

General Michael X. Garrett
Commanding General, U.S. Army Forces Command

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DWG: General, I just noticed like literally two minutes ago the Army put out a press release about the Fort Hood Independent Review Committee recommendations and their implementation. It's sort of in your street. Were you aware this was going to happen just before we went on here?

General Garrett: Actually, no. But my staff picked up on it as well. And there were a couple of things. Of course I know exactly what we're doing inside of Forces Command and what III Corps' doing.

DWG: Somebody may raise it. I'm not going to be asking you, but others may, so I'm glad you're ready.

It's 11:15, ladies and gentlemen, I'm David Ensor and this is the Defense Writers Group and we're honored today to have as our guest General Michael X. Garrett, Commanding General of U.S. Army Forces Command. General, thank you for joining us today. It's a real pleasure to have you with us.

I'm going to start, get the ball rolling with a couple of questions. The first one is what we call a softball in the journalism business, which is basically to ask you, why don't you just tell us what is FORSCOM and what are the front burner issues for you as commanding general?

General Garrett: Thanks, David. And thanks to everybody for piping in. This really is an honor and an opportunity for me to speak to you today.

Just a little bit about me before we go. I am in my 59th year of life and every single day has been in and around the Army. My dad was in the Army for 35 years. And I never thought I would eclipse him, but I am in my 37th year of service. And I'll tell you, being a soldier and leading soldiers is one of the greatest privileges of my life. Although we certainly have our challenges, I don't worry about our future because of the young

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men and women who continue to raise their right hand, swear an oath to the Constitution and the defense of our country and our way of life.

I've got a daughter who's married to a lieutenant, a soldier. I've got a son who's a West Point graduate and is a young Infantry officer. So the Army is my life. The job that I have now as the FORSCOM Commander is really one of the most humbling things that I've ever done.

And just to give you a little bit about Forces Command. It is our Army's largest command. Depending on who's doing the math it's 740,000-plus soldiers. If you consider in the active component about 85 percent fall under Forces Command. If you look at the Army Reserve, I'm responsible for - we are as FORSCOM - responsible for the Army Reserve. And all of our National Guard units, when they are mobilized for deployment, so our readiness requirements extend throughout the Army.

I am, and you can ask whatever questions you want and I'll certainly do my best to answer them. But what I get up in the morning thinking about and the last thing I think about before I go to bed at night is really the readiness of our Army. Our ability to meet combatant command requirements, our ability to produce disciplined, cohesive, well-trained squads, platoons, companies, battalions and brigades. So that's what I'm responsible for. And that's what I know most about. That is the readiness requirement for our Army.

Just a couple of things, and I'm sure you'll ask about this, but I'll start with Specialist Vanessa Guillen, and we're closing in on the one-year anniversary of her death. I'll tell you, I don't think a day goes by that I don't think about Specialist Guillen. I don't think about my interactions with her mother, her sister. Specialist Guillen is an area where we failed. We as an Army failed to protect Specialist Guillen. It's one of those things that we will learn from and think about and use to drive our Army for a long time.

Next week at Fort Hood we're going to dedicate one of the entrance gates into the installation for Vanessa Guillen. It's going to be the Specialist Guillen Gate. What's interesting about that gate is, it is the closest gate to her old unit the 3rd Cavalry Regiment. And I think what it will do, as I move around the Army and talk to soldiers, one of the things that I ask all

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young soldiers about, I ask them do they know who Specialist Guillen is? And they generally do. Then we get to have a conversation about how well our units know us and the faith, confidence and trust that our soldiers have in their chain of command.

Some of you, and I think David you mentioned the Fort Hood Independent Review Committee's findings.

DWG: Yeah, it just came out today. The Army's planning to try to implement the recommendations.

General Garrett: What will come out here shortly, though, are the results of the two investigations that I directed. If you remember, the Secretary of the Army directed the relief and suspension of a number of senior officers, NCOs, at Fort Hood last year. And as a result of that, I conducted, directed two investigations. One was conducted by General Mike Murray. That investigation is complete and we're working through final notifications before we roll that out. The other investigation was a more narrow investigation into the leadership of the 1st Cavalry Division, again the Commander of the 1st Cavalry Division and Sergeant Major were suspended by the Secretary of Defense pending the outcome of this investigation and we are just about done with that investigation as well.

I mention those to you to let you know that here in the coming weeks what we'll do is we'll share with you what we've learned in addition to the Fort Hood Independent Review Committee's findings. We'll identify folks who we are holding responsible, and you'll see the actions that we've taken as a result of it.

Again, I'm sure you'll want to talk about that.

The next thing, the really big thing that I did this past week was participate, and last night was the final After Action Review of the largest Warfighter Exercise that we've done in the history of the program. Warfighter is our division and corps-level simulations command post exercise. It's a computer simulation driven event and we do these to train our division and corps and now in large-scale ground combat operations. What was interesting about this particular exercise is that it not only involves III Corps, US; 1st Armored Division, US; but it also involves the 3rd UK Division and the 3rd French Division. And as you've heard our leaders say and what I know is that we're never

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going to fight alone. Our partners are always going to be incredibly important to us. Training with them, gaining a better sense of our interoperability requirements and challenges just make us stronger. So great operation. A number of firsts in this operation, and we can talk about that if you'd like.

The last thing before I turn it back to you, David, is our COVID response. The last thing I did yesterday before I came back to Fort Bragg was stop off at the Mercedes Benz stadium there in Atlanta where I got to spend time with one of our units out of Fort Stewart, Georgia. About 200 soldiers. And they've been there for a few weeks administering vaccines along with FEMA and the local government there. It's just amazing to me as I talked to the soldiers yesterday, one of the soldiers shared with me that they weren't all that interested in the vaccine itself, but --

DWG: You mean in getting the vaccine.

General Garrett: Right. But after watching thousands of people. I think they're up to 300,000 - I'm not sure what the number is there, but yesterday or the day before they issued 10,000, the group that we had did 10,000 shots. The young soldier said hey look, I just am amazed and have learned a lot listening to all of the people that are coming in here and how appreciative they have been not just for the Army's efforts but the government's efforts to get the vaccine out.

So really, really proud of our efforts as a part of COVID. From the very beginning with our urban augmentation, medical task forces. If you can remember the early days of setting up hospitals in New York and other places. Eleven states and the Navajo nation. Then here most recently with our vaccine support team.

I talked to one of the Army North officers the other day and I think we're closing in on three million vaccines from the time that we have participated in this. I think we're up to three million vaccines that we've helped deliver.

So again, David, I'm excited to be here and I look forward to answering any questions you have. So back to you.

DWG: Thank you, sir.

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Jackson Barnette of FedScoop, you're first and Paul Shinkman, you'll be next.

Jackson, are you on and do you have a question?

Okay, going to Paul Shinkman. He's on, probably on another phone call.

I'm going to go to Gina Cavalarro of Army Magazine.

DWG: Good morning, General Garrett, and David, thank you for this opportunity to talk. It's always great to talk with the Commander of FORSCOM. But I didn't expect to be first.
[Laughter].

My question might be, the Army's going through a lot of changes. There are troops going to be coming home from Afghanistan in a few months. Can you talk about any potential changes in the force that we might be seeing that might have to do with reorganizing in certain areas and also accommodating some of the testing that's going on with the Army Futures Command? Does that make sense?

General Garrett: It does. And it's actually a lot. That's about everything that we're doing. I guess I'll just begin the answer with reiterating Army's priorities, right? A few years ago when I took command the Army's priorities were Readiness. So our ability to fight tonight. Modernization. General Milley and Secretary Esper were focused on our modernization efforts. And Reform. Reforming many of our outdated processes and systems.

As a result of a number of things, last October the Secretary of the Army and the Chief changed our priorities to People, Readiness and Modernization.

As the FORSCOM Commander, and David and I were talking about this. My responsibility to the Army leadership is to ensure that we have soldiers, units that are ready to go, that are manned, equipped, trained and ready to meet combatant command requirements. And that has not changed.

If you just go back to January of 2020, think about what we were doing. We had a no-notice alert, and it was about the most minimalist thing that I've ever done, and that was reacting to Iran's actions in the Middle East. So we deployed the Immediate

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Response Force out of Fort Bragg. We got them into theater in the 96 hours that we've always talked about. That was followed up by several weather events where the National Guard and even some of our active component units were required. That was followed by COVID and the impact of getting our arms around COVID, assessing the impact and managing the risk associated with that. And again, our requirements didn't stop and they didn't change.

So not only did our FORSCOM units not have the luxury of sheltering in place, because we still had to deploy folks. We also didn't stop our modernization efforts. I can remember going over to see one of our communications modernization initiatives and what amazed me the most was not necessarily what we were talking about, the particular technology. It was how much effort was being put into being able to conduct the experiment, to do the work, at the same time working through a COVID environment.

The People, Readiness and Modernization priorities are very clear from the Chief. And I think to your point, what I've tried to do as the FORSCOM Commander is to ensure that our actions provide decision space for the Army senior leaders. That we are able to meet our readiness requirements, which again they don't change. That we're able to keep up with General Murray's modernization requirements. And as I said, the challenge for us has been doing that in a COVID environment, and I think that we've been fairly successful up to this point.

DWG: Thanks for the look back. I wonder if you could jump ahead a little bit and see what might be coming.

General Garrett: What's going to come is we're going to have to be even more efficient as we look at delivering readiness. If you look at a FORSCOM priority, it's delivering decisive total Army readiness. So really what I'm trying to do is to be more precise in the readiness that we deliver. We've had a couple of very good funding years since I've been in command. The future may be a little bit more challenging I think fiscally, so what we're going to have to do is make sure that we are as efficient as we can be here in the near future delivering readiness. We talked about potential requirements that may go away based on decisions in the Middle East. So readiness is going to be a requirement. Again, we'll do our best to deliver the readiness that the Army needs.

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Modernization. The modernization initiative that we have right now is really the result of some hard decisions and really everybody in the Army on the same sheet of music. I will continue - I don't know if you were listening early on, but I've got kids in the Army. I think it's in all of our interests that our Army has the best equipment in the world and remains the best Army in the world.

DWG: Thank you. Haley Britzky of Task & Purpose, you're next if you have a question.

DWG: Thank you. General, thanks so much for doing this.

I wanted to go back to some of the things you mentioned in your opening remarks about General Murray's 15-6 at Fort Hood and then also the investigation into 1st Cavalry Division.

Can you give us a sense of why that has taken so long to come out? I know when I've checked in on it the answer has always been in a couple of weeks, in a couple of weeks, and then it's been you know, several months. So can you give us a sense of what has been going on behind the scenes?

Also a sense of what will be happening with the 14 leaders that Secretary McCarthy suspended or relieved in December.

General Garrett: Investigations take time. General Murray's investigation, he interviewed thousands of people and soldiers. There was a lot of information for him to sift through. And everybody was focused on getting this right.

So the investigation in and of itself took time. Then after that, after we've received these investigations, part of the due process is the individuals that are named in the investigation have an opportunity to review it and to provide a rebuttal, and that takes time.

So where we are with General Murray's investigation is we have a couple of notifications to make, to let people know what our actions are going to be before they see it in the press. And we're very close to releasing the entirety of the 15-6 that General Murray did.

The investigation into the 1st Cavalry Division, specifically the Commander and Command Sergeant Major, again a little bit more

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narrow investigation. We looked at the command climate and looked at their adherence to our [SHARP] policies. Again, an incredibly thorough, detailed investigation and we're at the point in that investigation now where we're about to hand over the information that we have to the folks implicated so that they can review it and provide a rebuttal.

Like I said, we are very very close to closing out both of the investigations. And what I hope to do, and as I talk to folks in Forces Command, we certainly have already learned a lot and we are implementing recommendations as fast as we can in some cases.

We can talk about some of those later, but that's where we are with the investigations.

The leaders, if you go back and look at all of the folks that the Secretary of the Army directed their relief or their suspension, in the very near future we will lay out the disposition and my decisions on those, and then again, the 1st Cavalry Division leadership, that investigation will follow a little bit behind.

DWG: And if I could follow up, one of the main complaints, really concerns from the Guillen family throughout the search for Vanessa, was the kind of breakdown in communication that they had with the Army as that was ongoing. Can you talk a bit about what you've done to mend that communication as these investigations are ongoing? They obviously are very interested in hearing the results of those. Have you been in communication with them? And what steps have you taken to improve that?

General Garrett: We've made, like I said, I think about this most days. To your point we have, I don't know if it's routine, but we certainly keep the Guillen family informed. The Chief of Staff of Forces Command actually spoke with the Guillen family yesterday and gave them an initial update. We'll be able to give them more as soon as we finalize the investigation.

You talked about the communications, and I'll tell you, that is one of the big things that I took away from the investigation is that we don't know our soldiers as well as we think we do, and we certainly don't know them in many cases as well as we should.

The other piece is that when you talk to soldiers, when I get out and I talk to soldiers and I ask them about what's the most important thing, they tell me that it's the mission. As I think

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about what we've asked our Army to do over the last four years, I'm not necessarily surprised that we did not know, we did not spend the time getting to know our soldiers in a more personal way.

So one of the many things that we're implementing that we've done in Forces Command, is we have dedicated one day a month throughout Forces Command, a Foundational Readiness Day, and it does just what it sounds like. It is focused on linking or providing time for our leaders to better know their soldiers. And one of the things that we're doing in there, we are having leaders connect the soldier and the leader with the family. So things I remember doing as a very young officer we're not necessarily doing today.

So what you'll find as you move around today, and we certainly learned this from Specialist Guillen's case and looking back on that, is having soldiers and leaders know who the parents of our soldiers are.

The worst thing that could happen is the first time that you talk to a parent is when you're doing a next of kin notification, and we are doing everything that we can to avoid that.

I just gave you an example of two things of the many things that we have instituted since Specialist Guillen's death.

DWG: Amanda Mayfield of National Defense Magazine, are you on and do you have a question?

DWG: I don't have a question, thank you.

DWG: Matthew Beinart of Defense Daily? Do you have a question?

DWG: Thank you. I was wondering, and this touches a bit on an earlier answer you gave, but the Army's new REARM strategy. How are you kind of thinking about that from a FORSCOM perspective? And just in terms of the idea of rolling out all these new capabilities in the coming years in terms of determining where is the best [inaudible] to go and getting them in the right position? How are you kind of thinking of that from a FORSCOM perspective? Thank you.

General Garrett: Thanks for the question. The Regionally Aligned Readiness and Modernization Model, that is REARM. What

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it is designed to do for us is to help us manage the time that we have a little bit better; allows us to focus on the three key priorities - training, deployment, mission and modernization. And to help us keep our modernization efforts on track while we maintain our global presence in support of our combatant commanders.

The other thing that REARM is supposed to do for us is to provide a little bit more predictability and stability for our soldiers and our units. We've talked about some of the many lessons that we've learned here over the last year, and one of them is we've asked a lot of our Army. We've asked a lot of our soldiers. And they may not be deploying in the same numbers to the Middle East, but we have increased the deployments to Europe; we've increased the deployments to the Pacific; and our Brigade Combat Teams, our Aviation Brigades, our Support Brigades, they have been very, very very busy. And as I mentioned before, if you ask soldiers what the priority is they would tell you it's the mission, not necessarily the people. So we're trying to make sure that our actions reinforce our priorities. That's what REARM is designed to help us do.

DWG: If I can ask a quick follow-up. How do you kind of view either REARM in terms of the Army's new Arctic strategy? Or kind of overall on the whole, how does FORSCOM kind of view the new Arctic Strategy as things kind of shape and are moving forward towards that region?

General Garrett: I don't know if you read my bio, but I've got two tours in Alaska. One as a Brigade Commander of the Airborne Brigade there, and then I went on to the United States Army Alaska Commander. So I've been thinking about fighting in the Arctic, the impact of climate change on the Arctic and the importance of the Arctic. I think the Indo-PACOM Commander, the United States Army Pacific Commander, their requirements help frame for the Army the Army responsibility requirements there in Alaska and I think the Arctic Strategy does that for us. At the end of the day we need to be able to compete, and having forces who can operate at the temperatures that we're talking about, in the terrain that we're talking about, you know, is part of that strategy.

So I'm looking forward to seeing where we end up with our manning, equipping and training efforts up there in the Arctic.

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DWG: Let me go next to Dmitry Kirsanov of TASS.

DWG: Good morning. Thank you for doing this, General.

General McConville has been speaking consistently about the need to transform the U.S. Army and about the need to have a new doctrine. I was hoping, sir, you could speak to this a little in light of the great power competition. What do General McConville's remarks mean in practical terms? How will this transformation look like, especially for the U.S. Army Europe?

And as sort of a follow-up to that, are you going to grow the U.S. Army? Are you going back to the Cold War numbers like having 350,000 troops in Europe? Thank you.

General Garrett: That's a lot. I'll just give you a couple of FORSCOM perspectives.

First off you talked about our modernization efforts. Our modernization efforts are everything from our doctrine to our bases and installations, our equipment, the way that we bring people into the Army, the way that we trained people, the way that we employ them. And what is guiding the Army is the multi-domain operations concept which will soon be the multi-domain operations doctrine, and that's really the transition, the transformation that you're talking about. Moving from the Army of Airland Battle that you saw in Desert Storm and attacking into Iraq, to one that spent the last 20 years focused counterinsurgency and counterterrorism. So there is a transformation. That transformation is getting back to our competency and dominance in largescale ground combat operations.

I mentioned the exercise that we just completed with our partners and that's largescale ground combat operations. That is being contested in every domain from land to sea to air to cyber.

So the Army is on a path that takes us through our modernization efforts. Again, not just modernizing equipment but modernizing processes, modernizing formations, that takes us through a process that gets us to a point years from now we have a multi-domain capable Army. And that's the path that we're on.

The other thing that I would say to you is that the competition aspect of - what competition means to me is having ready forces and having forces that have real capability, and I see that as

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real deterrence. General McConville talks about the importance of a disciplined, well-trained, fit, cohesive team, squad, platoon, battalion, brigade. And that's really where we have been focused over the two years that I have been in Forces Command.

I talk to our folks about winning at the point of contact, and that is everything from individuals to tanks to artillery pieces, to you name the capability. But being the best at it. And then as we continue to gain proficiency in largescale combat operations we're also working through our modernization priorities.

So again, we're going to work our way through this and in the future have an Army that is operating on multi-domain operations doctrine and an Army that looks a lot different than the one that you see today.

DWG: Matthew Cox of Military.com, and after that will be Sydney Freedberg.

He may have dropped off. Let's go to Sydney.

DWG: Thanks very much for doing this.

I wanted to ask more about the Warfighter with the French and the Brits. That's a really big exercise, it's a really important exercise. You said you just received the AAR briefing. Without saying anything you shouldn't, what are some of the lessons being learned? What are some of the surprises, if any, from the exercises? Things you didn't expect to see, but when you do something on this scale there are always going to be surprises and new insights.

General Garrett: Again, the impact of COVID and what we all had to do that one, we could conduct this exercise; and two, that we could do it safely. And it goes back to one of the things that I said early on. You know, what we have done over the last year is, and what we do every day, is continue to master our ability to operate in the COVID environment. And when I talk to the French leadership and the British leadership, it was not lost on me all of the things that they had to do in order to exercise, to meet our training objectives but to do it in a safe manner.

I don't know that there are any huge surprises, but what we

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continue to learn is that in an operability with our partners and allies, it's incredibly important. And these exercises show us where we may not be as interoperable as we need to be. And in this particular exercise we did a couple of things that we've not done before. For instance, we put a British brigade underneath a U.S. division. We've done that before, but we've not put a U.S. brigade underneath a British division and we also task-organized a U.S. brigade under the French division.

So we learned, and we still had the final AAR for the exercise last night, but as we continue to unpack this, there are going to be a lot of useful lessons that will help drive future exercises so that we can improve on the interoperability that already exists out there.

DWG: I'd love to follow up with your folks about that, if your PA will talk to me.

General Garrett: Absolutely

DWG: How did the American soldiers do reporting to a French general?

General Garrett: Great. And I'll tell you, we have a couple of American soldiers that can actually speak French fluently. That was interesting that you see that, David. We take for granted our ability to communicate with people and the communications piece is something that we continue to learn and continue to work at and continue to get better at, quite frankly.

DWG: Jeff Seldin, Voice of America. Tara Copp will be next.

DWG: Thank you very much. Two questions actually.

One, I was just wondering, we've seem what the Pentagon has said it's going to be doing about extremism in the ranks and some of the steps that it's going to be taking. I was wondering what you could share from your experience with the stand-down with troops talking about extremism.

I'm also curious in a very general way, the U.S. has been at war in Afghanistan for 20 years which has bound to have an impact in many ways on the culture of U.S. warfighters, including those in the Army. With troops pulling out and the war essentially ending by December, what impact is that going to have on the culture, on

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the thought process, of soldiers and how are you in any way perhaps preparing for that?

General Garrett: I'll answer the first question on the extremism piece. As I said before, what we found over the last year of digging deep into the Army is that in many cases we don't know our soldiers as well as we should and that there was a lack of trust and in some cases is a lack of trust in our platoons and company formations. What we've done inside of Forces Command to get after that is to dedicate time for leaders to get to know their soldiers and we've encouraged and facilitated leaders having tough discussions with their soldiers.

I'll just give you a quick example. I'm here at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, the home of a lot of different units. One of them the 82nd Airborne Division. On the days that I run, I'll sometimes run down Ardennes which is the main street there in the 82nd footprint. I'll find myself a squad and work out with them for a little bit. But the whole purpose of that is for me to have a conversation with them at the end.

Talking about extremism, talking about racism, talking about suicide and sexual harassment. Those are not things that just pop up in normal conversation, and what we've done is we've asked our leaders to engage in these tough conversations so that one, we know each other a little bit better. And it's like the extremism thing. I don't think we have a huge extremism problem in the Army, but you know what, we do have people whose values are contrary to ours and the way we identify them is by the leaders truly knowing our soldiers.

So the extremism/racism piece. I really do think that over the last six, seven months we've learned a lot about ourselves in our Army and we are having I think very, very important conversations and we know our soldiers maybe a little bit better today than we did before.

Your second question on Afghanistan and the amount of time that we've been there. When I saw the news yesterday what immediately came to mind and what I reflected on was my first deployment to Afghanistan back in 2003. There were just a handful of people, a few thousand, and then I think about how many times that I've been there in different positions. And then you talked about where's the Army going? Well, where we're going is and where we've been going for the last four years, we've been working

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very, very hard to gain our mastery and dominance in largescale ground combat operations. We've been at it for four years now and we've made tremendous progress. We can never lose the counterinsurgency, counterterrorism capability that we've had and the expertise that we've gained. We can't lose that. But you know, the next fight is going to be different than what we've done over the last 20 years, and we've spent the last four years preparing for it. The example of the exercise with our French and British partners is just an example of what we're doing.

DWG: Tara Copp? Defense One.

DWG: Thank you, General, for doing this.

I wanted to get back to the larger issue of internal culture change in the Army. You had the Fort Hood report come out today, but as recently as this week we've seen reports of both a lack of prosecuting [material] rapists and then you saw the Fort Jackson soldier accosting that young black male. What more does the Army need to do to root out some of the behaviors that might actually convince the next generation of young men and women not to enlist?

General Garrett: There are over a million soldiers in our Army - 485,000 in the active component. And as I said before, most of our soldiers every single day represent the absolute best of our country and the absolute best of our Army. There are folks out there that don't necessarily live up to our values or even believe in them. You gave an example of one.

What we're trying to do in the Army, and what we're doing inside of Forces Command is we are taking time to provide opportunity for leaders to know their soldiers better. And I really do believe this is the chain. At the end of the day the Army is about people. People are the most important things in the Army. And over the last four years we've been moving at a pace that some of our formations didn't prioritize knowing our people as well as they should. That's been our focus for the last year. I believe that we're making progress. And I don't know the particulars of what's going to happen with the soldier there at South Carolina. The chain of command at Fort Jackson will kind of sort through this, but our challenge is to be consistent in how we manage these.

You also talked about the importance of how our Army is viewed by

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the young men and women that we need to maintain our all volunteer force and that's not lost on us either.

So again, that's probably not a satisfying answer for you, but I think we are making progress.

DWG: We have time for a couple more questions as I understand. Let me ask Mitsui Atanaka of Kyoto News of Japan whether he has anything he'd like to ask.

DWG: Thank you very much, General.

My question is on China. I believe the United States is shifting more and more focus on China, seeing it as a pacing threat. So I was wondering if there is any change or impact of your role in the Army Forces Command.

General Garrett: Thanks for the question. Again, it goes back to the previous question about where we've focused our Army for the last two decades. Really on the Middle East and the type that fight has been is different than the one that we're trying to prevent. Largescale ground combat operations, as I said before, is something that we were very very good at if we go back to Desert Storm and the attack into Iraq. And over the last four years we have worked very, very hard to regain our mastery and dominance of that.

If you think about the threats that we've faced over the last two decades, they were certainly not near peer threats. They were certainly not able to, if you consider our future adversaries, not able to contest us in every domain. That's our focus now.

So not only being able to fight and win with the force that we have right now, but transforming to a force that is multi-domain capable and with equipment doctrine, people that helped us maintain the advantage that we've enjoyed for years as the best Army in the world.

DWG: Mark Satter of CQ Roll Call.

DWG: No question at this time. Thank you.

DWG: Connor O'Brien of Politico, do you have a question?

DWG: Thanks, sir.

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Just to branch off some of your comments on the budget earlier, we saw some back and forth between the Air Force and the Army a couple of weeks ago about some of the Army's big programs. I think it was long range fires.

My question is more broadly, with it looking to be a flat budget top line, maybe even a little bit of a real decline, are you concerned at all that the Army could wind up as a bill payer for the other services? And in that scenario, what are you concerned about losing? What are you concerned you'd have to sacrifice there?

General Garrett: Here's what I know and what I have observed over the last two years as the Forces Command Commander, is that my focus is on readiness and I have watched my boss, bosses - the Chief of Staff of the Army and the Secretary of the Army - fight for the resources that we need to maintain our readiness.

I'm not overly concerned about the resources that we're going to have. What I need to know - and predictable funding is what I think all of us need, right? Once you tell me what we have, then we can tell you what we're going to be able to deliver readiness wise.

Like you, I think the future years are not, they're probably not going to be as good as the last couple of years, but I do think there are ways for us to be more efficient in how we think about readiness. I think as we modernize our processes, and that's everything from our unit life cycle model. For me it's sustainable readiness to the regionally aligned readiness and modernization model. You know, as we continue to define our acquisition models and systems. I think the Army is agile enough, at least the portion that I'm responsible for, agile enough to provide the readiness that we're going to need in the coming years.

DWG: Thank you, General. I understand from your staff that you have somewhere to be.

General Garrett: I do.

DWG: I'll let you go. I'll just end by saying if you have any closing comments you want to make, please do. And I just wonder, Jeff asked you earlier about Afghanistan, having served there

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several times if you have any closing thought on - for some people it's a little bit of a bittersweet week for folks who served in Afghanistan as you did and as I did as a diplomat.

General Garrett: Like I said before, when I think about Afghanistan I think about my personal experiences there and really what I think about is our current requirement to support the combatant commander with what he needs. That's what we're prepared to do here at Forces Command, to meet any requirements that they have for our Army there.

Then I'll just say that at some point we have to leave. We certainly have been planning for it for a very, very long time.

I guess the last thing I would leave all of you with is kind of where I started. I consider myself privileged to continue to serve in our Army and to lead the young men and women who are going to ensure our freedom in the future.

So David, thank you very, very much for having me today.

DWG: Thank you, General. Thank you very much. And thanks to everyone else for joining us.

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