



Committee: Senate Armed Services Committee

Event: [To receive testimony on the Department of Defense budget request for Fiscal Year 2027 and the Future Years Defense Program](#)

Date: April 30, 2026

Executive Summary: On Thursday, April 30, 2026, the Senate Armed Services Committee held a hearing to examine the Department of Defense's (DOD) \$1.5 trillion Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) budget request. There were significant partisan divides over the war in Iran and DOD leadership, particularly that of Sec. **Pete Hegseth**, but members of both parties broadly agreed on the need to rebuild the American defense industrial base and counter China.

Member Toplines:

[Chair Roger Wicker \(R-MS\):](#) Wicker argued that the U.S. is living in the most dangerous security environment since World War II, facing an "axis of aggressors" that includes China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea. He praised President **Donald Trump's** \$1.5 trillion defense budget request, stating it is necessary to rebuild military capabilities and maintain advantages in innovation. Wicker emphasized the need to accelerate the implementation of acquisition reforms, drive competition in the defense industrial base, and improve recruitment and retention.

[Ranking Member Jack Reed \(D-RI\):](#) Reed was highly critical of the administration's military strategy and budget request. He highlighted the severe consequences of the Iran war, including the loss of 13 service members, the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, and surging gasoline and fertilizer prices. Reed expressed deep skepticism over the 45 percent budget increase, noting it slashes research and development and provides no funding for Ukraine.

Witness Toplines:

[Pete Hegseth, Secretary, Department of Defense:](#) Hegseth characterized the \$1.535 trillion request as necessary to reverse "mismanagement of the Biden administration" and revitalize the defense industrial base. He touted DOD's shift from a bureaucratic model to a business one, claiming it has stimulated over \$50 billion in private investments and created 70,000 new jobs. Hegseth also generally defended the administration's military actions in Iran.

[Dan Caine, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Department of Defense:](#) Caine emphasized his commitment to providing candid, non-partisan military advice to civilian leadership. He praised the military for adapting to, and innovating in, a complex global environment. Caine highlighted the importance of modernizing the defense industrial base.

Jules W. Hurst III, Performing the Duties of Assistant Secretary of Defense (Comptroller)/Chief Financial Officer, Department of Defense: Hurst did not provide an opening statement.

Major Takeaways:

Defense Industrial Base Investments

- Chair Wicker asked for an update on the \$154 billion allocated to DOD from last year's *One Big Beautiful Bill Act* (OBBBA). Hegseth said \$26 billion has been contracted so far and the Department is looking to get the rest of the OBBBA money out quickly.
- Wicker also asked for a status update on critical mineral and drone supply chains in light of OBBBA and the FY26 National Defense Authorization Act. Hegseth said DOD has made meaningful progress on both fronts and highlighted the Office of Strategic Capital's (OSC) impact on mineral supply chain efforts.
- Sen. **Deb Fischer** (R-NE) praised DOD's new approaches to acquisition processes; Hegseth expounded on the success of those approaches and praised the leadership of Deputy Secretary of Defense **Steve Feinberg**.
- Sen. **Rick Scott** (R-FL) stressed the importance of reducing DOD reliance on Chinese-controlled supply chains.
- Sens. **Tom Cotton** (R-AR) and **Mark Kelly** (D-AZ) both focused on the need to replace stockpiles of munitions.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

- Sen. **Jim Banks** (R-Ind.) and Caine discussed the transition to "intelligentized warfare," which integrates AI and other advanced technologies into military strategy and operations. Caine confirmed that while the U.S. is currently ahead in AI integration, restricting Chinese access to high-performance AI chips is critical to maintaining that advantage.
- Sen. **Jacky Rosen** (D-NV) questioned Hegseth's decision to designate the AI company Anthropic as a supply chain risk and asked if DOD will always ensure human oversight of lethal targeting decisions. Hegseth said the Department always follows the law, including Directive 3000.09.

Energy Issues

- Sen. **Dan Sullivan** (R-Alaska) advocated for the acceleration of an Alaska liquid natural gas secured Hegseth's commitment to explore partnering on the project through OSC.
- The impact of the closure of the Strait of Hormuz was a major flashpoint. Democratic Senators, including Sens. **Mazie Hirono** (D-HI), **Gary Peters** (D-MI), **Elissa Slotkin** (D-MI), and **Tammy Duckworth** (D-IL) repeatedly argued that the closure has driven up domestic gas prices, spiked fertilizer costs, and fueled inflation.