

**THE NOMINATION OF MR. DANIEL P. DRISCOLL  
TO BE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY**

---

**HEARING**

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
UNITED STATES SENATE**

ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

\_\_\_\_\_  
JANUARY 30, 2025  
\_\_\_\_\_

Printed for the use of the Committee on Armed Services



Available via: <http://www.govinfo.gov>

\_\_\_\_\_  
U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

62–891 PDF

WASHINGTON : 2026

## COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

ROGER F. WICKER, Mississippi, *Chairman*

DEB FISCHER, Nebraska	JACK REED, Rhode Island
TOM COTTON, Arkansas	JEANNE SHAHEEN, New Hampshire
MIKE ROUNDS, South Dakota	KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND, New York
JONI ERNST, Iowa	RICHARD BLUMENTHAL, Connecticut
DAN SULLIVAN, Alaska	MAZIE HIRONO, Hawaii
KEVIN CRAMER, North Dakota	TIM Kaine, Virginia
RICK SCOTT, Florida	ANGUS S. KING, Jr., Maine
TOMMY TUBERVILLE, Alabama	ELIZABETH WARREN, Massachusetts
MARKWAYNE MULLIN, Oklahoma	GARY C. PETERS, Michigan
TED BUDD, North Carolina	TAMMY DUCKWORTH, Illinois
ERIC SCHMITT, Missouri	JACKY ROSEN, Nevada
JIM BANKS, Indiana	MARK KELLY, Arizona
TIM SHEEHY, Montana	ELISSA SLOTKIN, Michigan

JOHN P. KEAST, *Staff Director*

ELIZABETH L. KING, *Minority Staff Director*

# CONTENTS

JANUARY 30, 2025

	Page
THE NOMINATION OF MR. DANIEL P. DRISCOLL TO BE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY .....	1
MEMBERS STATEMENTS	
Wicker, Senator Roger .....	1
Reed, Senator Jack .....	3
WITNESS STATEMENTS	
Driscoll, Daniel P., to be Secretary of the Army .....	8
Advance Policy Questions .....	44
Questions for the Record .....	65
Nomination Reference and Report .....	96
Biographical Sketch .....	96
Committee on Armed Services Questionnaire .....	97
Signature Page .....	102



# **THE NOMINATION OF MR. DANIEL P. DRISCOLL TO BE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY**

**THURSDAY, JANUARY 30, 2025**

UNITED STATES SENATE,  
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,  
*Washington, DC.*

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:30 a.m. in room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Senator Roger Wicker (Chairman of the Committee) presiding.

Committee Members present: Senators Wicker, Fischer, Ernst, Sullivan, Cramer, Scott, Tuberville, Budd, Schmitt, Banks, Reed, Shaheen, Gillibrand, Hirono, Kaine, Warren, Peters, Duckworth, Rosen, and Slotkin.

## **OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR ROGER WICKER**

Chairman WICKER. The hearing will come to order. We thank the witnesses for being here, and those in attendance.

Certainly, all of us are concerned and saddened by the tragedy which occurred near Reagan National Airport last night, and I ask that the committee observe a moment of silence before we begin the hearing.

[Pause.]

Chairman WICKER. Thank you very much.

The Committee on Armed Services has convened this hearing to consider the pending nomination of Mr. Dan Driscoll to be the 26th Secretary of the Army. In support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Mr. Driscoll served our country in Iraq, spending 4 years with the Army. So we thank him and the entire Driscoll family: his wife, Dr. Cassie Driscoll, and their two children, Daniel and Lila, who could not be with us today, for their willingness to serve this country again, by accepting this new assignment.

After his Military Service, Mr. Driscoll received his law degree from Yale and has worked in private equity and venture capital, all the while he has retained many ties to his former service.

The Army faces a complex array of challenges. Recruitment and retention improved last year, but the Army still has more than 10,000 fewer recruits than it did in 2023. Since the beginning of the Biden administration, the service is down 36,000 soldiers. On top of that, the Army is not taking full advantage of opportunities to nurture interest in Military Service. Almost 300 high schools sit on a waiting list to get their own Army Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) unit. These units mean more than potential individual recruits. They represent communities where the Department of Defense (DOD) can put down roots, developing the

Army of leaders for tomorrow, as well as excellent citizens for our entire society.

As the service catches up on recruitment, it must also ensure that those who do enlist are equipped for the mission. The nature of large-scale combat operations is changing. The world sees this every week in Ukraine. To be ready for potential combat in the Western Pacific, the Army must expedite modernization efforts.

On top of recruitment and modernization projects, the next Secretary of the Army must address the servicemember quality of life issues that afflict this, the largest service. In the fiscal year 2025 budget, the Army increased funding for barracks maintenance problems, but the effects of decades of neglect cannot be fixed overnight. The Army has a facility backlog of more than \$100 billion. I offered an amendment which passed the most recent NDAA [National Defense Authorization Act], requiring all of the services to adopt minimum annual facility sustainment levels. My colleagues and I need to see evidence that this change has been embraced within the service.

I believe Mr. Driscoll's record, his Army service, his legal background, and financial experience have prepared him to handle the myriad responsibilities of Army Secretary. If he is confirmed, Mr. Driscoll will face the challenges I have already outlined.

He will be handed a budget that has not kept pace with inflation. He will also take the helm at a time of increasing danger around the world.

The Army is playing a largely quiet but crucial role in the Western Pacific. It is deepening partnerships with our allies and partners in Southeast Asia. Meanwhile, the service is helping us maintain deterrence against the Chinese Communist Party, and it ensures that our South Korean allies are postured to prevent North Korean aggression.

Soldiers from across the United States remain stationed in Europe. Their presence helps deter Russia and helps assure our NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] allies.

In the Middle East, the Army continues to play a lead role in combating Iranian aggression.

Clearly, the Army's work has been instrumental in these theaters. It must choose to remain relevant in today's complex threat environment. The Army should accelerate its transformation efforts and focus on new portions of the defense industrial base. It should expand its work on small unmanned aerial systems, or UAS, and counter-UAS. I say that even as I recognize and appreciate the chief of staff of the Army's focus in this area.

In the Western Pacific theater, the Army's contribution to sensing and shooting remains in its infancy. The service has the chance to realize its key logistics role for the joint force in contested areas, but it can do so with significant investment and focus.

So I look forward to this hearing on how Mr. Driscoll will work to change the culture around the issues I have listed, as well as other pressing matters.

I now recognize my friend, the Ranking Member of the Committee, Senator Jack Reed for any opening remarks he may offer.

**STATEMENT OF SENATOR JACK REED**

Senator REED. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much. Before I begin I want to take a moment to express my profound sorrow for those involved in the crash at National Airport last evening. This is a tragedy beyond words, and my thoughts are with the families both on board both aircraft as well as the entire Army community. I am grateful to the hundreds of brave first responders who worked throughout the night, and this Committee will do everything we can to assist, and I thank the Chairman for recognizing it with a moment of silence. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Driscoll, welcome to this morning's hearing. We were expecting to see Cassie and Daniel and Lila, but they are working or otherwise occupied, but give them our greeting, please.

Let me take this opportunity to also thank you for your military service. Mr. Driscoll is a third-generation soldier. He follows his father, who served in the infantry during Vietnam, and his grandfather, who was a decoder during World War II. The Committee is grateful to your family's military service and for your willingness to continue serving your country.

Mr. Driscoll, if confirmed as the Secretary of the Army you will oversee the manning, training, and equipping functions of the United States Army. This is no small task. The Army is in the midst of a generational modernization effort, currently overhauling many of its major weapon systems. Simultaneously, the Army is seeking to transform the structure and organization of its brigade combat teams, equipping them with cutting-edge technology in order to be more mobile and lethal. The service is experimenting with rapidly evolving technology such as unmanned system, drone defenses, and communications technologies, among other.

However, the Army continues to face a multiyear trend of flat budgets, which has forced Army leaders to fund the highest priority programs by reducing procurement of modern capabilities. With a smaller and more continental base force, maintaining readiness must be one of your top priorities. The Army has continuous deployment requirements around the globe, to include supporting Ukraine against Russia's invasion, defending our interests and allies in the Middle East, and maintaining a forward presence in the Indo-Pacific.

I am concerned that the Administration's orders to significantly increase military support to domestic law enforcement, particularly on the southwest border, will harm the Army's readiness. This is a role for DHS [Department of Homeland Security], and I am a consistent supporter of a big increase in DHS budget in the appropriations process as part of a bipartisan border bill. That is the way to address the border. In my personal engagements with commanders at all levels, they have made clear that fully readying their formations requires extensive time, training, and opportunities to innovate, and border missions will not build these warfighting skills.

Mr. Driscoll, I would like to know how would you plan to ensure soldiers' time, training, and capabilities are not spent on the border, rather than on readiness issues.

Of course, the Army's success also depends on its soldiers and civilians. Recently the Army has been challenged to meet recruiting

goals. The Army has worked hard to improve its recruiting activities, and it has enjoyed success with new programs like the Future Soldier Preparatory Course. But it should continue to improve efforts to reach all who are willing and qualified to serve.

Mr. Driscoll, in your advanced policy questions you State your intention to, quote, “review the Army recruiting strategy to ensure it effectively conveys a strong value proposition to young people across the Nation.” In addition to the Army’s strategy, I am concerned that comments from the Secretary of Defense about women in combat and the President’s Executive Order banning transgender troops may have a chilling effect on recruiting, and I am interested in your thoughts on this issue.

During our meeting early this month we discussed the importance of maintaining a professional and apolitical Army. I am also concerned by reports that the Administration may implement a so-called “warrior board” to screen senior military officers for supposed unfitness to lead. This raises the chilling possibility that the Administration may fire officers who are deemed to have the wrong political views or have served effectively in military assignments that are disagreeable to President Trump. In fact, we have already seen this happen with Admiral Linda Fagan, who was unceremoniously fired from her position as the Commandant of the Coast Guard, and I am troubled that this firing was not based on her performance.

Furthermore, I am alarmed that this week Secretary Hegseth stripped retired Army General Mark Milley, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and former Chief of Staff of the Army, of the protective security detail that he had because of credible security threats from Iran, and revoked General Milley’s security clearance. Secretary Hegseth has also directed the Defense Department’s acting inspector general—acting because the inspector general was fired Monday—to look into the facts and circumstances surrounding General Milley’s conduct, so the Secretary may determine whether it is appropriate to reopen his military grade review determination.

President Trump seems to be fulfilling his longtime threat to fire military leaders as a political loyalty test. I would point out, however, that our servicemembers swear an oath to the Constitution rather than a party or a leader. This is what makes our Army the finest in the world.

Mr. Driscoll, I am interested in your view on military officers’ obligation to provide their best military advice, even if that advice contradicts the views of a political appointee. I would also like to hear your thoughts on how military officers can be expected to provide their best military advice if they are subject to loyalty screens or purge boards and whether you think we are moving members to military for the views or positions will have a chilling effect within the military ranks.

Mr. Driscoll, you face complex challenges and will require all of your skills. Thank you for your willingness to continue your service and lead the Army at this very critical time, and I look forward to your testimony.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.



Chairman WICKER. Thank you very much, Senator Reed. Before Mr. Driscoll makes his opening remarks he will be introduced by two of our distinguished colleagues, first Senator Mullin and then Senator Blumenthal.

Senator Mullin, you are recognized.

Senator MULLIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I will say, you guys are much more intimidating from this side. I do not think I have ever really been intimidated by you all until I am looking at you now, so this is really scary.

I am so privileged and pleased to be able to introduce my good friend, Dan Driscoll. You know, we got to know each other, and it has been quite an honor, because I will say, right off the bat, what you see is what you get. I think everybody sitting up here has had the opportunity to sit down personally with him, and his personality, no matter what we were dealing with, no matter what pressure was facing us, was the same personality you received 24/7. I do not care if I was talking to him at 3 in the morning, 4 in the morning, 5 in the morning, or at 11 at night, which we did multiple times, he always this same type of personality, which is exactly what we need in our Army today.

We need consistency. We need a leader that our warfighters and those that are supporting our warfighters can rally behind. We need someone that brings positive attention to the real challenges that the Army is facing. As has been pointed out by our Ranking Member Reed, he is also the third generation in the family that has served, proudly and honorably, in the Army, and currently has a nephew that is stationed in Korea. He is heavily invested in it.

So I want to go through and read what he has accomplished, because it honestly makes me sometimes feel intimidated by sitting beside him when you start thinking about it.

First of all, he graduated in 3 years at UNC Chapel Hill with the highest distinction. I am still trying to figure out how to graduate from college. He used his 9/11 G.I. Bill to attend Yale Law School, worked at Yale's Veteran Legal Service Clinic. He ran for the U.S. House of Representatives in North Carolina's 11th District in 2020. He lost, but I want to show that he was willing to serve, and when that happened it just got him more involved in public service.

He did not go away. He still stayed involved, which sometimes defeat shows the biggest character, and that is when we first started getting to know each other, and his character shined true in that. He was not upset, he was not bitter, and we all know individuals that have lost elections that get very bitter. Instead, he dug down and still wanted to know how he could be involved in public service. It spoke highly of his character.

He worked at the 100 watt investment firm, was chief operating officer at a \$200 million venture capital fund, a member of the North Carolina State Bar Rotary Club, VFW Post 1137, and the IAVA [Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America].

Just to go through some of the stuff he did in the military, basic service training at Fort Jackson, OCS commissioned to U.S. Army as an armor officer. Completed Army Ranger School, stationed at Fort Drum New York with the 10th Mountain Light Infantry Division as a Cavalry Scout Platoon Leader. Deployed in 2009 to Bagh-

dad, Iraq, in support of Operation Freedom, earned the rank of first lieutenant.

Awards include the Army Accommodation Medal, Combat Action Badge, Ranger Tab, National Defense Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal and a Campaign Star, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, and Overseas Service Ribbon.

I think the things if you ask him that he is most proud about is his wife and his two kids though. His personal life is something that guides him each day, and I know this personally because we have had deep conversations about our family and about how we balance the work life and how it can be done.

We have had conversations about how you center your life and make sure your priorities are right because I believe wholeheartedly if your priorities are straight with God, family, and everything else, that everything else you will be highly successful at. This is why Dan has been highly successful in everything that he has put his hands upon.

For us to have someone like himself that is willing to step away from his family for a short period of time, because you all know the challenges that he is going to face, to be willing to still serve when he does not have to is exactly what we need. We need a selfless server that is going to be willing to take on the task of the United States Army, and as Secretary of Army, we have got a winner here.

So I really hope that all my colleagues, that this could possibly be a unanimous support of someone that is exactly what the United States needs today. With that, I will yield back.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you very much, Senator Mullin.

Senator Blumenthal, I do not know about you, but I did not know until this morning that Senator Mullin could be intimidated, so this is a revelation to us. You are now recognized.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thanks, Mr. Chairman, and I join Senator Mullin in observing how impressive this panel looks from this vantage point. More impressive without us being up there, I may say.

I want to join my colleagues in expressing my deep heartbreak at the tragic loss on American Airlines Flight 5342 and the soldiers lost on PAT25. My heart goes out to the families, especially of the servicemen who were lost. My heart breaks for their loved ones, and I want to thank the first responders for swiftly delivering their critical assistance at the scene.

As we await further updates, I hope that we will all pledge to redouble our efforts to ensure that the Federal agencies that make the Nation's skies safe, the FAA [Federal Aviation Administration], the NTSB [National Transportation Safety Board], the DOT [Department Of Transportation] and others, have the tools, the funding, the resources, support from the Congress to prevent future tragedies like this one. We all fly in and out of that airport, and I must say I often look out the window, as perhaps you do, with planes taking off and landing and wondering how this dangerous dance is done safely day in and day out. But we have to invest in the technology as well as the people to make it safe.

I have the great honor to introduce Dan Driscoll, and I want to thank his family, his wife Cassie, son Daniel and daughter Lila. We all know that families serve along with public officials, especially in our military and Department of Defense (DOD). I join the

Chairman and the Ranking Member in observing that the Army stands at a pivotal juncture. Ongoing global conflicts and nascent threats demand that the Army remains the strongest, best fighting land force in the world, and that we assure that they never have a fair fight, that they always have superiority in every space and sphere.

This nomination comes at a time when leadership and accountability in the Department of Defense require the highest standards of integrity, judgment, and capability. The next Secretary of the Army will be faced with training and equipping that land force in a way that reflects our Nation's values and commitments.

Now, this introduction is personal for me. As many of you know, Dan Driscoll was a classmate of the Vice President at Yale Law School, also my alma mater. He came to know, at Yale Law School, Jake Sullivan, who has just finished serving as National Security Advisor for President Biden, and Matt Blumenthal, my son, who is a United States Marine Corps veteran of Afghanistan.

Once Dan's nomination became public, I quickly heard from both Jake and Matt. Both shared stories of their friendship with Dan and recounted his strong intellect, his powerful work ethic, and his willingness to find solutions to difficult problems based on the facts, whatever those solutions might be. As a lawyer, we follow the facts and the law, and that is what Dan Driscoll will do as Secretary of the Army. He assured me that he is a person willing to listen, to learn, and to work in a bipartisan way to put our soldiers first.

I am confident that his prior service in the Army will serve him well, and he will remember that the Army's strength comes not just from its technological prowess but from the Americans who proudly wear the uniform he once wore.

I spoke to Dan a number of times in the course of his preparing for his appearance here today, and those conversations convinced me that he is willing to work on the basis of collegiality, be transparent and open with this panel, with the Congress and our colleagues. I welcome this opportunity to introduce him perhaps as a sign of not just the collegiality but the bipartisanship that has characterized this Committee so clearly and consistently.

So I am proud to introduce him today, and I hope that my colleagues will ask him tough questions, because he has indicated to me that he is not only confident in his ability to serve, but also in his ability to learn and do it with an open mind and a willingness to listen to Members of this Committee when we have views that he has to hear.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield the floor.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you, Senator Blumenthal, and to both Senator Blumenthal and Senator Mullin, I do not want either of you to feel anxious. So if you would like to return to your seats up here, you may do so.

Mr. Driscoll, you are now recognized for your opening statement. We appreciate you being here.

**STATEMENT OF DANIEL P. DRISCOLL, TO BE SECRETARY OF  
THE ARMY**

Mr. DRISCOLL. Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed, distinguished Members of the Committee, good morning. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as the nominee to serve as Secretary of the United States Army. It is an honor to be considered for this role. To Senator Mullin and Senator Blumenthal, I am sincerely thankful for the introductions, and I am deeply grateful for the trust and confidence placed in me by President Trump.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to all involved in last night's tragedy, which occurred a few miles away from this hearing room. If confirmed, I commit to working with this Committee to ensure that this never happens again.

Returning to my prepared remarks, I would like to begin by acknowledging my family who could not join me here because of the rescheduled hearing, but I know are watching. To my wife Cassie, who manages to keep us afloat despite being an accomplished surgeon, and children, Daniel and Lila, it is your unwavering support that has made my service possible, and I will be forever grateful. I also want to thank the men and women of the United States Army, past and present, whose courage and dedication inspire all of us every day.

My commitment to this role is rooted in my family's long lineage of military service. My grandfather served in the Army during World War II as a decoder. My father served as an infantryman in Vietnam. I served as a cavalry scout in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, and, in as much as you can trust the plans of an 8-year-old, my son, Daniel plans to join too.

We are a family that is grateful to have had the privilege of wearing the uniform of the United States Army. We are a family that understands the gravity of leading soldiers in and out of combat. We are a family that has chosen for generations to serve alongside our brothers and sisters in arms.

I joined the Army as a middle-class public school kid from the mountains of North Carolina. The values and experiences I gained through military service molded me into the man I am today, and they opened up ways for opportunities I could scarcely have imagined when I enlisted. In my experience, the transformative power of military service is open to those who are willing and able to shoulder the task.

During my time in the Army, I was fortunate to serve and deploy to combat alongside soldiers who represent the very best of America. The American soldier's professionalism, ingenuity, and dedication are unmatched. Whether in garrison at Fort Drum, New York, on the training grounds of Yuma, Arizona, or on the battlefield in Baghdad, Iraq, I saw firsthand the immense sacrifices they and their families make to uphold the freedoms we hold dear. The world is changing rapidly, and we must ensure the Army is prepared to operate in new, complex, and contested environments. From advancing our capabilities in multi-domain operations to cutting-edge technologies, my sacred duty to our Army is to ensure our soldiers have the world's finest training, equipment, and leadership to accomplish any mission, and to be as lethal a force as it can be.

If confirmed, I intend to be the soldiers' Secretary of the Army. This is why I believe President Trump has nominated me. America's soldiers and their families will be my mission.

Last, I recognize the importance of working closely with Congress, and in particular with this Committee. Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed, and Members of the Committee, it is the honor of my life to be given the opportunity to earn your trust and continue my service to our great nation. I look forward to responding to your questions and discussing how we can work together to support the soldiers, civilians, and families who make up the United States Army. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Daniel P. Driscoll follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT BY MR. DAN DRISCOLL

Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed, distinguished Members of the Committee, good morning. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as the nominee to serve as Secretary of the United States Army. It is an honor to be considered for this role. To Senator Mullin and Senator Blumenthal, I'm sincerely thankful for the introductions. I am deeply grateful for the trust and confidence placed in me by President Trump.

I would like to begin by acknowledging my family who have joined me here today. To my wife, Cassie, who manages to keep us afloat despite being an accomplished surgeon, and children, Daniel and Lila—your unwavering support has made my service possible, and I will be forever grateful. I also want to thank the men and women of the United States Army, past and present, whose courage and dedication inspire all of us every day.

My commitment to this role is rooted in my family's long lineage of military service. My grandfather served in the Army during World War II as a decoder. My father served during Vietnam as an infantryman. I served as a cavalry scout in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. In as much as you can trust the plans of an 8-year old, my son, Daniel is planning to join the Army too.

We are a family that is grateful to have had the privilege of wearing the uniform of the United States Army. We are a family that understands the gravity of leading soldiers in, and out of combat. We are a family that has chosen to serve alongside our brothers and sisters in Arms for generations.

I joined the Army as a middle class public school kid from the mountains of North Carolina. The values and experiences I gained through military service molded me into the man I am today and opened the way for opportunities I could scarcely have imagined when I enlisted. In my experience, the transformative power of military service is open to all those who are willing and able to shoulder the task.

If confirmed, I will continue my family's lineage of service. I will be accountable to the President, the Congress, and the American people for the judicious and effective use of an approximately \$200 billion budget and leadership of over a million soldiers and civilians.

Most important, I intend to be the soldiers' Secretary of the Army, not of the Generals or of the Bureaucracy. It is the American Soldier to whom our national defense and prosperity are entrusted. This is why I believe President Trump has nominated me. These are serious obligations that I will enter into with humility and determination.

During my time in the Army, I was fortunate to serve, and deploy to combat, alongside soldiers who represent the very best of America. The American soldier's professionalism, ingenuity, and dedication are unmatched. Whether in garrison at Fort Drum, NY, on the training grounds of Yuma, Arizona or on the battlefield in Baghdad, Iraq, I saw firsthand the immense sacrifices they and their families make to uphold the freedoms we hold dear. This service and sacrifice by soldiers is what will drive my commitment to ensuring the Army has the resources, leadership, and support it needs to remain the world's premier land force. I also saw firsthand how the decisions their leaders made affected the lives of our soldiers, many times decisions which just didn't make sense. We must do better, and we will do better for our soldiers.

The Army's purpose is simple. To protect and advance our national interests by deterring our adversaries. If deterrence fails, to win wars with overwhelming dominance. If confirmed, I will prioritize the readiness and modernization of the service to realize that purpose. The world is changing rapidly, and we must ensure the

Army is prepared to operate in new, complex and contested environments. From advancing our capabilities in multi-domain operations to cutting-edge technologies, my sacred duty to our Army is to ensure our soldiers have the world's finest training, equipment, and leadership to accomplish any mission, and to be as lethal a force as it can be.

One of my top priorities will be reinvigorating the defense industrial base. New battlefields are teaching us important lessons. These conflicts have demonstrated that the innovation, production, and fielding of some of our new weapons and capabilities must be done in weeks and months rather than years or decades. I believe our Nations' innovators and their companies stand ready for this challenge. We must empower them and hold them accountable for achieving these new goals as it is our warfighters who will ultimately pay the price.

If confirmed, America's soldiers will be my mission. Recruitment and retention challenges demand innovative solutions and a renewed focus on quality of life for our troops and their families. The Army has a rich history filled with American heroes in both war and peace. With the Army's 250th anniversary this year, we have a unique opportunity to tell those stories to a generation of future soldiers, who may not yet know that service is their path.

On retention, I want to take a moment to thank this Committee for passing the Fiscal Year 2025 NDAA. Your hard work to improve the pay, housing and access to childcare is appreciated by our soldiers and their families. We ask so much of them, and you have helped us take an important step in supporting them. If confirmed, your efforts will have made my job easier and I will strive to ensure you see a return on that investment through increased retention of our most capable personnel who will comprise the Army's future leaders.

Last, I recognize the importance of working closely with Congress and in particular with this Committee. Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed, and Members of the Committee, it is the honor of my life to be given the opportunity to earn your trust and continue my service to our great Nation. I look forward to responding to your questions and discussing how we can work together to support the soldiers, civilians, and families who make up the United States Army. Thank you.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you very much, Mr. Driscoll. Before I begin my questions, there are a few routine questions which we ask all civilian nominees that appear before this Committee, so if you would answer these questions. Have you adhered to applicable laws and regulations governing conflicts of interest?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Yes.

Chairman WICKER. Have you assumed any duties or taken any actions that would appear to presume the outcome of the confirmation process?

Mr. DRISCOLL. No.

Chairman WICKER. Exercising our legislative and oversight responsibilities makes it important that this Committee, its subcommittees, and other appropriate committees of Congress receive testimony, briefings, reports, records and other information from the executive branch on a timely basis. Do you agree, if confirmed, to appear and testify before this Committee when requested?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Yes.

Chairman WICKER. Do you agree to provide records, documents and electronic communications in a timely manner when requested by this Committee, its subcommittees, or other appropriate Committees of Congress and to consult with the requester regarding the basis for any good faith delay or denial in providing such records?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Yes.

Chairman WICKER. Will you ensure that your staff complies with deadlines established by this Committee for the production of reports, records and other information including timely responding to hearing questions for the record?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Yes.

Chairman WICKER. Will you cooperate in providing witnesses and briefers and response to congressional requests?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Yes.

Chairman WICKER. Will those witnesses and briefers be protected from reprisal for their testimony or briefings?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Yes.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you very, very much. Let me begin then my line of questioning by getting back to something I mentioned in my opening statement, and that is Junior ROTC. This Committee is serious about building Junior ROTC. It is a matter of scholarly study that Junior ROTC, whether Army or the other branches, is a citizenship builder. Students who volunteer for Junior ROTC, and they only take volunteers. They have better attendance records, they have higher graduation records, they attend post-secondary education at a higher rate, and in general, they are better students. This is without question based on peer-reviewed studies.

We have increased the minimum number of Junior ROTC units by 200 in our legislation, yet there are today only 15 more units across the DOD than there were 2 years ago.

Now, as Chairman of this Committee, and I think I speak for the Committee, we intend for the statute to be followed. This is not a ceiling that we have created. It is a floor, and we intend for the Department of Defense and the Department of the Army to follow the statute as passed by the House and Senate and signed by the President of the United States. So it troubles me that only 15 units across the country have actually been opened in spite of our statute.

Meanwhile, there are 300 schools around the country that are on a waiting list. If you ask a principal, any principal in any State of the Union, would they like a Junior ROTC, they say yes. If you ask the school board or the superintendent, they say, "We would love to have a Junior ROTC." This is a winner. The data are clear and a RAND Corporation study supports this.

So Mr. Driscoll, if confirmed, how would you plan to improve the situation that I have described and to reduce the Army Junior ROTC waiting list?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Senator, I appreciate the question, and thank you for taking the time in your office to dive into this with me. This is actually a personal issue. My nephew, who is now stationed in Korea, did JROTC in Lexington, Virginia. It was one of the most powerful experiences in his life, and I think that this is a topic that requires focus from the top. I commit, if confirmed, to looking at this, working with the team, because these are the kind of lineages and relationships and chains that we can build into communities that can get us not just one future soldier but get us generations of soldiers. So I would love to work with your office, if confirmed.

Chairman WICKER. Even those who do not go into military service are better citizens. So I appreciate that. So how are we going to tackle the overall issue of Army recruiting?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I think we have an incredible opportunity this year, Senator. It is the 250th anniversary of the Army. The Army has an incredible history that can be told of the men and women that have served and the amazing deeds they have done both in

and out of uniform. This year, we can take that momentum and build a backlog and a pipeline of soldiers that can hopefully fill up for the next couple of years. The Army has been actually taking some reasonably good steps, it seems from the outside. The Future Soldier Corps out of Fort Jackson that has been helping with ASVAB [Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery] prep and a lot of the physical fitness prep seems to be working.

If confirmed, I would want to look and see if that can be scaled even further. There are a lot of technology tools that have been integrated into the recruiting process. Some of them have had great benefits. Some of them like digitizing young people's medical records have had unintended consequences where now we are starting to find all sorts of things we would not have been able to see before. I think we need to take a deep dive on what are those unintended consequences to some of the things we are doing and try to create pathways and mechanisms for more waivers or whatever it is to continue to strengthen the Army's recruiting pipeline.

Chairman WICKER. I agree with that. Thank you very much. Senator Reed, you are recognized.

Senator REED. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Driscoll, you bring integrity, intelligence, and the experience as a young officer leading soldiers, which is the greatest privilege an American can have, so thank you for that.

In one of your advanced policy questions you said that the current promotion system does not necessarily select senior officers for their institutional knowledge or strategic acumen, which are increasingly desirable. Could you elaborate on that?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Senator, I think contrasting my experience in the military with my experience in the private sector, the private sector does recruiting a little bit differently where it is often the best woman or a man for the job. Time in a specific role is less correlated with promotion, and there are all sorts of things that would be a larger mosaic of traits that you would look at. I think the Army could take a similar view of promotion and mechanize it.

Senator REED. How would you describe the current sort of metric for promotion in the Army? My assumption is that it is principally based on performance and merit.

Mr. DRISCOLL. Senator, my understanding is that is a component of it with a heavy weighting toward time in service or time in your role.

Senator REED. Now, will you look at this promotion system with the idea you are making appropriate changes?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Yes, Senator.

Senator REED. Thank you. In the acquisition process we have, as you suggest in your answers, barriers to doing business from your perspective and particularly those in the 1980's that were designed to ensure fair competition. Could you generally describe these barriers and what you think you can do to eliminate them?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Senator, I think the first thing we need to do is improve the Army as a customer. The current model the Army uses to acquire things rewards entities that are enormous. The big five primes are the case study in who can currently survive such a hard relationship with a customer. The Army's ability to project what it is going to need in the future limits the ability for companies to



buildup the infrastructure to provide that support and to price things knowing how long the Army will remain in its life. I think that a hard focus on improving the Army's ability to project what it needs and empowering the defense base to expand from, call it, 5 to 7 to 25 to 50 would be powerful first steps.

Senator REED. One of the issues that you will face is the apparent increased deployments to the border for immigration activities. Back in June 2020, before the Appropriations Committee, General Hokanson, who is the previous commander of the National Guard, said, and I will quote, "As I have expressed within the building as well, there is no military training value for what we do. This is a law enforcement mission under the Department of Homeland Security." He also emphasizes stress on families of such missions.

What is your assessment of the training value and consequently the readiness status of the forces?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Senator, I think border security is national security. We have had soldiers at the border for a number of years. I think the Army stands ready to execute on any mission from the President of the United States and Secretary of Defense up to and including helping to secure our border.

Senator REED. But is there a cost in terms of readiness? Readiness to conduct military operations against a military opponent, not an immigrant?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I think the Army has a long 249-year history, Senator, of balancing multiple objectives, and if this is important to our commander in chief the Army will execute on it.

Senator REED. I guess the question would be how do you account then for General Hokanson's observation after serving as the Commander of the National Guard and looking closely at many National Guard deployments?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I think, Senator, the burden borne by our National Guard is something when I was in, when we deployed, the stress on their families is incredible. They were doing many deployments back to back. They have to manage jobs outside of their military roles. I think it adds a stress level that a lot of times is forgotten or just set aside by leaders.

My commitment to this Committee is, if confirmed, I would want to, anytime we work with National Guard, make sure we are considering and taking into account this stress on their jobs back home and on their families.

Senator REED. Well, thank you very, very much, Mr. Driscoll and thank you for your family's service.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you, Senator Reed. Senator Fischer.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and welcome, Mr. Driscoll. It is good to see you. Thank you for your service and really the sacrifice, service, commitment of your family as well.

The last several years from the war in Ukraine and the United States response to Iranian and Houthi attacks in the Middle East, it really has demonstrated just how quickly munitions are expended in modern conflicts. If confirmed, will you commit to reviewing our current stockpile requirements for Army munitions to ensure our stockpiles are right-sized for modern conflicts, especially for potential conflicts that would last more than a few weeks?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Absolutely, Senator, and this is a topic that you and I have talked about. I think what we have learned in Ukraine and with some of the other conflicts is it is no longer sufficient to buildup a munition supply, put it on the shelf over 20 years, and hope that we guessed the right amount that we or our allies or our friends would need. We have got to have an industrial base that is able to scale with us. I thank the Committee for this work on 155 munitions and getting it going again, but we have to do more, and if confirmed, I would want to work with this Committee and your office, Senator, to do a deep dive on this.

Senator FISCHER. Since the cold war, we have, I think, seen this pattern of feast and famine. When there is conflict, the first couple years we boost up production and then we let it slide, and I do not believe we can continue to have that kind of pattern there. You said you would work with Congress, that you would work with the Committee on that.

Just what do you think, off the top of your head, since we had the discussion, what do you believe is a path forward that you would suggest to this Committee? Do we have the necessary resources available to be able to accomplish that currently, do you think?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Senator, to the resource question, I would need to take a deeper dive once briefed, if confirmed, to what we could do. I think the United States has an incredible history of agile and innovative manufacturing. It has decayed as a nation over the last couple of decades, but it is still there. The American people will be with us if we include them. I think if you look at the private sector and the innovation loop, we do have some case studies of being able to create things with soldiers, having coders with them in the field, and actually updating products and getting it back to the manufacturing floor with a much tighter innovation loop. I think we can do that working together and it could make an incredible difference.

Senator FISCHER. Do we have the authorities to be able to accomplish that now, or do you think that you would need more authority to be able to move us quickly forward?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I think we do have the authorities, Senator.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you. Mr. Driscoll, small drones and the UAS, they are undoubtedly going to play a key role in future conflicts, but where do you see opportunities to expand the Army's use of those drones and unmanned systems?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I think, Senator, and it was incredibly great talking to you about this, it has changed how warfare has fought. When I did armor school, the way we have designed much of our equipment, our tanks in particular, our tanks are built to receive fire from the front or indirect fire from the top. They are not built to receive it from the rear or the back corners. So there are soft spots all over our tanks, which are some of our most dependable fighting machines, that very cheap drones rigged with very cheap explosives can exploit. I think we saw this with the Russian invasion in Ukraine, that a lot of the way that we have thought about how to fight will have to change because of drones, both large and small with swarms. We can no longer shoot \$4 million missiles to take down a \$400 drone. That just simple math does not add up. We are going to have to find solutions, whether it is directed en-

ergy or whatever it is, that can have a cost-effective way to provide security.

Senator FISCHER. You answered my second part of the question on how we are going to make sure it is cost-effective because right now it is not.

Okay, recruiting. We see tremendous challenges with recruiting in the Army across all services. What is your current assessment right now of the Army's recruiting challenges, and how would you address them?

Mr. DRISCOLL. My sense is for the last 3 or 4 years, we have missed our goals. I believe even the goals we hit from the outside, it seems as if the Army lowered their goals. The best analogy that I heard is the Army threw the dart at the dartboard and then drew the bullseye around where the dart landed. That is not a great way to staff an army. We have the fewest number of Active Duty soldiers that we have had since World War II right now. Conflict is erupting around the world.

I think there is a story to tell of the United States Army that young people want to hear, and I think we have complicated that story a bit over the last couple of years. I actually do not think it is throwing more money at the problem. I think it is nice to get things like the GI Bill, I got to use the GI Bill but I did not enlist for that. I enlisted because I wanted to go serve my country, and I think young people stand by ready for us to tell that story again in a compelling way. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you to tell that story.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you. I look forward to working with you.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you, Senator Fischer. Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Mr. Driscoll, congratulations on your nomination. Thank you for your past service and for the willingness of you and your family to continue to serve this country.

I want to start by expressing my condolences, as the Chair and Ranking Member, on the loss of lives last night, those members of the military who were lost as well as everyone lost in that air tragedy.

According to the Army's fiscal year 2024 accident or mishap assessment that was just released this month, 2024 had the most Class A flight mishap rates per 100,000 hours since 2007. So what will your strategy be to try and keep training flights out of harm's way?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Senator, to echo your remarks, it is an absolute tragedy. I have seen the same thing I believe you are on television. So it is an accident that seems to be preventable from what we can tell today. That should not happen. I think a focus from the top-down on a culture of safety. There are appropriate times to take risk and there are inappropriate times to take risk. I do not know the details around this one. But after doing it, if confirmed, and working with this committee to figure out the facts, I think we might need to look at where is an appropriate time to take training risk and it may not be near an airport like Reagan.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you. As I am sure you know, historically the Secretary of the Army has unique Homeland defense responsibilities and it is especially critical in times of crises. So at

the direction of the Army Secretary, you could direct that the National Guard be available to coordinate with civilian authorities on airspace. Is this something that you will be willing to consider and to work with civilian authorities?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Absolutely, Senator.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. I want to followup on your conversation with Senator Fischer because, as you know, most of the capabilities that we have provided to Ukraine come from Army stock or Army programs, Abrams tanks, anti-air and anti-armor weapons, long-range strike and guided multiple rocket launchers. The National Security Supplemental that Congress passed last year is providing real relief to the U.S. industrial base, including in New Hampshire where we have a significant defense industrial base.

If confirmed, will you ensure that Army stockpiles can meet our national security requirements and will you include in your budget and supplemental requests to Congress enough funding to replenish the defense industrial base?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Senator, as I told your colleague, I think this is one of the great problems facing our time in getting our munition and getting our magazines back up to where they need to be. I think we need to use this moment to figure out how do we create sustainable, scalable solutions so that if in the future we need to tap back into those stockpiles, how do we get them to scale even faster?

I commit to working with your office to both get us to where we need to be to replace what we have used in Ukraine, or to what we have had our friends using in Ukraine. But then also to get lessons learned from that, that we can record, so that we are ready to go if we need to for a threat like China.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you. One of the things we talked about when we met in my office was some of the challenges, those exact challenges. One of the companies I mentioned was L3 and their development of ENVG-Bs, the night vision goggles that have been so important to the Army. You talked about improving the Army's ability to project what it needs over the long term. One of the challenges that we have had with the ENVG-Bs is that the Army budget requests have been up and down over the years. They have not been consistent despite positive feedback from our warfighters.

How will we commit to dealing with that kind of budget inconsistency and how will you address it? What kinds of things, strategies are you thinking to address it?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Senator, I think this is the perfect kind of topic where, if confirmed, working with this committee to find solutions for funding. This is a problem that includes a lot of different parties, and I think a level of transparency and inclusion and planning will be helpful. As the Army does things like IVAS [Integrated Visual Augmentation System], it may be expanding away from some of the previous technologies that it used. I think we have to keep our eye on what has worked in the past and keep a hybrid of maintaining and refurbishing some of the old technologies to kind of smooth out the transition to the new ones, and I look forward to working with your office on these kinds of topics, if confirmed.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you very much. As you point out, we are not going to be able to replenish the stockpiles that we are losing if we do not have a strategy for how to deal with this long-term and ensure that our companies that are so critical to that replenishment are engaged in that conversation.

So thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you for that excellent point, Senator Shaheen. Senator Sullivan.

Senator SULLIVAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Driscoll, congratulations. I appreciated our meeting. I look forward to supporting you, in spite of your Yale law degree, which I think generally is disqualifying, but I will overlook that this time.

Ten years ago I was in this position. I was a brand new U.S. Senator, been here for a month, and the Obama administration announced, as part of its gutting of our U.S. Military, they were going to cut 40,000 Active Duty Army troops including the 425 at JBER [Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson] in Alaska, the only airborne brigade combat team in the entire Indo-Pacific, strategic national security suicide in my view. I was a brand new Senator. I fought that with everything I had. I put a hold on the Chief of Staff of the Army's confirmation. I put a hold on the Secretary of the Army's confirmation for several weeks until we got the Army to see the light, okay? Obama ended up cutting 35,000 troops, and he kept the 425 in Alaska, 5,000 airborne army troopers, which became the cornerstone of the 11th Airborne Division, as we built up the Army in Alaska.

Are you aware that the Army now has two Active Duty airborne divisions?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I am, Senator.

Senator SULLIVAN. The 82d, which we all love, but the 11th Airborne Division, which is in Alaska, the Arctic Angels. Are you aware of that?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I am, Senator.

Senator SULLIVAN. Great. So imagine my surprise, there have been some recent articles in the paper saying certain leaders in policy roles in the Trump Pentagon have passed ideas in the debate about shifting resources to the Indo-Pacific, which I support, but passed ideas on how we can do that.

One was a report, an idea from a report from 2021, that would deactivate four striker brigade combat teams, 6 infantry brigade combat teams, two National Guard aviation brigades, more than 10 percent of the Army's Active Duty combat power. If this idea ever saw its head in the Pentagon from a non-Senate-confirmed DAS [Deputy Assistant Secretary], I need your commitment to me and this Committee right now that you would kill it.

Mr. DRISCOLL. Senator, I commit, if confirmed, to fight as hard as I can for the Army. As I said to your colleague, the Army is at its lowest staffing since World War II.

Senator SULLIVAN. Right, and do you think cutting 12 brigade combat teams worth of combat power is a good idea?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Without knowing the specifics Senator, no.

Senator SULLIVAN. Well, come on. Just I need your answer to say no.

Mr. DRISCOLL. No.

Senator SULLIVAN. Do you think cutting 12 brigade combats—this is Obama 2.0, right? Do you think cutting 12 brigade combat teams from the Army would implement President Trump and Secretary Hegseth's policies of peace through strength?

Mr. DRISCOLL. No.

Senator SULLIVAN. No, it would not. Do you think it would deter Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin if this idea, and maybe this idea has been discarded by this DAS who is there right now, cutting 12 brigade combat teams would help with deterrence?

Mr. DRISCOLL. No.

Senator SULLIVAN. I do not think so either. Well, thank you on that, because very disturbing when I read that, and I am glad you agree with me that we are not doing Obama 2.0. We are doing Reagan and Trump 1-2.0, peace through strength, and ideas of gutting the Army's act of duty force, that is what I fought when I came here. If there is anyone who is trying to do that, we will fight it. I will fight it.

Okay, let me go to another question. In addition to the 11th Airborne Division in Alaska, we have the 49th Missile Defense Battalion at Fort Greeley. A lot of people do not know this but the cornerstone of missile defense for America is in Alaska, and it is led by the U.S. Army. The President put out his Iron Dome Executive Order recently for layered missile defense. I fully support that.

Will you work with me and this Committee, Senator Cramer, we are going to be introducing legislation to bolster what the President's trying to do, but a lot of it will involve the Army. A lot of people do not know that. The 49th Missile Defense Battalion at Fort Greeley, they like to call themselves the 300 protecting the 300 million, because they protect the whole country. Will you commit to working with this Committee and me on bolstering our missile defenses, particularly as it relates to Fort Greeley and our brave soldiers who are doing a great job defending our Nation, and come to Alaska with me to see them in the 11th Airborne Division?

Mr. DRISCOLL. It would be an honor, Senator. As we talked about in your office, I was stationed with 10th Mountain Division in Fort Drum, New York.

Senator SULLIVAN. Where there are no mountains.

Mr. DRISCOLL. When you get there you assume 10th Mountain Division would have mountains around and I think the highest elevation on the entire base is 50 feet. So I would be honored, Senator.

Chairman WICKER. Great, thank you. Thank you, Mr. Driscoll.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you very much. Senator Warren.

Senator WARREN. Thank you Mr. Chairman. Congratulations on your nomination, Mr. Driscoll.

What I would like to do is continue the conversation that we started in my office. The Army buys a lot of stuff, from tanks to helicopters. They buy a lot of stuff from big defense contractors. But those giant companies often sneak restrictions into the contracts. They hog up the software rights or the technical data all to prevent servicemembers from being able to repair their own equipment.

So today I would like to talk through an example so we can see the difference it makes when the Army is not hamstrung by right-

to-repair restrictions. Last year the Army needed a new cover for a safety clip, but the contractor told the Army they could not have it for months and the safety clips would cost \$20 a pop. Now thankfully, the Army had managed to keep right-to-repair restrictions out of this contract and was able to 3D print the part in less than an hour for a total cost of 16 cents.

Now, Mr. Driscoll, does being able to get the parts we need in hours, maybe minutes instead of months, and for nickels instead of dollars, help U.S. readiness and national security?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Unequivocally, Senator.

Senator WARREN. Good. When right-to-repair restrictions are in place, it is bigger profits for giant defense contractors, but also higher prices for DOD and longer wait times for servicemembers who need to get their equipment repaired so they are ready to go. Chairman Wicker has an Acquisition Reform Agenda which calls for a complete review of data rights across the Department of Defense. I think that is exactly right because it would help put the Army fully in command of the equipment that it has paid so much for.

Mr. Driscoll, let me ask you, if confirmed, will you work with this Committee to identify more opportunities where the Army can save money and time by making their own parts and fixing their own equipment?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, unequivocally, Senator.

Senator WARREN. Would you like to expand on that at all?

Mr. DRISCOLL. This type of innovation that is happening in the private sector at scale in a lot of ways seems to have not trickled into the Army as much. If we think about engagement with a peer like China, being able to repair our parts in areas around the world will be crucial to that. If we are having 6-month delays in CONUS [Continental United States] and paying 100x the rate, that is not scalable in an actual conflict. So I am totally supportive, Senator.

Senator WARREN. Good.

Chairman WICKER. That was a very good answer, Mr. Driscoll.

Senator WARREN. It was an excellent answer. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Right-to-repair restrictions have truly gotten out of control and they threaten our national security. In some cases, the Army cannot even write its own training manual without a sign-off from the contractor. My Service Member Right-to-Repair Act would help fix this problem.

But a root cause of this defense contractor profiteering is the revolving door between senior Pentagon officials and big defense contractors. Last year I released a report that found 700 instances of top-20 DOD contractors hiring former high-ranking officials. Do you think this is a problem, Mr. Driscoll?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I do, Senator.

Senator WARREN. When government officials cash in on their public service by lobbying, advising, or serving as board members and executives for the companies that they used to regulate, it undermines public officials' integrity and it casts doubt on the fairness of government contracting, and it costs DOD a lot of money. We owe it to our taxpayers and we owe it to our men and women

in uniform to fix this broken system. I look forward to working with you on this, Mr. Driscoll.

Mr. DRISCOLL. Thank you, Senator.

Senator WARREN. Thank you, I yield back.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you, Senator Warren. Senator Cramer.

Senator CRAMER. Thank you, Chairman, and Senator Reed, and thank you Mr. Driscoll for your service and your willingness to step in the gap again in this important position.

I am going to, first of all, thanks for all your answers to the previous questions, particularly on acquisition reform. It is a high priority for the chairman. It is a high priority for all of us, and quite honestly, I worry less about witnesses' answers to questions and promises that come from people at the Pentagon than I do the culture. To me, that is the big thing that all the policies in the world, in fact, I appreciated you answering earlier to the question that I think it was Senator Fischer asked when you said you have some of the authorities already that you need. We just have to go faster, and the Army does it quite well by the way. But just know that I am on the encouragement side. Go faster, as I have said from this roster many, many times to witnesses.

If people go faster and innovate more and encourage innovation, particularly from smaller companies, I promise not to be the person that sits up here and says, "I got you," when something bad happens, but I promise you I will be your worst nightmare if you fail to go fast because you are worried about your backside and some DOD lawyer or leader that does not have the guts to do what needs to be done to keep up with the pace of China. Having said all that, great answers.

I am going to go a whole different direction and talk to you about the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. A number of us, including the Chairman, Senator Sullivan, and at least the three of us and maybe a couple of others up here, are also on the Environment and Public Works Committee so we have jurisdiction over the Corps of Engineers in two committees. In the last Congress, in the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA), that was signed into law December 2022, I authored some bipartisan language with Senator Merkley requiring the Army Corps to establish the Western Water Cooperative Committee. Now, the Corps hates advisory committees, but this was a committee of Western states, at the encouragement of Western states, every Governor from Washington State to California to the Dakotas and in between supported it, and every attorney general. In other words, a pretty diverse group of leaders in this country, supported this Western Water Cooperative Committee. It was to be implemented no later than 90 days after enactment.

So here we are more than 2 years later, after it has been authorized and fully funded, it still has not been stood up. Now, that is not your fault. But Senator Merkley and I sent the Corps a letter in October of last year asking for an update. After a whole bunch of back and forth leading up to this hearing, I finally got a little bit of clarity the other day on the process—process, by the way, is a word I am growing to hate; process is what DOD officials use to kill good people and good ideas. Just my opinion. Thanks for listen-



ing. But I finally have a bit of clarity on the process and what the Army's working through.

Yesterday I was told that the committee's charter currently sits before the DOD's Advisory Committee Management Office, really, and will be approved within 30 days. It is a law. It has been approved by the only people that matter, the people in Congress and the President of the United States. So 30 days to approve something that they are required to do by law seems a little outrageous to me, but I am going to be generous today.

After that, quote, "30 days," which we will see—I will believe it when I see it—it goes back to the Army for action, okay? Now that does not give me a lot of solace because I have history. Again, it is a law. It has been a law for over 2 years.

Now I know you are not in your role yet, Mr. Driscoll, and I did not plan on using my time on this topic necessarily, but my colleagues have done a great job on the priorities of the day. Can I get your commitment that it does not have to take 30 days to get something going that is been the law for over 2 years, that DOD officials, who do not like this idea, have just tried to kill by stalling? Do I have your commitment to get to it and get it done in quick order?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Unequivocally, Senator. and just to highlight, I hope it is illustrative and I would hold myself accountable to this next statement, having two of your colleagues here from each side, I intend to, if confirmed, work with this Committee and follow the law. I would absolutely commit to looking into that.

Senator CRAMER. Thank you. I yield.

Chairman WICKER. Senator Cramer, thank you for your question, which is well taken and applies to the issue that I rose about the increased floor of junior ROTC units, for which there are 300 applications and only 15 have been created in response to a statute passed by the Congress and signed by the President of the United States.

Senator KAINE, you are next.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Mr. Driscoll. Congratulations on your nomination.

Thanks to all my colleagues who offered thoughts about the crash, the three soldiers from Belvoir, we do not have their identities yet, but that is something I know the Army family feels and this region feels, all my colleagues do actually, because all my colleagues have staffers who work in this area and we are all kind of awaiting with dread the manifest and the passenger list of those who died.

Here is a topic that this Committee has really grappled with, and I will say that none of us are happy with it in a bipartisan basis, and that is the efforts of our DOD to figure out strategies to counter UAS incursions into our bases. A well-publicized one occurred at the Langley base in Hampton, Virginia, but there have been other sightings, New Jersey and other bases have been subject to these. Langley as an example, the incursions occurred over a period of 17 days in December 2023, and we are 14 months later and we still have not been given good answers about what, in fact, happened. I think we are really frustrated by this because if it was just a 1-day thing, well maybe you could not track it, could not fig-

ure it out, but if it happened for 17 days and we still do not have answers, that is problematic.

The reason I raised this with you, Mr. Driscoll, is that the Army has been tasked with being the DOD's executive agent on this topic. All the stakeholders are at the table, but the Army is tasked with being the lead in countering small UASs. The Army is charged with leading and directing relevant doctrine requirements, materiel training standards and capabilities to establish joint solutions, not just Army solutions, but joint solutions for addressing current and future emerging small UAS threats.

Should you be confirmed, what will you do to ensure coordination between the services in developing a joint counter small UAS doctrine?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Senator, I think these drone incursions highlight kind of a core problem with how we have thought of our Nation's defense. We have not thought about it in a while, and I got to speak with your colleague kind of in-depth about this specific incursion and it seems to be the buck falls between a lot of different agencies and no one is empowered to act quickly. That is at scale even when it continues to show up day after day, night after night.

I think a lot of the first steps are building a network of communication and identifying an SOP [Standard Operating Procedure] for how do you engage with these things? Who owns what? Who is calling and what is an acceptable timeframe for this kind of communication to occur? That would just be the people side of the thing.

Then from a technology side, I think if you look at a lot of the tools like directed energy, we need to empower our agencies to protect our Homeland from these types of incursions so that we can shoot them down and learn from specifically who sent it, what was it doing, what was it collecting? My understanding of this situation in particular is we just do not know, and that is not good enough for the American people.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Driscoll. I know that Senator Fischer asked you some questions about recruiting when I was at another hearing, but I want to come back to it. I am on the Health, Education, Labor, Pension Committee too so workforce issues economy-wide in the military, in the civilian space are very important to me.

What innovative approaches have you either seen in the Army or do you foresee trying so that we can have the size of the force that we need to defend this country?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Senator, from what I have heard of the Future Soldier Program out of Fort Jackson, which is actually where I did basic training, it is working really well. It is helping future soldiers prep for the ASVAB, which, in and of itself, might have some complications of how valuable is a test when you are prepping everybody for it.

But the fitness side of things is obviously helping. Those soldiers are doing really well in basic training. Those are the types of solutions that I think are going well.

If you look at things like waivers, I had mentioned to your colleague, I think we need to relook at the waiver process. Currently, the physicians in charge of giving waivers, their incentive struc-

ture, as I understand it, is they are punished when somebody they waive does not make it to basic training, but there is no feedback loop to reward them for somebody that needed a waiver, that got through basic training. So I think we need to start to look at things like that, which could have some pretty meaningful impacts on the pipeline.

Senator KAINE. Finally, one last question. At his confirmation hearing before us 8 years ago, Former SECDEF General Mattis noted, and I quote, "If you don't fund the State Department fully then I need to buy more ammunition." He was talking about the fact that you needed a whole-of-government approach to promote national security. Do you agree with that sentiment?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Unequivocally.

Senator KAINE. That is why I am really, really troubled by the Trump order pausing all foreign assistance. I think when an order goes out pausing foreign assistance to other nations, except for arms transfers to Israel and Egypt. China and our adversaries hear that and then they rub their hands together, because they are not pausing. They look at us pausing as an opening for them to build deeper and deeper ties into the hearts and minds of nations that should be our allies. I am glad you agree with what General Mattis said, and I hope we might move forward in budgets and in policy to express that as a bipartisan priority. Thank you very much.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you, Senator Kaine. Senator Kaine, do you recall which Member of the Committee asked that question of General Mattis?

Senator KAINE. I am going to guess it was the Senator from Mississippi.

Chairman WICKER. You are absolutely correct. You got it right the first time. Senator Tuberville.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thanks for being here. Thanks for your service.

I want to echo the thoughts about what happened last night here in our home territory. It is devastating. It just so happens to coincide a little bit, not that it has anything to do with this, but Fort Novosel in my State of Alabama we train all the vertical lift Army pilots, as you well know.

My first question for several weeks has been, I want to get your thoughts on what you think about the new curriculum for flight school that the Army has proposed. This affects all the pilots in the Army, and I want to get your commitment to continue an open dialog about the Army's intent on how best to leverage existing resources. You know, we are cutting back on sorties. We are not putting the money in training like we used to, that we need to do. We are undertrained in some areas.

So I would like to get your thoughts on the curriculum and your thoughts about the future of vertical lift, especially with the new vertical lift that the Army is purchasing for the future fights that we might have.

Mr. DRISCOLL. Senator, to your comment on what occurred last night, I think we are all collectively going to have to take a deep dive—

Senator TUBERVILLE. Oh yes.

Mr. DRISCOLL.—and figure out what occurred there. The early indicators, from what I have seen on television—I have no other access to information—is that it might have been a training exercise gone wrong, that had catastrophic outcomes. So we are going to have to work together to make sure that never occurs again, or at least to mitigate the odds that it could ever occur again.

Then specifically to future vertical flight, if you look at the contested airspace with our peer, China, and what we will have to do, our vertical assets are going to have to be able to get further and faster with lower signature than they do today. That being said, if you look at FARA, the push for the Army, it is early in its development, it is incredibly expensive, and we are likely going to have to work with the Blackhawks and the Chinooks and the assets that we have today.

If confirmed, I would want to get briefed on this and do a deep dive with the team to figure out how are we going to position ourselves and what training do we need for the next 1 day to 5 years until we can get to a better state.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Thank you. I want to discuss an issue that affects many of our installations, including mine in Huntsville Redstone Arsenal. The issue is military construction, MILCON, as we know it. We need to move fast and the traditional military construction process is far too slow. Back at Redstone Arsenal, there are two warehouses as we speak that are being constructed, one for military by the Corps of Engineers and one by the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation]. These warehouses are roughly the same size, regarding to the size, but the FBI has got a huge amount of bells and whistles, more than the military warehouse.

The military warehouse is going to cost almost \$56 million and it is going to take 48 months, 4 years, to build this, where the FBI facility is going to cost \$40 million and take only basically a year and a half. We have got a problem. How on the earth does this make any sense?

The Army is currently running a repair-by-replacement pilot program that is being tested at a couple of installations to demolish older barracks and replace them with new modern facilities. The key part of this program is that it is using operations and maintenance dollars versus traditional MILCON dollars. Are you familiar with this?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Senator, I had the opportunity to talk with you about it in your office. This is the type of thing that makes my blood boil on behalf of soldiers. The Army has a limited budget to begin with. We have to be good stewards of the American taxpayers' dollars, and when we are not, it is both the taxpayer and the soldier, and these soldiers are my friends. It is my friends that live in these barracks and raise their families there, and we need to stretch these dollars as far as we can.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Yes, and the other small point I want to bring up, we talked about recruiting, I will not get into that. The new recruit in the Army makes \$25,000 a year before taxes. We just gave a raise, but we cannot expect to attract the best and the brightest young men and women in the military unless we do something else, we got to continue. I know we give them a lot of perks at the end of the day, but we have got to understand

\$25,000, I mean, most of them can make that in a 2-months time in some kind of big tech or whatever. So just keep that in mind as you get into recruiting. We have got to start taking care of these young men and women if we are going to build the fighting force that we need. Thank you.

Mr. DRISCOLL. Yes, Senator.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you, Senator Tuberville. Senator Slotkin.

Senator SLOTKIN. Sorry, apologies. I am not used to going anything but last, Chairman, so shocked me. Thank you for being here and congratulations on your nomination, as I said when we met.

I was glad to hear so many people talking about the collision that happened last night, you will have an important role in that investigation, if confirmed. It does sound like it is a training mission, but it is just important that we lead a thorough process. People across the country are mourning watching that, and everyone on this panel here flies in and out of there. I mean, it is hard not to think about it, so thank you for your attention to that.

I think the thing we talked about in my office is I am a Democrat who won on the same ballot as Donald Trump. I absolutely understand that Donald Trump has the right to nominate his own people, put forward his own policies. I have seen that now in many transitions, Democrat and Republican. But the thing that I keep coming back to is the core constitutional responsibility. You will swear an oath to the Constitution, not to any one President. Many of us have worked alongside or in the military for a long time and care deeply about it remaining apolitical. We are seeing now Active Duty military Army being sent to the border, being sent on missions right now to support DHS, but according to our Constitution, the U.S. military Active Duty cannot perform law enforcement roles.

When you were trained in the military, were you trained on basic law enforcement techniques?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I was not, Senator.

Senator SLOTKIN. Can we agree that searching a building in Iraq or Afghanistan when you are in a combat zone as an Army officer is fundamentally different than performing those kinds of search and activities inside the United States with American citizens?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Senator, this is not meant to be evasive. I have never been trained on it, and so I could not answer what would be different about it from my training.

Senator SLOTKIN. Yes, I think the issue is not just the Constitution, although that should be enough. I am deeply concerned that Active Duty troops are going to be forced into law enforcement roles, and we are already hearing stories that really, really touch right on the line. They are not properly trained. There is going to be an incident. Someone is going to get hurt. There is going to be some sort of blow-up, and suddenly we are going to have a community deeply, deeply angry at uniformed military who were just told to go and drive those DHS vehicles, clear that building, perform support to something.

So I have to ask you again that if the U.S. was asked, Active Duty, was asked to do something that contravenes the Constitution, can you say clearly that you will push back on anyone, wheth-

er it is the Secretary of Defense or the Commander In Chief, and stand up on behalf of the Army instead of just doing whatever you are told?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Just to answer the beginning part of the question, Senator, I reject the premise that the President or Secretary of Defense would ask for an order like that.

Senator SLOTKIN. Fine.

Mr. DRISCOLL. But I will always follow the law.

Senator SLOTKIN. Okay. I mean, your predecessor, Secretary of the Army, Secretary Esper, had this exact thing that he wrote about in his book. The 82d Airborne, Army, was asked to come in and cleanup peaceful protests in Washington DC. So I reject your rejection that this is theoretical, that this is hypothetical. It is not, and a nominee and confirmed Secretary under Trump, I know they have removed his portrait, but I just have to say this is not a hypothetical. So we are counting on you to protect the integrity of a non-political military that is not trained in law enforcement roles.

Next, do you support revoking the pension that comes with anyone who is honorably discharged from the Army?

Mr. DRISCOLL. It is hard to deal on a hypothetical, Senator.

Senator SLOTKIN. It is not hypothetical. There is now focus on Mark Milley, the former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and I know there is lots of controversy around Mark Milley, but you cannot debate that he served many more years than anyone on this panel. Can you tell me that you support the seemingly political reprisal of removing someone's pension when they have already been honorably discharged?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Senator, without knowing the specific details, I do support the President's right to execute law for order.

Senator SLOTKIN. Because you see the pattern this starts. So then another Administration comes in and suddenly people who supported Donald Trump are having their pensions removed. You can see how this politicizes the institution that should be apolitical, and for the January 6th guys and all these folks, there was not a question about their pensions, and I have deep concerns about it. I know my time is up and I yield back.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you very much. Senator Ernst, you are next.

Senator ERNST. Yes, thank you Mr. Chairman, and I will also add my condolences to the families who lost loved ones near DCA last night.

Good morning, Mr. Driscoll, and thank you for your testimony today and for being with us, and I appreciate the time you took to meet with me in my office and just dive into everything Army. Very important to me obviously, my time in service, my family's time in service, and your time in service, so thank you.

Once confirmed, you will be facing a challenging path ahead, and you have already talked a little bit about recruiting. I will add some thoughts to that. We also have to build upon the current modernization efforts, and of course we have very complex geopolitical landscapes out there.

So I am going to start with recruitment and I just want to give you some of my thoughts on this. Recruiting remains a really critical issue for the Armed Forces. Army is on track to meet its re-

cruiting goals for the second consecutive year. That is an encouraging sign. We have to maintain the momentum.

But a key concern that is been brought to my attention is ensuring our recruiters have meaningful access to schools, to be able to get into high schools and talk to young men and women. I plan to introduce my SERVE Act to enhance military recruiters' access to schools and mandate regular visits to improve information sharing with the students and their administrators, and I would love to work with you on this particular issue, once confirmed.

Additionally, the military has faced challenges reaching potential recruits via social media, and we have seen a recent flurry of activities when it comes to Meta and regarding reports that U.S. Army posts were being shadow-banned or removed for alleged violations. I did send a letter to Meta about this last month.

So Mr. Driscoll, given the challenges, do you commit to working with us on these recruiting challenges, on making sure that we are able to spread our good message to young men and women?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Absolutely, Senator, it would be an honor, if confirmed.

Senator ERNST. Thank you. So very briefly, I am also the chair of the DOGE [Department of Government Efficiency] caucus in the U.S. Senate, and Iowans sent me here to make them squeal. I have made it my mission to find ways to identify waste, fraud, eliminate it, get more efficient, more accountable to our taxpayers. The Department of Defense, and, of course, our great Army should not be exempt from this effort.

So Mr. Driscoll, can I count on your commitment to collaborate on strategies for reducing waste in the Army?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Absolutely, Senator, and as I told your colleague earlier, the dollars are limited, as they should be, and we are beholden to this committee and the Congress for how to use those dollars. But then once the dollars come to us, it is our responsibility to use them as effectively as we possibly can, and it would be an honor to work with you on that, if confirmed.

Senator ERNST. Absolutely. Thank you, Mr. Driscoll. Another one of my top priorities remains addressing traumatic brain injuries (TBI), within our services, and last year I successfully passed comprehensive TBI legislation, and I intend to build on that progress in the upcoming NDAA cycle. So can I get your commitment to collaborate with the Defense Health Agency Army, SOF [Special Operations Forces], and acquisition personnel to prioritize TBI initiatives and further enhance our Army's immediate and long-term health and safety?

Mr. DRISCOLL. This issue, Senator, is deeply personal. When we were deployed, we had mortars and IEDs [improvised explosive device]. You never know how that impacts a soldier, but I know when we got back, a lot of our guys struggled with a lot of issues. So I would be honored to do anything I possibly can to lend a hand here. So if confirmed, absolutely, yes.

Senator ERNST. Excellent. No, I appreciate that. Thank you, and I think both of us have had many friends that have been impacted by TBI. It is very, very important to them and their families.

Force structure, as well. I have limited time, but I do chair the Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities, and I

prioritize the Special Operations Community and the critical enablers that they provide. In recent years, the Army implemented force reductions within SOF. Despite these cuts, SÖCOM [Special Operations Command] has testified last year that the demand for Special Operations Forces remain high.

So Mr. Driscoll, will I get your commitment to work with me to make sure that we are addressing these cuts and how we can continue to provide for our special operations community so that they may further support our conventional forces?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Absolutely, Senator. Our special operators are force multipliers. If you look at the threats ahead, we have a pacing threat in China, but that certainly does not mean that other threats would not take advantage of us being in engagement with China. Special Forces are incredibly well suited to both lend a hand in that fight, and also, with all of our innovation, they are innovation laboratories that can test things more quickly, they can learn and get their procurement lessons and actual lessons learned to the larger force. So I am incredibly supportive, Senator.

Senator ERNST. Well, thank you, Mr. Driscoll. Mr. Chair, I was going to ask him to sing the Army song, but I will submit that for the record.

Chairman WICKER. Your time is expired, regrettably, Senator, but thank you for your questions. Senator Gillibrand.

Senator GILLIBRAND. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. I know you served your Active Duty tour with the Army at Fort Drum. Climb to glory. A little over a year ago, Fort Drum was selected to host the Army's second multi-domain task force (MDTF). If confirmed, your tenure as Secretary will align with the Army's target for the full MDTF implementation by fiscal year 2028. What challenges do you see in this timeline, and do you believe the split structure of the second MDTF between Germany and Fort Drum is sustainable? Can the structure be leveraged in other theaters such as the Pacific?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Senator, I have not been specifically briefed on that unit and its bifurcation of location, but the multidomain roll-out across the Army is the future of warfare. If you think of things like cyber and space, how war has been fought up until this point will no longer look the same. Those issues require networked abilities that in near real time or real time allow for a communication across a lot of assets and sensing tools and human beings. I look forward to both learning more, working with your office and specifically returning to Fort Drum, if confirmed.

Senator GILLIBRAND. Thank you. A recurring challenge that you and I talked about in our meeting for the military has been the recruitment and retention of skilled cyber operators, both military and civilian. As of November, the military reported about 28,000 unfilled military and civilian cyber roles. To help address this, I created the Cyber Service Academy Scholarship Program and secured language in the most recent NDAA to study the advisability of a cyber military service. Army Cyber is the largest of our cyber service components, placing a significant portion of this burden on you. How will you approach the cyber personnel challenge, and how do you see things like the Cyber Service Academy supporting your efforts?



Mr. DRISCOLL. Senator, very sincerely, thank you for your work on this. We are going to have to figure out and work together to create unique pathways for the cyber experts among us to be the most lethal cyber person or soldier. That pathway may look very different from going to ranger school and ending up in ranger battalion. We need to work with the feeders and the pipelines in the civilian sector to empower those candidates who want to join the Army, those future soldiers, to come in, and I think pathways, like what you were describing, are incredibly valuable.

Senator GILLIBRAND. You will need a capable and qualified principal cyber advisor, but that role has been vacant for nearly 6 months. Will you commit to me to quickly fill that role if you are confirmed?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Senator, that would be, if confirmed, one of the roles I would be most excited to fill. I do not know what has led to the delay in filling it, so I cannot speak to that. But I can commit to very early on trying to prioritize that because, as stated earlier, with the way that multidomain is going and our wars are going to be fought in the future, that will be a critical role.

Senator GILLIBRAND. Thank you. One of the issues that this Committee has spent at least a decade working on is the scourge of sexual assault in the military. We put in place bipartisan reforms that had the support of 65 Senators. It was overwhelmingly supported. The reforms are geared toward more transparency, more accountability, more training, and having the decisionmaker of whether a crime has been committed be given to a trained military prosecutor who is not in the chain of command, who arguably has more precise and applicable training to reach better decisions.

Are you aware of these reforms and do you commit to me that you will do everything to make sure these reforms are fully implemented so that our military can be a functioning place for everyone to work and that certain people are not unfortunately disregarded or devalued because of the system in place?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Very sincerely, Senator, I thank you and your colleagues for the work on this. I mentioned in my opening statement that my 8-year-old son is planning to join the Army. It is hard to know if my 6-year-old daughter wants to join. My wife and I have been nudging her that way, as much as you can nudge a 6-year-old. I want her to join an Army that the sky is the limit, the standards of excellence are hard, but she is able to achieve them, she faces absolutely zero instances of sexual harassment during her time in. It would be an absolute honor, Senator, to work with you in this Committee to, from the top, ensure we are both rolling out the law and setting a culture where that is not tolerated in any way.

Senator GILLIBRAND. Thank you. With my last 20 seconds, you mentioned in the questions you gave to the committee that you wanted to appoint a high-level position dedicated to ensuring a focus on ending sexual assault in the military. Do you have any thoughts about what your thinking is there or what you would do for that position?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Senator, I would want to work with you in your office and with your colleague, Senator Ernst. I know you have done a deep dive on this. I want to commit publicly to commit the

resources, the time, the energy, and the focus to scorching it from the United States Army, and I think that that could be a powerful first step.

Senator GILLIBRAND. Thank you, Mr. Driscoll. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you, Senator Gillibrand. Senator Scott.

Senator SCOTT. Good morning, Mr. Driscoll. Congratulations on your nomination, and thanks for your willingness to do this. I think I told you my father was one of 3,000 people who did all four combat jumps with the 82d Airborne in the Second World War. He was crazy. After that, he fought in the Battle of the Bulge. My whole childhood he told me the Germans were horrible, the food was horrible, and the foxholes was horrible, so after high school I joined the Navy, which, the food was not bad, but no Germans, no foxholes.

So first, tell me what is your experience in the Army, and thank you for your service as calvary scout platoon leader. What lessons did you learn that is going to make you a better Secretary of the Army?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Senator, Secretary Hegseth mentioned it in his hearing that the dust on the boots model, I had not thought of that in a long time. But the experiences of being able to think through when a decision from the top comes down, how does it actually impact the soldier. I can think back to our COP [combat outpost] outside Baghdad, Iraq, that had 40 of us, and we had these amazing vehicles, which I think probably this Committee had a lot of help in getting these MRAPs [mine-resistant ambush protected] out. When our soldiers first deployed, the bottom of these Humvees was thin and it basically perfectly absorbed a blast. These MRAPs were created, which saved a lot of lives. But one of the problems with the MRAPs is they were very heavy, very tall, and very prone to roll over.

I can remember for the entire 9 or 10 months we were at the COP, every couple of weeks you would send a soldier out there, they would startup the MRAP, turn it on and run the engine for a couple of minutes and then turn it back off, and then the process would repeat itself. It was not for any sort of malintention, and the actions by those creating it were for good purposes, which is fundamentally the MRAP did not work in a lot of areas in Iraq because it is muddy, dusty roads that just cannot support a lot of weight.

I think those types of experiences of saying this may be the right answer some of the time, but what is it actually going to look like for the actual soldier on the ground where we need this? I think that that will be a very impactful, or I hope if confirmed, that will be a very impactful vision.

Senator SCOTT. I became Governor of Florida in January 2011. I had no earthly idea that the Army Corps of Engineers was going to control every bit of development in my State. You could not do anything at their ports, you could not do anything in our rivers, there was so much the Army Corps of Engineers controlled. My experience is it is just an absolute black hole. They are wonderful people, but you could never get an answer—never get an answer

about their timeline, never get an answer about why they make the decisions. It was just an absolute black hole. It has been consistent for my 8 years as Governor and my 6 years up here.

I do not know if you have spent any time with the Army Corps of Engineers, wonderful people, but for anybody that wants to get anything accomplished in their State, it is just a pain in the royal butt. Have you thought about what you would do to change that?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Senator, one of the amazing parts of the Army is that it does touch so many different parts of both our countrymen's lives and the lives of those abroad. When I talked to your colleague, Senator Warren, one of the things we had talked about is, is it possible to do something like an NPS score, which is a net promoter score. It is pretty common in business. If you went to a Chick-fil-A, you might get a questionnaire afterwards, zero to 10, how likely would you be to refer this to a friend? If we could start to do those in our communities where our bases are, either abroad or in our communities locally, I think what we would start to find is there are some low-hanging areas that when our soldiers are touching those in our civilian population, there are probably ways that we can just be more responsive.

I would love, if confirmed, to work with this Committee to try to figure out what low-hanging fruit exists to make the Army a better co-inhabitant of the world and our country.

Senator SCOTT. In your private life, have you had to recruit employees? Have you recruited people to work with you, try to find how to work with people?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I have, Senator.

Senator SCOTT. So why do you think the Army has such a horrible experience trying to recruit people?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I think that from my experience as a third-generation soldier, what my grandfather would say he joined for, and we all joined during times of war. I think if you asked us, it would have been, we would have said the reason we joined is we did not want to miss the opportunity to serve our country when it needed us. I think that very specific story is what a lot of soldiers, women and men, would say is the reason that they joined.

I think we have oftentimes lost focus on that and started to focus on things like the benefits, which are all important and they are very valuable reasons to join, but I think for many of America's youth, it is the purpose of getting to serve this amazing nation. So, if confirmed, I would love to work with this Committee to clarify that story and tell it more broadly.

Senator SCOTT. Thanks. You will do a great job.

Mr. DRISCOLL. Thank you, Senator.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you, Mr. Driscoll. You have made that point repeatedly during this hearing, and I think it is got quite a bit of validity. Senator ROSEN.

Senator ROSEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Reed, for holding this hearing. Mr. Driscoll, I would like to thank you for your service, your willingness to serve again, and for being here with us today.

I will take a moment of privilege, like the rest of my colleagues and all Americans, today our heart is broken by the events at DCA last night, and I just want to offer my deepest condolences to the

families, to the fellow soldiers, to all of those who were lost. I want to thank our first responders for their immediate action, running to the scene in the dark of night, in the iciest of waters, to try to save lives. Thank you.

Now I am going to turn to my home State of Nevada and talk a little bit about Hawthorne Army Depot. Mr. Driscoll, Nevada's Hawthorne Army Depot is the world's largest ammunition depot and demilitarization facility, depot stores and demilitarized munitions and ensures that munitions readiness for all of DOD.

Despite its size and crucial role that Hawthorne plays, again, the only one in the country, it is in need of continued infrastructure upgrades. Investing more in our munitions depots has only become more important in light of our need to ramp up munitions productions, both to arm Ukraine against Russian aggression and backfill our own stockpiles for just a few examples.

In recent years, Army's posture hearings, the Secretary and Chief of Staff of the Army made commitments to me to consider new investments in Hawthorne, and I am happy that the Army is doing so.

Mr. Driscoll, if confirmed, can I have your commitment to include Hawthorne in Army's future years defense planning or unfunded priority list so that Congress can fund these crucial and critical investments to ensure our munitions' readiness?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Senator, our munitions readiness, as I was referencing to your colleagues, is absolutely one of the primary challenges facing us as a Nation, as we face the threat of a peer like China. I absolutely commit to, if confirmed, taking a deep dive and look at this topic—

Senator ROSEN. I invite you to come to Hawthorne and see what they are doing there. How is that?

Mr. DRISCOLL. It would be an honor, ma'am.

Senator ROSEN. Thank you. I want to move now to women in combat because prior to women being able to serve in combat arms, cultural support teams, largely from the Army Reserve, embedded with Special Operations Forces in Iraq and Afghanistan to engage with female populations. They fill critical gaps, significantly expanding operation and intelligence collection capabilities.

However, in so many cases, their military records do not reflect that they served in combat despite accompanying SOF on raids and sustaining injuries, some even dying. This is because their Reserve units who oversaw them administratively were not there to document their service in combat. So in some instances, these women have no record of ever having left the base despite having done so as a job requirement.

As a result, they have all struggled to prove to the VA that their injuries are service-related, they are combat-connected, and since women have only been able to serve in combat arms in the last decade.

So, if confirmed, will you commit to performing a review of these combat veterans, these women who embed overseas, to help us collect this important cultural intelligence Army records? We must have them be accurate. These women come home and they are denied their disability claims because the lack of documentation. They really need to receive the care and the benefits, their families

as well, and the recognition that they deserve. It is the least that we owe to our women in uniform.

Mr. DRISCOLL. Senator, we have a sacred duty to care for our soldiers, and from my experience deploying, some of the most competent, heroic people I deployed with were women. They served incredibly important jobs, with bomb-sniffing dogs, searching out IEDs. They were right beside us every step of the way. So I absolutely commit to working with your office to make sure that that population is not forgotten and gets the care and respect that they deserve.

Senator ROSEN. Thank you. I am proud to serve with some women who showed their valor in times of need as well.

I just have another moment, so we will submit this for the record, but it is about cyber workforce development. It has been touched on here, the fiscal year 2024 NDAA, and did include my bipartisan legislation authorizing the Army to create a Civilian Cybersecurity Reserve to provide CYBERCOM with qualified civilian personnel for surge capacity in times of need, to ensure the U.S. Government has the cyber talent needed to respond to malicious activities, secure DOD's information and systems. We are trying so many ways to really buildup that force.

I will take the answer off the record, but I would like to speak with you about the implementation of the Civilian Cyber Reserve Corps and have your commitment to see this through as we know cyberattacks are on the rise.

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, it would be an honor to speak about that, Senator.

Senator ROSEN. Thank you.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you, Senator Rosen. Senator Banks.

Senator BANKS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Driscoll, welcome and congratulations on your important nomination. You bring a unique background in business and private equity, and one of the biggest things that we have to accomplish in this moment is innovation at the Pentagon. I wonder if you could talk about your background and how that uniquely helps you help us create better innovation in our national security.

Mr. DRISCOLL. Senator, after attending law school on the GI Bill, I was fortunate enough to spend time as a CEO [Chief Executive Officer] at a venture capital firm where, for a couple of years, I got to spend time working with and learning and seeing how some of our country's most amazing innovators are building their businesses. Some of the lessons that they have learned in the private space over the last 10 to 20 years I think are ripe for transferal to the United States Army. Creating a feedback loop and a learning loop that gets lessons learned from the actual soldiers in the field back into the manufacturers or the software developers occurs in the private space frequently, and I think it is a little bit less frequent in the Army.

There are examples of this, I think, working wonderfully in the Army, like the IVAS system as I understand it. It is kind of a shining beacon of effective development, and so what I am hoping to do, if confirmed, Senator, is work with this Committee and the Army's existing leaders to figure out where can we tighten the innovation loop and get the learnings from the field, and the

learnings from our friends in places like Ukraine. I mean, that battlefield is ripe with lessons around drones and cyber and how can we get those lessons into our procurement processes and on the manufacturing floor as quickly as possible.

Senator BANKS. Part of working in venture capital and when it comes to innovation is thinking outside of the box, and we have a major crisis in the military right now, especially with the United States Army, with a historic recruitment crisis. I know you have already covered this, but give us more specific ideas that we can use new technologies and innovation to recruit the best and brightest of the next generation to serve our country.

Mr. DRISCOLL. I think if you look, Senator, there are a lot of tools used by some of our larger corporations in the country to recruit at scale but give a very individualized and personalized experience. What I have heard with the recruiting processes, they are looking at all sorts of different ways of creating a specialty where a recruiter, if you are an incredible recruiter, perhaps that can be how you serve your country for your entire time in uniform. Things like that, that mimic the expertise that can be developed in the private sector. Applying those best lessons and processes to the Army I think will continue to unlock what has seemed to be, no doubt, a lot because of the work of this Committee, forward momentum in recruiting in the Army right now.

Senator BANKS. Secretary Hegseth has talked at length about restoring the meritocracy to our military, and I happen to believe that the recruitment crisis faced in the military today has a lot to do with taking merit out of the military. Young men and women say, why would I join the military if it is no longer the great meritocracy that it used to be? So I think restoring that would be important to the Army.

On that note, last year the Army argued that affirmative action at our service academies was, quote, "critical to mission success and national security." When I asked Secretary of the Army Wormuth last year in the House Armed Services Committee, where I previously served, whether the Supreme Court harmed national security when it banned affirmative action at schools with ROTC programs, she admitted she was, quote, "a little puzzled" why affirmative action at West Point was not also banned.

Mr. Driscoll, do racial admission preferences at service academies like West Point help our national security?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I do not believe so.

Senator BANKS. You would support efforts, as Secretary Hegseth has talked about as well, to end affirmative action at our service academies, especially at West Point?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I think one of the most amazing parts of my time in service is the Army, in my experience, was an incredible meritocracy. I cannot remember a single time being in where anyone thought that this system was against them. When I have told our kids, Daniel and Lila, about what we hope that they will do after high school, I have told my daughter it would be the proudest day of my life, and I do not think she understands the nuance of what I am saying, to pin a ranger tab on her if she can complete ranger school, with the incredibly difficult standards being the exact same as when I went through.

I think that those standards and excellence that the Secretary of Defense has talked about are important. It is what makes our Army great. It is what has made our Army the greatest land fighting force in the last 249 years on the Planet Earth, and I hope that we are able to hold those standards going forward.

Senator BANKS. You bring a lot to the table. I am excited to work with you to make the Army as strong as it can possibly be, fix the recruitment crisis, and modernize the Army for the future. Thank you for agreeing to serve our country. You have my full support.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you very much, Senator Banks. Mr. Driscoll, I have said that the United States military is the greatest civil rights organization in the history of the world. What do you think about that?

Mr. DRISCOLL. My experience, Senator, is the exact same.

Chairman WICKER. Yes. Having served in the Air Force, that has been my experience and so I do appreciate that. Senator Peters.

Senator PETERS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Driscoll, congratulations on your nomination to serve as the Secretary of the Army, and I want to thank you for your service to our Nation as well as thank you for the time that we spent in my office earlier. We addressed a number of concerns and I think we had a very fruitful discussion, so I appreciate that.

As you know, senior officials and combatant commands have testified before this Committee on the severe threat that is posed by PRC [People's Republic of China]-sponsored cyber actors. The threat is evidenced by the Salt Typhoon, the recent infiltration of U.S. telecommunication companies that left civilians, servicemembers, and installations vulnerable to these attacks. The attack is part of a broader pattern of PRC cyber aggression targeting United States infrastructure across the country.

The U.S. Army plays a critical role in deterring these threats through defensive cyber operations, through intelligence, integration with U.S. Cyber Command, as well, to protect us.

So my question for you, sir, is do you agree with the Army's current cyber strategy?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Senator, I think the cyber threat to this country—I was actually beside one of our elected officials when we found out our phones were hacked, and I was reflecting with them that all that we do to protect our information and keep it classified, if things like our Verizon cell phone network are going to be compromised, we have to think through a lot of the ways that we have designed our information protection systems.

I think cyber with the changes occurring with quantum computing, the changes with generative AI [artificial intelligence], these are fundamentally going to alter how soldiers fight wars, how information is exchanged on the battlefield, how we prepare, and then the kind of gray zone activities that our peers like China are able to do through cyber are scary.

I have not received a formal brief, but my understanding is that the Army actually is taking steps in the right direction. I look forward to learning more and working with your office, as I know this is close to your heart, to make the Army as effective as I can both on offense and defense in cyber.

Senator PETERS. So specifically about the strategy because certainly we are in total agreement with the statement that you made. But as far as the strategy that the Army is using now, what is your assessment and would you change anything to support operations with what you know of the strategy now?

Mr. DRISCOLL. My understanding now, Senator, is that our offensive capabilities are perhaps not where they should be, and I think our adversaries are being much more aggressive with us than we are with them. I would want to take a deep look at that.

Senator PETERS. The intelligence systems play a pivotal role in informing commanders' decisions, and the adoption of AI is changing that dramatically. Question to you is about the AI implementation strategy that the Army currently has. Do you have any changes or do you believe the Army is adequately evaluating this threat and adapting accordingly?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Senator, my understanding of how AI implementation is occurring is that it is siloed right now. I think that this is the type of work that should occur across the different services. Our lessons learned for the Army will apply to the Air Force and apply the Navy. So I think we need to be focusing on this AI threat, because the speed and the pace of the growth here is unbelievable. I do not know if you read the article about the Chinese startup that basically was able to, I think it was between 4 and \$10 million, 1/10000th of the cost, or 1/1000th of the cost of what some of our American companies were able to develop, 6 months trailing. The pacing and the timeline on this, is not going to allow us to be slow, and so we are going to need to be at the front curve of it.

Senator PETERS. So that leads the question that how do we stay at that front curve, because you are right, things are changing dramatically. Traditionally in the Army or any of the services, innovation has not moved as quickly as it has in the civilian side, and civilian side innovations are only accelerating, including our adversaries, as you mentioned.

How would you engage with small businesses and other innovators to shake up the procurement process and make sure we are on the forefront of AI development, for example?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I am optimistic, Senator. I think from what I have seen since being the President's nominee we have had a lot of interest from Silicon Valley and other places in the country for innovators at small companies, medium companies, and some of the big ones that want to get in the game on behalf of our country. I think having very deliberate conversations with them about how do we get into their R&D [research and development] pipeline, how do we partner with them early on, so as they are training these models, the Army as I understand it today is getting access to these models once they go public. China and our other threats are also getting access to those models. There is no reason that, from my understanding, we could not be getting access earlier, and so instead of having a 6-month lead, perhaps there are ways we could have a 9- or 12-month lead on these things.

I think those conversations could be important and I would look forward to working with your office to have them.

Senator PETERS. Great. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.



Chairman WICKER. Thank you, Senator Peters. Senator Duckworth.

Senator DUCKWORTH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, like everyone else, am praying for all the family members and thinking about the crew of the Black Hawk and all the people that we lost last night. I would like to caution that before we start calling it a training accident that we have better idea of what exactly happened, because a training accident has very specific definitions, so please be careful about that. It tends to then start to blame the pilots and frankly, our military pilots are some of the best trained in the world.

Earlier this week the Trump administration imposed a funding freeze on all Federal grants and loans. Even though the OMB [Office of Management and Budget] memo was rescinded yesterday, the freeze has not been rescinded. Mr. Driscoll, what is your position on the legality of that funding freeze?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Senator, before answering your question, I very sincerely, last night I was sitting watching what occurred on TV with a friend from 10th Mountain who was the downed chopper, one of the platoons that had to deal with that in Afghanistan, and watching this struggle and heartbreak as he had to relive those moments. We actually reflected in the moment. I want to take a quick moment to say, very sincerely, thank you for your service. I know it is an immense sacrifice. Soldier to soldier, I am sorry for what you had go through.

To your question, the legality of—would you mind repeating it?

Senator DUCKWORTH. Was the order from President Trump, his current order to pause all grant funding, legal?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Senator, I have not been able to take a good deep enough look to know whether it was legal or not, but I would not believe that the President would issue an illegal order.

Senator DUCKWORTH. You do not believe that the President of the United States can issue an illegal order?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I do not believe President Trump would do that, Senator.

Senator DUCKWORTH. Okay. That leads me to my next question. If President Trump directed you to do something illegal, would you refuse to obey?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I reject the premise of the question, Senator, that he would, but I would only follow lawful orders.

Senator DUCKWORTH. Constitutional ones?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Constitutional ones.

Senator DUCKWORTH. Okay. If confirmed, will you commit to disbursing all obligated grant funding from the Department of the Army on time and without delay?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I would follow all lawful requirements of my job if confirmed, Senator.

Senator DUCKWORTH. Okay. I would like to followup on our meeting last week. To be candid, you performed very poorly in your conversation with me. I asked you, for example, how many personnel are in a division and you told me 3,500. You just recently, when I came, were answering my colleague from Alaska's questions about brigade combat teams. How many personnel are in an average brigade combat team?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Senator, I imagine the purpose of this question is to get to my qualifications as a leader.

Senator DUCKWORTH. No, no. I want you to answer the question.

Mr. DRISCOLL. Senator—

Senator DUCKWORTH. What is the—do you not know? If you do not know, that is okay.

Mr. DRISCOLL. Senator, I assume—

Senator DUCKWORTH. Answer my question. How many personnel are in a—because you have performed very well today and I have been impressed because it looks like you actually did some homework. But you spoke with conviction about the number of brigade combat teams that the Army needs to be effective. Can you tell me how many soldiers are in a brigade combat team on average?

Mr. DRISCOLL. 3,500.

Senator DUCKWORTH. Great. Thank you. See, I would have been so much easier, but I know you are filibustering. I get it. What is FM 3-0?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Senator, I believe all of these questions are going to be—

Senator DUCKWORTH. What is FM 3-0?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I actually was reading it last night, Senator.

Senator DUCKWORTH. Excellent.

Mr. DRISCOLL. It is the Army's Training Manual.

Senator DUCKWORTH. Operations.

Mr. DRISCOLL. Operations Manual.

Senator DUCKWORTH. Fantastic. I am glad you are doing your homework. See, this is working because you are doing your homework, which you did not do because you could not name a country in Africa where we have troops, when I asked you.

Mr. DRISCOLL. Senator, I believe—

Senator DUCKWORTH. What are your views on force posture generally and the components and elements of force posture as well as your understanding of the Army's current force posture?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Senator, I believe that the President of the United States chose me specifically because of my experience set that your colleagues—

Senator DUCKWORTH. You are not answering. Does that mean that you do not have an opinion on the Army's current force posture? It is my job to advise and consent on the nominees that the President puts forward. Just because a President puts forward a nominee does not mean that person is automatically qualified to do the job.

My question to you is, sir, as someone who will become Secretary of Army, if confirmed, what is your current opinion of the Army's force posture and can you describe the elements of that force posture?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Absolutely. Senator, and to your Africa comment, West Africa and Horn of Africa. I did study after you asked me that question, so I am grateful for the question.

Senator DUCKWORTH. Answer my question on force posture.

Mr. DRISCOLL. We need to be prepared, Senator, for a threat from China, a peer that we have not—

Senator DUCKWORTH. I am not asking you about near-peer threats. I am asking you about the force posture.

Mr. DRISCOLL. We need our forces postured all over the world to respond——

Senator DUCKWORTH. What are the components of the force posture?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Senator, I believe that the question——

Senator DUCKWORTH. The answer is military disposition, strength, and condition and readiness of the military. It is in FM 3-0 Operations which you were reading last night. Can you outline for me the key capabilities that the Army is supposed to provide the combatant command?

Chairman WICKER. Senator, you can ask that question for the record. Your time has expired.

Senator DUCKWORTH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Rescued by the Chairman.

Chairman WICKER. Senator Budd.

Senator BUDD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator DUCKWORTH. I am sorry, Mr. Chairman. Can I add FM 3-0, the Army's Operations Manual, for the record? Include in the record?

Chairman WICKER. Well, without objection.

Senator DUCKWORTH. Thank you.

Chairman WICKER. But let me ask you this. How many pages does that consist of?

Senator DUCKWORTH. It is quite a few pages actually, but it is a basic reading for anybody who has gone through the officer's basic course, which I believe you have completed. Have you not, Mr. Driscoll?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Senator, it is 350 pages approximately.

Senator DUCKWORTH. There you go.

Chairman WICKER. So you really do want us to go to the expense of reprinting something that is widely available? Could we just refer to it?

Senator DUCKWORTH. That is acceptable to me, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman WICKER. All right, thank you very much. Senator Budd.

Senator BUDD. Thank you again, Mr. Chairman, and again, welcome, Mr. Driscoll. It is good to see you. As a fellow North Carolinian, I know, and as you are someone who served in the Army, I know our hearts are broken with the recent flight, with the aircrew, the Black Hawk. Having a family of Army aviation and Army aviators, my hearts are especially broken.

You know, I want to congratulate you as a friend. It has been good to know you for several years, and this is a great role that you have been nominated to. I am proud to see someone born and raised in North Carolina, particularly western North Carolina, to serve in this role. So many from the Army were serving there in days following recent Hurricane Helene.

Mr. Driscoll, in your advanced policy questions, you identify recruiting as one of the most significant challenges facing the Army. So if confirmed, how would you recommend the Army fix this recruiting challenge?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Senator, I had mentioned to your colleagues a couple of things that the Army has done really well as it seems from the outside.

Senator BUDD. Right.

Mr. DRISCOLL. The Future Soldier training course at Fort Jackson where I did basic training that prepares soldiers to take their ASVAB test and get more prepared from their fitness, get more fit before they go to basic training, has seemed to pay dividends. That type of thing, that type of innovation I think could be spread farther around the country to continue to increase the pipeline of the population that is qualified.

But more specifically, I think telling this story of the United States Army with its 250th anniversary coming up this summer is an incredible time through our JRTCs, through our communities across the country, to buildup the pipeline of freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors in high school who can join. This is the year to tell the story of the women and the men in uniform who have done amazing things on behalf of our country and who I think would say, like me, had their lives changed by this experience.

So Senator, I look forward to working with you and this committee, if confirmed, to make this year the Army's best recruiting year in history.

Senator BUDD. I look forward to that as well. Thank you.

As you know, special operations forces, and I think you spoke about this with some of my colleagues prior to me, but they are essential in responding to irregular warfare. North Carolina is home, and for the purpose of this morning, maybe we will call it Fort Bragg, and special operations forces, special operations are now playing a larger role in the cyber and the space domains. Yet the Army recently decided to cut significant number of Army special operations forces.

So in your advanced policy questions, you State that Army special forces play a critical role in supporting the joint force and accomplishing the objectives of the National Defense Strategy. Do you believe that SOF is still relevant today?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Wholeheartedly, Senator. Just from my qualitative experience, the special operators that I was fortunate enough to serve alongside of were some of the most incredible soldiers that I ever saw. They were innovation laboratories, testing out all sorts of new things, from new weapons to backpacks to whatever it was. A lot of the lessons that they learned, even if it was not formal, trickled down to the larger force. So, Senator, I think unequivocally on a go-forward basis, they are a crucial force multiplier for our Army.

Senator BUDD. Well, thank you. In my recent visits there to Fort Liberty, Fort Bragg, I have seen the same thing continuing today and I know you will see that very soon, if confirmed.

As you work to address recruiting more broadly, what strategies will you pursue to increase the pool of recruits so that they are eligible and have qualifications to serve in Army special operations forces positions?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Senator, my understanding, which I had covered with one of your colleagues, was one of the problems with what we have done by digitizing medical records is accidentally we have taken people who have broken arms but have been an ultramarathoner or who have had an inhaler prescribed when they were 13 and a day. These were the types of things that for 249 years,

or 244 of those years, just would have never come up. Either you would not have remembered to put it down or your recruiter would told you it was not relevant. Right now it is blocking a lot of possible soldiers who I believe would be incredible future soldiers.

So I think taking a deep dive on the incentive structure for how we do waivers and maybe working with this Committee to look back at—should some of these things, should flat feet still be preventative of joining? I do not have an opinion on the matter, but I think it is worth a fresh look.

Senator BUDD. Thank you, and again, I appreciate your willingness to serve our country and I wish you the best.

Mr. DRISCOLL. Thank you, Senator.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you very much. Mr. Driscoll, before I recognize Senator Hirono, I want to make sure I get this straight. As a Mississippi young man, I joined the Air Force and was stationed at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in Goldsboro, North Carolina. You would agree, would you not, that eastern North Carolina barbecue is far superior to Lexington-type of barbecue?

Senator BUDD. I would ask you not to answer the question, sir.

Mr. DRISCOLL. So as someone from western North Carolina, Senator, my heart bleeds the thick, ketchup-based barbecue that I grew up with, but I can concede that Lexington barbecue is exceptional.

Chairman WICKER. Well, there is no accounting for taste, but a pretty good answer. Senator Hirono.

Senator HIRONO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I did want to take a moment to extend my condolences to all those affected by the tragic accident last night near Reagan National Airport and the brave Army soldiers on board the helicopter.

Mr. Driscoll, I ask the following two initial questions of all nominees who come before any of the committees on which I sit to ensure the fitness of the nominees. Since you became a legal adult, have you ever made unwanted requests for sexual favors or committed any verbal or physical harassment or assault of a sexual nature?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Never.

Senator HIRONO. Have you ever faced discipline or entered into a settlement relating to this kind of conduct?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Never.

Senator HIRONO. Mr. Driscoll, several of the critical training areas that the Army uses in Hawaii are leased from the State, including Pohakuloa, and the leases are set to expire in 2029. These leases are vital to ensuring military forces can adequately train in the Pacific. However, the land involved also holds cultural significance to the Native Hawaiian community.

How do you plan to approach these important lease renegotiations, and will you commit to engaging in good faith with State officials and the community to ensure that the leases are negotiated in a way that is fair to the State, the people of Hawaii, and the military?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Senator, this is an incredibly important issue, not just in Hawaii, but in all the places we engage with the community and sign leases. I would absolutely commit to wanting to work with

your office and then to engage with community members to ensure the Army is being its best neighbor that it can be.

Earlier in the hearing I was referencing with your colleague, Senator Warren and I were chatting about this, both kind of abroad how the Army exists in its footprint, but then specifically domestically, how the Army and its soldiers and the civilians that work on the bases engage with the community and the youth in that community is directly correlated to who gets a taste of what the Army has to offer and who gets to see what a life in the Army can do for them. I think it is both the right thing to do and the selfish thing to do to be the best neighbors we can be.

Senator HIRONO. Mr. Driscoll, I want to particularly emphasize how important these negotiations are and how they are conducted because the military of late has been criticized for what happened at Red Hill basically involving the Navy. But as far as the community is concerned, what happens to one service is something that impacts all of the other services. So it is really critical that you engage with the community.

So going to modernizing DOD infrastructure is one of my top priorities, and the Army has a deep backlog of maintenance and modernization for its facilities. Sadly, for example, in Hawaii, 50 percent of Army facilities are classified as failing or failed, and the cost to repair or replace them is over \$5 billion. This is just involving Hawaii.

So we need to have a functioning infrastructure critical to military readiness. How are you planning to address the Army's infrastructure issue in Hawaii and in the greater Indo-Pacific?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Senator, I have had many friends stationed in Hawaii, and though the experience has been good, I think that they might echo that some of the maintenance issues exist. We owe a duty to our soldiers and their families. My daughter, my 6-year-old Lila is named after my E6's daughter, Lila. She lives on a military—

Senator HIRONO. So Mr. Driscoll, my time is running out. So what I am getting from you is that there is a commitment to deal with the lagging infrastructure throughout the military and the Army, so I will certainly be holding you to that, should you be confirmed.

Let me get to mass deportations. President Trump has already ordered thousands of additional Army soldiers to the southern border. Experts have said deporting over 11 million people—these are the people who are undocumented—will require tens of thousands of personnel, hundreds of billions of dollars, and years to complete.

The Army is the primary military service who would be called upon to support a mass deportation order. What impact would deploying tens of thousands of troops have on Army readiness?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Senator, my understanding from the outside is that the Army stands by and stands ready to support the President's mission to defend the border—

Senator HIRONO. Well, if you have to deploy 10,000 people or more from the Army to do that, I would say that it is going to impact Army readiness for the other purposes for which the Army is stood up. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you, Senator Hirono. Senator Schmitt.

Senator SCHMITT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I agree. Actually, Joe Biden letting in 15 million people here necessitating the mass deportations is a problem. But Bill Clinton deported 12 million people. Barack Obama deported 8 million people. So deportations, they may have been suspended over the last 4 years, but is exactly what people voted for. They are tired of the lawlessness.

But for you, thanks for being here and thanks for your willingness to serve. As you know, I am very supportive of your nomination. I think you are going to do a great job, and I think you are going to provide a great perspective for what the Army really needs. I think your energy and your attitude and the way you explain why you served and I think a way forward to improve recruiting is actually, I have not heard that before. You hear it from soldiers and you hear it from people who are actually serving, but for somebody that is serving in your capacity I think it is a great way to sort of frame the importance of the recruitment challenges that we have and how we get beyond it.

I do want to ask about Fort Leonard Wood. We talked about it. In Missouri, we are really blessed to have Fort Leonard Wood in our State. It is pretty uniquely situated in that it is in a rural setting with the Mark Twain Forest, you have got a lot of room. I think that maneuverability that you get and the versatility that you get, including from other branches in law enforcement, to train there is a pretty unique asset. So just a couple of questions on that.

There has been some talk, and I mentioned this to you, not really from the Army, but from the Defense Health Agency, there is a hospital there that is really important, not just to the base, but to the community there. There has been some discussion about downgrading that to some sort of health clinic. Will you commit to working with me to make sure that that does not happen? I think they have sort of backtracked from that, but that would be devastating for the Fort Leonard Wood community. Is that something we can work on?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Senator, it would be an honor to work with your office, and as somebody who grew up in the mountains of North Carolina, and my wife is a physician, access to health care is a real thing. If you take that access away, it can completely change how a community is able to function. So this is an important issue and I would look forward to working with you, if confirmed.

Senator SCHMITT. Can you talk a little bit about the benefits of having a sort of centrally located base like that at Fort Leonard Wood? You have got all the real eState you need. There have been significant upgrades made, hundreds of millions of dollars pumped into the new housing there, so for the long term, it is a great place for us to kind of stage operations. A lot of people get their early training there. But why that is important to the Army to have a base like that?

Mr. DRISCOLL. My understanding, Senator, of your description, and if confirmed I would be honored to visit it with you, is the base can scale for future needs that we just do not know about. In a lot of areas, the bases are constrained by what is around them. This base seems to have the ability that if we needed it in 1 day, 1 year, or 10 years to scale for things. We do not quite know what we need. We do not know where our soldiers need to be positioned. We

do not know what testing requirements will be. Fort Leonard Wood seems like an amazing place to be able to expand.

Senator SCHMITT. Well, the folks back home would be happy to hear that you want to come by, and Missouri barbecue is the best in the country, so we will make sure you get some of that. My Texas friends and Carolina friends may disagree, but they are wrong. They are wrong.

I want to ask, we talked a little bit in my office and others may have touched on this too, but clearly our chief adversary is China, and so the Army is reorienting itself a little bit for this challenge. Can you talk about how you see it, and some things that if you were just talking to somebody on the street about what the Army's traditionally done and what it is going to need to do in the future to prepare for what could potentially be this struggle, of course, for the 21st century?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Absolutely, Senator. My time being deployed, and I think my friends who deployed to Afghanistan and my experience in Iraq, most of the movements were squad level movements. So you would have, call it, 15 to 25 men and women doing most actions. The logistics, getting things in and out of the countries was less contested. If you needed water or fuel, you could get it from the continental United States to those theaters quickly and relatively easily.

An engagement with a peer like China will be a completely and totally different thing than I have seen in my time on the Planet Earth. Everything can be contested. It is a peer adversary who will do everything they can to defeat us. This requires, let's call it a pre-war time footing for us as an Army and us as a people to get ourselves ready to engage in a conflict that could fundamentally alter our future way of life if we are not ready for it.

Senator SCHMITT. Thank you, and as you know, I support you and I think you are going to do a great job. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you, Senator Schmitt. Thank you, Mr. Driscoll. We appreciate your answers to the questions today and we appreciate your willingness to serve, and we will now close the hearing.

For the information of our Members, questions for the record will be due to the Committee within two business days of the conclusion of this hearing. With that, if there are no objection, we are adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:47 a.m., the Committee adjourned.]

---

[Prepared questions submitted to Mr. Daniel P. Driscoll by Chairman Wicker prior to the hearing with answers supplied follow:]

#### QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

##### DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES AS SECRETARY OF THE ARMY

*Question.* What is your understanding of the duties and functions of the Secretary of the Army?

*Answer.* The Secretary of the Army is the senior official and head of the Department of the Army, with authority and responsibility for conducting all affairs of the



Department of the Army, subject to the authority, direction, and control of the Secretary of Defense (10 U.S.C. § 7013). The Secretary of the Army is solely responsible for the functions of Acquisition, Audit, Comptroller, Information Management, Inspector General, Legislative Affairs, Public Affairs and Research and Development (10 U.S.C. § 7014).

The Secretary of the Army is also responsible for the supervision and control of Army intelligence activities as well as any other activities as may be prescribed by law, the President, or the Secretary of Defense.

*Question.* What background and experience do you possess that render you highly qualified to perform these duties and responsibilities?

*Answer.* I was honored to first experience the Department of the Army through the lens of a young Armor officer, deploying to Iraq from 2009–2010, which was an ideal way to understand the needs and perspectives of the Army's soldiers, the sacrifices required of them and their families, and the institutional culture that makes our Army the finest in the world. After being honorably discharged from the Army, I attended Yale Law School on the Post-9/11 GI Bill and graduated in 2014. I then began a career in finance working at an investment bank and then co-founded a venture studio where we partnered to launch and grow small and medium businesses in my home State of North Carolina. I began working as a Chief Operations Officer at a venture capital fund and worked as a Chief Strategy Officer at a healthcare business. My experience working with innovators in the private sector has given me a crucial lens to apply to the current challenges facing the Army.

If confirmed, I would serve as the soldier's Secretary of the Army, as opposed to that the bureaucrats. I would spend every day focused on our soldiers and their families knowing the immense sacrifices they and their families make to uphold the freedoms we hold dear. If confirmed, my duty would be to ensure our soldiers have the world's finest training, equipment, and leadership to accomplish any mission, and to make the Army the most lethal force possible.

*Question.* In particular, what management and leadership experience do you possess that you would apply to your service as Secretary of the Army, if confirmed?

*Answer.* My background as an Army Armor officer was invaluable in preparing me to lead the Army. From leading soldiers in garrison at Fort Drum, NY to the training fields of Yuma, Arizona to the battlefield in Baghdad, Iraq, I have learned that every decision requires putting the soldier first. I know from first-hand experience the challenges soldiers face every day. My time serving as a cavalry scout with the 10th Mountain Division is the most formative leadership experience that I have had. If confirmed, I will always remember that it is the soldiers on the ground that will feel the consequences of their leaders' decisions. I intend to be the soldiers' Secretary of the Army.

Since leaving the Army, I have led teams in private sector roles across several industries. In each role, it was critical to have a team of experts who could bring their own experiences and leadership styles to the roles and, if confirmed, I would build a similar team of experts for the Army.

If confirmed, I look forward to leading from the front, working closely with Army senior leaders and staff to lead an Army focused on mission effectiveness that takes care of its people, soldiers, civilians, and their families.

*Question.* To the extent that the functions of the Army overlap with those of other DOD entities, what would be your approach, if confirmed, to consolidating and reducing unnecessary duplication?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will eagerly coordinate with the Department in identifying and eliminating unnecessary duplication. I will prioritize ensuring that the right element is in the lead on each task rather than focusing on territoriality. Our resources are finite, and the tasks and the responsibilities of the Department and the Army are large, so there is no room for waste.

*Question.* If confirmed, what duties and responsibilities would you assign to the Under Secretary of the Army?

*Answer.* The Under Secretary of the Army performs such duties and exercises such powers as prescribed by the Secretary of the Army, and Army General Order No. 2024–01 specifies that the Under Secretary is the Secretary's senior civilian assistant and principal adviser on matters related to the management and operation of the Army. Accordingly, the Under Secretary is entrusted with the task of communicating and advocating for Army policies, plans, and programs to external audiences, including Congress, the American people, and foreign governments. The Under Secretary is also designated as the position of Chief Management Officer of the Army, serving as the Secretary's principal adviser on the effective and efficient organization of the Army's business operations and initiatives for the business transformation of the Army. If confirmed, I would continue to assign the Under Sec-

retary of the Army those duties and responsibilities and would rely on them as a key member of the team.

*Question.* If confirmed, over which members and organizations of the Army would you direct the Chief of Staff of the Army to exercise supervision and what would be the scope of such supervision? What other duties would you assign to the Chief of Staff of the Army?

*Answer.* The Chief of Staff of the Army (CSA) is the senior military advisor to the Secretary of the Army and the senior Army military officer. The CSA presides over the Army Staff, communicates Army Staff plans and recommendations to the Secretary of the Army, and advises the Secretary of the Army on those plans and recommendations. In addition to the advisor role, the CSA is responsible for ensuring the effective and efficient functioning of Army organizations and commands in executing their statutory missions and assisting the Secretary of the Army in performing acquisition-related functions. The CSA also performs the duties prescribed for him as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (10 U.S.C. § 151). Additionally, multiple units report directly to the CSA, including the U.S. Army Test and Evaluation Command, the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, the U.S. Army Military District of Washington, and the U.S. Army War College.

If confirmed, I would assign the above responsibilities and supervisory roles to the CSA.

*Question.* If confirmed, what innovative ideas would you consider providing to the Secretary of Defense regarding the organization and operations of the Department of the Army?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I would consider providing recommendations to the Secretary of Defense concerning accelerating promotions for exceptionally meritorious individuals and broadening opportunities for non-traditional career pathways to ensure the Army attracts and retains the best talent. I would base any such recommendations on a thorough review of the Army's current policies and procedures.

#### CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

*Question.* Federal ethics laws, like 10 U.S.C. § 208, prohibit government employees from participating in matters where they, or certain family members or organizations with which they have certain relationships, have a financial interest.

Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to disclose any potential conflicts of interest, including investments, business ties, family relationships, or other connections that could be perceived as influencing your decisionmaking?

*Answer.* Yes, I agree.

*Question.* Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, that if a conflict of interest arises, you will recuse yourself from participating in any relevant decisions regarding that specific matter?

*Answer.* Yes, I agree.

*Question.* Do you commit, without qualification, if confirmed, to decisionmaking on the merits and exclusively in the public interest, without regard to private gain or personal benefit?

*Answer.* Yes, I do.

#### CIVILIAN CONTROL OF THE MILITARY

*Question.* In its report, Providing for the Common Defense, the National Defense Strategy Commission cautioned, "there is an imbalance in civil-military relations on critical issues of strategy development and implementation. Civilian voices appear muted on issues at the center of U.S. defense and national security policy."

If confirmed, specifically what would you do to ensure that your tenure as Secretary of the Army epitomizes the fundamental requirement for civilian control of the Armed Forces embedded in the U.S. Constitution and other laws?

*Answer.* I am fully committed to the requirements in the U.S. Constitution and other laws enshrining civilian control of America's Armed Forces. If confirmed, I would bring that commitment to my role as Secretary of the Army, fulfilling my legal obligations to control and oversee all affairs of the Army.

#### BUDGET

*Question.* If confirmed, by what standards would you measure the adequacy of funding for the Army?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will measure the adequacy of funding for the Army by the Army's ability to meet the requirements laid out in the NDS and the priorities of the Secretary of Defense. As a critical part of the Joint Force, the Army must be capable of defeating military aggression that threatens U.S. vital interests.

*Question.* How will you ensure the Army is appropriately resourced to simultaneously modernize, grow readiness, and take care of its people?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will work with the Secretary of Defense to ensure that the Army has sufficient resources to address each of its priorities and will ensure that any resource constraints are communicated clearly and early to Congress.

*Question.* Section 222a of title 10, U.S. Code, provides that not later than 10 days after the President's submission of the defense budget to Congress, each Service Chief must submit to the congressional defense committees a report that lists, in order of priority, the unfunded priorities of his or her armed force.

If confirmed, do you agree to support the Chief of Staff of the Army in providing his/her unfunded priorities list to Congress in a timely manner?

*Answer.* Yes, if confirmed, I will support the Army Chief of Staff in meeting the statutory requirement by providing an Unfunded Requirements (UFR) list to Congress within 10 days of the submission of the President's defense budget to Congress.

#### MAJOR CHALLENGES AND PRIORITIES

*Question.* What would you see as your highest priorities for the near-term and long-term future of the Army?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will initially focus on advancing the Army's current priorities: Warfighting, Delivering Combat-Ready Formations, Continuous Transformation and Strengthening the Profession. I will also carefully review and validate those priorities and consider any necessary changes.

*Question.* What do you consider to be the most significant challenges you would face, if confirmed as Secretary of the Army?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I expect that one of my most significant challenges would be ensuring the Army recruits qualified candidates in sufficient numbers. As the Army's end-strength and veteran population declines, fewer young people are closely connected to a soldier or veteran, meaning becoming a soldier may seem foreign to them.

A second significant challenge I would anticipate is continuing the substantial task of modernizing the force to maintain overmatch against near-peer adversaries.

*Question.* What plans do you have for addressing each of these challenges, if confirmed?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will strive to ensure that the Army presents a compelling message concerning the benefit of service both to our Nation and to those that serve, and that the message is presented across every region and eligible demographic. Young people want to understand the value proposition of what is presented to them, and it would be my job to ensure that the Army offers them a strong value.

To continue the modernization of the Army while maintaining a high level of readiness, I would communicate frequently and transparently with all stakeholders, including the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Assistant Secretary of the Army Acquisition, Logistics and Technology, and Army Futures Command, ensuring that operational demands do not overwhelm the Army's ability to prepare for the future fight. I will also prioritize ensuring that Army modernization programs remain on time and on budget.

#### NATIONAL DEFENSE STRATEGY

*Question.* The 2022 NDS outlines that the United States faces a rising China, an aggressive Russia, and the continued threat from rogue regimes and global terrorism. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the NDS Commission testified in July 2024 that China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea have formed an "axis of aggressors", supporting each other's military aggression and illegal wars.

What is your assessment of the military threat posed by the People's Republic of China?

*Answer.* The 2018 and 2022 National Defense Strategies each identified China as the Department of Defense's pacing threat, and I share that assessment. Xi Jinping has openly expressed his intention to annex Taiwan to mainland China, told his armed forces to be prepared to use force to achieve such an outcome by 2027, and invested heavily in military capabilities required for such a campaign. If he were to succeed in achieving that goal, that would profoundly negatively impact future U.S. trade, military alliances, and influence around the world.

*Question.* What is your assessment of the military threat posed by Russia?

*Answer.* The 2018 and 2022 National Defense Strategies each found that Russia presents a significant conventional, gray zone, and strategic threat to the United States and Europe and acts as a destabilizing force in several other regions globally. Even constrained by the international sanction's regime in place since 2014, Russia

has successfully fielded and maintained capable military forces, delivered novel strategic capabilities, and increased production of key platforms and materiel.

Outside the constraints of the New START Treaty, Russia has substantially built up its tactical nuclear arsenal, threatening its neighbors in Europe and Asia. Russia's ability to operate extra-regionally using mercenaries and proxies has been strained but is not insignificant.

*Question.* What is your assessment of the military threat posed by collusion among Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea?

Answer. Recent actions taken by China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea in Ukraine and elsewhere suggest a cooperative approach to undermine U.S. influence and its alliances around the world. Near peer competitors may view rogue states as distractions that they can use to draw the attention and resources of the United States and its allies away from their own military buildup or coercive activities.

Technology transfer and materiel sales have allowed these countries to circumvent or alleviate the costs imposed upon them by sanctions. And there is the potential that military conflict spurred by any one of these actors could be used as an opportunity for another actor to engage in aggression if they believe U.S. forces are tied down. It is a foundational principle of strategy that one's adversaries should be divided.

*Question.* Are there significant opportunities that, in your view, the Army has been unable to leverage, or has leveraged only in part, since the NDS was published in 2022? If so, how would you correct this situation, if confirmed?

Answer. With the 2022 National Defense Strategy identifying China as the Department of Defense's pacing threat and finding that Russia presents a significant conventional, gray zone, and strategic threat to the United States, I would approach my evaluation of any additional needed capabilities, if confirmed, with this in mind. Following this evaluation, I would make recommendations to the Secretary of Defense on any potential additional resources or authorities the Department of the Army might need.

*Question.* What do you perceive to be the Army's role in competing with and countering China?

Answer. The Army remains an essential force for asserting American power in the Indo-Pacific. The vast majority of Chiefs of Defense in the Indo-Pacific have an army background, and many of them have attended professional military education courses in the USA. The Army regularly participates in exercises across the region, continually strengthening our bonds with Indo-Pacific allies and partners.

The Army's communications, logistics, security, air defense, cyber, and sensing and strike capabilities will be extremely important in any Pacific conflict. Moreover, the ground combat capabilities that the Army maintains may be important as well. We all have a vision of what warfare in the Indo-Pacific looks like, but our pre-conceived notions of future war are rarely accurate.

*Question.* Do you believe the Army must maintain the ability to conduct large-scale ground combat operations, to deter major-power competitors such as Russia?

Answer. Yes, the Army must always have the ability to conduct large-scale ground combat operations, and all operations across the continuum of conflict.

*Question.* Is the Army adequately sized, structured, and resourced to implement the current strategy and the associated operational plans? Please explain your answer.

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with the Army, Joint Staff, and OSD to evaluate the Army's current strategy and determine if the force is sized, structured, and resourced to satisfy operational plans.

*Question.* What are your primary lessons learned from observing operations in Ukraine and the Middle East that the Army must consider in its modernization efforts?

Answer. Small-unmanned aerial systems, counter-unmanned aerial system technologies, and the revitalization of electronic warfare are reshaping modern battlefields. Access to air power at scale is changing tactics, techniques, and procedures. The Army must adopt this technology, and the techniques developed in the Russo-Ukraine conflict quickly.

*Question.* Does the Army have the requisite analytic capabilities and tools to support you, if confirmed, in evaluating the Army's force structure and sizing strategies to ensure that it can and will generate forces that are manned, trained, and equipped to execute current plans and strategies? Please explain your answer.

Answer. If confirmed, I will evaluate our current processes and capabilities for shaping army structure and size and modify them accordingly to ensure that the Army can generate forces to execute our current plans and strategies.

*Question.* If confirmed, how will you address any gaps or shortfalls in the Army's ability to meet the demands placed on it by the operational plans that implement the current strategy?

*Answer.* I will work with the Army Staff to identify potential mitigations to any revealed gaps or shortfalls in the Army's ability to enact operational plans, while we account for long-term deficiencies that these mitigations create.

*Question.* If confirmed, what changes or adjustments would you make in the Army's implementation of the current strategy?

*Answer.* If confirmed, one of my first acts as Secretary of the Army will be to conduct a complete review of the Army's current strategy and revise it accordingly.

*Question.* How would you characterize your familiarity with the civilian leaders of the Armies of other nations and multi-national and international land power-focused consultative forums? If confirmed, on which leaders and forums would you focus your engagement with a view to advancing the interests of the Army?

*Answer.* Relationships with foreign military leaders are essential to maintain interoperability with our allies and partners. The timing and frequency of my engagements with foreign leaders and at land-power forums will be driven by priorities identified in our national military strategy.

The Army is the lead Service for overseeing the development of the components that compromise the Integrated Air and Missile Defense of Guam system. However, rather than embrace this effort so critical to U.S. operations in a contingency in the Western Pacific, the Army has assumed a much lesser role than that required by a Joint Program Executive Office who should manage the timing and integration of the multi-service air and missile defense weapons systems, contributing to continued delays in the overall effort.

*Question.* If confirmed as Secretary, what steps will you take to ensure the Army better executes its responsibilities for the defense of Guam and expedites the fielding of air and missile defense capabilities on the island?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will evaluate current Army resource contributions against the integrated air and missile defense plan and work with my counterparts in the other services to ensure we work together to provide for the defense of Guam.

#### END STRENGTH

*Question.* Is the Army's current end strength sufficient to meet national security objectives and execute the associated operational plans? If not, what end strength do you believe is necessary? Please explain your answer.

*Answer.* I think that the decline in Army end strength in recent years is due to recruiting challenges rather than a conclusion that the Army required fewer soldiers to meet its national security objectives. This has occurred during an era of increasing security challenges. Therefore, it is likely that the Army's current end strength is insufficient to accomplish its mission. I will need additional data, including wargame outputs, analysis, and opinions from senior leaders, before I can verify that conclusion or make recommendations on the total Army end strength that is required.

If confirmed, I will assess end strength levels in concert with the OSD staff, the Joint Staff and the Army Staff against appropriate defense planning scenarios. Any growth in the Army's end strength should have the full support of Congress. I would only ask for that support after reviewing service plans for force structure, modernization, training, and logistical requirements in line with an updated National Defense Strategy.

#### RECRUITING/RETENTION

*Question.* The 2024 National Defense Strategy Commission stated that "The DOD workforce and the all-volunteer force provide an unmatched advantage. However, recruiting failures have shrunk the force and raise serious questions about the all-volunteer force in peacetime, let alone in major combat." In addition, DOD studies indicate that only about 23 percent of today's youth population is eligible for military service, and only a fraction of those who meet military accession standards are interested in serving.

If confirmed, how would you ensure the Army maintains sufficiently high recruitment and retention standards?

*Answer.* Maintaining appropriate standards is a critical component of Army readiness. If confirmed, I will review the Army's current recruitment and retention standards and solicit input from all levels of the Army to ensure that the right standards are in place. I will also empower Army leaders to hold recruits and soldiers to those standards, ensuring that the Army does not enlist soldiers unprepared to succeed and does not reenlist soldiers who have not maintained standards.

*Question.* If required to choose between maintaining high recruitment and retention standards and achieving authorized end strength levels, which would be more important, in your view?

*Answer.* Standards are important. If confirmed, I would not support lowering recruitment or retention standards to meet end strength goals. Unprepared or unqualified soldiers hinder the mission, and accessing or retaining the wrong people is not an effective method of achieving metrics.

*Question.* What impact do current medical and other qualifications for enlistment in the Army have on the number of individuals eligible for military service? If confirmed, what changes to such qualifications, if any, would you recommend to increase the number of individuals eligible for service without degrading the quality of recruits?

*Answer.* The low percentage of American eligible and interested in serving in the Army is greatly concerning. If confirmed, I will review the Army's current enlistment qualifications to ensure they are the right standards and not unnecessarily eliminating qualified individuals from consideration. If we are enforcing standards irrelevant to an individual's ability to serve effectively, I would recommend changing those standards.

*Question.* Rather than relying solely on ever-higher compensation for a shrinking pool of volunteers, what creative steps would you take, if confirmed, to expand the pool of eligible recruits and improve Army recruiting?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will consider all non-monetary options of expanding the pool of eligible recruits and improving Army recruiting, including alternative career routes, sabbaticals, desired duty station assignment, increased direct commissions for certain specialties, and others. I will also review the Army recruiting strategy to ensure it effectively conveys a strong value proposition to young people across the Nation.

*Question.* What do you consider to be key to the Army's future success in retaining the best qualified personnel for continued service in positions of greater responsibility and leadership in the Army?

*Answer.* The best qualified soldiers are likely to have strong alternative employment options, including monetarily, so the Army must compete in other areas to retain them. I believe that soldiers are inclined to remain in the Army when they and their families have been treated well, when they have been given chances to develop and succeed, and when they feel like they are using their abilities to make meaningful contributions to high-performing teams. Providing our soldiers with strong quality of life, maximizing dwell time and predictability of assignments, providing them with new challenges, and ensuring capable and responsive chains of command will best position the Army to compete for talent.

*Question.* What steps, if any, should be taken to ensure that current operational requirements and tempo do not adversely impact the overall recruiting, retention, readiness, and morale of soldiers?

*Answer.* Every time that the Army sends a unit on a training exercise, overseas rotation, or deployment, it must assess the holistic impact on the readiness of that unit and other units. Operational requirements must be balanced against the long-term health and readiness of the force.

*Question.* In your view, do current recruiting standards—particularly DOD-wide criteria for tier-one recruits—accurately predict recruit attrition and/or future success in the Army?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will review the data concerning the level to which current recruiting standards accurately predict recruitment attrition and/or future success in the Army. If I determine that the current standards are not an accurate predictor, I will advocate for appropriate changes.

*Question.* Do you believe that current military entrance testing methods unnecessarily restrict the pool of eligible recruits, for example, by penalizing prospective recruits for whom English is not their native language?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will review current military entrance testing methods. I will conduct that review before determining whether current entrance testing methods unnecessarily restrict the pool of eligible recruits. If I conclude that any current entrance testing methods are unfair, I will advocate appropriate changes.

#### RESERVE COMPONENTS

*Question.* In a historic shift since 9/11, Reserve components of the Army continue to serve more routinely as a part-time workforce for the Department of the Army in support of ongoing training and operational requirements. This requires continuous review of how the Army funds, develops, equips and compensates members of the Army Reserve and Army National Guard.

In your view, what is the appropriate relationship between the Active Army and the Army Reserve and Army National Guard?

Answer. The Active Army, Army Reserve, and Army National Guard are all critical components of the Total Force. The roles that each component plays in an operation are dictated by circumstances, capabilities, and the timing of events. The Reserve components provide the Active Force with supplemental and unique capabilities and can provide relief to stressed formations in the Active component. However, the Army must always be cautious about overstressing Reserve components units in turn.

*Question.* What is your vision for the roles and missions of the Army Reserve components? If confirmed, what new objectives would you seek to achieve with respect to the Army Reserve components' organization, force structure, end strength, and readiness?

Answer. Reserve components provide depth and expertise and skillsets that are often unavailable in the Active Army. If confirmed, I will evaluate how the Army employs, schedules, alerts, and mobilizes the Reserve components to support operations across the globe.

Additionally, I will review the balance of capabilities between Reserve components and the Active Army during the annual Total Army Analysis Process.

*Question.* Are you concerned that continued reliance on Army Reserve components to execute operational missions—both at home and around the globe—is adversely affecting the ability to meet their recruiting and retention missions? Why or why not?

Answer. Excessive operational tempo can harm recruiting and retention. I would need to view additional data before I can assess if or how the current operational tempo of the Reserve components is affecting their recruitment or retention.

As both an operational Reserve and a part-time workforce, members of the Army Reserve components are subject to many requirements by both the Active Force and the Reserves. In many cases, reservists are required to do more work than they have time for, given the part-time nature of their service, Army limits on compensation, and competing personal and professional priorities.

*Question.* In this world of limited resources, what are the most important activities for members of the Army Reserve component to engage in?

Answer. The primary task of all Army Reserve units and individuals is to maintain readiness. Army Reserve units should strive to gain and maintain proficiency in their mission essential tasks and individuals should strive to be proficient in their assigned duties and mission-occupational specialty.

*Question.* In what areas should the Army take acceptable risks in the training and readiness of Reserve Forces?

Answer. The Army should evaluate the quantity of mandatory training not required by law that Reserve component forces are required to complete annually.

*Question.* In your view, does the Army offer adequate career management to members of the Reserve components?

Answer. The Army offers career development models to Reserve component soldiers. However, they receive less formal guidance than many of their Active Duty peers. At present, Reserve and Active career models are very similar. If confirmed, I will ask the Chief of the Army Reserve and the Chief of the Army National Guard to evaluate if we should make changes to Reserve component career models and professional military education requirements.

*Question.* In your view, are any legislative reforms necessary to facilitate easier transitions for members of all components between Active and Reserve status?

Answer. If confirmed, I would support making transitions between Active and Reserve status in the Army more seamless. I will need to study the issue more to determine if legislative reforms are necessary to ease transitions between components.

#### NON-DEPLOYABLE ISSUES

*Question.* Do you agree that soldiers who are non-deployable for more than 12 consecutive months should be subject either to separation from the Army or referral into the Disability Evaluation System?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that soldiers who are non-deployable for more than 12 consecutive months will receive an individualized review that weighs whether their continued service is in the Nation's best interest. If not, they should be considered for separation from service or referral into the Disability Evaluation System as appropriate.

*Question.* In your view, under what circumstances might the retention of a soldier who has been non-deployable for more than 12 months be "in the best interest of the Army"?

Answer. The determination of whether retaining a soldier who has been non-deployable for more than 12 months is in the best interest of the Army is an individualized review that should consider factors including the likelihood of the soldier swiftly returning to deployable status and the soldier's unique skills and qualifications.

#### ARMY TALENT MANAGEMENT

*Question.* In your judgment, how effective is the Army at identifying, promoting, and rewarding top performers?

Answer. I believe that the Army generally does a good job identifying and promoting top talent in our enlisted and junior officer ranks, particularly during tactical assignments. However, the current promotion system does not necessarily select senior officers for their institutional knowledge or strategic acumen, which are increasingly desirable as officers progress.

I believe that the Army struggles to reward talent and retain talent, in part, because of the inflexible nature of its time-based compensation and promotion system. Exemplary leaders can only expect to be promoted one to 2 years more quickly than a peer of average performance. That's a very different dynamic than the private sector.

*Question.* Similarly, how effective is the Army at identifying and removing underperforming or counterproductive servicemembers?

Answer. I believe that the Army's current evaluation system is generally effective at identifying underperforming or counterproductive soldiers. The Army's ability to remove or exclude underperforming servicemembers is significantly constrained by the health and size of an officer's or non-commissioned officer's career field and rank. When the Army has a surplus of soldiers of a specific rank, promotion rates are lower. When recruiting and retention are challenging, promotion rates are higher. For example, in 2005, during the surge in Iraq, 97 percent of eligible Army Captains were promoted to Major. Historically, that percentage was closer to 80 percent.

*Question.* In your view, what should be done to improve Army talent management, both in the Active and Reserve components?

Answer. The Army should work with the Department of Defense and Congress to continue to refine elements of the Defense Officer Personnel Management Act to make promotion schedules more flexible. It should also make better use of its direct commissioning programs to introduce different perspectives into the force.

I also believe that the Army should ease the process for soldiers to transfer between Reserve and Active service. Permitting soldiers to more easily transition between Active Duty and Reserve components will improve access to talent across the breadth of the total force and introduce flexibility in military service in a manner that improves retention.

As the Army fights for talent, it must continue to improve its efforts to place the right person in the right place to maximize the contributions of each soldier to the mission of restoring lethality and deterrence to the Army and our country.

#### SUICIDE PREVENTION

*Question.* If confirmed, what actions would you take to prevent suicides in the Active Army, the Army Reserve, and the Army National Guard, and in the families of soldiers across all components?

Answer. Even one suicide among the force is too many. If confirmed, I will make suicide prevention a high priority, striving to ensure that all soldiers and their families have access to the resources necessary to foster their physical, mental and spiritual well-being, and that their leaders encourage them to take advantage of those resources.

#### SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND ASSAULT PREVENTION AND RESPONSE PROGRAMS

*Question.* Do you believe the policies, programs, resources, and training that DOD and the Military Services have put in place to prevent and respond to sexual assault, and to protect service members who report sexual assault from retaliation, are working? If not, what else must be done?

Answer. There is no place in the Military for sexual assault or sexual harassment. Sexual assault is a crime within and outside of the Army. It destroys unit cohesion and readiness and deters both men and women from serving. Congress, the Department of Defense, and the Army have taken a series of helpful actions to reduce the incidence of sexual assault in the military, but more must be done.

If confirmed, I will continue to refine policies and programs implemented over the last 4 years to reduce the incidence of sexual assault and improve support to victims. I anticipate ensuring high-level focus on this issue; including appointing a



high-level position dedicated to ensuring a focus on ending sexual assault in the military. Every soldier deserves the opportunity to serve their nation without fear of harassment or assault. If the worst happens, the process of justice must be fair and swift, perpetrators must be brought to justice, and victims must have access to the services they need and are ensured the ability to continue their service without sanction or setback to themselves or their careers.

*Question.* If confirmed, what would you do to increase focus on the prevention of sexual assaults?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will review the Army's existing efforts to prevent sexual assault. I will personally express the importance of focusing on that prevention and instruct Army leaders at all levels to do the same with their soldiers.

*Question.* What is your view of the necessity of affording a victim both restricted and unrestricted options to report sexual harassment?

*Answer.* Offering restricted and unrestricted reporting options to victims of sexual harassment increases the likelihood that victims will feel comfortable and safe enough to report that harassment. Reporting sexual harassment is a necessary step to effectively address that wrongful conduct. If confirmed, I would support offering both types of reporting options.

#### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND CHILD ABUSE IN ARMY FAMILIES

*Question.* What is your understanding of the extent of domestic violence and child abuse in the Army, and, if confirmed, what actions would you take to address these issues?

*Answer.* Any domestic violence and child abuse in the Army is unacceptable. If confirmed, I will review the current rates of both domestic violence and child abuse in the Army, ensure that the Army holds perpetrators accountable and assists victims, and that victims are familiar with and have access to a range of reporting options and resources. I will also ensure that Army leaders at all levels prioritize that effort.

#### SERVICES PROVIDED TO SERVICE MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

*Question.* If confirmed, how would you support increased employment opportunities for military spouses and other family members?

*Answer.* Army families make many sacrifices, and they deserve the Nation's support. Army spouses' careers are frequently disrupted by their spouse's training exercises, reassignments, and deployments. If confirmed, I will review existing Army programs and policies in place to support employment opportunities for spouses and other family members and work with the Secretary of Defense, Congress, and State and local governments to ensure that Army programs and policies continue to grow meaningful employment opportunities for Army family members.

If confirmed, what specifically would you do to establish accountability in the Army for sustaining the high-quality housing that soldier and their families deserve?

*Answer.* Army families and servicemembers deserve high-quality housing. If confirmed, I will evaluate the current performance of housing providers and empower garrison commanders to hold these providers accountable.

*Question.* If confirmed, what specifically would you do to establish accountability in Military Housing Privatization Initiative (MHPI) "contractors," particularly given that, in most cases, they have public-private partnership agreements with the Army that extend for as long as 50 years?

*Answer.* I will work with the Army Installation Management Command to evaluate the performance of each MHPI contractor, and to determine what authorities the Department can leverage to improve performance. If necessary, I will request additional authorities from Congress.

#### ARMY READINESS

*Question.* How would you assess the current readiness of the Army—across the domains of materiel and equipment, personnel, and training—to execute the National Defense Strategy and Combatant Commanders' associated operational plans?

*Answer.* The U.S. Army continues to be the most professional land force in the world. However, I worry about the ability of the country's industrial base to provide sufficient military stocks to fully support our warfighters.

Additionally, our technological edge is shrinking. The Army needs to accelerate its modernization and better prepare our forces for the advances in drone and autonomous warfare the world has witnessed in Ukraine.

*Question.* In your view, what are the priority missions for which current and future Army forces should be trained and ready in the context of day-to-day activities, as well as for contingencies?

*Answer.* Prioritization for training and readiness will be driven by the National Defense Strategy and National Military Strategy. If confirmed, I will work with the Army Staff to align our training and readiness against defense planning scenarios identified by the Department.

*Question.* If confirmed, how would you oversee compliance by the Army with readiness goals and timelines?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I would work with my staff to evaluate and revise the existing governance structure within the Army to ensure that the organization establishes metrics and regularly reviews progress toward our readiness goals.

*Question.* If confirmed, how would you prioritize maintaining readiness in the near term, with modernizing the Army to ensure future readiness?

*Answer.* Prior to supporting a deployment or rotation, I will require the Army Staff to holistically assess the impact of that deployment on the readiness of the impacted unit or stock, future readiness, and impact on the career field of soldiers impacted by that deployment. In the case of transferring arms or military stocks to another country, I will require the Army Staff to provide information on the capacity of our industrial base to replace the item, and the time and money required.

#### MUNITIONS

*Question.* If confirmed, what steps would you take to ensure the Army has sufficient inventories of munitions to meet combatant commanders' needs?

*Answer.* Maintaining a sufficient inventory of critical munitions is essential to keeping the Army ready for conflict, supporting allies and partners, and deterring adversaries from hostile action. If confirmed, I will direct the Army Staff to work with OSD Policy, the Joint staff, and OSD A&S, to verify munitions requirements, and suggest mitigations to overcome shortfalls in the short-, medium-, and long-term.

*Question.* Is the ammunition industrial base, including the Army's organic ammunition plants, capable of supporting current and future munitions requirements, in your view?

*Answer.* While I have not received briefings from the Army on its organic industrial base modernization plan, I suspect that there will be more to do to meet current and future munitions requirements. If confirmed, implementing and revising this modernization plan will be a top priority for my office and the ASA (ATL).

*Question.* If confirmed, what actions would you take to reduce single points of failure and foreign material supplier dependencies in the ammunition industrial base?

*Answer.* The Army needs to be able to quickly scale production of critical munitions while protecting its supply base. It is increasingly important to reduce single points of failure and foreign dependencies in our ammunition industrial base. If confirmed, I will work to make sure that plans to reduce foreign dependencies and single points of failure are included in OIB modernization plans.

*Question.* Based on your experience, what are some of the lessons from the past 4 years of increasing 155mm artillery shell production that we should ensure get institutionalized in the Army to improve future industrial mobilization efforts (for munitions or other areas)?

*Answer.* The U.S. Military must question many of the assumptions it made during the "peace dividend" era about the need for flexibility in defense production. From what I have observed, the Army has learned that it needs to regularly invest in its organic industrial base, nurture component suppliers domestically, and understand the time required to procure long-lead items necessary to scale manufacturing.

*Question.* Based on your experience, how should the Army be factoring in the needs of foreign partners and allies into over munitions forecasting in order to improve the long-term production stability of the industrial base?

*Answer.* Forecasting future needs for the U.S. military is extremely challenging, and adding in foreign partners and allies adds another layer of friction. I am skeptical that the Department can successfully forecast these requirements in a dynamic, geopolitical environment. Accordingly, it must make acquisition strategies and industrial base investments in equipment and munitions that allow for expansion and contraction in demand based on a range of demand that can be expected from allies and partners. The Department needs modular production facilities, and a cold and warm capacity that can be turned on and off to meet need.

*Question.* The Fiscal Year 2024 NDAA required the Department of Defense to establish a pilot program to incorporate the explosive CL-20 into existing munitions.

Is the Army considering executing any activities under this pilot in order to improve the explosive yield or operational envelope of any of its munitions?

Answer. I have not had the opportunity to receive a brief on this pilot program but will request one if confirmed.

*Question.* Regardless of whether the Army is doing anything under this pilot program, how is the Army considering incorporation of new energetic materials, like CL-20, or new manufacturing processes for energetics, like biomanufacturing, into existing munitions to increase explosive effects or operational envelope of its weapons?

Answer. If confirmed, I will investigate Army exploration of new energetic materials and manufacturing processes. I have not had the appropriate briefs to respond adequately to this question.

#### SPECIAL OPERATIONS

*Question.* What is your assessment of the role and importance of Army Special Operations Forces in supporting the Joint Force and the objectives of the National Defense Strategy?

Answer. Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) play a critical role in supporting the Joint Force and accomplishing the objectives of the National Defense Strategy. The Joint Force has heavily relied on ARSOF for many years, particularly in the role of building partner capacity, and I anticipate that trend to continue in the future.

#### OPERATIONAL ENERGY

*Question.* If confirmed, how would you lead the Army in harnessing innovations in operational energy and linking them with emerging joint operational concepts in order to reduce contested logistics vulnerabilities for warfighters?

Answer. Reducing the footprint of the Joint Force in expeditionary operations is vital to increasing the survivability of forward-deployed forces and reducing strain on sustainers. If confirmed, I plan to continue to support investments in technologies that reduce energy waste and provide accessible energy to the warfighter.

*Question.* In what specific areas, if any, do you believe the Army needs to improve the incorporation of energy considerations and alternative energy resources into the strategic planning processes?

Answer. Not just the Army, but the Joint Force needs to consider energy consumption and utilization in all operational plans, supplied by a variety of sources, to include alternative sources not used today. Unlike conflicts of the past thirty years, adversaries have an increased capability to interdict our lines of supply. Units must prepare to self-sustain during interruptions in shipments of fuel.

*Question.* How can Army acquisition systems better address requirements related to the use of energy in military platforms to decrease risks to warfighters? In your view, how can energy supportability that reduces contested logistics vulnerabilities become a key performance parameter in the requirements process?

Answer. To better address energy demands in system requirements, the Army should consider both its capacity to transport and receive energy in expeditionary environments, and overall energy requirements of units by echelon. These can then form a baseline to develop individual energy-based requirements for the development of different weapons and equipment sets.

*Question.* If confirmed, how would you prioritize energy resilience, including acquiring and deploying sustainable and renewable energy assets, to support mission critical functions, and address known vulnerabilities?

Answer. Energy resilience is installation resilience. Army installations, both CONUS and OCONUS must be increasingly prepared to provide for their energy needs without outside support. If confirmed, I will require the ASA (IE&E) to evaluate our current plans to increase installation energy resilience and continue the Army's progress in making our installations more resilient.

*Question.* Given that the Army has been charged with Contested Logistics for the Joint Force, how do you believe operational energy can and should be used to support this effort?

Answer. Developing new concepts for generating energy in a deployed and contested environment will greatly enable the Joint Force to reduce the quantity of tankers required to sustain it and increase the survivability of expeditionary formations.

#### ENVIRONMENT

*Question.* If confirmed, how would you further efforts to address PFAS contamination at Army installations?

Answer. If confirmed, I will fully support the Army's efforts to address PFAS contamination at Army installations and will review the sufficiency of those efforts. The health of our soldiers and their families, Army civilians, and the communities surrounding our installations must remain an Army priority.

#### READINESS AND RESOURCE IMPACTS FROM EXTREME WEATHER

*Question.* How would you assess the readiness and resource impacts on the Army from recent extreme weather events?

Answer. If confirmed, I will review the readiness and resource impacts on the Army from recent extreme weather events, prioritize resources needed to address those impacts, and seek to mitigate the risks of future such events.

*Question.* Based on these readiness and resource impacts, do you believe it necessary to use more resilient designs in Army infrastructure? How can the Army better use existing authorities on extreme weather mitigation granted by Congress in the last few NDAA's?

Answer. Army infrastructure design should contemplate the full range of potential weather events to ensure resiliency. If confirmed, I will review the Army's existing use of authorities on extreme weather mitigation and explore the benefits of greater use of those authorities.

#### AUDIT

*Question.* If confirmed, what specific actions will you take or direct to enable the Army to achieve a clean financial audit in the most expedited fashion?

Answer. I understand that the Army has continued to make progress on achieving a clean financial audit, but that there is more to do. I have been informed that the Army is investing in tools and revising processes, but I do not know the implementation status of these efforts. If confirmed, I commit to using my authority as the Secretary of the Army to continue to push toward achieving a clean audit, reforming business processes, and implementing technological systems to ensure the Army's fiscal health and transparency.

*Question.* What are the benefits to Army missions and effectiveness of achieving and maintaining a clean audit?

Answer. In my opinion, a clean audit will provide the awareness necessary to ensure that every dollar appropriated to the U.S. Army goes to its best use. We can only make the greatest strides in reducing waste and improving allocation of funds without full financial transparency and accountability.

*Question.* How will you hold Army leaders and organizations responsible and accountable for making the necessary investments and changes to correct findings and material weaknesses identified in the audit process?

Answer. A successful audit will showcase options to make Army funding, equipping, and sustainment practices more efficient and productive. If confirmed, I will hold Army Leaders accountable for making progress toward a clean audit. I will expect results from the ASA (FM&C) and Senior Army Leaders. I will require them to create metrics for progress toward financial accountability and hold those responsible who fail to meet them.

*Question.* Based on your experience, how do you see improved data from Army financial management IT systems that support audit help Army decisionmaking and readiness?

Answer. In general, improvements in financial management IT systems offer opportunities to reduce manual inputs and clerical errors, automate accounting of equipment and funding expenditures, and ease burdens that deter individuals across the Army from correctly following accounting procedures.

*Question.* As the Army continues down the path to a clean audit, there are still lessons that can be gleaned beyond the end goal of a clean audit opinion. Based on your experience, how do you anticipate operationalizing any intermediate lessons from audit into the Army's overall management reform objectives?

Answer. If confirmed, I will evaluate the Army's current process for disseminating lessons learned and circulating them through the force. If these processes and procedures are insufficient, I will task the ASA (F&MC) and other Army Leaders to revise them to ensure we are operationalizing lessons learned as we unveil them.

#### ARMY-RELATED DEFENSE INDUSTRIAL BASE

*Question.* What is your assessment of the systems and processes for identifying, evaluating, and managing risk in the Army's organic, commercial, and defense industrial base, including the munitions industrial base?

*Answer.* While I suspect these systems and processes have matured because of U.S. support to Ukraine since 2022, I have not received a brief on their maturation. If confirmed, I will receive the appropriate briefs to make an assessment.

*Question.* What do you see as the levers to motivate the defense industrial base, to include munitions manufacturers, to make additional capital investment (for facilities and tooling), as well as research and development investments to increase the capacity of the defense industrial base?

*Answer.* First, we need to create a long-term “demand signal” that justifies capital expenditures in production lines. Part of this demand signal must come from allies and partners and we must streamline foreign military sales processes to facilitate this outcome. Second, the Department of the Army should work with industry to incentivize the design of modular factories, capable of rapid prototyping and short-run production without large losses in efficiency. Advances in automation, artificial intelligence, and mechatronics have made this increasingly possible, and the Department of the Army should lead in its development.

*Question.* How should Army acquisition leaders consider impacts on the industrial base when addressing requirements for recapitalization or modernization of major defense weapons systems and munitions, and life cycle costs of such systems?

*Answer.* Acquisition leaders must consider both immediate and potential demand for major weapon systems and munitions as they formulate acquisition plans. An ability to scale capacity, or at least calculations concerning cost and time to scale that capacity should accompany acquisition strategies.

*Question.* How would you seek to ensure the Army engages with the broadest industrial base possible, including traditional contractors, nontraditional contractors, and small businesses?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I would work with the Army’s acquisition workforce and leaders to remove as many barriers as possible to doing business with the U.S. Army. The U.S. Army needs to be a better customer. Many of the actions that the U.S. Government took in the 1980’s to ensure fair competition have now become barriers to entry.

*Question.* If confirmed, what changes, if any, would you pursue in systems and processes to ensure that risk in the Army-relevant sectors of the defense industrial base is adequately managed to enable the development, production, and sustainment of technically superior, reliable, and affordable weapons systems and munitions?

*Answer.* I will need to review existing processes before I can make informed changes to the way the Army manages its portion of the defense industrial base. If confirmed, the status and management of the defense industrial base will be one of the first issues that I engage on.

#### EQUIPPING/MODERNIZATION

*Question.* What is your assessment of the Army’s past modernization record and current efforts?

*Answer.* I am aware that the Army has had difficulties in the past modernizing in a timely and efficient way, and getting that process is key for the Army’s future success. Rapid technological development by our adversaries highlights the need for the Army to innovate quickly based on lessons learned from current battlefields.

The establishment of Army Futures Command has helped streamline and focus the Army’s modernization efforts. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Under Secretary, the Assistant Secretaries, and other stakeholders to ensure that the Army stays on time and on budget in executing its current modernization priorities.

*Question.* Based on your experience, how would you structure the Army to conduct better tradeoff analysis so that programmatic investments are not stove-piped and can be assessed against the impact of various alternatives?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will work with the Army leadership team to evaluate current and projected investments across the department to better understand these priorities. The review process will allow me an opportunity to evaluate all priority programs and identify any adjustments that need to be made to increase their effectiveness.

*Question.* What is your assessment of the sufficiency of the Army acquisition workforce across both civilian and military personnel, both in the number and the level of experience of those personnel? What do you see as the pros and cons of civilian versus military acquisition professionals?

*Answer.* The army acquisition workforce consists of over 30,000 professionals of various professional specialties charged with ensuring the delivery of critical warfighting capabilities to our service members in uniform. This workforce consists of a blend of civilians, officers, and non-commissioned officers which provides it with

a unique blend of critical institutional knowledge with the career civilian cadre and the soldier specific knowledge to deliver the best capabilities to our formations. If confirmed, I will evaluate the effectiveness and size of our acquisition workforce to ensure we are properly postured to deliver world-class capabilities to our soldiers.

*Question.* How has Army Futures Command (AFC) contributed to improving Army modernization programs over previous Army efforts? What role do you expect the Command to play going forward? In your view, how has the establishment of AFC modified Army Secretariat roles in Army modernization efforts?

*Answer.* Army Futures Command (AFC) plays a key role in Army modernization. I am aware that prior to AFC's establishment, program proponents developed requirements not always fully aligned with the Army's modernization needs. Today, AFC's process includes inputs from a variety of stakeholders, including soldiers, to ensure the Army will get the capability it needs.

Going forward, I expect AFC to continue to lead in implementing the Army's modernization strategy and defining the future operating environment. AFC's role will be key in ensuring that the Army is equipped to fight and win on future battlefields.

*Question.* If modernization is fundamental to future readiness, how you would frame future readiness requirements, if confirmed? What key capabilities must the Army possess for multi-domain operations?

*Answer.* The Army must modernize to ensure its future readiness, and building toward a multi-domain operations-ready force by 2035 is an important part of Army modernization efforts. At the same time, the Army must maintain a State of readiness sufficiently to meet current and emerging missions. If confirmed, I will work closely with AFC, the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology, and other stakeholders to clearly define the Army's future readiness requirements and work closely with Congress to ensure the Army invests in support of those priorities.

If confirmed, I will review the Army's current plan for conducting Multi-Domain Operations (MDO), including relevant capabilities currently available and those in development, as well as those of our near peer competitors, to determine what, if any, additional capabilities are required.

*Question.* Do you believe the Army's modernization priorities should be modified? If so, and if confirmed, how would you propose to modify them?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will assess the Army's current modernization priorities of long-range precision fires, next generation combat vehicles, future vertical lift, the network, air and missile defense, and soldier lethality, to confirm that they are in line the National Defense Strategy and the priorities established by the President and the Secretary of Defense. If I determine that they must be modified, I will work closely with all stakeholders and Congress to do so.

*Question.* Do you see utility in the Army conducting more joint program development? In what systems or categories of systems do you perceive the most potential and benefit in joint development?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I would support joint program development wherever doing so would save time or money, increase effectiveness or interoperability, or accomplish a combination of those factors.

#### ACQUISITION

*Question.* Civilian oversight of the acquisition system has been a cornerstone of the post-World War II acquisition system.

What are your personal views on the principle of civilian control of the defense acquisition system?

*Answer.* I believe that civilian control of defense acquisition is required by U.S. Code, but that does not preclude military leaders from playing a very substantial role in the process.

Congress has expanded and refined the acquisition-related functions of the Chief of Staff of the Army and the other Service Chiefs.

*Question.* If confirmed, how would you synchronize your acquisition responsibilities with those of the Chief of Staff of the Army and the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will clearly lay out responsibilities for acquisition in a revised general order for the Headquarters, Department of the Army.

*Question.* If confirmed, what role would you assign to the Chief of Staff of Army for improving the prioritization of requirements and program funding?

*Answer.* The Chief of Staff of the Army serves as the senior military advisor to the Secretary of the Army. His or her advice will play a crucial role in shaping Army requirements and programmatic objectives as the overseer of the Army Staff.

*Question.* Congress has authorized a range of authorities, including the Middle Tier of Acquisition, rapid acquisition authority, and the software acquisition pathway, to tailor the acquisition process to enable the rapid delivery of new capabilities.

In your view, what benefit has the Department of the Army derived from its utilization of Middle Tier of Acquisition?

*Answer.* Middle Tier Acquisition authority offers a pathway for the Army to rapidly prototype or rapidly field capabilities in under 5 years. Use of this pathway can save the Department time and money as it develops and fields new technology, particularly when requirements are not fully mature.

The Army has used this authority to accelerate programs like the XM30 combat vehicle, the Maneuver-Short Range Air Defense Increment 3 (M-SHORAD Inc 3), and Indirect Fire Protection Capability Increment 2 (IFPC Inc 2) among others.

*Question.* In your view, what benefit has the Department of the Army derived from its utilization of the rapid acquisition authority?

*Answer.* Rapid acquisition authority provides the Department of Army a pathway to quickly meet operational needs through material solutions. The Army used this authority to rapidly acquire coyote interceptors for counter-unmanned aerial systems missions and protect U.S. forces overseas.

*Question.* How will you ensure that rapid acquisition pathways are not inundated with bureaucratic processes?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will instruct the ASA (ALT) to create an incentive structure that rewards outcomes and calculated risk-taking, not compliance with procedures. Success is the creation of a capability, not completion of a checklist.

*Question.* How will you seek to balance the need to rapidly acquire and field innovative systems while ensuring acquisition programs stay on budget and schedule?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will hold program offices accountable for their failures to stay on budget and on schedule. Second, I will require requirements developers and acquisition officials to more carefully evaluate when the Army can purchase a fully developed, commercial or non-commercial and satisfy requirements with minimal acquisition risk, and when we must mature technology and develop an organic capability. Purchasing a fully developed system lowers development costs and delivery time. Some capabilities must be bespoke, but the Army can save time and money by buying as many non-commercial and commercial products as possible that meet warfighter needs.

*Question.* This Committee has been a strong supporter of Army Futures Command and its focus on future readiness for competition with near-peers.

What is your view on Army Futures Command use of directed requirements?

*Answer.* Army Futures Command has played a critical role in shaping the current Army modernization. Without AFC, and its cross-functional team approach, the Army would be much further behind in its six modernization priorities.

Directed requirements provide the Army with an expedited means to acquire operationally critical capabilities. They are necessary to allow the Army to adapt to the stunning changes in warfare that we are witnessing in Russo-Ukraine, and the leaps in capability showcased by America's competitors.

*Question.* What is your view on the Cross-Functional Teams and how they are coordinating Army Futures Command and the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics?

*Answer.* Cross-functional teams provide acquisition programs with diverse talent sets that help the teams avoid pitfalls and siloed perspectives. From what I have been told, coordination between ASA (ALT) and AFC is going well.

#### REQUIREMENTS

*Question.* The Fiscal Year 2024 National Defense Authorization Act required the Joint Staff to take a clean-sheet approach to the requirements process and the Fiscal Year 2025 National Defense Authorization Act required the Secretary of Defense to establish an advisory panel on reforming the requirements process.

What recommendations would you make to the requirements process to make it more adaptive to changes in threats and technologies?

*Answer.* The current process of constructing requirements has many faults. It takes too long to develop requirements, requirements are often developed without sufficient interaction with warfighters or acquisition professionals, and in many cases, requirements are overly difficult to achieve for industry or from a technological maturation perspective.

Any revision to the requirements process needs to make it faster, more iterative, and less rigid. In many situations, requirements take so long to build, that they fall behind the current State of technology before they reach production. In others, re-

quirements are so exacting that industry can only meet them at great costs, which are then passed onto the Army.

Any new requirements process must provide requirements developers, warfighters, and acquisition officials near constant opportunities for interaction, and be more agile in nature.

*Question.* What role do you see for the Joint Staff versus the military services in the requirements process?

Answer. The Joint Staff oversees the development of requirements that span the military services. Services oversee the development of requirements that fall within their Title 10 responsibilities.

#### TEST AND EVALUATION

*Question.* Are you satisfied with Army test and evaluation capabilities? In which areas, if any, do you believe the Army should be developing new test and evaluation capabilities?

Answer. I need additional information on current Army test and evaluation capabilities before I can assess them. If confirmed, I will gather the necessary perspectives and information to assess Army Test and Evaluation Command.

*Question.* Do you believe that current Army test and evaluation facilities, personnel and technical test apparatuses are up to par for what is needed for the modernization challenges of the Army now and in the near future?

Answer. I require additional information before I can answer this question.

*Question.* Do you believe the Army should exploit non-developmental or commercial off-the-shelf solutions to meet Army requirements? Would this put capabilities into the hands of soldier more quickly, in your view?

Answer. Yes. Wherever possible, and as required by Federal Acquisition Regulations, the Army should purchase non-development and COTS solutions to meet requirements. Some capabilities require the Army to undertake independent development, but many of the Army's most pressing needs: small-unmanned aerial systems, counter-unmanned aerial systems, electronic warfare systems, and communications gear have already been developed.

*Question.* What do you see as the operational test and evaluation needs for such non-developmental or commercial items to ensure they can still meet the technical requirements and human factors needs of environments often more complex and demanding than commercial settings?

Answer. It depends on the operational need. Some commercial products and non-development items should move immediately into the field without testing or with minimal testing because the Army currently has no existing capability. In other situations, the Army can thoroughly test non-developmental and commercial items because the operational need is less dire.

*Question.* How should Army test and evaluation capabilities support software and other efforts that require rapid iteration between developments?

Answer. If confirmed, I will evaluate the Army's ability to test and evaluate software and other efforts that require rapid iteration.

*Question.* The Army is responsible for the maintenance and operation of the garrison supporting U.S. assets on the Kwajalein Atoll, including the Ronald Reagan Ballistic Missile Defense Test Site—a capability essential to the modernization of the Nation's nuclear deterrent and many other weapon systems. However, the Army has not adequately budgeted for these facilities resulting in the poor maintenance of the garrison which supports a critical test range utilized on a daily basis by the Department.

If confirmed, what steps will you take as Secretary to revitalize this facility and improve the welfare of those stationed there?

Answer. If confirmed, I will review the current Army budgeting and plans for revitalization of the Ronald Reagan Ballistic Missile Defense Test Site and will prioritize improving the welfare of all soldiers stationed on Kwajalein Atoll.

#### INNOVATION

*Question.* If confirmed, what steps would you take to support the Army's in-house innovation enterprise at its labs and engineering centers?

Answer. In-house innovation by Army labs and engineering centers can bring great capabilities and cutting-edge technology to the force, but support for any innovation center or lab must be conditional on the outputs of that organization. If confirmed, I commit to reinforcing success across the Army's innovation enterprise, and reforming aspects of that enterprise that need modification to meet the Army's needs.



*Question.* If confirmed, how would you make use of the Small Business Innovation Research program to fund cutting edge research, diversify the Army's industrial base, and transition capabilities to Program Executive Offices?

*Answer.* The Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program allows the Army to offer opportunities to non-traditional contractors to work with the Department; while simultaneously helping it access developing technologies. One of the criticisms of SBIRs is the poor record of transitioning promising pilots and prototypes developed under a SBIR into a full program of record or capability. If confirmed, I will work with a consortium of small businesses and our acquisition community to identify ways that we can improve SBIR outcomes.

*Question.* If confirmed, how would you ensure that Army labs and test ranges have sufficient military construction and equipment funding to maintain world class research and testing infrastructure to maintain our military technology advantage, which is making significant investments in this type of infrastructure?

*Answer.* I have not been briefed on current military construction and equipment funding deficits for our labs and test ranges. If confirmed, I will work with the ASA (IE&E) to confirm that the Army is allocating sufficient capital to these investments.

*Question.* If confirmed, how would you assess whether the Army has sufficient new investment in science and technology programs, especially those that are creating new capabilities and possibilities for new concepts of operations beyond current requirements?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will work through Army Futures Command to ensure that the Army not only has enough investment in science and technology programs, but that these investments are going to the most impactful capabilities. Technology enables tactics. One of the surest ways to develop a warfighting advantage is to harness new technology and adopt tactics that suit it in a coherent manner faster than an adversary.

*Question.* Based on your experience, are there enduring technology areas that might not be considered emerging (for example, energetic materials, or corrosion control) that Army should remain focused on as categories outside of the modernization priorities? How should the Army make investment decisions to balance the needs between these emerging and enduring technology areas?

*Answer.* The Army should continuously reexamine its prioritization of technology areas to invest its resources in the areas with the largest payoff for the organization. If confirmed, I will continually evaluate these choices as part of the POM and look to organizations like AFC to make sure that we are balancing our investments between "today" and "tomorrow."

*Question.* If confirmed, how would you facilitate and accelerate the transition across the so-called Valley of Death from development to production and from the lab into the soldier's hands.

*Answer.* The Army cannot afford to invest capital in the research and development of capabilities, only to repeatedly abandon them because they lack a champion. As a service, the Army should attempt to reduce the number of programs that fall into the "valley of death," by linking warfighters, acquisition officials, requirements developers, and researchers with a program in its infancy. Research and development projects should discontinue because they lack maturity or usefulness, not because of programmatics or a poor hand-off between champions of different phases of development.

*Question.* In your view, where does the Army struggle most with technology transition and why?

*Answer.* I think this issue is worthy of further study before response. I will require additional briefs about the causes of failure and rates of failure of various programs before answering.

*Question.* What is your view of programs such as the Army Technology Maturation Initiative (TMI)? Do "6.4" efforts such as TMI serve important objectives related to transition?

*Answer.* Programs like the Army Technology Maturation Initiative provide opportunities to continue developing technologies that are close, but not quite ripe for transition into an acquisition program. If confirmed, I would evaluate the outcomes that the TMI has achieved and determine how the program should be modified or reinforced going forward.

#### CYBER

*Question.* In September 2023, DOD released its 2023 Cyber Strategy. The strategy charges DOD to persistently engage malicious cyber actors and other malign threats to U.S. interests in cyberspace.

In your view, how well postured is the Army to meet the goals outlined in the 2023 DOD Cyber Strategy? What actions do you think need to be taken in the Army to address any gaps with the 2023 DOD Cyber Strategy?

Answer. The Army's role in defending the Nation from cyberspace attacks continues to evolve. If confirmed, I will review the Army's current cyber posture and ability to meet the goals outlined in the 2023 DOD Cyber Strategy as well as the Army's coordination efforts with the Department of Defense and Federal, State and local law enforcement agencies to address cyber threats.

*Question.* If confirmed, what would you do to improve military and civilian cybersecurity career paths?

Answer. The Army needs cyber warriors. If confirmed, I will review the current career pathways and professional development opportunities for our cyber warriors, both in and out of uniform, and seek to ensure that we are giving them the right training and growth opportunities to address current and future cyber threats.

*Question.* In what ways could Army cyber forces be better leveraged to address tactical cyber effects at a theater warfighting level? Are there things that Army could do to ensure that cyber is better integrated at a tactical level with other kinetic and non-kinetic capabilities?

Answer. I expect cyber integration at every level of warfighting to continue to increase going forward, and the Army must address that need. If confirmed, I will assess the Army's current use of cyber effects at every level of warfighting and work to ensure that we provide the right capabilities to our soldiers.

*Question.* Section 1657 of the fiscal year 2020 NDAA directed each Military Department to appoint an independent Principal Cyber Advisor (PCA) to act as the principal advisor to the Secretary concerned on all cyber matters affecting that Department.

What do you see as the role of this position? If confirmed, how would you personally plan to utilize the Army PCA within your leadership structure?

Answer. Cyber considerations are critically important to the Army. If confirmed, I would gladly rely on the Principal Cyber Advisor (PCA) to inform me and other Army senior leaders of all cyber matters affecting the Army and rely heavily on their judgment. The PCA should be in a lead role in conducting periodic reviews of the Army cyber posture and analyzing the risks and benefits of cyber-related decisions.

*Question.* If confirmed as Secretary of the Army, how would you best utilize the PCA to improve cybersecurity and otherwise ensure that the Army maintains decisive advantage in the Cyber domain?

Answer. If confirmed, I will use the PCA as the focal point for all synchronization and coordination of cybersecurity matters and the Army's liaison to the DOD and the interagency on such matters.

#### TECHNICAL WORKFORCE

*Question.* A significant challenge facing the Army today is a shortage of highly skilled data scientists, computer programmers, cyber, and other scientific, technical and engineering talent, especially those needed to work at Army institutions outside of the defense laboratories and technical centers (which currently benefit from specific workforce authorities available to Army labs).

If confirmed, what actions would you take to increase the recruiting and retention of scientists, engineers, software coders, and in other technical positions across the Army's enterprise?

Answer. Recruiting, developing and retaining talented personnel in the science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields is critical to the success of the Army. If confirmed, I will review the Army's current efforts in that area, reprioritize as needed, and work with Congress for any legislative support that may be needed to ensure the Army has a deep reservoir of STEM talent.

*Question.* If confirmed, what specifically would you do to provide Army organizations with the civilian workforce management tools they need to shape their science, technology, data, cyber, and engineering workforces, especially for those organizations that need this kind of technical expertise but are not inherently scientific or research organizations?

Answer. If confirmed, I will be fully committed to ensuring that Army organizations have the right civilian workforce management tools to leverage their technology, data, cyber, and engineering personnel. I will solicit input from those organizations directly concerning their needs and allocate resources appropriately to support their missions.

## ARMY INTELLIGENCE, COUNTERINTELLIGENCE, AND SENSITIVE ACTIVITIES

*Question.* If confirmed, what role would you establish for yourself in the decisions on and oversight of Army intelligence, counterintelligence, and sensitive activities?

*Answer.* I am aware that the current Army policy places the Secretary of the Army as the head of oversight of the Army intelligence, counterintelligence, and sensitive activities, and, if confirmed, I intend to maintain that policy.

## ARMY CEMETERIES

*Question.* What is your understanding of the role of the Secretary of the Army in the management and oversight of Arlington National Cemetery (ANC)?

*Answer.* The Secretary of the Army oversees Arlington National Cemetery through the Office of Army cemeteries.

*Question.* What factors would you consider in granting or denying a request for exception to established ANC interment or inurnment policies?

*Answer.* As Secretary, I would examine applicable law, Federal regulations, and past precedent before evaluating a request for an exception to policy.

*Question.* What progress has the Army made in executing plans and programs for the expansion of ANC?

*Answer.* I have not been briefed on Arlington Cemetery's Southern Expansion Project. If confirmed, I will request a briefing on ANC, to include current capacity challenges and the expansion.

*Question.* If confirmed, how will you ensure that the progress the Army has made in re-establishing an enduring caisson capability at Arlington National Cemetery and in support of State funeral requirements, to include ongoing consultation from world-class equestrian experts, persists?

*Answer.* I understand that the Army has had difficulty maintaining the health of horses in the caisson platoon within the Old Guard. If confirmed, I will assess the reforms that the Military District of Washington and the Old Guard have made over the past 2 years and determine if additional measures are required.

## U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS (USACE)

*Question.* What do you perceive to be the appropriate role for the Secretary of the Army in the management and oversight of USACE?

*Answer.* I believe the Secretary of the Army has the responsibility to fully oversee both the military and Civil Works programs of the USACE. On the military side of the USACE the Secretary under his or her authority to man, train and equip the Army has the responsibility to ensure that all facilities constructed by the USACE are built to the highest standards and the lowest cost to the taxpayer. As the statutory authority for all Civil Works projects the Secretary has the responsibility to ensure that these projects are constructed in accordance with the project authorization enhances the public interest and is constructed in the most cost-efficient manner.

*Question.* Based on your experience, how can the Army better leverage the unique public works authorities of USACE?

*Answer.* In my view the Army can leverage the extraordinary experience and expertise of the USACE's public works program to enhance national goals such as border security, assist in disaster relief and enhance the overall safety and quality of life of all Americans while providing valuable experience to the Army's Engineer Corps that will help us win on the battlefield as well.

## DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA NATIONAL GUARD (DCNG)

*Question.* What is your understanding of the role and authority of the Secretary of the Army with respect to the DCNG?

*Answer.* I understand that the President, by executive order, authorized and directed the Secretary of Defense to supervise, administer, and control the District of Columbia National Guard (DCNG) while it is in a militia status. The Secretary of Defense directed the Secretary of the Army to perform the supervision, administration, and control of the DCNG.

*Question.* What is the role of the Secretary of the Army with respect to National Guard from other States in a Title 32 status who are called in to augment the DCNG?

*Answer.* The Secretary of the Army is responsible for supervising, administering and controlling the DCNG while it is in a militia status. With respect to State National Guard members augmenting the DCNG, I understand that they take directions from the Federal entity that requested their support, and not from the Secretary of the Army. While the President or the Secretary of Defense may request that a Governor order National Guard personnel member to perform training or

other duties, there is no role for the Secretary of the Army unless the Secretary of Defense delegates the authority to coordinate tasks. Pre-established Memorandums of Agreement or Understanding between the States and the District of Columbia guide how personnel and units may augment the DCNG. If the Guardsmen perform duties within their home State for their State, they remain under the command and control of their respective Governors.

*Question.* In your view, should the role of the Secretary of the Army with respect to the DCNG be changed? If so, what changes would you advocate, if confirmed?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will work with the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of the Air Force, the Chief of the National Guard Bureau, and other stakeholders to review existing authorities to determine what changes, if any, should be made to the role of the Secretary of the Army with respect to the DCNG.

#### THE ARMY CIVILIAN WORKFORCE

*Question.* In your judgment, what is the biggest challenge facing the Army in effectively and efficiently managing its civilian workforce?

*Answer.* Effectively and efficiently managing a civilian workforce is inherently challenging. If confirmed, I will review the Army's current civilian workforce best practices, including recruiting hiring, training, promotion, and compensation, to ensure that the Army attracts, develops and retains skilled civilian professionals across the workforce.

*Question.* Would there be value, in your view, to establishing a unified DOD civilian workforce, as opposed to separate civilian workforces segregated by DOD component? Please explain your answer.

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will review the advantages and disadvantages of establishing a unified DOD civilian workforce, and work in concert with the Secretary of Defense, my counterparts, and other stakeholders to determine the feasibility and desirability of pursuing such a course of action. congressional Oversight

In order to exercise legislative and oversight responsibilities, it is important that this Committee, its subcommittees, and other appropriate committees of Congress receive timely testimony, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information from the executive branch.

*Question.* Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, and on request, to appear and testify before this Committee, its subcommittees, and other appropriate committees of Congress? Please answer with a simple yes or no.

*Answer.* Yes.

*Question.* Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to provide this Committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate committees of Congress, and their respective staffs such witnesses and briefers, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information, as may be requested of you, and to do so in a timely manner? Please answer with a simple yes or no.

*Answer.* Yes.

*Question.* Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to consult with this Committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate committees of Congress, and their respective staffs, regarding your basis for any delay or denial in providing testimony, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information requested of you? Please answer with a simple yes or no.

*Answer.* Yes.

*Question.* Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to keep this Committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate committees of Congress, and their respective staffs apprised of new information that materially impacts the accuracy of testimony, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information you or your organization previously provided? Please answer with a simple yes or no.

*Answer.* Yes.

*Question.* Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, and on request, to provide this Committee and its subcommittees with records and other information within their oversight jurisdiction, even absent a formal Committee request? Please answer with a simple yes or no.

*Answer.* Yes.

*Question.* Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to respond timely to letters to, and/or inquiries and other requests of you or your organization from individual Senators who are members of this Committee? Please answer with a simple yes or no.

*Answer.* Yes.

*Question.* Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to ensure that you and other members of your organization protect from retaliation any military member, Federal employee, or contractor employee who testifies before, or communicates with this Committee, its subcommittees, and any other appropriate committee of Congress? Please answer with a simple yes or no.

Answer. Yes.

---

[Questions for the record with answers supplied follow:]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROGER F. WICKER

ARMY AVIATION TRAINING

1. Senator WICKER. Mr. Driscoll, what is your view of the Army's current aviation training system?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I believe the Army is focused on training and producing a safe, skilled, competent aviator from Flight School, who is able to quickly integrate into the operational force and apply basic learned flight skills to the warfighting formations. I also believe there may be more cost-effective platforms to train on while simultaneously producing a more highly trained aviator and that is something I would like to take a deeper dive into.

2. Senator WICKER. Mr. Driscoll, do you believe that the Army should invest further in virtual training to augment existing training?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Yes, I firmly believe virtual training is one essential component of a modern and effective training program. This is particularly important as the Army executes aviation training within environments that will replicate large-scale combat operations.

3. Senator WICKER. Mr. Driscoll, if confirmed, do you commit to providing an update on the Army's aviation training plan?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Yes, one of my priorities will be to assess the current state of aviation training followed by an updated aviation training plan.

---

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TOM COTTON

ARMY FORCE STRUCTURE

4. Senator COTTON. Mr. Driscoll, during your confirmation hearing you told Senator Sullivan that cutting 12 brigade combat teams (BCTs) would not implement President Trump's policy of peace through strength nor would it deter Xi and Putin. Can you elaborate on why cutting 12 BCTs would be harmful to U.S. national security?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Cutting BCTs would signal weakness to our adversaries and a diminished capacity to deny the territorial desires of Xi and Putin. The essence of BCTs is to seize and hold key terrain as a central and decisive part of COCOMs' termination objectives. The presence of the Army's combat credible forces and demonstrating our ability to deliver and sustain them globally, has the inherent deterrent effects we need in competition and in support of the President's national security policy.

Maintaining the lethal and robust capabilities and capacity of ground maneuver forces is central to deterring Xi and Putin's territorial, hegemonic ambitions against our friends and allies across the world. As critical components of our joint force, ground maneuver formations complement the inherent capabilities of our naval, air, and space forces and together present an interlocking set of dilemmas to our adversaries. BCTs also complement and multiply the Army's additional contributions to the JF which includes air defense and other types of protection, long range fires, and deep sensing capabilities, our allies' ground forces, forming the core of combined, multinational formations.

5. Senator COTTON. Mr. Driscoll, this hare-brained idea of cutting 12 Army BCTs comes from a 2023 report published by The Marathon Initiative. The report is authored by a current department official, Austin Dahmer, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Strategy and Force Development. Specifically, the Marathon Initiative report recommends deactivating four Stryker BCTs (2 Active component and 2 National Guard component), 6 infantry BCTs (1 Active component and 5 National Guard component), and 2 National Guard aviation brigades. If confirmed, would you

commit to opposing this proposal and advocating to maintain funding for these BCTs and aviation brigades?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Maintaining a depth of lethal capability across the Total Force is central to deterring, and if necessary, defeating our adversaries. Strategies that rely solely on a 'quick win' through exquisite precision are inherently fragile; retaining the Army's capacity and capability signals a national resolve that cannot be waited out by our adversaries. Maintaining and modernizing the Army against the pacing threat of the PRC creates operational level options and depth for the joint force commander as well as strategic ones for national leadership; cutting the Army precludes those options. This does not mean that our Army will not adapt its force structure to evolving threats, technology, and operational concepts; there is ongoing, rigorous analysis being done by Army Futures Command and others across the force that are building the evidence on how we must, as a component of the joint force, transform to meet the challenges of the future. Importantly, this does not mean that we gut the Army; rather, if confirmed I will seek to maintain the funding associated with these BCTs and aviation brigades, across the Total Force, while modernizing and adapting them to the threats and demands that lay ahead.

6. Senator COTTON. Mr. Driscoll, will you further commit to opposing equally ill-advised ideas to gut the Army force structure?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Yes; the varied demands on the Army will require a force that is organized, trained, and equipped to be lethal, flexible, and integrated with the joint force to present our adversaries with a coherent set of dilemmas to deter and if necessary, defeat our adversaries. History has shown that the Army is called upon for the full range of military operations; gutting force structure will signal weakness to our adversaries, constrain the options for our state and national responses to emergencies in the Homeland, and limit the flexibility of our joint force. Additionally, gutting the Army force structure would degrade key combat capabilities at echelon. The lack of depth would add pressure to our rotational missions which enable credible deterrence across the globe and further complicate our ability to maintain strategic readiness across the Joint Force.

7. Senator COTTON. Mr. Driscoll, should the Army maintain a strong force presence in United States European Command (EUCOM), and if so, why is this important? If not, why not?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I will support the President's and Secretary of Defense's policies and prioritize Army resources and personnel in line with those policies. Current Operational Plans for Europe require a baseline of in-place forces to support follow-on force flow into theater during a time of war/conflict. These in-place forces also provide the President and Secretary of Defense options to respond during a time of crisis/conflict in Europe.

8. Senator COTTON. Mr. Driscoll, Russia and China have committed to a "no limits" partnership and are increasingly cooperating on military exercises and training. As it contemplates an invasion of Taiwan, China is also watching how the United States responds to aggression and maintains its commitments to allies in Europe. Given this connection between United States interests in Europe and those in the Pacific, why would it be dangerous for the United States to abandon its current force structure in Europe?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I will support the President and the Secretary of Defense's operational plans for Europe and prioritize Army resource and polices in line with those plans.

9. Senator COTTON. Mr. Driscoll, if confirmed, would you be comfortable accepting major cuts to the Army based on the assumption that the United States will not need ground forces in a future war in the Pacific? Why or why not?

Mr. DRISCOLL. The Army and ground forces will be needed in a future war in the Pacific, in particular protection, fires, sustainment, long range sensing and other capabilities the JF must have to achieve OJSSs. Achieving positional advantage increases options and decision space for Joint commanders and the National Command Authority.

10. Senator COTTON. Mr. Driscoll, advocates for cutting Army capabilities tend to minimize the critical roles the Army would play in a Taiwan-conflict scenario. These include air defense, long range fires from the Philippines, base defense, security assistance and training for allies and partners, attack aviation, and advice and assistance to the Taiwanese military. Can you explain your vision for the role of the Army in a Taiwan-conflict scenario?

Mr. DRISCOLL. As part of the Combined/Joint force, Army forces provide positional advantage. The Army attacks, defends, seizes, destroys enemy forces, holds, and stabilizes key terrain to provide endurance in important locations to allow the JF to achieve its OJBs. As your question conveys, Army forces will provide key capabilities including air defense and other types of protection, long range fires, and deep sensing to the Joint Force. Security Force Assistance Brigades train, advise, and assist our allies and partners to improve their warfighting readiness and integrate with the Joint Force. Army forces are critical to intra-theater resupply operations to sustain the Joint Force during a conflict and decisive kinetic and non-kinetic effects.

## ISRAEL

11. Senator COTTON. Mr. Driscoll, President Trump has committed to support our ally Israel's fight against the same terrorists that hold Americans hostage and kill American soldiers. If confirmed, would you commit to executing President Trump's vision and advocate for the Army continuing to partner with Israel to advance our common interests?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Yes, if confirmed, I would commit to working to ensure that my staff faithfully implement the policies outlined by President Trump including his support for a strong US-Israel relationship.

12. Senator COTTON. Mr. Driscoll, if confirmed, would you ensure that none of your staff try to undermine President Trump's support for a strong United States-Israel relationship by slowing weapons deliveries or blocking training programs?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Yes, if confirmed, I would commit to working to prevent my staff from undermining President Trump's support for a strong United States-Israel relationship.

## ARMY COMBAT FITNESS TEST

13. Senator COTTON. Mr. Driscoll, do you agree that physical fitness standards for Army combat military occupation specialties should be gender-neutral?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Yes, I agree that physical fitness standards for Army Close Combat Force military occupation specialties should be gender-neutral.

14. Senator COTTON. Mr. Driscoll, do you agree that these gender-neutral standards should also be higher for combat than non-combat military occupation specialties?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I agree that physical fitness standards for Army Close Combat Force military occupation specialties should be higher than for non-Close Combat Force military occupation specialties.

15. Senator COTTON. Mr. Driscoll, if confirmed, do you commit to implement promptly such gender-neutral and higher standards for combat military occupational specialties?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Yes, if confirmed, I agree to follow the guidance of the Secretary of Defense regarding the implementation of physical fitness standards for Army Close Combat Force military occupational specialties.

## INTEGRATED VIRTUAL AUGMENTATION SYSTEM

16. Senator COTTON. Mr. Driscoll, the Army's Integrated Virtual Augmentation System (IVAS) has cost the Army millions of dollars thus far but has failed to perform. It is bulky, can still make soldiers nauseous, and may slow them down or disrupt their normal vision of the battlefield. In last year's National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), I sponsored a provision to cut about \$200 million in procurement funds for IVAS. If confirmed, do you plan to maintain these cuts to this failed program? If not, please explain.

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing the current status and future development of the IVAS program.

## ARSENALS

17. Senator COTTON. Mr. Driscoll, while the Army has begun to modernize its organic industrial base, it is still not fully using its arsenals and ammunition plants. Arsenals, including the one in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, are struggling for modernization funds and additional work. If confirmed, how do you plan to utilize existing Army arsenals and ammunition plants to expand desperately needed production capacity?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Increasing the production capacity at Army Ammunition Plants is a top Army priority. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing the Army's 2025 Army Ammunition Plant Modernization, which I'm told will be submitted to Congress by the end of March. In that plan the Army will address how it will balance investments across the multiple Army Ammunition Plants to maximize production capabilities of all munitions.

## RECRUITING

18. Senator COTTON. Mr. Driscoll, the Army suffered through record low recruiting numbers under former Secretary of the Army Christine Wormuth. The Army only met its recruiting goal for fiscal year 2024 because it lowered its goal by 10,000 recruits to 55,000 recruits, which was the Army's lowest goal in at least 20 years. Do you think former Secretary Wormuth's focus on climate change and combating racism and extremism (which were two of her six stated Army objectives) were helpful or hurtful to the Army's recruiting effort?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I believe that anything not focused on soldier lethality is hurtful to the Army's recruiting mission.

19. Senator COTTON. Mr. Driscoll, if confirmed, would you commit to prioritizing the Army's lethality over politicized objectives like climate change and combating extremism?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Yes, I would commit to prioritizing the Army's focus on lethality in its training.

## CAISSON

20. Senator COTTON. Mr. Driscoll, former Secretary Wormuth paused caisson platoon funerals at Arlington National Cemetery for nearly 2 years, leaving dozens of families to bury their loved ones without the earned honor of the caisson. Last year, this Committee voted unanimously for the Army to resume funerals with the horses it has available. If confirmed, do you commit to resuming caisson funerals immediately at Arlington National Cemetery, at least on a limited basis?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I will ensure that the Army meets the requirements outlined in Section 1088 of the Fiscal Year 2025 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) to safely return caisson operations at Arlington National Cemetery (ANC). The Army recognizes the significance of caisson funerals in honoring our Nation's fallen and is dedicated to reintegrating this capability safely and sustainably. I will work to coordinate the return of caisson operations, ensuring clear communication with families regarding caisson availability.

21. Senator COTTON. Mr. Driscoll, horses have pulled wagons since the dawn of time, yet the Army under Secretary Wormuth needlessly threw up all kinds of bureaucratic obstacles to caisson funerals at Arlington National Cemetery, in particular by delaying the purchase of more horses needed to conduct the maximum number of funerals per week and new land for those horses. If confirmed, do you commit to making these purchases an immediate priority?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I will ensure that the Army establishes a sustainable and effective program to support caisson operations at Arlington National Cemetery. The Army has taken deliberate steps to procure well-trained and fit horses capable of performing this critical mission, as exemplified by the successful execution of President Carter's State funeral. The quality of horses remains paramount. I will make their acquisition an immediate priority to ensure we have the necessary equine capability to sustain this tradition with the dignity and excellence it demands. If confirmed, I will remain engaged in overseeing these efforts and will keep Congress informed of our progress.

## NEXT-GENERATION HOWITZER

22. Senator COTTON. Mr. Driscoll, the Army is on its fourth attempt for a new self-propelled howitzer. A 2023 Army study determined the Next-Generation Howitzer (NGH) should focus on more autonomous artillery systems with greater range and improved mobility. In addition to these requirements, the request for information to industry focused on high maturity systems that minimize or eliminate development times. Do you believe this procurement strategy of purchasing established systems has merit?

Mr. DRISCOLL. The Army recently completed market research through multiple Self-Propelled Howitzer Performance Demonstrations and determined that mature and available Self-Propelled Howitzers exist in the marketplace with the ability to



deliver by 2030. Each of the demonstrated systems provided increased lethality and range over existing U.S. Army capabilities.

23. Senator COTTON. Mr. Driscoll, should this procurement method be applied to other immediate Army needs?

Mr. DRISCOLL. The Self-Propelled Howitzer Performance Demonstrations that the Army conducted with industry will help inform requirements, assess vendors, understand capabilities in the marketplace, and support a competitive system assessment in the fiscal year 2026. If confirmed, I will encourage the Army to partner with industry in this manner when it makes sense, in order to bring critical capabilities to the warfighter faster.

#### COMMERCIAL OFF-THE-SHELF SOLUTIONS

24. Senator COTTON. Mr. Driscoll, how do you plan to encourage the use of commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) solutions to meet immediate Army needs, while maintaining flexibility for future upgrades?

Mr. DRISCOLL. The use of commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) solutions can significantly reduce development timelines and lower life-cycle costs. I will encourage a preference for COTS solutions when available and continue to encourage the Department to expand use of a Modular Open Systems Approach (MOSA). The use of MOSA when developing systems enables maximum flexibility and fosters stronger competition for considering future system upgrades. MOSA supports continued competition when upgrading systems and subsystems and can prevent “vendor lock”. It also better allows incremental improvement and innovation to occur throughout a system’s life cycle.

#### CHANGING INCENTIVES FOR BIG PRIMES

25. Senator COTTON. Mr. Driscoll, how can you change the incentives for big primes to be more willing to partner with non-traditional defense companies who are working on the most advanced emerging technology?

Mr. DRISCOLL. It is my understanding that the Army is undertaking several initiatives to incentivize prime companies and integrators to accelerate adoption of innovation into our programs by partnering with small businesses and nontraditional companies. If confirmed, I will encourage and maximize the use of these incentives, where appropriate, and will work with our industry partners to ensure the Army is leveraging the most productive incentives for primes to partner with innovative small and non-traditional companies.

#### ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND MACHINE LEARNING

26. Senator COTTON. Mr. Driscoll, if confirmed, how would you strengthen the Army’s competitive advantage in the field of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning with respect to title 50 authorities and strategic sensing and targeting capabilities?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I would pursue a multi-faceted approach, focusing on enhancing warfighting capabilities and increasing lethality as the foundation to and focus for our efforts. This means developing and deploying advanced sensors that leverage AI and ML to detect and track targets in real-time, enabling more accurate and effective targeting, implementing AI and ML-enabled target recognition to reduce the risk of misidentification and enhance targeting accuracy, and moving us from descriptive analytics to predictive analytics.

I believe that this approach will strengthen the Army’s competitive advantage in AI and ML and will enable us to maintain our position as a leader in the development and deployment of these critical technologies. I am committed to working tirelessly to ensure that the Army remains at the forefront of AI and ML innovation, and I look forward to the opportunity to lead this effort.

27. Senator COTTON. Mr. Driscoll, if confirmed, how would you plan to ensure that leading edge AI capabilities continue to be prioritized in the Army’s Multi-Domain Intelligence (MDI) program and others like Project Linchpin?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I will continue to prioritize integrating leading edge artificial intelligence (AI) capabilities into our programs and formations to address complex problems and prepare for current and future operating environments. For example, the Army’s Next Generation Command and Control effort is leveraging AI and machine learning (ML)—in an open and modular, multi-vendor approach—to rapidly organize and manage operational data in support of commanders’ decisions.

In the Army’s Multi-Domain Intelligence (MDI) program, Army Intelligence Data Platform (AIDP) sets the Army’s intelligence data foundation and modernizes the

analytic tools and services to assess intelligence data using a built-in AI/ML capability. The Army is working on applications of Generative AI within the AIDP to enhance operations, intelligence analysis, PED, administrative activities, and cybersecurity. The Army will publish an AI Strategy and implementation orders to establish AI Governance prioritizing and monitoring operationalization of AI capabilities that will provide the greatest impact on our warfighting capabilities.

---

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MICHAEL ROUNDS

DIAGNOSTIC TESTING TECHNOLOGY

28. Senator ROUNDS. Mr. Driscoll, almost 3 years ago the Department of Defense estimated that the inability to detect and isolate electronic faults resulted in over 383,000 non-mission capable days each year and over \$5.5 billion in non-value-added sustainment costs. In response to this readiness and sustainment challenge, the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) proposed funding for the purchase of a readily available, effective, and proven technology to address this issue. The Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) fully supports this technology, and the fiscal year 2024 defense appropriation included \$35.2 million for it. My concern is that under the previous administration, the Army has, instead of acquiring this readily available, proven, and extremely cost-effective technology despite its powerful support from OSD and SASC, decided to continue to only study the issue. If confirmed, would you commit to following up with me on this technology?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Yes. If confirmed, I am committed to communicating with the Committee regarding the adoption and application of technology to improve the Army's electronic fault detection capability.

---

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JONI K. ERNST

COUNTERINTELLIGENCE ARMY AUTHORITIES

29. Senator ERNST. Mr. Driscoll, I led an effort in the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) to expand the Army's counterintelligence authorities, which has proven effective in combating foreign and domestic terrorism. Can I get your commitment to ensuring that the necessary signatures and approvals are put in place to address and close those critical gaps as quickly as possible?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I appreciate your efforts in expanding Army's counterintelligence authorities. It is my understanding that the National Defense Authorization Act authorizes certain civilian special agents of U.S. Army Counterintelligence Command to execute and serve warrants and make arrests for investigating national security crimes. These authorities enable Army Counterintelligence agents to more effectively counter, neutralize, and exploit foreign intelligence, international terrorism, and counterintelligence related insider threats to the Army, Department of Defense, and the Nation.

I also understand that these authorities can only be exercised in accordance with guidelines prescribed by the Secretary of the Army and approved by the Secretary of Defense and the Attorney General. If confirmed, I commit to ensuring the necessary approvals are in place as quickly as possible for lawfully exercising these counterintelligence authorities.

CRITICAL CAPABILITIES

30. Senator ERNST. Mr. Driscoll, to take and hold land, the Army relies on multiple capabilities. What capabilities do you see as vital for the Army to achieve the objective of taking and holding land in future conflicts?

Mr. DRISCOLL. The Army will continue to provide lethality to the Joint Force through combat credible formations that seize and control land. To achieve this, Army Soldiers remain the most important capability, organized into fighting squads, platoons, companies, and battalions. Our close combat combined arms teams are essential to seize and secure key terrain as part of Joint Forceable Entry capabilities. The Army provides the Joint Force protected and survivable long-range fires; air, ground, and maritime capable Human-Machine Integrated Formations; long range and persistent sensing capability; Formation Based Layered Defense of critical capabilities (ships, aircraft, sustainment, ground-based fires, etc.); and command and control through Next Generation Command and Control (C2).

31. Senator ERNST. Mr. Driscoll, do you believe the Army will continue to have to provide that important capability in future wars?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Yes—so long as people continue to live on land, the ability to take and hold land remains decisive.

#### ARMY VEHICLES

32. Senator ERNST. Mr. Driscoll, do you view vehicle and mobile firing platforms such as Abrams tanks and Strykers to be a critical capability in taking or holding land?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Armored forces will remain relevant in any future fight, including in the Pacific. They provide mobility, protection, and firepower essential for seizing and holding terrain, especially in urban environments. Armored forces are able to operate in contested environments because the Army uses combined arms tactics and layered protection capabilities like adaptive vehicle protection systems, counter-UAS, electronic warfare, air and missile defense.

---

#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR DAN SULLIVAN

##### SUICIDE IN 11TH AIRBORNE DIVISION

33. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Driscoll, for several years now, the 11th Airborne Division based at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska and Ft. Wainwright, Alaska has dealt with a large number of servicemember suicides. The number of suicides in the 11th Airborne (or its predecessor units) averaged between 6 and 8 suicides a year between 2019 and 2022 with a large spike in 2021 to 17 suicides (some of the highest rates in the Army). Although suicide numbers have somewhat improved thanks to efforts by the 11th Airborne Division and Congress, the need for continuous emphasis on suicide prevention, particularly in Alaska, is important. A U.S. Army Public Health Center Behavioral and Social Health Outcomes Program report from 2019 entitled Assessment of Behavioral and Social Health Outcomes at Fort Wainwright, AK (March—Sept 2019) found that (among other things) improving aging domicile infrastructure like barracks, providing for indoor community centers, improving behavior health staffing, and focus on holistic soldier health could help decrease suicides. While we've implemented many of the above changes since 2019, more can be done to stamp out the scourge of suicide at these bases. Will you commit to reviewing the findings of the technical report referenced above and ensure that 11th Airborne gets the resources that it needs to combat the scourge of suicide with the goal of reducing such incidents to zero annually?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I will direct the Army to review the technical report referenced above and work to ensure that the 11th Airborne Division has the necessary resources to combat the scourge of suicide.

34. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Driscoll, former commander of 11th Airborne Division, Lieutenant General Brian Eifler, USA, stated that making Alaska a volunteer-heavy unit would hopefully help improve the quality of life for soldiers who move there. As of last year, this program does seem to show positive results. Will you commit to reviewing the volunteer program for PCS [permanent change of station] moves to Alaska and continuing to build on that success?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I will direct the Army to review the volunteer program for PCS moves to Alaska and advocate for any expansion of that program where necessary.

##### UNLEASHING ALASKA'S EXTRAORDINARY RESOURCE POTENTIAL

35. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Driscoll, during his term, President Biden passed 70 executive orders that restricted Alaska's ability to extract its own natural resources despite an acute need for them on both commercial and national security grounds. These executive orders have slowed down or completely hindered resource extraction and critical infrastructure projects important not just to the State but to the Nation as a whole. On the first day of his presidency, January 20, 2025, President Trump signed an executive order entitled Unleashing Alaska's Extraordinary Resource Potential. The order in part reads as follows:

“Section 3 Specific Agency Actions

a. The heads of all executive departments and agencies, including but not limited to the Secretary of the Interior; the Secretary of Commerce, acting through the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere; and the Secretary of the Army acting through the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Public Works, shall exercise all lawful authority and discretion available to them and take all necessary steps to:

(i) rescind, revoke, revise, amend, defer, or grant exemptions from any and all regulations, orders, guidance documents, policies, and any other similar agency actions that are inconsistent with the policy set forth in section 2 of this order, including but not limited to agency actions promulgated, issued, or adopted between January 20, 2021, and January 20, 2025; and

(ii) prioritize the development of Alaska's LNG [liquefied natural gas] potential, including the permitting of all necessary pipeline and export infrastructure related to the Alaska LNG Project, giving due consideration to the economic and national security benefits associated with such development . . .

Section 3(d) in addition to the actions outlined in subsection (a) of this section, the Secretary of the Army, acting through the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, shall render all assistance requested by the Governor of Alaska to facilitate the clearing and maintenance of transportation infrastructure, consistent with applicable law. All such requests for assistance shall be transmitted to the Secretary of Defense, Secretary of the Interior, and Assistant to the President for Economic Policy for approval prior to initiation.

Section 3(e) the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, under the direction of the Secretary of the Army, shall immediately review, revise, or rescind any agency action that may in any way hinder, slow or otherwise delay any critical project in the State of Alaska."

Will you commit fully to the intent of the President's executive order referenced above where the Department of the Army and the U.S Army Corps of Engineers will play a vital role?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Yes, if confirmed, I will ensure that the Department of the Army supports development of all energy sources and complies with the President's Executive Order to enable regulatory reform actions in compliance with current law.

#### EXPEDITED MILITARY CONSTRUCTION ON BASES

36. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Driscoll, the pace of military construction in Alaska is often slow, weighed down by burdensome environmental regulations and the harsh Arctic environment which allows for a short building season. Can I get your commitment to review regulations (including environmental regulations) that govern military construction and identify where Congress or DOD could speed up the building process for military construction by cutting red tape or passing legislation?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Yes, if confirmed, I will strongly support reviewing and streamlining regulations that govern military construction to ensure that our Nation's defense capabilities are not hindered by unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles. The unique challenges posed by Alaska's harsh Arctic environment and short building season demand a more efficient and adaptable approach to military construction. I would commit to identify areas where regulations, including environmental regulations, can be revised, or updated to strike a better balance between protecting the environment and facilitating the timely completion of critical military construction projects. This may involve exploring opportunities to simplify permitting processes, reducing paperwork burdens, and implementing more flexible and responsive regulatory and statutory frameworks. If confirmed, I will work with Congress, the Department of Defense, and others to help pass legislation or implement regulatory reforms that will help speed up the military construction process.

#### MISSILE DEFENSE

37. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Driscoll, Billy Mitchell, the Father of the U.S. Air Force once said, "I believe . . . whoever controls Alaska controls the world. I think it is the most strategic place in the world." No other State but Alaska is strategically located to provide such a high level of Homeland defense. At Fort Greely, the 49th Missile Defense Battalion provide our Nation's first line of defense, tasked to defend against the threat of an intercontinental ballistic missile attack and command 40 of the Nation's 44 ballistic missile interceptors and receive data from the nearby Long Range Discrimination Radar. Fort Greely will soon house the new Next Generation Interceptor (NGI) missiles, but the program for this system has stalled due to high cost overruns and manufacturing delays. The NGI will be an essential part of our national ballistic missile system. Will you commit to reviewing the NGI program, if confirmed, and keep Congress informed of what resources are required to field the missile on time?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I will ensure that the Army continues close coordination with the Missile Defense Agency (MDA) to keep Congress informed of the resources required to field the Next Generation Interceptor (NGI).

38. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Driscoll, Alaska is strategic not only for its geographic location but also because of its concentration of over 100 fifth generation fighters (the highest concentration in the world) as well as it being home to the 11th Airborne Division, the Nation's preeminent Arctic combat unit. If a war occurred in the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM) area of responsibility (AOR), forces in Alaska would almost certainly be part of that fight and therefore would also be potentially targeted in their home bases. Do you believe that President Trump's "Iron Dome for America" should include Alaska as a critical site to be defended from missile attack given the facts stated above?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I will direct the Army to contribute to the Secretary of Defense's efforts pursuant to the President's Iron Dome for America executive order, including a focus on the role that the 11th Airborne Division serves in those plans.

39. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Driscoll, the Army controls a number of capabilities that are or will be used for multi-layered missile defense including the "Iron Dome for America." Two such capabilities are the Terminal High Altitude Air Defense (THAAD) system and the Patriot system, both of which have proven highly effective in combat within the last year. Currently the Army has only seven THAAD batteries worldwide with a demonstrated need for more, while the Patriot system continues to be the subject of continued upgrades. Will you commit to reviewing both programs and reporting back to Congress what is needed to expedite fielding of these systems and their munitions?

Mr. DRISCOLL. As the President highlighted in the recently released Executive Order, The Iron Dome for America, "The threat of attack by ballistic, hypersonic, and cruise missiles, and other advanced aerial attacks, remains the most catastrophic threat facing the United States." I take this threat very seriously and if confirmed, I will review both the THAAD and Patriot programs and report back to Congress on ways to expedite fielding of these systems and their munitions.

#### STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES IN ALASKA FOR MULTI-DOMAIN TASK FORCE BASING AND ADDITIONAL TROOPS

40. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Driscoll, Billy Mitchell, the Father of the U.S. Air Force once said, "I believe . . . whoever controls Alaska controls the world. I think it is the most strategic place in the world." Alaska's geostrategic positioning has only strengthened in recent years as the Arctic has become more navigable and thus important for adversaries like Russia and China to control. The U.S. Army's Multi-Domain Task Force (MDTF) concept lends itself well to Alaska's geostrategic position. The Army's 3d MDTF took advantage of Alaska's premiere training areas in both 2023 and 2024 as it took part in Northern Edge 23 as well as in a snap airlift deployment to Shemya Island to counter Russian and Chinese Forces taking part in OKEAN 24 last September. In the Army's January 2021 strategy document, Regaining Arctic Dominance: The U.S. Army in the Arctic, the Army's senior leaders including Secretary Ryan McCarthy and General James McConville, USA, committed to defending Arctic interests and stated that they would "field a Multi-Domain Task Force-enabled division." The Biden administration did stage training events in Alaska for MDTF, but so far, the Army has not followed up on its strategy document committing to basing a MDTF in 11th Airborne Headquarters. A MDTF in Alaska would bring joint fires, cyber, space, and intelligence operations to the Arctic and future basing opportunities in the Aleutian Islands combined with U.S. Army airlift assets could extend the reach of several of these capabilities to deter adversary aggression in the region. Do you believe that a MDTF is still needed in Alaska as your predecessors did and will you commit to reviewing the January 2021 strategy document and explaining what resources are needed to fulfill this requirement?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I will commit to reviewing the strategy documents specifically related to the Arctic and ensuring we have resources aligned to requirements.

#### AMERICAN MILITARY PRESENCE ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA

41. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Driscoll, during your hearing, you mentioned your family's military service on the Korean Peninsula. As you know, the American military's presence on the Korean Peninsula has helped keep the peace there since 1953. For many years, the clearest sign of that commitment is a bottom line presence of 28,500 American troops as well as a robust schedule of combined United States-Republic of Korea (ROK) exercises that ensures we are ready to "fight tonight" to maintain the peace. In demonstration of South Korea's own commitment to the alliance, it paid 90 percent of the \$11 billion cost of building a new base for U.S. Forces

at Camp Humphries. Do you recognize the value of the United States-Korean alliance and the U.S. Army's continuing presence on the Korean peninsula to our allies in Seoul?

Mr. DRISCOLL. The recent provocative actions of Kim Jong-Un and his regime demonstrate the threat we face every day. I see the value of the United States-Korean Alliance. Alliances such as this are something our enemies do not have, and it is our source of strength.

42. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Driscoll, Xi Jinping and Kim Jong Un have both long sought to dislodge the United States military from the Korean Peninsula. Do you believe that removing large numbers of United States Army personnel from the Korean Peninsula is a good idea from the standpoint of strategic deterrence?

Mr. DRISCOLL. We continue to adjust our force posture and capabilities on the Korean Peninsula to enhance our ability and readiness to respond to provocation. The Army is prioritizing strategic deterrence while continuing to modernize the force. Ongoing and future Army modernization efforts have increased lethality and capability of units with minor adjustments to personnel strengths on the peninsula.

#### DEFENSE INDUSTRIAL BASE AND DEFENSE ACQUISITION

43. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Driscoll, a few months ago, members of the Senate Armed Services Committee received a briefing on counter-unmanned aircraft systems (cUAS). Although more needs to be done to field these systems quickly, I was impressed by the Army's approach to budget agility because it echoes some of the findings of last year's Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution (PPBE) Reform Commission Report that called for budget consolidation and flexible spending within capabilities portfolios. Will you commit to continuing to push the results of this attempted line item consolidation to Congress so we can work solutions during NDAA season across programs and portfolios?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I believe that the recommendations provided in the PPBE Reform Commission Report could help get new capabilities into the hands of Soldiers faster. If confirmed, I will further the Army's efforts to accomplish budget line consolidation.

44. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Driscoll, over the last 2 years, DOD and the Army have worked hard to increase production of 155mm artillery shells to support the requirements of our own forces and supporting the war effort in Ukraine. While production numbers for 155mm artillery are up, there are concerns about critical munitions production shortfalls in other areas like the Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS). Further, multiple think tanks like the Center for Strategic and International Studies believe that we will run out of certain critical munitions if we do not ramp up industrial base production now. Will you commit to doing a full review of Army critical munition supply chains from critical minerals all the way to production and report back to Congress what is needed to shore up those supply chains?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I share your concerns about potential vulnerabilities within the Army critical munition supply chain, and, if confirmed, I look forward to learning more about ongoing analysis and mitigation strategies in this area. I also commit to conducting a review of the Army's critical munition supply chains and report back on what could strengthen our resilience.

45. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Driscoll, how do you plan to work with DOD leadership to assess ways to speed up the acquisition process?

Mr. DRISCOLL. The Department must fully embrace the acquisition, requirements and resourcing reforms provided by Congress in recent years to help accelerate acquisition outcomes. Current efforts by the Army's lead fielding organization, Assistant Secretary of the Army (Acquisition, Logistics, and Training), Army Futures Command, the Defense Innovation Community of Entities as well as partnerships with the Defense Innovation Unit are identifying opportunities to accelerate technology delivery. Additionally, the Army has identified opportunities to accelerate acquisition through improvements to the Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution (PPBE) process and continued streamlining of acquisition statutes. I will further encourage the Department to maximize the use of flexible acquisition authorities to streamline processes and enable more rapid acquisition outcomes.

46. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Driscoll, what do you think we should be doing differently?

Mr. DRISCOLL. The Department can improve communication with industry, lower barriers to entry, and be a better customer in order to do business with a wide vari-

ety of traditional and non-traditional firms. Engaging with a broader pool of firms will increase competition, attract new and innovative ideas, and potentially lower costs for the Department. One of my goals will be to expand the defense industrial base by attracting new partners.

47. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Driscoll, will you commit to reviewing the Army's "cost plus" model versus "firm fixed price" model for software acquisitions and ensure that we are adopting the best commercial practices so we aren't missing out on better technology at a potentially cheaper price?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Yes, I am committed to reviewing the Army's use of the cost-plus and firm-fixed-price models for software acquisitions to ensure we are adopting best commercial practices. The Army should evaluate which approach provides the best value, innovation, and cost efficiency while maintaining agility and security in software procurement. If confirmed, my goal is to ensure the Army is leveraging the most advanced, cost-effective technologies without unnecessary financial risk.

48. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Driscoll, I noticed the Army is readying an expensive Army Data Platform (ADP 2.0) procurement that appears redundant to the Army Vantage program at a potentially higher cost. Will you commit to informing this Committee during our posture hearings in the spring what you are doing to reduce redundancy in programs like this one?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I commit to reducing redundancy and providing the best capability for our Soldiers. The Army needs to be flexible and agile in our ability to meet the Nation's needs, maintain a competitive environment, and spend every taxpayer dollar wisely. If confirmed, I will inform this Committee on this issue.

#### RECRUITING AND BUILDING WARRIOR ETHOS CULTURE

49. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Driscoll, outside of incentivizing recruiters and growing basic-training prep programs, how else does the U.S. Army plan to address its recruiting challenges?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I will continue to support the Army's significant changes in how it trains and supports Recruiters with facilities, technology and process innovation. As I understand, Army has multiple innovative experiments underway focused on reengineering the business process and is adopting a new AI-assisted, industry leading software system to support Recruiters.

50. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Driscoll, what are you going to do to counterbalance this expected drop of eligible recruits in 2026?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, my first step to counterbalancing the effects of a drop in eligible recruits in the near future is to continue the momentum in enlistment production that has steadily increased over the last 2 years. I will continue to support the efforts to market and recruit from older, more educated markets while still allowing opportunities for those that benefit from additional math, reading and physical training in our Future Soldier Prep Course, which is currently showing a 93 percent graduation rate. Finally, the continued investment on improved recruiter training and incentives, such as merit based and productivity promotions, the use of supporting technologies, and innovative approaches to changing our business processes will prove effective.

51. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Driscoll, Secretary of Defense Peter Hegseth, has made it his mission to place special emphasis on the warrior ethos and building lethality in the fighting force during his tenure. What changes do you think the Army could make now to better inculcate the warrior ethos and lethality in new recruits, junior enlisted, and junior officers?

Mr. DRISCOLL. It is my understanding the US Army Training and Doctrine Command already plays a critical role in fostering the warrior ethos and enhancing lethality across all levels of the force. If confirmed, I look forward to working with TRADOC and diving deeper into their efforts to conduct comprehensive evaluations of the Army Training Enterprise and identifying opportunities to enhance efficiency and effectiveness.

#### MAINTAINING HIGH STANDARDS OF PHYSICAL FITNESS

52. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Driscoll, your predecessor promised the Senate Armed Services Committee that she was going to institute a gender-neutral standard across the Army Combat Fitness Test (ACFT): she was not successful. Will you commit to revisiting this issue and, at a minimum, determining a gender-neutral standard for infantry and armor units and their battalion-level and below attachments?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I agree to revisiting the issue of a gender-neutral ACFT standard and to following the guidance of the Secretary of Defense regarding the implementation of physical fitness standards for combat military occupational specialties.

#### MAPPING IN ALASKA

53. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Driscoll, late in the last Congress, our Chairman, Senator Wicker, released "Restoring Freedom's Forge: American Innovation Unleashed." The report and accompanying legislation outline critical reforms that DOD and Congress must enact to position defense budgeting and acquisition for the 21st century.

Senator Wicker reported a recurring problem with conflicts of interest. The report reads in part:

Sometimes, DOD labs simultaneously support program office acquisitions and offer products that compete with industry. When Government standards and reference architectures are overly prescribed, they can become a back door to sole-sourced solutions created by government-supported labs, universities, and federally funded research and development centers. The regulator becomes the supplier. Lab personnel generate program requirements, provide technical assistance to the program and contracting team, and serve as members of source selection evaluation boards. Rather than buying and configuring an off-the-shelf product that has millions or even billions of dollars invested, DOD labs will convince the program offices to redevelop the solution.

I share the Chairman's concern regarding conflicts of interest. For example, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has a nationwide coastal mapping program run out of one of the Corps districts in the Lower 48. I'm concerned the district may be using commercially available LIDAR [Light Detection and Ranging] for coastal mapping tasks awarded outside the normal competitive process which can create disincentives for industry to invest in state-of-the-art mapping technology.

I am concerned that the Corps is not fully engaged with the Alaska Mapping Executive Committee (AMEC), which coordinates mapping in Alaska among the State and Federal stakeholders. Despite congressional instructions to coordinate the Corps' mapping with AMEC, is often slow in sharing updated shoreline mapping with the organization.

If you are confirmed, will you commit to reviewing the Alaska Coastal Mapping Program's working relationship with USACE including internal sole-source contracts and the Corps' participation in the Alaska Geospatial Council?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Yes, if confirmed, I will review the contracting processes by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers National Coastal Mapping Program, and relationship with mapping entities in Alaska. It is my understanding that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers currently utilizes competitive contracted services for LIDAR and coastal mapping and already participates in several Alaskan working groups.

---

#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR KEVIN CRAMER

##### WESTERN WATER COOPERATIVE COMMITTEE

54. Senator CRAMER. Mr. Driscoll, thank you for your "unequivocal" commitment to establish the Western Water Cooperative Committee during the hearing today. As I outlined during your nomination hearing, the Water Resources Development Act WRDA of 2022 required the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) to set up this Committee within 90 days of enactment. Yet more than 2 years later, we are still waiting for the Committee to launch despite it being authorized and fully funded by Congress. I'm aware the Committee's charter sits before the Department of Defense (DOD), and is expected to be approved within 30 days before moving back to the Army. Once the charter is approved and sent back to the Army, can I also get your commitment to see this through to completion?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to continuing to work proactively with the Department of Defense to gain approval of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) charter for the Western Water Cooperative Committee. I appreciate that the Congress provided both authority and funding for this effort and will continue to seek to convene this Committee as soon as practicable.

55. Senator CRAMER. Mr. Driscoll, too often the Army Corps is overlooked by the Army and progress is then slow or unaccountable. As you work to establish the Western Water Cooperative Committee, will you commit to keeping my office informed on progress and provide information needed to get it to completion?



Mr. DRISCOLL. Yes, if confirmed, I will commit to continuing to work through the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works to focus on the Western Water Cooperative Committee and will endeavor to ensure you and your staff receive regular updates as the Committee is established.

---

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TED BUDD

DEFENSE ACQUISITION PROCESS

56. Senator BUDD. Mr. Driscoll, you have robust experience working with innovators in the private sector. What do you view as the priority in addressing innovation and acquisition challenges impacting the Army?

Mr. DRISCOLL. In my view, we need to ensure the Science and Technology, Acquisition, Resourcing and Requirements communities are fully aligned so that innovative new technologies are able to transition into fielded capabilities. We also need to ensure we are fully tapping into private sector innovation beyond just the traditional defense industry. If confirmed, I will look at ways to fully leverage existing programs, such as the xTech competitions and Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR), partnerships with the Defense Innovation Unit, and flexible acquisition models such as Commercial Solutions Openings (CSO) via Other Transactions (OT) authority to accomplish this.

COUNTER-UNMANNED AERIAL SYSTEMS

57. Senator BUDD. Mr. Driscoll, last year, the Army released a white paper titled "Army Force Structure Transformation" which outlines an array of new capabilities and structural changes needed to deploy defenses from unmanned aerial systems and other air threats. How do you view the Army's role in protecting the joint force from unmanned systems, and how would you rate its preparedness to do so today?

Mr. DRISCOLL. All Services have a role to play in countering the unmanned aerial systems threat. My understanding is that the Army has and continues to invest heavily in Counter-small UAS (C-sUAS) equipment, training, force structure, and tactics, techniques, and procedures. Additionally, the Army is currently fielding C-sUAS equipment sets to Divisions and multiple other formations.

Mr. DRISCOLL. The Army has made progress in the C-sUAS mission area and continues to pace the threat. With that said, I believe this threat is persistent and evolving with advances in hardware and software that have enhanced speed and range while making drones more autonomous, more easily proliferated, and deadlier. We must partner with the other Services, Combatant Commands, the inter-agency community, industry, and academia to continue to outpace the small UAS threat.

JOINT DEPLOYMENT WARFIGHTING COMPLEX

58. Senator BUDD. Mr. Driscoll, the XVIII Airborne Corps is working to consolidate their headquarters into a new and modern facility called the Joint Deployment Warfighting Complex (JDWC). This consolidation is a top priority from an operational and readiness perspective. If confirmed, do you commit to keeping this Committee updated on this project?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed as Secretary, I will review the prioritization of this project and ensure the Army keeps the Committee updated on its status.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

59. Senator BUDD. Mr. Driscoll, if confirmed, how would you plan to ensure that leading edge AI capabilities continue to be prioritized in Army intelligence programs, such as Project Maven?

Mr. DRISCOLL. First, I would work closely with the Army's intelligence community to identify and prioritize AI-enabled initiatives that can provide the greatest impact on our warfighting capabilities. This would include investing in advanced machine learning algorithms, automated target recognition, natural language processing, and computer vision, among other technologies.

Second, I would foster strong partnerships with industry, academia, and other government agencies to leverage their expertise and stay abreast of the latest advancements in AI research and development. This would include collaborating with leading tech companies, universities, and research institutions to identify and adapt emerging AI technologies for military applications.

Third, I would ensure that the Army's AI development and deployment efforts are guided by a clear and comprehensive strategy that aligns with our national security

objectives. This would involve working closely with the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Staff, and other stakeholders to develop and implement a unified AI strategy that prioritizes Army intelligence programs, avoids duplication of effort, and maximizes the effectiveness of cutting-edge AI.

Fourth, I would prioritize investment in AI talent and workforce development, recognizing that our ability to leverage AI effectively depends on having a skilled and knowledgeable workforce. This would include providing training and education programs for our soldiers and civilians, as well as recruiting and retaining top AI talent from industry and academia.

Finally, I would ensure that the Army's AI development and deployment efforts are characterized by a culture of innovation, experimentation, and continuous learning. This would involve encouraging a mindset of experimentation and calculated risk-taking, as well as providing the necessary resources and authorities to support rapid prototyping and fielding of new AI capabilities.

#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JACK REED

##### DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION DIVISION, CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION LABORATORY, AND FORENSICS EXPLOITATION DEPARTMENT

60. Senator REED. Mr. Driscoll, the U.S. Department of the Army Criminal Investigation Division (DACID), Criminal Investigation Laboratory (USACIL), and Forensics Exploitation Department (FXD) provide forensic analysis support to the Department of Defense for investigations and prosecution of military sexual assault and for investigations, prosecution, and targeting of foreign enemies and terrorists operating overseas and here in America. These labs partner with the Department of Justice, Interpol, and other law enforcement agencies and allow military forces around the world to fully target and prosecute threats to the United States and keep our military forces safe. The FXD provides critical weapon system analysis and profiling to identify and interrupt the supply chain of weapons system components, trace the signatures of threat systems across borders, and inform force protection equipment and tactics, techniques and procedures that increase our lethality as a military force.

For the first time in 2023 military sexual assault and sexual harassment declined. This was the result of increased congressional budget investment and a focus on policy within the Department by the Secretary of Defense. If there is one place that America's sons and daughters should be safe from sexual assault and harassment it should be among the men and women in the U.S. Military. Currently the USACIL only received a portion of its requested funding for operations in fiscal year 2026.

What does this mean for the continued prosecution of sexual assault within the DOD?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I want to commit the resources, the time, the energy, and the focus to eliminate sexual assault and sexual harassment from the United States Army. If confirmed, I commit to reviewing the investments for the USACIL and the other components, given their important role in the justice process.

61. Senator REED. Mr. Driscoll, the Joint Staff and the Army validated formal and enduring requirements for DACID FXD 12 years ago. The Army, through numerous formal documents, and intensive study and labor, analyzing years of operational success, has addressed and validated the requirement for DACID: the Forensic Exploitation Laboratories (FXL) Capability Production Document (CPD) addresses the capability gaps identified in the Forensics Support Across the Range of Military Operations (ROMO) Initial Capabilities Development (ICD) Functional Solutions Analysis (FSA) dated 31 January 2010; the Cost Analysis Requirements Description (CARD) # 15011 approved 11 Feb 13; the Government Accountability Office (GAO) 13-447 Defense Forensics "Additional Planning and Oversight Needed to establish an Enduring Expeditionary Forensic Capability" dated June 2013; the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) tasking order (TASKORD) IN131352 Capabilities Development for Rapid Transition (CDRT) 15 dated 17 July 2013 and supports a Milestone C decision.

Currently, the Army continues to fund the majority of the DACID FXD capability through an ad hoc, year to year, funding approach overseen by a rapid response office within the Army that was created to fund emerging requirements for the Army. Funding decisions in this office do not require approval or prioritization by the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Army, G-3/5/7, the Provost Marshal General, or the Director of CID. DACID FXD has continuously operated expeditionary labs for almost 18 years, and today they operate and support counter-unmanned aircraft systems, mar-

itime interdictions, other threat weapons system acquisition and analysis, and Homeland security. The Army will finally consider formal approval of the FXD requirement in the POM [Program Objectives Memorandum] 28.

When will the Army's FXD Capability Development Document, that began Army TRADOC staffing in 2016, be approved by the Army?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I do not have a definitive answer as to when the FXD's CDD will be finalized, but I will look into this action and its relative prioritization with all other competing requirements. I will ensure CID is effectively managing FXD's resource requirements to ensure the success of FXD's critical mission.

62. Senator REED. Mr. Driscoll, how will the Army ensure USACIL and DACID FXD get their full funding requirement in POM 28 (fiscal years 2028–2032)?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I intend to review the Army's entire Program, to include USACIL and DACID FXD. Based on the needs of the Army, I will seek to balance limited resources across the most critical requirements.

63. Senator REED. Mr. Driscoll, how will the Army ensure DACID FXD funding is bridged until POM 28?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I intend to review these efforts within the context of the overall Program and make resourcing decisions in the best interests of the Army beginning in Fiscal Year 2025.

---

#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MAZIE K. HIRONO

##### ALLIES AND PARTNERS

64. Senator HIRONO. Mr. Driscoll, our strong network of allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific is one of our greatest advantages and a key part of our National Defense Strategy. Maintaining these important relationships requires adequate Service-level budgeting for joint and multilateral exercises and training, which bolsters military readiness and deterrence. Given the constrained fiscal environment, how do you plan to prioritize Army campaign funding for multilateral exercises and training in the Indo-Pacific?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Exercises and training are a critical aspect of building interoperability with and improving the capabilities of Allies and partners. Army Senior Leaders through USARPAC prioritizes exercises through Operation Pathways by integrating new capabilities and formations, which exercise in key locations to deter and be more responsive if required. Allies and partners continue to demonstrate great interest in U.S. joint and multinational exercises due to the high value of training offered. Many allies and partners cover the costs of their own participation in these exercises, in accordance with law and guidance provided by the Department. Their participation and enduring contribution to campaigning maximizes the impact of U.S. training dollars.

##### RECRUITMENT

65. Senator HIRONO. Mr. Driscoll, the Army is experiencing the most challenging recruiting landscape in a generation, consistently missing recruiting targets until just last year. We now have a Secretary of Defense who has made disparaging comments about women in combat and across the military. How many soldiers are female?

Mr. DRISCOLL. As of 31 December 2024, the Army Active component has 71,828 female soldiers, which represents approximately 16 percent of the Army Active component.

66. Senator HIRONO. Mr. Driscoll, how many women in the Army serve in combat roles?

Mr. DRISCOLL. As of 31 December 2024, there are 3,785 women serving in combat roles.

67. Senator HIRONO. Mr. Driscoll, if these soldiers are isolated and disrespected by the senior civilian in charge of DOD, what impact do you think this will have on retention and recruitment, especially for the Army?

Mr. DRISCOLL. The Army continues to focus its recruiting and retention efforts on "Quality over Quantity," recruiting and retaining qualified individuals based on merit to serve. If confirmed, I will ensure that the Army continues to recruit and retain high quality personnel. These Soldiers will be tactically and technically trained, ready to fight and win our Nation's wars.

68. Senator HIRONO. Mr. Driscoll, how do you plan to ensure the Army adequately meets its recruiting goals?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, my plan to ensure the Army adequately meets its recruiting goals is to look at lessons learned, continue initiatives that are effective, and support the Army's Recruiting Enterprise Transformation. I plan to provide Recruiters the best marketing and technology support available, reengineering business processes to improve effectiveness, and constantly reviewing performance in every aspect, discarding dated and restrictive policies, expanding programs that are working, and continuing to seek the best talent in the right markets.

69. Senator HIRONO. Mr. Driscoll, in 2023, 6.8 percent of Active Duty women and 1.3 percent of Active Duty men indicated experiencing unwanted sexual contact. In the same year, 523 servicemembers died by suicide, an increase from the previous year (493). What steps will you take to improve quality of life and resources for soldiers to address the continued problems of sexual violence and suicide?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I will fully support and provide oversight for implementation of the approved recommendations from the DOD Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military and the Suicide Prevention and Response Independent Review Committee findings.

#### MODERNIZATION-SUSTAINMENT AND TRAINING

70. Senator HIRONO. Mr. Driscoll, in 2024, the GAO reported that the Army is rapidly fielding new types of weapon systems and equipment to deploying units even before fully completing the doctrine, training, personnel, and facilities requirements that are needed to best operate and sustain the equipment. Recognizing there is value to putting new weapon systems in soldiers' hands as early as possible, what steps will you take as Secretary of the Army to ensure that necessary training, sustainment, and other planning elements are also rapidly developed and implemented?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I will review which programs are worth investing in. Scaling them to the entire Army using Deliberate Transformation is necessary to capture DOTMLPFP fully burdened cost and ensure we deliver sustainable solutions. The ability to provide and incorporate iterative soldier feedback enables the Army to spend money where it makes the biggest difference to increasing lethality and warfighting.

#### RAPID ACQUISITION PROCESSES

71. Senator HIRONO. Mr. Driscoll, the Army has faced criticism for being slow to deliver new capabilities to soldiers. What reforms would you implement to streamline acquisition processes and deliver critical capabilities faster, particularly for the Indo-Pacific area of responsibility?

Mr. DRISCOLL. The Army must continue to avoid a "one-size-fits-all" approach to acquisition. If confirmed, I will encourage the Army to tailor acquisition approaches based on the capability being acquired by using novel acquisition authorities provided by Congress. Flexible acquisition pathways, such as the use of Other Transaction authority, enable rapid development and deployment of new capabilities and allow iterative upgrades to improve new capabilities.

72. Senator HIRONO. Mr. Driscoll, the private sector often outpaces Government research and development processes in developing and fielding cutting-edge technologies. How will you ensure that the Army prioritizes partnerships with private companies, particularly small businesses and non-traditional companies, to rapidly integrate existing commercial technologies into the Army?

Mr. DRISCOLL. The Army recognizes the private sector's ability to rapidly innovate and is committed to strengthening partnerships with small businesses and non-traditional defense companies to accelerate the integration of cutting-edge commercial technologies. If confirmed, I will focus on eliminating barriers, leveraging agile procurement strategies, and fostering collaborative innovation to maintain technological overmatch.

#### PROTECTING CIVILIANS

73. Senator HIRONO. Mr. Driscoll, the U.S. Army has indicated that it plans to eliminate the Civilian Protection Center of Excellence—the DOD office that protects civilians in war zones and mitigate civilian harm. This office grew out of an initiative begun by former Secretary of Defense James Mattis, who ordered a study into how U.S. airstrikes had killed Iraqi civilians. If the U.S. Army plans to take steps

to eliminate this congressionally mandated office, how will the U.S. Army be held accountable and adequately trained for reducing civilian harm in conflict?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I have not received a briefing on the Civilian Protection Center of Excellence. I strongly support all efforts to mitigate civilian harm, including through the U.S. Department of Defense Civilian Harm Mitigation and Response (CHMR) effort. If confirmed, I will request a briefing and work with the Senate Armed Services Committee to ensure Soldiers are adequately trained for reducing civilian harm in conflict.

#### SCALING EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

74. Senator HIRONO. Mr. Driscoll, the Pentagon often struggles to transition promising prototypes into large-scale programs. What barriers do you see preventing the rapid fielding of ground autonomous systems for the Army, and how would you address them to ensure we can operate at scale?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Large scale fielding of autonomous ground systems operating alongside Soldiers presents a complex challenge. It is my understanding that existing ground autonomous systems are currently not mature enough to operate along with Soldier formations without requiring significant oversight by Soldiers. If confirmed, I will advocate for both further maturation of the systems themselves, along with continued Soldier experimentation, to validate the effectiveness and safety of the systems.

---

#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ELIZABETH WARREN

##### ETHICS

75. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, please provide a list of all your clients at In Witness Advisory LLC.

Mr. DRISCOLL. I have provided all relevant information in compliance with the Office of Government Ethics financial disclosure and SASC Questionnaire processes.

76. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, if confirmed, will you commit to recuse yourself for 4 years from all particular matters that have a direct and predictable effect on your former clients at In Witness Advisory LLC?

Mr. DRISCOLL. My Ethics Agreement and existing laws and policies will require me, if confirmed and appointed, to recuse myself for a period of 1 year from participating personally and substantially in any particular matter involving specific parties in which I know that a former client is a party or represents a party, unless I am first authorized to participate by the appropriate ethics official. I will ensure that I have a robust screening process in place to help implement these recusals.

77. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, please provide a list of any clients and any companies purchased by or advised by Flex Capital Management LLC.

Mr. DRISCOLL. I have provided all relevant information in compliance with the Office of Government Ethics financial disclosure and SASC Questionnaire processes.

78. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, if confirmed, will you commit to recuse yourself for 4 years from all particular matters that have a direct and predictable effect on the clients of and companies purchased or advised by Flex Capital Management?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I will comply with existing laws and regulations.

79. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, if you are confirmed, will you commit to not seeking any employment with or compensation from a defense contractor, including through serving on a board, as a consultant, or as a lobbyist, for 4 years after leaving DOD?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I will abide by the extensive post-government employment ethics rules required by Federal law and policy. These provisions set forth comprehensive restrictions relating to acceptance of compensation from defense contractors, as well as communicating back to the Federal Government on behalf of any future employers and clients. I believe that these existing rules are appropriate and sufficient to protect the public interest. If confirmed, I will carry out the responsibilities of my office honorably, and I will seek any post-government employment in full compliance with the applicable ethics rules.

80. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, if you are confirmed, will you commit to not engaging in any lobbying activities, including "behind-the-scenes" lobbying, focused on DOD or any of its components for 4 years after leaving DOD?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I will abide by the extensive post-government employment ethics rules required by Federal law and policy. These provisions set forth comprehensive restrictions relating to acceptance of compensation from defense contractors, as well as communicating back to the Federal Government on behalf of any future employers and clients. I believe that these existing rules are appropriate and sufficient to protect the public interest. If confirmed, I will carry out the responsibilities of my office honorably, and I will seek any post-government employment in full compliance with the applicable ethics rules.

81. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, during your nomination process, did anyone on the Trump campaign, transition team, or other closely related entity approach you about your loyalty to President Trump?

Mr. DRISCOLL. No.

82. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, if you were approached about your loyalty to President Trump, did you sign a loyalty pledge or other similar oath? If so, please provide a copy of the text of that pledge or oath.

Mr. DRISCOLL. No.

83. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, if you were approached about your loyalty to President Trump, did you make any verbal representations of loyalty? If so, please describe this representation.

Mr. DRISCOLL. I was never approached.

84. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, in November 2024, the New York Times and other news outlets reported that Boris Epshteyn, a top adviser to President Trump, allegedly requested payment from prospective political appointees to promote their candidacies for top positions within the Administration. Did you discuss the possibility of joining the Administration with Mr. Epshteyn at any time?

Mr. DRISCOLL. No.

85. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, if you did discuss the possibility of joining the Administration with Mr. Epshteyn, did Mr. Epshteyn seek payment from you for promoting your candidacy for a position within the Administration?

Mr. DRISCOLL. No.

86. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, at any time, did lawyers for President Trump or members of President Trump's team approach you regarding Mr. Epshteyn and the allegations cited above? If so, please explain the information that they provided you, including copies of documents, what was discussed during any calls, and any other information pertaining to this interaction.

Mr. DRISCOLL. No.

#### CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT AND TRANSPARENCY

87. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, what is your understanding of the role of the Department of Defense Inspector General and the Army Inspector General?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I have not received a briefing on the role of the DOD Inspector General and the Army Inspector General. If confirmed, I will request a briefing.

88. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, will you ensure your staff complies with any Inspector General deadlines established for requested communications, providing witnesses, providing documents, and that those witnesses will be protected from reprisal for their testimony?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I am committed to meeting all legal requirements from the Inspector General.

89. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, if you are not able to comply with any Inspector General requests and deadlines, will you notify the Republican and Democratic members of the Committee regarding the basis for any good faith delay or denial?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I am committed to meeting all legal requirements from the Inspector General and provide any legally required notice to Members of the Committee.

90. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, if you are confirmed as Secretary of the Army, will you commit to refusing to follow illegal orders from any individual, including the President?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I reject the premise of the question that the President would issue an illegal order. I would only follow legal orders.

91. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, will you commit to testify before Congress if you are called upon by Congress to provide a deposition or if you are issued a subpoena?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Yes, I am committed to meeting all legal requirements from Congress.

92. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, will you commit to providing information or documents to Congress if you are requested to do so or issued a subpoena?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Yes, I am committed to meeting all legal requirements from Congress.

93. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, will you commit to following current DOD precedent for responding to information requests, briefings, and other inquiries from Congress, including the Senate and House Armed Services Committees and their minority members?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Yes, I am committed to meeting all legal requirements from the Senate and House Armed Services Committees.

94. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, if confirmed, will you commit to posting your official calendar monthly?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I am committed to meeting all legal disclosure requirements.

95. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, do you think the Army has an over-classification problem and if so, can you commit to providing this Committee an estimate of the number or percentage of Army documents that are overclassified?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I have not yet received a briefing. If confirmed, I will review the Army's current classification system.

96. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, to the best of your knowledge, are Army components identifying records for proactive posting in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act? And if not, how would you ensure that they do so to comply with public records law?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I have not received any briefing on the Army's current Freedom of Information Act compliance. If confirmed, I will review.

97. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, if confirmed, do you think the Army should pursue strategic technology to support automated declassification?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I will review the Army's current declassification technology system.

#### PROJECT 2025

98. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, have you discussed Project 2025 with any officials associated with the Trump campaign, the Trump transition team, or other members of the Trump administration? If so, please explain what you discussed, when you discussed it, and with whom you discussed it.

Mr. DRISCOLL. No.

99. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, have you discussed Project 2025 with any officials associated with the Heritage Foundation? If so, please explain what you discussed, when you discussed it, and with whom you discussed it.

Mr. DRISCOLL. No.

#### FOREIGN INFLUENCE

100. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, have you received any payment from a foreign government or entity controlled by a foreign government within the past 5 years?

Mr. DRISCOLL. No.

101. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, have you communicated with any foreign government or entity controlled by a foreign government within the past 5 years?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Yes, all such communications have been disclosed in conjunction with my clearance background check and Senate briefing.

102. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, please disclose any communications or payments you have had with representatives of any foreign government or entity controlled by a foreign government within the past 5 years and describe the nature of the communication.

Mr. DRISCOLL. I have received no such payments. All such communications have been disclosed in conjunction with my clearance background check and Senate briefing.

#### SEXUAL ASSAULT AND HARASSMENT

103. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, the most recent DOD statistics found that about 29,000 Active Duty troops—which accounts for 6.8 percent of female servicemembers and 1.3 percent of male servicemembers—experienced unwanted sexual contact in 2023. A Brown University study estimates that the actual rates are two to four times higher. How do you plan to address and reduce sexual assault and sexual harassment in the Army?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Sexual assault and sexual harassment have no place in the Army. If confirmed, I will receive a briefing on the current state of sexual assault and sexual harassment in the Army and support ongoing efforts to eliminate these problems.

104. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, how do you plan to support and protect Army servicemembers, civilians, grantees, and contractors who come forward with reports of sexual assault and sexual harassment?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Sexual assault and sexual harassment have no place in the Army. If confirmed, I will receive a briefing on the current state of sexual assault and sexual harassment in the Army and support ongoing efforts to eliminate these problems.

#### AGREEMENTS

105. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, have you, in any professional or personal capacity, signed or agreed to sign a non-disclosure agreement, confidentiality agreement, confidential disclosure agreement, proprietary information agreement, non-disparagement agreement, and/or secrecy agreement and for what reasons did you do so?

Mr. DRISCOLL. As is standard practice for many businesses, I have signed agreements related to my previous employers of record. All such employment have been disclosed in conjunction with my clearance background check.

106. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, have you, in any professional or personal capacity, agreed to pay, paid, or receive payment or services in conjunction with any of the aforementioned instances?

Mr. DRISCOLL. As is standard practice for many businesses, I have signed agreements related to my previous employers of record and received compensation from those employers.

107. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, if you have in any professional or personal capacity, agreed to pay, paid, or receive payment or services in conjunction with any of the aforementioned instances, please provide a breakdown of the amount(s) agreed to pay, paid, or received and an explanation of services rendered and include a timeline of when any of these agreements, payments, or services rendered occurred.

Mr. DRISCOLL. As is standard practice for many businesses, I have signed agreements related to my previous employers of record and received compensation from those employers.

#### RETALIATION AND PROTECTING WHISTLEBLOWERS

108. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, do you believe that servicemembers, civilians, grantees, and contractors should be protected from any form of retaliation for coming forward about an illegal order, sexual assault or harassment, negligence, misconduct, or any other concern that they wish to raise?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I believe that all whistleblower laws should be followed.

109. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, have you ever retaliated against any individual for coming forward about an illegal order, sexual assault or harassment, negligence, misconduct, or any other concern that they wish to raise?

Mr. DRISCOLL. No.



110. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, if you are confirmed as Secretary of the Army, will you commit to protecting whistleblowers and how will you do so?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I will follow all laws related to whistleblowers.

#### DOMESTIC DEPLOYMENTS OF U.S. MILITARY

111. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, in which circumstances do you believe that the Insurrection Act should be used?

Mr. DRISCOLL. The Insurrection Act is a lawful authority of the President of the United States given to him by the Congress. Its lawful uses are spelled out in statute.

112. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, do you believe that the Insurrection Act should be used only as a “last resort?”

Mr. DRISCOLL. Invocation of the Insurrection Act is a lawful prerogative of the President of the United States and not that of the Secretary of Army. The authority to use the Act is spelled out in U.S. Code.

113. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, do you believe that military forces should be deployed to respond to civil unrest only in situations where State and local authorities are overwhelmed?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Military forces, be they National Guard or occasionally Active Duty Forces, have in our country historically been employed to respond to civil unrest when the capacity and capabilities of civil authorities have been stretched to the limit and there is a complete or near complete breakdown of law and order.

114. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, do you believe that the parties best positioned to determine whether State and local authorities are overwhelmed are those authorities? If not, why not?

Mr. DRISCOLL. That State and local authorities are overwhelmed will often be clear to the general public merely by the scale of violence and/or disorder. Further, State or local authorities may not be in a position to convey that they are overwhelmed.

115. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, if confirmed, would you support using the military for immigration enforcement, including for mass deportations, despite the military’s lack of relevant training and the harm it would almost certainly do to military readiness?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I will support and execute all lawful direction and guidance from the President of the United States and the Secretary of Defense.

#### IMPOUNDMENT CONTROL ACT

116. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, on January 27, 2025, President Trump’s Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued a memo calling for all Federal financial assistance programs (excluding “assistance provided directly to individuals”) to be suspended. Do you agree with OMB’s decision to issue this memo?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I will support and execute all lawful direction and guidance from the President of the United States and the Secretary of Defense.

117. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, do you believe that the Secretary of Defense or the Secretary of the Army has the legal authority to block the disbursement of funds appropriated by Congress?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I have not received any briefing on the disbursement of funds appropriated by Congress. If confirmed, I will request a briefing on the Army’s requirements to follow all applicable laws.

118. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, what is your understanding of the Impoundment Control Act?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I have not received any briefing on the Impoundment Control Act. If confirmed, I will request a briefing on the Army’s requirements to follow all applicable laws.

119. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, do you commit to following the Impoundment Control Act?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I will follow all laws.

120. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, do you commit notifying the Senate and House Armed Services Committees, including the majority and minority, if you are

asked not to follow the Impoundment Control Act or not to expend the money that Congress appropriates or authorizes?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I will follow all applicable laws.

121. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, the Constitution's Spending Clause (Art. I, § 8, cl. 1) and Appropriations Clause (Art. I, § 9, cl. 7) give Congress, not the Executive, power of the purse. The Supreme Court has unanimously upheld this power. Do you believe that impoundments are constitutional?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I will support and execute all lawful direction and guidance from the President of the United States and the Secretary of Defense.

122. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, the funding levels in appropriations bills passed into law are not targets or ceilings; instead, they are amounts the executive branch must spend, unless stated otherwise. Congress could—if it wanted the President to have discretion—write those amounts as ceilings. Do you agree?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I will support and execute all lawful direction and guidance from the President of the United States and the Secretary of Defense.

123. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, what is your understanding of the requirements for DOD to obligate funding that Congress authorizes and appropriates, in accordance with the time period that Congress deems it to do so?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I have not received any briefing on the requirements and timelines for the Army to obligate funding that Congress authorizes and appropriates. If confirmed, I will request a briefing on the Army's requirements and ensure the Army follows all applicable laws.

124. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, do you commit to expending the money that Congress appropriates and authorizes?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I will follow all applicable laws.

125. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, do you commit to following and implementing the annual National Defense Authorization Act passed into law?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I will follow all applicable laws.

#### CIVILIAN HARM

126. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, do you agree that one difference between the United States and its potential adversaries is the greater value that the U.S. Government puts on protecting human life and liberty at home and abroad?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I'm supportive of the U.S. DOD CHMR effort.

127. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, what is your understanding of title 10 U.S.C. 184, which established the Civilian Protection Center of Excellence?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I have not received a briefing on the Civilian Protection Center of Excellence. If confirmed, I will request a briefing.

128. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, the U.S. military has spent many years working to improve its ability to prevent and mitigate civilian harm without sacrificing lethality—including through the development of the DOD Instruction on Civilian Harm under the first Trump administration, which I commend. These efforts received bipartisan support from Congress and grew out of a recognition from the U.S. military itself that, after over 2 decades of U.S. wars, warfighters needed better tools and trustworthy systems to prevent civilian harm, uphold U.S. values, and prevent the moral injury and psychological trauma that too often comes with deadly mistakes. The Army has played a critical role in these efforts by serving as the joint proponent for civilian harm mitigation and response (CHMR) and housing the Civilian Protection Center of Excellence (CPCOE), which provides direct support to operational combatant commands on civilian harm issues. The CPCOE has also been enshrined in U.S. law via the James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023. If confirmed as Secretary of the Army, will you commit to continued Army leadership on civilian harm issues, including housing and resourcing the CPCOE?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I commit to following all relevant laws and DOD issuances relating to civilian harm mitigation and response.

129. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, what do you understand to be your roles and responsibilities regarding civilian harm mitigation and response?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I have not received a briefing on the Secretary of the Army's specific roles and responsibilities regarding civilian harm mitigation. If confirmed, I will request a briefing.

130. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, what do you understand to be the importance of mitigating civilian harm in military operations?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I am committed to meeting all legal and regulatory requirements with respect to reporting on Department of Defense efforts to mitigate civilian harm.

131. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, if you are confirmed, will you commit to supporting and protecting the Civilian Protection Center of Excellence?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I commit to following all relevant laws relating to the Civilian Protection Center of Excellence.

132. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, according to press reports the Army is drafting proposals to defund and potentially disestablish the Civilian Protection Center of Excellence, what do you understand to be the Army's authority to do so?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I have not received any briefing relating to the Civilian Protection Center of Excellence. If confirmed, I will request a briefing and will follow all relevant funding laws and DOD issuances relating to civilian harm mitigation and response.

133. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, if one of the options is to move the office to another Service, how will you oversee the transition?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I have not received any briefing relating to the Civilian Protection Center of Excellence. If confirmed, I will request a briefing and will follow all relevant laws and DOD issuances relating to civilian harm mitigation and response.

134. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, if the Civilian Protection Center of Excellence is moved out of the Army, how will you oversee the Army's compliance with title 10 U.S.C. 184 and the Civilian Harm Mitigation Response and Action Plan (CHMR-AP)?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I have not received any briefing relating to the Civilian Protection Center of Excellence. If confirmed, I will request a briefing and will follow all relevant compliance laws and DOD issuances relating to civilian harm mitigation and response.

135. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, if you are confirmed as Secretary of the Army, how will you prevent and mitigate civilian harm?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I will request a briefing on the DOD CHMR program, including the role of the Army in that program, and will advocate for a culture that strives to improve its civilian harm mitigation and response processes.

136. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, if you are confirmed as Secretary of the Army, will you commit to supporting and implementing the CHMR-AP?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I will follow all relevant laws and DOD issuances relating to civilian harm mitigation and response.

137. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, do you believe that our troops are at higher risk for retribution as the number of civilian deaths from U.S. military operations or U.S.-led military operations increases?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Yes.

#### BLAST OVERPRESSURE

138. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, if you are confirmed as Secretary of the Army, will you commit to protecting servicemembers from blast overpressure and increase their options for seeking care after being exposed?

Mr. DRISCOLL. It is our sacred duty to care for our soldiers suffering from service-related injuries. If confirmed, I will request a briefing on the current options for care for Soldiers suffering from blast overpressure and continue ongoing efforts that support mitigating blast overpressure while maintaining the operational and training standards of the Army.

139. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, if you are confirmed as Secretary of the Army, what steps will you take to protect servicemembers from blast overpressure and increase their options for seeking care after being exposed?

Mr. DRISCOLL. It is our sacred duty to care for our soldiers suffering from service-related injuries. If confirmed, I will request a briefing on the current options for care for Soldiers suffering from blast overpressure and, where necessary, work with this Committee to advocate for increased mitigation and care options where appropriate.

140. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, how do you plan to work with the Department of Veterans Affairs to make sure that servicemembers, veterans, and their families are aware of the risks of blast overpressure and traumatic brain injury?

Mr. DRISCOLL. It is our sacred duty to care for our soldiers suffering from service-related injuries. If confirmed, I will work with the Department of Veterans Affairs, where necessary, to care for Soldiers suffering from blast overpressure.

141. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, do you support establishing logs for soldiers on blast overpressure exposure and traumatic brain injury?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I will request a briefing on the current system for monitoring blast overpressure exposure and traumatic brain injury and ongoing efforts to further improve tracking such exposure.

142. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, do you support requiring neurocognitive assessments of soldiers annually, before they begin training to establish a baseline, and before they leave the military to determine when their change in cognitive health over time?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I will request a briefing on the current system for neurocognitive assessment for soldiers.

143. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, if you are confirmed as Secretary of the Army, how will you address the links between blast overpressure exposure and increased risks of suicide?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I will request a briefing on any current links between blast overpressure exposure and increased risks of suicide. The Army should work, from the top down, to prevent all suicides.

144. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, it appears that U.S. Army Green Beret Master Sergeant Matthew Livelsberger, who died by suicide in a cybertruck explosion on January 1, 2025, may have had a history of traumatic brain injury. What do you understand to be the consequences and long-term effects of blast overpressure exposure and brain injury on servicemembers?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I will request a briefing on any current links between blast overpressure exposure and increased risks of suicide. The Army should work, from the top down, to prevent all suicides.

145. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, do you support addressing the risks of blast overpressure to servicemembers through the swift implementation of sections 721 through section 725 of the Fiscal Year 2025 NDAA?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I will request a briefing on the current state of implementation of sections 721 through section 725 of the Fiscal Year 2025 NDAA and follow all applicable laws.

146. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, which occupational specialties do you understand to be at the highest risk for blast overpressure exposure in the Army?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I will request a briefing on the current understanding of which occupational specialties have the highest risk for blast overpressure exposure.

#### RIGHT-TO-REPAIR

147. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, do you believe giving the Army access to the technical data rights needed to repair its own equipment could advance the Army's readiness?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Yes, I believe that it could help advance the Army's readiness. If confirmed, I will request a brief on the current state of the Army's right-to-repair.

148. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, do you believe giving the Army access to the technical data rights needed to repair its own equipment could help reduce the Army's repair and sustainment costs?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Yes, I believe that it could help reduce the Army's repair and sustainment costs. If confirmed, I will request a brief on the current state of the

Army's right-to-repair to better understand the scale of impact on repair and sustainment costs.

149. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, how will you ensure soldiers who are stationed abroad can timely and cost-effectively repair equipment that is damaged, especially in a contested logistics environment?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Technological innovations may exist that can improve equipment repairs. If confirmed, I will request a brief on the current state of the Army's repair systems with a focus on repairs in a contested logistics environment.

150. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, if you are confirmed as Secretary of the Army, will you commit to including right-to-repair/technical data rights clauses in acquisition contracts that the Army enters into?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I will request a brief on the current state of the Army's right-to-repair and advocate for contracting language that can strengthen the Army.

151. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, if you are confirmed as Secretary of the Army, will you commit to ensuring contractors deliver technical data rights to the Army when their contract requires or allows it?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I will request a brief on the current state of the Army's technical data rights and advocate for data rights that can strengthen the Army.

152. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, if you are confirmed as Secretary of the Army, will you commit to understanding the cost of not having the right-to-repair/technical data rights for the Army's equipment through an assessment, the results of which you would make public for review by Congress and the Department of Government Efficiency?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I will request a brief on the current state of the Army's right-to-repair/technical data rights and publicly advocate for areas that can significantly strengthen the Army.

#### NAMING OF CONFEDERATE BASES

153. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, the Fiscal Year 2021 NDAA established a commission to rename Federal bases and other military property named after Confederate figures. The Naming Commission recommended new names for military installations and other property named after Confederate soldiers. The Commission received bipartisan support and worked with local communities to make these recommendations, which the Department of Defense accepted. Section 1749 of the Fiscal Year 2020 NDAA also prohibits the Department of Defense from naming a new asset or renaming an old asset in reference to the Confederacy. Do you support keeping the names of military property designated by the Naming Commission?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I will request a brief on the Naming Commissions findings to better understand its recommendations.

#### ARMY CONTRACTING

154. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, reporting on January 27, 2025, indicated that Secretary of Defense Peter Hegseth was "halting all new Army contract awards as well as solicitations for new programs" and that this pause "could last as little as 10 days but could potentially continue for months." The Army has since claimed that there is an ongoing review but "contracting activities continue to move forward." Do you support a pause in new Army contract awards and solicitations for new programs?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I have not received any briefings on the Army's current contracting positions. If confirmed, I will receive a briefing to better understand the current state of the contract awards and solicitations for new programs.

155. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, if you support a pause, how long of a pause do you support and under what conditions?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I have not received any briefings on Army contracting. If confirmed, I will receive a briefing to better understand the current state of the contract awards and solicitations for new programs.

156. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, if you support a pause, what do you estimate to be the cost of such a halt in contracting?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I have not received any briefings on Army contracting. If confirmed, I will receive a briefing to better understand the current state of the contract awards and solicitations and any possible cost implications.

157. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, what do you understand to be the ramifications of a pause in new Army contract awards and solicitations for new programs, including both on the programmatic side and industry side?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I have not received any briefings on Army contracting. If confirmed, I will receive a briefing to better understand the current state of the contract awards and solicitations and any possible ramifications.

158. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, what do you understand to be the cost, including a dollar amount; effect on reputation; and time lost that would result from a pause in new Army contract awards and solicitations for new programs?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I have not received any briefings on Army contracting. If confirmed, I will receive a briefing to better understand the current state of the contract awards and solicitations and any possible cost implications.

159. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, what do you understand to be the effect of a pause on new Army contracts awards and solicitations for new programs on the ability of the Army to expend the money that has been authorized and appropriated by Congress in a timely manner?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I have not received any briefings on Army contracting. If confirmed, I will receive a briefing to better understand which funds have been authorized and appropriated by Congress.

160. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, in the past, the Army has called for a “Night Court” process to consider retention, elimination, or modification of weapons systems programs. Do you support this process and how should the Army work to identify and prevent potential overlap and duplication in its programs?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I have not received any briefings on Army contracting, but I am very supportive of identifying and preventing unnecessary overlap and duplication in Army programs. If confirmed, I will receive a briefing to better understand the current state of the contract awards and solicitations for new programs.

#### JUNIOR RESERVE OFFICER TRAINING CORPS REFORMS

161. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, there are several reforms in the Fiscal Year 2024 NDAA to better protect Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) students from sexual misconduct by instructors and forced enrollment after extensive reporting about these issues. Do you support the swift and full implementation of sections 552, 555, and 556 of the Fiscal Year 2024 NDAA?

Mr. DRISCOLL. All forms of sexual assault and sexual harassment should be purged from the JROTC. I have not received any briefings on sexual misconduct in JROTC, but if confirmed, I will receive a briefing and work to reinforce a culture of zero tolerance.

162. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, what is your understanding of the responsibility of the Army and Department of Defense to coordinate with the Department of Education on reports of sexual misconduct by JROTC instructors?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I have not received any briefings on the reporting requirements of sexual misconduct in JROTC, but if confirmed, I will receive a briefing and follow all applicable reporting laws.

163. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, what is your understanding of the responsibility of the Army and Department of Defense to hold schools accountable if they do not report an allegation of JROTC instructor misconduct to the Military Service point of contact within 1 business day?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I have not received any briefings on the reporting requirements of sexual misconduct in JROTC, but if confirmed, I will receive a briefing and strive to ensure all schools follow applicable reporting laws.

164. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, if you are confirmed, what is your plan to ensure that JROTC Army students, parents, and others feel they can come forward to the Army to report an allegation?

Mr. DRISCOLL. All forms of sexual assault and sexual harassment should be purged from the Army and JROTC and students, parents, and others should feel that they can come forward with any allegations. I have not received any briefings

on sexual misconduct in JROTC, but if confirmed, I will receive a briefing and review the current reporting model.

165. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, do you support climate surveys of JROTC Army students to better understand concerns about and incidences of sexual assault and harassment in the JROTC programs?

Mr. DRISCOLL. All forms of sexual assault and sexual harassment should be purged from the Army and JROTC. I have not received any briefings on sexual misconduct in JROTC, but if confirmed, I will receive a briefing and work with this Committee to collect data that can help reduce the risk of sexual assault and harassment in the JROTC programs.

#### MILITARY HEALTH SYSTEM GENESIS RECRUITMENT DELAYS

166. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, what is your understanding of the impact of Military Health System (MHS) Genesis on increasing recruitment delays by flagging long-healed or manageable injuries of recruits and requiring them to get a waiver to serve?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Any barrier that is unnecessarily harming recruiting should be reviewed and, where possible, removed. If confirmed, I will receive a briefing on the MHS Genesis and its impact on recruiting.

167. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, there are several reforms in the Fiscal Year 2025 NDAA intended to address the recruitment delays caused by MHS Genesis. Do you support the full and swift implementation of section 738 and section 740?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Any applicable law that helps to remove recruiting barriers should be implemented as quickly as practicable. If confirmed, I will receive a briefing on sections 738 and section 740 of the Fiscal Year 2025 NDAA.

#### HOUSING

168. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, how will you address the affordability and supply issues within the military housing market?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I intend to review the current state of military housing and oversight mechanisms for both on-and off-base housing, and work with this Committee to take care of our Soldiers who reside housing in and around Army installations.

169. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, do you believe it is acceptable for servicemembers and their families to live in hazardous housing conditions?

Mr. DRISCOLL. No.

170. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, do hazardous housing conditions like dangerous mold, lead-based paint, and rodent and insect infestations violate DOD's existing housing agreements with private companies?

Mr. DRISCOLL. While I have not received any briefings on the current state of Army housing, I will work with this Committee to take care of our Soldiers who reside in Army housing. The situation described is unacceptable.

171. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, as Secretary of the Army, how would you guarantee the habitability of servicemember's housing?

Mr. DRISCOLL. It is our sacred duty to care for our soldiers and their families. I have not received any briefings on the Army housing, but I will work with this Committee to take care of our Soldiers who reside in Army housing.

172. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, how would you address the quality concerns in the military housing inventory?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Our soldiers and their families deserve the best quality housing the Army can provide them. If confirmed, I intend to review the current state of Army housing and oversight mechanisms, and work with this Committee to take care of our military personnel who reside in military housing.

173. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, how should the Department of the Army strengthen its oversight of the private military housing market?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I intend to review the current state of military housing and oversight mechanisms, and work with this Committee to take care of our soldiers who reside in Army housing.

174. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, how would you guarantee the implementation and enforcement of the Military Housing Privatization Initiative (MHPI) Tenant Bill of Rights?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I have not received any briefings on the MHPI Tenant Bill of Rights. If confirmed, I will receive a briefing on it and work through the Army's oversight processes and with this Committee to protect our soldiers and their families.

175. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, how would you ensure MHPI accountability given the recent invocation of the Federal enclave doctrine to strip military families of their day in court?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I have not received any briefings on the MHPI accountability impacts from the invocation of Federal enclave doctrine. If confirmed, I will receive a briefing on it and work with this Committee to protect our soldiers and their families.

176. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, will you agree to provide a comprehensive overview of which military housing projects are subject to the Federal enclave doctrine?

Mr. DRISCOLL. I have not received any briefings on which current Army housing projects are subject to the Federal enclave doctrine and work with this Committee to protect our soldiers and their families.

177. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, how would you ensure that landlords do not take advantage of Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) rates, including through the use of software like RealPage or collusive rent-setting?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Soldiers should not be taken advantage of by their landlords. I have not received any briefings on how software may impact rent-setting. If confirmed, I will request a briefing and work with this Committee to protect our soldiers and their families.

178. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, do you commit to ensuring no one is retaliated against for submitting complaints to the DOD Housing Feedback System (DHFS)?

I commit to ensuring all retaliation laws are followed.

179. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, do you think families should be forced to sign nondisclosure agreements in order to get housing deficiencies addressed?

Mr. DRISCOLL. It is our sacred duty to care for our soldiers' families. I commit to working with this Committee to protect them. I have not received any briefings on forced non-disclosure agreements in the Army housing process. If confirmed, I will request a briefing on it and advocate for our soldiers' families.

180. Senator WARREN. Mr. Driscoll, will you seek to bar MHPI landlords from requiring that families sign nondisclosure agreements in order to get housing deficiencies addressed?

Mr. DRISCOLL. It is our sacred duty to care for our soldiers' families. I commit to working with this Committee to protect them. I have not received any briefings on non-disclosure agreement requirements from MHPI landlords. If confirmed, I will request a briefing on it and advocate for our soldiers' families.

---

#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JACKY ROSEN

##### CYBER WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

181. Senator ROSEN. Mr. Driscoll, the Fiscal Year 2024 NDAA included my bipartisan legislation authorizing the Army to create a Civilian Cybersecurity Reserve to provide U.S. Cyber Command (CYBERCOM) with qualified civilian personnel for surge capacity to ensure the U.S. Government has the cyber talent needed to respond to malicious activity and secure DOD's information and its systems. Understanding you are not yet confirmed, what do you know of the status of the implementation plan for the civilian cyber reserve?

Mr. DRISCOLL. To generate combat power in cyberspace, the Army has a responsibility to build the best bench of superior cyber personnel across both the uniformed and civilian workforce. If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about this assessment and I commit to providing an informed status update.



182. Senator ROSEN. Mr. Driscoll, if confirmed, can I have your commitment to see this through?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I commit to continuing the Army's work to explore a Civilian Cybersecurity Reserve, and to providing the Congress briefings on these efforts, as required by law.

---

#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MARK KELLY

##### INNOVATION AND MODERNIZATION EFFORTS

183. Senator KELLY. Mr. Driscoll, Army modernization, across every domain, is a top priority. Given the increasingly complex and competitive global environment, the Army's ability to innovate is critical for ensuring the United States stays ahead of adversaries. How do you plan to address the challenges in developing and fielding new technologies?

Mr. DRISCOLL. The Army needs to ensure a focus on integration, not just innovation, to enable technology insertion across the modernization enterprise including tight alignment across the full lifecycle of an effort. We also must also expand integration of private sector innovation beyond just the traditional defense primes and foster teaming arrangements. If confirmed, I will review existing policies and practices to explore how to better leverage existing tools or develop new ones to ensure the Army is a lethal force and maintains its competitive edge over adversaries.

184. Senator KELLY. Mr. Driscoll, what are your thoughts on incentivizing major defense contractors to collaborate more with small and non-traditional defense companies?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Encouraging major defense contractors to collaborate with small and non-traditional defense companies is essential for fostering innovation, competition, and supply chain resilience. By leveraging the agility of small businesses alongside the scale of prime contractors, we can accelerate technology adoption, reduce costs, and enhance warfighter capabilities more effectively.

185. Senator KELLY. Mr. Driscoll, Russia has recently fielded electronic warfare systems during the war in Ukraine. Do you believe current Army systems and infrastructure is sufficient to perform against our adversaries in a contested environment where we are encountering electronic warfare?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely within the department to review Army systems and infrastructure to ensure it is sufficient to perform against our adversaries in a contested environment.

##### INDO-PACIFIC REGION

186. Senator KELLY. Mr. Driscoll, the Indo-Pacific region entails a huge array of challenges, everything from vast distances to the continental United States industrial and military base, to disaggregated islands that require a novel campaign approach not seen in contemporary conflicts. There are some within the Department of Defense that feel the conventional Army is solely a logistics apparatus to support the Joint Force in U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM). If confirmed, what steps will you take to ensure the Army maintains relevancy across all warfighting functions in INDOPACOM?

Mr. DRISCOLL. In the Indo-Pacific, the Army provides critical formations and capabilities to the joint force across all warfighting functions. If confirmed I will ensure the Army continues to work closely with the joint force—commanders in theater, the Joint Staff, as well as our sister services—to ensure that our capabilities, formations, posture, training, and capacity reflect what is needed across all warfighting functions in the Indo-Pacific region.

187. Senator KELLY. Mr. Driscoll, while we can acknowledge Ukraine is a vastly different operating environment than INDOPACOM, there are distinct lessons learned that we can tease out. How do you plan on directing the Department to take lessons learned from Ukraine and operationalize them in the more complex terrain that is the Indo-Pacific?

Mr. DRISCOLL. It is my understanding the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command collects and disseminates clear and focused lessons learned from current conflicts—including the war in Ukraine. The Army, with feedback from Army Commands, already uses the lessons learned to determine the requirements to adopt changes that would affect how the U.S. Army trains, equips, and organizes in preparation for combat operations to include the Indo-Pacific. The lessons and observa-

tions drawn from the war in Ukraine have certainly informed their approach to doctrine development, Initial Military Training, unit training, and system procurement. These lessons are theater agnostic and must continue to be integrated into doctrine, organizations, training strategies, exercises, leader development and education programs.

#### RECRUITMENT GOALS AND IMPROVING RETENTION

188. Senator KELLY. Mr. Driscoll, the Department of the Army's fiscal year 2024 recruitment goal was 55,000 recruits. Under your predecessor, Secretary Wormuth's leadership, the Army recruited 55,300 new recruits, meeting that goal. What steps will you take, if confirmed, to continue and improve upon the Army's recent efforts to boost recruitment?

Mr. DRISCOLL. The goal for fiscal year 2025 is 61,000 recruits, with an additional 10,000 entry pool to enter fiscal year 2026, and the Army is already ahead of pace to achieve this goal. If confirmed, I plan to expand our efforts by leveraging industry-leading technology and AI initiatives, while grounding our strategy in robust training for our recruiters. I will also assess the positioning of our recruiting force on the ground to ensure we are making the most effective use of our facilities. I also plan to leverage JROTC programs.

189. Senator KELLY. Mr. Driscoll, retention is equally important, you yourself, are a third-generation soldier and by your testimony, plan on encouraging your children to serve. What specific strategies will you implement to ensure that newly recruited soldiers stay in service for the long term, and how do you plan to improve overall retention rates across the Army?

Mr. DRISCOLL. Yes, if confirmed I will prioritize ensuring soldiers feel supported, valued, and motivated to stay in service. The Army will continue to provide world-class training and equip our warriors with leading-edge technology to enhance readiness and performance for any global challenge our country faces. Key strategies for retention will include personalized career development plans, clear pathways for advancement, and competitive pay and benefits. In addition to retention bonuses, we will continue to offer non-monetary incentives like stabilization and station of choice to show soldiers they are valued.

I will also focus on career flexibility, allowing soldiers to explore different roles, which increases satisfaction and engagement. We must retain the right skills to stay competitive in the global landscape, especially for warfighting. This means ongoing investment in professional development to equip soldiers with the skills needed for modern warfare. Finally, we will strengthen transition programs to ensure soldiers are well-prepared for post-service careers, enhancing retention and long-term commitment to the Army.

#### WARRIOR BOARD

190. Senator KELLY. Mr. Driscoll, President Trump has proposed a plan to remove generals and career civil servants in the Department of Defense if the proposed "warrior board," tasked with reviewing these individuals, determines they are disloyal to the Administration. How do you think the purging of highly experienced military officers will impact the Department of the Army's ability to meet its operational goals?

Mr. DRISCOLL. The Administration and I share the view that the Army should be a merit-based organization that promotes only the most qualified and highest-performing men and women to senior leadership positions. If confirmed, I intend to pursue that aim.

191. Senator KELLY. Mr. Driscoll, are you concerned that subjecting military leaders and civil servants to this review might pull their attention away from their operational goals by encouraging them to focus more on political appeasement than on fulfilling their professional duties?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I will continue the administration's efforts to build and maintain an Army where professional advancement is based on merit, performance, and credentials. The Army has a long and proud tradition of non-partisanship, and if confirmed, I will strengthen that tradition. It is my intent for evaluations to be based on the successful accomplishment of professional duties and other performance-based metrics, thus ensuring only the most talented advance and work to increase the operational capacity and lethality of the Army.

## ARMY AVIATION

192. Senator KELLY. Mr. Driscoll, with the Army's cancellation of the Future Attack Reconnaissance Aircraft, would you agree that we still require that capability, and thus need to continue the procurement of reliable manned attack aviation, such as the AH-64 Apache?

Mr. DRISCOLL. If confirmed, I will review the aviation portfolio in detail to better understand the Army's requirements to support the National Defense Strategy.

193. Senator KELLY. Mr. Driscoll, as part of the Aviation Branch's rebalance last February, the cancellation of Future Attack Reconnaissance Aircraft (FARA) allowed the shift of funding to procure both more UH-60Ms and CH-47 Block IIs. However, the cancellation of the Advanced Chinook Rotor Blade by Secretary Wormuth in September 2021 left a gap in the Block II Chinook's envisioned performance that could be realized with a more powerful upgraded engine. What is the Army's plan to move forward with Chinook Engine Enhancement program that Congress helped fund in fiscal year 2022, fiscal year 2023 and fiscal year 2024 and realize the full capability of this airframe with the integration of a more powerful engine that contributes to improved operational capabilities and cost savings?

Mr. DRISCOLL. It is my understanding that the Army is executing the additional funding provided by Congress for the Chinook Engine Enhancement program by conducting engine enhancement studies with those resources. The current engine in the Chinook meets threshold requirements for the Chinook Block II.

194. Senator KELLY. Mr. Driscoll, how will you work to improve the Army's contracting processes to ensure timely delivery of capabilities to United States and allied warfighters? For example, the Germans finalized a procurement for 60 CH-47 Chinook helicopters from the United States nearly 2 years ago (July 2023) and the Army still has not initiated a contract with the manufacturer (Boeing) to build them. At a time when we need to strengthen the U.S. defense industrial base to respond to global threats, the Army must become more agile and adaptable.

Mr. DRISCOLL. The Army has made improvements to the Army's contracting processes to ensure timely delivery of capabilities to U.S. and allied warfighters. Our allies and foreign partnerships are crucial to enhancing our industrial base and the Army plans to continue to explore ways to improve the contracting processes both domestically and internationally.

[The nomination reference of Mr. Daniel P. Driscoll follows:]

**NOMINATION REFERENCE AND REPORT**

**PN12-12**

AS IN EXECUTIVE SESSION,  
SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES,  
January 20, 2025.

*Ordered*, That the following nomination be referred to the Committee on Armed Services:

Daniel Driscoll, of North Carolina, to be Secretary of the Army, vice Christine Elizabeth Wormuth, resigned.

\_\_\_\_\_, 2025.  
(Date)

Reported by Mr. Wicker \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

with the recommendation that the nomination be confirmed.

**□ The nominee has agreed to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.**

[The biographical sketch of Mr. Daniel P. Driscoll, which was transmitted to the Committee at the time the nomination was referred, follows:]

**BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF DANIEL P. DRISCOLL**

Raised in Boone, North Carolina, Dan spent much of his childhood in a log cabin in the Appalachian Mountains. Dan attended Appalachian Christian School and Watauga High School.

While a freshman at UNC-Chapel Hill, and with America in the middle of the War on Terror, Dan forwent the typical college experience to commission as an Armor officer in the U.S. Army. Dan graduated With Highest Distinction in 3 years. While most of his classmates were enjoying Carolina basketball games, Dan was graduating from basic training and officer candidate school and preparing to deploy for war.

After completing U.S. Army Ranger School, Dan was stationed at Fort Drum, NY, with the 10th Mountain Light Infantry Division where he served as a Cavalry Scout platoon leader. In 2009, Dan was deployed with his unit to Baghdad in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

After returning from combat, Dan enrolled at Yale Law School on the post-9/11 GI Bill. During his time at law school, Dan worked at Yale's Veterans Legal Services Clinic, providing free legal counsel to veterans. While at Yale, Dan received the Joseph A. Chubb Faculty Prize for excellence in legal draftsmanship and the Elliott Goldstein Scholarship for excellence in the field of corporate law.

Since graduating, Dan has worked in investment banking, private equity, and as the Chief Operating Officer at \$200M venture capital fund. He most recently has

been serving as Senior Advisor to Vice President-Elect JD Vance. He is a member of the North Carolina State Bar, Rotary Club, VFW Post 1134 and Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA).

Dan is married to his high school sweetheart, Dr. Cassie Driscoll, a plastic surgeon. They have two kids, Daniel Jr. and Lila and are members of Reynolda Presbyterian Church in Winston-Salem, NC.

[The Committee on Armed Services requires all individuals nominated from civilian life by the President to positions requiring the advice and consent of the Senate to complete a form that details the biographical, financial, and other information of the nominee. The form executed by Mr. Daniel P. Driscoll in connection with his nomination follows:]

119<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, 2025 -- 2026  
UNITED STATES SENATE  
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
ROOM SR-228  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510-6050  
(202) 224-3871

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES QUESTIONNAIRE  
INFORMATION REQUESTED OF CIVILIAN NOMINEES

**INSTRUCTIONS TO THE NOMINEE:** Answer all questions and provide all requested information. If more space is needed, attach an additional sheet of paper to the Questionnaire and cite the part of the Questionnaire and the question number (e.g., A-9, B-4) to which the continuation of your answer applies. Unless otherwise required, an answer of "yes", "no", or "not applicable" is appropriate.

QUESTIONNAIRE, PART A

**NOTE:** Information furnished in this part of the Questionnaire will be made available in Committee offices for public inspection prior to the hearing, if any, and will be entered in the hearing record, also available to the public.

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION TO BE MADE PUBLIC**

1. **Name (Include any former names you have used):** Daniel Patrick Driscoll
2. **Position to which nominated:** Secretary of the Army
3. **Date of nomination:** Announced on 12/4/2024
4. **Education (List names of secondary and higher education institution attended, type of school [vocational, technical, trade school, college, university, military college, correspondence, distance, extension, and on-line], dates attended, degree received, and date degree granted):**  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill - B.S. in Business Administration  
August 2004 – May 2007  
Yale Law School – J.D.  
August 2011 – May 2014

5. **Employment record (List all jobs held since college, or in the last 10 years, whichever is less, including the title or description of the job, name of employer, location of work, and dates of employment. If the employment activity was military duty, show each change of military duty station as a separate period of employment):**  
 RNC & Trump/Vance Transition – Advisor – Washington, D.C.  
*July 2024 - Present*  
 OnCall Solutions – Chief Strategy Officer – Based in Philadelphia, PA - worked remotely  
*January 2021 – July 2024*  
 Flex Capital – Chief Operating Officer – Based in San Francisco, CA - worked remotely  
*October 2021 – March 2023*  
 The Variable / 100watt – 100watt founder – Winston-Salem, NC  
*January 2017 – December 2020*  
 Self-employed – Winston Salem, NC  
*February 2016 – December 2016*  
 BlackArch Partners – Associate – Charlotte, NC  
*May 2014 – January 2016*
6. **Have you ever received approval, pursuant to section 908 of title 37, United States Code, to accept civil employment (and compensation for that employment), payment for speeches, travel, meals, lodging, registration fees, or a non-cash award from a foreign government?**  
 No.
7. **Government experience (List any advisory, consultative, honorary, and other part-time service or positions with Federal, State, or local governments, other than those listed in response to question 5, above):**  
 U.S. Army
- September 2007 – November 2007 – Basic Training, Fort Jackson, SC
  - November 2007 – March 2008 – Officer Candidate School, Fort Benning, GA
  - March 2008 – April 2008 – BOLC II, Fort Sill, OK
  - May 2008 – August 2008 – Armor School, Fort Knox, KY
  - September – December 2008 – Ranger School, Fort Benning, GA
  - January 2009 – March 2011 – 1 Squadron 89<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regiment, 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade, 10<sup>th</sup> MTN Division, Fort Drum, NY and Baghdad, Iraq

8. **Business relationships (List all positions currently held as an officer, director, trustee, partner, proprietor, agent, representative, or consultant of any corporation, firm, partnership, or other business enterprise, and of any educational or other institution):**  
None. Recently resigned as board member from OnCall Parent LLC.
9. **Memberships (List all memberships and offices that you currently hold, as well as any memberships and offices you have previously held in professional, fraternal, scholarly, civic, business, charitable and other organizations):**  
North Carolina State Bar (*licensed*)  
Rotary Club (*member*)  
VFW Post 1134 (*member*)  
IAVA (*member*)  
Reynolda Presbyterian Church (*member*)
10. **Political affiliations and activities:**
  - a. **If you have ever been a candidate for, or have been elected or appointed to a political office, list the name of the office(s); whether you were a candidate/elected/appointed; the year(s) during which you were a candidate, or in which the election was held or the appointment was made; and the term of office (if applicable):**  
Candidate for NC-11 Congressional District – lost race  
2020
  - b. **List all memberships and offices held in, and services rendered to, all political parties or election committees during the last 5 years:**  
Republican National Committee / Trump Vance Transition - Advisor
  - c. **Itemize all individual political contributions of \$100 or more to any individual, campaign organization, political party, political action committee, or similar entity during the past 5 years. List each individual contribution (not the total amount contributed to the person or entity) over this period:**  
Will Scharf – Missouri Attorney General election - \$2,650  
Brad Knott for Congress - \$1,000  
Friends of Tim Moore - \$1,000  
The Pat Harrigan Committee - \$1,000  
Walker 4 NC (Mark Walker) - \$1,000  
Virginia Foxx for Congress - \$3,300  
Ted Budd for Senate - \$2,900  
Kiersey for Congress - \$1,900

Jesse Reising for Congress - \$1,000  
 Ted Budd for Senate - \$2,900  
 JD Vance for Senate, Inc. - \$2,900  
 Jesse Sullivan – Illinois Governor Republican Primary election - \$1,000

11. **Honors and awards (List all scholarships, fellowships, honorary degrees, honorary society memberships, and any other special recognition received for outstanding service or achievements):**  
 University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill - 2007  
 Graduated with Highest Distinction  
 Yale Law School - 2014  
*The Joseph A. Chubb Faculty Prize and the Elliott Goldstein Scholarship*
12. **Published writings (List the titles, publishers, and dates of books, articles, reports, or other published materials that you have written or for which you served as co-author or editor, including articles and blogs published on the internet):**  
*Op-Ed: It's time for a wartime veteran on the Supreme Court // LA Times*  
 Feb. 26, 2016
13. **Speeches (Provide the Committee with two copies of any formal speeches you have delivered during the last 5 years—of which you have copies—in which you addressed matters relevant to the position to which you have been nominated).**  
 None.

**COMMITMENTS IN FURTHERANCE OF CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT**

**NOTE:** In order to exercise their legislative and oversight responsibilities, it is important that this Committee, its subcommittees, and other appropriate committees of Congress timely receive testimony, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information from the executive branch. A simple “yes” or “no” response is appropriate.

14. **Do you agree, if confirmed, and on request, to appear and testify before this Committee, its subcommittees, and other appropriate Committees of Congress?** Yes.
15. **Do you agree, if confirmed, to provide this Committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate Committees of Congress, and their respective staffs such witnesses and briefers, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information, as may be**



requested of you, and to do so timely? Yes.

16. Do you agree, if confirmed, to consult with this Committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate Committees of Congress, and their respective staffs, regarding your basis for any delay or denial in providing testimony, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information requested of you? Yes.
17. Do you agree, if confirmed, to keep this Committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate Committees of Congress, and their respective staffs apprised of new information that materially impacts the accuracy of testimony, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information you or your organization previously provided? Yes.
18. Do you agree, if confirmed, and on request, to provide this Committee and its subcommittees with records and other information within their oversight jurisdiction, even absent a formal Committee request? Yes.
19. Do you agree, if confirmed, to respond timely to letters to, and/or inquiries and other requests of you or your organization from individual Senators who are members of this Committee? Yes.
20. Do you agree, if confirmed, to ensure that you and other members of your organization protect from retaliation any military member, federal employee, or contractor employee who testifies before, or communicates with this Committee, its subcommittees, and any other appropriate committee of Congress? Yes.

#### FUTURE EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIPS

21. If you are confirmed by the Senate, will you sever all business connections with your present employers, business firms, business associations, and business organizations? Yes.
22. Do you have any plans, commitments or agreements to pursue outside employment, with or without compensation, during your service with the government? If so, explain. No.

---

[The nominee responded to Parts B-F of the Committee questionnaire. The text of the questionnaire is set forth in the Appendix to this volume. The nominee's answers to Parts B-F are contained in the Committee's executive files.]

---

**SIGNATURE AND DATE**

I hereby state that I have read and signed Parts A and B of the foregoing Senate Armed Services Committee Questionnaire, and that the information provided therein and in any document appended thereto, is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, current, accurate, and complete.

*Dan Driscoll*

---

This 16<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2025

---

[The nomination of Mr. Daniel P. Driscoll was reported to the Senate by Chairman Wicker on February 11, 2025, with the recommendation that the nomination be confirmed. The nomination was confirmed by the Senate on February 25, 2025.]

