

Transforming the Total Army

Introductory Remarks by Ambassador Eric S. Edelman

*Featuring General James C. McConville, Lieutenant General Jody J. Daniels,
and Lieutenant General Jon A. Jensen*

Moderated by Bradley Bowman

EDELMAN: Hello and thank you for joining us for today's Foundation for Defense of Democracies event. I'm Ambassador Eric Edelman, a member of the Board of Advisors at FDD's Center on Military and Political Power. With an eye on daunting military threats from our near peer competitors China and Russia, the United States Army is undertaking the most significant transformation and modernization in four decades.

The goal is to ensure that the United States can deter and, if necessary, defeat any adversary. That requires a Total Army—including the active duty, Guard, and Reserve components—that can conduct and support effective large-scale combat operations as part of a capable, integrated, and agile joint force.

That, in turn, requires the Army to sustain the readiness gains it achieved in the last few years while 1) fielding desperately needed new weapons and systems to blunt any adversary attempting to impose a fait accompli on the United States and 2) developing new formations and operational concepts to employ these capabilities.

That is all easier said than done, especially when the administration's budget request for the Army for next fiscal year represents a \$3.6 billion reduction—a far cry from the three to five percent annual growth above inflation recommended by the bipartisan, congressionally mandated, National Defense Strategy Commission that I was honored to co-chair a few years ago.

As Congress crafts the National Defense Authorization Act and defense appropriations for the next fiscal year, these topics are more timely than ever.

To discuss these topics, I am happy to say that we are joined today by:

General James C. McConville, the U.S. Army Chief of Staff

Lt. Gen. Jody Daniels, the Chief of Army Reserve and Commanding General of the U.S. Army Reserve Command; as well as

Lt. Gen. Jon A. Jensen, the Director of the Army National Guard.

This conversation is moderated by my colleague Bradley Bowman. Brad serves as Senior Director of FDD's Center on Military and Political Power, where he focuses on U.S. defense policy and strategy. He served as a long-time Senate staffer, Army officer, and assistant professor at West Point.

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With that, over to you, Brad, to begin the discussion.

BOWMAN: Ambassador Edelman, Thank you for that introduction, I really appreciate it. General McConville, Lieutenant General Daniels, Lieutenant General Jensen. It's a pleasure to have the opportunity to talk with each of you. It's honestly not every day that we have the Army Chief of Staff, the Chief of the Army Reserve and the Director of the Army National Guard together at one time. So, I'm eager and excited to dive into our discussion. So, let's do that.

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So, I definitely want to cover total Army readiness, modernization, force structure, but first I would really love to lay out the context for the viewers by discussing the Army's current operations and the role that the Guard and Reserve are playing in those current operations. So, with the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan, or most of those troops, and the fact that we have relatively few service members still in Iraq and Syria, many Americans might be under the misimpression that the Army is not that busy these days.

General McConville, welcome again. If you're willing, can you perhaps talk about the continued combat and command demand for forward-deployed soldiers, Active, Guard and Reserve, and how many do we see for deployed and stationed abroad right now? Thank you again.

MCCONVILLE: Thanks, Brad. And thanks for having us and thanks for taking some time to recognize the incredible contributions of our Army National Guard and Army Reserve to national security. It's been an incredible year with what they've done both home and away from COVID to wildfires, to storms, to social unrest, to what they're doing overseas has been an incredible contribution. And I could not overestimate just how proud I am of what they're doing every single day for the nation with COVID going on. But as far as the OPTEMPO is still extremely high for our soldiers. We have about 173,000 soldiers committed in the sport of our combatant commanders and our Reserve and Guard are an integral part of that. They have some leads and I'll let Jon and Jody talk about the precise missions they're executing. But they are not only doing things at home, they are doing things around the world and they are integral to everything that we do.

BOWMAN: No, thank you for that. That's great. I was looking at your testimony just a month or two ago, General McConville, to the Senate Armed Service Committee. And I noted that you said that the Army represents 25% of the defense budget, 35% of the active force, 45% of the active and reserve forces, but you meet over a half of global demand. So I think those are important statistics for folks to keep in mind. And there's a lot of conversation about the Indo-Pacific these days, but I also noted that you continue to have thousands of soldiers fulfilling vital missions in the Central Command area of operations and also Europe.

Let me bring in, if I may, Lieutenant General Daniels and Lieutenant General Jensen, welcome again, to both of you. Would you be willing to speak to the continued demand your components are seeing abroad for your forces? What are you currently seeing in terms of continued demand? General Daniels, would you like to start?

DANIELS: Thank you very much for giving us this opportunity, glad to be here today. We're seeing on the Army Reserve side, somewhere between 7,000 and 8,000 soldiers deployed in overseas locations and about another 3,000 or 4,000 or so deployed across the United States. So altogether, roughly 11,000 soldiers in a continuous movement supporting one of the combatant commanders.

BOWMAN: And General Jensen.

JENSEN: Hey Brad, again, thanks for having us today. So for the Army National Guard, about 22,000 soldiers are deployed across the globe. That would be in support of NORTHCOM, very traditional Southwest border mission going on right now. As well as the National Capital Region Air Defense Mission. SOUTHCOM about over 600 soldiers deployed there in the Gitmo mission. CENTCOM obviously is the largest mission for the Army Guard right now, over 10,000 soldiers in CENTCOMs AOR supporting Operation Inherent Resolve, and Operation Spartan Shield, 2,400 soldiers in EUCOM, another 1,500 on the continent of Africa, and then about 500 soldiers in INDOPACOM. So, totality 22,000 Army National Guard soldiers in support of our combatant commands across the globe. It's not as significant as it was maybe

in 2006, 2007, but as General McConville laid out, it's still a pretty fast pace for the Army Guard, but we're meeting all of our missions.

BOWMAN: And I welcome that. And I appreciate how you laid out the details there, because I'm not sure a lot of Americans appreciate how much the Army National Guard does, not just at home, which we're going to talk about more in a minute, but also abroad. And so I appreciate the detail you went through there. Speaking of that, in addition to seeing the continued demand abroad, we really have seen a lot of demand here at home, and I really want to focus on that for a minute.

General Jensen, let me go to you if I may. Can you tell us, if you wouldn't mind, about the role of the Army Guard on Capitol Hill after January 6th?

JENSEN: Yeah. So after the crisis at the Capitol on January 6th, what we saw immediately was that immediate response by the DC Guard where several hundred soldiers and airmen responded to the crisis there. And the very next day we saw soldiers from Virginia and Maryland, again, in an immediate response activity that began to flow soldiers and airmen into Washington DC. And then the mission began to transition a little bit as we established that initial security with the Capitol police and the Metropolitan Police Department and the Park Police. We really began transitioning into an inauguration security mission under the Secret Service as the lead federal agency. Ultimately what we saw is over 25,000 National Guardsmen deployed to Washington DC in support of our Presidential and Vice-Presidential inauguration to ensure that we had that safe and secure environment for that transition of power to take place.

Shortly after the inauguration, you began to see soldiers and airmen returning back home. And then ultimately as the environment here, in and around the Capitol and the National Capital Region, was declared stable and secure, the National Guard came off the mission and returned home. So total mission, over 25,000 Guardsmen, just an incredible operation that was conducted in a very short period of time, very proud of the soldiers and airmen that responded to that event there.

BOWMAN: Thank you for that. You mentioned Guardsmen from nearby closer states to DC like Virginia and also Maryland, but I understand that they were from almost 28 different states if I have that correct, General Jensen, is that about right, about 28 different states contributed to that mission?

JENSEN: Ultimately it was every state and every territory in support of the DC Guard here. So all 53 came to the support for Washington DC.

BOWMAN: Okay. I would imagine that as you try to project what kind of budget you need for the out years and the following fiscal year, I'd imagine that some of this was unexpected. And so I'm curious how much did it cost the Army National Guard to do everything you just described on Capitol Hill?

JENSEN: In its entirety it was \$521 million that was split between the Air Guard and the Army Guard. The Army Guard's portion of this mission was about \$450 million, Both personnel costs as well as operational costs. And we have asked Congress to be reimbursed for that, because as you mentioned, you don't really budget or program for an immediate response event like this. And so there's just not flexibility inside of the Army National Guard's budget to spend \$450 million on an operation like this, and then do everything else that we're being asked to do as it relates to our missions that we just laid out across the globe. The good news to report is just before coming into to this event, the United States Senate has passed their portion of the bill. And now we'll see that bill move over to the House. And we're

Transforming the Total Army

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confident that the House will pass that bill as well. And we'll be reimbursed in our entirety, the \$521 million that will really allow the Army National Guard then to continue our operations through August and September.

BOWMAN: Thank you for that. As we go along here, I'm going to try to intersperse or inject some questions from reporters that I have. And one of the questions I have is from Connor O'Brien with Politico, and he wanted to ask very much about some of which you already covered, but it sounds very encouraging and optimistic that both chambers will pass these supplemental appropriation, or however you want to refer to it, soon. If that appropriation were not to go through and be signed into law, what would be the consequences for the Army National Guard?

JENSEN: So we've been very consistent with what we believed that we needed to be reimbursed with in terms of total dollar figure, but also the key dates as well. And so we've been communicating with Congress since the beginning of summer on that \$521 million. And we really identified two key dates. July 15th was the initial date that we asked that a bill be enacted to reimburse the National Guard, specifically because there's always the lag time between the bill being enacted, and then the money actually flowing. And we believe that we really needed the money no later than 1 August. While we weren't able to meet that 15 July timeframe as it relates to an enacted bill, we were still pretty confident that everything was trending well with the Congress, but if we do not receive the \$521 million, what we are going to be able to see is we're going to see the cancellation of training events and schools.

So, a couple of examples. We have about 1,300 soldiers that are currently scheduled to go to the professional military education or PME or what we would call a school over the course of August and September. Without reimbursement, we'll have 1,300 soldiers that will not be able to go to school. The issue with that is, that is not an easy event to make up in course of time. That could take a year or two years to recapture those school slots, get those officers and NCOs back into a school so they can continue to progress as it relates to their PME. We also see this time of the year is usually a very active year as it relates to medical readiness for our soldiers. Our belief is, if we're unable to execute our plan, that what we'll see is about a 7% decrease in the medical readiness to the Army National Guard.

And as we just laid out the numerous missions that we have both domestically and overseas, that medical readiness is really the key gate for our soldiers in order to go accomplish those missions. That's the first step they have to make in order to be declared ready and go forward. So we believe it's going to have a significant impact on the Army Guard if we're not reimbursed that money. But again, as of 1400 today, I think we're on a good path. We're not exactly where we need to be yet, but we still have a day before I think we get really into the critical last moments.

BOWMAN: Thank you for that. No, I share your optimism, but your comments for me underscore the importance of urgency of getting it passed and then getting that money programmed and delivered so that we don't lose those opportunities, some of which cannot be made up later. That's great.

I'd like to transition to COVID-19 and natural disasters. General McConville, in your testimony to SASC on June 15th, you said, quote, "As demonstrated repeatedly over the past year that your Army remains the nation's principal response force to protect our country and communities." That's what caught my eye. "And communities in the face of unexpected crisis." As all three of you know better than me, the Guard and Reserve have carried most of that burden. So Lieutenant General Daniels, I'd like to go to you. Even as the Army itself has struggled with the pandemic as all of us have, I mean, soldiers in our Army, it's us, it's people. They have to struggle with the pandemic as well. We've seen the Guard and Reserve just do incredible things for our country as a whole, in the context of COVID-19.

Transforming the Total Army

Introductory Remarks by Ambassador Eric S. Edelman

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I'd love to hear first from you, General Daniels, if you're willing and then General Jensen about what the two components have done with COVID-19 to help our whole country get through this challenging time.

DANIELS: The Army Reserve did something that was unique in that we had our medical formations took a paper that had been written by Defense Human Services and converted that into an operational concept. So it was a talk about an urban augmentation medical task force, or a medical task force. An 85-person unit to go out and supplement hospitals, be able to support 250-bed capability with doctors, nurses, anesthesiologists, behavioral health, you name it, all the different kinds of medical support that was needed. And we collected up from around the country those personnel, and only those who are not actively involved in their home communities. So they weren't disadvantaging the existing communities by putting these health capabilities into those that were really in crisis. And so we put together 15 of these and launched them up to the Northeast pretty early on. And they did just a huge relief valve for those communities.

And then later on, we put together another three that went out to Western states. Altogether, besides just in medical treatment capabilities, we also had logistics support where we were helping move around the PPE, getting various protective devices around, moving respirators. We also had aviation assets that were up because we could put them in a bubble. We could move senior leaders around that way. So we put those to good use. We had engineers that were helping with the construction design of those facilities. So we had a lot of different capabilities. And then the one that was interesting was religious support teams to support a lot of those healthcare providers who just weren't ready for this kind of trauma. And so we had a number of those activated for quite some time to help out with that other relief valve.

So altogether we had about 4,800 soldiers across the United States that were mobilized to help out with the relief effort. We still have some that are still activated, finishing up with vaccine support in terms of moving things around, a lot of logistics capabilities on that front, logistics command and control as well. But we're starting to wind down.

BOWMAN: Thank you. General Jensen, what has the Army Guard done on COVID over the last couple of years?

JENSEN: So, while the first soldiers that we mobilized in response to the COVID crisis, four Washington National Guardsmen were mobilized by their governor and their Adjutant General, on the 6th of March last year, 2020. And so we started with four soldiers and ultimately our high point last year was over 39,000 Army National Guardsmen on duty in support of their governor, their Adjutants General, and obviously their communities and the missions that Jody just laid out, absolutely the Army Reserve and the Army Guard were conducting those. And I think early on, what the Guard and the Army Reserve really brought to their states and to the leadership of their states, is an organization. Brad, you know this as a former Army officer, the one thing the Army does exceptionally well is plan and organize. And at this time, I was the Adjutant General of Minnesota and I saw that need inside of my state as well.

And so our ability to put professional logisticians down with state commissioners and talk through options and plan through how we were going to work our way through COVID because while we knew it was going to be a long operation, I don't think any of us really knew how difficult ultimately this was going to be for our nation. And over the course of time we moved from the main effort being organization and logistics to then the main effort moved over to testing. I'm proud to say that out of the Army National Guard, we tested over 16 million citizens. And then the main effort has moved over to the vaccination and that operation. And we've been able to administer almost 13 million doses of the vaccine here in the United States.

Transforming the Total Army

Introductory Remarks by Ambassador Eric S. Edelman

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And so it was a very complex mission that changed over the course of time. And I think the Army, both our active component, Army Reserve and our Army Guard, show how flexible and adaptable we are to complex missions like this. And we were able to do this at home, which always, from our experience, my experience, when you're in your local community supporting your fellow citizen there's just a level of satisfaction that can't be met in any other mission.

BOWMAN: Thank you to you both for that. It's important for Americans to understand what the Guard and Reserve have done to help us. And I'm glad that you laid that out the way you did. General McConville, speaking of COVID, if I may, with COVID cases sadly increasing again in the country with concerns about different variants, what portion of the total Army is currently vaccinated against COVID?

MCCONVILLE: Well, right now on the active side, we're probably running somewhere around 65 to 70% is the numbers, not exact because some people are getting it outside of the military. Then on the Guard Reserve, it's probably a little lower, but again, the numbers are not as exact in the Guard and Reserve because we can't necessarily see them on our systems and many have options to get them outside. But we'd definitely like to see more, the vaccinations are available for all Americans right now. And we are encouraging our soldiers, family members, civilians, to take advantage of that, because that is the best way to defeat this invisible enemy.

I would add that really proud of what the Guard and Reserve have done to get after this COVID threat. And it is a threat. I mean, it's killed over 600,000 Americans. So it is a clear and present threat to our citizens. And one of the measures that we think is going to be helpful is getting our force and getting the American people and helping them go ahead and get vaccinated. And we had General Gus Perna was in charge of the logistics, and his team with Operation Warp Speed, and they did some incredible work to get behind the logistics so all Americans would have the opportunity to get vaccinations. We certainly would like them to take advantage of that.

BOWMAN: Thank you. Given the threat to people's health and how effective the vaccines are proven to be to protect individuals, do you anticipate making, General McConville, the COVID vaccine mandatory for soldiers?

MCCONVILLE: Well, I won't be making it mandatory for soldiers, but we certainly will be taking a look. There's a process going on right now to certify the vaccination beyond the emergency usage. We'll see what happens. There's also discussions going on, taking a look at the threat. People are very concerned about the Delta variant and how fast that is transmissible. So again, from where we're sitting right now, we do not have the authority to make it mandatory. And we are using education and making sure people have a chance to see the science and the value to the team of getting vaccinated so we can defeat this threat that is a serious and clear and present threat to our soldiers and their families.

BOWMAN: Thank you. General Jensen, again, as you know well, the Guard has long played a role in helping with natural disasters at home. I remember reading something a few months back, maybe Guard or Reserve unit, I think it was a Guard unit, California National Guard if I remember correctly, fighting the wildfires. And as a former Army aviator, I noticed that the heroic service of some of the helicopter pilots out there fighting some of those fires, getting people to safety, and that sort of thing. Can you just talk a little bit, if you're willing, General Jensen about what the Army Guard has done and continues to do on the natural disasters front in support of governors?

JENSEN: We've talked about our mission overseas. We've talked about our response to COVID, but on top of that, we had an incredibly busy year last year as it relates to tropical storms and hurricanes. And then we had an unprecedented wild land fire season out West. And ultimately across the Army Guard, we responded to over 52,000 wildfires last year, executed over 155,000 man-days in support of wildfire suppression. The example that you brought up

Transforming the Total Army

Introductory Remarks by Ambassador Eric S. Edelman

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about our aviators, a Chinook crew, and a UH60 Black Hawk crew, were awarded the distinguished flying cross for their actions in California, where in an incredibly smoky environment, limited visibility due to darkness, responded and saved 200 people from an area that was completely surrounded by fires.

And I think that mission there shows is that we are able to perform a variety of domestic operations because of our warfighting skills. The experience, the training, the equipment we receive for the war fight, we were able to turn around and then do very complex things here in the Homeland. And I think that example there of those two aviation crews from California and their ability to save 200 people in a very dangerous environment, shows the utility of using our Reserve component to support our active force overseas because those skills come back and help us at home.

BOWMAN: That's a great point that a lot of the skills that you were trained for that deploy overseas are also useful at home. I'm glad you mentioned that. General Daniels, I'm interested in hearing a bit more, if you're willing, about the role that the Army Reserve plays in helping to fight and deal with natural disasters here at home.

DANIELS: Absolutely. I think that the average American probably doesn't really realize how much the Army Reserve is able to contribute across the Homeland. So for example, back in 2017, we provided assistance to over 4,000 or 5,000 different civilians and drawing evacuations from the various different hurricanes that came through. As you may recall, that was a pretty significant hurricane season. And so were able to assist a lot of folks as they were challenged in their homes. But we also have a lot of other capabilities such as aviation. There are various helicopters help out with medivac and or search and rescue. We've talked about our medical capabilities, but again, that also includes ground ambulances, combat support hospitals, and other specialized medical teams that we can provide. Our engineers do all kinds of different engineering support. We also have significant transportation and trucking capability.

So during some of these crises, we help move things around to get things in high water scenarios as quickly as we can help them get moved. Light, heavy, and medium different trucks. We also have lots of different communications capabilities. Really, the one capability that we use probably more than anything is our logistics, our water purification systems. Because interestingly enough, that's the one thing that you need when you have too much water is you actually need potable water. So we helped out quite a bit with that. And in fact, most recently back in the Texas freeze, we had a couple of different units during an immediate response authority respond to a couple of hospitals that had lost power and lost water. And army reserve units were able to bring that capability in. The army reserve has quite a bit of enablers that we use across the country as needed to help augment those great things that the guard is doing as well.

BOWMAN: Thank you. With our remaining time, I want to transition now if I may, to a discussion of readiness, modernization, force structure, in that order. And as all three of you know well, and many of the viewers may know, and I say it for their benefit--Readiness: is an Army unit, or is the Army broadly ready to do what it's designed to do? Is it ready to go and fulfill its mission, do that effectively, and come home safely? Modernization: does the Army have modernized equipment? We want our soldiers have the best in the world. We want them to never confront a foe with better weapons and systems. And force structure, do we have enough people, and are we structured and organized in an appropriate and most effective way to deal with the threats that we confront to our core interests? So those are the three topics.

BOWMAN: So with that little CliffsNotes version, let's jump in, if I may, to readiness. General McConville, if I can go to you, we've seen the Army dig out of a significant tactical readiness hole in the last few years. I know during my time on Capitol Hill, I have had a second-row seat to Army Vice Chiefs coming to the Hill every year, warning about the readiness crisis in 2016,2017 timeframe. I'm so glad to see that the Army has really dug out of that and really is a much better place in tactical readiness. For my part, I'm eager to not see any service go back to what we saw in the 2016, 2017 timeframe.

Transforming the Total Army

Introductory Remarks by Ambassador Eric S. Edelman

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Moderated by Bradley Bowman

And here's my question, General McConville. What, in your view, has enabled those significant readiness gains that we've seen in the last few years and what is key to sustaining those readiness gains?

MCCONVILLE: Well, I think at the end of the day, it comes down to resources. And what do I mean by resources? It's time and money to do the training. You know, we've got to give our soldiers an opportunity to get out there and train. And it's a focus on taking advantage of building organizations from the bottom up and making sure they have the time and resources to change. You know, we bring in a hundred about 120 to 130,000 soldiers every single year. So those soldiers have to train and our Guard and Reserve, and our Regular Army forces have done a great job through COVID because they have to go out and actually recruit these soldiers while COVID is going on, while they may not be going to school and they've been able to do that. So that's the first thing is bringing in the right people.

And then it's getting through the initial military training that's required for their skillset. Again, that has been very challenged by COVID because it just makes everything much, much more difficult. And then once they're in the units, they have to do squad, platoon, company training, and then we have to get to our combat training centers so they can get collective training. And I just had a great experience of going out to the National Training Center, over to Fort Hood for an external combat training center, and then to Fort Polk. And I got to see three different Guard brigades with multiple enablers, from many, many states getting after that tough training.

And it's really, to use an analogy, you got to do repetitions, you've got to do multiple rehearsals, and that's what training is all about. And it's fragile. And if you move away from it or you don't get the resources, or you don't have the time to train, that readiness can quickly be lost. And that's why it's a continuous process because every day we're bringing new soldiers in. Every day we have to continue to train, and we must have those resources to do that. And that's a challenge when you're trying to modernize the Army. And when you try to maintain a minimum level of age and strength that you have, because the only other place you can look for money is readiness. So we want to continue to see the amount of resources that we need to maintain the Army ready.

BOWMAN: Thank you for that. That's a wonderful highlight of several things I want to dig into in more detail here in a moment, including the combat training centers. But I really appreciate how your comments highlight that all three of these things are connected. I talked about readiness, modernization, and force structure. You talked about the importance of training to readiness. Well, if we have an Army that's not big enough, and soldiers and units don't have enough time at home station between deployments, then not only is that hard on families, but it also makes it tough to get the training time you need. And so that makes the size of the Army matter. And as we're going to talk about a little bit later, you're prioritizing modernization because you have to. But if you're going to prioritize that, then you have to take risks elsewhere.

And what are the consequences of that? So we'll dig into all of that, but I love how that kind of showed the connectivity of the three. General Daniels, if I can go to you. When we talk about readiness, an essential question that you hear in the beltway and on my mind is readiness for what? Readiness to do what? What is the mission? A core focus of DOD's transformation efforts is assuring that we are better prepared to conduct, if necessary, large scale combat operations against near peer adversaries. That was really a focus as you know, of the 2018 National Defense Strategy and presumably of the next National Defense Strategy to come. What is the role of the Army Reserve when it comes to supporting or conducting such combat operations? For example, are there Army Reserve soldiers who would be among the first to deploy in such a scenario?

Transforming the Total Army

Introductory Remarks by Ambassador Eric S. Edelman

*Featuring General James C. McConville, Lieutenant General Jody J. Daniels,
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DANIELS: Interestingly enough, indeed there are. So the Army Reserve provides a lot of the port opening capabilities, and the theater opening capabilities, as well as support to our mobilization sites. So there's a lot of mobilization support force that goes out. The Guard also does that mobilization support to those [mobilization] sites so that we can help catch all of our forces overseas so in addition to those enablers. So the Army Reserve has quite a few of the enablers that will go forward early in terms of your medical, transportation, water, those kinds of logistic-kinds of capabilities. So we are in fact trying to keep those as ready as possible and continually test those, do various different exercises. I was at a liquid logistics exercise earlier this year, they were laying down five miles worth of pipeline, running fuel through it, testing it, and making sure it was good. They're keeping those skills fresh and current while being safe in a COVID environment.

BOWMAN: That's outstanding. There might be some people sitting at home are thinking, "Hey, we've got to keep the active-duty forces ready to go to fight tonight, but those Guard and Reserve folk, we can worry about them coming along several months later." What I hear you saying is that there are people on the Army Reserve, that'll be among the first to deploy if we're going to effectively get our combat power there and able to do their jobs. Is that a decent summary?

DANIELS: That is absolutely true. And it's true of some of the Guard forces as well. So there are various capabilities in the Reserve component that enable the active people in it to be as successful.

BOWMAN: Let's go to that, General Jensen. What are some of those Guard units that would be among the first to deploy in a large-scale combat operation?

JENSEN: Well, as General Daniels laid out, they're initially are going to be enabling forces. As you laid out, our immediate response is going to come from the active component as it relates to brigades, or brigade combat teams, or divisions. Jody and I, what we're going to do is we're going to help enable that effort. And then as it relates to the Army Guard, because of our peer size, we're over 337,000 soldiers, we have 27 brigade combat teams, we're going to come back behind the Army. What we provide them I believe is, is endurance, and stamina, and mass. And so as we come in behind those initial deploying units from the active component, and the enabling force from the Army Reserve and the National Guard, we're going to provide, again that stamina for the Army to fight for a period of time, whatever period of time that is.

And again, for us, it's primarily those 27 brigade combat teams, but we really, again, because of the size of the Army National Guard, we really look a lot like our active component. I always say that the Army National Guard really has everything the active component has with the exception of a couple of key capabilities that are in the Army Reserve; Civil Affairs, PSYOPS, for example. But outside of that, we pretty much look like our active component brothers and sisters, in terms of formations and force structure.

BOWMAN: General Daniels, what would be your overall kind of 30 second assessment of readiness in the Army Reserve right now? What's going well, and where do you have concerns?

DANIELS: My motto right now is ready now, shaping tomorrow. So I believe that we're in a really good state in terms of our individual readiness. We lost a little bit of collective readiness due to COVID, and our challenges of trying to have lots of people in close proximity, do small unit kinds of activities. But we're getting after it. We're supporting 15 CTC rotations this year, we've got 14 major exercises that we're also supporting, as well as those who were continuing to deploy. Over the years, we've had like 11,000 since COVID started, have continued to deploy to various combatant

commands. So we're continuing to stay after it, continuing to stay ready as best we possibly can. And as we look towards the future, what sort of capabilities will we need for modernization, but that'll be for the next discussion.

BOWMAN: General Jensen, what's your version of that? What's going well for the Army National Guard and readiness, and where are your concerns?

JENSEN: I think because of the diversity of our mission portfolio, for us, what was key is our ability to prioritize training and specifically units. Because you look across the country, we were involved in COVID-19 responses in every state and territory. So, every unit was impacted and infected for the last two years as it relates to COVID-19. So, what we were able to do though, is identify those key units that were going to go on a GFMAP mission, prioritize them and get them through their training gates that they need so they could meet those mission windows. Second behind them, knowing that we're just a year away from doing this all over again, those units that were right behind them, they were our second priority to ensure that we were getting them through their training gates, so when it became their time to mobilize and deploy, they were able to do so.

I think it's this ability to balance future requirements with current operations and emerging operations. The Southwest border for example, there was a time this year where we thought maybe that mission was going to go off the table. It didn't and once we got the order to execute that mission, we were able to do so in a very quick manner. It's that ability of plans, future operations, and current operations being balanced, and that you've got your priorities right.

BOWMAN: Thank you for that. And for the viewers, GFMAP, when we say that we're referring to the plan, the global plan for future deployments, generally speaking in layman's terms. General Jensen, let me, if I may, drill down a little bit, because based on my research here, and also I know Thomas Spoehr over at Heritage is doing great work as on this as well, I see readiness is generally much better, but some of the lingering concerns I see a lot of them are in the Army National Guard. What is the readiness standard for the National Guard brigade combat teams? What's the standard you're shooting for on PCTs in the Army National Guard?

JENSEN: So, so the Army National Guard is primarily funded to be at platoon proficiency. And then as we identify units that are going to go up to the combat training center in a normal year, what we would do is we would help move those units and those brigades up to company level proficiency, so as they arrive at the CTC, they can go above company-level proficiency. We haven't had a normal year in the last two years. And so what we've really focused on for those units that were going to the CTCs is, initially as General Daniels laid out, that individual soldier qualification, and then crews, squads, and then platoons. Knowing that there was an impact on this, so our ability to conduct safe operations, and then every day get a little bit better. Every day, climb that training readiness ladder.

We were very fortunate to share that the Army Guard will have five combat training center rotations, two at NTC, two at JRTC. And then we have our 54th SFAB that will be down at Fort Polk later in August. So that's a very heavy year for the Guard, we normally don't get five rotations in one year, but it has worked out very well for us. It's allowed us to get back to complex, collective training in some of our larger formations.

BOWMAN: That individual soldier readiness that you described, squad, platoon, company, battalion is so essential, right? And that's the foundation on which brigade combat teams are ready. My understanding, and General Jensen, please correct me if I have this wrong, is that the standard for BCT readiness in the Guard is 33% at the highest level of readiness. Is that correct? And which BCTs in the Guard are currently meeting that standard at the highest level of readiness?

Transforming the Total Army

Introductory Remarks by Ambassador Eric S. Edelman

*Featuring General James C. McConville, Lieutenant General Jody J. Daniels,
and Lieutenant General Jon A. Jensen*

Moderated by Bradley Bowman

JENSEN: As you look at the Reserve component, we kind of look at a five-year model for them. And so as it relates to you moving through a readiness cycle, a sustain readiness model was our previous readiness cycle. I think we're going to talk about ReARMM here in a little bit as our new unit life cycle. But traditionally what you would see is about 20% of a given force every year that we would make available. Of course, that depends on what's going on globally. Some years it's more than that. In many years it's more than that.

But generally, what we look at is about 20% of the entire formation to go forward. And again, these are all about planned operations that we know about. When we begin moving into contingency operations, of course, that changes the equation there. And our ability to make units more ready in a quicker manner really depends on, how large of a formation are we talking about? Brad, as you mentioned, a brigade, almost 4,000 soldiers, very complex organization. It takes longer to get a brigade combat team ready for employment overseas than let's say a transportation company of 165 soldiers.

BOWMAN: Thank you for that. And I know when officials such as a senior officer such as yourself speak, you're speaking to lots of people, you're speaking to potential adversaries. You're speaking to allies, you're speaking to the American people. And for those listening on Capitol Hill, I encourage you to look at Army National Guard BCT readiness, and when you're making funding decisions. Because if you don't provide that funding, we're not going to help get our BCTs where we need them to get.

General McConville, in the fiscal year '22 budget proposal, the department requested funds for over 1,100 operating tempo full spectrum training miles per month. For those who aren't familiar with that, that is essentially how we fund our ground maneuver units based on the number of miles the primary vehicles are going to drive per month. I know that gets pretty wonky quickly, but that's how we measure how we're funding our BCTs. That 1,100 number caught my attention. How does that compare to the FY-21 operating tempo full spectrum training miles for our Total Army BCTs?

MCCONVILLE: Yeah, I'll have to check on the exact numbers and how that compares. But basically, what we have put in place, and we talk about combat training center rotations. And it's about 20 combat training rotations is what we think we need. We think we have the right amount of money and readiness. We actually upped our flying hours. And what's interesting is, some of the things that we're getting after, you mentioned miles, in some ways we talk about flying hours. We put 12.2 flying hours, and that's what we fund that. What we're really at is just the outcome. We got so much money based on those miles, or based on those flying hours. What does that equate to readiness inside those, not only brigade combat teams, but also those other key enablers that you talked about that are in the Guard and Reserve, and making sure they're ready to go?

We're actually taking a hard look at that, because I want to make sure that every dollar we get for readiness has an outcome. And we don't want to pay for under readiness this, but we certainly don't want to pay for over readiness too. And because every dollar in the Army counts, and if we pay too much for readiness, that means we're not paying for modernization, which is quite frankly, future readiness. We're laying off, as you said, we have to reduce force structure and strength, which means that our troops are not getting the time they need to recover before they go to training. It's a mosaic and an equation that we're really taking a hard look at. Very similar to the Night Court and deep dive we did with modernization, we're coming back and doing the same thing on readiness. And we're doing the same thing on personnel to make sure that every single person matters, and every single readiness dollar matters also.

Transforming the Total Army

Introductory Remarks by Ambassador Eric S. Edelman

*Featuring General James C. McConville, Lieutenant General Jody J. Daniels,
and Lieutenant General Jon A. Jensen*

Moderated by Bradley Bowman

BOWMAN: For the viewers, the Night Courts that General McConville is referring to, is this effort over several years where the Army really looked at itself and said, we have delayed modernization for too long. Our adversaries, our fielding capabilities that are as good or better. In some cases, where can we cut things within the Army's own budget to make room for these modernized systems that our troops need? And the Army really, through a rigorous systemic effort across administrations, in my view, has done a great job of making tough choices, really tough choices to create that budget space for modernization –And it's important that money stay in the Army so that it can be used for its purpose, and that is to modernize the Army.

A real quick comment on the full spectrum training miles, according to the Army's budget documents, the number was 1,489 last year, and it's 1,109 this year. And so that's a 26% reduction. And so General McConville, you said it well, you're a former Army aviator. If you don't fly, right, the readiness erodes. And the same thing is true for M1 Abrams tanks or Bradleys, they got to get in those hours and those iterations. And so I just highlight this, and I don't need anyone to comment unless you want to, is that these are the things that Capitol Hill's got to watch closely, otherwise we're going to see readiness erode over time if we're not making those investments in training. And CTC rotations, I would just flag and I'll pause if anyone wants to comment. The CTC rotations, General Jensen, for the Army National Guard in '21, I think is five. I believe that's what you said. In the budget proposal for '22, it's down to two. So from five CTC rotations down to two, do I have that right? Or do you want to comment General Jensen, or shall I move on?

JENSEN: No, you're correct as it relates to the budget proposal. And so, we're working really close with HQDA on that. I think there are other opportunities that the Army Guard can put themselves in to recapture some of those lost CTC rotations. Our ability to augment active component brigades when they go to CTC, our ability to augment the opposing force element at our CTCs. Our ability to come and serve as guest OCs, observer controllers, during those exercises. So I think over the course of time we've gotten really focused on your brigade flag has to go to a CTC. But there are any number of other opportunities as it relates to those training installations where we can go and gain proficiency, gain experience, and then ultimately gain readiness.

And so I will tell you, from my one year as the director of the Army Guard, I don't think that we would be able to maintain five CTC rotations every year. That is a big, big lift. There's, I think, an exact number out there, or a better number. But what we're going to do, is we're going to take advantage of every opportunity we can to go to Fort Polk and Fort Irwin and ensure that our soldiers have that professional experience that's so important in the development of our officers and our NCO Corps.

BOWMAN: Army officers are famous for doing the best with what they get. But it seems to me there is no substitute for CTC rotations. And would you agree General Jensen that the ideal number is something north of two rotations a year for the Army National Guard? Maybe not five, but is it more than two?

JENSEN: Yeah. Well, if you just look at our current force structure, we have five ABCTs. And so, you could calculate, well we need to do one heavy rotation a year just out of our ABCTs, our armored brigade combat teams. And then we have 20 IBCTs. And so, we have a capability of doing more than one per year, because if you're only doing one per year out of your IBCTs, a soldier or a leader could very well go their entire career and never get to a CTC. And so I think we could build that back to two, what we would call light rotations. Get that number to two or even three. And I think we're really meeting, I think, the professional development requirements of our brigade combat teams. But as I mentioned, there are other opportunities as well to be a part of that exercise.

Transforming the Total Army

Introductory Remarks by Ambassador Eric S. Edelman

*Featuring General James C. McConville, Lieutenant General Jody J. Daniels,
and Lieutenant General Jon A. Jensen*

Moderated by Bradley Bowman

BOWMAN: Thank you. So, by my [Poli-Sci] math, that would be about three to four Army National Guard rotations per year is what I heard you just say there. All right, transitioning, if I may, to ReARMM. A Regionally Aligned Readiness Modernization Model. General McConville, if you're willing, what is that? How is it different than what the Army has done in the past? And why is the Army making this change to the ReARMM?

MCCONVILLE: Well, Brad, really what this is about is trying to get some balance and predictability in the force as we move forward. And as General Jon Jensen said very eloquently is, we want to make sure that the troops know when they're going to train, when they're going to modernize. And all these come together. And also, it's a model for the combatant commanders to have a good idea of predictability of what is available to them in their region to support their demands. And so it's a balanced approach to get at this predictability. What we've found is even on rotation of force some people will say, hey, it's one to three. But when you take a look a one to four for the Guard and the Reserve. But when you take a look at what's going on inside these organizations, they are spinning very quickly to be able to accomplish those missions, they're either deploy, or they're training deploy, or they're coming back and recovering from deployment.

And then if you try to put modernization in there, which we need to do because we have a lot of modernization come to the force, there's just not enough time to keep the forces ready the way we think we need to do it. So this model is going to help us do that. It's really supply driven, and shows what's available. And it also allows us to modernize the Army the way we do. We have lots of modernization coming in, both into the Regular Army, into the Guard and the Reserve. And we have to give them the time to get their new tanks, to get their new aircraft. And we need a predictable model to do that. And that's what it's designed to do.

BOWMAN: So as the Army undertakes this modernization transformation effort, something that we haven't seen of its kind in four decades, it's a model that creates predictability for units. General Jensen, General Daniels, what does ReARMM specifically mean for the Guard and Reserve? If you are willing to give me a quick 30 seconds on that, if you want.

JENSEN: Yeah. Brad, I think for the Army National Guard, what it does is it takes modernization as a mission. As General McConville laid out, sometimes we've approached new fielding of equipment, we try to fit it in where there is available time. This is a more deliberate effort. And the way we refer to it is modernization as a mission.

BOWMAN: General Daniels, anything to add?

DANIELS: Sure, just like the Guard, we're looking at it as a mission, a dedicated amount of time to look at that modernization. But we're also getting after that, the first word, which is that regional. And I have a number of different capabilities that if they focus in on the region in which they're going to go, they can create, again, those habitual relationships. Become deeper experts in the culture, the knowledge, the language, the community that they're going to be employed in. And gain that expertise and then bring that to bear over the long-term as well. So we're really taking a hard look at those alignments for continuity's sake as well.

BOWMAN: General Daniels, you read my mind. That's where I was going to go next with the R, the regional. I'm intrigued by that. And General McConville, I don't know if you're willing. What are we specifically saying? Are we saying that we will change unit structures and field different weapons to a unit that is focused on Europe versus the Indo-Pacific? Is that an element here? Are we going to have differently constructed units based on the AOR that they're supporting?

Transforming the Total Army

Introductory Remarks by Ambassador Eric S. Edelman

*Featuring General James C. McConville, Lieutenant General Jody J. Daniels,
and Lieutenant General Jon A. Jensen*

Moderated by Bradley Bowman

MCCONVILLE: Yeah, I think so. I can see that happening. I think what you're going to see is base type organizations that fundamentally have the same thing. But one of the new organizations we're developing is the Multi-Domain Task Force. What we need in the Pacific would be very, very different than what we think we need in Europe. And so we're going to go ahead and develop that organization. We've also developed Security Force Assistance Brigades, which are regionally oriented. And when you take a look at in this time of competition, we want to work closely with our allies and partners. And some of the ways of doing that is having regionally aligned forces where the Security Force Assistance Brigades work within the region. Our Special Forces work within the region. Our State Partnership Programs work within the region. As General Daniels said, her units that are focused on can work within the region. So we have a lot of capability to work with our allies and partners, which I think is very, very important. So I see all that coming together as we move forward in the future.

BOWMAN: Thank you. And this is just a quick interjection for me. This is in my mind, at least, another point where this connectivity between readiness, core structure, and modernization come together, right? Our country's long talked about being able to conduct two major combat operations at the same time. But if we have an Army of insufficient size and you're tailoring units to particular regions, then one could envision a scenario where you have a major combat operation in the Indo-Pacific or Europe. And you're being forced to pull units from one to the other because you don't have a sufficient force structure to do both.

And so you have people that have been equipped and trained and focused on one mission, being pulled to do another because you failed to maintain a sufficiently sized Army. So that just one quick interjection. General McConville, you mentioned SFABs, Security Force Assistance Brigades. I'd love to dig a little deeper on that if you wouldn't mind. Just very quickly, what makes an SFAB unique? And then I would love to hear more about the SFAB that we have specifically in the Reserve component, that 54th SFAB. General McConville, what is, in short, an SFAB, and why is it valuable?

MCCONVILLE: Well, the Security Force Assistance Brigade is an advise and assist capability: develop the capacity and capabilities of our allies and partners. And so everyone within that organization, the brigade commander is a former brigade commander, so they know how to coach and mentor brigades. The battalion commanders are former battalion commanders inside that brigade. All the way to the company commanders and first sergeants – And they have the team to go out there and work with our allies and partners, and they are very much in high demand because they bring that expertise of a professional conventional Army.

Which is different than what Special Forces is doing. Some of the great training they're doing with our Special Operation Forces for other countries, working with them to develop their capability so they could do counterinsurgency or counter terrorism, or irregular warfare operations. Then you couple that with what our state partnerships are doing from the National Guard. All this comes together to reassure allies and partners, and to make sure that we have a good relationship with them. And I'll add one other thing too, the SFABs are prominently built around a BCT-like capability, but we can augment them. So if they need a cyber capability, that can come in as part of the advise/assist team. If they need an air defense capability, we can bring those type of things in. So there's a base structure, but they are agile enough and adapted enough that we can add additional enabling capabilities that they may desire for advise and assist.

BOWMAN: Thank you. And I understand that the 5th SFAB, if I'm not mistaken, has already conducted missions in the Indo-Pacific, including with the Thais, the Indonesians, and Indians. There's a lot of talk, rightfully so these days, about the Indo-Pacific and threats there. I mean, there's a tangible example where we're building readiness and interoperability with key partners that will play a key deterrence role, seems to me.

Transforming the Total Army

Introductory Remarks by Ambassador Eric S. Edelman

*Featuring General James C. McConville, Lieutenant General Jody J. Daniels,
and Lieutenant General Jon A. Jensen*

Moderated by Bradley Bowman

MCCONVILLE: Absolutely.

BOWMAN: Yeah. Okay. General Jensen, one of those SFABs is a Guard SFAB. Can you tell us just quickly, if you wouldn't mind, about the 54th SFAB?

JENSEN: Yeah. The 54th SFAB headquartered out of Indiana but is a multi-state unit. We're really excited about the 54th SFAB. As a matter of fact they will, as I mentioned earlier, they'll be at Fort Polk in August to go through their last validation exercise as a brigade. And then what we'll see, is we'll see them begin deploying next year in support of the other SFABs across the Army. And so it not only has the ability to deploy as a brigade, but also to augment our other SFABs across the Army. And so I think it's a natural extension of our State Partnership Program that the Chief laid out. Where since the early 90s we've been partnered across the globe with armies and nations. And I think it's just a great next evolution.

BOWMAN: Thank you. I'm glad you mentioned with the State Partnership Program, because that's where I was going to go next quickly, since the Chief brought it up as well. Everyone you talk to when you talk to combatant commanders, SOUTHCOM, EUCOM, any one of them, they're big fans of the SPP. And they're big fans for a whole variety of reasons – It builds long-term relationships. People meet when they're lieutenants, and then they're working together with one another twenty years later when they're colonels and one-stars. And it really builds that trust and interoperability between the United States and foreign militaries, and really people to people. A lot of these were stood up, as you know well, better than me, General Jensen, in Europe initially. But we've seen expanding those programs around the globe, including the Indo-Pacific. I would note that there's lots of countries in the Indo-Pacific where we don't yet have programs. If my data is still current, Japan, Australia, India, Singapore. What are your thoughts on expanding the State Partnership Program in the Indo-Pacific more, in support of the National Defense Strategy, some of the threats we see in that region?

JENSEN: Yeah, absolutely. I think the State Partnership Program has to support the National Defense Strategy, it can't be separated from that. Early on, it did exactly that, early 90s as the Soviet Union collapsed and we saw the fall of the Warsaw pact, EUCOM created a program, Partnership for Peace, that the National Guard then became part of and created the state partnership piece. So, if you think of those initial relationships of Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, and the criticality of those relationships now, as we look at competing with Russia in Europe, this has allowed us to stay engaged in the European theater, even while maybe our attention might have gone somewhere else in the globe.

And so, now with INDOPACOM and the primacy of INDOPACOM, I think the State Partnership Program is a great way to come in and create these long-lasting relationships amongst our militaries. And then ultimately the key part of these partnerships, is that they grow beyond army to army or military to military. And I can just speak for Minnesota and our relationship with Croatia, and how we were able to partner the University of Minnesota with the University of Zagreb. We were able to partner the city of St. Paul, Minnesota, with the city of Zagreb. And so, these relationships very quickly go beyond the military. And so, my personal experience is that this program contributes to the national defense strategy.

BOWMAN: I completely agree. And Cliff May and I, the founder and president of our think tank, did a podcast a while back with the SOUTHCOM commander. And he was just singing the praises of the State Partnership Program. And I saw it firsthand when I worked in the Senate, supporting senators from New Hampshire and Indiana, and saw how those partnerships were really paying off for both those states, both for our allies and partners, and also for us. So, we have about 10 minutes left, and in that time, if possible, I'd love to cover modernization and force structure. So, I'm going to try to move quickly here.

Transforming the Total Army

Introductory Remarks by Ambassador Eric S. Edelman

*Featuring General James C. McConville, Lieutenant General Jody J. Daniels,
and Lieutenant General Jon A. Jensen*

Moderated by Bradley Bowman

General McConville, as Ambassador Edelman said in the introduction and as we referenced, Army's undertaking a modernization effort not seen in 40 years or so. We've covered a little bit on this, but I just think it's really important to drive this point home. It seems to me we're in a pivotal moment in the Army's modernization program. We have a lot of research development, test evaluation programs that have made tremendous progress, but many of them have not been fielded yet. And to get them fielded and in the hands of our troops, we need, as I think you've said, two to three years more of robust funding. Can you just speak to how important this modernization effort is, why you're prioritizing it, and how important it is that you get the funding and support you need to complete it, to finish it, and what the long-term benefits or consequences of not doing that are?

MCCONVILLE: I think what it comes down to is we must transform the Army right now, because it's really not about fighting the last war better. It's really about winning the next fight, and we want to win the first fight. And quite frankly, we want to have the overmatch that we need, that we won't even have to get in the first fight. But if we do need to have that, we're going to have that capability. And I make the argument, and some have heard me make this argument, but every 40 years the Army needs to transform. It did in 1940 right before World War II, when General Marshall was sitting in the seat that I have right now. It did it in 1980 when I came in the Army.

But it's not just new weapons systems. People talk about the Big Five from the 1980s, but it's new doctrine, which was AirLand Battle. It's new organizations, our special operations forces came out of the desert. From Desert One in 1979, we had the best special operations in the world. We stood up the combat training centers. I went to one of the initial national training center rotations out of Fort Irwin, and those were in the late 70s, early 80s. And it's the Abrams tank, which have incrementally improved over the last 40 years. It's the Bradley, it's the Apache, it's the Blackhawk, it's the Patriot, it's those types of systems. And then it's the all-volunteer force which we put in place.

But we're at that point right now, where I agree with you, we are at an inflection point. We must come up with new doctrine, because we know we're going to be contested in every single domain. 40 years ago, we weren't worried about space, and we weren't worried about cyber. And quite frankly, when we look at potential competitors, we've got to worry about the air, and we've got to worry about the sea. We need to come up with new organizations, that's where the SFAB came from. We're coming up with a multi-domain task force that will buy long range precision effects, and long-range precision fires, that's going to basically help us deter potential adversaries.

We're developing new ways to train: we've taken advantage of the technologies available, synthetic training environment, virtual and augmented reality, and those types of things. And then the six modernization priorities: long range precision fires, a next generation combat vehicle, future vertical lift, the network, air and missile defense, and soldier lethality. Those systems in the hands of great soldiers, and part of that is how we're doing talent management, using the doctrine, using the organizations where we do simulation, we experiment, those systems win. And that's what we need for the future.

BOWMAN: Thank you, I really do agree we're at an inflection point. And if we don't give the Army the resources it needs, I worry about these modernization programs. If we get it right, on a positive note, that's where your historical anecdotes I think are so valuable. The kind of thinking, developing, funding that we were doing in the 70s and 80s, we continue to benefit from today. We're still using a lot of these systems. So if we get this right for our country, our sons and daughters, maybe our grandkids are going to be using some of these systems to defend our country. So, this isn't about next year or five years, this is about the next 30 or 40 years. Are our soldiers going to have what they need to accomplish the missions we give them?

Transforming the Total Army

Introductory Remarks by Ambassador Eric S. Edelman

*Featuring General James C. McConville, Lieutenant General Jody J. Daniels,
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Moderated by Bradley Bowman

So, I think the stakes are high, and no one needs to comment on this or respond unless you want to. But just to my former colleagues on the Hill, the FY-22 budget submission if my number's right, was an 11% decrease in procurement, and RDT&E. So, if you believe what we're seeing here, which you should, right, how does it make any sense to be reducing RDT&E and procurement at this pivotal moment? So, no need to respond unless you want to, that's my little interjection there. But moving on, General Daniels, we're talking about modernization. Very quickly, I'd love to give you just a chance to talk about the 75th innovation command, and how that's relevant to this modernization effort we're talking about.

DANIELS: The Army Reserve is able to leverage all those great civilian skills, that our soldier citizens bring to the fight. So we have a tremendous number of engineers, computer scientists, folks that are involved in artificial intelligence, data science, data mining, a whole variety of cyber-warriors, that they do that on their day to day, Monday through Friday kind of positions. And so, we've put together a unit that looks, and scouts out for the Army Futures Command. And they work with Hacking for Defense, we've brought folks in to act as chiefs of staff for some of these innovation type offices. Because they do have these technical skills, these technical points of contact that they interact with daily.

So, we're putting them to use on that front, in order to bring some of these projects to be sort of the sanity test for do we need someone else to take a deeper look at this? Is there something there, or is it all smoke and mirrors? So, we've done a really great job putting those folks out, and leveraging their already existing skillset, rather than training others to augment. And it's worked out really well. Futures Command is really happy with all the results they've been getting. We've been able to bring a number of technologies into programs of record, based on what the 75th has been able to find out from their scouting activities.

BOWMAN: So, Reserve soldiers with the amazing jobs that they do most of the time, many of them in fields related to Army modernization effort, taking advantage of those expertise and funneling it into Army Futures Commands efforts, to make sure we do exactly what we just talked about. Makes sense to me. A quick lightning round to each of you if I can: if you have one more dollar, one more dollar to spend on your budget, where would you spend it? General McConville, where would you spend the next dollar?

MCCONVILLE: Well, I think you say one dollar, you're not going to buy much.

BOWMAN: One Billion, add a B.

MCCONVILLE: I'd probably buy a candy bar for the troops.

BOWMAN: Yeah, buy a Coke.

MCCONVILLE: No, I think the thing is that, one of the things in the Army right now is about people first. And we talk a lot about weapons systems, and we certainly need weapons systems, but we're in a war for talent, and we're trying to compete to keep the best and brightest in the United States Army. And I think we're doing that, I think we're on the path to do that, but that's why the number one priority is not readiness and modernization, it's people. And if we get the right people in the right place, with the right weapons systems, that's how we maintain the overmatch we need. And so, it is about people. And if I had one more dollar, I'd spend it on people.

BOWMAN: Thank you, General Daniels, where would you spend the next dollar or one billion dollars?

Transforming the Total Army

Introductory Remarks by Ambassador Eric S. Edelman

*Featuring General James C. McConville, Lieutenant General Jody J. Daniels,
and Lieutenant General Jon A. Jensen*

Moderated by Bradley Bowman

DANIELS: So, if I had a billion dollars, I could split it, and I could spend some on and on some equipment as well.

BOWMAN: Yeah, buy a lot of Cokes for that.

DANIELS: So that would be – Obviously there's lots of systems, people systems that I'm working. The Army Reserve is a community-based organization, we're not focused around installations, so I have a different service model, a different delivery model, so I need to have a little bit additional resources to be able to have services in a dispersed kind of fashion. And then of course, we have some modernization activities that we'd like to get after, but I'll leave those for another day.

BOWMAN: Thank you. General Jensen? Same to you.

JENSEN: Yeah. I agree with both the Chief and the CAR there on this. The Army, it's all about our people. And so, what I said when I first became the director is my first requirement to the United States Army is to make sure the Army National Guard meets its end strength mission, as assigned by the Secretary and the Chief every year. And so, whether it's services, as General Daniels laid out, or ensuring that we continue to meet our end strength mission, that's where I would put it. And align with what the Chief just laid out about people first.

BOWMAN: General McConville, transitioning finally to force structure, very quickly, we talked about the Army more than arguably, maybe any service, is really centered around people. Colin Clark with Breaking Defense is interested in Army end strength and force structure and wanted me to ask about whether you believe the Army is going to be forced to do some significant end strength reductions in the POM. For viewers, the POM is basically what we plan to do over the next five years. What do you see looking forward on Army end strength, General McConville?

MCCONVILLE: I think I've talked to in many venues about the end strength. And I think the end strength we have right now is the end strength we need. It's 485,000 active in the Regular Army, and a little over 500,000 in the Guard and Reserve. And I think when we take a look at the size army that we need, that's the same size army we had at 9/11. And we took that army to war, and we quickly found out that we needed to grow it very quickly, even in conflict with Afghanistan and Iraq.

And again, I like to look at historical vignettes, and at the peak when we were all doing 15-month deployments, and we're extending and stop-lossing and stop-leaving and doing all these type things to our soldiers, we had an army of about 720,000 on active duty. Regular Army, and also Guard and Reserve, about 150,000 Guard reservists on active duty. So, that kind of gives you an idea of the size army that we needed just to do Afghanistan and Iraq. And we're in a time of great power competition. So when I take a look at it, I think that's the minimum size army that we need, is the army that we have.

BOWMAN: Thank you for that. So, as we move to conclude here, I want to give each of you an opportunity to say anything that you'd like to say, if you feel that we missed something. So, starting with you, General McConville, anything to say as we move to conclude here?

MCCONVILLE: Yeah. I'd just like to thank, firstly, I want to thank the Guard and Reserve. What they've done over the last 18 months has been an absolutely incredible performance. Jon talked about 25,000 soldiers coming to the Capitol to make sure we had a safe and secure passage of power. And those people were sitting in jobs, they weren't in any type of ready status, but it was amazing when the country called, how quick they could be there. And I looked in the Reserves, Jody talked about the urban augmentation task forces, and what they were, they were actually more combat

Transforming the Total Army

Introductory Remarks by Ambassador Eric S. Edelman

*Featuring General James C. McConville, Lieutenant General Jody J. Daniels,
and Lieutenant General Jon A. Jensen*

Moderated by Bradley Bowman

surgical hospitals, where they used innovation to take about 85 out of the 300. Because the other 215 were in community hospitals, providing COVID support.

So, what they were able to do, is take what was not directly employed, use them in an innovative way, and go around the country, and go into other communities, hospitals and provide them hope. And I thought that was absolutely incredible. So, I've watched this Army go through some incredibly tough times over the last 18 to 24 months. There was COVID, there was wildfires, there was storms, we're in Afghanistan, we're in Iraq, we're around the world, we're in 140 countries. And I could not be more proud of what they do every single day, and I want to thank their families for supporting them and enabling them to do it. So thank you for having a chance to be with you today.

BOWMAN: Thank you, sir. General Daniels, any closing quick thoughts?

DANIELS: I do want to – Thank you for this. I do want to circle back real quick to the INDOPACOM region. The Army Reserve has a really interesting activity that's taking place out there. I just had an opportunity to go visit, it's called Taskforce Oceania, and we're working with those specific island countries. We've got Civil Affairs folks out there, we've got engineers out there, we've got medical capabilities out there. Very small numbers, but big impact. Because you can't overwhelm those countries, I mean, you can very easily. And so, we need to put in small, carefully crafted teams to get after those needs and requirements, working with the ambassadors, working with those leaders. And we've got a lot of initiatives out there in concert with the INDOPACOM leadership, that you all may not be aware of, but it's having a great benefit. But again, thank you for today and the opportunity to talk about the Army Reserve.

BOWMAN: Thank you, ma'am. Thank you. General Jensen, any last comments?

JENSEN: Yeah, thanks Brad. The motto of the Army National Guard is, "Always ready, always there." And I think over the last two years, we've seen the great flexibility that the Reserve component brings to any number of complex problems. So again, as Jody just laid out, thanks for bringing the three of us together. It's always great to spend time with the Chief of Staff of the Army, and the Chief of the Army Reserve. And I think what you see here is an Army senior leadership team, that's united and going the same direction together.

BOWMAN: Well, thank you. Please extend our gratitude to the soldiers that you lead on our nation's behalf, and to the families that serve with them and sacrifice so much. General McConville, Lieutenant General Daniels, Lieutenant General Jensen, thank you so much for spending time with me to discuss our total Army, the great work our soldiers continue to do, and what they need to continue to defend our country. Thank you sincerely to each of you for your decades of service to our country, and for what you continue to do to keep all of us safe. I'm deeply grateful, thank you. And for our audience, this concludes our discussion. Thanks for watching. For more on FDD's Center on Military and Political Power, please visit us at fdd.org. Thank you very much.