**The Honorable Christine Wormuth**

**Secretary of the Army**

**General Randy A. George**

**Chief of Staff of the Army**

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**Moderator:** Good morning and welcome to this very special Defense Writers Group. We have as our guests today the Secretary of the Army, the Honorable Christine Wormuth; and the Army Chief of Staff General Randy A. George.

I’m sure you know the ground rules, but let’s go over them quickly. This is on the record. You may record it for accuracy of quotes, but there’s no rebroadcast of audio or video. I’ll ask the first question as always, and then a whole bunch of you emailed to get questions in advance. I’ll go through as many as we can. If there’s time after that we’ll go around the table. The final minutes will be reserved for closing comments from our guests.

Madame Secretary, General, thank you so much. We are honored to have you.

The first question is a pretty obvious one. The war in Ukraine has entered its third heart-breaking year. The Army is great at harvesting lessons learned but also incorporating them. So what are you both of you seeing? Madame Secretary, you were just in Munich. General, I know you travel to the AOR and talk to counterparts. What are you learning and seeing from the war in Ukraine that will help drive Army transformation across the board. Personnel, capabilities, networking, UAS, counter-UAS. Madame Secretary?

**Secretary Wormuth:** Thanks, Thom, and thanks everybody for being here. I don’t know how special this will be, but we’ll try to make it special.

I did just come back from Germany where I was seeing what our Security Assistance Group to Ukraine is doing as well as the training we’re doing with the Ukrainians. There was a battalion there that was finishing up their training. So I had the opportunity to really see first-hand some of what we’re doing, and frankly, some of what we’re getting back from the Ukrainians.

As I’ve said in the past, I think many of the lessons learned we’ve seen from the battlefield in Ukraine underscore that a lot of what the Army is doing in terms of the kinds of modernization programs that we’re pursuing are the right ones.

We have put a lot of emphasis on investing in integrated air and missile defense systems, for example. We see how important that is in Ukraine.

We’ve put a lot of investment in long range precision fires, and again, we’ve see how important fires are in what’s happening in Ukraine.

I think what I would say more specifically, for example, one of the things that we’ve been seeing the last three years is the importance of being more mobile on the battlefield. We have to in-place and displace more rapidly.

For example, when I was out at Grafenwoehr seeing our soldiers and the Ukrainians, I saw a tactical command post that used to be three Stryker vehicles with full crews in each of the vehicles. A pretty significant radar that would be placed outside. They have skinnied all of that down now to basically two vehicles, no radar, all of the major sort of coms and network systems are in one of the Strykers.

Something I thought was fascinating is we have the capability to simultaneously in real time do translation between Ukrainian and English, and we can do this now in any language. So you can type into the chat and give directions, have discussions, share information, and you can do that simultaneously.

Similarly, we can now -- there was a first lieutenant in the vehicle who was speaking in English and giving directions and it was immediately translated into Ukrainian. Having been to Iraq and Afghanistan many times over the years, that was not something we were able to do.

That whole tactical command post can be set up and taken down in 15 minutes. That’s really, really fast. So I think that’s an important lesson.

I was really struck by how I think the learning that’s going on with the Ukrainians in Grafenwoehr is very much a two-way street. Our soldiers I think are getting as much out of it as they are.

Looking at some of the TTPs that the Ukrainians have been using, we are now actually doing 3D printing out in the field, soldering basically components onto drones to be able to carry small payloads. That’s pretty significant. We certainly weren’t doing 3D printing out in the field five years ago, ten years ago.

So I would give those as a couple of examples.

I think one thing, and I know the Chief and I share this view very strongly, what we’ve seen in Ukraine underscores that we in the Army have got to do more and more and more on UAS, counter-UAS in terms of investing in those systems. We as a service are investing more than any other service in those areas already, but I think when you look at the threats to our soldiers in CENTCOM for example, we have got to do more. So that’s I think an area where we think there’s area for improvement.

**General George:** First, thanks everybody for joining us this morning. We appreciate it.

I’ve been over in Europe. I just yesterday had all the commanders up over there, we do this probably every other week where we talk about what’s happening on the battlefield, what are we learning from it, and then what are we bringing back.

There’s been a couple of you who have been in here with me, spent a lot of time out at MTC and JRTC to see how we’re making sure that we’re taking those lessons.

I was going to kind of start with, I just was out and talked to all the majors, talked to all of our commanders as well, and talk a little bit about what I tell them about how the battlefield is changing because I think it is significant just in the last couple of years.

First, and I think everybody’s heard this, there’s really no place to hide. You cannot hide any longer -- if you can’t be seen from space, which you probably can be, there’s unmanned sensors that are out there and then I think none of us will be shocked to know that there’s phones and everybody’s taking pictures and you're on video. It’s just really easy, especially with large language models to be able to find anybody almost anywhere. And everybody knows the implications for that.

Commercial tech is outpacing military tech in a lot of ways. Drones is one of them. How we operate with the network. And really what that means is that everybody has access to that. It’s getting cheaper and cheaper and cheaper, and I think that should say something to how we’re going to operate as well.

People are moving into cities and what’s important -- having been in Iraq and Afghanistan when you have a lot of things that were out, and we did things inside cities. But people are moving to cities and I think we’re seeing that combat is moving there as well. There are certain implications to that.

Then I tell everybody that the battlefield is no longer local. You’ve got space and cyberspace and how everything is connected that I think we need to pay attention to.

There are some basic things that I think the Army has to continue to do for the joint team. First is seize and hold ground. That’s going to be critical for the joint team and everything that we’re doing.

We’re going to have to provide long range fires. I can talk examples, I think everybody’s seen just how effective ground-based long-range fires have been in Ukraine. We’ll continue to do that for the joint force.

Obviously we play a big part in logistics. We’re doing a lot of that. We can talk about that with what we’re doing to support what’s going on in Ukraine, but getting beans, bullets, fuel, all those things in a contested environment is something that the Army’s going to have to do.

The Secretary mentioned protection which is protection against integrated air and missile defense and it’s also counter-UAS.

For lessons, we always talk about there’s a difference, and I preach this all the time, there’s a difference between a lesson observed and a lesson learned. If you’re going to learn a lesson in the Army you’re going to change how you operate on the battlefield, you are going to change what you’re teaching in your courses and how you are instructing your people so that they’re prepared. Then you have to change how you buy things, and I’m going to talk a little bit about that.

So I think we’re getting after all of this. Obviously we have a sense of urgency and we talk about this all the time. We’d like to go faster in many areas, but it’s important what we’re doing, and I think doing this inside of our formations.

One is we’re leaning out our formations. We have, some of you have seen this, getting rid of excess equipment. You can’t have too many vehicles which increases your log tail, and all those things that we have done over the last 20 years when I’ve been out there in those formations and it’s helpful one, to have a lighter formation that also saves our soldiers and our formations time so that they can train.

The Secretary alluded to what we’re doing with 3D printing. We are trying to build a culture of continuous transformation, where everybody realizes, and our challenge to everybody is that our formations have to look better. This isn’t like two or three POM cycles. We have to look better this next year. We have to look better in a couple of months. And I can give you an example of what we’re going to do, and I’ll talk a little bit about that next.

We have started something called Transforming in Contact. We are transforming in contact when it comes to counter-UAS in the Middle East which means we are getting all of our capabilities forward with users, developers and testers and we are transforming as we go because the battlefield is changing that quick.

We’ve also selected three brigades, and they are going to prototype new formations and we’re going to give them new equipment. UAS, Counter-UAS, Next Generation Squad Weapon, and infuse them with the kind of new tech that they need on the battlefield, and they will adjust. And I can talk a little bit about this because we have canceled Shadow and Raven and what we would do, how we would modify that force structure inside those formations.

We’re moving fast to get the network right, and the Secretary alluded a little bit to this where we’ve had four Strykers leading a brigade. For those of you who have been in Afghanistan, you know how big those footprints used to be, those CPs. We’re done lugging around big satellite dishes. We’re done with server stacks. All of that’s got to change and we need to have basically tablets and user -- the commercial industry has shown that we have that capability to have right now so we can hide in plain sight.

You do not want to be, nobody wants to be prominent on today’s battlefield. What being prominent will give you is it will get you killed. So we are changing our footprints to make sure that we’re doing that. Again, on BCTU devices, UAS and counter-UAS. Obviously we have to change ahead.

I think we have to change how we buy things and this is where our partnership with industry.

And finally, the only thing I wanted to say on what hasn’t changed. We are doing some transformation in these other areas. There’s never been, in my 35 year plus career, formations, leaders that take care of their soldiers and make sure their families are combat multipliers, are the formations that are successful. And there’s areas that I think that we’re working to transform on that as well, with how we go after MILCON and look at barracks and those kinds of things.

Again, thanks for being here.

**Secretary Wormuth:** I just want to add one really important footnote to what the Chief had to say. Without a ’24 appropriation, continuing under a CR, it looks like maybe we’re going to get another short CR. Who knows? Not having the supplemental for Ukraine hurts us in all of these areas. It hurts our ability to transform.

So for example, without the ability to do new starts, without the ability to do reprogramming, we can’t invest in development of UAS and counter-UAS systems. We can’t train with those systems. We can’t produce those systems as rapidly as we want to.

The mid-range capability, which is a long range fire system that now has become a program of record. If we have another CR, we have a $500 million investment that we want to make in that program going forward that we won’t be able to pursue under a CR.

The supplemental, which Thom and I were talking, is so critical for Ukraine, would contribute to jobs back here in the United States because so much of those munitions are being built in plants in Camden, Arkansas or in Texas or in Scranton. There is I think $560 million in the supplemental just for counter-UAS. Now that’s for all services. Not all of that is Army. But we could use that. We could do a lot with that. So that is hurting us.

Finally, to the Chief’s point about as we transform the Army we’ve got to take care of our soldiers, the CR hurts us to do that as well. For example, we were planning to do five new barracks in the coming year. One at JBLM, a place that the Chief is very familiar with. That’s a pretty high cost of living. We have a shortage of beds there already. We’ve got soldiers living out in the community, paying high rents, and frankly, from the community’s perspective, being viewed as sort of competing with them and driving up rents. We won’t be able to build that barracks under a CR and we’ll probably have to build it at a higher price tag when we do get to build it because construction costs are going up every single month basically.

We were planning to do $50 million of investment in equity at Fort Leonard Wood and at Fort Eisenhower on family housing. These are both places that I’ve visited recently. Fort Leonard Wood has really, really old houses. And without that equity investment, which we can’t make under a CR, we’re not going to be able to start building houses. And believe me, I have heard from Senator Hawley about this a number of times and Senator Schmitt as well.

So I just want to give those examples to underscore that there is a real -- there is real pain and real delays that result because the Congress doesn’t seem to be able to pass us a budget.

**Moderator:** Thank you both.

First questioner is Lita Baldor of AP.

**DWG:** Good morning. Thanks a lot for doing this.

I just wanted to ask if you could both address some of the ongoing stress on the Army, particularly with recruiting and sort of lack of soldiers in certain areas. How is that impacting the ability to transform?

And can you just give us an update on the Army’s recruiting this year. I think everyone’s familiar with the struggles over the last several years. If you can just tell us where you are now.

**Moderator:** Can I just add with the power of the chair to follow this question. Do you think the all-volunteer model is broken? Not because of the Army but because of America.

**Secretary Wormuth:** Thank you.

Lita, and I know the Chief will want to talk about this as well.

I was just at Fort Cavazos not too long ago, was also at Fort Riley over the summer. I do think the fact that we’ve had recruiting challenges, obviously that means we have some manning challenges. So I did hear from E4s to E7s when I was at Cavazos about the fact that they feel like they have very full plates and they are doing the work of one and a half to two soldiers.

I think that’s a reality. We are doing the best that we can to be able to make sure that we’re being smart about how we’re manning units and making sure that units that are on the hook to be part of the immediate response force are manned at a high level so they can have readiness. But there’s no doubt that it’s putting some strains on our soldiers. I think our engaged leaders are really focused on how they can mitigate that.

One of the things that I said to the soldiers I talked to at Cavazos is the Chief and I and all leaders in the Army are laser-focused on fixing our recruiting problem. Because ultimately that’s the best way to solve that problem.

And in terms of the update there, I would say a couple of things. One, first of all our goal this year is 55,000 new contracts plus 5,000 soldiers going into the delayed entry program. Young people who would ship out later. That’s a bigger goal. Well, if we make that goal that would be better than we did last year. I think that is a realistic goal for us.

Right now we are recruiting at a higher rate than we were at this time last year, so that’s good news. The Future Soldier Prep Course is going like gangbusters. We have graduated 15,000 soldiers out of that program since its inception in August of 2022. We are expanding it modestly because we think there’s more folks in the pipeline who we could bring through that prep course and I think we feel pretty confident now that the quality of the people coming through that course is where it needs to be to perform well as soldiers.

One of the things I’m most excited about is the Chief and I announced back in the fall a number of decisions. One of the most significant I think is the fact that we’re professionalizing our recruiter workforce in a number of different ways. A piece of that professionalization is creating a group of warrant officers who will be recruiters, and I’m actually going down to Fort Knox in a week or two to go see the selection process for the first cohort of those warrant officers. That’s a down payment, I would say. We’re going to create an MOS that is focused on recruiting specifically. It’s going to take us a little longer to do that. But I think we’re putting some things in motion that have a lot of promise, but I would say it’s still going to be a multi-year solution. This is not going to be solved in a year.

The last thing I’ll say is I do not think that the all-volunteer force is broken. I think we are very challenged right now, but I still feel there are lots of young Americans who want to serve this country and we just have to continue talking to people about all of the opportunities the service and the Army offers, but I don’t think it’s fundamentally broken.

**General George:** I will pick up right where the Secretary left off, I also don’t think it’s broken. I think we have some challenges that we’re going to address and get the word out. I think that’s what makes our Army great.

In my own personal story, coming in right out of high school for college money and staying, and we’re doing really well with retention so I’m a big fan of what we have and I think it’s what makes us very special.

We are getting better, as the Secretary said -- knocking on wood -- and so things are getting a little bit better. We are focused on it. We talk about this not every day, but pretty darn close to it. That and transformation and other things, but this is at the top of our list.

I think that one of the things we’re going to see is a real concerted effort to pick the right recruiter. I always used, when I was down in Houston, a sergeant first class. She had [inaudible], enlisted 38 people. She was really good at it, and there was somebody right next to her, I think he had two or three people that he had enlisted. So he might have been a great rifle squad leader but being a recruiter wasn’t his thing. So I think picking the right people is what is critical, and I think we’re starting to see some of that. Warrant officers will help.

We’ve also got to do better at getting them the right tech, the right software. I think again this is back where we can leverage what’s happening.

As far as stress, I think part of, the big message we always get to is, there’s a lot of things that we have to stop doing that don’t help us become a better warfighting organization. They don’t help us become better at building cohesive teams. You name it.

I’ve just met with a bunch of brigade commanders that are out every time I go out, and company commanders and first sergeants. So I think there’s more work to do to get rid of doing what I call dumb stuff. Whatever it is that’s collecting data, getting rid of the excess has helped us because you have less stuff to lay out, maintain, lug around. So we’re doing that.

I think there are some examples of software systems that we get. The Digital Training Management System is one that I use that does not work very well, and I always tell people if it’s not working we shouldn’t use it. We should find different ways of doing things.

So I think there’s still some work that we have to do like that. We have reduced the amount of times we’re doing services to our vehicles. So I think it’s a combination of things. We have to be better at saying no and making sure that whatever it is that we’re going to do, because the Army is really busy, is helping make us better and supporting the joint force.

**Moderator:** Tom Bowman, NPR.

**DWG:** If you could talk a little bit more about Ukraine and focus on drones. What observations are you making about how Ukraine is using their drones?

Also observations about how the Russians are jamming those drones. That’s a particular problem.

Also you and others keep talking about the supplemental, the importance of it, the industrial base. It looks like it’s probably not going to happen, so is there a Plan B? Do you take more risk in the Army by providing them with more weaponry? Just talk about the way ahead.

**General George:** I’ll talk a little bit about drones, and we are learning a whole bunch. Same thing in the Middle East. We’re paying attention to this I think around the world.

One of the systems, we just canceled Shadow and Raven a couple of weeks ago. It was a good system years ago and it’s not a good system and can’t survive on the battlefield.

I was just down at Huachuca. Down at Fort Huachuca we have a very large range where we can do anything we want as far as electronic warfare. We are looking at how we are going to test and operate drones in test environments. That’s something we have to do. Every drone that we’re going to have to have is going to have to be open architecture so we can adjust it with software, we can make adjustments on the road.

As I mentioned, when I think [inaudible] with flexible funding looking forward, and we are looking at how we would fund things, and we obviously have to work with the appropriators on this to explain how we can do this with the proper oversight. But for unmanned systems, for countering unmanned systems and EW, things are moving so fast that we are going to have to -- you can’t wait and say okay, we’ll get that in the next POM and then it will be there two years from now. It’s going to have to be we have developed something through R&D and we have the flexible funding and now we can produce something that we know is going to be effective on the battlefield, so that’s what we’re looking at.

The other thing is we are also trying to operate where we can actually, and the Secretary mentioned the 3D printing. I think where that helps us the most is getting a formation that’s skilled at being able to one, operate in that environment -- and we have a lot of the soldiers, most of them I would argue, are pretty good at picking these things up and doing it. But we’re going to teach that at every installation where they can actually operate those small drones. Then they will look at little bit different at the battalion level and they will look a little bit different at the brigade level. And where we took the 28 people that were in the force structure for the Shadow, there might be a detachment of that at the brigade level that has a more longer distance, the more high powered, a little bit more expensive, more exquisite drone, and it will be different at every level. The kind of legs and sensors and all those things that are on it.

So that will be part of our Transforming in Contact and we’re going to -- and I’d invite any of you to come down to JRTC. It’s nice and warm in August, and we’ll give you your own bug juice. But you can actually see what we’re going to do and how we’re going to adjust that.

**Secretary Wormuth:** Thom, I’d just add a couple of things. I was struck when I saw, again, a graph and saw the Ukrainians training and our soldiers training with them. Huge use of first-person view drones in Ukraine, and the Ukrainians were really giving our soldiers a lot of feedback about both how they’re using drones on the battlefield and how they’re being used against them, and I think it was causing our soldiers to be thinking about making some adjustments to their TTPs.

But it underscored to me that we need to be looking at cheap, attritable, mass quantities of drones and I think that the Deputy’s Replicator program is aimed squarely at that and the Army has a piece of that, if you will. I think we’ve got to really look at how we can get volume at cheaper, cheaper qualities.

The other thing, drones are really essentially, when it comes to our combat vehicles, flying IEDs. And I think we’ve got to think about protection for our tanks, Bradleys, Strykers and so on. That is going to be a challenge. And one of the things that we’ve been pursuing in that way is directed energy, high powered microwave. We’ve got some of our directed energy prototypes out now in the field, being tested, having some successful engagements. One challenge there is how do we make those systems affordable. They’ve got unlimited magazines if you will, but right now they’re still pretty pricy. I think all of those efforts, to me, everything that’s happening in Ukraine, foot stomps the importance of those.

On the supplemental, I think there is still a pathway from, I was in Munich last week and talked to a lot of the members who were there as part of the CODEL. We were just having some internal conversations in the department yesterday and I think there still is very much a desire from a bipartisan majority to find a way to get the supplemental passed.

What exactly that vehicle is going to be and sort of when it’s going to be is not entirely clear to me, but I think it’s absolutely critical because it’s clear that Putin is not going to stop unless he is stopped, and critical to stopping him is everything that comes with the supplemental. And I just would underscore, and I know you all don’t need to be told this, but it is in our national interest to see the Ukrainians succeed against Russia. We have got to make it clear that a blatant territorial grab against a peaceful country is not acceptable. There are countries watching what’s happening in Ukraine every day and if we allow Putin to win it sends a signal and it sends a signal that’s not helpful for American security.

**Moderator:** Thank you so much. Flying IEDs is a very powerful turn of phrase. Thank you.

Dan Lamothe, Washington Post.

**DWG:** Thank you both for being here this morning.

General, you opened with a discussion of what you’re learning in Ukraine. After several months in Gaza, particularly with the US Army’s plans to be prepared for urban combat, mega city combat, that sort of idea. What are you learning? What are you observing from the Israelis in Gaza and how might that inform, make the Army smarter? Looking forward to how the Army might fight in big cities.

And then Secretary, please can you speak a bit against the concerns on the training side, particularly as a CR gets closer and closer to being an issue? I saw some comments from US Army Europe over the weekend discussing sort of having it “taken out of hide”. How long is that even feasible?

**General George:** I think there’s a whole bunch of things that are very similar as well and I’ve met with the IDF, and again, we’re having the same, studying the same thing like I mentioned earlier, around the world. Part of what we’re talking about as far as inside cities, I’m going to give you a couple of examples. One is having protection and armored vehicles I think are critically important.

But they’re doing the same things. They know they’re going to have to be more mobile, smaller, figure out active protection that’s around them to the Secretary’s comments. You’re going to have to be able to protect vehicles that are out there. So the same thing with the counter-UAS, top-down attack, all of those things that I think we’re going to have to be focused on. Logistics again is a huge challenge, getting things in.

One of the things for all of these that I’m a huge fan of is hybridization of our vehicles just because I think whatever we can do to reduce our logistics footprint is going to help us. The same thing that I think we’re learning in Ukraine as far as what we can do, what we can fix forward and what we don’t have to drag back.

I think the big thing on urban combat that you realize is that it consumes a lot of combat power to go in and do things, and that kind of gets to what we have inside of our formations. And when I mentioned up front that we’re going to have to seize and hold ground, that’s going to be the Army’s job, and I think we’re going to have to continue to do that.

I could go down the list on UAS, counter-UAS, from that one, EW, and what’s happening.

The other thing is there’s a lot of -- and this gets back to Thom’s question, there’s a lot of old things that we were doing as far as what you’re doing, putting netting up and how you’re hiding in plain sight. There’s a lot of things I think we’re relearning after 20 years of not really worrying about anything from above and not thinking about it. Having big CPs and doing all those things. I think that’s fundamentally changed.

**Secretary Wormuth:** And Dan on training, I would say just a couple of things. We are cash flowing, essentially, from USAREUR-AFRICA, the training that we’re doing with the Ukrainians to the tune of about $500 million that we’ve spent so far. Again, we were counting on the supplemental to be able to sort of replenish us for that. If that’s not going to come, that’s a very substantial part of USAREUR-AF’s O&M budget. And what that means is probably by late spring/summer, we would have to make some difficult choices about other exercises, for example, that we had planned to participate in. There’s a whole host of NATO exercises, for example, that our forces participate in.

Similarly, we’ve been cash-flowing some of the support to Israel and some of the deployments that we’ve made to be prepared, if necessary, in Israel. The price tag for that so far isn’t as large, but again, I think the Chief and I do worry. Our budget has been flat for the last couple of years. We don’t have a lot of cash under the sofa cushions, and if we don’t get a budget and we don’t get a supplemental we’re going to probably have to cancel some things.

**Moderator:** Next is Liz Friden of Fox.

**DWG:** General George, [inaudible] the Army National Training Center last month. What specifically did you learn there? Can you provide some more details about [inaudible] that you’re learning from the war in Ukraine?

And then can you go into the idea of you said hide in plain sight a few times. Can you say what that means and what you’re learning about it?

**General George:** Sure. One of the things we wanted to do at the National Training Center, and again, this is getting back to lessons, how you operate and really drilling that into your formations. I was in National Training Center and then spent the weekend at the Joint Readiness Training Center, very similar.

As an example, we put a division headquarters actually in the field. We haven’t been doing that and we made, so there was a two-star general and all of his staff that were all [inaudible] stuff that made my heart sing that they were out there in the dirt. They had reduced the size of their command post by about 75 percent. So they got rid of vehicles. They were not pulling these trailers with big satellite dishes and all of those things. They were minimized.

If you think about what you do with a phone when you travel, you’ve heard of a Faraday Bag where you can put it in there and it can kind of block the signal. So they were putting netting over to make sure that they had reduced their emissions, and they were about 85 percent -- they were hard to find, actually, when we were out there looking for them.

It's one thing to hide in plain sight in an urban environment. It’s much harder to do out in the desert.

That’s what they were doing and they have to still figure out how to command and control a very big, large, complex organization. They had to worry about UAS that are trying to find them and to kill them out there. So that was one aspect of it.

And very similar, it’s the same thing, we’re doing this to all of our formations out there. We have an active live OpFor which they are 3D printing drones and going after our troops. They are putting together -- there’s a sensor that the CW2, an EW warrant put together that could pick up watches, phones, all of that stuff. So we’re constantly looking at everybody’s digital footprint that is out there and capturing that.

Again, if you can be seen on the battlefield, you can be killed. I think that’s what we want to make sure that everybody is training differently. So operating in that environment -- it’s one thing to talk about it. It’s another thing to actually get out and execute and to do it.

**Moderator:** Next is Tony Capaccio, Bloomberg.

**DWG:** A couple of hardware questions on Ukraine. ATACMs and 155s. Sir, have all the policy questions ben answered about whether to provide longer range ATACMS to Ukraine if you’re ordered to. Are you comfortable with the inventories right now of the longer range versions that haven’t been provided given that Prism missiles are not coming in yet to replace those?

And Madame Secretary, the 155 saga. You were going to go from 28,000 a month to 37,000 a month coming up in April. Is that on track? And would the supplemental help jumpstart that even more?

**General George:** I’m going to start with maybe where the Secretary will also go, and again, for us why the supplemental is so critical is because there’s a lot of things that we want to do for our industrial base to produce more of everything that we’re talking about. So for us magazine depth is an important aspect of this.

I’m very comfortable with the process that we go through back in the building with the joint staff and with OSD to figure out how we’re going to provide different systems that we know will help the Ukrainians in their fight.

**DWG:** ATACMs are very different. Like the shorter range version. They would like the longer range version. Are you uncomfortable with the inventory if in fact the White House says provide them in the TDA?

**General George:** Yes.

**Secretary Wormuth:** On 155’s Tony, I would say it’s like wow, you have a hotline to Doug Bush. Your numbers are exactly right. We’re at 28,000 a month right now. We’re going to go to 36,000 a month in sort of the March/April timeframe. I’m comfortable that we are in a good place to be able to do that.

To get to the goal of 100,000 a month by late 2025, we need the $3 billion that’s in the supplemental. I wouldn’t say the supplemental will jumpstart us beyond that 100,000, but if we don’t get the money in the supplemental we’re not going to be able to increase capacity to get to that 100,000 a month goal.

**DWG:** In the short term, 37,000, that’s going to be consistent for the rest of the year basically, if in fact you get the supplement.

**Secretary Wormuth:** I believe so. When I checked with Doug yesterday it’s 36,000 a month in March//April, but yes. We’re on a path to be able to keep that going.

**Moderator:** Dan Schere, Inside Defense.

**DWG:** Thank you so much for doing this. A question for both of you.

AS you’re approaching the FY25 request, can you just sort of talk about, does the Army need to take like a similar approach in terms of reorganizing commands like similar to what the Air Force did earlier this month? Is there overlap between things for example like TRADOC and Army Futures Command? So what are your thoughts on the reorganization that might need to happen?

**Secretary Wormuth:** What I would say, Dan, is I don’t think we have -- we are not in a place where the Air Force is where we need to sort of have what I would say is a sweeping reorganization. In part because many of the things that Secretary Kendall and General Allen are pursuing are things that the Army had already done. We stood up Army Futures Command, and I would say we’ve been adjusting the roles and responsibilities between Futures Command and TRADOC, between Futures Command and ASALT. Sort of like the Chief talks about continuous transformation, I would say we’ve been kind of continuously adjusting those relationships.

We have a PA&E, obviously, inside of our Army staff that’s very effective. That’s another thing that the Air Force is standing up.

So I don’t think that we have major gaps or issues that need to be addressed the way the Air Force does.

**General George:** On the tactical side one of the things, typically you would decide something up here, put out a PowerPoint and tell everybody hey, let’s make the adjustments. Part of what we want to do get after changing some of our force structure was what I talked about earlier with Transforming in Contact. We kind of put out left and right limits to our troops that are in the field that are going to fight these formations, and then we are going to make adjustments based on that that are going to feed how we’re going to do things Army-wide. We’re doing that in the Pacific with what we’re looking at for our formations.

I do think that we are viewing every bit of our force structure that we have to do that, to make sure that we don’t have any kind of redundancy, that we are having the right skills at every level. Again, it’s like what EW do you need at the battalion level? Electronic Warfare What do you need for UAS at each level. I think that we’re going to continue to do that.

One of the things that we’re discussing, and we do Total Army Analysis, is to say make adjustments kind of in stride with that. I think that will help us. Rather than looking out, doing something years in advance and moving towards that.

**Moderator:** Jen Judson, Defense News.

**DWG:** Hi, thank you for doing this.

I wanted to ask in the aftermath of the FARA decision, obviously that got a little far down the road, not as far as some of the other previous programs to replace [Scout]. I’m just wondering what you’re thinking about what might need to change maybe at Army Futures Command or the requirements process so that you’re approaching the requirements development and speaking about -- you kind of talked a little bit about this, the capabilities.

Is AMC going to look at, is their approach to requirements in all these going to change at all because of examples like FARA where you invested quite a bit in something and then had to cancel it because you were developing a manned helicopter that you don’t actually need for, as you were talking about with Ukraine, for instance, or in the Middle East now. Manned helicopters in that role are never going to work. So I would imagine there are other examples in other areas. So does this mean a big change for AMC?

**Secretary Wormuth:** No. My view is that the aviation portfolio rebalancing that the Chief and I decided to pursue is not indicative of some sort of flaw in the requirements process at Army Futures Command. The rebalancing and the decision not to move forward with FARA was really driven by three things. One, I think we’ve seen a lot of change on the battlefield. The Army began the FARA program, the development at least, before the Russians went into Ukraine, and I think before we started seeing just the incredible transparency of the battlefield, the fact that air superiority certainly against high tech adversaries is a thing of the past. So number one is a lot of change on the battlefield.

Number two is, we conducted an analysis of alternatives that really scrutinized in detail FARA against other options. What that concluded was essentially while FARA provided some increase I capabilities, it was not commensurate with frankly the overall cost of the program. That’s sort of the third thing is an affordability issue. I mean we have a flat budget, as I said. We have Black Hawks, Apaches, Chinooks. We have an overall aviation portfolio that we’ve got to keep healthy, and our ability within a flat budget to be able to pursue both FARA and FLARA, which we are continuing to pursue as you know, Jen, plus be able to maintain and invest in those enduring platforms just, something had to give. I think it’s much more about that than it is about any sense that Futures Command isn’t structured right to do requirements.

**Moderator:** Mike Flynn, Washington Times.

**DWG:** Good morning. Thanks for coming.

I made my [bones] as a young soldier sitting in the middle of the Fulda Gap waiting for the Red Horde to come through back in the old days. You talked a little bit about the lessons you’ve learned from Ukraine. What I’m interested in now is two years, going on three years into this war in Ukraine, what has the Army learned about the Russians as a potential adversary? Quite frankly, the Army I saw roll into Ukraine was not the Army I expected to come crunch all over us USAREUR guys back in the ‘80s. What has the Army learned about the [inaudible], and what is the Army’s thinking about the Russians now?

**General George:** I’ll mention a couple. First, I think that we’re learning like any other organization they are adapting, they are learning. And I think making adjustments. You can get after whether it’s UAS, loitering munitions, electronic warfare, all of those things. My message to everybody is don’t underestimate your enemy. That’s never a good place to start.

Also I think we’ve seen they’ve done very well with their pumping money and energy into their industrial base and what they’re getting after with magazine depth and doing all that. Kind of what we were talking about here that we want to do.

I still think that they struggle. Back to the question on the all volunteer force with mission command type orders and letting units, small unit leaders have the flexibility that they need on the battlefield. I certainly appreciate our structure.

But I think everybody around the world is watching what’s happening. Everybody is adapting to what’s happening. I think everybody’s paying very close attention to that and that’s kind of why we’re talking about having on-time funding and making sure that we get flexible funding, that we continue to stay ahead of that. It’s critically important for us.

**Secretary Wormuth:** Maybe this is just sort of saying the same thing in a slightly different way, but I think what you see with Russia I think really just underscores that quantity has a quality all of its own. They took, I don’t know, 10 million casualties in World War II, and kept on coming. I think they have just the ability to push thousands and thousands of soldiers into the meat grinder and they’re willing to do that.

So at the systemic level, I think that’s a very strong, that’s a strength for the Russians, is the ability to generate mass in terms of humans, and I think at the systemic level we see them being able to regenerate their industrial base despite all of the sanctions.

That said, I think at the individual soldier and individual leader level as the Chief said, they are not nearly as agile, entrepreneurial, and able to take the initiative as we are. So I think that’s a big strength for the United States Army.

**DWG:** I’ve heard some reports that the Russians launched more troops in the fight for Avdiivka as they did during the entirety of the war in Afghanistan. Have you heard that?

**General George:** I don’t know the specific numbers, but very high casualties on both sides.

**Moderator:** Meredith Roaten, Janes.

**DWG:** Thank you for doing this.

You’ve been talking a lot about force structure changes, so I wanted to ask about one of the Army’s US formations, the Multi-Domain Task Force. Last year the third MDTF was stood up and got kicked off. You were talking about looking at hosting the fourth with Japan or another ally in the Pacific.

Can you give us a status update on the fourth MDTF and what you’re looking at as far as the fifth MDTF in consideration.

**Secretary Wormuth:** Let me talk a little bit about the MDTFs. We’re building five. The plan is to have three essentially aligned, if you will, to the Indo-Pacific. So focused on the Pacific. There’s one in Hawaii now. One is obviously aligned to EUCOM in Germany. Then I think the fifth one would be sort of service-retained. The Chief and I have talked, obviously CENTCOM is a pretty important AOR, has been important, continues to be important. So it’s likely that we’ll focus that one on CENTCOM.

We have not decided to put one in Alaska right now to focus on the Artic. We’re going to have one be up at Fort Drum, one at Fort Liberty, one at Fort Carson. And in looking at that, we looked at where did we have installations where there would be enough training range for them to do all the things that they need to do, where would they be situated so that they were close to power projection. You know, rail, air, to be able to get out of the country quickly. And where could they get synergies also with other sort of like units? At Fort Carson there’s a lot of different space capabilities there and that’s an important piece of the MDTF.

So that was kind of a quick overview of our thinking on that.

I think in terms of, eventually I think we’d like to see the MDTFs be forward as much as possible. I think that strengthens deterrence a lot, and again, the fact that we have one in Germany and one in Hawaii.

But the conversations with countries like Japan and others are ongoing. I think that’s -- we can only go at the pace that potential host nations are willing to go at. I think we might be able to see things like rotational deployments of pieces of the MDTF.

For example, the third MDTF was out in Australia for Talisman Saber this summer, and I think we might be able to move to that in the next few years. But we’re not at a point now where we can say oh, Japan is going to host an MDTF or a piece of it.

**Moderator:** Ashley Roque, Breaking Defense.

**DWG:** I wanted to ask about force structure changes. In I think it was October you guys were about to go to the Hill to lay out potential cuts to MLSes, potentially the SOF force. Could you give us an update on where things stand right now and what needs to be done going forward?

**Secretary Wormuth:** Sure. The Chief and I spent a lot of quality time on the Hill talking to members of Congress about the work that we’ve done in Total Army Analysis. And I would also say that I think we will be hanging on our website somewhere, Colonel Ferrell can be more specific, a short little white paper that tries to lay out in a little more detail what we have accomplished through Total Army Analysis.

But the big headlines on that are, you know, in my view this is also about the Army transforming. We are transforming our force structure, we are transforming our weapon systems through our modernization programs, and what we’ve done through the force structure changes is make room for some new formations like Multi-Domain Task Forces but also like Directed Energy M-SHORAD for example. That was about seven and a half thousand spaces that we needed to make room for inside of our force structure.

The other piece of Total Army Analysis is because of the recruiting challenges we’ve been having, our end strength has decreased notably and we, the Chief and I, did not want to have a lot of hollow structure hanging around. That’s essentially unready structure. So we needed to basically reduce 32,000 spaces to both shrink over-structure and make room for that 7500 of new structure, and the paper will go into a little more detail about how we did that.

But we basically looked at, we’re moving away from counterterrorism and counterinsurgency. We want to be postured for large-scale combat operations. So we looked at where were there pieces of force structure that were probably more associated with counterinsurgency for example, that we don’t need anymore.

AS we move to the division as a unit of action and put a lot of emphasis on core and division capabilities, that meant that we could take some -- we could thin out, if you will, some MOSes at the brigade level.

So that’s -- we kind of went through all of these different ways to try to thin out our force structure, but I would say we briefed extensively on the Hill all of our oversight committees, many members who were specifically affected, and generally I think there’s a good understanding from members of Congress about what we’re doing, why we need to do it. So I think we’re in a pretty good place on that force structure transformation. And it will take place over sort of a five year period.

**DWG:** Could you give us a peek of what’s happening with the SOF forces as a result of this?

**Secretary Wormuth:** We got agreement with working closely with Special Operations Command and SOLIC and this went all the way up to the Secretary, that our Special Operations Forces grew considerably over the last 20 years and through looking at modeling major conflicts but also doing modeling looking at what kinds of special operations capabilities did we need for campaigning, for competition, that we still had excess. We have more than we need.

So we will reduce Army Special Operations Forces by about 3000 spaces, and SOLIC, I think if you want more specifics on exactly where those reductions would be taken can speak to that. But essentially we tried to identify obviously jobs that were hard to -- that they’ve had trouble filling. Things again like print media, psyops kinds of capabilities that are sort of no longer needed. Those are the kinds of things that we looked to get rid of.

**General George:** I would just add, we were working this along with USASOC and SOCOM for months and months together. So the point is, I think for all of us, it’s a continual process for us. I was the force manager for the Army when we go through the modeling. And everything that, the things that we want to not have in our formation are actually things that we don’t think are going to make us successful on the battlefield going forward and so we need to not have those in our formation.

Ther’s other things that we think we need to grow and to add -- counter-UAS, integrated air and missile defense. Then there’s obviously different ways we can do things as the Secretary alluded to. If you don’t need these great big CPs, (Command Posts), why do you have to have all those people. You can have other ways of doing it.

**Moderator:** We are under the five minute mark. We have a hard stop at 10:30. So I apologize to those who asked for questions in advance but didn’t get them. And others. But I wanted to give the final couple of minutes to Madame Secretary, Chief, for any wrap-up comments.

**Secretary Wormuth:** The only thing -- and I apologize because I’m a long talker. The only piece that I would want to put out there for you all that we haven’t already talked about, as we look ahead to the ’25 budget. Equally important with the transformation that we’re doing, getting rid of things we don’t need anymore, making sure we’re investing in what we need to be successful on the battlefield, it’s critical that we take care of our soldiers.

So as the ’25 budget comes out, you will see us spending more again on barracks, for example. We are going to be -- I can’t speak to specific numbers before the budget drops, but in addition to investing more for military construction we are going to be funding sustainment of barracks at 100 percent. That’s a significant increase over what we’ve been doing in the past. And in doing that we hope to basically stabilize the quality of our inventory. We’re going to be hiring more managers to help us maintain quality in our barracks. We do not want to see any more reports about mold in the barracks or flooding in the barracks, things like that.

So I just want to emphasize that there’s a lot that’s really important about taking care of our soldiers and that’s something that we’re also very focused on as well.

**General George:** We’re both very proud of what our Army is doing, continues to do around the world. I think the one big thing for takeaways is we are acutely aware of the world and how it’s changing and we are doing, we have a real sense of urgency to adapt ahead of it which I think is critically important. Again, that’s how we operate, how we buy stuff, how we’re training our people and doing all that. And I would love, like I mentioned earlier, to have you out at any of our beautiful hot spots like the National Training Center or the Joint Readiness Training Center, anything else. Kind of an open invitation. We’d love to have you see what we’re doing.

I think that’s what really makes the difference is when you actually get a chance to see it and feel it and see what people are doing.

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

**Colonel Ferrell:** Just to reference the Secretary and the Chief’s remarks on the [inaudible] changes. Right now, 10:30, a white paper will be on Army.mil that will detail everything the Secretary and the Chief just referenced.

**Moderator:** Breaking news.

**Secretary Wormuth:** It’s only three pages. So it’s not a treatise.

**Moderator:** Thank you all for coming in again. This was a really, really interesting discussion and I thank you for your time.

**Secretary Wormuth:** Thank you.

**General George:** Thanks, Thom.

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