



Maj. Gen. Mark Bennett, director of the Army budget, speaks Monday during a Coffee Series event hosted at AUSA headquarters in Arlington, Virginia. (AUSA PHOTO)

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# Service seeks ‘urgent action’ on funding

**A**s the Army rolls out its budget request for fiscal year 2025, the service urgently still needs funding for the current fiscal year, a panel of senior Army leaders said.

More than five months into fiscal 2024, which began Oct. 1, the Army continues to operate under a continuing resolution, stopgap funding that keeps spending at the previous year’s levels and prohibits new starts. The current measure expires Friday.

The Army also continues to support operations in Ukraine—almost \$500 million this fiscal year—and provide an enhanced presence in the Middle

East, said Maj. Gen. Mark Bennett, director of the Army budget.

The Army is requesting “urgent action” on both base funding for fiscal 2024 and the supplemental spending bill, Bennett said Monday during an Association of the U.S. Army Coffee Series breakfast.

The \$95 billion supplemental spending bill, which is still pending in Congress, includes about \$60 billion in military aid for Ukraine as well as aid for Israel and Taiwan, the Associated Press reported.

Without the supplemental funds, the Army has been pulling money from other accounts to pay for its obligations to support Ukraine and the Middle East, according to Army budget documents. “The strains on the Army are significant with the cash

flow issue,” Bennett said. “We’re still looking forward to the urgent passage of that supplemental. The bills are significant there.”

Looking to fiscal 2025, the Army continues to balance efforts to transform the force and maintain readiness for today’s missions while dealing with flat budgets, Bennett said.

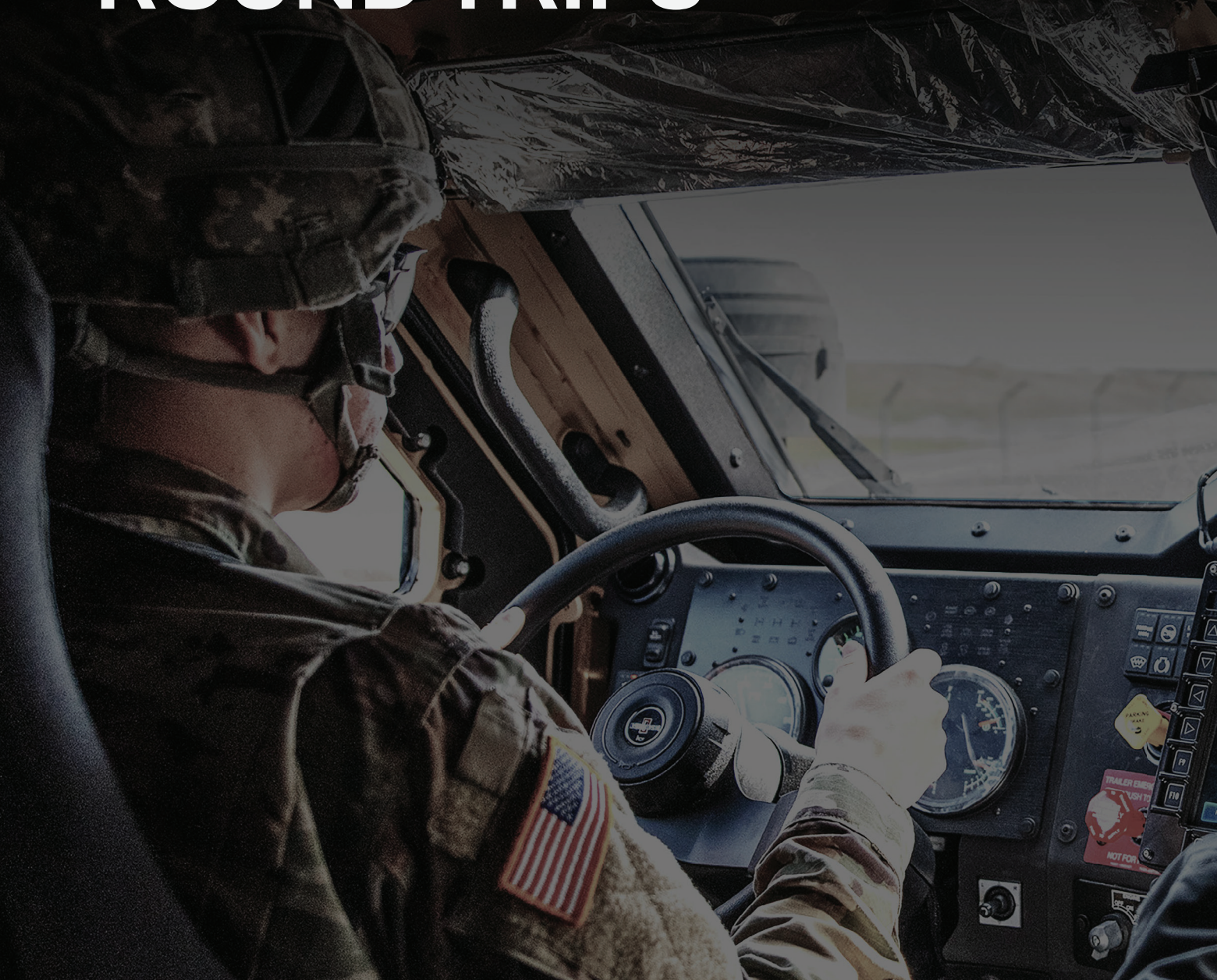
For fiscal 2025, the Army is requesting \$185.9 billion, a 0.2% increase from its fiscal 2024 request. It includes a 4.5% pay increase for troops and a 2% raise for civilian personnel.

The request complies with the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023, which was approved by Congress in the debt limit deal last year and limits fiscal 2024 spending to the president’s

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## National Guard to add 6 new partner nations in 2024

The National Guard's State Partnership Program will grow by several nations this year, expanding to more than 100 the number of U.S. military partnerships with allies and partners, said Gen. Daniel Hokanson, chief of the National Guard Bureau.

In remarks before defense and industry leaders participating in the McAleese Defense Programs Conference in Washington, D.C., Hokanson announced that Finland, Palau, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Sweden and Tanzania will be added to the program in 2024.

Created in 1993 to help establish military ties with 13 former Soviet bloc nations, the State Partnership Program in coordination with DoD and the State Department has paired 100 partner nations in every geographic combatant command with the National Guard in the 50 states, plus territories and the District of Columbia.

The newly announced partner nations will be paired with states in the coming months, a process subject to DoD, State Department and combatant command input and approval, according to an Army news release.

"Freedom and democracy are American values—but we can't uphold them alone," Hokanson said at the March 7 forum, according to the



Staff Sgt. Jacob Thompson, center top, and Staff Sgt. Adelard Hoffarth, both assigned to the North Dakota Army National Guard, demonstrate teaching techniques to Togolese Army NCO academy instructors Feb. 26 in Temedja, Togo. (U.S. ARMY/1ST LT. NATHAN RIVARD)

news release. "Instead, we must tend to our networks, nurture our alliances and invest in the partnerships that may one day make the difference between chaos and stability, authoritarianism and democracy, or victory and defeat."

Hokanson said the program is one of the most productive, cost-effective security cooperation programs the United States has to offer. Positioned in 2,800 communities across the country, the Guard also is ex-

perienced with disaster response, search-and-rescue and civil-military relationships—focus areas of most State Partnership Program affiliations, the news release said.

In recent years, Guard troops have conducted about 1,000 training exchanges with their foreign counterparts annually, focusing on everything from peacekeeping operations to NCO development, lifesaving techniques and cyber defense, according to the release.

"The pairing of a state with a nation is not random," Hokanson said. "Demographics, economics and military size and composition are all factored in. This helps establish a sense of commonality and to make the partnerships beneficial for both parties."

The program is about mutually beneficial relationships, he said.

"Each of our partners is really good at a few things, and so are we. The National Guard is building partners and allies for our nation, and in turn, we're helping them build capability and capacity for the good of their nation," Hokanson said.

### Meet the AUSA headquarters staff

#### Lucas Costa

*Financial Compliance and Tax Manager*

Lucas Costa has been with AUSA for two years. He recently passed all sections of the CPA exams and is pursuing his MBA with a concentration in Business Analytics at Radford University. In his spare time, Lucas likes to get out and play golf and basketball or watch his favorite sports teams, the New York Giants and New York Knicks.



## AUSA, other military groups join in call to pass 2024 appropriations

Joined by four other military associations, the Association of the U.S. Army is calling on Congress to pass the fiscal year 2024 defense appropriations bill before the current stopgap funding expires Friday.

“Our nation faces numerous threats, and our service members operate in one of the most complex and challenging security environments in decades. From Chinese aggression and growing North Korean capabilities in the Indo-Pacific, to the crisis in the Middle East, the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the escalating threat of terrorism, our nation’s interests and its security are at risk,” the associations say in the March 15 letter to the top four leaders of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

“Domestic emergencies like wildfires and floods frequently also require service members to execute critical missions in support of civilian authorities. This makes sufficient and timely funding vital to national security and to the well-being of our service members and their families,” the letter states.

The Army and the other services have been operating under stopgap funding measures, known as continuing resolutions, since the Oct. 1 start of fiscal 2024. The current continuing resolution expires Friday.

“A full-year Continuing Resolution (CR) harms national security, the Armed Forces, our service members and military families,” the letter states.

In addition to impacts on readiness, training and quality of life programs for troops and their families, a continuing resolution is a “wasteful use of resources,” says the letter signed by retired Gen. Bob Brown, AUSA president and CEO.

“As has been demonstrated by the conflicts in Europe and the Middle East, significant investment in the



‘A full-year continuing resolution harms national security, the Armed Forces, our service members and military families,’ the letter says. (ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL PHOTO)

industrial base is required to ensure that our service members always have what they need to accomplish overmatch in a protracted high-end conflict,” the letter states. “A CR jeopardizes that.”

In the letter, Brown is joined by retired Air Force Master Sgt. Daniel Reilly, president of the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States; Stuart Bradin, president and CEO of the Global Special Operations Forces Foundation; retired Maj. Gen. Francis McGinn, president of the National Guard Association of the United States; and Cara Rinkoff, national executive director of the U.S. Army Warrant Officers Association.

“The image of the United States stumbling from one self-inflicted fiscal crisis to another while failing to provide timely and sufficient funding to its Armed Forces ... surely reduces our security and global standing,” the letter states. “Our allies and partners are watching and are not reassured. Our adversaries, however, are emboldened by what they see.”

Read the letter here.

# AUSA Extra

Voice for the Army –  
Support For the Soldier

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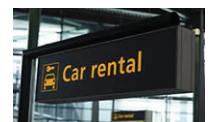
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**Budget**

From Page 1

budget request and provides for a 1% increase in fiscal 2025, according to CQ News.

As a result, “we really do have negative real growth” in the budget, said Bennett, who spoke at AUSA alongside Kirsten Taylor, deputy assistant Army secretary for plans, programs and resources in the office of the assistant Army secretary for acquisition, logistics and technology; and Maj. Gen. Joseph Hilbert, director of force development in the office of the deputy Army chief of staff for resources and plans, G-8.

To offset the constrained budget, the Army has prioritized areas such as recruiting and retention efforts, modernization programs, barracks and housing improvements, quality-of-life initiatives and readiness.

The request also projects an active Army troop strength of 442,300,



Sgt. 1st Class Landen Dela Cruz, right, assigned to the Hawaii Army National Guard, instructs recruits March 2 at Waimanalo, Hawaii. To offset the constrained budget, the Army has prioritized areas such as recruiting and retention efforts. (U.S. ARMY/SGT. LIANNE HIRANO)

down from the 452,000 requested in fiscal 2024 and the 445,000 that was eventually authorized.

It also projects an Army National Guard strength of 325,000 and an Army Reserve strength of 175,800 in fiscal 2025, for a total force of

943,100, down from the 951,800 that was projected in fiscal 2024.

“If fully funded, the [fiscal] ’25 budget will provide the Army what it needs to do what the nation asks it to do while taking care of soldiers and their families,” Bennett said.

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# Global networks challenge Army sustainment functions

The proliferation of global communications networks is eroding the relative dominance the Army once counted on to safely conduct sustainment operations, a senior officer said.

Brig. Gen. Jake Kwon, director of strategic operations for the deputy Army chief of staff for operations, G-3/5/7, said that while contested logistics is not a new concept to logisticians who have faced challenges moving to and from the fight, the changing factor is “the ubiquity of global networks.”

Coupled with an “increasingly pacing threat, we now for the first time in recent history don’t enjoy relative geographic safety from adversaries and physical damage like we have in the past,” Kwon said at a recent Association of the U.S. Army Hot Topic forum on contested logistics.



Brig. Gen. Jake Kwon, director of strategic operations for the deputy Army chief of staff for operations, G-3/5/7, addresses a recent AUSA Hot Topic forum on contested logistics. (AUSA PHOTO)

“Sustainment, like all warfighting functions, will be network reliant,” Kwon said, pointing out that key capabilities will be “the ability to not

only share data and establish decision dominance across our Army, but with those of our joint and coalition partners.”

To maintain a competitive advantage, the Army must continually evaluate and refine concepts and capability developments that can be used to pose dilemmas for the adversary during competition and crisis and avoid conflict, Kwon said.

It also must look critically at leveraging capabilities such as artificial intelligence and machine learning, learn from past data and “produce anticipatory models to assist with predictive logistics,” he said.

Kwon also noted the importance of ensuring that there are “coding savvy warfighters” who can program apps at the point of need as the battlespace and mission requirements change.



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## Women's Memorial hosts Operation Deploy Your Dress

Located at the ceremonial entrance to Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia is a hidden gem: the Military Women's Memorial, a tribute to America's women in uniform.

In-person visitors will journey through more than 250 years of women's service to the nation as they walk through the memorial's impressive education center and information-filled exhibit gallery. There also is a 360-degree virtual tour and two virtual exhibits that can be viewed online.

The heart of the memorial is the Register, an interactive database filled with the stories of more than 312,000 women who have served. Created in 1987, the Register grows every day as new stories are added.

"The story of women's service to the nation will never be complete until the more than 3 million women who have served have taken their rightful place in history by having their service registered at 'their' memorial, the only major national memorial to honor America's service women," said retired Chief Warrant Officer 5 Phyllis Wilson, the memorial's president.

Wilson also is a member of AUSA's board of directors, and she is one of the association's senior fellows.

### Teaming up

AUSA's Family Readiness directorate, in partnership with Operation Deploy Your Dress, will host its seventh annual pop-up event April 13. This year, it will be at the Military Women's Memorial. The event is open to individuals from all branches with a military ID card. Register here.

The mission of Operation Deploy Your Dress is to help offset the cost of formal military events by offering gently used dresses and accessories to service members and their family members. The nonprofit organization, founded in 2015, has "deployed" over



The Military Women's Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia will be the site of the annual Operation Deploy Your Dress D.C. pop-up event, co-hosted with AUSA's Family Readiness directorate. (MILITARY WOMEN'S MEMORIAL/K. SAUNDERS)

20,000 dresses through its 14 shops around the world.

"AUSA Family Readiness is thrilled to support our service members and families with Operation Deploy Your Dress, especially at the Military Women's Memorial where we honor service women who have profoundly impacted the armed forces and continue to do so," said Holly Dailey, AUSA's Family Readiness director.

The Family Readiness team will be collecting donations for the pop-up event—including all sizes of formal attire and accessories such as shawls, purses and jewelry—at the Family Readiness pavilion during next week's AUSA Global Force Symposium and Exposition in Huntsville, Alabama. This is the first time that

a Family Readiness pavilion will be featured at Global Force.

"We are so honored and excited to have a Family Readiness pavilion at Global Force this year. Our team is looking forward to connecting with you," said Thea Green, AUSA Family Readiness deputy director.

As we celebrate Women's History Month, let's not forget the countless service women who have answered the call of duty, and those who have given their lives serving their country. Their stories deserve to be told, their sacrifices remembered, and their accomplishments celebrated. May we honor their legacy forever.

**Kaylee Spielman** is AUSA's Family Readiness intern.



Holly Dailey, second from left, AUSA's Family Readiness director, and Family Readiness deputy director Thea Green, third from right, participate in the 2023 Operation Deploy Your Dress pop-up event at AUSA headquarters in Arlington, Virginia. (AUSA PHOTO)

## Chapter members support curling events for VA patients

**A**ssociation of the U.S. Army chapters around the world—made up entirely of volunteers—support soldiers, veterans, families, retirees and Army civilians in a variety of ways, including recreational and educational opportunities. Grassroots support for America's Army can only come when people know and understand the value of the Army to the nation.

Although the association's Milwaukee chapter in Wisconsin is not affiliated with a military installation, chapter members continue to advance AUSA's mission of supporting the Army.

### Milwaukee

In 2007, following a curling sport demonstration at the National Veterans Wheelchair Games, hosted by the Department of Veterans Affairs, the nursing staff of Milwaukee's Clement J. Zablocki Veterans Affairs Medical Center approached the Wauwatosa Curling Club and asked if the club could offer a curling event to patients who have spinal cord injuries. Later that year, the club gave instructions to a group of veterans from the center so they could try curling themselves. This became a monthly opportunity.

The Milwaukee AUSA chapter was invited by members of the curling club in February 2015 to observe the veterans' curling program and offer insights for expansion. Our initial impression was tempered by concern over safety issues, but I spoke with the nurses and surgeons from the VA medical center, who informed me that the events promote upper body strength and increase self-confidence for the veterans.

Our chapter partnered with the club the very next month with the goal of assisting and adding to the veterans' quality of life. We provided volunteers to assist on the ice and started a lunch program for attending veterans, creating another opportunity for socializing away from the hospital and an alternative to cafeteria food.



Chuck Yerkes, right, a volunteer with AUSA's Milwaukee chapter, assists a veteran on the ice during an event at the Wauwatosa Curling Club. (AUSA PHOTO)

The events have since been extended to twice each month during the six-month curling season, and chapter volunteers continue working with the Wauwatosa Curling Club and the surgeons and staff of the VA hospital to support veterans. Taking a wheelchair on ice gives patients the opportunity of a lifetime to experience the sport of curling.

The curling program also has expanded to other departments within the Clement J. Zablocki Veterans Af-



Retired Command Sgt. Maj. Frank Parker, left, AUSA's Milwaukee chapter president, presents season passes to the Milwaukee Horticultural Conservatory to a nurse at the Clement J. Zablocki Veterans Affairs Medical Center. (AUSA PHOTO)

fairs Medical Center, including veteran patients from the Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Center and the Housing and Urban Development-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing program, or HUD-VASH, which provides rental assistance for homeless veterans. Currently, an average of 35 VA hospital patients have the opportunity to experience curling on ice bimonthly.

To provide the veterans even more opportunities to socialize, the Milwaukee AUSA chapter recently presented the nursing staff of the spinal cord unit with two group season passes to the Milwaukee Horticultural Conservatory. Each pass will admit a staff member and seven patients to view and experience events at the Milwaukee Domes throughout the year.

As a gesture of awareness and appreciation, many of the VA hospital patients and volunteers from the Wauwatosa Curling Club have joined our chapter. They understand AUSA's mission and are proud to be a part of this national organization that supports soldiers and families, provides a voice for the Army and honors those who have served.

**Retired Col. Tony Majewski** is AUSA's Milwaukee chapter secretary.



## ***Eagle Chapters***

**The following chapters attained Eagle status for February by showing positive membership growth. The number of consecutive months of growth since July 1 is shown in parentheses.**

Allegheny-Blue Ridge (8)	Delaware (7)	New Orleans (6)
Arizona Territorial (8)	Dix (7)	Rhode Island (6)
Benelux (8)	Fort Campbell (7)	San Francisco (6)
CPL Bill McMillan-Bluegrass (8)	Fort Leonard Wood-Mid Missouri (7)	SGM Jon Cavaiani (6)
Florida Gulf Stream (8)	(7)	Sunshine (6)
Fort Sheridan-Chicago (8)	Fort Liberty (7)	Western New York (6)
GEN Creighton W. Abrams (8)	Fort Riley-Central Kansas (7)	Connecticut (5)
George Washington (8)	Francis Scott Key (7)	Fort Jackson-Palmetto State (5)
Greater Atlanta (8)	Gem State (7)	Greater Augusta-Fort Gordon (5)
Greater New York-Statue of Liberty (8)	Greater Los Angeles (7)	Las Vegas-John C. Fremont (5)
Greater Philadelphia (Penn & Franklin) (8)	Indiana (7)	Last Frontier (5)
Massachusetts Bay (8)	Magnolia (7)	MG John S. Lekson (5)
Milwaukee (8)	Marne (7)	Northern New Jersey (5)
National Training Center-High Desert (8)	MG Harry Greene, Aberdeen (7)	Southern Virginia (5)
Newton D. Baker (8)	Minutemen (7)	United Arab Emirates (5)
North Texas-Audie Murphy (8)	Redstone Huntsville (7)	Coastal South Carolina (4)
PFC William Kenzo Nakamura (8)	Silicon Valley (7)	Fort Knox (4)
Picatinny Arsenal-Middle Forge (8)	Space Coast (7)	Mediterranean (4)
San Diego (8)	St. Louis Gateway (7)	Northern New York-Fort Drum (4)
Suncoast (8)	Tri-State (7)	Tucson-Goyette (4)
Texas Capital Area (8)	Utah (7)	Pikes Peak (3)
Thunderbird (8)	Alamo (6)	White Sands Missile Range (3)
Virginia Colonial (8)	Central Ohio (6)	Guam (2)
Arkansas (7)	COL Edward Cross (6)	
Arsenal of Democracy (7)	Columbia River (6)	
Chattahoochee Valley-Fort Moore (7)	First Militia (6)	
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	Korea (6)	

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