

RECORD VERSION

STATEMENT BY

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Introduction

Chairman Waltz, Ranking Member Garamendi, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee, 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 partnership in ensuring that our Army remains ready to deter adversaries and, when called upon, fight, and win our Nation's wars.

Just over a year ago Russia further invaded Ukraine, unjustly and without provocation. The Ukrainian people unified in self-defense and continue, almost 15 months later, to inspire the world with their intrepidity and unflappable sense of duty. But their impressive successes against Putin's forces and the strong and strengthening posture of NATO today are also rooted in American strength and investments. Since 2015 the Army has trained Ukrainian troops, and we've seen the impacts of that training and partnership on the battlefield. Within days of the full-scale invasion, American soldiers were deployed to NATO's eastern flank, drawing from pre-positioned stocks, and standing ready to meet and deter any threat to our Allies. And today, 42,000 soldiers are serving in Europe—17,000 of which are part of rotational formations. They are working to support the transit of materiel to Ukraine, to train Ukrainian Armed Forces, and to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with Allies.

And of course, the Army is not just serving or investing in Europe. Our formations in the Indo-Pacific are focused on deterring America's pacing challenge—China. Through multinational exercises, exchanges and engagements, as well as actions to set the Theater, the Army campaigns and competes in the Indo-Pacific and plays a critical role in integrated deterrence. Land power is Joint power and we aim to have Army forces in the region 7 to 8 months out of the year, in addition to Army forces stationed in Hawaii, Japan and South Korea. In sum, this past year has demonstrated returns on our earlier investments and planning, America's commitment to her allies and partners, and the strength and responsiveness of our Army.

From Europe to the Middle East and Africa, Latin America to the Indo-Pacific, our Army is focused on meeting the many challenges of today while simultaneously investing and transforming rapidly to confront the challenges of tomorrow. In essence, despite well-known difficulties with recruiting, which I will address, our Army continues to work to maintain the trust and confidence of the American people and serve its interests across the globe.

Current State of Army Readiness

Warfighting is the Army's business, and our Army is focused on just that. We remain the premier ground force in the world, and our soldiers remain ready to respond when the Nation calls. Leaders and soldiers in our formations, alongside Allies and Partners, continue to train for large scale contingency operations and maintain the competencies required to combat terrorism and win in asymmetric conflict. They are also honing their ability to fight and win in any climate—from the jungle to the arctic.

Our Army is demonstrating readiness around the globe daily through exercises and training informed by observing operations in Ukraine. In Warfighter exercises and at training center rotations, soldiers are preparing for multidomain conflicts in which all domains—land, air, sea, space and cyberspace—are contested. And the new Joint Pacific Multinational Readiness Center (JPMRC), with locations in Alaska and Hawaii, affords our troops the opportunity to navigate both jungle and cold weather climates, likely environments for future conflict.

Additionally, our formations are experimenting with new systems and tactics to confront emerging battlefield dynamics to ensure we maintain our competitive advantage over potential adversaries. Over the course of the last year, we have witnessed rapidly evolving capabilities such as air and maritime unmanned systems and modern missile technologies. Most recently, we have witnessed Russians and Ukrainians employ a combination of one-way-attack unmanned systems and cruise missiles to destroy critical infrastructure and disrupt Ukrainian command and control. Joint and multinational experiments like Project Convergence allow the Army to identify

trends and changing dynamics, and rapidly incorporate promising technology into the force. Meanwhile, our Army continues to lead the Joint Force in developing and deploying counter-unmanned aerial systems (c-UAS) and doctrine.

On the support side, the Army is incorporating lessons learned in Ukraine to develop and rehearse concepts for conducting effective logistics in contested environments. From prepositioning equipment, coordinating supply distribution with host nations, conducting telemaintenance, and additive manufacturing, the Army is optimizing logistics processes and incorporating contested logistics concepts into exercise and contingency planning, particularly in the Indo-Pacific Theater.

Finally, our Army continues to synchronize with its sister services and build relationships with Allies and Partners across the globe, so that we can provide credible, interoperable and forward forces to Component Commanders. As an example, this past March the Army and Joint Force team, along with servicemembers from 29 other Nations, convened in Thailand to participate in the largest Cobra Gold exercise in a decade. After years of diminished activities due to the pandemic, we have resumed and expanded our multinational exercise programs.

In sum, our Army continues to maintain a high state of readiness, despite facing dispersed and significant threats. This reflects a close and committed partnership with Congress, and is enhanced by consistent, reliable, and timely funding.

Building Readiness for Tomorrow

Even as we engage emerging challenges, our Army is keeping its eye on the horizon. While the nature of war doesn't change, the character of war does, and if we don't adapt to that changing character, then we will lose our edge. Warfare today is evolving rapidly. America faces formidable adversaries with the capability to compete with us in all domains. The battlefield is constantly expanding with advances in long range precision fires that can challenge our most capable air defense systems. Unmanned systems and artificial intelligence combine to form 'swarm-like' capabilities

that will change the calculus on the battlefield, and our adversaries' highly capable sensing and targeting systems require us to exercise deception and camouflage, manage signatures, and plan for periods of degraded networks.

In answer to this, and with Congress' trust and partnership, the Army is undergoing the most significant transformation of the last 40 years. For starters, we are modernizing our capability to support the long-range Joint fight. By 2028 the Army will expand its three existing Multi-Domain Task Force (MDTF) formations, grow two additional MDTFs, and procure three long-range hypersonic batteries and five mid-range capable batteries. These formations will provide critical fire support, as well as space, electronic warfare and cyber support, to the Joint team across the globe.

At the same time, while many think that the future fight will be brief and entirely over-the-horizon, history admonishes that war almost always lasts longer than we expect and ultimately comes down to a close fight. So, our Army trains and campaigns for conflict on the ground as well, and will be ready to take the battle to the enemy in competition, crisis or protracted conflict when required.

We are modernizing the network to achieve data centricity and interoperability with the Joint team and our allies and partners. For decades, we have enjoyed an information advantage in battle—our network was ubiquitous, always on, and secure. Today, this can no longer be taken for granted. In competition and in conflict we must be prepared to continue our mission even through periods of degraded communications. The data, more than the network platforms, must be secure, accessible, and interoperable, and our Army must stay flexible to deliver the right information to the right leaders at the pace of battle on the smallest platform possible. We are transforming to embrace that framework and coordinating closely with the Office of the Secretary of Defense and sister services as we continue to develop Joint All-Domain Command & Control (JADC2).

And we are modernizing across other functional areas as well, and plan to deliver a variety of new systems into the hands of soldiers this fiscal year. These will include fielding the new Integrated Air and Missile Defense, which will integrate current and future sensors and weapons, improve target identification, provide greater flexibility to the Joint Force, and enhance the survivability of our force; fielding improved unmanned aerial systems, which provides greater reconnaissance and targeting capabilities to commanders; and issuing prototypes of the Next Generation Squad Weapon to enhance soldier lethality.

But the Army of 2030 can't just be technologically lethal, it must also be resilient—across both systems and installations. We are improving onsite energy generation and storage on installations to keep critical systems online even when local utilities are compromised. This winter I visited Installation of the Future initiatives at Ft. Carson, Colorado, including the site of a new flow battery system, which will reduce energy requirements during peak hours, leverage photovoltaic power generation systems, and provide a feasible means for long-duration energy storage to support critical assets. On the tactical side, we are working to reduce energy usage in existing vehicles and electrify future fleet vehicles. Hybrid-electric vehicles will reduce logistics tails, help us manage signatures, and improve survivability in heavily contested environments. Enhanced resiliency is enhanced readiness, and we look forward to continuing our partnership with Congress on these goals.

Sustaining Readiness as we Build the Army of 2030

Our Army must balance the requirements to be ready now with the need to prepare for tomorrow's fight. It is a challenge, but through deliberate evolution and by capitalizing on natural momentum, we *can* effectively do both. Over the last 15 months and with significant support from Congress, the Army has provided critical support—equipment, munitions, and personnel—to Europe. We have taken advantage of that effort to learn and transform, replace legacy systems and munitions with the latest technology, and launch ourselves into the future. And in the meantime, we have mapped a progression path for other modernization efforts.

First, we are leveraging supplemental replenishment appropriations from Congress for support provided to Ukraine to replace legacy systems with more modern ones. For example, the Army is sending our existing M113 Armored Personnel Carriers to Ukraine to support the ground fight today, but also backfilling our force this year with the new Armored Multipurpose Vehicle—a more survivable general-purpose vehicle. Meanwhile, while we have invested significant munitions in the Ukrainian war effort, our plants and depots—like the Iowa Army Ammunition Plant, which I visited in January—are ramping up capacity, and are poised to modernize existing lines, build new more automated lines, and increase production with the supplemental funding provided by Congress.

And as we continue to move towards the future, we are not canceling or slowing training, but scheduling modernization activities to synchronize with training, mission, and refit requirements. Our combat readiness centers continue to support twenty-two unit rotations each year, with our mission command training center leading four major exercises a year for our divisions and corps. As our regionally-aligned modernization model reaches full operating capacity in fiscal year (FY) 2024, we are able to forecast and plan delivery of new systems to ensure that we deconflict with training and mission requirements and remain ready while still building capability.

Finally, though there is a lot going on in the Army, we continue to emphasize safety. If measured in total soldier losses, FY 2022 was the safest year in Army history, even as we ramped up training and exercises post-pandemic. In particular, we are improving our safety data collection and analysis processes to keep leaders better informed and ensure that commanders can effectively assess risk at every echelon.

Our Army *is* People.

Any army is people. *Our* Army is comprised entirely of Americans who, for 50 years, have all freely volunteered to serve. That is part of what makes us great—we are the most professional, best trained, and most lethal Army in the world because of the

quality and commitment of our soldiers and leaders. They chose to join a team of teams.

Today our Army faces significant recruiting challenges. Yet, it remains a great place to serve. We continue to achieve over 100% of our retention goals, which positively reflects the teammates, sense of community and mission that the Army offers our soldiers and their families. And Army senior leaders are committed to maintaining and improving quality of life for our Army; our soldiers and families deserve safe and comfortable barracks and housing, available and quality childcare, and opportunity to thrive within the military community. We appreciate Congress' support in this area, demonstrated by the FY 2023 Appropriations Bill, which committed \$1.55 billion in Army Military Construction funding to military housing, barracks and Child Development Centers.

Yet despite positive retention trends, we are in a war for talent when it comes to recruiting. Young men and women are, in large numbers, either unqualified or not interested in serving. Today, only 23% of Americans aged 17-24 are qualified to serve without a waiver. Meanwhile, our Army is committed to maintaining its standards because we require and rely on high quality teammates. Recognizing that a great number of Americans want to serve but need help meeting our standards, we established a Future Soldier Prep Course (FSPC) in July 2022, designed to prepare young people who are willing and eager to serve their Nation for the rigors of Army training. The program has been a great success. As of March 31, 2023, 5,614 FSPC recruits have moved on to Basic Combat Training—a 97% rate.

However, the problem is not just finding qualified recruits. *Propensity* to serve among young men and women is also the lowest in recent history at 9%. Unfortunately, many young people—along with their parents, counselors, coaches, and teachers—do not know their Army and hold misconceptions about Army culture. Only 21% of youth from Generation Z believe that Army culture is consistent with their values and beliefs,

and 56% report that their impressions of the Army (mostly negative) are driven by non-Army media.

But we are an Army of the people. Along with other service professions in our Nation, we rely on the willingness of young people to fill our ranks. We ask for Congress' help amplifying the call to service and de-sensationalizing the negative narratives that abound in the media surrounding military service. Our Army is the greatest ground force in the world—strong, professional, and ready to defend its fellow citizens.

In the meantime, Army leaders continue to work on building strong command climates at scale, particularly through talent management. On that front, the Army's Battalion Command and Colonel's Command Assessment Programs have significantly improved how we select leaders by providing a holistic assessment of officers identified as having potential for command and key assignments. We have recently added Brigade-level Command Sergeants Major, medical commanders, and acquisition leaders as part of this assessment program. Additionally, in the fall of 2022, we released an update to Field Manual 6-22 *Developing Leaders*, to provide our commanders with up-to-date guidance on cultivating the rising generation of leaders.

Finally, there is abundant research demonstrating that cohesive teams are lethal teams. Soldiers who trust and respect each other are more likely to succeed on the battlefield and collaborate on solutions to the wicked problems posed by peer and near-peer conflict. We are working at every echelon to build cohesive teams and support a safe, respectful and effective warfighting culture. The Sergeant Major of the Army has dedicated countless hours on this front and hosted Monthly Solutions Summits to evaluate ways to prevent harmful behaviors—like sexual harassment and assault, racism and extremism, and domestic violence—in our formations. This year I began hosting Building Cohesive Team Forums in order to approve and resource the working group's initiatives. We are a strong team, but imperfect, and we must strive to improve

our culture. There is no place for disrespect and harmful behaviors in a formation of warfighters.

Industry – Our Lifeblood

If people are our backbone, industry is our lifeblood. Our Army sustains its cutting edge because of the ingenuity, energy, and expertise of our industry. We must cultivate that support.

So, we are moving out on a 15-year plan to modernize our Organic Industrial Base to increase capacity, capability, and throughput, and improve safety and resiliency. Using biannual wargames we assess and validate all of the scheduled plans to ensure that we are effectively and efficiently moving forward. Congress has been highly supportive on this front; the supplemental funding provided over the last year has helped move projects ahead of schedule.

Additionally, we appreciate Congress' effort to provide a material exclusion for carryover; this has helped us execute long-term programs and maintain critical workforces through FY transition. For example, artillery tubes take about 14 months to make and require the input of artisans and engineers across the country. With the material exclusion, we can continue executing funding for the tubes beyond the FY and keep producing essential warfighting equipment without interruption. Moreover, we can offer stability to the workforce required for the tubes. The men and women in our OIB plants and depots often come from generations of expertise and allegiance. Unfortunately, other carryover limitations—for instance on foreign military sales and support to other services—often require the Army to walk away from designated modernization dollars because the timeline to execute them is too brief. We continue to work through this challenge, but always appreciate Congressional funding that is dedicated early on in the FY, as it provides us maximum time to execute it.

In addition to the OIB, the Army seeks to maintain and grow our relationship with private industry. This partnership is essential as we problem solve emerging threats and

find ways to maintain the Army as a formidable fighting force. Again, Congress has provided indispensable support to this relationship. For instance, multi-year procurement has enabled us to make long-term commitments to industry. This year, we utilized multi-year procurement contracts for artillery round production, and we plan to explore their potential use in FY 2024 for Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System production. Meanwhile, we will continue to maintain transparency with both Congress and industry to ensure that we stay sharp and state-of-the-art.

Conclusion

Our Army remains the best in the world—ready for the fight today and transforming rapidly for the fight tomorrow. We appreciate Congress' continued guidance and partnership as we meet these demands. Your support has helped us maintain readiness while supporting Allies and Partners in Europe, improve quality of life for our soldiers and their families, and enhance industrial strength.

We also acknowledge the challenges on the horizon—especially with recruiting talented and qualified young men and women to our ranks. We ask that Congress help us amplify the call for service with America's youth. Joining the Army team means opening doors, finding community and being all you can be.

Thank you and I look forward to engaging with you further.