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**PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION  
AND THE NATIONAL DEFENSE STRATEGY**

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HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

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# CONTENTS

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	Page
STATEMENTS PRESENTED BY MEMBERS OF CONGRESS	
Gallagher, Hon. Mike, a Representative from Wisconsin, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Military Personnel .....	2
Speier, Hon. Jackie, a Representative from California, Chairwoman, Subcom- mittee on Military Personnel .....	1
WITNESSES	
Munsch, VADM Stuart B., USN, Director for Joint Force Development, Joint Staff, J7 .....	22
Johnson-Freese, Joan, Professor, National Security Affairs, U.S. Naval War College .....	5
Schmidle, LtGen Robert E., Jr., USMC (Ret.), Professor of Practice, School of Politics and Global Studies, Arizona State University .....	3
Skelly, Hon. Shawn G., Assistant Secretary of Defense for Readiness, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness .....	20
APPENDIX	
PREPARED STATEMENTS:	
Johnson-Freese, Joan .....	54
Munsch, VADM Stuart B. ....	83
Schmidle, LtGen Robert E., Jr. ....	40
Skelly, Hon. Shawn G. ....	76
Speier, Hon. Jackie .....	39
DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD:	
[There were no Documents submitted.]	
WITNESS RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ASKED DURING THE HEARING:	
[There were no Questions submitted during the hearing.]	
QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING:	
Dr. Jackson .....	93
Ms. Jacobs .....	91



## **PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION AND THE NATIONAL DEFENSE STRATEGY**

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL,  
*Washington, DC, Wednesday, May 18, 2022.*

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 2:02 p.m., in room 2118, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Jackie Speier (chairwoman of the subcommittee). presiding.

### **OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JACKIE SPEIER, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM CALIFORNIA, CHAIRWOMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL**

Ms. SPEIER. Good afternoon.

The Committee on Military Personnel will come to order. I want to welcome the hearing presentations today. We're going to hear from those who have an interest in or are connected with professional military education and the National Defense Strategy.

This is the second committee hearing that we have had on this topic, and I commend the ranking member for making this a priority.

We are here to discuss with the Office of the Secretary of Defense [OSD] and the Joint Staff the Department's processes for developing and deploying professional education to service members that is relevant, flexible, and delivers value to the Armed Forces, given the investment in time and taxpayer dollars.

This content prepares officers charged to advance and execute our future national military strategy and ultimately become the senior leaders responsible for the defense of the Nation.

We will also hear from our panel of outside witnesses on their thoughts on the Department's professional military education enterprise and their recommendations for change.

From our OSD and Joint Staff panel, I want to hear not only about the need for this ongoing education but what is intended and the actual return on the significant investment of both time and resources, estimated at over \$8 billion a year, and how that return is measured.

I'm also concerned about these programs becoming very insular and not taking into consideration educational experts outside of the Department of Defense [DOD] to consider their insights in the development and execution of relevant educational content as well as maintenance of accreditation.

We must make sure that our leaders remain on the cutting edge of intellectual, technological, and educational development necessary for the changing character and conduct of operations.

The Office of the Secretary of Defense has been in charge of professional military education for 30 years, but it appears to have operated on autopilot and with little oversight by DOD or Congress.

The need for swift change in this arena must match the evolving strategy in a rapidly changing world. I'm convinced that the professional military education system is flexible enough to—I'm not convinced that the professional military education system is flexible enough to modify and adapt the curriculum promptly to keep pace with changing defense needs.

It needs attention of leadership and follow-through. I want to ensure that these educational opportunities are not used for career box checking but are used to enhance the warfighters' intellectual rigor or, as Chairman Milley states, the, quote, "intellectual overmatch," unquote, that is necessary to increase critical strategic thinking, leading to increased competence and effectiveness of our fighting force.

I'm also very interested to hear from our civilian witnesses their opinions of robustness and effectiveness of the current system of professional military education, and any and all recommendations they have for the improvement of the education continuum.

Before hearing from our witnesses, let me offer Ranking Member Gallagher an opportunity to make his opening remarks.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Speier can be found in the Appendix on page 39.]

**STATEMENT OF HON. MIKE GALLAGHER, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM WISCONSIN, RANKING MEMBER, SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL**

Mr. GALLAGHER. Well, I thank you, Chairwoman Speier, for your interest in this topic. I want to thank both of our panels for being with us today.

I will start with a quote that is sometimes attributed to Thucydides, other times attributed to Sir Francis Butler—it depends on what you reference—but I'm sure you've heard it before, which is that a nation that makes a great distinction between its scholars and its warriors will have its laws made by cowards and its wars fought by fools.

The stakes with professional military education [PME] and its intersection with the National Defense Strategy is absolutely critical to the defense of our Nation. The threats to America include an increasingly aggressive China, a revanchist Russia. The threat of Salafi jihadism has not gone away.

Cyber criminals attack us every single day and, of course, unique challenges we have all faced in the last 2 years related to the pandemic. The list goes on and on. The bottom line is we have to ensure our readiness through an unyielding commitment to outthinking our opponents, whether they are state actors or cyber criminals or nonstate terrorist groups. We have to get this right.

This past December, we had a subcommittee briefing and I started with a statement from the 2018 National Defense Strategy which said, quote, "PME has stagnated, focused more on the accomplishment of mandatory credit at the expense of lethality and ingenuity," unquote.

I also mentioned the need to harness the power of war-gaming, which I think we're not doing enough of. In today's hearing I would like to get into these issues. I would like to understand what's changed in our approach since we have had that initial briefing, how we can ensure that we have the right system for PME and, by extension, that our military leaders are prepared to fight and win in any conflict and as well as just understand the future of warfare.

The challenge here is whether we have the institutions and organizational wherewithal within our military to do this, or does the current system of PME need a fresh look and a transformational change.

We need to hear the thoughts of both panels on this and we also need to know what your constraints are and how we can get after this and support you in the right way.

In my mind, PME should be something that inspires intellectual curiosity and the critical thinking of our service members. It should be the result of a meritocratic culture that assures the best and brightest are afforded the opportunity to lead and to hone their craft as thinkers and as warriors.

And so I'm very much looking forward to this discussion. I thank you, and I yield back.

Ms. SPEIER. I thank the ranking member and would now like to welcome our first witnesses in our first panel. First is retired General U.S. Marine Corps, Robert Schmidle—did I say that right?—Junior, Professor of Practice at the School of Politics and Global Studies at the Arizona State University, and Professor Joan Johnson-Freese, National Security Affairs, Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island.

Mr. Schmidle, you may begin with your opening statement.

**STATEMENT OF LTGEN ROBERT E. SCHMIDLE, JR., USMC (RET.), PROFESSOR OF PRACTICE, SCHOOL OF POLITICS AND GLOBAL STUDIES, ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY**

General SCHMIDLE. Thank you, Chairwoman Speier and Ranking Member Gallagher, and the other members of the subcommittee.

I first want to thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to address the issue of professional military education and the National Defense Strategy.

Although this subject has been investigated before, it seems to me that what makes this such a pressing issue today is the rise of China. China is the first true peer adversary we have had to deal with in many years. China has the economic, technical, and manpower resources that make it perhaps the most severe threat that we have faced.

Because of this, it is a matter of great consequence that the professional military education system produces the very finest officers who are both thinkers and doers. In examining the state of military education, the first thing that I think we should consider is answering the following question.

What do we want our senior military and civilian leaders to be able to do, what are the characteristics and attributes we want them to have? We want them to be creative, to be innovative, to be critical thinkers. Answering this question is fundamental to

identifying areas of concern and opportunity, and seems to me that this, in fact, is a question for the Congress.

It is important to remember that while we, the U.S. military, are unmatched on the battlefield, the many tactical victories we have achieved have not always been relevant to enabling strategic success.

Ensuring a coherent relationship between tactics and strategy is part of a long-term—as part of a long-term campaign model is critical to maintaining America’s place in the world order. The most effective and enduring methods, in my experience, for achieving this relationship is through realistic and rigorous war-gaming, especially at the classified level.

The example of War Plan Orange is very instructive. War Plan Orange was the plan for the defeat of Japan in the Second World War. War Plan Orange was created initially out of seminars at the national—the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island, and for many, many years, they would war-game a rising Japan in the South Pacific.

And when we finally went to war with Japan, the senior leaders actually had in their minds an operational design for what that conflict was going to look like and what that plan would look like, and that came from the war-gaming that was done for many years at Newport.

Previous efforts at reforming professional military education have only been successful because of congressional leadership. As I suggested in my written testimony, a congressional commission similar to the Cyberspace Solarium Commission, I think, would be a great first step.

I was fortunate to be on the red team for that commission and I was very impressed with the level and the depth of knowledge and understanding of the nuances of cyber operations among the commissioners.

I had just come from being the first deputy commander of Cyber Command and I was relatively familiar with those things. So I was very impressed with the methodology and the leadership of that commission, and I think that that would be a great way for us to begin to understand the issues, their potential solutions, and to start crafting legislation to put them in place.

Two things that I think we should keep in mind as we consider the implications of professional military education. First, investing in human capital has a much bigger payoff than investing in technology alone.

As some on this committee know personally, technology by itself doesn’t fight wars. It doesn’t win wars. People using technology fight wars and people, ultimately, make decisions that win or lose wars.

The Department of Defense budgets should, in fact, reflect the outsized importance of applying appropriate resources to professional military education and most of all to war-gaming.

Second, I think we need to take a holistic approach to military education, understanding the inescapable linkages to service personnel and promotion policies. The example of Goldwater-Nichols and the effect that it had on joint duty is, again, instructive.



Prior to Goldwater-Nichols, there was—officers were not in a hurry to go to joint duty. It was considered a pariah. But after Goldwater-Nichols, when it became apparent that the Congress had run out of patience with giving waivers to the Department of Defense for promotion to general officer, it suddenly became the cause celebre and the best and the brightest of the O-6s we had—the colonels and Navy captains—were trying to get into joint positions so that we could, in fact—they would be eligible for promotion. And I think that we are all the better for it—our joint forces, obviously, the better for that.

So I think that that is a good example of how we could actually legislate and start to move the needle on this. The most important contribution that professional military education makes to National Defense Strategy is preparing senior officers and civilians for all that we can confidently know about the future and that is that it will be uncertain.

And with that, I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of General Schmidle can be found in the Appendix on page 40.]

Ms. SPEIER. Thank you, sir. We'll now hear from Dr. Johnson-Freese.

**STATEMENT OF JOAN JOHNSON-FREESE, PROFESSOR,  
NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS, U.S. NAVAL WAR COLLEGE**

Ms. JOHNSON-FREESE. Representative—thank you.

Representative Speier, Representative Gallagher, and members of the subcommittee, at is an honor and a pleasure to have the opportunity to speak with you today about professional military education, a field I've worked in since 1993.

The focus of my remarks will be on the degree-granting institutions, specifically, command and staff and war colleges, as that is where my experience lies.

And while I'm currently a faculty member at the Naval War College, the views I'm expressing today are strictly my own.

There is much that has improved in PME during my nearly 30-year career. Adherence to the principles of academic freedom, the foundation for quality teaching, and recruiting top teachers is now embedded in most PME programs.

There has also been a slow and steadily growing recognition that it is not the purpose of either the intermediate or senior level courses to better prepare each individual attendee for their next billet, a mistake that long dominated PME.

Military officers need to be educated for the arc of the rest of their careers rather than the next assignment.

Another improvement is that we see far fewer moments when senior officers take to the stage to welcome students with statements like, it's only a lot of reading if you do it. Clearly, however, some services and some military branches still encourage, respect, and appreciate education more than others.

The hybrid nature of PME institutions creates three general types of stresses and challenges that remain particularly problematic: first, establishing clarity on the goal of the academic program; second, defining the institution's expectations of the students and what those students should expect to get out of the program; and

third, having the most effective mix of civilian academics, Active Duty and retired military professionals, and national security practitioners to best implement the academic program.

I suggest beginning with consideration of three recommendations. First, accentuate that Congress' goal for PME is education, not training. PME should produce leaders who are intellectually agile, questioning, critical and strategic thinkers who can broadly anticipate future challenges, and, consequently, most effectively be ready to employ U.S. forces for maximum effect and lethality.

Second, institutionalize a two-track PME pathway for students, one for students who seek only to complete requirements and one for those who want to pursue a graduate degree.

This is important because we have found that most students do, in fact, want to complete a master's level program. Indeed, that was the reason for accrediting the program in the first place.

But some students chafe at degree program requirements and that minority should be allowed to pursue a smaller and more circumscribed program.

And third, address issues consistently identified as problems on command climate surveys. In my experience, these problems consistently include transparency in decision-making, hiring and promotions, narrow communications within institutions, and longstanding problems of inclusion and diversity.

To that end, DOD should collect data on faculty and administration towards increased diversity through demographics, backgrounds, and expertise. These statistics are often very closely held within institution.

But in my experience, I would estimate that PME college level administration, which has grown significantly in past years, is overwhelmingly composed of retired military. This lopsidedness persists because of inertia in hiring practices. As one of my students explained to me, ducks pick ducks.

Few or none of this group of administrators have experience in academic life or higher education before coming to PME.

More data on which groups are hired more often, have been hired at higher or lower pay, and are promoted more often into more senior positions would go a long way at getting a more accurate picture of faculty at PME institutions.

Clarity here would help dispel faculty perceptions of unfairness if such perceptions are erroneous. If such perceptions are accurate, however, and I suspect many of them are, more data would allow for more accurate course corrections and institutional improvement.

Until this problem is addressed, inertia and status quo within the institutions will prevail. I elaborate on each of these areas in my written testimony and would be happy to answer questions from that elaboration.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my views.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Johnson-Freese can be found in the Appendix on page 54.]

Ms. SPEIER. Thank you both.

Let me start with you, Mr. Schmidle. This congressional commission that you have conceived was intriguing to me. Who would you recommend be put on that kind of a commission?

General SCHMIDLE. Well, I think that, again, I go back to the Solarium Commission, and the members that were on—the commissioners that were on and many of whom I knew. But I would suggest that you need a mix of people that are on the civilian side that are experts as well as on the military side.

I mean, I think what I would be most inclined to do would be to pick a chairman and a co-chair, and then have them begin to cogitate on who they wanted in there.

You know, my experience, I'm also on the faculty at Arizona State University so I've had a chance to see this from both sides. I'm a student of the PME process. I went to command and staff college as a major.

I went to the war college—the Marine Corps War College—as a lieutenant colonel, and then I taught at the Marine Corps University after that because that—in those days in the mid to late 1990s that was part of the payback. They sent us to the war college and then we went and were on the faculty.

So I think a diverse group of people—to pick up on something that Joan just mentioned a minute ago about retired military, as I mentioned in my opening statement, I think that we could legislate career paths that would encourage the best and the brightest officers to be faculty in those—in our universities and that their career paths—that they wouldn't have to make a decision between a career path that would lead to promotion and one that would not.

Recognizing that I have really not answered your question, I just think that it would require—I mean, there are some things that I've seen in the civilian academic world that I think would be very useful for us to import.

But I think there's also some rigor that is called for in the military schools, especially when we get into things like war-gaming, that really need to be and can best be taught by people with an operational background.

Ms. SPEIER. All right. Thank you. What percentage of the faculty, Dr. Johnson-Freese, would you recommend be civilian?

Ms. JOHNSON-FREESE. Not just the faculty but administration? A third.

Ms. SPEIER. A third. And how about war-gaming? What percentage of the curriculum should be war-gaming?

Ms. JOHNSON-FREESE. What percentage of the curriculum? Again, I can speak only to my experience—that it usually is part of the military operations course, whatever it's called, And it is the kind of culminating exercise.

So I would estimate it's probably somewhere between 10 and 20 percent of the overall curriculum. But I would suggest that, for example, in my department, we have an exercise that is not war-gaming, per se, but it is an exercise which puts students in the position of have to think about force planning and having to think about how you match force planning with strategy. So there are elements of war-gaming practices that are throughout the curriculum.

Ms. SPEIER. What percentage of the curriculum at the war college that you have been part of for all these years is Socratic versus seminar engagement?

Ms. JOHNSON-FREESE. Well, as I pointed out in my testimony, we aim for Socratic method teaching. But it's very difficult to go into

a classroom where the vast majority of the students are coming from a STEM [science, technology, engineering, and mathematics] background. Most of them are engineers.

They've come from the military academies. And when you try and have a discussion that starts off with something like what are the pros and cons of alliances for the United States, and the students in the room have absolutely no background in that field, there's a certain amount of teaching that has to go on before you can get into the Socratic method.

There's a lot more teaching that has to be done on the basics of social sciences to prepare them for that Socratic method that is very effective.

Ms. SPEIER. In one of your articles you wrote that we should limit the number of retirees hired on war college faculties. Would you like to expand on that?

Ms. JOHNSON-FREESE. The retired faculty play a very important role. Some of them leave the military and become—take on a civilian role and develop their own fields. I have a colleague who has become an expert strategist. I have another colleague who is a marvel at international engagement. They do this.

But there are also a pretty strong percentage who use their position or see their position as a faculty member to teach what they have done, and that gets us into teaching the last war. Their currency becomes dated rather quickly.

So I would suggest, too, the second part of that is they see the students as a younger version of themselves and what that means is they understand their stresses, their limitations, and they become as focused on getting the students through comfortably as getting them educated, and we bend over backwards to make things comfortable for the students.

I'm sure you remember in college finals week, even in high school, where you might have two finals in 1 day or three finals in 2 days. That will never happen at war college. It's spaced out to make it comfortable.

When I first got to the Naval War College, we didn't have students read an article. We had a faculty member read it and then do a Cliff Note to give to the students to make it easier for them.

So, again, I think the retired military, seeing these young officers as versions of themselves, rigor can become overly balanced with accommodation.

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Schmidle, would you like to comment on any of those questions? War-gaming—what percentage should it be?

General SCHMIDLE. So I think if we—war-gaming, to me, is something that we can do as part of every piece of the syllabus. War-gaming is, ultimately, theory applied practically.

It's a way for us to take sort of the big ideas in life and to say how would this apply in this case. I think war-gaming does something else for us. I think it gives us an opportunity to evaluate officers, and I hear exactly what Joan is saying.

My experience in the war college was very different. The Marine Corps—when we stood up the Marine Corps War College, we did it like we did everything else.

We went as far overboard as we could and it was like academic boot camp and—but it was an extraordinary year, and I thoroughly

enjoyed it. There were 12 people in a seminar and if you didn't—hadn't read what was going the night before, you were going to get embarrassed in front of everybody.

And the faculty at the time sort of relished that and I thought that was okay because—holding people to that standard. The evaluation of students—one of the things that I think we miss an opportunity in the war colleges is being able to do just that, to look at some of these students and begin to pick out the best and the brightest that are in these war colleges that are not just there to get the X in the block but are genuinely the kinds of people that you and Ranking Member Gallagher were talking about, the intellectually curious, the folks that really want to know more about how this big system of ours operates.

So I would be inclined to do more war-gaming more often and to hold the students accountable for trying to understand the, quote, "big ideas" that are driving a lot of this.

Ms. SPEIER. Thank you. My time has expired.

Ranking Member Gallagher.

Mr. GALLAGHER. Well, thank you. I apologize. I keep running out. We have a T&I [Transportation and Infrastructure Committee] vote series going on right now. So trust me, there's a TV and I'm listening to what you're saying as I also vote simultaneously so—and I very much appreciated both of your thoughtful testimony.

General Schmidle, in your testimony, you mention a China Hands program. Could you tell us a little bit more about that and what benefit you think it would provide to the Defense Department?

General SCHMIDLE. You know, we tried to—there we go. Okay. The Defense Department tried the Afghan Hands program a number of years ago. You may have heard of that. And, actually, it was—it was actually pretty popular. I knew a number of officers that wanted to know how to get involved in it.

We didn't quite take it to conclusion. It didn't get embedded institutionally. But I think the idea of starting, for instance, a China Hands program—so if you were a young major and you said, hey, I want to get into that program, you would select into it—you wouldn't just decide you wanted to do it—and then you would go to school.

You would probably go to a master's degree program in Chinese politics, Chinese geography, Chinese economics. You would learn the language, at least some—enough of the language to be able to be passively—if not fluent to be able to read, and you would spend your career in jobs that were continually focused on China.

So you might spend a couple years in the Pentagon. Then you might go to the INDOPACOM [U.S. Indo-Pacific Command] staff, continuing to get promoted—and this is something that we would have to ensure was happening—and then come back to the Pentagon so that the Secretary of Defense had a group of folks that he could go to outside of OSD Policy, which, as you know, has a large turnover of folks in there, but a core group of people that truly understood China and the Chinese issues and the Chinese culture.

We had a de facto experience like this in the 1960s and 1970s with the Sovietologists, right. We had a lot of people in the Depart-

ment of Defense that just knew the Soviet Union and that knew the Russian people and the issues that were there that we never really thought about it because that was the peer threat.

And this was just a suggestion that I had that as a way to kick start and to generate interest in furthering the education and giving these young officers access to the Secretary with their suggestions.

Mr. GALLAGHER. Can I—so you mentioned War Plan Orange—phenomenal book, very eye opening. As I understand it, or if memory serves, the key was that you had students, Active Duty—in this case at the Naval War College—whose work was then being fed into the actual war plan.

General SCHMIDLE. Absolutely.

Mr. GALLAGHER. And it evolved over time.

General SCHMIDLE. Absolutely.

Mr. GALLAGHER. I mean, they—what's remarkable is they got the basic idea kind of right but made significant adjustments throughout. Is there any such connectivity going on right now between the war-gaming happening at our national war colleges and the actual OPLANS [operation plans] such as they exist?

General SCHMIDLE. I really don't know. I suspect that it may not be as tight of a loop but—

Mr. GALLAGHER. And I'll allow Dr. Freese to—you seem like you had a thought on—yeah.

Ms. JOHNSON-FREESE. Yeah. One of the things that's happened over the past 10 years is there's been an increasing recognition within the war colleges that there's a lot of external experts that you can bring in to work with.

The war colleges used to be very insular. There is now a recognition that the way you get expertise and the way you develop expertise is to work with outside institutions. At one time, faculty were discouraged from doing that, but that is slowly changing.

So you've got this breadth of expertise not just on China, but on China, on the Middle East, on—name the area of the world—that you can work with. And, again, recently, Russian studies has come back into vogue, which was very much in vogue during the Cold War.

But we don't need to develop them all within the war colleges because, again, languages—Chinese—my son took Chinese for 6 years and I think he would say he speaks Chinese like a first grader.

So it's a long process to develop expertise. We can't develop them in a 10-month program, but we can make them aware of the questions they need to ask to find the experts who are there. And I think that's an important thing to do.

Mr. GALLAGHER. Well, the other thing that I'm concerned about is we invest this money and time into some of our best and brightest, although there's a dispute as to whether we're selecting our best and brightest, depending on the institution.

Are we then putting them in operational assignments that reflects the year or 2 years they just spent working on a particular intellectual problem?

I only have 14 seconds. Yeah, I got to—yeah.

General SCHMIDLE. I think we would find out that it's probably episodic.

Ms. JOHNSON-FREESE. I can only say, based on what my students tell me, rarely.

Mr. GALLAGHER. Okay. I'm listening. Again, I swear.

[Laughter.]

Ms. SPEIER. Dr. Johnson-Freese, I believe in your testimony you recommended that it not be focused on the next position that officer is going to have but their totality of the arc of their term in the military.

Ms. JOHNSON-FREESE. Yeah. When I started in PME that was the idea that we were supposed to [be] preparing them for their next job. Well, when your seminar is 12 students and one is a pilot and one is a nurse and one is a ship driver and one is in cyber—you can't prepare them. We are not—that is training. That is training.

What we are preparing them to do is to recognize long-term threats, to think strategically. Getting away from that idea of preparing them for their next job has been incremental, but I think we have made a great deal of progress in that area.

Ms. SPEIER. Thank you. Next is the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania, Ms. Houlahan. You are recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you to our panel for speaking. I served in the military and was a Russian—I took a bunch of Russian as well back in the day, and my dad actually was a Navy guy and went to Naval War College, amongst other terrific professional education opportunities.

So I'm really excited to kind of learn your perspective, and I had a specific question for Ms.—it must be Dr. Johnson-Freese or Ms. Johnson-Freese—you suggested in your testimony that the Department should utilize a two-track PME pathway for students for those who were pursuing master's degrees and those who sought only to complete their PME.

We have often heard that noncommissioned officers [NCOs] and petty officers are the backbone of the Armed Forces and about 82 percent of the forces are enlisted, and so my question to you is, given how strongly that we rely on the enlisted folks and ongoing efforts to recruit and retain these qualified folks, would you also recommend, similarly, that pathways apply to enlisted for PME?

Ms. JOHNSON-FREESE. I'm not familiar—I'm not as familiar with the education system that deals with NCOs. But I know we have included—on a very selective basis included them into our programs and I think—again, many students come to us and say, I've got two master's, I don't need another master's.

I would rather spend that time doing something else. And, frankly, there are just students who aren't interested for whatever reason and they don't add much to the seminar. I had a student say, so I did all the reading, did all the work, and I'm going to get an A- and the man next to me who didn't spill his coffee every day is going to get a B+.

Let him take a more condensed version and get him out of the classroom and add more interagency people. Add more international. Add some of the NCOs. That creates a more interesting and useful mix.

Ms. HOULAHAN. So you're saying that you could increase capacity if you changed the mix of what people's aspirations were in terms of the end result of the program?

Ms. JOHNSON-FREESE. Absolutely.

Ms. HOULAHAN. And that's interesting. My other question—you also did a lot—spoke a lot about sort of diversity of the staff and faculty and you spoke a little bit about—I think what you were saying is measuring what mattered and being able to have the data in front of us as to what that diversity looks like, where people are coming from, so that you can see what sort of efficacy results from that diversity.

Is that, indeed, what you were indicating a need for is an understanding of what the faculty looks like at these various institutions?

Ms. JOHNSON-FREESE. What the faculty looks like and equally, if not more important, what the administration looks like. I would argue that the administration in PME throughout the institutions is overwhelmingly retired military, and that's rather like having a hospital—if everybody running the hospital is a surgeon, they're going to have the same answer to pretty much every medical question.

When you have a war college where everybody is retired military, you don't get much diversity of thought. So my argument is that since it is Active Duty, retired military, professional academics, and practitioners, there ought to be some kind of mix in there to get diversity of viewpoint, and it is not a matter of Ph.D. and non-Ph.D.

It's a matter of where did you come from? What is your background? Did you have experience in education? Are you aware of what it takes to succeed as an academic as opposed to—many of the retired military will go on to get a Ph.D. at a night school program maybe in the field they're working in, maybe not.

So it's not Ph.D./non-Ph.D. It is what was your background when you came in to give you what—diversity of thought and I think that will get—that will remove a lot of the inertia and status quo that has prevailed.

Ms. HOULAHAN. And with my remaining seconds would love to understand from Mr. Schmidle—General Schmidle, you mentioned the fact that—I'm trying to remember what the angle was.

I'm sorry. I've lost the train of thought. It was really important, but I'm sure it'll come to me.

And with that, I guess I'll yield back because I've forgotten what I wanted to ask you about.

General SCHMIDLE. So if I could comment on the question you asked about accreditation. So the question we might ask ourselves is if we were not concerned with accreditation for master's programs, what would that free up in terms of bandwidth at the war colleges to potentially teach things that we're not teaching today, and the extent to which that accreditation actually impacts us at that level might be something to think about.

The other thing is with regard to the administration, the question we should be asking ourselves is how do we incentivize civilian faculty to join the administration of a war college, and Joan has brought up some great points.



If everybody there is a surgeon, then their answer is going to be, well, let's do some exploratory cutting and figure out what the problem is.

So I just think if we could consider those two things that might be useful.

Ms. HOULAHAN. No, I appreciate it. I know my time is up. I did remember what I was going to ask—

Ms. SPEIER. All right. Go ahead and ask question.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Thank you, which was when you talk—both of you have talked about the balance between rigor and, you know, making sure you don't alienate the population—your student population—I also was a chemistry teacher for a time so I do understand that as well.

But my challenge is you also mentioned that it made a huge difference when it was part of a person's career path to require that they take a stop at this sort of professional development and education.

If we make it so that we're lowering the accreditation standards or that there isn't accreditation, will it still be that desirable path or is there—how do you reconcile that, I guess, is my question.

General SCHMIDLE. I don't think that the accreditation path—when I was teaching at the Marine Corps University at the command and general staff level—I had just finished the war college—we did not have—we were not given a master or we didn't earn a master's degree at that program. It was not accredited.

Yet, I was entering students in command and staff college that—for master's degrees when I did not have one myself. So I think that that the—that is just not really an issue.

The point that I think I was trying to make was if you say to the best and brightest of our young officers a tour on the faculty of the university of one of the schools and one of our services is good for your career as opposed to being something to be avoided, then I think that you will, just like joint duty was, all of a sudden overnight it became the thing that everybody wanted, and 2 weeks before that you couldn't get anybody to sign up for a joint job. So that does happen.

Ms. SPEIER. Thank you.

Ms. HOULAHAN. I get it. I get it. I appreciate it. Thank you, sir. Thank you, Madam—

Ms. SPEIER. The gentlelady yields back.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. SPEIER. Mrs. McClain is next but she's not here. So we'll move to Mr. Jackson of Texas for 5 minutes.

Dr. JACKSON. Thank you, Chairwoman, and thank you, Ranking Member Gallagher, for holding this hearing today. I share Ranking Member Gallagher's passion for providing oversight, for reforming the future of professional military education.

So I'm glad we had this hearing take place today. I believe this is one of the most important topics that we can discuss here in this subcommittee.

As a retired flag officer, I believe that we need to continue to invest in our people by providing adequate opportunities for development and growth.

Yesterday, our committee received a briefing from Deputy Secretary Hicks on National Defense Strategy. During the briefing, she emphasized investment and modernization in our cyber and space capabilities.

General, you helped stand up the CYBERCOM [U.S. Cyber Command] as the first deputy commander so your expertise is a real asset to this committee. China's cyber capabilities are advancing rapidly each day.

So I think it's important that we continue to educate our force about cyber in particular because we will—it will be such a critical component of the conflict in the Indo-Pacific should that happen.

So, General, where do you see the largest gaps in knowledge in the Department when looking at cyber and, further, what aspects of cyber should we implement in the curriculum at our PME institutions to ensure our forces are ready for the Chinese adversary?

General SCHMIDLE. Well, that's a great question, Representative Jackson. Thanks for asking it. So, in my time at Cyber Command and my time since then dealing with this issue when I was on Active Duty and today where I'm on the advisory board at NSA [National Security Agency], it seems to me that what we really need in our senior officers and our senior leadership, we don't want to turn them into computer scientists but they do need to have an understanding—enough of an understanding of the technology to be able to think through the implications of using that technology as a tool of national security because what we are seeing and what we have seen over the course of the last 15 years is that cyber capabilities can, in fact, have an effect—a big effect, in some cases—on what you might think about for national security strategy.

So I think that it's important that we have some level of technical education and the example from my own experience is being a pilot, right—I'm not an aeronautical engineer. I couldn't build an airplane.

But I do know why if I push the stick forward the trees get bigger. If I pull it back, they get smaller. I understand who Bernoulli was and I got all that. And I think we need people like that that understand the world of cyber and especially to realize that there's two different things we're talking about here.

There's the pathways, if you will, of cyber, the way that we push bits and data through, and then there is what we can potentially do with cyber technologies that would be—have some other effect on what we're doing. So it's a great and very timely question and, as you well know, the Chinese are active and so—

Dr. JACKSON. Yes, sir. No, I appreciate that. Thank you. And I had another question that was related. You answered most of that, actually.

But I think it's really important too because I think what—the other thing it does is it gives us—you know, if we include this in the curriculum it makes people much more competitive across the board for jobs when they get out of the military because cyber is so important.

Just, you know, no matter what you choose to do when you leave the military, I think having a little bit of background in this and having this part as your professional military education is going to

make life after the military a lot more competitive and a lot better for folks when they get out.

So thank you. I appreciate both of you for being here and for your time. And with that, I yield back. Thank you.

Ms. SPEIER. He wants to—do you want to yield to the ranking member?

Dr. JACKSON. Oh, yeah. Yeah. I yield back, Madam.

Ms. SPEIER. All right. The gentleman is recognized.

Mr. GALLAGHER. Can I ask a blunt question. How—okay, so when we talk about, like, our top level war colleges, right—National War College, Naval War College—I'm not trying to get you to pick sides here—how do you think they stack up against top-level civilian master's degree programs, right? Think SAIS [Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies], Georgetown. I don't know what the latest ranking is. Do we have a way of assessing that?

General SCHMIDLE. So after I went through the Marine Corps War College, I decided that I wanted to get a master's degree because they were not issuing master's degrees and I wanted to continue. So I applied and got accepted at American University and I got a degree in philosophy.

So here I am in a civilian university. I'm a 50-year-old or a 47-year-old colonel wandering around, going to night school trying to do this. Academically, I can tell you that it was the first 6 months of the Marine Corps War College at that time, 1996, when we were doing strategy was as in depth as what I did in that master's program.

The second 6 months of the war college, which were more of the joint force applied stuff, was not—it was more in people's comfort zones. So but that was just my one snapshot experience into what that was.

Joan.

Ms. JOHNSON-FREESE. I would argue that the PME can declare success when an officer is offered a chance to go to Harvard, Yale, SAIS, or a war college and they pick the war college.

Mr. GALLAGHER. I like the way you put that.

Ms. JOHNSON-FREESE. Because, right now, there is the perception that the degree from one of those civilian academic institutions is worth more, and part of that is, again, because they—these—Harvard, Yale, SAIS—they have very selective admissions, they're very rigorous, and the faculty at those institutions are not there to make the students comfortable.

They are there to challenge them. General Petraeus going to Princeton was the first C he ever got and it made him a better student. So I think it's really—the war colleges—the advantages that the war college brings is it has faculty with in-depth security experience who understands that they are teaching to practitioners, and they don't go in—when I teach theory I do it knowing that my students don't even like the word theory and I put it out there in a way that would be acceptable and they will learn from.

I have to add to that, too, a different view on accreditation. When the Naval War College was the first to accredit its program, it was not—we did not gold-plate it. It was accredited the way it was. There is this myth that we can strip things away and have all this

extra time, which is simply not true, and the reason it was accredited was because the students would come to Newport knowing they were going to pass PME.

It was going to—they were going to pass. Everybody passes. So they would go to the local university to get a master's and come to class, and when you asked about readings they were very sorry, but they didn't get to it because they had homework to do for their master's program.

Mr. GALLAGHER. Wow.

Ms. JOHNSON-FREESE. So accrediting those war college programs is to get their attention, at least in part, and if we don't have them accredited we're going to go back to that idea that their attention is going to be split because they do want post-career master's programs.

Mr. GALLAGHER. That's right. I thank the chairwoman for indulging me with that extra time.

Ms. SPEIER. So, on the one hand, it would suggest that—first of all, in looking at the accreditation of the various war colleges they're supposed to be accredited every 6 years and some of them have not been accredited in a 6-year period of time. So I don't know how rigorous that accreditation process is. Are you familiar with it relative to the Naval [War] College?

Ms. JOHNSON-FREESE. Yeah. They are accredited—the war colleges are accredited by the same bodies that accredit Harvard, Yale, wherever, at Stanford—wherever it happens to be.

What very often happens—these are academics. Academics come into a military environment and they are dazzled by the efficiency and the stacks of books, and they are just—they're dazzled. That's the only word I can give you. And they are impressed by what they see and rarely do they see problems. But, again—

Ms. SPEIER. So, for instance, the College of Naval Warfare, which is, I presume, under your—hasn't been accredited since May of 2015 and it's supposed to be accredited every 6 years.

Ms. JOHNSON-FREESE. I think a lot of that has to do with COVID. They would have been accredited. I'm not familiar specifically, but I would suggest it would have been last year.

Ms. SPEIER. All right. Other questions? I don't believe we—everyone else is off. Okay. Well, we really very much appreciate your participation today. It's been very valuable.

Let me just ask one last question to each of you. If you could change anything in the war colleges today, what would it be?

Ms. JOHNSON-FREESE. Makeup of the administration.

Ms. SPEIER. I'm sorry?

Ms. JOHNSON-FREESE. The makeup of the administration.

Ms. SPEIER. Okay.

General SCHMIDLE. I would actually—would tend to try to make them more academically rigorous. I think that challenge is something that we need to come to grips with and I think that we need to think about the war colleges as a potential place for evaluation of senior officers as opposed to a place where we simply educate them. I think we have the opportunity to do both.

Ms. SPEIER. So do you think we should change this idea that no one gets a C and no one gets an A?

General SCHMIDLE. I think we could. My experience at grad school, the first semester I got a B-. I thought my life was over. At American, I couldn't believe it. What, a B-? You got to be kidding me. I get As in everything I do. But it's just a different standard, and it was the last B that I ever got. But that was—it was there.

And so I think that that is—look, we're talking about Type A people that are really competitive and those are the folks that you want to come out of the war colleges and to continue to serve this country and to bring that disciplined focus to bear on all the problems we have, specifically the Chinese problem.

Ms. SPEIER. All right. Again, thank you both very—yes?

Ms. Jacobs, have you joined us?

[No response.]

Ms. SPEIER. I don't believe so. All right. Again, thank you very much for your participation.

Ms. JACOBS. I'm here. Sorry.

Ms. SPEIER. Oh, wait a minute. Okay. All right. Ms. Jacobs, you're recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACOBS. Well, thank you so much, Madam Chair, and thank you so much to our panelists. So I would love to ask Dr. Johnson-Freese, the 2018 National Defense Strategy notes that PME across the board has stagnated and a recent RAND study on Air Force PME found that, in practice, the officers ranked most highly do not tend to attend PME at Air University and officers do not give the quality of Air University school [inaudible] as a high ranking.

What are the benefits values of service level PME programs? What's special about the war college programs that sets them apart and what is the current philosophy for officers assigned to PME programs like war college, Navy Postgraduate School, Air University, et cetera?

Ms. JOHNSON-FREESE. If I understand the question correctly, it's, basically, what they can get out of it. Is that the question?

Ms. JACOBS. I think the question is, you know, we have heard a lot that they don't—you know, at Air University they don't feel like they're getting high quality relative to other programs.

So if you could just talk through some of the benefits and value of the programs and what sets them apart from other programs.

Ms. JOHNSON-FREESE. Well, I think, again, in order to have a quality program you have to have a top quality faculty, and that gets into what I said repeatedly about having a more diverse faculty and more appreciation for the hybrid nature of the faculty.

It also—in order to attack the question you have to get to the previous question that was asked about grades. If I were to give—at one point in my career I gave an officer a C, and I was called down to the front office and said, so, Joan, the U.S. Government has spent millions training this officer as a pilot and now you want to ruin his career by giving him a C.

And I said, what is the expectation? And the response was, the expectation is that you need to do a better job at getting this student to the level he needs to be at. And all faculty at war colleges know that, that it is not the responsibility of the student to do better. It's for the student to do good enough that we can get them through.

So to go to the general's point, how do we get past that? How do we add the rigor without ruining a pilot's career because that person can't put two sentences together in a paragraph—in a written paragraph?

Ms. JACOBS. Yeah. And what role and relationship do you see the JPME system having with the civilian academic education system, especially in getting civilian help and support for providing research, educational resources, such as courses, being a talent pipeline to train and supply future generations of cutting-edge scholars to work in the JPME system? Is there room for greater integration between the JPME and civilian university systems?

Ms. JOHNSON-FREESE. I think there should be. I think that's a great question. But, again, they have been very insular because there is this difference of instilling rigor and challenging students or getting students through.

But recently there has been a recognition that working with other institution brings in specialties on China, on the Middle East, bringing in the expertise that you don't necessarily have. But it needs to be made clear to administrators that this is a good thing and faculty should be rewarded, not punished, for their external associations.

Ms. JACOBS. Great. And with my last minute, are top performers being assigned to the system or how are you doing officer assignments?

Ms. JOHNSON-FREESE. The services assign the students to PME on different systems. Some have to compete. Some are assigned. Some services feel that education is important and they will send their officers to education two or three times throughout their career—the Air Force.

Others feel that any day you're not operational is a wasted day. So it's—I think, as the general pointed out, if going to—PME is seen as a career enhancer rather than a career inhibitor, it could change dramatically.

Ms. JACOBS. All right. Well, thank you very much for your work. Madam Chair, I yield back.

Ms. SPEIER. The gentlelady yields back. The ranking member has one more question.

Mr. GALLAGHER. Well, I'm quite attracted to this idea of increasing the rigor and I would argue if someone can't write a coherent sentence or paragraph in simple and direct prose, perhaps that's an indication that that person should not be promoted, particularly to a general or flag officer rank, right.

A lot of our frustration here is we get these documents from the Pentagon and it—yeah, the Pentagon—they're, like, filled with acronyms and, you know, passive voice and it suggests muddled thinking. Muddled prose suggests muddled thinking.

I quite like this idea of raising the stakes, right, and that puts the pressure on a unit to make sure that before they send someone to a top level school or an intermediate level school they're ready to go, right.

Before, you know, the Army sent Dwight Eisenhower to Leavenworth they made sure he was ready and when he graduated number one it was a big deal, right. A big deal. And that gets to the type of prestige, I think, you're talking about, Dr. Freese.

So I don't know if there's a question in there so much as a comment. But I do think—I wonder, do you think we could do a better job of tracking graduates throughout the rest of their career?

I mean, I've asked for some basic data on what happens to graduates from top level schools or how long are they staying in, what does it mean for their career. Thus far, I have not gotten the data. I just wanted your opinion on it.

Ms. JOHNSON-FREESE. The problem is at schools like Harvard, Yale, Stanford, they boast about how many of their graduates have become President, won Pulitzers, won Nobel Prizes.

Well, those are very much later in their career events. It's not right—immediate after graduation. And that's the problem with education.

Education is a long-term payoff, and because it's so difficult to measure, it sometimes pushes the military to training because training—you know, when Johnny came into the program he could screw in 13 widgets in a minute and when he left he could do 35. He was trained. Education is very, very difficult to measure return on investment.

General SCHMIDLE. Yeah. To your to your point, though, Ranking Member Gallagher, grades at the war college—so having sat on a number of promotion boards, in my experience, the only grade that really mattered is if you were the honor graduate in your class that that would welcome a line in a brief about who you were and it made a difference. The rest of the crew, it didn't matter.

The fact is you graduated from the war college. So whether you graduated with a C+ or a B-, at least in my experience at the promotion level, that was not necessarily a factor.

The other interesting point you mentioned about muddled thinking and muddled writing, after I became a general officer, whenever I would go to a new job and I was looking for people that I could work with, literally, one of the first questions I would ask is do we have an English major on this staff somewhere because I just get tired of editing.

And I used to have a stack of Strunk & White Style Manuals on my desk, and when people would come in, when they'd hand me something to read and I would make a comment on it and I'd clip this book to it and send it back to this action officer and say, I know you're not familiar with this book because I just read this paper. So it might help you.

I, personally, think that rigor would be—the competitors that you want, the meat eaters, the carnivores, are going to chew on that and they're going to want to be there, and I think that's a good thing.

Ms. JOHNSON-FREESE. May I add one thing? I teach at Harvard Extension School and some of the classes I teach are called writing intensive and that means with the subject matter I teach, I also teach writing. We could do that in PME but it requires teachers who are good writers as well as [inaudible].

Mr. GALLAGHER. Well, again, I thank the chairwoman for indulging me. And for this concern about ruining people's careers, heck, we used to relieve people, I mean, routinely, and it was not necessarily a career ender. So part of that is we need a process for changing that as well. So, again, I'm sorry. Thank you for—

Ms. SPEIER. All right. Well, you've been very helpful and this is an area that, obviously, we want to spend more time. I actually think Congress has really not done a great job of the oversight it needs to do on PME and I think the ranking member has brought it to our attention in a way that we will continue to do so.

So we really appreciate you, General, and you, Doctor, for your participation today.

Ms. JOHNSON-FREESE. Thank you very much.

Ms. SPEIER. We'll now make the room right for our next panel. So we will recess for 5 minutes.

[Recess.]

Ms. SPEIER. We now welcome our second panel, and our first panelist is the Honorable Shawn Skelly, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Readiness in the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness.

Please proceed.

**STATEMENT OF HON. SHAWN G. SKELLY, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR READINESS, OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR PERSONNEL AND READINESS**

Ms. SKELLY. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. Good afternoon, Chairwoman Speier, Ranking Member Gallagher, and distinguished members of the subcommittee. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss matters related to professional military education and the National Defense Strategy [NDS].

I thank the subcommittee for its part in sustaining a dialogue to discuss congressional ideas and concerns as well as DOD initiatives.

Last December, our staff briefed the subcommittee on how the Department has addressed shortcomings in PME and JPME as identified in the NDS. We plan to provide a follow-up report addressing your questions by June 15th. As you have my written statement, I'll briefly summarize it.

Since the start of the Biden/Harris administration, Secretary Austin has made clear that DOD will invest in our most significant strategic advantage, our people. In the newly released 2022 NDS, Secretary Austin emphasized three overarching ways in which we'll ensure our national security: integrated deterrence, campaigning, and building enduring advantage.

Investing in the military education of our service members supports all three initiatives and is particularly crucial for building enduring advantage for the future joint force.

Where training prepares our service members for certainty, PME prepares them for uncertainty. The goal of PME is to create leaders who can achieve intellectual overmatch against adversaries. That overmatch demands a system that prepares service members to address all contingencies.

Unique to our institutions, PME provides officers with the opportunity to learn the state of the art in military strategy and operational planning, which will continue to stand as prerequisites to an understanding of the nature and conduct of warfare.

PME also provides service members with the skills and knowledge to make sound decisions in progressively demanding command and staff assignments.



It ensures they're ready for the uncertainty they'll face throughout their military career by providing critical knowledge on the ethos, culture, and core values of their service, the technical and tactical skills appropriate to how that service wages war, and most importantly, the wisdom and judgment to be applied in a broad range of situations across domains, theaters, and in both joint and combined operations with allies and partners.

But military education policy is more than staff and war colleges. It's about continuous learning across all points of service such as strengthening the ability of the services and future leaders to lead rapid adaptation and innovation, and to understand the potential use of all types of disruptive technologies.

In a significant advance reflecting DOD's increased emphasis on PME, last month the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness approved the first ever departmentwide policy for military education.

The policy details the structure for providing guidance to the services about curriculum and outcomes that graduates of military education programs should achieve while preserving the impact and agility of our PME system that comes from empowering our institutions.

This includes service-governed PME, Chairman-guided joint PME [JPME], the service academies, and professional development opportunities such as graduate education, fellowships, and training with industry.

The policy establishes an oversight governance structure to assess PME effectiveness and evaluate the Department's return on investment in military education by adopting an outcomes-based approach.

Developing authentic assessments of what our officers and enlisted members can do with their knowledge will change the requirements for graduation from "attended and graduated" to meaningful standards, providing more granular data that supports talent management and ensures an appropriate return on investment.

The instruction also promotes the integration of war-gaming into the military education curriculum, advancing the Secretary's call for enhanced strategic thinking across the force by providing avenues for military personnel to practice their leadership, creativity, and problem-solving skills in scenarios closely resembling the national security challenges facing the Nation today.

Finally, the Department must develop leaders that are responsible for taking care of our people, including tackling sexual assault and other harmful behaviors in the force.

We're working to implement the training and education recommendations of the Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military across the Department.

PME helps forge the most professional fighting force in the world. Looking forward, DOD will increase the links between education and talent management, continuous learning, and professional development to enable intellectual overmatch against our competitors.

Madam Chairwoman, this concludes my statement. I'm happy to answer any questions that you or the ranking member may have,

and thank you for your continuing support of the women and men of our Armed Forces.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Skelly can be found in the Appendix on page 76.]

Ms. SPEIER. Thank you, Honorable Skelly. We'll now hear from Vice Admiral Stuart Munsch, the director of Joint Force Development, the Joint Staff J7.

**STATEMENT OF VADM STUART B. MUNSCH, USN, DIRECTOR  
FOR JOINT FORCE DEVELOPMENT, JOINT STAFF, J7**

Admiral MUNSCH. Good afternoon, Chairwoman Speier, Ranking Member Gallagher, and distinguished members of the subcommittee, including those that might be participating virtually.

I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today and further appreciate the support that Congress has provided for the funding of professional military education as well as your oversight and your feedback.

PME, of course, is critical, and I include in it knowledge, skill sets, critical thinking, and a network of like-minded individuals to the future success of our Armed Forces.

Our current system largely stems from the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986, further advanced by Representative Skelton's panel in 1990. That's resulted in a five-phase continuum for PME.

Of that, the subset of joint professional military education has three parts of that continuum and that's intermediate level, senior level, and then the general and flag officer training and education.

We recently also have added enlisted professional military education, which I know was raised by the prior panel. We're currently undergoing a transformation in PME, driven by the 2018 National Defense Strategy that resulted rather quickly in the Joint Chiefs' vision for guidance for professional military education and talent management.

That vision then was codified in policy through the Officer Professional Military Education Policy, which we refer to typically as OPMEP. Recently here a few months ago also released the vision for enlisted PME, "Developing Enlisted Leaders for Tomorrow's Wars," and then that further for policy was ensconced in the Enlisted Professional Military Education Policy, or EPMEP.

PME is focused on achieving the intellectual overmatch in order to have the warfighting advantage that we need against the adversary. Paired with that needs to be talent management so that the right students are attending and the right faculty are teaching.

It also requires that we have a rigorous cycle of planning, executing, assessing, and then applying the feedback from what we have learned in that assessment to the subsequent planning cycle.

That has not always been present in past PME, and with the effort on outcomes-based military education, we are now getting at that where the objectives are more rigorous, the education, the—excuse me, the execution is being tracked closely. We have established metrics in order to be able to do assessments and then, of course, applying that to make it better as we go on.

In conclusion, I'd like to reiterate my thanks and also state that education is a force multiplier, and by way of a maritime analogy, it's like a rising tide that raises all ships.

So thanks again for your continued support and we look forward to your feedback and your questions.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Admiral Munsch can be found in the Appendix on page 83.]

Ms. SPEIER. Thank you both. Admiral, does the Department survey PME graduates about their experience with the program and whether it prepares them for future jobs?

Admiral MUNSCH. Yes. Students are surveyed—

Ms. SPEIER. Is it anonymous?

Admiral MUNSCH. In some cases, yes. In some cases, they can volunteer their own identity if they would like.

Ms. SPEIER. How about the supervisors' views of whether PMEs sufficiently prepare their direct reports?

Admiral MUNSCH. Yes, the war colleges do surveys. As was discussed in the prior panel, sometimes it's difficult to distinguish between the intellectual attainment due to attending a war college versus learning on their own—self-educating versus their life experiences. But we do do the surveys and we try to make those distinguishing characteristics identifiable.

Ms. SPEIER. Would you share some of those surveys with the committee, please?

Admiral MUNSCH. At a later time? Is that what you're asking?

Ms. SPEIER. Yes.

Admiral MUNSCH. Yes. Okay.

Ms. SPEIER. All right. Thank you.

Assistant Secretary, based on what you heard from the first panel, what do you believe we should be doing relative to the mix in administration and the faculty?

Ms. SKELLY. Madam Chairwoman, that's a great question as to faculty makeup is one that I don't have much experience in with regard to the execution of my responsibilities as selection of faculty and the mix in there is with regard to the owning institution, the governing institution of that school, whether that be a war college or a staff college.

What we do is we do set the policies in there but we don't actually get involved with the selection of the actual professors.

Ms. SPEIER. No, I understand that. But you could, certainly, recommend that a third of the faculty or a third of the administration be persons who are not retired military or military?

Ms. SKELLY. With regard to the balances, ma'am, we could and we'd have to examine that to see where we would think we'd do an evaluation. We might include that in our next—in a future upcoming study to see what a proper mix could be.

Ms. SPEIER. So the widespread perception that it's hard to earn an A at JPME but even harder to get a C, feeding the notion that somehow you go there, you don't necessarily have to read the material, you've got to show up and you'll be successful—how do we deal with that? That may be an older perception. Maybe there's already been enough changes so that that's not going on.

But to hear the previous testimony from Dr. Freese, this—someone was actually going to another college to get a master's and also coming to the war college for, I guess, a program that was not going to represent a master's, was kind of surprising to me.

Ms. SKELLY. It is to me as well, Madam Chair, and I wonder about the implications that having a dual-track process within our war colleges might complicate accreditation for the side where degrees would be conferred to have a mix of students, potentially, in some classes and on separate tracks in other classes and how that might impinge upon the academic rigor for all and how that might impact accreditation attainment.

And I also wonder about creating two tracks. I know some of our allied partners have different tracks where folks can opt into a noncareer track.

As a former aviator, I often wondered about that because those folks tend to stay in the cockpit for a while and would that be advantageous, and [if] confronted with that challenge would I go after that, and I wonder how we would create a segregation within our—our system is not really set up.

You're either tracking towards command until you're not, until you might find yourself in a tour or two that, you know, signals that you're not going to promote to O-6 or O-7 and beyond. But I would wonder about how we would adopt such a system into our current paradigm.

Ms. SPEIER. So, Admiral Munsch, what percentage of the curriculum is war-gaming?

Admiral MUNSCH. It varies, and if I could broaden the definition of war-gaming to include other forms of practical learning, typically it's between a quarter and a third of what goes on.

Ms. SPEIER. How do you think we can make it more attractive as an assignment for high-performing officers who would have much to impart to their junior officers?

Admiral MUNSCH. There's a series of issues there, ma'am. One of them is depending on the particular warfare specialty of officers that can be very demanding in terms of the practical skills in operating, what they operate, for example, pilots of jet aircraft, submariners with their submarines. And as a result of that there's this tension between the time that needs to be devoted to developing the expertise and experience to operate those platforms safely and with warfighting expertise versus time spent doing something else while coming up in your career.

And so there's the—where oftentimes you'll find people have to do night and weekend work in order to get the joint professional military education or the master's degree that was just discussed, because there isn't time in the career.

So what the services other than the Navy do is that they make the staff and command college a screening mechanism for their best officers as well as the war college, which is typically at the post-command level.

The Navy has not had that culture to do that and, as a result of that, have not had the same level of quality students that the others have had. So there's a policy choice to be made there.

The Marine Corps made this transformation when General Gray was Commandant of the Marine Corps. He made it very firm he was shifting the policy. There were a few that didn't believe that he was as serious as he was and then they, essentially, lost their career—

Ms. SPEIER. So the GAO [U.S. Government Accountability Office] pointed out that the Navy was the only service that was not participating in JPME. Has that changed?

Admiral MUNSCH. Well, they do participate in PME. I think the GAO report was pointing out that they don't send sufficient number of students to the sister war colleges—

Ms. SPEIER. Well, that's—okay.

Admiral MUNSCH [continuing]. To be students and faculty to allow the acculturation that [inaudible].

Ms. SPEIER. Right. So you stand out by not doing that. And is that going to change or is there some philosophy behind not participating?

Admiral MUNSCH. There are efforts ongoing to do better in that. I can't speak for the Navy at this point because I'm—I've been on the Joint Staff for 2 years. But I'm aware of there is activity ongoing and that was also responded to in the OSD letter to you all.

Ms. SPEIER. All right. My time has expired.

Ranking Member.

Mr. GALLAGHER. Vice Admiral Munsch, my understanding is you have a master's from Oxford. Is that correct?

Admiral MUNSCH. I do.

Mr. GALLAGHER. Can I ask you at what point in your career were you able to do that and how did that come about?

Admiral MUNSCH. So this is unusual. I wouldn't take it as the normal path. It was immediately after leaving the Naval Academy through a scholarship.

Mr. GALLAGHER. Oh, okay. So you were actually good as an undergraduate, unlike me, who wasted a lot of time.

Admiral MUNSCH. Well, I was from a small State and had to work hard, sir.

Mr. GALLAGHER. Absolutely. I guess—and we have a series of programs and the Marine Corps is actually catching up. The Navy has been in the lead with the Air Force of sending people to go get Ph.D.s at purely civilian institutions and then bringing them back and utilizing them. There were two—there were at least two Active Duty service members in my Ph.D. program at Georgetown, one of which went back to be a strategist in the Pentagon. Super smart guy. The other actually went to the Air War College down in Maxwell, I believe, right? Just both brilliant guys.

Are you aware of these sort of programs? Do we feel like we're getting a good return on that investment? Because that's an even bigger investment, right? I mean, you're setting people away for, potentially, 2 years.

Then they got to figure out how to finish their dissertation. That's a huge investment that we darn sure have to make sure we're capitalizing on on the back end.

I'll start with you, Admiral, and then Assistant Secretary Skelly.

Admiral MUNSCH. It's uncommon around the joint force. It's more common in the nonmaritime services where you'll see that. I think there's maybe a little bit more room in the career path to do something like that, as well as acceptability in selection boards as a desirable characteristic. There have been programs in the past in the maritime services that did more of that. It's just not very present right now.

Ms. SKELLY. Congressman, I think the new DODI, the [Department of Defense] Instruction 1322.35, which sets the conditions to create a data informed approach to drive the return on investment evaluation at the departmental level. So the services have their reasons for pursuing it historically, culturally, as the admiral alluded to.

We need to understand how they're doing it differently, see what they think they're getting for a return, and what the Department believes that the Department's return on investment across the joint force should be there. We don't have the wherewithal to do that today.

The question of Ph.D. attainment came up in our—in my meeting with the chairwoman yesterday and we have to go do a data call on that and it will take some time to bring back the numbers as they exist right now from the service military manpower systems.

Mr. GALLAGHER. And on that front, I very much appreciate you referencing my requests for information in your testimony. I look forward to reviewing that data. Again, the intent is just to assure that we're making good use of those graduates, right.

I think there are two kind of related issues that we're trying to—well, I guess maybe three that are coming out here. One is whether we are selecting the best and the brightest to go to these institutions.

The second is whether the institutions themselves are on par with the—their civilian counterparts who have a much fancier name or credential, right. Like, let's just be honest. We had the previous panel talking about what it means to have a Harvard degree versus National War College. No offense to the National War College, although Princeton is better than Harvard. I'm just going to throw that out there.

And then the third and perhaps most important is whether when we—how we're tracking our utilization of graduates, and it seems like right now you don't have the ability to pull up the numbers very quickly.

Ms. SKELLY. We certainly do not.

Mr. GALLAGHER. Okay. I just would argue, in 2022—technologically, there's no barrier to it. We should be able to interrogate the data routinely in order to assess, okay, how are the services doing?

Or reach down and say, okay, what are the report cards telling us about how our people are performing, not in real time, but near real time?

Ms. SKELLY. Congressman, I'm sure you're aware of the emphasis that the Secretary and the Deputy Secretary have put on data across the Department that all data is available for the Department's use.

Recently, the Deputy Secretary directed that all models that include that data are also available for the Department's use. We have to go there, we are making our way there.

We're imparting that lesson, that expectation, across the Department, and I'm looking—personally looking forward to taking the military education enterprise in that direction because we're learning lessons as to how to drive accountability to make data available

to bring it together, because it's not just one service's data and displaying that. It's how you do the relationships, how you—and then create that power in there.

I know from my own experience, sort of the three questions that you raise, I saw all of them. I asked to go to Naval War College, to College of Naval Command and Staff, and the only reason it was entertained because I had time is what the detailer thought. And I had it—in my shop in the Pacific Command I had a Hindi speaker who went to the Indian War College, and his counterpart in Central Command had gone to the Pakistani War College.

But it was back and forth. I had a—excuse me, I had an Urdu speaker for India, and they had a Hindi speaker for Pakistan because they didn't get assigned to where their imparted government-provided skills and training had taken them to.

We have a history of not making the most out of that and be able to account for it beyond their payback tour. You get your education, you owe several years. But what do we do after that?

Because we'll send you to someplace to try and squeeze that out of you. But how do we know what we're getting as to who makes three stars, who makes more, who goes to particular commands that suit their training or if they just happen to wind up someplace, especially with regard to cyber, AI [artificial intelligence], and other technologies that are emerging.

We can only impart exquisite knowledge to so many. We have to ensure that they're put in places to utilize that.

Mr. GALLAGHER. Well, I appreciate that. I'm out of time. Before I forget, however, one of those classmates I mentioned, my understanding is he's retiring soon. His name is Jeff Donnithorne.

So wherever you are, Jeff, you are one of the most brilliant scholars I have—I've ever met and a patriot and you've served your country very admirably. So I'm going to miss your retirement ceremony, but maybe this will get to you through the ether.

Ms. SPEIER. All right. Mrs. Bice, you're recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BICE. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman and Ranking Member, and I appreciate the witnesses for their time this afternoon.

Let me start with—you know, it was mentioned actually in the previous panel but I want to kind of circle back around and get your perspective. One of the key tasks of our Nation's war colleges is to develop senior joint leaders who can successfully master across domains of ground, air, space, and, importantly, cyber operations.

While we have made some positive strides, I feel strongly that our Nation's warfighters need greater opportunities to expand their familiarity with cyber operations.

So my question to the panel, does our Nation's JPME curriculum do enough to prepare future senior military leaders to oversee operations in cyberspace or that have a cyberspace component to them?

Ms. SKELLY. Thank you, Congresswoman. We know we have to do better because of the increasing importance, near dominance of cyberspace. Every operation we have relies upon the cyber environment.

Every potential conflict or interaction that we might have with a peer adversary will certainly involve cyber in some way, shape, or form. Presently, we are studying, which is not action, but we are

studying to learn where we have to do better on cyber education and we are responding to the—I believe it's the committee's desire to learn more about with NDU [National Defense University] and cyber, and we have an in-depth study going on on that right now.

I would say from my personal experience in my 9 months in the Department as sitting on the Department's cyber council it's a confluence of the career civilian professionals who have the information operations, the information systems, the cyber knowledge, along with the senior operators and the cyber-smart people, but we have to create a combined departmental effect to be able to operate in these environments.

I have behind me my Deputy Assistant Secretary for Force Education and Training, and one of her key tasks is learning how to create literacy on a range of topics across the force and how we understand what individual service members need—based on whatever their specialty may be, what do they need to know about cyber and what do they need to know about a changing climate, data analytics, and also take that to the—in a continual way across their increasing rank and responsibilities in there.

We think it's key and we are pursuing our ability to create that capability within our professional military education enterprise.

Mrs. BICE. Thank you very much. To follow up on that, what can Congress do to further expand the opportunities for military personnel in this area of study?

My colleague, Mr. Gallagher, and I have a focus on cyber and so this is something I think that we haven't put enough emphasis on but can now. So what can Congress be doing to help in this realm?

Ms. SKELLY. First, ma'am, I think we have a decent revisit rate on our curriculum between the services with the curriculum that they're responsible for where the Joint Staff informs joint professional military education—those requirements.

I believe our previous expert panel referenced cyber education. And it's the demands the Department of Defense, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, places upon the system to be responsive to that and we certainly rate cyber as an area of the highest importance for our force to understand and to be able to operate in that realm.

Mrs. BICE. Vice Admiral, do you have anything that you want to add to that?

Admiral MUNSCH. Yes. I would offer there are a couple of challenges in cyber that make it a bit different from the traditional domains.

One is that it is a very rapidly changing field at all times, and so at any point you might think you have a grasp of what is in the realm of the possible with cyber and very quickly it changes.

So it requires, as individuals, a revisit rate that's very high relative to the other domains to really understand what it is capable of doing. With that high visit rate there also is then a shortage of personnel who know how to do this that are in uniform.

It's typically not a core specialty like it would be to be a pilot or a ship driver. But it's a secondary specialty, and we just don't have enough of those people. And when you don't have a critical mass then you're not spreading the wealth of the knowledge through interaction throughout the joint force.



So in terms of what Congress could do, I think it's—a bit of it is just the nature of the beast and that it's a very fast moving field. But we're trying to make cyber more robust in all aspects of PME in order to grow that mass of people who really understand it. Thank you.

Mrs. BICE. Thank you. And let me just quickly follow up with I think it's crucial that we find the service members that have this background and develop them and keep them in the service because every day that goes by the cyber component of operations becomes more and more critical and without this individuals will continue to fall behind.

Madam Chair, thank you for the time. I yield back.

Ms. SPEIER. The gentlewoman yields back. I have just a couple of more questions. We'll allow for a second round.

Assistant Secretary, we have required, I believe, in the NDAA [National Defense Authorization Act] of 2 years ago that women, peace, and security be included in the curriculum and there's, you know, growing recognition that that is a key component to successful national security. What are you doing at your level to make sure that this is, in fact, not lost in the process?

Ms. SKELLY. Excuse me, ma'am. The mic is winning.

Women, peace, and security is a curriculum area. If I could ask the admiral to weigh in. I know the Joint Staff has a priority on it or it has it in its rank of priorities for curricula across the joint force.

But we agree it is NDS—the former NDS directed and I believe it's within my colleagues in OSD Policy that have responsibility to ensure that the joint force is meeting the requirements of the demands of women, peace, and security [WPS].

Ms. SPEIER. But let's say it doesn't happen. Let's say it just falls off. Who then is accountable to make sure that that is included in the curricula?

Ms. SKELLY. Ma'am, that's where governance would come into play, that we have—it wouldn't just be me as the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Readiness who has responsibility for the lead for our education programs.

It's to ensure that the entirety of the Office of the Secretary brings all of its equities to bear or it would be the principal cyber advisor to the Secretary. It would be the Under Secretary for Policy's folks who have space responsibilities as well as cyber, as well as those that have WPS, as an example, to ensure that those that they have subject lead on are being accounted for within the education enterprise, which is where—I don't mean to beat the dead horse—of the new instruction providing a data foundation that we can then take into a governance model and where we can use the authority of the Under Secretary for Personnel who can order much of what needs to be done responsibly through the Department.

And if we can't reach resolution, we already have a standing forum to reach the Deputy Secretary of Defense on workforce matters, which is what education would fall under and that way—but it would be my responsibility as the lead for the education enterprise to ensure that all those equity stakeholders bring their issues to the fore and ensure that they're being held to account through our wherewithal within P&R [Personnel and Readiness].

Ms. SPEIER. Admiral, do you have anything that you'd like to add?

Admiral MUNSCH. Yes, ma'am. So the service war colleges would be accountable through the services. National Defense University would be accountable through us on the Joint Staff. And through the outcomes-based military education effort, we do a regular assessment on the curriculum to make sure that it includes the requirements and it is relevant and current.

And, additionally, just for our JPME there is an accreditation process. It's separate from the accreditation that go to the other war colleges for their—that are done by civilian accreditors. And so that's another item we look at for the JPME accreditation.

Ms. SPEIER. So the 2018 NDS recognized that professional military education had come to be valued more for the institutional requirement of having attended a program and received credit than for the knowledge, skills, and abilities fostered and developed. What are we doing to change that?

Assistant Secretary.

Ms. SKELLY. Chairwoman, that is what the new DOD Instruction is all about, is the direction that all programs will be objectives-based military education that will then result in data, which we then have to—it's mentioned—I mentioned in my opening statement, it's talent management. It's not just the data itself and governing through that data is not the whole solution.

We have to have a personnel management, talent management system, that can understand the attributes that all our service members bring when they access whether through their high school graduation or their bachelor's degree.

What we impart to them through the education programs they go through either at the tactical level when they're more junior, then when they go to staff colleges and war colleges what we intend to impart to them, what they take away, what they demonstrate through their competencies in there, that's the way we have to get after it.

It's the data, it's the objectives of the education, understanding the impact of it, and then attributes to the individuals to create an appreciation of the force and whether we have the sufficient knowledge and wherewithal for the positions that need it. It has to be a continual cycle.

Ms. SPEIER. The first panel talked about creating greater rigor in the actual curriculum. From your vantage point, how do you make sure that in each of these war colleges there is the requisite rigor in terms of the program?

Ms. SKELLY. Ma'am, I think it would be through the objectives that are set and how they're measured and what the services believe they need out of them, what the Joint Staff believes we need from JPME, and OSD assessment and revisiting those based on—you raised the point about the surveys from those receiving commands, the senior service staffs, the combatant commands.

Are they feeling satisfied, and through any place where we have oversight is the force performing to meet the demands of the mission and the environment in the world at that time? We can never stand still. It's about continuous process improvement.

Ms. SPEIER. So my last question. The previous panel talked about how if you bring in a lot of retired military officers they are teaching from their experience. So they're providing an educational experience that relies on yesterday's war and not the future. How are we going to make sure that we keep the curriculum looking at the future of war and not what's happened before?

I'll start with you, Admiral.

Admiral MUNSCH. Yes, ma'am. So there's really a broader issue in the Federal employment in that there is a strong benefit for veterans in hiring practices and that does occur also then in the war colleges that results in veterans having a larger preponderance than maybe they would otherwise because of the point scoring scheme in hiring Federal workers and the benefits that veterans get.

So it's a bit of a broader issue than just PME. But how do we ensure that they're focused on the future? Well, traditionally, in academia, publishing is a key metric for promotions within the academic institution. There could be more rigor that is added there.

And then, I mean, it's not been in my experience that they're all backward looking. There is some value in history and in experience. But the—and to tie to some of your earlier questions here about the value of the war college and the rigor, we did go through a period of a couple decades where we did not have an adversary that was especially strong or existential against us, and there's nothing like a threat to focus an institution.

And so along with this transformation that we have described there's a deep-seated transformation ongoing because of the students' interest in getting—being ready for their responsibilities to fight China, if that comes, or Russia.

Ms. SPEIER. So that does that mean there's a China Hands in the future?

Admiral MUNSCH. I don't know about that. Anytime we create a sidetrack like that it tends to only last for a while and then the larger needs of the service eventually overcome that and it chokes it off. So I'd be concerned about losing quality people to—

Ms. SPEIER. Well, I guess I would disagree with you because I think, as we are seeing in many of our other entities, building a Russia and China focus is critical to building the kind of talent we want and the leadership we want.

Assistant Secretary, your final words, and I've really exceeded mine and then I'll give you the opportunity.

Ms. SKELLY. Thank you, Chairwoman. I share the admiral's concerns with regard to a Hands program that could unduly silo off folks.

I believe wholeheartedly we have to raise the rigor with regard to our competitors and the specifics, and we have to focus, I think, in three parts, strategic competition writ large, though I don't think any new strategic competitors are probably coming out of left field anytime soon. But it's the basic demands of strategic competition.

What's particular to the China problem set, China's unique attributes in their military, what their military presents as well as likewise Russia—Russia is likely not to leave the stage anytime soon.

We certainly need folks who can speak the language and who understand the tactics and what are appropriate to the positions that require a level of increased understanding and specific knowledge, whether it be intelligence, operations planning, and the like. I believe that's appropriate.

Personally, I would like to see, and I will look after this to understand what the lessons learned and evaluation of the success of the AFPAK [Afghanistan-Pakistan] Hands program was because, as the admiral said, it was a large effort—that just about the time it gained real momentum and mass it got sidelined and stovepiped, and I have acquaintances that I served with, squadron mates, who wound up adrift with the language and the expertise, and they had done one tour and they still had a career—a good chunk of a career in front of them.

In that way, I'll always be wary of how we can impinge upon the services' ability to make use of the talent available to it if we put it off in a direction that loses favor with leadership.

Ms. SPEIER. All right. Ranking Member, a final question?

Mr. GALLAGHER. Thank you. Well, [inaudible]—to pick up where you left off, I thought we were making changes to JPME to reflect China as the so-called pacing threat. Many quibble with that language.

Admiral MUNSCH. Absolutely.

Mr. GALLAGHER. Yeah. The idea being that, you know, go back to Rooster's [Lieutenant General Schmidle's] days and every naval officer could tell you everything about the Soviet navy. We need a similar level of expertise for the PLA [People's Liberation Army] Navy, right. Are you hamstrung by Goldwater-Nichols in making those changes?

Ms. SKELLY. Sir, I don't believe so. I was just down on the Norfolk waterfront with a soon-to-deploy destroyer crew and captain and they were talking about Russian and Chinese assets in the same ways that—as you mentioned, as we Cold Warriors once did.

The Soviet ships became Russian ships. The same for the aircraft. But they had that focus on the high-end adversary as I remember having myself.

Mr. GALLAGHER. And then I want to—shifting gears, I want to highlight what I think is one pocket of excellence that I found interesting. SOCOM [U.S. Special Operations Command] has partnered with MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology] and created this course where they're sending O-6s to a short-term tailored course. Doesn't—not a master's degree granting course. It could be a micro masters, if that's now a thing, where the idea is not to turn them into technologists but give them basic fluency in AI, ML [machine learning], quantum, cyber. That's intriguing to me. Are you aware of this effort?

Ms. SKELLY. I am not. I will become so after this meeting.

Mr. GALLAGHER. I'm sure if you—MIT will answer your call, Assistant Secretary Skelly. I was very impressed by the idea. Again, we're not creating a separate thing. MIT was eager to partner with SOCOM in this regard and it just seemed like a great symbiosis between DOD and—to civilian higher ed.

Ms. SKELLY. And Congressman, I certainly applaud it, because it goes back to the point I made about literacy—what do you need to

know for the position you're going to and how can we impart that right amount for the job to you in that time and see it coming—to make you available if you're in a particular field or a particular staff or service-level position, that we know what you need to know, especially with AI, cyber, machine learning and the like because it's coming into play, the how we do everything.

Our service members are doing it themselves in the course of their jobs where they can get the permissions to bring those capabilities to bear. It's much like we were when we were all coding—I wasn't, but much younger folks were all coding, 15, 20 years ago. They're doing data analytics now on their own work and trying to bring that to bear in the performance of their duties.

Mr. GALLAGHER. And what would be the—in light of the previous discussion we had about academic rigor, what would be the barriers to posting class rankings? Making that publicly available?

Are there some concerns that would be—beyond embarrassing people that don't perform well, would there be some legal barrier or regulatory barrier I'm unaware of?

Admiral MUNSCH. So there's some Privacy Act issues with displaying grades and rankings like that.

Mr. GALLAGHER. Interesting. I'll follow up on that.

Admiral MUNSCH [continuing]. Legislation. Yeah.

Mr. GALLAGHER. You may be right. I'm not willing to just accept that necessarily. I don't think it would be a bad idea to be—to sort of post that information publicly. I don't know.

Admiral MUNSCH. The other way to get at the issue, I think, that you're after here is to do actual fitness reports for students based on their performance.

Mr. GALLAGHER. Or use a carrot instead of a stick, right. Give the top 10 percent or 25 percent graduates preferential treatment in terms of their follow-on assignment, right. That could be a powerful incentive.

Since I have a minute and 36 seconds left, I've already crossed the threshold of half-baked ideas, and we may have to wait another 5 years before we have a PME hearing, then I will sort of lay out a series of more provocative statements. My emerging view is that if we're going to try and give someone a highly technical skill set, we should probably just send them to a civilian institution rather than recreating something on our own, we would probably get more bang for our buck, and might create interesting friendships and relationships with civilian experts in AI, quantum, or advanced engineering.

As we look towards what the military can do uniquely well, I don't know, I mean ask yourself if our current programs would be better or worse than a year, half of which involved a writing boot camp with a sort of near religious reverence for Strunk & White and teaching field grade officers and potential general grade officers how to write clearly and well, and another half year of intense war-gaming tied directly to testing our war plans. I don't know.

Obviously, I'm not asking you to answer that question. But the fact that part of you is even questioning it right now in your minds, as I know you are, means we got some work to do.

Ms. SKELLY. Writing boot camp or something akin to was in my feedback to the Naval War College when I was in the middle of my

combatant command tour. I was not prepared to be a staff writer, staff officer in that way. There's a there there, sir.

Admiral MUNSCH. Sir, I'd go one more than that. I would offer a three-part process. One is to institute a tutorial process where it's one professor on one student or one on two.

That is expensive but that's how you really grow critical thinking with that kind of contact. That can be, say, once a week, twice a week. And then I would do classroom work in the mornings with rigor and then I would do practical application of the learning in the afternoon with war-gaming.

And then to broaden that cycle, what is learned then, much like the interwar period that was done at the Naval War College, send that learning out to the fleet, to the operating forces, to open it up to the joint force and do a large exercise in the off academic period in the summer to test out those ideas in order to advance war plans. Send that feedback back to the war colleges and then begin the cycle again.

Mr. GALLAGHER. If we do all these things and then outlaw the use of acronyms, the Chinese cannot beat us. I guarantee you. So——

Ms. SPEIER. All right. Mrs. Bice, do you have any follow-on questions? You do?

Mrs. BICE. Madam Chair, I do not.

Ms. SPEIER. Okay. All right. Well, you've given us a lot of food for thought. As you can tell, we both have a great interest in wanting to pursue PME and JPME to get the biggest bang for our buck.

This is not a, you know, year in which you can relax and enjoy your family. It shouldn't be that. Now, hopefully, that has changed. But I do think there's more work that needs to be done and I think the ranking member's suggestions are ones that we should pursue.

The other thing we should also look at, we do have the military academies that are filled with fine academic teachers, professors, and maybe we need to rely on them somewhat more in terms of evaluating what we need to do differently.

But we really appreciate your participation today. Thank you, Assistant Secretary Skelly. Thank you, Vice Admiral Munsch.

And we will stand adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:48 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

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## **A P P E N D I X**

MAY 18, 2022

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**PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD**

MAY 18, 2022

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**Statement of Hon. Jackie Speier**  
**Chairwoman, Subcommittee on Military Personnel**  
**Hearing on**  
**“Professional Military Education and the National Defense Strategy”**  
**May 18, 2022**

I want to welcome everyone to the subcommittee hearing on Professional Military Education and the National Defense Strategy. This is the second subcommittee event we have had on this topic, and I commend the Ranking Member for making this a priority. We are here to discuss with the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Staff the Department’s processes for developing and deploying professional education to servicemembers that is relevant, flexible, and delivers value to the armed forces given the investment in time and taxpayer dollars. This content prepares officers charged to advance and execute our future National Military Strategy and ultimately become the senior leaders responsible for the defense of the nation. We will then hear from our second panel of outside witnesses on their thoughts on the Department’s Professional Military Education enterprise and their recommendations for change.

From our first panel I want to hear not only about the need for this ongoing education, but what is the intended and actual return on the significant investment of both time and resources—estimated at over 8 billion dollars per year—and how that return is measured? I am also concerned about these programs becoming very insular and not taking into consideration educational experts outside of the Department of Defense to consider their insights in the development and execution of relevant educational content, as well as maintenance of accreditation. We must make sure that our leaders remain on the cutting edge of intellectual, technological, and educational development necessary for the changing character and conduct of operations. The Office of the Secretary of Defense has been in charge of Professional Military Education for 30 years, but it appears to have operated on autopilot and with little oversight by DoD or Congress. The need for swift change in this arena must match the evolving strategy in a rapidly changing world. I’m convinced that the Professional Military Education system is flexible enough to modify and adapt the curriculum promptly to keep pace with changing defense needs—it just needs the attention of leadership and follow through. I want to ensure that these educational opportunities are not used for career box-checking, but are used to enhance the warfighters’ intellectual rigor, or as Chairman Milley states the “intellectual overmatch” that is necessary to increase critical strategic thinking, leading to increased competence and effectiveness of our fighting force. I am also very interested to hear from our civilian witnesses their opinion of the robustness and effectiveness of the current system of Professional Military Education and any recommendations they have for improvements to any aspect of the education continuum.

Professional Military Education and National Defense Strategy

Testimony before

Subcommittee on Armed Services Military Personnel

Committee on Armed Services

U.S. House of Representatives

May 18, 2022

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The views I express in this testimony are my own and should not be construed as representing  
any official position of Arizona State University

I want to thank Chairwoman Speier, Ranking Member Gallagher and the other members of the subcommittee for the opportunity to address the pertinent issue of Professional Military Education and National Defense Strategy. In this statement I will articulate the problem facing our nation today, which makes this issue so timely. Then I present the challenges encountered in trying to address that problem. Next, I illuminate the considerations we should bear in mind as we propose to address the relationship between Professional Military Education and National Defense Strategy. Finally, I suggest some potential initiatives for implementation that would have a positive, near term effect on making Professional Military Education more relevant to National Defense Strategy.

**Problem**

The last time the Congress addressed Professional Military Education the Soviet Union was rapidly deconstructing and no peer or even a near peer adversary was lurking on the horizon. Today the landscape is far different with a rising China declaring itself an existential threat to the influence, if not the integrity, of the United States. The imperative to link the education of senior officers and civilians to a National Defense Strategy has never been more pressing. This linkage is critical if we are to create operational end-states that support and enable stated strategic/political end-states in future conflicts. The U.S. has historically demonstrated an unmatched ability to achieve tactical victories on the ground. However, those victories have not always been the ways and means coincident with and enabling, the political goals of whatever conflict was being prosecuted. The difficult task of translating tactical success into desired

strategic results remains an enduring challenge. It is one which requires a truly symbiotic relationship between civilian and military leadership. Producing the next generation of strategic military leaders who understand this relationship and who can design and execute military operations to achieve strategic success is the fundamental issue that must be addressed today.

### **Challenges**

As we wrestle with this problem the first and most important task is to answer the question: "What does the nation need and want from senior officers and civilians?" Answering this question is made timelier by the confrontational threat from China. To deal effectively with China, which has clear hegemonic designs, the nation needs senior officers who are critical thinkers. Their creativity and innovation are essential to keeping the U.S. ahead of the adversary's developing military capabilities. Those officers will have a solid historical grounding in operational and strategic matters relating to both China and the United States. Additionally, but no less important, they will have a deep understanding and appreciation for traditional civil-military relations and the processes of government. Ultimately, those senior officers and civilians are also the nation's bulwark against the disruptive effects of events that are a 'strategic surprise.' They will help mitigate against surprise because they understand the motivations and perspectives of the U.S. as well as they understand those of the adversary. The challenge confronting this subcommittee is how to best develop those future strategic leaders.

Professional Military Education should be about more than just the accumulation of knowledge, it should be about the demonstrated application of knowledge through rigorous wargaming. The time spent in resident education programs should foster repeated iterations of

wargames where execution is informed by theory. Senior level professional military education is also a venue in which an objective evaluation of an officer's potential for strategic leadership is possible. Identifying those exceptional leaders should be a mission of senior level education.

The challenges presented here are also tied to other related issues, evident in the following questions. First, while there are many important topics that could be taught at professional education institutions, who decides what are the most important topics? Furthermore, who decides which important topics will not be taught in the core curriculum but would be available only in elective courses? Second, to what extent can strategic creativity and operational innovation be curated in senior officers? And how is that best accomplished? Answering these questions is the fundamental first step in constructing a comprehensive plan for developing future strategic leaders.

Another consideration in addressing the challenge(s) that I am articulating, is exploring the relationship between Professional Military Education and the Service's Personnel policies. For example, if professional education is critical to sustaining a strategic and operational advantage over our adversaries then how do we incentivize the best and brightest active duty officers to teach in the War Colleges? Having the finest, world class faculty in a professional military education institution is an imperative to meeting emerging challenges. However, that generally occurs only episodically or by serendipity because of current personnel policies and promotion system priorities. There is a need to direct change so that the most capable officers are serving as faculty and that service is a path to operational command and promotion. These changes will likely require legislation to be widely and enduringly implemented, similar to the legislation that mandated serving in a Joint billet as a prerequisite for promotion to General Officer. That

legislation caused an immediate and noticeable change in officer career patterns. The U.S. military is, in fact, a more lethal and effective Joint force because of that mandate. Along with senior officers, senior Department of Defense and Intelligence Community career civilians should also have the same professional education opportunities and be encouraged and incentivized to attend resident programs. The threat from China and the myriad potential options to deal with aggressive Chinese behavior requires not just domain or Service specific knowledge but knowledge gained through the collaboration of the best minds in the U.S. government. Operationally this means not simply synchronizing different capabilities but the nuanced integration of those capabilities to a level of interdependence unknown and unrealized by any other military. That collaboration can be nurtured and developed through the rigorous wargaming of current and future scenarios.

#### **Considerations**

The recently released Joint Chiefs of Staff Vision and Guidance for Professional Military Education & Talent Management, dated May 2020 articulates what the Chairman and the Service Chiefs believe to be the road ahead for Joint Professional Military Education. While the document covers many important issues, it is ultimately up to the individual Services to support these reforms in their budgets and in their personnel policies. However, all too often professional military education has been a “bill payer” for other programs. The true test of the influence of this document will be determined in its execution over multiple Future Year Defense Programs - the devil really is in the details.



Another issue for consideration is determining the content of the curriculum of senior Service schools. That content, evident in the individual courses is generally created by course directors, most of whom do not teach the subjects themselves. This may be done as part of a drive toward standardization of instruction and for that is to be commended. However, it can also be constricting; reflectively biased toward a particular institutional or Service point of view. For example, take the case study methodology used to present a historical operation. In many instances the conventional focus is on discovering the exploitable vulnerabilities of the adversary, generally in the domain most familiar to the creator(s) of the course. While this is a necessary part of any case study, it is not sufficient to fully understand the relevance of actions taken by either side. In order for that case study to be an effective heuristic at the senior service school level, it must include a discussion of not just what happened but why it happened and how the event was influenced by the interface of civilian (political) and military (operational) concerns. These concerns are best addressed by a high-quality faculty who are not limited by narrow academic disciplines or Service domain expertise. Those same faculty should be empowered to create the content of the courses they teach and must, of course, be up to the task of guiding the students through the nuances of civil-military relations.

As I have called out previously, the most powerful teaching tool at senior level schools is wargaming. This is not a BOGSAT (Bunch of Guys/Gals Sitting Around a Table) but a serious, disciplined and realistic approach, which explores the practical application of a theory of victory. Wargames also provide an opportunity for senior faculty to evaluate students under the stress of decision-making in front of their peers. Previously, those students were most likely accustomed to having their staff accept their orders without question because of their rank and

or billet. Now, having their decisions subject to faculty and peer review will sharpen their critical thinking skills by illuminating and articulating alternatives. Importantly, these wargames should be as much about critiquing the blue (friendly) forces as celebrating the discovery of red (adversary) weaknesses. As difficult and uncomfortable as self-criticism maybe, it is an essential step in increasing the effectiveness of decision-making under stress.

An example of successful and influential wargaming at the senior Service school level is the development of “War Plan Orange.” This was the plan for the U.S. Navy’s war at sea against Japan in World War II. “War Plan Orange” was created and subsequently refined through an elaborate series of wargames conducted over many years at the Naval War College. Of note, the premise of the wargame, that Japan would attack and conquer islands across the Pacific Ocean was, at the time, unthinkable. That is, however, a characteristic of the most effective wargames – forcing the participants to think the unthinkable. For example, it would be germane once again, to closely examine the considerations for deterring and/or responding to an adversary’s use of tactical nuclear weapons. Lastly, wargames conducted in the senior Service schools, to be most useful, should include not only military officers and career civilians but political appointees and Members of Congress.

#### **Initiatives**

The most significant and far reaching action would be the creation of a Congressional Commission to investigate the state of Professional Military Education and its impact on the National Defense Strategy. Similar to the Cyberspace Solarium Commission, the goal would be to make recommendations for change and initiate legislation to ensure that identified reforms

are in fact, implemented. Quite simply, Professional Military Education needs an advocate(s) in Congress.

In light of the implications of continued Chinese military expansion and increasingly bellicose actions, creating a “China Hands” program should be examined. Those selected for the program would consist of military officers and civilians committed to a career studying all things China. They would gain a deeper understanding of not just the military and political issues but the language, history, economics and culture of China as well. The intent is to gain a high level of institutional knowledge, similar to that developed by the Department of Defense about the Soviet Union during the Cold War. The China Hands would focus on making recommendations directly to Department of Defense and Congressional leadership about potential near-term and long-term strategies. Importantly, possessing expertise on China is only part of what is required. The China Hands must also have a clear and direct path, free from the inevitable bureaucracy, to senior leaders.

In order to provide the necessary oversight and insure the Department of Defense is committed to professional education, a Senate Confirmed Chief Learning Officer for the Office of Secretary of Defense and the Department of Defense could be created. The office would be resourced from the staff and budget of the Joint Staff J-7 and the Office of Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. That exercise in itself, creating a newly empowered office from existing structure, would demonstrate an appropriate level of commitment to Professional Military Education. It would also provide the opportunity for creating direct, structural connections for collaborating and consequently developing a National Defense Strategy.

**Robert E. Schmidle Jr.**  
**Non-Resident Senior Fellow**

Lieutenant General Schmidle is the University Advisor on Cyber Capabilities and Conflict Studies at Arizona State University. Dr. Schmidle is also a Professor of Practice in the School of Politics and Global Studies. Additionally, he is a Senior Fellow in the Center on the Future of War at Arizona State University.

While on active duty he served as the first Deputy Commander of United States Cyber Command, responsible for standing up the command while concurrently executing full spectrum cyber operations. Subsequently, he was the head of Marine Aviation and his final assignment on active duty was as the Principal Deputy Director, Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation in the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

Lieutenant General Schmidle has extensive operational flying experience, amassing nearly 4,700 hours in tactical fighters, participating in combat operations in Iraqi and Bosnia. He commanded an F-18 squadron, VMFA-251 in combat and aboard USS America as part of Carrier Air Wing One. He was also selected for an extraordinary second operational command of another F-18 squadron, VMFA-115.

As a Colonel, he commanded the Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force (Experimental), planning and executing the Marine Corps Warfighting Experiments. As a Brigadier General, he was the Deputy Chief of Staff for the Office of the Secretary of Defense Quadrennial Defense Review Team and the Deputy Director for Resources and Acquisition Joint Staff J-8.

As a Major General, he commanded the First Marine Aircraft Wing, which included all Marine Corps aviation in the Pacific Theater. He also led the Marine Corps Quadrennial Defense Review Team.

He holds a bachelor's degree from Drew University, a master's degree from American University and earned his doctorate from Georgetown University. His thesis, recognized with distinction, was titled "The Power of Context in Shaping Moral Choices." He is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the Defense Science Board. His numerous publications are in the fields of moral philosophy, social psychology, and military history.

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COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

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May 18, 2022

**Hearing Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Hearing Subject:**

Professional Military Education and National Defense Strategy

**Witness name:** Robert E Schmidle Jr \_\_\_\_\_

**Position/Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Capacity in which appearing:** (check one)

☒ Individual      ☐ Representative

**If appearing in a representative capacity, name of the organization or entity represented:**

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**2021**

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**2020**

Federal grant/ contract	Federal agency	Dollar value	Subject of contract or grant

**2019**

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**2018**

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**2021**

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Foreign contract/ payment	Foreign government	Dollar value	Subject of contract, grant, or payment

**2018**

Foreign contract/ payment	Foreign government	Dollar value	Subject of contract, grant, or payment

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**2021**

Contract/grant/ payment	Entity	Dollar value	Subject of contract, grant, or payment

**2020**

Contract/grant/ payment	Entity	Dollar value	Subject of contract, grant, or payment



2019

Contract/grant/ payment	Entity	Dollar value	Subject of contract, grant, or payment

2018

Contract/grant/ payment	Entity	Dollar value	Subject of contract, grant, or payment

Testimony of Joan Johnson-Freese  
House Armed Services Military Personnel Subcommittee  
“Professional Military Education and National Defense Strategy”  
Wednesday, May 18, 2022  
2118 Rayburn Office Building

Representative Speier, Representative Gallagher & Members of the Subcommittee,

It is an honor and pleasure to have the opportunity to speak with you today about Professional Military Education (PME), a field I have worked in since 1993. The focus of my remarks is on degree-granting PME institutions, specifically Command & Staff and War Colleges, as that is where my experience lies. And while I am currently a faculty member at the Naval War College, the views I am expressing today are strictly my own personal views.

A decade ago, national security journalist and author Tom Ricks suggested closing the War Colleges and simply sending military officers to civilian schools. I argued against that as I believed then and believe now that educating America’s military through PME institutions is critical to America’s national security. These institutions are best suited – in terms of curricular focus, understanding the strengths, limitations and backgrounds of the students, accommodating military career schedules and having the capacity to deal with the numbers of students we are talking about, and facilities - to prepare military leaders for the challenges of the future. But I have also always felt that these institutions could do better, and that it is the duty of PME administrators and faculty to strive for improvement for the benefit of the officers that attend and the nation.

Make no mistake, America’s competitive edge in warfighting has narrowed. Therefore, it is imperative that the United States maintain and develop its advantages to the fullest. PME plays a critical role in that regard by educating officers to anticipate emerging threats and how to effectively develop and employ tip-to-tail ready and combat lethal forces.

I am especially glad to be here because it affirms that PME has taken a big step forward over the past 11 years in simply accepting that open discussion regarding potential improvement is in fact healthy. When I first published an article suggesting that PME needed improvement in 2011, my observations were considered heresy by some of my colleagues. Military institutions like to handle their dissent in private; in public, the mantra is: “everything’s fine.” Previously, critique was offered only by retired faculty, when their careers could no longer be threatened. Now, publications such as *Joint Force Quarterly* regularly publish articles generating useful debate on PME curricula and instruction.

There is much that has improved in PME during my nearly thirty-year career. Adherence to the principles of academic freedom – the foundation for quality teaching and recruiting top teachers – is now embedded in most PME programs. Additionally, PME institutions have recognized the need and benefits of affiliating with other institutions, to expand both their

breadth of expertise and reap the benefits of collaboration. It is also through these external relationships that top faculty establish, grow and have their expertise recognized by their peers. Therefore, external relationships ought always to be encouraged, not thought of as taking away from the mission.

There has also been a slow but steadily growing recognition that it is not the purpose of either the intermediate or senior level JPME/PME courses to better prepare each individual attendee for their next billet – a mistake that long dominated PME but is impossible when class members range across all military specializations, from pilots, to ship drivers, to infantry, veterinarians, lawyers, etc, and come from all branches of the military as well. All of these national security professionals need to be educated for the arc of the rest of their careers rather than a next assignment that might last only a few years. The now-standard inclusion of international students and interagency representatives adds considerably to the educational parameters of PME as well; even more would be better.

Another improvement is that we now see fewer moments when senior officers take to the stage to welcome students to PME with statements like “it’s only a lot of reading if you do it” and “I’ve spent a lot of time sleeping in those very chairs you’re now in.” Nevertheless, it is certainly still the case that some services and some military branches encourage, respect and appreciate education more than others.

The hybrid nature of PME institutions creates 3 general types of stresses and challenges that remain particularly problematic: (1) establishing clarity on the goal of the academic program (2) defining the institution’s expectations of the students and what those individual students should expect to get out of the program, and (3) needing the most effective mix of civilian academics, active-duty and retired military professionals, and national security practitioners to best to implement the academic program.

For PME institutions to be better learning institutions, and therefore more effective in preparing military officers for a challenging future with America’s security at stake, I suggest beginning with consideration of three recommendations.

1) Make it clear that Congress’ goal for intermediate and senior JPME/PME is *education*, and not *training*. PME should produce military leaders who are intellectually agile, questioning, critical and strategic thinkers who can broadly anticipate future challenges and consequently most effectively employ US forces for maximum effect and lethality when needed. To cite from the recently published DOD Instruction 1322.35, Volume 1 section on Standards, military education programs should: “emphasize intellectual leadership (e.g. strategic and critical thinking), military professionalism, and independence in action in the art and science of warfighting, in order to develop the intellectual agility required for success within the profession of arms.” American military officers today are highly *trained* in their specialized jobs as warfighters. With increased rank, however, comes increased complexity in knowing how, where and when to apply the lethality that they learn in training, important both on the battlefield and when they are called upon to advise civilian policy-makers.

2) In terms of student expectations and what institutions can expect from students, I recommend institutionalizing a two-track PME pathway for students: one for students who seek only to complete JPME and one for those who want to pursue a graduate degree. This is important because we have found that most students do in fact want to complete a Master's-level program. Indeed, this was a main driver for accrediting PME to give those degrees in the first place. But some students chafe at getting a degree or degree program requirements, and that minority should be allowed to pursue a smaller and more circumscribed program to satisfy JPME requirements.

3) Regarding the most effective mix of civilian, active-duty and retired military and national security practitioners, I recommend addressing issues consistently identified as problems on command climate surveys. In my experience, these problems include transparency in decision-making; whether hiring, awards and promotions are based on qualifications and merit; narrow bands of communication among administrators and faculty within institutions; and longstanding problems of inclusion and diversity. To that end, DoD/OSD should collect data on faculty and administration toward increased diversity through demographics, backgrounds and expertise. Research consistently shows that until minorities reach a 30% level in organizations their voices go unheard or neglected. Increased administrative diversity and diversity on hiring committees is especially important. Statistics on faculty and administrative composition along the four categories I have identified are often closely held within institutions, but I would estimate that PME administration – which has grown significantly in past years - is overwhelmingly composed of retired military, perhaps as high as 8 or 9 out of every 10 positions. This lopsidedness persists because of inertia in hiring practices. As one of my students pointed out when noticing the predominance of retired military in PME: ducks pick ducks.

Few or none of this group of administrators have experience in academic life or higher education before coming to PME. Clear and granular data on which groups are hired more often, have been hired at higher or lower pay (and whether those hired at lower pay are still lagging), and are promoted more often and to more senior appointments (as a percentage of the faculty) would go a long way toward getting a more accurate picture of administrative and faculty balance or imbalance inside PME institutions. Clarity here would help to dispel faculty perceptions of unfairness if such perceptions are erroneous. If such perceptions are accurate, however – and I suspect many of them are – more data would allow for more accurate course corrections and institutional improvement.

Allow me to discuss each of these areas in turn.

First, regarding the goals of PME academic programs, there are Congressional studies and consequent directives on JPME and PME. DOD/OSD Instructions then attempt to translate those directives into practice. CJCS policies and OPMEP directions also further distill and operationalize Congressional intent, with the perception that those can lean toward accommodating the status quo and default to training, vice education, practices. Individual PME

institutions then turn all of this direction into curriculum, some with more external “help” from their services than others, and increasingly more internal administrative “help.” In my department at the Naval War College, desired outcomes have always driven curriculum, not the other way around, but that is not always the case.

Being able to anticipate future threats and understanding the parameters of addressing them – through strategic and critical thinking, full situational awareness and understanding, and understanding both joint and interagency operations – is very different from making officers better at their individual jobs. They are already very good at those jobs. Learning critical thinking is education; getting better at a particular skill is largely training. The military is much more comfortable with training, because training is easier to “measure” and produces more concrete metrics (with metrics a staple of demonstrating performance in the military) than education. Consequently, there is a tendency to default in that direction.

Let me offer a somewhat unusual example of the difference. Some years ago, parts of the book *World War Z* were included in the Naval War College curriculum to generate discussion regarding the need to understand that different challenges require different capabilities. In that case, a baseball bat was more effective in fighting the enemy (zombies) than was a fighter jet or an aircraft carrier. The soldiers in *World War Z* did not know how to change their assumptions and approach against a new enemy and subsequently they wasted time trying to figure out how to use Stealth bombers against an already mostly-dead enemy.

While not as dramatic as fighting zombies, there are other clear indications that security and security challenges are rapidly changing and in ways that are not always initially recognized. Remember how the inability to understand the implications of the Sunni-Shia religious conflict hindered US strategy in Iraq. Or how not understanding the role of gender was an issue in gathering intelligence and providing security in both Iraq and Afghanistan until women soldiers were attached to US special forces teams. The technological leaps of other countries can be underestimated until something like the 2013 Chinese “space science mission” that nearly reached what the US has considered a sanctuary orbit for high-value satellites results in a quiet panic in Washington. Russia’s unprecedented use of information warfare to influence US elections and its earlier use of grey-zone tactics in Crimea and Georgia as a rehearsal for the present-day war in Ukraine has suddenly made Russian studies relevant again.

In a similar vein, five years ago, it was difficult to get my students to think of climate change as a security issue. Many considered it a hoax. Only three years ago trying to generate a discussion on a pandemic as a security challenge was near impossible and considered a waste of time. But as we have seen, the world is increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous, and our leaders must be prepared to operate in that world. Leaders with the most and most accurate situational awareness and understanding of their environment, can get inside decision-making loops, and have prepared for contingencies will succeed. They will be the gamechangers. We may not be facing zombies, but we will face enemies and threats whose nature is still unknown to us.

Second, elaborating on why PME rather than civilian schools, and thinking about what students should get out of a PME program and what institutions can expect from students, it is important to remember a few important facts at the outset.

- There are no academic admission requirements for students entering JPME1 or JPME2 programs, nor should there necessarily be since the idea is to educate the military at large.
- Also, students enter PME with college degrees, some even graduate degrees, but not necessarily relevant to the PME mission as they are overwhelmingly technical or engineering degrees. Military students are not well prepared for civilian academic programs other than in STEM fields.

These two facts mean that many students enter these accelerated 10-month PME degree-granting programs with little prior educational breadth and little or no writing skills.

This lack of preparedness means that while PME schools have long recognized the preference and benefits of active learning methods for adults, it is difficult to jump into a Socratic discussion on the pros and cons of alliances for the US when the students have no knowledge, for example, about why NATO was founded or how the organization has evolved since the ending of the Cold War. This matters because if PME does not make military officers more adept and conversant in the basics and lexicon of national security, they will later be left behind in critical discussions with civilian counterparts because they don't understand the premises of realism, liberal internationalism, deterrence, nuclear strategy, global economics and globalization, and other concepts that require a clear understanding to be useful in making policy.

Students also need to be able to clarify their thoughts on these topics and effectively convey them to others. While writing papers is the most effective method for practicing this, most PME students struggle with writing, some mightily.

Whether deficiency in writing should matter to students' military careers and, given this deficiency, what is an acceptable graduate level paper or exam are questions then often left unanswered and grade inflation becomes a problem. PME institutions, given their unique student body, stress that they do not have a grading curve, but the reality is that these institutions have improbably higher graduation rates and rates of graduate degrees granted than many top schools whose students have already been vetted with highly selective admission standards.

And yet, positive student and administrative praise for PME abounds. Students, for their part, hear that it is hard to get an "A" at War College, but harder still to get a "C" at War College. Many are happy with that; some feel that adage means their degree is worth less than others, but others – who have been told that PME is a time to "take a rest and reconnect with their families" are fine with lowered grading requirements. PME administrators, meanwhile, and many faculty are quick to employ overused but undefined terms to describe PME programs in

glowing terms, to the point where PME faculty have long passed them around as a PME meeting Bingo card: synergy, “World Class,” result-driven, rigor, fast track, client-focused, core business, and proactive among them.

The goal of PME should not be to compete with Harvard or Yale or profess that war colleges are “peer institutions” to those academic centers. But neither can they continue to say that they exist in so specialized a space that they are world-class but cannot be compared to anyone else in that same world. The goal should be to focus on identifying how to maintain and expand America’s military edge, who best to educate for that purpose, and how best to achieve it using the unique advantages of the PME environment, including security clearances, shared military experiences, and faculty with deep security backgrounds.

Third, and perhaps most importantly, we must improve the quality and balance of faculty who administer and teach. Until this is done, inertia and the status quo will prevail. Developing intellectually capable and flexible military leaders requires capable, flexible and deeply educated PME faculty who are themselves involved in life-long learning and professional engagement. These administrators and faculty should have subject-matter expertise beyond PowerPoint slides prepared by someone else. This is not to say that all faculty should look alike. PME faculties are hybrid organizations composed of (1) active-duty military members (2) career academics (3) practitioners from the interagency and think tanks and (4) retired military. All play an important role and each have strengths and liabilities.

Active-duty military bring currency and credibility to the classrooms and connect well with the students, though often have limited backgrounds in classrooms or the subject matter they teach. Academics bring subject matter expertise, educational experience and perhaps most importantly, a vastly different cultural outlook that focuses on challenging students, but they sometimes initially have difficulty conveying their subject matter expertise so that it is relevant to PME students. The academic culture also expects hiring and promotion to be on clearly defined, merit-based criteria. Practitioners also bring subject matter expertise, especially regarding the interagency process and specialized fields, and are perhaps more adept at making curricular material relevant to students than academics. They are in some ways the true hybrid members of the faculty. Retired military faculty bring field experience, a strong connection with the students - who they often see as younger versions of themselves - and an appreciation of the military culture’s expectation of not raising questions or voicing problems regarding mission execution. But the subject-matter currency of retired officers can fade relatively quickly, and many – not all - have little interest in expanding their subject-matter horizons. Few have any experience with teaching or research beyond PME. They often see themselves and their work as so unique that merit-based criteria for hiring and promotion can only be “soft” at best. The dominance of retired military faculty and administrators in PME is a problem. Gathering data to support or refute that dominance and related perceptions is a key step to any meaningful PME reform.

There are, of course, former practitioners and civilian academics who lose the essential currency in their field that makes them valuable to PME. Part of what fostered this problem is

that faculty at PME institutions are government employees and as professionals they join knowing and understanding that they are therefore subject to federal rules and policies. But what the “rules” and procedures are *within* institutions was for many years opaque and it was therefore difficult to hire or keep academics. Most faculty were on short term contracts, a practice that breeds cautiousness and timidity, and leads to excessive concern with student ratings. When I first arrived at the Naval War College it was standard practice to have students see their grades *before* evaluating their instructors. Little surprise that most faculty and administrators adopted a “safety first” mentality centered on high student ratings and successful throughput rates.

The good news is that faculty-related policies have changed over the years. Many PME institutions, for example, now have policies for faculty academic rank, hiring, retention and promotion. The bad news is that there is still reason for cautiousness and timidity among faculty. The 2019 Naval War College Faculty Handbook, for example, is a daunting 345 pages of policies, memos, and acronyms. It has only been out for less than three years and it is already in the process of a rewrite, despite the reality that faculty could barely keep up with the 2019 version. This churn in guidelines for faculty promotes the perception – not entirely undeserved – that those rules are applied selectively, some remain deliberately ambiguous, and that certain categories of faculty are favored in terms of hiring, retention, awards, promotion and having a voice within institutional decision-making. These perceptions undermine building an effective faculty team, with some people feeling they are not truly welcome or trusted enough to really be on the team, despite being told repeatedly that being considered a good team player is among the primary criteria for a successful PME career.

The three problems outlined create a great deal of inertia. By way of example, in 2017, Congress passed the bipartisan Women, Peace & Security Act. DOD was designated as one of four governmental department primarily responsible for implementation of this act in the 2019 US National Strategy on Women, Peace and Security.

But you can’t implement what you don’t know about, and data has consistently shown low rates within DOD of knowledge about, or even awareness of, the Women, Peace & Security framework – that it is a *security* framework – and the strategic advantages it brings to the US domestically and in all corners of the world, including in this era of strategic competition. That will likely remain the case until it is integrated into PME core curriculum. DoD issued a WPS Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan in 2020. In the case of the Navy, the Secretary of Navy issued a memo calling for mainstreaming WPS across PME in February 2022, and the USNWC Strategic Plan for 2022-2027 calls for the integration of WPS across all programs by 2024.

WPS was incrementally and narrowly integrated in the Naval War College core curriculum in 2021-22 for the first time. Full integration, however, will hinge on how willing and able all faculty are to become conversant in the subject matter. As far as I know, however, the Naval War College is the only PME institution to include WPS in its core curricula at all. So, while I



proudly say that the Naval War College is leading the way in WPS implementation, there is still a long way to go.

There is of course the legitimate argument that putting something into an academic program, especially one already abbreviated and tailored to accommodate military manpower considerations, requires taking something out. But finding the right balance between traditionally-taught material – doctrine, past battles and wars, planning processes - versus new or potentially underrepresented areas – artificial intelligence, information warfare, nuclear strategy, chemical and biological warfare, demographics, space security, global economics, climate change, pandemics, cyber security – and all the manpower and operational issues associated with each, must be considered. And all faculty must be broadly educated and/or willing and able to continue to broaden their personal expertise throughout their careers to accommodate a changing environment.

I am retiring from PME in July 2022. I am grateful for the professional experiences, friendships, academic freedom and classroom opportunities that have enjoyed. I have worked with students through the Post-Cold War “peace dividend,” 9/11, the War on Terror and the return to Great Power Competition. Each was challenging, but the future will be even more so. The imperative for effective PME only continues to grow.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my views.

**May 2022**

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**Employment History**

**2010-July 31, 2022**

**University Professor, National Security Affairs, Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island.** Teaching security studies to U.S. and international military and security practitioners in a 10-month M.A. course.

**2002-2010**

**Chair, National Security Affairs Department, Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island.** Responsible for a faculty of 50+ multidisciplinary, multicultural faculty of active duty military, retired military and academic faculty, curriculum development and execution to 500+ MA students annually.

**2004-Current**

**Harvard University, Adjunct Professor, Summer School & Extension School Cambridge, MA.** Classes: Women, Peace & Security, Grand Strategy & US National Security, Leadership in War & Peace, Space & Security.

**1998-2002**

**Professor & Chair, Department of Transnational Studies, Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, Honolulu, HI** Multidisciplinary classes taught at the APCSS to military officers and security practitioners from the Asia-Pacific region.

**1993-1998**

**Professor, National Security Studies, Air University, Maxwell AFB, AL**

**1981-93**

**Associate Professor, Political Science, Director Center for Space Policy & Law, University of Central Florida, Orlando, FL**

**1991-current**

**1993-Current****Faculty, International Space University, Strasbourg, France****1991-92****Visiting Researcher, Institute for Space & Astronautical Science (ISAS),  
Sagamihara, Japan****Selected Professional Activity**

- Senior Fellow, Women in International Security
- Advisory Board, Breakthrough Initiatives/Starshot 2019-current
- International Space University, Faculty, 1994-current.
- Presentations on various gender and security related topics to: USAF Mobility Command; Army Public Health Command; Oxford University, Said School of Business; Pacific Forum; RAND; Qatar University College of Law; USAF Kessel Run; Sea Services Leadership Association; USAF ROTC, Howard University & Yale University; Center for Ethics and the Rule of Law, Univ. of Pennsylvania; African Union; Solar Sister; Women's Foreign Policy Group, Council on Foreign Relations
- Presentations on various space related topics include to: Chatham House; Renmin, Fudan and Beihang Universities, McGill University; Leuven (Belgium) Center for Space Law; Werner Von Braun Symposium; Santa Fe Institute; Yale Security Council Simulation; Belfer Center, Kennedy School of Government; Institute of Politics (Kennedy School of Government); Chinese Academy of Social Sciences; CSIS-Eisenhower Center Space Policy Workshop (Washington, D.C.); National Geospatial Agency; INFRI (Paris); Strategic Space Workshop (Tokyo); IEEE, Center for Nonproliferation Studies/GWU (Washington, D.C.), MIT Speaker's Series (Cambridge, MA); Brief to NASA Administrator Michel Griffith on the Chinese space program prior to his trip to China (September 2006), Fairbanks Center, Harvard University (Cambridge, MA), Center for Defense Information (Washington, D.C.), CSIS (Washington, D.C. 2003).
- Media Consultant, includes working with: A&E Channel, CBS Nightly News, CBS news specials, Xinhua News Agency, China Radio, BBC, NBC, CBS Radio, Al Jazeera, Canadian Broadcasting, Discovery Channel, The Learning Channel, Austrian television, CNN, ABC News, *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *USA Today*, *Florida Today*, *Space News*, *Defense News*, Reuters, Associated Press, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Voice of America, National Public Radio, Bloomberg.
- Recipient: Department of the Air Force Meritorious Service Award, 2 Department of the Navy Meritorious Civilian Service Awards, and a Department of the Navy Superior Civilian Service Award.

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**DISCLOSURE FORM FOR WITNESSES  
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**INSTRUCTION TO WITNESSES:** Rule 11, clause 2(g)(5), of the Rules of the House of Representatives for the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress requires nongovernmental witnesses appearing before House committees to include in their written statements a curriculum vitae and a disclosure of the amount and source of any federal contracts or grants (including subcontracts and subgrants), and contracts or grants (including subcontracts and subgrants), or payments originating with a foreign government, received during the past 36 months either by the witness or by an entity represented by the witness and related to the subject matter of the hearing. Rule 11, clause 2(g)(5) also requires nongovernmental witnesses to disclose whether they are a fiduciary (including, but not limited to, a director, officer, advisor, or resident agent) of any organization or entity that has an interest in the subject matter of the hearing. As a matter of committee policy, the House Committee on Armed Services further requires nongovernmental witnesses to disclose the amount and source of any contracts or grants (including subcontracts and subgrants), or payments originating with any organization or entity, whether public or private, that has a material interest in the subject matter of the hearing, received during the past 36 months either by the witness or by an entity represented by the witness. Please note that a copy of these statements, with appropriate redactions to protect the witness's personal privacy (including home address and phone number), will be made publicly available in electronic form 24 hours before the witness appears to the extent practicable, but not later than one day after the witness's appearance before the committee. Witnesses may list additional grants, contracts, or payments on additional sheets, if necessary. Please complete this form electronically.

**Hearing Date:** May 18, 2022

**Hearing Subject:**

Profession Military Education and National Defense Strategy

**Witness name:** Joan Johnson-Freese

**Position/Title:** University Professor, Naval War College

**Capacity in which appearing:** (check one)

☒ Individual ☐ Representative

**If appearing in a representative capacity, name of the organization or entity represented:**

**Federal Contract or Grant Information:** If you or the entity you represent before the Committee on Armed Services has contracts (including subcontracts) or grants (including subgrants) with the federal government, received during the past 36 months and related to the subject matter of the hearing, please provide the following information:

**2021**

Federal grant/ contract	Federal agency	Dollar value	Subject of contract or grant
None			

**2020**

Federal grant/ contract	Federal agency	Dollar value	Subject of contract or grant
None			

**2019**

Federal grant/ contract	Federal agency	Dollar value	Subject of contract or grant
None			

**2018**

Federal grant/ contract	Federal agency	Dollar value	Subject of contract or grant
None			

**Foreign Government Contract, Grant, or Payment Information:** If you or the entity you represent before the Committee on Armed Services has contracts or grants (including subcontracts or subgrants), or payments originating from a foreign government, received during the past 36 months and related to the subject matter of the hearing, please provide the following information:

**2021**

Foreign contract/ payment	Foreign government	Dollar value	Subject of contract, grant, or payment
None			

**2020**

Foreign contract/ payment	Foreign government	Dollar value	Subject of contract, grant, or payment
None			

**2019**

Foreign contract/ payment	Foreign government	Dollar value	Subject of contract, grant, or payment
None			

**2018**

Foreign contract/ payment	Foreign government	Dollar value	Subject of contract, grant, or payment
None			

**Fiduciary Relationships:** If you are a fiduciary of any organization or entity that has an interest in the subject matter of the hearing, please provide the following information:

Organization or entity	Brief description of the fiduciary relationship
None	

**Organization or Entity Contract, Grant or Payment Information:** If you or the entity you represent before the Committee on Armed Services has contracts or grants (including subcontracts or subgrants) or payments originating from an organization or entity, whether public or private, that has a material interest in the subject matter of the hearing, received during the past 36 months, please provide the following information:

**2021**

Contract/grant/ payment	Entity	Dollar value	Subject of contract, grant, or payment
None			

**2020**

Contract/grant/ payment	Entity	Dollar value	Subject of contract, grant, or payment
None			

2019

Contract/grant/ payment	Entity	Dollar value	Subject of contract, grant, or payment
None			

2018

Contract/grant/ payment	Entity	Dollar value	Subject of contract, grant, or payment
None			

Not for publication until released by the Committee

**PREPARED STATEMENT**

**OF**

**THE HONORABLE SHAWN SKELLY  
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR READINESS**

**REGARDING  
PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION AND THE  
NATIONAL DEFENSE STRATEGY**

**BEFORE THE**

**HOUSE ARMED SERVICES SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL**

**May 18, 2022**



Good afternoon, Chairwoman Speier and Ranking Member Gallagher, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss matters related to Professional Military Education (PME) and the National Defense Strategy (NDS) in the Department of Defense (DoD).

I would like also to thank the Subcommittee for having initiated a series of consultations with DoD on PME through Congressional hearings and meetings, reports, and proposed legislation. We welcome this dialogue as it provides a much-needed venue to discuss Congressional ideas and concerns, as well as our DoD initiatives.

In December 2021, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Force Education and Training, Caroline Baxter, and Major General Daniel Tulley, Vice Director for Joint Force Development (J7) on the Joint Staff, briefed members of the subcommittee, including the Chairwoman and Ranking Member, on how the Department has addressed the shortcomings in PME and Joint Professional Military Education (JPME) as identified in the 2018 National Defense Strategy and assessments by the Government Accountability Office (GAO). As a follow up to that meeting, our staffs have been preparing a report that will address the Subcommittee's follow-up questions on topics that included programs, students, faculty, financial information, professional development opportunities, and return on investment. We plan to submit the report to Congress by June 15, 2022.

Last month, in accordance with the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021, the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R)) submitted on behalf of the Secretary of Defense a report to Congress that addressed three topics related to PME reform: (1) the status of the recommendations in the GAO Report on PME; (2) a review of recommended improvements to the PME enterprise in support of the National Defense Strategy; and (3) an assessment and value statement of the contributions of each of the senior Service colleges as it relates to JPME, Phase II education. As the first of a series of reports that DoD will be transmitting to the Congress this year, it responded directly to many of the questions that VADM Munsch and I expect to address today, such as how the PME enterprise is addressing strategic competition with a rising China and a revanchist Russia, how its programs are developing joint warfighters, and how the Department is reforming the enterprise to increase the return on investment.

**PME as a DoD Priority**

Since the start of the Biden-Harris Administration, Secretary of Defense Austin has made clear that DoD will invest in our greatest strategic advantage, our people. In the newly released 2022 National Defense Strategy, Secretary Austin emphasized three overarching ways in which we will ensure our national security -- integrated deterrence, campaigning, and building enduring advantage. Investing in the military education of our Service members supports all three initiatives and is particularly crucial for building enduring advantage for the future Joint Force. The cognitive edge that PME delivers for our warfighters is a strategic asset that pays dividends on the battlefield and has helped forge the most professional fighting force in the world.

The DoD relies on PME to prepare its military personnel, throughout their careers, for the intellectual demands of strengthening American national security during a period of strategic competition. The objective of the PME system is to create leaders who can achieve intellectual overmatch against adversaries—and that overmatch demands a system that prepares Service members to address all contingencies that may present themselves.

PME provides Service members with the skills and knowledge that enable them to make sound operational and management decisions in progressively more demanding command and staff positions within the national security environment. It is intended to provide our professional personnel with critical knowledge: the ethos, culture, and core values of their Service; the technical and tactical skills appropriate to how that Service wages war; and, most importantly, the wisdom and judgment to be applied in a multiplicity of situations—across domains, theaters, in both joint and combined operations with allies and partners—and, in taking care of their people.

PME provides officers with the opportunity to learn the state of the art in military strategy and operational planning that they can then apply in assignments throughout their careers. These areas have long been the critical substance of an officer's development in PME, and they will continue to stand as prerequisites to an understanding of the nature and conduct of warfare. PME also provides them with the opportunity to develop their understanding of the most up-to-date knowledge about important trends in geopolitics, international relations, economics, management practices, and technology—and their impact on the preparation for, and the conduct of, warfare.

The Department has recognized the extraordinary advantage that education offers and is developing and implementing workforce development policies and strategies that align with the needs to provide the Service member with the intellect and tools to overcome strategic challenges. These policies will enable greater understanding of these issues through continuous pursuit of knowledge and learning at all points of service and not just during assignments to staff and war colleges.

This guidance will strengthen the ability of military education to assist the Services and future leaders to anticipate and lead rapid adaptation and innovation under the current conditions of strategic competition and the potential use of all types of disruptive technologies. Moreover, DoD is prioritizing active learning through exercises and wargaming to stimulate strategic and creative thinking and increasing the links between education and talent management, continuous learning, and professional development to enable intellectual overmatch against our competitors.

Finally, the Department must develop leaders that are responsible for taking care of our people, including tackling sexual assault and other harmful behaviors. We are working to implement the training and education recommendations of the Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military across the Department.

#### **DoD Instruction on Military Education**

In a major advance reflecting DoD's increased emphasis on PME, the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R)) last month approved DoD Instruction 1322.35, Volume 1, "Military Education: Program Management and Administration." This Instruction is the first-ever Department-wide policy for military education, and includes Service-governed PME, Chairman-guided Joint PME, the Service Academies, and professional development opportunities such as graduate education, fellowships, and training with industry. Additional guidance will follow to support implementation of the Instruction.

The new Instruction directs that military education programs move to better assess what graduates know and, more importantly, can do with that knowledge. Through this approach DoD will be assured that its personnel have the knowledge and skills they will need to succeed in future challenges. In terms of our national security, a focus on outcomes will produce warfighters with the intellectual acumen, critical thought, and strategic understanding to defend our Nation in the face of ever-changing threats.

This will enable more effective talent management and workforce development. The policy also lays the foundation to provide direction and guidance to the Services with regard to the topics to be covered and the outcomes that graduates of military education programs should achieve.

The policy establishes an oversight governance structure to enable the USD(P&R), through my office, to assess effectiveness and evaluate the return on investment that the Department makes in military education. Specifically, it does so through adopting an outcomes-based approach to assessing the effectiveness of PME. Professional education is about learning to do, to be able to apply even esoteric knowledge and techniques with skill to address the problems and challenges that will be encountered outside of the schoolhouse. Developing authentic assessments of what our officers and enlisted members can do with their knowledge will change the requirements for graduation from “attended and graduated” to performance above and beyond meaningful standards.

To support implementation of this approach, the Instruction requires procedures for data collection and reporting for all military education programs. Collection and analysis of this data will allow for assessments of return on investment across military educational programs and help ensure that these programs are delivering results with maximum efficiency.

The bedrock structure provided will allow for further adaptive improvements to the way military education is delivered. Under this policy, the Services and the Department have the latitude and authority to continue to align PME efforts to national security imperatives as the Department and the Nation adapt to the technological, social, and political change inherent in an era of strategic competition. Efforts already undertaken in anticipation of this policy include the direction given by the Secretary of Defense to develop and implement a rubric of minimum learning outcomes so that officers attending our command and staff and war colleges better understand the pacing threat for the Department.

This Instruction will enable the Services to develop talent management policies and develop better best practices in promotion, assignment, compensation, separation, and other relevant personnel decisions. Assessments of performance and the competencies developed in PME programs beyond “was selected and graduated” will provide better information for assignment and promotion decisions. Ultimately, more granular data will enable the personnel

management enterprise to assign the right personnel to the right assignments at the right time to ensure appropriate return on investment.

In addition, this Instruction ensures that diverse, capable, and talented warfighters are afforded learning opportunities provided by the finest educators and leaders available. The incorporation of diversity, equity, and inclusion considerations will further contribute to DoD actions and programs in PME.

Lastly, the Instruction also promotes the integration of wargaming into the military education curriculum. The use of wargaming exercises in PME advances the Secretary of Defense's call for enhanced strategic thinking across the force by providing avenues for military personnel to practice their leadership, creativity, and problem-solving skills in scenarios closely resembling the national security challenges facing the nation today.

#### **Conclusion**

Looking toward the future DoD will utilize its military education policies to strengthen the professional development of our personnel to:

1. Better foster the development of a force that can develop and implement globally-integrated, multi-instrument, all-domain strategies and plans that align with national security policies to compete effectively with strategic competitors.
2. Ensure that our military professionals develop and demonstrate an ability to effectively adapt to changing strategic and technological circumstances.
3. Perform effectively and ethically across the entire spectrum of DoD operations to achieve national security objectives—namely fighting and winning our Nation's wars and advancing the interests and values of the United States of America.

Madam Chairwoman, this concludes my statement. I am happy to answer any questions you or the Ranking Member may have at this time. Thank you for your continuing support for the men and women of the Armed Forces.

**Shawn G. Skelly**  
**Assistant Secretary of Defense for Readiness**

Shawn G. Skelly was confirmed by the Senate to be the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Readiness on July 22, 2021. She is the principal advisor to the Secretary of Defense and the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R)) on all matters related to the readiness of the Total Force. In that capacity, she develops policies and plans, provides advice, and makes recommendations for Total Force Readiness programs, reporting, and assessments of readiness to execute the National Defense Strategy.

Ms. Skelly advises the Secretary of Defense on the strategic and operational readiness of the Armed Forces, and develops and oversees policies and programs to ensure their readiness for peacetime contingencies, crises, and warfighting. She supervises the comprehensive, enterprise-wide readiness system that measures the capability of the armed forces to carry out the National Defense Strategy, and develops tools to provide strategic and predictive readiness analysis. She also maintains policy and oversight of Military Service and joint training and education, including training systems and technologies, joint exercises, professional military education, and learning technologies. Additionally, Ms. Skelly serves as the DoD Designated Agency Safety and Health Official, responsible for integrated assessment and reporting of safety and occupational health issues, trend analysis, and mishap and accident reduction and mitigation activities.

Ms. Skelly served on active duty in the U.S. Navy for 20 years as a Naval Flight Officer, retiring with the rank of Commander. After a period in industry with ITT Exelis, she joined the Obama Administration in 2013, first serving as Special Assistant to the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics at the U.S. Department of Defense, and ultimately as the Director of the Office of the Executive Secretariat at the U.S. Department of Transportation. In 2017, President Obama appointed her to serve as a Commissioner on the National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service, which delivered its final report to Congress, *Inspired to Serve*, in March of 2020. Ms. Skelly is also a Co-Founder and former Vice President of Out in National Security, formerly served on the Atlantic Council's LGBTI Advisory Council, and was a member of the Service Year Alliance Leadership Council.

Ms. Skelly received a bachelor's degree in History from the University of South Carolina and a master's degree in National Security and Strategic Studies from the U.S. Naval War College.

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF  
VICE ADMIRAL STUART B. MUNSCH, USN  
JOINT STAFF, DIRECTOR JOINT FORCE DEVELOPMENT (DJ-7)  
PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION AND THE NATIONAL DEFENSE  
STRATEGY HEARING

May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022

### **Introduction**

Good afternoon, Chairwoman Speier, Ranking Member Gallagher, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee. I too appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss Professional Military Education (PME). I am privileged to lead the Joint Force Development Directorate, Joint Staff J-7, for Chairman Milley. We work across the Department of Defense and with Allies and Partners to train, educate, develop, design, and adapt the Joint Force. Our goal is overmatch in the continuum of conflict under conditions of accelerating change in the character of war. In working to set conditions for the Joint Force of 2030, professional military education is critical to ensure the Joint Force can deter and respond to future national security challenges.

The resources provided by Congress have enabled the Joint Force to meet the current challenges and put us on a trajectory to be able to produce highly-skilled, agile, and capable warfighters into the future. Education is a force multiplier and will continue to be a focal point for Joint Force development as we continue to align the force to the 2022 National Defense Strategy.

### **The PME Enterprise and Continuum**

Professional military education is foundational for the development of our joint warfighters, refining their ability to think critically and to conceive, design, and implement strategies and campaigns in support of our elected leaders and national strategy. The Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 established the goal of improving the quality, experience, and education of joint officers. It instituted the joint professional military education and joint qualification for officers, provided authority for the Secretary of Defense, with the advice of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), to review JPME programs, and review service schools' curricula to improve the focus on joint matters. Concluding in 1990, the Skelton Panel recommended, and Congress enacted, a two-phase joint professional military education system which has evolved into the system we have today.

The current CJCS *Officer Professional Military Education Policy (OPMEP)* outlines a five-phase continuum for officer education delivered by the Department's 29 JPME programs. At the individual level, these phases progress from Pre-Commissioning, through Primary, Intermediate, Senior, and General/Flag Officer programs. While the Pre-commissioning and Primary phases of education



are executed by the Services, they are informed by CJCS joint learning areas to instill joint education early in an officer's development. All phases are fully informed by the National Security Strategy, the National Defense Strategy, and the National Military Strategy.

- Intermediate level education occurs through Service staff colleges and prepares field grade officers of all Services to assume positions of higher responsibility and includes JPME I outcomes.
- Senior-level education occurs within Service war colleges and the National Defense University (NDU) and prepares officers to develop and implement military strategies with an emphasis on Joint operations and includes JPME II outcomes.
- General/Flag Officer education occurs in the Capstone course taught at NDU, and prepares O-7s and above for executive leadership in joint, interagency, intergovernmental and multinational environments and includes statutory requirements for the third phase of JPME.

To benefit from the diverse service cultures and expertise, service and domain-specific constructs are included in Service staff and war colleges; this ensures our Joint forces maintain a level of expertise in these areas. An officer's military education only ends at separation from military service. These educational phases are complemented by joint and service experience and other training throughout an officer's career, creating a continuum of learning.

### **JPME Transformation**

We have been continuing to transform and adapt PME to meet the demands of the strategic environment. The 2018 National Defense Strategy identified the imperative of gaining and sustaining intellectual overmatch over our adversaries and competitors. To meet this challenge, the Joint Chiefs of Staff collectively published the *JCS Vision and Guidance for Professional Military Education and Talent Management*. This document recognizes the rapidly changing character of war and conflict in the 21st century. It emphasizes the need to align Professional Military Education (PME) and Talent Management (TM) with the changes in the operational environment to adapt and develop strategically-minded joint Warfighters able to plan and execute globally integrated operations.

The Joint Staff then published an updated *Officer Professional Military Education Policy (OPMEP)*, which directs that Services ensure programs prepare officers to "...conduct joint warfighting, at the operational to strategic levels, as all domain, globally integrated warfare, including the ability to integrate allied and partner contributions." It also directs leaders of PME programs to adopt an outcomes-based approach as the way in which programs will be assessed and receive feedback to ensure relevance in the rapidly changing global environment.

These policy and governance changes set the foundation for the transformation of our joint professional military education system. The Services have been fully supportive and we are seeing a renewed focus on warfighting and flexible and relevant curricula across the war colleges.

#### **The Future of Joint Professional Military Education – Vision End-States**

Our joint professional military education curriculum in our Joint and Service staff and war colleges is continuing to be transformed and adapted to meet the warfighter skills necessary to execute the JCS *Vision and Guidance* and achieve intellectual overmatch. The desired end state is that our PME enterprise produces joint warfighting leaders who can: discern the military dimensions of national security challenges and recommend viable military, globally integrated options; anticipate and lead rapid innovation and adaptation under conditions of great power competition and disruptive change in technology; conduct joint warfighting at the operational to strategic levels including integrating ally and partner contributions; and are able to adapt strategy through campaigns and complex operations. The JCS *Vision and Guidance* also recognizes that talent management policies and procedures must reinforce the PME end-states, and provide officers opportunities to refine their existing knowledge and develop increasingly agile intellectual skills.

While significant progress has been made, there is more work to be done. Effecting this transformation across a federated enterprise of PME programs has taken continued effort and engagement. We endeavor to learn from our past performance and continuously improve the education that we are providing to our joint warfighters. We continue to refine data and metrics to assess our return on investment and effectiveness of our PME enterprise. Each JPME program has begun its transition to the outcomes-based military education, which in the future will provide more detailed and standardized metrics on student learning outcomes,

inform the talent management process, and provide feedback to faculty and program leaders so that they can better refine their curricula to meet the warfighters' requirements.

### **Conclusion**

Professional military education is a force multiplier and critical element for Joint Force Development and operationalizing the 2022 NDS. While the transformation of our military education system is underway, we are working to continue to improve our Joint and Service staff and war colleges so their graduates can continue to expand our capabilities and strengths relative to our adversaries and meet the desired end states outlined in the JCS *Vision and Guidance*. Your continued support has helped to accelerate this transformation and we welcome your feedback.

**Vice Adm. Stuart B. Munsch**  
**Director for Joint Force Development, J7**

Vice Adm. Stuart Munsch, a native of North Dakota, graduated from the Naval Academy in 1985 with a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering. At Annapolis, he was brigade commander of his class and an All-American and national champion pistol shooter. Selected for a Rhodes Scholarship, he attended Oxford University and earned a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Arts in Philosophy, Politics and Economics.

He then was assigned to four consecutive sea duty assignments, serving on USS Will Rogers (SSBN 659), USS Jefferson City (SSN 759), USS Kitty Hawk (CV 63) on the staff of Commander, Cruiser Destroyer Group 5, and USS Tucson (SSN 770). In 1999, Munsch reported ashore to U.S. Pacific Command, where he served in the Plans and Policy Directorate (J5) prior to becoming deputy executive assistant to the commander. He then was selected for a White House Fellowship and served as special assistant to the Secretary of Agriculture.

Munsch commanded USS Albuquerque (SSN 706) from 2002 to 2005, followed by duty in the Pentagon as the military assistant to the Deputy Secretary of Defense and then as executive assistant to the Director, Submarine Warfare, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (OPNAV N87).

Munsch commanded Submarine Development Squadron (DEVRON) 5 from 2008 to 2010 and then returned to the Pentagon to head the Navy Strategy branch (OPNAV N513). Selected for flag rank, he was reassigned as Deputy Director, Undersea Warfare (OPNAV N97).

Sent overseas to Japan and Bahrain, Munsch commanded Submarine Group 7 and Task Forces 74 and 54 from 2013 to 2015, followed by duty in the Pentagon as the senior military assistant to the Deputy Secretary of Defense. In 2017 Munsch reported to OPNAV N3/N5 as the Assistant and in 2018 became the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Operations, Plans and Strategy. In 2019 he established and served as the initial Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Warfighting Development, N7. He assumed his role as Director for Joint Force Development (J7) in 2020.

Munsch is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, a Massachusetts Institute of Technology Seminar XXI fellow and recipient of the U.S. Navy League's Decatur Award for operational excellence. His awards include the Defense Distinguished Service Medal, Navy Distinguished Service Medal, Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit (five awards), and several unit awards shared with shipmates.

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**QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING**

MAY 18, 2022

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### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MS. JACOBS

Ms. JACOBS. How are you studying and measuring the impact of Professional Military Education on service members' war-fighting capability? How has the PME curriculum evolved to incorporate tangible and intangible factors of war, such as the will to fight?

Ms. SKELLY. The Department does not yet systematically capture or report metrics of return on investment from PME that would specifically capture "the impact of PME on service members' war-fighting capability," but does have some measures available. First, retention of an officer in service after their developmental opportunity is a quantitative measure of return on investment; however, it does not capture the increased quality of their contribution to the force during that period. Second, PME institutions survey their alumni with regard to how well the program prepared them for subsequent assignments. Alumni report they are better able to consider a broad, whole of government, and multinational context when making decisions and providing advice due to completing in-residence PME. Furthermore, they report being more adept and comfortable with joint matters. Third, the schools solicit senior leader (GO/FO/SES) feedback on the degree to which graduates demonstrate proficiency in a program's learning outcomes. Finally, they also solicit feedback from Combatant Commands on the skills and abilities of PME graduates. These latter two sources of feedback depend upon contextual knowledge that the respondents may not have readily available in a systematic manner—i.e., to enable comparisons between officers that have attended PME and those who have not, controlling for other factors that may affect their performance. Still, these surveys do provide general feedback as to the perceived value of these experiences to the former student and those who manage them.

Regarding the evolution of PME curricula, the PME enterprise encompasses a wide array of programs and courses, and high-level concepts like the tangible and intangible factors of war form part of the foundation for intermediate- and senior-level PME. How this is expressed, and how it has evolved over time, is dependent upon the expert judgment of the faculty of the various PME programs.

Ms. JACOBS. Do you believe PME should be tailored to the service member and not an overarching requirement? Why do Navy physiologists need to attend the Navy War College to be considered for promotion?

Ms. SKELLY. Professional military education (PME) constitutes the core of professional development for officers and enlisted personnel. PME develops the professional knowledge and traits of Service members, inculcates the habits of mind essential to the profession, and certifies officers and enlisted personnel at key points in their career as professionals entrusted to practice their profession effectively and ethically. Promotion to specific ranks is dependent upon more than competence in a specific specialty, such as those of Navy physiologists, but rather is indicative of their competencies in the broader profession of arms.

While PME focuses on the rank appropriate core competencies of the Department's uniformed professionals, the PME system is heterogeneous in its delivery. Each Service is responsible for educating officers and their enlisted members in their core competencies according to Service needs. Air Force schools, for example, primarily teach air and space warfare. Similarly, Army, Navy, and Marine Corps schools focus on land, maritime, amphibious and expeditionary warfare, respectively. The Department depends on the Services' PME to develop its professionals with Service-specific proficiencies.

Specific technical competencies are developed in the broader system of military education, including those that develop the technical competencies of personnel such as Navy physiologists. It is in these programs where military education is customized to specific communities and its members.

Ms. JACOBS. The focus of JPME is increasingly focused on the kinetic dimensions of warfighting, but as conflict in today's world demonstrates, the economic, geo-economic, and technological domains matter greatly as well. For example, munition stockpiles, economic warfare, and a state's mobilizational capacity are critical in assessing warfighting ability and sustainability. Should the JPME system pay attention and devote space to the research and teaching of these issues?

Ms. SKELLY. JPME is a subset of PME and reflects a concentration on Joint matters, frequently offered in tandem with the delivery of Service-focused PME. JPME is defined in Federal law (per Title 10, U.S. Code, chapter 107, "Professional Military Education") as "...consisting of the rigorous and thorough instruction of officers in an environment designed to promote a theoretical and practical in-depth understanding of joint matters and specifically, of the subject matter covered."

Federal law directs the six specific subject matter topics for all JPME: (1) National military strategy; (2) Joint planning at all levels of war; (3) Joint doctrine; (4) Joint command and control; (5) Joint force and joint requirements development; and (6) Operational contract support. Four additional items supplement this list to round out JPME II: (1) National security strategy; (2) Theater strategy and campaigning; (3) Joint planning processes and systems; and (4) Joint, interagency, and multinational capabilities and the integration of those capabilities.

JPME programs are distributed across the schools of the National Defense University and the Military Services. The Services' JPME programs develop joint officers that understand the required topics of joint matters through curricula that provide appreciation of the domain, capabilities, employment considerations, and general limitations of the host Service. The programs at National Defense University address joint matters through a whole-of-government focus. In particular, the Eisenhower School was founded in 1924 as the Army Industrial College to better prepare the U.S. government to mobilize the resources of the nation for the purposes of grand strategy and warfare if necessary. Its stated mission today is: "The Eisenhower School prepares select military officers and civilians for strategic leadership and success in developing national security strategy and in evaluating, marshaling, and managing resources in the execution of that strategy." While all JPME programs have adapted their curricula to address the non-military and non-kinetic dimensions of strategic competition, it is the Eisenhower School where "economic, geo-economic, and technological domains" receive the greatest emphasis.

Ms. JACOBS. How are you studying and measuring the impact of Professional Military Education on service members' war-fighting capability? How has the PME curriculum evolved to incorporate tangible and intangible factors of war, such as the will to fight?

Admiral MUNSCH. Our recent shift to Outcomes-Based Military Education (OBME) helps to assess PME's efficacy and to align curricula with Combatant Commands' needs. Through OBME, we work with Combatant Commands to assess how PME graduates perform in their operational assignments and better understand what specific educational outcomes are required to prepare an officer for joint war-fighting. This is an iterative process; PME curricula will continue to adapt to the strategic environment. The Joint Staff directs JPME programs adjust curriculum to align with the current Chairman's Education Policy, which is updated (at a minimum) every five years. Recent modifications to PME curriculum include both tangible factors, such as countering weapons of mass destruction, and intangible factors, such as updated instruction on officer ethics. JPME curricula will continue to evolve to reflect the changing character of war and will incorporate lessons learned from contemporary conflicts.

Ms. JACOBS. Do you believe PME should be tailored to the service member and not an overarching requirement? Why do Navy physiologists need to attend the Navy War College to be considered for promotion?

Admiral MUNSCH. PME is uniformly required to ensure all officers possess the common knowledge, skills, and attributes that form the basis of the profession of arms. However, officers do have a variety of options to meet this requirement, including choice of timing (within a given window) and distance learning. Non-line officers, such as physiologists, are not usually required to meet the same career gates as line officers. They often have different commissioning pathways and promotion timelines. Still, as commissioned officers, they have the same need for professional development as line officers.

Ms. JACOBS. The focus of JPME is increasingly focused on the kinetic dimensions of warfighting, but as conflict in today's world demonstrates, the economic, geo-economic, and technological domains matter greatly as well. For example, munition stockpiles, economic warfare, and a state's mobilizational capacity are critical in assessing warfighting ability and sustainability. Should the JPME system pay attention and devote space to the research and teaching of these issues?

Admiral MUNSCH. The time officers have to devote to JPME is finite, as is the content of the curriculum. As such, different PME programs focus on different learning outcomes. For example, the Eisenhower School extensively examines supply chain issues and mobilization; whereas the National War College focuses on grand strategy and its connection to national defense. Allowing schools to focus on these unique emphasis areas builds an academically diverse officer corps, capable of ad-



addressing diverse economic, political, and technological factors influencing today's security environment.

#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY DR. JACKSON

Dr. JACKSON. In response to the guidance of the 2018 National Defense Strategy (NDS), the Department of Defense looked at how to modernize PME to meet the current fight.

This subcommittee held a briefing late last year to hear about some of these developments, however we left the room that day with many questions about the current efforts.

One thing that I support is framing the curriculum at PME institutions to be shifted to have a focus on strategic competition with China.

Secretary Skelly, how are the reforms going that were originally directed to be in line with the 2018 NDS? Further, do you anticipate additional reforms needed to match the new NDS, and if so, what would those new initiatives look like?

Ms. SKELLY. Long-term strategic competitions with China and Russia are the principal priorities for the Department of Defense. The NDS recognized that PME would play a key role in shifting the focus of the Department. Therefore, in 2020 the then-Secretary of Defense directed the National Defense University to refocus its curriculum by dedicating 50 percent of the coursework to the PRC, and tasked the Military Departments and Services to make China the pacing threat in all of our schools, programs, and training. This direction is being implemented at each of National Defense University's six JPME programs, as well as at each of the Services' war and command and staff colleges. At each institution, curriculum content is being reframed and adjusted so that 50 percent is focused on strategic competitors to the United States. These adjustments include enhancing understanding non-military aspects of the strategic competition, such as the diplomatic, economic, information, intelligence, and cultural opportunities and challenges inherent in grand strategy as well as how these apply to domains such as space and cyberspace, as well as how they may be affected by the development and proliferation of disruptive technologies, such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, big data analytics, hypersonic propulsion, and synthetic biology.

Implementation of these changes have not been particularly disruptive as the faculty at each school regularly review and refresh the curriculum of their programs on a regular basis to maintain relevance. OSD and the Joint Staff have practiced active oversight of these adaptations to ensure implementation will be complete by the beginning of the 2024 academic year.

The 2022 NDS has not yet been promulgated in an unclassified form. However, we expect that PME faculty will adapt the curriculum of their respective programs appropriately and OSD and/or the CJCS may provide additional guidance.

Dr. JACKSON. Throughout the Department of Defense, we look at industry and the private sector as partners for our military and frequently lean on them to provide critical resources and capabilities.

Without a doubt, our service members should have the latest and greatest technology, however often times our military is lagging behind the civilian world when looking at implementing the latest technologies.

I want to help make sure that anything being provided to top academic institutions around the country is also being provided to our PME institutions.

Admiral Munsch, could you speak to some of the best practices learned from civilian academic institutions that are being implemented by DOD? Additionally, what are some areas where our PME institutions might lag behind civilian universities in terms of technology or capabilities?

Admiral MUNSCH. JPME institutions, such as the National Defense University (NDU) work closely with their military and civilian partner institutions. Some of the recent best practices learned from or developed in cooperation with civilian academic institutions are:

—Hybrid learning. During the COVID-19 pandemic, JPME institutions built robust hybrid programs that leveraged the best technical and educational practices of our civilian counterparts.

—Immersive learning. Like many of the best civilian institutions, NDU augments classroom instruction with concentrated immersive learning. For example, NDU's Eisenhower School conducts a semester-long study across 18 key industries relevant to national defense. The study includes site visits, in-depth economic analysis, and collaboration with senior executives from national and international corporations.

—Agile curriculum. Top academic institutions' courses of instruction are not static; they evolve in real-time to incorporate lessons learned from the current environ-

ment. NDU successfully applied this approach this Spring and rapidly adapted lesson plans based on the ongoing conflict in Ukraine.

Dr. JACKSON. Additionally, what are some areas where our PME institutions might lag behind civilian universities in terms of technology or capabilities?

Admiral MUNSCH. In terms of technology and capabilities, three areas where JPME institutions lag behind our civilian counterparts are our facilities, modeling and wargaming, and cyber warfare resources.

—Modeling and Wargaming. To reach parity with the best universities and think tanks, PME institutions require more wargaming, exercise, modeling, and simulation capacity. For example, NDU's Center for Applied Strategic Learning supports 70–80 wargaming events per year with 15 authorized billets. This is almost double the number of events with less than half the personnel of premier wargaming centers.

—Cyber warfare resources. NDU's College of Information and Cyberspace (CIC) leads DOD and civilian institutions in educating students on cyber warfare policy and strategy. However, PME colleges like CIC lack dedicated, modern cyber laboratories to create virtual environments in which to test policy and strategy. These immersive labs are essential prepare defense leaders for contemporary all-domain warfare.

—Facilities. NDU's facilities are aging and lag well behind those of many peer civilian institutions. NDU and DOD appreciate the additional \$50M appropriation to repair Eisenhower Hall, one of our main academic facilities. However, Congress' continued support is necessary to upgrade our facilities to the standards of our civilian counterparts.

