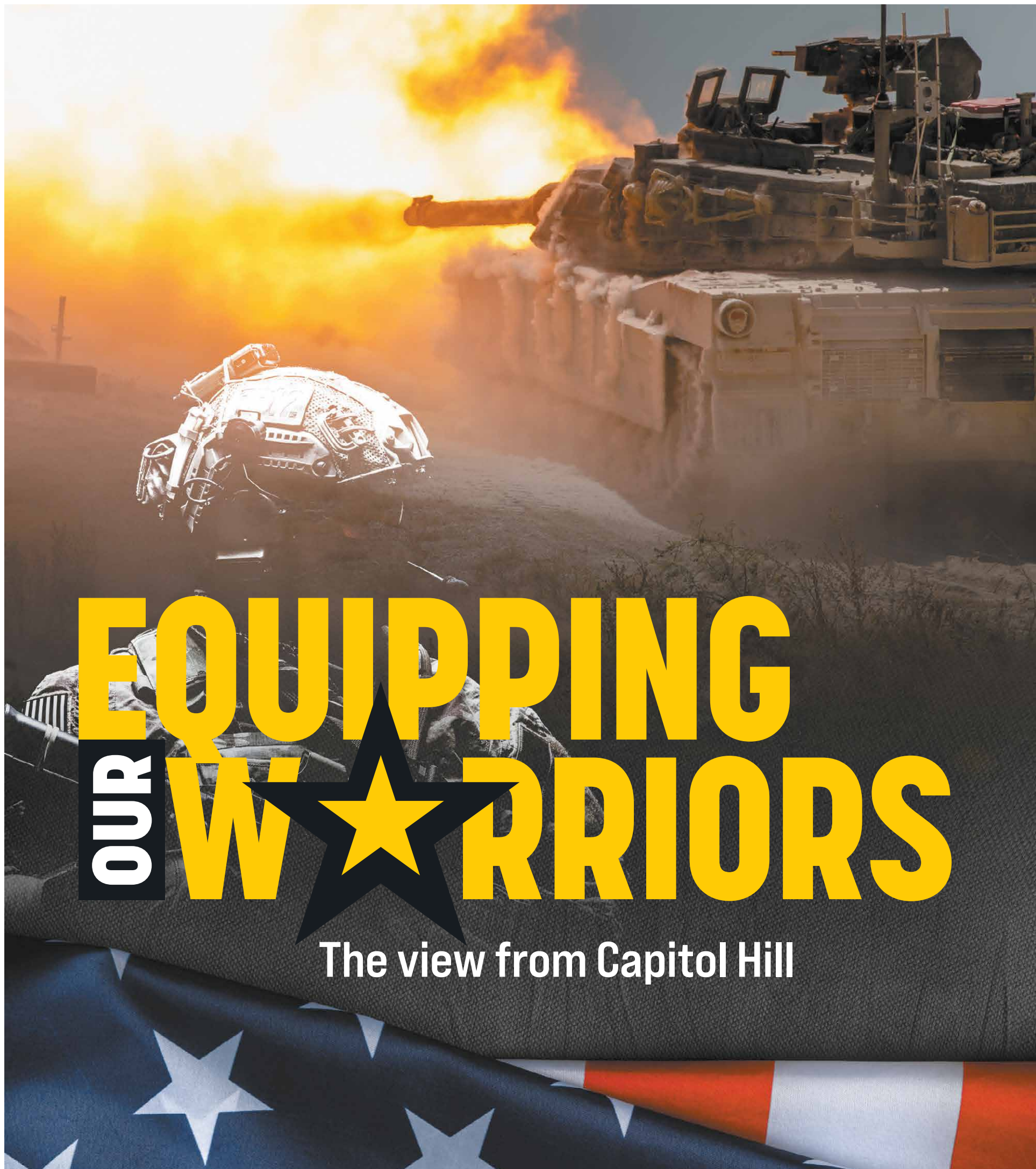




OUR NEW WARRIORS

The view from Capitol Hill

Equipping our warriors: The view from Capitol Hill

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Alaska's military comeback is creating jobs and opportunity



By U.S. Sen. Dan Sullivan, R-Alaska

For decades, Washington underestimated Alaska's importance to America's national security — and its potential to drive economic growth.

That is changing.

Alaska has always been on the front lines of America's defense. During World War II and throughout the Cold War, our state served as a strategic gateway to the Arctic and the Indo-Pacific. But after the Cold War, the Pentagon forgot. It closed bases, proposed force reductions and even planned to shrink the Coast Guard's presence in Alaska.

That was a mistake — not only for America's security, but also for Alaska's economy.

Since I was elected to the Senate, I have worked to reverse that neglect through my seat on the Senate Armed Services Committee and as chairman of the Senate Commerce Subcommittee overseeing the Coast Guard. Working closely with Alaska communities, we have helped restore our state's central role in America's Arctic and Indo-Pacific strategy.

The result is one of the largest military buildups in Alaska's history — and a tremendous economic opportunity for Alaska workers and businesses.

This is about more than just a buildup of military forces and equipment. It is about good-paying jobs, billions of dollars in investment and opportunities for Alaska contractors, engineers, manufacturers, suppliers and skilled tradespeople.

The latest example is the full recapitalization of Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in Anchorage.

At \$7 billion, the Fighter Town Recapitalization Project is likely the largest military construction project in Alaska's history. Over the next decade,



PHOTO CREDIT: ALEJANDRO PEÑA

A U.S. Air Force Guardian Angel assigned to the 212th Rescue Squadron, 176th Wing, Alaska Air National Guard, jumps from a 211th Rescue Squadron HC-130J Combat King II over Malemute Drop Zone at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, Sept. 23, 2026.

it will create 26 state-of-the-art facilities supporting multiple generations of fighter aircraft and approximately 4,000 private-sector jobs.

That means work for Alaska construction companies. It means contracts for Alaska suppliers. It means opportunities for engineers, electricians, welders, heavy-equipment operators and other skilled workers. And it means billions of dollars flowing through Alaska communities.

The project builds on roughly \$400 million we have secured for a new runway at JBER and another \$300 million for the Air Force's new Joint Integrated Test & Training Center.

And JBER is only part of the story.

In 2022, the redesignation of Alaska's 1st and 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Teams as the historic 11th Airborne Division reaffirmed Alaska's importance to America's military. Eielson Air Force Base has since welcomed two squadrons of F-35s, joining the F-22s stationed at JBER to create the world's largest concentration of fifth-generation fighter aircraft.

Billions of dollars in new missile-defense investments through the "Golden Dome" initiative will further

expand Alaska's military footprint while supporting construction, logistics and other economic activity across the Interior.

These investments demonstrate an important principle: national security investment can also be economic investment.

Nowhere is that more apparent than with the U.S. Coast Guard.

For years, I warned that America was falling dangerously behind in the Arctic. Russia operates more than 50 icebreakers, while China continues expanding its Arctic ambitions. For too long, the United States relied on just two aging heavy icebreakers based in Seattle.

We are finally changing course.

Earlier this year, the Secretary of Homeland Security announced that three additional Coast Guard icebreakers will be homeported in Alaska, joining the Coast Guard Cutter Storis in Juneau.

That decision will strengthen America's Arctic presence — but it will also create a long-term economic benefit for Alaska.

Homeporting major Coast Guard assets means demand for housing, infrastructure, maintenance, logistics,

ship repair and other services. It means more Coast Guard personnel and their families living and spending money in Alaska communities.

Communities from Ketchikan and Seward to Kodiak, Juneau, Sitka, Petersburg and Valdez are already seeing the benefits. Alaska shipyards, marine repair facilities, construction companies and small businesses are benefiting from increased demand for vessel maintenance, infrastructure improvements and support services.

The economic impact extends beyond Alaska's borders, too. Shipbuilding, aviation, construction, logistics and defense manufacturing are national industries. Strengthening Alaska's military infrastructure strengthens the broader American industrial base and creates opportunities for businesses and workers throughout the country.

Taken together, these military investments represent one of the largest federal economic development opportunities in Alaska's history. They are creating thousands of high-paying jobs, supporting Alaska contractors and suppliers, strengthening our maritime industry and generating long-term economic activity in communities across our state.

And these investments are helping rebuild America's ability to defend itself.

The Arctic is becoming more strategically important. The North Pacific is increasingly contested. Russia and China are investing heavily in the region. America needs a strong military presence, resilient infrastructure and a modern Coast Guard capable of operating in some of the world's most challenging environments.

Alaska provides the geography and the people to make that possible.

The federal government is finally recognizing what Alaskans have always known: Alaska is America's first line of defense — and an increasingly important engine of American economic opportunity.

By restoring Alaska's role in our national defense, we are creating opportunities for Alaska workers, businesses and families while strengthening the industrial base and security of the entire United States.

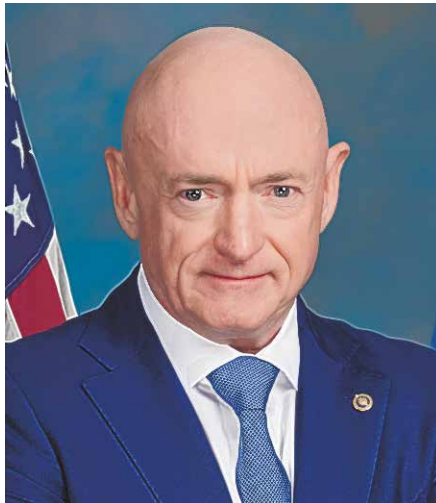
That is a win for Alaska.

It is a win for American workers.

And it is a win for America's security.

.....
Sen. Sullivan was sworn in as Alaska's eighth United States Senator on Jan. 6, 2015. He serves on four Senate committees vital to Alaska: Armed Services, Environment and Public Works, Veterans' Affairs, and Commerce, Science and Transportation.

Winning the AI fight means keeping humans in command



By U.S. Sen. Mark Kelly, D-Ariz.

Artificial intelligence is already changing warfare. There's no doubt AI can help our service members process enormous amounts of information, identify threats faster, improve logistics, strengthen cyber defenses and make better decisions under pressure. China and Russia are investing heavily in AI and autonomous systems because they know these technologies could determine who holds the advantage in the next conflict.

The United States cannot afford to fall behind.

But after 25 years in the Navy as a combat and test pilot and 15 years as an astronaut, I know having the most advanced technology doesn't guarantee success. Technology is a tool. What matters is whether our people know how to use it, understand its limitations and can still accomplish the mission when it fails.

Used well, AI can process information faster than any human and help commanders make sense of a complex battlefield. But in a conflict with a capable military like China's, we should expect attempts to jam our communications, corrupt our data and try to disable the systems on which our forces depend.

That leaves our military with a lot of challenges to solve with AI. While we need to have the most capable systems, we can't lose sight of these two principles: our service members must be able to fight when technology fails, and human judgment and responsibility must be at the center of decisions about the use of force.

So first, we need the Department of Defense to assess how reliance on AI affects readiness, identify the skills most impacted by AI and determine how service members keep the judgment



PHOTO CREDIT: 1ST LT. TYLER WILLIAMS

U.S. Army Spc. Aden Fairbanks, an infantryman assigned to Multi-Purpose Company, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, pilots a ModalAI first-person view drone to practice striking targets at Fort Hood, Texas.

they need when those systems are unavailable or compromised. That's the idea behind my bipartisan *Warfighter AI Readiness and Preparedness (WARP) Act*, that I introduced with Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Ark.

This isn't an argument against AI. It's an argument for using it correctly — as a tool, not a replacement. A pilot still needs to be able to complete the mission when the automation fails. Tomorrow's warfighters must be able to recognize when an AI system is giving them bad information and know how to continue the mission without it.

Because while *AI can assist human judgment, it cannot replace human responsibility, including for the use of force.*

For that reason, we also need a permanent requirement for human judgment and accountability when autonomous weapons and AI systems are involved in the use of force, which is part of my *Ultimate Human Responsibility in Defense Systems Act*.

That doesn't mean a human has to manually perform every function of an advanced weapon system. But it does mean there must ultimately be a human being responsible for how force is used.

Commanders and operators need to understand the systems they employ. They need the ability to supervise their operation and, when necessary, be able to intervene. And those

A pilot still needs to be able to complete the mission when the automation fails. Tomorrow's warfighters must be able to recognize when an AI system is giving them bad information and know how to continue the mission without it.

systems must be developed and used consistent with U.S. law, the law of armed conflict, and the rules of engagement that govern our military.

These requirements aren't obstacles to innovation. They are part of building military technology we can trust in the highest-stakes moments of a conflict.

My legislation would also require the Pentagon to keep learning and improving how we use this technology. Aviation became extraordinarily safe in part because the military and commercial aviation communities study accidents, near misses, mechanical failures and human error, and use those lessons to improve training and technology.

We should bring that same discipline to AI generally and to AI use in the military.

When an AI recommendation conflicts with a commander's intent, or when a use of AI contributes to an error, the Defense Department should learn from it.

The faster AI develops, the more important it becomes to get ahead of it, capture these lessons and feed them back into how these systems are developed and used.

America has enormous advantages in this competition. We have some of the world's best technology, research universities, engineers and entrepreneurs. More importantly, we have the most professional military in the world.

Our goal should be a military in which AI allows a service member to understand the battlefield faster, make better decisions and accomplish missions that would otherwise be impossible while still possessing the training, experience and judgment to recognize when technology is wrong and take control.

The countries that figure out that balance will have a major advantage. That edge is ours for the taking.

.....
Sen. Mark Kelly has served his country as a U.S. Navy combat pilot, a NASA astronaut, and now as a U.S. Senator for Arizona. He serves on the Armed Services, Environment and Public Works, Intelligence, Aging, and Joint Economic Committees. He is Ranking Member of the Senate Armed Services Airland Subcommittee.

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ASSOCIATED PRESS

Posters for the proposed Golden Dome for America missile defense shield are displayed before an event with President Donald Trump in the Roosevelt Room at the White House, Monday, May 12, 2025, in Washington. (AP Photo/Mark Schiefelbein) ** FILE **

Pentagon eyes energy solutions for ‘power hungry’ Golden Dome missile shield

By BEN WOLFGANG
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

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The Trump administration’s Golden Dome, a multilayer missile defense system designed to thwart a mass missile attack on the U.S., will need more than money and time to work. It is going to need power — and lots of it.

The missile shield’s looming power needs were in the spotlight Tuesday at a Defense Department energy expo at the Pentagon. The three-day event featured more than 100 “energy innovation” exhibits, military officials said.

Across Washington, the debate has largely focused on the system’s cost, how quickly it can realistically become operational and whether the cutting-edge technologies expected to make up the system will be reliable in the long term.

Still, the Golden Dome missile shield will require massive amounts of electricity to operate. The system is expected to include directed-energy

weapons and an artificial-intelligence-powered command-and-control system of virtually unprecedented scale. Officials said reliable power must be in place.

“We’re delivering the energy backbone for Golden Dome. We’re rapidly innovating to reduce integration risks for high-power weapon systems and advanced sensors,” said Dale R. Marks, assistant secretary of defense for energy, installations and environment, during remarks at the energy expo. “And if we want to deploy directed energy, high-energy microwave and advanced radar systems, we must solve the energy equation.”

“Energy is the lifeblood of the entire Golden Dome kill chain,” he said. “It goes from space-based early warning sensors to ground-based radar and kinetic and nonkinetic interceptors.”

Mr. Marks described directed-energy weapons as potentially far cheaper than traditional weapons but also exceedingly “power hungry.” Consequently, the Pentagon needs affordable, reliable energy infrastructure to ensure the Golden Dome and its components function even if an adversary targets traditional American power grids.

Questions about the Golden Dome’s energy appetite have arisen against the backdrop of a broader national debate about the massive energy required to power today’s advanced AI models and the sprawling data centers that accompany their use.

The Trump administration estimates that the Golden Dome will cost \$185 billion through 2035, but it is unclear whether existing price estimates account for the massive energy costs expected to run the system.

No comprehensive estimate exists for the power required to operate the entire Golden Dome system.

Mr. Marks pointed to two

major projects expected to deliver the needed energy for the project: the Army’s Tactical Microgrid Standard and the Navy’s Common Operational Resilience and Energy Storage.

The Army project aims to enable the “seamless integration of diverse power sources, including renewable energy, generators and storage systems, into a cohesive network” that can function as a self-sustaining power infrastructure, according to a description on the Army’s Small Business Innovation Research website.

The Navy project focuses on scaling backup power systems that can stay online even during disruptions to the civilian power grid, which most U.S. military installations still rely on.

The Trump administration argues that the Golden Dome is necessary because Russia, China and other actors are making huge investments in their ballistic and hypersonic weapons programs. The U.S. currently lacks a full missile shield protecting the entire country.

Fears are growing that adversaries could exploit those defensive gaps as their missile technology improves.

The specific architecture of the Golden Dome is classified, and its funding has been a continuous point of contention between lawmakers and the Pentagon. Space-based missile interceptors are crucial components of the planned system, but are also widely expected to be the most expensive pieces of the Golden Dome.

A May report from the Congressional Budget Office estimated that the missile shield could cost as much as \$1.2 trillion over 20 years, though the agency described its projection as “one illustrative approach rather than an estimate of a specific Administration proposal.” The White House initially estimated that the entire Golden Dome project would cost \$175 billion over three years, but Pentagon officials and the fiscal year 2027 budget request have since cited a figure of \$185 billion through 2035.

Readiness begins before the battlefield



By U.S. Rep. Joe Wilson, R-S.C.

As soldiers, senior military leaders, policymakers, and industry partners gather in Washington this month for the 2026 Association of the United States Army Annual Meeting and Exposition, this year's theme, "America's Army: The Foundation of the Joint Force," is particularly appropriate for the current security environment our nation faces.

As a 31-year Army veteran, the father of four sons who have all served overseas in the military, and the most senior member of the House Armed Services Committee, I have seen national security from many perspectives. However, one lesson has remained constant: military readiness begins long before a Soldier reaches the battlefield.

The geography that once afforded the United States a measure of protection no longer provides sanctuary. The Army and the Joint Forces of the military must be prepared to defend the homeland and operate across environments ranging from the icy Arctic to the jungles of the Indo-Pacific and deserts of the Middle East and Central Asia.

America is engaged in multidomain competition across land, sea, air, space, and cyberspace. Hypersonic missiles, unmanned systems, long-range precision weapons, electronic warfare, super intelligence and contested logistics are transforming the battlefield.

As General Christopher LaNeve recently explained in the strategic guidance document "The Army Azimuth," a ready Army provides capabilities that underpin Joint Force operations while the service works to outpace adversaries and project power on and from the land.

Meeting those challenges requires more than purchasing the newest weapon system. A capability, no matter how exquisite and sophisticated, has limited value if industry cannot produce it at scale and breadth, if supply chains cannot sustain it, or if our military



A U.S. Marine launches a Neros Archer attack drone from a maritime craft off Okinawa, Japan, Sept. 18, 2026. The training demonstrated the use of small unmanned aircraft for sea-to-shore operations.

cannot move and replenish it in combat.

The Constitution entrusts Congress with building and supporting armies, and today that responsibility includes establishing defense policy and authorities, allocating resources, and conducting oversight. Decisions made on Capitol Hill provide the direction and resources that allow the Army's generating force to build and sustain its operations.

The Soldier who ultimately employs American combat power is supported by a national enterprise shaped years earlier in congressional hearing rooms, think tanks, Pentagon offices, laboratories, arsenals, depots, installations and factories across America. Congress does not directly engage the battlefield, but it has a vital responsibility to ensure those who do are trained, equipped, sustained, and supported.

American military power is ultimately underwritten by American economic and industrial strength. That is why the defense industrial base is itself a readiness issue. Congress helps create the

conditions for industry to expand production lines, replenish munitions, secure supply chains and access critical minerals, develop a skilled workforce, and deploy rapidly changing technologies.

Domestic production should remain at the center of that effort, while trusted allies and partners can bring capital and expertise into American capacity. South Korea's Hanwha, for example, has announced a \$5 billion infrastructure investment in its Philadelphia shipyard to expand American shipbuilding capacity.

In my home state of South Carolina, I see this national security ecosystem firsthand. Fort Jackson, for example, trains new soldiers; McEntire Joint National Guard Base is home to the 169th Fighter Wing and Army aviation; and Shaw Air Force Base hosts the 20th Fighter wing, U.S. Army Central, and U.S. Air Forces Central. At the Savannah River Site, construction of the Savannah River Plutonium Processing Facility supports the nation's two-site strategy, along with New Mexico's Los Alamos

National Laboratory, for modernizing and strengthening the nuclear deterrent.

Secretary of War Pete Hegseth's newly announced 'Fortress America' initiative reinforces the importance of resilient installations, secure supply chains, and independent power. As the military develops the concept for the proposed 'Next Great American Base,' South Carolina's existing ecosystem, which includes the communities surrounding the Savannah River Site, offers a useful example of how military infrastructure, industry, academia, energy resilience, and a skilled workforce can come together to generate combat power.

However, readiness ultimately depends on people.

A capability, no matter how exquisite and sophisticated, has limited value if industry cannot produce it at scale and breadth, if supply chains cannot sustain it, or if our military cannot move and replenish it in combat.

Military families are constantly called upon to sacrifice alongside our service members. Frequent moves, deployments, access to childcare, housing, and health care all affect the force's ability to remain ready. That is why with my bipartisan colleagues, I advocated for the House-passed *Fiscal Year 2027 National Defense Authorization Act*.

Included within the bill is a provision reversing specified reductions at Eisenhower Army Medical Center at Fort Gordon, restoring personnel and clinical services to March 2026 levels, particularly affecting those in South Carolina and Georgia.

From Capitol Hill to the Pentagon, from the factory floor to the training range, and ultimately to the battlefield, national defense is a shared undertaking. Congress has an integral role in combat power, industry provides the capacity to produce and sustain it, and our servicemembers and their families remain at its center.

The next crisis will not wait for America to rebuild inventories, reopen production lines, repair installations, or strengthen supply chains. Readiness, resilience and survivability must be built before a crisis begins.

A ready Army provides the foundation for a powerful Joint Force, and that readiness remains imperative to preserving Peace Through Strength.

Joe Wilson is a member of the U.S. House of Representatives serving South Carolina's 2nd District.



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Inexpensive drones can pose a costly challenge for military defenses, forcing the Pentagon to find more affordable ways to counter evolving threats.

Affordable enough to fire, fast enough to evolve



By Brett Velicovich

A drone assembled from commercial parts crosses the line, and a six-figure missile leaves the rail to meet it. The missile works. The drone is destroyed, but the defender has just spent many times what the attacker did. Next month the adversary changes the drone: a new airframe, a different control link, a flight profile the last engagement never saw. The missile is still the same missile, and it will be the same one next year. Cost is half of the counter-drone problem. The speed of change is the other half, and Washington has spent far more time on the first than the second.

The cost problem

The arithmetic of today's counter-UAS posture favors the side that is shooting cheaply. An attacker can field

drones by the hundred for the price of a single exquisite interceptor. A defender who answers each one with a high-end missile will run out of interceptors long before the attacker runs out of drones,

target it was designed against has been replaced, sometimes more than once. The soldier gets a capability that was right for the last fight, and the taxpayer has paid for it anyway.

A weapon program built around a multi-year development cycle meets that threat on the wrong clock. By the time a traditional system reaches the field, the target it was designed against has been replaced, sometimes more than once.

and will run out of money shortly after that. Magazine depth is a budget question as much as an engineering one. Every service member who has stood watch over a base or a convoy knows the feeling of counting what is left, and every appropriator knows what it costs to refill the rack. When the defender must ration shots against targets that cost almost nothing, the attacker is already winning the exchange — whether or not any individual drone gets through.

The adaptation problem

The second problem is harder to see on a spreadsheet. Small drones are software and commodity hardware, so they change at the pace of the commercial electronics market. Operators swap airframes, add jamming resistance, fly in groups and try new tactics the moment an old one stops working. A weapon program built around a multi-year development cycle meets that threat on the wrong clock. By the time a traditional system reaches the field, the

The model that works

The answer is an interceptor that is cheap enough to fire in volume, and cheap enough to keep improving. Four habits make that possible:

Test in the field, not just the lab. A design that performs on a range under controlled conditions tells you very little about a crowded, jammed and unpredictable sky. Constant live demonstrations and live-fire shoot-offs with the services, against realistic targets, show where a system fails while there is still time to fix it.

Iterate fast. Each test should produce lessons, and those lessons should become upgrades in weeks. Treating interceptors as software-driven products with generations, much like a phone or a car, lets the design keep pace with the threat. Powerus has put multiple generations of its interceptor through this cycle in its first years.

Build at home, and at volume. Upgrades only help if they reach the field quickly. Domestic production gives engineers a short path from a

test result to a line change to a unit receiving the improved version, and it keeps the supply chain under American control. Production at home also means the same line can scale when demand rises, without waiting on a foreign supplier.

Keep a human in the loop. Autonomy handles the work that people are too slow to do, such as tracking a small target and guiding the interceptor to it. Operators keep authority over when and whether to engage. That balance is what lets commanders trust the system and lets Congress oversee it.

The ask

The Army and Congress can encourage this model with three decisions. First, buy interceptors the way the military buys ammunition: in quantity, on a steady schedule, with the expectation that they will be used. Second, fund iteration instead of perfection. A program that rewards a better version every few months will outperform one that rewards a flawless version in five years. Third, reward vendors who test in the open. Companies willing to put their systems in front of soldiers and against real targets, and to publish what they learn, should have an advantage over those who stay behind the slide deck. Cheap drones will keep getting cheaper and smarter. The nation that answers them with interceptors that are affordable to fire and quick to improve will hold the advantage, and the buying decisions that make that possible are available now.

Brett Velicovich is CEO of Powerus.



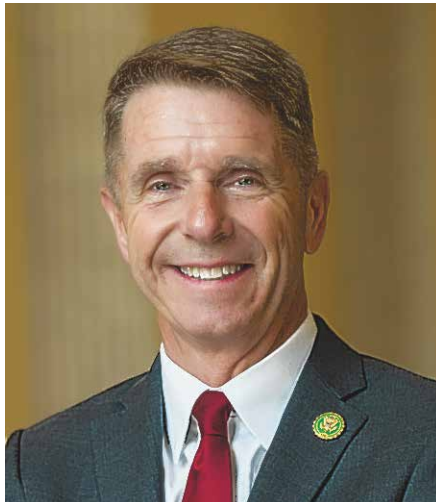
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Moving the Army at the speed of relevance



By U.S. Rep. Rob Wittman, R-Va.

In the last 18 months, the Pentagon has moved through an unusually rapid period of institutional change: new priorities and funding, faster fielding of emerging technologies and new ways of doing business with industry.

Nowhere is that transformation more apparent than in the United States Army.

The Army Transformation Initiative (ATI), Drone Dominance Program, Project Janus and Joint Interagency Task Force (JIATF)-401 are just a few examples of new Army initiatives.

Programs established years ago have also been accelerated to breakneck speeds: Future Long-Range Assault Aircraft, MIE3, counter-UAS technologies, Next Generation Command and Control (NGC2) and more.

Speed matters. The threat environment we face today — and more importantly, the threats we face tomorrow — require the U.S. military to start operating as if conflict is going to break out at a moment's notice.

There is immense promise on the horizon for the Army.

For years I have been banging the drum that operational resilience starts with energy. Fuel and supply convoys were frequent targets during two decades of conflict in the Middle East. In a Pacific contingency, the tyranny of distance and an adversary capable of contesting our supply lines would make sustainment even more difficult.

The Army's Janus Program is an important step toward resilient, independent power at military installations. We should also continue examining how deployable advanced energy technologies can reduce operational risk and support computing, long-range fires, and other power-intensive capabilities in contested environments.

If we have learned anything from the conflict in Ukraine, it is that denied and degraded environments will be the status quo in warfare. Command and control



PHOTO CREDIT: SGT. JOSEPH LIGGIO

A U.S. Army soldier with the 728th Military Police Battalion engages a drone with a Dronebuster during counter-unmanned aircraft systems training at Khaan Quest 26 near Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, June 21, 2026.

(C2) between forces, but also between humans and machines, is the key enabler to success on the modern battlefield.

The Army is tackling that challenge through the NGC2 program. NGC2 is leveraging flexible and rapid acquisition pathways to move expeditiously while leaning into open architectures that enable agile iteration and increase competition.

Technology has repeatedly reshaped the battlefield. Today, unmanned systems — and the weapons to defeat them — are doing so at extraordinary speed.

In 2000 BCE, it was the chariot. In the 1400s, it was the cannon. Armored ships in the Civil War. Machine guns in World War I. And jet-powered aircraft in the mid-20th century.

Today, it's unmanned systems and defenses.

The Army, for its part, is scaling the Drone Dominance Program and drone marketplace to develop, test and deploy small unmanned aerial systems. And, in last year's National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), Congress codified JIATF-401 as the counter-drone test, evaluation, and procurement hub.

Amidst all this change, we must be mindful of the right way and the wrong way to go about institutional reforms.

Here's the wrong way: undertake sweeping reorganizations, propose major divestments and accelerate nascent technologies without giving Congress the budget details, tradeoffs,

The Pentagon and the Army need to move fast. They need to experiment rapidly, identify failures early, learn from them and incorporate those lessons before flawed approaches are scaled across the force.

risk assessments and end-state vision necessary to understand where the Army is headed. Congress wants to be, and is, a willing and able partner to affect these changes, but we cannot be effective without knowing where we're heading. That is why the House-passed *FY27 National Defense Authorization Act* includes my language requiring the Army to report annually to Congress on its transformation decisions, including the capabilities it is fielding, the capabilities and capacity it is divesting, and the rationale behind those choices. This is not to be an overbearing overseer, but to be a better partner.

The Pentagon and the Army need to move fast. They need to experiment rapidly, identify failures early, learn from them and incorporate those lessons before flawed approaches are scaled across the force.

But funding, resources and, most

importantly, time, are finite.

As Congress moves to finalize the NDAA and pass appropriations bills, here is how we can better empower the Army:

First, we need to prioritize more flexible funding, especially at the critical juncture when an Other Transaction Authority ends and capabilities need to move into scaled production.

Second, we must ensure there are off-ramps from legacy systems and on-ramps into next-generation system procurement.

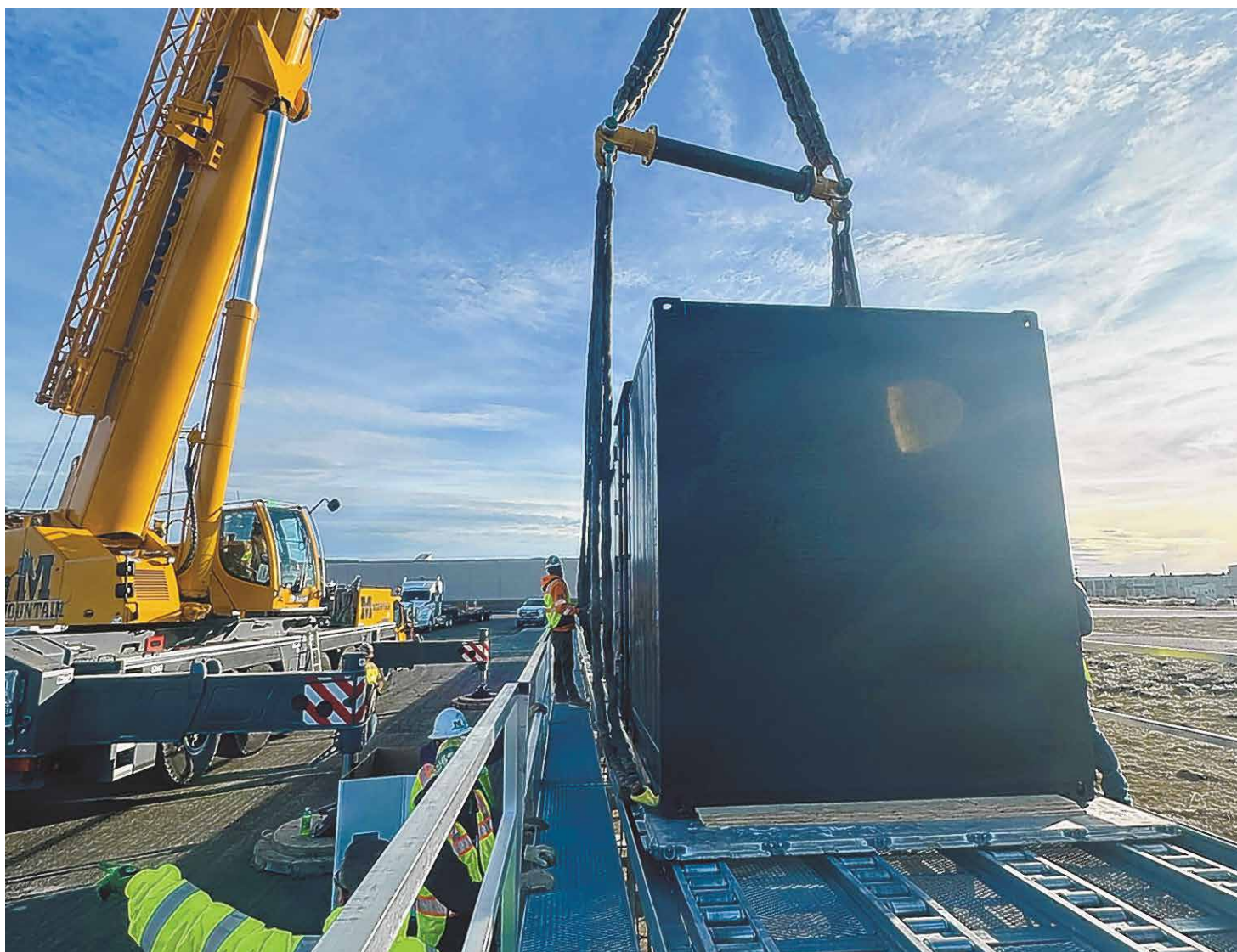
Third, we need to better leverage technologies for test and evaluation, such as digital twins and virtual modelling.

Lastly, we need to supercharge our efforts to maintain our equipment, both in terms of funding and process.

I know the Army is up to the task at hand. And Congress will continue to be a willing and able partner to move at the speed of relevance.

But, in the words of the late, great country singer Jerry Reed: we have a long way to go and a short time to get there.

Rep. Rob Wittman serves as vice chairman of the House Armed Services Committee and the House Natural Resources Committee. Prior to his election in Congress, he spent 26 years working for the Virginia Department of Health's Division of Shellfish Sanitation and as an environmental health specialist for local health departments in Virginia's Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula regions.



COURTESY PHOTO BY TECH. SGT. WILLIAM MCCALMANT

Crews unload containerized nuclear power reactor at Hill Air Force Base, Utah, Feb. 15, 2026. The system is part of an interagency demonstration evaluating the feasibility of rapidly deploying nuclear power using strategic airlift.

Army picks 5 companies to build, operate nuclear microreactors at military bases

By BEN WOLFGANG
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

The Army has selected five companies to build and operate nuclear microreactors on five military installations across the country, the service announced Wednesday.

It's the latest development in a military-wide push to ensure bases have reliable power supplies that function independently of local power grids, which could become targets in a future conflict. The Army initiative is known as the Janus Program, named after the Roman god of transitions.

Officials expect to have more than 20 nuclear microreactors eventually at Army installations. The initial round of awards is

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worth a combined \$2.2 billion, officials said.

"Since launching the Janus Program, our mandate ... has been clear: secure the power our warfighters need to train, deploy and win," Army Secretary Dan Driscoll said in a statement.

"Awarding these contracts accelerates our ability to deliver safe, reliable baseload power directly to our installations," Mr. Driscoll said. "We are building the energy resilience necessary to project combat power globally, without relying on potentially

vulnerable external grids."

The five companies selected, and the bases where they will construct and operate microreactors, are:

- Antares Nuclear Inc. — Fort Bragg, North Carolina.
- BWXT Advanced Technologies LLC — Fort Campbell, Kentucky.
- General Atomics Electromagnetic Systems — Fort Hood, Texas.
- Radiant Industries Inc. — Fort Benning, Georgia.
- Westinghouse Government Services — Fort Drum, New York.

In May 2025, President Trump announced plans for a "nuclear renaissance" that called for quadrupling the nation's power output by 2050, including 300 gigawatts of net

new capacity. One gigawatt of power can provide electricity to about 750,000 homes.

The president's executive order on the subject specifically called for the operation of an Army-regulated nuclear reactor at a domestic military installation no later than September 2028.

For the military, reliance on diesel generators when deployed and local electric grids here at home — the same grids that serve the general public — is widely viewed as a significant national security threat.

Fueling logistics associated with those diesel generators limit U.S. forces' operations abroad. Domestically, if local power grids are compromised, either by a natural disaster,

enemy attack or cyber operation, military installations could lose power.

The nuclear microreactor push is accelerating across the military.

In a wide-ranging exclusive interview on the latest episode of the Threat Status podcast, Space Force Col. Eamon R. Murray said his installation, Colorado's Buckley Space Force Base, is also in line to receive a nuclear microreactor, built by the California-based company Radiant Industries.

"This is a good news story. This is not a risky endeavor. This is a good thing for Buckley. This is a good thing for national defense. This is a good thing for the local community," Col. Murray said.

People and communities are at the foundation of America's military might



By U.S. Rep. Sanford Bishop, D-Ga.

I have the honor of representing Middle and Southwest Georgia, where military readiness is part of everyday life. Fort Benning, Robins Air Force Base and Marine Corps Logistics Base Albany demonstrate how much our national defense depends on the people and communities supporting those who serve.

Fort Benning trains the Army's infantry and armor forces. MCLB-Albany hosts one of only two Marine Depot Maintenance Command production plants, supporting cradle to grave acquisitions. Robins houses one of three Air Force air logistics complexes, sustaining aircraft, software and combat capability. Their missions rely on service members, skilled civilians, and families who shoulder the demands of military life.

My wife grew up in a military family, moving every two or three years as her father served. Families across our region know those disruptions well: a spouse searching for work, a child changing schools, or a parent trying to arrange specialized care. Addressing these challenges helps families remain resilient and service members remain focused on their missions.

That connection guides my work on the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs and as co-chair of the bipartisan Congressional Military Family Caucus. The caucus brings families' experiences into discussions with lawmakers and defense leaders. Progress comes from translating those concerns into legislation, funding and oversight.

The bipartisan Fiscal Year 2024 funding package I supported provided approximately \$336 million for child development centers and \$2 billion for military family housing. These MIL-CON-VA investments support additional



For a parent reporting for duty before dawn, dependable childcare is essential to meeting the demands of service. Safe housing gives families stability through deployments and repeated moves.

childcare capacity and better living conditions. For a parent reporting for duty before dawn, dependable childcare is essential to meeting the demands of service. Safe housing gives families stability through deployments and repeated moves.

The fiscal year 2025 National Defense Authorization Act built on that work. Our caucus's Republican co-chair, Rep. Jen Kiggans, R-Va., served on the bipartisan Quality of Life Panel whose recommendations helped shape the law. It directed improvements to DoD childcare staffing and compensation, addressing the difficulty of keeping classrooms staffed. Construction and workforce investments must work together: a new center cannot serve families without qualified caregivers.

The fiscal year 2023 NDAA established a pilot for special needs inclusion coordinators at selected child development centers. The fiscal year 2025 law also required additional positions supporting these children and their caregivers. Such support helps families navigate care needs and allows parents to meet military responsibilities with greater confidence. Congress must

ensure these requirements translate into accessible services.

Spouse employment is equally important. Congress authorized the Military Spouse Career Accelerator Pilot, implemented through DoD's partnership with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Hiring Our Heroes. Its paid fellowships connect spouses with employers and opportunities for lasting careers. The fiscal year 2025 NDAA established a successor program beginning in 2026, extending this approach beyond the pilot. These public-private arrangements help families maintain income and give employers access to skilled talent.

Congress also strengthened professional license portability in the fiscal year 2025 NDAA and made permanent DoD's authority to support interstate licensing compacts. Eligible spouses moving under military orders can carry professional credentials across state lines under applicable requirements. Reducing career interruptions helps families absorb relocation costs and makes continued military service more sustainable.

Our civilian workforce needs similar stability. Albany reported 2,042 civilian

employees in fiscal year 2024; Robins reported 14,154 appropriated-fund civilians in 2025. Figures provided to my office show Albany filling only 74% of authorized job vacancies, while payroll pressures leave employees covering multiple jobs. At Robins, hiring freezes and attrition have strained capacity, prompting recruitment for at least 600 positions. Deferred resignations risk further losses of expertise. Reliable payroll funding, faster hiring, apprenticeships, and retention efforts are essential to sustaining the people who maintain our military's equipment and facilities.

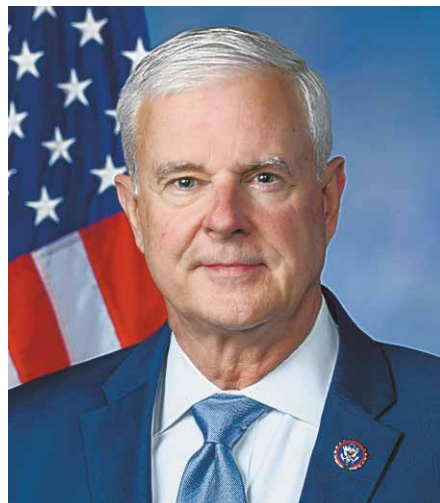
Financial security remains unfinished work. According to the 2025 Blue Star Families survey, a military family advocacy organization, 28% of military families faced hunger, and only 37% of active-duty family respondents would recommend a young family member join the military. No family serving our country should struggle to put food on the table. Adequate pay, nutrition assistance, affordable childcare and steady spouse employment reinforce one another.

These measures strengthen the Armed Forces by helping families withstand disruption, enabling service members to concentrate on duty, and supporting retention of experienced personnel. Continued bipartisan work must be measured by what families experience: care they can access, careers they can sustain and confidence that their service is supported. That is how we sustain America's military strength.

I will always work hard — across the aisle wherever possible — to make sure Congress does so.

Rep. Sanford D. Bishop, Jr. has represented the Second Congressional District of Georgia in the U.S. House of Representatives since 1993. He is the Ranking Member of the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee. In addition, he serves on the Financial Services and General Government Subcommittee and on the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Subcommittee.

The National Guard is indispensable to the force of the future



By U.S. Rep. Steve Womack, R-Ark.

For 250 years, America has maintained a force to defend the homeland and deter aggression from overseas. Of all our storied services and capable components, only one force can, and has, shouldered that dual burden: the National Guard.

I know that force. Before my time in Congress, I served in the Arkansas National Guard and retired as a colonel after 30 years. However, the National Guard's roots have created a paradigm in which it is often treated as "second-class."

The National Defense Act of 1920 established the three components of the United States Army: the Regular Army, the National Guard, and the "Organized" Reserves. It characterized the National Guard as the "primary combat reserve" of the Regular Army.

The National Guard is more than a strategic reserve; it is an operational, combat-tested force that America relies on every day. And the numbers prove it.

In 2025 alone, more than 15,000 National Guard members deployed overseas in support of a broad range of missions. Roughly 13,000 National Guard members were on duty protecting the homeland from natural disasters, conducting security operations, and assisting civilian authorities. And through the State Partnership Program, the National Guard expanded relationships with 116 partner nations worldwide.

This already impressive track record is even more remarkable given their operating budget.

The Army National Guard composes 34.4% of the total Army end-strength but is asked to operate with only 15% of the operations and maintenance funding. The Air National Guard is no different: It makes up 21.9% of the total Air Force



PHOTO CREDIT: 2ND LT. JENNA D'ORAZIO

U.S. Army National Guard Soldiers from units across the United States, including the Arkansas National Guard, train alongside active-duty Soldiers assigned to the 75th Ranger Regiment at Camp Joseph T. Robinson, Arkansas, Oct. 6, 2026.

end strength, but has only 11% of the operations and maintenance funding.

When hurricanes, floods, fires, and cyberattacks threaten our local communities, the National Guard responds. When combatant commanders in Europe, Asia, South America, Africa, and the Middle East require trained formations, the National Guard is already in the rotation. And when the nation requires a show of strength, as it did recently with the conflict in Iran, the National Guard answers the call.

Yet, our budgeting and force-structure decisions require the National Guard to carry out active component responsibilities with second-hand equipment, disproportional funding, and shrinking formations.

We call this a "red star cluster" in the Army: a warning signal that needs to be addressed. In Congress, we call this a responsibility that needs to be taken

seriously. History shows both the cost of neglecting readiness and the strategic value of investing in the National Guard.

In January 1941, the Arkansas National Guard's 206th Coast Artillery Regiment was mobilized, trained and sent to defend Dutch Harbor in Alaska's Aleutian Islands. On June 3, 1942, the Japanese Navy launched two aircraft carrier raids in the first ever aerial attack by an enemy on North American soil. Although surprised and outmatched technologically, these brave Arkansans beat back the Japanese in the opening battle of the Aleutian Islands campaign. The Battle of Dutch Harbor demonstrated what the National Guard can accomplish when the nation mobilizes and trains prior to combat.

But the regiment's outdated weapons also illustrate the unnecessary risks created when National Guard formations are given yesterday's equipment

for tomorrow's fight. Eight years later, Task Force Smith provided the opposite lesson on the Korean Peninsula — courage cannot compensate for an under-strength, ill-equipped force.

"No more Task Force Smiths" is now a mantra that is invoked to caution against unpreparedness and is a warning against confusing capacity with capability.

That is why Congress must learn from both Dutch Harbor and Task Force Smith and invest in readiness over ambition. It is our obligation to modernize without hollowing out the force that must be prepared to defend at home and fight abroad.

The lesson is simple: when the National Guard is prepared in advance, it is the tip of spear; but when our nation waits until the crisis arrives, brave Americans pay the price.

The National Guard is more than a strategic reserve; it is an operational, combat-tested force that America relies on every day.

For the National Guard, this means concurrent and proportional fielding. National Guard formations assigned the same missions and deployment timelines as the Regular Army, while also remaining responsible for defense of the homeland, require more funding and comparable equipment — not less.

Peace through Strength begins with forces that are ready. We should build the Regular Army to meet the challenges of tomorrow, but not at the expense of today's capable and ready National Guard.

The National Guard is not the force of last resort. It is not the billpayer for the Regular Army. The National Guard is indispensable to the force of the future. It is time we funded, equipped, and employed it that way.

Rep. Steve Womack retired from the Arkansas Army National Guard in 2009 at the rank of Colonel with more than thirty years of service. He has represented the Third District of Arkansas since his election in 2010. He is currently a senior member of the powerful House Appropriations Committee, where he serves as the Chairman of the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) Subcommittee and also sits on the Defense and Financial Services and General Government (FSGG) Subcommittees.



A U.S. Air Force A-10 Thunderbolt II assigned to Davis-Monthan Air Force Base performs a strafing run.

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Air dominance is America's first line of defense



By U.S. Rep. Austin Scott, R-Ga.

"Air power is like oxygen. When you have enough, you don't think about it. When you don't have enough, that's all you can think about." — General Frank Gorenc (former Commander of U.S. Air Forces in Europe and Air Forces Africa)

Air dominance is fundamental to America's ability to defend our nation, protect our service members, support our allies and deter our adversaries. Congress has a responsibility under Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution to ensure our military has the capabilities, resources and readiness necessary to meet them.

Maintaining air dominance requires more than buying new aircraft. It also means preserving proven capabilities when they remain relevant. Consider a farmer who keeps an old John Deere tractor running long beyond its expected service life. It may not be the newest machine, but it is reliable, the

farmer knows how to maintain it and he knows what it can do. The same principle can apply to America's aircraft fleet. Some platforms are new while others are older, but battle-tested. Congress must ultimately determine whether each provides capabilities our warfighters need to meet tomorrow's threats.

Operation Epic Fury further demonstrates why this debate deserves careful consideration. The A-10 executed combat missions against Iran even as the Air Force sought to accelerate its retirement. Its continued use demonstrates that older aircraft can retain significant combat value. That does not mean the

Air dominance is about more than aircraft; it depends on the pilots who fly them, maintainers who keep them ready, bases and infrastructure that support them and the industrial base that sustains them.

The A-10 Thunderbolt II is a compelling case study. For generations, A-10 pilots have flown into demanding combat environments while troops on the ground have depended on the aircraft when lives were at stake. It is now being replaced by the F-35 Lightning II, a modern aircraft designed for a broader range of missions, but not comparable to the A-10 in its traditional close air support role. This transition raises important questions about capability, cost and training, including the cost per flying hour of an F-35 versus an A-10 for CAS missions and the specialized training required for those missions.

For years, the Air Force has sought to divest the A-10 fleet, while Congress has repeatedly pushed back. Recognizing the value of a proven combat aircraft, I was proud to offer an amendment to the *Fiscal Year 2026 National Defense Authorization Act* requiring the Air Force to maintain at least 93 A-10C "Warthog" aircraft during Fiscal Year 2026.

A-10 should remain in service indefinitely, but rather that we should fully assess the capabilities it can provide before retiring the remaining fleet.

The changing threat environment may also create new missions for the A-10. Congress should examine its potential role in counter-unmanned aircraft systems (C-UAS). Drones are an increasingly important threat on modern battlefields, and our allies need affordable and effective ways to protect their forces and critical infrastructure. While the A-10 was not designed specifically for counter-drone operations, its endurance, weapons capacity, sensors, cannon and ability to operate from established airfields make it worth evaluating for certain missions.

We should also examine whether the Foreign Military Sales program could offer suitable A-10s to capable allies and partners. If a John Deere tractor has served you well but you no longer need it, you would not necessarily send it to the boneyard simply because you

bought a newer model. You might give it to a neighbor who could still put it to work. The same principle could apply to the A-10. If an aircraft can still provide meaningful capabilities to an ally — particularly against the growing drone threat — we should consider transferring it to capable partners before sending it to the boneyard.

Simultaneously, modernization must continue. America needs modern stealth aircraft, resilient tankers, advanced intelligence and surveillance platforms, electronic warfare capabilities and survivable fighters capable of operating in contested airspace. Air dominance is about more than aircraft; it depends on the pilots who fly them, maintainers who keep them ready, bases and infrastructure that support them and the industrial base that sustains them.

The A-10 has earned its place in American military history. Its continued performance in combat reminds us that a platform's value should be measured not simply by its age, but by what it can still accomplish.

Congress bears the responsibility of balancing modernization with readiness. We owe it to our service members and taxpayers to build the force of the future without discarding proven capabilities before we are certain their mission is truly finished.

Rep. Austin Scott is in his eighth term as the U.S. Representative for Georgia's Eighth Congressional District. His committee assignments include the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, the House Armed Services Committee, the House Agriculture Committee and the House Committee on Rules.

Countering evolving threats and defending America require a whole-of-government strategy



By U.S. Rep. Rick Crawford, R-Ark.

The people of the United States enshrined in the U.S. Constitution our collective duty to “provide for the common defence.” As a U.S. Army veteran, the Chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (HPSCI), the Founder and Co-Chair of the bipartisan Congressional Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Caucus, and a proud American, I take my duty to defend this country seriously.

Since 1789, we have been tested time and again by adversaries and enemies, and we have always prevailed. How we did so wasn’t accidental; it was intentional. We gathered intelligence, we planned, we tested and we used our best and bravest to our country’s advantage. In the 25 years since the horrific September 11 attacks, we have been engaged in a global war on terror and a continuous operation to learn from that attack and stop the next one.

Over the past year, HPSCI has held multiple open hearings, including the first field hearing in the committee’s history, where we examined an increasingly contested homeland in which China, Russia, Iran and other adversaries do not separate espionage, cyber operations, sabotage, and traditional intelligence collection in the way our government is organized to counter them. They run campaigns that blend all these activities, exploiting the seams between federal agencies, state and local governments, the private sector, and academia to steal our technology and secrets, disrupt our critical infrastructure, and undermine our way of life.

A growing chorus of voices is now calling for action to transform our counterintelligence enterprise because the scale of the threat and what is at stake



PHOTO CREDIT: TIANA WILLIAMS

Air Force Airman 1st Class Neal Tyagi inspects an unmanned aircraft system during joint training at Schriever Space Force Base, Colo., March 17, 2026. The training strengthened detection, response and recovery capabilities against evolving drone threats.

demands it. These priorities have guided our work on the Intelligence Authorization Act. This challenge cannot be met by simply adding another office or reporting requirement. We are advocating for intelligence integration to connect information sitting in disconnected silos, resourcing and professionalization of our counterintelligence workforce, sharper analytic rigor, and an enhanced ability to detect bad actors traveling to and within the United States.

This whole-of-government approach to counterintelligence must include a segment of the defense enterprise that is often overlooked; our EOD operations.

EOD techs are trained to retrieve valuable forensic data from explosive devices in the field. Whether lifting fingerprints from IEDs in Iraq to determine the bomb maker or breaking down devices for analysis at intelligence community (IC) labs to identify component origin, new enemy developments, and techniques, EOD techs have uncovered intelligence that has been incredibly helpful in understanding Iranian drone capabilities as well as the inclusion of Chinese- and US-originated components in the downed drones in Ukraine and the Middle East. EOD forces play a pivotal role in information gathering for the IC.

That’s why I have been advocating to

We are advocating for intelligence integration to connect information sitting in disconnected silos, resourcing and professionalization of our counterintelligence workforce, sharper analytic rigor and an enhanced ability to detect bad actors traveling to and within the United States.

create a single intelligence officer within the IC to compile data from EOD units for dissemination across the IC. Streamlining and connecting data retrieval and analysis of developing threat information to IC decision makers is critical to defending America.

After 9/11, Congress transformed our security architecture because our institutions couldn’t simply be asked to work harder; they had to work smarter with new tools. We built new mechanisms for integration, information sharing, identity screening, joint operations, and strategic coordination. These reforms helped protect the country. But two decades of

focus on counterterrorism meant less attention on how adversaries like the Chinese Communist Party were targeting America. We should not have to wait for another catastrophic failure to force the next evolution. Our goal is to drive that transformation now — before the next 9/11-level event strikes our nation at the hands of Russia, China, or Iran. That means every piece of our defense enterprise, including EOD, must be involved in sharing intelligence and supporting the whole-of-government approach to national defense.

The American people have stood firm for generations in supporting our common defense. Through continued investment in our warfighters, intelligence capabilities, and our defense industrial base, our country will be better protected at home and abroad and our Constitutional duty will be fulfilled.

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Eric A. “Rick” Crawford is Chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (HPSCI) and represents Arkansas’s First Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives. First elected in 2010, he began serving in Congress in January 2011 and is currently serving his eighth consecutive term. He has served on the HPSCI since 2017 and was appointed Chairman in January 2025.

America's longest frontline



By U.S. Rep. Rich McCormick,
R-Ga.

This week, thousands of U.S. Army soldiers, industry partners, policymakers, and defense leaders will gather in our nation's capital for the Association of the United States Army's 2026 Annual Meeting. They will spend those days talking about the future of the Army, the technologies changing the battlefield and what our soldiers will need to win the wars of tomorrow.

This is, without a doubt, the most transformative time in military history. Historically, the "king of battle" has been artillery. At the beginning of the war in Ukraine, we could not produce enough 155mm howitzer rounds. Now, artillery is essentially obsolete. Historically, the most feared weapon of the modern battlefield has been tanks. In short order, tanks now have to hide. The advent of cheap, disposable drones has changed everything and has been well covered.

But while those conversations take place in Washington, another fight will continue around the clock — a fight that never lets up.

Every hour of every day, the brave men and women serving as our nation's cyber warriors are facing down adversaries and malicious actors in cyberspace. They stand atop the castle walls surrounding our military information networks, thwarting attempts to penetrate the digital infrastructure that undergirds nearly every aspect of modern life and modern military operations.

I spent 20 years serving in the United States Marine Corps and Navy. When I joined, the military was already becoming increasingly reliant on technology, but the transformation since then has been extraordinary. Today, nearly every tool our warfighters use to defend this country relies on massive, exquisite software suites, sophisticated information and communications networks and, increasingly, artificial intelligence.

Those systems connect the entire



PHOTO CREDIT: U.S. SPACE FORCE/DAVID DOZORETZ

A U.S. Space Force Guardian and a member of Combat Delta 1-5 monitor a space effects command-and-control display at the Combined Space Operations Center at Vandenberg Space Force Base, Calif.

joint force and serve as force multipliers across all five domains of modern warfare: land, air, sea, space and cyberspace. That means military superiority today is not simply about possessing the best aircraft, ship, weapon, sensor or satellite. Increasingly, lethality depends on systems integration.

Our systems are only as good as their integration.

Modern warfare produces an almost incomprehensible quantity of data. Our military must constantly sense the battlefield, make sense of that information, and transform it into something commanders and warfighters can actually use. Done correctly, that allows American forces to identify threats, make decisions and reach out and kill our enemies before they even see us coming.

But collecting information is only part of the equation. That information must move.

Our networks allow it to travel seamlessly across the different echelons involved in an operation, giving our forces a shared picture of the operational environment and the threats within it. A sensor detecting something hundreds or thousands of miles away can contribute to a decision made elsewhere by a completely different platform or commander.

Look no further than the Aegis Combat System, produced by Lockheed Martin, aboard our Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers. Aegis brings together the systems necessary to sense, process, communicate, and respond to threats.

In many ways, it is the digital

Our military must constantly sense the battlefield, make sense of that information, and transform it into something commanders and warfighters can actually use. Done correctly, that allows American forces to identify threats, make decisions and reach out and kill our enemies before they even see us coming.

backbone of the modern carrier strike group. But that incredible technological advantage also creates an enormous responsibility. Every piece of software that allows one of these systems to operate, and every single node connected to one of these networks, represents surface area where cyber operations can occur.

Every new capability we integrate, every network we expand, and every software-enabled system we field gives the American warfighter another tool. At the same time, it creates another piece of digital terrain that must be defended.

Our cyber warriors defend a battlefield most Americans will never see, but one that increasingly touches every battlefield on which American forces

operate. Their mission is not separate from the tanks, aircraft, ships, satellites, and weapons systems we traditionally associate with military power. It is what helps make those systems work together.

As soldiers, defense leaders, innovators and policymakers gather at AUSA this year to discuss the future of American land power, we should remember that the next generation of military dominance will depend on more than what we can build. It will depend on whether we can connect it, integrate it, protect it and keep it operating when an adversary tries to take it away.

America has spent generations building the most capable military force the world has ever known. Maintaining that advantage in the modern era means recognizing that the front line no longer begins at the edge of a battlefield. It runs through every network, every system and every line of code our warfighters depend upon. And every day, America's cyber warriors are standing watch.

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Dr. Rich McCormick is a decorated veteran and emergency room physician who proudly serves Georgia's 7th Congressional District in the United States House of Representatives. Rep. McCormick serves on the House Armed Services Committee, Oversight & Government Reform Committee, and the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, where he serves as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Investigations and Oversight. As a former AI Task Force member, he is a leading voice on emerging technology policy in Congress.



PHOTO CREDIT: AIR FORCE SENIOR AIRMAN EDGAR GRIMALDO

Airmen perform postflight checks on an MQ-9 Reaper assigned to the Texas Air National Guard. Maintaining critical military equipment is essential to keeping the force ready and capable of meeting operational demands.

Modernizing the Defense Production Act is essential to military readiness



By U.S. Rep. Warren Davidson, R-Ohio

If you have ever waited weeks for a car repair because a part was backordered, you know how that delay can disrupt your life. Getting to work or picking your kids up from school suddenly requires rearranging your day or finding alternative transportation, all because some component was delayed somewhere in the supply chain. When the equipment waiting on that part is a Black Hawk or an armored vehicle, service members are left without the equipment they

need to carry out their missions.

Thousands of individual parts go into our defense supply chain. Disruptions threaten or limit our warfighters' ability

risks. American manufacturers now rely on critical minerals processed overseas and components that may pass through several countries before reaching their

Defense demand can change dynamically due to new technology or surge rapidly due to conflict. We must have a robust, innovative and responsive defense industrial base to meet each moment.

to complete their missions and return home safely. Defense demand can change dynamically due to new technology or surge rapidly due to conflict. We must have a robust, innovative and responsive defense industrial base to meet each moment.

Congress created the Defense Production Act in 1950 to fix supply chain production needs during the Korean War. In the wake of WWII, the U.S. abandoned defense production and was unprepared, so Congress authorized the president to provide financing for manufacturers and direct that defense orders move ahead of other contracts.

More than 75 years after Congress enacted the DPA, nearly everything about defense and production has changed. But the law has not. Our globalized supply chains pose specific

factories. Foreign dependence results in vulnerabilities, both malicious and benign. If an adversary cuts off access to critical materials or disrupts their delivery, the resulting shortages can become a national security crisis.

Smart defense contracting can remedy some situations, but in some vital sectors our flawed trade policy has been exploited — by China in particular. For certain items, there is no real market price. China sells below market to bankrupt foreign rivals. This leaves American companies competing against foreign governments rather than rival companies in a competitive marketplace.

Congress needs to modernize the Defense Production Act to help American companies keep our supply chains viable and resilient. I introduced the *DPA Modernization Act* with Republican and

Democratic colleagues to extend these authorities through 2031 and update how they support American production. The Financial Services Committee approved it unanimously. The bill would simplify approval of production investments and allow regulatory waivers to accelerate procurement of critical technologies and minerals, including permitting for the facilities needed to produce them. It also would support mining and processing in the United States and allied countries, giving manufacturers more reliable sources of materials beyond our adversaries' control. Agencies would also be required to identify supply vulnerabilities and plan how to address them before shortages disrupt military production.

When the *National Defense Authorization Act* returns to the House, the *DPA Modernization Act* should be included in the final bill. While the administration has been working aggressively to address these problems, the bill has already earned unanimous support in committee. Including it in the *NDAA* would help turn that agreement into law and provide a modernized framework that can provide continuity in this vital line of effort to keep America secure.

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Rep. Warren Davidson, a member of the House Financial Services Committee, represents Ohio's 8th District in Congress.

Guardsmen made our cities safer. Now, let's thank them



By U.S. Rep. Clay Higgins, R-La.

On November 26, 2025, Army Spc. Sarah Beckstrom, a 20-year-old West Virginia National Guardsman, was ambushed and shot by an Afghan national while on patrol in Washington, D.C. She died the next day. She wasn't in Afghanistan or Iraq, but in the heart of her nation's capital, just a few blocks from the White House, watching over Americans because she chose to answer the call to service. Staff Sgt. Andrew Wolfe of the WV. Air National Guard suffered grievous wounds in the same attack.

President Donald Trump took historic action in mobilizing Guardsmen like Spc. Beckstrom and Staff Sgt. Wolfe under Title 10 and Title 32 authorities to defend the homeland, restore law and order in American cities and help secure the southern border. But no award exists specifically to recognize the patriots who faithfully perform these vital domestic missions. As a member of the House Armed Services Committee, I secured language in the House's *FY27 National Defense Authorization Act* (NDAA) codifying a National Guard Homeland Defense Service Ribbon.

While some states recognize their Guardsmen for domestic service, many do not, and no state ribbon honors the soldier who volunteers to leave their home and serve across state lines. This important provision will ensure every Guardsman who puts boots on the pavement under Titles 10 and 32 is properly honored. We recognize overseas service. Service at home is no less praiseworthy.

I'm a former street cop and Army Veteran. I've walked beats, and I know the feeling of arriving at an unknown situation, unaware of what's waiting around the corner. I understand what it means to wear the uniform and carry out a mission. Public safety work,



Congressman Higgins visits with Louisiana National Guardsmen sent to secure Washington D.C.

whether as a police officer, federal agent or domestically engaged National Guardsman, is never routine. So, when I say these soldiers in our cities are doing dangerous work, I say it as someone who's done it.

Staff Sgt. Andrew Wolfe made a miraculous recovery from the gunshot wound sustained in the violent assault that took Spc. Beckstrom's life. While he struggled to recuperate, his mother, Melody Wolfe, encouraged Americans to support the National Guardsmen in their neighborhoods because "they're protecting us, and they're protecting our freedoms." She's absolutely right. The daily reality for these servicemen and women is walking through dark, unfamiliar streets in uniforms that make them targets for those who seek to tear down law and order. Many volunteered for these deployments and knew the risks. They served anyway, and their sacrifice has not been in vain. The numbers prove it.

When President Trump announced he would be sending the National Guard to American cities, there was an outpouring of protests, legal challenges and media criticism. But now, in hindsight, the results speak for themselves. In Washington, D.C., over the past year, homicides have dropped by 45%. In

While some states recognize their Guardsmen for domestic service, many do not, and no state ribbon honors the soldier who volunteers to leave their home and serve across state lines.

Memphis, they are down 37%. And in New Orleans, during an eight-month security mission, murders decreased by 87% in the French Quarter. But these aren't just statistics. Every reduction means more Americans going home at night to see their loved ones. President Trump made the call, and our National Guardsmen delivered. They saved lives and made many cities safer places to raise a family. They deserve recognition.

The National Guard Homeland Defense Service Ribbon will be a permanent reminder to our servicemen and women that they played an important role in making America safe again. They can wear it on their chests and pass it on to their children and grandchildren. I

urge my House and Senate colleagues to keep this provision in the final version of the NDAA so that the thousands of National Guardsmen like Spc. Sarah Beckstrom and Staff Sgt. Andrew Wolfe, who left their homes to protect another's, are duly honored for their sacrifice. They made our cities safer. It's time we said thank you.

Rep. Clay Higgins represents Louisiana's 3rd District in the U.S. House of Representatives. Before his election to public office, Higgins spent much of his career dedicated to uniformed service. He is an Army veteran and law enforcement officer, maintaining an active commission and Louisiana State POST Certification. Rep. Higgins is widely regarded as one of the most conservative members of Congress and is a core member of the House Freedom Caucus. He serves as a senior member of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee and as Chairman of the Federal Law Enforcement Subcommittee, where he investigates corruption at the highest levels of government. Congressman Higgins is also a member of the House Armed Services Committee, serving on the Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces and the Subcommittee on Readiness.

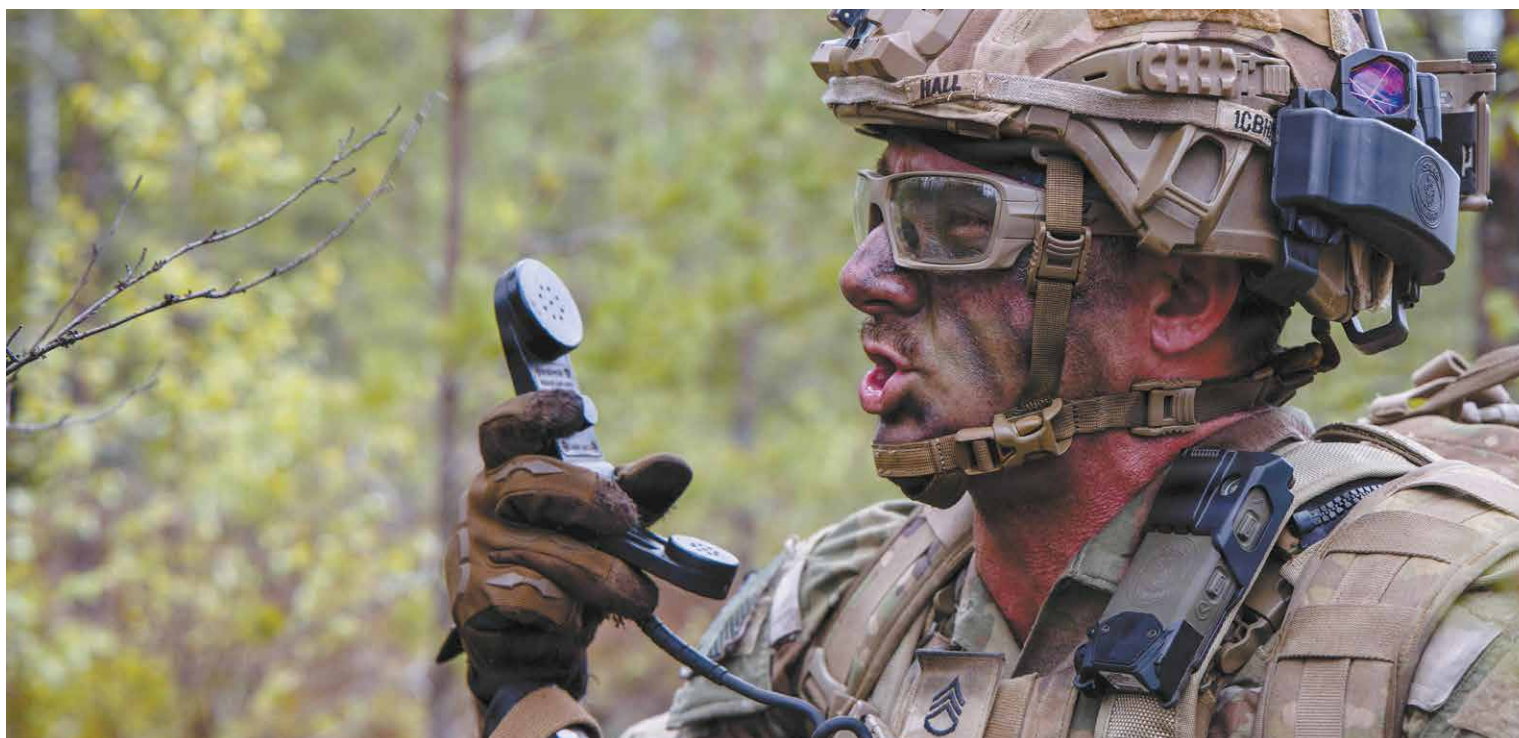


PHOTO CREDIT: ARMY STAFF SGT. ALEXANDER KELLY

Army Staff Sgt. Brandon Hall shouts commands to his squad during a Saber Strike exercise at a training facility in Finland, May 19, 2026. Soldiers used unmanned systems, AI-enabled command and control and live data networks to improve speed and decision-making across multiple domains.

America can't wait to prepare for the next generation of warfare



By U.S. Rep. Tim Moore, R-N.C.

When Americans hear “peace through strength” or “the next arms race,” quantum computing is probably not the first thing that comes to mind. But the technologies being developed today will help determine whether our military maintains its edge tomorrow.

For decades, America’s military advantage has depended on the strength of our warfighters and our ability to develop and deploy technology before our adversaries. That is just as true today as it was when radar and GPS

transformed warfare.

The next technological shift is already underway. While artificial intelligence is getting much of the attention, quantum technology could fundamentally change how our military communicates and protects sensitive information.

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Quantum technology is more than just quantum computers. It includes quantum sensing, quantum networking and quantum-enabled artificial intelligence. These technologies could eventually help the military solve complex problems, improve navigation, strengthen communications and tackle challenges that conventional computers cannot.

History has shown us what happens when technology changes the battlefield. The United States did not wait until World War II was underway to begin developing radar. We did not wait for the Cold War to fully take shape before investing in space technology. And we did not wait for our adversaries to demonstrate the full potential of the

internet before building the networks that helped establish American technological leadership.

Military readiness means preparing before the threat arrives. That is why I introduced the Army Quantum Readiness Act, H.R. 10130. The legislation

would establish a Quantum Readiness and Advanced Computing Initiative within the United States Army focused on preparing to integrate these technologies into future operations.

The Army needs to understand the infrastructure these technologies will require, develop a workforce with the skills to operate these systems, and identify acquisition pathways. Just as importantly, the Army needs to test capabilities like post-quantum cybersecurity and resilient networking before they become urgent requirements.

North Carolina will play an important role in this effort. Our state is home to a growing defense technology ecosystem, a significant military presence, and world-class research institutions.

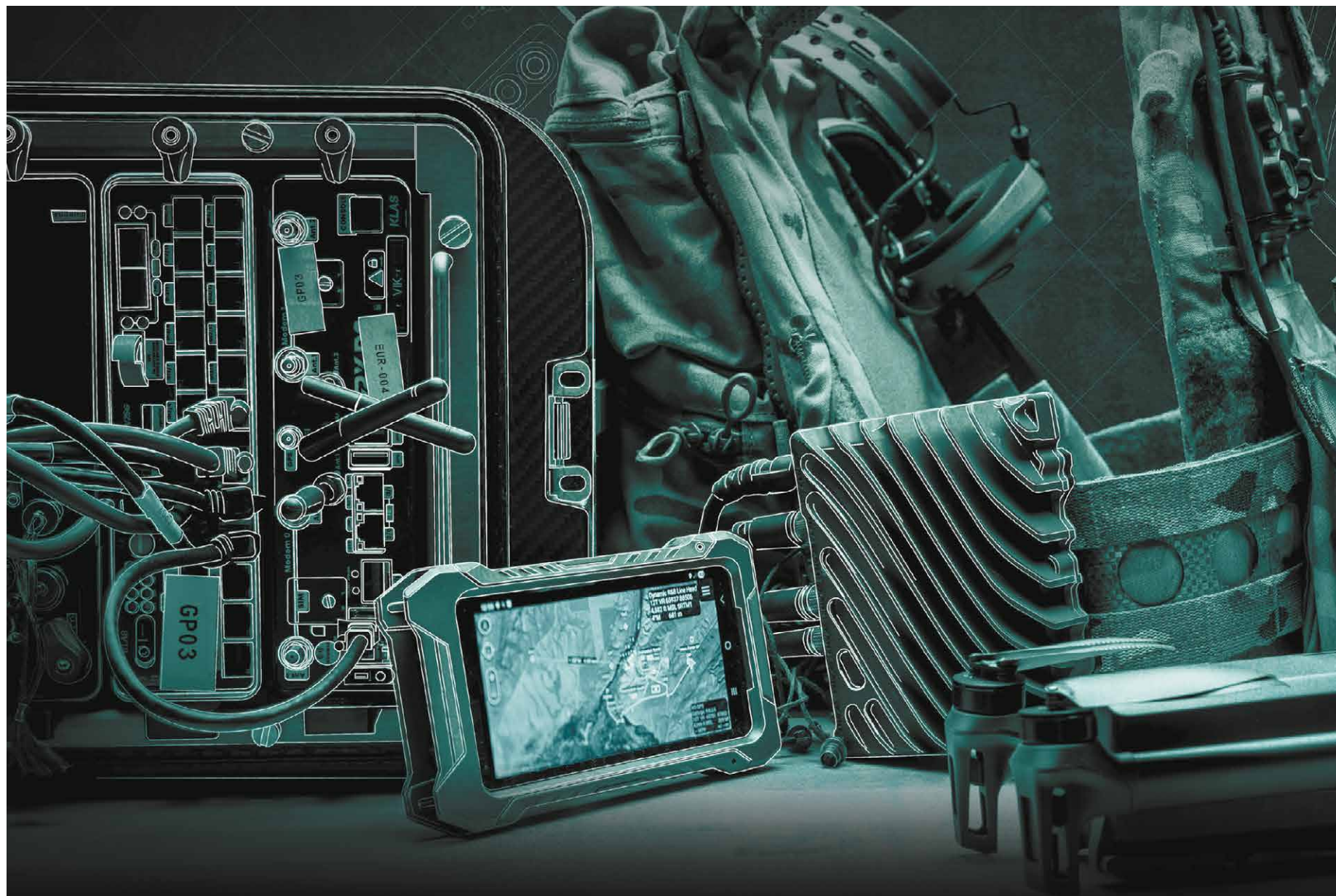
North Carolina State University’s Quantum Initiative, in partnership with the University of North Carolina system and IBM, is advancing research and innovation in emerging technologies. We have the talent, institutions, and innovative capacity needed to help build the workforce and develop the technologies America will need to maintain its national defense capabilities for the future.

We know technology will continue to change how wars are fought. We know our adversaries are investing in that future. And we know military readiness requires preparation before a capability becomes a necessity.

America has never maintained its technological edge by waiting to see what happens next.

We must invest, innovate and prepare now so that our military is ready before the next generation of warfare arrives.

Rep. Tim Moore represents North Carolina’s 14th Congressional District and is a member of the House Committees on Financial Services and the Budget. He previously served as Speaker of the North Carolina House of Representatives for a decade. A lifelong resident of Kings Mountain, North Carolina, Congressman Moore earned his B.A. in Political Science from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1992 and his Juris Doctor from Oklahoma City University School of Law in 1995.



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