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Before the

COMMITTEE ON
ARMED SERVICES

UNITED STATES SENATE

TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON THE DEPARTMENT OF

DEFENSE'S

MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Tuesday, April 27, 2021

Washington, D.C.

1   TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE'S

2   MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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6   U.S. Senate

7   Committee on Armed Services

8   Washington, D.C.

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10   The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:30 a.m. in

11   Room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Jack Reed,

12   chairman of the committee, presiding.

13   Committee Members Present: Senators Reed [presiding],

14   Shaheen, Gillibrand, Blumenthal, Kaine, King, Manchin,

15   Rosen, Kelly, Inhofe, Wicker, Fischer, Cotton, Ernst,

16   Tillis, Sullivan, Scott, Blackburn, Hawley, and Tuberville.

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

     2   RHODE ISLAND

     3   Chairman Reed: Let me call the hearing to order. The

     4   committee meets this morning to examine the challenges and

     5   opportunities in the management of the Department of

     6   Defense. Helping us better understand this issue are three

     7   very qualified witnesses, who I thank for joining us today.

     8   Mr. Peter Levin, Senior Policy Advisor for the

     9   Institute for Defense Analysis, Former Deputy Chief

    10   Management Officer at the Department of Defense, and most

    11   notably, Staff Director for the Senate Armed Services

    12   Committee. Thank you, Peter, for joining.

    13   Dr. Adam Grant from the Wharton School of Business

    14   and a former member of the Defense Innovation Board. Thank

    15   you, Doctor.

    16   And Ms. Elizabeth Field, Director, Defense

    17   Capabilities and Management at the Government Accountability

    18   Office. Thank you, Ms. Field.

    19   Each of you have unique experience on management

    20   in the public and private sector, and I hope that you can

    21   provide the committee with a better understanding of the

    22   following questions, including, Why is the management of the

    23   Pentagon important to military missions and national

    24   security? What challenges does the Pentagon have in

    25   reforming and improving its management practices? Why are

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1   data and real metrics so important to improved management

2   and decision-making? How can the Pentagon work with outside

3   experts from universities and industry to improve

4   management, and how can this committee help to improve DoD

5   management practices?

6   Management reform is a topic that is always in the

7   background of all of our hearings and meetings regarding the

8   Department of Defense. We have touched on aspects of it

9   recently, in discussions on budget and acquisition reform

10   and personnel reform. But it goes beyond these issues. It

11   includes such things as how DoD manages the funding it

12   receives, which touches on its ability to pass on audit,

13   including monitoring its vast inventory of systems and

14   network of installations; how it structures its

15   organizations and assigns roles and responsibilities to

16   leaders to best execute its array of missions; how it

17   embraces and encourages positive change to improve

18   performance, hopefully through the use of real data and

19   expert analysis; and how it manages a global logistics

20   system that can deliver the equipment and supplies to

21   deployed forces all over the world, giving them what they

22   need, when they need it.

23   The management challenges facing the Department are

24   real and long-standing. For example, GAO has put DoD

25   approach to business transformation on its high-risk list,

1   and cites that it renders its operation as vulnerable to

2   waste, fraud, and abuse. Despite being under a mandate

3   since the passage of the Chief Financial Officers Act of

4   1990, DoD remains unable to pass a financial audit,

5   indicating that it does not have good processes and controls

6   to monitor its financial transactions and spending, and in

7   its report from June 2020 on the chief management officer

8   position, the Defense Business Board found that the DoD

9   culture and subcultures remain resistant to transformational

10   business process changes.

11   These are just three examples of a systemic problem

12   which is not just a back-office issue. These management

13   inefficiencies and a culture of bureaucratic stasis end up

14   costing taxpayers money because they create unnecessary

15   waste, they slow the delivery of new and needed capabilities

16   to our deployed forces at time when technological change is

17   happening at accelerated rates, and they drive good, hard-

18   working and well-intentioned people out of public service

19   out of frustration, furthering the downward spiral of

20   mismanagement.

21   I believe we should think about management as a defense

22   capability that we need to nurture and grow, through

23   leadership commitment, hiring personnel with the right skill

24   sets, investing resources for IT modernization, and

25   protecting and encouraging innovation in the bureaucracy.

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1   Unfortunately, we sometimes use management reform as a

2 search for budget savings, often cutting personnel who

3 provide the expertise that allows DoD to best steward

4 taxpayer dollars and most efficiently execute defense

5 missions. In addition, innovators can become frustrated

6 when their ideas are stifled by the bureaucracy and a

7 culture resistant to change.

8   Finally, a quick fix, whether it is new legislation or

9 a simple change to the DoD's organizational chart, usually

10 falls short and sometimes leads to new problems. I think we

11 can do better. I am hoping that our expert panel can help

12 this committee assess where we are and what we should focus

13 on to achieve effective management reform in DoD. We have a

14 duty to our servicemembers and the nation's taxpayers to

15 have the most efficient and effective system in place to

16 guide and run our nation's military.

17   Thank you again for being here this morning, and I look

18 forward to your testimony. And now let me recognize the

19 Ranking Member, Senator Inhofe.

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1   STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES INHOFE, U.S. SENATOR FROM

2   OKLAHOMA

3   Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Over the

4   past few years the committee's top priority has been

5   ensuring that we implement the 2018 National Defense

6   Strategy.   The Department of Defense remains the third

7   pillar in the NDAA, as we have read for quite some time now,

8   and the bipartisan NDS commission told us that the Pentagon

9   does not possess the analytical capacity and capability to

10   manage its daily tasks, let alone the aggressive, innovative

11   reform demanded by the NDS.

12   There are some who believe that only by cutting the

13   Department of Defense can we achieve more efficient

14   outcomes, and I do not believe that. We spent the first

15   half of the past decade cutting the budget in real terms,

16   $400 billion, and telling the Department to do more with

17   less.

18   Under sequestration, both Congress and successive

19   administrations pushed for meat-cleaver approaches to

20   management. We did across-the-board reductions in civilians

21   and headquarters staff, and we gave entire organizations

22   with DoD flat-rate cuts to manage the budget. We punished

23   the people for taking risks and failing. We required

24   thousands of reports a year, more and more all the time,

25   with fewer people and less funding. Ask any DoD worker --

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1   uniformed, civilian, contractor -- who has worked for the

2   Department over the past decade, and they will vouch for

3   this.

4   We eroded our human capital in every area. The DoD is

5   not an attractive place for smart, talented, young people to

6   go and solve tough problems. Our witnesses from Google and

7   Microsoft and industry told us that a couple of months ago.

8   I still happen to think we have the finest servicemembers

9   and the Federal civilians in the world, even after what we

10   did under sequestration. But they need the right management

11   structure in the time and space created by sufficient

12   resourcing to innovate and get more efficient ways of doing

13   business. So I think we can increase the budget and improve

14   the management. In fact, I think it is a necessity in

15   implementing the 2018 NDS.

16   We made some great strides in recent years, alongside

17   more adequate budgets. For example, we made more progress

18   in the audit over the past three years than we have over the

19   past three decades before that. We have seen an explosion

20   in the Department's interest in using data to make better

21   decisions. The Pentagon is applying that to the problems

22   from workforce issues to weapons acquisition. And we saw

23   improvements in cross-functional teams and new ways of

24   prioritizing budgets, though we still have a long way to go.

25   So I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding the hearing,

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1   and I look forward to it. Thank you, sir.

2   Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Inhofe. And before

3   we begin the questioning let me remind my colleagues about

4   our procedures, because of the hybrid nature of this

5   committee hearing.

6   We will not follow the early bird rule. Rather, we

7   recognize Senators based on seniority. Standard five-minute

8   question period will be in place, and I ask everyone to pay

9   attention to their clocks. And finally, please mute your

10   microphone so we will not have any interference, given the

11   hybrid nature of the hearing.

12   Let me again thank the witnesses for being here today,

13   and I am going to cut to the chase, starting with Mr.

14   Levine, and going down the panel. If our goal is to improve

15   DoD management and bureaucratic processes, what are the one

16   or two specific things you would like to see this committee

17   do, either through legislation or oversight over the

18   Pentagon. Mr. Levin, please.

19   Mr. Levine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

20   Chairman Reed: Oh, excuse me. I am so efficient I

21   forgot to recognize the individual witnesses for their

22   statements. So with appropriate apology, I will now

23   recognize Mr. Levine for his statement.

24   Mr. Levine: Mr. Chairman, I would be happy to start by

25   answering your question.

1   Chairman Reed: No. No, no, no, no. No. No. No.

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1   STATEMENT OF HONORABLE PETER K. LEVINE, FORMER

2 DEPUTY CHIEF MANAGEMENT OFFICER, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE,

3 SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW, INSTITUTE FOR DEFENSE ANALYSES

4   Mr. Levine: Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Inhofe,

5 members of the committee, thank you for inviting me to

6 participate in today's hearing. It is a privilege to be

7 here, a pleasure to see all of my good friends again. Of

8 course, it is a pleasure to see anybody in person again

9 these days.

10   In your witness letter you asked why the management of

11 the Pentagon is so important to military missions and

12 national security. My answer is simple. Functions like

13 acquisition, logistics, information technology, personnel,

14 and health care are often dismissed as overhead, but, in

15 fact, they are essential warfighting functions. The

16 acquisition system provides our military with modern

17 weaponry. The logistics system enables it project power on

18 a worldwide basis. IT systems are the basis for command,

19 control, communications, intelligence, and so much else.

20 And the personnel and health care system ensure that we have

21 the troops we need and that they are ready to fight.

22   Each of these functions is exceptionally complex and

23 expensive to manage. For example, tens of thousands of

24 military, civilian, and contractor employees make millions

25 of decisions every year that contribute to the successes and

1 failures of the defense acquisition system. Even relatively

2 minor organizational and process inefficiencies in a system

3 like that can easily cost tens or hundreds of millions of

4 dollars and reduce the availability and functionality of

5 critical combat systems.

6   There is no way to fix a system like that, because

7 these systems are just too complex and there are too many

8 competing priorities. But there is better, and there is

9 worse, and it is important to try to keep better.

10   As tempting as it may be to seek quick wins and

11 immediate savings from management reforms there are few

12 shortcuts, and easy solutions rarely result in long-term

13 improvements. Across-the-board reductions cut good programs

14 and bad programs alike, adding to bottlenecks, slowdowns,

15 and backlogs. If you really want to root out waste and

16 inefficiency you have to go through the painstaking process

17 of reviewing these processes and structures one step at a

18 time.

19   In a 2019 article, I offered ten rules for defense

20 management reform. Some of these rules were fairly obvious

21 principles like do not try to take on too much, never

22 overlook what is working, and one-size-fits-all approaches

23 rarely work in an organization as complex as the Department

24 of Defense.

25   As a long-time staffer for this committee, however, one

1   of my favorite rules is legislation alone does not solve

2   anything. In the management area, at least, if you want to

3   succeed you need strong partners in the Executive branch who

4   can provide engaged leadership over a continuing period of

5   time.

6   So what can Congress do to help? First, Congress can

7   provide new tools and authorities, like the direct hiring

8   authority you provided to the DoD personnel system and the

9   middle-tier acquisition authority that you provided in the

10   acquisition arena. While there is always more that can be

11   done in this area, annual NDAAs have already taken a lot of

12   the low-hanging fruit in terms of new tools.

13   Second, Congress can set priorities, as with

14   legislation highlighting the need for the Department to

15   address issues like sexual assault or cyber policy, and on

16   and on. The problem with this type of legislation, in my

17   view, is it becomes less effective when it is overused.

18   When NDAAs turn into catalogs covering every issue, then the

19   problem is if everything is a priority, nothing is a

20   priority.

21   The third thing Congress can do is it can provide

22   funding. Management reforms, as the chairman noted, are

23   often viewed as a cash cow, but the secret is that real

24   improvement often requires up-front investment. If you want

25   those savings down the road you may have to put up money up

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1   front. Beyond that, management reforms do not always yield

2   savings. They may yield better practices and more effective

3   practices that provide better support to the warfighter,

4   rather than money back to the taxpayer.

5   So to give you an example, the Department really needs

6   better data systems to make better decisions. It really

7   needs new skills and capabilities in its workforce, areas

8   like advanced software and cyber skills, for example. Those

9   are things that if you really want to achieve them, you need

10   to put money into the system, not take money out.

11   The final thing that Congress can do is to conduct

12   oversight. In many ways, your most valuable tool, as a

13   Member of Congress -- I do not think I need to tell you

14   that, but in many ways your most valuable tool is your own

15   time. Officials all over the Pentagon watch how the

16   Secretary of Defense spends his time, because they know that

17   that commitment of time reflects priorities. The same is

18   true of you. The people in the Pentagon pay attention when

19   you call them to account. Congress cannot manage the

20   Pentagon, but it can show the Pentagon that it believes

21   management reform is important. This hearing is a good step

22   in that direction.

23   That concludes my statement, and I look forward to your

24   questions. Thank you.

25   [The prepared statement of Mr. Levine follows:]

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1   Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Mr. Levine. Ms.

2   Field?   Thank you.

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1   STATEMENT OF ELIZABETH A. FIELD, DIRECTOR, DEFENSE

2 CAPABILITIES AND MANAGEMENT, GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

3 OFFICE

4   Ms. Field: Thank you, Chairman Reed, Ranking Member

5 Inhofe, and members and staff of the committee. It is an

6 honor to testify before you today on GAO's work regarding

7 DoD's management challenges and opportunities.

8   This hearing could not come at a more important time.

9 As more and more Americans get inoculated against the COVID-

10 19 virus and the country begins its economic recovery, we

11 must once again turn our attention to addressing the

12 nation's unsustainable, long-term fiscal path. Under our

13 projections, the debt will reach its highest point in

14 history only seven years from now. The defense budget, as

15 you know, is the largest single category of discretionary

16 spending, making it a key component of any discussion about

17 future Federal spending.

18   At the same time, we face a complex array of threats to

19 our national security, from the political and military

20 advancement of near-peer competitors, such as China and

21 Russia, to the introduction of increasingly sophisticated

22 dual-use technologies to the development of new and

23 dangerous weapons. Reforming how the Department of Defense

24 is managed, if done effectively, can help address both sets

25 of challenges, by lowering costs, reducing waste, and

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1   delivering better and faster support to the warfighter.

2   In their work, Mr. Levine and Dr. Grant offer

3   compelling ideas about reform, one from an insider's

4   perspective, offering a recipe for operating effectively

5   within DoD's organizational culture. The other from an

6   outsider's view, providing examples of reformers who have

7   succeeded through original and nonconformist thinking.

8   This morning I would like to share two thoughts, based

9   on GAO's work, about what those responsible for defense

10   management reform must have in order to succeed, whether

11   they be practical incrementalists or innovative originals.

12   Namely, they must be enabled, and they must be empowered.

13   First, reformers must be enabled through the use of

14   complete and accurate data and resources to turn their ideas

15   into reality. DoD suffers from an alarming lack of accurate

16   and consistent data on almost all of its core business

17   functions. This problem makes it exceptionally difficult

18   for anyone who wants to drive change. Our reports cite

19   numerous instances in which DoD data were so unreliable or

20   inconsistent that we could not assess the underlying issue.

21   To give you one small example, when we assessed how DoD

22   manages human resources delivery, things like hiring and

23   onboarding personnel, we found that least three different

24   defense agencies and field activities, as well as all three

25   military departments, provided some human resources services

1   to other DoD components. In fact, one DoD component

2   received these services from all six.

3   Department officials, to their credit, recognize that

4   this arrangement was less than efficient and sought to

5   develop better solutions for human resources service

6   delivery, but they were stymied by a lack of available data.

7   For example, although they wanted to reduce the time to

8   hire, a key metric for assessing the performance of human

9   resources service delivery, they found that no one in the

10   Department defined that metric the same way or collected the

11   same data, making comparisons nearly impossible.

12   Likewise, those attempting to drive reform at the

13   Department have been hindered by a lack of up-front

14   resources, something Mr. Levine also spoke about. In 2019,

15   when we examined the Department's efforts to establish

16   cross-functional teams charged with finding new ways to

17   increase efficiency in key business operations, we found

18   that many of them were stuck, trying to find resources to

19   pilot-test their ideas or initiate phase one of their

20   reforms.

21   Second, to be effective at DoD reformers must be

22   empowered, with clearly defined roles and authorities and

23   sustained support from the very top. A few years ago, when

24   Congress created a standalone chief management officer

25   position at the Department, we closely monitored how this

1   position was being implemented, recognizing it as an

2   opportunity for real change. Unfortunately, we found that

3   while the legislation creating the CMO position envisioned a

4   senior official with significant responsibilities and

5   authorities, the Department did not truly realize that

6   vision. For example, although the statute allowed for the

7   CMO to have the authority to direct the military departments

8   in matters related to business operations, the CMO was not

9   empowered to fully execute that authority when needed.

10   With the recent elimination of that position, the

11   Department must find a new way to enable and empower those

12   who can see a different future for this most critical

13   organization. We will be watching this new chapter play out

14   with keen interest.

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

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

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1   Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Ms. Field.

2   Dr. Grant, please.

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1   STATEMENT OF DR. ADAM M. GRANT, SAUL P. STEINBERG

2   PROFESSOR OF MANAGEMENT, WHARTON SCHOOL OF BUSINESS,

3   UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

4   Ms. Grant: Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Inhofe, and

5   members of the committee, it is an honor to be invited here

6   to discuss defense management. I am an organizational

7   psychologist. I spent four years on the Defense Innovation

8   Board, and I have also spent time teaching leadership to

9   generals and admirals and doing research on military bases.

10 I have deep admiration for our servicemembers and DoD

11 civilians.

12   I also worry that DoD's culture is a threat to national

13 security. Culture is the system of values and norms that

14 govern behavior, how we do things around here. Culture can

15 shape whether organizations are built to last or doomed to

16 perish. It has a dramatic impact on performance and

17 innovation, and I believe DoD culture stifles innovation.

18   In the DoD, innovation is mostly discussed in terms of

19 new technology, but innovation ultimately rests on people.

20 Buying all the advanced machines, software, and data in the

21 world does not guarantee that people will rethink old

22 strategies and develop new ones. Our ability to anticipate

23 our adversaries' moves and avoid falling behind depends on a

24 culture of innovation, values and norms that support the

25 generation and successful implementation of creative ideas.

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1   We know that good management is the life blood of

2 innovation. There is evidence from the software industry,

3 for example, that managers have tripled the impact of

4 individual innovators on performance. But I am afraid that

5 DoD is still, by and large, doing 1950s-era management.

6   During my time on the Defense Innovation Board I

7 consistently heard three sentiments from leaders and

8 managers that undermined a culture of innovation. The first

9 is "that is too risky." On my visits to military bases, I

10 heard many junior people say different things behind

11 leaders' backs than to their faces. That is a symptom that

12 people lack psychological safety, the freedom to take risks

13 without the fear of being punished.

14   We have extensive evidence that a culture of

15 psychological safety is critical to preventing threats and

16 promoting innovation. When people lack psychological safety

17 they aim to prove themselves and protect their image. They

18 hide their mistakes and withhold their idea. When people

19 have psychological safety they strive to improve themselves

20 and protect the mission. They admit errors and voice

21 suggestions.

22   We need to train leaders to build psychological safety,

23 to empower canaries in the coal mine to raise problems, even

24 if they have not figured out yet how to solve them, to make

25 it clear to junior people that speaking up about issues and

1   ideas will not jeopardize their reputations or their

2   careers, to give them the authority and the resources to

3   champion change. Yeah, change carries risk, but not

4   changing is risky too. It leaves us predictable and

5   vulnerable to attack.

6   The second sentiment that concerns me is "that is not

7   the way we have always done it." When junior people have

8   the courage to raise new ideas, I have seen too many DoD

9   leaders dismiss them. Research reveals that deep experience

10   often leads to cognitive entrenchment. Leaders start to

11   take for granted ideas that need to be questioned. They

12   overestimate the quality of their own ideas and

13   underestimate the potential in new directions. They cling

14   to tried-and-true best practices instead of aiming to test

15   and learn, in search of better practices.

16   DoD should be running more experiments. We need more

17   innovation tournaments where people compete to solve

18   problems. We need to stop punishing people who have good

19   ideas with bad outcomes, and start rewarding people who have

20   promising ideas with uncertain outcomes.

21   The third sentiment that haunts me is "that will never

22   work here." On too many occasions, I have seen leaders

23   reject ideas because they came from outside the military.

24   There is name for this too. It is called organizational

25   uniqueness bias. Yeah, there are aspects of DoD that are

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1   unique, but there are also fundamentalist similarities

2   across people and industries, and overlooking those

3   parallels closes the door to learning, from universities and

4   from Silicon Valley.

5   The organizational uniqueness bias is not unique to

6   DoD. At Google, for example, engineers were convinced that

7   they needed to build their own management playbook, and they

8   found that what set their best managers apart was the same

9   set of behaviors as everywhere else, like empowering teams

10   and coaching individuals. Then I challenged them to study

11   their great teams, and they discovered that the single most

12   important driver of team performance was not individual

13   talent. It was the psychological safety that leaders

14   created. Sound familiar?

15   There is a lot that DoD could learn from other

16   organizational cultures. The fact that something was not

17   invented here does not mean it will not apply here. We need

18   scouts and ambassadors to make connections outside the

19   military and government and explore new management

20   practices. We also need them to study the range of

21   practices inside the DoD itself.

22   DoD is not one single culture. It is full of

23   subcultures. And one of the silver linings of being a

24   massive organization is that there are always bright spots,

25   pockets of excellence. Some DoD examples that I have seen

1   include Kessel Run, the Defense Innovation Unit, the

2   National Security Innovation Network, AFWERX, NavalX, and

3   the new Army Software Factory.

4   However, many leaders shut down psychological safety,

5   new ideas, and outside perspectives. You can find some who

6   are encouraging people to take risks, rethink best

7   practices, and learn from beyond the defense industry. If I

8   were in your shoes, I might start by identifying those

9   leaders and studying what they do. I would work to

10   disseminate those better practices and give those

11   organizations additional people, resources, and

12   flexibilities.

13   These bright spots exist in spite of institutional

14   resistance, which exhausts their people and sometimes

15   imperils their survival. It is time for DoD to embrace

16   these outliers and strive to build a culture where they are

17   the norm, not the exception. Thank you.

18   Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Dr. Grant. Thank

19   you all for your excellent testimony.

20   I have already indicated how eager I am to engage the

21   panel, so let me repeat my question -- forgive me -- and

22   starting with Mr. Levine.

23   If there are two specific things you would like to see

24   done, either legislatively or through our oversight, which

25   are the two major ways in which we influence the behavior of

1   DoD, what would they be?

2   Mr. Levine: Well, I think the list is probably a

3   little longer than that, but I will focus in on --

4   Chairman Reed: You can go longer.

5   Mr. Levine: -- I will focus in on what I think is one

6   of the key challenges facing the Department, which is access

7   to talent in areas like cyber, AI, software, and the list

8   goes on and on, digital engineering, modeling and

9   simulation, places where we have to compete with the private

10   sector for talent, where we have some of the best that is

11   available in the world, but it is not necessarily available

12   to the Department of Defense.

13   One of the things that I think we need to think about

14   seriously there is how do we hire and bring on civilians,

15   and how do we treat our civilian workforce. I think there

16   have been any number of reports in recent years, and Senator

17   King's Cyber Solarium is one of them, that have pointed to

18   these problems. There have been a serious of

19   recommendations about changes for the civilian workforce.

20   Frankly, I think this committee has already taken a lot of

21   action to improve authorities available to the civilian

22   workforce.

23   What that does not bring together is the focus in the

24   Department of Defense to believe that the civilian workforce

25   is actually important. And this goes back to what I was

1   talking about earlier, about is there money where the

2   authority is. So you have direct hiring authority, you have

3   a lot of tools. There are places in the Department where

4   their intake systems, like cohort hiring, which is something

5   I am looking right now at for defense analyses, where you

6   bring in new entrants in area, and you train them up and

7   give them rotational job assignments and team-building

8   exercises. You invest in them, show them that they are

9   important. You attract better people into the workforce in

10   this way.

11   One thing that is happening in the Department right now

12   is at the same time that we are saying we need new skills,

13   we are cutting funding for those programs, because of their

14   overhead and we do not have enough money to go around, and

15   civilian workforce is one of the first things that you cut.

16   So we need to think about investing in our civilian

17   workforce if we want to build those kinds of new skills.

18   That would be at the top of my list, Senator.

19   Chairman Reed: Thank you very much. Ms. Field, please?

20   Ms. Field: I agree with what Mr. Levine said. In

21   fact, when we assessed, a few years ago, the defense

22   laboratories and how they were using the direct hire

23   authority to recruit talent, we found that they used that

24   authority more than any other authority available to them,

25   so it was really critical.

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1   The two things I would add to that are to the extent

2   that this committee and Congress legislates reform at the

3   Department, which it has done for many years, I would

4   encourage that legislation to align with the way in which

5   the Department structures its information and its systems.

6   For example, a few years ago, Congress, as I am sure you are

7   aware, mandated the CMO to develop cost baselines and

8   associated savings with four business lines of effort,

9   things like real estate management and civilian resource

10 management. But the Department did not necessarily organize

11 its information, including its financial information,

12 consistent with those definitions, and so the CMO was left

13 sort of spinning her wheels, trying to figure out how to

14 comply with this mandate.

15   The second thing I would say, and you mentioned this in

16 your opening statement, is support for the full financial

17 audit. This is not a paper exercise. This is not about

18 bean counting. Fundamentally, the full financial audit is a

19 catalyst for the Department getting better information, to

20 make better-informed management decisions.

21   Chairman Reed: Thank you very much. And Dr. Grant,

22 please.

23   Mr. Grant: I will just give you one idea. I think the

24 DoD has done a brilliant job investing in quality of life

25 for people. I think we need it to be as brilliant in

1   investing in the quality of their ideas.

2   I mentioned the idea of innovation tournaments as an

3   approach to that. An example, at a chemical company that I

4   had the chance to witness up close, is they said, "All

5   right, we are looking for ideas that will save energy and

6   reduce waste. We will welcome proposals from across the

7   organization, as long as they have the potential to pay for

8   themselves within a year." And they basically let anybody

9   submit ideas. They evaluate proposals. They advanced the

10   promising ones to round two. And then eventually the

11   company bets on the most high-potential ideas.

12   They end up doing this for a decade. They bet on 575

13   ideas, and they save the company $110 million per year, on

14   average.

15   These are not mostly ideas coming from people in

16   creative jobs. They are often people on a factory floor,

17   who saw a system that was broken but did not know where to

18   take their solution until the innovation tournament was

19   announced. I would love to see more of those tournaments

20   run, and we need the incentives to back them up, to

21   encourage people who have ideas to speak up, to share their

22   ideas, to go and test them, and then reward them and

23   recognize them for doing that, as opposed to punishing them

24   for taking risks.

25   Chairman Reed: Thank you very much. Thank you all.

1   Senator Inhofe, please.

2   Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A lot of

3   reviews of the Pentagon management practices tell us that

4   many of the officials -- and we are talking about civilian

5   and military -- have little experience with the private

6   sector, and are not aware of even basic modern management

7   tools. I experienced this for my own. I had a whole

8   career, long before I got into this thing, and it is always

9   obviously to me that we did not have a lot of the private

10   sector experiences.

11   So I would like to have each of you comment. How far

12   behind the private sector do you think the Pentagon is in

13   terms of management practices, and what is your number one

14   recommendation to fix this? Let's start with Peter.

15   Mr. Levine: So first of all, I would say the

16   Department is light years behind the private sector in terms

17   of management practices. I do not know that bringing in

18   people from the private sector is an answer to that by

19   itself. I think it is good for the Department to have

20   leadership a mix of people with private sector experience

21   and government experience, because there are so many unique

22   factors about the way the Department works, and we sometimes

23   see people come in from the private sector who are

24   unfamiliar with the way the Department works, and are fish

25   out of water, and are frustrated immediately by the

1   Department and find it difficult to get anything done.

2   I like some of the ideas that Mr. Grant is talking

3   about, in terms of innovation. I think, though, that there

4   is no substitute for engaged leadership, to find leaders who

5   will actually dig in and try to solve problems rather than

6   sitting in their offices by themselves. It is great to have

7   ideas bubble up, but somebody has to be willing to grab them

8   and implement them. And I think that asking the leaders who

9   come before you for confirmation specifically about

10   management challenges, and challenging them to engage and to

11   follow these issues through, is perhaps the most important

12   thing this committee can do. Thank you.

13   Senator Inhofe: Ms. Field?

14   Ms. Field: I agree with Mr. Levine about the

15   importance of sustained leadership at the top, with a real

16   focus on management, and I would also agree with his

17   assessment of the Department compared to the private sector.

18   I am going to come back to the full financial audit. It is

19   not a silver bullet, but if any major company CEO were

20   sitting here before you and had not been able to pass a

21   financial audit, ever, I think you would have a lot of

22   questions about how well that company was run.

23   So again, I think for the Department to continue the

24   work toward attaining a clean opinion on a full financial

25   audit is a really important part -- not the only part, but a

1   really important part of strengthening management at the

2   Department.

3   Senator Inhofe: Yeah, we are actually doing that now.

4   It has taken a few years, but we are.

5   Ms. Field: I will, yeah.

6   Senator Inhofe: Dr. Grant?

7   Mr. Grant: As a social scientist, I do not have the

8   data to quantify how far behind we are, but it is far, and

9   it is deeply distressing. I think the place that I would

10   probably start is to build a leadership and management

11   training program. This is obviously self-serving since I

12   live in a university, but we run these programs all the

13   time, for both public sector and private sector leaders.

14   And I think that there is a lot more than could be done to

15   bring both DoD and private sector leaders together in these

16   programs, to compare notes and share effective practices.

17   I think doing that, though, requires accountability. I

18   think it requires accountability for leaders inside to

19   implement the ideas that they learn from the outside. One

20   of the ways that I have watched private sector organization

21   so this is through coaching. I have been struck that an

22   increasing number of CEOs in the private sector actually

23   have an executive coach. Sometimes entire leadership teams

24   have executive coaches. And we expect this of our elite

25   athletes and musicians. We know they cannot achieve

1 excellence on their own. For some reason, when people get

2 into leadership roles in organizations we assume that they

3 are all good independently.

4   So I would love to see a little bit more feedback for

5 senior leaders to find out are they implementing the

6 practices that we ultimately teach them.

7   Senator Inhofe: I noticed in one of your articles --

8 let me read the quote here. It says, "Many managers fear

9 that when their employees spend lots of time coming up with

10 new ideas they will be less focused and efficient." Explain

11 to me what you are talking about there.

12   Mr. Grant: I think there is a false dichotomy that

13 gets created in too many leaders' minds between creativity

14 and execution, and the thought is that if we distract people

15 by letting them generate ideas that they are going to fail

16 to implement them. The reality is we all have ideas all the

17 time. Some of you have even had ideas for how to structure

18 this meeting more efficiently. And I think what we need to

19 do is give people an outlet for those ideas and give them a

20 chance to test them and express them, and figure out if they

21 are any good.

22   Senator Inhofe: Good. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

23   Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator Inhofe.

24 Let me recognize Senator Shaheen, please.

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

1   you to each of you for your testimony this morning.

2   Ms. Field, I would like to begin with you, because I

3   understand that there is still a government-wide personnel

4   security process that faces a backlog in clearances, and

5   that that affects our ability to hire some of the most

6   talented and qualified personnel that we would like to hire

7   in DoD. That is unlike this committee, where many of us

8   have members who have security clearances who cannot get in

9   to hear classified information, but I digress on that.

10   So my question is, is that the case? Has it improved

11   since background investigation got transferred from the

12   Office of Personnel Management to DoD? And what do we need

13   to do to ensure that we can address those security

14   clearances and hire the people we want, and put them in the

15   jobs that we want?

16   Ms. Field: Thank you, Senator Shaheen, and as I am

17   sure you are aware, the government personnel security

18   clearance process is on our high-risk list, because of the

19   critical issues that you just identified.

20   I think it is fair to say that there has been some

21   progress made. For example, most recently in our high-risk

22   report we noted that DoD has made progress developing NBIS

23   as a secure, shared service for background investigations.

24   That is one example of progress that has been made. But I

25   will note that this chapter of the high-risk report has one

1   of the longest "what remains to be done" sections that I

2   have seen in the high-risk report.

3   So just to give you a few examples of some of those

4   actions, DoD needs to develop and implement a comprehensive

5   strategic workforce plan that identifies the workforce

6   needed to meet the current and future demand for its

7   services.

8   Senator Shaheen: I am sorry to interrupt. So is that

9   something that DoD needs to be directed to do? Do we need

10   to provide more resources for DoD? What are the

11   impediments? Are they cultural, as you all have suggested,

12   in many cases?

13   Ms. Field: And I am not an expert on this, I should

14   note, but I think one of the impediments here to developing

15   a comprehensive strategic workforce plan, in addition to

16   just having the impetus to do it, comes back to data. So

17   the Department does not always know what its skills are that

18   it has, how many people it has that have those skills, and

19   then what it needs, so what is the gap. And data is a key

20   piece of that. That is where personnel management systems

21   are so important.

22   Senator Shaheen: So let me go back to you, Mr. Levine,

23   because you talked about this in your statement. Over the

24   years, this committee has authorized billions of dollars to

25   address data management within the Department of Defense,

1 and yet we still have these problems. So, again, what is

2 the issue here? Are we hiring the wrong people? Do we not

3 know what we need?

4   Mr. Levine: Senator, this is where I make myself

5 unpopular. I actually disagree with GAO on the issue of the

6 financial audit, and it goes to the question that you are

7 talking about. This committee has authorized billions of

8 dollars for data systems. To my lights, too much of that

9 investment has focused on financial statements and financial

10 systems and not enough has focused on the systems the

11 Department really needs to make it work -- the personnel

12 data system, the acquisition data systems, the logistics

13 data systems.

14   And one of the reasons you have trouble with a defense

15 audit is those financial systems rely on all those other

16 parts of the Department which are actually doing the work.

17 And so if you do not have good personnel systems, you are

18 not going to be able to audit in the end.

19   I would like to see the aperture broadened as to where

20 the committee and the Congress and the Department invest

21 their money in data systems and a greater focus on what I

22 consider the actual workhorse systems, those personnel

23 systems, acquisition systems, logistics systems, so we get

24 better data for management decisions where the rubber really

25 hits the road.

1   I think in spite of the criticism they get for lack of

2   auditability, the financial systems are actually in

3   relatively good shape compared to some of these other

4   systems that have not gotten as much focus.

5   Senator Shaheen: Thank you. Mr. Grant, I want to just

6   share a story. Senator King and I visited the Portsmouth

7   Naval Shipyard with Acting Secretary Harker not too long

8   ago. And one of the demonstrations we saw was done by the

9   shipyard's innovation project team, led by Superintendent

10 Joe Murphy. And it was an amazing display of creativity and

11 innovation, done by workers at the shipyard, to improve how

12 they addressed overhauls of submarines. And I would bet

13 Senator King would agree with me that this was one of the

14 impressive things that we have seen. And that was the

15 result of a culture at the shipyard, I believe, that

16 responded to some of the threats about whether they were

17 going to be closed, and developed a real culture, as I say,

18 of management and workers working together to figure out how

19 they could be more efficient and more productive.

20   Now I do not know how we create that system-wide, but

21 certainly that is an example of what happens when people are

22 given the leeway to actually innovate and do what they need

23 to improve how they do their jobs.

24   Mr. Grant: Senator, that sounds like the kind of

25 example that we need to find and celebrate, and especially

1   celebrate when Senators are not watching.

2   Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Shaheen. Senator

3   Ernst.

4   Senator Ernst: Thank you, and I appreciate our

5   witnesses being here today, and Dr. Grant, I have to say,

6   when you were talking about people saying things are too

7   risk, you know, to do, we hear that all the time. And of

8   the mission command principles in the United States Army is

9   to assume prudent risk. So we really need to focus on that

10   much more. It is actually one of my four core pillars of

11   success. I actually have it on my challenge coins. So I

12   zoomed right into that and I appreciate you sharing that,

13   because I do think we have to be innovative and be willing

14   to accept some of that risk to move forward, you know,

15   identify the pros and cons of every situation, but we

16   willing to take a step outside of the norm in order to get

17   ahead.

18   So I really, really appreciate that, and all of the

19   input today is fascinating to me, because I am a former

20   county auditor. I know that is much smaller, in rural Iowa,

21   but I appreciate the input as well, Mr. Levine, on the fact

22   that we are very focused on the financial systems, but you

23   are right, there are so many other aspects that need to be

24   pulled into all of that in order to complete that audit and

25   really present that to the American people.

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1   So I do want to talk about the audit a little bit, and,

2   Ms. Field, you had a comment about why it is important to do

3   the audit. I believe you said it is a catalyst. And could

4   you explain that a little bit further? Why is it important

5   that we have that catalyst? Why is it important that we are

6   able to pull all these pieces together?

7   Ms. Field: Thank you. To borrow a phrase from Mr.

8   Levine, there are workhorse systems that are critical to key

9   functions of the Department related to things like personnel

10 and real estate, inventory, supply chain management. The

11 full financial audit is a forcing function for the

12 Department to make sure that those workhorse systems are

13 operating effectively, because they feed into the financial

14 audit. So if those systems are not in good shape, the

15 Department will never pass the full financial audit.

16   What I think is a good-news story here, in part, is

17 that in the past three fiscal years, through the full

18 financial audit that the Department has been conducting,

19 although it has not passed, there have already been some

20 concrete benefits that we have seen from the full financial

21 audit.

22   So, for example, the Department engaged in inventory

23 cleanup initiatives in order to prepare for the full

24 financial audit, and that identified almost $3 billion in

25 materials that could be used for redeployment. That has a

1   direct link to readiness.

2   I could go on and on, but I know that if the

3   Comptroller General were sitting here today he would also

4   forcefully speak for the importance of the full financial

5   audit.

6   Senator Ernst: No, and thank you, and I do agree with

7   that, and I think it is important that we are able to pull

8   as many of those pieces in and continue to reinforce that.

9   Even if we are not getting a clean audit, it is important

10   that we continue to go through this exercise to pull all

11   those pieces in, maybe take the funds and invest a little

12   more in other systems, because, as Dr. Grant had stated

13   about executive coaches, a lot of us have executive coaches

14   that are called constituents. And it is really important

15   that we are reporting back to our constituents that their

16   taxpayer dollars are being used wisely, and they are being

17   directed to the resources that will show results, whether

18   that is resourcing for our soldiers or Marines out in the

19   field, or whether it is within the systems at the Pentagon

20   or at the DoD.

21   And then, finally, Mr. Grant, I know that we have

22   identified a number of legacy programs and challenges that

23   continue to exist year after year. Every year they are

24   identified as challenges to the DoD. What can we do to

25   overcome that, just in the remaining few seconds?

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1   Mr. Grant: I am not sure I know. I am not an expert

2   on the inner workings of the DoD and the legacy programs. I

3   would say, though, that we are in a position where we do

4   need to change the way that the Department thinks about

5   risk. I think that never taking a risk is actually a risky

6   strategy. And one of the things that I often find myself

7   telling leaders is, if you think about investing in the

8   stock market, you want a diversified portfolio. You want

9   some gambles, and you also want some very safe, predictable

10 investments. Our programs ought to work the same way. We

11 ought to have a portfolio of risk where we have safe,

12 predictable bets and we also have more uncertain bets, and

13 it seems that we are not doing enough of the latter.

14   Senator Ernst: Well, thank you all so much. I love

15 all of the input that you all have provided today, and thank

16 you, Mr. Chair, for focusing on this issue.

17   Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Ernst, and now via

18 Webex, Senator Gillibrand.

19   Senator Gillibrand: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

20   I wanted to ask a little bit about authorities for hiring.

21   Dr. Grant, I will start with you.

22   One issue that I am really interested in is recruiting

23 and retaining the most talented workforce that we can get

24 access to, specifically in cyber. I had a hearing on our

25 subcommittee where we talked about getting the best cyber

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1   workforce and what authorities the DoD needed to be able to

2   acquire the workforce that we needed.

3   And there is one program called the Cyber Excepted

4   Service. I do not know if you have read about it or know

5   anything about it, and perhaps the other panelists might.

6   But that created flexibility in allowing to hire the staff

7   they wanted, different requirements, because not everybody

8   who is expert in cyber are going to necessarily look like or

9   want to be trained like a typical recruit for the Armed

10   Services. So we might need different standards for, you

11   know, how they are trained, and whether they are going to

12   have the same training in terms of fitness or in terms of

13   weapons usage, et cetera.

14   Do you have any insights on this, and do you think that

15   it would help to create flexible standards in order to

16   recruit the most talented cyber personnel?

17   Mr. Grant: I do, Senator Gillibrand. This is a high-

18   priority issue when we were doing our work on the DIB. I

19   think we need to go further than higher standards. I

20   actually think we need an entirely different career track

21   for specialists. We already have one in the military for

22   doctors and lawyers. I think it is time that we create one

23   for computer scientists. Most of our cyber expertise is

24   going to come from software engineers, and the sad reality

25   we have seen in too many parts of the DoD is that you get

1   rotated into a role for two years, you have just begun to

2   develop expertise, and then you are forced out of it before

3   you can fully master the skills that you are trying to train

4   in.

5   So I think if we created an expert specialist track for

6   computer scientists we would have a much easier time not

7   only attracting and retaining cyber talent but also

8   developing them.

9   Senator Gillibrand: Other panelists, would you like to

10 answer the same question?

11   Mr. Levine: Yes, Senator, if I could. First, it is

12 good to see you again, and second, I appreciate your point

13 about the Cyber Excepted Service. I think it is an

14 important tool. I think direct hiring authority is an

15 important tool as well. Those both focus on the civilian

16 workforce. And then you asked about the military workforce,

17 I think we have a real problem, which goes directly to what

18 Mr. Grant is talking about, in that we do not have a well-

19 developed requirement within the Military Services of what

20 we need. Because they do not have a career track, they do

21 not have a specialty in cyber, they do not have all the

22 specialties they need to find, they cannot send a

23 requirement to the recruiters.

24   What I think the key starting point is for our cyber is

25 what is the requirement? How many people do we need? What

kind of people? To the extent that they are military, why

do we need to have them in the military rather than having

civilians or contractors? So there may be different skills

that we need from people who are in the military, at one

level, from people who are in the civilian, at another

level, and people that we contract out. And until we define

what that is, it is kind of hard to get on top of the

recruiting problem, because you do not know what requirement

to send to your recruiters until you have gotten your arms

around it and said, "This is what I am looking for."

Senator Gillibrand: Ms. Field, do you have anything

you want to say?

Ms. Field: The only thing I would add, and it is very

much consistent with what Mr. Levine said, which is that we

see a lot of room for improvement at the Department in terms

of strategic workforce planning, human capital, and

strategic approach to human capital is also on our high-risk

list. I should note that DoD has more areas in the high-

risk report than any other agency.

But we also have developed some key principles for

strategic workforce planning that we would hope the

Department would follow, including determining the critical

skills and competencies that would be needed to achieve

current and future programmatic results and developing

strategies that are tailored to address gaps in the number

1   of deployment and alignment of human capital approaches.

2   There are more elements to those leading practices. But

3   having that framework in place could help the Department

4   think about things like recruiting and retaining staff with

5   cyber capabilities.

6   Senator Gillibrand: Can you speak to the specific idea

7   that Dr. Grant shared in his answer?

8   Ms. Field: In terms of a specialty track?

9   Senator Gillibrand: Correct. Like do you think we

10   could create, within the DoD, a specialty track with

11   enumerated requirements that actually allows for the

12   flexibility that we created in the Cyber Excepted Service?

13   Ms. Field: I am not an expert in human capital at the

14   Department. Based on what I know, I do not see any

15   impediments to the Department doing that. I think what I am

16   suggesting is that in doing so, the Department think about

17   it holistically in terms of its workforce planning efforts.

18   Senator Gillibrand: Thank you. Thank you, Mr.

19   Chairman.

20   Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Gillibrand. Let me

21   now recognize, via Webex, Senator Tillis.

22   [No response.]

23   Senator Gillibrand: Tom, you are still on mute. We

24   cannot hear you.

25   Chairman Reed: Senator Tillis? You are recognized by

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1 Webex. I think you might be on mute and we cannot hear you.

2   Senator Tuberville, are you ready, sir? This is

3 unusual. You are so early in the hearing.

4   Senator Tuberville: It is unusual. I appreciate that,

5 Mr. Chairman.

6   Chairman Reed: You are very welcome. Your patience

7 has finally been rewarded.

8   Senator Tuberville: Thank you. It is always good to

9 be here, right?

10   Thank you very much for being here today. Dr. Grant, I

11 was very encouraged by your early remarks about the culture

12 and about, you know, 1950s management style. Hey, we have

13 got to grow. I mean, the Department of Defense is the most

14 important department that we have in this country, because

15 if we are not safe, and with the threats that we have, we

16 are going to have huge problems. So thanks for your

17 expertise there and kind of understanding that, hey, if you

18 have got an idea, bring it up, and you are not jeopardized

19 if you do that. I think that is so important. That is our

20 culture today, and we have so many good ideas and great

21 ideas, it is important to understand that.

22   Ms. Field, we are proud that Redstone Arsenal has been

23 selected as the permanent home for Space Command. The move

24 is pending as an inspector general review, which I am

25 confident will show the process, that it is the right

1   choice. But last week, during the SPACECOM posture hearing,

2   my colleague brought up an important point regarding the

3   significant cost savings of locating Space Command in

4   Alabama. The Air Force reported that the cost savings in

5   moving SPACECOM from Colorado to Redstone Arsenal in

6   Huntsville is significant. A tremendous savings for the

7   taxpayer -- 35 percent, one-time savings for the move and

8   then 25 percent annual cost savings over 20 years. This is

9   all on top of the lowest cost of living and the lowest cost

10   index for construction and sustainment out of all the

11   considered sites.

12   Now I am not asking you to comment on the ongoing

13   investigation, but I have got one question. What options

14   may exist to provide greater transparency into funding for

15   combatant command operations, hiring, and training, and

16   exercise, all over the world?

17   Ms. Field: I want to make sure that I am understanding

18   your question correctly. So do you mind repeating the very

19   last piece of it?

20   Senator Tuberville: Yeah. Well, you know, just kind

21   of comment on hiring for right positions in the DoD, how

22   important it is to not hire people just for what they went

23   to school in but the experiences that they have and what

24   they bring, you know, to the game, so to speak.

25   Ms. Field: Certainly. So I believe you are speaking

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1   about the civilian acquisition workforce? Is that --

2   Senator Tuberville: Yes. Yes.

3   Ms. Field: Thank you. So this is another somewhat of

4   a good-news story. DoD contracting has been on our high-

5   risk list for many years, but we recently removed the

6   section related to civilian acquisition workforce. As you,

7   I am sure, are aware, back in the 1990s there were

8   significant cuts to the civilian acquisition workforce.

9   They had a lot of unintended consequences, and it took many

10   years for the Department to rebuild that workforce. It is

11   now in a much better place, and so we were able to remove

12   that portion from our high-risk list.

13   So I think if I were to give you sort of a status

14   update today, from the Department on that, that would be a

15   good-news story.

16   Senator Tuberville: Thank you. Dr. Grant, as a

17   professor at one of the world's top business schools, in

18   your experience, how many of your students would consider a

19   career in the Department of Defense, when all this money is

20   out there? You know, they can go out there and bring in the

21   bacon, so to speak. What should we do to make the

22   Department more attractive to kids coming out, to work for

23   our country?

24   Mr. Grant: Well, Senator I have taught, I guess, a few

25   thousand students at Wharton over the past decade. I can

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1   count three who expressed an active interest in DoD, so it

2   is not zero.

3   What can we do to make it more attractive? I think the

4   first thing we could do is create a rotational program,

5   where if you have technical talent, in particular, if you

6   have cyber capabilities, you can spend a year here, and then

7   rotate back into the private sector. I would love to have

8   exchange programs with companies as well that would draw

9   some of those people for six months or a year or two years

10   at a time. And I think if we allowed them to rent their

11   skills they would be very excited about the opportunity to

12   serve the mission without having to give up on their career

13   aspirations altogether.

14   Senator Tuberville: It is important that we attract

15   the best. And I know they do not make as much money

16   sometimes, but sometimes there is a sacrifice.

17   Dr. Levine, several weeks ago we heard from the

18   Selective Service that out of 32 million young people every

19   year that sign up for Selective Service, only 450,000 were

20   fit for the military and the DoD, 450,000 out of 32 million.

21   The Department faces a moral crisis of drugs, dropouts,

22   arrests, and obesity in American youth. The government

23   cannot parent. What can we do to help turn this crisis

24   around?

25   Mr. Levine: I believe the statistic you are looking at

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1   also encompassed the issue of what is called propensity,

2   whether young people are inclined toward military service.

3   So there is the fitness issue and there is also the

4   propensity issue.

5   The fitness issue is very difficult because it goes to

6   society as a whole, and you have to deal with the fitness of

7   our young people in general. The propensity issue may be a

8   little bit more in the area that Congress and the Department

9   can directly address, by communicating the mission of the

10   importance of service to country and the value that the

11   military provides to the country. I think that that message

12   has been lost over the years, and that there is a large

13   segment of our society that does not believe that the

14   military is important, and does not even consider or think

15   about military service for that reason. I think that is a

16   place where Congress can help.

17   Senator Tuberville: Thank you. Thank you for your

18   comments. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

19   Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator

20   Tuberville. Now let me recognize Senator Kaine, please.

21   Senator Kaine: Thank you, Mr. Chair and Ranking Member

22   Inhofe and to the witnesses. It is great to have you here

23   today.

24   I think I will start with you, Mr. Levine. We did an

25   across-the-board headquarters cut as part of the 2017 NDAA,

1   and I was pretty significantly opposed to that at the time,

2   not because I oppose cuts but because I had done so much

3   budget cutting as governor during the '08-'09 fiscal

4   recession that I learned across-the-board cuts were

5   problematic. Two years later we were dealing with a crisis

6   in military housing, and questions at hearings in December

7   2019 revealed that because of the headquarters cut the Army

8   had laid off 33 percent of their housing oversight staff.

9   The Air Force had laid of 76 housing oversight staffers.

10   The Navy number was a little bit harder to determine.

11   Across-the-board cuts just are not the way to run any

12   operation, but we do need to push efficiencies. We do need

13   to look at letting go of lesser-performing programs, if only

14   to then repurpose those resources into more new innovation

15   or higher-performing programs.

16   So where, within DoD, should the kind of continuous

17   improvement be pushed? Should it be at the surface,

18   Secretary level, reporting to the SecDef, or what is the

19   best organizational place to have this kind of push so we do

20   not do across-the-boards, which are foolish, but we do

21   targeted strategies?

22   Mr. Levine: So, first, I was in the position of having

23   to implement some of those cuts when you enact them, so I

24   shared your pain on that and saw some of the difficult

25   decisions that had to be made. And let me just give you a

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1   couple of other examples before I talk about how you address

2   it.

3   We talked about strategic workforce planning and the

4   need for strategic workforce planning in a number of areas

5   today. One of the reasons why the Department is really bad

6   at strategic workforce planning is it does not have any

7   workforce to do strategic workforce planning. That would be

8   a headquarters function, and we have defunded it. We do not

9   have that capability.

10   One that particularly worries me is modeling and

11   simulation, where we spend much less on modeling and

12   simulation. If you want to be innovative and experimental,

13   you ought to be spending more on modeling and simulation,

14   not less.

15   So you can sort of go down the list and see things that

16   have been cut that, yeah, that is a headquarters reduction,

17   but it makes a real difference for the ability of the

18   military to operate. It makes a difference for the

19   warfighter.

20   I have to be careful, though, in saying that the budget

21   is blemished tool, but it is an important tool, because it

22   really is true that in the Department of Defense if you just

23   tell people to do things better you will never see any

24   savings on anything. So I have a real problem with these

25   kinds of across-the-board cuts that are unrealistically deep

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1   and particular. They push the Department into behavior that

2   does not make sense. You have stuff that is cut in one

3   place. Civilians are cut and you end up with military doing

4   the same function and doing it more expensively, or OSD is

5   cut, and you end up with three military departments doing

6   the same thing, and duplicating efforts, and doing it more

7   expensively.

8   So you end up with cuts that end up costing you more

9   than they save you. But if you do not have some use of the

10   budget to drive toward efficiency in those areas, you are

11   not going to get it.

12   So I would say that more rational, targeted cuts, where

13   you have specifically looked at an area and said, "This is

14   an area which I know I am going to need to do it, but I need

15   to do it better. I am not going to cut you in the first

16   year because I need you to do the planning that it takes to

17   figure out how you are going to do it better, and I am going

18   to target this area." You are going to get 2 percent or 4

19   percent, but over a period of time, to let you phase it in

20   and figure out how to make your processes work better, then

21   you can use the budget as a tool in a way that makes more

22   sense instead of this across-the-board thing that is just

23   going to hurt as much as it helps.

24   Senator Kaine: Got it. Mr. Levine, I have got one

25   more question for you. All of you indicate the importance

1   of leadership to making any of these things work. I am a

2   little worried about the prevalence, during the last

3   administration, and still today, with actings rather than

4   confirmeds. So right now I think there are 60 Senate-

5   confirmed positions in the DoD. Twenty are confirmed. Two-

6   thirds have acting in the role, and that certainly is a

7   holdover from the past administration.

8   What are the downsides of having huge swaths of the

9   leadership be acting rather than, you know, in place with

10   the confidence that they can have the job for a while?

11   Mr. Levine: So, Senator, just quickly. First, a

12   transition between administrations is always a difficult

13   time, and you can expect to have actings in much greater

14   numbers, just because of the nature of that period of time.

15   The downside to actings is that the bureaucracy and the

16   organization do not pay as much heed to actings as they do

17   to full-time confirmed officials. There is a level of

18   ability to do things that becomes greater, the ability to

19   work with senior people in the building. Remember that the

20   senior military are all there, so you have your four-stars.

21   Is the four-star dealing with somebody who is a real peer,

22   who is a Senate-confirmed peer, or is the four-star dealing

23   with somebody that they know is an SES who is temporarily

24   sitting in that seat and will be gone tomorrow? It really

25   does affect the ability to act on management issues.

1   Senator Kaine: Thank you very much. Thanks, Mr.

2   Chair.

3   Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Kaine. And let me

4   recognize Senator Tillis via Webex, with the assumption the

5   technology is working.

6   Senator Tillis: Mr. Chairman, can you hear me?

7   Chairman Reed: I can, Senator. Thank you.

8   Senator Tillis: Thank goodness I have technical skills

9   to actually undo what this application randomly did to me

10 for muting.

11   Mr. Grant, you missed an incredible question that I was

12 on mute, and I want to go back and see if I can redo it.

13   I spent most of my career in technology, research and

14 development, and large-scale technology implementation, and

15 your concept of stretching the team to come up with ideas,

16 some of them did not make sense, many of them did, I think

17 is very important. In fact, we brought it up in a

18 subcommittee hearing with Chair Gillibrand just last week.

19   How would we structurally do that within the Department

20 of Defense, or create that culture? What sort of

21 suggestions would you have for maybe baby steps to get that

22 sort of culture of innovation engrained in everyone, and

23 possibly even encourage them through financial incentives if

24 they complete their day job, but come up with great ideas

25 that potentially either can be complementary to the mission

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1   set that they have or to maybe some other area within the

2   Department of Defense?

3   Mr. Grant: Senator, one practice I have seen in the

4   private sector is to rethink the idea of a suggestion box,

5   and say suggestions are great but first we need problems.

6   We need to figure out which problems need to be solved. I

7   would love to see problem boxes in every single segment of

8   the DoD, where anytime you see something broken -- it could

9   be a technical bug, it could be a management bug, or a

10   culture bug -- you submit it. Then we get senior leaders to

11   come in and rate how important the various problems are, and

12   then if you want to work on one of the high-priority

13   problems you can get some resources to do that, you can

14   build a team around you. I think that is one way to begin

15   the innovation process.

16   I think in order for that to be sustainable, of course,

17   we need senior leaders who are willing to place bets on some

18   of those ideas. But the great thing about raising problems

19   is if you do it effectively you can actually build consensus

20   about what the issues are before we then have to innovate

21   around finding the best solution to them, and I think that

22   is a process that would make it a lot easier for people who

23   are on the ground, closest to the action, to point out the

24   things that senior leaders need to be aware of. So,

25   personally, I might start there.

 1   Senator Tillis: I think that is a great idea. Mr.

 2   Levine and Ms. Field, I want to go back to a question that

 3   Senator Shaheen touched on, and Senator Gillibrand, and that

 4   has to do with, we are in a highly competitive environment,

 5   where most people with really high skills probably have two

 6   or three job offers pending at the same time. And then you

 7   get a job offer from the Department of Defense and they tell

 8   you it could be months before they can onboard you.

 9   What more do we need to do to really accelerate that

10   process? We talked about things that we could do for non-

11   classified office space for hires pending their clearance.

12   But what more do we need to do to be competitive? I think

13   we can attract people to the DoD, because of the tools and

14   mission, but we create a huge impediment when it could be

15   six or nine months before you can be onboarded. Thoughts on

16   that?

17   Mr. Levine: Senator, you have done a lot to address

18   with the direct hiring authority that you have already

19   provided. I think you correctly point to the security

20   clearance process as something that is a continuing

21   bottleneck there. I would point out, though, the security

22   clearance process is a bottleneck for many parts of the

23   private sector too, at least if they are working for the

24   Department of Defense.

25   To me, the most important thing you can do in this area

1 -- there are two things. One is, as I mentioned before, is

2 identify your requirements. Figure out what parts of that

3 cyber workforce you need to have in uniform, what parts you

4 need to have as employees, and what parts you can contract

5 out, because you have greater tools and greater flexibility

6 if you can contract out, and sometimes you can bring in

7 better talent.

8   But where you need to bring the workforce in-house,

9 where you want to hire civilians, comes to my second point.

10 The most important thing is you can invest in the civilians

11 and show them that you care about them while they are in the

12 Department. So do not just hire and forget. Bring them in,

13 train them up, give them the kind of educational experience,

14 rotational experience so that they are exposed to the

15 mission and know that they are important to the mission and

16 the Department cares about them. That, to me, is the most

17 important thing you can do in terms of making the Department

18 a more attractive employer.

19   Senator Tillis: Ms. Field, in my remaining time, the

20 2019 GAO report that identified more than 100 initiatives

21 that were intended to improve business operations within the

22 DoD were never really acted on. Do you have an

23 understanding of some of those initiatives and the ones that

24 you think really should have been implemented, that could

25 have potentially improved business operations within the

 1   DoD?

 2   Ms. Field: Well, I want to make sure that I am

 3   responding to the correct report. We do have a high-risk

 4   area focused on DoD's approach to business transformation,

 5   where we talk about sort of the overarching structure that

 6   the Department needs. But we also talk about business

 7   systems modernization, and one of the key areas there is in

 8   an effort to come up with a plan for the next generation of

 9   the federated business enterprise, enterprise business

10   architecture, which is about mapping, sort of the framework

11   for business transformation, so mapping all of the different

12   business systems that the Department has in place that are

13   needed to drive management reform. That initiative is one

14   of the key plans that the Department needs to fully

15   implement.

16   Senator Tillis: I agree. Mr. Chair, thank you. I

17   think that we are not looking -- there are two distinct

18   functions within the DoD. There is the warfighter and

19   protecting our national security, working with our partners

20   and allies, and there is the business of the DoD that has

21   not been modernized by any contemporary standards for

22   decades. And I think that we need to look at that as

23   fundamental as an application portfolio, inventory of all

24   applications and systems across the DoD, which ones can be

25   consolidated, modernized, and drive out deficiencies so we

1   can plow into these very important underfunded initiatives

2   within the DoD.

3   So hopefully, Mr. Chair, thank you for bringing this

4   topic up for a committee hearing. Hopefully we can see some

5   progress over this Congress. Thank you.

6   Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Tillis. Let me now

7   recognize Senator King.

8   Senator King: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think the

9   most uttered sentence in America in the last 12 months has

10   been "you are still on mute." We all hear that.

11   Mr. Levine, I want to ask a policy question disguised

12   as a management question. Jack Welch once said, "Management

13   is looking reality in the eye and then doing something about

14   it." My concern is that the reality is, in terms of the

15   defense of this nation, that the most serious and likely

16   threat is in cyber. Anybody who thinks about a future

17   conflict will assert that it will at least begin with a

18   cyberattack, on our military system, on our electric grid,

19   financial systems, all of those things, and that may be the

20   extent of the war.

21   I just did a quick calculation, based upon the 2021

22   budget. We are spending a little over 2 percent of the

23   defense budget on cyber. Are we making a huge management

24   error by not recognizing the significant threat and not

25   reflecting it in our budgetary priorities?

1   Mr. Levine: Senator, you spent several months now, I

2   gather, with the Cyber Solarium Commission, so I am afraid

3   that I am responding to somebody who knows a whole lot more

4   about this subject than I do, in terms of the balance.

5   But what I would suggest that you think about, in

6   framing the issue, is what is it possible to do? Is it, in

7   fact, possible to create a cyber defense that is going to be

8   affective, even if you spent the entire defense budget on

9   it? Could you do that, or is our reliance on the internet

10 and our reliance on computers so extensive, and our

11 investment so extensive -- if we went from 2 percent of the

12 budget to 3 percent to 5 percent, how much difference would

13 it make? And do we need to think in different terms? Do we

14 need to think in terms of deterrence or offensive

15 capabilities rather than simply in defensive capabilities?

16   I do not know the answer to that question. I know that

17 you have a got a tremendously important question. I know

18 you have spent more time on it than I have. But I cannot

19 answer it. I cannot tell you there is a magic percentage or

20 a magic number that we could spend that would make us safe

21 in that area.

22   Senator King: And I agree with you. We cannot patch

23 our way out of this risk. And I do not know what the right

24 number is, but I think 2 percent is low.

25   On the other hand, you are absolutely right that

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1 deterrence has to be part of the equation. The best

2 cyberattack is the one that does not occur, and it does not

3 occur because the adversary is afraid that there will be

4 response. What I said to someone the other day is this is

5 Deterrence 2.0, mutually assured disruption, and that is

6 really the way we need to think about it.

7   I am concerned about the lack of data, and your

8 testimony from the GAO, one of my favorite saying is, "Does

9 it work, and how do you know?" It strikes me that we do not

10 have a way of knowing, in many cases. Is that accurate?

11   Ms. Field: Well, I think that the full financial

12 audit, which I know I sound like a broken record, is one of

13 the ways to figure out what we know and what we do not know,

14 and, therefore, which problems to prioritize. To bring it

15 back to cybersecurity, as a result of the full financial

16 audit, DoD identified hundreds of vulnerabilities in its IT

17 systems. That provided a roadmap for strengthening those IT

18 systems from a cyberattack.

19   So I agree with you. We do not have yet a full and

20 complete picture of the department.

21   Senator King: The sad fact is the Russians may have a

22 better idea of where those vulnerabilities are than we do,

23 but that is another subject.

24   Mr. Levine, this had been touched upon. It has always

25 concerned me that turnover is problem. The whole mindset in

1   the military of the three-year assignment and then move on

2   is a barrier to the development and maintenance of expertise

3   and experience. Should we be rethinking the sort of

4   rotational mindset that drives so much of personnel policy

5   in the Defense Department?

6   Mr. Levine: Senator King, I would be cautious about

7   that. What I would say is perhaps in some areas. So, for

8   example, where you have an area where you feel you need deep

9   expertise. But the rotational system in the military also

10   provides us with value. It provides us with broad leaders,

11   leadership skills that you do not get otherwise, exposure to

12   multiple kinds of problems and different kind of thinking.

13   And when you combine the military and civilian who are

14   present next to each other -- in some of these

15   organizations, you have the civilians who can bring the

16   continuity, the military who can bring the leadership --

17   that can be a pretty potent combination.

18   So I would say the answer is yes, but I heard Senator

19   Ernst say earlier -- what was it? -- assume prudent risk.

20   This is an area where I think you want to assume prudent

21   risk. You want to test this in areas where you think it

22   would be particularly helpful to build deep expertise before

23   you broaden it.

24   Senator King: We have a model for that in the nuclear

25   Navy, where the term is eight years, as opposed to three

1   years in other places, because of the need for expertise.

2   So I take your point that it should be done selectively, but

3   there may be places where it would help.

4   Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

5   Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator King. Let me

6   recognize Senator Hawley, please.

7   Senator Hawley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thanks to

8   the witnesses for being here. Mr. Levine, if I could just

9   start with you. You wrote last year that "The next

10   Secretary of Defense should preserve the good elements of

11   the new acquisition experimentation while avoiding a return

12   to the 1990s-era conspiracy hope." I wonder if you could

13   just elaborate on that for us. What aspects of acquisition

14   form should DoD be focusing on, and what pitfalls does it --

15   Mr. Levine: I just quoted Senator Ernst saying,

16   "assume prudent risk." I think that is what we need to be

17   doing in the acquisition system. And another way I have

18   said it is we need to be able to walk and chew gum at the

19   same time. We need to be able to do far-out experimental

20   kinds of things, and at the same time we need to be able to

21   run major programs that are going to cost hundreds of

22   billions of dollars in a relatively controlled way, so that

23   that we do not end up having overruns at 50, 100 percent, as

24   we have had with weapons systems in the past.

25   The experience that we had in the 1990s was that we

1   said, "We are going to try new things, and these new things

2   are all going to work." And so we are going to assume that

3   everything is going to work really well. We are going to

4   take off all the controls, and that is going to reduce our

5   costs.

6   We took off controls. We took off baselines. We put

7   in commercial technologies and commercial approaches, and

8   when things did not work we had costs that really spiraled

9   out of control, and a lot of weapons systems that failed,

10   weapons systems that were cancelled. The Army lost,

11   essentially, a generation of modernization because it plowed

12   money into systems that did not pan out.

13   So we need to be able to do some things in a

14   conservative way, where we are really careful and cautious.

15   But when you are building an aircraft carrier, you probably

16   want to be very careful about how you build the aircraft

17   carrier, so that when you get to the end of your $12 billion

18   investment you have a $12 billion aircraft carrier.

19   On the other hand, you want to be able to do this

20   experimentation and push the frontier. So it is walk and

21   chew gum at the same time, is what I am suggesting here.

22   Senator Hawley: Very good. Thank you for that.

23   Ms. Field, let me ask you about this. A GAO report

24   from this year credited DoD leadership with demonstrating a

25   strong commitment to improving the management of its weapons

1 systems acquisitions, but the report went on to say that

2 there is more work to be done. So let me just ask you about

3 that. Do any weapons programs, in particular, stand out to

4 you as examples of how these kinds of programs should be

5 managed?

6   Ms. Field: So I will first note that my colleague,

7 Shelby Oakley, will be here next week to talk about

8 acquisition reform, and she might be the best person to

9 answer that question. But I will say that we did an

10 analysis, I think last year, where we looked at different

11 major defense acquisition programs, and one of the things we

12 found is that for those programs where there were certain

13 steps taken in the acquisition process, such as reviewing

14 the designs at an earlier point in the process than

15 traditionally done, they had significantly less cost

16 overruns and schedule growth.

17   And so which programs those exactly were, Ms. Oakley

18 will know, but we certainly do have examples of acquisition

19 programs that have been run better than others. I would

20 also note that the Department has instituted new policies to

21 try to speed up the acquisition process. We think that

22 those policies are a good step forward. What we now need to

23 see are the Military Services mirroring those policies with

24 their own in-house policies.

25   Senator Hawley: Let me ask you this. The Department

1   has long struggled to balance near-term and long-term

2   requirements, and we have seen this play out in recent years

3   as DoD has tried to meet the combatant commanders' requests

4   for forces while also allowing the Services to pursue and

5   rebuild readiness and modernization. How can better

6   management practices help improve DoD's ability to manage

7   these competing priorities in a systematic way?

8   Ms. Field: Well, that is a really tough question, and

9   I think the tension between the readiness and modernization

10   is one that no single person can figure out. I will say

11   that the idea behind a chief management officer, which is

12   something we have long suggested the Department needs, is to

13   elevate, integrate, institutionalize management reform so

14   that the Secretary and the Deputy Secretary can be freed up

15   to focus on tough questions like that. So have a senior

16   official whose full-time job is to try to improve management

17   processes, to save money to put toward things like readiness

18   and modernization. So having a senior official who can

19   focus full-time on management reform is key.

20   Senator Hawley: Do you have anything to add to that,

21   Mr. Levine?

22   Mr. Levine: Well, I would agree with Ms. Field that

23   the balancing of readiness and future needs is a matter of

24   budgets and priorities. It is really not a management

25   issue. It is an issue more for the Secretary of Defense and

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1   for the Congress to reach that balance than for management-

2   level officials in the Department.

3   Senator Hawley: Very good. My time has nearly

4   expired. I may have another question or two for you for the

5   record, but thank you so much, all of you, for being here.

6   Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

7   Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Hawley. Let me

8   recognize Senator Kelly, please.

9   Senator Kelly: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This first

10   question is for Mr. Levine. So you have had experience

11   serving in senior management of both the Defense Department

12   and the staff of the Senate Armed Services Committee, and

13   some suggest Congress is like the board of directors for

14   DoD. Based on your experience, can you speak about how you

15   view the relative roles of the DoD and Congress?

16   Mr. Levine: As I said in my opening statement,

17   Congress can set priorities for the Department and Congress

18   can provide tools to the Department, but Congress cannot

19   manage the Department. So we are here today talking about

20   defense management. There are things that you can do to

21   help, but at the end of the day it is DoD officials in

22   senior positions who have to manage the organization.

23   The thing that I worry about is that when Congress

24   tries too hard to help it can be counterproductive. So if

25   we have too much legislation, even if it is well-intentioned

1 legislation, it may even be good legislation, it can add a

2 huge burden to the Department, which becomes more of a

3 management problem than help.

4   I do not know if that answers your question.

5   Senator Kelly: Well, Mr. Levine, as we look to improve

6 accountability to the American public while improving

7 readiness and deployment of new technologies, how should we

8 work together to improve these management practices?

9   Mr. Levine: I think that Congress' best role in

10 management is as a partner, for leaders of the Department of

11 Defense. So you can partner with them by meeting with them,

12 getting to know them, understanding the problems they are

13 working with, understanding whether they need new tools, and

14 helping them set priorities. You can push them. You can

15 provide oversight to them. What you cannot do, at the end

16 of the day, is manage, as I say. They have to have that

17 responsibility. But you can push them in the right

18 directions.

19   Senator Kelly: Thank you. Dr. Grant, I was at NASA

20 during the Columbia space shuttle accident, and on the

21 ground there in East Texas, helping lead the recovery

22 mission during those first couple of days. And I lost

23 friends and classmates that day, and it was a difficult time

24 for our organization. And this investigation, after

25 Columbia, discovered that multiple employees at NASA were

concerned about the damage the space shuttle had taken

during liftoff, but had never raised those concerns. And as

we assess what happened and why, we opted to make management

changes to avoid the kind of group think that helped lead to

this disaster.

To this day, on a wall in a conference near the Mission

Control Center it says -- this is quote -- it says, "None of

us is as dumb as all of us." You know, the message being

that few things are as dangerous in a high-stakes

environment as unchallenged group think.

Dr. Grant, the Department of Defense necessarily relies

on a no-fail, can-do culture that places a premium on

command and control structures to ensure the success of its

missions. How can managers in DoD apply your research about

the advantages of challenging group think to an organization

like the Department of Defense?

Mr. Grant: Senator, how many hours do you have today?

I think it is obviously a very complex question, and,

frankly, I think there is a lot we can learn from NASA that

is applicable to DoD. I think the place I would start is I

know one of the norms in place at NASA now, in many parts of

the organization, is that at the very end of a meeting

people are asked, "Does anyone have any information that has

not been shared but might be relevant to the decision we are

making today?" I think it is a last-ditch attempt for

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1   people to share critical information that might have gotten

2   lost.

3   I think that we need to think, though, much more

4   systematically about how we encourage people to challenge

5   upward. One of the things I worry about most is sometimes

6   known as the "HIPPO effect." HIPPO stands for Highest Paid

7   Person's Opinion. And as soon as that is known, people want

8   to jump on the bandwagon, and we start to see conformity and

9   convergent thinking instead of diversity of thought and

10   divergent thinking.

11   I think that, you know, there are a lot of different

12   ways to challenge that, but one of the ways that we

13   implement this in many organizations is we say, okay, let's

14   put the problem or the decision on the table. Let's get

15   everybody's independent thought before the leader's view are

16   known, and that way we can surface the different opinions in

17   the room and begin to discuss which ones are worth pursuing.

18   I think that is a practice we could probably apply much more

19   broadly than we currently do.

20   Senator Kelly: Yeah, I used to, when I got assigned to

21   be a commander of a mission, one of the first things I would

22   tell my crew members is that they were required to question

23   my decisions, not optional, especially if it had to do with

24   safety and mission success. I mean, there are some things

25   that could go, but when it has to do with those two things,

 1   safety and mission success, we need individuals that will

 2   question their leadership.

 3   Mr. Grant: Yeah.   Let's make it unsafe not to speak

 4   up.

 5   Senator Kelly: Thank you, Dr. Grant.

 6   Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator Kelly.

 7   Let me recognize Senator Sullivan, please.

 8   Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I

 9   appreciate the witnesses coming today.   Really important

10   topic, even though it is kind of dense.

11   So, Mr. Levine, I was reading your ten rules for

12   defense management reform, and I want to look at one of your

13   rules.   You caution Congress and the DoD from taking on too

14   much.   You list a number of recent major overhauls, to

15   include military health care, defense acquisition, officer

16   personnel management, military retirement, UCMJ, and you

17   conclude by stating, "When you try to attack everything at

18   once you often end up accomplishing nothing."

19   So if this committee were going to take your sound

20   advice, given the current strategic environment, where

21   should we focus defense reform efforts to ensure we compete

22   most effectively with China and Russia, and we get back to

23   the main mission of the Department of Defense.   There has

24   been a lot of talk about some of these broader issues,

25   social issues you might want to call them.   But I think we

 1   have to remember the DoD mission is to protect our nation,

 2   to close with and destroy the enemies of our country, if

 3   need be to go and kill the enemies of our country, and

 4   sometimes we forget that.

 5   What are the reforms you would focus on?

 6   Mr. Levine: First, Senator, my rules are little bit

 7   oversimplified. I am talking about rules that you can

 8   prioritize so you get them up at the senior level of the

 9   Department and you get your senior leaders to focus on them,

10   which can only be a handful.

11   I would think about a couple of areas. One is the area

12   -- so the advanced kinds of skills that we need for new

13   warfighting, whether it is cyber, AI, software. Those are

14   things that we are increasingly reliant on and we are

15   deficient in skills. And I would look at that as being a

16   major priority for the Department of Defense. We need to

17   reform the way that we access those skills and the way we

18   treat those skills, so that we can build them into the

19   workforce and make better use of them.

20   The second thing I would worry about is data. We have

21   got reams and reams of data at the Department of Defense.

22   We have got all kinds of data that could be incredibly

23   helpful to us, and we are not able to access it in an

24   effective way to make decisions.

25   I think that those two things would be right up at the

1   top of my priority list, Senator.

2   Senator Sullivan: I am going to ask this question for

3   all three witnesses, and I know you have already talked

4   about it, but it is such an important issue and I think it

5   is such a strategic disadvantage, relative to China, in

6   particular, but it does not need to be, and that is in the

7   area of weapons systems reform, getting new platforms.

8   We have all heard the kind of parade of horrible

9   Senator Tillis. I am surprised that he did not pull out his

10   450-page RFP for the next fiscal -- literally, a 450-page

11   RFP for the next generation of handgun. You can go and buy

12   a handgun off the shelf that I think would be fine, whether

13   it is the F-35 taking 20 years to develop, I know we have

14   already talked about the Ford-class carrier. But then you

15   have other instances in U.S. history. I forgot the

16   development time frame of the SR-71, the Blackbird, the spy

17   plane, but I know it was very, very short.

18   So what can we do to address the giant challenges that

19   we have in developing weapons systems that take years, if

20   not decades, and certainly disadvantages us relative to

21   China?

22   Ms. Field: I think one of the key things that needs to

23   happen is to get out of the business of bringing on or

24   starting new acquisition programs without having sound

25   business cases in place from the beginning. And so we often

1 see, in acquisition, that the requirements simply do not

2 match the resources. It is a fundamental problem. I am

3 oversimplifying it, but that is a key piece of it. And the

4 result, of course, is that more programs are started than

5 can be executed, buying power is reduced, performance is

6 reduced, delivery is delayed. And so bringing more

7 discipline to the up-front piece of the acquisition process

8 is critical.

9   Senator Sullivan: Great. Any other witnesses on that?

10   Mr. Levine: Senator, I think that recognizing that

11 different markets are different, that acquisition is not all

12 of one piece. So the example you gave of handguns is

13 obviously a crazy thing, because handguns are out there.

14 There is no revolutionary handgun that the Department of

15 Defense is going to invent that is vastly superior to what

16 the commercial marketplace is producing.

17   Aircraft carriers are different from handguns. It

18 probably takes 10, 15, 20 years to field your next aircraft

19 carrier, and you are not going to short-circuit that by

20 running a competition faster or something, because that is

21 the development cycle. Software is completely different

22 because it is largely commercial.

23   We need to be able to respond to each of these areas in

24 different ways, depending on what the market is and what the

25 competitors look like.

1   Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

2   Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Sullivan. Let me

3   now recognize, via Webex, Senator Manchin.

4   Senator Manchin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank

5   you all for being here and the service you have given our

6   country.

7   Mr. Levine, my home state of West Virginia sits just

8   outside the National Capital region, which is often used in

9   the Fed's contract as a way to geographically limit which

10 companies can compete for the work of the Department of

11 Defense. This is known as "place of performance." That

12 clause has been a hindrance to West Virginia and a number of

13 other rural states without a significant military or

14 industrial footprint, essentially preventing any company,

15 any opportunity at increasing that footprint for business

16 that do not exist in the region identified by the place of

17 performance clause.

18   And my question would be, would you agree that there is

19 need for a change, and if it would be basically still

20 hurting the Department if we do not change it, and in the

21 highly urban and high cost of living areas that is a strain

22 anyway. I have to assume that the higher cost is being

23 passed on to the Department and the taxpayer. So your

24 comments on this would be appreciated.

25   Mr. Levine: Senator, first of all, it is good to see

1   you again.

2   Senator Manchin: You too.

3   Mr. Levine: Second of all, I think that, as I just was

4   saying in response to Senator Sullivan, it would depend on

5   the market. So there are some things where place of

6   performance may be important. I would think those would be

7   fairly limited, something where you have to support an

8   organization that is in the National Capital region, and

9   even that may be more attenuated these days as we are all

10   getting used to remote work. So things that we thought, in

11   past years, we needed to have a place of performance that

12   was close to the organization or entity that was in charge,

13   we may now, with our greater ability to work remotely, be

14   able to move on from that, and I think it is something that

15   deserves to be re-examined. Are we using that correctly?

16   There probably still some places where we need to specify

17   place of performance, but it may be less today than it was

18   even a year ago.

19   Senator Manchin: Is it a policy in place, sir, or do

20   you have the flexibility to make those changes or

21   recommendations, or does it take legislation?

22   Mr. Levine: I believe that the Executive branch would

23   have the ability to make that change on its own. I do not

24   believe that any legislation is required with regard to

25   place of performance on contracts.

1   Senator Manchin: Right. If you could check that out I

2   would really appreciate that.

3   Ms. Field, I was extremely disappointed last year's

4   NDAA included the termination of the chief management

5   officer position at the DoD. In light of the CMO's position

6   termination, I asked my staff to get on the phone with a

7   number of experts, including yourself and Mr. Levine, to

8   talk about how Congress can help shape cost reform in the

9   DoD, specifically in the fourth estate.

10   One idea that was brought up by the multitude of people

11   was the creation of another Under Secretary of Defense,

12   whose role would be similar to the State Department's Deputy

13   Secretary for Management and Resources.

14   My question would be, while I do not want to see more

15   bureaucracy added to the DoD without appropriate authority

16   driving it, are there any concrete ways that we can empower

17   a position within the Department to ensure business reforms

18   are instituted without constant oversight at the

19   congressional level?

20   Ms. Field: Thank you for that question, and you are

21   absolutely right. Since 2005, GAO has noted the need for a

22   very senior official at the Department to drive management

23   reform. It was the same year we added DoD approach to

24   business transformation to our high-risk list.

25   There are a number of different structures that could

1   be used to help drive change at the Department. Now

2   changing a line in an org chart is not going to get you

3   where you need to be. But what we believe the Department

4   needs is a senior official who is in a full-time position

5   created through legislation, has the responsibility,

6   authority, and accountability for DoD's overall business

7   transformation efforts, reports directly to the Secretary of

8   Defense, brings significant and relevant experience to the

9   job, is on a term appointment, crossing administrations, and

10   is subject to a performance contract. That is what we

11   called for back in 2005.

12   I think the legislation back in FY 2017 and 2018,

13   through the NDAA that created the chief management officer,

14   was actually very much in line with a lot of that.

15   Unfortunately, what we found is that the Department did not

16   truly empower the CMO with those authorities because they

17   were subject to the direction, control, and authority of the

18   Secretary of Defense, who did not support the CMO.

19   Senator Manchin: Thank you very much. Every business

20   and economy runs an inherent risk of generating waste, but

21   the clear difference here, in my opinion, is that the

22   management of these vast programs of the DoD are not

23   prioritized or incentivized with programs or audits that

24   reinforce cutting waste. Furthermore, I feel as though

25   waste in the DoD is far too often seen as an excuse by

1 product, and what troubles me is that the accepted normality

2 is then passed off to the American taxpayer.

3   So either one of you all, from a business reform

4 perspective, what are the top concerns you have with the

5 Defense Logistics Agency, the Defense Information Systems

6 Agency, the Defense Finance, the Defense Contract Audit

7 Agency, and Defense Contract Management Agency?

8   Mr. Levine: Senator, so I would say at the Defense

9 Logistics Agency, in my experience, is one of the best-run

10 parts of the Department of Defense. I cannot tell you there

11 is no waste there, but my impression is it is extremely

12 effective and efficient, and that the consolidation of tasks

13 that used to be performed in the military departments into a

14 single agency that runs them on a consolidated basis for all

15 the military departments has been a success.

16   DFAS also consumes far less resources than the Services

17 did when they performed similar functions. I think there

18 are real questions now, though, about the interface between

19 DFAS and the Services, as we try to get to financial audit,

20 and whether sometimes that becomes more of a problem than a

21 solution, because as we field these enterprise resource

22 systems in the Services, and they are capable of doing some

23 of the things that DFAS does, there may be some duplication

24 there that causes more problem than it helps, and it is

25 something that deserves to be looked at.

1   I give you one more, which is DISA. I think there has

2   been some concern that DISA does not necessarily control all

3   the things that it would like to control, and there is

4   rivalry with the Services. There is some duplication of

5   computing centers, as I understand it, and computing

6   capability within DISA. Some of that may be because it is

7   located in places in the United States where it is hard

8   close a facility once you have it.

9   But these are not agencies that are waste. These are

10 agencies that are an essential part of the way the

11 Department operates not only its business systems but also

12 its warfighting systems. DLA, and DISA, in particular,

13 support the warfight and should not just be viewed as

14 overhead.

15   Senator Manchin: Thank you very much. My time has

16 expired. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

17   Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Manchin. And now

18 let me recognize, via Webex, Senator Rosen.

19   Senator Rosen: Thank you, Chairman Reed, Ranking

20 Member Inhofe for holding this important hearing. I would

21 like to thank all the witnesses for being here testifying

22 today, because, as you know, DoD's 2019 Digital

23 Modernization Strategy, it does serve as the Department's

24 strategic plan for information resource management and

25 presents IT-related modernization goals.

1   But I want to speak to something a little more

2   specific, common data capture across all platforms, because

3   raw data is a strategic asset. When data is common across

4   platforms, it provides a powerful tool for policymakers, for

5   strategic planning, knowing what we did, what we need to do,

6   et cetera.

7   So DoD's Modernization Strategy calls for elevating the

8   importance of data and information in its military

9   operations. Standardizing data capture across DoD

10 organizations, some data capture can give the warfighter

11 better information on efficiencies by using economies of

12 scale, maybe consolidating resources where it makes sense,

13 understanding what our needs or gaps are for future military

14 operations.

15   So to Ms. Field and Mr. Levine, as DoD modernizes, how

16 should it attempt to convert and capture data that is

17 common, in some kind of common format across organizations

18 for strategic planning and operations?

19   Mr. Levine: One thing I would say is you cannot do it

20 on the cheap. There is often an effort to shortcut this and

21 think we can do it with no resources. We absorb fantastic

22 quantities of data in the Department of Defense, both for

23 warfighting purposes and business purposes. I think I heard

24 at some point that the F-35 alone takes in more data than

25 the entire Department took in, in, say, 1980 or 1985. Just

1 vast quantities of data from a single system, and we do not

2 know what to do with it. We do not know how to

3 operationalize it.

4   The same is true on the business side. It is not good

5 enough just to take in the data. For too long we have

6 shortcutted past the whole issue of data science. We need

7 data science in the Department. We need data scientists.

8 We need to curate our data so that it is in a form that we

9 can actually use it in, and that is not going to be cheap

10 and easy. And that is why I talk about opening the aperture

11 on our financial audit investment, and investing more in the

12 other types of data and other types of data systems where we

13 have been really deficient in our investment.

14   Senator Rosen: I could not agree more. Ms. Field,

15 would you like to elaborate quickly, because I have one more

16 important question.

17   Ms. Field: Very quickly, I will note that

18 standardizing definitions of data is critical in order to

19 draw connections and make comparisons, and, therefore,

20 better informed decisions. One thing I will note is that

21 the chief management officer, before that position was

22 eliminated, worked with the CIO to develop an integrated

23 business framework. That was a positive step toward exactly

24 what you are talking about. And so one of the things that

25 we plan to look at, at GAO, is what happened to that effort

1   now that the position has been eliminated.

2   Senator Rosen: Thank you. I appreciate it. I would

3   like to move on to tech personnel management. This question

4   is for Mr. Levine. In a recent article, you cited risk-

5   adverse personnel systems, and you quoted "a maze of rules

6   is undermining the Pentagon's ability to access the people

7   it needs," and it is, quote, "driving away needed talent."

8   Senator Blackburn and I, we have been trying to address

9   this challenge in cyber, recently introducing legislation to

10   create a cyber reserve for DoD and DHS, made up of former

11   Federal personnel now working in the private sector, a

12   reserve corps, if you will.

13   So building on questions from Senators Gillibrand and

14   Tillis, what do you believe are some of the management

15   constraints that are keeping DoD from attracting talent in

16   the fields of software, cyber, and artificial intelligence,

17   and what can we do to help you attract talent to these

18   critical fields?

19   Mr. Levine: So first of all, just hearing about it

20   from you, the idea of a cyber reserve sounds like a good

21   idea. It sounds like a good idea because we need to access

22   talent wherever we can find it. So if we can access it, if

23   we can tap into a different type of talent in a different

24   way, that has got to be a good thing.

25   With regard to civilian employment, my view is we have

1   direct hiring authority now. Congress has been very good

2   about providing directing hiring authority in areas like

3   cyber, and so the inefficiencies of the competitive hiring

4   system really are not particularly a problem in an area like

5   cyber. The question of pay comes in. We have the Cyber

6   Excepted Service, which allows paying higher salaries, not

7   enough to be competitive with the private sector.

8   The missing element is bringing it all together and

9   showing people that we are willing to invest and to care

10   about them. And so developing a program where you bring

11   people in, and you put them in a position where they

12   understand that they are important to the mission and they

13   are going to play a key role in what you are doing, there is

14   no thing you can do more for employees than showing you care

15   about them, to build your recruiting and build your ability

16   to retain key personnel.

17   Senator Rosen: Well, I could not agree more. I think

18   that goes across all businesses. Employee turnover is

19   always the highest cost, because you lose that institutional

20   knowledge. So when we invest in the long-term care of an

21   employee, that means they take care of what they need to.

22   Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My time has expired.

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

24   Now I have just a few comments I would like to make before

25   we adjourn. First of all, I was struck, Mr. Grant, at page

1   193 of your book there is a caption to a cartoon that I

2   think captures the essence of everything we do here, and it

3   is, "We'd now like to open the floor to shorter speeches

4   disguised as questions." So with that, let me open the

5   floor to shorter speeches disguised as questions.

6   A couple of observations. One is that we have had

7   several commentators, including the authors of the National

8   Defense Strategy Report, indicating a shift from civilian

9   control of the military to professional military officers in

10 control. One aspect of that might be is that if you look at

11 professional officers and, even now, senior enlisted, they

12 have the opportunity -- in fact, they are expected to go to

13 graduate school, and they are expected to go to military

14 education schools, the General Staff College, et cetera. I

15 do not think we have anything comparable to that in the

16 civilian service.

17   So what happens is you have a situation where you have

18 a civilian, and then someone is brought in, a younger,

19 perhaps, officer, a captain or major, who has a Ph.D. in

20 systems analysis, and right away you have a sort of

21 disparity between what we expect to be the civilian in

22 charge versus the officer that is there for one or two

23 years. Is this a serious issue, and something we should do

24 about it? Your comments, Mr. Levine.

25   Mr. Levine: I think there is a continuing tension, but

1   I do not think the continuing tension is necessarily bad. I

2   think that bringing different kinds of talent to focus on a

3   problem, and people with a different perspective, can be a

4   good thing. So I hesitate to say that this is a problem.

5   It is a tension, but not necessarily a problem.

6   Chairman Reed: Well, let me reverse it. Should we

7   have a comparable system for civilian employees at the

8   Department of Defense so that they can mature and advance

9   their skills as the uniformed side does?

10   Mr. Levine: Absolutely, and we do have some of those

11   systems. The problem is that we are not organized in how we

12   use them for civilians. So we have civilian training.

13   Civilian training sometimes is used as a reward -- I have

14   somebody good so I am going to send them off to training, to

15   show them how much I like them. That does not necessarily

16   have anything to do with the job he or she is going to be

17   doing when she gets back. It is sometimes used as a way to

18   get rid of somebody that they do not like and get them out

19   of the office for six months, send them to training. It

20   needs to be much more systematic, in the way that it is in

21   the military.

22   Chairman Reed: Ms. Field, any comments?

23   Ms. Field: I would note that one of the things that

24   the Department has been experimenting with in the past few

25   years, I think at the behest of this committee, has been the

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1   use of cross-functional teams, which brings civilians and

2   military personnel together for six months to two years.

3   They leave their day jobs and they focus on a critical

4   issue. There was one team focused on electromagnetic

5   spectrum operations. And I think that that experiment,

6   while still very much an experiment, is one good way of

7   bringing civilians and military officials together to think

8   creatively and innovatively about an important problem.

9   Chairman Reed: Dr. Grant, any comments?

10   Mr. Grant: Substantial risk that we underinvest in

11   leadership development for civilians, and oftentimes the

12   capabilities are already there. I remember a few years back

13   I taught a leadership course that involved a pretty

14   extensive change simulation that both civilians and generals

15   and colonels were participating in. And the civilians in

16   the DoD performed significantly better, in part because

17   instead of executing immediately, they actually stopped to

18   plan. And I saw that and wondered, what are we doing to

19   make sure that ability to pause and analyze is really being

20   developed and harnessed in the DoD, and my hunch is not

21   enough.

22   Chairman Reed: Thank you. Another issue -- again,

23   this is observational, not analytical -- is that we hire

24   lots of contractors at the Department of Defense. Sometimes

25   they are essential because we do not have those skills.

1 Sometimes we have done it because we have cut back

2 dramatically on civilians. And sometimes I think we do it

3 because there is at least a short-run financial incentive to

4 hire the contractors, but at the expense of the long-return

5 of seasoned career professionals. Dr. Levine, your comments

6 on this? Is this a problem?

7   Mr. Levine: Over-reliance on contractors can

8 definitely be a problem. There are many places, as you

9 know, where we rely on the special expertise we can get from

10 outside the Department. I think that in the cyber area,

11 some of the things we are talking about, AI area, there may

12 be skills that we can access from the private sector that we

13 cannot build ourselves.

14   The important thing is that we have to at least

15 maintain enough expertise in the government that we

16 understand what we are buying. If we do not have any

17 expertise at all, ourselves, if we contract it all out, then

18 we are just a victim. We cannot make smart decisions, we

19 cannot understand what we are doing, and I do not think we

20 want to be in that position.

21   Chairman Reed: Your comments, ma'am?

22   Ms. Field: Yes. So DoD, a few years ago, as I am sure

23 you are aware, did an assessment, or tried to assess whether

24 it more expensive to use civilians or contractors in certain

25 places, or military personnel, for that matter. And the

1   Department determined, although it was using a non-

2   judgmental sample, that there really was not a significant

3   difference. So I think that is the first key piece to keep

4   in mind is the cost is not the driving factor here.

5   So to your point, then, the key consideration is what

6   capabilities do we want in-house, that we want to nurture,

7   whether it be on the military side or the civilian side?

8   One of the things we found is that the Department has not

9   assessed the mix of civilian, contractor, and military

10   personnel throughout the Department, and so we have

11   recommended that the Department do that.

12   Chairman Reed: Thank you. Dr. Grant, any comments?

13   Mr. Grant: I do not have data from within the DoD on

14   this, but one of the things that I would put on the table is

15   in other industries we see that experience is a double-edged

16   sword, that on the one hand it brings a lot of know-how, on

17   the other hand it also carries blinders and baggage, and

18   sometimes people over-index on their internal experience.

19   So I think that in some cases it is possible that

20   contractors bring fresh ideas and new perspectives, and we

21   could benefit from that, and we ought to be documenting what

22   that looks like.

23   Chairman Reed: Finally, and this is more of a thought

24   impression, is while the hearing was going on and we were

25   talking about innovation and creativity and how do we jump

1 ahead, I thought of Alan Turing and Bletchley Hall, in which

2 the British government, Prime Minister Churchill, basically

3 said, "Leave them alone and let them do." And it was an

4 interesting group of people, and they basically made a

5 significant discovery that some would say shaped, or even

6 determined the outcome of the war.

7   Do we need something like that, or do we have something

8 like that already? I know DARPA does great work, but have

9 we picked out a key element like quantum computing or AI and

10 said we are going to build, not just at a DoD level but at a

11 national level, this group of experts, and set them loose?

12   Mr. Levine: I think that Mr. Grant referred to number

13 of different DoD organizations that work in that way, with

14 DIU and NSIN and some of the others. He had a list of them,

15 I think, up front.

16   But I think it is also important recognize that it is

17 still something that our military does at the tactical and

18 operational level. So we had people in Iraq and in

19 Afghanistan in the field, dealing with problems on a day-to-

20 day basis and developing solutions. And so we should not

21 overlook the fact that we have innovators at all levels of

22 our organization who continue to perform well today. There

23 are some other examples that come to mind -- and I do not

24 know whether they are classified so I cannot talk about them

25 -- where the people at the front end, at the pointy end of

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1 the sword, in fact are still able to innovate and still able

2 to do some of that. That does not get to your question of a

3 Manhattan Project kind of thing, and I am not sure what the

4 Manhattan Project would be, so I do not necessarily have a

5 comment on that.

6   Chairman Reed: Thank you. Ms. Field?

7   Ms. Field: Well, I would again point to cross-

8 functional teams as one interesting model that could be

9 used, that could generate some interesting ideas, in

10 addition to all of the other various innovative cells that

11 Dr. Grant referenced.

12   I would say one thing to keep an eye on, which will be

13 very interesting, are the new task forces that have been

14 just stood up or are in the process of being stood up, on

15 things like China and climate change and cyber. Those task

16 forces, if approached from an experimental or innovative

17 way, could be a really interesting opportunity for the

18 Department to try new things and come up with new solutions

19 on key problems.

20   Chairman Reed: Thank you. And Dr. Grant.

21   Mr. Grant: One of the more encouraging trends that I

22 have seen in the past couple of years in DoD is the

23 development of courses around design thinking and innovative

24 problem-solving. And I think we have an adoption problem

25 there. The expertise exists. It is not necessarily being

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1   disseminated. And I take a look at I-Corps and some of the

2   other programs in place to try to figure out, can we spread

3   this more widely?

4   Chairman Reed: Thank you very much for all your

5   testimony and for your service to the country, and we really

6   appreciate your comments today.

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

8   [Whereupon, at 11:25 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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assume 32:2 37:9 62:19, 20 63:16 64:2 75:22
assumption 54:4
assured 61:5
athletes 31:25
attack 22:5 71:17
attaining 30:24
attempt 69:25 81:16
attempting 17:12
attention 8:9 13:18 15:11
attenuated 76:9
attract 26:9 48:14 56:13 83:17
attracting 42:7 83:15
attractive 7:5 47:22 48:3 57:18
audit 3:12 4:4 7:18 27:17, 18 30:18, 21, 25 35:6, 15, 18 37:24 38:1, 3, 11, 14, 15, 18, 21, 24 39:5, 9 61:12, 16 79:6, 19 82:11
auditability 36:2
auditor 37:20
audits 78:23
authorities 12:7 17:22 18:5 25:21 40:20 41:1 78:16
authority 12:8, 9 18:7, 9 22:2 26:2, 23, 24 42:14 56:18 77:15 78:6, 17 84:1, 2
authorized 34:24 35:7
authors 85:7
availability 11:4
available 17:6 25:11, 21 26:24
average 28:14
avoid 20:23 69:4
avoiding 63:11
aware 27:7 29:6 33:17 47:7 55:24 88:23

< B >
baby 54:21
back 13:4 25:25 28:20 30:18 34:16, 22 39:15 47:7 48:7 54:12 56:2 61:15 71:22 78:11, 12 86:17 87:12 88:1

background 3:7 33:11, 23
backlog 33:4
backlogs 11:15
back-office 4:12
backs 21:11
bacon 47:21
bad 11:14 22:19 51:5 86:1
baggage 89:17
balance 60:4 66:1 67:1
balancing 66:23
bandwagon 70:8
barrier 62:2
based 8:7 16:8 44:14 59:21 67:14
baselines 27:7 64:6
bases 20:9 21:9
basic 29:6
basically 28:8 75:19 90:2, 4
basis 10:18 79:14 90:20
bean 27:18
beginning 73:25
begins 15:10
begun 42:1
behavior 20:14 24:25 52:1
behaviors 23:9
behest 86:25
believe 4:21 6:12, 14 20:17 25:24 36:15 38:3 46:25 48:25 49:13 76:22, 24 78:3 83:14
believes 13:20
benefit 89:21
benefits 38:20
best 3:16 5:3 22:14 23:8 24:6 25:10 40:25 48:15 50:19 55:21 61:1 65:8 68:9
best-run 79:9
bet 28:12 36:12
bets 28:11 40:12 55:17
better 2:6, 21 5:11 7:20 11:8, 9 13:2, 3, 6 16:1 17:5 22:15 24:10 26:9 27:19 35:24 47:11 51:23 52:15, 17, 20 57:7 61:22 65:19 66:5 72:19 81:11 82:20 87:16
better-informed 27:20

beyond 3:10 13:1 24:7
bias 22:25 23:5
billion 6:16 38:24 64:17, 18
billions 34:24 35:7 63:22
bipartisan 6:8
bird 8:6
bit 32:4 38:1, 4 40:20 49:8 50:10 72:6
Blackbird 73:16
Blackburn 1:16 83:8
blemished 51:21
Bletchley 90:1
blinders 89:17
blood 21:1
Blumenthal 1:14
Board 2:14 4:8 20:8 21:6 67:13
book 85:1
borrow 38:7
bottleneck 56:21, 22
bottlenecks 11:14
box 55:4
boxes 55:7
branch 12:3 76:22
bright 23:24 24:13
brilliant 27:24, 25
bring 25:14, 23 26:6 31:15 45:18 46:24 47:20 57:6, 8, 12 61:14 62:15, 16 84:10 89:20
bringing 29:17 59:3 73:23 74:6 84:8 86:2 87:7
brings 78:8 87:1 89:16
British 90:2
broad 62:10
broaden 62:23
broadened 35:19
broader 71:24
broadly 70:19
broken 28:17 55:8 61:12
brought 46:2 54:17 77:10 85:18
bubble 30:7
budget 3:9 5:2 6:15, 22 7:13 15:14 50:3 51:20 52:10, 21 59:22, 23 60:8, 12
budgetary 59:25
budgets 7:17, 24 66:24
bug 55:9, 10

build 21:22 23:7 24:16 26:17 31:10 55:14, 19 62:22 64:16 72:18 84:15 88:13 90:10
Building 1:11 53:19 64:15 83:13
built 20:15
bullet 30:19
burden 68:2
bureaucracy 4:25 5:6 53:15 77:15
bureaucratic 4:13 8:15
Business 2:13 3:25 4:8, 10 7:13 16:16 17:17 18:8 20:2 27:8 47:17 57:21, 25 58:4, 6, 9, 11, 12, 20 73:23, 25 75:15 77:17, 24 78:6, 19 79:3 80:11 81:23 82:4, 23
businesses 84:18
buy 73:11
Buying 20:20 74:5 88:16

< C >
calculation 59:21
call 2:3 13:19 71:25
called 22:24 39:14 41:3 49:1 78:11
calls 81:7
canaries 21:23
cancelled 64:10
can-do 69:12
Capabilities 2:17 4:15 13:7 15:2 44:5 48:6 60:15 87:12 89:6
capability 4:22 6:9 51:9 80:6
capable 79:22
capacity 6:9
capital 7:4 43:16, 17 44:1, 13 75:8 76:8
captain 85:19
caption 85:1
capture 81:2, 9, 10, 16
captures 85:2
care 10:14, 20 57:11 71:15 84:9, 14, 20, 21
career 29:8 41:20 42:20 47:19 48:12 54:13 88:5
careers 22:2

careful 51:20 64:14, 16
cares 57:16
carrier 64:15, 17, 18 73:14 74:19
carriers 74:17
carries 22:3 89:17
cartoon 85:1
case 33:10
cases 34:12 61:10 73:25 89:19
cash 12:23
catalogs 12:18
catalyst 27:19 38:3, 5
category 15:15
causes 79:24
caution 71:13
cautious 62:6 64:14
celebrate 36:25 37:1
cells 91:10
Center 69:7
centers 80:5
CEO 30:19
CEOs 31:22
certain 65:12 88:24
certainly 36:21 46:25 53:6 65:18 73:20
cetera 41:13 81:6 85:14
chain 38:10
Chair 40:16 49:21 54:2, 18 58:16 59:3
chairman 1:12 2:3 6:3 7:25 8:2, 19, 20, 24 9:1 10:4 12:22 14:1 15:4 19:1 20:4 24:18 25:4 26:19 27:21 28:25 29:2 32:22, 23, 25 40:17, 19 44:19, 20, 25 45:5, 6 49:18, 19 54:3, 6, 7 59:6, 8 63:4, 5, 7 67:6, 7, 9 71:6, 8 75:1, 2, 4 80:16, 17, 19 84:22, 23 86:6, 22 87:9, 22 88:21 89:12, 23 91:6, 20 92:4
challenge 37:11 70:4, 12 83:9
challenged 23:10
CHALLENGES 1:2 2:4, 24 3:23 15:7, 25 25:6 30:10 39:22, 24 73:18

challenging 30:*10* 69:*15*
champion 22:*3*
chance 28:*4* 32:*20*
change 3:*17* 4:*16* 5:*7, 9* 16:*18* 18:*2* 22:*3* 40:*4* 75:*19, 20* 76:*23* 78:*1* 87:*14* 91:*15*
changes 4:*10* 25:*19* 69:*4* 76:*20*
changing 22:*4* 78:*2*
chapter 18:*13* 33:*25*
charge 76:*12* 85:*22*
charged 17:*16*
chart 5:*9* 78:*2*
chase 8:*13*
cheap 81:*20* 82:*9*
check 77:*1*
chemical 28:*3*
chew 63:*18* 64:*21*
Chief 2:*9* 4:*3, 7* 10:*2* 17:*24* 66:*11* 77:*4* 78:*13* 82:*21*
China 15:*20* 71:*22* 73:*5, 21* 91:*15*
choice 46:*1*
Churchill 90:*2*
CIO 82:*22*
cite 16:*18*
cited 83:*4*
cites 4:*1*
civilian 7:*1* 10:*24* 25:*15, 19, 21, 24* 26:*15, 16* 27:*9* 29:*4* 42:*15* 43:*5* 47:*1, 6, 8* 62:*13* 83:*25* 85:*8, 16, 18, 21* 86:*7, 12, 13* 89:*7, 9*
civilians 6:*20* 7:*9* 20:*11* 25:*14* 43:*3* 52:*3* 57:*9, 10* 62:*15* 86:*12* 87:*1, 7, 11, 14, 15* 88:*2, 24*
classified 33:*9* 56:*11* 90:*24*
classmates 68:*23*
clause 75:*12, 17*
clean 30:*24* 39:*9*
cleanup 38:*23*
clear 21:*25* 78:*21*
clearance 33:*18* 56:*11, 20, 22*
clearances 33:*4, 8, 14*
clearly 17:*22*
climate 91:*15*
cling 22:*13*
clocks 8:*9*

close 28:*4* 72:*2* 76:*12* 80:*8*
closed 36:*17*
closely 17:*25*
closes 23:*3*
closest 55:*23*
CMO 18:*3, 7, 8* 27:*7, 12* 78:*16, 18*
CMO's 77:*5*
coach 31:*23*
coaches 31:*24* 39:*13*
coaching 23:*10* 31:*21*
coal 21:*23*
cognitive 22:*10*
cohort 26:*4*
coins 37:*11*
colleague 46:*2* 65:*6*
colleagues 8:*3*
collected 17:*10*
College 85:*14*
colonels 87:*15*
Colorado 46:*5*
Columbia 68:*20, 25*
combat 11:*5*
combatant 46:*15* 66:*3*
combination 62:*17*
combine 62:*13*
come 15:*8* 29:*23* 30:*9, 18* 41:*24* 54:*15, 24* 55:*11* 58:*8* 90:*23* 91:*18*
comes 34:*16* 57:*9* 84:*5*
coming 28:*15* 32:*9* 47:*22* 71:*9*
command 10:*18* 37:*8* 45:*23* 46:*3, 15* 69:*13*
commander 70:*21*
commanders 66:*3*
comment 29:*11* 38:*2* 46:*12, 21* 91:*5*
commentators 85:*7*
comments 49:*18* 75:*24* 84:*24* 85:*24* 86:*22* 87:*9* 88:*5, 21* 89:*12* 92:*6*
commercial 64:*7* 74:*16, 22*
commission 6:*8* 60:*2*
commitment 4:*23* 13:*17* 64:*25*
Committee 1:*7, 10, 12, 13* 2:*4, 12, 21* 3:*4* 5:*12* 8:*5, 16* 10:*5* 11:*25* 15:*5* 20:*5* 25:*20* 27:*2*

30:*12* 33:*7* 34:*24* 35:*7, 20* 59:*4* 67:*12* 71:*19* 86:*25*
committee's 6:*4*
common 81:*2, 3, 17*
communicating 49:*9*
communications 10:*19*
companies 48:*8* 75:*10*
company 28:*3, 11, 13* 30:*19, 22* 75:*14*
comparable 85:*15* 86:*7*
compare 31:*16*
compared 30:*17* 36:*3*
comparisons 17:*11* 82:*19*
compelling 16:*3*
compete 22:*17* 25:*9* 71:*21* 75:*10*
competencies 43:*23*
competing 11:*8* 66:*7*
competition 74:*20*
competitive 56:*4, 12* 84:*3, 7*
competitors 15:*20* 74:*25*
complementary 54:*25*
complete 16:*14* 37:*24* 54:*24* 61:*20*
completely 74:*21*
complex 10:*22* 11:*7, 23* 15:*18* 69:*18*
comply 27:*14*
component 15:*16* 17:*1*
components 17:*1*
comprehensive 34:*4, 15*
Comptroller 39:*3*
computer 41:*23* 42:*6*
computers 60:*10*
computing 80:*5* 90:*9*
concept 54:*15*
concern 59:*14* 80:*2*
concerned 61:*7, 25* 69:*1*
concerns 22:*6* 69:*2* 79:*4*
conclude 71:*17*
concludes 13:*23*
concrete 38:*20* 77:*16*

conduct 13:*11*
conducting 38:*18*
conference 69:*6*
confidence 53:*10*
confident 45:*25*
confirmation 30:*9*
confirmed 53:*5, 17*
confirmeds 53:*4*
conflict 59:*17*
conformity 70:*8*
Congress 6:*18* 12:*6, 13, 21* 13:*11, 13, 19* 17:*24* 27:*2, 6* 35:*20* 49:*8, 16* 59:*5* 67:*1, 13, 15, 17, 18, 23* 68:*9* 71:*13* 77:*8* 84:*1*
congressional 77:*19*
connections 23:*18* 82:*19*
cons 37:*15*
consensus 55:*19*
consequences 47:*9*
conservative 64:*14*
consider 35:*22* 47:*18* 49:*14*
consideration 89:*5*
considered 46:*11*
consistent 16:*16* 27:*12* 43:*14*
consistently 21:*7*
consolidated 58:*25* 79:*14*
consolidating 81:*12*
consolidation 79:*12*
conspiracy 63:*12*
constant 77:*18*
constituents 39:*14, 15*
constraints 83:*15*
construction 46:*10*
consumes 79:*16*
contemporary 58:*21*
continue 30:*23* 39:*8, 10, 23* 90:*22*
continuing 12:*4* 56:*20* 85:*25* 86:*1*
continuity 62:*16*
continuous 50:*16*
contract 43:*6* 57:*4, 6* 75:*9* 78:*10* 79:*6, 7* 88:*17*
contracting 47:*4*
contractor 7:*1* 10:*24* 89:*9*
contractors 43:*3* 87:*24* 88:*4, 7, 24* 89:*20*
contracts 76:*25*
contribute 10:*25*

control 10:*19* 64:*9* 69:*7, 13* 78:*17* 80:*2, 3* 85:*9, 10*
controlled 63:*22*
controls 4:*5* 64:*4, 6*
convergent 70:*9*
convert 81:*16*
convinced 23:*6*
core 16:*16* 37:*10*
corps 83:*12*
Correct 44:*9* 58:*3*
correctly 46:*18* 56:*19* 76:*15*
cost 11:*3* 27:*7* 46:*3, 4, 8, 9* 63:*21* 65:*15* 75:*21, 22* 77:*8* 84:*19* 89:*4*
costing 4:*14* 52:*8*
costs 15:*25* 64:*5, 8*
Cotton 1:*15*
count 48:*1*
counterproductive 67:*24*
counting 27:*18*
country 15:*10* 45:*14* 47:*23* 49:*10, 11* 72:*2, 3* 75:*6* 92:*5*
county 37:*20*
couple 7:*7* 51:*1* 68:*22* 72:*11* 85:*6* 91:*22*
courage 22:*8*
course 10:*8* 55:*16* 74:*4* 87:*13*
courses 91:*23*
covering 12:*18*
COVID 15:*9*
cow 12:*23*
crazy 74:*13*
create 4:*14* 36:*20* 41:*15, 22* 44:*10* 48:*4* 54:*20* 56:*14* 60:*7* 83:*10*
created 7:*11* 17:*24* 23:*14* 32:*13* 41:*6* 42:*5* 44:*12* 78:*5, 13*
creating 18:*3*
creation 77:*11*
creative 20:*25* 28:*16*
creatively 87:*8*
creativity 32:*13* 36:*10* 89:*25*
credit 17:*3*
credited 64:*24*
crew 70:*22*
crisis 48:*21, 23* 50:*5*
critical 11:*5* 18:*12* 21:*15* 26:*25* 33:*19*

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38:*8* 43:*22* 70:*1*
74:*8* 82:*18* 83:*18*
87:*3*
criticism 36:*1*
cross 91:*7*
cross-functional
7:*23* 17:*16* 87:*1*
crossing 78:*9*
cultural 34:*11*
culture 4:*9*, *13* 5:*7*
16:*5* 20:*12*, *13*, *14*,
17, *24* 21:*8*, *14*
23:*22* 24:*16* 36:*15*,
17 45:*11*, *20* 54:*20*,
22 55:*10* 69:*12*
cultures 23:*16*
curate 82:*8*
current 34:*6* 43:*24*
71:*20*
currently 70:*19*
cut 8:*13* 11:*13*
26:*15* 49:*25* 50:*7*
51:*16* 52:*2*, *3*, *5*, *15*
88:*1*
cuts 6:*22* 47:*8*
50:*2*, *4*, *11*, *23*
51:*25* 52:*8*, *12*
cutting 5:*2* 6:*12*,
15 26:*13* 50:*3*
78:*24*
cyber 12:*15* 13:*8*
25:*7*, *17* 40:*24*, *25*
41:*3*, *8*, *16*, *23* 42:*7*,
13, *21*, *24* 44:*5*, *12*
48:*6* 57:*3* 59:*16*,
23 60:*2*, *7* 72:*13*
83:*9*, *10*, *16*, *20*
84:*3*, *5* 88:*10* 91:*15*
cyberattack 59:*18*
61:*2*, *18*
cybersecurity 61:*15*
cycle 74:*21*

< D >
D.C 1:*8*
daily 6:*10*
damage 69:*1*
dangerous 15:*23*
69:*9*
DARPA 90:*8*
data 3:*1*, *18* 7:*20*
13:*6* 16:*14*, *16*, *19*
17:*6*, *11* 20:*20*
31:*8* 34:*16*, *19*, *25*
35:*8*, *12*, *13*, *21*, *24*
61:*7* 72:*20*, *21*, *22*
81:*2*, *3*, *8*, *9*, *10*, *16*,
22, *24* 82:*1*, *5*, *6*, *7*,
8, *12*, *18* 89:*13*

day 54:*24* 61:*4*
67:*21* 68:*16*, *23*
69:*6* 87:*3* 90:*20*
days 10:*9* 68:*22*
76:*9*
day-to 90:*19*
deal 49:*6*
dealing 50:*5* 53:*21*,
22 90:*19*
debt 15:*13*
decade 6:*15* 7:*2*
28:*12* 47:*25*
decades 7:*19* 58:*22*
73:*20*
December 50:*6*
decision 69:*24*
70:*14*
decision-making 3:*2*
decisions 7:*21*
10:*25* 13:*6* 27:*20*
35:*24* 50:*25* 70:*23*
72:*24* 82:*20* 88:*18*
deep 20:*10* 22:*9*
51:*25* 62:*8*, *22*
deeply 31:*9*
Defense 2:*6*, *9*, *10*,
14, *16* 3:*8* 4:*8*, *21*
5:*4* 6:*5*, *6*, *13* 10:*2*,
3 11:*1*, *19*, *24*
13:*16* 15:*1*, *14*, *23*
16:*9*, *24* 20:*6*, *7*
21:*6* 24:*1*, *7* 25:*12*,
24 26:*5*, *21* 34:*25*
35:*14* 45:*13* 47:*19*
51:*22* 54:*20* 55:*2*
56:*7*, *24* 59:*15*, *23*
60:*7*, *8* 62:*5* 63:*10*
65:*11* 66:*25* 67:*11*,
20 68:*11* 69:*11*, *16*
71:*12*, *15*, *21*, *23*
72:*16*, *21* 74:*15*
75:*11* 77:*11* 78:*8*,
18 79:*5*, *6*, *7*, *8*, *10*
81:*22* 85:*8* 86:*8*
87:*24*
DEFENSE'S 1:*1*
defensive 60:*15*
deficiencies 58:*25*
deficient 72:*15*
82:*13*
define 43:*6*
defined 17:*10*, *22*
definitely 88:*8*
definitions 27:*12*
82:*18*
defunded 51:*8*
delayed 74:*6*
deliver 3:*20*
delivering 16:*1*
delivery 4:*15*

16:*22* 17:*6*, *9* 74:*6*
demand 34:*6*
demanded 6:*11*
demonstrating
64:*24*
demonstrations 36:*8*
dense 71:*10*
DEPARTMENT
1:*1* 2:*5*, *10* 3:*8*, *23*
6:*6*, *13*, *16* 7:*2*
10:*2* 11:*23* 12:*14*
13:*5* 15:*23* 17:*3*,
10, *13*, *25* 18:*5*, *11*
25:*6*, *12*, *24* 26:*3*,
11 27:*3*, *5*, *10*, *19*
29:*16*, *19*, *22*, *24*
30:*1*, *17*, *23* 31:*2*
34:*17*, *25* 35:*11*, *16*,
20 38:*9*, *12*, *15*, *18*,
22 40:*4* 43:*15*, *22*
44:*3*, *14*, *15*, *16*
45:*13*, *14* 47:*10*, *14*,
19, *22* 48:*21* 49:*8*
51:*5*, *22* 52:*1*
54:*19* 55:*2* 56:*7*,
24 57:*12*, *16*, *17*
58:*6*, *12*, *14* 61:*20*
62:*5* 65:*20*, *25*
66:*12* 67:*2*, *11*, *17*,
18, *19* 68:*2*, *10*
69:*11*, *16* 71:*23*
72:*9*, *16*, *21* 74:*14*
75:*10*, *20*, *23* 77:*17*,
22 78:*1*, *3*, *15*
79:*10* 80:*11* 81:*22*,
25 82:*7* 86:*8*, *24*
87:*24* 88:*10* 89:*1*,
8, *10*, *11* 91:*18*
departments 16:*25*
18:*7* 52:*5* 79:*13*, *15*
Department's 7:*20*
17:*15* 77:*12* 80:*23*
depend 76:*4*
depending 74:*24*
depends 20:*23*
deployed 3:*21* 4:*16*
deployment 44:*1*
68:*7*
Deputy 2:*9* 10:*2*
66:*14* 77:*12*
deserves 76:*15*
79:*25*
design 91:*23*
designs 65:*14*
Despite 4:*2*
destroy 72:*2*
determine 50:*10*
determined 89:*1*
90:*6*
determining 43:*22*

deterrence 60:*14*
61:*1*, *5*
develop 17:*5* 20:*22*
27:*7* 34:*4* 42:*2*
73:*13* 82:*22*
developed 36:*17*
42:*19* 43:*20* 87:*20*
developing 33:*22*
34:*14* 42:*8* 43:*24*
73:*19* 84:*10* 90:*20*
development 15:*22*
54:*14* 62:*2* 73:*16*
74:*21* 87:*11* 91:*23*
DFAS 79:*16*, *19*, *23*
DHS 83:*10*
DIB 41:*18*
dichotomy 32:*12*
difference 51:*17*, *18*
60:*12* 78:*21* 89:*3*
different 16:*23*
18:*12* 21:*10* 41:*7*,
10, *20* 43:*3* 58:*11*
60:*13* 62:*12* 65:*10*
70:*11*, *16* 74:*11*, *17*,
21, *24* 77:*25* 83:*23*
86:*2*, *3* 90:*13*
difficult 16:*17* 30:*1*
49:*5* 50:*24* 53:*12*
68:*23*
dig 30:*5*
digital 25:*8* 80:*22*
digress 33:*9*
direct 12:*7* 18:*7*
26:*2*, *22* 39:*1*
42:*14* 56:*18* 84:*1*
directed 34:*9* 39:*17*
directing 84:*2*
direction 13:*22*
78:*17*
directions 22:*13*
68:*18*
directly 42:*17* 49:*9*
78:*7*
Director 2:*11*, *16*
15:*1*
directors 67:*13*
Dirksen 1:*11*
DISA 80:*1*, *2*, *6*, *12*
disadvantage 73:*5*
disadvantages 73:*20*
disagree 35:*5*
disappointed 77:*3*
disaster 69:*5*
discipline 74:*7*
discovered 23:*11*
68:*25*
discovery 90:*5*
discretionary 15:*15*
discuss 20:*6* 70:*17*
discussed 20:*18*

discussion 15:*16*
discussions 3:*9*
disguised 59:*11*
85:*4*, *5*
dismiss 22:*9*
dismissed 10:*14*
disparity 85:*21*
display 36:*10*
disruption 61:*5*
disseminate 24:*10*
disseminated 92:*1*
distinct 58:*17*
distract 32:*14*
distressing 31:*9*
DIU 90:*14*
divergent 70:*10*
diversified 40:*8*
diversity 70:*9*
DLA 80:*12*
Doctor 2:*15*
doctors 41:*22*
documenting 89:*21*
DoD 3:*4*, *11*, *24*
4:*4*, *8* 5:*3*, *13* 6:*22*,
25 7:*4* 8:*15* 12:*8*
16:*15*, *19*, *21* 17:*1*,
21 20:*10*, *17*, *18*
21:*5* 22:*8*, *16*, *25*
23:*6*, *15*, *21*, *22*, *25*
24:*15* 25:*1* 27:*24*
31:*15* 33:*7*, *12*, *22*
34:*4*, *9*, *10* 39:*20*,
24 40:*2* 41:*1*, *25*
43:*18* 44:*10* 46:*21*
47:*4* 48:*1*, *20*
50:*16* 53:*5* 55:*8*
56:*13* 57:*22* 58:*1*,
18, *20*, *24* 59:*2*
61:*16* 63:*14* 64:*24*
66:*3* 67:*14*, *15*, *21*
69:*14*, *20* 71:*13*
72:*1* 77:*5*, *9*, *15*, *23*
78:*22*, *25* 81:*9*, *15*
83:*10*, *15* 87:*16*, *20*
88:*22* 89:*13* 90:*10*,
13 91:*22*
DoD's 5:*9* 15:*7*
16:*5* 20:*12* 58:*4*
66:*6* 78:*6* 80:*22*
81:*7*
doing 7:*12* 20:*9*
21:*5* 28:*12*, *23*
31:*3*, *17* 35:*16*
40:*13* 41:*18* 44:*15*,
16 52:*3*, *4*, *5*, *6*
59:*13* 63:*17* 79:*22*
84:*13* 86:*17* 87:*18*
88:*19*
dollars 5:*4* 11:*4*
34:*24* 35:*8* 39:*16*

63:*22*
doomed 20:*15*
door 23:*3*
double-edged 89:*15*
downside 53:*15*
downsides 53:*8*
downward 4:*19*
Dr 2:*13* 16:2 19:2
20:*1* 24:*18* 27:*21*
31:*6* 37:*5* 39:*12*
40:*21* 44:*7* 45:*10*
47:*16* 48:*17* 68:*19*
69:*11* 71:*5* 87:*9*
88:*5* 89:*12* 91:*11*,
20
dramatic 20:*16*
dramatically 88:*2*
draw 48:*8* 82:*19*
drive 4:*17* 16:*18*
17:*12* 52:*10* 58:*13*,
25 77:*22* 78:*1*
driver 23:*12*
drives 62:*4*
driving 77:*16* 83:*7*
89:*4*
dropouts 48:*21*
drugs 48:*21*
dual-use 15:*22*
dumb 69:*8*
duplicating 52:*6*
duplication 79:*23*
80:*4*
duty 5:*14*

< E >
eager 24:*20*
earlier 26:*1* 62:*19*
65:*14*
early 8:*6* 45:*3*, *11*
easier 42:*6* 55:*22*
easily 11:*3*
East 68:*21*
easy 11:*12* 82:*10*
economic 15:*10*
economies 81:*11*
economy 78:*20*
education 85:*14*
educational 57:*13*
effect 70:*6*
effective 5:*13*, *15*
12:*17* 13:2 17:*21*
31:*16* 72:*24* 79:*12*
effectively 15:*24*
16:*4* 38:*13* 55:*19*
71:*22*
efficiencies 50:*12*
81:*11*
efficiency 17:*17*
52:*10*

efficient 5:*15* 6:*13*
7:*12* 8:*20* 17:*4*
32:*10* 36:*19* 79:*12*
efficiently 5:*4*
32:*18*
effort 27:*8* 58:*8*
81:*20* 82:*25*
efforts 17:*15* 44:*17*
52:*6* 71:*21* 78:*7*
eight 62:*25*
either 8:*17* 24:*24*
54:*25* 79:*3*
elaborate 63:*13*
82:*15*
electric 59:*18*
electromagnetic
87:*4*
element 84:*8* 90:*9*
elements 44:*2*
63:*10*
elevate 66:*13*
elevating 81:*7*
eliminated 82:*22*
83:*1*
elimination 18:*10*
elite 31:*24*
Elizabeth 2:*16* 15:*1*
embrace 24:*15*
embraces 3:*17*
Employee 84:*18*, *21*
employees 10:*24*
32:*9* 57:*4* 68:*25*
84:*14* 86:*7*
employer 57:*18*
employment 83:*25*
empower 18:*11*
21:*23* 77:*16* 78:*16*
empowered 16:*12*
17:*22* 18:*9*
empowering 23:*9*
enable 18:*11*
enabled 16:*12*, *13*
enables 10:*17*
enact 50:*23*
encompassed 49:*1*
encourage 27:*4*
28:*21* 54:*23* 70:*4*
encouraged 45:*11*
encourages 3:*17*
encouraging 4:*25*
24:*6* 91:*21*
enemies 72:*2*, *3*
energy 28:*5*
engage 24:*20* 30:*10*
engaged 12:*4* 30:*4*
38:*22*
engineering 25:*8*
engineers 23:*6*
41:*24*
engrained 54:*22*
enlisted 85:*11*

ensure 10:*20* 33:*13*
69:*13* 71:*21* 77:*17*
ensuring 6:*5*
enterprise 58:*9*
79:*21*
entire 6:*21* 31:*23*
60:*8* 81:*25*
entirely 41:*20*
entity 76:*12*
entrants 26:*6*
entrenchment 22:*10*
enumerated 44:*11*
environment 56:*4*
69:*10* 71:*20*
envisioned 18:*3*
equation 61:*1*
equipment 3:*20*
Ernst 1:*15* 37:*3*, *4*
39:*6* 40:*14*, *17*
62:*19* 63:*15*
eroded 7:*4*
error 59:*24*
errors 21:*20*
especially 36:*25*
70:*23*
essence 85:*2*
essential 10:*15*
80:*10* 87:*25*
essentially 64:*11*
75:*14*
establish 17:*15*
estate 27:*9* 38:*10*
77:*9*
et 41:*13* 81:*6*
85:*14*
evaluate 28:*9*
eventually 28:*10*
everybody 41:*7*
everybody's 70:*15*
evidence 21:*2*, *14*
exactly 65:*17* 82:*23*
examine 2:*4*
examined 17:*15*
example 3:*24* 7:*17*
10:*23* 13:*5*, *8*
16:*21* 17:*7* 18:*6*
21:*3* 23:*6* 27:*6*
28:*3* 33:*21*, *24*
36:*21*, *25* 38:*22*
62:*8* 74:*12*
examples 4:*11*
16:*6* 23:*25* 34:*3*
51:*1* 65:*4*, *18* 90:*23*
excellence 23:*25*
32:*1*
excellent 24:*19*
Excepted 41:*3*
42:*13* 44:*12* 84:*6*
exception 24:*17*
exceptionally 10:*22*

16:*17*
exchange 48:*8*
excited 48:*11*
excuse 8:*20* 78:*25*
execute 3:*16* 5:*4*
18:*9*
executed 74:*5*
executing 87:*17*
execution 32:*14*
Executive 12:*3*
31:*23*, *24* 39:*13*
76:*22*
exercise 27:*17*
39:*10* 46:*16*
exercises 26:*8*
exhausts 24:*14*
exist 24:*13* 39:*23*
46:*14* 75:*16*
exists 91:*25*
expect 31:*24* 53:*13*
85:*21*
expected 85:*12*, *13*
expense 88:*4*
expensive 10:*23*
88:*24*
expensively 52:*4*, *7*
experience 2:*19*
22:*9* 29:*5*, *20*, *21*
47:*18* 57:*13*, *14*
62:*3* 63:*25* 67:*10*,
14 78:*8* 79:*9*
89:*15*, *18*
experienced 29:*7*
experiences 29:*10*
46:*23*
experiment 87:*5*, *6*
experimental 51:*12*
63:*19* 91:*16*
experimentation
63:*11* 64:*20*
experimenting 86:*24*
experiments 22:*16*
expert 3:*19* 5:*11*
34:*13* 40:*1* 41:*8*
42:*5* 44:*13*
expertise 5:*3* 41:*23*
42:*2* 45:*17* 62:*2*, *9*,
22 63:*1* 88:*9*, *15*,
17 91:*25*
experts 3:*3* 77:*7*
90:*11*
expired 67:*4* 80:*16*
84:*22*
Explain 32:*10* 38:*4*
explore 23:*19*
explosion 7:*19*
exposed 57:*14*
exposure 62:*11*
express 32:*20*
expressed 48:*1*

extensive 21:*14*
60:*10*, *11* 87:*14*
extent 27:*1* 43:*1*
59:*20*
extremely 77:*3*
79:*11*
eye 59:*13* 91:*12*

< F >
F-35 73:*13* 81:*24*
face 15:*18*
faces 21:*11* 33:*4*
48:*21*
facility 80:*8*
facing 3:*23* 25:*6*
fact 7:*14* 10:*15*
17:*1* 23:*16* 26:*21*
37:*21* 54:*17* 60:*7*
61:*21* 85:*12* 90:*21*
91:*1*
factor 89:*4*
factors 29:*22*
Factory 24:*3* 28:*16*
fail 32:*15*
failed 64:*9*
failing 6:*23*
failures 11:*1*
fair 33:*20*
fairly 11:*20* 76:*7*
falling 20:*23*
falls 5:*10*
false 32:*12*
familiar 23:*14*
fantastic 81:*21*
far 29:*11* 31:*8*
78:*25* 79:*16*
far-out 63:*19*
fascinating 37:*19*
faster 16:*1* 74:*20*
favorite 12:*1* 61:*8*
fear 21:*13* 32:*8*
Federal 7:*9* 15:*17*
83:*11*
federated 58:*9*
Fed's 75:*9*
feed 38:*13*
feedback 32:*4*
feel 62:*8* 78:*24*
FELLOW 10:*3*
fewer 6:*25*
Field 2:*16*, *18* 14:*2*
15:*1*, *4* 16:*24*
18:*16* 19:*1* 26:*19*,
20 30:*13*, *14* 31:*5*
33:*2*, *16* 34:*13*
38:*2*, *7* 39:*19*
43:*11*, *13* 44:*8*, *13*
45:*22* 46:*17*, *25*
47:*3* 56:*2* 57:*19*
58:*2* 61:*11* 64:*23*
65:*6* 66:*8*, *22*

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73:*22* 74:*18* 77:*3*, *20* 79:*21* 81:*15* 82:*14, 17* 86:*22, 23* 88:*22* 90:*19* 91:*6, 7*
fields 83:*16, 18*
fight 10:*21*
figure 27:*13* 32:*20* 36:*18* 52:*17, 20* 55:*6* 57:*2* 61:*13* 66:*10* 92:*2*
figured 21:*24*
final 13:*11*
Finally 5:*8* 8:*9* 39:*21* 45:*7* 89:*23*
Finance 79:*6*
Financial 4:*3, 4, 6* 27:*11, 16, 18* 30:*18, 21, 24* 35:*6, 9, 15* 36:*2* 37:*22* 38:*11, 13, 15, 18, 20, 24* 39:*4* 54:*23* 59:*19* 61:*11, 15* 79:*19* 82:*11* 88:*3*
find 17:*18* 18:*11* 24:*5* 30:*1, 4* 32:*5* 36:*25* 40:*6* 42:*22* 83:*22*
finding 17:*16* 55:*21*
fine 73:*12*
finest 7:*8*
first 6:*14* 12:*6* 16:*13* 21:*8* 26:*15* 29:*15* 42:*11* 48:*4* 50:*22* 52:*15* 53:*11* 55:*5* 65:*6* 67:*9* 68:*22* 70:*21* 72:*6* 75:*25* 83:*19* 84:*25* 89:*3*
fiscal 15:*12* 38:*17* 50:*3* 73:*10*
Fischer 1:*15*
fish 29:*24*
fit 48:*20*
fitness 41:*12* 49:*3, 5, 6*
five-minute 8:*7*
fix 5:*8* 11:*6* 29:*14*
flat-rate 6:*22*
flexibilities 24:*12*
flexibility 41:*6* 44:*12* 57:*5* 76:*20*
flexible 41:*15*
floor 28:*16* 85:*3, 5*
focus 5:*12* 25:*3, 5, 23* 30:*16* 35:*21* 36:*4* 37:*9* 42:*15* 66:*15, 19* 71:*21* 72:*5, 9* 86:*2* 87:*3*
focused 32:*10* 35:*9, 10* 37:*22* 58:*4* 87:*4*

focusing 40:*16* 63:*14*
follow 8:*6* 30:*11* 43:*22*
following 2:*22*
follows 13:*25* 18:*16*
foolish 50:*20*
footprint 75:*14, 15*
Force 46:*4* 50:*9*
forced 42:*2*
forcefully 39:*4*
forces 3:*21* 4:*16* 66:*4* 91:*13, 16*
forcing 38:*11*
Ford-class 73:*14*
forget 57:*12* 72:*4*
forgive 24:*21*
forgot 8:*21* 73:*15*
form 63:*14* 82:*8*
format 81:*17*
Former 2:*9, 14* 10:*1* 37:*19* 83:*10*
forward 5:*18* 8:*1* 13:*23* 18:*15* 37:*14* 65:*22*
found 4:*8* 16:*23* 17:*9, 17* 18:*2* 23:*8* 26:*23* 65:*12* 78:*15* 89:*8*
four 20:*7* 27:*8* 37:*10*
four-star 53:*21, 22*
four-stars 53:*20*
fourth 77:*9*
frame 73:*16*
framework 44:*3* 58:*10* 82:*23*
framing 60:*6*
Frankly 25:*20* 69:*19*
fraud 4:*2*
freed 66:*14*
freedom 21:*12*
fresh 89:*20*
friends 10:*7* 68:*23*
front 13:*1* 90:*15, 25*
frontier 64:*20*
fruit 12:*12*
frustrated 5:*5* 29:*25*
frustration 4:*19*
full 23:*22* 27:*16, 18* 30:*18, 24* 38:*11, 15, 17, 20, 23* 39:*4* 61:*11, 15, 19*
full-time 53:*17* 66:*16, 19* 78:*4*
fully 18:*9* 42:*3* 58:*14*

function 38:*11* 51:*8* 52:*4*
functional 91:*8*
functionality 11:*4*
Functions 10:*12, 15, 22* 16:*17* 38:*9* 58:*18* 79:*17*
fundamental 58:*23* 74:*2*
fundamentalist 23:*1*
Fundamentally 27:*18*
funding 3:*11* 6:*25* 12:*22* 26:*13* 46:*14*
funds 39:*11*
further 38:*4* 41:*19*
furthering 4:*19*
Furthermore 78:*24*
future 15:*17* 18:*12* 34:*6* 43:*24* 59:*16* 66:*23* 81:*13*
FY 78:*12*

< G >
gambles 40:*9*
game 46:*24*
GAO 3:*24* 35:*5* 57:*20* 61:*8* 64:*23* 77:*21* 82:*25*
GAO's 15:*6* 16:*9*
gap 34:*19*
gaps 43:*25* 81:*13*
gather 60:*2*
General 39:*3* 45:*24* 49:*7* 85:*14*
generals 20:*9* 87:*14*
generate 32:*15* 91:*9*
generating 78:*20*
generation 20:*25* 58:*8* 64:*11* 73:*11*
geographically 75:*9*
getting 27:*19* 39:*9* 40:*25* 68:*12* 73:*7* 76:*10*
giant 73:*18*
Gillibrand 1:*14* 40:*18, 19* 41:*17* 42:*9* 43:*11* 44:*6, 9, 18, 20, 23* 54:*18* 56:*3* 83:*13*
give 13:*5* 16:*21* 22:*2* 24:*10* 26:*7* 27:*23* 32:*19* 34:*3* 47:*13* 48:*12* 50:*25* 57:*13* 80:*1* 81:*10*
given 8:*10* 36:*22* 71:*20* 75:*5*
giving 3:*21*
global 3:*19*

go 7:*6, 24* 11:*16* 25:*4* 26:*14* 28:*22* 34:*22* 39:*2, 10* 41:*19* 47:*20* 50:*13* 51:*15* 54:*12* 56:*2* 70:*25* 72:*3* 73:*11* 85:*12, 13*
goal 8:*14*
goals 80:*25*
goes 3:*10* 25:*8, 25* 35:*6* 42:*17* 49:*5* 84:*18*
going 8:*13, 14* 30:*18* 32:*15* 35:*18* 36:*17* 41:*8, 11, 24* 45:*16* 52:*11, 14, 15, 17, 18, 23* 60:*7* 63:*21* 64:*1, 2, 3, 4* 71:*19* 73:*2* 74:*15, 19* 78:*2* 82:*9* 84:*13* 86:*14, 16* 89:*24* 90:*10*
good 4:*5, 17* 10:*7* 11:*13* 13:*21* 21:*1* 22:*18* 29:*19* 32:*3, 21, 22* 35:*17* 36:*3* 38:*14* 42:*12* 45:*8, 20* 63:*10* 64:*22* 65:*22* 67:*3* 68:*1* 75:*25* 82:*4* 83:*20, 21, 24* 84:*1* 86:*4, 14* 87:*6*
goodness 54:*8*
good-news 38:*16* 47:*4, 15*
Google 7:*6* 23:*6*
gotten 36:*4* 43:*9* 70:*1*
govern 20:*14*
Government 2:*17* 15:*2* 23:*19* 29:*21* 33:*17* 48:*22* 88:*15* 90:*2*
government-wide 33:*3*
governor 50:*3*
grab 30:*7*
graduate 85:*13*
Grant 2:*13* 16:*2* 19:*2* 20:*1, 4* 24:*18* 27:*21, 23* 30:*2* 31:*6, 7* 32:*12* 36:*5, 24* 37:*5* 39:*12, 21* 40:*1, 21* 41:*17* 42:*18* 44:*7* 45:*10* 47:*16, 24* 54:*11* 55:*3* 68:*19* 69:*11, 17* 71:*3, 5* 84:*25* 87:*9, 10* 89:*12, 13* 90:*12* 91:*11, 20, 21*
granted 22:*11*

great 7:*16* 23:*11* 30:*6* 45:*20* 49:*22* 54:*24* 55:*5, 18* 56:*1* 74:*9* 90:*8*
greater 35:*21* 46:*14* 53:*13, 18* 57:*5* 76:*13*
grid 59:*18*
ground 55:*23* 68:*21*
group 69:*4, 10, 15* 90:*4, 11*
grow 4:*22* 45:*13*
growth 65:*16*
guarantee 20:*21*
guess 47:*24*
guide 5:*16*
gum 63:*18* 64:*21*

< H >
half 6:*15*
Hall 90:*1*
hand 60:*25* 64:*19* 89:*16, 17*
handful 72:*10*
handgun 73:*11, 12* 74:*14*
handguns 74:*12, 13, 17*
happen 7:*8* 73:*23*
happened 69:*3* 82:*25*
happening 4:*17* 26:*11*
happens 36:*21* 85:*17*
happy 8:*24*
hard 4:*17* 43:*7* 67:*24* 80:*7*
harder 50:*10*
Harker 36:*7*
harnessed 87:*20*
haunts 22:*21*
Hawley 1:*16* 63:*6, 7* 64:*22* 65:*25* 66:*20* 67:*3, 7*
headquarters 6:*21* 49:*25* 50:*7* 51:*8, 16*
health 10:*14, 20* 71:*15*
hear 33:*9* 37:*7* 44:*24* 45:*1* 54:*6* 59:*10*
heard 21:*7, 10* 48:*17* 62:*18* 73:*8* 81:*23*
hearing 2:*3* 7:*25* 8:*5, 11* 10:*6* 13:*21* 15:*8* 40:*24* 45:*3* 46:*1* 54:*18* 59:*4* 80:*20* 83:*19* 89:*24*

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proud 45:*22*
prove 21:*17*
provide 2:*21* 5:*3* 12:*4, 7, 21* 13:*3* 34:*10* 46:*14* 67:*18* 68:*15*
provided 12:*8, 9* 16:*25* 40:*15* 56:*19* 61:*17*
provides 10:*16* 49:*11* 62:*10* 81:*4*
providing 16:*6* 84:*2*
prudent 37:*9* 62:*19, 20* 63:*16*
psychological 21:*12, 15, 16, 19, 22* 23:*13* 24:*4*
psychologist 20:*7*
public 2:*20* 4:*18* 31:*13* 68:*6*
pull 38:*6* 39:*7, 10* 73:*9*
pulled 37:*24*
punished 6:*22* 21:*13*
punishing 22:*18* 28:*23*
purposes 81:*23*
pursuant 1:*10*
pursue 66:*4*
pursuing 70:*17*
push 50:*12, 19* 52:*1* 64:*20* 68:*14, 17*
pushed 6:*19* 50:*17*
put 3:*24* 12:*25* 13:*10* 33:*14* 64:*6* 66:*17* 70:*14* 84:*11* 89:*14*

< Q >
qualified 2:*7* 33:*6*
quality 22:*12* 27:*24* 28:*1*
quantify 31:*8*
quantities 81:*22* 82:*1*
quantum 90:*9*
question 8:*8, 25* 24:*21* 33:*10* 35:*6* 42:*10* 46:*13, 18* 52:*25* 54:*11* 56:*2* 59:*11, 12* 60:*16, 17* 65:*9* 66:*8* 67:*4, 10* 68:*4* 69:*18* 70:*22* 71:*2* 73:*2* 75:*18* 77:*14, 20* 82:*16* 83:*3* 84:*5* 91:*2*
questioned 22:*11*
questioning 8:*3*

questions 2:*22* 13:*24* 18:*15* 30:*22* 50:*6* 66:*15* 79:*18* 83:*13* 85:*4, 5*
quick 5:*8* 11:*10* 59:*21*
quickly 53:*11* 82:*15, 17*
quite 6:*7*
quote 32:*8* 69:*7* 83:*7*
quoted 63:*15* 83:*5*

< R >
raise 21:*23* 22:*8*
raised 69:*2*
raising 55:*18*
randomly 54:*9*
range 23:*20*
Ranking 5:*19* 10:*4* 15:*4* 20:*4* 49:*21* 80:*19*
rarely 11:*12, 23*
rate 55:*11*
rates 4:*17*
rational 52:*12*
raw 81:*3*
reach 15:*13* 67:*1*
read 6:*7* 32:*8* 41:*4*
readiness 39:*1* 66:*5, 9, 17, 23* 68:*7*
reading 71:*11*
ready 10:*21* 45:*2*
real 3:*1, 18, 24* 6:*15* 12:*23* 18:*2* 27:*9* 30:*15* 36:*17* 38:*10* 42:*17* 51:*17, 24* 53:*21* 79:*18*
reality 16:*15* 32:*16* 41:*24* 59:*13, 14*
realize 18:*5*
really 11:*15* 13:*5, 6, 9* 26:*25* 30:*25* 31:*1* 35:*11, 24* 37:*9, 18, 25* 39:*14* 40:*22* 51:*5, 22* 53:*24* 56:*5, 9* 57:*22, 24* 61:*6* 64:*3, 8, 14* 66:*8, 24* 71:*9* 77:*2* 82:*13* 84:*4* 87:*19* 89:*2* 91:*17* 92:*5*
reams 72:*21*
reason 32:*1* 49:*15*
reasons 35:*14* 51:*5*
rebuild 47:*10* 66:*5*
RECEIVE 1:*1*
received 17:*2*
receives 3:*12*
recession 50:*4*
recipe 16:*4*

recognize 5:*18* 8:*7, 21, 23* 17:*3* 28:*23* 32:*24* 44:*21* 49:*20* 54:*4* 59:*7* 63:*6* 67:*8* 71:*7* 75:*3* 80:*18* 90:*16*
recognized 44:*25*
recognizing 18:*1* 59:*24* 74:*10*
recommendation 29:*14*
recommendations 25:*19* 76:*21*
recommended 89:*11*
record 61:*12* 67:*5*
recovery 15:*10* 68:*21*
recruit 26:*23* 41:*9, 16*
recruiters 42:*23* 43:*9*
recruiting 40:*22* 43:*8* 44:*4* 84:*15*
redeployment 38:*25*
redo 54:*12*
Redstone 45:*22* 46:*5*
reduce 11:*4* 17:*7* 28:*6* 64:*4*
reduced 74:*5, 6*
reducing 15:*25*
reduction 51:*16*
reductions 6:*20* 11:*13*
Reed 1:*11, 13* 2:*1, 3* 8:*2, 20* 9:*1* 10:*4* 14:*1* 15:*4* 19:*1* 20:*4* 24:*18* 25:*4* 26:*19* 27:*21* 28:*25* 32:*23* 40:*17* 44:*20, 25* 45:*6* 49:*19* 54:*3, 7* 59:*6* 63:*5* 67:*7* 71:*6* 75:*2* 80:*17, 19* 84:*23* 86:*6, 22* 87:*9, 22* 88:*21* 89:*12, 23* 91:*6, 20* 92:*4*
re-examined 76:*15*
referenced 91:*11*
referred 90:*12*
reflecting 59:*25*
reflects 13:*17*
reform 3:*6, 9, 10* 5:*1, 13* 6:*11* 11:*20* 13:*21* 16:*3, 10* 17:*12* 27:*2* 58:*13* 65:*8* 66:*13, 19* 71:*12, 21* 72:*17* 73:*7* 77:*8, 23* 79:*3*
reformers 16:*6, 13* 17:*21*

reforming 2:*25* 15:*23*
reforms 11:*11* 12:*22* 13:*1* 17:*20* 72:*5* 77:*17*
regard 76:*24* 83:*25*
regarding 3:*7* 15:*6* 46:*2*
region 75:*8, 16* 76:*8*
reinforce 39:*8* 78:*24*
reject 22:*23*
related 18:*8* 38:*9* 47:*6*
relative 67:*15* 73:*5, 20*
relatively 11:*1* 36:*3* 63:*22*
relevant 69:*24* 78:*8*
reliance 60:*9, 10*
reliant 72:*14*
relies 69:*11*
rely 35:*15* 88:*9*
remain 4:*9*
remaining 39:*25* 57:*19*
remains 4:*4* 6:*6* 34:*1*
remarks 45:*11*
Remember 53:*19* 72:*1* 87:*12*
remind 8:*3*
remote 76:*10*
remotely 76:*13*
remove 47:*11*
removed 47:*5*
renders 4:*1*
rent 48:*10*
repeat 24:*21*
repeating 46:*18*
report 4:*7* 33:*22, 25* 34:*2* 43:*19* 57:*20* 58:*3* 64:*23* 65:*1* 85:*8*
reported 46:*4*
reporting 39:*15* 50:*18*
reports 6:*24* 16:*18* 25:*16* 78:*7*
repurpose 50:*14*
reputations 22:*1*
requests 66:*3*
required 6:*23* 70:*22* 76:*24*
requirement 42:*19, 23, 25* 43:*8*
requirements 41:*7* 44:*11* 57:*2* 66:*2* 74:*1*

requires 12:*24* 31:*17, 18*
RESEARCH 10:*3* 20:*9* 22:*9* 54:*13* 69:*14*
reserve 83:*10, 12, 20*
resistance 24:*14*
resistant 4:*9* 5:*7*
resource 27:*9* 79:*21* 80:*24*
resources 4:*24* 16:*14, 22, 25* 17:*5, 9, 14, 18* 22:*2* 24:*11* 34:*10* 39:*17* 50:*14* 55:*13* 74:*2* 77:*13* 79:*16* 81:*12, 21*
resourcing 7:*12* 39:*18*
respond 74:*23*
responded 36:*16*
responding 58:*3* 60:*3*
response 44:*22* 61:*4* 76:*4*
responsibilities 3:*15* 18:*4*
responsibility 68:*17* 78:*5*
responsible 16:*9*
rests 20:*19*
result 11:*12* 36:*15* 61:*15* 74:*4*
results 39:*17* 43:*24*
retain 84:*16*
retaining 40:*23* 42:*7* 44:*4*
rethink 20:*21* 24:*6* 55:*4*
rethinking 62:*3*
retirement 71:*16*
return 63:*11*
revealed 50:*7*
reveals 22:*9*
reverse 86:*6*
review 45:*24*
reviewing 11:*17* 65:*13*
reviews 29:*3*
revolutionary 74:*14*
reward 28:*22* 86:*13*
rewarded 45:*7*
rewarding 22:*19*
RFP 73:*10, 11*
RHODE 2:*2*
rid 86:*18*
right 4:*23* 7:*10* 26:*5, 11* 28:*5* 37:*12, 23* 45:*9, 25* 46:*21* 53:*4* 60:*23,*

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warfighting 10:*15*
72:*13* 80:*12* 81:*23*
Washington 1:*8*
waste 4:2, *15* 11:*15*
15:*25* 28:*6* 78:*20*,
24, 25 79:*11* 80:*9*
watch 13:*15*
watched 31:*20*
watching 18:*13*
37:*1*
water 29:*25*
way 7:*24* 11:*6*
17:*10* 18:*11* 22:7
26:*10* 27:*4* 29:22,
24 40:4, *10* 50:*11*
52:*21* 55:*14* 60:*23*
61:6, *10* 63:17, 22
64:*14* 66:7 70:*16*
72:17, *24* 75:*9*
80:*10* 83:*24* 86:17,
20 87:*6* 90:*13*
91:*17*
ways 7:*12, 23*
13:*12, 14* 17:*16*
24:*25* 31:*20* 61:*13*
70:*12* 74:*24* 77:*16*
weaponry 10:*17*
weapons 7:*22*
15:*23* 41:*13* 63:*24*
64:9, *10, 25* 65:*3*
73:7, *19*
Webex 40:*18*
44:*21* 45:*1* 54:*4*
75:*3* 80:*18*
week 46:*1* 54:*18*
65:*7*
weeks 48:*17*
Welch 59:*12*
welcome 28:*6* 45:*6*
well 16:*24* 25:*2*
30:*22* 37:*21* 40:*14*
42:*15, 18* 46:*20*
47:*24* 48:*8* 58:*2*
61:*11* 64:*3* 66:8,
22 68:*5* 84:*17*
86:*6* 90:*22* 91:*7*
well-intentioned
4:*18* 67:*25*
went 46:*22* 60:*11*
65:*1*
West 75:7, *12*
Wharton 2:*13* 20:*2*
47:*25*
wheels 27:*13*
Wicker 1:*15*
widely 92:*3*
willing 30:7 37:*13,*
16 55:*17* 84:*9*
wins 11:*10*
wisely 39:*16*

withhold 21:*18*
witness 10:*10* 28:*4*
witnesses 2:7 7:*6*
8:*12, 21* 37:*5*
49:*22* 63:*8* 71:*9*
73:*3* 74:*9* 80:*21*
wonder 63:*12*
wondered 87:*18*
work 3:2 11:*23*
15:*6* 16:2, *9* 22:*22*
24:*9* 30:*24* 35:*11,*
16 40:*10* 41:*18*
47:*22* 52:*20* 53:*1,*
19 55:*12* 61:*9*
64:2, *3, 8* 65:*2*
68:*8* 75:*10* 76:*10,*
13 90:8, *13*
worked 7:*1* 82:*22*
worker 6:*25*
workers 36:*11, 18*
workforce 7:*22*
13:7 25:*15, 19, 22,*
24 26:9, *15, 17*
34:5, *15* 40:*23*
41:*1, 2* 42:*16*
43:*16, 21* 44:*17*
47:*1, 6, 8, 10* 51:*3,*
4, 6, 7 57:*3, 8* 72:*19*
workhorse 35:*22*
38:*8, 12*
working 4:*18*
11:*22* 36:*18* 54:*5*
56:*23* 58:*19* 68:*13*
83:*11*
workings 40:*2*
works 29:*22, 24*
world 3:*21* 7:*9*
20:*21* 25:*11* 46:*16*
world's 47:*17*
worldwide 10:*18*
worried 53:*2*
worries 51:*10*
worry 20:*12* 67:*23*
70:*5* 72:*20*
worse 11:*9*
worth 70:*17*
wrong 35:*2*
wrote 63:*9*

< Y >
Yeah 22:*3, 25* 31:*3,*
5 46:*20* 51:*16*
70:*20* 71:*3*
year 6:*24* 10:*25*
28:*8, 13* 39:*23*
48:*6, 9, 19* 52:*16*
63:*9* 64:*24* 65:*10*
76:*18* 77:*23*
years 6:*4* 7:*16, 18*
15:*14* 17:*23* 20:7
25:*16* 26:*21* 27:*3,*

6 29:*16* 31:*4*
34:*24* 38:*17* 42:*1*
46:*8* 47:*5, 10* 48:*9*
49:*12* 50:*5* 62:*25*
63:*1* 66:*2* 73:*13,*
19 74:*18* 76:*11*
85:*23* 86:*25* 87:*2,*
12 88:*22* 91:*22*
year's 77:*3*
yield 13:*1, 2*
young 7:*5* 48:*18*
49:*2, 7*
younger 85:*18*
youth 48:*22*

< Z >
zero 48:*2*
zoomed 37:*12*

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