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**Defense Writers Group**  
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**Moderator:** Welcome to this Defense Writers Group. We're so honored to have General McConville, the Army Chief of Staff. As always I'll ask the opening question and then we'll go around the floor. As always, this session is on the record, but neither audio nor video can be rebroadcast.

General McConville, sir, thank you for joining us.

**General McConville:** Thank you for having me.

**Moderator:** You can't really get away from the news of the day so I wanted to ask you, as you observe and analyze the current war in Ukraine, what are you learning that might help you shape your Army as far as readiness, procurement, force structure, et cetera? This has got to be -- a tragedy on the ground has to be an incredible laboratory as well for you and the Army.

**General McConville:** I just had the opportunity to visit the troops in Eastern Europe, so that was very insightful. Some of the takeaways for me is first of all the importance of our allies and partners in the region. I've worked in Europe for many, many years and I've never seen NATO more united, never seen allies and partners come together in a common cause. So that's very, very important.

The second thing that I've found very important is our force posture in Europe. We have a four star headquarters over there with Chris Cavoli. We have a corps that's dedicated to supporting that area. And we've worked with our allies and partners to develop a lot of infrastructure which gave us the capability to rapidly deploy our units into Europe that weren't already there, and to reinforce and reassure our partners that are over there that we're going to stand together.

I'm very, very proud of how quickly our forces were able to respond.

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And one of the lessons that we learned is we took our 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division which is a heavy brigade. And normally they take a while to deploy, but the fact that we had prepositioned stocks over there, that we had the tanks and Bradleys and the equipment they needed, they were able to deploy from Fort Stewart in basically seven days and be on a range conducting operations which I think is extremely important. And the 82<sup>nd</sup> certainly is there, and they're used to deploying very quickly. We've deployed them a whole bunch over the last couple of years. Again, they were able to draw prepositioned stock for an Infantry Brigade that allowed them to get over there very quickly without all the logistics that go on with making that happen.

The other thing, I mentioned logistics, but there's that old adage at least in the Army and the military is, you know, professionals study logistics and amateurs study tactics because logistics are really important. If you don't have the logistics right, you're not going to have an effective Army. We have great logisticians supporting us and allowing us to do the things that we need to do.

The last thing is on modernization. We're transforming our Army right now. I like to say it's the biggest transformation in 40 years. We do it every 40 years. Some of you have heard me talk about this. We did it in 1940, right before World War II; we did it in 1980 when I came in the Army; and we're doing it right now. Those systems that we're going to deliver to our soldiers, and it's going to happen pretty quickly, we're going to have 24 of our systems coming in next year into the hands of soldiers. They are going to give us the military advantage that we need for any future conflict so we're in a position to deter.

So all those things are coming together and we're learning an awful lot from what's happening in Europe.

**Moderator:** You mentioned the word alliance and allies. At the national level we've seen a lot of it, the President, the Secretary of State. At the Army level, how did you work the alliance piece? Or were things already in place to do what you needed?

**General McConville:** I have very strong relationships with all the Chiefs of Staff over there. General Mika in Poland. When I was over there we spent time with him. I spent time with the

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Chief of Staff of the German Army, General Mais. We have a very, very strong relationship with all the Chiefs over there.

To me, military to military relationships are extremely important. We've fostered those relationships over many, many years -- myself as the Chief and the Vice before. We have very, very strong relationships. And many of those officers, we served in Afghanistan and Iraq together. So there's a very, very strong bond with our allies and partners in Europe. And not all are NATO members. But even those who are not, it's very strong relationships which we think is really important.

**Moderator:** The first question from the floor is Matt from Defense Daily.

**DWG:** I wanted to ask about the FY23 budget. Not as detailed, kind of came out [inaudible] some of the programs that received reductions [inaudible] kind of stood out. Additionally, were reductions to enhancements for Abrams, Strykers.

What is the level of risk you assess in kind of those reductions within the budget request and in terms of taking that on in order to fully fund modernization? Is it less risk than it was in previous budget requests or a little bit more? How do you assess that?

**General McConville:** The way I assess it is, we're taking a measured approach. We need to have the Army ready today. We need to be ready for the future. And so what we're trying to do is find that kind of sweet spot where we're continuing to incrementally improve the Army we have today and when you take a look at the systems, the Abrams tank, the Apache helicopters, the Howitzers, all those systems are what I call enduring systems. And we're improving them and in fact I was just down at Fort Stewart and I saw the soldiers have the new tanks, they have new Bradleys, they have new Howitzers, they have the new Joint Light Tactical Vehicle. They are very excited about those systems. They think they're great. They work extremely well. But at the same time, I don't want to mortgage the future I want to make sure that we're ready today and we're ready tomorrow. That's why we are keeping the modernization efforts going.

If you saw the budget, we're funded. I'm pretty pleased with the funding we have to keep the momentum going on those

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transformational six modernization priorities that we have.

**DWG:** A quick follow-up, but items like Abrams enhancements and Stryker enhancements, do you anticipate those ending up on something like an unfunded priorities list?

**General McConville:** They could. We'll wait and see once that's processed and when that comes out people can take a look at it.

What we do, at least as the Chief of Staff of the Army is, I try to provide the best Army we can with the resources we get, and what I'm required to do as the Chief is to provide recommendations if there's additional funds and where we would put them. That could be a place that that could possibly happen, depending on what happens.

**Moderator:** Ethan from Inside Defense.

**DWG:** Good morning, General Thanks for doing this.

I wanted to ask about the FY22 request funded as a division rotation permanently to Europe. A division rotation for Europe, will that become a permanent feature in Europe? And could that become a permanent rotation division? Or will it always be a rotation?

**General McConville:** I think with what's happening in Europe right now there's a lot of things on the table. People taking a look at a lot of options. We don't have a decision on those type things. That's a policy decision that will be made at the most senior levels. There's certainly discussions. People are taking a look at what's happening. Then the Army will be prepared to execute the policy. We won't make that policy but we will have an opportunity to provide best military advice on the way ahead.

**DWG:** The elements of the 18<sup>th</sup> Airborne Corps deployed to Europe, Will we see changes to the staffing of the corps in reaction to that? Are there any more capabilities we could see there?

**General McConville:** If you look at what's happening in Europe, we actually have two corps over there right now. We have the 5<sup>th</sup> Corps full up and we have the 18<sup>th</sup> Airborne Corps, along with two divisions, the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division and the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division. So there's plenty of structure to react to any type

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of contingencies that are there. And as we said, the 5<sup>th</sup> Corps is focused on doing, on conducting operations in Europe. There's a location that has a forward command post and it's actually stationed at Fort Knox. And again, all these potential options are being looked at and we'll see how they play out as this unfolds.

**Moderator:** Next is John Ismay from the New York Times.

**DWG:** General, if you look at the justification for things like Long Range Precision Fires, and the PrSM Missile program, a lot of those are based off analysis after 2014 of what Russia was capable of. What weapons they had, and a fear that American artillery was out-ranged. Does what you're seeing in Russia now, or Russia's performance in Ukraine back that up? Do you think it in any way undercuts the need for the billions of dollars spent on things like Long Range Precision Fires?

**General McConville:** I actually think, when I take a look at what's happening in Europe, I take a look at what could happen in other areas, I absolutely think we are more committed to Long Range Precision Fires. We need hypersonic capability. We need a mid-range capability with the ability to sink ships. And we need PrSM capability which is a -- long range is in the hands of the beholder, but basically exceeds 500 kilometer capability and in the near future will have the ability to sink ships.

So when I think about the options that we want to provide combatant commanders around the world, having the ability to even set up "no sail" areas for them, where ships can't come in because we have a mid-range capability provides an option for commanders, but also presents dilemmas to those who may want to use their naval assets in a certain way. Maybe prevent an amphibious landing. So having that capability is very, very important.

Having integrated air and missile defense is very, very important with where we're going with Project Convergence which we tie a bunch of different sensors to a bunch of different systems around the Joint Force which allows us to do things maybe from the ground and sea and air as a Joint Force that we could never do before. Possibly a no-fly type capability using systems on the ground gives us additional capability.

So I feel very strongly in that.

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**DWG:** Do you think a lot of these weapons would not have been possible under the INF Treaty? And --

**General McConville:** The PrSM was not going to be possible under the INF Treaty. And the original requirement for PrSM was going to be 499 kilometers and that was driven by the INF Treaty. But the fact that the INF Treaty is no longer in effect, the ranges of PrSM go much further than that.

**DWG:** When INF was in effect, I think there is a general consensus that it brought a level of stability to Europe by not having things like ground-launched cruise missiles that could possibly launch a low-observable, low-level nuclear first strike. But there was a degree of stability that that brought that no longer exists. Is there not benefit in returning potentially to some sort of international framework that would limit weapons of this type?

**General McConville:** I think I'm going to leave that to the policymakers. They're going to negotiate those type of treaties.

But the reason that the INF became a problem is there was one country that was following the INF and not developing those type systems, and we look around the world at others that have developed those systems. They're not playing by the same rules and so I think --

**DWG:** Who are the other countries besides Russia?

**General McConville:** China has capabilities that exceed the -- China does not play by the INF Treaty and there are other countries that don't play by the INF Treaty. So from a military standpoint, we develop the capabilities that our commanders want. How we employ them becomes a discussion. That's a policy decision on where you employ those type systems. But having the capability is something that I see as an insurance policy and a deterrence policy. And that's why we're developing those systems. I can imagine a lot of systems, a lot of times when that actually gives us a deterrence capability that we didn't have before.

If someone wants to shoot missiles at us, we certainly have the capability to shoot those missiles down, but we also have the

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ability to respond, to return fire if you will, if someone engages us. It doesn't mean we're going to actually do that, but we certainly have that capability.

**Moderator:** Next is Todd South of Army Times.

**DWG:** I wanted to talk a little bit about the demands on the Brigade Combat Teams. Obviously just recently [inaudible] down at Fort Stewart. You spoke about the rapid deployment of forces I think just came home from Korea maybe six months prior. The Sergeant Major specifically said that it would take about nine ABCTs to deploy or have three ready for deploy.

Can you talk about creative solutions, simple solutions for force packages for projecting that? The demands you're having on keeping those units ready and modernized as you rotate out [inaudible]?

**General McConville:** We always have this discussion on how much force structure do we need. There's people who question what's the role, do we need to have tanks, do we need Armored Brigade Combat Teams? I certainly think we do.

We have three Armored Brigade Combat Teams in Europe right now. We have one in Korea. So you start to figure out the math, so to speak, 11 in the active force, 5 in the National Guard. Everyone needs to be part of those rotations. To me, I like rotations about once every four years is about the right OpTempo on how I would like to do that. Now that changes.

And then as we take a look at how we, what happens in Europe. Are they rotational forces, are they permanent forces, are they dynamically -- do we dynamically respond to the situation? So we've got a couple of options in our kit bag and we're taking a look at what we think the requirements will be. Right now the requirements are one in Korea, one in Europe. And people look at it, you basically have 16 ABCTs, but now with three -- at a minimum it's three to make one. You're going to rotate them around, that's about what you need. You go below that, you're really going to start stressing the troops.

The other reason we like four to one is as we're modernizing the force, you need to kind of take them offline and let them get all the new tanks. That's what we're kind of doing right now. That's what the whole rearm model is all about.

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So we're taking a look. Right now we've got a contingency so we're moving forces in, but what we will do is take a look long term, what's the best way to do that based on -- we will make military recommendations as they make policy. Then the question becomes, you know, are they forward deployed, are they permanent, do they take their families, how all that works. If they're stationed there it's one brigade. If they're rotational then it's three brigades to make that. And we have to figure out how we're going to do that.

**DWG:** So the Armored Brigade Combat Team requirement for Korea, my understanding is there may be discussions about perhaps substituting that with a Stryker Brigade Combat Team and in addition, the National Guard rotations for Spartan Shield in CENTCOM is also something to look at.

Are there discussions about other force types of force packages replacing Armor in certain areas to relieve that pressure?

**General McConville:** There's not a final decision, like in Korea. But they're certainly looking at options and what's the best way to fill the requirements for what those missions are up front.

The other thing is, for us the insurance policy in a lot of ways is the prepositioned stocks of armor. If you're going to put them on a ship you're talking weeks, not days. If the equipment's already there and you're moving the troops, we can move troops very, very quickly. Like we did into Europe if the equipment's already there.

So as the policymakers do a posture review in each of these countries based on, you know, the National Defense Strategy is out running around and how does it all come together based on the situation that we see right now, so that's what's happening.

**Moderator:** Next is Mitch Tanaka of Kyoto News.

**DWG:** Good morning. Thank you very much.

My question is about Army posture in North Pacific. Is the United States going to add deterrence against China? How is the Army postured in [inaudible]? What changes are the allies in Japan going to see?



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And the next question is, I think one of the priorities in the Army is developing long range fires, where in the Pacific is the Army going to position those long range fires in order to deter China on the contingencies like Taiwan Strait?

**General McConville:** Thank you for that question. I'll start with the importance of allies and partners, and Japan is a very important ally and partner. In fact I'm meeting and hosting your Chief of Staff of the Army, General Yoshida next week. He's coming here. So we will spend time with him and kind of reinforce the very strong relationship that we have with Japan and many other countries in the region. Very very important to us.

From an Army standpoint, we have somewhere between 80,000 and 100,000 forces committed to the Indo-Pacific, either assigned, allocated or exercising to that area. Put that in perspective, right now we have 45,000 troops in Europe. So the idea that it's not important, just to put it in perspective. To us that theaters is very, very important. Our relationships with the armies in the theater are extremely important. We have strong relationships with all the armies, all the Chiefs. We go to each other's schools, we routinely exercise together to increase interoperability. Many of us are using the same equipment now which is very, very important.

Then for the long range precision fires, that is just, as far as stationing and those type things, that's a policy decision. The government's working it out.

From the Army's standpoint, what we're doing is providing the capability. We have a capability to do this and then depending on the situation, that's an option. If you have a concern about a certain piece of terrain or water where you might want to have an anti-ship capability, we could provide that. Or you have a concern about where potential competitors' were flying, then you have an air and missile defense capability you can buy. But that's all policy-type things, and really from the Army's standpoint, we're going to execute the policy, not necessarily make it. And all that will be worked out at the national security policy level.

**Moderator:** Ashley from Janes.

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**DWG:** I have two semi-unrelated questions.

First, if the Stingers, Javelins, Switchblades, some of the big ticket items going into Ukraine, sort of how do you assess at a production line and concerns ramping up there?

And are there other weapons that you [inaudible] we do not actually have enough of those?

**General McConville:** We're taking, I think it's very open that we've sent a whole bunch of Javelins over there, and we've sent Stingers. Our intent is to replenish those stocks, and we're working with the industry to do that. We think we can do that. It's just, it takes a little time. We're watching that because it's a measured response.

But we're seeing tens of thousands of not necessarily just from us but from a whole, really a cross of anti-tank capability which we think is very important, and hundreds to thousands of Stinger-type capability for air defense.

Really the whole world, a lot of people are giving them the arms that they need to protect themselves, and from our side of the house we're doing the same, and what we want to do is give them what they need to defend themselves. Then we have to replenish those stocks. So we're ready for any type of future conflict and we're doing that right now.

**DWG:** Are you able to put like a timetable on that?

**General McConville:** Our [ASAL] folks are actually working the contracts, talking to industry and I have not seen -- we can come back to you. I have not seen like the contract signed, they're going to build this many. We know what the numbers are, we know what we want to do. If you saw our budget, there's some future Stinger research and development. That's actually not to replenish, that's to improve. But those two things are going on as we speak right now.

**DWG:** In the budget there's still money for development of landmines and there's been an interagency review ongoing for over a year, about a year right now. So where does that stand from the Army's vantage point? How do you deal with development of these capabilities and the future use of them?

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**General McConville:** We're going to follow the policy on that. We provide capabilities but we're certainly not going to employ them unless the policy allows those type of things. There's certainly military value, at least to those on the ground, to have the capabilities to use those type of systems but the big concern about landmines is what happens after you put them in, and we certainly don't want to harm innocent people in defense. As we take a look at the future development of those things, you want to make sure that they don't become a problem later on. That's really why people are really concerned about landmines. You don't want to hurt a bunch of innocent people.

**DWG:** I have a question about the 82<sup>nd</sup> and then a people question.

There's some frustration in the 82<sup>nd</sup>. Obviously they're the immediate response force sent over there. Since then it's been sort of they're training, there's not really a lot going on. At what point is it going to be that we're calling them back, there's enough people already on a rotational deployment with the corps and elsewhere that the 82<sup>nd</sup> is no longer needed in a situation like that.

**General McConville:** The 82<sup>nd</sup> will stay as long as they're needed. Right now there's no plan to bring them back in the immediate future, but they will stay until the mission is done. I'm real proud of them. If you've taken a look at what we've asked the 82<sup>nd</sup> to do. I've been the Chief almost three years, and we've deployed them four times with relatively no notice. They do a great job.

I was over there visiting them, and they were living pretty hard, in the snow. This deployment for the 82<sup>nd</sup> was different than a lot of types of deployments because they went into pretty hardship -- they were on the ground for a couple of weeks before we actually could get the logistics to support them.

Their presence matters. Their presence is to reassure our allies and partners and for me, it's amazing what they do by their presence. They are doing exactly that. Many of those countries, they want to see American soldiers standing side by side, supporting the President's commitment that we'll defend every inch of NATO and that's what they're going to do.

**DWG:** In the last six months or so we've seen two Army generals

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at the Pentagon now under investigation for toxic climate. I know that is something the Secretary has made a priority of, establishing positive command climate.

I know that the Army is working on things like Battalion Command Assessment Program; Sergeant Major Assessment Program, to focus on sort of that new generation of leaders coming up. But do you think the Army has done enough with its current leaders now? General officers, senior NCOs, who as the Army is changing its culture, trying to improve things, who may sort of be stuck in their old ways, not wanting to move forward?

I know you can't speak about those investigations in particular, but just the effort being made about current senior leadership now, and sort of what the message is to them.

**General McConville:** I think we are. If you go to any organization you're always going to have the one or two folks that, and again I won't speak to those because they're under investigation. But we do a tremendous amount of assessments on our senior leaders. They are in a magnified fishbowl every single day. It's a very challenging environment to lead in.

I think it's very, very different than previous leaders ever had. Everyone has a phone, everyone has the ability to come right to the leadership. People come right to me. It's amazing how quickly, if they don't like something, they will tell you. So everyone understands that as you move up in rank the fishbowl becomes more magnified and if you're not living up to our Army values, if you're not doing engaged, caring leadership, you're going to have some challenges. That's where we're at.

**DWG:** Sort of the sentiment among those [inaudible], but is sort of like well, once you get to a certain rank, once you get stars on your chest, the questions kind of start going away. There's not as much circumspection on their command because they are kind of "in the club" so to speak. What would your message be to some of the [inaudible] soldiers who feel like they're being held to a standard that their commanders are not.

**General McConville:** First of all, I get to see behind the curtain of what happens as far as general officers, and any allegation against a general officer is investigated or at least an inquiry. So I think our generals are held to very, very high standards, beyond -- If anyone can make an allegation against

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any one of you, it would be not of -- say we don't like this and that, and it would be certainly taken a look at by an outside agency to make sure that's not true. So I think our leaders are held to a very high standard. They're routinely investigated. Not necessarily in the media, but there's always investigations going on. If someone said something or someone did something, and there's multiple climate surveys that are done on all leaders inside their organizations. So I would suggest, having looked at a lot of different organizations, that we take a hard look at our leaders and anybody else.

And you talked about the Battalion Commander Assessment Program, the Colonels Command Assessment Program -- all these assessment programs are kind of like, I equate them to almost like a professional football combine. It's like a tryout. When they go through this process their soldiers and their subordinates have a chance to anonymously rate their leaders. They go this process for about five days, take a hard look at them, and we're finding out about people. And in fact we're finding out that some people that may have really good evaluations, looking up, when we get the feedback from their subordinates, that's affecting their ability to take those type jobs. We think it's very valuable.

And we're taking that -- the feedback we've gotten, a lot of people think that's a very good process but they go, we wish we knew this before.

We're putting a Project Athena at the major and captain level where they get assessed more in a developmental model. And we, at least we're on that. I'm a people first. But I believe we're in a war for talent and we want to keep the best and brightest in the Army, and we have to keep the talent just like industry's doing. If we don't have the best leaders -- and the leaders affect I think the troops the most, starting at battalion command. Those lieutenant colonels, sergeant majors impact the future of the Army. That's where those sergeants live, that's where those soldiers live, that's where those lieutenants and captains who are coming on their first tour. And what we find is if they have good leadership at that level, they will stay with us. If they don't have good leadership they'll go on and do something else.

So we are in a war for talent and I think we hold people -- again, if you know someone out there let us know and we'll take

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a look. But we're trying to hold our leaders to the highest standards. Again, I get to see what they do every single day and how they work and how we deploy them and what we ask out of them and their families and I'm extremely proud of almost every one of them.

**Moderator:** Dmitry from TASS.

**DWG:** Good morning, General. Thank you so much for doing this.

I wanted to ask you to grade our competition, if I may. One of America's elder statesmen, Secretary Robert Gates, wrote an OpEd several weeks ago, and you probably saw that, in which he argued for developing a new strategy against Russia and China. He argued for, and I want to quote, "a decisive importance of military power" saying "we need a larger, more advanced military in every branch, taking full advantage of new technologies to fight in new ways."

My question is, this whole thing, this whole equation, what's going on between the United States and Russia, it seems to me has a life of its own now. Obviously working into a second global war without realizing it.

**General McConville:** When I graduated from West Point in 1981 President Ronald Reagan was the speaker at our graduation and he talked about peace through strength. I'm a believer in that. I think that we have to figure out in this world how we maintain peace. And some, it takes a hard power capability to do that. We have to have a strong military, we have to have a strong whole of government effort, we need to have strong allies and partners who share the same vision of what the world order is. And this is more for policymakers, but we need to figure out how to coexist. You can't have great power wars. If you think about it, a regional conflict, a regional war right now in Ukraine is having global implications. It's affecting the Middle East as far as wheat and a country with oil and gas, you know, the whole world feels this unprovoked attack in Ukraine. And we as a global environment -- it's not necessarily we're all allies and partners, we have to take a look at what are the costs versus benefits of doing that.

Deterrence to me is about imposing costs when people want to upset the peace and stability of the world. And our role in that is providing a strong Army and a combat-credible Army that

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if we have to do something we're ready to do it. The rest is -- which I think is very powerful is -- the world coming together saying hey, is this the right thing to do? Is it the right thing to do to attack another sovereign country? That question needs to be answered. Is it the right thing to do to indiscriminately shoot missiles into civilian sectors and kill innocent civilians? We just have to ask those type questions and see if that's the right thing to do for the global environment.

From the Army's standpoint, we just want to make sure that we have a strong and ready military that's combat credible. If it's directed to go and fight and win we can do that, and that's what we intend to do.

**DWG:** My brief follow-up is about US Army strength in Europe. Are you falling back to the Cold War levels? What's going to happen to that?

**General McConville:** Again, I don't think there's -- if you look at the levels during the Cold War, we had 350,000 troops in Europe. I certainly don't think that's the level of troops that we would go to. But I think policymakers will make a decision on what's the appropriate level of troops to have. Both allies and partners in NATO, to make sure that we can have a peaceful, stable and prosperous region there that affects the rest of the world.

**DWG:** Ellen Milhiser with Synopsis. Thank you for being here.

The Army says people first. We're about to enter that [inaudible] time of year, PCS season. And you have a lot of families, young families moving to metropolitan areas where the housing market is already horrendous. Is the Army doing anything proactively to help these families find a place to live that they can afford given that housing in places like JBLM is not available on base?

**General McConville:** First of all, it's a whole bunch of issues. The problem with housing, there's a problem with moves, COVID --

**DWG:** That's my follow-up.

**General McConville:** I've got the problems and you make a good point.

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When you talk about people first, what we're trying to do is get leaders to help with these capabilities. We're giving them a longer time to find decent housing. We've extended orders where they don't have to necessarily -- everyone moves during the summer, and that's one of the challenges. When you take a look at even the moving companies, it's hard to get a moving company because the moving companies are in a war for talent too. They're having a hard time getting people that will actually move furniture and drive trucks and do those type things. And so that's making it very challenge for our families.

We're extending families, we're stabilizing families, we're giving them more time. Then when they get in, the command's working very, very closely to try to do as much as they can to get them the appropriate housing. We're giving pay raises, we're giving BAH raises, so there's a lot of things going on in that side too.

We're trying to stay ahead of it, but we don't have it all solved.

**DWG:** You say you're giving people more time to find housing and so on, however, houses -- I'm familiar with the JBLM market. They go off the market in two hours. It comes on the market, it's sold. Families that are looking now for a move in June cannot afford to hold that house for six months. What is the answer? And also with the moves, have you all considered doing anything along the lines of giving families a pack-your-own cargo van where you drop it at their house, they pack it, you pick it up and move it?

**General McConville:** Yeah. I mean they can do personally secured moves. There's a couple of different ways of doing that. We used to pay 80 percent, now we pay 100 percent. There's a lot of people doing personal procured moves now which is changing that, so we have looked at that. And I do have a son at JBLM too, so he just went through that process.

**DWG:** The reason I'm familiar with it is I have a son headed to JBLM.

**General McConville:** I'll give you my son's name, we'll hook them up, try got square him away.



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**Moderator:** My question is, did either of the parents go help pack? [Laughter].

Next question is from Nancy at the Wall Street Journal.

**DWG:** The President said that [inaudible] Ukrainian forces [inaudible] liaison but not training them in the traditional sense. Can you give us some visibility on what US soldiers are doing with their Ukrainian counterparts?

**General McConville:** We are not training. The United States Army is not training Ukrainian soldiers or units right now. We are not. The liaison is, there are materials being provided to Ukrainians but that's just a ship, it comes in and it moves out. But we are not training Ukrainians right now. I actually asked my folks that question so I know that's true.

The United States Army is not training Ukrainian soldiers in Ukraine as of now. In Poland right now.

**DWG:** The liaison, is there anything about how to use the equipment? Anything along those lines?

**General McConville:** I checked, we are not, we don't have teams over there showing them how to use the training. They have people that know how to use the training, they know how to use the equipment, and they're doing that themselves.

**DWG:** John Harper. Thanks for doing this.

I wanted to ask you about JADC2, the implementation plan was just signed out. You mentioned Project Convergence earlier. Officials have said that the FY23 budget request would be aligning resources towards JADC2. I know that the implementation plan itself is classified but can you give us an idea of the level of resources that are going towards the JADC2 implementation? And maybe provide some insight to the extent you can in the unclassified realm about what the plan will entail?

**General McConville:** I can talk to you about what the Army's doing to get after -- and I actually use the word CJADC2. I add a C to it because I talk a lot about allies and partners and the ability to work together, and when we talk about JADC2, it's really about passing data. How quickly we can pass data. Our

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contribution to that effort is Project Convergence. We've done two already. We're getting ready to do a third in '22. What we've done is the first one we did in '20 was just the Army learning how to pass data between our systems and that is really hard to do, it's really important, because a lot of the systems were designed not necessarily to work in an integrated manner so we did that.

We just finished '21 which we brought out the Joint Force, so we had all the different services out there and we kind of showed we could bring our sensors and shooters together in an integrated battle command system. And now we're going to, this year in '22, we're going to bring some of our partners out there. The Brits are going to be there, the Australians are going to be there. We'll have other parts, but they're actually going to participate. And what we're doing is, we've still got the Joint Systems Integration Lab at Aberdeen. It's a laboratory where almost like if you want to come to Project Convergence you have to come there first, you have to bring your systems there, and we have to make sure that we can pass data back and forth. And we're learning a lot about how to do that.

There's a lot of people smarter than me, but there's this notion of you create this data fabric. A lot of people will say hey, you need open architecture, you need standardized data. But we're trying to take a whole bunch of different systems, especially when we look at our allies and partners, they're going to have certain radios and so how do you do that in the most efficient way so you can pass data back and forth? And we have some very smart people that are figuring out how to do that very, very quickly. What that gets you is different sensors are out there, whether radars or planes that can sense things. They can take that data and quickly pass it to an integrated battle command system, using artificial intelligence you can quickly go through the data and figure that stuff out. And then actually pass it to the right lethal capability. And that is happening very, very quickly as we speak.

As far as resources, it's a lot of resource. It's hard to go -- it's this much money, and Project Convergence would put so much money in, but we're talking billions of dollars and it's really -- what at the Joint Force we're trying to do is align our systems so they talk. So everyone can talk to everyone. There's different ways with translators and gateways of moving data, but there's a way of doing it with a data fabric that you

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can move it very, very quickly between all systems, almost like we use the internet, and that's where we're going with these systems.

**DWG:** What are the biggest, what you just said sounds like a very complex undertaking. What are the biggest challenges or obstacles to achieving JADC2? It definitely doesn't sound like an easy task.

**General McConville:** I think it's trying to get everyone aligned. You have old systems, you have new systems, each of the services tends to optimize their systems for the environment they're going to operate in. So if you're in the air how you pass data in the air is very different than if you're on the ground and in the dirt and in the Navy how you do it from ship to ship. What we're trying to do is bring people together, and we're actually having some fairly good success. We were pretty happy with the last Project Convergence, the way that's starting to happen.

But it's almost like it's worth doing because when you take a look at some of the scenarios that we envision, if you quickly want to have advantage and deterrence where you could destroy large formations. The ability to have sensors where there's space, aerial, sub-aerial, on the ground, that can quickly pick up where things are at and then get them into a system that can quickly provide lethal effects, the right legal effects, is very, very important. And we're seeing where sometimes it could take hours or tens of minutes, it's getting to tens of seconds. And that's how you win.

I talk about speed, range, and convergence, and that to me is the secret of the future battlefield.

A lot of stuff we talk about long range precision fires, things that go fast and far. That's just the weapon system, but there's another piece to that which is the decision-making process.

If you have a weapon that goes really fast and really far but it takes you two days to figure out how long it's going to get you on the target, then you're not going that fast. You might as well --

That's what this is all going to provide.

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**DWG:** Is there anything that concerns you right now about where things stand with JADC2 or anything that you're worried about?

**General McConville:** You always worry about it's network dependent. So you've got to have a robust and resilient network and make sure that you can protect the network, and that's what we're trying to do. That's the thing. You've got to be able to, what happens when the network -- I see all your phones here and stuff like that. What happens when the network goes down? We want to make sure that you're not a one option type force where you're dependent on whatever that company is. If that company goes down you can't talk. What is more a mesh network where if something happens you go to another capability. There's more than one way to get that information past. So if an adversary takes down maybe the satellite you're using, there's another way of passing that data. Or they jam that system, there's another way of doing those type things. That's what we're trying to work.

**DWG:** Brian Everstine with Aviation Week. Thanks again for doing this.

I want to go back to the first question about what's [inaudible] in Europe. In the realm of ISR is this typically a [GMCI]?

**General McConville:** Yeah.

**DWG:** There's an Army prototype [inaudible], very active flying up there, coming as the Air Force is looking to get rid of its JSTARS. Do you see this as a growth area for the Army, flying high altitude ISR? How can some [inaudible] contribute to this mission?

**General McConville:** As we take a look at -- one of the things I was interested in, I'm amazed at how effective the TB2 has been, the Turkish unmanned aerial system. And oh by the way, to me unmanned aerial systems or lethal drones, I've talked about it, is a huge, most likely and for a lot of forces, the most dangerous threat we're going to see moving in the future. We're going to see them from violent extremists to great powers and all the way in between. So we're going to have to deal with lethal drones and countering those lethal drones and making all those type things happen.

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So we take a look at what is the growing area as far as aviation? Everyone, ground commanders have a need for intelligence. And each of the services has certain roles and missions. Sometimes they kind of, I won't say they overlap, but there's not enough ISR -- there's an insatiable appetite for ISR when you look at Predators, when you look at all these type of systems, we have Gray Eagles which are fairly big to do those type things. We've had prop type ISR platforms like MARS and those type things. And right now we're just trying out Artemis and these types of things. It's really kind of the jet aircraft, the smaller jet aircraft is just a platform to get those sensors into place where they need to be. And what we will see is there will be a discussion later on, what's the best way to accomplish that mission? And that will be joint type requirements and what's the best way to do it. And when we say growth industry, what I see is a layered approach to ISR. You're going to have little drones, big drones, airplanes, sensors, aerial balloons and LEO satellites, all those type things are going to be layered to get the targeting that we need.

Think about long range fires, you don't have long range precision fires without long range targeting, so something has to get you the targets, and if you don't have people on the ground that can get those things then you've got to have some type of technology that's going to help you do that and that's where this kind of comes in.

**DWG:** And not necessarily a question about the budget, but what would be your assessment of [inaudible], particularly FARA? The [inaudible] engine has a little bit of delay and that's caused companies to push back their progress on [inaudible].

**General McConville:** Right.

**DWG:** What's your assessment on the schedule? Will it affect the budget eventually, a little bit of a cut for FARA? Is that kind of an assessment of where things stand?

**General McConville:** If you look at the budget, I thought it showed full commitment to FARA and FLARA. And I'm going to say that when I go to [Quad A] because a lot of people are, where are we going with that?

I'm very pleased with the budget. We're still buying Apaches,

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we're still buying Black Hawks, we're still buying Chinooks. But we are committed to the future attack reconnaissance aircraft and the future long range assault aircraft. They're in the budget.

We're trying to get these systems right, and for me, we don't want to rush to failure but we don't want to stroll to irrelevance either, so I'm trying to find that sweet spot.

Like with ITEP. ITEP, again it's that engine. What that's going to allow us to do is have one engine really for three aircraft, so it will go in the Black Hawk, it will go in Apache. You've got about 50 percent more power and 25 percent reduction in fuel. Every program I've ever seen usually doesn't arrive early. So we've got to do that, and it may be a couple of months but the system itself is still on schedule to get delivered when we want it which is really '28-ish and beyond. That's what we're looking at.

**DWG:** General, I just came back from a two-week trip to Alaska to observe the training there. I embedded with your 11 Bravos, shared a tent with them. It was very nice and they're very professional people. But what I saw there was --

**General McConville:** Did you see my son? My son was up there.

**DWG:** I was looking for him.

**General McConville:** He's in the 160<sup>th</sup>. He was up there flying.

**DWG:** I'll find him next time.

What I saw was a lot of the soldiers were wearing old uniforms, ACUs with holes still in them. The Strykers don't work. The haul road between Wainwright and the training area looked like a Russian convoy. You've got old tents. [Knobs] that freeze from condensation. And the Strykers, you know, your prime vehicle there you can't take in the snow.

So what does the Army need to do to make Alaska an actual priority and a fitted fighting force for its Arctic strategy?

**General McConville:** If you take a look at where we're going, if you take a look at regaining dominance in the Arctic which is the paper we wrote. I've been kind of talking about where we're

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going. We're not quite there yet as far as rolling out completely, but we are looking at an operational headquarters unit.

If you take a look at Alaska as an organization it doesn't have an operational headquarters. It has an administration headquarters. If you take a look at the Stryker brigade, the question is, is that the best place for Strykers? If it's going to be an Arctic brigade is that the right equipment set to have there? So that's the discussion we're looking at right now.

If you take a look at the budget and what we're doing as far as making sure people get the right equipment up there. The intent for the Arctic is we're going to have Arctic units. Not units that live in Alaska and go other places, they actually can -- the fact that you're up there, it's hard. It's tough just to train or do things in the Arctic environment. That's why you saw the big exercise, that's why you see units that never trained up in the Arctic going up there and refining their skill sets. It can be very dangerous. You have to survive in that weather. What was it minus 20 when you were up there?

**DWG:** It ranged between negative 40 and 15 degrees.

**General McConville:** Minus 40's cold; 15 not too bad. When you get stuck in those type of temperatures, minus 20 to minus 50, if you're not properly equipped, properly clothed with the right equipment, and that's where we're going. That's part of the strategy, that you're going to see that stuff as the budget kind of starts to roll out. We're investing in that. And to shift units and shift organizations just takes some time and we're in the process of doing that.

**DWG:** I'm [Inaudible], Defense Daily.

My question is about the intermediate or long range missile behavior [inaudible]. And you said that we are [inaudible] deploy [inaudible] but when it would be ready from your [inaudible]? And also, [inaudible], with what [inaudible] you will have? It's a big change for Japan. And what's your thought on this? How you discuss this issue with your defense companies?

**General McConville:** First of all, we're anticipating delivering our first long range hypersonics battery the end of next year,

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basically '23. So that's one of our programs. We're anticipating delivering the mid-range capability which is a sink ship capability in '23. And we're anticipating delivering our first precision strike missile capability in '23. So they're all next year. There's testing going on and we're finalizing things. But at JBLM, if you go up to JBLM, you'll see our first hypersonics battery. It's already fielded. [Inaudible] company commander, she's in charge, she's got the equipment. We're just testing out the missiles to make sure we work out all the things that happen when you field a new system.

So the systems will be ready in '23.

What can they do is, they're tactical capabilities. They sink ships. Hypersonics is a very big capability and PrSM has very good capability. So they just provide options.

Now where they go and how we use them is really something that -- I have a lot of idea on how we would do that but we just have to wait and see how that plays out.

The other thing is, they're designed to be what I call expeditionary. So they can go on a C-17, they can fly into an airstrip, they can roll off, do some things, they get picked back up and go someplace else. That's how they're designed. They're not fixed at one place. You can move them around. And you can use them to deter maybe certain actions if you need to.

**DWG:** Andrew with Breaking Defense.

The FY23 budget request asked for a multidomain task force over the FYDP. When will the Army decide where that task force will go? And how is that decision going to be made?

**General McConville:** We're standing it up right now. The question is, where does it end up? We have one, it's going to be in the Pacific is where it's probably going to go. We're looking at going to five, so it's going to take some time. But right now the third one's on the books. My [SIG] Chief's going to be a commander.

It's going to be tied to US Army Pacific. The final stationing decision is still to be made. It really depends on what it looks like. But we're in the process of standing that up. It may get stood up in Hawaii as a prototype and then depending on



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where's the best place to have it, we'll take a look at it, but we have not made a decision on final station. We have made a decision on who's going to command it and that we're going to do it.

**DWG:** Who's going to command that?

**General McConville:** Dave [Zim].

**Moderator:** General, before I officially thank you for your time I give the floor back to you for any closing comments or thoughts you'd care to share.

**General McConville:** One thing I'll put out that no one asked me, which I was surprised, is if you look at the budget, we took a small reduction in end strength. A lot of people are asking that question. And I would just tell you right now, recruiting for the military is challenging and we're in a war for talent. What's interesting is, or not interesting is, some people talk about the Army and the military becoming a family business. A military family business. And I'm not so sure that's best for the nation. Service should be an Army family business, not a military family business. And when I look at who comes in the Army, 79 percent of the young men and women coming into the Army are military family members. Which is interesting.

Another factoid that's interesting. 49 percent of the young men and women that come in the Army come from a high school that has a Junior ROTC program. Not that they're necessarily in it, but they've been exposed to the military.

The last statistic which is interesting, only 23 percent of Americans are qualified to come in the Army.

So as we take a look at it, we're in a war for talent and the Secretary and I want to have a high quality Army. To me, quality is more important than quantity. So as we go forward, we're going to have a certain, we're trying to keep a certain level of the Army, but we're going to do a lot of work to try and expose the Army to people that really haven't seen it before. I don't think there's any better opportunity for people that -- I come from a working class family and I don't think there's any better opportunity for people to have a chance to progress in life and get ahead in life and go to school and get training and get discipline and those type things. So I think

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that's really, really important for the future of the country.

Again, we're in an interesting timeframe with COVID and what's happening and where people are at and those type things, so I think that's extremely important.

Again, I just could not be more proud of what we've asked our soldiers to do in the Army. From COVID to national disasters, the National Guard and the Reserves. We just ask an awful lot of them and I just couldn't be more proud of them.

So thank you all for coming and I enjoyed the discussion.

**DWG:** That statistic about 49 percent of those entering the Army have been exposed to Junior ROTC, are you talking about just schools that had the ROTC program there or schools that have their students go to a local school that have a program.

**General McConville:** I don't parse it that way. What I'll tell you is ten percent of high schools have JROTC, but 49 percent of the kids come from a high school that has JROTC. Not necessarily in the program. And I thought it was an interesting factoid.

When I look at it, what happens is military kids are very comfortable going into the military. It's like a family business. They know what it's about. They're not, you know, just how people perceive it. Then we have other people who have no idea what the military is all about. They can't fathom those kind of things.

I don't come from a military family either. My dad was a 2<sup>nd</sup> class petty officer in the Navy during the Korean War, but that's not a military family.

**Moderator:** General, first of all, thank you for your time, for sharing your wisdom, for everything that you do and the forces you command. And I'd just like to say for our group here, the way people in uniform can reach out to the American public is in a forum like this, and this engagement we think is valuable.

I was joking before, it's incredible the number of general officers who've seen multiple combat deployments but run in fear form correspondents. [Laughter]. So thank you for coming, you are a brave man, and --

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**General McConville:** I may not be a smart man, but I'm brave. Thank you all. [Laughter].

**DWG:** General, what are your last ACFT score -- [Laughter].

**General McConville:** My last was 486. But I'm 63 years old. But now, I'm looking at [inaudible]. I'm pretty close to 600 on that.

Here's the thing, the way I look at the ACFT it's getting, this is going to improve the Army. What we do not want to do is disenfranchise anybody. And there's a lot of motion around that, but the intent was -- I want to get everyone on the bus. Get on the ACFT bus, it's six events, it's a much better event. I do the things -- if you just do the six events you'll be in shape. I mean it is a much better training event than we had before. And I was around, I hate to say it, the APFT. I've been doing this for over 41 years, so I was there when we changed. Oh, my God, we're changing the test.

What I've learned is, this is the alpha model. I always say that. You know, get something in place and we have a lot of discussions, it takes a long time, you're changing culture. What we're really trying to do is, at least in the Army is, I want to change -- I do believe in people first. That is not a slogan for me. I really believe in that. But how do you take care of people? Rather than be in an attrition Army, I want to be in a developmental Army. And like when I went to West Point, it was an attrition university. We brought 1500 kids in, they could only have, like by law they could only have like 950. They used to crank it up on hazing, depending on where they're at. Wait a minute, we've got to get rid of 100 kids because -- seriously. And then all of a sudden it's like hey, we're losing too many. We need to turn it back down.

That's not the way we are, and quite frankly, the young people today will not put up with it. So we want to develop them. What I see is, they can do it. We've just got to give them time. We've been doing this for three years in Initial Military Training. They don't know any different. They like it. The young people actually like the Army Combat Fitness Test. You'll find some that don't. You go around and find some that don't like everything. But I think it's going to make us a much better Army.

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And the approach we're taking too is this holistic health and fitness. I'm very blessed, I married a dietician. It's better than a gym pass. But we're putting dieticians, getting strength coaches. And what we're really trying to do is not -- you bring people in, a lot of these kids haven't worked out so we're trying to get them where they work out before they even come in the Army so they have to take the occupational physical assessment test. Very simple thing. But let's get them to a certain level, then we bring them into Initial Military Training, and it's developmental. Let's get them in better shape, then they come to their units and --

**Moderator:** I don't like to give orders to four-stars, but I am supposed to escort you out.

**General McConville:** You want to get rid of me?

**Moderator:** No.

**General McConville:** This is a good discussion here.

**Moderator:** We wish you could stay all afternoon, but we are on a schedule. If I displease your staff we don't get you back.

[Multiple voices].

**General McConville:** -- an improvement. There's two things that are supposed to happen. One is replenish what we've got. Get them the stocks. The second is an R&D effort to improve it which is different than what we, it will be a little different.

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