

**The Honorable Christine Wormuth
Secretary of the Army**

**General James C. McConville
Chief of Staff of the Army**

**Command Sergeant Major Michael A. Grinston
Sergeant Major of the Army**

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Moderator: Welcome to this special Defense Writers Group. We have all three senior leaders of one of the armed forces. Of course I'll introduce them, but they truly need no introduction.

We have the Secretary of the Army, the Honorable Christine Wormuth; we have the Army Chief of Staff, General James McConville; and the Sergeant Major of the Army, Command Sergeant Major Michael Grinston.

Our ground rules are the same as always. This is on the record, but there is no rebroadcast of either audio or video. I'll ask the first question, and then I'll go to a list of those who emailed me in advance. If we get through those, and it's a long list already, I will go to the floor.

So to all of you, thank you so much for the great honor of being with us here today.

Whether we're entering a new Cold War or just a very very complicated new age of danger, I'd really love for each of you to describe for us what is your number one priority over the coming year and why.

Madame Secretary?

Secretary Wormuth: First of all, thanks everybody for being here this morning. I apologize, I have a little bit of a cold so if I get a little scratch I apologize.

I think the number one priority in my mind for this year, particularly in light of the security environment, is fixing our recruiting problem. As I'm sure all of you know, the Army

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missed its recruiting target last year by about 15,000 people. That's a very serious situation for us. It took us more than a year to get into the situation that we're in in terms of the recruiting landscape, and I think it's going to take more than a year to turn it around.

I think of the Army's end strength as sort of like the foundation of the house. You've got to have a strong foundation.

So we are in the process of, I think the Chief and I sometimes say we're reintroducing the Army to the American public. We are really focused on a call to service. We have set a very ambitious recruiting target this year -- 65,000. That's 5,000 more than frankly our goal was last year. We are pulling out all of the stops to try to do our very best to make that mission, but that is a major priority for us this year.

General McConville: I agree with the Secretary as far as people first. But we need to be ready today and ready tomorrow. So the Army's undergoing what we would say is the biggest transformation in 40 years. It's new doctrine, it's new organizations, it's changing the way we train, it's our six modernization priorities that we have been very consistent and persistent on, and then it's about changing our industrial age personnel management system to a 21st century talent management system so we're ready for the future fight.

CSM Grinston: I'll just kind of caveat what the Secretary said. She's worried about accessions and I'm worried about retention. So for sure 15,000 last year, skill level one, we've got to retain the absolute best so that we don't cause a void as we go three years from now, that we don't have enough NCOs at the sergeant and the staff sergeant level. So the number one priority is absolutely retention, keep quality. And the good news is once people join the Army they want to stay. We've not seen our retention dip at all, we've actually see it increase. So once they join the Army they stay in the Army. And a close second behind retention is always preventing those harmful behaviors -- sexual assault, sexual harassment, suicide. We want to get those numbers as low as we can on all three of those things.

Moderator: Thank you all. The first question is Patrick Tucker of Defense One.

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DWG: Thanks. You gave sort of a quick glimpse of the service. In terms of the mission of supporting Ukraine and that conflict while also pursuing the deterrence mission in the Indo-PACOM AOR, China, can you give us a sense of what that looks like for you? Balancing those two things, especially as the summer fighting season heats up in Ukraine.

Secretary Wormuth: Sure. As you all probably know, we've got 100,000 service members in Europe right now working to either support Ukraine, help train the Ukrainians obviously, or standing shoulder to shoulder with our NATO allies; and about 50,000 of those service members are Army service members. So that's a big focus for us.

But at the same time, we are very focused on campaigning in the Indo-Pacific, and the Pacific Pathways series of exercises is sort of the flagship set of activities for the United States Army. We've gone from eight Pacific Pathways exercises last year to 18 this year. In many ways we've expanded the scope and complexity of some of those exercises. Taken ones that were bilateral and made them multilateral.

So our goal is really to try to have Army forces in theater either in exercises or working with allies and partners using our Security Force Assistance Brigade seven to eight months out of the year to sort of continue to show combat credible forces.

But I think we're able to do both of those sets of activities -- what we're doing in Indo-PACOM and what we're doing in EUCOM at the same time.

General McConville: As the Secretary talked about, to me it's deterrence through strength. One of the ways we get after that, we're seeing the support that we're giving to Ukraine and it kind of follows, the rest is we want our allies and partners to have the capabilities, the capacities and the competence that they need and that kind of gets, gest in the will to fight. We're seeing Ukrainians very very strong on their will to fight.

So as we look at other allies and partners, making sure they have the capabilities, the right weapon systems, the right amount of weapon systems and the competence in those weapon systems we think is very, very important. That's been our strategy, as the Secretary said, in campaigning and

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organizations we've started up like the Security Force Assistance Brigade, or Special Forces or our state partnerships. We're all working to give our allies and partners the capabilities, capacity and competence they need so they can defend themselves.

DWG: Secretary Blinken recently made the comment that China may start helping Russia replenish its stocks of arms. If that were to happen it would seem to frustrate both your resupply mission for Ukraine and also possibly complicate your Indo-PACOM mission. Is that something you're thinking about? If so, how are you preparing for that eventuality?

Secretary Wormuth: What we're really focused on obviously is trying to ramp up production of munitions to be able to keep giving as much as we've been giving to the Ukrainians, and we're doing that through investing in our own organic industrial base. I was just at the Scranton Arsenal in Pennsylvania where they make the casings for the 155mm and we're actually adding production capacity there. Then we've been working very, very closely, Doug Bush in particular, with defense industry folks to try to help them expand their production. That's really the piece that we're focused on in the Army.

General McConville: As we give ammunition we give weapon systems, we certainly need to replenish them, and as the Secretary said, Mr. Bush is actively doing that. But also on the weapon systems. We're not going to buy new old stuff. So as we replenish, we're giving 113s, we're going to buy MVs and some of the other capabilities. So we want to modernize the Army and transform the Army as we go through this process.

Moderator: Dan Lamothe, Washington Post.

DWG: Good morning. Thanks for your time today.

I wanted to follow on sort of the same theme. The United States has provided an absolute ton of materiel to Ukraine. At the same time we're hearing there's obviously an even greater demand. Taiwan obviously has talked about its shortages and concerns about backlogs of US supplied weapons as well.

I guess an update on where you are in terms of adding lines, increasing capacity in that regard. And is it enough? At some point the Defense Production Act hasn't come into play in a

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significant way here. Should it?

Secretary Wormuth: What I would say about that is again, I'll give the example of the 155mm shells. We've gone from doing 14,000 a month to 20,000 a month. We're going to ramp up again. And basically by 2025 we're going to be doing 70,000 rounds a month so that's a 500 percent increase, basically, from where we started. I think that's an example of how we're trying to either again, use our own investments in the organic industrial base or partner with industry with the big companies to increase production. We're looking at what we can do with GMLRS, what we can do with Javelins. We're looking at that across the board.

We got multi-year procurement authority from Congress in the last round of legislation and I think that's really helpful because one of the things I know I've heard from CEOs is, if we're going to ramp up production we need to have a constant demand signal to put our money out there. So I think that's helpful.

Every time the Ukrainians ask for materiel, we make an assessment of what the impact is going to be on Army readiness and what the risk levels are. We've been able to manage that so far, and I think that we'll continue making those recommendations to the Secretary and the Chairman. But at the same time we're trying to increase production. So I think there's a lot of good forward momentum.

DWG: Is 2025 good enough in terms of increasing to that degree?

Secretary Wormuth: Obviously I wish we could do it faster, but there's sort of a time and physics issues of how quickly you can get the parts and things like that that you need to put in the new machining. But doing what we're doing, doing what all of the services in the United States are doing, and then also working with our allies and partners, we're going to them obviously to get them to give munitions and other types of support. And I think in the totality of all that we're going to be able to continue supporting the Ukrainians, and we're training them. And I'm sure the Chief can speak to this in more detail.

We're ramping up the training for the Ukrainians and part of that is about making them more efficient both in terms of how they're using the munitions they have but also how to maneuver

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more effectively to just be more effective on the battlefield relative to the Russians.

Moderator: Tony Capaccio, Bloomberg.

DWG: Great line, we're not going to buy new old stuff.
[Laughter].

A couple of specifics. The Ukraine M1 tank was announced like three weeks ago. What is it? Is it an upgraded SEP-1? What is it?

Then the lynchpin weapon for the Pacific is a long range hypersonic weapon. Where is that in terms of A, testing; B, have you got any permission from the Philippines or Japanese to allow your multi-domain task force to field that weapon in the first island chain so that its range is effective?

Secretary Wormuth: I'll take the Ukraine tanks.

We're looking at options for how to get the Ukrainians tanks and there are a variety of different ways that we could do that. So what the Army is doing right now is putting together options for the Secretary to look at in terms of how to -- obviously you can build the tanks from scratch for example as we're doing for the Poles. We had a big sale with the Poles recently. There are other FMS cases with other countries. There are countries that we've sold tanks to previously. So we're looking at all of those options. They have pros and cons. Some could presumably get tanks to the Ukrainians more quickly, but might disrupt relations with important allies and partners. So we're laying that all out. The Secretary will look at that and make recommendations to the President.

DWG: What's the fastest route to an M1 tank to Ukraine, besides pulling from your inventories? Do you have a sense of that?

Secretary Wormuth: A lot of the tanks that we build, obviously, are built from sort of older tanks that are refurbished. So there are I think ways to get tanks -- we're looking at what's the fastest way we can get the tanks to the Ukrainians. It's not going to be a matter of weeks, I will say that. None of the options that we're exploring are weeks or two months. There are longer timelines involved. But I think there are options that are less than two years, less than a year and a half. But

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again, we have to look at the pros and cons of each of them.

General McConville: On the long range fires, first with the multi-domain task force, let me talk about long range fires first. As you know, hypersonics. We're on schedule right now to deliver that this year and there's testing that's going to go on and that's all as we move forward, so I think you can expect to see that capability delivered by '23.

DWG: Prototype then, not a full operational capability, right?

General McConville: It depends on what you mean by operational capability. The battery is built. The systems are in place. The weapon system works the way we envision it, so there is a capability there. So we will have that capability.

The second is on mid-range capability. SM-6, TLAM type capability. That's also scheduled to be delivered this year. Again, the first battery. And that's in the hands of soldiers and that will have the ability to sink ships at the ranges that we talk about.

More importantly, precision strike missile system, which is a 500-kilometer plus type that rides on HIMARS. That is also going to be in place.

So what you're going to see is an array of long range precision fires. We talk about HIMARS, we talk about ATACMs. So when you look at it, we're going to have an array of capabilities.

When it comes to the Pacific, that will be a policy type decision as far as who allows, if they do, and based on the policy decision made, what's the right system to have in place. When you take a look at the multi-domain task force, that's like the nucleus of what happens. So they have the ability to do long range targeting, if you will, and they can do intelligence, they can do information operations, they can do cyber, they can do electronic warfare in space, so you can do long range fires, you need long range targeting, so they have that capability.

And really what you start to think about with the multi-domain task force, it's more a bolt-on capability. We can use the multi-domain task force with HIMARS and do the same thing; and then we can use it with PRSM. We can stretch it out, and depending on the mission that we get, those systems are designed

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to be moved on C-17s so with the right situation they can move into the appropriate place with the appropriate range and get the effects that our policymakers agree with.

DWG: But at this point Japan or the Philippines haven't reached an agreement with the Army to allow the domain task force to be Upper Lausanne or something like that. To be determined?

General McConville: I would defer that -- that to me is a policy type decision.

DWG: But you would know if a decision's been reached.

Secretary Wormuth: I think what I would say Tony is that the agreement that Secretary Austin struck with the Philippines a couple of weeks ago, with the expansion of four sites through the [Inaudible] Agreement is a really important one. There are no specifics around that in terms of what kinds of forces and which types of locations. But the fact that the Philippines did that I think is very, very significant and creates a lot of opportunities for us to do more with them.

Moderator: Eric Schmitt, New York Times.

DWG: Thanks for doing this.

Will there be more M1 tanks going to Ukraine by the end of this year?

And the second question is, given the battered state of the Russian military, however this ends up in your priorities you just articulated for the Indo-Pacific, how much sense does it make to keep 100,000 forces in Europe [inaudible]? Or do you expect that number to decrease [inaudible] some other way?

Secretary Wormuth: Eric, I would say again on the timelines we're putting together options for the Secretary to consider. And like I said, there's a range of timelines. So I think it's still to be determined as to whether tanks could get there by the end of the year.

There's a lot that goes into that as well. There's obviously recovery vehicles, there's ammunition for the tanks, there's the training package that goes along with that. So there are a lot of details still that need to be worked out.

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And I think none of us know what the next several months is going to reveal, and I don't think I would want to speculate on whether the force posture would change down the road.

I think it's very, very important for us to continue to reassure our NATO allies that we are their shoulder to shoulder with them, continuing to show President Putin unity with the NATO alliance I think is really important, but I don't think it would be appropriate for me, the Title 10 Secretary of the Army, to speculate about what is essentially a foreign policy decision.

General McConville: And we're prepared to [fire] those forces if that decision is made. So we have forces that are ready and we look at it as condition based. They'll make the decision. If they make that decision we are ready to provide ready forces.

Moderator: Dan Schere, Inside Defense.

DWG: Thank you so much for doing this.

Secretary Wormuth, you mentioned a little bit earlier the importance of multi-year procurement authorities and I know there were a lot of multi-year procurement authorities put into the NDAA. Can you all just sort of talk generally about the importance of those multi-year procurement authorities going forward when it comes to replenishment from the Ukraine munitions, and do you think these authorities might be extended beyond some of what we saw in the NDAA for munitions? Just sort of talk broadly about that strategy.

Secretary Wormuth: I think the real value of the multi-year procurement authority is that it allows us to sign contracts with industry that give them sort of a guaranteed flow over time. It shows them that we will be a customer over time, and it allows them to make investments as a result of that because they know that they can count on the business, if you will. They have to worry about their profit margins, they have to respond to their shareholders.

What I have heard from CEOs across the board is, they understand the importance of what we're doing as a nation in Ukraine. They want to partner with us and help us both build up the stockpiles for the Ukrainians, for ourselves, replenish, and they're more able to do that when they know there is a guaranteed demand for

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their products. And I think we're going to start seeing those multi-year procurements bear fruit.

Whether Congress might extend those or broaden those I think remains to be seen. I would imagine the Hill will want to see sort of how the department uses the multi-year authorities that it has right now. But as I look to future conflicts, I think we all understand now how important magazine depth is, so I would certainly at this early point be in favor of seeing multi-year authorities be broadened potentially, but I think Congress will want to watch and see what happens.

General McConville: We've been doing this a while on aircraft and what we've found is we've got a good flow and we also tend to get them at least cost. What we've talked to industry about is they tend to respond to contracts better than enthusiasm, so. [Laughter]. The fact we're talking about that makes it a little more favorable for them.

Moderator: That's two zingers in one morning. [Laughter].

DWG: Do you mean to ask Congress for those additional authorities?

Secretary Wormuth: I think it's probably too early. We have a good ongoing conversation with folks on the Hill around these matters. I think there's been a lot of really good partnership. So I think if something comes up where there's a good new opportunity we'll be able to have those conversations at the right time.

Moderator: Mike Flynn, Washington Times.

DWG: Good morning. Thanks for coming here.

I'm wondering if you could talk about the criteria the Army used for selecting Bell Textron for the Black Hawk replacement? Both Bell and Lockheed -- both of them were pretty novel choices. What is it about the Bell option that was the better choice?

Secretary Wormuth: We can't talk about that at this time. As you know, there's a protest and GAO is still looking into that, so at this point the competition is technically still open and until GAO concludes its work we can't comment publicly or privately. [Laughter].

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DWG: If you were told by the White House or whatever that you had to provide M1s from your stocks, could you without adversely affecting the nation or the Army now?

Secretary Wormuth: I don't think we should get into hypotheticals about what the White House might tell us. We're putting options together for the Secretary to take a look at.

Moderator: Matt Beinart, Defense Daily.

DWG: Thank you.

In recent years kind of in a lead-up to budget releases it's been mentioned about tough choices ahead, fully funding modernization in terms of where do you find cost savings from other programs.

So now with another budget release imminent, and I know you can't get into specifics, but generally how did those conversations about the tough choices come together? It's been mentioned about picking through the low hanging fruit. Could you find more low hanging fruit as you looked to continue fully funding the modernization, the signature system development?

Secretary Wormuth: I think you'll see a lot of continuity in the budget that comes before Congress as compared to the budget that we put out last year. And the Chief and I are working hard to sort of strike a balance between investing in the new systems that we're developing. You know, we talk about delivering 24 systems in prototypes or fielded in 2023. And continuing to invest in some of the enduring systems that we really need like Abrams, for example, while also investing in housing in barracks which is critically important and taking care of our people. So that is a balancing act.

There isn't any more low hanging fruit. What that means is we're having to balance. Would we like to invest more in our new systems? Sure. But it's critical that we take care of our soldiers and families and that's not cheap to do.

So I think we're going to put forward a balanced program that's going to allow us to transform, like the Chief talked about, which is critical. But also maintain our readiness and take care of soldiers and families.

General McConville: AS we've talked, when we break our kind of weapon systems down into three types, we have legacy weapon systems, we have enduring weapon systems, and we have our future weapon systems. So when it comes to legacy, we're not invested in legacy. The 113s we're getting rid of and the intent is to replace them with future systems, and the Army multi-purpose -- what we're going to, anyways. But the FV as we like to say. I don't know what that means, but it should. That's the strategy.

So really where you see the grit is in the enduring systems because what we're doing to our enduring systems is we're incrementally improving them. We're going, in the Apache, we slowly moved from the Alpha model to the Delta model to the Echo model. Or for the various tanks we moved to A3, A4, the different versions. And we're doing that.

But as the Secretary said, we're trying to balance that with the new systems and at the same time we've got barracks we want to fit, we've got housing, we want to take care of child development centers, we want to take care of our people. So that's what we're trying to do.

DWG: A quick follow-up, but to place in context, what is a, for this budget cycle, a [inaudible] process similar to recent years in terms of making those decisions and kind of going from top to bottom and seeing where you can make those cuts?

Secretary Wormuth: We didn't run a Night Court set of issues, but I think because of the work that was done a few years ago on Night Court, we have a lot of visibility into our different accounts, if you will, and where the money is.

We continue to scrutinize through our program budget build all of our programs very, very aggressively. But we didn't have sort of an, I don't want to say ad hoc, but we didn't have like a separate special Night Court process.

DWG: So is Night Court then considered done as a kind of --

Secretary Wormuth: To the extent -- Night Court was about finding the fruit on the tree. The low hanging fruit is gone, so Night Court served its purpose.

General McConville: I would say I think one of the things on

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the people side of the house, we are taking hard look at people. What I mean by that is as we transform we're going to have to build new organizations and we're going to have to do that very similar to how we did modernization, within pretty much a flat end strength, if you will. So we're taking a hard look at what type of organizations do we need for the future so as we go into long range precision fires, guess what, we're going to build those type units. We're going to build more air and missile defense. We're going to build counter-UAS type organizations. And what you're going to eventually see is we're going to take a hard look at how do we do that within the resources and structure that we have.

Moderator: Chris Gordon, Air and Space Forces Magazine.

DWG: General McConville, you've already talked a lot about the Army increasing emphasis in new long range fires. Secretary Wormuth and General McConville, [inaudible] Project [Convergence], and one thing that came up there as you said, General McConville, is there was an industrial approach to airspace management with the UAS systems and your long range fires and you needed to fix that with the Air Force.

So all these long range weapon systems sound great in a possible future fight, but they only work if you can actually use them. So what progress specifically have you made on this issue so you can actually bring those new long range fires into a fight and not take, as you said, hours to deconflict something?

General McConville: I think what we're learning is the importance of, first of all, you have to have sensors on the battlefield. Those sensors need to be integrated and they need to bring that information into some type of central battle command system. We use, at least in our Army, the multi-domain task forces as one of those type of capabilities. And then the ability to move that information very quickly to some type of lethal effects, some type of long range precision fires. And really, the system -- what we learned is it can be ground, it can be maritime, or it can be air type systems, and then taking advantage of the technology allows you to bring that together very, very quickly.

We are seeing, the Ukrainians are doing that -- their speed of their ability to get fires and their ability to work the capabilities they have is demonstrating there is tremendous

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potential in that. And I feel where we're at is we have demonstrated, we continue to develop those capabilities. The secret of the future is really convergence. It's how we converge data very, very quickly.

So as we talked about, if you have a hypersonic missile that goes way fast and goes way far, but it takes you days to get it actually on the target, then you're not taking advantage of the speed.

The speed is how quickly you can find the targets, and quite frankly, we're seeing we can do that very quickly. Then how quickly can you get that to whatever the lethal means is, and the right lethal means, too. That's really important. And then be able to use that. And we are making progress on that.

DWG: What's the answer to that question? The key is data, but --

General McConville: The key is data but the data allows you to, and taking advantage of the speed of data and algorithms to separate. The way we separate, we talk about separating systems is blocking out huge spaces of airspace, of ground for a long period of time. You want to be able to integrate those type systems.

So if you have an airplane up there, you're only blocking out where that airplane is. So you've got a lot of moving pieces that you're going to have to work your way through. Very similar to what happens at a major airport. We have a whole bunch of planes in the air and you've got to be able to not necessarily even deconflict, you want to be able to integrate where they're going and what they're doing, and that's where we're going right now.

DWG: Are you making progress?

General McConville: Absolutely. Yeah, we are.

DWG: Can you [inaudible] on that?

General McConville: Not too much more than I gave you. I told you -- [Laughter]. There's a lot of things going on that are -- we are very comfortable where we're going with this. I'll leave it at that.

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Moderator: Next is Meredith Roaten of Janes.

DWG: I was at a talk with the Commander of Army Futures Command a couple of weeks ago and he mentioned that there is no drama between AFC and ASALT at this time. And I was wondering from an Army leadership perspective, what is your assessment of that relationship? Do you have a strategy to kind of dispel that [misinflection] and get that relationship to where you feel like there doesn't need to be a disclaimer that there's no drama?

Secretary Wormuth: I haven't felt like there needed to be a disclaimer about no drama for many months now. This is -- I think General Rainey and Doug Bush have a fantastic relationship. I think the proof is in the pudding. We're continuing to deliver the prototypes to make good on our '24 and '23. I think as a lot of those programs shift towards becoming major programs I think that's part of the reason you see General Rainey talking about really placing emphasis for Futures Command on thinking about the Army of 2040 and really thinking about let's -- as the Chief mentioned, we put out our new doctrine, FM 3.0. I think General Rainey wants to really focus on what comes after that in terms of operational concepts.

So it's a very healthy relationship. Modernization in the Army is a team sport and it has been, so I don't think there's any issue there.

DWG: So you don't think there needs to be further clarification for anyone in the Army community about this issue and kind of, is it just public perception versus an actual issue?

Secretary Wormuth: I think the people who are on the teams in ASALT and Futures Command and in our cross-functional teams know what their roles and responsibilities are and work well together.

I'm always happy to give people clarification if they come to me and say that they need it, but the leaders of the organizations that are part of the modernization team in the Army understand what their responsibilities are and understand how to work together.

General McConville: I think, we've been doing this a while. I think we're very blessed to have General Jim Rainey and the

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Honorable Doug Bush in those two positions. I don't think we've seen better people that are more capable, more competent and committed to the Army than those two.

This is a system of checks and balances. I think the checks and balances are there for a reason. In a perfect world you could maybe move faster without checks and balances, but they work very good together. And really, when we look at the programs that we're doing. And again, from a government standpoint, from a people -- you want good checks and balances, and they understand the importance of collaboration.

And quite frankly, I don't see that. I may be missing it, I'm just the Chief, but as far as the relationship, they are working very, very good together and those two individuals along with the team are really, if you know their backgrounds, we could not have better people doing those jobs than those two. So I'm excited about what they're going to do and I'm excited about what they're going to deliver over the next four to five years.

CSM Grinston: Chief, if I may, because I've been building teams, I'm not in charge of Army Futures Command, but every team goes through a forming, a storming and norming. That's every team that gets put together. It's just the way you build teams. They come together. There may be some forming, there will be some storming. In any group. And then they'll get to norming. So I think what you're talking about is just every team has some forming and a little storming and now I think we're in what is called the norming. They're going to perform their mission. But I would say the same thing for any new organization when you bring a new group of people together there's always going to be those stages that you go through. And that's been building teams since I've been in the Army. It's not different at this headquarters or all the way down to the squad level.

Moderator: Jeff Seldin, VOA.

DWG: Thanks very much for doing this.

We hear mostly from the Navy about the concern and the need to keep up with the Chinese Navy in terms of shipbuilding, but how much do you as the Army worry about keeping up with the Chinese Army? Whether it's the munitions, whether it's critical systems, weapon systems, manpower? And especially as we look ahead a couple of years with the predictions that China is

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preparing to possibly take Taiwan by force and possibly the need for support to Taiwan like we're seeing right now in Ukraine?

Secretary Wormuth: We're just as focused as the Navy and the Air Force and the other services on China as the pacing challenge. How that expresses itself for the Army I think is a little bit different. But a lot of the new systems that the Chief and I have been talking about are ones that are extremely relevant to the Indo-Pacific. Certainly our long range fires portfolio, the new helicopters are investments in integrated air and missile defenses, are very much geared towards looking at China as the pacing challenge.

I would say, and one should never underestimate the PLA. The Chinese have undertaken an extremely broad and comprehensive modernization of their military in the last 20 years, but I think an area of comparative advantage for the United States military is in the Army in the quality of how our soldiers are trained, the kind of leaders that they have, the kind of combat experience that the force has. The human dimension of the United States Army I think is a comparative advantage relative to the Chinese Army.

General McConville: One of the greatest non-commissioned officers I've ever seen is the Sergeant Major of the Army. And one of the biggest lessons from Ukraine and Russia is the value of these non-commissioned officers that we have, that run our organization. And when you start to look at other militaries, if they're doing conscription, that's like bringing people on for a year, year and a half, and when you think about how people are training their soldiers, if you only get a couple of weeks of training, you throw them into combat, I don't know how you do it. And you uncertainly don't run complex plans. It would be like a professional football team taking -- you're going out there and not having the players. You can be a great coach but if you don't have the right players to execute your plans you can't do that. And that's where the people part of our business is so important. And having a great non-commissioned officer corps like we have in the United States Army, which quite frankly is, you know, everyone would like to have the folks we have. It really makes a difference.

Sergeant Major, I don't know if you want to touch on that.

CSM Grinston: I'm actually going to throw it out. In order to

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have a great NCO Corps you actually have to have confident leaders. Without great civilian leadership and officers, if you don't trust your NCOs you're never going to have a great NCO Corps. I don't care where you're at in the world. You have to have the leadership that is confident in what they're doing, that says I trust this individual that they'll do this mission, so I can focus in on the pacing challenge or whatever. Because you know that the NCOs are going to provide you the absolute best, well trained and individual small teaming crews that they can, and they don't have to worry about that. They know that I trust that these NCOs are going to do that, so I can focus in on the other things.

If we don't have that, it doesn't matter where you're at in the world, you're not going to have the great NCO Corps. And I think it's just having great leaders that are confident in what they do to allow the NCOs to do what we do.

DWG: Staying on recruitment and retention which came up earlier, also adding in the information part. To what degree do you worry about or are you seeing adversaries like Russia, China, perhaps other nation states or non-nation states, targeting soldiers or potential recruits with disinformation, with influence operations, and to what degree do you see that, or do you see problems with domestic extremist groups as you are facing [inaudible] to raise recruits and make sure you can still retain soldiers?

Secretary Wormuth: We obviously live in a very contested information environment. I'm not particularly concerned at this time at adversary information operations aimed explicitly at trying to convince young Americans not to join the Army, for example. But there is a lot, as we all know, there is a lot of misinformation and disinformation that's out there so I think we have to be alert to that and we shouldn't be complacent about that.

I would say, I do worry about, I do think that countries can have capabilities, information operation capabilities, to target specific individuals. Whether it's individual soldiers, whether it's leaders, it is possible now to target information operations in a very tailored way to try to create effects. I think that is something that we should not underestimate and that we have to guard against. And these are the kinds of things that Army Cyber Command, big Cyber Command are thinking

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about in addition to all of the other types of cyber operations that they're focused on.

DWG: Is there any type of education or any type of programs you're running just for the average soldier, the average recruit, so that as they wade into the internet, social media as part of their normal lives, that they won't --

Secretary Wormuth: I'm not aware. Maybe SMA could speak to that. I don't think we particularly, for sort of entry level soldiers, I'm not sure that we talk a lot about information operations. But I'm sure as soldiers get ready for deployments and things like that, they get briefings on the kinds -- just as they would get a threat briefing about where they're going, there would be a dimension of that.

CSM Grinston: We've always had OpSec classes since I've been a young soldiers. Just in OpSec and how you have operational security and how you get information, it's just a lot harder nowadays.

One thing I'd ask for everybody here, when you do report something, do you have a little bit or do you have the facts? I would just ask us all, you know, dig in and actually know the facts. That's what we talk to our soldiers about. When you look at something, are you reading the full information of what you have? A lot of times you're just seeing one tidbit of that. So we do talk about that a lot. We've got some ways we could do that, but a lot of times it's usually tailored to, when you deploy this is operational security. But we've had those classes since I've joined the Army 35 years ago.

Moderator: Next is [Snichi Akiyama] of [Inaudible] Newspapers in Japan.

DWG: Good morning. Thank you for this opportunity.

I want to ask you about the Army posture plan in Japan. Compared to other services, the US Army does have many bases, people on the ground in Japan. But when we speak about to deter China or to defend Taiwan, it's Navy. I think the Army needs more presence.

So what do you plan to expand the Army presence in Japan, and what's your plan?

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Secretary Wormuth: Again, and I can say this as someone who served as the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy at one point, we have a very close defense relationship with Japan. I think the Army would be very open to doing more in Japan and with the Japanese self-defense forces, but we have to have, there has to be an agreement obviously between the United States and Japan to enable that. So we're very happy to talk to our counterparts in Japan about what opportunities might be there, but I don't think that we can get ahead of the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Japanese Ministry of Defense.

It was obviously a very big announcement for the Marine Littoral Regiment. Japan, it's been interesting to see how far Japan has come in terms of how it thinks about its own role in the theater, and I think we're very open to continuing to talk about what opportunities are there in the future.

Moderator: That's the last of the advance questions. I see a few hands from the table.

DWG: Thanks. John Harper with Defense Scoop.

With regard to modernization, Navy and Air Force leaders have been talking a lot about the unmanned task forces that they've set up under CENTCOM. It's my understanding that the Army now has Task Force 39, I think, exploring some of the emerging tech out there.

Can you talk about your vision for that and the technologies they're going to be exploring? And maybe some takeaways that you've come up with from that?

General McConville: A couple of things. What I see is when we talk about unmanned capabilities, we've been doing this for quite a while when it comes to aviation. Manned/unmanned teaming is the term. We use it and it's nice to know, we were doing it back in Iraq over Sadr City, having an unmanned aerial system kind of find the targets. Being an Apache pilot, it's much better to have them find the targets, or lase the targets and do those type things.

When I look at manned/unmanned teaming, that's going to become more prevalent. But you're also going to see unmanned/unmanned teaming, where if you think about the ability to I won't say a

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bomb truck, but have the capability to go forward and bring air-launched effects capability into a fight.

And the other thing we see, at least I do. In the future, I personally like the person in the loop. Now the person doesn't necessarily need to be in the lead aircraft or in the lead vehicle, but there's something different. We're talking to you right now, I can look around this room and see everyone's kind of -- I've got a much better feel. If we were doing this on a Zoom call, you don't get the same curiosity, you don't get the same feeling. It's the same thing in combat when you're looking through drones. So you want a person in the loop.

But I can envision, what about the system called IVAS -- to some people it's big, it's working through its thing, but the Integrated Visual Augmentation System I think will fundamentally transform how we operate.

I can envision where you're sitting there and you have unmanned systems, you know, on the ground, in the air, and we're doing that right now. If you've been on [the Convergence], we have autonomous -- and you can start to see, I want to go out and be in this Red One which is a robotic controlled vehicle, and you click, and now you're actually almost in augmented reality and you are in that vehicle. Let me go up and look here. So all of a sudden you're kind of doing what we call T-Bone tactics. You've got unmanned systems in front of you, you're controlling them, you can virtually put yourself into those systems on air and ground. And then you can take advantage of the fact that you can put people where you need to put them. You can do with less people because -- you know, some of the discussion on unmanned aircraft, I'm kind of interested, minimally manned aircraft and vehicles because we don't have to have two pilots. Look at all the training you save, look at the things you intend to do. Same thing with vehicles. Do you need four people in a tank? All these type things will help us get the right people in place.

The future is definitely going to be that, and the future's going to be countering those type systems. But how do you keep people in the loop so you don't have totally autonomous. It's kind of almost like one of those things, for analogy, many of us back in the day you'd have those little vacuum cleaners that went around your house and they kind of, those robots. And they'd hit a wall and you had to kick them and get them going.

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With some of the autonomous vehicles you almost have to do the same thing. They'll get into a problem set where they need some help. They're pretty good, but they need to go. So having people that can help that. But it's going to be unmanned/manned teaming on the ground, in the air, and really a combination of both. It's going to be a big use for us on the battlefield and that's what we're seeing.

DWG: With regard to the Task Force over there, are they exploring those similar technologies?

General McConville: There's a lot of that stuff going on, yeah. As far as taking a look at how we're going to use -- we've got a lot of different people doing different things on that.

The future is, first of all, how you deal with unmanned aerial systems. And ground systems. Then how do you counter them? I've said that publicly to industry, you know, that is a growing field. We're going to see unmanned aerial systems at stadiums and everything else, so people are going to need to be able to counter them from the lowest level to the highest level. So that is a growth industry that at least I see in the future.

DWG: And from a training perspective and personnel perspective, what are the challenges there in terms of training soldiers to counter these unmanned systems but also kind of the manned/unmanned teaming aspect. You noted that sort of IVAS kind of concept, but integrating that with unmanned systems.

General McConville: I have three millennials that serve and below that, they are much more tech savvy than we are. The ability to -- because they've been on computers, they've been on simulators. Like for us to fly an Apache helicopter you fly through a system, and for older pilots it's hard to do because you basically fly through the sensor on the front of the helicopter. For the young people, and one of my kids is an Apache pilot, it's like flying a video game for them. They were brought up that way. They're used to doing those type things. They're incredibly tech savvy.

The kids code, we have great young men and women in our software factory. One of the specialists we have, he's an E4, he codes at the PhD level and he's never had any formal training. So you're going to see a different type of person on the battlefield of the future. Because as we start to get

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artificial intelligence, and we start using all these type systems, you're going to have to code because the camouflage of the future, right now we use all this green stuff, we paint our face, we put trees on us and do all these different type things. But in the future you're going to have maybe a tank that you want to make look like a bus against an algorithm.

So how do you do that? You stick something on the side, and then someone will go hey, they stuck something on the side, so you've got to write a code that hey, if they stick something on the side of the tank, it's actually still a tank, it's not a bus. So all those type things are going to play out in the future.

CSM Grinston: I'll go back to the IVAS and how soldiers train. I'll use myself as probably a bad example with IVAS. I think I'm pretty good at entering a building and clearing a room, but with IVAS you go in and there's people in the room, but there are not really people in the room. And then when I did that with a small team, the younger soldiers were really good at identifying whether -- I was like there's not somebody, and I'm trying to figure it out. You just see this in the screen. Then at the end, our AAR, we all stood around and then pulled the AAR. Here's where you were and how you walked, and you could see how we did it through the goggles. The new soldiers were like we got it, this is awesome. And I'm like can we do this? [Laughter].

Again, really good at the practical application, but they took it even further. They picked up on it very quickly and they were really comfortable with that AAR where I wanted to, let's get the sand table out. Sergeant Major, we don't do that anymore. [Laughter].

Moderator: I wish we could sit here all day, but I need to reserve time at the end for our special guests, but there's time for one last quick question.

DWG: Brian [Inaudible].

You talked a lot about the health of the industrial base with regards to modernization. I was wondering if you have any concerns about the health of the industrial base when you look at sustainment of legacy. For example, when you look at depots] across the DoD, problems with depots, like the grounding in each

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service. Last year the Army had [inaudible]. So the Chinooks, we brought that fleet down for a while. Do you have concerns about the health of your depots and [inaudible]?

Secretary Wormuth: There's obviously work that we need to do in our organic industrial base, and we have a 15-year plan to modernize the OIB and we're spending \$17.6 billion over that 15 years. We have 23 arsenals, ammunition plants, depots around the country. I have not been to all 23. But a lot of them are sort of vintage. They're sort of World War II factories that have been sort of incrementally modernized over time. So there's definitely I think work that needs to be done there.

But I think the Army and Army Materiel Command in particular has done a great job of going and developing a strategy for us to upgrade those depots and arsenals over time, and it was, frankly, because of the good work that was done by Army Materiel Command, that when everything started happening with Ukraine we had sort of shovel-ready projects that we had identified already in that plan, that we were able to say to Congress hey, if you let us spend some of the Ukraine security assistance money that you're providing we could actually start ramping up production and upgrading some of these facilities right away.

So there is work to be done, but we have a plan and it's something that we're investing in steadily.

Moderator: We believe our nation is stronger when senior leaders such as yourself engage with the media on behalf of the American public. So I invite you for any final words before we adjourn this morning.

Secretary Wormuth: I think I would just close with where I started which is we really have to get after our recruiting challenge, and this is frankly a challenge not just for the United States Army but for all of the services. So I would ask for you all, for your help frankly, in terms of maybe shining a spotlight on all of the value that young Americans can get out of serving their country. And it doesn't even have to be, frankly, just serving in uniform. We have a nursing shortage in this country. Law enforcement are having trouble recruiting. Teachers are seeing shortages. We really need to help young Americans understand the importance of public service in whatever form that it takes.

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You all, I'm a huge believer in the free press. We need you all to hold us accountable. But there are a lot of great things that the United States Army does. There are a lot of great stories about young Americans doing incredible things. And giving some space in your columns to that would be fantastic, in addition to shining a light on the problems that we need to fix.

General McConville: I had a chance to go see our troops in 11 countries in December, all over the Middle East and then Eastern Europe and then Central and South America just recently. It's really amazing when we talk about, you know, some people talk about our soldiers, but what's really amazing is how other militaries and how other countries view our soldiers. And when you're in places like Lithuania and Latvia and Estonia and Poland and Romania and you have American soldiers on the ground, it really makes a difference. American military on the ground.

The idea used to be said, you know, wherever the American soldier goes freedom follows, but the reality is and what we're seeing in Europe right now is freedom stays. It's a big deal. It's something that hopefully the American people will understand what a difference their sons and daughters that have chosen to serve are making for this country.

I would argue that these regional conflicts, as I talk to fellow Chiefs around the world, these regional conflicts have global implications. What's happening in Ukraine right now has affected the entire world. And if someone else was to do an unprovoked attack we could expect similar type things. It's in everyone's interest to have a stable and secure world because that's how everyone benefits.

Thank you.

CSM Grinston: I would just close by thanking everyone for being here today, and really thank our soldiers and their families. No matter what mission they've been given, over and over and over again, it's most of the time not reported on, they just keep doing it.

We took an armor brigade combat team in this month last year, that had just gotten back from Korea after three months, not on the immediate response force, deployed them in seven days, and they were shooting a live fire in Grafenwoehr, Germany in seven days. Most armies around the world, I don't know if any could

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do that. We just do it. And their families -- they just support their families.

And I couldn't be more proud of what your Army does, not somebody else's. We belong to you. Every citizen of America, we've sworn an oath to support and defend the Constitution and protect you all. So when you're writing something and we're short people, you're short in your Army. Not somebody else's Army, your Army. And you want us to be able to pick up that brigade and move it, and we need your support and supporting your Army.

As I reflect back on my time, 35 years, and I've got about six months before we move out.

Secretary Wormuth: Boo.

CSM Grinston: I'd just say that you all, I would do it again, for everybody in this room. I couldn't be more proud to say that I was part of your Army. So thank you.

General McConville: Just one final point. Some people have said you go to war with the Army you have. We go to war with the Army we have, and that's why we've got to have the best Army in the world, because we're going with it. Thank you.

Moderator: Thank you all for a very thoughtful and thought-provoking discussion. Thank you.

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