

Statement of Chairman Adam Smith
House Armed Services Committee Hearing on:
“Department of the Army Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Request ”
April 19, 2022

Good morning and thank you to Secretary Wormuth and General McConville. I'd like to lead off by recognizing the outsized role the Army has played in the effort to assist Ukraine as it defends its sovereignty. Thank you to you and your respective staffs for all that you have done to contribute to this effort.

The Army spent over 20 years focused on counter-insurgency operations, and during that time our strategic competitors closely watched how we operated, and then modernized to adapt. It's clear that the Army must account for the rapidly changing operational environment, but this transformation must be nested in, and contribute to the overarching National Defense Strategy. I look forward to hearing what progress you've made toward this effort, but I'd also like to hear from the witnesses what help the Army needs to manage risk as it balances current readiness with a need to modernize.

Modernization remains a key goal and I believe that your Cross-Functional Team construct is an effective way to develop and deliver relevant capabilities to the combatant commanders. The Army's six modernization priorities – Long Range Precision Fires, Next Gen Combat Vehicle, Future Vertical Lift, Network, Air and Missile Defense, and Soldier Lethality – provide a path to an immensely capable Army of the future, but it's imperative that the individual programs remain stable, affordable, and relevant over time; especially as threats evolve. Equally important is how these programs connect as part of the joint force, and how we ensure their survivability.

The last year, in particular, highlighted a need to modernize and expand our munitions industrial base. I recognize that this isn't just an Army problem, and that the other services and the Defense Department will play a large role in this, but it would be helpful today if you would elaborate on what actions you have taken, or plan to take, to get after this problem; including how you've utilized new munitions procurement authorities provided in last year's National Defense Authorization Act. If you foresee a need for additional authorities, please also speak to that. For many years, Army readiness has been challenged by high operational tempo and global demand for rotational forces, and this year those challenges will be exacerbated by the significant recruitment challenges the Department is facing. I would like to hear from our witnesses today how they plan to meet this challenge, including actions taken to improve recruitment and retention, and to improve the quality of life of our soldiers.

Finally, the Army is continuing to institute its new unit life cycle model named the Regionally Aligned Readiness and Modernization Model (ReARMM), with the goal of relieving operational strain and ensuring that equipment modernization is timely and prioritized. This change is still in its nascent stages and it remains to be seen how ReARMM will fare when combatant command requirements increase and place pressure on the modernization cycle. We expect the Army will keep the committee informed on how this new force generation model will impact training and maintenance requirements, budgetary decisions, modernization efforts, and readiness of the force.

Thank you again to our witnesses for joining us, and I look forward to receiving today's testimony and getting updates on all of these issues.

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