

RECORD VERSION

STATEMENT BY

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Introduction

Chair Garamendi, Ranking Member Waltz, and distinguished Members of the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Readiness, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the readiness posture of the United States Army. On behalf of the Secretary of the Army, the Honorable Christine Wormuth, the Chief of Staff of the Army, General James McConville, and our soldiers and their families serving around the world, we appreciate your continued support, partnership, and commitment to maintaining an Army capable of meeting our Nation's challenges. If there is one message I wish to impart, it is that the Army must continue to maintain its high level of readiness today while building its readiness for tomorrow. Recent events around the world and in the homeland highlight the merits of years of investment in Army readiness, and as a result, today we have an Army able to respond rapidly to crises. At the same time, we must continue along the path of modernization to field the capabilities needed for tomorrow's operating environments characterized by rapidly changing technologies, advanced adversarial capabilities, and emerging global challenges.

The Importance of Readiness Today

The Army's demonstrated ability to respond rapidly highlights the integral role of the Army in the Joint Force—to deliver expeditionary and sustained land dominance. Most recently, the Army's response to Russian aggression in Ukraine through the rapid deployment of a corps and several division headquarters elements, brigade combat teams, critical air and missile defense assets, and important logistical capabilities within hours or days highlights the readiness of our force and our ability to provide the President with immediate, impactful options, and to support our NATO Allies and European partners. The Army continues to demonstrate its ability to respond to emerging requirements even as it operates in over one-hundred and forty countries to combat violent extremists and terrorist organizations, deter potential adversaries, build and strengthen relationships with our Allies and partners, and provide critical support to civil authorities in the homeland.

How We Sustain Readiness

At the same time, readiness is fragile. Our ability to provide a ready force capable of meeting today's challenges with speed and at scale is the result of a focused, comprehensive, integrated, and long-term investment strategy. It includes investments to attract and retain high-quality, diverse talent from the American populace, and provide our people world-class training. Also important are investments which ensure we are able to meet Combatant Command requirements for combat power, both planned and emergent. It includes investments in maintenance and periodic upgrades to our existing combat platforms, which provide our soldiers with the most lethal and survivable equipment on the battlefield. Also, investments in strategic readiness—the deployment platforms, facilities, Army pre-positioned stocks, and the organic industrial base, which all facilitate rapid response and the ability to conduct continued, sustained operations. Finally, it includes investments toward strengthening our relationships with partners and Allies around the globe, which have earned us access, presence, and influence. Neglecting investment in any of these areas threatens the Army's ability to respond as rapidly and effectively as we have in the past twenty-four months.

Current State of Readiness

The Army's readiness remains high, as is evidenced by its management of a diverse mission set in over 140 countries. Even after two years of COVID-19 mitigation activities, the Army continues to effectively support the Joint Force in counterterror operations, disaster response, and deterrence and assurance activities across the globe.

Reserve Component readiness levels also remain steady despite performing several important missions in support of operations at home and abroad. This includes support to COVID-19 efforts, OPERATION ALLIES WELCOME, and Defense Support of Civil Authorities missions. The Reserve Component has also shouldered the brunt of our requirements to respond to several natural disasters. Although all Defense Support of Civil Authorities missions consume readiness, we were able to mitigate the

consumption of readiness by limiting the duration of missions and attempting to align Military Occupational Specialty tasks with associated missions.

Building Readiness for Tomorrow

The world is changing at a rapid pace, and in order to buy future readiness to meet the challenges of tomorrow, the Army must continue to conduct the most consequential transformation since the 1980s. Many of our combat platforms are now forty-plus years old, while the operating environment (both in war and competition) continues to evolve. As we are seeing in Ukraine, war now permeates all domains—land, sea, air, space and cyberspace. Moreover, disruptive technologies, like loitering drones, are changing the character of war.

We must keep the Army on a sustainable strategic path to field cutting-edge formations capable of conducting multi-domain operations while recognizing fiscal pressures. I must recognize and thank our Congressional partners for the recent and generous boost to the Army's procurement funds, particularly in the area of counter-small unmanned aircraft systems. Unmanned aircraft systems, which General McConville recently described as "the new improvised explosive device," pose a significant threat. The resources that Congress has allocated to address this threat will certainly have a significant impact. We look forward to continuing to work with Congress to ensure that we maintain the modernization momentum necessary to fight and win against our highly-capable and evolving adversaries.

Accessions

Additionally, the Army is in a high-stakes competition for talent, and we must attract the best and brightest individuals capable of employing new technologies and methods of warfare in order to remain ready to respond to current and future threats. In fiscal year (FY) 2021, despite a very austere recruiting environment, the Army met its end strength of 485,900 and achieved our active-duty accessions mission of 57,500 soldiers. However, the environment remains a challenge. The talent pool from which we recruit continues to shrink, as the qualification rate for military service among 17-24 year olds who are eligible to join without a waiver has dropped from 29% to 23%. The

qualification problem is acute on multiple dimensions—for instance physical and mental fitness and academic proficiency.

We want to ensure that we continue to emphasize quality over quantity in FY 2023 as we address any gaps in our recruiting projections. We have been continually reviewing end strength, and will continue to devise innovative solutions to attract talent. As always, we welcome a continued dialogue to ensure transparency in our discussions and reports, and to best use our manpower and resources. We will look to re-build end-strength over the Future Years Defense Program and are looking forward to working with Congress to inform budget execution of the FY 2022 and FY 2023 Military Personnel Appropriation, as well as future National Defense Authorization Act end-strength authorizations.

To compete for talent, the Army must provide a workplace environment free of harmful behaviors, to include sexual assault, sexual harassment, racism, extremism, and the risk factors which lead to death by suicide. Prevention, not just intervention, is key. Secretary Wormuth's objective of building positive command climates at scale across the Army is the bedrock of our efforts. Specific to suicide prevention, we are in the process of updating our policy, have published handbooks for commanders, and continue to focus on building the protective factors which nest with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance and the President's strategy for reducing military and veteran suicide. One suicide is too many, and we will not be satisfied until we get to zero.

Calibrated Global Posture

Russia's attack on Ukraine reinforces the importance of the Army's role in the Joint Force to deter and respond to adversary aggression. The extent to which the Army fills this role effectively depends on our ability to maintain global access, presence, and influence. By maintaining a deliberate Calibrated Global Posture, informed by the outcomes of the February 2021 Global Posture Review, the Army continues to assure, deter, and respond to threats worldwide.

With Congress' support, oversight, and direction, the Army has been investing in readiness in Europe through the European Deterrence Initiative. As a result, when

USEUCOM needed support to NATO's eastern flank after Russia's invasion into Ukraine, Army forces were able to respond rapidly. They deployed; utilized forward facilities for reception, staging and onward integration; and drew prepositioned equipment in theater. Additionally, to ensure responsiveness across the theater the Army has assigned a Corps forward, and is rotating forward a U.S. division headquarters, an armored brigade combat team, an aviation brigade, and other decisive elements of combat power. This package ensures a U.S. presence across Eastern Europe, to include the Baltic States, Poland, Romania, and Bulgaria.

The Army is also postured to support the Joint Force in the Indo-Pacific, where land forces are still the center of gravity for the region's nations. The Army continues to build cooperation with Allies and partners in order to enhance regional stability, counter malign Chinese influence, and deter potential military aggression and threats from China and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Army's annual OPERATION PATHWAYS program deploys thousands of Army forces and equipment across the region, promotes bilateral and multilateral relationships, creates multi-axis dilemmas for our adversaries, enhances logistics and C2 networks, and gives us access and capabilities within the first island chain. In addition to OPERATION PATHWAYS, we have permanently stationed key assets forward, and continue to modernize Army Prepositioned Stocks in the region.

Finally, if our Nation goes to war, it will never be alone. Through a robust schedule of senior leader engagements and training exercises with partner nations, the Army assures global Allies and Partners, improves interoperability, and maintains critical relationships for when we may need them most.

Climate Strategy

The threat of extreme weather makes the Army's core mission of winning our Nation's wars more challenging. The Army must proactively reduce climate impacts and respond to climate risks to maintain its strategic edge in a climate-altered world. The Army Climate Strategy and the Army Climate Action Plan will synchronize climate-related efforts across the force to increase capability, enhance installation resiliency, and prepare for new hazards and operating environments. It will also modernize

processes, standards, and infrastructure while cutting operational demand. This will require significant resources and investments in the short, medium, and long terms.

To date, the Army has initiated a number actions. In March of 2021, we stood up the Army Climate Change Working Group, an enterprise-wide task force in response to Executive Order 14008, with the aim of improving resiliency and reducing emissions in-line with the DoD Climate Adaptation Plan. We established the Army Climate Directorate to implement the Army's Climate Strategy. We also launched the Army Climate Assessment tool to identify climate hazards and prioritize installation resilience. These efforts will ensure we are prepared for the environmental impacts of extreme weather and reduce the Army's contribution to greenhouse gas emissions.

Arctic Strategy

One area significantly impacted by climate change is the Arctic, and the changing environment there has enticed our adversaries to seek presence and influence in order to exploit the area's resources. The Army recognizes the vital importance of arctic readiness in order to counter malign activity, but it has lost much of its ability to operate in the Arctic and sub-Arctic regions as well as other extreme cold weather, high altitude, and mountainous environments. A revitalized arctic capability is necessary to defend a vulnerable region of the homeland. The Army's Arctic Strategy is a multi-year approach that aims to utilize experimentation and analysis to inform conclusions on organizing, equipping, and training arctic-capable formations. We aim to do this in a manner that aligns departmental objectives while also understanding how the Army serves as a Joint Force multiplier in meeting the demands of the region. Just last month we took an important step in our strategy implementation and re-designated U.S. Army Alaska as the 11th Airborne Division—a mission command capable headquarters. Implementation of our strategy supports our quality of life improvements underway to strengthen the foundation of readiness for our Alaska-based units. A few months ago, I travelled to Alaska to assess the situation personally. I can attest that we are urgently working actions to resolve those issues. However, additional actions related to the organization and equipping of our forces may be necessary to operate with an optimal level of capability in this unforgiving region to defend the homeland and deter aggression.

Organic Industrial Base Modernization

The Organic Industrial Base (OIB) is critical to the Army's ability to sustain readiness. We reviewed the whole of our capacity, including but not limited to, facilities, equipment, people, IT, and energy requirements. Our modernization strategy will allow the OIB to meet current Army demands and provide the capacity to surge and sustain a multi-domain operations capable force for large scale combat operations in the future. We are utilizing a 15-year phased approach to modernize the OIB to a 21st century capability through collaboration across the entire Army enterprise coupled with industry engagements, while ensuring projects are tied directly to the Army's signature modernization efforts. Historically, American success in armed conflict has largely been the result of superior logistics, and this will not change. I ask for your support as we continue modernizing the OIB, which in my estimation is a world-class capability unique to our country.

Conclusion

With the support of Congress, the Army is working hard to sustain its current level of readiness while simultaneously investing in the Army's six modernization priorities to continue the most consequential transformation in forty years. I urge Congress to consider the integrated enterprise of capabilities resident in the Army that enable us to provide a level of readiness and response no other nation or military force can perform, as demonstrated over the past twenty-four months. The Army looks forward to working with Congress to ensure that the Army is always prepared to meet any requirement asked of it by the Nation, today and in the future. Thank you for your steadfast support as we strive to ensure the Army is able to meet the needs of the American people.