

RECORD VERSION

**STATEMENT BY
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SECRETARY OF THE ARMY**

AND

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CHIEF OF STAFF
UNITED STATES ARMY**

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The Need for Continuous Transformation

Today's security environment is both complex and volatile. The contemporary battlefield is increasingly transparent. The inescapable prevalence of internet-enabled sensors, from cell phones to satellites, makes it possible for our adversaries to see and target U.S. interests anywhere in the world. Advances in commercial technology have outpaced military technology in many areas, and the innovative use of simple and inexpensive commercially available systems provides a tactical advantage to forces that can procure and adapt faster than their opponents. Conflict is migrating into cities and dense population centers and is extending into new domains, with space and cyberspace enabling global effects. Developments in Ukraine, the Middle East, and elsewhere around the world have highlighted the volatility of this landscape, and regional conflicts carry the potential to ignite a firestorm with global impacts.

To meet these challenges successfully, the Army must transform quickly. We will ensure continued progress on long-term efforts that improve our warfighting on current and future battlefields in support of the National Defense Strategy, but our readiness cannot wait for arbitrary time horizons. The Army must continuously transform to adapt to the rapid pace of change occurring now. This need drives our \$185.9 billion budget request for Fiscal Year (FY) 2025.

Army transformation is well underway, but we must accelerate and intensify our efforts. We must transform our capabilities, force structure, and recruiting enterprise. We must deliver ready combat formations and take care of our people, ensuring the quality of life for our Soldiers, Army Civilians, and families.

Transforming our Capabilities

As we adapt to the changing environment, we are steadfast in developing advanced, long-term modernization programs to ensure that the Army maintains the overmatch required for future battlefields. The Army has made significant progress in our most ambitious modernization effort in more than 40 years by maintaining continuity across budgets and meeting major milestones for development and fielding. The success of this effort has been marked by the recent delivery and fielding of the Armored Multi-Purpose Vehicle (AMPV), Integrated Air and Missile Defense Battle Command System (IBCS), Mid-Range Capability (MRC), Next Generation Squad Weapon, and Precision Strike Missile (PrSM).

The Army continues to develop counter-unmanned aircraft system (UAS) capabilities as the Department of Defense's lead agency for countering small-UAS (C-sUAS). From the testing and fielding of systems such as Mobile Low, Slow, Small-Unmanned Aircraft Integrated Defeat System (M-LIDS), Fixed Site Low, Slow, Small-Unmanned Aircraft Integrated Defeat System (FS-LIDS), or Coyote, to the operational deployment of Directed Energy Maneuver Short Range Air Defense System (DE-MSHORAD), the Army and the Joint Counter-UAS Office (JCO) are exploring novel concepts and accelerating system development to meet the challenges of the advancing threat.

Building on the requirements for long-range precision fires, the Army fielded the first prototypes of the MRC to its 1st Multi-Domain Task Force (MDTF) in 2023 and is in the process of completing flight testing of the Long-Range Hypersonic Weapon, which is intended for delivery by the end of 2024. The Army awarded the contract for the development of the Tactical Intelligence Targeting Access Node (TITAN) in 2Q FY 2024 to produce the targeting data needed for these advanced capabilities and provide battlefield commanders with advanced decision-making tools in a rapidly evolving battlespace.

The Army is transforming the network to enable these capabilities and ensure our forces are lean, mobile, and low signature. We will begin a pilot for satellite-as-a-service in early FY 2025 while making continued progress on a zero-trust architecture. These efforts will form the security backbone of the Unified Network and enable the Army's integration into Combined Joint All-Domain Command and Control (CJADC2).

The Army is re-balancing aviation investments, shifting away from capabilities that are not survivable on the modern battlefield while investing in effective new technology. We are ending the development of the Future Attack and Reconnaissance Aircraft (FARA) and the production of the UH-60V version of the Blackhawk helicopter while also phasing out the operations and sustainment of the Shadow and Raven unmanned systems. We are delaying entering into production of the Improved Turbine Engine but remain committed to developing that program for integration into the UH-60 Black Hawk and AH-64 Apache helicopters. We will deliver needed capabilities by relying on a mix of enduring, unmanned, and space-based assets that are survivable and effective for current and future fights.

We are investing in our aviation capabilities by beginning production of the CH-47F Block II Chinook helicopter and continuing development of the Future Long Range Assault

Aircraft (FLRAA). We are also continuing to develop advanced unmanned systems, such as the Launched Effects family of systems and the Future Tactical Uncrewed Aircraft System, while leveraging opportunities to use commercial technology in innovative ways.

As we transform our capabilities, we will explore new ways to validate our systems as we introduce them into our formations. One way we will do this is by transforming in contact, using ongoing deployments and troop rotations as opportunities to explore new techniques and equipment. Transforming in contact ensures we validate systems and processes in their intended environments with the Soldiers who will employ them. Infusing commercial technology that is ready for employment will improve our lethality and readiness to face the challenges ahead.

These developments require the continued support of industry, underpinned by the ingenuity and drive of the American people. Investments in the modernization and workload of our organic industrial base are essential to meeting the requirements and scale of the modern battlefield. Current commercial production is insufficient to meet global demand. Multi-year procurement authority will significantly improve the production rates of critical munitions such as 155mm artillery rounds and Patriot missiles. However, further investment is necessary to ensure that the nation can scale the production of these and other munitions and systems to meet current and future requirements.

Transforming our Force Structure

The Army is transforming our force structure to incorporate new capabilities and refocus on large-scale combat operations. The legacy structure from the past two decades focused on counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations and maintained authorizations to accommodate 494,000 Active-Duty Soldiers. Our transformation will reduce the unfilled and excess positions and create space for new capabilities supporting large-scale combat operations in a multi-domain environment. The success of this restructuring will rely on the Army's ability to gradually increase end strength from the current 445,000 Soldiers to 470,000 by FY 2029 to meet the requirements of the future force.

This transformation includes a reduction of some 32,000 authorizations across the Active-Duty force structure and an addition of 7,500 new authorizations, leading to a net decrease of about 24,000 authorizations. The overall reduction in authorizations will more closely align the structure to the authorized end strength to improve the readiness of formations while increasing their capabilities for the future fight. Our restructuring efforts focused on

creating lethal, flexible formations that can adapt to large-scale combat operations and decreasing the number of authorizations that were designed for a counterinsurgency mission, not frequently deployed or unfilled. New additions to the Active Component force structure include the completion of five MDTFs, four additional Indirect Fire Protection Capability (IFPC) battalions, nine C-sUAS batteries, and four additional M-SHORAD battalions. All these formations bring advanced capabilities to meet current requirements and ensure that we maintain overmatch against adversaries in the future.

Transforming our Recruiting Enterprise

Transformation will only take place through the hard work of talented and dedicated Soldiers, Army Civilians, and the support of their families. The Army is a great place to serve: we are retaining talented Soldiers, finishing FY 2023 at 102% of our retention mission. Even so, the challenges to Army recruiting pose an existential threat to the all-volunteer force, and addressing these challenges has been one of our most comprehensive efforts over the last year.

The Army is making fundamental changes to its recruiting approach. This starts with redesigning our recruiting workforce, moving away from a model that places Soldiers outside of their primary military occupational specialty (MOS) into temporary recruiter positions for only a few years at a time. To do this, we are creating new talent acquisition specialties for both enlisted Soldiers and warrant officers, allowing our recruiters to develop skills to succeed in a competitive hiring environment. These new recruiters will expand their focus on the prospect market beyond those with a high school degree and will aim to recruit a third of new trainees from the “college or some college” population by 2028. This shift requires our recruiters to become more active on the campuses of junior colleges and technical institutes and increase Army recruiting presence in online forums.

We are also creating a significant innovation capability within U.S. Army Recruiting Command (USAREC) to quickly identify and scale promising new approaches and discard recruiting practices that are no longer successful in a competitive and rapidly changing labor market.

Finally, we are seeking to elevate USAREC to become a three-star command that oversees enlisted recruiting, Army Cadet Command, and the Army’s Enterprise Marketing Office and reports to the Secretary of the Army and the Chief of Staff of the Army in light of its

critically important mission. The leadership of USAREC will serve for an extended tenure, building stability and expertise and decreasing the impact of frequent leadership changeover.

Although FY 2023 was a challenging year, it showed a marked increase of 5,200 recruits over FY 2022, in large part due to the outstanding work of our 8,000 recruiters and the successful implementation of initiatives across the Army. As this transformation begins, our goal for FY 2024 is 55,000 Regular Army recruits and 5,000 commitments to the Delayed Entry Program. We will also continue successful initiatives like the Future Soldier Prep Course, which has brought more than 18,000 new Soldiers into the Army since its inception in the summer of 2022.

Delivering Ready Combat Formations

Despite recruiting challenges, the Army is meeting our global requirements. Over 140,000 Soldiers from all components are deployed or stationed in 143 countries worldwide to defend the nation's interests and maintain security with our allies and partners.

The Army provides the operational endurance, reach, and survivability necessary for joint force success in the Indo-Pacific. For FY 2025, we are requesting \$1.5B for Pacific Deterrence Initiative activities to exercise and campaign with our allies and partners, building and demonstrating shared readiness to deter Chinese aggression and ensure regional stability. This readiness begins in Hawaii and Alaska, where U.S. Army Pacific has established the Joint Pacific Multinational Readiness Center (JPMRC). JPMRC allows the Army and our partners to train in a variety of environments, from tropical jungles to the high arctic.

Funding for Operation Pathways will support partnered, all-component, multinational exercises such as TALISMAN SABRE. Last year's exercise included over 30,000 participants from 15 nations and provided the Army with the opportunity to construct and operate Joint Logistics Over the Shore (JLOTS), the largest such operation in over two decades. We continue to train, exercise, and collaborate with our long-standing allies, the Republic of Korea (ROK) and Japan. Last summer, the Army deployed a combined arms battalion on short notice from CONUS to the Korean Peninsula to demonstrate rapid crisis response and our resolve to deter DPRK aggression. In Japan, the Army supported Japan's Ground Self Defense Forces through the annual YAMA SAKURA exercise series.

The Army will continue to prioritize the Indo-Pacific as we transform our force structure and introduce new capabilities for strategic competition, including the 1st, 3rd, and 4th MDTFs,

the 5th Security Forces Assistance Brigade (SFAB), and the 11th Airborne Division, the Army's newest division focused on cold weather and high-altitude operations in the Arctic.

In Europe, the Army is requesting \$2.1B to support European Deterrence Initiative activities to maintain rotational deployments, train with our NATO allies, build readiness, and demonstrate our ability to rapidly project combat forces into the theater. This was recently on display during Exercise ARCTIC SHOCK when U.S. Army paratroopers and their Norwegian counterparts flew over the North Pole from Alaska and conducted a combined airborne operation into Norway. In the coming months, over 16,000 of our Soldiers will train with more than a dozen other countries in Exercise DEFENDER 24.

We continue our full support of Ukraine and its fight to repel Russia's invasion of its sovereign territory. Our troops have trained over 17,000 Ukrainian soldiers in Germany. We have sent major combat systems and munitions to Ukraine, including 21 High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS), 1 Patriot air defense battery, 131 Strykers, 31 Abrams tanks, 162 Bradley fighting vehicles, and over 1.5 million artillery munitions. This support is an investment in our own national security: it deters potential aggression elsewhere in the world and strengthens our defense industrial base. Supporting Ukraine is also critical to our military readiness. The lessons we have learned from Ukraine have allowed us to develop new methods, techniques, and capabilities for future conflicts. We have also seen how U.S. equipment is both effective and survivable, even in degraded or contested environments.

Now more than ever, the Army is leading efforts to support Ukraine in its fight to regain its sovereign borders, but that support is at risk the longer we operate without a supplemental appropriations bill. Every day that passes without funding for support to Ukraine is one that Russia will use to its advantage against Ukraine, against Europe, and against our NATO allies. We urge Congress to pass on-time appropriations bills and supplemental appropriation bills when required to support unforeseen crises.

In the Middle East, Iranian-aligned militia groups have increasingly threatened and attacked U.S. forces and interests, invigorated by Hamas's attacks against Israel in October 2023. U.S. Army Central (USARCENT) has assessed the force protection requirements of facilities and units, and we have deployed advanced counter-UAS capabilities, including DE M-SHORAD, to the region to defeat the ongoing use of sUAS and expand the network of defense for U.S. troops and bases. We are also supporting U.S. Central Command with JLOTS, which will provide the

Joint Force with the capability to increase the viability of large-scale maritime shipments of humanitarian aid into Gaza.

Soldiers from all components of the Army are serving the nation around the globe, including 2,500 Soldiers supporting the Department of Homeland Security at our southwest border. Regionally aligned Special Operations Forces and SFABs provide access and presence in each geographic combatant command, including 2nd SFAB's support over the last year to partner forces in Kenya, Tunisia, Gambia, and other partners in Africa. Army National Guard units support 30 nations in Central and South America as part of the State Partnership Program, training and building enduring relationships that improve mutual readiness.

Readiness of Soldiers and Families: Quality of Life Investments

Our readiness depends not just on recruiting, equipping, and training the force but also on the individual health and fitness of every Soldier. This readiness begins in the barracks, and the Army is dedicated to providing safe, high-quality housing and barracks for our Soldiers. The Army will invest an average of \$2.1B annually in the construction, sustainment, restoration, and modernization of barracks for unaccompanied Soldiers across Future Years Defense Program 25-29.

For FY 2025, the Army is budgeting \$935M for nine unaccompanied housing construction projects across Active Duty and Army Reserve at multiple installations, a 325% increase in construction from FY 2024. Barracks sustainment has been funded at 100% of the requirement, an investment of \$680M in FY 2025. We are also leveraging the expertise found within the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to stabilize project cost growth through early involvement in the planning and design processes. Additionally, the Army is allocating \$35M to hire civilian barracks managers at multiple installations, which will decrease the requirements for Soldiers to serve as barracks managers and allow them to focus on their primary warfighting duties.

For accompanied Soldiers, the Army is investing \$403.7M into government-owned Army family housing in FY 2025. This investment will address facility sustainment, construction of 173 new homes, and renovation of 252 homes. Across all installations, the Army is committed to increasing oversight of privatized housing and combating environmental hazards within both government-owned Army family housing and privatized housing through consistently applied maintenance and inspection programs.

The Army remains committed to reducing instances of sexual assault and sexual harassment, ensuring impartial justice, and encouraging healthy behaviors that strengthen the trust between the Army and the American people. During early FY 2024, the Army established the Office of the Special Trial Counsel (OSTC), which is staffed by specially trained, independent military attorneys (“special trial counsel”) who make prosecution decisions for sexual assault, domestic violence, and other covered offenses. Beginning in December 2023, the OSTC gained the authority to make case dispositions. This increases transparency and ensures that impartiality is inherent within the military justice process.

The Army is implementing a comprehensive, integrated prevention plan (CIPP) at all commands across the Army, which details actions to improve command climate. In particular, at the United States Military Academy, CIPP incorporates character development with proactive approaches to prevent sexual assault and other harmful behaviors. Additionally, we have instituted dedicated instruction during initial entry training that reinforces the shared trust required to form cohesive teams and provides education on prevention and response resources. These proactive approaches and many others will inform the creation of the Army’s Sexual Harassment and Response Program (SHARP) regulation, which will be published this fiscal year.

The Army continues to combat the risk of Soldier suicide through multiple approaches, acknowledging that every suicide impacts families, teammates, and the readiness of the force. The Army published its Suicide Prevention Regulation in September 2023, and we are ensuring that Soldiers are aware of and have clear access to mental and emotional health resources. The Army is investing in programs that help Soldiers maintain financial stability, mental health, strong relationships, and physical well-being, including expanding the Holistic Health and Fitness (H2F) program to 71 brigades in FY 2025 and budgeting \$24.4M for financial counseling services.

This holistic approach to Soldier wellness is taking form at every installation in the Army, with many garrisons consolidating the resources needed to combat suicide and increase Soldier fitness at a single accessible location. Tailored programs like 1st Infantry Division's "Operation Victory Wellness," 10th Mountain Division's "Mountain Care," and 11th Airborne Division's "Mission 100" are prioritizing engaged leadership and providing a wide range of location and community-specific resources to Soldiers and their families.

Ensuring that Army families have the resources they need to thrive is vital to our force's readiness and a driving factor behind Soldier retention. The Army's FY 2025 budget requests funding to construct three new child development centers (CDCs) at Fort Liberty, North Carolina, Fort Meade, Maryland, and Wiesbaden, Germany. We are testing and implementing incentives to maintain high staffing levels at existing CDCs by providing recruitment and retention bonuses, tuition assistance, and access to on-post resources such as commissaries at 16 installations.

Building on the Veterans Auto and Education Improvement Act of 2022, the Army continues to work with the Defense State Liaison Office to ensure military spouses can achieve portability of their occupational license as they undergo a permanent change of station. Army spouses may also take advantage of new opportunities provided by updates to the Military Spouse Employment Act, which grants federal agencies the authority to hire military spouses for remote work and allows military spouses to retain their positions should they relocate to another location. We are also continuing to coordinate with the Office of the Secretary of Defense to implement new policies that further expand employment opportunities for our Army spouses as directed by the Executive Order on Advancing Economic Security for Military and Veteran Spouses, Military Caregivers, and Survivors.

The Army spends over \$1.3 billion annually to provide Soldier and family support programs at installations around the world, but we recognize that each installation, unit, and community is unique and has discrete needs. We are empowering senior installation commanders with the authority to scale successful programs and close programs that do not meet the needs of each individual community. We are piloting this tailored, localized approach to Soldier programs at Fort Cavazos, TX, and will expand to other installations pending the results of the pilot.

Maintaining the Strategic Path

Today's security environment is volatile and evolving quickly. The battlefield is increasingly transparent, commercial technology is advancing rapidly, and new capabilities allow adversaries to reach around the world. The Army is transforming to meet the needs of this rapidly changing environment. With Congressional support, we will keep the Army on a sustainable strategic path as we transform for the future. We will deliver ready combat formations with advanced capabilities to defend our nation and its interests. We will transform our recruiting enterprise to guarantee the longevity of the All-Volunteer Force. We will invest in

the quality of life of our Soldiers, Civilians, and their families. We will build cohesive teams and foster climates of trust grounded in our shared Army values. And we will serve with the discipline and professionalism that the nation demands of its Army, just as we have done for the past 249 years. This We'll Defend.