



**Remarks by Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs
Ronald T. Koehane, ROA annual meeting banquet, Washington D.C., Oct. 5, 2024**

Thank you, National President Wroblewski, Major General (Retired) Phillips and the Reserve Organization of America team for inviting me to join you for this evening's banquet and thank you everyone here today for your service to our great Nation and the Reserve Component. It is truly an honor to be with you today.

Before I begin, I would like to take a moment to reflect on the communities across the Southeast impacted by Hurricane Helene -- the tremendous loss of life, the families shattered by this disaster, and the devastation to homes and businesses that will take months or years to recover. Our thoughts go out to all of those affected, including the more than 6700 men and women in the Guard forces of 16 states mobilized for disaster assistance and recovery. As we go through this weekend, I ask that you keep these communities and our Reserve Component Service members working there in your thoughts as well.

I'll note this is the first Saturday of fiscal year 2025 -- so a hearty thank you to all of our incredible Reserve Component Service members who reported this morning for the first drills of fiscal year 2025! What a way to start the "new year" -- as we call the new Fiscal Year in my office.

Of course, the full-time civilians and Active Guard/Reserve Service members who support them this weekend deserve a huge thank you as well!

But most importantly -- I also like to thank your families who carry the "home front" while you're activated, drilling, and serving our Nation. Without them, your work would not be possible.

I am especially grateful to be here, to not only thank you personally, but to also acknowledge what a dynamic role you play in serving. Your role is multi-faceted -- wearing our Nation's uniform, working in the civilian sector . . . and managing multiple bosses, leading multiple teams -- both in and out of uniform. That is by no means lost on me -- so thank you so much for taking on those challenges. *Our Nation is stronger because of it.*

While my portfolio within the Department of Defense is vast--from oversight of the best school system in the country and a global grocery chain, to every facet of our Department's civilian and military personnel policies -- I often remind people that half of my office's title is "Reserve Affairs" -- "Manpower and *Reserve Affairs*."

I take the charge of advocacy for, and integration of, the Reserve Components throughout DoD and across the executive branch. This is a responsibility I take very seriously, as does our Commander-in-Chief, whose own son, Beau, served as a Judge Advocate in the Delaware

National Guard. He and the First Lady know firsthand the sacrifices Service members in our Guard and Reserve forces and their families make every day – it is truly appreciated – and our Nation owes you a debt of gratitude.

Just ten days ago I carried that message to Guardsmen and women in Central Europe; they were from Mississippi, Pennsylvania, Nebraska, and Texas. Some of those Guard men and women are training the only soldiers in the world who are engaged in large scale combat – The Ukrainian Army.

Let that sink in – your Army National Guard, taking the heavy mantle of preparing another nation’s soldiers for the most extraordinarily lethal combat seen in decades. I can tell you these incredible soldiers are doing so with professionalism, dedication, and expertise far from home while their families and civilian employers await their return. They are passing on lessons learned that could shape how we fight in years to come too. We should be proud of their example and thousands more around the world; their work on the eastern flank of NATO demands an equal share of support from us on the policy front.

Tonight, I am going to share with you some highlights of Reserve Component history and policies, then discuss the RC’s role in supporting the National Defense Strategy – particularly related to Russia and China – and end with some initiatives we’re working within M&RA to ensure our Reserve Component is supported with the best policies and programs possible. First, let’s look at where our Reserve Components have been, and the challenges they’ve endured as they have fought for the benefits and resources they have today.

For over three hundred years, well before the birth of the United States, America has relied on a trained and ready reserve military force to protect our homeland. When called upon, they fight and win our nation’s wars. Our Army National Guard Service members trace their history to December 13, 1636, as trained and organized militia formed across the early colonies in defense of villages and the New World’s frontiers. Just like today, they served dual roles as civilians-blacksmiths, business owners, politicians, farmers, physicians – and soldiers when duty called.

These militia played pivotal roles throughout the American Revolution and early battles of the Civil War, and were a proving ground of leadership for many of our Nation’s Presidents. It’s important to pause here and reflect that the vast majority of these RC members had no concept of a pension system, health insurance, standardized pay, or any of the other benefits offered today to members of the Guard and Reserve. Those would come in time, but only after hard-fought engagements on Capitol Hill and battlefields around the world.

In the years leading up to World War I, America began a near century of organization, professionalization, and reform of the Reserve Components.

The Army Reserve traces its roots to 1908, with the establishment of the Medical Reserve Corps. Several years later, as it looked more likely that America would be drawn into war in Europe, Congress created a federal Navy Reserve in 1915 and the US Marine Corps Reserve in 1916. Congress created a US Coast Guard Reserve in 1941, again amidst the threat of war along the nation’s coastline from Japan and Germany. America’s military leaned heavily on her Guard and

Reserve Service members through both World Wars and Korea. Many of our RC units today trace their lineage to those wars and wear the patches of units bloodied in the fields and air above Europe, North Africa and across the Pacific.

After World War II, America took another holistic look at our Reserve Components, leading to historic legislation that built much of the compensation and benefits package we have today. The early days of the Cold War also saw the birth of more components of the RC-the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve. While most Guard Service members received some kind of compensation for service during weekend drills, every member of the federal Reserve forces didn't receive drill pay until 1948.

Those Reserve Component Service members mobilized for World War I and II. Their service during drill was considered their patriotic duty, without pay or any hope of a retirement plan. It was a chorus of support from current and former Service members and legislators for a professionalized, duly compensated Reserve Component that brought regular drill pay and a retirement plan in the early days of the Cold War. Statements submitted by military service organizations like your legacy Reserve Officers Association highlighted the financial sacrifice every member of the Reserve Components faced when drilling without compensation, and the need to mitigate "inconvenience and lost time" however drills were paid.

The reforms of the late 1940s and early 1950s were watershed moments for the Guard and Reserve – and we would never consider a force without the benefits that era provided. Likewise, America's military finally integrated women and people of color into the force during this time too, reversing policies that were not only deeply morally wrong but detrimental to the lethality of the force. My office is dedicated to advancing policies that continue this integration and ensuring we have a Reserve Component that can utilize 100% of the talents of as much of American society as possible. Our lethality and ability to win depend on it.

More change would come after America considered lessons learned from the Vietnam War. In 1973, just over 50 years ago, we pivoted to an all-volunteer force and a Reserve Component so integrated into the plans and structure of our military that we simply could not go to war without it. The first Gulf War found this all-volunteer, RC-reliant force to be the most lethal military in the world, but not unscathed from sacrifice and heartbreak. A single scud missile on February 25, 1991, hitting the Dharran (DAR-ran) barracks in Saudi Arabia.

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, instantly brought our Guard and Reserve Service members into crucial service once more protecting the homeland and deploying to support operations across the Middle East. Twenty-three years of deployments, and more sacrifice, seen and unseen in the lives of Guard and Reserve Service members and families, would follow. The reforms of benefits started 100 years earlier continued as we saw implementation of Tricare Reserve Select, the Post-9/11 GI Bill, reduced age retirement calculations, expanded access to commissaries, Reserve Component maternity leave (and starting October first, parental leave), and reforms to compensate Reserve Component members traveling over 150 miles to Inactive Duty Training.

The Reserve Forces Policy Board and my office, Manpower & Reserve Affairs, worked tirelessly to develop a massive legislative package-known simply as “Duty Status Reform,” to provide a simplified duty system and benefit parity across the Reserve Components.

A new “Total Force Policy” arrived in 2007 to help balance the tremendous requirements of RC forces in Iraq and Afghanistan with the need to reset and rest from deployment. We even saw a glimmer of hope in 2020 as Congress deemed 2030 the year prohibitions against federal civilian employee access to Tricare Reserve Select would expire. Incredible changes but wrought from a time when we asked more and more of our most valuable asset in the Reserve Components – our people and their families.

As we approach 2025, this is the force we have today: an all-volunteer, battle-tested, operational force with significantly more programs and benefits available than just a few decades prior. A force, however, with growing demands like cyber defense, support to civilian communities, disaster assistance, mobilizations to support active component missions, and more.

Forefront of these requirements, however, is the challenge to be ready for what our National Defense Strategy labels an “acute threat,” Russia, and our pacing challenge, China. Our RC Service members have incredible capabilities to support the National Defense Strategy in three key areas: supporting integrated deterrence; should deterrence fail, directly supporting combat operations and generating manpower for our combatant commanders, and finally, lending their talents gleaned in the civilian workforce to the multidomain battlefields of tomorrow.

First, our Reserve Components play a key role in advancing the centerpiece of the National Defense Strategy: integrated deterrence. Integrated deterrence is the coordination of every tool available to the Department, across services, components, the U.S. government and our allies and partners to ensure potential foes understand the folly of aggression. China’s People’s Liberation Army and Navy in particular have grown more capable in using a wide variety of means, from coercion, lawfare, information warfare and aggressive actions in the South China to achieve their objectives and destabilize the Indo-Pacific.

So too our response must be coordinated across domains (air, land, sea, space, in cyberspace and across the information domain). Integrated deterrence requires a modernized, ready, capable Reserve Component that clearly demonstrates to our potential adversaries the cost of aggression against US interests. Today your Reserve Components regularly demonstrate their readiness through tough, realistic training and support to large-scale training exercises across the Indo-Pacific and Europe. We see integrated deterrence in action when Navy Reserve Sailors integrate into the Rim of the Pacific-RIMPAC-exercise to demonstrate replenishment at sea operations, and when Army Reserve and National Guard Soldiers train with their Japanese and Australian counterparts at the Yama Sakura command post exercise in Japan. We see Reserve Component Airmen support integrated deterrence when they train for operating in contested airspace across the Indo-Pacific in Mobility Guardian 23 and Alaska’s Northern Edge.

The Army and Air National Guards’ State Partnership Program is one more example of integrated deterrence in action-engaging with partners and allies across over 100 nations to operate and train together. I saw the fruits of this program firsthand in the Czech Republic last

week visiting Texas and Nebraska National Guard Soldiers, working with their Czech partners to strengthen cyber defense capabilities across NATO.

Finally, there are thousands of Reserve Component sailors, marines, soldiers, sailors and coast guardsmen on extended Active Duty today directly supporting deterrence campaigns, missions across the Indo-Pacific and daily operations of active-duty forces around the world. In these missions, our Service members are building their own readiness and proficiency while bolstering our military's credibility around the world.

Our Reserve Components also play a huge role in preparing military manpower to deploy. About six months ago, I was *finally* confirmed as Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs. Not long after returning a third time to the Department of Defense, I began planning travel to get out of the Pentagon and engage directly with Guard and Reserve forces to hear their challenges firsthand.

One of my first stops was to Fort Riley, Kansas, recently designated by the Army as a "Mobilization and Force Generation Platform," or MFGI-a rebranding of the "power projection platform" title used during most of our operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. MFGIs are installations across the country designated to train and prepare active and reserve forces to deploy and are vital to the Department's planning for large scale mobilization.

The middle of Kansas may seem an odd choice to go to after waiting nearly a year and a half for confirmation, but this trip was special. Fort Riley already hosts a full infantry division, so to also serve as an MFGI required bringing an Alaska National Guard unit to serve as the post's Mission Support Force-a unit that serves as the MFGI's engine and coordinates post-mobilization processing and training. MFGIs also required doctors, dentists, and lawyers to give one last medical, dental, and legal check to our deploying Service members, so Fort Riley also brought in those specialties from Army Reserve units.

To test if Riley's MFGI force was ready, another Army National Guard unit mobilized at their home station and traveled to Kansas to run through the training, administrative processing, pay updates, medical and dental checks, and updates to their command and control systems as they prepared to support US Central Command operations. Far from an exercise training against a notional or pretend enemy, our Reserve Component Service members from around the country were preparing other Reserve Component Service members to deploy to a real-world mission and were doing so with distinction and high motivation-and seamlessly integrated into the post's MFGI operations.

The US Navy Reserve's Mobilization and Deployment Support Command, launched in December 2023, is another sign of this Department-wide focus to have an agile, ready Reserve Component that can quickly provide the manpower required for any contingency. As the Navy Reserve prepares for strategic competition and decentralized mobilization processing, it, like the Army, will rely on its Reserve forces to rapidly stand up locations required for post-mobilization training and processing, and ensure those that arrive are as ready as they can be to deploy.

Your Reserve Component is already supporting mobilization operations, and has been for decades, but to support the National Defense Strategy and deter Russia and China, they are practicing the massively important task of large-scale mobilization operations in posts like Fort Riley, Fort McCoy, Fort Bliss, and Joint Base Lewis-McChord to be ready to send tens or hundreds of thousands of multicomponent personnel overseas if needed.

The mobilization task given to our Reserve Components recently got even more attention in June of this year, as the Deputy Secretary of Defense designated the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, to whom I report, as the executive agent for mobilization. 2025 will see more activity from M&RA and across DoD to prepare for large-scale mobilization of all components, and we will rely on our Guard and Reserve members to be ready to fulfill that mission. The simple act of activating our Reserve Component personnel and standing up new a new MFGI like Fort Riley also sends a message to Russia and China: we are ready, and our Reserve Component personnel will answer the call to perform large scale mobilization with courage, competence, and grit if our resolve is tested.

I do have a concern here, and welcome any input to my office as we embark on this endeavor. Everyone I met at Fort Riley from our Guard and federal Reserve forces was outstanding-professional, dedicated to the mission, and extraordinarily competent in what they were doing. I recognize preparation for such as mission takes time-longer than the “one weekend a month and two weeks a year” model most of America associates with our Reserve forces. Some MFGI missions require Active Duty periods longer than two weeks, and our Status of Forces surveys of Reserve Component Service members indicate that many spend hours each month outside of drills to prepare for even routine missions and readiness activities.

As we stress the infrastructure to support mobilization, and rely more on the RC to support the generation of manpower to fulfill current and future operations, I do wonder the impact that has on Service members and families; we have resources able to mitigate some impact, but as Secretary Austin has stated over and over again, our people are our most important asset. It’s through that lens, coupled with the need to support the National Defense Strategy, that we constantly evaluate how our RC is accessed and what policies within M&RA we need to nuance to ensure our people are taken care of.

Finally, the Department recognizes two facets of future warfare that will rely on our Reserve Components just as heavily as we have, if not more, the last century. The Department’s number one priority in the National Defense Strategy is defending the homeland, paced with the multi-domain threat posed by the PRC. Implied in this is a recognition that tomorrow’s battles will be fought across all domains, requiring highly skilled Service members who can take punches and “punch back” in the highly technical domains of cyber, space, and information. It also acknowledges that the PRC is growing capabilities that could threaten the homeland-and impose huge demands on our Reserve Components to support the communities in which they live.

Our Reserve Component Service members are uniquely positioned to support multi domain operations, or MDO, due to the immense talents and skills they gain daily working in the civilian sector. Your ranks are filled with cyber security professionals, airline pilots, professionals in the space and communications industries, journalists, content creators on social media, drone

operators and software engineers-exactly the skills MDO requires to outmaneuver, outsmart and outmatch an opponent.

The key here is capturing that talent and ensuring our leaders leverage that talent to the greatest extent possible. The DoD is taking several steps to help that effort.

The Defense Innovation Unit's GigEagle platform, developed by Reserve Component members for Reserve Component members, seeks to revolutionize how we find and utilize the tremendous talent within the RC. Gig Eagle is a talent matching platform that allows interested DoD Reservists and Guard members to build profiles that highlight their civilian expertise and find short-term work within the DoD.

By employing Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning, Reservist profiles will be automatically matched to open requirements posted by DoD organizations needing specialty skills. The platform is already live and matching opportunities between DoD offices needing the niche talents in abundance in the Reserve Component with Service members ready to take on projects whether they be a few hours or several months.

MDO will require talent matching like this at a far greater scale. We know, however, the dual nature of our Reserve Components, with the support of the businesses, industries and employers across America who hire and retain our RC talent, are daily growing the capability to be ready when called.

One example of our active component colleagues recognizing the MDO talent in the RCs is the Navy's Fleet Information Warfare Command Pacific April 2024 call across the Reserve Force for Sailors to join its ranks. Charged with the mission to "plan, coordinate, and direct information-related capabilities and effects within the Indo-Pacific region," this relatively new command is at the center of multi-domain operations and deterrence of the PRC-and sees Reserve Component support as critical to complete its mission in peacetime and in war.

The Department also recently appointed a Chief Talent Management Officer, Brynt Parmeter, to identify talent across DoD as well as recruit and retain the best talent we can across America. While his efforts have focused on civilian talent acquisition, his broader efforts will strengthen the ways we find and leverage skills across DoD and sharpen the tools we have for the multi-domain fight.

As I mentioned earlier, MDO implies that a future adversary could attack the US homeland, particularly in the information and cyber domains. Such attacks would likely intensify during a call for mobilization. Imagine post-mobilization activities in a state with degraded internet, attacks on power infrastructure, compromised travel, personnel or pay systems, and social media flooded with disinformation on the legality or reason for large scale mobilization. Our Reserve Component service members must not only be ready for such a contested environment, but we must also be ready for calls for many to remain in the communities in which they live and work.

A contingency in the Indo-Pacific may very well require many of our RC Service members to assist in homeland defense, to protect not only their home communities but the infrastructure on which our mobilization enterprise depends. Reserve centers and armories aren't fortresses

sequestered away from the civilian world-on the contrary, they are embedded in communities across America, far away from the support of a large military installation. An MDO conflict could very well place additional strain on our Reserve Components as they effectively fight through homeland cyber and information attacks to simply mobilize, then answer calls to station wherever needed to keep the homeland safe.

The Department and again, the Reserve Forces Policy Board, recognized this problem of a contested homeland when, at the RFPB's recommendation, we began drafting a new "Total Force Policy" in late 2023. The last policy, implemented during the heady days of the surge in Iraq, was very much a policy of its time. Strategic competition and potential adversaries capable of MDO and strikes against the US homeland require a policy that drives integration of the Reserve Components and identifies early whether our mix of active and reserve forces and civilian are properly positioned to meet the needs of the nation's defense. My team is working hard to update the policy to also account for a potential contested homeland and get all of us thinking about what sectors of the US homeland will likely need support from the Reserve Components should they come under some type of attack.

Our Reserve Components are incredibly busy and in demand now to support integrated deterrence, and certainly will be so if called to mobilize in large numbers to support a crisis or conflict in the Indo-Pacific. As we move into 2025 and beyond, I'd like to close with policy changes and programs my team have spearheaded to get the Reserve Components ready.

I've already mentioned the enormous effort my Reserve Integration team have put into a new Total Force Policy-and appreciate the foundation laid by the RFPB. Beyond working toward a new policy, my team has hosted dozens of meetings with stakeholders across the Services, Joint Staff, Combatant Commands and DoD to highlight the challenges Reserve Component Service members and units face to meet the needs of in National Defense Strategy.

These discussions have proven invaluable in revealing to these key leaders common issues most of us just take for granted in reserve service. Issues like the "dual counting" of Reserve members who also serve in critical roles as civilians in DoD or the Federal government, a lack of smooth transition from Reserve to Active Duty and back, and problems with data sharing for pay or command and control between active and reserve systems. "Reserve Affairs" often means we are the only advocates in the room for Reserve Component issues, and my Reserve Integration team have taken that advocacy to the next level as they work a new policy.

Next, we look forward to the implementation next year of the DD Form 214-1. Once fully operational, this form will capture for the first time, in a single document, service data like periods of Active Duty and eligibility for post-9/11 benefits, and generally provide a summary of Reserve Component service unavailable today. For decades Reserve Component service members retiring or simply ending their terms of service have left without the benefit of a DD214 like their Active-Duty counterparts.

Our DoD instruction for this new form also envisions the transfer of this service data to the Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Labor, and even state departments of veterans and military affairs. My Military Personnel Policy office has worked hard to ensure the Services

meet our February 2025 deadline to implement the DD 214-1 and are encouraged by their progress.

Our Military Personnel Policy office is also exploring a Reserve Component-specific pathway for transition, complementing their efforts on the DD214-1. Reserve Component Service members often have different needs as they prepare to transition off Active Duty than someone leaving years or decades of active component service. The pathway to a pension is certainly different for someone entering the Retired Reserve, for example, and there is a huge difference in TRICARE options between retirement from a 20-year Reserve or Active component career. Transition from military service can be complicated, particularly when done outside of an Active Duty transition support office, and I look forward to seeing what our office develops to help our separating or retiring Service members.

To get after parity of benefits generally, we continue to champion Duty Status Reform as a necessary change to simplify how we access and support our Service members for inactive and Active Duty. We will continue to advocate for Duty Status Reform and other innovations spearheaded by my Reserve Integration team to better utilize activation authorities and ensure our RC Service members receive activation orders as early as possible to access Active Duty benefits like TRICARE Prime or TRICARE Remote.

My team worked hard throughout 2023 and 2024 to allow actively serving Guard and Reserve Service members to support Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps programs as instructors-a monumental shift in how we recruit JROTC staff. Detaching instructor pay from retirement pay, because these new RC instructors must still be actively in the Selected Reserve, required development of an entirely new pay scale, roughly equivalent for instructors between a GS-10 and GS-11 civil servant. Like our reliance on the RC for multi-domain operations, opening JROTC positions to current Guard and Reserve officers and NCOs is simply an acknowledgement of the incredible talent we have across our force.

JROTC is an incredible program building tomorrows leaders, so I'd ask you to please pass the word on this new opportunity.

My portfolio also includes many quality of life initiatives and programs directly supporting military families. During the next year, I look forward to supporting efforts piloted by the National Guard Bureau and Army Reserve to provide child care during weekend drills. As you know, finding child care can be challenging anywhere, but especially so on a weekend or rapidly after a short-notice call to activate or attend training. Reserve Component members, like our Active Duty Service members, should not have to decide between service to the nation and providing quality, affordable care for their children while they are away.

For Active Guard/Reserve Service members and those mobilized on Active Duty installations, we have implemented a new child fee schedule at Child Development Centers that reduces cost for those in lower income levels, making care much more affordable. We know many AGRs live and work far from a CDC, so have also increased our fee assistance cap for non-CDC care to \$1800.00 a month as well.

Just this week, after months of working with our colleagues at the Internal Revenue Service and Office of Personnel Management, we secured approval for members of the National Guard performing Active Guard and Reserve (AGR) duty to participate in Flexible Spending Accounts, or FSAs. FSAs are tax-free accounts available to most other federal employees that can be used for expenses such as child care, preschool, elder care, summer camp and more. Title 32 AGRs can enroll in Dependent Care Flexible Spending Accounts during the 2024 Federal Benefits Open Season and Health Care Flexible Spending Accounts during the Special Enrollment Period for Service members from March 3 to March 31, 2025. We are finalizing the policy and requirements to support this population's enrollment and are glad our efforts with the IRS and OPM were successful.

One emerging area we look forward to exploring and tackling is spouse unemployment within the Reserve Components. Our data indicates that unemployment among RC spouses has held steady for years at roughly 8%, or double the national unemployment rate. We have little data on why. While most RC spouses don't move around the country, which can be very disruptive to a civilian career, some do as their spouses accept Active Duty tours or changes in civilian employment. We also know more Service members travel to attend drill, placing an additional burden on a military spouse during a Thursday or Friday before drill.

Further, we know the activations and deployments across the last two decades have placed additional strain on military families and some level of uncertainty as we pivot to challenges from Russia and China. We welcome any insight into this issue, and like childcare, don't believe a military spouse should have to decide between a fulfilling career and support to their Reserve Component spouse.

My Military Community and Family Policy office directly manages a host of programs designed to assist military spouse unemployment, including the Military Spouse Career Accelerator Pilot. This program, a competitive multi-year program that provides spouses with paid 12-week fellowships at employers in various industries and locations, is open to the spouse of any member of our Guard and Reserve forces. Many programs like this require Active Duty service, but MSCAP does not.

Host employers provide program fellows with hands-on professional training and mentorship in the civilian workplace. Those who excel in the program and are a fit with their host company may be invited to join the employer as a direct hire. Applications are accepted year-round on a rolling basis, with new opportunities available continuously. Career-ready Reserve Component military spouses that are looking for a new career, or career change, should absolutely take advantage of this program, and my team will provide the ROA team links on how to do so.

We also directly manage a series of military teen adventure camps, held free of charge throughout the summer, designed to provide amazing outdoor experiences to teens and build teamwork skills and self-confidence. Like the military spouse fellowship, these programs are open to any currently serving or retired member of the Reserve Components. Incidentally, these camps are held during the busiest training season for the Reserve Components, so what a better way to give a boost to military teens who typically see their mother or father leave for weeks at a time during the summer for annual training.

Lastly, in the next few months, we should have a final report from the Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation-the QRMC-impacting all components and services' pay and entitlements and examining the compensation of deployed Service members regardless of component. It's been over a decade since a QRMC looked holistically at how we compensate members of the Reserve Component, so I'd ask you to think about what a future QRMC should examine. Potential recruits today are working in a post-COVID-19 "gig" economy, with opportunities to chain together multiple part-time jobs. Is our compensation model, developed decades ago, up to the task to compete in such an economy?

Our Reserve Components will play a crucial part in our Nation's security, throughout the homeland and abroad, in the multi-domain world of tomorrow. No doubt we'll continue to lean on them to support current global operations as we seek to leverage their skills and expertise in an increasingly complex, technical battlefield. If the last century of reforms is any indication, we'll see more efforts to buttress recruitment and retention of the best talent available in the Reserve Components, and renewed interest in testing the ability of the RC to quickly mobilize.

The July 2024 National Defense Commission report noted the likely need for future Reserve Component Service members to mobilize without months of warning or preparation, should conflict erupt with a peer or near-peer competitor. We'll all carefully watch as the Space Force implements its "single component" vision of allowing Guardians to serve part and full time, and seek to learn lessons from their efforts on permeability and more seamless integration between active and reserve service.

Whatever the future may hold, my team will continue to support the incredible Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen, civilian employees and their families, who serve our Reserve Components every day, every weekend, and the thousands already mobilized and deployed overseas. Thank you again for the opportunity to speak with you tonight. It is truly a pleasure to be here and with that, if we have any questions, I'd be happy to take a few. Thank you.