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Before the

Subcommittee on
Readiness and Management Support

COMMITTEE ON
ARMED SERVICES

UNITED STATES SENATE

HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON THE CURRENT STATE
OF READINESS OF U.S. FORCES IN REVIEW OF THE DEFENSE
AUTHORIZATION REQUEST FOR FISCAL YEAR 2017 AND THE
FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM

Tuesday, March 15, 2016

Washington, D.C.

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7
8 U.S. Senate
9 Subcommittee on Readiness and
10 Management Support
11 Committee on Armed Services
12 Washington, D.C.
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14 The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:03 a.m.
15 in Room SR-222, Russell Senate Office Building, Hon. Kelly
16 Ayotte, chairman of the subcommittee, presiding.

17 Members Present: Senators Ayotte [presiding], Inhofe,
18 Fischer, Ernst, Kaine, Shaheen, Hirono, and Heinrich.
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1 OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. KELLY AYOTTE, U.S. SENATOR
2 FROM NEW HAMPSHIRE

3 Senator Ayotte: Good morning. I want to welcome our
4 witnesses here today, the Vice Chiefs of Staff of our Armed
5 Forces, and thank them for their leadership. And this is a
6 very important hearing of the Readiness and Management
7 Support Committee.

8 As we begin this subcommittee's second hearing of the
9 year to receive testimony on the current readiness of our
10 military forces, I want to thank the Ranking Member, Senator
11 Kaine, for his continued leadership on defense issues and
12 work with me in a bipartisan manner on these incredibly
13 important issues to the readiness of our forces.

14 We're joined this morning by General Daniel Allyn, the
15 Vice Chief of Staff for the Army; Admiral Michelle Howard,
16 the Vice Chief of Staff of Naval Operations; General John
17 Paxton, Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps; and
18 General David Goldfein, the Vice Chief of Staff of the Air
19 Force. I want to thank each of you for your leadership and
20 service to our country, and all of those who serve
21 underneath you. We're grateful for what they do for our
22 country.

23 General Paxton, I understand that today may be one of
24 your last, certainly, Readiness force-posture hearings, but
25 you're also the longest serving Assistant Commandant in the

1 Marine Corps in the last 100 years.

2 [Laughter.]

3 Senator Ayotte: You have been in that position since
4 December of 2012. And I just want to thank you for your
5 amazing service to our country, your leadership. You are
6 the finest. And we -- I've appreciated getting to know you
7 in this position, and I speak for all my colleagues in
8 saying that we just very much appreciate your distinguished
9 service to our country and all that you and your family have
10 done for us.

11 [Applause.]

12 Senator Ayotte: General Paxton: Thank you, Chairman.
13 Honored to serve and to be with great battle buddies like
14 this and to be with great marines. So, thank you, Senator.

15 Senator Ayotte: Thank you. Semper Fi.

16 On February 9th, the Director of National Intelligence,
17 James Clapper, said, "In my 50-plus years in the
18 intelligence business, I cannot recall a more diverse array
19 of challenges and crises that we confront as we do today."
20 When we consider just a few developments, it is easy to
21 understand why Director Clapper would say that from where we
22 even met from last year for this important hearing.

23 You recently testified that there are more Sunni
24 terrorist group members and safe havens than at any other
25 point in history. Russia, a country that the Commander of

1 European Command reminds us represents an existential threat
2 to the United States and the NATO alliance as a whole, has
3 invaded and annexed part of Ukraine while conducting a major
4 military modernization and resuming provocative military
5 actions that we have not seen since the Cold War.

6 China has invested massively in its military
7 capabilities, steadily closing many of the technological
8 advantages that the U.S. has enjoyed for decades.
9 Simultaneously, Beijing is building and militarizing
10 artificial islands in the South China Sea, an effort that
11 seeks to bully its neighbors and challenge one of the
12 pillars of U.S. and global trade: the freedom of
13 navigation.

14 Assumptions that held true a decade or two ago
15 regarding the absence of a peer or near-peer military
16 competitor can no longer be taken for granted. In North
17 Korea, an unpredictable, despotic, and nuclear-armed ruler
18 has developed a road-mobile intercontinental ballistic
19 missile that the Commander of the Strategic Forces Command
20 assesses is likely capable of reaching much of the
21 continental United States.

22 Iran, the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism,
23 is pocketing billions of dollars in benefits from the Iran
24 deal while supporting Hezbollah and the murderous Assad
25 regime and advancing Tehran's ballistic missile program to

1 threaten our forward-deployed troops, our allies, like
2 Israel, and ultimately our homeland.

3 Meanwhile, as our communities confront horrible drug
4 epidemics, South Command struggles with a severe lack of
5 resources to detect and interdict drug shipments traveling
6 to the United States. At the same time, Northern Command
7 and its Federal partners confront a tremendous challenge in
8 securing a porous southern border that is as vulnerable to
9 terrorists attempting to enter our country as it is to drug
10 smugglers.

11 These are just a few examples of the threats and
12 challenges that we face and our allies confront. Yet, as
13 these threats have grown, our military readiness has not
14 kept pace. Instead, we have seen a disturbing deterioration
15 in the readiness of each of our services. Many
16 servicemembers don't have enough time home between
17 deployments for rest and training, undercutting full
18 spectrum of readiness. The readiness of nondeployed forces
19 is not what it should be, depriving our Nation of the
20 strategic depth that we need, given the threats that we
21 face. And key combatant commander requirements go unmet.
22 Critical war plans lack the necessary resources, and key
23 modernization programs are delayed. In short, the gap
24 between the military we need and the military we have has
25 grown, and that gap is making -- in my opinion, is a

1 dangerous gap.

2 Our defense budgets must be based on our national
3 security interests and the threats that we face to those
4 interests, not artificial budget caps. A small percentage
5 of our fellow citizens raise their right hands, join the
6 military, and agree to leave their families to keep the rest
7 of us safe. We owe them tough, realistic training as well
8 as modern, well-maintained equipment. To provide them
9 anything less is to neglect our moral and constitutional
10 responsibilities. And by maintaining unchallenged military
11 superiority and preparedness, we take care of our troops,
12 fulfill our responsibilities and make costly conflicts less
13 likely. I look forward to hearing from each of you today
14 regarding the readiness of each of our services and what you
15 specifically need from Congress to ensure that we meet our
16 needs and that we can defend our Nation, and that our most
17 precious resource, our men and women in uniform who serve
18 below you, and you, yourself, that you can let us know what
19 they need to effectively do their jobs.

20 I also look forward to getting some specific updates
21 that are important to my home State of New Hampshire on the
22 arrival of the KC-46A at Pease Air National Guard Base. I
23 want to also discuss some issues that are important to the
24 New Hampshire Army National Guard, as well as workers at the
25 Portsmouth Naval Shipyard as they maintain our Nation's

1 attack submarine fleet, which is so important to our
2 combatant commanders.

3 I would now like to call on our Ranking Member, Senator
4 Kaine, for his opening remarks, and thank him for his
5 leadership.

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1 STATEMENT OF HON. TIM KAINED, U.S. SENATOR FROM
2 VIRGINIA

3 Senator Kaine: Thank you, Madam Chair.

4 And thanks, to all the witnesses. I've enjoyed the --
5 working together in conversations I've had with many of you
6 in preparation for this hearing.

7 And I want to extend my thanks to General Paxton. I
8 gather you're the longest-serving Assistant Commandant since
9 the very first one, Lieutenant Colonel Eli Cole, in 1915.
10 So, your penalty for that is, you've had to do this posture
11 hearing four times. Your reward is, you won't have to do it
12 a fifth time. So --

13 [Laughter.]

14 Senator Kaine: But, we're -- again, we're very, very
15 happy to celebrate with you this significant accomplishment.

16 You know, for many years, the recurring theme from this
17 annual posture hearing is -- remain unchanged. And that is,
18 military is stuck at an unacceptable level on the spectrum
19 readiness -- on readiness spectrum. Last week, I received a
20 classified briefing, available to all committee members, on
21 this readiness question. I was really shocked, and I would
22 encourage any member of the committee, and especially this
23 subcommittee, to go get that same briefing. It will really
24 put in context this readiness question in a way that will
25 stun you.

1 And everything I'm going to say now is not from that
2 classified briefing. This is open, what I'm now going to
3 say. There are other things that I could say, but I won't.

4 Today, less than half of our Nation's military is ready
5 to perform their core wartime mission. And some critical
6 units are in far worse shape than this 50 percent. Fourteen
7 years of sustained combat, together with the Budget Control
8 Act of 2011, have presented the Nation with a unique
9 readiness challenge. It's kind of the perfect storm of two
10 significant events. And that problem has no likely end in
11 sight if we continue down the path of sequestration budget
12 caps with the increasing operational demand that the
13 Chairwoman described, given the state of the world.

14 Today, there are no -- zero -- fully ready Army Brigade
15 Combat Teams, and there are only nine ready BCTs available
16 for unforeseen contingencies.

17 Less than half of the Marine Corps units are ready to
18 perform their core wartime mission, despite having a
19 congressionally mandated role as the Nation's crisis-
20 response force.

21 Today, 80 percent of aviation squadrons do not have the
22 required number of aircrafts to train.

23 Less than half of our Navy's ships are ready to ship to
24 meet wartime plans, while deferred and unplanned maintenance
25 continues to delay training timelines and prolong

1 deployments. For example, ship deployments that used to be
2 6 months are now 8 to 10 months, which exacerbates the
3 conditions of the ships and also creating challenges for
4 those in the extended deployments. I look forward to
5 digging deeper into the topic of our shipyards. We're going
6 to have a subcommittee hearing on this on April 5th.

7 And on the Air Force side, half of the Air Force
8 aircraft are ready, some fighter and unmanned units are in
9 far worse condition. This is well below the 80-percent
10 requirement that is necessary to execute the national
11 military strategy.

12 High operational tempo and the combatant command
13 requests have left too many units with unsustainable deploy-
14 to-dwell ratios. The ratio -- the rate of operational tempo
15 is like forcing the same five people to play an entire game
16 of basketball without relief from the bench.

17 However, we, in Congress, have to admit that we've
18 helped create these terrible conditions for our military.
19 We can't buy you time -- we can't buy time to restore
20 readiness. It will take a while to rebuild our strategic
21 depth. Nor can we simply buy our way out of our readiness
22 problem. But, we can do much better in the way in which we
23 provide you with resources. Sequestration continues to be a
24 significant challenge and kind of a mindless menace, because
25 it's nonstrategic. Too often, we've given DOD unpredictable

1 funding levels, and even those appropriations have arrived
2 late in the year or in the form of last-minute continuing
3 resolutions. And the only reason we suffer from this self-
4 inflicted predicament is because we were not able to come
5 together to find a meaningful solution to a sequestration
6 that was artificially passed by Congress in August of 2011.
7 A lot of things have happened in the world since August of
8 2011. That was pre-Ebola, pre-Zika, pre-North Korean
9 cyberattacks, pre-ISIL, pre-Russia into the Ukraine. The
10 world has changed dramatically, and yet we're still living
11 under a significant straightjacket.

12 I continue to believe, as I expressed in one of my
13 first votes in the Senate, we need to repeal sequestration,
14 not only for the sake of readiness, but for the sake of our
15 full spectrum of national security needs. Our intelligence
16 agencies, law enforcement agencies, homeland security,
17 international development, State Department, and domestic
18 agencies all require relief, and we need to work together to
19 make this happen.

20 General Allyn, I know it's a few months before your son
21 graduates from West Point, but I want to, as I conclude,
22 congratulate both you and him today. We both have sons in
23 the military, and we owe them, and all future generations,
24 our thanks. And I want to congratulate you on that.

25 And then, Madam Chair, thanks for pulling this hearing

1 together. And I know that we're going to have an awful lot
2 to talk about.

3 Senator Ayotte: Thank you, Senator Kaine. Appreciate
4 your leadership.

5 And I would like to call on, first, for testimony,
6 General Daniel Allyn, the Vice Chief of Staff of the United
7 States Army.

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1 STATEMENT OF GENERAL DANIEL B. ALLYN, USA, VICE CHIEF
2 OF STAFF, UNITED STATES ARMY

3 General Allyn: Thank you, Madam Chair Ayotte, Ranking
4 Member Kaine, distinguished members of the subcommittee.
5 Thanks for inviting me to testify on the readiness of your
6 United States Army.

7 We live in a dangerous world, as you've both talked
8 about. And, after more than 14 years of continuous combat,
9 it is tempting to hope that a respite lies just over the
10 horizon. Instead, the velocity of instability is
11 increasing, and demand for Army forces across a range of
12 military operations is increasing.

13 At current end strength, the Army risks consuming
14 readiness as fast as we build it. Today, the Army is
15 globally engaged, with more than 186,000 Total Force
16 soldiers deployed in support of combatant commanders in over
17 140 countries. These soldiers conduct combat operations,
18 deter aggression, and assure our allies and partners.

19 In Afghanistan, the Army continues to train, advise,
20 and assist Afghan National Security Forces to defeat the
21 enemies of our country. In Iraq, we build partner capacity
22 to fight the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant. In
23 Africa and throughout the Americas, we partner to prevent
24 conflict and to shape the security environment. In the
25 Pacific, more than 75,000 soldiers remain committed,

1 including 20,000 who stand ready in the Republic of Korea.
2 In Europe and Asia, Army forces reassure allies and deter
3 Russian aggression. At home and in every region of the
4 world, the Army stands ready.

5 This is why readiness is, and must remain, the Army's
6 number-one priority. Training is the bedrock of that
7 readiness. To provide trained and ready forces to combatant
8 commanders, the Army must conduct realistic and rigorous
9 training across multiple echelons. Realistic training
10 demands predictable and sustained resources in both time and
11 money. To ensure a trained and ready Army today, the Army
12 is accepting considerable risk by reducing end strength
13 while deferring modernization programs and infrastructure
14 investments. These tradeoffs are reflections of constrained
15 resources, not strategic insight.

16 The Army requests congressional support to rebuild
17 readiness, maintain end strength, equip our soldiers with
18 the best systems now and in the future, and provide soldiers
19 and their families with quality of life commensurate with
20 their unconditional service and their sacrifice. With your
21 assistance, the Army will continue to produce the best-
22 trained, best-equipped, and best-led Army forces to fight as
23 our Nation calls them.

24 We thank Congress for your steadfast support of our
25 outstanding men and women in uniform, our Army civilians,

1 our families, and our veterans. They deserve our best
2 effort.

3 Thank you again for allowing me to join you today, and
4 I look forward to your questions.

5 [The prepared statement of General Allyn follows:]

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1 Senator Ayotte: Thank you, General Allyn.

2 I'd like -- I'd now like to call on Admiral Howard, the
3 Vice Chief of Staff of Naval Operations.

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1 STATEMENT OF ADMIRAL MICHELLE J. HOWARD, USN, VICE
2 CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS, UNITED STATES NAVY

3 Admiral Howard: Chairman Ayotte, Senator Kaine, and
4 distinguished members of the subcommittee, it is my honor to
5 represent the thousands of Navy sailors and civilians who
6 sustain operations around the globe.

7 I appreciate the opportunity to testify on the current
8 state of Navy readiness and the projected changes to that
9 readiness with the Fiscal Year 2017 Budget Request. This
10 budget submission provides the resources for our deployed
11 forces and supports our continued readiness recovery
12 efforts. This submission also contains the hard choices and
13 tradeoffs we made to achieve future warfighting capability.
14 In a design for maintaining maritime superiority, the Chief
15 of Naval Operations, Admiral Richardson, has challenged the
16 Navy team to meet the demands of our mission along four
17 lines of efforts. First, the readiness funding directly
18 contributes to strengthening naval power at and from sea.
19 Navy readiness organizations are actively engaged in efforts
20 to meet the second line of effort, to achieve high-velocity
21 learning at every level by investing in our sailors through
22 new and reinvigorated training programs. And we support the
23 third line of effort to strengthen our Navy team for the
24 future by employing innovative training methodologies to
25 accelerate productivity of new shipyard employees. And

1 lastly, we strive to expand and strengthen our network of
2 partners in order to meet our most critical challenges. We
3 have reached out to industry to address our shipyard and
4 aviation depot workload. Our budget request supports the
5 design, and, if executed, will result in continued
6 operational excellence throughout our Navy.

7 The demand for naval assets by global combatant
8 commanders remains high, and Navy continues to provide
9 maximum sustainable global presence. Supporting this
10 posture requires a commitment to protect the time and funds
11 needed to properly maintain and modernize our force. Full
12 recovery of the material readiness of the fleet is likely to
13 extend beyond 2020. Stable funding, improvement in on-time
14 execution of ship and aviation depot maintenance, and
15 steady-state operations are required to meet our fleet
16 readiness goals.

17 As we proceed on the road to recovery for float
18 operational units, we continue to do so by taking conscious
19 risk in the maintenance of our shore infrastructure. To
20 mitigate impacts ashore, Navy has made difficult decisions
21 and focused on items directly tied to our primary missions.
22 As a tradeoff, Navy continues to postpone much needed
23 repairs and upgrades for the majority of our infrastructure.

24 Continued shortfalls in our facility sustainment will
25 eventually have effects on our sea readiness model. Failing

1 to plan for these necessary investments will continue to
2 slow our future recovery. We are still paying down the
3 readiness debt we accrued over the last decade, but more
4 slowly than we would prefer and at continued risk to our
5 shore infrastructure.

6 Powered by our exceptional sailors and civilians, your
7 Navy is the world's finest, and we are committing to
8 retaining our superiority. And this budget represents a
9 margin of advantage over our adversaries. And that margin
10 could be lost if we do not achieve stable budgets. We can
11 only maintain our status as the world's greatest Navy with
12 constant vigilance, dedication to restoring our readiness,
13 and a commitment to sustain forces around the globe.

14 And, with that, I'd like to depart from my prepared
15 remarks with one caveat. Senator Kaine, you talked about
16 August of 9/11 as a milestone. For my Navy, there's another
17 issue that's capacity all of its own as it affects
18 readiness. And on another 9/11, I was in the Pentagon. And
19 at the end of that timeframe, when we -- when 9/11 happened,
20 we had 14 carriers, we had over 300 ships, and we had 60,000
21 more people in the United States Navy. So, during this time
22 of conflict, we have become more efficient, we are a smaller
23 Navy, but we are at 272 ships, as of today. That's ships
24 and submarines. We are growing back to over 308 ships, and
25 I appreciate the support of this committee in understanding

1 the purpose of the Navy and helping us get back to where I
2 believe we need to be, in terms of capacity. And we've got
3 to have a certain core capacity in order to achieve
4 readiness for the warfight.

5 So, I extend my thanks to all of you for your efforts
6 in continue to support.

7 Thank you.

8 [The prepared statement of Admiral Howard follows:]

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1 Senator Ayotte: Thank you, Admiral Howard.

2 I would now like to call on General Paxton, the
3 Assistant Commandant of the United States Marine Corps.

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1 STATEMENT OF GENERAL JOHN M. PAXTON, JR., USMC,
2 ASSISTANT COMMANDANT, UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

3 General Paxton: Thank you, Chairman Ayotte, Ranking
4 Member Kaine, distinguished members of the Readiness
5 Subcommittee. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before
6 you again today and to report on the readiness of your
7 United States Marine Corps.

8 The Marine Corps is committed to remaining our Nation's
9 ready force, a force that's truly capable of responding to
10 any crisis anywhere around the world at a moment's notice.
11 It has been so for 240 years, since Captain Nichols led his
12 marines ashore in Nassau in March of 1776. Last year, the
13 Congress reiterated the expectations of the 82nd Congress
14 that the Marine Corps continue to serve as our country's
15 expeditionary force in readiness, and to be most ready when
16 the Nation is least ready, as you mentioned just a moment
17 ago, Senator Kaine. I thank you for that reaffirmation, and
18 assure you that today the Marine Corps is meeting, and will
19 continue to meet tomorrow, your rightly high expectations.

20 Marines continue to be in high demand from all our
21 combatant commanders around the world. They are forward-
22 deployed and engaged on land and on sea for crisis response
23 in Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and the Pacific. Last
24 year, marines conducted airstrikes in Iraq and Syria, they
25 enabled Georgian forces operating in Afghanistan, and they

1 conducted lifesaving and disaster-relief operations in
2 Nepal, among many other issue -- many other missions, all
3 while remaining ready to respond at a moment's notice.

4 Maintaining that "fight tonight" warfighting relevance
5 across all five pillars of readiness requires careful
6 balancing. We must constantly balance between operational
7 readiness and institutional readiness, between capability
8 and capacity, as the VCNO just said, between current and
9 future operations, between steady-state and between surge
10 and between low-end and high-end operations as well as the
11 training that goes with them, all of this as we face the
12 increasing and varied demands from the combatant commanders.

13 In our challenging fiscal environment, we're struggling
14 to maintain all of those balances. As the Commandant said
15 in his posture statement, the Marine Corps is no longer in a
16 healthy position to generate current readiness and
17 simultaneously reset all of our equipment while sustaining
18 our facilities and modernizing to ensure future readiness.

19 We have continued to provide the geographic combatant
20 commanders with operationally ready forces to execute all of
21 their assigned missions. In some cases, these units are
22 fully trained only to those assigned missions, not the full
23 spectrum of possible operations.

24 In addition to this operational -- in addition to this,
25 operational readiness is generated at the cost of our wider

1 institutional readiness. This year, I must again report
2 that approximately half of our nondeployed units are
3 suffering from some degree of personnel, equipment, or
4 training shortfalls. We continue to prioritize
5 modernization for the most important areas, particularly the
6 replacement of aging aircraft and aging amphibious assault
7 vehicles, but we are deferring other needs. Our
8 installations continue to be the billpayers for today's
9 readiness, putting the hard-earned gains from the past
10 decade and the much needed and the congressionally supported
11 military construction further at risk.

12 While our deployed forces continue to provide the
13 capabilities demanded by the combatant commanders, our
14 capacity to do so over time and in multiple locations
15 remains strained. Our deployment-to-dwell-time ratio
16 continues to exceed the rate that we consider to be
17 sustainable in the long term. The strains on our personnel
18 and equipment are showing in many areas, particularly in
19 aviation, in communications and intelligence. And I'm
20 prepared to talk about those, thank you.

21 We have already been forced to reduce the capacity
22 available to the COCOMs by reducing the number of aircraft
23 assigned to several of our aviation squadrons, and we expect
24 to continue those reductions throughout 2017.

25 While we are able to maintain steady-state operations

1 today, to include the ever-expanding Phase Zero operations
2 and to better shape theater capacity for the combatant
3 commanders and be focused on theater security cooperation,
4 building partnership capacity, and sustaining mil-to-mil
5 engagements, our ability to surge for a crisis or for a
6 warfight is increasingly challenged.

7 Though your Marine Corps remains able to meet the
8 requirements of the defense strategy and to conduct high-end
9 operations in a major contingency response, we may not be
10 able to do so with a level of training and for all of our
11 units and along the timelines that would minimize the costs
12 in damaged equipment and in casualties.

13 These challenges in balancing provide context for the
14 message today. Your Marine Corps remains ready to answer
15 the Nation's call, but with no margin for error on multiple
16 missions in which failure is not an option. To win in
17 today's world, we must move quickly, move decisively, and
18 move with overwhelming force.

19 I thank each of you for your faithfulness to our Nation
20 and for your continued bipartisan support of the Department
21 and all of the services.

22 I request that my written testimony be accepted for the
23 record.

24 I thank you for the opportunity to appear before you
25 today, and I look forward to your questions.

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[The prepared statement of General Paxton follows:]

1 Senator Ayotte: Thank you, General Paxton.

2 I would now like to call on General Goldfein, the
3 United States Air Force Vice Chief of Staff.

4 Thank you.

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1 STATEMENT OF GENERAL DAVID L. GOLDFEIN, USAF, VICE
2 CHIEF OF STAFF, UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

3 General Goldfein: Thank you, Chairman Ayotte, Ranking
4 Member Kaine, and distinguished members of the subcommittee,
5 on behalf of our Air Force Secretary and Chief of Staff.
6 And it's an honor to be with you today, and a privilege to
7 be here with my fellow Vice Chiefs.

8 I request my written statement be placed in the record.

9 Just as you have heard from my colleagues, your airmen
10 work side by side with their fellow soldiers, sailors,
11 marines, and coastguardsmen to defend U.S. interests here in
12 the homeland and across the globe. As an example, it's
13 still winter in Minot, North Dakota, Malmstrom, Montana, and
14 F.E. Warren Base in Wyoming, and early this morning, a
15 number of airmen drove the equivalent of Philadelphia to
16 D.C., and now stand watch over the most destructive force on
17 the planet as they provide strategic nuclear deterrence for
18 our Nation and our allies. At the same time, airmen are
19 providing top cover and precision fires for our joint and
20 coalition teammates in Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Korea,
21 Africa, and Europe, all while our Air National Guardsmen
22 provide 24/7 defense of the homeland in support of U.S.
23 Northern Command. From moving critical supplies and people
24 to every corner of the map to managing 12 constellations in
25 space to defending our critical cyber networks to executing

1 lifesaving personnel recovery and Special Operations
2 missions, I could not be prouder to represent the more than
3 660,000 Active Duty, Guard, Reserve, and civilian airmen who
4 put the power in airpower.

5 However, 25 years of continuous combat coupled with
6 budget instability and lower-than-planned top-lines have
7 made the Air Force one of the smallest, oldest, and least
8 ready in our history. To put our relative size, age, and
9 readiness in perspective, in 1991 we deployed 33 of our 134
10 combat-coded Active, Guard, and Reserve fighter squadrons in
11 support of Operation Desert Storm. We were 946,000 airmen
12 strong. On average, our aircraft were 17 years old, and 80
13 percent of the fighter force was ready for full-spectrum
14 conflict. Today, we have just 55 Total Force fighter
15 squadrons, and our Total Force is 30 percent smaller, at
16 660,000. The average age of our aircraft is 27 years, and
17 less than 50 percent of our combat Air Force is ready for
18 full-spectrum operations.

19 Couple this significant readiness decline with a rising
20 and more aggressive China, recent Russian actions in eastern
21 Europe and Syria, continued Iranian malign influence, North
22 Korean nuclear and space ambitions, and our ongoing fight to
23 deliver a lasting defeat to ISIL, and you understand my
24 concern with this dangerous trajectory.

25 The fiscal year '17 budget reflects our best effort to

1 balance capability, capacity, and readiness under the top-
2 line we received. We made difficult trades between
3 readiness today and the critical investment required to
4 modernize for the future against potential adversaries who
5 continue to close the technological gap. Air Forces who
6 don't modernize eventually fail. And when the Air Force
7 fails, the joint team fails. I look forward to discussing
8 these trades and their impacts in today's hearing.

9 Madam Chairman, decisive air, space, and cyberspace
10 power is fundamental to American security, and it underpins
11 joint force operations at every level. The 2017 President's
12 Budget and the flexibility to execute the resources as we
13 have recommended is an investment in the Air Force our
14 Nation needs. America expects it, the combatant commanders
15 require it, and, with your support, airmen will deliver it.

16 On behalf of our Secretary and our Chief of Staff and
17 our airmen who give our service life, thank you for your
18 tireless and continued support. And I look forward to your
19 questions.

20 [The prepared statement of General Goldfein follows:]

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1 Senator Ayotte: Thank you, General.

2 I would like to start by asking each of you, What is
3 your leading readiness concern as we think about where we
4 stand? Appreciate the testimony that you've given, but if
5 you can tell me, What are the things -- what is the thing
6 that keeps you up at night, readiness-wise?

7 General Allyn: Thanks, Madam Chair.

8 For the United States Army, our number-one readiness
9 risk is sequestration. We must have sustainable and
10 predictable and sustained funding to deliver the readiness
11 that our combatant commander requires -- require to meet the
12 missions that continue to emerge. So, elimination of
13 sequestration is our greatest risk to future readiness.

14 Admiral Howard: Madam Chair, I would echo those
15 comments. I was at the fleet when we actually sequestered.
16 We ended up canceling deployments, shifting maintenance
17 periods to meet the savings required to meet the new budget
18 top-line. And it -- the ripple effect of that goes through
19 the years. You not only lose the maintenance time, but you
20 lose qualification time for people in that experience that
21 can never be bought back, because you can't get the time
22 back. So, particularly for us, as a capital-intensive
23 force, having a stable budget, being able to procure and
24 maintain our ships with certainty allows us to maintain a
25 ready fleet.

1 Thank you.

2 Senator Ayotte: Thank you.

3 General Paxton: Thank you, Chairman.

4 I concur with both the VCA -- Vice Chief of the Army
5 and the VCNO. The continued impacts of sequestration are
6 felt over multiple years. We have not had a stable fiscal
7 planning environment for 3 years now. So, we are -- we
8 continue to make hard tradeoffs, and we mortgage our future
9 readiness, because we're trying to fight today's fight. So,
10 I have concerns about capacity and future readiness. And
11 everything we do is trade space, and we need some top-line
12 relief, ma'am.

13 Thank you.

14 General Goldfein: Ma'am, and I'll just continue the
15 same dialogue. When we stopped flying in -- when we were
16 sequestered, we shut down and grounded 31 fighter squadrons.
17 And when an Air Force stops flying, it's actually felt
18 across the enterprise, because not only is it the aircrew
19 that stop training, it's the air traffic controllers that
20 stop training, it's the folks that actually all participate
21 in producing airpower, and it extends into the depots that
22 all work towards becoming our readiness engine. And so, for
23 us, we're still climbing out of the impacts of
24 sequestration.

25 And I would just add, one point is that we also broke

1 faith with our airmen, especially our civilian airmen. When
2 they were furloughed, we lost a number of them who decided
3 that if the company was not invested in them, they were not
4 going to stick with the company. So, for us, repeal of
5 sequestration is job one.

6 Thank you.

7 Senator Ayotte: Thank you all.

8 General Goldfein, I wanted to have you provide us an
9 update on the KC-46A and where they stand with the delivery
10 to Pease. And also, I saw, in the Air Force request, that
11 you've requested funding in 2017 for a KC-46A fuselage
12 trainer at Pease. Is that important training resource as we
13 base the KC-46A at Pease?

14 General Goldfein: Yes, ma'am. So, right now, the KC-
15 46 is on track to meet both their required aircraft
16 availability delivery date, which is 18 aircraft in August
17 of '17. We have had some testing delays. And the impact of
18 that is that, in a normal schedule, we would have aircraft,
19 you know, be produced, we would induct them into the Air
20 Force, we would do the maintenance and the testing on those.
21 What's happening is, even though we believe they're going to
22 be able to meet their required aircraft delivery date, we're
23 going to get a number of aircraft all at once. So, as we
24 work our way through that, we believe that we're going to be
25 able to absorb that in the first two bed-downs, which is

1 Altus and McConnell. And so, by the time they actually get
2 to Pease Air Force Base, we believe that we'll actually be
3 back on track. So, we're watching that very closely.

4 We have had some issues lately with some boom axial
5 loads, but we think we actually have the software fix in
6 place, so we're on track, we believe, to meet the IOC dates.

7 Senator Ayotte: Excellent. Appreciate it. And I know
8 that our airmen and all at Pease are anxiously waiting and
9 ready, so we appreciate it -- the update. And keep us
10 updated on where things stand there.

11 I wanted to ask, Admiral Howard -- you and I talked
12 about the Virginia-class submarine. And, of course, you've
13 been to the shipyard, and I appreciate your visit there.
14 Right now, are we able to meet all the combatant commanders'
15 requests for support from our attack submarine fleet?

16 Admiral Howard: Ma'am, thank you for that question.

17 Across our entire fleet, we're not able to meet the
18 combatant commander requests. And, generally, their
19 accumulated requests are -- is about three times higher than
20 the force that we have. And so, our SSNs and their
21 multimissions are very important to the combatant
22 commanders.

23 Senator Ayotte: And so, as you talked about in your
24 opening testimony, the size of the fleet, it -- obviously,
25 our attack submarine fleet's phenomenal, but presence is

1 very important, especially as we think about the Asia-
2 Pacific region and also the Middle East and various areas
3 around the world that we have to cover.

4 As I look at -- right now, under the Navy's current
5 plan -- you and I talked about this, but -- by 2021, we're
6 at one -- producing one Virginia-class submarine a year,
7 versus two. And I know that Secretary Stackley had
8 testified that he would be open to the idea of, if you were
9 able to have enough -- achieve enough savings in the Ohio-
10 class replacement program, that he would like to see you
11 purchase two in 2021.

12 Now, I understand you can't answer that question now
13 until you know what the planning is, and investment in the
14 Ohio-class program, going forward. But, do you agree with
15 Secretary Stackley that, if -- obviously, if this were
16 something that you were able to achieve the savings and we
17 were to give you the certainty that you needed, that there
18 is an urgency and importance to making sure that we continue
19 to build up and strive for the two production of Virginia-
20 class submarines from 2021, going forward?

21 Admiral Howard: Yes, ma'am, I do. Yes, Senator, I do.

22 In our last force-structure assessment, we believe we
23 need about 48 SSNs. And as we've been buying two a year,
24 then, as the older ones start to reach the end of their
25 lifecycle, we will be down to 48 in '24, and then we

1 continue to drop in numbers until we get into this bathtub
2 in the 20s. And so, we -- in order to make sure we don't
3 get to that bathtub, we're going to have to continue to
4 build two, and we're going to have to figure out how to get
5 there.

6 In terms of the Ohio replacement, one of our issues
7 will be whether or not we will have to manage that funding
8 for that asset. It's a strategic asset. And I certainly
9 appreciate this group's work on the strategic deterrence
10 fund, but if we have to fund Ohio replacement within our
11 budget top-line, that will affect all of shipbuilding and
12 actually affect the rest of the conventional force, as well.

13 Senator Ayotte: Excellent. Thank you, Admiral Howard.

14 I would now like to call on Senator Kaine.

15 Senator Kaine: Thank you, Madam Chair.

16 And thanks, to the witnesses.

17 General Allyn said something. I just took it down
18 quickly. I think I got the quote right, "Sequestration is
19 the greatest risk to future readiness." And I believe that
20 that's true. Sequestration was driven by a reality that we
21 also have to acknowledge, which is, we do have an increasing
22 debt that we have to manage. The deal that was struck, the
23 BCA cap deal on August of 2011, basically punished a lot of
24 our operations, discretionary spending, and defense
25 spending, as a way of forcing the effort to find a deal.

1 And the deal was, basically, supposed to be a deal that
2 dealt with the costs of Medicaid and Medicare, on one hand,
3 and the escalating tax expenditure suck out of the revenues,
4 on the other hand. We haven't done that deal. You know,
5 just bluntly, Democrats generally are loathe to get involved
6 in Medicaid and Medicare reform, and Republicans are loathe
7 to get into tax reform. But, if we don't do that deal at
8 some point, we can't just say the deficit doesn't matter.
9 Because it does. And the sequester is going to stay on.

10 So, the need to release sequester is going to demand of
11 us a willingness to show backbone and find some reforms in
12 these areas that, in the past, has been difficult to do.
13 But, I really pray that, as a U.S. Senator, I'm going to get
14 to cast a vote on a big tax reform and spending reform
15 package that will enable us to just put sequester in the
16 dustbin, where it belongs.

17 The -- I'm going to ask this question for the record.
18 Senator McCain has written a letter to the Service Chiefs in
19 -- asking for FY17 unfunded requirements priorities list.
20 Chatted with you about some of that. Some of the material
21 is starting to come over to the committee. And the unfunded
22 requirements and priorities are not, themselves,
23 prioritized. So, for the record, I'm going to ask that the
24 Service Chiefs' submissions, in fact, be prioritized,
25 because it will help us, if we decide, can we do some

1 additional resources, to know how those would be applied by
2 the services. And I'll ask that question for the record.

3 [The information referred to follows:]

4 [SUBCOMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 Senator Kaine: General Paxton, let me ask you about a
2 couple of items with respect to the Marines on aviation.
3 The goal of the Osprey readiness is 87 percent, but it's
4 about 60 percent today. About one-third of the Sea Stallion
5 helicopters you need to train are ready today. And last
6 year's hearing, you talked about the extensive backlog of
7 requests for legacy model F/A-18 Hornets. Tell us a little
8 bit about how we can help you best on this aviation
9 readiness shortfall that you've described.

10 General Paxton: Thank you for the question, Senator
11 Kaine.

12 We continue to have challenges in our aviation
13 communities, writ large. And if I were to say -- if you
14 needed an exemplar of the impact of continued sequestration
15 or the readiness dollars, I would tell you that the pacing
16 indicator in the Marine Corps is our aviation community.
17 Within that community, we are struggling to get F- -- B-22
18 parts to keep them online, and we are struggling for
19 maintenance for the F/A-18s. We have some challenges in our
20 depot maintenance. Some of that was exacerbated by the loss
21 of skilled craftsmen and the loss of money during the
22 sequestration, 3 years ago. So, we have a continued rebound
23 there.

24 The plan to regenerate F-18 capability is behind
25 schedule on a monthly and on an annual basis. We continue

1 to chip away at that, sir.

2 It is a mix of three component pieces. It's the
3 ability to get the aircraft off the line, to get it in to be
4 ready to maintain, which means you're going to strip away a
5 frame that pilots would be training on. It's also the need
6 to have the wrench-turner, be it a uniformed military or a
7 civilian. And then it's the money available to continue to
8 do the maintenance and to bring that offline.

9 So, we have to sync all of those up together, sir. We
10 have a demand signal for -- particularly for our F-18s right
11 now, until we get the F-35s online. And we -- we're flying
12 the wings literally off the F-18s right now. And that is
13 probably the biggest pacing item for us, sir. The depth-to-
14 dwell is below 1-to-2. We continue to source them to two of
15 our Special-Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Forces in support
16 of CENTCOM and AFRICOM. So, there's a demand signal, and
17 we're trying to meet the "fight tonight" capability, as I
18 said. And we're doing it at the expense of both the
19 sustainment and the modernization, Senator.

20 Senator Kaine: Can I follow up on the point you made
21 about the Special Purpose MAGTFs? You've got two, and
22 they're assuming a greater role in crisis response in the
23 regions that you discuss. And I understand the Marine Corps
24 is looking at even increasing forward presence to ensure
25 that one-third of active operating forces are immediately

1 available for use for contingencies. How do you, kind of,
2 position forward and at the same time deal with some of the
3 home base readiness issues that the Marines are
4 experiencing?

5 General Paxton: Thanks, Senator Kaine.

6 We are committed, as you know and the committee knows,
7 I'm aware, and as I said in testimony, to answer the "fight
8 tonight" requirements from the geographic combatant
9 commanders, which is why we have the two Air-Ground Task
10 Forces forward-deployed. We have, in the last year, as we
11 did our global force allocation -- we have had to reduce the
12 density of aircraft available to those Special Purpose
13 MAGTFs, in at least one case. And that's because we reached
14 the point where we had to change our depth-to-dwell model.
15 We had to change our maintenance. And we had to actually
16 induct aircraft back into the line, back here in the States,
17 and we had to keep sufficient aircraft at home to train
18 pilots. So, we're answering the geographic combatant
19 commander's demand signal, but we have asked him to reduce
20 that demand signal a little bit. So, we had to strike that
21 balance, again, between "operate tonight" and "ready for
22 tomorrow," Senator.

23 Senator Kaine: General Goldfein, I want to move over
24 and ask about an Air Force issue that we talk about a lot in
25 the committee, but I didn't fully grasp, til recently, that

1 it was not a platform issue; it was really kind of a
2 readiness issue. And so, this is -- we debate, on the
3 committee, about A-10 versus F-35. And we have been. And
4 if dollars were no object, we might not be having the
5 debate. But, dollars are an object, and so there's been
6 kind of a tug-o-war of this.

7 I thought that was a -- essentially, a debate about the
8 viability or the effectiveness of one platform versus
9 another. But, what I find, for example, as I've dug into it
10 more, the Air Force was intending, in the phase-down of the
11 A-10, to take the A-10 maintainers and move them over and
12 have them become F-35 maintainers. And so, if we don't
13 phase down the A-10, suddenly there's about 4,000
14 maintainers that you need for the F-35 that you don't have.

15 And so, this is really a readiness question on the
16 maintenance side. How do you deal with that maintenance gap
17 on the F-35 side? Because that's a sizable crew of people
18 that you need to make sure the F-35 are effective.

19 General Goldfein: Yes, sir. Thanks for the question.

20 Because we actually are all in the same boat on this
21 one, in that we don't have excess capacity to bring on new
22 while we maintain the old.

23 Senator Kaine: Yeah.

24 General Goldfein: So, actually, I could not give you a
25 better example of the impacts of sequestration than the A-10

1 discussion we're having, because it came directly out of the
2 sequestration discussion. I mean, in '15, we were given an
3 \$8 billion math problem to solve under the sequestered
4 budget. So, in '13, just as the Chairwoman said in the
5 opening comments, you know, a lot of the -- the world was
6 relatively stable as we looked to the forward. We were
7 coming -- we were out of Iraq, we were coming out of
8 Afghanistan, Russia was not active. So, we had a relatively
9 stable environment we were looking forward to. We had to
10 solve an \$8 billion math problem.

11 So, we went to the combatant commanders and said, "Of
12 those missions that we do for the Nation and for your
13 combatant commands, we have got to find an -- a weapon
14 system that we can take offline to be able to harvest the
15 dollars to pay the bill and the manpower to bring on the new
16 weapon system. Here are the options. Take out the B-1,
17 take out the F-15E, take out 400 F-16s, or take out the A-
18 10."

19 So, as you know from working budgets, the easy answers
20 are gone pretty early in the discussion, and what you're
21 left with is a series of bad options, and you try to pick
22 the least bad one, which was the A-10. And so, we have 100-
23 percent concurrence with the combatant commanders that,
24 given those options, the A-10 is the weapon system that we
25 would take offline and retire, because we do have a

1 mitigation -- not a one-for-one replacement, not a platform
2 that can step in for the A-10, but jointly across all of our
3 aviation capabilities, we have a way to mitigate the
4 shortfall of the A-10. So, when the combatant commanders
5 looked at that, versus other options, they chose that.

6 And so, we are going through a number of steps to be
7 able to mitigate that. When we came back to Congress and
8 delayed the retirement, it was based on the reality that the
9 world changed since our assumptions were made.

10 Senator Kaine: And this is not to really get back into
11 -- members of the committee have strong feelings about A-10
12 versus F-35 --

13 General Goldfein: Sir.

14 Senator Kaine: And I'm actually not interested in
15 arguing that right now. But, the thing that I hadn't fully
16 grasped is, by keeping the A-10 alive, we had made a
17 decision to move the maintainers over, and so now we have a
18 maintenance gap on the F-35 side, which is pretty critical.
19 And that's a readiness question. So --

20 General Goldfein: Sir.

21 Senator Kaine [presiding]: -- these issues do tie
22 together tightly.

23 My time is up. And Senator Inhofe is next.

24 Senator Inhofe: Okay, thank you, Senator Kaine.

25 I think one thing we're getting out of this, so far, is

1 that General Hawk Carlyle was right when he was talking
2 about, "We have more mission than money, manpower, and
3 time." That refers not just to the Air Force, but across
4 the board. And I know that's the situation we're in right
5 now. And it's very disturbing.

6 Secretary James and General Walsh were before this
7 committee last -- I think it was 2 weeks ago -- and they
8 said, prior to 1992, the Air Force procured an average of
9 200 fighter aircraft per year. In the two and a half
10 decades since, curtailed modernization has resulted in
11 procurement of less than an average of 25 fighters yearly.
12 Now, that's -- General Goldfein, that is pretty disturbing.
13 How are we -- did we have too many before? Explain how we
14 got to this situation.

15 General Goldfein: Yes, sir, thanks.

16 So, over the last 15 years, while the Nation has been
17 very singularly focused, in many ways, on the violent
18 extremism threat and fight in the Middle East, each service
19 has made strategic trades, based on demand signals, on what
20 we provide to the joint team. For the Air Force, the demand
21 signal has been primarily in space, cyber, ISR, and the
22 nuclear enterprise. And so, you'll see in our budget that
23 we invest in those. And so, when you're trying to balance
24 against those, there's only two places you go to balance,
25 and that's people and conventional airpower.

1 Senator Inhofe: Yeah. So -- yeah. So, we're talking
2 about fighter squadrons there.

3 General Goldfein: Sir.

4 Senator Inhofe: And I can remember, not too many years
5 ago, I think they, through necessity, did away with 17 -- or
6 stood down 17 fighter squadrons. And I remember, at the
7 time, we were making statements, and I did, before the
8 general committee, that it costs more to reinstate those
9 than anything that is saved in that short period of time by
10 standing down those fighter squads. Do you agree with that?

11 General Goldfein: Yes, sir, I do.

12 Senator Inhofe: We had the actual figures of that, and
13 it's pretty astounding, that --

14 General Goldfein: Yes, sir.

15 Senator Inhofe: And then, talking -- and I would also
16 mention the Chairman of the committee, Senator Ayotte,
17 talked about what's happening over there, what our
18 competition is doing. And, as we find ourselves in a
19 situation where we are downgrading, China and Russia are not
20 standing still. And I see this gap closing. The J-20 -- I
21 guess they were the -- yeah, J-20 in China, and the T-50 in
22 Russia. They are -- they're closing in on us. And the --
23 China's J-20, it's my understanding, would be a real
24 competitor to our F-35 and F-22. So, we have those
25 problems.

1 And when you talk about failing -- and we all said that
2 it's modernization that is paying the bill for a lot of this
3 stuff. We're not preparing for the future. I can remember
4 -- and I'd direct this at our Army and our Marine Vices.
5 Are you aware that my last year on the House Armed Services
6 Committee, before I came to the Senate, we had people
7 testifying that, in 10 years, we would no longer need ground
8 troops? Remember that? Yeah. Well, I guess what I'm
9 saying is, when you're talking about modernization, you have
10 two problems. One, modernizing equipment. And the other is
11 on your mission -- modernize your mission. And if we were
12 to sit here right now -- you guys are all smart -- and
13 determine what are our needs going to be 10 years from
14 today, you're going to be wrong. And the only way, if we
15 are going to try to reinstate our position of superiority,
16 is to go ahead and do what's necessary in all the possible
17 scenarios that might be taking place in -- 10 years from
18 now, or 20 years from now. And you have to stop. You can't
19 wait 8 years and then determine what to do.

20 So, I would hope that you'd consider that to be a major
21 problem that we need to address, in that we don't know what
22 our needs are going to be. And the American people out
23 there, they don't know that we don't already have -- aren't
24 already superior in every possible scenario, put together.
25 And I think that's something --

1 Now, I don't disagree with Senator Kaine, although
2 let's keep in mind that, when we were testifying -- I think
3 it was General Walsh or -- but one of them said that, in
4 1964, we spent, total -- 52 percent of our total
5 expenditures on defense. And today it's 16. Now, when you
6 read further, you do find the culprit in there is in the
7 entitlements that we're going to have to address. And I
8 would agree that we're going to have to get there. But,
9 nonetheless, whether it's entitlements' fault or anybody
10 else's, we're still down there to a small fraction of what
11 we considered to be the priorities to defend America at that
12 time.

13 Did we find -- Mr. -- General Goldfein, when we talked
14 about the -- we brought this up when we had your boss in
15 here and talked about the fact that we, today, have 33 -- he
16 said 34 at that time; this was just last week -- fighter
17 squadrons into our first conflict since Vietnam, or today.
18 But, in 1991, we had 134 combat-coded fighter squadrons.
19 Would you say that we -- again, asking you kind of the same
20 question that we did before -- did we have too many at that
21 time? And how can we justify this kind of degrading, in
22 terms of the numbers of fighter squadrons?

23 General Goldfein: Yeah, thanks, sir.

24 I would say that we did not have too many. We had,
25 actually, what we needed to go. And that was a result of

1 the vision of the Vietnam generation who built our force
2 back after Vietnam and gave us the force we needed when we
3 wanted to go in.

4 Our challenge today is that for an Air Force -- and we
5 all build and sustain readiness a little bit differently,
6 but I'll tell you, for an Air Force, when we say that we
7 require the force to be -- 80 percent of the force to be
8 ready, it's because if you take a look at the timelines of
9 the operational plans that the combatant commanders rely --
10 approximately 80 percent of the Air Force is forward within
11 120 days. So, we have to have that capacity to be able to
12 meet the defense strategic guidance.

13 Senator Inhofe: Yeah. Okay.

14 And lastly, in this morning's -- one of the
15 publications, they kind of relived what happened to our
16 Harrier that caught fire, here, just the other day. And I
17 think it was the -- yeah, it was General Neller said that he
18 raised the question as to whether readiness shortfalls had
19 contributed to what has become a 5-year high in aviation
20 mishap rate. That's really astonishing. A 5-year -- it
21 affects all you guys -- a 5-year high. What -- now that
22 you've had some time to think about it, what do you think
23 about that, in terms of, What could have been the cause of
24 the Harrier with the fire accident that -- just a few days
25 ago?

1 General Paxton: Yeah, thank you, Senator Inhofe.

2 We are concerned about the safety of the aircraft.

3 We're not concerned -- let me rephrase that, sir. That's
4 incorrect.

5 We're not concerned about the safety of the aircraft.

6 The aircraft are well-designed, well-built, well-maintained,
7 and well-flown by great pilots.

8 Senator Inhofe: Been around, though, since 1985.

9 General Paxton: But, we are concerned about an
10 increasing number of aircraft mishaps and accidents. And we
11 are -- although that particular one is under investigation,
12 Senator, we're looking to see if there's a lineal
13 correlation. We know, historically, that if you don't have
14 the money and you don't have the parts and you don't have
15 the maintenance, then you fly less.

16 Senator Inhofe: Sure.

17 General Paxton: And we call it "sets and reps." You
18 need set-and-repetitions to keep proficiency up there. So,
19 we truly believe that if you fly less and maintain slower,
20 there's a higher likelihood of accidents. So, we're
21 worried.

22 Senator Inhofe: So, your schedule now is -- I think
23 that's -- they're ultimately going to be replaced by the B-
24 35Bs. Is that correct? And the date for ultimate -- for
25 ultimately replacing all of them would be 2025. Am I -- is

1 that information correct?

2 General Paxton: That is correct, Senator.

3 Senator Inhofe: Do we have enough Harriers to last
4 that long?

5 General Paxton: We have sufficient inventory, sir. We
6 have to keep up the maintenance on them.

7 Senator Inhofe: Okay.

8 General Paxton: Absolutely.

9 Senator Inhofe: Thank you.

10 Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Chairman, not Mr.
11 Chairman.

12 Senator Ayotte [presiding]: Thank you, Senator Inhofe.
13 I'd like to call on Senator Heinrich.

14 Senator Heinrich: Thank you, Madam Chair.

15 General Goldfein, Senator Kaine brought up the issue of
16 -- with keeping the A-10s flying, the maintainer challenges
17 that we have. That's something that's been impacting my
18 home State of New Mexico, as well. And some of that gap has
19 been filled with contractors. Why haven't we looked at
20 using the Air National Guard to help fill that maintainers
21 gap?

22 General Goldfein: Sir, actually, we have. It's --
23 what's an interesting part of your Air Force today is that
24 you can jump on a C-17, walk up into the cockpit and ask,
25 "Okay, who's Guard, who's Active, who's Reserve," and all

1 three hands will go up. We're that integrated.

2 So, we actually have used, and are continuing to use,
3 the Air National Guard as we look at resolving the
4 maintenance challenges we have as we, right now, maintain
5 the A-10 and bring on the F-35. So, it's a complete one-Air
6 Force solution that we're going down.

7 You mentioned contractors. And what we've done is,
8 we've actually looked at those locations where squadrons
9 don't deploy, and we're using contractors. So, that's where
10 you see the replacement training units and the aggressor
11 squadrons. But, that's a short-term fill, because
12 eventually we've got to get back into blue-suit maintenance
13 for those units.

14 Senator Heinrich: Yeah. I would just encourage you
15 along those lines. And I think that's a really good role
16 for our Air Guard. And, as we work through those
17 challenges, I think that's one of the solutions that I'm
18 certainly most attracted to.

19 I wanted to bring up something that came up here when
20 we did the NDAA last year. As you know, this committee
21 provided a pay incentive specifically to encourage RPA
22 pilots to enter into and stay in that field. In the end,
23 the Air Force decided against providing that incentive pay.
24 The justification or the rationalization for that was to
25 main parity across Air Force platforms, but it ignores the

1 underlying issue, which is the Air Force RPA pilots are
2 leaving the service in high numbers, as you know, and
3 creating very serious training challenges. It's -- it seems
4 to be a pretty insatiable demand right now for those
5 capabilities overseas. Some have said that the RPA is
6 literally -- community -- is literally at a breaking point.
7 That's why I think you saw this committee authorize that.

8 If RPA pilots fly more hours -- and I've seen estimates
9 around 900 per year -- shouldn't their bonus structure
10 reflect that increased demand?

11 General Goldfein: Yes, sir, thanks.

12 So, the reality of the RPA -- remotely powered aircraft
13 -- business in ISR is, it's been on an exponential growth
14 really ever since 2001, when we had zero caps, then we grew
15 up to -- all the way to 65 caps. And so, what happened
16 along the way is, we continued to try to mature that weapon
17 system. And a mature weapon system, as we define it, is
18 enough individuals in the weapon system to do the primary
19 mission, plus go to school, plus do staff, plus serve as
20 interns here, and do all those things that we can
21 communicate that portion of the Air Force across the
22 enterprise.

23 What's happened in the business of RPA is that every
24 time we try to stabilize, three more caps were added. And
25 so, the question came to the Air Force, "Can you?" And our

1 answer was always, "Yes, if." "Yes, if -- yes, we can add
2 three more caps if we delay maturing the weapon system."
3 And so, everyone we had in the weapon system was doing
4 mission.

5 This year is the first time we've actually had a chance
6 to stabilize. And so, we've got -- we've got 140
7 initiatives now that we're actually able to execute, that
8 have been on the books for years, actually, that can now
9 improve, not only the manning we need to be able to get the
10 weapon system to be mature, but also improve the quality of
11 life for these folks that you mentioned. One of those is
12 the pay that you authorized.

13 When we looked at the critically -- the, you know, low-
14 density, high-demand weapon systems across the Air Force,
15 personnel recovery, you know, some of our other weapon
16 systems, we want to make sure that we target all of them.
17 So, while it's a -- it may come across as an issue of
18 fairness and equity; it's really a matter of making sure
19 that we target. So, we're doing that the first year, with
20 25,000. We're going to come back to you this next year and,
21 as we've taken a look at the impact, and perhaps come back
22 for the full 35.

23 Senator Heinrich: Can you talk a little about, aside
24 from the bonus issue, what steps you're taking just to
25 recruit and train more quickly?

1 General Goldfein: Yes, sir.

2 So, first, the most important thing we've done is,
3 we've increased our instructor pilot force that you've seen
4 at Holloman --

5 Senator Heinrich: Right.

6 General Goldfein: -- up to 80 percent, where we were
7 sitting about --

8 Senator Heinrich: Yeah.

9 General Goldfein: -- 60 percent. And that's really --

10 Senator Heinrich: Huge change. It's --

11 General Goldfein: -- increased its throughput.

12 Senator Heinrich: -- very --

13 General Goldfein: That's going to get us that 10-to-1
14 crew ratio that we've got to build to mature the weapon
15 system.

16 The other thing we're doing is, we're actually working
17 to add a squadron to each wing that we have. Because the
18 way we are operating now is, every squadron is in full
19 combat operations. There's no relief. We want to add
20 another squadron so that you have one squadron that's in
21 training, the one squadron that's doing, you know, all of
22 their additional work that they have to do, while the other
23 two are engaged in combat operations. And so, you rotate
24 through the wing the way we do in other mature weapon
25 systems.

1 The other thing we're looking to do is add a base. And
2 we'll do that transparently through the basing process so
3 that we don't have the option of essentially going between
4 Holloman and Creech as the only two locations for that
5 enterprise.

6 Senator Heinrich: Great. I appreciate your attention
7 to that.

8 General Allyn, the National Commission of the Army
9 appeared to take a pretty pragmatic approach when
10 considering the tradeoffs that you've talked about between
11 readiness and modernization. The Commission recognized the
12 need to preserve the Army's level of readiness, but also
13 provided a pretty scathing critique of the lack of
14 investment for next-generation Army platforms. The
15 Commission concluded that the consequences for modernization
16 were regrettable, and warned that the long-term risk to
17 force and mission would be significant. What are your
18 thoughts on what needs to be done differently, in terms of
19 the acquisition or the requirements process, so that the
20 Army can pursue the testing, evaluation, and procurement of
21 those next-generation weapon system, as well as investing in
22 the ranges to actually test them?

23 General Allyn: Thank you, Senator.

24 And, I mean, you put your finger on the issue that
25 affects all of our services, and that is this struggle that

1 we have to maintain balance between delivering the force
2 that's required today while building the force for the
3 future and taking care of our people. And so, what you see
4 us having to do is make a very hard decision and a poor
5 choice, but the best choice we have within the resources
6 that we have. And, while acquisition reform is essential to
7 make sure that we get the best value for every dollar that
8 we put into procurement and acquisition efforts, the problem
9 in delivering capability is not because of acquisition
10 reform, it's under-funding. All right? We have eroded our
11 procurement --

12 Senator Heinrich: And you will get --

13 General Allyn: -- funding by 35 percent.

14 Senator Heinrich: -- I think, no argument from us on
15 that fact. I think, as you heard from Senator Kaine, in
16 particular, that, until we address sequestration, I don't
17 think any of us are under the misinterpretation that we're
18 going to be able to fix the gross overall problem.

19 General Allyn: But, we are absolutely committed,
20 Senator, to taking not only actions within the service to
21 address acquisition reform, because it's absolutely vital
22 that we deliver the right equipment at the right time for
23 the best value for the Nation, and we're committed to that,
24 but we also have got to put more funding into future
25 readiness, because we're mortgaging it right now.

1 Senator Heinrich: Thank you.

2 Senator Ayotte: Senator Ernst.

3 Senator Ernst: Thank you, Madam Chair.

4 Thank you, ma'am, gentlemen, for your great years of
5 service.

6 General Paxton, especially to you, thank you so much
7 for your many, many years of service. And I think General
8 Allyn would also thank you for your service, as well.

9 General Allyn: For the record, he wasn't there 100
10 years ago when the first ACMAC went on duty, contrary to
11 popular opinion.

12 [Laughter.]

13 Senator Ayotte: He came right after that?

14 [Laughter.]

15 Senator Ernst: You have a good friend in General
16 Allyn, sir. So --

17 General Allyn, I'd like to start with you and thank you
18 for your hospitality yesterday, as well. I appreciate your
19 time and effort in these matters.

20 But, over the past year, we've had a number of
21 combatant commanders that have told us they are either
22 lacking capabilities or they're not -- just barely able to
23 adequately meet demands. And I would like to hear from you
24 how comfortable you are with the Army's ability to respond
25 to the combatant commanders' requirements currently, and

1 then also, Do you think that you have adequate capacity to
2 respond to the combatant commander current requirements as
3 well as if we have an unforeseen crisis that comes up in the
4 near future? If you could expand on that, please.

5 General Allyn: Thank you, Senator.

6 Let me probably hit a target that everyone at this
7 table is wrestling with. And you've heard it from each of
8 us, that we are absolutely committed to delivering trained
9 and ready forces in support of our combatant commanders.
10 That is job one for us. And for the United States Army, we
11 delivered 91 percent of what our combatant commanders asked
12 for, in terms of known requirements, for this past year.
13 That sounds good. Ninety-one percent. That's an A in many
14 schools across the country. But, that 9-percent gap is
15 unacceptable to a combatant commander, and we recognize
16 that.

17 In addition to that, the Army has delivered 64 percent
18 of the emerging requirements that came out during this past
19 year, of their total requirements. So, 64 percent of what
20 they asked for that was unpredicted at the beginning of the
21 year, we delivered. And, of course, the problem with that
22 is, that came out of our surge capacity build. So, while
23 we're trying to generate surge capacity for contingencies,
24 we must continue to answer the emerging requirements that
25 are validated by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and the

1 Secretary of Defense. And the end result of that is, I do
2 not have a level of comfort that we are ready for a
3 contingency of a major scale against our peer adversaries;
4 and therefore, I am very uncomfortable with the trajectory
5 of our drawdown right now, and I do believe it's time for a
6 strategic review of, Is that what is best for our Nation?

7 Senator Ernst: And, General Paxton, do you have any
8 thoughts on that, as well? Do you have capacity?

9 General Paxton: Thank you, Senator Ernst.

10 I know this will shock you, but my battle buddy and I
11 are pretty aligned here, ma'am. We will continue to always
12 meet geographic combatant commander demand signals. Even
13 within those requirements, as General Allyn just talked
14 about, there is a prioritization on the Joint Staff. So, we
15 delude no one in knowing that Pacific Command and Central
16 Command are resourced at a much higher capacity than AFRICOM
17 or SOUTHCOM. And that is of some concern, certainly to
18 those two geographic combatant commanders, but also to the
19 services.

20 And, in the case of the Marine Corps, when we say
21 "fight tonight," we have an equally high pride factor and
22 ability factor to source "fight tonight" forces. As you
23 just heard me explain to Senator Kaine, we've had to already
24 chip into that by saying, "We're going to resource you and
25 send it over, but you're not going to get quite as many

1 aircraft in the next round of doing that." And we do all of
2 that at the expense of our bench strength. We have
3 "tonight" forces, which are ready, "tomorrow night," which
4 is ready, then everything else is at some degraded state of
5 readiness, whether it's personnel, training, leadership,
6 equipment. And that is not only mortgaging the future, but
7 that's mortgaging the surge capability to fight an
8 operations plan against a known adversary, where we're
9 banking to have good indications and warning, adequate lift,
10 and right time. So, I worry about the capability and the
11 capacity to win in a major fight somewhere else right now.

12 Senator Ernst: Okay. Very good. Thank you, General
13 Allyn and General Paxton.

14 General Paxton, if we could just continue the
15 conversation about personnel readiness. You -- the Marines
16 are a small force already. And yet, you continue to
17 downsize. And as we look at the pool of ready applicants
18 that are coming into the Marine Corps, we really do want
19 those quality individuals. Can you talk a little bit about
20 how the Marine Corps is facing these challenges in
21 recruiting and retention? And also, how do you deal with
22 the challenges of keeping qualified senior leadership in
23 your ranks?

24 General Paxton: Yeah, thank you very much, Senator
25 Ernst. Two great questions.

1 All the services, I think, are vitally interested in
2 quality applicants. And the amount of high-quality young
3 men and young women in the United States, that pool
4 continues to dwindle when you look at physical
5 characteristics, you look at academic performance, you look
6 at morals, and things like that. So, we continue to have a
7 challenge to identify interested and propensed individuals
8 from a smaller and smaller pool.

9 In the particular case of the Marine Corps, we are not
10 having a problem now at all. We have not had a problem for
11 many, many years attracting high-quality individuals,
12 officer and enlisted, regular and Reserve, to come into the
13 Marine Corps. So, we're very, very proud of our recruiters,
14 our recruiting force, our recruit trainers, and our entry-
15 level pipeline. We do not have a problem with reenlisting
16 officer and enlisted first-term, too.

17 The challenge we see, as you said, to continue to
18 maintain a high-quality force over time. And there are
19 certain leading indicators in our second-term reenlistments.
20 Forces -- there is a high demand signal for them to train a
21 lot. Forces where we need -- we have the authorities for
22 bonuses, but we may not have the money for the bonuses. And
23 there's a demand signal out in the civilian economy.

24 So, I think all the services right now are wrestling
25 with the cyberworld. We know that we need better defensive

1 cyber capabilities. We know that, at some type, we need
2 offensive cyber capabilities. And it takes a long time to
3 train those individuals. Once you train them and you get
4 them the security clearance, they are highly marketable, and
5 the civilian establishment is making money off of us,
6 because we qualify them, we train them, we give them
7 security clearances, and then we need to keep them around.
8 So, cyber operators, special operators, there's a handful of
9 folks -- pilots -- I think all four services will wrestle
10 with the long-term retention of those critical skills,
11 Senator.

12 Senator Ernst: Thank you very much.

13 And I just want to echo that. I know it's true in the
14 Army, as well; I'm sure in the other services. I struggled,
15 as a battalion commander, once we found those soldiers that
16 had those special skills, keeping them employed within our
17 units without losing them to other civilian occupations.

18 So, thank you very much, ma'am, gentlemen. Thank you
19 for your time here today. Appreciate it.

20 Thank you, Madam Chair.

21 Senator Ayotte: Thank you, Senator Ernst.

22 Senator Hirono.

23 Senator Hirono: Thank you, Madam Chair.

24 And thank all of you for being here.

25 General Goldfein, adversary air is an important part of

1 keeping readiness levels of our pilots at their desired
2 levels. And because there are no convenient aggressor
3 aircraft available in a nearby State, the Hawaii Air
4 National Guard's F-22s are forced to conduct exercises
5 against each other, which eats up very valuable and
6 expensive airtime of these advanced fighter aircraft. I've
7 introduced legislation in the past encouraging the Air Force
8 to look at a wider range of solutions to this problem. So,
9 for Hickam, are you considering having -- basing some
10 aircraft that can be used as aggressors, looking at
11 commercial aggressor services, for example? Can you tell me
12 where the Air Force is in trying to solve this problem?

13 General Goldfein: Yes, ma'am.

14 In a -- couple of jobs ago, I served as the A3, the
15 Director of Operations for a combat command, and we built a
16 fleet of T-38As, much older aircraft that were no longer in
17 use in Training Command. And we currently use those in
18 three locations in the United States, in the CONUS, for
19 training the F-22, for exactly what you're talking about,
20 because the cost per flying hour is much less and we're able
21 to replicate at least a portion of the threat when we fly
22 these against them.

23 Within our current top-line, we continue to look at
24 commercial alternatives while we can contract some of those.
25 We do, in some our exercise, already do that. The services

1 do, as well. Right now, I know of no initiative that we're
2 looking at specifically for Hawaii, but I'll go back and ask
3 and get back to you.

4 [The information referred to follows:]

5 [SUBCOMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 Senator Hirono: Can you take a look at that?

2 General Goldfein: Yes, ma'am.

3 Senator Hirono: Because if you can locate some of
4 these T-38s in Hickam, for example, that would definitely
5 release the F-22s from that particular part of training.

6 Admiral Howard, I was happy to see, in your written
7 testimony, that you remain committed to improving the
8 conditions of our Navy shipyards, of which, of course, Pearl
9 Harbor Naval Shipyard is a large facility. Can you
10 elaborate on the importance of maintaining our shipyards,
11 including, of course, Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard? And do
12 you believe that the funding allocated in the fiscal year
13 '17 is adequate to meet your needs in this area? And I know
14 that you've testified that, you know, we're really putting
15 aside -- postponing the needed repairs and upgrades of all
16 of our facilities. That includes the shipyard facilities.
17 But, can you just elaborate a bit more on whether the F-17
18 budget meets your commitment to maintaining our shipyards?

19 Admiral Howard: Ma'am, at this point, the budget does
20 maintain our commitment to the shipyards. Overall, the
21 amount of money we've put into facility sustainment across
22 all of our installations is less, and our MILCON is less.
23 But, we understand the importance of our shipyards. I mean,
24 those are the incubators and the lifeblood for us to produce
25 ships. And so, the -- we've exceeded a 6 percent investment

1 the last few years into the shipyards. We're probably going
2 to hit about 8.1 percent investment of upgrades in the
3 shipyards. And then, for '17, we're at 7.1 percent
4 investment, continuing to upgrade or modernize the
5 infrastructure. So, in a budget where we have fewer dollars
6 allocated to infrastructure support, we prioritize the
7 shipyards to make sure that they continue to provide us
8 excellent work.

9 Senator Hirono: And I think that, as you focus on
10 issues such as the productivity at our shipyards -- and, at
11 one time, that was an issue at Pearl Harbor, and I would
12 think probably at the other shipyards -- modernization and
13 just keeping the equipment up to par, all of that, totally
14 impacts productivity. And also the fact that our ships are
15 out longer when they come back to -- for repair and
16 maintenance, it takes our workers longer. And that
17 recognition should be reflected in what you consider
18 productivity numbers.

19 Another question for General Paxton. You mentioned, in
20 your written testimony, that the number of amphibious
21 warship vessels required to meet the demands of the
22 combatant commanders exceeds 50 vessels. And, furthermore,
23 while the minimum requirement is 38 vessels, you currently
24 only have 30 in your inventory. That's page 16 of your
25 testimony. Can you elaborate on what efforts and duties you

1 are unable to perform as a result of this inadequate number
2 of vessels? And does the Marine Corps have a current plan
3 to increase the number of vessels to fulfill necessary
4 requirements and missions?

5 General Paxton: Thanks for that question, Senator
6 Hirono.

7 And work very closely with my shipmate on my right
8 here, because this is a joint problem. The VCNO alluded,
9 earlier in her statements, about the overall size of the
10 Navy. And then, secondly, she also indicated the pressures
11 of funding the Ohio replacement program within the
12 Department of the Navy top-line, because this is what
13 actually pressurizes all of the accounts, not only the
14 shipbuilding account, which affects amphibs for us, but
15 service combatants, destroyers, carriers, everything for the
16 Navy, but it also pressurizes our joint aviation top-line,
17 too. It -- because it's just a big bill.

18 To your specific two questions, Senator. Number one
19 is, the 50 and the 38 are measured against two different
20 metrics. Of course, the 50, which both General Dunford and
21 Admiral Greenert testified to last year, reflects the
22 steady-state demand signal around the world if we were to
23 answer all of those combatant commander demands. The 38
24 reflects the war plans and if we had the requirement to take
25 two marine expeditionary brigades and move them

1 simultaneously to two major conflicts. So, those are the
2 metrics that we measure against. The Navy-Marine team
3 agreed, several years ago, that if the funding was
4 available, if the maintenance of the ships was available, we
5 could handle 34 amphibious ships, provided they were surge-
6 ready to get to the fight. As we both know, we're at 30
7 today. We have not been above 30 for the last 11 years,
8 since 2006. So, we are interested in building more amphibs,
9 given the fiscal constraints that the Department operates
10 under. Right now, we have, thanks to the good offices of
11 the Congress, the ability to build a 12th LPD, and we have a
12 plan to take the 12th LPD and move it into the LXR, a common
13 hull form. So, we have a plan to get better, ma'am, but
14 it's contingent on the money.

15 Senator Hirono: Everything is contingent on the money.
16 And we start, first and foremost, by lifting the threat of
17 sequester, going forward.

18 And, you know, considering that all of -- everyone who
19 comes to testify says, "Get rid of sequester," and you
20 notice we haven't done it yet. And I would say that that
21 should be a top priority for our committees and our
22 subcommittees.

23 General Allyn, you mentioned, in your written testimony
24 -- oh, I'm running out of time.

25 Madam Chair, I -- perhaps I'll submit some of these

1 questions for the record.

2 Thank you.

3 Senator Ayotte: Thank you, Senator Hirono.

4 Senator Shaheen.

5 Senator Shaheen: Thank you.

6 And thank you, to each of you, for testifying today and
7 for what you do every day to ensure the security of this
8 country and for your service to America.

9 I would like to start talking about energy in the
10 upcoming budget, because I am very interested in hearing
11 about the efforts to continue to leverage alternative energy
12 use and energy efficiency. And I think there is a
13 perception in some quarters that this is being done in the
14 military because people are being told to "go green."
15 Actually, I think it's more about our combat effectiveness
16 and how we address our vulnerabilities because of our
17 dependence on energy for so much of what we do and how we
18 can be more effective using that energy. And, you know, I'm
19 sure that everybody here is very aware of the impact in
20 Afghanistan and other conflicts with needing to continually
21 convoy energy use -- or oil and other resources for energy
22 use.

23 So, can you all update me on what you're thinking as
24 you're looking at this upcoming budget, and where you are
25 with energy use?

1 General Allyn: I'll go ahead and start, give my
2 teammates a chance to reflect.

3 I'll give you two examples, Senator Shaheen, where this
4 is playing out exactly as you described. We did a
5 significant amount of work to reduce energy expenditure on
6 our forward operating bases in Afghanistan. And on those
7 bases where we were able to put energy-efficient generators
8 to operate all of our facilities, we were able to reduce
9 monthly fuel convoys from five to two. And every convoy
10 that stays off the battlefield is one less target in a very
11 IED-rich environment. So, it's about, actually, force
12 protection as much as it is about saving fuel expenditure
13 and reducing weight for what has to be brought into the
14 theater.

15 In terms of what we're doing for future warfighting
16 development at our NIE exercises out in Fort Bliss, Texas,
17 and White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico, we are assessing
18 smart technologies to reduce the number of generators it
19 takes to run our mission command centers, particularly for
20 our brigade and our battalion task force -- tactical
21 operations centers. This does many things for us. Number
22 one, it reduces the signature for these mission command
23 nodes on the battlefield. Number two, it makes these
24 entities much more expeditionary. We can reduce from
25 multiple airframes to bring them into a combat environment,

1 to a couple of airframes. And that's substantial over the
2 -- a major conflict, in terms of strategic lift requirement
3 reduction for the United States Air Force and the United
4 States Navy.

5 And so, we have already seen huge gains, in terms of
6 smart power generation and onboard power generation, where
7 many of our medium tactical vehicles, and now some of our --
8 even our small tactical vehicles, will have power generation
9 capacity that can be outported to run mission command
10 systems and reduce the need to even bring trailers and fuel
11 haulers and generators. So, it's --

12 Senator Shaheen: And --

13 General Allyn: -- it's got great long-term effects.

14 Senator Shaheen: And can you speak to the importance
15 of that, in terms of readiness for --

16 General Allyn: Well, in terms of readiness for the
17 combatant commander, if I can deliver a brigade combat team
18 with three or four less C-17s, he's able to use those
19 aircraft to bring additional capability that he needs.
20 Because it's all about -- in a no-notice fight, every single
21 piece of equipment is prioritized. So, if you reduce
22 equipment, you enable more capacity for a smaller
23 consumption of strategic lift. And that is absolutely
24 critical to us.

25 Senator Shaheen: Admiral Howard?

1 Admiral Howard: Senator, thank you for the question.

2 So, for us, energy independence is directly tied to our
3 warfighting effectiveness. The Navy has to be completely
4 self-sufficient at sea. We carry all the fuel for our
5 conventional ships, and then we carry the fuel for the
6 aircraft. So, the more efficient we use fuel at sea means
7 we can stay on station longer, it means we have to go
8 alongside another ship less times. And every time you're
9 alongside another ship to receive fuel, you're not doing
10 your primary mission, whatever it is.

11 And then, for us, I once heard a admiral say, years
12 ago, a captain of a ship is least important when the ship is
13 in port. Mobility is intrinsic to who we are as a Navy.
14 But, then, also for us, there are security issues that
15 you're also most vulnerable when you're in port. Speed is
16 life. So, if you're static, that's when you're most likely
17 to be a target. So, an ability to be energy independent of
18 host nations is important to our warfighting effectiveness.

19 And so, for us, we've been doing different things.
20 We've been looking at our actual propulsion plans for new
21 design, making sure we have hybrid electric drive. We're
22 backfitting a couple of our destroyers with hybrid electric
23 drive. And then, when you look at our shore infrastructure,
24 when you look at critical infrastructure and utilities, it
25 is to our benefit to be energy independent as much as we

1 can, even stateside.

2 And then, in the end, it helps us be good stewards of
3 the taxpayers' money. If we are not paying high utility
4 bills to power a ship that's pier-side stateside, that's
5 better use of that dollar to something else.

6 Thank you for the question, Senator.

7 Senator Shaheen: Thank you.

8 General, either of you like to comment, as well?

9 General Paxton: Very quickly. Thank you, Senator
10 Shaheen.

11 And, of course, being marines, we're partway between
12 the Army and the Navy, here. If I could give you just two
13 more examples, though, of the benefits of this.

14 General Allyn talked about reducing the number of
15 generators, or the size of the generators. When you talk
16 about your core marines being expeditionary, that reduces
17 one of the five fingerprints of lift. So, when you look at
18 that cubic foot, square foot available space on the ships,
19 then we take less. That means we can put more on the ship,
20 so we become more agile and mobile, out moving around the
21 seaspace and the battlespace.

22 The second one that General Allyn alluded to was in
23 terms of fuel consumption, too. As you know, with our O&M
24 dollars, we pay to train. We now have the capability to
25 meter vehicles, and you can figure out at what point the

1 idling is no good and it's time to shut it down, and the
2 fuel consumption is actually better then, and you figure out
3 when you start it back up, as opposed to having a marine or
4 a soldier let it idle too long. And that saves money, which
5 allows us to train longer and get more bang for the buck out
6 of the training dollar.

7 Thank you, ma'am.

8 Senator Shaheen: Perhaps you should share that
9 information with the vehicle fleets that the government
10 maintains, because -- the rest of government -- because I
11 think that's -- we have a -- awful lot of idling vehicles
12 out front.

13 General? Just to finish up.

14 General Goldfein: Ma'am, very quickly. I'll just give
15 you one example.

16 So, in the business of remotely piloted aircraft
17 intelligence, you've got to simultaneously have access to
18 assured energy for the aircraft that are flying overhead
19 that bounce off the satellite to go back to command and
20 control, that go into the process exploitation
21 dissemination. So, part of what we're working with, with an
22 energy task force, is to ensure that we have uninterrupted
23 access to that energy and electricity so we don't have
24 mission failure, which impacts readiness, based on
25 vulnerability to cyberattack. So, that's where we're

1 putting a lot of our effort.

2 Senator Shaheen: Thank you.

3 Senator Ayotte: Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

4 Admiral Howard, I wanted to follow up an issue that you
5 and I had talked about in my office, but one of the things
6 that the workers at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard do is,
7 they're often deployed to share their expertise at other
8 shipyards to help make sure that we've got good maintenance
9 and we're all working together. And one of the issues that
10 we put in the 2016 NDAA was a concern that the new long-term
11 TDY policy may be discouraging excellent, excellent workers
12 from going to other shipyards because of the cost of it and
13 also, you know, putting a burden on them that doesn't allow
14 them to stay similarly situated if they had stayed homeside.
15 So, this is something that I'm worried about -- just worried
16 about, because I -- we want to share our expertise. Our
17 shipyard workers do a great job with this. And I know
18 Admiral Hilarides has raised some issues about this, as
19 well. So, I just wanted to say, Is this something that you
20 can look at to make sure that these concerns are addressed?

21 Admiral Howard: Yes, ma'am, absolutely.

22 So, Admiral Hilarides' concerns have now reached the
23 Department of Navy secretariat, and then we'll be looking
24 more deeply into it and forwarding a recommendation to OSD.

25 So, there's a couple more aspects I think we need to

1 think about. One, the policy was created to help save money
2 --

3 Senator Ayotte: Right.

4 Admiral Howard: -- and to help all of us be good
5 stewards of the taxpayers' money. In the end, unless we
6 have volunteers, we can only compel shipyard workers to
7 spend a certain amount of time TAD, so we may end up -- as
8 they reach the end of that 4-week cycle, we may have more
9 turnover than we like. And then we end up --

10 Senator Ayotte: Would cost us more money, right?

11 Admiral Howard: It ends up -- in the end, the policy
12 may be costing us more money. So, we are working through to
13 get those details with NAVSEA. And, obviously, a policy
14 that had exactly the opposite effect is not one we should
15 stay committed to.

16 But, there's another principle here that we need to
17 think about. One is the commitment to these artisans and
18 their skillsets --

19 Senator Ayotte: Right.

20 Admiral Howard: -- and that, as a government, we
21 should be providing just compensation to our people. And if
22 it's true that, based off the per diem rates and then the
23 actuality of the functioning of how we have these people
24 working, they are paying money out of their pocket, then
25 that sort of violates many principles of --

1 Senator Ayotte: Right.

2 Admiral Howard: -- leadership and government. So, we
3 are working with NAVSEA to get to the facts of what's going
4 on, and then we can make a good recommendation to OSD.

5 Senator Ayotte: Well, we really appreciate your
6 consideration and really careful view of this, because -- I
7 just want to say, for the shipyard workers at the Portsmouth
8 Naval Shipyard, I know they want to go and help the other
9 shipyards. And so, we just want to make sure that they're
10 treated fairly and are able to do that. So, I appreciate
11 your looking at this policy. Thank you.

12 General Goldfein, I wanted to ask you, How are the A-
13 10s performing in -- against ISIL? And the Secretary of
14 Defense has said they've been performing superbly. How are
15 they doing?

16 General Goldfein: Superbly, yes, ma'am. I would align
17 with that.

18 Senator Ayotte: Okay, appreciate it.

19 I wanted to follow up -- I -- on the maintenance issue
20 that was raised earlier. The Air Force told Congress that
21 it had had to place A-10s on XJ or set-aside status to free
22 up maintenance personnel moved to the F-35. And I think
23 this may have been raised earlier in the hearing. And
24 you've discussed the maintenance shortfall in your prepared
25 testimony. Yet, my office has learned that at least five A-

1 10 crew chiefs from Davis-Monthan have -- were not moved to
2 the F-35, but, rather, to the Azores to conduct basic
3 aircraft transient alert activities that can be done by any
4 maintenance personnel. Are you aware of this? And, if not,
5 can you look into it for me?

6 General Goldfein: I'm not, and I will. Yes, ma'am.

7 Senator Ayotte: I appreciate it. Because I want to
8 make sure that, if this is the claim on the maintenance
9 personnel, that it is -- that we're maximizing and properly
10 using the maintenance personnel. And I want to know, for
11 the record, that the Air Force has told our office
12 previously that it couldn't use contractors to solve a
13 short-term maintenance shortfall. But, I know, in this
14 budget request, it will -- the request will fund contractor
15 maintenance personnel to fill gaps at select noncombat A-10,
16 F-16, and C-130 units, following our Active-Duty maintainers
17 to transition to the F-35. So, I've gotten different
18 stories on the maintenance issue. And so, one thing I would
19 appreciate, overall, is if you could provide my office --
20 since the claim is that we need the A-10s maintainers to
21 assist the F-35, I'd like to know a -- what's happening with
22 the A-10 maintenance personnel, and to have a list of the
23 last 2 years of where they're moving and how they're
24 performing.

25 [The information referred to follows:]

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[SUBCOMMITTEE INSERT]

1 Senator Ayotte: My concern about the A-10 continues to
2 -- and I think it's exemplified by the letter that I
3 received from other TACP Association that represents roughly
4 1300 Active Duty, Air National Guard, and Reserve JTACs and
5 2,000 former JTACs who have written me and said, "We believe
6 F-15s, F-16s, and B-1s cannot replicate the CAS capabilities
7 of the A-10. And we know from combat experience that the
8 elimination of the A-10 before a viable replacement achieves
9 full operational capability will cost American lives." And
10 that's been my focus from the beginning, and my concern
11 about this particular platform.

12 I do also -- you and I have gone round and round about
13 this -- but, I also want to follow up on the wing issue that
14 you and I have talked about. As I understand it right now,
15 that, under the current plan, if there's not a reprogramming
16 request submitted for A-10 wings, that 13 A-10s will be
17 grounded in 2018 due to the need for new enhanced wing
18 assemblies. And part of it is, they're being used right
19 now, right, a lot against the fight against ISIL? Is that
20 -- is my understanding correct for that? And am I right to
21 say that, for the record, without a reprogramming request
22 for additional action, not only the 13 retired in FY18, the
23 Air Force will -- also told me that 28 A-10s would be
24 grounded in '19, 42 in 2020, and 47 in 2021. Is that true?

25 General Goldfein: Partially, ma'am. So, the aircraft

1 in '18 are actually going to be grounded, but the -- even if
2 we were able to buy new wings, those wings won't show up
3 until '19, so they actually will not affect the '18 numbers
4 that will be grounded. Our plan right now is to take those
5 out of the BAI aircraft so it won't affect, actually, those
6 combat-coded aircrafts that we send forward to a combatant
7 commander, so we'll manage those 10 in '18. The wings, if,
8 in fact, we come forward and are approved for a above-
9 threshold reprogramming by the committees that approve that,
10 if that's approved and the Secretary comes through with
11 that, those wings will start showing up in '19. And that's
12 when they'll start being refitted.

13 Senator Ayotte: Well, I -- and I would -- as you and I
14 have talked about, I would urge the Secretary to come
15 forward, because obviously time is of the essence. We know
16 that this platform is working well against ISIL. And I
17 really would appreciate the Secretary -- and I know that
18 Chairman McCain shares my concerns about this.

19 Thank you.

20 I would like to call on Senator Kaine.

21 Senator Kaine: Thank you.

22 Admiral Howard, we talked a bit in my office about an
23 issue that's related to the workforce issue that Chairwoman
24 Ayotte was discussing. We are going to have a shipyard
25 workforce hearing in this subcommittee in early April, so I

1 don't need to go into it in depth, but I just wanted to
2 focus on it for a second.

3 The shipyard workforce is public shipyards who do
4 repairs, private shipyards who do construction and repairs,
5 and in many different locations around the country. And now
6 we also do some significant ship repairs in foreign
7 countries when our ships are posted there; in Spain, for
8 example, I know at Rota we do some repairs. And one of the
9 concerns that I'm hearing from my ship-repair community,
10 private ship-repair community in Hampton Roads, is kind of
11 the challenge they have sort of knowing what's coming down
12 the pike. Now, some of that is on us, Congress. Budgetary
13 certainty is a significant generator of uncertainties. But,
14 they also feel like they don't really know who to go to, to
15 try to find out what the likely future schedule is. And so,
16 if we -- if we're balancing work between public shipyards,
17 private shipyards, and some shipyards overseas, and some of
18 the way we balance it is, in the public shipyards, by moving
19 people around, then the private ship-repair community often
20 feels like they're the last ones to know, and it creates
21 challenges with them having to staff up, layoff, some people
22 move to other areas. Then there's a kind of a surge. We
23 need more, and it's more difficult to staff up.

24 So, one of the issues I'd kind of like to dig into, and
25 I would just like any general thoughts you have about, Are

1 there points of contact that would be better for the
2 industry to be able to kind of reach out to, to get some
3 sense of how this work will be apportioned and allocated
4 down the road? And again, we have to own our portion of it
5 on the budget-certainty side, but I'd love to have you talk
6 about that for a bit, and then we'll dig into it more in
7 early April.

8 Admiral Howard: Senator, thank you for the
9 opportunity.

10 So, in particular, this last year, when the issue was
11 brought up, NAVSEA and fleet went into dialogue with the
12 private shipyards, and one of the things that -- we tend to
13 look at the schedules in terms of producing operational
14 ships, but then there generally is some fungibility in the
15 schedule. So, they were able to work with the private yards
16 and move the start of when some of those availabilities
17 would be, and then that allows the private yards to get more
18 long-term endurance, in terms of the number of workers they
19 need to employ.

20 So, I think, one, we need to continue that dialogue
21 with NAVSEA and the fleet and the private yards, not just in
22 our fleet concentration areas, but, in some cases, in other
23 areas where we more rarely use them. But, it's the same
24 sort of thought process, allowing them to understand what
25 our schedules are going to be and then working through so

1 that they can more optimally support us.

2 And then, for us, our type commander, Vice Admiral
3 Rowden, has started to take this on, because there is a Navy
4 portion to this, in terms of the planning and getting to a
5 better definitized of what the repairs need to be before we
6 even send a proposal out for everybody to bid on. So, I
7 will, right now, commit to working with the fleet, NAVSEA,
8 and Admiral Rowden in making sure that one of them says, "I
9 want to be the integrator of all of this," and continue this
10 dialogue and make sure that the folks who are helping us
11 keep our ships going are also optimized. Because, in the
12 end, that's probably going to cost us less money. If
13 they're not having to hire and fire, then that means the
14 continuity will help us get to the best return on
15 investment.

16 Thank you, Senator.

17 Senator Kaine: Thank you all for your testimony.

18 Senator Ayotte: Senator Shaheen.

19 Senator Shaheen: Thank you.

20 I wanted to follow up on the discussion about the
21 shipyards, because obviously, like Senator Ayotte, I share
22 an interest in the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. And I was
23 very pleased, Admiral Howard, to hear your commitment to the
24 Shipyard Modernization Program, and very pleased to be see
25 that the President put in even more than the 6-percent

1 target in this budget. So, I hope that we can continue to
2 ensure that we make the investment, the capital investment
3 that we need to make in our shipyards, and appreciate your
4 commitment to that.

5 I want to also follow up on the question that Senator
6 Ayotte raised about the travel regulations. Because one of
7 the things that I have heard from shipyard workers is that
8 many of the people who are -- who have been there the
9 longest, who have the highest skills, are some of the people
10 who find the new regulations the most difficult. When I
11 have people say to me that, on the per diem that they get
12 under the new regulations, that they can't afford to go out
13 for dinner, and they -- because they're working such long
14 hours, it's really hard to cook in the facilities that
15 they're in. I think that creates a real challenge for
16 people. And I appreciate your willingness to look at this
17 issue and also your recognition that it's really the skills
18 of our employees who make such a difference, and that it
19 could have the ironic impact of actually costing us more
20 money than saving money. So, thank you. I hope you'll be
21 willing to let us know soon what NAVSEA sees with respect to
22 the information around what we're seeing with those travel
23 regulations.

24 Admiral Howard: Yes, ma'am. I'll make sure we get you
25 feedback.

1 Senator Shaheen: I wanted to ask one other question.
2 And that has to do with the 2014 NDAA that we passed that
3 says that it's DOD policy to eliminate the fielding of
4 service-specific combat uniforms so that we adopt and field
5 a common combat uniform for all members of the Armed
6 Services. Can anyone tell me what the status is of the
7 effort to have our military services working together on
8 joint clothing and combat -- joint combat uniform? Because,
9 as we think about where are areas that we can cooperate and
10 save money, it seems to me that this is one.

11 And I appreciate everyone's interest in being
12 identified as -- with their branch in the military, but it
13 seems to me, when we're talking about combat uniforms,
14 since, before 2002, everybody wore the same combat uniforms,
15 that it's -- we should think about whether that policy
16 should be changed. So, I don't know if anybody wants to
17 comment on that.

18 General Goldfein: Ma'am, I'll jump on that one. We
19 meet routinely on all issues relative to, really, personnel
20 actions, whether force of the future or women in service,
21 all those kind of things. And I won't speak for all of us,
22 but I will tell you, this issue hasn't come up in the last 6
23 months, in terms of any of the dialogues we're having.
24 However, you know, we have been operating in a single combat
25 uniform deployed in the OCPs, and all of us tend to wear

1 that same uniform, and then we change the tape, you know,
2 that actually has our service on it. We went to that, some
3 years ago. And so, as far as any of the dialogues we've
4 been in, I've not -- that has -- topic has not come up.

5 General Allyn: I'll just add one point to leverage on
6 the -- continuing to use the OCP. That's the uniform we're
7 going to as we transition away from the Army combat uniform.
8 We're going to the combat variant that we're using so that
9 we save resources and don't create a new requirement. So,
10 we're trying to leverage all of the contingency stocks that
11 we have purchased to ensure that, as we go forward, we're
12 being good stewards of the resources you provide us.

13 Senator Shaheen: General Paxton?

14 General Paxton: Yeah, thanks, Senator Shaheen.

15 The question did come up. And I don't believe it was
16 last year. I believe it was the year before, when we
17 discussed it. Last --

18 Senator Shaheen: Yes. 2014.

19 General Paxton: And then last year, we did take it for
20 a question in the House. And I know the concern of the
21 committee and, rightfully so, the American taxpayer is not
22 excess money. There is a commitment among the four of us
23 and all four services to always share our RDT&E. So, if we
24 figure out that, in a pixilated pattern, where if, in a
25 uniform, itself, that there is a best practice there, we'll

1 share that with each other.

2 The way I recall this when we left it, 2 years ago, was
3 that we had all -- we were freeze-framed in our current plan
4 right now, and there was an obligation to continue to share
5 that information, because I thought the sense of the
6 committee and the sense of the Congress was not to invest
7 further R&D money in that. I know, in the case of the --
8 particularly the Marine Corps, we had two uniforms that we
9 developed, a woodland pattern and a desert pattern, that
10 were actually developed pre-9/11, and that's what we've
11 continued to use for the entirety of the last 14 years. And
12 I know some of the pattern that we have, even though it is
13 trademarked and patent-righted, and it was when we did this,
14 we share it with Special Operations units, and they strip
15 off the Marine things and put on -- as General Goldfein
16 said, they put on their own identification and patches like
17 that. So, there is a high degree of sharing, here. And I
18 thought the commitment was not to expend R&D monies in the
19 future without sharing best practices, ma'am.

20 Senator Shaheen: I don't know, Admiral, do you want to
21 comment on this?

22 Admiral Howard: So, ma'am, the Navy and Marine Corps
23 have been together a long time. And when we put our
24 corpsmen in docks with the marines, as long as they pass the
25 PFT test, they're allowed to wear the Marine Corps uniform.

1 So, we've been saving money that way. We do have our own
2 camouflage, but we have not been looking at a new camouflage
3 uniform, so this has not come up.

4 Senator Shaheen: So, you think things are progressing,
5 then, in the way that the 2014 NDAA legislation envisioned?
6 Is that what I'm hearing everybody say?

7 General Paxton: Yeah. I mean, again, Senator, it
8 hasn't come up in 2 years. And I thought we understood the
9 legislation. We were all compliant with the paths that we
10 were taking, and it was just an issue of no further
11 investments. But, you know, happy to take that for the
12 record and go back and make sure we understand exactly what
13 the obligations were in the language, Senator.

14 Senator Shaheen: I guess my understanding was a little
15 bit different, so that would be helpful. And we can submit
16 a question for the record, if that's helpful to everybody.

17 Admiral Howard: Yes, ma'am, it is. Thank you.

18 Senator Shaheen: Thank you all.

19 [The information referred to follows:]

20 [SUBCOMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 Senator Ayotte: Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

2 I do have a couple of brief followups, and they relate
3 to end strength.

4 I want to -- obviously, you all can weigh in on it, but
5 particularly, General Allyn, General Paxton, as we think
6 about our ground forces -- would like to ask you, General
7 Allyn, where our Army size is right now. How many of those
8 men and women in uniform who have served or deployed combat
9 missions on our behalf are receiving involuntary
10 separations? And what are -- as we look at the potential
11 for -- if we were called to a major conflict, what our
12 capacity is. And I would like to, obviously, get General
13 Paxton to comment on the Marine Corps, as well, because I
14 think it's important for people to understand where we are,
15 vis-a-vis the size of our force, the force structure, versus
16 what we really need for size of force.

17 General Allyn?

18 General Allyn: Thank you, Madam Chair.

19 The -- to your first point, the size of our Army today
20 is about 1.03 million in the Total Force. We're headed in
21 this program toward a --

22 Senator Ayotte: What's the Active Duty component of
23 that?

24 General Allyn: We are at about 482 today, headed to
25 475,000 by the end of this fiscal year, and toward a program

1 force of 450,00 in the Active Force. And, as I mentioned,
2 with 186,000 deployed on a daily basis in 140 countries, you
3 understand my discomfort with trying to continue to meet
4 emergent demands and current operations with a force that is
5 getting smaller, and what that means, in terms of our
6 ability to build surge capacity in a time when the
7 contingencies are becoming ever more real as we face them.

8 So, we have done a number of things internally to try
9 to address that risk. We've gone to a sustainable readiness
10 model, a goal of which is to deliver two-thirds of our force
11 ready at any moment in time for an unforeseen contingency.
12 Frankly, at a 980,000-soldier Total Force, that's the only
13 way that we can make the math work for a major contingency
14 against a peer competitor. And we're sitting at about a
15 third of the Total Force ready today sufficiently for
16 combined-arms maneuver against a near-peer competitor.

17 And so, it's not where we need it to be, and I am
18 absolutely uncomfortable with a force that gets smaller as
19 the demands for our forces continue to grow and the
20 contingency requirements escalate in multiple theaters
21 around the globe.

22 Senator Ayotte: So, how many are -- I know this isn't
23 of your desire to do this, so -- how many of our men and
24 women who have deployed -- and I know -- understand many of
25 them deployed more than once -- are receiving involuntary

1 separations as we downsize the force, even though it's not
2 consistent with what we need to do to defend the Nation?

3 General Allyn: And I apologize, Senator Ayotte, for
4 not answering that part of your question.

5 The bottom line is, if we continue on the path toward a
6 program force, we will have to involuntarily separate
7 another 14,000 soldiers, 10,000 of which are officers. And
8 on this last round of involuntary reductions, over 50
9 percent of those that we were asking to separate
10 involuntarily had two or more combat deployments. So, these
11 are all soldiers that have answered the call of the Nation,
12 they have served admirably, and, because of the program
13 force structure, we must separate them. It's not something
14 we want to do. And, frankly, we're doing everything that we
15 can to ensure, through our Soldier for Life Program, that
16 we're providing them a seamless transition. And we're also
17 ensuring that our Army Reserve and our National Guard
18 leadership have the first shot at accepting these seasoned
19 soldiers into their ranks. And, frankly, it has really
20 helped our Reserve component save dollars by taking
21 experienced soldiers into the ranks and not having to
22 retrain them. So, that has been a positive benefit of this
23 unfortunate drawdown. But, it's still a situation that we
24 should not find ourselves in.

25 Senator Ayotte: Right. I would say that this is one

1 where I really am concerned that we're not keeping faith
2 with them, if they have deployed multiple times and we're
3 going to give them an involuntary separation. And I hope
4 that's something we think about. But, also, the threats we
5 face, given what we need to do.

6 And, General Paxton, I wanted to get your thought on
7 this, as well. Because we've talked about it in prior
8 hearings. We used to build for two conflicts, right? And
9 then we went down to a one-and-a-half-conflict strategy.
10 And, as I understand where we are now, if we got called to
11 one major conflict, we're all-in. So, can you help us
12 understand that, from the ground perspective? And I know we
13 have naval and Air Force issues, as well, but in terms of
14 the first in for us.

15 General Paxton: Thank you, Madam Chair.

16 And I'll try and work in reverse, given your last
17 question. And we were originally, many years ago, a two-MCO
18 force, and then we reduced from there, and we are now at a
19 -- in a -- defeat-deny is the strategy. The DSG has not
20 changed since 2012. And I think the shared concern of the
21 members here in the committee is, if you're all-in on the
22 defeat piece, what is left for the deny somewhere else. And
23 if the deny grows exponentially, we may not have the
24 indications and warnings we need for lead time, we may not
25 have the strategic lift by sea or air. We may not have the

1 -- either the capability or the capacity to respond in time
2 to keep the other one in either deny or impose costs. So,
3 as we are commonly wont to say, capacity has a quality all
4 its own.

5 To your original questions, Senator Ayotte, if I may,
6 the Marine Corps at peak strength was 202K. We knew, when
7 we were asked for that authorization, that that was only
8 going to be a 3- or 4-year authorization. And this was pre-
9 sequestration. We are -- we have done three specific
10 studies on optimal end strength of the Marine Corps. All
11 three of those were completed before Senator Kaine's point
12 about -- this was pre-ISIL, pre-Ukraine, pre-South China
13 Sea, pre-cyber, pre-Snowden --

14 Senator Ayotte: So, pre-all of the obvious --

15 General Paxton: -- pre-all of that.

16 Senator Ayotte: -- threats we face.

17 General Paxton: So, as we came down from 202, Senator,
18 we knew that the optimal strength of the Marine Corps was
19 supposed to be 186-8. We are, today, en route to 182,000 by
20 the end of this fiscal year. So, we are below where we
21 would optimally like to be. And again, that study was based
22 on previous -- unknown previous conditions.

23 So, to your second point, we have not had to
24 involuntarily separate anyone. We would obviously prefer
25 not to break faith. And I know the challenges that the

1 larger and the other services have there. We continue to
2 have, you know, 66 percent of the force on the first-term
3 enlistment. It's a fairly young force. Most of them come
4 in for 4 to 6 years, and then they separate. So, our
5 challenges are a little different.

6 We do worry, as I said earlier, under question, about
7 the -- some of the critical skills, Special Operations,
8 cyber operations, pilots, and how we retain them.

9 And then, ma'am, just as an indicator, the combat
10 capability that we have lost going below 186-8 -- when we
11 went from 202 to 186-8 to 182 -- we have lost three infantry
12 battalions, six towed artillery companies -- excuse me --
13 batteries. So, three battalions, six batteries, four tank
14 companies, and five AAV companies. So, that's conventional
15 capacity that we have offered up because we had to pay for
16 cyber, for space, for nuke, for third offset strategy, and
17 those things that we know are national priorities. But,
18 that has been the trade space, in terms of conventional
19 capability.

20 Thank you.

21 Senator Ayotte: I want to thank all of you for being
22 here. I want to thank you for your leadership and important
23 positions of defending our country and serving our country
24 with such distinction. And I want to thank all of the men
25 and women who serve underneath you for the incredible work

1 that they do making us proud every day and defending our
2 Nation, and especially what we've learned today with the
3 gaps in capabilities that we have. This is a real issue for
4 us, and I really appreciate your coming forward and
5 testifying. And thank you for being here.

6 [Whereupon, at 11:56 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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