grateful to my sister,
2 Stephanie, for her support, as well as the influence my
3 younger brother, Kevin, had on me and our family before his
4 passing.

5 I want to express my gratitude to this Committee and
6 the Congress for your continued support, to our men and
7 women in uniform, DoD civilians, and their families. It is
8 thanks to your enduring commitment and advocacy that we
9 remain the most capability military force in the world.

10 I come before you today having served the last 3 years
11 as a service and joint chief. But for the 11 years prior, I
12 served in seven assignments across four combatant commands
13 -- EUCOM, AFRICOM, CENTCOM, AND INDOPACOM. I have held
14 leadership positions focused on our five national security
15 challenges -- China, Russia, North Korea, Iran, and violent
16 extremists. So I arrive before you having spent less time
17 as a general officer in Washington, D.C., and more time with
18 our fielded forces, allies, and partners, either in conflict
19 or preparing for conflict.

20 Having led warfighters abroad shapes my thinking. As a
21 result, I am mindful of the security challenges at this
22 consequential time and the need to accelerate to stay ahead
23 of the growing threat. The Department of Defense must
24 implement the National Defense Strategy and prepare a Joint
25 Force that can win the next war, if called upon, a Joint

1 Force that serves today and into the future to maintain
2 peace.

3 If confirmed, I commit to provide the President and the
4 Secretary of Defense my military advice informed by the
5 joint chiefs and our military leaders. Throughout, I will
6 collaborate with the Department's civilian leadership, the
7 interagency, and with our allies and partners, and if
8 confirmed, I commit to provide candid and open communication
9 to this Committee and the Congress. I will work closely
10 with you to invest in our national defense and strengthen
11 our national security.

12 Finally, I commit myself to sustaining faith and
13 confidence with our soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines,
14 Guardians, and DoD civilians and their families. I will
15 likewise work to sustain faith and confidence with the
16 American people and their elected officials. Above all, I
17 will dedicate myself to this proposition, that the American
18 people should understand and know their military and its
19 servicemembers, serve solely as unwavering defenders of the
20 Constitution and our nation.

21 I thank you again for the opportunity to appear before
22 you today, and I look forward to your questions.

23 [The prepared statement of General Brown follows:]

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1 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, General.

2 There are a series of questions that are addressed to
3 nominees. You can respond.

4 Have you adhered to the applicable laws and regulations
5 governing conflicts of interest?

6 General Brown: I have.

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

10 General Brown: I have not.

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

18 General Brown: I do.

19 Chairman Reed: Do you agree, when asked before this
20 Committee, to give your personal views, even if your views
21 differ from the Administration?

22 General Brown: I do.

23 Chairman Reed: Do you agree to provide records,
24 documents, and electronic communications in a timely manner
25 when requested by this Committee, its Subcommittees, or

1 other appropriate committees of Congress, and to consult
2 with the requester regarding the basis for any good faith
3 delay or denial in providing such records?

4 General Brown: I do.

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

10 General Brown: I will.

11 Chairman Reed: Will you cooperate in providing
12 witnesses and briefers in response to congressional
13 requests?

14 General Brown: I will.

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

17 General Brown: They will.

18 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, sir.

19 As I indicated in my opening statement, we are facing a
20 challenging environment, and one of the aspects is the
21 challenge of recruiting, with fewer and fewer Americans
22 eligible because of many factors, including health and other
23 aspects, but also a sense of lack of participation in the
24 military.

25 Recruiting is a primary duty of the services, the

1 chiefs of staff of each of the services. But what actions
2 will you take to ensure this recruiting process becomes
3 successful and also enhances readiness?

4 General Brown: Senator, I appreciate the question, and
5 as service chief I have had an opportunity to really think
6 deeply about this, and I have had a number of opportunities
7 to engage with my fellow service chiefs on how best we move
8 forward.

9 As the Chairman, if confirmed, one of the key areas I
10 do think about is ensuring that the young people and their
11 influencers understand the opportunity to serve and the
12 great opportunities provided by serving in the military. I
13 think, just based on my own experience, being a role model,
14 to show the young people and their influencers that there
15 are many great career opportunities within the military, and
16 there are many that have served in the military and have
17 gone on to be successful, whether they stayed for a full
18 career or stayed for one tour.

19 I really believe that young people only aspire to be
20 what they see or know about, and it is hard for them to be
21 part of an organization or aspire to go down a career path
22 they do not fully understand or appreciate. And so we have
23 a responsibility to reconnect with the nation to talk about
24 the opportunities and for all of us that are interested in
25 national defense and national defense how we share the

1 stories of what inspired us to join. You know, I joined
2 because of my father and his recommendations, and because of
3 opportunities I had in ROTC, I was going to be an engineer
4 and I decided to become a pilot because I had to be exposed
5 to -- be able to fly at ROTC summer camp.

6 So there are a number of things I think we can do, and
7 those are things I will do, if confirmed as the Chairman.

8 Chairman Reed: Thank you, General. Another topic that
9 I mentioned is the development of joint capabilities. The
10 services are principally responsible for developing
11 equipment and operational techniques, but you will be the
12 point of ultimate decision on many of these proposals. And
13 historically, service parochialism has interfered with true
14 jointness.

15 If confirmed, what actions will you take to inhibit
16 parochialism, encourage interoperability, and to get us the
17 best equipment and the best-trained people in the field?

18 General Brown: Senator, I appreciate the question
19 again, and one of the things that was started by a couple of
20 the Vice Chairmen before was to rework the Department's
21 Oversight Council, instead of being just an Oversight
22 Council, a bit more directed to ensure we have the joint
23 capabilities. I want to continue to build upon that, but we
24 also need to do it based on analysis to show the value of
25 each part of the Joint Force and what they provide. And

1 there will have to be some give and take and some hard
2 decisions and hard calls that need to be made, but I think
3 that is a responsibility, not just for me but also with the
4 service chiefs and also service joint chiefs, that we have
5 to take off our service identities and think about what is
6 best for the Joint Force.

7 Chairman Reed: Thank you.

8 We are engaged in supporting the Ukrainian people in a
9 critical battle because my view is if they lose, we lose
10 also. Are there any immediate lessons, operationally or
11 strategically, that you have taken away from the conflict in
12 Ukraine?

13 General Brown: Senator, I think strategically the
14 thing I do think about is how the value of information,
15 before the campaign started and before the conflict started,
16 and how that was able to bring not only NATO closer together
17 but also to bring together allies and partners around the
18 world. So that was one point about how we collaborate and
19 how we build relationships well before a crisis occurs and
20 then how we use the information we have available to help
21 their decision-makers or local decision-makers make those
22 decisions and move forward.

23 I think the other thing I would highlight too is the
24 value of logistics. And I think the Russians learned if you
25 do not pay attention to logistics it is hard to win and hard

1 to move forward. I think we also learned that the timeline
2 for military operations, particularly in a conflict,
3 sometimes take longer than we might expect, and that is also
4 a challenge.

5 And I think the other piece that I would highlight is
6 just the will to fight. The one thing about the
7 determination and the will of the Ukrainian people and their
8 leadership, that is something that is hard to measure before
9 a conflict, but it plays a huge dividend.

10 And then last thing I would say, from my own
11 perspective as an airman, the value of air power, and having
12 watched what either side has been able to do or not do, but
13 the value air defense, innovative air defense, and how that
14 has been helpful to the Ukrainians in the defense of their
15 nation.

16 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, General.

17 Senator Wicker, please.

18 Senator Wicker: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and
19 thank you, General Brown. Let me first mention a statutory
20 requirement that you and I have discussed before, 10 USC
21 153. It requires the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
22 to complete a Chairman's Risk Assessment, CRA, of the
23 National Military Strategy each year. Now we have had a
24 problem with this in the past, and a frustration from
25 Congress in not receiving this CRA. Even the National

1 Military Strategy itself last time was unacceptably late.

2 If confirmed, I need your commitment to carrying out
3 the statutes governing the relationship between the Chairman
4 of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Congress, including
5 submitting the Chairman's Risk Assessment on time. Can I
6 get your assurance that you will do this, General Brown?

7 General Brown: Ranking Member Wicker, as we discussed
8 yesterday, I will assure you that I will do my best to make
9 sure we get those documents to you on time, because it is
10 important to allow you and the Congress to do the things you
11 require in order to provide the budget for us and the
12 authorization to execute.

13 Senator Wicker: Absolutely. This is a law passed by
14 the Congress, signed into law by the President of the United
15 States some years ago, and if you, as Chairman of the Joint
16 Chiefs of Staff need some additional resources or if there
17 is something within your jurisdiction that keeps you from
18 doing this, will you let us know so that we can be on time
19 with this very important CRA?

20 General Brown: Yes, sir. I will definitely
21 communicate with you if there are any challenges.

22 Senator Wicker: Thank you very much for that
23 assurance.

24 General Brown, let's talk about the Pacific. Congress
25 provided the Administration with authority to provide \$1

1 billion in transfers of U.S. equipment authority to help
2 Taiwan. Is it your best military judgment that the usage of
3 this drawdown authority and training would improve Taiwan's
4 ability to defend itself?

5 General Brown: Yes, sir, it will, and it will help
6 them procure some asymmetric capabilities to defend their
7 nation.

8 Senator Wicker: All right. So I certainly hope that
9 we can move forward with that.

10 I described, in my opening statement, General, I
11 described our defense capacity and our industrial base as
12 "clunky." You and I also discussed this in our
13 conversation. Do you agree with my assessment that the
14 bureaucracy and the industrial base are clunky, based on the
15 speed with which technology has evolved and changes as
16 compared to how we are able to access that as a military?

17 General Brown: I do, and I think it is an area we can
18 all improve upon. We have a great innovation here within
19 our nation, and we want to make sure that we are putting
20 that into the hands of our warfighters as quickly as
21 possible. I also believe there is an integral process to
22 this, just based on there are so many things that are
23 software-based today. And if we can knock down any barriers
24 to be able to move faster, I am all for it.

25 Senator Wicker: Well, do you have specific plans for

1 how we would do this, based on your experience in the
2 various theaters you mentioned?

3 General Brown: Some experience. What I have been able
4 to do is part of this is really how I build those
5 relationships. That is what I have done as the Air Force
6 Chief of Staff. That is what I did in my previous
7 assignment as Commander of Pacific Air Forces is to be
8 engaged and be able to collaborate and figure out where
9 those barriers might be that prevent us from moving as fast
10 as we need to.

11 Senator Wicker: Okay. Now let's talk about the
12 European theater and NATO. The Department of Defense
13 leadership regularly states that the Department is following
14 the normal process for requirements generated by the
15 European Command. Can we agree, General, that the threat
16 against NATO countries today is far different than it was 3
17 years ago, before the Russians invaded Ukraine and depleted
18 much of their ammunition and capability in this unjust and
19 illegal war?

20 General Brown: Yes, sir. I would say the threat and
21 the security environment are both different from where they
22 were 3 years ago.

23 Senator Wicker: Okay. Well, on a bipartisan basis,
24 Senators and members of the House have repeatedly asked
25 senior joint leadership staff to lead a dynamic requirements

1 review of the European theater that accounts for this
2 reality. In other words, we were prepared to defend NATO
3 nations against the threat which Russia is simply incapable
4 of doing at this point. Are we able to be flexible enough
5 to admit that and to direct more of our help toward our ally
6 in Ukraine?

7 General Brown: Ranking Member Wicker, if confirmed,
8 one of the things I want to be able to do is actually assess
9 where we are. I am an engineer by background, so doing
10 assessments and doing analysis is how I think about things.
11 And that is something we do need to do, not just for Europe
12 but I would say for all of our major security challenges, to
13 continue to reassess.

14 Senator Wicker: Thank you, sir. Thank you, Mr.
15 Chairman.

16 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Wicker.

17 Senator Gillibrand, please.

18 Senator Gillibrand: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
19 Congratulations, General Brown. Thank you to your family
20 for being here to support you.

21 I just returned from a codel surveying a lot of our
22 operations in Europe to prepare Ukrainians to fight, to
23 preposition equipment, to do the type of readiness trainings
24 with our NATO allies that are so essential to preparation
25 and to give Ukrainians the ability to win their war against

1 Russia. And you mentioned how important logistics are and
2 how important readiness is and the will to fight is.

3 We have a growing threat from China, from the Xi
4 regime, with regard to Taiwan, and I would like to hear your
5 assessments on the challenges of that type of theater versus
6 the ease with which we were able to do the work with our
7 NATO allies in Europe, since we have allies on the border of
8 Ukraine that facilitate a lot of our training and exercises
9 and preparation. So could you talk a little bit about the
10 challenges with regard to that other theater and what type
11 of preparation you think will be essential.

12 General Brown: Sure. Thanks for the question. The
13 thing that I think about when you are looking at the two
14 theaters, there are a couple of factors that play in, and it
15 is geography and infrastructure. And when you look at the
16 geography of Europe, where you have a large land mass,
17 borders, and you also have infrastructure with roads,
18 railroads, airfields that are all close together.

19 In the Indo-Pacific you do not necessarily have that.
20 What you have is more maritime space, islands, but you do
21 have airfields. So it would be more challenge, and oh, by
22 the way, the size of the region is much larger than it is in
23 Europe, so the distances are pretty massive.

24 So from that perspective, one of the things that I have
25 thought about, going back to my time as the Commander of the

1 Pacific Air Forces is you cannot wait until the crisis
2 occurs to be able to deploy capability. You have to pre-
3 position capability and have that in place. You have to
4 work with allies and partners to have access to locations so
5 you can put capability into place. And that is an area that
6 we are focused on, not only as an Air Force but I would also
7 say as a Joint Force.

8 As a matter of fact, right now we are in the process of
9 a large exercise, Mobility Guardian, led by Air Mobility
10 Command, to really test ourselves on how quickly we can move
11 by air and other means to get capability into the theater as
12 quickly as possible. And we will take that and learn from
13 that. We also did, for the Air Force, did a tabletop
14 exercise focused on the logistics in the Indo-Pacific.

15 So because of those differences in geography and
16 infrastructure, we cannot use the same approach in both
17 theaters, and that is where I have been focused, as the Air
18 Force chief, and will continue to focus as the Chairman, if
19 confirmed.

20 Senator Gillibrand: Agreed. With regard to Asia,
21 there will be certain reliance on other assets such as
22 cyber, such as space, such Air Force, as you say, and one of
23 the challenges that we have is critical infrastructure that
24 is necessary to deploy, to stage, to prepare. And we
25 recently heard reporting on China's cyber threat with regard

1 to Guam. I would like to know your thoughts on how will
2 cyber threats inform your thinking in viewing these
3 logistics and mobility plans, and what collaboration exists
4 between the joint staffs and DHS and relevant senior risk
5 management agencies to ensure whole-of-government alignment
6 in the event of such a conflict.

7 General Brown: What I do think about from the cyber
8 threat, it is not just for Guam, but I really say the aspect
9 of if you were back in the continental United States and the
10 aspect of in order for us to generate combat power and get
11 it deployed we depend on various supports and rail yards and
12 other arrays and airfields to get ourselves to be able to
13 deploy. We have got to be able to protect that critical
14 cyber infrastructure, and if we do not it will challenge us
15 to be able to get ourselves deployed. And so that is why it
16 is very important to work collectively, not just inside the
17 Department of Defense, primarily through Cyber Command, but
18 as you highlighted, the Department of Homeland Security and
19 others to take a look at the critical nodes that we have to
20 protect.

21 Because I believe we are in a contested environment
22 today that we need to be paying attention to, and I think we
23 have seen that in past examples, and we have got to make
24 sure we are working closely together, across the entire
25 government, and also with our allies and partners to ensure

1 we are protecting ourselves in the cyber domain.

2 Senator Gillibrand: And with regard to cyber, services
3 are responsible for establishing a range of personnel
4 policies for cyber personnel and providing them to Cyber
5 Command. This leads to variations across services and
6 length of service requirements and length of tours at Cyber
7 Command. As Chairman, how would you approach working with
8 the service chiefs to help bring service policies into
9 better alignment with the needs of Cyber Command?

10 General Brown: I think one of the key areas is, one,
11 to meet the needs of Cyber Command, but at the same time
12 align some of our policies and processes so we are not
13 committing amongst ourselves for talent. If we have similar
14 approaches it helps us to bring in all talent across the
15 nation, and then also help to retain that talent within the
16 services as well.

17 Senator Gillibrand: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

18 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Gillibrand.

19 Senator Fischer, please.

20 Senator Fischer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank
21 you, General, to you and your wife and your family for your
22 service to this country.

23 I took note of a comment you made in your opening
24 statement. You said, "Having led warfighters abroad has
25 shaped my thinking." As you know, I remain deeply concerned

1 about our munitions production capacity, and in the Wall
2 Street Journal a couple of days ago they wrote an editorial
3 about America is runny out of ammo, Biden admits the
4 problem, but then why not do something about it.

5 I remember hearing the President make a passing comment
6 on that a couple of days ago, and I was struck by it because
7 it is the first time I had heard from the Administration
8 concern about munitions for our security and our defense
9 here in this country. So, frankly, after years of
10 underinvesting in munitions production, we now find
11 ourselves, I think, in a very precarious position.

12 While this Committee has generally been supportive of
13 providing aid and transferring excess munitions from our
14 stockpiles, we also have a clear expectation that the
15 Department will work with us to ensure that we produce more
16 munitions, as many as we can, and as fast as we can, to
17 backfill our stockpiles, increase our margins, and support
18 our allies and partners.

19 Do you agree that we need to increase our munitions
20 production capacity?

21 General Brown: I do, and one of the areas I would
22 highlight is for all the services in this year's budget
23 submission we asked for multiyear procurement, and that
24 multiyear procurement was designed to help increase our
25 stock, but also what it does for us is help provide

1 predictability to the defense industrial base, to their
2 supply chains, and to the workforce.

3 Senator Fischer: Yes. This Committee has led Congress
4 in giving more tools to the Department to address these
5 shortages, and that includes providing multiyear procurement
6 authority, modifying older and unnecessary contracting
7 requirements so that we can get contracting officers to move
8 faster. We need them to move faster.

9 I understand the Department is reviewing its total
10 munitions requirements amid the worsening geopolitical
11 environment. As new stockpile levels are determined,
12 particularly for precision guided munitions, will you work
13 with this Committee to identify any emerging gaps in our
14 stockpiles?

15 General Brown: Yes, I will.

16 Senator Fischer: Thank you. Do believe the tools that
17 we have given the Department, those contracts, multiyear, is
18 that going to continue to help you meet those requirements
19 as well?

20 General Brown: Senator, I think it will, and one of
21 the areas, as we work through the contracting aspect, is how
22 we incentivize our contractors, contracting officers, and
23 how we build those contracts to make sure they are moving in
24 the right direction, to change the culture of how we have
25 done things in the past.

1 Senator Fischer: Right. To be clear, I think there is
2 much more that can be done in fiscal year 2024 to address
3 the munitions production challenges that what was in the
4 President's budget request. For example, for \$67 million,
5 the Army could expand the capacity of the GMLRS from 120 per
6 year to 1,000 per year by 2025. This is a key long-range
7 fireline that could be relevant in multiple theaters.

8 And I am frequently asked, "What can we do to help
9 Taiwan help themselves more?" Well, for around \$70 million
10 more dollars we could expand the Harpoon production capacity
11 such that we accelerate the final deliveries to Taiwan from
12 2029 to 2027, and that 2027 is an important date that we
13 hear from Xi himself as a goal that he hopes to reach to be
14 able to invade Taiwan. But it is not in the fiscal year
15 2024 budget request.

16 We could have \$150 million more dollars. That buys us
17 another Patriot launcher battery this year alone.

18 These are some of the examples of what we could be
19 doing, and I would say what we should be doing, but we are
20 not doing it because of budget constraints. They have all
21 been confirmed by industry and by the Department that it can
22 happen, and I hope that you will be an advocate to be able
23 to help us push for what we need to address threats that we
24 face as a country and as a world in any emergency spending
25 package or supplemental that comes up.

1 Would you be willing to put yourself forward? We talk
2 about this all the time, you and I. I always say if the
3 American people hear about the threats that we have, we will
4 see tremendous support for our military and for the needs
5 that we have to be met, for the resources that we must have
6 to defend this country.

7 General Brown: Senator, I will definitely work with
8 you, be very candid about the threat, and then also be
9 willing to make the tough calls, if confirmed as the
10 Chairman.

11 Senator Fischer: Thank you, sir.

12 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Fischer.

13 Senator Hirono, please.

14 Senator Hirono: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

15 Congratulations, General, on your nomination. I thank you
16 and your family for your service to our country.

17 To ensure the fitness of all nominees who appear before
18 any of the committees on which I sit I ask the nominees the
19 following two initial questions.

20 One, since you became a legal adult, have you ever made
21 unwanted requests for sexual favors or committed any verbal
22 or physical harassment or assault of a sexual nature?

23 General Brown: I have not.

24 Senator Hirono: Two, have you ever faced discipline or
25 entered into a settlement related to this kind of conduct?

1 General Brown: I have not.

2 Senator Hirono: General, I thank you for your
3 consistent support for our servicemembers' access to
4 critical health care no matter where they are stationed
5 around the world. And as we face recruitment and retention
6 challenges across the services, support for servicemembers
7 of all backgrounds is critical. And for almost four decades
8 now, you have built inclusive, diverse, and ready teams in
9 the Air Force, and I assume you will support such teams
10 throughout the DoD.

11 When we had a chance to chat yesterday you gave me an
12 example of how important the DEI programs -- as we refer to
13 diversity, equity, and inclusive programs -- are within the
14 military. You talked about your own experience. Can you
15 share with this Committee what you shared with me yesterday?

16 General Brown: Sure, Senator. I think about, for my
17 own career and all of our members, all they want is a fair
18 opportunity to perform. And by preventing them that fair
19 opportunity they do not want to be advantaged or
20 disadvantaged or discounted based on their background. They
21 want to have the opportunity, but they have got to be
22 qualified.

23 And I will just tell you, from my own career, when I
24 came in and flying F-16s, I did not want to be the best
25 African American F-16 pilot. I wanted to be the best F-16

1 pilot. I would say the same thing when I went to Weapons
2 School to go back as an instructor, be the commandant, and
3 every position I have had throughout my career. I wanted it
4 because I was the best and qualified. I did not want to be
5 provided a position or promotion based on my background. I
6 wanted it based on the quality of my work. And I think that
7 is the aspect that all of our servicemembers look for is
8 they want a fair opportunity, but they also want to be
9 rewarded for their performance.

10 Senator Hirono: And when we had this discussion, fair
11 opportunity means that they are able to have experiences
12 that they may otherwise not have access to, and that is the
13 importance, in my view, of the attention being paid to the
14 importance of diversity in our services and the fairness
15 that diversity provides.

16 If confirmed, you would be the highest-ranking officer
17 in the U.S. military, which gives you a unique perspective
18 on the burden of command. I have repeatedly asked for
19 leadership accountability and structural changes from the
20 DoD in the wake of high-profile failures, in Hawaii, for
21 example, the disaster at Red Hill, which I am sure you are
22 familiar with, and that disaster has led to public mistrust
23 in the military in Hawaii.

24 General Brown, how do you view the burden of command
25 and the ultimate responsibility entrusted in military

1 commanders?

2 General Brown: There are two factors I think about in
3 the responsibility of command or leadership at any level.
4 You have the responsibility to get the mission done, but you
5 are also accountable for the mission as well. And that
6 accountability, if it does not go well, you should be held
7 accountable. And those are the areas that I have focused on
8 and ensure that we maintain the standard across the
9 military, but at the same time maintain the public
10 confidence from the American people that we do support.

11 Senator Hirono: I think that if we do not hold
12 commanders responsible that it does continue to shake the
13 faith that communities have in the leadership of the
14 military, and as chief of the joint chiefs you are going to
15 have major responsibility to make sure that the burden of
16 command, as I have expressed it, is carried through.

17 I just visited with the Deputy Secretary of the DoD,
18 our shipyards, and I just want to make sure that you will
19 continue to support the modernization of our shipyards,
20 because even as we make decisions to build new ships, i.e.,
21 assets, that we have to make sure that we have the
22 capability to repair and maintain the ships that we already
23 have, and that means that a shipyard improvement commitment
24 has to continue. This is a multiyear commitment. I would
25 like to have your commitment that we will continue to fund

1 this very critical part of our military readiness.

2 General Brown: Senator, you have my commitment.

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

4 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Hirono.

5 Senator Rounds, please.

6 Senator Rounds: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General
7 Brown, first of all I want to thank you for your years of
8 service. I also want to thank your family, specifically
9 Sharene, who is with you here today, and your children.
10 When we deploy someone, and you have been deployed multiple
11 times, it is not just you that gets deployed. It is the
12 entire family that feels that deployment. And I thank all
13 of you for your service to our country.

14 General, earlier this year at the Air Force posture
15 hearing you and I discussed the impact of auctioning off
16 portions of the spectrum and what that would do to our
17 defense capabilities. Those same concerns were echoed by
18 all of the other service chiefs and the combatant
19 commanders, all of them.

20 Based on what we have discussed before, if this report,
21 which is due in September, demonstrates that auctioning off
22 the 3.1 to 3.45 gigahertz portion of the spectrum will
23 adversely impact our national security, what would be your
24 advice to the President and to the Congress, and how would
25 you proceed?

1 General Brown: Senator, I would echo exactly what you
2 just highlighted, the impact on our national security,
3 because that part of the spectrum is where we have many of
4 our capabilities across the Joint Force, and if we had to
5 vacate that we would lose that capability and we would have
6 to figure out how now to regain that capability, and that
7 will take time and cost money. Now is not the time to drop
8 our national security.

9 So my recommendation is we should not vacate, realizing
10 we have to still get through the study before we make any
11 decisions. But there will be an impact, and if confirmed, I
12 will bring, with the services, detailed information on the
13 challenges and how it might impact the Joint Force.

14 Senator Rounds: Thank you, sir. Let me just ask you,
15 with regard to your professional military opinion, do you
16 think there is a possibility that our adversaries are
17 actually attempting to influence the debate and to convince
18 us that it is appropriate to sell portions of the spectrum
19 that are vital to our national security?

20 General Brown: Well, Senator, I cannot speak
21 positively on that topic, but I would not be surprised if
22 our adversaries were always trying to do something to
23 decrease our advance and complicate our decision-making, and
24 it is something that we need to be paying attention to as
25 senior leaders.

1 Senator Rounds: Thank you, sir. I have gone on record
2 many times regarding my concerns about the DoD's approach to
3 providing space-based, ground moving target indication
4 capabilities to DoD users following the divestment of the
5 JSTARS platform. There is an ongoing conversation within
6 the interagency as to how the funding, responsibility, and
7 priority of GMTI, the ground moving target indication
8 capabilities, will be handled. And I am not confident -- I
9 am not confident -- the warfighters will get this vital
10 capability that they need to close the kill chain in the
11 future.

12 As Chairman, will you use your position to make certain
13 that our men and women on the front lines have full and
14 priority use of the platforms conducting GMTI missions in
15 the future?

16 General Brown: Senator, I will.

17 Senator Rounds: Thank you, sir. General, this is
18 something that I never thought I would be sitting here in
19 the United States Senate asking questions about, and yet it
20 is one that has been brought to my attention by our South
21 Dakota adjutant general. General Brown, you will take the
22 seat in the midst of the largest recruiting crisis in the
23 history of DoD's 50-year, all-volunteer force. While the
24 services struggle to meet recruiting numbers, there has been
25 an increased emphasis on immutable characteristics like race

1 and sex, and the Department has increasingly focused on new
2 policies and plans in areas like equity, extremism, gender
3 ideology, abortion, and sex change operations. There is
4 even a growing bureaucracy that focuses on these specific
5 issues.

6 I am aware of a situation, and it was just brought to
7 my attention, where a young woman in the South Dakota
8 National Guard experienced a situation at basic training
9 where she was sleeping in open bays and showering with
10 biological males who had not had gender reassignment surgery
11 but were documented as females because they had begun the
12 drug therapy process. This 18-year-old girl was
13 uncomfortable with her situation but had limited options on
14 how to deal with it. If she raised her hand she feared she
15 would be targeted for retaliation. She could have recycled,
16 which would have delayed her freshman college start and
17 would not have provided a guarantee of a different
18 situation. She could request to leave the Guard for
19 religious purposes and not be able to pursue her dream of
20 serving our country.

21 General Brown, this is a challenging situation. If
22 confirmed as the Chairman, how do you propose to handle
23 situations like this which I truly believe may be impacting
24 recruitment and morale by placing a disproportionate
25 emphasis on gender-related ideology?

1 General Brown: Senator, one of the things I have
2 thought about throughout my career, as you are being
3 inclusive you also do not want to make other individuals
4 uncomfortable. And so as we look at our policies and
5 approaches and get feedback like this we have to take a look
6 to see if we can improve on how we approach situations like
7 this. As I have done as the service chief, as I have done
8 throughout my career, if confirmed, I will continue to do
9 so.

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

12 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Rounds.

13 Senator Kaine, please.

14 Senator Kaine: General Brown, congratulations to you
15 and your family for the nomination. You are eminently
16 qualified for the position.

17 Just situational awareness. Two events happened
18 yesterday that really bear upon the nation's military
19 mission, one very positive, one negative. The positive
20 event yesterday was the announcement by the Biden
21 administration working together with the NATO Secretary
22 General and the governments of Sweden and Turkey, that
23 Turkey would support accession of Sweden to NATO. It was
24 followed up immediately by an announcement from Hungary that
25 they would also support accession of Sweden to NATO.

1 Just in the last few years, people were questioning
2 whether NATO had value or whether the U.S. should continue
3 in NATO. We have demonstrated, through American leadership,
4 the strength of alliances, that democracies in the world can
5 link arms, and when we do, our alliances enable us to defend
6 Ukraine and promote democracy throughout the world. And I
7 think it is important to recognize that the U.S. and the
8 cause of global democracy is stronger today because of this
9 decision announced yesterday that Sweden would now be
10 greenlit for NATO membership.

11 The bad event that happened yesterday was the
12 retirement of General David Berger. It was not bad that he
13 retired. He had a distinguished career and served very
14 ably, as we all know. But for the first time after that
15 retirement, in 164 years, the United States Marine Corps
16 does not have a Commandant confirmed by the Senate of the
17 United States.

18 I am the father of a United States Marine. I am
19 unaware of anything that the Marines have done that would
20 warrant being punished in this way. I am unaware of
21 anything that the Marines have done that would warrant being
22 disrespected in this way, having their leadership hobbled in
23 this way.

24 One of my colleagues is exercising a prerogative to
25 place a hold on 250 generals and flag officers. I am

1 unaware of anything that they have done that would warrant
2 them being disrespected or punished or delayed in their
3 careers. Just because a prerogative can be exercised does
4 not mean that it should be exercised.

5 We marked up the National Defense Authorizing Act in
6 this Committee 2 weeks ago, and there were some things that
7 I wanted in the act that I did not get in. I was
8 disappointed. There were some things that got added to the
9 act that I opposed. I was disappointed. But I am not
10 taking my disappointment out on people who have volunteered
11 to wear the uniform of this country and even risk their
12 lives in doing so.

13 I would urge all of my colleagues to turn away from the
14 path that we are on, where we are disrespecting and
15 punishing people because we are unhappy with policies in the
16 military that these individuals had nothing to do with. If
17 I am not able to convince my colleagues in a committee of a
18 position, that is on me. I will have to try to do a better
19 job next time and maybe try to convince more to support the
20 position that I have taken. But if I am unable to do that,
21 I would never even contemplate taking out my disappointment
22 and punishing people who have volunteered to wear the
23 uniform of this country.

24 People who volunteer to serve in the military do so
25 knowing that their lives could be at risk. But if they

1 think not only will my life be at risk, but do I want to run
2 the risk that a member of the Senate being unhappy with a
3 policy I had nothing to do with may choose to block my
4 career, that might be a risk that people might choose not to
5 undertake. That might be the kind of thing that might make
6 them decide if my Article I branch is not going to respect
7 the service that I have given this country, including
8 deployments overseas, maybe I should look for a line of work
9 where I will be respected.

10 General Brown, I want to ask you a question about
11 AUKUS. I think this Committee, and other committees, have
12 been following the AUKUS agreement very closely. I am
13 particular focused on it as the Chairman of the Seapower
14 Subcommittee and also because some of the work on the
15 Virginia-class submarines that are part of Pillar 1 will be
16 done in Virginia.

17 Much of the focus on AUKUS right now is about Pillar 1,
18 the ability to transfer Virginia-class submarines and
19 related technology to Australia. Pillar 2 refers to a suite
20 of cooperative activities in areas such as advanced
21 capabilities, quantum, AI, cyber, and hypersonics. If
22 confirmed, what role do you see for yourself in advancing
23 integrated deterrence initiatives in the Indo-Pacific, such
24 as AUKUS?

25 General Brown: Senator, the thing I do think about,

1 when you do look at AUKUS, is more to the nuclear-powered
2 submarines, but all these other factors that we can bring
3 together to break down barriers, to work with allies and
4 partners, not just with Australia and the U.K., in this
5 case, but really across the Indo-Pacific.

6 One of the benefits that I have had, having served as
7 the Commander of the Pacific Air Force, is the number of air
8 chiefs and chiefs of defense and, in some cases, ministers
9 of defense that I have known personally and had a chance to
10 engage with. That dialogue, to me, is hugely important to
11 determine how best we can move forward and break down
12 barriers, and identify areas that we can work together on,
13 not only as a military but also between our nations as well.
14 And that is where my focus will be, is to continue that
15 dialogue, to ensure we can work together and highlight where
16 the challenges may be and then work with the right entities
17 to be able to move forward to ensure that we are able to win
18 the next war, if called upon to do, but definitely deter to
19 avoid war.

20 Senator Kaine: I thank you for that answer. I yield
21 back, Mr. Chairman.

22 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Kaine.

23 Senator Ernst, please.

24 Senator Ernst: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you
25 very much, General Brown, for being here today, and I want

1 to thank your wife, Sharene, as well for being here. We
2 appreciate your support through the many, many years.

3 General Brown, you have had a very distinguished career
4 and have held many commands, and I want to distinguish
5 between some of my colleagues. I know the burden of command
6 was referenced, but I would state having served as a low-
7 level commander in our armed services that it is not a
8 burden to be a commander. It is a great honor and
9 distinction, and I want to thank you for your service to our
10 country.

11 You are moving into a new position. I will assume your
12 confirmation, and I support your confirmation. I think you
13 are the right person at the right time. If confirmed, you
14 will be Chairman at a time when threats to the nation are
15 mounting while our resources are actually shrinking. We
16 will be operating our Department of Defense under a
17 constrained environment, and under those constrained budgets
18 we have to put our defense dollars towards smarter
19 investments. And you, as Chief of the Air Force, have
20 focused on modernizing our Air Force. I assume that you
21 will continue the modernization process through the rest of
22 our service branches.

23 So General, you will inform investments across what we
24 talked about, the Iron Triangle, of modernization, force
25 structure, and readiness. So I am assuming there will have

1 to be hard choices made and some tradeoffs. So if you
2 could, could you talk a little bit about your vision of
3 modernizing our force?

4 General Brown: Senator, I appreciate the question, and
5 to your question, I have done kind of the same thing as a
6 service chief, and if confirmed as the Chairman, I will take
7 that same approach.

8 I have often talked about how we have to balance risk
9 over time and look at capability and capacity, because we
10 cannot just try to modernize completely at the risk of
11 today's operations. At the same time, we cannot maintain
12 all capability for today's operations and not have the
13 capabilities because of the threats we see forthcoming.

14 So as you look at that Iron Triangle, it is the balance
15 between those, and again, I really believe, on analysis,
16 that we have to do. We can work emotion, but emotion does
17 not work. It is really the analysis that we have to go
18 through to be able to determine how we make those tough
19 calls, and then we have a responsibility, and I have a
20 responsibility if confirmed as Chairman, to articulate what
21 that risk might be from whatever choice we make, and then we
22 determine, as a nation, how we accept that, or how we
23 mitigate that risk. Again, I think this is where allies and
24 partners play a key role in some of these areas of how we
25 ensure and think about all the capabilities that we have

1 available and how we might use those to make the best
2 decisions, based on the resources that are provided.

3 Senator Ernst: Thank you. I was going to ask about
4 mitigating the risk, and you are talking about that, using
5 allies, partners, but spreading out the risk over time, so I
6 do appreciate that.

7 During the office call you also mentioned the constant
8 demand signal that we have gotten from our global combatant
9 commanders, and how would you strike that right balance
10 between our near-term readiness and those future
11 modernizations, including and accepting prudent risk?

12 General Brown: Well, I have lived on both sides of the
13 coin, serving as Deputy Commander in the United States
14 Central Command but then also as a service chief. And the
15 way I have always thought about this is we have got to put
16 all of the cards and all of the details on the table and
17 then have a conversation that is not tied to a particular
18 position and figure out what is best to do for the Joint
19 Force, what is best to do for all the combatant commands,
20 because there is going to be some give and take as we do
21 this. And that is where those dialogues, to me, are very
22 important. It is really about dialogue. There are many
23 things we can agree on, and those are the things we need to
24 move forward on and continue to debate the things that we do
25 not necessarily see eye to eye on.

1 But at some point you have to make a decision, and I
2 think my role, if confirmed as the Chairman, is to provide
3 my best advice to the Secretary of Defense and the President
4 on how we make those decisions, and again, articulate where
5 I see the risks of whatever path or options we do lay out.

6 Senator Ernst: Thank you. I appreciate it. And in
7 just my last few moments I do want to talk about my concern
8 that the military is being dragged into politics. And if
9 confirmed, how would you keep the military out of the
10 political limelight and focused on the mission of our
11 Department of Defense?

12 General Brown: The first thing I would do is set a
13 personal example, that I would stay nonpartisan and
14 nonpolitical in how I approach the position of Chairman, if
15 confirmed. And I would set that same expectation throughout
16 the force, that we need to stay out of politics and stay
17 nonpartisan and nonpolitical, and at the same time advocate
18 that our civilian leadership does not bring us into
19 political situations. Part of that is a dialogue that we
20 have to have and that we have to maintain a standard as part
21 of the force, and that is what is expected of the nation,
22 for us as military members, to support the Constitution of
23 the United States and stay out of politics.

24 Senator Ernst: Thank you very much, sir. I look
25 forward to supporting you. Thank you. Thank you, Mr.

1 Chairman.

2 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Ernst.

3 Senator Manchin, please.

4 Senator Manchin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and General
5 Brown, first of all let me thank you for your service. I
6 want to thank your wife and your children and your family
7 for their service and support of you for your service. It
8 is a team effort; I know that.

9 We had a nice conversation, and I appreciate that very
10 much, and I want to ask a question and follow up on the
11 financial stability of what we are dealing with, and the
12 demand in the Department of Defense in defending our
13 country.

14 The bottom line is, that we have been talking about, if
15 we do our job on time, and we, as Congress, get our budget
16 done by September 30th, what does that mean to you all as
17 far as having that on-timeliness as far as financial, to
18 you? How much money would that save you by not going into
19 the continuing resolutions, or an omnibus bill at the end,
20 and now we have been doing it for far too long.

21 General Brown: I do not have a figure. I would have
22 to come back to you, Senator, with a figure. We can get
23 that for you. But what I can tell you is it is the aspect
24 of --

25 Senator Manchin: Let me just throw out one for you.

1 The American Enterprise Institute threw out a rough estimate
2 of \$200 million per day under the latest continuing
3 resolution, that covered the start of fiscal 2023. That is
4 a total of \$18 billion, just that. I have been told by
5 retired generals who were not on the spot that basically
6 have said that they could save, overall, 5 percent, a
7 minimum of 5 percent, and 5 percent across the board of \$880
8 billion, that is \$44 billion. And we have been talking
9 about more appropriated funds for our military, with all of
10 the challenges we have. The money is right there, the
11 spending power of us doing our job, and we are going to need
12 someone like you who is going to take the financial concerns
13 and basically let us know how we should be able to help by
14 just doing our job too. We ask you to do yours.

15 General Brown: Yes, Senator, I would agree, and the
16 key area that I would highlight in challenges is we lose
17 buying power, as you described. At the same time we lose
18 predictability, not only for the force but also for our
19 industrial base, to be able to produce the capabilities that
20 are required for our joint team.

21 Senator Manchin: Here one other fact, too. The
22 Department of Defense Comptroller noted that from fiscal
23 year 1991 to 2010, the average delay for defense
24 appropriations was 29 days. The average delay for
25 appropriations for defense was 29 days. That is a

1 tremendous amount of money over the period of time that we
2 have talked about.

3 I would hope that you would work with us in trying to
4 make sure that we are keeping our feet to the fire, to make
5 sure you have the resources to do the job that we need you
6 to do. That is my commitment to you.

7 Going to another topic, fiscal responsibility. I have
8 been extremely concerned about the lack of progress in
9 business modernization, auditing commercial cost comparison
10 independent evaluations of programs, how it is run. The
11 Department of Defense is the only department in the Federal
12 Government that we do not have an audit. Myself and the
13 late Senator John McCain, our dear friend, worked with me on
14 that, and we tried our darndest, and we got a few of them
15 done but not many. So if you could commit to getting the
16 Department audited and making sure they do it in a timely
17 fashion it would be very helpful for us to do our job here,
18 to make sure that we are appropriating the funds that are
19 needed.

20 General Brown: Senator, I commit to work with you on
21 that.

22 Senator Manchin: Okay. The other thing is the
23 concerns of the abolishment of the Chief Management Officer.
24 They abolished the Chief Management Officer position within
25 the Department in 2020, and most recently, with the

1 abolishment of the cost assessment and program evaluation,
2 not only do they not want to audit, they do not want anyone
3 being held accountable to oversee to make sure they will
4 audit.

5 So thankfully I had an amendment in the NDAA this year
6 to reinstate the Chief Management Officer, the CMO, that was
7 adopted into the Senate and to ensure that the Department
8 has a leadership position.

9 So based on your 40 years in military service, and your
10 nomination to become the most senior member of our military
11 and the service, do you believe that a confirmed and
12 chartered Chief Management Officer is a position the
13 Department and you, if confirmed, would benefit from and
14 will basically support?

15 General Brown: Senator, I agree that having that
16 position filled, or someone filling that position to help us
17 go through the audit process, like you described, to make
18 sure we are doing our aspects of fiscal responsibility, is
19 important.

20 Senator Manchin: The problem we had before, it never
21 had support from the top, and you know yourself, if the
22 leaders do not support it, it is not going to happen. And
23 that is why they said, well, it was meaningless. It was not
24 doing the job. They had no charter to do it. There was no
25 direction for them to do it. But I guarantee you it needs

1 to be done, and no business with any type of value to it
2 whatsoever would ever operate without an assessment value,
3 an officer that can do the management, the whole process.

4 So it is there. It is coming back for you, sir, so we
5 hope you take advantage of it.

6 General Brown: Thank you.

7 Senator Manchin: Thank you.

8 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Manchin.

9 Senator Cramer, please.

10 Senator Cramer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you,
11 General Brown, and to your entire family, thank you for your
12 service. Congratulations on the nomination.

13 Let me just follow up with Senator Manchin's point
14 about the Chief Management Officer. I just had to turn
15 around and ask myself, why did we get rid of it again? I
16 remember when it happened. I remember the person in the
17 position. We did it to, quote, "cut bureaucracy" and what
18 we did is cut our throats. And I am with you, Joe. I hope
19 we get it back. And then we have to, as members, insist,
20 regardless of who is at the top, that we have some fiscal
21 responsibility at the Department.

22 All right. Thank you for firing me up just before my
23 questioning, Joe.

24 It will not surprise you, General Brown, that over my
25 nearly 5 years on this Committee I have asked almost every

1 single combatant commander if they get enough ISR from the
2 air, and it will also not surprise you that every one of
3 them says no. Now, that is a little bit like asking the
4 billionaire if he has enough money, and the answer is always
5 no, he can always use more.

6 That said, you had a wonderful discussion in response
7 to Chairman Reed's questions about interoperability, the
8 changing role, as well as with Senator Ernst. But as Air
9 Force chief, you were making tough calls and asked for some
10 cuts to airborne ISR, sometimes with the hope or the promise
11 of replacement with space capabilities. But now, in this
12 new role that I, like Senator Ernst, I suspect, you will
13 soon be confirmed, how do you plan to bridge that gap?
14 Again, it is a more specific question to the broader
15 question that Joni asked, but as you view the needs of the
16 combatant commanders, as they state, versus the needs that
17 the services want to provide, specifically, in this case,
18 the Air Force with eyes in the sky, how do you see that
19 moving forward in your decision-making?

20 General Brown: Senator, as you highlight, this has
21 been an ongoing debate between the services and the
22 combatant commands at large, and having sat as a joint chief
23 for the past 3 years I have really started to think through
24 how we approach this. There are aspects of, when you look
25 at, not just the ISRs, what are you trying to get from the

1 ISR, it is information that is being provided from the ISR.
2 And so there is one aspect of the platform, but how are we
3 getting the information back to combatant command
4 headquarters so they can make decisions?

5 So with the stamp of the Space Force and access to
6 space-based ISR, it is the combination of the two, and it is
7 going to drive us to have to change some processes about how
8 we provide information and how then we work with the
9 combatant commands.

10 And this is a conversation that we have been having. I
11 have had this conversation with General Saltzman, the Chief
12 of Space Operations, of how we lay out a different approach
13 in some areas to be able to get to all the information that
14 is available and not just what is reliable on an airborne
15 ISR that may not be there 24/7, 365. And that is where the
16 focus has to be of how do we, maybe in some cases, do things
17 a bit differently and provide not only the capability we
18 have today but even greater capability in the future.

19 Senator Cramer: I appreciate that. I want to
20 piggyback a little bit on Senator Rounds' questioning. He
21 has become very consistent, as I have, on what matters the
22 most, and I have great respect for his questions about
23 relieving the spectrum, particularly prior to the study that
24 you have talked about.

25 So without prejudging that study, and maybe even

1 piggybacking a little bit on some of the things you said
2 earlier about specifically our defense industry base, but I
3 am going to talk more about the private sector in general,
4 what I think we do not talk about enough on the Committee is
5 the role that technology companies or telecommunications
6 industry, particularly in 5G, all important back to some of
7 the other discussions we are having, and you have been noted
8 to be an innovator, and you have been, and I appreciate
9 that.

10 What role has the private sector played in the
11 advancement of the technological tools that are at your
12 disposal, both in the Air Force and now perhaps hopefully
13 the Joint Force?

14 General Brown: They play a pretty big role, and I will
15 just tell you from my own personal experience the
16 opportunity to go out to Silicon Valley a couple of times
17 and talk to those who have an interest in national security,
18 that is a conversation that we need to continue to have, so
19 we understand the aspect of all the capabilities we have
20 within our nation and how they all, in some form or fashion,
21 contribute to our national security. Even when we have
22 these discussions about spectrum, there is an economic
23 aspect that supports our economic security, but there is
24 national security, and we have got to have those
25 conversations in the same room because it has an impact in

1 some form or fashion. And that is why it is important that
2 we build those relationships, and we have that dialogue to
3 ensure we are doing what is right for the nation as we make
4 decisions.

5 Senator Cramer: I appreciate that attitude. Thank you
6 very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

7 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Cramer.

8 Senator Kelly, please.

9 Senator Kelly: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General
10 Brown, thank you for your decades of service, and welcome
11 today.

12 I want to talk to you a little bit about our military's
13 close air support capability. We have discussed this issue
14 at length a number of times, and you know how important this
15 is to me. And you know that our ground troops and special
16 operators depend on this capability, and it is often a life-
17 or-death matter for them. And you and I have talked through
18 some of the current planning that the Air Force is doing to
19 transition to a future CAS capability. And in my view, the
20 design of our close air support needs to stay centered on
21 the guys on the ground.

22 So General, how will you achieve this same level of
23 protection for those troops with future CAS solutions, and
24 how are we going to avoid any kind of a gap?

25 General Brown: Senator, I appreciate the question, and

1 as we talked in your office a couple of months ago it is the
2 aspect of not only the platforms that we operate, it is the
3 technology that we use, and still be able to use the basic
4 tactics, techniques, and procedures we used since we started
5 doing close air support. It is the aspect of providing that
6 capability and the dialogue and we will be able to move
7 information electronically to be more responsive, at the
8 same time have weapons that are highly precise to support
9 our servicemembers on the ground.

10 Senator Kelly: And one of my concerns here is, you
11 know, F-35s, multi-mission, and a lot of capability in the
12 airplane. I just ask that you continue to focus on this as
13 an important mission for future fighters, including the F-
14 35.

15 And then I am also concerned about the personnel that
16 support our CAS community as we transition to these new
17 platforms. Are there any plans to transition some of the
18 skill sets that reside in our tactical air control and JTAC
19 community today?

20 General Brown: They are, and we are using their
21 capability to help us in our command and control as well as
22 making sure the procedures that we already have we do not
23 let atrophy and continue to work that.

24 One thing I will highlight to you on the F-35 is many
25 of our A-10 pilots, they have a lot of CAS background and

1 are flying and going to F-35s. As a matter of fact, I just
2 met a captain here this past week who has just converted
3 from the A-10 into the F-35. Those are the kinds of things
4 we have got to continue to do to ensure we do not let the
5 skill sets that we have atrophy.

6 Senator Kelly: Yeah, that is a positive thing now, but
7 when we look at a decade from now you are not going to have
8 that same kind of transition. So I encourage you to
9 continue to focus on this and make sure we retain the unique
10 expertise of these other groups, not just the pilots but the
11 tactical air controllers and JTACs.

12 I want to talk about another issue. I am the only
13 graduate of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in Congress, as
14 far as I know, so I pay special attention to our nation's
15 maritime strength. We talked a little bit about that when
16 Senator Gillibrand asked her questions. And I am concerned
17 that the U.S. investment is falling dramatically behind what
18 the Chinese government has invested in terms of the size and
19 modernization of each of our respective merchant fleets.

20 Since the 1980s, there have been a series of policy
21 decisions that have brought us down to a rather startling
22 figure of just 80 U.S.-flagged merchant vessels operating in
23 international trade, and 60 of those consist of MARAD,
24 Maritime Security Program, that allows them to contract
25 U.S.-flagged vessels during times of war. So we have 80

1 ships. The Chinese have over 5,500. And they are the
2 world's top shipbuilder, and they control ports that handle
3 67 percent of the world's shipping containers.

4 As you know well, this impacts our ability to supply
5 our own troops in conflict. You talked about how much
6 different the Western Pacific is from Europe -- you know,
7 islands, mobility, and logistical challenges. It also
8 impacts trade and global supply chains in peacetime, and it
9 is critical. I mean, this is the kind of capability that
10 cannot be turned on and off overnight. We need to
11 investment now if we want to rely on it tomorrow. I know in
12 your new role there is a chance that you are going to need
13 this capability.

14 We also see some similar underinvestment in the U.S.
15 Merchant Marine Academy, which is under the Department of
16 Transportation's purview, but it trains a lot of military
17 officers and the mariners that will man those ships. Our
18 nation's national security leaders cannot turn a blind eye
19 to these capabilities simply because they lie outside of the
20 military's and your immediate jurisdiction. And I think we
21 really need to increase our focus here.

22 So if confirmed, can I have your commitment to keep
23 this concern top of mind as you enter into this new role as
24 Chairman?

25 General Brown: Senator, if confirmed, you do have my

1 commitment.

2 Senator Kelly: Thank you.

3 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Kelly.

4 Senator Tuberville, please.

5 Senator Tuberville: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good
6 morning, General.

7 General Brown: Good morning.

8 Senator Tuberville: Thanks for being here. Thanks for
9 your service. And in talking to you yesterday, you moved
10 over 20 times in your career. I do not think a lot of
11 people understand the complexity of that with a family, so
12 thank you for your service.

13 General, I think most of us up here agree that other
14 than foreign countries, \$32 trillion in debt is one of our
15 biggest threats to national security. We are broke. In the
16 past, you have criticized the Department of Defense's
17 complex bureaucracy and have expressed a desire to improve
18 its inefficiencies. By law, the Joint Staff is capped at
19 around 2,300 personnel, with some exceptions.

20 Can you clarify at this time, how big is our staff as
21 we speak? Do you have a number on that?

22 General Brown: Senator, I do not have an exact number.
23 I will have to get that for you. But I know it is somewhere
24 around 2,000.

25 Senator Tuberville: Yeah. Thank you. I would

1 appreciate that.

2 You know, the House NDAA includes a study to look at
3 reducing the size of the office. Do you have any
4 suggestions on where we could look to cut staff or budget to
5 help, and not cut back efficiency?

6 General Brown: Not at the moment. As I go into this
7 position, if confirmed, that will be one of the things I do
8 take a look at when I look across the Joint Staff. And I
9 would also say, as we look across the aspects of our
10 military departments, if there are things we can do to
11 increase our efficiency and our capability and capacity,
12 those are things I would focus on.

13 Senator Tuberville: You know, the fiscal year 2023
14 budget for the Joint Staff was around \$1.2 billion, and the
15 budget request for fiscal year 2024 is close to \$1.3
16 billion. I guess you are familiar with that, right?

17 General Brown: Not the level of details of the Joint
18 Staff budget, because I have been focused on the Air Force
19 budget.

20 Senator Tuberville: Okay. Thank you. That is pretty
21 high. But I would like you to give us kind of a rundown the
22 next time we see you in a hearing in terms of where we are
23 at with that. Is it too much? Not enough? You know, we do
24 not want to cut back our military. It is so important. But
25 we also want to be efficient in what we use. So I would

1 appreciate anything that you could do for us in terms of
2 giving us an update on what you are going to set your team
3 up as, because you are going to be the new leader. So I
4 would hope you would keep an eye on that because that is a
5 lot of money.

6 I got an article yesterday that says Air Force delays
7 some moves, bonuses, as inflation cuts into personnel
8 budget. Could you explain that? That came from the Stars
9 and Stripes.

10 General Brown: Sure, Senator. As we built our budget
11 a couple of years ago, and, you know, based on the factors
12 we had, the economic factors, as well as the force mix
13 factors based on different career fields and different rank
14 structure, we typically will come back and ask for
15 reprogramming. We are working through the process of
16 reprogramming, so we do not go through an anti-deficiency
17 act and not spend money we do not have.

18 And so part of this is for us to be able to work with
19 Congress to get the reprogramming in place so we can
20 actually -- all the programs and impacts are outlined in
21 that article that we communicated to the force here recently
22 -- we can reverse and minimize the impact to airmen and
23 their families throughout the rest of this fiscal year.

24 Senator Tuberville: Yeah. And we all know how
25 important it is, and I think most of us have talked about it

1 up here today, recruiting. You and I talked about that
2 yesterday. Our recruiting is in a tailspin in most areas,
3 unfortunately. And with an all-volunteer military we are
4 going to have to do better. We have got to do better with
5 salaries, incentives, all those things to get our young men
6 and women involved and interested in our military. I think
7 it is so important. We can have all the upper echelon we
8 can get, but unless we have the people that actually does
9 the job on the ground, and in the planes, on the sea, we are
10 going to have huge problems because we live in a dangerous
11 world.

12 So thank you for taking this on. It is going to be a
13 hard job, and any way we can help you we are here to help.
14 Thank you, General.

15 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Tuberville.

16 Senator Warren, please.

17 Senator Warren. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good to see
18 you again, General Brown, and congratulations on your
19 nomination. Mrs. Brown, welcome here today.

20 So the Department of Defense is full of talented,
21 patriotic leaders who are working hard to keep us safe.
22 Even so, the Pentagon remains too cozy with powerful defense
23 companies that are reaping huge profits from hundreds of
24 billions of dollars in government contracts.

25 When our top leaders leave government service and head

1 straight to big paydays on the boards of the Department of
2 Defense's largest contractors or as defense industry
3 lobbyists it sends the message that the Pentagon is for
4 sale.

5 Now during his confirmation hearing before this
6 Committee, Secretary Austin publicly committed not to go to
7 work as a lobbyist for defense contractors after he leaves
8 his current job, and I appreciate the commitment, and I
9 believe that the American people do as well.

10 If confirmed, General Brown, you will be the
11 President's top military advisor, and your actions will set
12 the tone for the entire armed forces. So I would like to
13 hear you make those same commitments. General Brown, if
14 confirmed, will you commit to not going to work as a
15 lobbyist for a defense contractor for 4 years after you
16 leave government service?

17 General Brown: Senator, I am sensitive to the
18 perceptions of a conflict of interest that discussed in your
19 office, and I do not intend to pursue opportunities in the
20 defense sector or a lobbyist upon retirement from military
21 service. You know, my passion is in leadership and
22 mentoring.

23 Senator Warren. Good.

24 General Brown: And that is where I want to focus my
25 efforts after military service, of building the next

1 generation of leaders.

2 Senator Warren. I appreciate that, and I will take
3 that as a yes.

4 Let's do the second part, even though I think you got
5 the answer in there. Lobbying is not the only way that
6 former officials cash in on their government service. Giant
7 defense contractors frequently hire former top Pentagon
8 officials in non-lobbying roles and add them to their
9 corporate boards. The former Pentagon official gets paid
10 handsomely, and the defense contractor touts their name in
11 order to get more contracts.

12 General Dunford, the former Chairman of the Joint
13 Chiefs, joined the board of Lockheed Martin, DoD's top
14 contractor, less than 5 months after leaving government
15 service, and so far he has received nearly \$1 million in
16 compensation in that role. By contrast, Secretary Austin
17 pledge not to join the board of one of these companies when
18 he left government.

19 So General Brown, if confirmed, do you commit to not
20 receive compensation from a defense contractor for 4 years,
21 including compensation for being a board member?

22 General Brown: I will do the same answer I just
23 highlighted.

24 Senator Warren. Okay. I will take that as a yes then.

25 You know, it is really important. I am going to take

1 you at your word on this, and the American people and I will
2 hold you to it. This is a matter of personal integrity,
3 something that I know is very important to you.

4 I want to close and use our remaining time by asking
5 about the impact of the holds on the promotions and
6 assignments of senior military officers that the Senator
7 from Alabama has imposed. The families of these
8 servicemembers are held at a standstill. They are unsure
9 about where to enroll their kids in school or whether they
10 need to arrange a move across country, or even somewhere
11 else around the world.

12 General Brown, can you just spend a minute here and
13 talk to us about the impact that these holds are having on
14 our military families?

15 General Brown: There are several factors that I think
16 about as we are going through this and how we are working to
17 mitigate the challenges associated with the holds. There
18 are aspects of readiness in the transition in leadership,
19 and for our young servicemembers to know who is in the
20 position of leadership that is qualified, has the experience
21 to be there, and not, in some cases -- you know, we have
22 strong deputies, but at the same time they do not have the
23 same level of experience going forward.

24 In addition to the senior officers there is a whole
25 chain of events that go down to our more junior officers,

1 and that has an impact. It has an impact on their
2 progression in their career field, potentially, because if
3 one does not get promoted or move on then they are blocking
4 a spot for someone else. At the same time, we have several
5 members who have served honorably, and they are ready to
6 retire, but they are going to, in some cases, stay with us
7 to help us mitigate through that challenge.

8 The area that hits us, I think, that we do need to
9 think about is how it impacts our families, because it has
10 an impact not just for the senior officer but all their
11 staff and all those below them it has an impact. And as you
12 highlighted, whether it is schools, whether it is
13 employment, or the fact that they have already sold their
14 home because they thought they were going to move and now
15 they are living in temporary quarters, that creates a
16 challenge.

17 The last thing I would highlight on that is my concern
18 for future retention, because we have our more junior
19 officers who now will look up and say, "If that is the
20 challenge I am going to have to deal with in the future, I
21 am going to balance between my family and serving in a
22 senior position." And we will lose talent because of those
23 challenges.

24 The spouse network is alive and well, and the spouses
25 will compare notes. And the member may want to serve, but

1 the spouses and the families get a huge vote on while we
2 continue to be able to serve. And I thank my family for
3 that opportunity to be able to continue to serve.

4 Senator Warren. I see Mrs. Brown nodding her head on
5 this as well.

6 You know, if the Senator from Alabama continues his
7 reckless action he will soon be holding 650 leaders, who
8 have served our country honorable, hostage, and as you
9 rightly point out, that has effects on many more of the best
10 and brightest who have volunteered to serve our nation.

11 I heard the Senator say, as he concluded his questions,
12 that if there was anything he could do to help you in your
13 actions and help the service that he would be glad to do it.
14 What he could do to help is lift this stay before it does
15 more damage to our country.

16 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

17 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Warren.

18 Senator Budd, please.

19 Senator Budd: Thank you, Chairman. Good morning,
20 General Brown, and congrats on your nomination. I enjoyed
21 our meeting last month, just a few weeks ago, in my office.

22 In that discussion we talked about the importance of
23 securing the right capabilities to deter our nation's
24 adversaries. Last week my office received a long-awaited
25 report on divestment of F-15 aircraft, including at Seymour

1 Johnson Air Force Base in my home state of North Carolina.
2 The report bears your signature, and it states that the Air
3 Force plans to divest the remaining 149 F-15Cs and Ds in the
4 inventory and 119 F-15Es, leaving fewer than 100 E models
5 while procuring only 24 F-15EXs in each of the next 2 years.

6 So I am concerned about the divestment of a very
7 capable fighter aircraft, particularly F-15Es with upgraded
8 radars and electronic warfare suites. These are the most
9 advanced, fourth-generation fighters in the world, with
10 years of service left. It is particularly concerning given
11 the current threat window and the fighter capacity gap that
12 I believe you have talked about repeatedly.

13 The report states that these cuts will be used to
14 modernize the force. My question is this. What combat-
15 capable platforms are ready and available today -- and I
16 emphasize today -- that can be procured now, not in the
17 2030s or the 2040s?

18 General Brown: Senator, I understand your concern in
19 the aspect of it as we look at this. It goes back to a
20 comment I made a little bit earlier about how we balance
21 capability and capacity. And as we do this it is not just
22 the platforms themselves. It is the other aspects of our
23 command and control in terms of bringing some reconnaissance
24 capabilities, that we will continue to invest in to bring
25 those forward to make each of the platforms we have more

1 capable, not just for the Air Force but I would say the same
2 thing across the Joint Force. And it also has to do with
3 munitions as well.

4 Because of our procurement cycles for each one of these
5 it is typically from the time we get a budget, and if we get
6 it on time, which is why that is so important, it takes
7 about a year to 2, and in some cases, most times than not, 2
8 years to get that capability. And so not only on the
9 fighter piece but it is also the capabilities to make those
10 fighters more relevant and combat capable as we go forward,
11 and that is how we are trying to balance between the two and
12 make sure we have the analysis, the research and development
13 to make sure we are staying ahead of the threat, which
14 actually adds to that as well, in bringing in advanced
15 technologies into some of these platforms and capabilities
16 we are procuring, not just, again, for the Air Force but
17 really for the Joint Force as well.

18 Senator Budd: Thank you, General. In your advanced
19 policy questions regarding the role of Special Operations
20 Forces in implementing the National Defense Strategy you
21 state, and I quote, "SOF remains ideally suited to identify
22 a competitor's coercive capabilities and the Gray Zone,
23 encounter them with deliberate, credible actions while
24 managing escalation," end quote.

25 Given that SOF is ideally suited and provides expanded,

1 low-cost and credible options for combatant commanders and
2 the President across strategic competition, counterterrorism
3 and crisis response, would it be, in your best military
4 advice, would you give the advice to this Committee to cut
5 Special Operations Force structure?

6 General Brown: Well, that is something that, if
7 confirmed, I would do a bit more analysis on, but I would
8 also highlight the fact that our Special Operations Forces
9 over the course of the past 20 years of conflict grew a fair
10 amount. And as we rebalance the force and think about all
11 the national security challenges that we have, as outlined
12 in the National Defense Strategy, how can we balance that
13 SOF capability, what it does today and what it will do in
14 the future. Because the aspect of SOF, I think, will be a
15 bit different from what we have done, particularly in the
16 Middle East, for the past 20 years.

17 Senator Budd: I understand that. I just have
18 tremendous concerns of what I have seen in the President's
19 budget. But let me ask an ongoing question on the same
20 topic.

21 Do you agree that SOF play a critical role,
22 particularly as it relates to broader efforts to gain
23 influence, advantage, and leverage as part of strategic
24 competition?

25 General Brown: I do.

1 Senator Budd: Thank you.

2 Changing topics, military recruiting shortfalls
3 continue to be a grave concern as we consider how the
4 recruiting crisis impacts our nation's military readiness.
5 In our discussions in my office we talked about diversity,
6 equity, and inclusion policies that, in my view, deter
7 rather than encourage young people to serve. I have heard
8 from many young and qualified individuals from North
9 Carolina who are hesitant to join a force they see as
10 extremely political and defined by DEI policies.

11 In August 2022, you signed a memorandum, along with the
12 Secretary and Under Secretary of the Air Force directing Air
13 Education and Training Command the Air Force Academy to
14 achieve diversity and inclusion goals broken down by
15 percentage of both race and sex. We talked about this. It
16 was a good discussion. But I want to give you an
17 opportunity to respond in an open session. What is the
18 purpose of this memo, the one from August of 2022, and how
19 do such policies improve recruiting? Bottom line, I think
20 that we should be suspect of any policies that give
21 advantage to some groups at the expense of others. But I
22 will give you an opportunity.

23 General Brown: Senator, the goal is to tap into all
24 the talent across our nation, and that memo outlined
25 applicant goals, and the goal there was to actually outreach

1 to broader aspects across the nation and show them the
2 opportunities to join the force.

3 What the memo also says is there is a goal to allow
4 those young people to understand what the opportunities are
5 but to get selected and to come into the Academy, ROTC, or
6 any other program that is merit-based, and they have to be
7 qualified and meet the standard to join. We have got to
8 make sure we provide the opportunity. I have talked
9 personally about recruiting aspect. Young people only
10 aspire to be what they know about, and if they do not know
11 anything about the military, and we do not outreach to them,
12 we may miss some tremendous talent.

13 But they have got to be qualified because we are a
14 merit-based organization, and that is the way we have
15 operated for an extended period of time, and that is the way
16 we will continue to operate as a military force.

17 Senator Budd: Thank you, General. I yield back.

18 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Budd.

19 Senator Peters, please.

20 Senator Peters: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General
21 Brown, good to see you again, and congratulations on your
22 nomination, and thank you for your years of service.

23 General Brown, as we discussed, for the U.S. to be able
24 to successfully defend against all the threats that we face
25 in the 21st century it is going to be absolutely vital that

1 we are as efficient as possible when it comes to our force
2 structure as well as understanding our limited manpower
3 resources. And as you know very well, our National Guard
4 comprises a significant portion of both our air and ground
5 combat capabilities, and oftentimes these units actually
6 have a higher level of experience than their active duty
7 counterparts and are more easily able to meet recruiting as
8 well as retention goals.

9 The National Guard is a critical part of our domestic
10 cyber response and mission assurance duties and plays a key
11 role, I think, or I know, between the Department of State
12 and local officials.

13 In a time when innovation is absolutely critical,
14 National Guard installations are able to easily host private
15 sector partners who are conducting testing and evaluation of
16 emerging technologies, and every year thousands of National
17 Guardsmen build closer ties and increase interoperability
18 with partners and allies across the globe through the State
19 Partnership Program.

20 Camp Grayling, in my home state, in northern Michigan,
21 is a place where thousands of U.S. troops train alongside
22 NATO and INDOPACOM partners every summer during Exercise
23 Northern Strike, and I think it is just one example of the
24 tremendous capabilities our National Guard brings to the
25 total force.

1 Simply put, the United States cannot compete with near-
2 peer competitors, combat long-term insurgencies, implement
3 the National Defense Strategy, or overcome recruiting and
4 retention challenges without an adequately resourced and
5 empowered National Guard.

6 So my question for you, sir, is what investments does
7 the Department need to make in the National Guard to build
8 and to maintain a force able to meet the challenges that our
9 nation will face for the rest of this century?

10 General Brown: Well, Senator, I have tremendous value
11 working with the Air National Guard throughout my career, in
12 having had them under my command in the combat operations as
13 well as serving as the Air Force Chief of Staff.

14 I think the key area, a couple of things that we have
15 to think through as a Joint Force, and if confirmed as the
16 Chairman, is to ensure that our Guard members have the
17 capabilities with the resources and equipment that is
18 modernized so they can be a frontline institution to be
19 ready to go whenever the nations call. And then at the same
20 time it is some of the personnel programs we have to ensure
21 that we are taking care of those members and their families,
22 particularly knowing that they change status as they go on
23 and off active duty or get deployed back and forth. The
24 better we can smooth those processes, that helps us out.

25 And then the last thing I would kind of highlight is

1 the work we do on the active side and how we ensure that the
2 process to retain that talent and bring it over into the
3 Guard or the Reserve component. There are areas where
4 sometimes we make it a little more difficult than it has to
5 be, and we may lose an opportunity with a great
6 servicemember who decides to go do something else. But the
7 value that our Guard provides, whether it is because of
8 their dual status, you know, their civilian career and their
9 military career, I have been a great proponent of the State
10 Partnership Program. That has done tremendous work for our
11 allies and partners.

12 So the Guard, both the Air and the Army Guard, are
13 great assets to our Joint Force.

14 Senator Peters: Great. It is good to hear that.
15 General Brown, when you assumed the position of Air Force
16 Chief of Staff you issued a directive for airmen, quote, "to
17 accelerate change or lose." You described this concept as a
18 necessity for the Air Force to be able to dominate in a very
19 dynamic, rapidly changing security environment.

20 As Chairman, if confirmed, you would have great
21 influence on bringing this type of attitude to what is
22 perhaps the most risk adverse, bureaucratic organization in
23 the world. So my question for you sir is, what are the
24 biggest challenges that you can identify to having the
25 Department embrace this culture, which I think is essential,

1 of accelerating change?

2 General Brown: Well, one of the areas that I have
3 found as I try to do this -- and I have made some progress
4 in -- I have been happy with some of the progress I have
5 made in certain areas as the Air Force chief, but at the
6 same time, there are some areas that I am not as happy
7 about.

8 The challenge there is having all of our servicemembers
9 understand the big picture and why this is so important, why
10 we need to modernize, and what is at stake. And from that
11 perspective, then you step away from your own interests and
12 then we do what is best, not just for your part of the
13 organization but what is best for the entire organization.
14 That is how I have approached it as the Air Force Chief of
15 Staff. If confirmed, that is exactly the way I would
16 approach it as the Chairman of the joint chiefs. And having
17 served as a joint chief, I have had to be able to do the
18 same. We have got to be able to do that a bit more across
19 the force and put what is best out front for the force, to
20 ensure we are doing the right things to protect the nation
21 and our national interests.

22 Senator Peters: Thank you, General. Thank you, Mr.
23 Chairman.

24 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Peters.

25 Senator Mullin, please.

1 Senator Mullin: Thank you, Chairman, and going kind of
2 on the same lane that Mr. Peters was but not necessarily the
3 same question but talking about the accelerating change or
4 lose. When you had originally drafted that as Air Force
5 Chief of Staff, you outlined the urgent need for technology
6 advancement in your "accelerate change or lose" comment.

7 An important factor in our ability to outpace our
8 competitors is the health of our defense industry. Are we
9 able to actually leverage them in an accurate way to be able
10 to have the same mentality to, as you said, accelerate
11 change or lose with the industrial base in the current state
12 that it is in?

13 General Brown: I do think we can, and the thing I have
14 found as a service chief for the past 2 years, after I wrote
15 "accelerate change or lose" that it not a flip of a switch.
16 It is a bit of a culture change that takes a bit of time to
17 get it bought into the force and start to move.

18 And so what I have seen is aspects of the defense
19 industrial base, aspects of the defense industry to start to
20 shift. We have been able to do it in certain programs, a
21 couple of programs for the Air Force, and the B-21 program
22 is a good example, Sentinel is a good example, Next
23 Generation Air Dominance are good examples where we have
24 taken a different approach to drive ourselves in a different
25 direction. I would say the same thing with AFWERX, where we

1 are being able to build relationships with smaller companies
2 and smaller technologies, have them play in the competitive
3 space. Because that is what happens outside of the
4 Department of Defense.

5 So we have been able to make some advancements in those
6 areas, but you are still going to have the major defense
7 acquisition programs that are a bit broader. But we are
8 making progress, and that is something we have got to
9 continue to do, and if confirmed, the same energy I put in
10 as the Air Force Chief of Staff on accelerating change is
11 the same thing you can expect from me as the Chairman, if
12 confirmed.

13 Senator Mullin: I could not agree more. I mean, in
14 the private sector, in any sector, we have to accelerate
15 change, or you do fall behind. So I agree with what you are
16 saying. But how do you keep the industrial base nimble
17 without sacrificing legacy systems and knowledge at the same
18 time?

19 General Brown: Well, I think part of this is the
20 aspect of how we write our contracts, how we incentivize and
21 set the business model, realizing that our defense companies
22 have stakeholders that they have got to report to. But at
23 the same time, we have got to make sure we provide the
24 combat capability for our Joint Force.

25 So it is important for us to come together so we are

1 not talking past each other or debating on different sides
2 of the aisle on this, or different sides of the perspective.
3 It is really how do we come together and figure out how we
4 move forward. The way I operate is basically on a Venn
5 diagram. There are some things we agree about -- let's skip
6 those and move those forward -- and the things we disagree
7 about, how then do we break down those barriers and then
8 help improve. Part of that is building relationships within
9 industry so they understand where we are going and what they
10 are trying to achieve, and then we can work together to
11 ensure we are doing what is right for the nation.

12 Senator Mullin: All right. Switching gears a little
13 bit, nearly everyone that comes in front of this Committee
14 this year has talked about the challenges we have with
15 recruiting. There have also been, obviously, comments about
16 having to change our posture a little bit because our lag to
17 be able to man some of the systems that we are trying to
18 move forward with or some of the areas that we are trying to
19 grow in.

20 But at the same time, during COVID, we had let 8,000
21 capable service men and women go for not wanting to get the
22 vaccination. As more technology has come out, we think that
23 they probably had the right to do so. But how do we bring
24 those individuals back into the fold now that the pandemic
25 is, quote, "over," and get them back, plugged in, and

1 reinstatement to where they should be, if they choose to
2 come back?

3 General Brown: Each of the services has a process to
4 allow those members who want to return and review them
5 coming back into the service.

6 Senator Mullin: Do you support bringing them back in?

7 General Brown: On a case-by-case basis with the
8 reviews done by the services.

9 Senator Mullin: What would be the case-by-case? I
10 mean, what are red flags for you?

11 General Brown: Well, in some cases maybe there were
12 other factors beyond just the COVID vaccination that may
13 prevent them from returning.

14 Senator Mullin: But if it was based just specifically
15 on the refusal to get the COVID vaccine, you support
16 bringing them back in?

17 General Brown: I would be supportive, but I would
18 defer to those who are going through the cases before I -- I
19 do not want --

20 Senator Mullin: Well, obviously, being the Chairman,
21 you are going to have a big sway in it. If you say, "Hey
22 guys, let's bring these guys back," if this was the only
23 thing that was on their mark, and you say, "Let's bring them
24 back in," I think most people would probably follow that
25 leadership.

1 General Brown: Somewhat true, but I am not in the
2 command chain. If confirmed as the Chairman, I am not in
3 the command chain. There are commanders that make those
4 decisions, but I will provide my advice on how best to
5 approach moving forward.

6 Senator Mullin: Well, thank you for your service.
7 Ma'am, Ms. Brown, thank you for your service too and
8 supporting him along the way. We really appreciate you and
9 the sacrifice you made in raising the family while he was
10 serving the country, and all the 20 moves and making the
11 house a true home for him to come to and feel comfortable.
12 So thank you for that. Sir, I appreciate your service, and
13 I appreciate the conversation we had in my office. I look
14 forward to working with you.

15 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Mullin.

16 Senator Rosen, please.

17 Senator Rosen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you,
18 General Brown, again for your service to our nation, willing
19 to serve in this critical role. I always thank the family
20 members who serve right alongside with you, so I echo
21 Senator Mullin. That boxing up 20 homes, it cannot be easy.

22 But I do want to make a quick comment before my
23 questions because I do want to start off by saying that I am
24 deeply concerned by the fact that your swift confirmation is
25 being held up, along with hundreds of others of senior

1 military promotions, including those in my state of Nevada.
2 That would not be acceptable for any reason, but it is even
3 more outrageous that these holds are to get rid of a policy
4 that protects our servicemembers' reproductive rights. And
5 so this extreme anti-choice agenda, it is jeopardizing our
6 national security in order to impose restrictions on our
7 servicemembers' reproductive freedoms. Enough is enough.
8 We need to fill these critical roles, and I would like to
9 see you have a quick confirmation. And so I am going to
10 move onto that, General.

11 My colleagues have been talking about maintaining our
12 technological edge because we know that there is global
13 competition for a skilled workforce, declining investments
14 in R&D, and DoD contracting challenges, and the STEM
15 workforce gap. They are all impediments to eroding our
16 defense technological edge with our adversaries. Meanwhile,
17 we also know that China is investing heavily in advanced
18 technologies such as artificial intelligence, biotechnology,
19 quantum computing. So we talk about accelerate change or
20 lose.

21 And that is why in this Congress I introduced
22 bipartisan legislation with Senator Blackburn to establish a
23 pilot program to accelerate the scaling, production, and
24 acquisition of advanced capabilities for national security
25 through a public-private partnership that is going to

1 incentivize American investment in small business that is
2 working on innovative defense technologies. This
3 legislation has been included in both the House and Senate
4 version of the NDAA for fiscal year 2024.

5 So building on some of the prior questions, General
6 Brown, if confirmed, how might the public-private
7 partnership that catalyzes investment in advanced
8 capabilities really enhance our competitiveness with China?

9 General Brown: Well, if confirmed, what it does for us
10 is it actually has us being able to tap into all the
11 technical capability within our nation. And that is why the
12 aspect of these public-private partnerships are so
13 important, because there are certain things that happen
14 outside the Department of Defense that provides great
15 capability, that it will solve some of the operational
16 problems that we are faced with, that will help us better
17 defend the nation.

18 And that partnership, to me, is so important, and it is
19 the aspect of how do we come together and build these
20 relationships, create the dialogue, and solve problems
21 together that benefit both the private sector but also the
22 public sector, and particularly the Department of Defense.

23 Senator Rosen: Thank you. I want to move now on to
24 combating Iranian aggression because just last week Iranian
25 naval vessels attempted to seize two foreign-flagged

1 commercial tankers right in international waters. Notably,
2 this incident involved an Iranian Navy warship, not an
3 Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps vessel, which is a
4 troubling escalation.

5 So to address Iran's growing naval aggression I
6 introduced, with Senator Ernst, the Maritime Act, which is
7 bipartisan legislation that would require the Department of
8 Defense to develop a strategy with our partners and allies
9 in the Middle East to counter these maritime threats posed
10 by Iran.

11 So General Brown, if confirmed, how would you confront
12 Iranian aggression in all forms, and how would you leverage
13 the regional partnerships fostered by the Abraham Accords to
14 deter Iran's malign actions?

15 General Brown: Senator, if confirmed, it is building
16 on my vast experience, particularly in the Middle East. But
17 you mentioned the Abraham Accords, and what I do see is
18 greater cooperation between the nations within the Middle
19 East. It is something we would have to continue to help
20 support. Part of that is ensuring, as we do this we are
21 also providing them the capabilities to be able to support
22 efforts to push back against Iranian aggression in all
23 forms. We have been able to do that in the past, but as you
24 highlighted, the world and the threat has gotten more
25 complicated, and so we cannot rest on our laurels. We have

1 got to continue to work hard with our partners in the region
2 and give them the capabilities, and also working with them
3 as well, because we have got to be part of the solution as
4 part of the United States and our military force as well.

5 Senator Rosen: Thank you. I want to talk a little
6 bit, again, on our capacity to really meet the challenges
7 going forward, and we know that cyber challenges are huge.
8 We know in the private sector it is really huge to get that
9 employment, get the skilled technologists, and we know that
10 in the military as well. And as I have noted before this
11 Committee numerous times, our nation does face these
12 unprecedented cyberattacks, consistent shortage of talent,
13 cyber talent. They pose a significant threat to our
14 security.

15 I have a bill to find solutions such as my Civilian
16 Cybersecurity Reserve Act. It was included in this year's
17 NDAA for fiscal year 2024, to provide the DoD with qualified
18 civilian personnel to support the Department's cyberspace
19 operations and ensure we have the talent needed to defeat,
20 deter, and respond to malicious cyber activity, especially
21 at times of greatest need, to provide surge capacity.

22 And so I know my time is just about up, but if you
23 could answer quickly, how might nontraditional cyber reserve
24 models be a possible pathway to recruit personnel who might
25 not otherwise choose to serve full-time but possess those

1 valuable cyber skills?

2 General Brown: Senator, it allows us to tap into the
3 great talent and capability across our nation and allows us
4 to address national security needs. And building those
5 relationships, I think, are going to be important as a
6 nation as we go forward.

7 Senator Rosen: Thank you.

8 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Rosen.

9 Senator Cotton, please.

10 Senator Cotton: General Brown, welcome, and
11 congratulations on your nomination, and thank you for you
12 decades of service to our nation. And Mrs. Brown, thank you
13 for your decades of service as well.

14 There has been a lot of conversation this morning about
15 munitions. I want to continue that conversation because I
16 view it as one of the most vital challenges the Department
17 faces today. Obviously, this is in the context of our
18 support for Ukraine and its defense of its own territory and
19 Russia's unprovoked war of aggression.

20 General Brown, has the Ukraine war caused the challenge
21 to our munitions and defense industrial base or has it
22 exposed some of the fragility and cracks in the defense
23 industrial base?

24 General Brown: Senator, I would say it has exposed,
25 and the reason I say that is just based on experience. When

1 I was air component commander for United States Central
2 Command during the Defeat ISIS campaign we had some similar
3 conversations. Back in 2017-ish time frame, when North
4 Korea was very active, we did some reviews and it
5 highlighted it then.

6 Now it is highlighting it even more so, and it is the
7 aspect of why it is important for us to not only invest in
8 the platforms, we have got to invest in the munitions, do we
9 have enough stockpile, particular the advanced munitions
10 that are most effective. Those are the things that we need
11 to continue to do, not only from the Department but also as
12 we work with Congress to highlight those needs.

13 Senator Cotton: I agree with that, that the war in
14 Ukraine has exposed those cracks and the fragility in our
15 defense industrial base. Of course, those concerns are part
16 of the broader context of China and the threat that it poses
17 to Taiwan and our ability to deter Communist China from
18 going for the jugular in Taiwan.

19 One important question here is to think about the kinds
20 of munitions we have been providing to Ukraine and the kinds
21 of munitions we provide to Taiwan, or that we might provide
22 or might use ourselves in the future.

23 Speaking broadly, are the munitions used in Ukraine
24 versus those that might be used in Taiwan, are those
25 completely the same, totally different, or somewhere in the

1 middle but closer to one pole or the other?

2 General Brown: I would say they are somewhat
3 different, just based on the environment that they are
4 operating in. But there are some that are similar. I think
5 the key part for us is to ensure -- and this is one reason
6 why we, in this year's budget submission, we had multiyear
7 procurement. The more your procurement was to actually make
8 sure that we not only had the munitions we are going to buy
9 but also the facilities as well as the workforce and the
10 supply chain, and that is the value of having these
11 multiyear. It sets some predictability for defense and the
12 industrial base so it is not an up-and-down with each budget
13 cycle, and that will help them better plan and ensure we
14 have the capability, not only for ourselves but as we also
15 think about our allies and partners as well.

16 Senator Cotton: Well, I am glad you raised multiyear
17 procurement because I think that has been something that
18 could help address this problem. It is not a silver bullet,
19 but it could help address it. To be clear, multiyear
20 procurement, though, is not necessarily about saving money
21 for the Department but about giving predictability and
22 certainty to the companies across America that assemble or
23 make components for these munitions. Is that correct?

24 General Brown: That is correct. It is about building
25 capacity. It is about buying down risk in the future. You

1 cannot not put a price tag on risk. You know, ideally you
2 do want to save money, but in the big scheme of things you
3 have got to actually get the facilities built first. That
4 is going to be some capital investment. But then, when you
5 start to produce, that is when you may get some savings in
6 the future.

7 Senator Cotton: Because if you are sitting at the
8 head, not of the United States military, as you will, if
9 confirmed, but rather, say, at the head of a major defense
10 contractor like Lockheed or Northrop, or even one of their
11 subcontractors who, say, makes parts for the rocket motors
12 or the explosives or the steel, those are major capital-
13 intensive investments if you are going to expand a line or
14 even add a new line. And obviously you would be concerned
15 if you cannot have multiyear certainty that that line is
16 going to be at full capacity. Is that right?

17 General Brown: It is not only the line and the
18 capacity but it is also the workforce, making sure they are
19 going to be available, and the subcontractors to support the
20 major aspects that you need to pull together.

21 Senator Cotton: I think you and the Department have
22 convinced the authorizers on this point. I think maybe
23 appropriators still need some convincing to do. I am
24 confident our Chairman, who also sits on the Appropriations
25 Committee, can carry your points to the Appropriations

1 Committee.

2 One final question I want to raise since it has been in
3 the news is what has sometimes been colloquially called as
4 "155" over the last few days. That is a 155-millimeter
5 artillery shell that is one of the most basic shells that we
6 use or that our Western partners use. We have spent about
7 \$1.5 billion on production of 155 shells over the last 6
8 months to get to a point to quintuple our production rates.

9 I have looked at the inventory numbers which, in
10 combination with donations from other allies and partners,
11 do not appear to be approaching concerning levels yet. We
12 have also heard, on this Committee, from several leaders
13 that 155 production rates right now are sustainable.

14 Do you think that we are currently low on 155-
15 millimeter artillery shells?

16 General Brown: Senator, I have not looked at it that
17 closely. I would have to come back to you with maybe a
18 question for the record on that one.

19 Senator Cotton: Okay. Could you do that, please? And
20 if confirmed, also, if you conclude that we are not, in
21 fact, low, could you perhaps, in your role as the principal
22 military advisor to the President, share the news with him,
23 because I think he may have misspoken somewhat in an
24 interview recently.

25 Thank you, General Brown.

1 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Cotton.

2 Senator Schmitt, please.

3 Senator Schmitt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good
4 morning, General.

5 General, do we have too many white officers in the Air
6 Force?

7 General Brown: Senator, what I really look at is the
8 quality of all the officers that we have, and we look at the
9 aspect of everyone who is qualified, meets the
10 qualifications, is promoted.

11 Senator Schmitt: Well, I would agree with you, but
12 that answer is not consistent with your August 9th memo. In
13 your August 9th memo, you said that -- you signed onto that
14 there should be a reduction essentially of about 9 percent
15 of the white officers. That is 5,400 -- have 5,400 too many
16 white officers. And this is the real impact, I think, of
17 this desire of the Administration, and I am saddened to see
18 this in this memo, of this obsession with sort of race-based
19 politics being interjected into our military.

20 How did you come up with the percentage of 67.5 percent
21 of the officers should be white, and how did you come up
22 with 13 percent should be Black, and how did you come up
23 with 10 percent should be Asian, and how did you come up
24 with 1.5 percent should be American Indian and Native
25 Alaskan, how did you come up with 1 percent being Native

1 Hawaiian or other Pacific islander, and how did you come up
2 with 15 percent of our officers should be Hispanic or
3 Latino?

4 General Brown: Senator, that memo is on application
5 goals, not the actual makeup of the force. And those
6 numbers are based on the demographics in the nation.

7 Senator Schmitt: Okay. All right. Ten percent of our
8 country is Asian American? Is that where you came up with
9 it, just the percentage of the population?

10 General Brown: Essentially.

11 Senator Schmitt: Because right now the actual
12 percentage -- I mean, this is where this is a ridiculous
13 conversation, to be perfectly honest, because why did you
14 not come up with, or are you going to come up with the
15 percentage of the overall force? Did you contemplate that,
16 of how many, you know, Black Americans should be in the Air
17 Force, or how many Asian Americans should be in the Air
18 Force? Did you contemplate the total force percentages?

19 General Brown: Senator, what we looked at was the
20 aspect of providing opportunities for anybody who wants to
21 serve --

22 Senator Schmitt: Listen, if that were the case
23 -- listen, if that were what was in this memo I would not be
24 asking you these questions. But we have in a memo, signed
25 by you, that you think right now there are too many white

1 officers. This is a blanket statement.

2 And so I could go down the line of questioning of which
3 of the 5,400 white officers that we have too many of should
4 be fired, because that is the actual impact of all this. I
5 agree with you. Your story about wanting to be the best
6 pilot in the Air Force, regardless of race, that is what the
7 military is supposed to be. It is this great meritocracy.
8 It is why there are uniforms and haircuts.

9 And I heard so many of my colleagues talk about
10 infusing abortion politics into this. That is exactly what
11 is wrong. This Administration has infused abortion politics
12 into our military, COVID politics into our military, DEI
13 politics into our military, and it is a cancer on the best
14 military in the history of the world. Those men and women
15 deserve better than this, this idea that they have to go
16 through these struggle sessions with DEI training.

17 Because trust me, I believe that we ought to have the
18 broadest pool of applicants and get the best and the
19 brightest, and we ought to be recruiting in various areas to
20 make sure we have the best and the brightest from every
21 community, regardless of your race or your gender or your
22 ethnicity. But that is not what DEI is. DEI is an ideology
23 based in cultural Marxism, and somehow, some way, we ended
24 up in a place where a general in the Air Force is advocating
25 for racial quotas, whether it be by applicants or the number

1 of officers or maybe the total unit, and I just think that
2 is wrong. I think that is the wrong approach.

3 You have had a distinguished career, and I thank you
4 for your service. I just do not know how we can continue to
5 have leadership that advocates for this divisive policy.

6 And so I will ask you also, there have been 8,500
7 military men and women fired because they chose not to get a
8 vaccine. If confirmed, what would you do to go out, not
9 just they can reapply and there is a process, to go out and
10 recruit these folks back? What would you do to do that?
11 What would you do to accomplish that?

12 General Brown: Senator, if confirmed, I would provide
13 them the opportunity to reapply.

14 Senator Schmitt: I just do not think that is good
15 enough. I heard that from Secretary Austin. I just do not
16 think that is good enough. We did a great disservice to
17 this country by firing people because they made that
18 decision. I think they ought to be reinstated with rank and
19 back pay. I have not heard that from anybody that has come
20 before this Committee, and I am saddened by that.

21 I think I am out of time, Mr. Chairman.

22 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Schmitt.

23 Senator Duckworth, please.

24 Senator Duckworth: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General
25 Brown, welcome to you and your family, and congratulations

1 on your nomination.

2 I really enjoyed our discussion last month. I look
3 forward to continuing to work with you on our military's
4 readiness, if you are confirmed. Each of the military
5 services faces challenges in meeting recruiting goals, in
6 part due to historically small pool of eligible recruits,
7 and that pool continues to shrink.

8 That is why I am introducing the ENLIST Act to begin to
9 remedy this issue. My legislation enables the Department of
10 Defense to expand its recruiting pool to include long-time
11 residents of this country. This could include many people
12 who love this country and are dedicated to service, like
13 DACA recipients or people who originally came on a work or
14 educational visa and have applied to stay permanently but
15 cannot receive an immigrant visa due to caps in the system.

16 The ENLIST Act will aid recruitment efforts by allowing
17 highly skilled and motivated individuals to succeed in the
18 military while still maintaining the Department's security
19 requirements and high enlistment standards.

20 General Brown, during our discussion you described
21 traveling to bases and meeting new Americans eager to serve
22 in the Air National Guard. I would like to know if you
23 think that the ENLIST Act and its expansion of the pool of
24 possible recruits benefits the military recruitment efforts,
25 and I would also like to hear your perspective on the value

1 that highly qualified immigrants bring to the military.

2 General Brown: Senator, as we talked about in your
3 office, I do think about those who, as you mention, love
4 this country, want to serve, want to raise their right hand
5 and take an oath of enlistment, and the opportunity for them
6 to become citizens of the United States. It provides an
7 opportunity because in many cases they are very talented,
8 and they want to stay in this nation. There are
9 opportunities that the ENLIST Act would help us in some of
10 our recruiting, and again, talent that resides in this
11 nation that wants to serve. And if they want to serve, and
12 meet the qualifications, I think all should be provided the
13 opportunity.

14 Senator Duckworth: Thank you. I cannot think of a
15 better way to show love of this country. You want to be an
16 American? Put on her colors. Stand shoulder to shoulder
17 and help defend her.

18 I would like to thank my colleagues on this Committee
19 and the staff for their work on this year's NDAA, which
20 supports a strong and ready total force. I am particularly
21 proud of my NDAA provision expanding TRICARE coverage of
22 assisted reproductive technology, or ART, for current
23 servicemembers and their dependents. Studies show that
24 servicemembers have higher rates of infertility compared to
25 the general population, which is only complicated by an

1 overly restrictive DoD policy and servicemembers' deployment
2 schedules.

3 General Brown, expanding assisted reproductive
4 technology services to female and male members of the
5 uniformed services and their dependents, without regard to
6 coital conception, helps members to start their families
7 that they have always dreamed of. Do you think expanding
8 our servicemembers' access to this important health care is
9 a positive recruiting and retention tool?

10 General Brown: Senator, what I believe is we, as
11 senior leaders in the military, responsibly provide health
12 care for all our members. And when I think about providing
13 health care I do not try to determine aspects of what type
14 of health care but health care at large. We have done that
15 in the past, and we need to continue to do it and support
16 our military members and their families with the health care
17 to ensure they are healthy, and again, continue to serve and
18 be part of the greatest fighting force in the world.

19 Senator Duckworth: Thank you, General. And earlier
20 this year I led an Indo-Pacific code of conduct that reinforced to me
21 just how important our alliances and partnerships are in the
22 region. I am going back there again in August, to the
23 Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand. I think that these
24 partnerships are incredibly important, and I have asked
25 these same questions of every service chief who has come

1 before this Committee because I think we can be doing so
2 much more to better these key relationships.

3 General Brown, you have deep experience in interacting
4 with allies and partners in the Middle East, in Europe, and
5 in the Indo-Pacific. Can you speak about your personal
6 relationships with air chiefs from other nations and how
7 that may benefit your role as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs
8 of Staff, if you are confirmed?

9 General Brown: Senator, when I think about it, it is
10 all about relationships, and it is the relationships I have
11 been able to build with these various air chiefs, and in
12 some cases the air chief is retiring and a new air chief
13 comes in, so I have relationships in the retired community
14 as well. But it is also providing the opportunities to meet
15 with the various chiefs of the defense, as I have gone and
16 traveled around the world, to include the Indo-Pacific. And
17 if confirmed as Chairman, I will have an opportunity to
18 deepen those relationships with other chiefs of defense, and
19 again, the value of these relationships I have as an air
20 chief will open the door. And even if I do not know that
21 chief of defense, having a relationship with that air chief
22 actually helps to open the door and build a new relationship
23 with a chief of defense who I do not already know, if
24 confirmed.

25 Senator Duckworth: Thank you. And Mr. Chairman, just

1 one very quick, 10 seconds?

2 Chairman Reed: Yes.

3 Senator Duckworth: Thank you. I just wanted to
4 clarify, because I came in late. I apologize for that. But I
5 only heard half of my colleague's questioning to you. And he
6 seemed to say that he thought that you were advocating for
7 quotas, racial quotas, in recruiting. I did not think that
8 was the case. My understanding is that you want to broaden
9 the recruiting and allow anybody who wants to serve, who
10 qualifies to serve, and making sure that people have access
11 to service, or are you actually implementing racial quotas
12 and saying only a certain number of Asians, a certain number
13 of Blacks, a certain number of whites can be recruited?

14 General Brown: No. Broaden the pool, and we do not
15 have quotas. That is against policy for staff quotas.

16 Senator Duckworth: Thank you for clarifying that,
17 General.

18 Chairman Reed: Senator Scott, please. Thank you,
19 Senator Duckworth.

20 Senator Scott: Chair, first, General Brown, thank you
21 for your service, and I want to thank your wife for her
22 service. You have got a stellar background.

23 I just got back from the Middle East. I was in Israel
24 when they had to go into Jenin and kill the terrorists that
25 were targeting Israeli citizens. And everybody I talked to

1 in Israel, all they talked about was the problems with Iran.
2 I went to Bahrain, and they were concerned about the menace
3 of Iran. And I went to UAE, and it is the same thing.
4 Everybody is concerned about what is going on with Iran.

5 Also while I was over there the U.S. Navy was able to
6 -- and you really have to admire, I think it is the 5th
7 Fleet -- what they did. They stopped two ships from being
8 taken over by Iranian forces and did a great job.

9 So here is my question. And as far as I understand,
10 most of these tankers that are going through the Strait of
11 Hormuz are not flagged in America. They are not owned by
12 American companies. So can you talk about what is the value
13 of the U.S. military, U.S. Navy, being there. That is
14 number one. Number two is, are allies doing their part, or
15 should we be doing less and let our allies deal with it?

16 General Brown: Well, the role of the U.S. Navy in that
17 region, and along with the other services, is to help
18 provide security within the region, which actually may have
19 a global impact. And so the role that the Navy plays to
20 help the free flow of commerce that impacts not just the
21 United States but, more broadly, those countries in the
22 region but many of our allies and partners, and that plays a
23 key role in our participation there.

24 I think we have got to stay involved with our allies
25 and partners, and as you highlighted, many of the countries

1 in the region have started to talk more about Iran. And I
2 think that is one of the areas that I, having served there
3 with United States Central Command several times, we have
4 been focused on counterterrorism. You now think about the
5 aspect of Iran in the national security documents, the
6 National Security Strategy, National Defense Strategy, the
7 coalescing of all the nations now to talk about this
8 opportunity to work more closely together in our collective
9 efforts to deter the activities by Iran in the Strait of
10 Hormuz and the Gulf or any other place in the Middle East.

11 Senator Scott: Thank you. Another thing you brought
12 up is -- and a lot of the leaders were concerned about what
13 the Biden administration is doing with regard to trying to
14 negotiate some sort of deal with Iran. And once I get back
15 I hear that the FBI is investigating Robert Malley, who
16 recently served as President Biden's special envoy to Iran,
17 because his security clearance was suspended based on
18 mishandling of classified information.

19 So does this concern you, or are you concerned when we
20 you are going to have an obligation to try to defend the
21 transit and help Israel, things like that, and then over
22 here you have got the Biden administration trying to
23 negotiate some deal that is going to possibly give Iran more
24 resources?

25 General Brown: Sir, the thing that I do think about is

1 the role of how all parts of our government play in our
2 overall deterrence. And it is not just what the military
3 does. It is what we do in the diplomatic space, it is what
4 we do in the information space, what we do economically. I
5 think all those things work collectively together, and if
6 confirmed as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs I think I have a
7 responsibility -- I need to provide the military advice, but
8 I need to put it in the context and understanding the other
9 factors that are in play as well.

10 Senator Scott: Okay. Thank you. Homestead Air Force
11 Base, we talked about that when we met. Can you talk about
12 the importance of continuing to find a mission for Homestead
13 Air Force Base, especially when you look at what now it
14 looks like China is doing in Cuba. Can you tell me what you
15 believe is the importance of Homestead?

16 General Brown: Well, having spent 4 years at
17 Homestead, and a matter of fact, that is where my wife and
18 I, our first assignment after we got married, we have fond
19 memories of being there.

20 But to your question, the capability we have down in
21 southern Florida, that Reserve unit, and having flown with
22 that Reserve unit when I was stationed there on active duty,
23 is still being able to have a capability. That is something
24 that we are working internal to the Air Force to ensure that
25 Homestead still has a mission, and we still have a platform

1 to operate there. And continuing dialogue that we will
2 have, and we will have with you as well, and the Air Force
3 will have with you as well, as we look at Homestead and
4 ensure that we maintain a mission there.

5 Senator Scott: All right. Thank you, and thanks for
6 your service. Congratulations on your success. When I
7 joined the Navy, it was a melting pot. It was a great
8 melting pot. It gave you an opportunity to meet people that
9 you probably would never meet. And I do not believe in
10 quotas. I do not think anybody should.

11 But I do believe it is a great melting pot, and I think
12 if we can recruit more people from different backgrounds, we
13 ought to be doing that. But do not ever impact somebody's
14 ability to get ahead because they might have a different
15 skin color or background than somebody else. It sounds like
16 you completely agree with that.

17 General Brown: I do.

18 Senator Scott: Thank you.

19 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator Scott, and
20 General Brown, thank you too.

21 I just want to raise an issue or discussion about this
22 August 2022 memorandum. It was designed to increase the
23 pool of applicants, essentially to search for more talent.
24 It was not designed to set the composition of the Air Force.
25 Is that accurate?

1 General Brown: That is correct. It was only
2 application goals. It was not designed to eliminate the
3 opportunities for anyone. It was just looking to open up
4 the opportunities for as many as we could, and make sure we
5 are outreaching to --

6 Chairman Reed: And this memorandum was signed by the
7 Secretary of the Air Force, the Under Secretary of the Air
8 Force, Space Operations Chief, and I believe that is it. So
9 it was a combined effort by the leadership of the Department
10 of the Air Force.

11 General Brown: Yes, Chairman, it was.

12 Chairman Reed: I would like to quote from the
13 memorandum. "These goals are aspirational, aligning
14 resources to invest in our long-term objectives, and will
15 not be used in any manner that undermines our merit-based
16 processes." So the memorandum clearly declares that merit
17 is the one standard by which you merit accession to the Air
18 Force and promotion in the Air Force.

19 General Brown: Yes, Senator. As a matter of fact, if
20 that kind of statement was not included I would have never
21 signed that letter.

22 Chairman Reed: I completely concur, and I know your
23 character. You would not have signed the letter.

24 General Brown, thank you. I look forward to your
25 confirmation. I think you will lead with distinction and

1 set an example of professionalism and skill that is
2 continuing the example set by your predecessor.

3 With that I will adjourn the hearing. Thank you.

4 [Whereupon, at 11:49 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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