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**NATIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES  
AND U.S. MILITARY ACTIVITY IN  
NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICA**

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COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS

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**NATIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES AND U.S. MILITARY  
ACTIVITY IN NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICA**

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,  
*Washington, DC, Wednesday, April 14, 2021.*

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 11:00 a.m., in room 2118, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Adam Smith (chairman of the committee) presiding.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ADAM SMITH, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM WASHINGTON, CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES**

The CHAIRMAN. With that, I will call the meeting to order.

The committee meets this morning on our “National Security Challenges and U.S. Military Activity in North and South America.” We have the commanders of both NORTH- and SOUTHCOM [Northern Command and Southern Command] with us today.

I must first, since this, again, is a hybrid hearing, read the statement that explains how the hybrid hearing will be conducted.

Members who are joining remotely must be visible on screen for the purposes of identity verification, establishing and maintaining a quorum, participating in the proceeding, and voting.

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Finally, I have designated a committee staff member to, if necessary, mute unrecognized members' microphones to cancel any inadvertent background noise that may disrupt the proceedings.

Thank you.

As I was saying at the start, our committee hearing is on "National Security Challenges and U.S. Military Activity in North and South America." We have with us today Mr. Robert Salesses, performing the duties of Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Global Security; we have Admiral Craig Faller, U.S. Navy, Commander, U.S. Southern Command; and General Glen VanHerck, U.S. Air Force, Commander, U.S. Northern Command and North American Aerospace Defense Command.

And I thank you all for being here. We look forward to the discussion. Obviously, there are a lot of challenges going on in the world right now, and, you know, the one that dominates is COVID [coronavirus]—its impacts, how it is impacting your commands, how it is impacting stability in your areas of responsibility.

We are very interested to hear how it is going in terms of making sure that we protect our service members, maintain our ability to train and meet our readiness requirements, and, at the same time, how COVID may be impacting your areas of responsibility.

Obviously, there is a great deal of instability, in particular in South America—two hurricanes, continued economic challenges. We have the ongoing crisis in Venezuela, and we have seen the impact in the flow of folks coming to the border.

There are a lot of challenges in that region. We would be anxious to hear—are anxious to hear from Admiral Faller about the details of that and how best we should respond and work with partners in the region to meet those challenges as they impact that region and certainly as they impact us once you come further north.

Also curious to hear from both of you about your thoughts on the border, what role you can play in helping us deal with that challenge, and what the best policy is going forward as we try to deal with what is undeniably a very challenging situation driven by the incredible instability in—well, in Mexico as well as, more so, in Central America. We need to figure out how to address that issue.

One thing I am curious, as I mentioned yesterday, we don't yet have a budget, which is problematic and challenging. I do understand the transition to a new administration, but it is mid-April. So the sooner we get that, the better we will be able to meet our responsibilities in terms of passing the national defense authorizing act this year, and, of course, the appropriators would also like to see the budget. But I am curious about what your initial insights are on how that budget might impact you.

I think one of the great challenges particularly in SOUTHCOM over the course of the last 20 years is there has been so much going on in the rest of the world that SOUTHCOM tends to be pretty far down the priority list. When you look at what has been going on in CENTCOM, the pivot to Asia, even a number of the challenges that have cropped up in Africa, you know, how do we meet all of those responsibilities and still do enough in SOUTHCOM?

And, similarly, how this impacts NORTHCOM's budget. And I know, General VanHerck, you have been particularly focused on the Arctic. And that is something that, speaking for myself and for

others, we don't understand that issue as well as we should. And I think, in part, because of all those other challenges that we have had, adding what seems like a new one is a challenge. But we have to understand what is going on up there. Obviously, Russia has been very active in that area.

And I guess, lastly, based on our conversation before the hearing, I am very curious to get your take on how you perceive the threats to the homeland, the rise of both Russia and China in terms of their global capability. North Korea, as well, has introduced a level of threat to the homeland that we haven't seen before. How do we need to respond to that? What is the most intelligent spending we can do in the Department of Defense budget to meet those challenges?

And then what is the whole-of-government response as well? Because obviously this is not just—none of the challenges that I just talked about are just the military. How do we work with the entire different pieces of our government to meet those challenges?

I look forward to the testimony and to the questions and answers.

And, with that, I will yield to the ranking member, Mr. Rogers, for his opening statement.

**STATEMENT OF HON. MIKE ROGERS, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM ALABAMA, RANKING MEMBER, COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES**

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate you holding this hearing today.

The defense of the homeland and our security efforts in the Western Hemisphere are becoming increasingly more complex as China and Russia and other adversaries expand their reach and improve their capabilities to strike us.

NORTHCOM is charged with defending our homeland against those threats. Operating our missile defense systems, countering increased Russian and Chinese activity in the Arctic, and supporting civilian response to emergencies are just a few of NORTHCOM's many mission priorities. Supporting these missions should continue to be a priority for this committee.

In recent years, China and Russia have established an extensive military and economic presence in South and Central America. Their presence destabilizes the region and threatens our national security. SOUTHCOM is responsible for countering those threats.

SOUTHCOM relies on security cooperation programs, humanitarian and disaster response assistance, and counter-narcotic capability building to promote security and counteract the influence of China and Russia. It is important for the committee to continue our bipartisan support of these programs.

I have no doubt the men and women of NORTH- and SOUTHCOM can successfully carry out their critical missions, but they will only be able to do so if we provide them the resources they need. That is why I greatly was disappointed with the President's top-line budget number of \$715 billion requested for DOD [Department of Defense], which constitutes a nearly \$5 billion cut in real dollars.

It also completely disregards the recommendation of the bipartisan National Defense Strategy Commission. To counter the growing threat from China, Deputy Secretary Hicks and the rest of the commissioners urged Congress to grow the defense budget each year by 3 to 5 percent. This budget doesn't even keep pace with inflation.

My biggest concern is that this request fails to ensure our military can deter the growing threat from China and Russia. General VanHerck and Admiral Faller are dealing with these threats every day. I look forward to their best military advice on the impact of their operations from a budget that fails to keep pace with inflation.

And, with that, I thank the witnesses for their service to our country and for being here, and I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Mr. Saleses, I believe you are first.

**STATEMENT OF ROBERT G. SALESSES, PERFORMING THE DUTIES OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR HOMELAND DEFENSE AND GLOBAL SECURITY, OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE**

Mr. SALESSES. Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Rogers, distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on the national security challenges faced by the United States and the U.S. military activity in North and South America. I am honored to be here in the company of Admiral Faller and General VanHerck.

Today, I would like to emphasize three key points. First, today's global security environment is more complex than ever before. Our adversaries are developing capabilities to challenge us in every domain and, increasingly, to hold the homeland at risk. Second, consistent with the President's strategic guidance and Secretary Austin's priorities, DOD is strengthening the multidomain defense of the Nation to maintain our competitive advantage. And, third, domestic emergencies and disasters are increasing in severity, causing DOD's Federal, State, and local partners to rely more and more on the Department of Defense.

The increasingly complex and dynamic global security environment is driven by the accelerating strategic competition with Russia and China, where both are engaged in aggressive military modernization programs designed to target what they perceive as DOD's strategic vulnerabilities. China has become more capable in every domain and constitutes a significant long-term security threat to the U.S. China is our top priority, while Russia presents a near-term threat.

Within the Western Hemisphere, to the north, Russia is expanding its Arctic posture, and China has classified itself as a near-Arctic nation, raising concerns with both nations' intentions. To the south, in Central and South America, a key strategic region, China and Russia are attempting to increase their influence within the region.

As DOD confronts this competition with Russia and China in every domain, it must also ensure its ability to deter today's range of threats, including those posed by Iran and North Korea, while



countering terrorism and violent extremists both abroad and here at home.

DOD is committed to strengthening its decisive advantage in defending the U.S. homeland by reinforcing our defenses in the approaches to North America and by building stronger partnerships to advance freedom, prosperity, and security throughout the Western Hemisphere.

DOD, as the region's partner of choice, is working closely with our hemispheric neighbors to address the region's shared challenges through security cooperation programs. DOD also continues its support of interagency efforts to disrupt transnational criminal organizations and to counter trafficking of illicit narcotics in the region.

COVID-19 significantly challenged our hemispheric partners. With congressional support, DOD provided and will continue to provide medical assistance to our partners.

In defense of the homeland, DOD must be ready for future conflicts that will likely include multidimensional targeting of critical infrastructure. The United States and Canada are jointly working to increase capabilities to provide enhanced indications and warning to detect aerospace threats and cue our air and missile defense systems against them. DOD is strengthening its homeland missile defenses through the development of next-generation interceptors and a new generation of ground- and space-based sensors.

In defending the U.S. maritime approaches, DOD has taken steps to enhance its awareness of activities on and under the sea, provided early warning of approaching maritime threats.

DOD is successfully competing with adversaries in cyberspace by defending forward to disrupt and degrade malicious cyber activity close to its origin and improving response options.

As a DOD mission, DOD regularly provides defense support of civil authorities to Federal, State, and local partners. The COVID-19 pandemic has posed an unprecedented challenge on our Nation. Since the start, DOD has protected its people and supported the Nation's response by providing unparalleled support, to include medical assistance, supply and acquisition support, and the development, distribution, and administration of vaccines.

Recent hurricanes and wildfire seasons have challenged response efforts and driven increased requests for DOD capabilities.

Hemispheric challenges and events in the homeland have also led to increased requests for DOD support. At the southern border, DOD continues to support DHS's [Department of Homeland Security's] border security mission and HHS's [Department of Health and Human Services'] mission to shelter unaccompanied children.

DOD also continues its support to the U.S. Capitol.

In conclusion, DOD is strengthening its defense of the homeland, building stronger partnerships in the Western Hemisphere, and assisting more than ever our Federal, State, and local partners.

It is an honor to serve alongside our Nation's military and civilian members of the Defense Department as they work every day to keep our Nation safe and secure.

Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Rogers, distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I would also like to express my appreciation for the support

of the Congress, and thank you for your continued commitment and support of the men and women of the Defense Department.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Salesses can be found in the Appendix on page 67.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.  
Admiral Faller.

**STATEMENT OF ADM CRAIG S. FALLER, USN, COMMANDER,  
U.S. SOUTHERN COMMAND**

Admiral FALLER. Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Rogers, and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. I am honored to be here with my shipmates General Glen VanHerck and Assistant Secretary Bob Salesses.

Now more than ever, I feel a deep sense of urgency about the global threats we face, including in this region. The Western Hemisphere is our home, it is our shared neighborhood, and it is a hemisphere which is of vital national interest to the United States.

Two of the most significant threats are China and transnational criminal organizations. As the INDOPACOM [Indo-Pacific Command] commander, Admiral Davidson, stated, China is the number one strategic threat of the 21st century.

I would like to take a few minutes to do some myth-busting about these threats.

Myth one: China's interests in the Western Hemisphere are purely economic.

The Chinese Communist Party, with its insidious, corrosive, and corrupt influence, seeks global dominance. Our strategic approach to China must also be global.

China is quickly growing its influence here in the hemisphere, working on more than 40 port deals, dishing out significant loans for political and economic leverage, pushing its IT [information technology] infrastructure, and engaging in predatory practices such as illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing, all with little concern for human rights, the environment, or the rule of law.

Myth two: Transnational criminal organizations are just drug-trafficking organizations and only a law enforcement problem.

To be clear, transnational criminal organizations, or TCOs, pose a direct threat to our national security. They traffic in arms, humans, drugs, and claim tens of thousands of lives here in the United States each year. Their murderous tactics have resulted in 43 of the 50 most violent cities in the world in this hemisphere. They drive illegal migration, and they allow bad actors like China to gain influence.

Myth three: The military has no role to play in this region.

Our professional U.S. military men and women in the region serve as an example every day as we collaborate through education and training exercises and humanitarian assistance. DOD has established programs to help partner nations develop diverse and inclusive militaries that respect the rule of law and human rights. Our programs help develop the professional forces to secure and stabilize our hemisphere.

Our security cooperation programs include institutional capacity building that make partner-nation forces resilient to corruption and

external influences. Our exercise program develops readiness, interoperability, and the ability to respond regionally to threats. We provide not only positive role models but tools and strategies for our partner nations to implement that enhance their capacity, and they make us all stronger together.

Underpinning those national security threats is growing fragility in the region. COVID-19 has hit the hemisphere hard. According to the IMF [International Monetary Fund], the economies of Latin America and the Caribbean shrank by 7.4 percent in 2020. The impacts of the pandemic will alter the hemisphere for years to come.

In the midst of this pandemic, back-to-back major hurricanes devastated Central America, creating even greater instability. The pandemic and these unprecedented storms struck on top of the already vicious circle of threats that I previously highlighted, creating strong push factors for the people of the region to head north in search of safety and basic needs.

Despite an economy in a tailspin and more than 5 million refugees fleeing the country, the illegitimate Maduro regime continues to cling to power in Venezuela with support from Cuba, Russia, Iran, and China.

We cannot face such daunting challenges on our own. The only way to counter these threats is to strengthen our partnerships in order to win the strategic competition. No one nation is as strong as all of us working together. And I am very impressed by the nations who have worked with us shoulder to shoulder to counter the threats.

For example, last year, Colombia brought together more than two dozen nations to conduct Operation Orion VI, a countering-transnational-criminal-organizations operation. And, earlier this year, Brazil became the first Latin American country to send forces to our high-end U.S. Army training at Fort Polk, Louisiana.

Good neighbors are there to help when you need them the most, especially during a crisis. We provided humanitarian assistance to our partners when COVID struck, and we did it at the speed of relevance, delivering field hospitals and critical PPE [personal protective equipment]. To date, we have executed 498 projects in 28 countries with a total investment of \$72 million. This is making a difference.

SOUTHCOM works every day to build readiness and professionalism of our trusted military and security partners. Modest investments in intelligence, security cooperation, and presence go a long way in this hemisphere and will help us and our partners counter these global threats.

Finally, our success would not be possible without our most important resource: our people, our SOUTHCOM team and their families. And we are taking proactive steps to support them and to protect our force from unacceptable behaviors, like sexual assault and harassment, racism, and extremism. We take these threats seriously because it is key to readiness and it is the right thing to do.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Rogers, on behalf of the SOUTHCOM team, thank you for the trust you place in us, and thank you for the opportunity to testify. And I look forward to the questions.

[The prepared statement of Admiral Faller can be found in the Appendix on page 84.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Admiral.  
General VanHerck.

**STATEMENT OF GEN GLEN D. VANHERCK, USAF, COMMANDER,  
U.S. NORTHERN COMMAND AND NORTH AMERICAN AERO-  
SPACE DEFENSE COMMAND**

General VANHERCK. Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Rogers, distinguished members of the committee, it is a privilege to testify before you today.

I am honored to serve as the commander of United States Northern Command [USNORTHCOM] and North American Aerospace Defense Command [NORAD]. And I am grateful to appear alongside Mr. Salesses and Admiral Faller, as they are crucial partners in homeland defense.

USNORTHCOM and NORAD are separate commands charged with the critical mission of defending North America. USNORTHCOM is the U.S. geographic combatant command responsible for defense of the homeland, defense support of civil authorities, and theater security cooperation with Canada, Mexico, and the Bahamas. NORAD is the binational command that provides aerospace warning, aerospace control, maritime warning for the United States and Canada.

Over the last year, NORAD fighters, tankers, and airborne early-warning aircraft responded to numerous incursions into our air defense identification zones; multiple ships sortied under USNORTHCOM operational control to defend our maritime approaches; and USNORTHCOM synchronized the Department of Defense's support to lead Federal agencies in the fight against coronavirus, multiple hurricanes, and wildfires. No matter the threat, we are always ready to defend the lives of our citizens and our homelands.

As thousands of service members provide lifesaving vaccinations to our citizens, the threats we face and the pace of change in the geostrategic environment continue to advance. We have entered an era of renewed global competition, and this time we are facing two nuclear-armed peer competitors.

Our competitors are focused on circumventing our defenses, both kinetically and nonkinetically, from all directions and in all domains, and exploiting a perceived gap between our foundational homeland defense—our nuclear deterrent—and also our conventional homeland defense deterrent capabilities.

Concurrently, the rise of transnational criminal organizations and the subsequent instability they create has generated opportunities for our competitors to exploit.

We must adapt to the challenges posed by this reality. We must outpace our competitors by accelerating efforts to transform into a culture that thinks and operates globally and invests early and often in relationships with our allies, partners, and other like-minded nations. Our culture must also adapt and cultivate talent within the ranks and counter extremists and destructive behaviors that oppose our values.

In addition, we must factor in homeland defense into every strategy, plan, force management, force design, acquisition, and budg-

etary decision so we can deter in competition, de-escalate in crisis, and, if we must, defeat in conflict.

To do this, USNORTHCOM is building capability to deter and, if needed, defend against increasingly advanced global all-domain threats. In concert with the other 10 combatant commands, the recent Global Information Dominance Experiment highlighted the effectiveness of operating without geographic seams to execute coordinated actions across all combatant commands.

In coordination with the Missile Defense Agency, United States Strategic Command, United States Space Command, USNORTHCOM is maintaining and improving upon our Nation's ballistic missile defense capability. And together with the Canadian Armed Forces, NORAD is in the early stages of modernization and building additional military capabilities in the Arctic.

In order to balance our readiness for crisis and conflict, we are also staying in global competition. We are placing significant emphasis on left-of-launch framework. This framework grants decisionmakers increased decision space and more deterrence and de-escalation options vice endgame kinetic defeat.

Our priority effort is all-domain awareness that uses a layered, open-sensor data architecture, machine learning that enables information dominance and decision superiority. This framework provides flexible response options to deter, deny, or, if required, defeat every threat to the United States and Canada.

USNORTHCOM and NORAD service members and civilians take solemn pride in executing the Secretary of Defense's top priority by standing watch to defend our Nation against all threats, whether posed by competitors, natural disasters, a pandemic. I am grateful for the trust and responsibility that you place in USNORTHCOM and NORAD, and thank you for the opportunity and support. In time, I look forward to answering your questions.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of General VanHerck can be found in the Appendix on page 108.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

This is our first hearing this year where we are going in reverse order, just to keep things interesting I guess. So we are starting at the bottom, working our way up.

I will ask just one question before yielding to Mr. Rogers, and that is: General VanHerck, we talked a little bit about the Arctic, you know, what is going on up there. Can you give us just—what should we do? I know we are waiting to see the budget, what our investment is, but as the commander in this area, if you had, like, your three priorities for how we need to be responding to what is happening in the Arctic, what would they be?

General VANHERCK. Thanks, Chairman.

First, to compete in the Arctic, you have to be on the field. And, currently, our capabilities, I would assess that we are in the game-plan development. We are not able to have the persistence that I need to compete day-to-day in the Arctic.

My priorities start with domain awareness. It starts with the ability to communicate and provide data and information so that we can operate and have persistence in the Arctic.

I am grateful for \$46 million that have been provided towards this. We have 10 satellites currently on orbit, with approximately 100 more that will be in the future. And we will take that additional money and have two companies providing the satellite capability.

But to be persistent, you also have to be on the playing field, and that requires fuel so that Coast Guard cutters, Navy destroyers and cruisers can remain persistent in the Arctic.

And I have a requirement that is stated and validated for fuel north of Dutch Harbor, Alaska, and that would give us the persistence, as well as, also, additional infrastructure for our ISR [intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance] platforms and our fighter capabilities so that we can compete on a day-to-day basis and be close and present with the Russian activities. They have dramatically modernized and increased their capabilities in the Arctic.

I am encouraged by the President and also the Prime Minister for discussing NORAD modernization, and I look forward to the Department putting a framework together with the ministry in Canada to move forward with continued modernization.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Mr. Rogers.

Mr. ROGERS. And I share the chairman's concern about the Arctic, and I am glad to know that you are on top of it. And we want to make sure you have what you need to stay on top of that.

To that end, I now would ask this of both Admiral Faller and General VanHerck: If your funding does not at a minimum keep pace with inflation, how does it impact your ability to meet these challenges from China and Russia that you described in your various AORs [areas of responsibility]?

Admiral Faller, I would start with you. I know you and I talked a lot about what China is doing in South America.

Admiral FALLER. Certainly, prioritization is going to have to happen, always needs to happen, versus all the various needs. We will make our strong case for why winning the day-to-day competition, particularly in our neighborhood, given the proximity that we share—and proximity matters to threats—and given the people ties, why that matters. We will lay that out.

It is a modest investment in this hemisphere. We have about 1 percent of the intelligence assets assigned to United States Southern Command. Intelligence drives everything. And then add security cooperation, where we received great support from Congress last year. I think there are additional investments that could be made there to help partner capacity.

And then, finally, assets. Being on the field is important. We must be heard and seen in order to win the competition. And winning the competition is so critical, globally, so that we don't have to go into confrontation and have a war.

General VANHERCK. I would say a couple things. First, I look forward to seeing the fiscal year 2022 budget, when it comes out, to actually get an understanding of where we are with regards to future funding.

In the near term, we understand the top line of \$715 billion. We will be able to exist and work just fine in the near term.

But, long term, I would be concerned, if we don't keep up with the pace of inflation, of the potential for us not to keep pace with our peer competitors throughout the globe. So I think it is crucial that we maintain a funding pace within the inflation role.

We are going to certainly be able to continue our modernization efforts. We will focus on sustainment. We will also need to focus on efficiencies and what capabilities and legacy capabilities that we may need to divest to enable us to go forward with the approach that I discussed in my opening statement and that is in my posture statement.

Mr. ROGERS. Would you describe the threat or the activity pace of China, in particular, as growing in your AOR, or is it static?

Admiral.

Admiral FALLER. China is increasing their influence across all elements of their power, from IT, cyber, information. Particularly in the military, it is below—it is insidious, it is right below the threshold of what you would observe. But the gifts in tens of millions of dollars that they are offering, their expansion of the PME [Professional Military Education] program, mirroring what we do at Leavenworth and all our great schools, and then opening up even further, offering cyber engineering scholarships with full Mandarin immersion to second lieutenants at various forces, it has picked up at an alarming pace.

Mr. ROGERS. So it is an aggressively growing threat?

Admiral FALLER. It is aggressive.

Mr. ROGERS. Okay.

General.

General VANHERCK. I share the same sentiment as Admiral Faller, Congressman. China is absolutely taking aggressive steps in the Western Hemisphere and in the NORTHCOM AOR through COVID diplomacy; additional actions with buying up businesses' capability, especially tourism industry in the Bahamas, trying to gain additional access; 5G, trying to stand up their 5G in the Western Hemisphere.

Mr. ROGERS. So am I hearing you correct, then, if the activity by the Chinese—and not to mention the Russians and the others you've got to worry about—is aggressively growing, if your funding is static or less than what you received last year, are you going to be able to effectively meet those challenges, Admiral?

Admiral FALLER. I believe the front line of competition is right here in this neighborhood, Chairman. We will have to come forward and determine what that means and ask ourselves tough questions about where the prioritization is. And I think modest investment here goes a long way to assuring the security of the United States.

General VANHERCK. Congressman, I believe we have to balance and balance back into the Western Hemisphere to focus on things going on right here in our neighborhood. We have a unique opportunity to do that right now. I look forward to seeing what the 2022 budget does and where the Department is going in the Western Hemisphere, but I do believe that we need to apply additional resources and funding here.

Mr. ROGERS. Yeah. And I do too. And that is the thing I am trying—the point I am trying to make is, this is not brain surgery. If

the Chinese are increasing, as they have stated, their funding by 7 percent—and I think that is not true; I think it is more than that. But their declared increase in defense spending is 7 percent. If we do not fund you at least at the rate of inflation, and hopefully aligned with the National Defense Strategy Commission's recommendation of 3–5 percent increase, then we are doing you and our country a great disservice.

And, with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mrs. Murphy is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MURPHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you for keeping it interesting by starting at the bottom of the virtual dais today.

Thank you to the witnesses for your testimony and your service to our country.

I find the conversation about the aggressive actions of China in our shared neighborhood to be very disconcerting. And, Admiral Faller, you put quite a bit of information both in your written and oral testimony today about the ways in which China is seeking to increase its influence in our shared neighborhood. And I want you to know that, as somebody who represents a district in Florida, I am a near neighbor. And so it is something that I am very concerned about and determined to do something about.

And, yesterday, I introduced a bill to require the State Department, the Department of Defense, and the intelligence community and the National Security Council to jointly prepare a holistic assessment for Congress, containing both an unclassified and a classified section, on China's efforts to expand its influence in South America, Central America, the Caribbean, and Mexico and how these efforts could compromise U.S. interests.

You know, I think it goes to what—we need this assessment so that we can answer the question that the ranking member is posing about precisely what military, diplomatic, and economic activities China is conducting in the region and then how we prioritize our response.

For my part, I am particularly concerned about the CCP's [Chinese Communist Party's] relationship with the authoritarian regimes in Venezuela and Cuba and the security implications of these investments in the deepwater ports that were mentioned already, as well as their export of technology to governments that could use it to monitor and repress their citizens, their exportation of their autocratic, dystopian technology.

But, you know, budget aside, what are three specific things that you think the U.S. should be doing which we are not currently doing to combat China's malign activities?

Admiral.

Admiral FALLER. Thank you for the question. And, importantly, thanks for visiting with SOCOM [Special Operations Command] and Special Operations Command South this week to hear up front their concerns and challenges and opportunities.

Whole-of-government solutions, whole-of-nation solutions are so important here. And there is more to do, working together, both in prioritization and coming up with actionable steps. And you highlighted the importance of whole-of-government steps.



Within the Department, I cite the 1 percent intelligence. We have to leverage data, big data, machine learning, and AI in an innovative way that recognizes that the threats are stealing that, and as a nation of laws, we rightly have to buy it and protect it. But we need to leverage it in a way that represents the 21st century within the Department.

And it goes along with my shipmate Glen VanHerck's comment about all-domain awareness and how we tie this all together holistically so we can make decisions based on what the threat is doing, not what the threat did years and years ago.

And then, finally, back to being on the field to compete, the right level of presence. Recent trip to Guyana—massive untapped oil reserves. ExxonMobil is in there in a big way. It is a complicated partnership with China. China is leveraging it, a country with a 50 percent disputed border. Florida is the main—Florida National Guard, State partner, is the main muscle mover for things that we are doing in Guyana.

And so how do we best leverage all our elements in the DOD with the right authorities. I think there is more that we could offer our Guard and Reserve in that regard to help us get in there and compete day in and day out.

Mrs. MURPHY. Thank you.

And speaking of whole-of-government approaches, with regards to the rise in transnational criminal organizations, are there lessons that can be learned from our decades in CVE [countering violent extremism]?

And then do you believe that we are approaching the transnational criminal organizations in the right way, with law enforcement in the lead? Are there other ways in which DOD could play a more robust role?

Admiral FALLER. Transnational criminal organizations are a national security imperative. They are driving the insecurity across the hemisphere, particularly in the Northern Triangle Central America region. There is a crisis, and it is the crisis of insecurity that is driving people to find safety elsewhere.

And our approach has been one of interdiction at the source and in transit. We are never going to interdict our way out of this. We have to adopt and adapt some of the lessons that we have learned the hard way over a generation in the counterterrorism fight to model the networks and then take a network approach to get after the centers of gravity. And DOD is a supporting element—

The CHAIRMAN. I am so sorry, Admiral. The—

Admiral FALLER. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN [continuing]. Gentledady's time has expired.

And I should warn the witnesses, once we get to the end of time, I don't want to cut you off, but if you could wrap up as quickly as possible once we hit zero, that would be great.

Mr. Moore, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MOORE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I share Representative Murphy's appreciation for the switch-up in the order today. None of my questions have been asked yet. I don't know what to do with all this power.

I want to thank the witnesses as well—in particular, your message about myth-busting. Our ongoing presence in the Middle East

and the increased awareness of and emphasis on the Indo-Pacific can't overshadow, you know, making sure that we protect our neighborhood in North and South America. So I appreciate this conversation today.

And, with that, with the challenges that do exist in the Western Hemisphere, I think it is important to highlight the wins that we have had and learn from those, as you just started to comment.

As NATO's [North Atlantic Treaty Organization's] only global partner in the region, Colombia continues to be a regional model on how to progress beyond the drug-fueled internal conflicts. Could you continue to expound on lessons learned from that relationship and what we can do to maybe apply that to the Northern Triangle?

Admiral FALLER. Thank you, Congressman.

Plan Colombia was a 10-year, about-a-billion-dollar-a-year investment by the United States, and the Colombians matched that with their talent and their money two-to-one. We stuck with it for 10 years, so it was consistency over time and addressing every element of the whole of government, truly whole of government, in Colombia.

We also brought in other nations that contributed. And Colombia has a close relation, because of their experience in the Korean War, with South Korea. Other nations contributed to this in a million different ways and importantly. And that has left a legacy of professionalism.

Not perfect. We are not perfect. But the Colombians do the right thing for the right reason, and I am proud to serve alongside them—professionalism, particularly. They have adopted some of our own human rights programs within their military that have paid off when their forces have been confronted with really tough situations.

I think there are things to be learned from that to develop a long-view approach to Central America and not the cyclic start/stop, 6 months/1 year, that we see and have seen as we have studied best practices.

Mr. MOORE. I think it is a great point to make, as our Nation, you know, tries to find the right balance for immigration policy. And if we can implement that in the Northern Triangle, I think there is lots to learn there. So thanks for that. And it is a great opportunity for us to show where our defense-related world can interact with some of our domestic policies.

I will continue on with Admiral Faller but welcome comments from the other witnesses.

Just, you know, working in that region—the Latin American region may recover last from COVID-19, as you have said in your testimony—are we doing enough to combat China's presence? And is there anything else we can do to make sure to get out ahead of that?

Admiral FALLER. COVID was like a perfect storm on the hemisphere. The fragility that existed from the transnational criminal organizations and their day-in and day-out violence; young institutions, young democracies that are plagued with corruption has just fueled this. The conditions in Central America are—they rival the Great Depression here in the United States in terms of how hard it has hit, and more needs to be done.

This has opened a door for China, and Russia to a lesser extent. We see it in their vaccine, heavy-handed vaccine diplomacy. The New York Times ran an excellent article that cited a couple countries where they are using the vaccines to leverage a shift to Taiwan, they are using the vaccines for better deals—and this is China using it—for better deals for 5G and Huawei, for example.

And so we have to come forward with positive, proactive results for these countries to help them. Things like our Development Finance Corp. are the right idea—through the BUILD [Better Utilization of Investments Leading to Development] Act—at the right time. DOD has a role as we stay engaged professionally.

Mr. MOORE. I welcome additional comments. Okay to pass if not.

General VANHERCK. I would agree. I think there is an opportunity for whole-of-nation education and a solution to this.

I am encouraged. The President stood up a task force to look at China. The Department has a task force to look at the China problem set. This will require us to go back to a competition focus, but this time it is a global competition focus, and it will come with the requirement to balance resources on a global basis. So that will determine how we do prioritization of those resources. It is an opportunity for us to look at it.

Mr. SALESESES. The only thing I would say is, there are a lot of good things going on down there right now from the Defense Department, too, with our security cooperation, our foreign military sales, the education things that we do. So there may be, certainly, a lot of competition, but we are in the competition. I think that is important to recognize, and we need to stay in it.

As Admiral Faller pointed out, too, the vaccine is an important part of that. And as the administration has pledged all \$4 billion to the COVAX [Coronavirus Vaccines Global Access] initiative, that is going to be very helpful in helping out Central and South America also.

Mr. MOORE. Thank you.

I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. Panetta is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PANETTA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, gentlemen, for being here, and appreciate, obviously, your service.

Sunday I just got back from McAllen, Texas. Did a border visit. Obviously got a limited view of the many challenges that just that one area faces when it comes to the migration that we are seeing right now as well as the influx of narcotics that we are seeing hit our borders as well.

Obviously—that was one of five times I have been to the border area. I am from California, central California, so going to the border is obviously eye-opening to me. But I have come away with the same impression each time I have been there, in that there needs to be more resources, obviously short term in dealing with our border, but also long term, looking beyond the border and, yes, looking at the Northern Triangle and Central American countries.

Obviously, providing resources, Admiral Faller, as you mentioned—but, unfortunately, in April of 2019, what we saw is a freeze of \$450 million of resources, similar to ones that you just

spoke about, in regards to programs that deal with violence prevention, poverty, and improving the justice systems.

And so my question to you is, based on your last statement, has that set us back? The fact that we froze those programs, has that set us back in our efforts to help down there and work with the Northern Triangle countries?

Admiral FALLER. I think, Congressman, consistent programs with the right policy and oversight hooks provide us more leverage over the long term. And in the foreign ops bill last year that zeroed out FMF, foreign military financing, for the Northern Triangle, I think we lost leverage, rather than gained leverage, in terms of how we can help professionalize behavior.

And some of the programs that are important that we rely on are our humanitarian assistance program. That is a win, and we have done well with that. We rely on our security cooperation program, where we install institutional capacity-building advisors—it is a fancy name for advisors in ministries of defense—that can look after corruption-free programs. In fact, Monterey is the source of that, the Naval Postgraduate School.

But being consistent with these programs year to year builds trust. And it takes time to build a professional, trusted institution in a partner.

Mr. PANETTA. Great. And, obviously, when you say partner, that is very important in regards to the work that we do with these nations in that area. Is there anything else we can be doing at this point in continuing to build those partnerships?

Admiral FALLER. Stay consistent with the exercise program. We are appreciative that the Department of Defense supported our program request for last year. We are very appreciative that we got a plus-up on our security cooperation budget. We had that 32 percent reduction over the previous 2 years. The Department and the support of Congress arrested that slide. And those are key investments going forward to build the capacity of our partners.

The reality is that partner-nation militaries are involved in the internal problems that they have. That is just the reality. And they are professional and they are the most trusted of all the security institutions in these countries, and we have to stay with them, because they want to emulate and model our professionalism. They learn it at our schools, and they learn it by example.

Mr. PANETTA. If you could, Admiral, go into, briefly, the Joint Interagency Task Force–South and what work we are doing to continue—like you said, you can't interdict our way out of it. Although we saw what the Border Patrol is doing there when they come to the ports of entry and the efforts that they are or are not doing, what else can we do beyond our borders when it comes to stopping that flow of narcotics?

Admiral FALLER. Joint Interagency Task Force–South in Key West is a team of teams. We have every partner nation, including Mexico, Canada, and our allies in Europe, represented there. Despite COVID, they stepped up. When the U.S. stayed on the field, they stepped up and increased their interdictions from 50 to 60 percent participation rate. That is key.

So we have to incentivize them to do that, recognize when they do. And Colombia is one of the countries that made a big impact.

In fact, Costa Rica, Panama, Honduras, Guatemala all made impacts last year professionally in that space.

So continuing to invest in that capability is a good deal and a good return on investment for the U.S.

Mr. PANETTA. Thank you. Thank you, gentlemen.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Carl is recognized for 5 minutes.

Turn your microphone on, sir. Sorry.

Mr. CARL. That always helps, doesn't it, sir?

The CHAIRMAN. Yep. There we go. You are good.

Mr. CARL. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Rogers.

And I thank the witnesses for being here, and I certainly thank you for your service to this country.

Admiral, over the recent years, we have heard an increasing role that China has played throughout Central and South America. China has continued to invest in projects to improve their relationship with these countries, which—that is what you have been highlighting here. And now your written testimony describes the increasing actions China has taken through diplomacy because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Can you explain what China has been doing and how the Navy ships, hospital ships, can be used to combat these while continuing to advance our relationship in the region?

Admiral FALLER. The National Defense Strategy and the Secretary of Defense's priorities rightly call out that China is a pacing threat and a competition that we have to win. And we have to recognize that they are the number one trading partner with the United States and they are our partners' number one trading partner.

So I don't ask them to choose, but I point out to our partners, whose gear would you rather work with? The United States, built in America, is the best gear out there, the best equipment, best ships. Whose values system better matches your values system? And that is our competitive advantage. And our workers and our country is our competitive advantage.

And so I go and I represent the best of the U.S., our service men and women and their equipment, and so we talk about the Navy and the importance of our Navy participating in exercises. And our Navy, with the support of SECDEF [Secretary of Defense], stepped up last year and supplied ships, ships built in Alabama and all over this great Nation, to work with our partner nations. And they did really well in the exercises and the training programs.

It works on interoperability, domain awareness, things that General VanHerck has cited as important to defending our Nation and important to building our strong alliance and partnerships globally.

Mr. CARL. Thank you, sir.

Second question: Given the upkeep requirements of our Navy hospital ships right now—we have two, correct? We have one in dry dock right now, and one is on the east coast?

Admiral FALLER. Correct, sir.

Mr. CARL. Have I got that right? Yeah.

Admiral FALLER. The *Mercy* and the *Comfort*.

Mr. CARL. Yeah. Given the upkeep requirements for both of those and these aging ships, how can increasing the number of Navy medical ships help in the response to China's activity in the AOR?

Admiral FALLER. Our partnerships, one of the strongest aspects of them has been our outreach in humanitarian assistance and medical assistance.

And I have seen firsthand the power of two *Comfort* deployments during my tour, where you send an outstretched hand, you help a mother with their son or daughter that has never been to a doctor. They are 8 years old, 9 years old. And you see the value of that to win hearts and minds. And the value of that is it shows the best of America.

So that capacity in winning the day-to-day competition and being able to respond in a competitor fight, a global war, is important. So, to me, it is how the services, the Navy, working with Secretary of Defense, best resources that. But it is really important that we never lose that capability to be able to supply the combatant commanders in peace so that we never have to fight.

Mr. CARL. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back my time.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Veasey is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. VEASEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General VanHerck, I wanted to ask you about the weather event that we had in Texas. I know that NORTHCOM works very closely with FEMA [Federal Emergency Management Agency] and DOD when it comes to natural disasters. And I was hoping that you would be able to talk a little bit about what the response was to the power outage in Texas and how DOD responded to the event.

General VANHERCK. Sure. Thank you for the question.

So defense support of civil authorities is obviously a crucial mission at United States NORTHCOM and something that we do as a no-fail mission. Our direct support to that was in support of a lead Federal agency, in this case FEMA, to provide generator support to where there was no electrical power to sustain hospitals and those kinds of things.

And the result of this is to take a look at our overarching resiliency as a nation, something that we do routinely to ensure that, from a defense of the homeland, that that is factored in to any potential not only disaster but attack on our homeland. And so working with the interagency, we continue to analyze the resiliency overall from that event you are referring to.

Mr. VEASEY. Is there anything that you learned from that event that can help us better prepare in the future? Obviously, there is still a great amount of concern. The State legislature right now is looking at, you know, what sort of safeguards they can possibly put in place to try to prevent something like that from ever happening again.

With it being, you know, so many people that were affected by that storm, is there something that you think needs to happen or that you are going to be looking at so we can better respond in the future?

General VANHERCK. So I would say that the largest lesson out of that should be applied to the fact that, although this was a nat-

ural disaster, that somebody with nefarious activity could take some kind of action that would put us in a precarious situation just like that. They will learn, they will see the potential vulnerabilities, and they will take action.

So us as not only the Department of Defense, within the inter-agency, should exercise this. We should work through the command and control of the future to ensure that we are in a properly positioned place to command and control and look at our resiliency.

Mr. VEASEY. Thank you very much.

Admiral Faller, you were asked a question earlier about Colombia and some of the successes that they have had there post Medellin and Cali cartels, when that country was a complete wreck. And I wanted to ask you specifically about what sort of—if today you could implement something to try to stabilize the countries where we receive most of the migration headed north to our southern border, what would be the first thing that you would implement?

And what sort of requirements or—and maybe “requirement” is not the best word, but what should be the expectation from, you know, a country like Honduras, where there is just, you know, such a long history of corruption, to be quite frank? Like, what, you know, should be, you know, asked of them in order to make anything that you would implement be a success?

Admiral FALLER. Thank you for recognizing the professionalism and the excellence of the Colombian security forces. They work hard every day at that and emulate our values in that respect.

I would ask support for a legislative proposal that we have submitted to Congress for the U.S.-Colombia Action Plan. It is a plan that is an offshoot of Plan Colombia that helps use security cooperation to fund a regional approach.

Colombia is now a net exporter of professional security and has trained thousands of Central American/Northern Triangle nations’ security forces. And the cultural fit is a very good one, and they have trained them to do professional work. They are willing to contribute with some additional funding here.

I would also ask support for our institutional capacity-building efforts, where we put these advisors that are trained at the institute in Monterey in host nation. We could, for example, with additional funding and support, embed one in the Ministry of Defense for Honduras. We know who the trusted partners are, and the Minister of Defense and his team are trying to do the right thing in Honduras. We know, working with other agencies, that they are trusted. And by putting an advisor in, we could provide the right system and overall view to add transparency so we can account correctly to Congress, your oversight role, that the dollars are being spent in a right way and invested that is going to be a return on investment for the U.S.

Mr. VEASEY. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

The gentleman’s time has expired.

Mr. Jackson is recognized for 5 minutes.

Dr. JACKSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Rogers, and to our witnesses for being here today.

While we spend much of our time talking about the threats posed by China and Russia, people need to understand, I think, that those threats are not limited to geographic locations. The threat and the influence imposed by China and Russia impacts both NORTHCOM and SOUTHCOM AORs. The National Defense Strategy correctly prioritizes competition with China and Russia, and the Department has seen great progress over the last 4 years in confronting that challenge.

With looming budget cuts in the pipeline, any advantage we may have could be wiped out by malign espionage efforts influenced by China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea through their proximity to our military installations. While there are conflicting views on this committee about many topics, I would hope that one view we all share is that our adversaries should not be the owners and operators of any facility that is anywhere close to a United States military installation.

With that said, I am worried about the potential espionage efforts related to this particular issue.

Mr. Salesses, could you speak to the threat that would be posed by China or any other adversary in their ability to purchase real estate near an installation and the intelligence that that could pose to our country?

Mr. SALESSES. Congressman, thanks for the question.

Obviously, that would be a very significant challenge, and we would need to—I know that that has come up around the country a couple of times. And we work very closely with the Justice Department and other organizations that would be involved in those kinds of activities in how we could limit that kind of activity here in the country.

Dr. JACKSON. Thank you, sir.

I have one more question.

The threat posed by China and our adversaries is of grave concern worldwide. However, there are things that threaten our military's ability to train here in the United States as well. While we as a country begin to look at renewable sources of energy, such as wind, one thing that has not always been considered is the impact that construction of these projects can have on our readiness levels. It is critical that the young men and women training in the United States are able to do so in order to prepare for the threats that they may face when they are deployed.

General, could you speak about the detrimental effects that wind farms can have on our military training routes [MTRs], what steps are being taken to mitigate that impact, and the overall readiness impact that occurs when we are forced to reduce the number of low-level MTRs flown out of pilot training bases, such as the one in my district, Sheppard Air Force Base?

General VANHERCK. Congressman, that is probably best answered by the service. But I would tell you that there is a detrimental effect that could limit our ability to train here in the United States, would have potential readiness impacts.

What is crucial is that we have a partnership, local partnerships with local commanders, with the local civic leaders, the mayors, et cetera, that, more broadly, also includes a broader discussion, a national security discussion, so that we can come to a solution for



business—folks that want to make that money for renewable energy, as you pointed out, to make us resilient as well—and the potential impacts on national security.

And that discussion has to happen any time there is a potential building of some kind of a facility that could impact training.

Dr. JACKSON. Yes, sir, I agree with you. And I think it will be our job as legislators to make sure that that happens before this stuff is put into place, because that is what I was seeing at Shepard Air Force Base. And it goes back to my first question as well. If we don't think about those things up front, then that stuff is going to happen before we realize it, and then we are going to be in a position where we can't go back and undermine that.

I thank you all for your thoughtful responses. We face threats across the globe and, unfortunately, even some here at home. I look forward to working with each of you and with all of my colleagues here on the committee to provide our military with the resources and the authorities that we need to protect our country.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back my time.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Ms. Strickland is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. STRICKLAND. Thank you, Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Rogers and to our witnesses.

I have the privilege of representing the Western Area Defense Sector, WADS, which is one the two sectors responsible for peacetime air sovereignty, strategic air defense, and airborne counter-drug operations in the continental U.S. under NORAD.

As we continue to implement the National Security Strategy, we must continue to ensure that our homeland assets are a deterrent to our adversaries. I strongly support ensuring that WADS has the resources it needs to continue to defend our homeland.

General VanHerck, I would like to start with you. And I have a few questions, one about WADS and then another about hypersonic detection, if we can get there.

One of the innovations that NORAD is working on is Pathfinder, which previously took separate data systems and combined them so NORAD can see a more complete picture. I know that a contract was recently awarded, so can you please tell me how the integration is going, if there are any difficulties, and why you think Pathfinder is so important to the concept of an all-domain awareness?

Thank you.

General VANHERCK. Thank you for the opportunity, ma'am, to talk about Pathfinder.

Pathfinder is an innovative capability that we have designed to do exactly what you talked about. And working in a partnership to take data and information—which, by the way, I think is a strategic value, is something that we need to utilize. Pathfinder ingests data from multiple sources and fuses that data and uses machine learning and intelligence capabilities to process and share in near-real-time.

But, previously to Pathfinder, we had 12 manual systems, phone calls, those kinds of things, that would take longer, minutes, if not longer. Today, when you utilize Pathfinder, it gives us a picture in seconds or less and a much more broad picture to help our air defense sectors accomplish our mission of defending our homeland.

Pathfinder is going great. The Canadians just gave us some additional funding to continue the program, and we look forward to moving that forward.

I will give you an example real quick, and I don't want to steal too much of your time, but Pathfinder was utilized, if you remember, in 2015, the gyrocopter that flew down from north in the National Capital Region here and landed on the Capitol lawn. When you take all the sensors in the National Capital Region and you look at them separately, none of the sensors detected that gyrocopter. When you take all those sensors—we took the real data and you take those sensors and you fuse it into Pathfinder, into a single system that aggregates that data and assesses it, sure enough, we were able to see that gyrocopter.

That is the value of information and data. Previously, the data was left on the cutting room floor and not analyzed. Pathfinder analyzes it.

So thanks for the opportunity to talk about that.

Ms. STRICKLAND. Great. Thank you. And it just really underscores how we talk a lot about data but it actually helps us make good decisions.

So I want to switch over to hypersonic detection and stay with General VanHerck.

As the commander of NORTHCOM and NORAD, what do you see as the most critical gap that must be filled in regard to sensor coverage of the U.S. for advancing Russian and Chinese threats of advanced cruise and hypersonic missiles?

And as the Air Force completes their analysis of alternatives of northern approaches, have NORTHCOM and NORAD priorities been accounted for in that final product that we get?

General VANHERCK. Well, I look forward to seeing the product as the Air Force completes it. I do believe that our equities will be accounted for in the product, but I haven't seen the final product. It is still with the Air Force.

Specific domain awareness is what we need for NORAD and United States Northern Command, and that is in my priorities that you will see in my statement and on my priority list that I submitted to the Department—domain awareness to get further out.

Today, competitors have increased capabilities. The Russians can actually shoot from over the Russian homeland and strike the continental United States. And so we need over-the-horizon radars and those kinds of capabilities.

Specifically with regards to hypersonic capabilities, I remain concerned. We are focused on offensive hypersonic capabilities, and that is crucial to our overarching deterrent. But just as important is our ability to detect, have a threat assessment, threat warning and attack assessment, for hypersonic coming in. And that is part of our deterrence by denial.

And any solution that we come up with for hypersonics should not be just a sensor that tells us what is inbound, but it ought to be able to deliver weapons-quality information so that we could actually negate that threat from a hypersonic vehicle that may be inbound.

And, by the way, hypersonics are here today. The Russians have fielded them. It is not something in the future. They are absolutely a threat right here and right now.

Ms. STRICKLAND. Great.

And, very quickly, do you think Canada is doing its part to equitably contribute to hypersonics?

General VANHERCK. Canada is a wonderful ally and does a great thing, specific with the North Warning System and our legacy systems. They have funded about 60 percent of that over time.

Going forward, what we really need to do, ma'am, is create the framework for NORAD modernization. I am encouraged by the President and the Prime Minister talking about it. But there is much more work to do on what that framework will look like in the future.

Ms. STRICKLAND. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mrs. McClain is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MCCLAIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, gentlemen, for being here, and thank for your service.

As it pertains to national security, I have heard a lot of words today—rule of law, human rights, deterrence—and, really, consistencies with our programs and our policies.

With that said, General VanHerck, as we know, the disastrous situation at our southern border is not only a humanitarian crisis but a national security crisis, where former President Trump had the border secured.

My question is simple. Has President Biden's actions to open the southern border and encourage migrants to illegally cross our border made the United States safer or less safe? And do President Biden's border policies threaten the security and stability in Mexico and the Northern Triangle?

General VANHERCK. Thanks for the opportunity to talk about national security.

I am not going to comment about the specifics on policies. I would ask the President and defer to him about those. But I would tell you that we have a national security imperative right now on our southern border that we need to deal with.

Admiral Faller made it very clear in his comments about the confluence of things that have come together. Transnational criminal organizations create an environment not conducive to successful rearing of families, employment, economics, et cetera. Combine that with COVID and two major natural disasters, and you have a confluence of things ongoing.

I would say there is a perception that folks can come here and bring your family with you. What we need to do is approach this from a national security imperative and come up with a whole-of-government approach that will secure our borders.

I am concerned from a homeland defense perspective. I believe the symptoms that we are seeing today are exactly that; they are symptoms: migration, counter-narcotics, human trafficking. The problem and the challenge is creating an environment where these folks can succeed so they don't feel like they have to migrate. And

that takes a whole-of-nation approach to get after transnational criminal organizations.

We figured this out with al-Qaida and ISIS [Islamic State of Iraq and Syria]. You can cut off their funding, you can do additional things as a whole of government, working with allies and partners to get after this problem. And so I look forward—I believe the administration is on a good track there. I look forward to seeing where it goes.

Mrs. MCCLAIN. Thank you. As we know, perception is 90 percent of reality.

I am going to switch gears for a moment. My next question is for all the witnesses.

As we know, China has become an ever-increasing threat not only to the Pacific region but globally. In addition to the buildup in their armed forces, they have been developing 5G technology, as we have discussed earlier, and the United States, it appears, is falling further behind in this regard.

My question is this to each of you: Would a 5G secured network accessible anywhere in the world to our forward operating bases or other command centers for transmission of data be a priority for USNORTH and SOUTHCOMs?

Mr. SALESSES. Congresswoman, any secure network would be very helpful. The question is, you know, what are the other things that we are balancing against that? So I agree that any secure network would be helpful, but we will have to look at what other challenges we have associated with that.

Admiral FALLER. When I sit down with our partners, their cybersecurity is in the top three of all their security challenges. And that is at every level in that partner. And it is in our top three as well. So it is important that we get this right.

And we know there is no civil-military divide by law in the People's Republic of China. And so any investment in Huawei and ZTE and their 5G is a direct pipeline to the PLA [People's Liberation Army] and their intelligence services.

And I point this out to our partners at each and every visit and every time. At a professional level, they get it, and they don't want to invest in that technology. They want to invest in secure technology, clean technology, U.S. or other trusted partner technology. And it is important that initiatives come forward that allow them an option to do that.

General VANHERCK. To directly answer your question, it would be incredibly valuable to have 5G secure technology.

And we have moved out on that at United States Northern Command. Our J6 [Director, Cyberspace Operations] is very innovative. J6 does our, you know, command and control and those kinds of things. That gives us resiliency as a nation, candidly.

Today, I am able to take a single device to do unclassified and classified information from any location and have resiliency, not reaching back to a single building or a single server, if you will, but can access multiple servers. That is incredibly valuable going forward in a crisis, whether that be crisis from a natural disaster or a potential attack on the homeland.

Mrs. MCCLAIN. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

The gentlelady yields back.

Ms. Jacobs is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACOBS. Well, thank you, Mr. Chair.

And thank you so much to our witnesses for being here.

First, I would just like to say to my colleagues who are expressing concern about the southern border, as a Representative of San Diego, we feel very safe, and I think we know that the root causes are really the key to making sure that this situation abates.

And on the question of root causes, Admiral Faller, I would like to ask you: As you referenced in your testimony, Latin America militaries and militia groups have a history of violating human rights, and these violations have sometimes been ignored or even encouraged by the United States. Throughout the civil wars of the 1990s, we saw special forces trained by the U.S. were used to commit these abuses.

So, given that reality, I was wondering if you could talk a bit about our current train-and-equip missions that SOUTHCOM is conducting and how you are working to prevent these types of violations from occurring.

Admiral FALLER. Thank you. It is an important question.

We have learned from that history. SOUTHCOM has a human rights program, the only combatant command to have one. It is now in its 20th-plus year. We have invested our own money in increasing the capacity of that program. We use that program with our partners. We have helped our partners—Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador—install human rights observers and advisors in their ministries and with their chiefs of defense. We hold seminars.

And I routinely, through that program, meet with the human rights NGOs [nongovernmental organizations] in the United States and in partner nations, for example in Guatemala, to listen to their concerns. These important NGO partners, they know their stuff and they have on-the-ground insights. And we take it very, very seriously.

And then we apply that into our Leahy vetting process, which is another extremely important program that we should look to enhance, frankly, and really embed in a systematic way within the Department and make it very consistent.

These programs have helped change behavior over time. And, while not perfect, we have made progress. And particularly in the last year, when there was every reason for partner nations, their militaries—that is what I can speak to—to turn inward, they didn't, and they acted professionally. There were some reports here and there, but, by and large, they acted professionally.

You can't assume that that will be future performance, but the building blocks are in place to have a better professional performance going forward. And I assure you, we are committed to that at our headquarters and in our training and education programs.

Ms. JACOBS. Thank you.

And still to you, Admiral Faller, I think, you know, as we have talked about the region and we often emphasize our willing partners, especially, for instance, the Colombian Government, I was wondering how you believe this partnership will serve the U.S. goals in the region as it relates to any peace deal with FARC [Rev-

olutionary Armed Forces of Colombia] or any potential peace deal with the ELN [National Liberation Army].

Admiral FALLER. Well, certainly we support our partners in information sharing. That is really key to understanding what promises are made, what promises are being broken.

It is unfortunate the Venezuelan crisis has just made all that worse. Venezuela is essentially a paradise for narcotraffickers, and Maduro and his illegitimate government and the military are profiting from that. And by creating that safe haven and encouraging them, “them” being the FARC dissidents and the ELN, it has compounded the situation.

The 5 million migrants that have been pushed out by the human rights abuses of the Maduro regime have also compounded it. Colombia has really, overall, just behaved and performed with humanity in accepting these migrants.

And so we are with them. We talk to them every day and share information. And it is largely in their ministry and government levels, so I just provide—I share information with my counterpart, General Navarro, who is just a wonderful, professional interlocutor.

Ms. JACOBS. Thank you. And thank you for your long service to our country.

And, Mr. Chair, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mrs. Bice is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BICE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member.

And thank you for the witnesses being here and for your service.

To each of you, in a hearing memo, it listed, in the last 2 years, a quarter of a billion dollars has been spent—DOD dollars have been spent for DHS border support.

Will you be reimbursed for those dollars? And, if not, what programs are going to be impacted by the quarter of a billion dollars that you have lost in funding?

Mr. SALESSES. So, Congresswoman, I will take that question. We have not been reimbursed. It was done on a nonreimbursable basis.

And that funding came out of the defense budget and other places. It probably impacted, depending on where the money was taken, depending what it impacted. It was probably training, some personnel costs, and those types of things, where the services had available money to use in that case.

Mrs. BICE. So, when we are talking about funding, you are asking for additional funding to make sure that you have the resources needed, but, in fact, you are actually having dollars pulled away from you in other ways, including to support DHS border support, that do impact the readiness and availability of the forces, it seems. Is that correct?

Mr. SALESSES. That is correct.

Mrs. BICE. Thank you.

My second question is: In the last 6 years, the United States has spent over \$3.5 billion in strategy and engagement for Central America. Do you believe that we are getting a return on our investment, given that we have seen a tremendous amount of influx of migrants from the Northern Triangle area, which is where the bulk of these dollars have been going?

And I would open that for any of the witnesses.

Admiral FALLER. Consistency in our programs is as important as the dollar amount.

And we have been in extremely good discussions. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and SECDEF have been excellent at asking for our advice on what might work and will work as part of the administration's \$4 billion multiyear plan.

And we are encouraged by the long look of this program. It takes time for partners' security forces—I can speak to military—to implement programs that they can responsibly and professionally enact that will make a difference in tamping down the violence.

And I know State Department—we work hand in hand with State Department on this—is committed through their INL [Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs] to the same professionalization of the police forces.

The issue has been that we have not applied this consistently. It has been started and stopped. And so, while there may have been a high dollar value, it is hard to make the argument that it was consistently applied over the time period that would be required to make a difference.

Mrs. BICE. Thank you for that.

Last question. Mr. Salesses, have you been requested to provide additional border support or security for fiscal year 2022? And, if so, what are the conversations surrounding that?

Mr. SALESSES. We have not been requested. But, obviously, we are talking to DHS, because, as you are aware, Congresswoman, we have military members on the border right now and have consistently provided military members over the last several years in support of DHS's mission.

Currently, there is no request for 2022, but that doesn't mean that we may not get a request for 2022.

Mrs. BICE. And the request that you have received over the last, let's say, several months, is that impacting Reserves or National Guard readiness as they are being pulled away to help support what is happening on the southern border?

Mr. SALESSES. I don't believe so, Congresswoman. The force that is down there now, even though it is National Guard members, was brought on as title 10, because it was part of their time to come on duty, full-time duty. And so we were able to make use of that by having them come on duty during that period.

Mrs. BICE. Great.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Morelle is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MORELLE. Good morning. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for this very, very important hearing.

And I want to thank the witnesses for being here today to share your expertise and also your dedication to our Nation's safety and security.

I am a new member of this committee, and so some of my questions will seem pretty basic. I am just trying to get a level set. But I would like to hear, General, a little more about NORTHCOM's mission associated with the Arctic. And appreciate the questions that my colleagues have asked up to this point about it.

But, General, if I were to go back home and talk to constituents and talk about the importance of the Arctic to the United States and the challenges associated, what would I say? How would I describe to them the importance of Arctic as a region and then also the challenges specifically associated with the Arctic?

General VANHERCK. Thanks, Congressman.

The Arctic is very important, and the environmental changes that have been ongoing have allowed increased access to the Arctic. The Arctic has tremendous resources, natural resources.

And it is also a line of communication now, with the environmental changes, that have a flow from Asia to the European AOR and back and forth. And having that flow, the economic flow, is crucial to maintain for prosperity of not only our Nation but other nations around the globe.

Russia gets 25 percent of their GDP [gross domestic product] from resources in the Arctic, so they absolutely have a vested interest in the Arctic, and they also want to ensure that it is secure for their efforts, if you will.

What I would tell you is, both Russia and China would like to change the international rules-based norms and the consistency that we have had that has served the globe well since the end of World War II. So it is incumbent upon us to be persistent by working with allies and partners and like-minded nations to ensure that we maintain the consistency of the international rules-based norms and laws that have served us well over time.

Mr. MORELLE. So, just so I might say it in—just so that I understand it, it is essentially that the changes in climate, then—I think that is what you are referring to in terms of environmental—make it more navigable, make it more accessible, and, at the same time, our two adversaries want to change the rules that govern the region and how we have historically approached the region.

Is that right? Did I get that?

General VANHERCK. Yes. So environmental change has created more access and opportunity. And both Russia and China are interested in ensuring that the activities conducted in the Arctic are favorable to them individually, not necessarily the international community.

Mr. MORELLE. So talk to me a little bit about that. So what type of investments and capabilities are they—what types of investments are they making in capabilities that increase that concern? Could you give me a little specificity around that, those investments?

General VANHERCK. Sure.

Russia has taken a dozen or so military installations that after the Cold War sat dormant, and they have revitalized those. They have worked hard on their nuclear capabilities and revitalized those as well, to include their bombers and infrastructure. Not only are they placing defensive capabilities that they state are obviously for defensive purposes, they are putting offensive capabilities into the Arctic, capabilities which are capable of not only striking Canada and North America but, obviously, our homeland.

China calls themselves a near-Arctic nation and wants to be influential in the Arctic as well. I would remind the committee that next month, in May, Russia takes over the Arctic Council. It is very



important for us to ensure that like-minded nations, allies, and partners are well-aligned as we go into this, because Russia and China will try to exploit any gaps or seams.

Mr. MORELLE. Thank you.

If I could just stay on that subject just for a moment more, as I use the balance of my time here. As we assess our capabilities in the Arctic, talk a little bit about the challenge you find with the extreme cold, ice, high altitude on our military equipment. And is there anything we should be doing in terms of working with industry on innovations to help address those needs? And have you began pursuing those partnerships? Are we engaged with partnerships already in that regard?

General VANHERCK. Thanks, Congressman. I think that is a great question.

And so I do think there is more we can be doing. And units that are organized, trained, and equipped and ready to operate in the Arctic is crucial. I believe that we need to do a better job of identifying those units, enabling them through day-to-day competition to practice their operations.

And working closely with industry, as you point out, to ensure that the capabilities that we do develop are conducive for successful operations in the Arctic. That goes from the human asset all the way to specific platforms and capabilities overall.

Mr. MORELLE. Thank you, gentlemen.

And thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back my time.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Waltz is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WALTZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Admiral Faller, I am struck and I would encourage my colleagues to look at your chart here of Chinese activity in South/Central America. Just some of the key things hopping out at me: 25 out of the 33 countries hosting Chinese infrastructure projects; 60 ports; 70 percent increase in Chinese Navy port calls; nearly a billion in weapons sales; and, most importantly, or at least most disturbingly I think, both sides of the Panama Canal now owned in some way, shape, or fashion by the Chinese in controlling that strategic choke point.

It leads me to wonder, is the Monroe Doctrine dead or at least on life support?

And if you could elaborate a bit more on what you are doing with the interagency. Because we are talking military tools here, which are critical, and I certainly support security assistance and increasing your security assistance efforts, but these are nonmilitary tools. And what tools do you need and what tools does the interagency need to combat this and to compete?

Admiral FALLER. Certainly, the statistics you cite fuel a sense of urgency with respect to strengthening our partnerships. Partnerships are key. We like to think of it as a good-neighbor doctrine. It resonates. Good neighbors have like values. And values are our strength in this hemisphere.

We recently visited Argentina. They want to do more with us. They want to partner with us at a mil-to-mil level. We have to do everything we can—

Mr. WALTZ. Which, by the way, now, Argentina has a Chinese space tracking station which lines up with our polar launches out of—

Admiral FALLER. We discussed—

Mr. WALTZ [continuing]. Vandenberg Air Force Base.

Admiral FALLER. We discussed those important issues.

We have to look to the Antarctic as well as the Arctic. China has a growing interest there. We have visited Ushuaia, which is the furthest port in this hemisphere, the continental hemisphere, and its important access.

You mentioned the Panama Canal. Panama, under the current leadership there, their President Cortizo, has opened with renewed commitment to a relationship with the United States. We are working on that with our Department of State. That is important. Panama is a very strategic partner with very professional security forces.

And those are the investments we need to make. A small investment in security cooperation, a little goes a long way. A businessperson, you would invest in it. It is a high P/E [price to earnings] stock.

Mr. WALTZ. No, thank you, Admiral.

And I would also note, you know, we are on the verge of having Barbados, Haiti, Honduras potentially switch their recognition of Taiwan; port projects in Honduras, Cuba, and, General, also, under your purview, the Bahamas as well; in addition to potential fishing rights going to the Chinese next to our underwater testing facilities.

Is that correct?

General VANHERCK. China is very aggressive in the Bahamas right now, with a new ambassador that is very aggressive. They have the largest embassy in the Bahamas right now, and they continue to buy up the tourism industry to have access and influence.

And you are exactly right; they do have access right now to an overwatch, if you will, of our Navy test and training facilities, which is very concerning.

We are partnering closely with the Royal Bahamian Defense Force. They are fantastic partners for domain awareness, putting capabilities in the south right now for domain awareness, such as radar. This year, we will put one into Nassau, as well, to give us additional capabilities.

But a little will go a long ways for investment with regards to Bahamas and Mexico.

Mr. WALTZ. Thank you.

Just switching to the other—from the Bahamas to the Arctic and adding to some of my colleagues. My understanding, the Coast Guard has one operational icebreaker that is about 60 years old, one under construction. The Russians have dozens.

The Northwest Passage is now open for shipping, along with shipping from across the north side of Russia from Asia to Europe.

Do we need more icebreakers?

General VANHERCK. Congressman, for persistence, I support the current plan for additional icebreakers for the Coast Guard. Your numbers are correct. They have two assigned. They had a fire on

one. They are about to resurrect that, which will end up with two. But for persistence, we do need extra icebreakers.

Mr. WALTZ. Great.

And just with my remaining time—thank you for that, General—Admiral Faller, if you could send to my office for the record your legislative proposal on adding to Plan Colombia.

And I would just mention to my colleagues, we have had Special Forces in Colombia with an all-of-government effort now for 30 years. So a lot of discussion in Washington these days of endless wars, but that persistent engagement can be incredibly effective.

Please send that over. Thank you.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 138.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

The gentleman's time has expired.

Mrs. LURIA is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. LURIA. Well, thank you, gentlemen, for appearing today.

And, Admiral Faller, I wanted to start with you. I recently read a press release from SOUTHCOM that announced the completion of the LCS-1 [littoral combat ship] USS *Freedom* deployment in support of JIATF-South [Joint Interagency Task Force-South]. It applauded the work of the ship's crew in counter-drug operations, working with partner nations to build interoperability, and hosting a U.S. Coast Guard LEDET [Law Enforcement Detachment] to counter illicit trafficking.

All in all, my takeaway from this press release was that this was a successful deployment. Would you concur in this assessment?

Admiral FALLER. There have been some real bright spots with littoral combat ship deployments. You cite *Freedom*. It was a very successful deployment. They had a high operational availability.

I would also cite the USS *Gabby Giffords*' recent deployment, where the CO [commanding officer], on his own initiative, made a video for his crew and for his families that went public about their high operational success.

So that capability has proven, and the CNO [Chief of Naval Operations], Admiral Gilday's commitment to getting the maintenance right is making a difference.

Mrs. LURIA. So it sounds to me that you would welcome additional LCS deployments in your AOR. But I also noted, however, the headline of this article was "USS *Freedom* Returns for Final Deployment."

Even though the LCS can provide significant contributions in your AOR and the Navy wants to grow its fleet, they intend to decommission the first LCS in class. Do you agree with this plan?

Admiral FALLER. The Navy shipbuilding plan has stated a capability and a size that the Navy needs, and I think it is recognized that we need a larger fleet. How the Navy sources that capability through the joint process, to me, is—I am indifferent on what type of ship, but we need a ship. Zero is equal to zero or unsolvable in any equation.

Mrs. LURIA. Well, thank you. And I appreciate you noting, as we talked about last year, the limited number of ships deployed in your AOR.

And, General VanHerck, I would like to switch and better understand the geographic responsibilities of the three combatant commanders whose AORs intersect at the Arctic.

On the west coast—and I am going to focus on naval assets—you have a single combatant commander at USINDOPACOM with 100-plus naval forces assigned, “forces for” [Forces for Unified Commands]. On the east coast, you have two combatant commanders responsible for deterring Russian aggression from the east coast to the Barents Sea, but USNORTHCOM has no permanently assigned naval forces in the “forces for” document, and EUCOM [European Command] has very few, which are mostly focused in the Mediterranean.

As USNORTHCOM, U.S. Fleet Forces Command is your maritime component commander. Is that correct?

General VANHERCK. That is correct.

Mrs. LURIA. But do you have operational control of those forces, as INDOPACOM does on the west coast?

General VANHERCK. Ma’am, I do not have operational control of the majority of the forces. Sometimes I get allocated those forces to execute for short durations of time, but to answer your question directly, no, I do not.

Mrs. LURIA. Okay.

And then, in 2018, Admiral Richardson, then CNO, stood up the new version of the 2nd Fleet, and he said that “the Second Fleet will approach the North Atlantic as one continuous operational space and conduct expeditionary fleet operations when and where needed.”

And so, according to Admiral Richardson, the 2nd Fleet’s area of responsibility crosses the NORTHCOM and the EUCOM AOR, yet they are not forces forward to either combatant commander. Is this correct?

General VANHERCK. That is correct.

Mrs. LURIA. And I recall that the *Harry S. Truman* recently conducted operations above the Arctic Circle. What combatant commander was assigned operational control of the *Harry S. Truman* Strike Group when they were operating in the Norwegian Sea?

General VANHERCK. General Wolters at the European Command had operation control.

Mrs. LURIA. Okay.

So, if I understand correctly, with the reestablishment of 2nd Fleet, we introduced a new Navy and NATO joint command that appears to have broad geographic responsibility but is not assigned to either combatant commander.

And, along with commander of USEUCOM, you are given the responsibility to deter Russian aggression and activity in the North Atlantic, but you essentially have no assigned naval forces. Is that correct?

General VANHERCK. That is correct now. From a ship perspective, you are correct.

Mrs. LURIA. And so I just wanted to comment—I saw that Captain Mohler, the Chief of Staff at 2nd Fleet, recently said in regards to this process of standing up the 2nd Fleet that “we were given no blueprints, we were given no resources, we were just told to do it.”

So this command of 2nd Fleet, do you feel that the area of responsibility crossing two combatant commands has been effective, as the NORTHCOM commander, in the overall mission that you need to accomplish in the Arctic?

General VANHERCK. Specific to the 2nd Fleet, I would defer to Vice Admiral Lewis there on that question. I will tell you that I am closely—

Mrs. LURIA. But, sir, can I just stop you, in the time I have remaining? U.S. Fleet Forces Command is your maritime component commander, and Admiral Lewis works for them, so he works for you.

The CHAIRMAN. I am sorry but the gentlewoman's time has expired. You will have to continue this for the record or later. Sorry.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 138.]

Mr. Bergman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BERGMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And, gentlemen, thank you all for your thoughtful, proactive leadership and continuing engagement.

General, the Joint Pub. 3-27 on Homeland Defense published in April of 2018 states that the purpose of homeland defense is to protect against incursions or attacks on sovereign U.S. territory, the domestic population, and critical infrastructure and key resources.

The publication also states that virtually all strategic threats to the homeland are based in the areas of responsibility of other geographic commanders and that major operations against an enemy in the U.S. remain, quote, "highly unlikely."

You can take any part or all of this question for the record or, you know, offer comments however you would like. But are these assumptions in Joint Pub. 3-27 still valid?

General VANHERCK. Congressman, I think the last point you made with regards to a likely attack on the homeland from a peer competitor is accurate, that we don't see indications of that right now. But we do see indications of peer competitors developing capabilities to hold the homeland at risk, which would have influence on our ability to project power on our timeline.

Specific to your first comment with regards to a majority of the threats existing in other AORs, I think we need to reconsider that. I think the persistent, proximate threat is here and it is here to stay in the future.

Mr. BERGMAN. Is NORTHCOM prepared to conduct operations in the homeland?

General VANHERCK. Day to day, based on current indications and warning, my assessment is yes. If indication and warning dramatically change, then I am going to have to ask for forces. And those forces would have to be allocated to me through the Secretary of Defense, at which point the Secretary would have to balance the globe based on the threat and risk that he would accept.

Mr. BERGMAN. Well, in that case, has all coordination with the many State and local jurisdictions been pre-coordinated, rehearsed, trained, exercised, et cetera, to allow NORTHCOM to quickly and effectively carry out its mission in the homeland when an immediate response is required?

General VANHERCK. My assessment, if I understand your question, is, do we need to practice and execute—

Mr. BERGMAN. Well, any time, whether you are Active, Reserve, Guard, whatever it is, you have a mission, you put together a plan, you get the people, get the gear, and then go train it, exercise it, see where you need to improve it or change it or whatever it is.

So that is, I guess, what I am asking, is, are those cross boundaries, everything from, you know, who is in charge when you start mixing title 10, title 32, et cetera, et cetera.

General VANHERCK. We do that on a daily basis, specifically with defense support of civil authorities. We do that with our seaborne response as well. We train that.

I am pushing hard for an exercise that is focused on a state-actor attack on the homeland that takes a look at exactly what you are talking about. Historically, when we work with an interagency, we work from a perspective of us providing support to the interagency. I think we also need to look at the opposite, where there is a potential state-actor attack on the homeland, where I am the supporting commander in that situation, and we work closely about command and control across the interagency with the other combatant commanders as well.

Mr. BERGMAN. Okay.

And, lastly, is Joint Pub. 3-27 in need of an update or a revision?

General VANHERCK. My assessment, based on the comments you made, was we need to go look at it and update it to reflect the threat to the homeland that exists today.

Mr. BERGMAN. Good. Thank you.

Admiral, my colleague asked a question about the littoral combat ships. I am going to ask a slight derivative of it, and the answer can be a simple “yes” or “no.” Do we need to consider other platforms, other than LCS, for use in SOUTHCOM AOR at this point?

Admiral FALLER. Staying engaged with our people is our number one and making sure we are properly resourced there, so absolutely.

And we are appreciative for Congress’s involvement in ensuring that we didn’t get cuts last year in our defense attachés. That is our front line, our senior defense officials.

So I think it is the capabilities, and there is none better than the U.S. service women and men.

Mr. BERGMAN. Okay. Thank you.

And, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Ms. Escobar is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ESCOBAR. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman, for this very critical hearing.

And, gentlemen, thank you so much for your testimony today.

I represent El Paso, Texas, which is on the southern border. And I am delighted that we are finally focusing a bit more on the Western Hemisphere, because, frankly, the crisis is not at our border; the crisis is outside of our borders, all the way south to the Northern Triangle.

And so it is really critical, I think, that in this moment where we can come forward with solutions to what is happening outside of our Nation’s front door that we really examine where we have

been effective, where we have been ineffective, and recognize this as a decades-long situation where we have failed to meet the moment over and over and over again, is my thought.

I think the thing that we need to recognize is we need a multifaceted approach to addressing mass migration coming from south of us. As we have, as a country, limited legal pathways for folks, we should not be surprised that illegal pathways become an only option for people who are fleeing exactly what you have described, Admiral Faller, with what is happening in their home countries.

And so, as a Congress, we need to reexamine what pathways we need to reopen, what legal pathways, for refugees, for asylum seekers, possibly TPS [Temporary Protected Status].

I think we also, as a Congress, need to acknowledge that many of those transnational criminal organizations that are trafficking drugs are in place, in part, because of America's insatiable appetite for those drugs. And so we need to look in the mirror, recognize our role as well.

But I would like to focus a little bit on those transnational criminal organizations and what we can do. I do think that, again, going back to a multifaceted approach, in addition to opening up legal pathways, in addition to investment and collaboration with our neighbors—you talked about good neighbors, Admiral. I am a big believer in that, as well, and coming up with solutions together, where there is not just investment but accountability.

We also—although I am not a huge fan of relying on the DOD for efforts like this, I do think that the DOD has a role to play. And I am curious about what your thoughts are in terms of the opportunities that exist.

I think we have to recognize we need a sustained approach. It can't be in fits and starts. And so we have to really work with those neighbors closely and make a long-term commitment. We have to respect human rights within those countries. We have to hold those countries accountable.

Because those organizations have become more powerful and more sophisticated over the last several years, and the policies of the last 4 years, like "Remain in Mexico," which is being unwound now by this administration, title 42, which has been kept in place by this administration, those policies basically don't stop migration. They just create a sea of humanity right outside our front door that is victim to these organizations. I have heard accounts right across from my community in Ciudad Juarez about horrific rapes, kidnapping, persecution. It is horrific, what is happening. And these policies basically provide that human fuel to these organizations.

What is our first step? And how do we ensure that we uplift the human rights of folks who have been vulnerable for decades?

And I have 1 minute. I am so sorry.

Admiral FALLER. The transnational criminal organizations, the first step is recognizing them in our strategic documents, that they are a national security threat and a national security imperative.

And, as you cite, while I am a big fan of DOD as well, we play a supporting and minor role in this, but a key role, because we pull people together.

An example of that success: During the last year, we helped the interagency develop a targeting process to identify and then iden-

tify the right interagency or partner lever to go after these threat networks on a more holistic threat basis.

An example of the magnitude of the problem that you cite: Forty million migrants over the last 5 years, 40 million, is the number, total, across the hemisphere. That is just an example of the scope and scale of the violence and the insecurity that is driving mothers and families to separate from their kids to seek a better life.

Ms. ESCOBAR. Thank you so much, Admiral.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Bacon is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BACON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I appreciate all three of you being here today and your leadership roles in defending our country.

And I want to say, it is great to see a fourth star on General VanHerck. So congratulations.

I have two questions for General VanHerck and one for Admiral Faller if time allows.

My first question is dealing with hypersonic weapons. You know, ICBMs [intercontinental ballistic missiles] take about 35 minutes from Russia to reach here; China, maybe a little longer. But hypersonics cuts that time in half.

How can we support you better out of Congress in being able to respond to those shorter times? Do you need better sensors? Better interceptors? How do we do a better job ensuring continuity of government with the—I mean, there is a whole myriad of issues that we have to look at with a 15-minute response time.

Thank you.

General VANHERCK. Thanks, Congressman.

First, I would say, go back to that domain awareness discussion I had up front, and create the domain awareness to have situational awareness on an inbound hypersonic live vehicle or a missile and the ability to take that awareness and transition it into a defense capability.

But, more broadly, as I talked about previously, it is getting further left. And we need to utilize data and information, that domain awareness, that gives us a picture ahead of any activity.

And so we can take today's GEOINT [geospatial intelligence] capability from satellite imagery or signals intelligence capability or even open-source from cell phone tracking to phones, et cetera, and give us a broader picture and a better picture much earlier, before we actually have to be defending, to create options to deter or de-escalate.

And that is where we are focused at United States Northern Command and NORAD.

Mr. BACON. One of the things that concerns me is the continuity of government, having nuclear C3 [command, control, and communications] confidence in deterrence. I know it is broader than just your combatant command, but with a 15-minute warning time and some of our stuff right off the coasts, I just think we need to rethink when it comes to deterrence and having an assured ability to respond.



A second question. Do you feel like we are on the right track with the Next Generation Interceptor program? And do you think it will adequately address the future threats?

General VANHERCK. In my discussions with Vice Admiral Hill at MDA [Missile Defense Agency], I do believe we are on the right track. I can't afford, from my mission, to have any further delays. I am encouraged by the decision the Deputy Secretary made to move forward with that, and I look forward to continuing to partner with MDA to deliver on that capability on time.

Going forward, I remain concerned about capacity, from the 10 October parade that we saw in North Korea, to ensure that I maintain enough capacity for the total number of ballistic missiles that North Korea could launch at the United States or North America.

I am also concerned about their capability—capability to develop advanced techniques to potentially deceive, decoy, those kinds of things.

In that way, Next Generation Interceptor will address those, both the capacity and the capability.

Mr. BACON. Thank you.

Admiral Faller, with China's GDP reaching ours, Russia totally modernizing its nuclear force, you know, regional threats, it seems to me America cannot do it alone, but yet we are indispensable. We are going to have to do more and more to bring in countries with like values to help shoulder this burden.

So what are the opportunities in your AOR? And, particularly, how about Brazil? It is growing in wealth, growing in capability. Hopefully they will see a role for themselves in this area.

Thank you.

Admiral FALLER. The National Defense Strategy calls out strengthening our alliances and partnerships as a top priority. The new Secretary's guidance is right in line with that, as is National Security Strategy, interim security strategy.

Brazil recently signed on a partnership with New York Guard and, in the last couple years, has really worked to align themselves with our training and exercises in a way that recognizes their strengths and our needs. And so, you know, partnerships being two ways, the legacy that we have with Brazil that goes back to World War II and the capable fighting force that they have is an area that we are clearly looking at, as we move forward, as a way to enhance capacity.

We are not going to outspend—we can't outspend our way out of this challenge of competition. We have to prioritize, focus on the right instruments with ruthless prioritization that give us the highest rate of return. And some of these competition elements—security cooperation exercises, Guard partnerships—we need to have an increased appreciation for the value they bring for \$1 or 1 hour of investment in time for the overall defense of our great Nation.

Mr. BACON. Thank you, Admiral.

And, Mr. Chair, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Crow is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CROW. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I wanted to start with Admiral Faller.

You had mentioned before that, you know, China is the pacing threat and a significant threat in your area of operations. And one thing you didn't mention in the beginning was just the threat of the climate crisis and climate change.

Obviously, you are a career Navy man, and you know well how that is impacting our ports, our operations around the world. I would just like a brief comment from you on the impact in the near- and mid-term on the climate and your operations.

Admiral FALLER. In the fall of 2019, I flew all over Guatemala with the then-NORTHCOM commander, General O'Shaughnessy, and we saw—we were doing a partner visit to both Mexico and Guatemala, and we saw firsthand dried white corn fields, endless fields, dried and parched.

In the fall of 2020, back-to-back Category 4 hurricanes within a 2-week period, on the same track, unprecedented, that flooded and wiped out what little crops were left across Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador. It is a credit to Honduran security forces and Guatemala that they responded so professionally with such devastation.

So it is a fact that climate is changing. Science—I believe in science. And it is a fact that that requires rapid response. And that is a military capability that we have, something that our partners need enhancement with, something that our security cooperation programs can and should focus on.

Mr. CROW. Thank you.

And, General VanHerck, a similar question to you. I am wondering about particularly the impact of a warming climate and climate change on installations in Alaska. I know we are having some issues regarding our radar facilities as the tundra actually thaws out, challenges with the infrastructure.

So a brief comment on that, if you will?

General VANHERCK. Sure, Congressman. I will be real brief.

You are absolutely correct. The permafrost, as it thaws, creates access problems to infrastructure, infrastructure we have for legacy warning systems, those kinds of things, which challenge us to get to those.

It also creates challenges for us in building any future capabilities within the Arctic. We must plan for that. It has to be part of any strategy and plan going forward.

Mr. CROW. Thank you.

And just to carry on my colleague Mike Waltz's comments about the icebreakers, I wanted to dig into that a little bit more, because I know Russia, you know, has over 20, I believe, and I don't even need this full hand to count ours.

I know you had mentioned your support for the Coast Guard plan. Is that enough? Are we on a right track to actually be competitive and to have the navigability and the access and the persistence that you talked about in the Arctic with our current plan?

General VANHERCK. My assessment is that, right now, their plan for six additional icebreakers would give me the persistence and the capability. That is a resource decision, though. If they are allocated elsewhere in the globe, then it may challenge me for my persistence.

My assessment is Russia has 54 icebreakers, not only military but overall, civilian as well.

Mr. CROW. Okay. Which is even worse than I thought. Thank you for that comment.

And then back to you, Admiral Faller. I, like many of my colleagues, recently went to the border to conduct oversight of the unaccompanied-minor issue. Obviously, we need to go to the root cause, because, you know, we set up these, quote/unquote, “emergency” facilities, but this is an emergency that actually happens every year at the same time every year. It is fairly predictable.

So we have to go to the root cause and stabilize Central America. You already talked about the transnational criminal organizations that are important, but—and the predictability of our investment funding.

With regard to the Northern Triangle countries, are there opportunities—do the conditions exist for us to expand our training and our professional exchange programs, given some of the challenges with the government officials in the current governments in those areas?

Admiral FALLER. There are opportunities, working with the professional elements of their security forces and working by, with, and through our embassies—we take the lead from the embassies and our ambassadors and chargés on everything—to look at smart investments.

The exercise program focuses on their needs; it focuses on partner needs, rapid response. Along with that we use humanitarian assistance authorities and money very successfully to do minor construction projects—for example, helping fix a leaky roof on a school, which is a skill set for partner militaries, it is a skill set for our Guard and Reserve forces, which are our principal force providers, and it provides hope—hope to the people.

And so there are opportunities. And we are currently looking at our existing exercise program for the next few months and next year, at how we can enhance that, in close cooperation with Secretary Salesses and others to get this right. And so, yes.

Mr. CROW. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman’s time—

Mr. CROW. I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN [continuing]. Has expired.

Mr. Gaetz is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GAETZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I would like to start by saying I am glad that President Biden is continuing the good work of President Trump to end the war in Afghanistan. There was a bipartisan consensus, a bipartisan majority, on this committee regarding legislation that would have limited President Trump’s effort to draw down troops in Afghanistan, and I am grateful that President Biden appears to be going in a direction more aligned with President Trump than the majority of this committee.

And while that may not seem particularly relevant to this discussion about the Western Hemisphere, it is. My community is home to the 7th Special Forces Group. They have as their principal area of responsibility Latin America, and yet they have seen frequent, persistent, bloody deployments to CENTCOM [Central Command].

And so I am hopeful that under this announcement from President Biden that they will be able to get back to their good work in the area of responsibility that I think increasingly calls for our attention.

Admiral Faller, you mentioned the importance of our partner nations. And I want to talk about the methodology of that engagement. One theory of the case is we can always be sending our service members down to our partner nations for train-and-equip missions. The other theory of the case is that we could do more by bringing some of those partners forces here so that we can collaborate and train and build those capabilities.

What is your assessment about the cost savings that could be realized if we did more of the train-and-equip work here in our country as opposed to down in the jungle?

Admiral FALLER. The engagement with our partners is so critical. And 7th Special Forces Group is a professional team that is culturally aligned and engaged day-to-day in training—training and advising, not accompanying. It is appropriate for the progress we have made. And they are doing it professionally, along with General Clarke's focus on professionalism and doing the right thing.

And so I think it is a mix. I think we have to go to partner-nation countries. Sometimes that can be very cost-effective, and it really gains cultural skills that our teams need. And then bringing our partners here gives them an appreciation. And I have been to the 7th Special Forces Group headquarters, been there, and they appreciate that two-way exchange. We learn as much from our partners as they learn from us.

And that persistent and episodic engagement with the Special Forces team, small teams—three, four, sometimes seven—is key to helping our partners build that capacity and securing our hemisphere, our home, and our neighborhood.

Mr. GAETZ. You mentioned that we cannot interdict our way out of these challenges in Latin America. I would suggest we also can't decapitate our way out of them. As we take out leaders in some of these organizations, they seem to have quite capable human resources to be able to replenish that talent. And so it would seem that those partner capabilities are increasingly important.

And it would also seem that we save a lot of money doing more and more of that here. And it has the added benefit of our service members being able to have their heads and beds at home, which I know increases their own morale and capability as well.

I also wanted to ask about the Chinese Communist Party's investments in infrastructure in the Western Hemisphere, and Mr. Waltz went through those. And you busted the myth that this is purely economic.

Could you talk about the infrastructure enhancements from the Chinese Communist Party that are most concerning to you?

Admiral FALLER. Most concerning infrastructure enhancement and advancements are in space and intelligence assets. We would welcome a classified hearing at a future date on that.

They are in IT and in the lack of civ-mil divide in how IT is viewed based on Chinese Communist Party law.

Enhancements in port infrastructure, which could be easily scaled up. And we have seen how that has insidiously scaled up globally.

And I think the world welcomes a fair competition and a fair access to the economic progress that we all need, but not an unfair one. And—

Mr. GAETZ. Thank you.

Admiral FALLER [continuing]. In cyber and IT.

Mr. GAETZ. Yeah, no, that is very helpful.

One final question. ELN seems to be playing the Duque government and the Maduro government off of each other in some of the work that they are doing in the border region between Colombia and Venezuela. Any comment you would have about how we ought to contextualize what ELN is currently doing?

Admiral FALLER. I think the illegitimate Maduro government has synergy with the ELN and the FARC dissidents. They share a lot in common: no values, a lack of respect for human rights, and a brutality that is driving migration.

I applaud the way President Duque and his Minister of Defense and team has responded to the challenge, given the circumstances.

Mr. GAETZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Brown is for recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROWN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I have a question—two questions each for Admiral Faller and General VanHerck. And I will ask that perhaps you can take no more than a minute each in answering each of the questions. And I will ask one at a time.

The first one is regarding the directive from Secretary Austin in late January, early February, for each command across the Department to conduct a stand-down for the purpose of discussing the problem of extremism in the ranks.

So my question for each of you is: What activities have you undertaken or directed within your command to execute and implement the Secretary's directive? And what lessons, if any, have you learned and are you able to share with us today?

Admiral FALLER. This is an important topic. It gets at readiness. It gets at cohesion. It gets at harmony. It gets at the necessity for all that to be combat-ready. And these unacceptable behaviors—extremism, racism, sexual assault and harassment—just erode at that good order and discipline, and we can never do enough to get after that.

And I think what I have learned is the importance of listening and the importance of perceptions and bias that comes into that. And whether we believe it or not, I think we all have them and we carry them with us. And we have done a lot to try to break down those barriers and look for ways to move forward.

Mr. BROWN. General VanHerck.

General VANHERCK. Yeah. Thank you for the opportunity.

So, specific, we executed and I personally led a session with the leadership in the headquarters that addressed the Secretary's guidance. Very informative. This is a leadership problem, and we have to apply leadership molecules to it. The rest of the command executed, as well, on the timeline that the Secretary asked.

I agree with Admiral Faller that the lessons are quite significant that we ought to take away—perception, realism. We led a diverse organization, a diverse group, and hearing from a diverse crowd on the challenges that are faced by those individuals is quite eye-opening.

Thanks.

Mr. BROWN. Thank you.

And, look, I agree with Secretary Austin; the vast majority of men and women serving in uniform, as well as civilian employees at DOD, embrace the values that we fight for and protect and value as a nation and a military. But even if you have a small element within the ranks that adhere to extremist views, we have to do everything we can to discover it and address it.

My second question: Can you briefly describe the initiatives or programs or activities within your command that you use to develop a culture that values diversity, equity, and inclusion?

And, also, can you share with us the diversity of your leadership team in your headquarters?

Thank you.

Admiral FALLER. It goes back to listening, Congressman, and the importance of including that in training. So our training and education program has embraced that. The human rights training, I think, is key to that as well. They are all really interconnected as fundamental human rights, the ability to approach things and have an equal opportunity in whatever aspect.

And so, as we saw the tragedy of George Floyd unfold last year, we stood up a diversity and inclusion team. And I picked a brigadier general, Regina Sabric, “Torch” Sabric, and one of our civilians, Mr. Darrell McCarthy, to lead that. We hold listening groups that are part of our training, and we feed that back in to how to do better things in the command.

Our leadership team: My deputy commander, civilian deputy commander, is an ambassador, Ambassador Jean Manes, a female. The Chief of Staff is the first female Hispanic admiral in the United States Navy, Rear Admiral Yvette Davids. And we have a deputy director, a one-star admiral, and I have a female. And then I have an African-American one-star deputy J3.

So we have tried to use what I would call the Rooney law in our hiring within our own headquarters.

Mr. BROWN. Thank you, Admiral.

General.

General VANHERCK. Congressman, thanks for the opportunity.

First of all, I think it starts with action, and your actions speak much louder than words. And so that is where we are focused. We continue to have sensing sessions in groups to expose and have a candid discussion about the challenges of extremism and diversity.

With regards to what we have done, I did a climate assessment that concluded in January ahead of the Secretary in the office, and it gave us a good focus on where we stand today. We are going to conduct the Secretary’s additional climate assessment.

In my office, when you walk in, I have an African-American master sergeant, a Hispanic female, I have a female aide-de-camp, I have an African-American junior—

The CHAIRMAN. I do apologize. The gentleman's time has expired here. A couple quick closing thoughts there?

Mr. BROWN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. Thank you.

Mr. DesJarlais is recognized for 5 minutes.

Dr. DESJARLAIS. Thank you, Chairman.

General VanHerck, as the commander of NORTHCOM, you are tasked with defending the homeland. Can you describe the importance of maintaining strong, secure borders in defending the homeland?

General VANHERCK. Thanks, Congressman.

Border security is national security, and we must have awareness of who is coming across that border and what their actual intent is. I think it is a security imperative overall.

Dr. DESJARLAIS. Yeah. As far as controlling the spread of the coronavirus, what does a vulnerable, porous border do to your efforts to stop the spread of this virus and get the pandemic under control?

General VANHERCK. It certainly increases the potential risk, because those folks coming across the border, we are unaware of their exposure, whether they have been vaccinated, et cetera. So I assess that, overall, it is a slight increase in risk to the U.S. population.

Dr. DESJARLAIS. The numbers were pretty stark, saying up to 10 percent. I think the holding facilities, I have heard, that have a capacity of maybe for 33 are at 1,000 times capacity. So, certainly, that is not any kind of protocol that we have followed in the United States and certainly shouldn't be following at the border.

For the sake of time, just a "yes" or "no": Do you believe strong enforcement of existing immigration laws serve as a deterrent to legal immigrants?

General VANHERCK. Well, as I said, I believe our border security is national security and that the laws that we have on the books would be part of contributing to overarching national security when enforced.

Dr. DESJARLAIS. Okay. So, on the other side of that, do you believe the weak enforcement of immigration laws can serve as a pull factor in drawing more migrants to our southern border?

General VANHERCK. As we previously stated, I believe it is a confluence of multiple things that are drawing folks to our border, from transnational criminal organizations, to COVID, to multiple natural disasters, to include the perception of weak border enforcement.

Dr. DESJARLAIS. Okay. So, I mean, you believe that maintaining a secure border should be a top priority in our shared goal of protecting the homeland?

General VANHERCK. Border security is national security, and we must know who is coming across the border and what their intent is, especially for potential nefarious actors. My assessment would be, nefarious actors that might want to do harm to the United States of America and our citizens, if there is a porous opportunity, they will find a way to exploit that.

Dr. DESJARLAIS. Yeah. Well, the CBP [Customs and Border Patrol] refuses to release the numbers of individuals on the terror watchlist that have been apprehended on the border. We can as-

sume that the two men from Yemen are not alone in making the trip.

What are the implications of this free flow of unvetted, sometimes highly dangerous individuals crossing our southern border when it comes to protecting the homeland?

General VANHERCK. I remain concerned about knowing who is coming across that border. And we work closely with Homeland Security and Customs and Border Protection and FBI, other law enforcement agencies who enforce the laws on our border, so that I maintain awareness of what is actually going on with regards to the border.

I am aware of the reports that you are alluding to. I won't talk about those in an unclassified environment. But I will tell you, the numbers are very small right now. But we do need to maintain an awareness on who is coming across that border.

Dr. DESJARLAIS. All right.

And, in 2018, when President Trump and Secretary Mattis deployed U.S. troops to support CBP and DHS efforts to counter transnational criminal organizations, human trafficking, and drug trafficking activities at the border, they were met with harsh criticism by many on the political left in Congress as well as the media.

Can you discuss the need to continue fighting these transnational criminal organizations at the southern border from a national security and homeland defense perspective?

General VANHERCK. Well, Homeland Security, I would defer to them for the law enforcement aspect of enforcing what transnational criminal organizations do with counternarcotics and those kinds of things. We are in direct support of Homeland Security and Customs and Border Protection.

Let me tell you what I am doing. I have a fantastic partnership and a relationship with Mexico, SEDENA [Secretariat of National Defense] and SEMAR [Naval Secretariat], General Sandoval and Admiral Ojeda. They are a fantastic partner. I am encouraged by what I heard the President announce with regards to an additional 10,000 folks from the Mexican military to help us get after this problem, Congressman.

Dr. DESJARLAIS. Okay.

Well, I mean, clearly, from the reports that we are all seeing on the news, there has been an escalation at the border that wasn't there a few months ago. Do you agree with that?

General VANHERCK. Congressman, there has been a significant uptick of migrants coming across the border. In the last quarter, it has been over 350,000.

Dr. DESJARLAIS. And a lot of this is created by the cartels and criminal organizations. And so, certainly, this provides opportunities to our adversaries, whether it be China, Russia, or nonstate actors, to exploit these vulnerabilities. Do you agree?

General VANHERCK. I agree it creates opportunity. Instability does create—

Mr. LARSEN [presiding]. The gentleman's time has expired.

Dr. DESJARLAIS. Thank you, General.

Mr. LARSEN. And I recognize Representative Carbajal for 5 minutes.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Thank you, Mr. Chair.



Thank you all for being here. And I look forward to my colleague Mr. DesJarlais supporting President Biden's immigration proposal to address those very important issues.

With that, Mr. Salesses, I want to take a moment to discuss DOD's coordination with FEMA and HHS to temporarily house unaccompanied children at military installations.

Earlier this month, DOD announced that it received a request for assistance, RFA, to use land at Army National Guard Base Camp Roberts, which is located in my district. I understand that DOD confirmed it will support this RFA.

In what ways does DOD support HHS throughout this process, from installation selection to when the first unaccompanied children arrive on base? And after the children arrive, in what capacity does DOD personnel stationed on the base interact with HHS facilities and personnel?

Mr. SALESSES. Congressman, thank you for the question.

Currently, right now, we are at Fort Lewis. We are supporting HHS, the Administration for Children and Families, who oversees the sheltering of the unaccompanied children. We are also planning to use Camp Roberts.

We work very closely with HHS, but the Defense Department, in particular, has no role in supporting the children directly. We provide facilities or we provide land. If we provide the land, like we will at Camp Roberts, HHS will contract and develop soft-sided facilities there. They will provide all the services, the wraparound services, and they will provide the care for the children.

So there is very little interaction from the Defense Department and our military members in dealing with the children at all.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Thank you for that clarification.

General VanHerck, as the combatant commander responsible for the defense of the United States against rogue nations' ballistic missile threats, besides the Next Generation Interceptor, what would be your top three priorities in the upcoming budget that must be prioritized to keep pace with the growing threat around the world?

General VANHERCK. As I have alluded to, domain awareness is at the top, and that would include over-the-horizon radar capability to see beyond where our legacy systems do today.

Undersea surveillance would be number two on my integrated priority list to take a look and ensure we know what is going on to our approaches from an undersea capability.

And then, obviously, that domain awareness and information that I talked about earlier to get further left to give us options before endgame kinetic defeat and give us options to create deterrence during competition would be the primary focuses.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Thank you.

Admiral Faller, I want to ask you about Brazil. In the past few weeks, the leaders of all three branches of Brazil's armed forces jointly resigned the day after President Bolsonaro fired the Defense Minister. All of this is very alarming.

How have these departures affected SOUTHCOM's engagement with Brazil's armed forces?

Admiral FALLER. I have remained engaged with the Chief of Defense, General Botelho. He is a professional. And we look at the fu-

ture, and there is a professional force with values that we have shared and trained and worked together, particularly through programs like our IMET program, our International Military Education and Training.

So, with continued investments in those types of programs, I am confident that, institution to institution, which is what we focus on, that we will be together in the long haul. And the rest is a political decision and choices that people make.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Do you feel there is enough continuity there to give us assurances that our partnership can weather?

Admiral FALLER. Ultimately, sovereign nations make decisions based on their own policy. What we can do is provide the best professional and consistent partnership from our standpoint.

That is why it is so important we remain on the field. If you are not on the playing field, if you are not engaged, you are not going to be heard or seen, and you can't make an impact and you can't make a difference.

So consistency year to year, and then looking at where we can make modest increases to stay together. The education program is one where we could use an increase. IMET is a State-run program; there is more capacity there.

But, given what we have invested in it to date, I am confident we will stay together as professional institutions, Brazil and across the hemisphere.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Thank you.

And, lastly, Mr. Salesses and General VanHerck, the Department and NORTHCOM have been critical partners this past year in the fight against COVID. What lessons have you both learned from this past year? And what changes are you looking to implement within your jurisdictions going forward to be better prepared for a health crisis?

Mr. LARSEN. The gentlemen will have to respond for the record. The gentleman's time has expired.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 137.]

Mr. LARSEN. And the chair recognizes Representative Scott of Georgia for 5 minutes.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SCOTT. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

Admiral, I know that multiple members have talked with you about Communist China's increasing influence in the Western Hemisphere. I have a specific question with regard to that, and it has to do with money laundering for the transnational criminal organizations.

And so could you speak to Communist China's increase in influence? And what is happening with regard to the money laundering for the transnational criminal organizations?

I also know that you lost funding of the ISR transfer fund. That is something that I am interested in and the impact that it has on you and your mission in SOUTHCOM.

And then Representative Panetta hit on this a little bit, but the differing authorities that you have for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief compared to authorities that you have for security cooperation.

So there are three questions that I have for you, and look forward to your response.

Admiral FALLER. Our interagency partners here in the United States have pointed out to us, the FBI, and others that Chinese money laundering is the number one underwriting source for transnational criminal organizations.

If you look at SOUTHCOM's area of responsibility, we have 8 percent of the world's population, 60 percent of the cryptocurrency. So there are active efforts to evade tough enforcement that the U.S. does and can provide when legitimate banking systems and methods are utilized.

It is a concern. It goes back to the need for a holistic approach to getting after these organizations and metrics to do so and big data and artificial intelligence, machine learning. DOD and SOUTHCOM play a supporting role in those overall efforts.

With respect to the ISR transfer fund, it is a fund that was set up by the appropriators in Congress to augment all the combatant commands. ISR is underappreciated by many but not by us in terms of its ability for us to see and hear and understand the battlefield.

That fund was not authorized and appropriated last year, and that resulted for SOUTHCOM in a precisely 38 percent reduction to our overall funding for ISR. That is significant. We only have about 1 percent of the ISR.

Intel drives everything. And without that intel—and that is in-year, this year's funding—we are going to understand less of the battlespace.

The humanitarian assistance program has been key. It is a flexible program. It allows us to meet our partners' needs. In the past year, we have had, just in COVID response, close to 500 projects, \$74 million worth, and we have been able to work with 28 different countries. That has strengthened our partnerships, it wins hearts and minds, and it is responsive to need. It is about long-term capacity.

Because of the way the rules are written in the authorizations, I can't apply that authority to work with a partner military force. I think that is a gap. I think we should look at how we could work that authorization so we can meet the point of need with our partners and work on capacity. A strong partnership, whatever the country, is good for the United States. It is a good return on investment.

I would also like to see if we could look into our security cooperation programs, the 333 program and others, and how would we craft a small-dollar-amount, flexible military assistance program, along the lines of the humanitarian assistance program, to allow combatant commanders to have a 21st-century, flexible, and responsible tool that will allow us to outcompete and win by meeting our partners' needs and focusing on our collective needs and our collective readiness.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you, Admiral.

And, you know, I would point out to my colleagues that you said millions. In many cases, we are talking about billions. We are talking about the whole Western Hemisphere. We could get a whole lot

more return on our dollar if we focused on some of the areas closer to home, I believe, with regard to security for the United States.

General, the questions I have for you have—many of them have been answered. But one of the questions I have a concern about is the ability to use small, unmanned aerial systems to attack U.S. military installations.

And do you have the authorities that you need to protect our military installations from these small or unmanned aerial systems?

General VANHERCK. Congressman, we have the authorities over Federal installations to protect Federal people and equipment.

My concern is, that is a little bit of a reactive and a—we are approaching this from a law enforcement perspective. Looking at defense, I want to get more proactive, to be able to engage when they are detected through that domain awareness and further out when they are a threat. So we are working closely with the FAA [Federal Aviation Administration] and the interagency to get there with those authorities.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you, General.

Mr. LARSEN. The gentleman's time has expired.

I recognize Representative Speier for 5 minutes.

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

And thank you, gentlemen, for your presentations and for your service.

I was impressed by what you said, Admiral Faller, about a little goes a long way in SOUTHCOM. What would you define as a little?

Quickly, because I have lots of questions to ask you.

Admiral FALLER. A congressional visit. A partnership exchange. This past week, I visited Uruguay. I was the first combatant commander to go there in a number of years. That visit went a long way to strengthen our relationship.

So time is our most underappreciated resource and one that I welcome an increased investment of in this hemisphere.

Ms. SPEIER. Okay.

I have a very different view of the littoral combat ship than my colleague, and I would like to drill down on this a little bit.

The *Freedom* class is, in my view and in the view of many, terribly unreliable, with the *Little Rock*, *Detroit*, and *Sioux City* all recently experiencing major propulsion failures. The *Freedom*-class LCS may also have a classwide defect, a flawed combining gear that breaks early in life of the ship. That will require a massive and expensive taxpayer-funded reconstruction. In the meantime, the last administration increased the OPTEMPO [operational tempo] to new highs.

So I would like to know the following. And if you could just be prepared to answer them either here in person or subsequently.

How much are taxpayers spending for each LCS deployment in SOUTHCOM? How much have LCS deployments increased over the past 3 years?

A recent article in Defense News says that each LCS costs about \$70 million a year to operate. And there are some 35 of them. So it is \$70 million per year to operate, almost as much as the cost of operating a much larger *Arleigh Burke*-class destroyer. Is that accurate?

But let me go on with my other questions, and you can answer them all at the same time.

What is the impact of the LCS maintenance problem on SOUTHCOM's ability to complete drug interdiction and humanitarian missions?

Admiral FALLER. Congresswoman, it is an important question, and the Navy is committed.

I look at it this way: Those ships that came into the fight have saved lives across the United States. So, whatever the steaming-hour cost, we have saved hundreds of lives. Without those Navy ships, about 40 percent more drugs would have made it into the United States. The CNO—

Ms. SPEIER. I understand that, but let's talk, separately from saving 100 lives in terms of drugs, to the actual functionality of these ships that cost over \$500 million apiece and then \$70 million a year to operate and maintain. And when you said a little money goes a long way in SOUTHCOM, you know, I would much rather see us spending some of that money there than on ships that don't float.

And I would also say, the Belt and Road Initiative, as you pointed out, is an example of how China has used \$50 billion to \$100 billion a year across the world in a way to benefit themselves exclusively, frankly. We tend to give money out in ways that are soft money that help the country. So maybe what we need to do is be a little smarter about how we invest in some of these countries.

But I think that somehow relying on the fact that you are interdicting some drugs to keep these ships operating makes no sense. And, at some point, we have to recognize—and the Department is very reluctant to say, “You know, we made a mistake”—and cut our losses. And I guess I am asking you to think about that and do that.

And I have only 59 more seconds, so let me just move on to Mr. Salesses.

When I was at Fort Hood recently, I went and visited some of the barracks. I have to tell you, it was like looking at tenements.

Now, beyond the barracks, we have 135 childcare development centers in the military that are defined as failing or poor. Now, I don't want to send my kid to a failing childcare development center. So, even though 135 have been identified, only 8 have been fixed in the last 10 years.

So my question to you is, how is DOD planning to spend the \$2.2 billion remaining of the military construction funds that were diverted to the border wall but were not spent? Will you spend that money on doing something on behalf of our service members—

Mr. LARSEN. The Representative's time has expired. I would like to offer that for the record.

Ms. SPEIER. Please respond.

Thank you. I yield back.

Mr. LARSEN. Thank you. The panel will take that for the record.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 137.]

Mr. LARSEN. The chair recognizes Representative Wilson of South Carolina for 5 minutes.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you very much.

And I want to thank the panel for being here today. Your service is just so appreciated.

I also, Admiral Faller, want to share a concern with Congressman Mike Waltz about the influence of the Chinese Communist Party on both sides of the Panama Canal. This is a threat to the people of Panama, and we need to be ever vigilant.

Additionally, Admiral Faller, I am a grateful Naval Academy graduate dad myself, so I particularly appreciate your service.

And I appreciate your update on Plan Colombia. This has been a real success story the American people need to know, working to stop narcoterrorists. And then my wife and I have been the South Carolina co-chairmen of the Partners of the Americas program, working with the country of Colombia. We have hosted students to live with us, high school students from Colombia. It has been very uplifting. In fact, my Naval Academy graduate actually was an exchange student to Colegio Bennett in Cali, Colombia. So we have such a relationship with that country.

And then I am very grateful, with the leadership of Adjutant General Van McCarty, former Adjutant General Bob Livingston, South Carolina National Guard is the State partner with Colombia. And so what a great opportunity we have working together, particularly with the tyrannical regime that now rules in Venezuela.

With that, Admiral, I have a question. What is your assessment of the whole-of-government approach to countering Russian, Iranian, and Chinese support to the corrupt regime in Venezuela? What can SOUTHCOM do to assist the multinational efforts to assist the people and benefit the people of Venezuela?

Admiral FALLER. Thank you for recognizing the Naval Academy, my alma mater. And I had the opportunity to speak to the class of 2021 in the fall, and I would tell you, Congressman, that we should all be proud of the young men and women that are going to be today and tomorrow's leaders. They are just as strong as any other generation, and they make you proud. Under the leadership of Admiral Buck at the Academy and others, we are in good shape for the future, I am convinced of that.

Thanks also for recognizing the importance of our State Partnership Programs. South Carolina Guard is so actively involved with Colombia. There are ongoing exchanges. No one ever stepped down when the pandemic heated up. And we are working particularly to use the Guard's capability of the F-16s. As Colombia has stated, that is an important capability that they need, and they are willing to commit their resources to that capability going forward.

That is the kind of investment that will make a difference against Venezuela, as they continue to isolate themselves. And you correctly point out the insidious and corrosive influence of Russia, Cuba, Iran, and China inside their—you look at that as an example. And over the last year, we see thousands of Cubans, hundreds of Russians, an increase in Iranian presence. And they are working in the cyberspace, as well, to control that information domain.

We have to work together for solutions that strengthen the neighbors, strengthen our partnerships with the neighbors, and isolate the Venezuelan regime, as Maduro has increasingly done himself through his human rights atrocities.

Mr. WILSON. Okay. Thank you for that response. And, indeed, it is remarkable to see the success of Colombia and then to see what was possibly the most wealthy country of South America, being Venezuela, being reduced to destitution. And so, what a great contrast. So thank you for your efforts.

Additionally, General VanHerck, the Russian threat spans two COCOMs [combatant commands]. What coordination do you take with the U.S. European Command to properly address Russia's military strategy?

General VANHERCK. Congressman, we work closely in partnership with the U.S. European Command through my various components, as well, to deal with threats to the homeland presented by not only Russia but others that may come through our approaches that may include the European Command area of responsibility. It may include working closely with my partner right next to me, Admiral Faller, the approaches that come from the SOUTHCOM area of responsibility, as well as INDOPACOM and working closely with our Canadians.

So we work closely in partnership. I believe relationships and partnerships are crucial and that homeland defense does not start in the homeland; it actually starts with the relationships and partnerships, not only with my fellow combatant commanders but also allies and partners for each of those combatant commanders as well.

Mr. WILSON. And, again, thank all of you for your service, and we look forward to working with you in a bipartisan manner.

Thank you. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN [presiding]. Thank you.

Mr. Courtney is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. COURTNEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you to both witnesses here today.

Admiral Faller, I just want to say, your description of the—and you are in a unique position, given your portfolio in SOUTHCOM. But your description of, sort of, the, you know, forces, the external forces, that are driving, you know, massive numbers of people from their homes in the Northern Triangle, whether it is, you know, the COVID depression that has hit the economy in that region, the natural disasters that, you know, were, I think, very underreported in the U.S., and, of course, the political violence that, again, is forcing people to make a, you know, incredibly difficult and high-risk decision to send their kids northward.

So thank you for that testimony today. Because I frankly think, coming from you, you know, it is a really important message that people should really think about as we try to deal with the problems at the border.

General VanHerck, your colleague from INDOPACOM testified, Admiral Davidson, a couple weeks ago, again, who is also dealing with, sort of, maritime challenges, freedom of navigation, which, again, are somewhat similar to what is going on up in the Arctic. Admiral Davidson actually was very, you know, frank about the fact that he believes that the U.S. should join the international Law of the Sea treaty, as did his predecessors and your—you know, in the EUCOM theater, same thing. We have heard that over the years. You know, there is a bipartisan group of us—Don Young

from Alaska, who also is supporting a resolution with me calling on the Senate to ratify the UNCLOS [United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea].

And I just wondered, you know, based on what you are seeing up there, in terms of the increased maritime activity and the competition for seabed minerals, whether you have any perspective or comment, as your combatant commanders have made, regarding UNCLOS.

General VANHERCK. Congressman, I would share the sentiment of Admiral Davidson. I support the accession to UNCLOS. I think it puts us in a more strategic position when we address these issues internationally, globally with competitors or our allies and partners as well.

Mr. COURTNEY. Well, thank you for that testimony. As I said, you know, on this committee, we have certainly elicited the same response from other combatant commands. I think, frankly, that is the first time we have heard that from the Northern Command.

And we are going to have a joint hearing with Foreign Affairs at the end of April to, sort of, dig deeper into this. It is really time that the U.S. get in the game in terms of being able to stake claims for seabed minerals as well as to protect freedom of navigation.

You know, we have had some discussions regarding the Coast Guard's involvement up in the Arctic. And I just would note that this committee was the one that authorized construction of the first large icebreaker a number of years ago.

Again, the Coast Guard's program office in terms of shipbuilding just really needed some help, and we provided an assist in terms of Navy's collaboration, which is continuing to this day with the joint program office. But, again, your testimony about the fact that we need to kind of boost that capability, I think, is also extremely helpful.

Admiral Faller, you in your testimony described the work that you are doing with your sea service, you know, colleagues in the Coast Guard. And I was wondering if you could talk about, you know, the offshore patrol cutters and how they collaborate with the Navy in SOCOM.

Admiral FALLER. The Coast Guard is such a tremendous, important element of our engagement in countering threats. Recently, the recent patrol of the United States Coast Guard cutter *Stone*, a national security cutter, to get after illegal, unregulated, unreported fishing, with China being the principal state sponsor of this IUU [illegal, unreported and unregulated] threat, is one example. Tremendous, reliable vessels. Their fast-response cutters, the whole cutter fleet is topnotch, and I am a big supporter. Tremendous readiness, and they have done a great job for us.

Additionally, another, sort of, example I would cite, Congressman, is some of our Navy patrols. And I call them patrols because they are short-duration. It is exactly the kind of focused, small investment that goes a long way. The USS *Vermont's* deployment to patrol to Brazil, where we worked joint exercises and capability demonstrations, was exactly in line with what we need to do to prepare for the future and increase our own crew's readiness.

Mr. COURTNEY. Well, thank you, Admiral.



Again, Mr. Chairman, just for the record, the USS *Vermont* is our newest *Virginia*-class submarine, which was commissioned in the middle of COVID, up in Groton.

So I thank you for the mention, and I will certainly pass along your compliments to the shipyard.

And, with that, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

For your situational awareness, gentlemen—appreciate you being here—is that we have two more at the moment. That does not mean that someone might not come back in the next 10 minutes, but, for now, we have Mr. Fallon.

Mr. Fallon, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FALLON. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Appreciate it.

SOUTHCOM is responsible for the region that covers 31 countries in Central and South America. And the thing that concerns me is the drug trafficking, because they seem to be, every year, increasing in wealth, in power, in influence, and it is clearly a major national security threat, and I think everybody here would agree that it presents a clear and present danger to our country.

And, under the prior administration, you know, it had been a flood and it reduced to a trickle, in large measure. And now, unfortunately, it is back to a flood.

I was at the Donna holding facility a couple weeks ago, where it was supposed to be 250 people in the facility, and there were 4,377. And there were 3,700 unaccompanied minors. There were pods where they had these unaccompanied minors, and they were sectioned off, and they had segregated them by gender and then roughly by age. And, in each pod, there were supposed to be 32 children, and unfortunately there were 500. And the Border Patrol was babysitting these kids. And that was their term for it.

And Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador have 34.5 million people. That is an inexhaustible amount of human folks that—and it is a long way to travel. I believe it is about roughly 1,200 miles from Central America to the United States. And, you know, it begs the question, how did they get here? Do they owe and who do they owe for the transit? Are the traffickers facilitating this?

And the reason why we mention this is, the Border Patrol agents were telling us the cartels love this crisis because it makes it very much easier for the cartels to do their business of smuggling illicit drugs because almost half of the Border Patrol are in these facilities changing diapers and what have you.

And so I wanted to ask the SOUTHCOM commander if he does agree that this is a clear and present danger, the drug trafficking and the cartels' power and influence?

And, sir, in your opinion, what is the best way to combat the Mexican drug cartels and the other drug traffickers and organized crime in Central America in reducing their power?

Admiral FALLER. Transnational criminal organizations are exactly as you state, Congressman, a national security threat, killing people in your home State and in my hometown in Pennsylvania as well.

And they are fueled by a tremendous amount of resources, money, a multibillion-dollar-a-year industry. And drugs are actually not their top source of revenue. It is illegal mining, it is illegal

businesses, it is extortion, it is human trafficking, it is arms trafficking, it is PPE, illicit PPE and COVID supplies, and everything to carry forward their influence and access. They are fueled by corruption.

The best way of stopping this is a whole-of-government approach, whole-of-nation approach, and empowering our partners with the right tools. And one of them is good judicial systems that do the right thing and operate in accordance with the rule of law.

And I have talked to these partners. The narcoterrorists, they fear the U.S. judicial system. They need to fear their home countries' judicial system too, because they need to have instilled in them the deterrent model that they are going to be held accountable for their murderous behavior and the violence that is driving people to leave their homes and make that treacherous trip.

Mr. FALLON. You know, Admiral, exactly to your point, too, according to the Department of Justice, in 2018, the most dangerous country on the planet, if you define that by murders per 100,000, weren't—if you asked a regular American—and, quite frankly, I had the impression that it was going to be maybe a country like Yemen, Afghanistan, Somalia, or Iraq. But it is in this hemisphere, and it was El Salvador, at 50 murders per 100,000. Honduras was closely behind at 40, and Guatemala was 22.5. And to give that context, Mexico is at 26, the United States is at 5, and a very safe country like Denmark is only at 1.

So it seems that the more power that the drug cartels have, the less GDP growth we have and the more violence. And it is something that we just have to address. I think it is the number one, right now, topic that we must—and it is the greatest national security threat. And it is an economic drain, as well, on our country.

And I hope that we can work in a bipartisan fashion to solve it, because we have the resources to do so; it is just a question of if we have the political will.

And, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. LARSEN [presiding]. Thank you, and I appreciate that.

I now will recognize myself for 5 minutes. I would note that Representative Smith did say there were two more, but we have had additional people show up, so it will be more than two more. So I want to just add that.

First off, I will come back to you, Admiral Faller, but it is good to see you again. It is always good to see you.

General VanHerck, thanks for the conversation yesterday. I am really pleased to hear my colleagues talk about the Arctic, something that I have been talking about for the last 20 years. So welcome aboard, everybody, on the concerns we have about the Arctic.

What I didn't hear today, though, is—I have had a briefing from the Air Force on the Arctic. I have had a briefing from the Coast Guard. I have had a briefing from the Navy. What I haven't had is the DOD briefing—that is, the umbrella strategy about what we are doing in the Arctic.

And I wanted to hear from you, General, about Northern Command's view of that. Is there a broader strategy? Or, as you said on page 12 of your testimony, with regards to data, getting all the data, breaking down stovepipes is achievable. Do we have a stove-

piped approach on our strategy in the Arctic with regards to the DOD? And what do we do to break those down?

General VANHERCK. So the Department did put out a strategy in 2019 for the Arctic, followed by each of the services. I also put out a strategy this winter as well. My strategy is not focused specifically on the Arctic, but the Arctic figures in heavily to my strategy at USNORTHCOM and NORAD as well.

I do think there is more we can do as a group focused on the Arctic to collaborate. It is not just a NORTHCOM problem, it is a EUCOM problem, it is an INDOPACOM problem, it is an ally and partner problem with multiple nations. And I think that is how we should approach it, from a global problem, to ensure that we approach and compete in the Arctic to keep the international rules-based order that we have had in the past.

Mr. LARSEN. I think what we will learn, too, as folks look into it more, is that there is not one Arctic. It is easy to do operations—a little easier to do operations in the Barents Sea or north in Norway because the water is a lot more free of ice year-round than it is in our part of the Arctic. And so we really need to be thinking about what is appropriate, what is the appropriate presence, what is the appropriate persistence that we need up there.

And, on that point, can you expand a little bit more on gaining knowledge to the left of action or the all-domain dominance and the decision superiority? What does that mean for us when we look at the budget?

General VANHERCK. That means having the sensor capabilities that will allow us to see further than we have in the past, that will allow us to take data—much of it exists today—and share that data, although it is in stovepipes where there may be laws or policies that don't allow us to share that data and information.

I believe data and information is a strategic asset that will enable us to—no kidding—win in the future in conflict if we have to, but, more importantly, take us further left in the competition to deter and de-escalate in crisis.

And so what I hope we see when the 2022 budget comes out is a domain awareness capability, such as over-the-horizon radars, undersea capabilities, and a focus on the ability to take that information and share it. What you would hear the Department talk about is joint all-domain command and control, if you put a bow around what I have been talking about.

Mr. LARSEN. Yeah.

I would also note, this begs the question, though, about: You get all that data; then what? I mean, you are the dog who caught the car, so what do you do with it now?

So I think, you know, looking at maybe one of the subcommittees that we have, the CITI [Cyber, Innovative Technologies, and Information Systems], looking at the role of AI [artificial intelligence] and machine learning. And the applications, the algorithms need to be written to gather that information and pick through it for you to give you decisions—is a critical part, which may not be your budget, but it is still an important part of DOD's efforts.

General VANHERCK. Congressman, I concur. We have to move forward with machine learning and artificial intelligence from a policy perspective and get our arms around this. What we can't do

is field capabilities and then wait till the end and we don't have our arms around the policy or the laws that go with it that enable us to support it.

What you do with this information, in my mind, is you give it to decision-makers—decision-makers all the way from the tactical level that may be pulling a trigger, but, more importantly, what I see is the operational level and the strategic level that you can take action on. Me, as an operational commander, could posture forces to create deterrence, or the President or the Secretary of Defense can use messaging to create deterrence as well.

Mr. LARSEN. Right. Right.

Admiral Faller, I will be really quick here. IUU fishing is important for us in the Northwest because of the Gulf of Alaska and the problems we have with not just Russians but Chinese and others.

Why is IUU fishing an important issue—be very specific why it is important—in Central and South America?

Admiral FALLER. Food security is national security for any nation. And when nations are losing their food stocks, their fishing, it is impacting their life. It is driving insecurity. It is all connected. And we play a role. Domain awareness is key there, helping people see on and across the sea.

Mr. LARSEN. Thank you very much.

I yield back. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN [presiding]. Thank you.

Mr. Lamborn.

Mr. LAMBORN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It is great to have you all here.

General VanHerck, congratulations on your promotion into this position. I look forward to seeing you in Colorado Springs one of these days when the COVID protocols make it easier.

But I would like to ask you a little bit more about missile defense. And I believe you are of the opinion, as are all the experts who look at North Korea's threat, that, while we can address that currently, starting around 2025, if current projected rates of their progress come true, that we start encountering greater risk.

And so I know that you are in support of an NGI, Next Generation Interceptor, to hopefully have by the end of this decade. In the meantime, do you support an underlayer or layered homeland defense with things like the Standard Missile-3 IIA, SM-3 IIA, and other assets that would give us an interim additional layer of protection?

General VANHERCK. Congressman, thanks for that question.

I think there is tremendous value in looking at the possibility of an underlayer. I know you are aware of the recent SM-3 test that proved incredibly successful. As you said, I am comfortable where we are today, but, as we go forward, there will be additional capabilities developed to hold our homeland at risk, and an underlayer would give us additional capacity and capability to do that.

If we do create an underlayer or additional sensors and capabilities to support that, it should not be focused on a single threat, such as a ballistic missile. That underlayer—a layered defense of the homeland should focus on everything from small UAS [unmanned aircraft systems] all the way to ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, and everything in between.

We can't afford any longer to build stovepiped systems which have capabilities for only one threat. We need to look more broadly at these systems to achieve affordable solutions to defend the homeland.

Mr. LAMBORN. Okay. Thank you for that answer.

And you mentioned cruise missiles. Let's talk about that. What do we need to do to better protect ourselves from that particular very dangerous threat?

General VANHERCK. Congressman, the first thing I am working on is getting a policy on what must we defend kinetically in our homeland. I would tell you that it looks something along the lines of continuity of government, our nuclear capabilities, command and control, ability to project power forward, and our defense industrial base. That would defend against a cruise missile kinetic kind of capability.

But I will go back to where I am focused in domain awareness. And I don't want to be shooting cruise missiles down in our homeland. And that is why it is so important to have these domain-awareness capabilities using information, machine learning, and artificial intelligence to get further left of that launch so we then create options for deterrence and de-escalation much sooner in competition.

We also need to balance our focus between planning, strategy, force management, force development from a conflict focus and more balanced on a competition focus as well, and competition globally across all domains.

But endgame defeat is not where I want to be. We need to figure out what that looks like. But I want to get further left and give our decision-makers options.

Mr. LAMBORN. And I know we are in an open setting here, but can you be more specific about going to the left and having these additional options?

General VANHERCK. Yeah, so going left means getting information sooner to make decisions. So, for example, our satellite capability, our GEOINT, our signals intelligence capability comes from National Security Agency or even open-source information—from social media, for example. Oftentimes, that information is not analyzed in a timely manner to have decision-makers make a decision.

So getting further left means taking that information, making it readily available by having policy and laws that allow us to do that, and then sharing it, and taking machine-learning capabilities and artificial intelligence to rapidly analyze and process in near-real-time, and then sharing it with decision-makers. That will give us the opportunity to be further left.

I can give you a specific example. So if you take a look at a parking lot over and over that supports a submarine base, for example, the machine will figure out how many cars are in that parking lot. And when you start to see changes and you couple that with cell phone data or information through social media, you can build a picture. Now it gives us the ability to take action much sooner.

Mr. LAMBORN. And also, General, lastly, you have talked about making sure we have the authorities in place that we need. And I think the implication is that we don't have all those authorities.

What are some specific authorities that maybe when we are looking at the NDAA [National Defense Authorization Act] this year we should consider that make your job easier?

General VANHERCK. I believe we need to take a look at intelligence sharing. Intelligence should be part of our overall deterrence factor. And what we share and reveal and conceal, for example, if you don't know about it, it is not creating any deterrence effects. But sometimes our policies or laws may hinder us from sharing that information.

Mr. LAMBORN. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Okay. We are going to stop at 2:00. We have Mr. Langevin. We have Mr. Khanna. All right, I lie. We are going to stop at, like, 2:02. But Mr. Langevin and Mr. Khanna are going to be last, and so we are done at that point.

Mr. Langevin is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank our witnesses for your testimony today. We have covered a lot of ground today in looking at national security challenges and U.S. military activities in North and South America.

I guess what I would like to start with, if we could, with General VanHerck: As we look to increase nonkinetic options available for homeland defense, how do you plan to incorporate things like emerging technologies such as directed energy, hypersonics, and artificial intelligence?

General VANHERCK. Well, absolutely, we must take machine learning, artificial intelligence, and innovative technologies and factor them into every homeland defense strategy, plan, policy.

I believe that everything that we do from now on, based on the threat to the homeland, from the strategy plan, force management, force design, acquisition, and budgets, ought to start with a discussion about what is the potential impact to homeland, what is the potential impact to a risk of strategic deterrence failure. We must incorporate the technologies as we go forward.

Mr. LANGEVIN. So further discussion, too, on, say, information sharing. Let me also talk about communications. When you talk about left-of-launch deterrence, how important are secure and robust command-and-control systems in the strategy? And how do other Federal agencies contribute to the strategy?

General VANHERCK. Secure capabilities are an imperative, Congressman. We have to go down that path with encrypted capabilities going forward to ensure that we have access to that data and information. That is an imperative that General Nakasone talks about routinely from his CYBERCOM [Cyber Command] and NSA [National Security Agency] hat as well.

Mr. LANGEVIN. And for Mr. Salesses: So the COVID response demonstrated that homeland chemical and biological scenarios demand a whole-of-government response. What are the major investments DOD made in interagency coordination? And how do you plan to sustain those gains beyond the current pandemic?

Mr. SALESSES. Thanks, Congressman.

I think the first thing is our ability to detect and surveil the kinds of biological threats that we face in the future, to include pandemics, our ability to do that more effectively.

And beyond that, it is certainly working with the laboratories, as we have, to develop the kind of countermeasures that we need to protect our population against those threats.

Mr. LANGEVIN. It is important to incorporate those lessons learned and make sure that they are institutionalized. This isn't going to be the last challenge that we face—biologically, manmade, or otherwise—that we see.

For all three, I think we have touched on this a bit, but I am going to ask it directly: Do you believe that climate change is undermining your command's core mission or at least complicating it? And if yes, then how?

Admiral FALLER. I believe in the science of climate change, and it has made rapid response imperative in our exercise, our training programs. And to the extent that it has caused us to respond to support partners' humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, it is a fact.

The point you make about secure communications, that has a role here too. So our ability to talk to our partners as part of this joint all-domain command and control concept that my shipmate General VanHerck talked about is so key. So we have to get that right.

And the vision that the Air Force and Lieutenant General Crall, the Joint Staff J6, have to encompass partners at the right scalable level in the future is key. If we can't talk to our partners secure, we can't respond rapidly to that catastrophic event. And, you know, we were challenged to talk to them, in some respects, last fall when those two major hurricanes hit.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Thank you.

General VANHERCK. Congressman, I will go next.

To specifically answer your question, I am not sure it undermines our ability to accomplish our mission. What I think it does is, environmental change creates opportunities and it creates vulnerabilities. The question is, are we postured to take advantage of the opportunities and to plug any vulnerabilities that that may create for us?

Mr. LANGEVIN. And Mr. Salesses?

Mr. SALESSES. Obviously, climate change is having a big impact. We have talked about the Arctic a lot today. We talk about sea rise. We talk about all those things.

For the Defense Department, it is the vulnerabilities that are created from these efforts. And our work here in the homeland, in particular, as we have seen the severity of storms and wildfires and those types of things, it drives additional requirements on the Defense Department in support of our Federal partners.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Thank you.

Well, I can't underscore enough how we need to think holistically about how climate change is affecting U.S. national security.

I think it was, Admiral, you who talked about how climate change is affecting food supplies, food stocks, creates instability. That creates problems for international security, where the U.S. has to get involved.

So, with that, my time has expired and I will yield back. Thank you all.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Khanna is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KHANNA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for holding this important hearing.

Admiral Faller, one of the causes of our border crisis is the rampant human rights abuses in El Salvador and Guatemala and in Honduras. As you know, the State-Foreign Ops bill specifically forbids any foreign military financing aid to these countries that have had oppressive practices.

Does SOUTHCOM intend to make sure that we aren't having section 333 programs in the Northern Triangle, in light of the State-Foreign Ops bill?

Admiral FALLER. Congressman, every program we apply, we apply the principles of the Leahy law and the processes. And our human rights training and programs are embedded in every single one of those. And we are making a difference with those security institutions over time as part of U.S. Government whole-of-government efforts, working with our embassies. And so we are committed to that, working forward.

In addition to the human rights programs, we have ramped up our Women, Peace, and Security Program, which is another part of the fundamental rights enshrined in the various constitutions of all these countries. So it is extremely important.

Mr. KHANNA. Thank you, Admiral. But specifically on section 333 programs, are we still doing them with those countries, or are we are not? And can you just address that as it relates to the State-Foreign Ops bill?

Admiral FALLER. I think, to be heard and seen, we have to stay engaged, and those programs allow us to stay engaged. And so we are continuing with the 333 programs. We are following all the guidelines that are set out for the right vetting and the right rule sets. I think we are going to have modeled responsible behavior better if we stay engaged with those programs, Congressman.

Mr. KHANNA. And maybe we can explore it after the hearing just to make sure that the equipment that is being given to these countries isn't in violation of the State-Foreign Ops.

But I think, more broadly, there are many people in Congress who are concerned that the ongoing drug war is actually hurting Americans' safety, that it is one of the causes for the mass migration to our border. Because you have these military governments in Honduras, in Guatemala, in El Salvador basically justifying oppression, in a desire to crack down against drug lords or drug cartels, captured by drug cartels. We have seen in Uruguay, where you have had a move towards legalizing and decriminalizing drugs, a more stable democracy, and we don't have many Uruguayan migrants coming to our border.

Mr. SALESSES, could you speak to the possibility of rethinking this drug war if we really are serious about lessening migrants coming to our border?

Mr. SALESSES. Congressman, I think we have heard this today several times, the importance of a whole-of-nation approach to this. The Defense Department can certainly play a role in helping, but it also takes the diplomatic, the economic, the information, the law enforcement, all of that and our partners in the south, working to-



gether, too, to rethink this. And I think that approach can be very successful.

I do think that the work the Defense Department is doing down in Central and South America is key, though. As Admiral Faller has repeated several times today, it is the values system, it is our professionalism, it is what the U.S. military brings to the region and provides to the militaries down there with security cooperation, foreign military sales, education, institutional reform. Those kinds of initiatives make a huge difference in that region and need to continue.

Mr. KHANNA. And one final question, Mr. Chairman.

I am one of 80 cosponsors on the Berta Cáceres Human Rights Act, and that would suspend our law enforcement aid to some of these military regimes, consistent with Leahy and what Senator Merkley are proposing in the Senate, just making sure that American tax dollars aren't going to repressive human rights practices that are then causing migrants to come to our border.

Do you have a view on the Berta Cáceres Human Rights Act and any thoughts on it?

Admiral FALLER. I think the human rights is a focus we need to continue. And I worry that if we abandon our partners, that Chinese malign influence will take over. And that is a view of human rights I don't think any of us want in our neighborhood.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman's time has expired.

And I think that is the—

Mr. KHANNA. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN [continuing]. Balance that is very difficult to strike. We want to maintain those relationships, but we don't want to give support to human rights violations. On the other hand, no nation, including our own, is perfect. So how do we strike that balance? Because if we just cut them off, like you said, they are going to turn to others, and then we don't have any influence. So how do we balance that? I think we—well, I know we always try to strike that balance in this committee.

With that, I really want to thank our witnesses above and beyond, staying with us for 3 hours, without a break, I might add.

And, as you can see, members have a great deal of interest in your areas of responsibility. There are incredibly important policy decisions we have to make, and I found this enormously helpful to all of us, to get your expertise and background on how we should approach those challenges. Look forward to continuing to work with you.

And, with that, we are adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 2:03 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]



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

APRIL 14, 2021

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**PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD**

APRIL 14, 2021

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Statement by  
Mr. Robert G. Salesses  
Performing the Duties of Assistant Secretary of Defense for  
Homeland Defense and Global Security  
Office of the Secretary of Defense

Before the 117th Congress  
Committee on Armed Services  
U.S. House of Representatives  
April 14, 2021

**Introduction**

Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Rogers, and distinguished Members of the Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on the key national security challenges faced by the United States and U.S. Military Activity in North and South America, and the Department of Defense's (DoD) actions to protect the security of the American people against these challenges. I am honored to be here in the company of General Glen VanHerck, the Commander of the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) and U.S. Northern Command, and Admiral Craig Faller, the Commander of U.S. Southern Command.

As the official performing the duties of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Global Security, I am the principal civilian policy advisor to the Secretary of Defense and the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy on a diverse range of matters, including Homeland Defense, Cyber, Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction, Mission Assurance, and Defense Support of Civil Authorities.

Today, I would like to emphasize three key points: (1) the global security environment is more complex than ever before, adversaries are advancing their capabilities to challenge our interests in every domain and hold the homeland at risk; (2) consistent with the President's strategic guidance and Secretary Austin's priorities, DoD is strengthening our multi-domain defense of the Nation; and (3) Federal, State, and local partners' are increasingly relying on DoD to assist them to meet their mission requirements.

As the President states, in his March 2021 Interim National Security Strategic Guidance: "It is our most solemn obligation to protect the security of the American people." The Department is accomplishing this, guided by key strategies, development of new capabilities, and strengthened by close relationships with our hemispheric partners. The Department is committed to its enduring mission to provide combat-credible forces that will deter complex nation-state threats, reinforce traditional tools of diplomacy, and, should deterrence fail, provide military options to the President to defend the Nation.



**Complex Global Security Environment**

As emphasized in the President's Interim National Security Strategic Guidance, protecting the security of the American people requires that the United States "meet challenges not only from great powers and regional adversaries, but also from violent and criminal non-state actors and extremists, and from threats like climate change, infectious disease, cyberattacks, and disinformation that respect no national borders."

Globally, the United States is facing an increasingly dynamic security environment driven by an accelerating strategic competition with Russia and China – with China as the pacing threat in most areas. As DoD confronts this competition, it must ensure its ability to deter today's range of threats, including those emanating from Iran and North Korea, while countering terrorism and violent extremism, both abroad and here, at home.

One thing is clear: The U.S. homeland is no longer a sanctuary; rather, the homeland is increasingly threatened by changes in the complex global security environment where our strategic competitors are contesting for advantage in every domain. These challenges, if left unchecked, could fundamentally affect our ability to achieve our nation's security objectives and limit the Department's ability to underpin other instruments of U.S. national power. The United States is also facing a decline in the long-standing rules-based international order where alliances, institutions and the norms that the United States helped establish over decades are being tested.

**China and Russia**

The distribution of global power continues to change as China grows ever more assertive and Russia seeks to enhance its influence and play a disruptive role, challenging the rules-based international security environment. Russian and Chinese efforts to lessen our competitive edge continue to be a central challenge for the Department.

Both Russia and China are attempting to reduce the United States' economic, military, and societal advantages, and, to that end, each has studied U.S. military capabilities and is

building capabilities designed to counter them. Both have engaged in aggressive modernization programs and developed offensive weapons capable of holding the U.S. homeland at risk. They are mapping, targeting, and infiltrating U.S. and allied and partner critical infrastructure, notably power, transportation, water, and communication networks, most of which DoD neither owns nor operates, with the intention of laying the groundwork for future disruptive attacks. To deter conflict and preserve peace, DoD must be prepared to prevail against these near-peer competitors.

China has become more capable in every domain and now constitutes a significant and long-term security threat to the U.S. homeland, and because of its rapid ascent and the scope and scale of its military modernization, China is our top priority. China has fielded its first aircraft carrier and is now exercising that carrier, in company with several other warships, near Taiwan, thereby escalating tensions in that region. China has also developed anti-satellite capabilities; advanced its short-, medium-, and long-range missiles; deployed anti-ship ballistic missiles; continued development of an increasingly sophisticated integrated air and missile defense system; successfully tested hypersonic glide vehicles; modernized and expanded its nuclear capabilities; claimed, or created, and militarized islands in the South China Sea; and conducted cyber activities against targets across the militaries and governments of the United States, and its allies and partners. China also continues to pursue greater economic and political influence in the Western Hemisphere.

Simultaneously, Russia is seeking opportunities to threaten the United States, and its allies, and partners. Russia's ongoing efforts to use cyber capabilities to spread discontent, collect intelligence, and threaten U.S. interests pose an ongoing and evolving challenge. Likewise, Russia has developed, deployed, and demonstrated the use of conventionally armed, long range, highly precise cruise missiles capable of reaching targets in Canada and the United States. Russian leaders appear to believe that these systems, launched from the Russian interior, from modernized bombers, or subsurface platforms, pose a credible threat to our homeland during a conflict. Russia's advanced kinetic capabilities include counter-space weapons and may soon include both a nuclear-powered cruise missile and an operational intercontinental ballistic

missile armed with a hypersonic glide vehicle payload designed to challenge our missile warning systems.

As these developments indicate, wars of the future will be waged not just on the land, in the air, and at sea, but also in space and cyberspace. DoD must be prepared to defend the homeland in future conflicts that will likely include multi-dimensional attacks targeting what our adversaries perceive as our strategic vulnerabilities, such as critical infrastructure, that if damaged could threaten our ability to project power abroad.

#### North Korea and Iran

Rogue regimes such as North Korea and Iran also pose threats to the United States, its allies, and its partners. North Korea maintains nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, as well as demonstrated intercontinental ballistic missile capabilities. Iranian activities in the Middle East, including civil nuclear program advancements, expansion of its ballistic missile force, and proliferation of advanced weapons to proxies, continue to destabilize the region and threaten U.S. interests, as well as those of our vital allies and partners. Both North Korea and Iran are developing cyber capabilities to target our defense capabilities, civilian critical infrastructure, and economy. Iran continues to use state-sponsored terrorism, a growing network of proxies, and its missile program to advance its objectives. Both pursue these capabilities at the expense of the welfare of their own people.

#### The Arctic

Climate change is altering the natural environment of the Arctic – and the strategic balance. The Arctic is becoming a region of geopolitical competition. We have serious concerns about the Russian military buildup and aggressive behavior in the Arctic. Russia has steadily expanded its military presence in the region and is testing its newest weapons and other advanced Arctic capabilities as it seeks to secure its northern coast and open a new shipping route from Asia to Europe. We are similarly concerned about Chinese intentions in the Arctic region. China, which quixotically classifies itself as a “Near-Arctic Nation,” has displayed an interest in expanding its influence and taken incremental steps to increase its military presence and influence in the region. Defense of the U.S. homeland increasingly depends on DoD’s

ability to deter, detect, and defeat threats both in and passing through the Arctic. Secretary Austin has committed the Department to evaluating and addressing the situation in the Arctic. In consultation with U.S. allies and partners, DoD is improving its strategy, posture, and equipment necessary to protect the U.S. homeland, to ensure a stable and open Arctic, to deter aggression, and to preserve our economic interests in the region.

#### Central and South America

Central and South America, is a key strategic region for the Department of Defense, which includes many key defense partners as well as pervasive challenges. The Department notes that the region has been among the most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has exacerbated governance and economic challenges that were already confronting many countries. With respect to El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, weak governance, ongoing economic problems, and persistent violence and insecurity have contributed to the root causes of migration, currently driving many people to seek a better life outside their country, including through migration to the U.S. southern border. Central and South America as a whole, but especially in Central America, also face increasing vulnerability due to the impacts of climate change, including hurricanes and droughts. Chinese and Russian efforts to consolidate their influence across Central and South America further threatens stability, regional prosperity, and security throughout the region. DoD is committed to working to strengthen and develop our military and security partners in the region so that they are fully capable to support their own defense, as well as to contribute to our shared defense and security goals.

#### Extremism

Terrorists still actively seek to harm the United States and its citizens, allies, and partners, and they remain a threat as some continue to pursue weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Terrorists, transnational criminal organizations, cyber hackers, violent extremists, and other malicious non-state actors threaten us with increasingly sophisticated capabilities, including tools of mass disruption, such as cyber capabilities.

Domestic violent extremism is an increasing area of concern. In a March 2021 report, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence reported that the Intelligence Community assessed

two major themes. First, “domestic violent extremists who are motivated by a range of ideologies and galvanized by recent political and societal events in the United States pose an elevated threat to the Homeland in 2021.” Second, “lone offenders or small cells of domestic violent extremists adhering to a diverse set of violent extremist ideologies are more likely to carry out violent attacks in the Homeland than organizations that allegedly advocate a domestic violent extremist ideology.”

In a February 5, 2021, memorandum, Secretary Austin directed a stand-down to address extremism in the ranks and across the Department. In his message to the Department, he emphasized we will not tolerate actions that go against the fundamental principles of the oath we share, including actions associated with extremist or dissident ideologies. Service members, DoD civilian employees, and all those who support our mission, deserve an environment free of discrimination, hate, and harassment. It is incumbent upon each of us to prevent actions associated with these corrosive behaviors. Commanders, supervisors, and all those who hold a leadership position within the Department have a special responsibility to guard against these behaviors and set the example for those they lead. This stand-down was just the first step in what the Secretary believes must be a concerted effort to educate ourselves and our people more fully about the scope of this problem and to develop sustainable ways to eliminate the corrosive effects that extremist ideology and conduct have on the Total Force.

#### Natural and Man-Made Hazards

Natural and man-made hazards continually threaten the security of the United States and are increasingly overwhelming Federal, State, and local departments and agencies responsible to address them. The United States has seen a rise in the number and severity of catastrophic incidents, including hurricanes, devastating wildfires, historic flooding, and most recently the outbreak of a global pandemic. The outbreak of coronavirus-2019 has claimed the lives of more than 550,000 Americans, a number that continues to rise daily, and created significant economic consequences for the United States and the rest of the world. This rise in natural disasters, is also affecting our partners in the Western Hemisphere, where they are contributing to increased migration to the U.S. southern border. Additionally, over this past year a significant increase in civil disturbances throughout the United States led to a substantial number of requests for DoD

support to our law enforcement partners. Moreover, adversaries' are progressively using cyber capabilities to impact the United States, particularly through interference in our election processes, to an extent where DoD's Federal, State, and local partners require DoD assistance to address these threats. Expectations regarding DoD support to civil authorities are greater now than they have ever been and are increasing.

### **Strengthening National Defense**

#### Western Hemisphere

As stated in the President's Interim National Security Strategic Guidance, "the vital national interests of the United States are inextricably bound to the fortunes of our closest neighbors in the Americas"; therefore, "we will expand our engagement and partnerships throughout the Western Hemisphere—and especially with Canada and Mexico—based on principles of mutual respect and equality and a commitment to economic prosperity, security, human rights, and dignity." U.S. efforts are strengthened when DoD works with allies and partners to take collective action to counter threats. Today, the Department is working to reinvigorate regional relationships, including focused cooperation with Canada – the United States' closest regional ally – not only to defend the homeland but also to strengthen regional and global security. DoD works with Canada and Mexico, including through the North American Defense Ministerial, to strengthen the defense of North America and support Mexico's increasing leadership role in the region and willingness to cooperate with DoD on mutual defense objectives.

The Department of Defense maintains a special commitment to uphold strong defense and security relationships with its partners in the Western Hemisphere, in support of the President's vision to build a hemisphere that is democratic, prosperous, and secure. DoD's partnerships in the region are bound by geographic proximity, economic and cultural ties, and shared values such as democracy, freedom, the protection of human rights, and the rule of law, with a shared vision of advancing mutual defense and security interests both regionally and globally, and where the United States remains the key strategic partner. Our defense and security relationships with a majority of nations in the region remain strong. Our commitment to

security cooperation to help our partners enhance their capabilities and build their defense institutions remains a top priority.

Collaborative defense and security relationships in the region are vital to advancing U.S. security interests. Despite the challenge presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, the United States remains the partner of choice – indeed the most valued partner - in the Western Hemisphere. In the face of the challenges presented by COVID-19 DoD continues to work with its partners, and with the support of Congress DoD provided substantial medical assistance. In addition, as the longstanding leader in global health, our domestic pandemic response will remain a top priority, but outpacing China’s and Russia’s “vaccine diplomacy” to save lives and alleviate suffering will provide the United States positional advantage to endure across generations.

In addition to international engagements, DoD supports interagency efforts to counter illicit trafficking in the Western Hemisphere, which not only affects the United States, but also the safety, security, and prosperity of the people of the region. Drug cartels and criminal organizations create fear, promote corruption, increase political instability, and negatively affect legitimate economies. DoD supports U.S. law enforcement agencies counter illicit trafficking by providing monitoring and detection capabilities. U.S. Southern Command’s, Joint Inter-Agency Task Force, leads a multi-national effort to conduct interdiction operations, and defense capacity-building programs with partner countries who contribute to the success of this mission. DoD also works closely with the Departments of State, Homeland Security, and Justice to promote cooperation among the militaries and law enforcement agencies of our partners, and also to emphasize human rights training as fundamental to the basic security of citizens and the effectiveness of military and police actions.

#### Multi-Domain Defense

The United States’ adversaries have invested heavily in advanced weapon systems and highly capable delivery platforms and they have shown indications of intent to target the U.S. homeland if necessary to achieve their strategic objectives. The Department of Defense is committed to maintaining its decisive advantage in the air, surface, undersea, cyber, and space

domains, denying any potential adversaries the same advantage, and to defending the U.S. homeland through strengthening U.S. defense in the strategic approaches to North America. DoD is focused on deterring, and, if necessary, defeating the complex nation-state threats that are now challenging DoD's military advantage. U.S. Northern Command is making prudent investments in capabilities that will enable us to deter, detect, and defeat these emerging threats through the development of capabilities that will provide enhanced all-domain awareness, information dominance, and decision superiority.

#### *Air Defense*

Presently, adversaries are able to hold North America at risk through their development of advanced air and maritime launch platforms and the deployment of weapon systems with increasing lethality and stand-off distances. DoD and our Canadian Forces partners provide for the air defense of North America against these threats through the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD). For more than 62 years, the United States has depended on an extraordinary relationship with Canada, an essential ally in the defense of North America. NORAD, the world's only bi-national command, has adapted and evolved to meet new challenges and stands firm in its resolve to defend the U.S. and Canadian homelands.

The United States and Canada are committed to develop ways and means to increase surveillance and detection that provides Indications and Warning (I&W) across the northern approaches of the United States and Canada. One example is the combined United States and Canadian commitment to modernize the North Warning System – the radars that provide threat warning and surveillance for the northern approaches to North America. To maximize these surveillance capabilities, DoD has been improving its ability to integrate multiple new and legacy sensors, and to fuse that sensor data into a comprehensive understanding of the potential adversarial actions within the air domain. DoD is also equipping alert fighters with Active Electronically Scanned Array (AESA) radars to provide them the ability to detect potential attacks. This is a part of a phased effort to enhance our ability to detect aerospace threats and cue air and missile defense systems against them. These improvements will enhance U.S. and Canada's defense across the northern approaches, helping to empower U.S. and Canadian national leaders to protect our nations more effectively.



Along with these improvements, DoD maintains Operation NOBLE EAGLE to control access to sovereign U.S. airspace. This mission sustains fighters on alert in a tiered response for air defense and aerospace control missions. Equally important is the role of the integrated air defense system around the National Capital Region (NCR), coupled with upgraded Electro-Optic/Infrared (EO/IR) cameras within the NCR, that provide an important defensive capability to prevent coercive threats to U.S. national leadership.

#### *Missile Defense*

The United States is strengthening its homeland missile defenses and is pursuing more advanced capabilities to defend against rogue state threats. Today the United States is defended by the Ground-based Mid-course Defense (GMD) system – 44 Ground-Based Interceptors (GBIs) supported by a globally integrated network of sensors and a command and control system.

To improve the current GMD system, the Department recently committed to the development of the Next Generation Interceptor (NGI), which will augment and potentially replace the aging current GMD interceptors, and improve the overall reliability of the inventory. DoD is also developing a new generation of advanced ground- and space-based sensors to detect, track, and discriminate enemy missiles more effectively, including through the completion of the Long Range Discrimination Radar in Alaska and the development of new space-based sensors to track more sophisticated missile threats.

#### *Maritime Defense*

In defense of the maritime approaches to the United States, DoD is committed to maintaining a decisive advantage in the surface and undersea domains, and to denying any potential adversaries the same advantage. To defend the maritime domain, DoD's employs naval forces to detect, track, interdict, and defeat maritime threats from hostile nation-states and non-state actors at a maximum distance from the U.S. coastline. As part of this effort, DoD provides global maritime situational awareness which enables timely, accurate decision-making to address

emergent maritime threats, and informs maritime threat response among Federal partners through the Maritime Operational Threat Response process.

DoD is collaborating with partners, both international and domestic, to enhance maritime domain awareness and capability. For example, the commander of the newly re-established U.S. Second Fleet in Norfolk is dual-hatted as the commander of NATO's Joint Force Command. This allows both headquarters to synchronize their exercise programs and operations in the Atlantic to maintain sea and air lines of communication. The Department is also partnering closely with the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) to enhance DoD's maritime situational awareness of threats on and under the sea. DoD and the USCG regularly work together to secure U.S. ports ensuring DoD's ability to deploy forces overseas, to support allies and partners, to deliver humanitarian assistance, and to provide a stabilizing and reassuring presence around the world.

#### Mission Assurance

Through its Mission Assurance program, DoD is identifying the critical assets required for execution of its mission, and assesses them against natural hazards and deliberate threats posed by our adversaries. DoD regularly works with public and private sector partners to identify and share threat information affecting Defense Critical Infrastructure and the Defense Industrial Base. The purpose of these activities is to ensure, among other things, DoD's ability to mobilize, deploy and sustain the joint force in a contested homeland environment. Force projection is a key component of defeating adversary aggression, and DoD's ability to mobilize rapidly and efficiently in a time of crisis is an indispensable element of deterrence.

DoD's Mission Assurance efforts promote resiliency and/or redundancy in the infrastructure DoD has identified as critical to mission execution. In recent years, DoD has made strides to improve its ability to identify the most pressing vulnerabilities and potential adversaries' most likely means of threatening DoD's most critical assets. As this program continues to develop, it will be an important component of DoD's ability to deny potential adversaries the ability to threaten the U.S. homeland prior to and during conflict. A key component of this new approach is working with interagency partners to improve the resiliency of "outside the wire" critical infrastructure assets that the Department relies on, but neither owns

nor controls. From commercial electrical power to maritime, air and terrestrial transportation systems, to DoD communications networks, the homeland infrastructure DoD requires is at risk from both traditional and novel threat vectors – cyber, space, supply chain manipulation, irregular warfare and a range of high-end weapons. Working through the geographic Combatant Commands, the Joint Staff, and others, DoD has executed a pilot program to advance understanding of the complex interdependencies of these assets, their vulnerabilities to them, and what is required to ensure they remain available in a crisis. DoD is building on lessons learned from the pilot to inform further mission assurance efforts.

#### Cyberspace

DoD forces operate in the cyberspace domain, just as U.S. forces constantly engage in the air, sea, and land domains, observing adversary activities, anticipating threats, and gaining insights that DoD can use to shape the strategic environment. In partnership with the interagency and, crucially, with allies and partners abroad, DoD is defending forward to degrade, disrupt, defeat, and deter malicious activity in cyberspace. This included DoD's successful support to whole-of-government efforts to defend the 2018 and 2020 elections from foreign interference. DoD's work in the cyberspace domain has also led to increased policy options and innovative new lines of effort, such as Hunt Forward operations, which combine US and partner nation cyber operators to collaboratively identify adversary malware and render it obsolete against ourselves, everyday Americans, and the broader digital ecosystem.

#### **Partners' Increasing Reliance on DoD**

DoD has a long history of providing Defense Support of Civil Authorities, supporting its Federal, State, and local partners in responding to man-made and natural disasters, public health emergencies, and support to law enforcement to include securing special events, securing the international borders of the United States, and, more recently, in strengthening interagency collaboration to enhance cybersecurity. The severity of these crises are increasingly overwhelming our Federal, State, and local partners. They often require significant DoD support to meet their Federal mission requirements making DoD an indispensable part of the national response to domestic incidents.

To enhance our cyber defenses, DoD and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) are cooperating to secure and defend the U.S. homeland from cyber threats, capitalizing on our departments' mutually reinforcing roles. DoD used its cyber capabilities to help protect the 2018 and 2020 national elections from foreign threats, and it continues to employ these tools in cooperation with our Federal partners to detect and respond to foreign cyber intrusions, and broaden the range of response options to acts of cyber aggression. Our partnership is most evident with the detailing of 20 individuals from DoD to DHS to support day-to-day activities. The Department, in collaboration with interagency and private financial and energy sector partners, is developing a "Pathfinder" process for real-time sharing of actionable cyber threat information.

Guided by Secretary Austin's priorities to defeat the COVID-19 pandemic and defend the force against COVID-19, while protecting our nation, DoD continues to work closely with its partners at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the lead Federal agency, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the lead Federal coordinating agency. DoD has been a linchpin for HHS and FEMA's COVID-19 response providing deployable medical personnel, significant acquisition and logistics expertise, and providing thousands of National Guard personnel to all 50 States, 3 territories, and the District of Columbia. Military personnel have augmented medical staff at hospitals, nursing homes, and assisted living facilities; delivered food to hard-hit communities; supported logistics efforts to supply medical equipment; built alternate care facilities; conducted community-based medical screening; conducted laboratory testing; provided installation support; and assisted with fatality management among other tasks. DoD personnel have also administered more than 8.2 million cumulative vaccine doses to DoD individuals and the general public through DoD supported Community Vaccination Centers. DoD's provision of key medical and non-medical capabilities, personnel, and supplies to support the States, the District of Columbia, U.S. territories, or international partners, was only possible because of strong, mutually supporting partnerships with our partners. DoD is institutionalizing the lessons learned from COVID-19 and evaluating its preparations for future pandemics.

DoD also regularly support Federal, State, and local partners to respond to other natural disasters, specifically hurricanes and wildfires. Recent hurricane and wildfire seasons have increased the severity of these naturally occurring incidents which has resulted in increased requirements for DoD capabilities and capacity to meet mission requirements.

On the southern border of the United States, DoD continues to provide support to the DHS in support of the DHS mission to secure our southern border, subject to the availability of DoD capabilities based on DoD mission requirements. As of March 29, 2021, 4,078 military personnel – principally National Guard personnel on active duty (Title 10) – were providing support to DHS. As of March 29, 2021, DoD had provided 5,606 hours of the 10,000 hours of aviation support requested by DHS for Fiscal Year 2021. Additionally, the surge in migration of Unaccompanied Children (UC) has resulted in the UC exceeding the capacity of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to house and care for them. The Administration considers finding remedies to this situation a top priority. Since 2012, DoD has provided HHS vacant facilities and land on military installations for HHS to house UC temporarily. Due to the current unprecedented surge of UC, the Administration estimates that facilities, or land built-out with temporary soft-sided shelters, will be needed to house them. Secretary Austin has approved HHS requests to house UC at three installations Ft. Bliss, Texas; Joint Base San Antonio in Lackland, Texas; and Camp Roberts, California. DoD will likely remain the Federal partner of choice from which HHS will seek assistance to address this urgent capacity shortfall.

DoD also regularly supports law enforcement agencies to provide capabilities and capacity. Civilian law enforcement agencies most frequently request DoD provide support for planned domestic major events (e.g., Presidential nomination conventions, Presidential Inaugurations, international summits, and major sporting events). The safety and security of these planned major events is a responsibility shared by local, State, and Federal authorities. At the height of nationwide civil unrest in the spring of 2020, more than 43,000 National Guard personnel in 33 States and the District of Columbia were called upon to assist Federal, State, and local civilian law enforcement agencies in restoring and maintaining order, protecting their communities, and defending the rights of all Americans to protest safely and peacefully. The D.C. National Guard were also called upon to respond to protests on January 6, 2021. Since

then, the U.S. Capitol Police have requested National Guard personnel to help secure the U.S. Capitol building and perimeter. As of April 5, 2021, DoD continues to provide 2,260 National Guard personnel to support the efforts of its law enforcement partners in the District of Columbia to provide for the safety and security of the U.S. Capitol.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, DoD is increasingly aware that our adversaries are striving to challenge our competitive military advantage that requires continued enhancements to DoD's multi-domain defense to maintain the competitive advantage over our adversaries. DoD's engagements with our hemispheric partners will be critical to advancing U.S. national interests in the region and preventing our adversaries from increasing their influence. Domestically, DoD expects that Federal, State, and local partners will continue to rely on DoD to assist them in meeting their mission requirements to respond to disasters and emergencies.

It is an honor to serve alongside our uniformed and civilian members of the Department of Defense and I continued to be inspired by all they do every day to keep our nation safe and secure.

Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Rogers, and distinguished Members of the Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. I would like to express my appreciation for the support of Congress and thank you for your continued commitment and support of the men and women of the Department of Defense.

**Robert G. Salesses**  
**Performing the Duties of Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense & Global Security**

Robert Salesses began Performing the Duties of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Global Security on January 20, 2021.

Mr. Salesses currently serves as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense Integration and DSCA. As the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense Integration and Defense Support of Civil Authorities, Mr. Salesses is responsible for the development of national homeland defense and security policy. He oversees the implementation of homeland defense and defense support of civil authorities' policy and plans and programs, ensuring the objectives addressing the emerging security challenges faced by the nation are achieved. Working closely with Federal, State, and local leadership, law enforcement, public health, and emergency management, he oversees DoD's response to national emergency operations in support of civil authorities.

Mr. Salesses is a retired United States Marine Corps Officer. His career included global planning and execution of numerous national, significant regional focused projects and contingencies to include: the withdrawal of critical nuclear stockpiles from former Soviet States; the development of multinational counter narcotics policies with Central and South America; and the liberation of Kuwait during the Gulf War, where he was awarded the Bronze Star. Mr. Salesses's military career culminated in his assignment to the Joint Staff where he worked global contingency missions.

Mr. Salesses began his Federal civilian service career shortly after September 11, 2001, serving as the Deputy Special Assistant for the Homeland Security Task Force. During this period, Mr. Salesses supervised strategic planning, military operational support to civil authorities, and the emergency preparedness activities of the Department of Defense. He was appointed to the Senior Executive Service in 2005. He was awarded the Presidential Rank Award at the rank of Meritorious Executive for his decisive leadership and keen program management skills, his contributions to the National Response Plan, and the National Strategy for Homeland Security.

Mr. Salesses graduated from Rhode Island College, with a Bachelor of Arts in Management and Economics. He received his Master of Arts in National Security and Strategic Studies from the Naval War College.

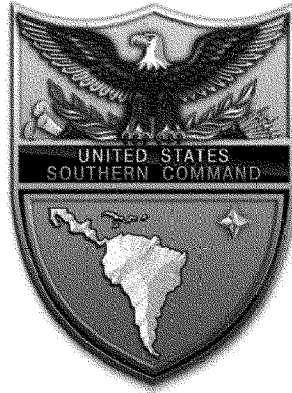
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**STATEMENT OF  
ADMIRAL CRAIG S. FALLER  
COMMANDER, UNITED STATES SOUTHERN COMMAND**

**BEFORE THE 117<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS**

**HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**APRIL 14, 2021**





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Over two years ago, I was entrusted with the great responsibility of leading the men and women of the United States Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) in working with our partners to secure our hemisphere. At the time, our region faced a seemingly insurmountable crisis of illicit drugs killing tens of thousands of Americans every year, institutional instability and corruption in the region, and external state actors (ESA), like the People's Republic of China (PRC), looking to exploit the conditions posed by these threats. I committed to tackling these challenges by building trust with the nations of this region and within our own interagency – by being the best partner we can be and by strengthening and complementing U.S interagency and partner nation capabilities to address these threats together. With your support, we have made notable strides, but much work remains to be done. I welcome this opportunity to discuss the significant national security challenges and opportunities we still face in Latin America and the Caribbean. This region is our neighborhood, directly tied to us in every domain. A threat to our neighbors is a threat to the United States; and an opportunity for our neighbors is an opportunity for us to make our neighborhood stronger together.

In fact, after two years in this position, I feel an incredible sense of urgency. This Hemisphere in which we live is under assault. The very democratic principles and values that bind us together are being actively undermined by violent transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) and the PRC and Russia. We are losing our positional advantage in this Hemisphere and immediate action is needed to reverse this trend. The intervention goes well beyond economic influence, the PRC's strategic outlook with over 40 ports in progress, significant loans that are used as political leverage and predatory practices demonstrated in illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing are weakening democratic institutions and leveraging the future of this Hemisphere. We have seen many of these same tactics in Asia and Africa over the last few

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decades and we are well aware of the results. We must act now to avoid those same results in our own hemisphere.

**Strategic Environment**

The National Defense Strategy (NDS) identifies defending the homeland as a critical defense objective and recognizes that our homeland cannot be safe without a stable and secure Western Hemisphere. USSOUTHCOM's primary mission is to keep our neighborhood safe from those seeking to do us harm so that our home remains secure. The threats in the Western Hemisphere are persistent, they're real, and they represent a formidable risk to our national security. Perhaps most urgently, this region has been one of the hardest hit by COVID-19; the health, economic, and social impacts of which will alter the hemisphere for years to come. In the midst of this pandemic, two back-to-back major hurricanes devastated Central America creating even greater economic strain. The pandemic and these unprecedented storms struck on top of an already challenging vicious circle of threats that jeopardize a secure, stable, and democratic Western Hemisphere. These threats include ESAs like the PRC, Russia, and Iran that actively seek to take advantage of the nascent, fragile democracies in this region and look to exploit the region's resources and proximity to the United States; TCOs that run all forms of illicit activities to turn a profit, at the expense of the rule of law, and more importantly, of the lives of all who are impacted along the way; and malign regional state actors – those countries within our own neighborhood, like Cuba, Venezuela, and Nicaragua, that perpetuate corruption and challenge freedom and democracy by opening the door to ESAs and TCOs at the expense of their own people. TCOs are a direct threat to the U.S. homeland. We cannot face such daunting challenges on our own. The only way to counter these threats is to strengthen our partners in the

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region – we must build OUR team to win this strategic competition. If our neighbors are stronger, we're all stronger.

**Threats and Opportunities**

**COVID-19 and Fragility in the Hemisphere.** There is an accelerating spiral of instability gripping the region as the pandemic has increased the region's fragility. Latin America and the Caribbean have suffered among the highest COVID-19 death rates in the world, and during my trips to the region, I witnessed the profound physical and emotional strain nations are experiencing. With only about 8 percent of the world's population, Latin America and the Caribbean are disproportionately impacted with nearly one fifth of global cases. Though nothing compares to the toll on human life, there will also be a significant socioeconomic impact on our neighbors for years to come. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), per capita income in Latin America will not recover from the pandemic until 2025 – later than any other region in the world. Coming on the heels of widespread public protests against governments throughout the region at the end of 2019, these COVID-19 losses coupled with longstanding socioeconomic grievances and corruption have created the conditions for even greater instability and unrest among our partner nations. These conditions create a more fragile region that serves as fertile ground for our competitors to advance their own interests, both malign and legitimate, making this challenge even more complex. Even some of our strongest partners are at risk of instability due to this confluence of factors.

Our partners' military and security force budgets are facing extreme pressure as governments use their limited resources to address the pandemic. Security forces are increasingly focused on the very near-term need for tactical items such as fuel, food, personal protective equipment (PPE), and vaccines at the expense of security operations. They are

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concerned that TCOs will gain even more freedom of action in their countries as conditions for corruption and illicit activity grow.

In order to gain more access, presence, and influence in the region, the PRC and Russia are taking advantage of the pandemic, deploying medical diplomacy and disinformation campaigns – often overpromising and under delivering. The PRC is offering \$1 billion in loans to the region for their COVID-19 vaccine and improvements to medical infrastructure, securing agreements with Argentina, Brazil, Peru, and Venezuela. This will further indebt the region to the PRC, which already holds \$165B in loans. The PRC aims to enhance medical exchange programs, exploiting the pandemic to advance its One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative in trade, technology, and infrastructure. Beijing is also using COVID-19 as a pretext to donate Huawei technology that integrates with its 5G networks and Safe City programs – touting its social monitoring model as an effective and inexpensive contact tracing solution.

Russia, too, is seizing the pandemic as an opportunity to increase its influence in countries where it previously had limited access. COVID-19 has also provided Russia with another avenue by which to expand its campaign to outcompete the U.S. in the information domain, pushing narratives about U.S. mismanagement of COVID-19 and claiming U.S. government sanctions are choking the Venezuelan people at their most vulnerable time.

*What we're doing about it:* Good friends are consistent and committed. While maintaining force health protection as a priority, USSOUTHCOM immediately responded to the needs of our partners in this crisis by providing humanitarian assistance to alleviate the burden on health systems throughout the region. Since April 2020, USSOUTHCOM has executed over 485 of these projects in 28 countries, with a total investment of more than \$56M, in addition to

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the humanitarian assistance delivered by State and USAID. Our efforts range from deploying field hospitals to providing critical PPE.<sup>1</sup> The U.S. government has delivered \$226 million worth of aid, with an additional \$35 million on its way, which is more than double what the PRC has donated. As part of overall U.S. government humanitarian efforts, DoD's humanitarian assistance program is making an important difference in these nations and helping to build trust and bring stability to the region. In every conversation with my counterparts in the region, they lead with "your assistance has been critical as we face COVID-19." If the U.S. wants to be the partner of choice – that means being first to respond in a crisis. Missions like the 2019 deployment of the USNS COMFORT provided world-class medical care to over 68,000 people in 12 countries and enhanced the medical readiness of our US and partner medical personnel. We work closely with State and USAID to find innovative ways to deliver this kind of relevant and timely support to our partners and demonstrate our commitment to the region.

**External State Actors (ESAs) and Malign Regional Actors.**

**People's Republic of China.** The NDS's central idea of "expanding the competitive space" must be applied globally, not only in the Pacific, but also in our own neighborhood. The NDS requires us to "sustain our advantages in the Western Hemisphere" and maintain a favorable balance of power in this region, while bolstering partners against coercion.

The PRC continues to increase its self-serving activities to gain global influence and leverage across all domains in the USSOUTHCOM AOR: cyber, space, extractive and energy industries, transportation hubs, roads, infrastructure, telecommunications, legal and illegal fishing, agriculture, and military training – Spanish and Portuguese-language military education

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<sup>1</sup> Only PPE that was available within the partner nation or for purchase from a third party were donated due to the simultaneous shortage we faced in the United States.

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modeled after U.S. professional military education. The PRC is also “gifting” security supplies and equipment as a way to gain access and win favor with regional security forces. As already discussed, COVID-19 has brought on a new era of medical diplomacy that the PRC seeks to leverage to its advantage. All of these overtures, to include the OBOR initiative, are part of a concerted effort by Beijing to indebt fragile countries in the region, impinge on our partners’ and allies’ sovereignty, and use its influence to extract concessions when needed. The PRC also thrives on and enables the corruption and lack of transparency in business and political deals exhibited in some of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. Beijing pairs these engagements with aggressive information operations that spread disinformation – emblematic of how the PRC’s actions are guided by different values than those of the U.S. and our regional partners.

The PRC is rapidly advancing toward their goal of economic dominance in the region within the next ten years. In 2019, the PRC surpassed the U.S. as the leading trade partner with Brazil, Chile, Peru, and Uruguay and is now the region’s second-largest trading partner behind the U.S. From 2002 to 2019, PRC trade with Latin America soared from \$17 billion to over \$315 billion, with plans to reach \$500 billion in trade by 2025.

The PRC is also seeking to establish global logistics and basing infrastructure in our hemisphere in order to project and sustain military power at greater distances. Outside our region, Beijing consistently abuses commercial arrangements at host country ports to support military functions and obfuscate the true purpose of its overseas installations.

Chinese Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing just outside or within the outer limits of South American Economic Exclusion Zones (EEZ) is another predatory practice

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that poses a threat to the livelihood of coastal nations. The Chinese government admittedly subsidizes this activity and is reluctant to curtail it because of its importance to PRC's food security and economy, with IUU fishing costing the region about \$2.7 billion in lost revenue annually. In August, activity of a fleet of approximately 350 Chinese operated vessels posed a threat to the Galapagos Marine Reserve and endangered species resulting in an international outcry, exposing this malign activity.

**Russia.** Russia is increasingly asserting itself in Latin America and the Caribbean, pursuing a strategy intended to grow Moscow's influence and undermine U.S. leadership in the region over the long term. Russia is actively engaging in this region to counter what it views as the U.S. meddling in its near-abroad. Expanding air and sea access to project military power, it has agreements with Venezuela and Nicaragua that allow Russian warships to visit on short notice. Moscow has executed three strategic bomber deployments to the region since 2008 and made more than 40 port calls since 2010. Russia doubled its naval deployments in this region, going from five (2008-2014), to 11 (2015-2020). Russia is trying to make inroads in the hemisphere by providing security training and has conducted \$2.3 billion in weapons and military equipment sales in the last 10 years. At the same time, Moscow is working to discredit the U.S. by flooding the region's information space with disinformation, to include hundreds of articles distorting U.S. security actions. In 2020, Russian Spanish-language media outlets more than doubled their social media followers from 7 million to over 18 million.

**Iran.** Iran uses both formal and informal instruments to expand its influence in Latin America and the Caribbean and prepare for any potential contingencies. Tehran seeks to expand its economic ties to the region, and leverages its security expertise and well-established diaspora in the region to expand trade and its overall influence. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-

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Qods Force, Tehran's primary external operations unit for exporting the Islamic Revolution, maintains operatives in foreign embassies, charities, and religious and cultural institutions to enhance ties globally. In the past year, Iran has expanded economic and security cooperation with Venezuela on fuel transfers, food staples, and military assistance, possibly expanding the Qods Force's presence in the region. Tehran also relies on a system of Iranian state-sponsored and non-state facilitated media outlets to shape the information domain to generate empathy for Iran and Shia Islam and diminish Western influence in the hemisphere. Tehran maintains a Spanish-language channel that reaches 17 countries in the region.

**Venezuela.** The Venezuelan people continue to suffer under the illegitimate Maduro regime. They lack basic services, clean water, food, and health care. The impacts of COVID-19, gas shortages, increasing levels of unemployment and inflation (at over 3000%), and human rights violations all compound one of the most severe humanitarian crises in the history of this hemisphere. The illegitimate regime is even struggling to provide basic services within Caracas, to which it previously diverted most of its resources to avoid threats to its control. Venezuelan migration continues to destabilize the region, straining the health systems and economies of Venezuela's neighboring countries. As of December 2020, approximately 5.5 million refugees and migrants from Venezuela were displaced globally, with some 4.6 million remaining in Latin America and the Caribbean. Venezuela is also the primary foothold and access point in the region for ESAs, enables TCO activities, and gives refuge to regional terrorist groups.

**Cuba.** Cuba remains a regional corrosive influence that enables and inspires autocratic regimes in the hemisphere and is the primary supporter of the illegitimate Maduro regime in Venezuela. Cuba is the entry point for ESA influence in the region and its reach extends beyond this hemisphere.



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**Nicaragua.** Nicaragua's current political crisis that began in 2018 continues, with President Ortega's policies still leading to calls for his resignation. We are already seeing a concerning suppression of the opposition, in advance of this year's election. Managua maintains close ties with Moscow, whose security assistance to Nicaragua focuses on Professional Military Education, donations, and the provision of humanitarian assistance in a strategy to subjugate the Nicaraguan government and counter U.S. regional goals. Over the past decade Russia built a joint counternarcotic training center in Nicaragua, trained at least 500 Latin American and Caribbean officers, and conducted multiple maritime and air deployments to the country.

*What we're doing about it.* We work to effectively posture U.S. forces to ensure we can achieve NDS objectives. USSOUTHCOM remains committed to maintaining our advantage and to our allies and partners to protect and advance mutual security interests. We, along with State do this through a wide range of security cooperation and assistance activities aimed at building partner capacity such as DOD's Joint Exercise and Humanitarian Assurances Programs and State's Foreign Military Financing (FMF) and International Military Education Training (IMET) programs, as well as information and intelligence sharing. To put it simply, we outcompete bad guys by being the good guys. While our adversaries look for opportunities to extract, we look for ways to build up. We work with partners to understand where their capability gaps are and how we can help fill those in – stronger partners are better equipped to secure our hemisphere, our neighborhood. Our training is responsive to the needs of our partners, it's the highest possible quality, and includes emphasis on professionalism to include values like respect for human rights and the rule of law as an inherent element of professional military and security forces. It emphasizes the importance of a strong non-commissioned officer corps and empowering women as part of the entire force. At USSOUTHCOM, we are committed to

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integrating gender perspectives into all of our activities, and we encourage our partners to create structural changes in their militaries to allow for the same through our Women, Peace and Security in the Western Hemisphere Initiative. For a nation's defense and security forces to be sustainable, legitimate, and respected, the meaningful inclusion of women is imperative. Our Human Rights Office, the only such program at any Combatant Command, actively promotes building stronger military human rights programs with partner nation militaries.

Our exercise program is designed to counter threats, build readiness, and enhance our partners' capabilities, interoperability, and domain awareness. This is a vital component of our strategy, allowing us to conduct multi-domain exercises with our partners and build interoperability and readiness that improve our collective ability to secure the region.

Being on the field, with a presence at Cooperative Security Locations in El Salvador, Colombia, and Curacao, and a Forward Operating Site in Honduras, home of Joint Task Force Bravo (JTF-Bravo), enables us to answer the call and build trust, when our neighbors ask for help in a crisis, as they did following the back-to-back major hurricanes that devastated Central America late last year. In the aftermath of **Hurricanes Eta and Iota**, our forces at JTF-Bravo, with support from our components and allies, responded immediately, conducting search and rescue operations and delivering lifesaving aid to areas isolated by the storms, delivering over 1.2 million pounds of life-saving humanitarian aid and rescuing 852 people. There is no better way to demonstrate U.S. commitment to the region than to respond to our neighbors' needs in times of crisis.

Through our security cooperation program, we focus on building our partners' capacity to conduct ground and maritime interdiction, defend their cyber networks, secure their borders and sovereignty, and maintain domain awareness. The Near Coastal Patrol Vessel (NCPV) program

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is a USSOUTHCOM initiative to address selected Caribbean and Central American partners' requirements for a maritime patrol vessel with the capacity to conduct sustained Maritime Interdiction Operations. Fielding these vessels in key partner nations will increase interoperability and regional ability to counter regional threats, the nefarious activities of which pose an existential threat to many of our partners.

Another important capability to outcompete our adversaries in the region is intelligence-driven – we must gather information across all domains and share it as widely as possible with our partners. We shine a light on the PRC's predatory and corrupt actions so our partners can recognize the PRC's malign activities and make well-informed decisions on engaging Beijing. We continue to convey to our partners and allies that Beijing and Moscow seek to undermine their national sovereignty and fosters instability that allows TCOs a foothold within their borders. We also highlight that partnering with the PRC requires turning a blind eye to malign behavior that ranges from corruption and human rights abuses to environmental degradation and natural resource depletion.

**Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs) and Violent Extremist Organizations (VEOs).**

**TCOs.** TCOs are violent and they pose a national security threat to the United States homeland. They share the goal of PRC, Russia, and other malign actors to advance their self-interests at the expense of our partners' sovereignty. TCOs engage in a wide array of illegal activities including drug and weapons trafficking, human smuggling and trafficking, and money laundering. TCOs make up an approximately \$90 billion a year life-threatening enterprise through cocaine profits alone and are responsible for thousands of deaths in the United States each year, forging a trail of violence, corruption, and instability through our region in route to

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our homeland. In many cases, TCOs are better funded than partner nation security forces. In 2020, drug traffickers likely attempted to move an estimated 2,300 metric tons of cocaine, departing from the source zone toward the United States, Europe, and other markets. Their efforts persist despite combined security operations and COVID quarantine measures (such as border and port closures), indicating these traffickers are bent on undermining security and prosperity for us, our allies, and partner nations all for the sake of profit. The COVID-19 environment has caused some traffickers to stockpile cocaine, and complicated coca eradication operations in the Andean Ridge. Traffickers have adapted to the COVID environment, cocaine flow has increased and rebounded to pre-pandemic levels. We must remain ready with increased U.S. and partner nation presence and pressure to stem this flood.

Narcotrafficking is a scourge throughout the hemisphere and TCOs aren't the only ones who benefit – the Maduro regime is heavily involved in trafficking narcotics, overtly supporting narcoterrorism while the innocent citizens of Venezuela continue to suffer under extreme oppression and grinding poverty. From 2015 to 2019 the known drug flow out of Venezuela increased by 145%. Over the last few years, the illegitimate Maduro regime has collaborated with National Liberation Army (ELN) and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia Dissidents (FARC-D) to move hundreds of metric tons of cocaine from Colombia through Venezuela via non-commercial aircraft and commercial cargo ships. This relationship also extends to illicit gold mining, a critical commodity that Maduro uses to sustain his illegitimate regime and military loyalty at the expense of the Venezuelan people.

**Regional Terrorist Organizations.** The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia Dissidents (FARC-D) and National Liberation Army (ELN) are the two main organized armed terrorist groups and drug trafficking organizations in the region whose actions pose a direct

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threat to our homeland and partners. The FARC-D is composed of remnants of the FARC, who traffic drugs and engage in extortion and illegal mining to generate revenue. The FARC-D targets Venezuelan nationals for recruitment, using money, food, and safe passage to encourage or coerce desperate Venezuelan migrants to support their cause. The ELN also remains committed to fighting the Colombian government and does so violently through the use of improvised explosive devices and vehicle-borne explosives. This group fundraises primarily through the drug trade and illicit mining, as well as by imposing “war taxes” on drug labs and other businesses in its control. The ELN and FARC-D benefit from unchallenged freedom of movement and protection in Venezuela, with much of their leadership operating with impunity from within Venezuelan borders. Venezuela has become a paradise of impunity for narcotraffickers, while the Venezuelan people are forced to endure a nightmare of insecurity.

**Al-Qa`ida and ISIS** maintain some sympathizers in the region. After ISIS’s intense propaganda campaign from 2014 to 2017, as many as 200 Trinidadians left the Caribbean islands to join the fight in Iraq and Syria. Several family members who traveled with the fighters are still in the Middle East and seek to return to the region, which will challenge the region’s security services at a time when they are already overstretched due to the pandemic. **Hizballah** leverages the region’s Lebanese diaspora throughout Latin America and the Caribbean for fundraising, recruiting, and logistical support. Operationally, Hizballah’s Islamic Jihad Organization (IJO), its external operations arm, is responsible for at least three high-profile attacks in the region and three other planned operations that were disrupted.

**Special Interest Aliens (SIAs).** In 2020, U.S. and partner law enforcement, with support from the intelligence community, arrested 66 Latin American human smuggling facilitators involved in moving non-U.S. citizens who potentially pose a national security risk to the United

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States or its interests. These facilitators move SIAs from countries like Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen - areas with pronounced VEO activity - through Latin America and toward the U.S. for fees ranging from \$10,000 to \$50,000 per person. This business is dangerous, but lucrative, generating between \$150 to \$350M a year for the facilitators.

*What we're doing about it.* Our regional partnerships are vital to security and prosperity in this hemisphere and to our collective ability to confront global challenges including ESAs, TCOs, and VEOs. The men and women of USSOUTHCOM work hard every day alongside our strong interagency and international partners to disrupt and degrade these adversaries, while maintaining U.S. presence, access, and influence in our hemisphere. The Joint Interagency Task Force-South (JIATF-S) in Key West, conducts our statutorily-directed mission to detect and monitor illicit narcotics, delivering a high return on modest investments. Last year, this international and interagency "team of teams" helped keep 264 metric tons of cocaine off U.S. streets. JIATF-S-facilitated interdictions historically account for almost four times the cocaine seized by all domestic and border enforcement efforts combined. In an operating area that is 11 times larger than the United States, JIATF-S provides the best bang for the taxpayer buck when it comes to keeping drugs from arriving on our shores.

Last year, recognizing the seriousness of the TCO threat to the U.S. homeland, the Secretary of Defense authorized an all domain enhanced counternarcotic operation to reduce the flow of illicit drugs, degrade TCOs, and increase interoperability and readiness. In the past year, the U.S. Navy stepped up, providing more ship presence and maritime patrol aircraft. These assets have achieved significant return on investment as well as provided readiness building opportunities for our Fourth Fleet and Navy crews. This initiative included an increase in

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surface and air platforms, other intelligence assets, and a Security Forces Assistance Brigade to work with our partners. We are putting these assets to good use, integrating with interagency and international partners across all domains to ensure long-term success. Through the employment of these additional assets we increased the targeting of known air and maritime illicit trafficking events by 65%. Our whole of government and partner nation approach has disrupted over 240 metric tons of cocaine and almost 100,000 pounds of marijuana. We have detained over 700 suspected drug smugglers, denied almost \$6 billion of profits to TCOs, and most importantly, saved the lives of more than 2000 Americans. A Security Forces Assistance Brigade is currently training Colombian and Honduran forces to more effectively fuse their intelligence to inform manual eradication and lab destruction efforts – helping to stop the drug threat closer to the source, before it begins its journey to the U.S. We plan on expanding this effort into other nations in Central America with a focus on capabilities to counter TCOs.

With this increase of U.S. all domain presence and pressure – a sign of U.S. leadership and commitment to the region – our partner nations, who could have easily turned inward to focus on the COVID-19 crisis, instead stepped up their participation to counter TCOs, demonstrating their commitment to countering this threat. Key partners like Colombia, Costa Rica, Panama, Guatemala, El Salvador, and others have been involved in almost 60 percent of drug disruptions during this operation. Years of sustained security cooperation with our partners throughout our hemisphere is really paying dividends – we have helped build the capability of these nations to operate with us to disrupt drug shipments before those loads enter the homeland.

We have very willing partners in this hemisphere, and they demonstrated their commitment throughout the year, despite the increased challenges of COVID. Colombia kicked off Operation Orion V in April 2020, just as COVID was beginning to impact their country,

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stating that if the United States is committed to the drug fight during COVID, they would stand with us. Operation Orion V was a multi-national (26 countries), all-domain operation that resulted in 50 metric tons of cocaine disrupted, 72 drug labs destroyed, and \$1.5 billion in profits denied to TCOs. The U.S. provided maritime patrol aircraft (MPA) and analyst support to this operation. Colombia just concluded the follow-on Operation Orion VI, in which this coalition disrupted another 76.5 metric tons of cocaine and detained over 400 traffickers. This is just one example of the large return on investment gained by combining a willing and able partner with a committed U.S. presence in the Western Hemisphere.

While the Secretary of Defense agreed to continue sourcing this mission with traditional military assets, this mission also benefits from non-traditional resources. Congressional support to the counternarcotic mission has been instrumental in the success of these operations. We are filling capability gaps through innovative solutions like the Multi Mission Support Vessel (MMSV). The MMSV has supported the disruption of almost 8 metric tons of cocaine and 15,000 pounds of marijuana, denied over \$180 million in profits to TCOs, and detained 48 drug traffickers, while also keeping three low profile vessels carrying tons of narcotics from reaching our shores. It also extends the reach of our partner nation interdiction vessels as they launch in support of these counterdrug operations. We are applying commercially-available technology like unmanned aircraft systems to increase the MMSV's ability to conduct detection and monitoring and provide information to partner nation interdiction assets.

SOUTHCOM employs less than 1% of DoD Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) resources to counter ESAs and TCOs in this region. To meet the mission, we are pushing the envelope with innovative techniques, focusing on a 21<sup>st</sup> century, non-traditional approach to intelligence that integrates publicly available information, advanced



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analytics, artificial intelligence and machine learning, and open collaboration with allies and partners to disrupt threats. These emerging tools offer persistent, AOR-wide coverage without risk to personnel at a relatively low cost and puts us in a position to better compete against adversaries. Our Technical Network Analysis Cell (TNAC) and Asymmetric Target Acquisition Center (ATAC) are just two examples of our approach. For an investment of \$1.2 million the TNAC at JIATF-S denied TCOs of \$817.1 million in revenue by providing actionable intelligence, in cooperation with our law enforcement partners, that is shared with partner nations and interagency partners leading to numerous disruptions. The ATAC, run by our Special Operations Command South (SOC SOUTH), is supporting law enforcement efforts to counter TCOs. The Congressional support we have received for ISR has been critical to sustaining the innovative capabilities that support our unique mission, making our non-traditional approach to ISR possible. USSOUTHCOM ISR activities are optimized for return on investment with a mix of traditional platforms, purpose-built sensors, and increasingly non-traditional collection methods. USSOUTHCOM will continue to work with the Department to ensure we can meet our vital mission to disrupt transnational criminal organizations, as well as work in concert with regional partners to confront shared threats.

While we are making strides, we are but one part of the solution. This problem set requires a whole-of-government and whole-of-society solution to address both the supply and demand sides of this threat. Drug overdoses have killed 840,000 Americans since 1999, and continue to kill 70,000 Americans a year. Drugs cost our nation billions each year in criminal justice, healthcare, and productivity losses<sup>2</sup>— in addition to the suffering caused by shattered and

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.drugabuse.gov/drug-topics/trends-statistics/costs-substance-abuse>

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lost lives. We must continue and further enhance the tremendous interagency and international cooperation we have fostered over recent years against this common enemy.

As the U.S. Coast Guard provides the bulk of our counterdrug forces, the acquisition and deployment of their Offshore Patrol Cutter will be critical to keeping drugs off our streets and countering TCOs. Each additional force package (maritime patrol aircraft, flight deck capable ship, embarked helicopter, small boat (US Coast Guard over-the-horizon boat or US Navy 11 meter RHIB), and law enforcement detachment) enables the disruption of 35 more metric tons of cocaine and the strong presence reinforces to our partners that we are all-in with them – building trust.

On the counterterrorism (CT) front, our Special Operations Command – South (SOCSOUTH) maintains persistent presence in several countries in the region, working and training with partner militaries. Our focus is on improving partner nation CT response capabilities, interoperability, and information sharing. The DoD Rewards Program has again provided tremendous return on investment in the fight against terrorism. In 2020, USSOUTHCOM paid \$979,000 in rewards to 54 informants that resulted in the neutralization of a record 107 individuals who were terrorists or force protection threats and seizure of 26 weapons/explosive caches and \$952,000 in cash. Although this is a counterterror and force protection program, it also yielded significant counternarcotic effects including the seizure of 14 metric tons of cocaine and the destruction of 12 drug labs. We also continue to focus efforts on assessing the financial underpinnings of national security threats in the region and have deepened our counter-threat finance related collaboration with the U.S. Treasury Department and interagency partners. This includes providing direct analytic support to the development of sanctions against Central and South American-based transnational organized crime groups that

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launder money, traffic drugs, and corrupt government officials in the region. An area requiring more emphasis is TCO network mapping and holistic interagency and partner nation efforts to dismantle key TCO centers of gravity such as logistics and finances.

USSOUTHCOM also takes a total force approach to these challenges, taking full advantage of the Reserve component, composed of Guard and Reserve Forces. With fewer apportioned forces and a smaller budget than most regional combatant commands, I have a great appreciation for the importance and critical support they provide to our interagency and international partners. The ability of the National Guard, to work directly with host nations and local institutions through the State Partnership Program is a force multiplier for engaging our partners. Over one third of those State partnerships are in our AOR, strategically complementing our security cooperation efforts.

**Joint Task Force Guantanamo Bay (JTF-GTMO).** JTF-GTMO continues to conduct safe, legal, and humane detention operations. In an effort to do so in a more efficient manner, the JTF has taken steps to right-size its force and consolidate operations. To date, we have safely reduced military personnel by over 20 percent. This is part of an ongoing effort to continually assess all USSOUTHCOM operations to ensure we are maximizing use of resources.

**What More can be Done/What we Need**

**Quality of Life.** People are our most important resource and our absolute priority. None of the initiatives described above would be possible without the tremendous work of our men and women. South Florida, including Miami and the Florida Keys, is a high cost-of-living area that poses many challenges to our personnel. The housing market is so competitive that personnel pay upwards of \$10K of up-front fees in order to secure a rental unit. We are working with the supportive local community to find immediate relief options for our service members

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and civilians on housing and other factors that contribute to the high cost of living. We are also appreciative of the Department of the Army's support to find a permanent, cost effective housing solution here in Miami. We have also established TEAM SOUTHCOM, a family readiness group, to support all of our families, especially as they transition to this high-cost area and a non-standard military installation.

**Congressional Support.** We appreciate your support of our security cooperation program in the USSOUTHCOM AOR as a continued recognition of the importance of these programs in our hemisphere. We also appreciate the increased flexibility that Congress included in the FY21 Consolidated Appropriations Act by increasing the percentage of 333 funds that may be used over two years. Greater funding flexibility increases our ability to plan and execute multi-year programs to build partner capacity. Congress also continued support to USSOUTHCOM's ISR program and the MMSV – two investments that will increase our domain awareness and ability to stop threats bound for our homeland.

**Infrastructure.** The FY21 National Defense Authorization Act authorized planning and design funding for a new Command and Control Facility for JIATF-S, recognizing what the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers determined was a compelling need to replace its current 1950's constructed facility. We appreciate this support and are working to complete the design for a resilient facility built to enable interagency and international collaboration for this critical mission. USSOUTHCOM is also working closely with the Defense Health Agency to replace the hospital at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay (NSGB), which is experiencing severe structural deterioration. This medical treatment facility (MTF) is the only strategic medical hub to support the full spectrum of mission personnel operating in the USSOUTHCOM AOR! It is also the

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only MTF for personnel at NSGB, as there are no civilian options available. It is also important to note that NSGB is a strategic asset as the only U.S. base in the USSOUTHCOM AOR.

**Supporting our Partners.** The U.S. military has established programs that help our partners develop diverse and inclusive militaries that respect the rule of law and human rights. These are the characteristics of a professional force that has legitimacy in the eyes of its population. Consistent engagement with our partner militaries and security forces through programs like our human rights training and Women, Peace, and Security programs, as well as through the range of security cooperation and assistance programs, is essential to our ability build their institutional capacity and resiliency to the range of threats we all face together.

**Conclusion**

The security threats in the Western Hemisphere, our shared neighborhood, demand a sense of urgency. TCOs threaten our U.S. homeland. We also see the rise in the PRC's leverage and influence is not just a South China Sea problem, it is a global problem, and it requires a solution that includes our partners and allies. When our neighborhood is strong, so is our national security. We no longer have two oceans to keep our adversaries at bay – their malign activity is knocking on our door, creating instability in an already fragile region, enabling TCOs to take hold in an attempt to weaken democracies and perpetuate corruption. We must stand by our partners.

We hold ourselves to a high standard. We have strong values as Americans. We ensure our partners respect human rights; we train them on the responsible use of military equipment; we help build the institutional capacity to maintain professional military and security forces; and we operate transparently and in accordance with civilian leadership, international norms, and the rule of law. U.S. security cooperation with our partners ultimately bolsters our own national

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security and has done so for over 70 years. Investing in our neighborhood is an investment in national security and we are at a critical juncture where focus and attention are essential to maintaining positional advantage.

I look forward to discussing our efforts to capitalize on the opportunities for shared security that exist in strengthening our partnerships.

**Admiral Craig S. Faller**  
**Commander, U.S. Southern Command**

Adm. Craig Faller is a native of Fryburg, Pennsylvania and 1983 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy with a Bachelor of Science in Systems Engineering. He is also a 1990 graduate of the Naval Postgraduate School with a Master's in National Security Affairs (Strategic Planning).

At sea, he served as reactor electrical division officer, electrical officer and reactor training assistant aboard USS South Carolina (CGN 37); operations officer aboard USS Peterson (DD 969); station officer aboard USS Enterprise (CVN 65), and executive officer of USS John Hancock (DD 981). As commanding officer of USS Stethem (DDG 63), he deployed to the Arabian Gulf and participated in maritime interception operations in support of United Nations sanctions against Iraq. During his tour as commanding officer of USS Shiloh (CG 67), he assisted victims of the devastating tsunami off Indonesia. Finally, as commander, John C. Stennis Strike Group/Carrier Strike Group 3, he deployed to the Middle East supporting Operations New Dawn (Iraq) and Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan).

Ashore, Faller served as an DIG prototype staff officer at the Nuclear Power Training Unit at Ballston Spa, NY; action officer in Navy Strategy and Concepts Branch (N513); legislative fellow on the staff of Senator Edward M. Kennedy; program manager, Surface Nuclear Officer Programs and Placement; executive assistant to Commander, U.S. Pacific Command; executive assistant to Commander, U.S. Central Command; executive assistant to the Chief of Naval Operations; commander, Navy Recruiting Command; director of operations (J3) U.S. Central Command; chief of Navy Legislative Affairs; and senior military assistant to the Secretary of Defense.

Faller has earned various personal, unit, service and campaign awards.

**STATEMENT OF  
GENERAL GLEN VANHERCK, UNITED STATES AIR FORCE  
COMMANDER  
UNITED STATES NORTHERN COMMAND  
AND  
NORTH AMERICAN AEROSPACE DEFENSE COMMAND**



**BEFORE THE  
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**14 APRIL 2021**



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Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Rogers, and distinguished members of the Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to testify today, and for allowing me the honor of representing the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Guardians, Coast Guardsmen, and civilians of United States Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) and North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD). I am especially privileged to represent the members of the Canadian Armed Forces who are a vital and essential part of the NORAD team.

USNORTHCOM is the U.S. geographic combatant command responsible for defense of the United States homeland. USNORTHCOM is also tasked with providing defense support of civil authorities and engaging in theater security cooperation with regional allies and partners. NORAD is a distinct, bi-national command responsible for three missions in defense of the United States and Canada: aerospace warning, aerospace control, and maritime warning. Canadian Armed Forces personnel, to include my three-star NORAD Deputy Commander, are essential to our NORAD missions.

Since I assumed command of USNORTHCOM and NORAD, each day has afforded me the opportunity to lead a workforce of dedicated, innovative, and resilient warfighters and public servants. That fundamental commitment to our vital missions is clearly evident as USNORTHCOM and NORAD have kept the watch and defended our nations in what is certainly the most dynamic and complex strategic environment I have encountered in my 33 years in uniform.

Our competitors continue to take increasingly aggressive steps to gain the upper hand in the military, information, economic, and diplomatic arenas. USNORTHCOM meets each of those challenges head-on—and we have done so while supporting whole-of-government efforts to safeguard our citizens through the coronavirus pandemic and historically severe hurricane and

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wildfire seasons, and also simultaneously synchronizing the deployment of troops to support federal law enforcement personnel on the southwest border. The cascading events of the past year placed unprecedented strain on our people, our interagency partners, and our institutions, and I am proud that we overcame each of those challenges and emerged more resilient.

That steadfast commitment is more important than ever as our competitors continue to target the homelands through multiple means in all domains. Defending our nations, our citizens, and our way of life requires constant vigilance, and USNORTHCOM and NORAD have demonstrated time and again that our commands remain determined, focused, and ready. But we must keep moving forward. Looking to the future, we will continue to pursue innovative new capabilities and strategies to detect, deny, deter, and, if necessary, defeat the mounting threats posed by peer competitors, rogue nations, transnational criminal organizations, and foreign and domestic violent extremists. No matter the challenge or circumstance, this Committee should rest assured USNORTHCOM and NORAD are always on guard.

### **Threats**

The global geostrategic environment continues to evolve rapidly. While the United States has spent the last 30 years projecting power forward to combat rogue regimes and violent extremists overseas, our global competitors pursued capabilities to circumvent our legacy warning and defensive systems and hold our homeland at risk. Peer competitors like Russia and China are undermining the international rules-based order and challenging us in all domains. Further, rogue states like North Korea and Iran are also pursuing capabilities to nullify our military advantages, threaten our networks with cyber weapons, and—in the case of North Korea—develop nuclear weapons. Meanwhile, violent extremist organizations continue to devise plots to attack our citizens and our way of life.

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During the Cold War, we were overwhelmingly focused on defending the United States and Canada from a single nation-state threat. After the Soviet collapse, Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and later the September 11, 2001 attacks shifted our focus to non-state and rogue actors. Today, we don't have the luxury of focusing regionally or on only one threat at a time. In the last decade, we've seen a sharp resurgence in the nation-state threat as our global competitors deploy increasingly sophisticated capabilities to hold the United States and Canada at risk and limit our options in a crisis. Concurrently, the terrorist threat continues to evolve in ways that challenge our homeland defense capabilities. As a result, today's threat environment is likely the most complex we have ever faced, as potential adversaries threaten us in all domains and from all vectors.

#### **Russia**

Russia presents a persistent, proximate threat to the United States and Canada and remains the most acute challenge to our homeland defense mission. Russian leaders seek to erode our influence, assert their regional dominance, and reclaim their status as a global power through a whole-of-government strategy that includes information operations, deception, economic coercion, and the threat of military force.

In peacetime, Russian actors conduct sophisticated influence operations to fan flames of discord in the United States and undermine faith in our democratic institutions. In crisis or conflict, we should expect Russia to employ its broad range of advanced capabilities—non-kinetic, conventional, and nuclear—to threaten our critical infrastructure in an attempt to limit our ability to project forces and to attempt to compel de-escalation. Offensive capabilities Russia has fielded over the last several years include advanced cyber and counterspace weapons and a new generation of long-range and highly precise land-attack cruise missiles—including

hypersonics. These capabilities complicate our ability to detect and defend against an inbound attack from the air, sea, and even those originating from Russian soil.

Russia also continues to modernize all three legs of its nuclear triad. In December 2019, Russia fielded the world's first two intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) equipped with a hypersonic glide vehicle payload that will challenge our ability to provide actionable warning and attack assessment. In the coming years, Russia hopes to field a series of even more advanced weapons intended to ensure its ability to deliver nuclear weapons to the United States. These include the Poseidon transoceanic nuclear torpedo and the Burevestnik nuclear-powered cruise missile, which—if perfected—could enable strikes from virtually any vector due to its extreme range and endurance.

Finally, Russia continues to conduct frequent military operations in the approaches to North America. Last year, NORAD responded to more Russian military flights off the coast of Alaska than we've seen in any year since the end of the Cold War. These Russian military operations include multiple flights of heavy bombers, anti-submarine aircraft, and intelligence collection platforms near Alaska. These efforts show both Russia's military reach and how they rehearse potential strikes on our homeland. Last summer, the Russian Navy focused its annual OCEAN SHIELD exercise on the defense of Russia's maritime approaches in the Arctic and Pacific. The multi-fleet exercise, intended in part to demonstrate Russia's ability to control access to the Arctic through the Bering Strait, included amphibious landings on the Chukotka Peninsula opposite Alaska, as well as anti-submarine patrols and anti-ship cruise missile launches from within the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone.

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**China**

China continues to pursue an aggressive geopolitical strategy that seeks to undermine U.S. influence around the globe and shape the international environment to its advantage. In the USNORTHCOM area of responsibility, China has made deliberate attempts to increase its economic and political influence with our close partners in Mexico and The Bahamas. While the United States remains the economic and military partner of choice in the region, China is seeking to grow its trade and investment in Mexico and, over the past few years, has invested in The Bahamas' vital tourism sector through marquee infrastructure projects. Militarily, China is rapidly advancing a modernization program that seeks to erode our military advantages and deter us from intervening in a regional conflict.

China remains among the world's most capable and brazen cyber actors, stealing volumes of sensitive data from U.S. government, military, academic, cleared defense contractors, and other commercial networks each year. In a crisis, China is postured to transition rapidly from cyber exploitation to cyber attack in an attempt to frustrate our ability to flow forces across the Pacific, and globally. China also continues to advance its counter-space capabilities that could threaten our space-based communications and sensors. In the foreseeable future, China will likely be able to augment its cyber-attack capabilities with a new family of long-range precision-strike weapons capable of targeting key logistical nodes on our West Coast that support U.S. mobilization and sustainment.

China also continues to expand and modernize its strategic nuclear forces to rival those of Russia and the United States in sophistication, if not in numbers. Over the last decade, China fielded dozens of road-mobile ICBMs and several ballistic missile submarines designed to enhance the survivability of China's nuclear deterrent and ensure its ability to retaliate following

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any attack. In the next decade, China will deploy a new generation of advanced weapons—some of them hypersonic—that will further diversify their nuclear strike options and potentially increase the risks associated with U.S. intervention in a contingency.

#### **North Korea and Iran**

The Kim Jong Un regime has achieved alarming success in its quest to demonstrate the capability to threaten the U.S. homeland with nuclear-armed ICBMs, believing such weapons are necessary to deter U.S. military action and ensure his regime's survival. In 2017, North Korea successfully tested a thermonuclear device—increasing the destructive potential of their strategic weapons by an order of magnitude—as well as three ICBMs capable of ranging the United States. In October 2020, North Korea unveiled a new ICBM considerably larger and presumably more capable than the systems they tested in 2017, further increasing the threat posed to our homeland. The North Korean regime has also indicated that it is no longer bound by the unilateral nuclear and ICBM testing moratorium announced in 2018, suggesting that Kim Jong Un may begin flight testing an improved ICBM design in the near future.

Iran continues to advance its military technologies and threaten the security of U.S. forces and allies throughout the Middle East. Iran adheres to a self-imposed range limit on its ballistic missile force that prevents it from directly threatening the United States. Nonetheless, Iran is developing and testing ICBM-relevant technologies through its theater missiles and space launch platforms—including its first successful orbit of a military satellite in April of 2020—that could accelerate the development of a homeland-threatening ICBM should Iran's leaders choose to pursue such a system. Iran retains the ability to conduct attacks via covert operations, terrorist proxies, and its growing cyber-attack capabilities, which it has already employed against U.S. financial institutions.

**Violent Extremist Organizations**

The terrorist threat has grown more diffuse, typified by simple attacks inspired from afar and carried out by individuals or small networks that are difficult for our law enforcement partners to detect and interdict. Foreign terrorist groups remain committed to attacking the United States, either directly or by inspiring homegrown violent extremists (HVEs) to act in their stead. Despite their territorial losses over the last several years, ISIS leaders—along with their more patient counterparts in al-Qa'ida—remain highly adaptive foes who are largely immune to traditional means of deterrence. Commercial and general aviation persist as preferred targets due to the disproportionate economic and psychological impact of such attacks. Meanwhile, foreign terrorists and HVEs continue to target U.S. military personnel both on and off base, as exemplified by the December 2019 shooting at Naval Air Station Pensacola.

**Transnational Criminal Organizations**

Transnational Criminal Organizations undermine the security of the United States, and that of our allies and partners, through increasingly violent and destabilizing activities that threaten the rule of law and our shared democratic institutions. These organizations have increased their collaboration with criminal groups beyond North America, which has increased their resilience. In our interconnected Western Hemisphere and globally, we must minimize the negative effect of organized criminal activity by aligning strategies, policies, plans, and authorities with the associated personnel and resources—across the United States Government and with allies and partners—to significantly diminish this proximate threat. All of this requires a coordinated whole-of-government effort to understand and manage these networks, as well as shared domain awareness across our government, allies, and partners. This national security imperative is integral to contesting peer competitors.

**Defending the Homeland**

USNORTHCOM's defense of the homeland provides the foundation for the full spectrum of the Department of Defense's worldwide missions and supports the missions of every other combatant command. The ability to deploy forces overseas, support allies, deliver humanitarian assistance, and provide presence and reassurance around the globe relies on our ability to safeguard our citizens, as well as national critical infrastructure, transportation nodes, and leadership. As competitors field highly advanced and agile long-range weapons systems and seek to act on growing territorial ambitions, we are adapting our thinking, evolving our own capabilities, and enhancing our operations and exercises to accurately reflect a changing world while remaining a relevant force.

The United States has long relied on our nuclear arsenal to serve as the strategic deterrent against an attack on our homeland. In today's threat environment, strategic deterrence remains foundational to our national defense. A safe, secure, and effective nuclear force remains the most credible combination of capabilities to deter strategic attack and execute our national strategy. The U.S. strategic deterrent has helped to maintain a careful balance between nuclear powers and remains the bedrock of our national defense, as the longstanding doctrine of deterrence by punishment makes clear to potential adversaries that a large-scale attack on the United States or our allies would result in an overwhelming and devastating response.

However, over the last decade, our competitors have adapted new techniques and fielded advanced weapons systems with the potential to threaten the homeland below the nuclear threshold. Simply stated, the missiles and delivery platforms now in the hands of our competitors present a significant challenge to our legacy warning and assessment systems and defensive capabilities. Advanced systems posing threats to the homeland have already been



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fielded in large numbers, and our defensive capabilities have not kept pace with the threat. The notion that the homeland is not a sanctuary has been true for some time, and that will remain the case for the foreseeable future. Therefore, we must ensure effective nuclear and conventional deterrents are in place to defend the homeland and ensure our ability to project power where and when it is needed.

Highly advanced cruise missiles, hypersonic missiles, and stealthy delivery platforms provide our competitors with the ability to hold targets in the homeland at risk with conventional weapons. That fact has led us to emphasize improved all-domain awareness and the development of a layered sensing grid to provide warfighters and decision makers at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels with increased awareness and decision space.

The reality of a vulnerable homeland and the risks associated with rising global competition are driving our commands to collaborate with interagency and industry partners to find and deliver smarter, more affordable technology. To outpace our competitors, we cannot be satisfied with incremental steps; instead, we must continue to increase the pace and tempo of our technological advancements. This work is essential, and we are proud of our close collaboration with a host of interagency and industry partners and international allies as we work together to outthink our competition, outpace threats, and defend what we hold most dear. That global focus and cooperation is also reflected in our growing wargaming capacity, including major homeland defense exercises such as VIGILANT SHIELD and our participation in the Large Scale Global Exercise series.

### **The Path to Decision Superiority**

I believe our future success in USNORTHCOM, our fellow U.S. combatant commands, and NORAD requires **all-domain awareness, information dominance, and decision**

**superiority.** Our competitors have invested heavily in weapons systems that can be launched against distant targets with little to no warning, as well as stealthy delivery platforms specifically designed to evade detection by existing sensors. As a result, the successful execution of USNORTHCOM and NORAD missions in the digital age relies on significantly improving global **all-domain awareness** through the development of a fused ecosystem of networked sensors extending from space to the seafloor.

This network will pull data from an array of repurposed systems, legacy sensors enhanced through low-cost software modifications, and a limited number of new sensors to provide robust indications and warning and persistent tracking of the full spectrum of potential threats to the homeland from the seafloor to on orbit. Integrating and sharing data from this global sensor network into common platforms will allow leaders to observe potential adversaries' actions earlier in the decision cycle, providing more time and decision space at all levels.

That decision space is where the true value of improved domain awareness resides. Harnessing the capability of distributed multi-domain sensors, machine learning, and artificial intelligence will provide military leaders, the intelligence community, and senior civilian officials with the information necessary to anticipate, rather than react to, competitors' actions.

All-domain awareness is the first critical step on the path to **decision superiority**, and USNORTHCOM and NORAD require and have prioritized capabilities that improve our domain awareness and global integration with our fellow warfighters. Sensors and systems such as Over the Horizon Radars, polar satellite communications, Integrated Underwater Sensor Systems, and space-based missile warning and tracking sensors are essential to our missions. And while the benefits to continental defense are clear, these capabilities will also help every U.S. combatant

commander around the world while enhancing USNORTHCOM and NORAD's collective ability to defend the United States and Canada.

In September 2020, just after I assumed command of USNORTHCOM and NORAD, the commands partnered with the United States Air Force and United States Space Command in the second onramp demonstration of the Air Force's Advanced Battle Management System (ABMS). This large-scale joint force demonstration established a network with embedded machine learning and artificial intelligence to rapidly detect, track, and positively identify a simulated cruise missile threat, while providing a common operating picture and all-domain awareness for commanders at multiple levels.

The ABMS onramp demonstration provided a brief but exciting glimpse into the future of USNORTHCOM and NORAD. By creating potential pathways for accessing and distributing data in ways that allow leaders to think, plan, and act globally rather than relying on outdated regional approaches, we are significantly amplifying the capability of the joint force. Through these and other efforts, USNORTHCOM and NORAD are actively working to deliver **information dominance** by fusing new technologies to increase decision space for commanders and senior civilian decision makers. Ultimately, our objective is to enable leaders and commanders all over the world to quickly assess any situation and take the steps necessary to stay well ahead of an adversary's next moves in order to deter and deny in competition, de-escalate in crisis, and defeat in conflict.

The prototype Pathfinder data analytics project provides another example of how USNORTHCOM and NORAD are working to leverage existing but stovepiped data streams to the benefit of both operational and strategic decision makers. In our ongoing prototype efforts, Pathfinder gathers data from multiple distinct military and civilian air domain sensors and,

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through automation and machine learning models, produces a fused common operating picture to improve the reliability of the data and increase the decision space that will someday soon be available in real time to our assessors and watch-standers. This low-cost, rapidly developed system will have long-term benefits for our domain awareness and has already shown some of the advantages that information dominance will provide to warfighters around the world.

Information is power, but only if it is accessible, sharable, and actionable. Unlocking the enormous potential of the data currently being collected by a global layered sensor grid will allow us to gain a decisive advantage over competitors and potential adversaries. Currently, vast quantities of data are trapped by incompatible systems and antiquated organizational structures. Breaking down these stovepipes is achievable, but doing so will require innovation and coordination across various agencies, to include technology that allows for timely exploitation of the massive volume of data collected by our sensor networks. More importantly, it will also depend on breaking away from a culture that favors compartmenting and isolating information, in order to fully realize the full potential of our capabilities—including those that reside with our allies and partners. As the defense and intelligence communities connect systems and sensors, consideration of national electromagnetic spectrum management policies is needed to ensure that necessary connections and bandwidth are accessible.

As our competitors rapidly develop and deploy advanced capabilities with clear intent to overcome the U.S. technological advantage, the Department of Defense and the U.S. Government as a whole must also modernize our requirements and acquisition processes to stay ahead. Given the current pace of technological advancement, the limitations of the two-year budgeting process and protracted acquisition timeframe simply do not allow us to take full advantage of the forward-thinking solutions our industry partners can offer. To succeed in this

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era of Great Power Competition, it is essential to rapidly deliver capabilities to the warfighter by streamlining the processes for prototyping, testing, and moving promising technologies into production.

The success of USNORTHCOM and NORAD's Pathfinder program, along with much of the work done by DOD's Defense Innovation Unit, show what is possible when we provide innovators and technical experts the resources and flexibility to tackle even the most daunting challenges. The same approach should also be applied to software development and acquisition. Success in competition and in conflict will increasingly depend on the ability to field software-based capabilities faster than our adversaries. For that reason, I am encouraged by the new model championed by the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment that will enable the Department of Defense to acquire software through modern development practices and deliver needed capability at the speed of relevance.

Armed with timely and accurate information, equipped with modern sensors and software, and backed by a flexible and responsive conventional deterrent that provides defeat mechanisms below the nuclear threshold, commanders will achieve **decision superiority** with the options and time necessary to allocate resources wherever needed to deny or deter aggression in competition, de-escalate potential crises, and defeat adversaries should conflict arise.

### **Missile Defense**

#### **Ballistic Missile Defense**

The need for a robust and modern ballistic missile defense system has been strongly reinforced over the past year. Despite U.S. efforts in 2020 to reach an agreement with Kim Jong Un, North Korea continued its development of ICBMs capable of striking targets in the United States. As North Korea continues its pursuit of advanced long-range strategic weapons—

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including the new systems displayed during their 10 October 2020 parade—USNORTHCOM remains committed to maximizing the capability and capacity of our ballistic missile defense systems.

USNORTHCOM is focused on developing and fielding advanced sensors capable of tracking potential missile threats and providing improved discrimination capability to our warfighters and assessors. Simultaneously, USNORTHCOM is collaborating with our partners in the Missile Defense Agency (MDA) to ensure that the Next Generation Interceptor (NGI) is fielded and operational as soon as possible. Of note, USNORTHCOM worked hand-in-hand with MDA to ensure all of our operational requirements are addressed in the NGI acquisition process. When fielded, NGI will add 20 interceptors to the current inventory, and will provide greater reliability and capability.

As competitor missile technology advances, USNORTHCOM is also working with MDA toward a layered missile defense capability that will allow for a more flexible and responsive defense of the homeland against both ballistic missile and cruise missile threats. The successful engagement of an ICBM-class target by an SM3-1IA interceptor on 16 November 2020 was an historic achievement and a critical step toward establishing this layered capability. Defending the United States homeland against the ballistic missile threat remains a complex and technically challenging endeavor, and I am grateful to the Committee for your continued support as we take the steps necessary to ensure the success of this critical mission.

#### **Cruise Missile Defense**

NORAD is devoting significant attention and resources toward mitigating the current and emerging threat presented by advanced, long-range cruise missiles. These sophisticated weapons are difficult to detect and can be launched from significant distances against targets in the United

States and Canada from launch sites on Russian soil and by long-range bombers, attack submarines, and surface vessels. Whether subsonic or hypersonic, these missiles can range targets in the homeland and present a very real challenge for our defensive capabilities. Russia has already amassed an inventory of both nuclear and conventional variants, while China is expected to develop similar capabilities in the next decade.

The proliferation of these systems creates all the more incentive for focused investments in improved sensor networks, domain awareness, and information dominance capabilities. Those investments, coupled with the development of layered denial, deterrence, and defeat mechanisms capable of addressing current and emerging threats, are fundamental to the defense of our homeland.

### **The Arctic**

The Arctic provides an avenue of approach to North America as well as a representation of the changing physical and geostrategic environment that is actively shaping our future plans and requirements. The escalation of Russian activity and Chinese ambitions in the region demonstrates the strategic importance of the Arctic. Competition will only increase as sea ice diminishes and competition for resources expands. Now and into the future, meeting the full scope of our mission requirements will require USNORTHCOM, our Service and fellow combatant command partners, and NORAD to devote attention, resources, and capabilities to the Arctic.

Improving our domain awareness, communications systems, and our ability to conduct and sustain multi-domain operations in the high north are all important priorities for both USNORTHCOM and NORAD. We are fortunate to be able to draw on the experience and expertise of the Arctic warriors found in the Canadian element of NORAD, as well as the

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soldiers and airmen of Alaskan Command and the Alaska National Guard. Multi-command Arctic exercises like ARCTIC EDGE, ICEX, and NORTHERN EDGE provide valuable experience and lessons learned for conducting multi-domain operations in the high north, while the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex (JPARC) offers expansive and demanding training opportunities for the Total Force.

USNORTHCOM and NORAD are expanding our knowledge base and ensuring that warfighters and partners are developing the skills and experience needed to overcome the significant challenges presented by the extreme climate and physical environment of the high north. We are also moving forward with our Canadian partners to fulfill mutual objectives to modernize NORAD by leveraging industry advances in infrastructure and expeditionary capabilities that will strengthen our ability to sustain operations in and through the Arctic.

Every successful military endeavor is dependent on reliable communications. USNORTHCOM and NORAD are working closely with United States Space Force, each of the other military Services, United States Space Command, and industry partners to establish space-based communications networks that will provide greater reach, more flexibility, and the ability to communicate with every element of the joint force operating in the high north.

I want to thank the Committee for your support for improving Arctic communications through a commercial constellation of proliferated low earth orbit communication satellites. This effort is well underway and will dramatically improve communications for military users in the Arctic, as well as for civilians in remote, high latitude communities. The capability will pay lasting dividends for all users and will enhance our defense of the homeland, as well as our ability to provide defense support of civil authorities.



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**Partnerships**

Our successes as a nation have long been due in large part to close collaboration with partners and allies. With history as our guide, USNORTHCOM and NORAD are building and fostering the critical interagency, interdepartmental, and international relationships that are so vital to any strategic endeavor. Just as we are knocking down stovepipes that impede the flow of critical data between organizations, we are also striving to expand our collaboration and communication with our partners.

**Canada** remains our essential ally in the defense of North America. For over 62 years, the extraordinary and irreplaceable relationship between the United States and Canada has been demonstrated through the constant vigilance of the world's only bi-national command, NORAD. That bond remains as vital as when the command was first established in 1958. Meeting NORAD's crucial missions to provide aerospace warning, aerospace control, and maritime warning in the United States and Canada has required the command to adapt and evolve to address new challenges and emerging technologies that threaten our homelands. Canada remains a true and trusted partner in our common defense and continues to share the economic and manpower costs associated with sustaining and modernizing vital NORAD capabilities.

Over the past year, our competitors repeatedly tested NORAD, but we have stood firm in our resolve and capability to defend the U.S. and Canadian homelands. The year 2020 saw Russian military aircraft entering the Canadian and Alaskan Air Defense Identification Zones (ADIZ) on multiple occasions to measure our responses to increasingly complex operations. As Russia continues to modernize its bomber fleets and improve the proficiency of its long-range aviation units, NORAD must maintain the ability to detect and respond to all air domain competitors.

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In addition to our aerospace control mission, NORAD provides warning of potential maritime threats to the United States and Canada. This critical mission requires uninterrupted contact with U.S. geographic combatant commands, the intelligence community, and NATO partners to detect and track maritime vessels of interest well before they cross into the NORAD area of operations.

The importance of this mission was illustrated in September 2020 when Russia conducted portions of its Exercise OCEAN SHIELD in the Bering Sea off the coast of Alaska. NORAD (and USNORTHCOM) monitored the exercise, noting that although the Russian vessels remained in international waters, they were in close proximity to U.S. civilian fishing boats operating in the United States Exclusive Economic Zone. That Russia would conduct a complex military exercise so close to our shore demonstrates the necessity for a robust and capable NORAD today and well into the future.

As further evidence of both the global nature of the threat and the implicit trust in our bi-national command, NORAD is developing the requirements for the defense of the United States and Canada against advanced cruise missiles. In this capacity, NORAD works closely with the U.S. military Services, the Canadian Joint Operations Command, and a host of other dedicated DOD and Canadian Defence Ministry partners to share costs and ensure a clear, common understanding of the threat and what will be required to mitigate the risk to our nations.

**Mexico** is a vital partner in our cooperative defense, and the USNORTHCOM relationship with our Mexican military partners remains robust. While the COVID pandemic has forced both countries to cancel a number of in-person engagements and planned training events, USNORTHCOM and our Mexican military counterparts have ensured we maintain routine, close contact through virtual engagements. From leaders at the tactical level, to the Mexican military

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liaison officers assigned to our headquarters, and up to the Secretaries of National Defense (SEDENA) and the Navy (SEMAR), USNORTHCOM is proud of the military-to-military cooperation and the personal relationships fostered over the years with our Mexican counterparts. Through well-established forums such as the Bilateral Military Cooperation Roundtable, USNORTHCOM and our Mexican partners have remained in close contact throughout the pandemic, and we continue to make substantive progress toward mutual security goals. The Mexican military faces significant challenges from violent drug cartels and from the effects of the pandemic, but USNORTHCOM and our Service components will continue to stand by our partners and work to enhance our domain awareness in the common defense of North America.

**The Bahamas** is an important partner that has faced extraordinary challenges over the last 18 months. The Bahamas continues to address the severe economic impacts resulting from Hurricane Dorian in 2019 and markedly decreased tourism resulting from the coronavirus pandemic. Even so, we continue to work closely with our Royal Bahamas Defence Force (RBDF) partners to improve regional maritime security in the southeast approaches to the United States. USNORTHCOM directly supports RBDF efforts by enhancing their domain awareness with maritime surveillance system radars currently being deployed across The Bahamas island chain. USNORTHCOM is firmly committed to our lasting collaboration with the RBDF and will continue to support our neighbors and valued partners.

USNORTHCOM has also worked with our partners in Mexico and The Bahamas to address our shared challenges in responding to the impacts of COVID-19. Since April, USNORTHCOM has been actively supporting response efforts to COVID-19, using Overseas Humanitarian Disaster Assistance and Civic Aid funds approved by Congress. To date, we have

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conducted 63 projects in support of the Mexican and Bahamian COVID-19 response, totaling \$7.29 million. A portion of that amount consists of reprogrammed CARES Act funds which Congress approved for that purpose. USNORTHCOM and U.S. Embassy support to Mexico and The Bahamas solidifies our position as the partner of choice for these nations and is critical to countering nation states, especially China, which continues its attempts to make inroads in both countries through offers for COVID-19 medical support, large-scale economic investments, information campaigns, and material support for infrastructure projects. Our relationships with Mexico and The Bahamas enhance regional security and stability and directly strengthen our ability to defend the homeland through continued close cooperation with these key partner nations.

#### **Defense Support of Civil Authorities**

USNORTHCOM provided defense support of civil authorities at an unprecedented pace in 2020, and many of those support missions continue today. As the Commander of USNORTHCOM, I serve as the DOD synchronizer for the federal pandemic response led by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Department of Health and Human Services. In that role, we remain tightly integrated with the interagency effort to assist health care providers and our fellow citizens around the country. As we have supported our federal interagency partners throughout this difficult national effort, members at every level of our command have demonstrated extraordinary commitment to meeting every mission requirement while diligently safeguarding the health of our own civilian and military workforce.

The 2020 hurricane season saw 11 hurricanes make landfall in the United States, impacting countless Americans, while catastrophic wildfires ravaged millions of acres and displaced entire communities in multiple western states. The Commander of USNORTHCOM

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was designated as the DOD synchronizer for the federal responses to each of those disasters, and the Command stood ready to support FEMA and the National Interagency Fire Center with Title 10 assets.

### **Conclusion**

As USNORTHCOM and NORAD look to a future marked by rapid shifts in the geopolitical environment and technological advancement, we are guided by the lessons of the past. Key among those is that we cannot overcome challenges in isolation. By viewing changing conditions and competitor actions from a global perspective, our problems become more solvable and the solutions more affordable. USNORTHCOM and NORAD will continue to build our partnerships, collaborate with fellow warfighters, and work toward overcoming shared problems rather than continuing to focus on point solutions to isolated threats.

To that end, I look forward to working with the Committee and with all of our innovative industry and interagency partners as we move quickly to develop and field the systems required to defend our nations now and well into the future. Together, I believe we can eliminate outdated barriers that only serve to stifle information sharing, and simultaneously foster a mindset that favors creative, forward-looking approaches over unproductive reliance on legacy systems.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, we will continue to prioritize our most vital asset: our people. With that in mind, I would like to take this opportunity to publicly recognize the select group of USNORTHCOM and NORAD personnel responsible for standing the operational watch 24 hours a day, every day. Their mission is crucial to our defense, and these military and civilian watch-standers have spent much of the last year under strict but necessary isolation protocols to mitigate the risk of a COVID outbreak. They and their families have endured long

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periods of separation during an already difficult time, and they have done so without any expectation of public recognition. I am honored to lead men and women of such selflessness and professionalism, and our citizens should rest assured these extraordinary defenders have the watch.

**General Glen D. VanHerck**  
**Commander, U.S. Northern Command & North American Aerospace Defense Command**

Gen. Glen D. VanHerck is Commander, United States Northern Command and North American Aerospace Defense Command. USNORTHCOM conducts homeland defense, civil support and security cooperation to defend and secure the United States and its interests. NORAD conducts aerospace warning, aerospace control and maritime warning in the defense of North America.

Gen. VanHerck is a graduate of the University of Missouri and commissioned through the Reserve Officer Training Corps program. He has a diverse background that includes operational and training assignments in the F-15C Eagle, F-35A Lighting II, B-2A Spirit and B-1B Lancer aircraft. He has served as an instructor pilot and flight examiner in the F-15C, B-2A and T-6A Texan II. Additionally, he served as a U.S. Air Force Weapons School instructor in the F-15C and the B-2A.

He has commanded at the squadron, group and twice at the wing level, including the 325th Weapons Squadron, the 71st Operations Group, the 7th Bomb Wing, the 509th Bomb Wing. As a major general, he commanded the U.S. Air Force Warfare Center. His staff assignments include tours as the Chief of the B-2 Program Element Monitor at Headquarters Air Combat Command, the Director of Operations at Headquarters Air Force Global Strike Command, the Director of Plans and Integration at U.S. Strategic Command, the Vice Director of Strategy, Plans and Policy (J5) at the Joint Staff, and the Vice Director of the Joint Staff.

Prior to his current assignment, Gen. Glen D. VanHerck was the Director, Joint Staff, the Pentagon, Arlington, Virginia. In this role, he assisted the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in his role as advisor to the President and Secretary of Defense, coordinated and directed the activities of the Joint Staff in support of the Chairman and served as the Staff Inspector General

**EDUCATION**

1987 Bachelor of Science, Liberal Studies, University of Missouri, Columbia  
 1995 Squadron Officers School, Air University, Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.  
 1999 Air Command and Staff College, Maxwell AFB, Ala., by correspondence  
 2000 Master of Science, Aviation Safety/Management, University of Central Missouri, Warrensburg  
 2005 Air War College, Air University, Maxwell AFB, Ala., by correspondence  
 2008 Master of Arts, National Security and Strategy, Naval War College, Newport Naval Station, R.I.  
 2008 Naval War College, Newport, R.I.  
 2009 U.S. Air Force Executive Leadership Seminar, Darden School of Business, University of Virginia, Charlottesville  
 2014 Combined Force Air Component Commanders Course, Maxwell AFB, Ala.  
 2015 Cyberspace Operations Executive Course, Maxwell AFB, Ala.  
 2015 Joint Flag Officer Warfighting Course, Maxwell AFB, Ala.  
 2016 Joint Senior Information Operations Course, Maxwell AFB, Ala.

**ASSIGNMENTS**

January 1988–January 1989, Undergraduate Pilot Training, 14th Flying Training Wing, Columbus Air Force Base, Miss.  
 February 1989–May 1989, Student, Lead-in-Fighter Training, Holloman AFB, N.M.  
 June 1989–November 1989, Student, F-15C Replacement Training, Tyndall AFB, Fla.  
 November 1989–December 1993, F-15C Aircraft Commander, Mission Commander, Instructor Pilot, Flight Examiner, 44th Fighter Squadron, Kadena Air Base, Japan  
 January 1994–June 1994, Student, U.S. Air Force Weapons School, Nellis AFB, Nev.  
 July 1994–May 1997, Chief, Weapons and Tactics, Flight Commander, Assistant Director of Operations, 94th Fighter Squadron, Langley AFB, Va.  
 May 1997–July 1998, F-15C Instructor Pilot, Chief of Safety, U.S. Air Force Weapons School, Nellis AFB, Nev.  
 August 1998–March 2001, Assistant Director of Operations, 393rd Bomb Squadron, Whiteman AFB,

Mo.

April 2001–December 2001, Director of Operations, 325th Bomb Squadron, Whiteman AFB, Mo.

January 2002–July 2004, B-2 Program Element Monitor, Chief, Air Combat Command Senior Officer Management, Headquarters Air Combat Command, Langley AFB, Va.

July 2004–December 2004, B-2 Requalification Training, 394th Combat Training Squadron, Whiteman AFB, Mo.

January 2005–January 2007, Commander, 325th Weapons Squadron, Whiteman AFB, Mo.

January 2007–July 2007, Deputy Commander, 509th Operations Group, Whiteman AFB, Mo.

August 2007–June 2008, Student, U.S. Naval War College, Newport Naval Station, R.I.

July 2008–August 2008, Student, T-6A Pilot Instructor Training, 559th Flying Training Squadron, Randolph AFB, Texas

September 2008–January 2010, Commander, 71st Operations Group, Vance AFB, Okla.

January 2010–June 2010, Vice Commander, 71st Flying Training Wing, Vance AFB, Okla.

June 2010–June 2012, Director, Plans and Integration, Joint Functional Component Command for Global Strike, U.S. Strategic Command, Offutt AFB, Neb.

July 2012–February 2014, Commander, 7th Bomb Wing, Dyess AFB, Texas

February 2014–June 2015, Commander, 509th Bomb Wing, Whiteman AFB, Mo.

June 2015–March 2016, Director, Operations, Headquarters Air Force Global Strike Command, Barksdale AFB, La.

March 2016–July 2017, Commander, U.S. Air Force Warfare Center, Nellis AFB, Nev.

July 2017–August 2018, Vice Director, Strategy Plans and Policy (J5), Joint Staff, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va.

August 2018–September 2019, Vice Director, Joint Staff, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va.

September 2019–August 2020, Director, Joint Staff, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va.

August 2020–present, Commander, North American Aerospace Defense Command and United States Northern Command, Colorado Springs, Colo.

#### **SUMMARY OF JOINT ASSIGNMENTS**

June 2010–June 2012, Director, Plans and Integration, Joint Functional Component Command for Global Strike, U.S. Strategic Command, Offutt Air Force Base, Neb., as a colonel

July 2017–August 2018, Vice Director, Strategy, Plans, and Policy (J5), Joint Staff, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va., as a major general

August 2018–September 2019, Vice Director, Joint Staff, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va., as a major general

September 2019–August 2020, Director, Joint Staff, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va., as a lieutenant general

August 2020–present, Commander, North American Aerospace Defense Command and United States Northern Command, Colorado Springs, Colo. as a general

#### **FLIGHT INFORMATION**

Rating: command pilot

Flight hours: more than 3,200

Aircraft flown: T-1A, T-6A, T-37, T-38A, A/T-38B, T-38C, F-15A/B/C/D, F-35A, B-1B and B-2A

#### **MAJOR AWARDS AND DECORATIONS**

Defense Distinguished Service Medal

Distinguished Service Medal (Air Force)

Defense Superior Service Medal

Legion of Merit with two oak leaf clusters

Meritorious Service Medal with three oak leaf clusters

Air Medal

Aerial Achievement Medal with oak leaf cluster

Joint Service Commendation Medal

Air Force Commendation Medal

Air Force Achievement Medal

#### **EFFECTIVE DATES OF PROMOTION**

Second Lieutenant Sept. 16, 1987

First Lieutenant Sept. 16, 1989

Captain Sept. 16, 1991



Major Aug. 1, 1998  
Lieutenant Colonel Feb. 1, 2003  
Colonel Sept. 1, 2007  
Brigadier General Sept. 2, 2013  
Major General May 13, 2016  
Lieutenant General Sep. 27, 2019  
General Aug. 20, 2020

(Current as of September 2020)



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**WITNESS RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ASKED DURING  
THE HEARING**

APRIL 14, 2021

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### **RESPONSE TO QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MS. SPEIER**

Mr. SALESSES. Of the total \$3.6 billion made available for border barrier projects under 10 U.S.C. 2808, \$2.1 billion is currently unobligated. An additional \$0.1 billion for a Navy project in Washington State that was deferred to make funds available for Section 2808 construction also is unobligated, but pursuant to a court order that is on appeal, the funds were released to the Navy.

As announced April 30, 2021, consistent with Presidential Proclamation 10142 (issued on January 20, 2021), the Department of Defense has cancelled all border barrier construction projects paid for with funds originally appropriated for other military missions and functions. With this cancellation, unobligated military construction funds that had been allocated for border barrier military construction projects will be released and made available to fund previously deferred military construction projects. [See page 49.]

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### **RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. CARBAJAL**

Mr. SALESSES. The COVID-19 pandemic is the greatest public health challenge our nation has faced in more than 100 years, since the 1918 influenza pandemic. Domestically, most disasters or emergencies either affect a single State or region within the United States. In contrast, the COVID-19 pandemic not only affected the entire United States, but the entire world. This created an unprecedented demand signal for DOD support.

When the risk of the pandemic has passed, or sufficiently diminished, a data-driven and comprehensive after-action review is needed to prepare for the next health crisis. However, DOD has conducted an in-stride strategic review, which has identified some potential opportunities for improvements, such as:

- The need to evaluate approaches to accelerate and expand capability to develop and mass-produce tests and medical capabilities rapidly for future man-made or naturally occurring biological threats of interest;
- The need to digitize DOD's manual contact tracing program;
- Investments in medical intelligence and bio-surveillance may be warranted to enable early warning of a potential outbreak.
- The need to incorporate lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic into planning for domestic incidents while concurrently conducting national defense missions.
- The need to identify and realign personnel to those medical capabilities most needed in wartime and other crises.
- The need for further analysis to incorporate lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic into future medical command and control structures and to inform the optimal joint force mix between Active and Reserve Component medical forces. [See page 46.]

General VANHERCK. I have placed strong emphasis on capturing and incorporating all lessons learned during the COVID crisis, and highlight the following two specific topics:

1) Relationships and rehearsals are crucial. The activation of the National Response Framework (NRF) and National Response Coordination Center provided an established coordinating structure that immediately reinforced effective leadership and interagency coordination. USNORTHCOM has developed long-standing, close relationships over many years with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and other interagency partners, as well as state and local governments, by exercising the NRF and supporting lead federal agencies in times of crisis. These formal and informal relationships set the conditions for a successful military response.

2) Resiliency matters, especially in command and control. To prevent cross-infection during the pandemic, USNORTHCOM and NORAD dispersed the force, moved watch-standing functions to multiple locations, and sequestered teams from the larger population. This ensured continuity of operations as USNORTHCOM and NORAD maintained 100% mission assurance of critical homeland defense missions throughout the pandemic response. [See page 46.]

**RESPONSE TO QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MR. WALTZ**

Admiral FALLER. We look forward to continuing our work with Congress on this important issue once the President has transmitted his Legislative Proposals for FY22. [See page 31.]

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**RESPONSE TO QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MRS. LURIA**

General VANHERCK. For clarification, Naval Forces North (NAVNORTH), commanded by ADM Chris Grady, is the U.S. Navy's component command that works for USNORTHCOM; Second Fleet is not organizationally aligned under NAVNORTH or USNORTHCOM. While Second Fleet does work for ADM Grady in his Navy responsibility as Commander of U.S. Fleet Forces Command (FFC), Second Fleet does not work for USNORTHCOM in this designated Navy chain of command.

Regarding your specific question, yes, purely from an organizational perspective, USNORTHCOM and USEUCOM routinely employ a variety of command and control mechanisms to ensure the appropriate combatant commander receives required USN support when and where required. Consistent with how adjacent combatant commanders in other areas of responsibility execute command and control, USNORTHCOM and USEUCOM regularly assess and iterate command and control mechanisms to seamlessly operate between our two commands.

I would add however that USNORTHCOM has numerous documented capability gaps related to establishing a persistent, sustainable presence in the Arctic, to include maritime fueling capability north of Dutch Harbor, which is necessary to expand the Navy's and Coast Guard's operations; improved facilities for air assets (e.g., fighters, tankers, and ISR platforms); and reliable, resilient communications systems. [See page 33.]

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**QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING**

APRIL 14, 2021

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### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MS. SPEIER

Ms. SPEIER. How much are taxpayers spending for each LCS deployment in the SOUTHCOM area of responsibility, and what is the typical duration of such a deployment?

Admiral FALLER. A typical LCS deployment to the SOUTHCOM AOR is planned for approximately 120 days. The daily operating cost for an LCS (according to United States Fleet Forces) is \$45,574 per day, or \$5.4M per 120-day deployment.

Ms. SPEIER. How much have LCS deployments increased over the past 3 years in the SOUTHCOM areas of responsibility? What is the breakdown among drug interdiction, humanitarian and disaster response, and other missions?

Admiral FALLER. There have been nine LCS deployments over the last three years to the SOUTHCOM AOR. The first LCS deployment began in Nov 2019. Five deployments were executed in 2020 as part of SOUTHCOM's enhanced operations to counter-transnational criminal organizations (TCOs). In 2021, three LCS have deployed.

LCS deployments in the SOUTHCOM AOR are predominately focused on countering TCOs, accounting for 95% of all mission days. Less than one percent of LCS mission days were spent on Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Response (three mission days) and the remaining 4% on traditional U.S. Navy (USN) missions and Theater Security Cooperation exercises.

Ms. SPEIER. For the *Freedom*-class ships assigned to SOUTHCOM, what was the average number of days that the ships were in dry dock in 2019 and 2020? What is the average number of days that they were planned to be at sea in 2019 and 2020? What is the average number of days that they were unable to complete planned/assigned missions in 2019 and 2020 due to maintenance requirements?

Admiral FALLER. When a USN ship deployed in the SOUTHCOM AOR has a serious maintenance problem, it goes into dry-dock facilities stateside where Fleet Forces Command takes operational control. When this occurs, the USN works to fill our operational requirement with another ship to minimize impact to operations. For specific information on the number of days a particular ship was in dry dock, I would have to refer you to the U.S. Navy.

Ms. SPEIER. What capability does the LCS provide to SOUTHCOM that is not present in other available vessels in the fleet?

Admiral FALLER. LCS, with its employment of the SH-60S helicopter and 11-meter Rigid-hull Inflatable Boat (RHIB), is the only USN combatant that can execute both airborne use of force (day and night) and surface use of force—a critical capability during the interdiction and apprehension stage. Structural modifications and asset re-allocations would be required to embark 11-meter RHIBs and SH-60S on other vessels.

Ms. SPEIER. A recent article in Defense News says that each LCS costs about \$70 million per year to operate—almost as much as the cost of operating a much-larger *Arleigh Burke*-class destroyer. Is that accurate? If not, what is the actual annual operating cost of a *Freedom*-class LCS?

Admiral FALLER. I would have to defer to the U.S. Navy for specific operational costs of different types of ships.

Ms. SPEIER. What is the impact of the LCS maintenance problems on SOUTHCOM's ability to complete drug interdiction, humanitarian, and other missions?

Admiral FALLER. From April 1, 2020 until May 10, 2021, we have lost 118 operational days because of LCS maintenance issues, and that number continues to grow. To the Navy's credit, they have worked to mitigate the operational days lost, and the above number is lower than it could be due to their efforts. However, the LCS platform is still plagued by systemic maintenance issues, which reduce its effectiveness.

Ms. SPEIER. What is the impact of the combination of high OPTEMPO and the unreliability of the *Freedom*-class LCS on the sailors who crew these ships? What, if anything, are you doing to mitigate these impacts?

Admiral FALLER. Due to shorter deployment cycles in the SOUTHCOM Area of Responsibility, the impact to crews has been minimal and significantly less than impacts from COVID associated with restriction of movement (ROM) requirements and

country access. Navy's employment model for LCS mitigates high OPTEMPO. Each LCS, with few exceptions, have two crews—blue and gold. This two-crew model mirrors that of other maritime platforms. Crews conduct a crew swap every 4–7 months, which is designed to limit OPTEMPO.

Ms. SPEIER. What are your plans going forward for OPTEMPO and LCS deployments in SOUTHCOM? Are you reconsidering the increased OPTEMPO?

Admiral FALLER. We anticipate future LCS presence to continue in this AOR. SOUTHCOM has an ideal mission set and compatible geography for this platform, but it will remain up to the U.S. Navy to provide assets based on SOUTHCOM's stated requirements. Although LCS presence has increased in the SOUTHCOM AOR, Navy's LCS employment model mitigates OPTEMPO concerns.

Ms. SPEIER. Both in media reporting and in my personal experiences speaking with service members and their families, it is clear that high OPTEMPO has been incredibly destructive to our military. How do you balance your mission needs, especially the unpredictability of disaster response, with stable force planning to reduce the burden of on short-notice deployments on the force?

Admiral FALLER. As a Combatant Command with no assigned forces, we rely exclusively on the Services to meet our mission requirements, both planned and emergent. We work closely with the Joint Staff through the Global Force Management Process to plan for normal, predictable mission requirements. While we cannot anticipate all emergency deployments, we take some proactive steps to minimize unplanned, short-notice deployments. For example, we do try to time deployments to coincide with hurricane season so that we can simply shift the mission of an already ongoing deployment to respond rapidly, rather than having to request a new deployment to react to a disaster.

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#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. SCOTT

Mr. SCOTT. How would the designation of cartels as foreign terrorist organizations affect U.S. Southern Command?

Admiral FALLER. While designating cartels as Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs) could change operational authorities from "law enforcement support and training" to the broader "counterterrorism" authorities, practically speaking, DOD activities would likely not change significantly. Alternatively, recognizing Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs) formally as threats to national security in key national strategic documents, which are directly tied to funding decisions, could result in direct positive impacts in the region.

Mr. SCOTT. The U.S. Coast Guard plays a significant role in SOUTHCOM. Do you have sufficient Coast Guard assets in SOUTHCOM or could you use more?

Admiral FALLER. The Coast Guard plays a key role in maintaining forward operating presence in the SOUTHCOM area of responsibility and is a top force provider in the region. The unique capabilities and authorities the Coast Guard bring are invaluable, and more USCG aircraft, cutters, and personnel would certainly contribute to meeting our mission requirements. However, Coast Guard assets are in demand worldwide, and they are only one force provider to our joint command. We work with the Joint Staff to source mission requirements through the Global Force Management Process, which includes assets from all Services.

Mr. SCOTT. CDR Daniel Upp, U.S. Navy, wrote in the April 2021 edition of Proceedings, "...the Paraguayan Navy is a worthy and critical partner for the United States in the struggle against the TCOs that threaten regional security in Latin America." What additional support does the Paraguayan Navy need from both the U.S. Coast Guard and the U.S. Navy so that it can defeat the transnational criminal organizations on some of South America's critical rivers?

Admiral FALLER. SOUTHCOM is addressing the lack of riverine security capability in Paraguay to conduct successful Counter Transnational Criminal Organizations (C-TCO) operations through an approved FY22 Significant Security Capability Initiative (SSCI) which was recently funded at \$773K to equip and train the Paraguayan Maritime Forces. We are currently looking to provide a new maritime riverine platform along with additional domain awareness capacity. In coordination with the Security Cooperation Office in Asuncion, DSCA, U.S. Navy South and the U.S. Coast Guard, we will assess the requirements and build an FY22 Section 333 support package to include a Minister of Defense-level Institutional Capacity line of effort executed by the U.S. Institute for Security Governance (ISG). Additionally, Paraguay and Colombia have agreed to conduct bi-lateral training under the U.S. Colombia Action Plan (USCAP), which will include both Military (DOD supported), and Public Security Forces (State supported) lines of effort.

Mr. SCOTT. Commander Jennifer Runion, U.S. Coast Guard, wrote in the February 2021 edition of Proceedings an article entitled “Protect Western Hemisphere Fish.” Is a regional fisheries commission needed to coordinate information sharing and enforcement efforts to protect Latin American fish stocks? Would the establishment of a shiprider program by the U.S. Coast Guard be effective in protecting the region’s fisheries?

Admiral FALLER. The practice of Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing is an economic and ecological threat, but also undermines port and maritime security, widens existing gaps in maritime governance, and is utilized by criminal elements to traffic drugs, arms, people, and other contraband. The Coast Guard is implementing a global strategy to combat IUU fishing that incorporates not only at-sea enforcement, but also intelligence sharing, legal support, and policy development. Partnerships with coastal nations aimed towards countering predatory behavior, and strengthening of multilateral and multinational coalitions, is a key part of this global framework. The Coast Guard coordinates partner nation cooperation and capacity building based on each nation’s capabilities and needs through the Department of State as well as the Department of Defense.

Mr. SCOTT. Commander Jonathan Ahlstrom, U.S. Navy, wrote in the January 2021 edition of Proceedings an article entitled “People-to-People Exchanges for the Win.” Has the U.S. Southern Command identified unfunded opportunities to “facilitate the cultural, educational, and people-to-people exchanges that create the networks of current and future political, civil society, and educational leaders who will extend a free and prosperous world.” If so, what are they and how much would they cost to implement?

Admiral FALLER. The benefits of collaborating with the U.S. military are far greater than just increased technical capability for the partner and we look for every opportunity to further our network of relationships within the region. Every engagement builds trust with our partners and reassures them that the United States wants to contribute in meaningful ways, and at the speed of relevance. The tools available through Security Cooperation, for example, allow for maximum engagement with our partner nation military and security forces. These tools include key leader engagements, subject matter expert exchanges, conferences, workshops, mobile training teams, and institutional capacity building at the Ministry level, to name a few. Our professional military education efforts in the region including International Military Education and Training (IMET), exchanges, and exercises shape future leaders and foster long-term relationships with partner nation military personnel. The programs are generally small investments with high, long-term return. A little bit goes a long way in this theater. When the U.S. military is present, we bring with us our values and we model professional behavior—we show our partners what “right” looks like. We have programs in place, like our Women Peace and Security initiative and the only Human Rights Office among the Combatant Commands, that help build the institutional capacity of our partner nation forces and make the resilient to all external influences and threats; programs to help partner nations develop diverse and inclusive militaries that respect the rule of law and human rights. We also agree with CDR Ahlstrom’s assessment that the inverse is also critical to developing our relationships—sending our U.S. military personnel to schools and exchange programs in partner nations and building cultural awareness and literacy within our own ranks shows partners that we are interested in understanding where they come from while informing our own decisions on how best to work with our partners in ways that are relevant to them. We will be submitting a list of unfunded requirements to Congress shortly after the President transmits the FY22 budget to Congress that will include partner engagement activities.

Mr. SCOTT. How is SOUTHCOM addressing the emerging threat of drones and drone swarming tactics?

Admiral FALLER. The Department of Defense has announced an intent to continue important research, development and procurement of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) and counter-UAS (C-UAS) technology. As DOD continues to develop, procure, and deploy these systems, we will work closely with our partner nations in the region to determine a collaborative way forward in the area of UAS.

Mr. SCOTT. What SOUTHCOM’s capabilities against a drone swarm attack? Do we currently have the ability to defeat a drone swarm attack and ensure we do not take out our drones?

Admiral FALLER. Unmanned aircraft systems are increasingly small, cheap, scalable, and disposable and can be used both offensively and defensively. We are paying attention to this technology and would be happy to discuss further in a classified setting.

Mr. SCOTT. What is SOUTHCOM working on to defeat adversary drones, singles and swarms, today and in the future?

Admiral FALLER. We would be happy to provide a classified briefing on this topic.  
Mr. SCOTT. What are the factors limiting your ability to deploy counter-UAS systems in SOUTHCOM?

Admiral FALLER. We continue to work together with partner nations in the region to evaluate and develop strategies in this area based on current capabilities and requirements.

Mr. SCOTT. Admiral Faller, you testified last year that ISR was critical to drug interdiction efforts, an issue with direct impact on the security of our nation and our communities. Despite that, you've said in the past that SOUTHCOM is forced to cover down on an area the size of the United States with just a handful of assets and that you're reaching just 20 percent of your overall ISR goal. What steps have you taken to remedy this shortfall? How do you assess your current ISR gaps or needs? Does your command plan to partner with U.S. companies to fill the gap with contractor-owned, contractor-operated ISR assets? How can Congress help?

Admiral FALLER. SOUTHCOM receives only one percent of DOD ISR. This creates a significant gap in our intelligence. For years, Congress has supported our intelligence program through the ISR Transfer Fund and other additional funding that has enabled us to mitigate some of those shortfalls. We have used these additional resources to contract, as well as purchase, ISR capabilities such as maritime patrol aircraft, tactical UAS, and more recently, non-traditional ISR capabilities that allow us to better harness large amounts of data to inform C-TCO and other operations in our AOR. Congressional recognition of the importance of this hemisphere, our own neighborhood, is key to sourcing this mission and countering the threats that directly impact our homeland. Modest increases in ISR, security cooperation, and presence in this region really go a long way in building our partners' resilience to all threats—TCOs, influence from malign state actors like China, and even humanitarian crises spurred by climate change.

Mr. SCOTT. In 2020, Congress responded to the combatant commanders' call for more ISR resources by appropriating \$250M for the ISR transfer fund, which funded additional ISR activities in the SOUTHCOM AOR. How did you leverage these additional resources in 2020? For 2021, the Pentagon did not request any funds for the ISR transfer fund and Congress did not appropriate any additional funds. How will the lack of ISR transfer funds in 2021 impact your mission?

Admiral FALLER. Intelligence drives everything. The loss of the ISR Transfer Fund this year resulted in a 38 percent reduction to our ISR in the current year. Over the last five years, the ISR Transfer Fund has provided 47 percent of our ISR. That's significant, especially since we only have about 1 percent of DOD ISR. Without that intelligence, we are going to understand less of the battle space. Small investments in ISR help inform us and, just as important, our partner nations, on the activities of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and TCOs in this region. With capabilities like COGINT (Commercial + Open Geointelligence) and Open Source Intelligence, we are able to understand the impact malign influences are having in the SOUTHCOM AOR and do so rapidly by leveraging automated machine learning. For instance, we have a better understanding of which Chinese companies and vessels are conducting illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, and are constantly monitoring patterns of activity. This information is key to help strengthening relationships with our impacted partners and for maritime sovereignty and security throughout the region.

Mr. SCOTT. What is the current rate of interdiction and apprehension of narcotics traffickers, and is this rate increasing or decreasing?

Admiral FALLER. SOUTHCOM works very closely with the interagency on the counternarcotic mission, as this is a true team effort. DHS, and specifically the U.S. Coast Guard, working with Joint Interagency Task Force-South (JIATF-S), is our primary law enforcement partner for drug interdictions at sea. Disruption rates have stayed within a tight range over the past five years. In terms of metric tons interdicted, JIATF-S saw an 11.6 percent rate of interdiction in 2020 which was approximately the same as the year before. It is worth noting that partner nation participation in these disruptions has increased to 60 percent, up from 50 the previous year. While we must continue to prevent as many drugs from entering our homeland as possible, we must also look toward a whole-of-society approach to address this scourge. For our part, SOUTHCOM can directly impact the supply side by continuing to work with our partners to stop the TCOs who will traffic in any commodity to turn a profit. It's not just about stopping the flow of drugs, we must go after their logistics chains and ultimately, their profits.

Mr. SCOTT. As SOUTHCOM's demand for ISR continues to grow exponentially, year after year, how is SOUTHCOM positioning itself to properly process, exploit, and disseminate the growing volume of information?

Admiral FALLER. SOUTHCOM continues to learn how best to leverage capabilities in order to stay innovative. Part of this effort is leveraging emerging artificial intelligence and machine learning capabilities that would allow us to collect and exploit information orders of magnitude faster than we once could and with fewer manpower requirements. We will look to continue expanding and investing in non-traditional ISR utilizing 21st Century tradecraft as a means of illuminating and limiting disinformation/misinformation in a whole of government approach that includes engaging with industry to best compete in a competitive information environment.

Mr. SCOTT. How is SOUTHCOM leveraging the opportunities that advanced cloud computing and artificial intelligence/machine learning can offer to more effectively manage this increasing volume of information?

Admiral FALLER. As I've said before, ISR drives everything. One thing we have started looking at more closely as an institution is non-traditional ISR. For example, our Special Operations Command South looks at big data—commercially available information—and they are able to quickly analyze this large quantity of data and make it actionable through artificial intelligence and machine learning. The next step is removing barriers to sharing information in order to leverage that data to understand what the threat is doing and to better inform our partners.

Mr. SCOTT. Do you think ABMS and Joint All-Domain Command and Control will have enough operational capability to fill the ISR gaps that JSTARS will not be able to fulfill once it is parked?

Admiral FALLER. The E-8C (JSTARS) has been a very valuable asset in our region. This platform enables valuable layered intelligence and the unique ability to characterize wide-areas of maritime trafficking environments with its moving target indicator (MTI), vital to identifying unknown suspicious surface activity along traditional high-volume trafficking routes. Additionally, employing the E-8C gives SOUTHCOM the opportunity to leverage external intelligence expertise for second and third phase analysis. The E-8C, when packaged with other airborne and surface Detection & Monitoring (D&M) assets, enables JIATF-S helicopter-equipped surface assets to increase their probability of detection of maritime targets from 7% to up to 50%. I would refer you to the Air Force for information on the Advance Battle Management System (ABMS) and Joint All Domain Command and Control (JADC2) systems and what their capabilities will be in the near to mid-term.

Mr. SCOTT. I am a strong supporter of the National Guard's State Partnership Program. My home State of Georgia is partnered with Argentina. While the current political environment makes it a challenge, can you talk about the value added by the Georgia National Guard to this partnership with Argentina?

Admiral FALLER. The State Partnership Program (SPP) is an integral part of our engagement capability with our partners and a force multiplier in the SOUTHCOM region. The State Partnership Program enables the exchange of tremendous expertise resident in our citizen Soldiers and Airmen fostering long-term relationships with partner nation military and security forces. SOUTHCOM fully leverages this value with 24 State Partnerships—the most of any region. The Georgia National Guard engagements with Argentina are nested under our security cooperation priorities. As part of the State Partnership Program, Georgia and Argentina continue to strengthen their relationship through multiple annual engagements since 2016. In 2020, even with COVID restrictions, the Georgia National Guard conducted 10 events with Argentina and have successfully executed nine of 27 events planned for 2021. One of the most recent engagement was a virtual subject matter expert exchange on COVID-19 best practices working group which enable leaders from each organization to share effective pandemic influenza/infectious disease (PI/ID) countermeasures, response to the novel outbreak and lessons learned. A team of medical professionals from Georgia National Guard, Georgia Department of Public Health, National Guard Bureau and Air Force South led the virtual engagement, sharing best practices with the Argentina partners on how the state of Georgia was managing its COVID-19 distribution logistics. They have exchanged knowledge in other SPP focus areas such as Cyber, Maintenance and professional development.

Mr. SCOTT. Could increased maintenance of current ground-based radar and communications intercept ISR assets expand capability? Has SOUTHCOM looked at leasing options with respect to ground-based ISR assets to include radars and communications intercept systems?

Admiral FALLER. We are always looking for ways to expand our ability to illuminate threats, not only to the U.S. but also our partners in the region. Maintenance of our assets is a critical but complex task to orchestrate at forward operating locations. We prefer basing our assets at U.S. controlled facilities or at locations where we have existing agreements with a partner nation. We do consider leasing if it is the only option that allows us to collect the information we need, and funding is available.

Mr. SCOTT. What is the demand signal for Navy hospital ships in SOUTHCOM? Admiral FALLER. Navy hospital ships are capable platforms that provide a vital service to our partner nations in their hour of need. They help build goodwill and highlight the best of America to our neighbors and the world. We have had multiple hospital ship deployments in SOUTHCOM's area of responsibility: from 2007–2019 those deployments treated 634,463 patients and performed 7,781 surgeries. There is a stable, consistent demand for medical care in many areas of the region, which is compounded by natural disasters and other crises. As a result of the seasonal threat of hurricanes, we have looked to schedule deployments in the summer in order to have hospital ship presence in order to quickly respond to an event.

Mr. SCOTT. What would the benefits be for NORTHCOM if the U.S. Navy established an Arctic Fleet?

General VANHERCK. As the Commander of USNORTHCOM and NORAD, I have consistently stated that our strategic competitors are exhibiting behaviors and taking actions that demonstrate their intent to compete with the United States globally and in all domains, including in the Arctic.

In order to counter their actions, the Department must establish a persistent, sustainable presence in the Arctic and close capability gaps. That includes establishing a maritime fueling capability north of Dutch Harbor, Alaska, which is necessary to expand the Navy's and Coast Guard's operational reach; improving facilities for air assets in coordination with our Canadian and Danish allies (e.g., fighters, tankers, and ISR platforms); and building reliable, resilient communications systems in the high north. We must also increase the capability of the Joint Force to operate in the Arctic, which necessitates examining existing equipment allowances as well as expanding opportunities to train in the Arctic.

I fully support the Navy's implementation of its "A Blue Arctic" strategy, with the objectives of establishing a more persistent maritime presence in the high north, strengthening relationships with Arctic allies and partners, and developing the capabilities and proficiency necessary to operate in the challenging Arctic environment. Achieving these objectives in all domains—not just at sea—would enable USNORTHCOM and NORAD to more effectively deter and counter strategic competitors' malign activities in the Arctic during day-to-day competition, provide national leaders with expanded options to de-escalate crises, and significantly improve the ability of USNORTHCOM and NORAD to defeat attacks against the homeland originating from or transiting through the Arctic approaches. I defer to the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Chief of Naval Operations as to the advisability or feasibility of establishing an Arctic Fleet.

Mr. SCOTT. What are the advantages to Arctic security of joint U.S. and Canadian Coast Guard patrols through the Northwest passage?

General VANHERCK. The extensive experience of the U.S. Coast Guard and Canadian Coast Guard in the Arctic and their long-shared history of combined operations in the Arctic Ocean provide significant benefits for Arctic security. Combined U.S. and Canadian Coast Guard operations demonstrate the strong security relationship and extensive maritime expertise between our nations and contribute to a safe, cooperative and prosperous Arctic region that protects the international rules-based order.

Mr. SCOTT. How much would it cost to modernize the missile early warning system with the capability to give the United States a clear advantage over Russia?

General VANHERCK. I defer to the Missile Defense Agency, the United States Space Force, and the United States Air Force regarding the cost to modernize the missile early warning system. USNORTHCOM and NORAD identify capability requirements in support of our assigned missions and work closely with the DOD Services and Agencies to provide fiscally viable solutions. I believe the emergence of peer competitors and their fielding of large numbers of long-range conventional cruise missiles and delivery platforms necessitates a more aggressive approach to missile defense for the homeland. USNORTHCOM and NORAD are aggressively working within the Department, along with Canada and other partners, to assess and identify capabilities such as over-the-horizon-radars that may complement terrestrial, airborne, and space-based technologies to improve early warning capabilities against current and future threats. A more aggressive approach must account for defense against the full spectrum of air and missile threats that we currently face in the homeland; we must avoid single threat solutions. The Department needs a more holistic approach in order to field an effective and affordable homeland defense capability.

Mr. SCOTT. How is NORTHCOM addressing the emerging threat of drones and drone swarming tactics?

General VANHERCK. NORAD is responsible for and has the authority to defend against attacks by large unmanned aircraft systems (UAS). However, the responsi-

bility and authority for defense against small UAS (sUAS) is distributed across multiple DOD and non-DOD agencies under law enforcement authorities. NORAD, together with USNORTHCOM, is aggressively collaborating with multiple DOD organizations and interagency partners to address the emerging threat of sUAS attack (e.g., small radar signature, easily purchased, commercially available). As an example, my commands are developing an integrated prototype sUAS detection and warning system, to include threats from swarms, that we intend to use in the continental United States.

The National Strategy for Aviation Security (NSAS) recognizes the wide variety of sizes in UAS, and that law enforcement has the authorities to counter sUAS. There is no lead federal agency designated to address sUAS threats within the National Airspace System.

I note that national-level statutes and policies currently constrain development of an effective interagency solution to this emerging sUAS threat. As such, I fully support efforts to establish national-level authorities and responsibilities that will enable a more fully integrated, interagency, whole-of-government solution that will mitigate potential sUAS and swarm sUAS attacks on the homeland.

Mr. SCOTT. What are NORTHCOM's capabilities against a drone swarm attack? Do we currently have the ability to defeat a drone swarm attack and ensure we do not take out our drones?

General VANHERCK. Today, NORAD (vice USNORTHCOM) has limited capability to detect small unmanned aircraft systems (sUAS) swarm attacks (e.g., small radar signature, easily purchased, commercially available). Further, NORAD has no ability to counter or defeat sUAS threats, nor is NORAD assigned the mission to counter-sUAS at this time. Instead, the counter-sUAS mission is conducted under law enforcement authorities as a reactive, not proactive, approach in domestic airspace. The counter-sUAS mission is conducted under military Service authorities only when over covered DOD assets and infrastructure. From a homeland defense perspective, I remain concerned with the reactive vice proactive approach to countering sUAS.

Mr. SCOTT. What is NORTHCOM working on to defeat adversary drones, singles and swarms, today and in the future?

General VANHERCK. NORAD (vice USNORTHCOM) is actively working with the Joint Counter-UAS Office and the Services to improve the Department's collective capability to successfully mitigate both single as well as swarm small unmanned aircraft system (sUAS) threats. Advanced technologies, such as the USNORTHCOM and NORAD Pathfinder prototype, are allowing us to take advantage of increased computing power, data analytics, and machine learning to detect and identify sUAS using existing sensors.

Through technologies such as Pathfinder, military commanders and senior civilian decision makers will gain decision space and the ability to employ a greater range of options. Instead of a reactive stance to sUAS threats, an expanded and integrated decision space will be key to a proactive defense against either single or swarm attacks.

By law and policy, the mitigation of sUAS is the responsibility of the Services and law enforcement agencies. NORAD (as the command tasked with aerospace warning and aerospace control) is focused on enhancing the ability to detect, track, identify sUAS in order to provide DOD installation commanders and interagency partners with the decision space necessary to successfully engage single and swarm sUAS threats. Gaining this enhanced awareness necessitates a more comprehensive approach than the installation-by-installation and point-by-point efforts that have been focused on in the past. It requires the netting together of DOD and non-DOD sensor data to gain composite air domain awareness, allowing for real-time detection of the full spectrum of air threats, including sUAS. This holistic approach will enable those tasked with the mitigation of sUAS by providing critical threat information, and most importantly, increased decision time.

My team is currently working with both DOD and interagency partners to test a prototype system that uses machine learning and artificial intelligence to provide real-time identification of those sUAS that are operating in such a manner as to warrant attention. This system will first be evaluated in the National Capital Region and Puget Sound, WA. Enabling early identification and shared early warning will increase decision time and allow those tasked with threat mitigation to take action when warranted.

Mr. SCOTT. What are the factors limiting your ability to deploy counter-UAS systems in NORTHCOM and specifically U.S. airspace?

General VANHERCK. As the NORAD (vice USNORTHCOM) Commander, I have the authorities needed for defense against large unmanned aircraft system (UAS) threats under the NORAD mission set. As the USNORTHCOM Commander, how-

ever, there are legal and policy limitations for employment of counter-small UAS (sUAS) systems in the defense of the homeland. For example, domestic security partners are restricted from sharing sUAS data with DOD organizations, which has impeded the development of a holistic, integrated approach for early detection of sUAS and protection of national infrastructure and critical assets from sUAS threats. In addition, Federal Aviation Administration controls designed to ensure safety of civilian aircraft preclude the use of some of the UAS mitigation systems that have proven effective in other theaters. Finally, no single agency is assigned within the National Strategy for Aviation Security to set overarching technical and operational standards necessary to facilitate an effective, whole-of-government approach to the sUAS threat.

Mr. SCOTT. Will the continued National Guard presence on the Southwest border become an enduring mission after the current mobilization authority expires?

General VANHERCK. This is a policy decision that I will defer to the Secretary of Defense. DOD personnel are currently deployed to the southwest border in response to a request from the Secretary of Homeland Security that was subsequently approved by Secretary of Defense authorizing up to 4,000 total DOD personnel on the border in FY21. All are currently National Guard members in Title 10 status providing support to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and U.S. Customs and Border Protection's (CBP) homeland security mission, enabling DHS and CBP personnel to focus their efforts on law enforcement.

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#### QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MR. NORCROSS

Mr. NORCROSS. General VanHerck, in your testimony you state that there is significant emphasis being placed on “left of launch framework” to provide “flexible response options to deter, deny or if required defeat every threat...”

Can you please describe in a bit more detail how this framework matches up against and can be utilized to defend the homeland or U.S. forces against adversary hypersonic weapons?

General VANHERCK. A left-of-launch framework to deter in competition, de-escalate in crisis, and deny and defeat in conflict against any threat—including hypersonic glide vehicles and cruise missiles—is all about increasing the ability to anticipate an attack before it occurs or has the ability to threaten the homeland. That is why my top priority is improving all-domain awareness, particularly against existing and emerging air and missile threats.

An all-domain awareness capability, achieved through layering a global array of existing and new sensors, will provide detection, identification, and tracking of the full range of threats, from hypersonic missiles to small unmanned aircraft systems. Although all-domain awareness by itself is not sufficient to deter an attack, it will enable information dominance and decision superiority by increasing decision space and creating an expanded range of options for military commanders and senior civilian decision makers, allowing them to assess and act well ahead of our competitors.

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#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. MOULTON

Mr. MOULTON. Admiral Faller, you referred in your testimony to PRC efforts to expand access to South American infrastructure and networks, including through its Safe City program, which exports the CCP's particular brand of technologically enabled authoritarianism. If, as you state, values are our strength in the hemisphere, where are you most concerned about losing ground to PRC influence, access, and particularly tools of oppression in South America? Can you elaborate on what additional tools, resources, or interagency support does USSOUTHCOM need to properly address this threat?

Admiral FALLER. In our AOR, China is increasing activity across all fronts, and it is all concerning: IT, cyber, space, extractive industries, ports (sea, air, land), roads, infrastructure, legal and illegal fishing, agriculture, and military—especially Spanish and Portuguese language professional military education modeled after U.S. education systems, along with gifts of military equipment because China knows countries in our hemisphere have fragile economies. China thrives on the corruption and lack of transparency in business and political deals resident in many of the countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Additionally, COVID 19 and the subsequent vaccinations brought on a new era of mask, health, and vaccine diplomacy that China seeks to leverage to its advantage. Chinese information operations are aggressive and full of lies—not bound by the same authorities or values as the U.S. As I said in my testimony, our strategic approach to China must be global. We can start by leveraging intelligence—find out everything we can about China across all



dimensions and domains and document it. Information sharing in this endeavor is key. We need to operate in a manner that allows us to release this information to our partners and, in some cases, the public. We'll use the findings to inform better DOD and USG actions to include resources. Additionally, we must remain present in the AOR—you can't win if you aren't on the field. We need to continue to get better and stronger with respect to partnerships, both bilaterally and multilaterally, through security cooperation activities. We are stronger together and even modest investments in this hemisphere go a long way and will help us and our partners counter these global threats.

Mr. MOULTON. General VanHerck, in your testimony you discuss the need for all-domain awareness enabled by machine learning and artificial intelligence. The Future of Defense Task Force, which I co-led last year, highlighted the importance of digital education and training to maximize use of those technologies. What changes in training do your leaders—junior and senior—need to be able to fully utilize and trust these capabilities to achieve decision superiority over our adversaries?

General VANHERCK. Digital education and training, as well as embedding a culture of innovation within USNORTHCOM and NORAD, are essential to reaching the strategic goals of attaining domain awareness, information dominance, and decision superiority over any competitor. To that end, I am pursuing a concentrated and focused effort to affect a digital cultural transformation across my commands, and within the Department of Defense. The cornerstone of this effort is investing in the digital education of our people in a way that makes us better today, and better able to counter future threats. Specifically, within my commands, initial efforts are to define the necessary skills to become digitally literate for every echelon of activity from operator to commander. The commands will then expand the model to address specialized, job-specific digital education and training to develop and deepen the technical expertise across the enterprise. Because many best practices often lie outside the Department, I am also seeking avenues to bring in experts from academia and industry, and leverage their knowledge and experience to educate our personnel and sharpen the edge of our digital initiatives. I expect to implement most of the commands' digital transformation training and education initiatives this calendar year.

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#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. BACON

Mr. BACON. Over the last year, Iran has flouted sanctions and made illicit oil deliveries to Venezuela. According to the Biden administration, they are aware of reports of a Venezuelan-Iranian petroleum exchange and continue to monitor. There are reports that Iran is disguising their vessels to evade these sanctions. What is DOD doing to counter these illicit flows and keep these two despotic regimes from propping each other up?

Mr. SALESSES. DOD is aware of the alleged Venezuelan-Iranian petroleum exchange and is closely monitoring the situation. As DOD's role is a supporting role, I defer to the Departments of State, Treasury, and Justice regarding U.S. Government efforts to counter the alleged illicit activities in violation of U.S. sanctions.

Mr. BACON. The 2021 USSOUTHCOM Posture Statement notes that the dissemination of intelligence to our partners is critical to "shine a light on the PRC's predatory and corrupt actions." China has made deliberate attempts to expand its "Belt and Road" Initiative to South America by establishing self-serving, exploitative economic and military ties to cement a foothold there. What is your assessment of our partners' response to our intelligence sharing efforts?

Admiral FALLER. U.S. Intelligence is a highly desired commodity by our partners, and our ability to share is a critical capability that is greatly appreciated. Sharing of this commodity is a persistent topic in my staff's interactions with partners. To this end, our Intelligence Directorate has a dedicated team focused on intelligence cooperation, sharing at the bilateral and multilateral level, and building and enhancing our partners' intelligence capacity and capabilities to include partner ability to absorb, secure, process and disseminate intelligence. In 2020 alone, our intelligence staff and partners collectively shared over 1,700 intelligence products and conducted over 8,000 intelligence collaboration voice/video calls. These interactions allow our partners to make better informed decisions and adroitly apportion scarce resources to counter shared threats in our AOR.

Mr. BACON. In 2020, USSOUTHCOM initiated Enhanced Counter Narcotics Operations under the whole-of-government approach to stem the flow of illicit drugs into the homeland. One year later, have these operations been successful in achieving their objective and what are some benefits and drawbacks to using this type of oper-

ation? Have you noted any links between this activity and the activity at our southern borders?

Admiral FALLER. The enhanced counter narcotics efforts were critical in keeping tons of illicit drugs off our streets and saving American lives. Our presence and commitment to the region, which continued through the COVID-19 pandemic, was reciprocated by partner nations, who contributed to an increasing percentage of interdictions. Key partners like Colombia, Costa Rica, Panama, Guatemala, El Salvador, and others were involved in 60% of drug disruptions during the operation. These efforts not only stop the drugs themselves, but address the violence, corruption, and erosion of the rule of law caused by TCOs and the drugs they smuggle through the region, impacts that are a driving force behind the population movements we see on our border. However, this is a complex issue that cannot be solved by interdiction alone. While the U.S. military plays a critical role in countering these TCOs and addressing the root causes of illegal migration, this national security imperative will ultimately require a whole of society approach.

Mr. BACON. SOUTHCOM's contractor-owned contractor-operated service has provided wide area persistent ISR of the SOUTHCOM AOR for the past year. How important is this service for SOUTHCOM and do you intend to extend COCO operations to ensure there are no ISR gaps?

Admiral FALLER. SOUTHCOM receives only 1% of DOD ISR assets. To mitigate our ISR shortfalls, we have used additional funds provided by Congress through the ISR Transfer Fund to contract for ISR capabilities. With the loss of the ISR Transfer Fund this year, which provided 47% of our ISR requirements over the last five years, our ability to close some of these gaps has been limited. As an example, we have used these additional congressional funds to contract aerial ISR capabilities, to include required sensor packages, that have been critical to our missions in this region.

Mr. BACON. In March you emphasized that Russia remains the top threat to the U.S. homeland due in large part to their whole-of-government strategy that leverages information operations, deception, and threats of military force. On March 29th, Russian Tu-142 maritime patrol aircraft entered the Alaskan Air Defense Identification Zone, in another sign of their resolve to assert themselves in the western hemisphere. Russia continues to conduct operations below the threshold of war against our institutions with the aim of causing discord and dissent. What can Congress do to help you reinforce your strategy to protect the Homeland and diminish Russia's operational effectiveness in targeting the American people?

General VANHERCK. Immediate actions Congress could take are to ensure sufficient research and development funding for emerging technologies and data science developments, while continuing to create opportunities for partnerships between DOD and outside experts. In addition, Congress can help to foster and support a culture where failure, when properly managed, is okay and a natural part of accelerating capability development—the Department learns the most from failures. Those collaborative efforts are critical to achieving all-domain awareness, information dominance, and decision superiority. As threats continue to advance, it is increasingly important to foster public-private partnerships, as well as collaboration with national and defense labs, the National Guard, and our Canadian partners to outpace our competitors.

I would also welcome any progress toward more streamlined and flexible acquisition processes that allow USNORTHCOM and NORAD to take full advantage of the innovative solutions offered by our tech industry partners. Russia has fielded advanced long-range and stealthy systems that are specifically designed to overcome current defense capabilities, and the Department must move quickly and efficiently to regain its strategic and technological advantage.

Mr. BACON. As the Arctic grows in significance to U.S. and allied security, NORTHCOM/NORAD has an urgent need for increased early warning and maritime domain awareness in the high north. What advantages and challenges do you see with the use of unmanned systems as an affordable option to provide early warning (AEW) and maritime domain awareness (MDA) in the Arctic? Are there viable options to partner with Canada and other Arctic Allies to increase AEW and MDA coverage in the Arctic and how do you recommend we engage with them?

General VANHERCK. Unmanned systems can provide persistent intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities from the sea floor to space, including providing that critical information in the high north. However, unlike manned systems, they lack the ability to respond to our competitors' actions if or when needed. The harsh Arctic environment remains unforgiving and only the most robust manned or unmanned systems are capable of sustained Arctic operations. Whether undersea, on land, or in the air, unmanned systems still face the challenges of remote maintenance, a difficult logistical tail and, for now, a limited communications infrastruc-

ture. In fact, the North Warning System, which is the system of radars across Alaska and the Canadian Arctic, is an unmanned land-based system. Operational for over three decades, this is the system NORAD still relies on each and every day. An opening Arctic invites competitors to operate ships and submarines on our northern flank, compounding our maritime challenge. Maritime domain awareness, above and below the surface, will be increasingly important to our ability to deter competitors in the North American Arctic. As the DOD Advocate for the Arctic, I have directed USNORTHCOM and NORAD to begin work to establish additional persistent early warning capabilities in the Arctic by advocating for land-, sea-, air-, and space-based sensors that will provide persistent domain awareness. Part of the solution will likely include modern over-the-horizon radar (OTHR) technology that has shown promise for delivering cost-effective, persistent wide area surveillance of the Arctic. The United States and Canada are pursuing the fielding of OTHR at key locations and actively researching polar OTHR technology as a means to surveil the entire polar region. Timely information sharing between allies and partners is also vital to global all-domain awareness, and USNORTHCOM and NORAD gain critical insight from the mutually beneficial and highly valuable relationships we share with Canada and our other Arctic allies. Finally, I am on record that I believe the United States must include a space-based sensor network as soon as possible to provide a global, persistent, and resilient surveillance capability so threats to the homeland can be detected and tracked from wherever they may be launched.

#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. WALTZ

Mr. WALTZ. A whole-of-government approach to combat the trafficking of illegal narcotics and other contraband into the United States is essential to the protection of the homeland from transnational criminal organizations (TCOs). Federal law enforcement agencies partner with the Department of Defense (DOD) to work closely together to detect, interdict, and prosecute these criminal actors utilizing the source, transit, and arrival zones (to include the U.S. maritime waters) as primary smuggling routes for their illicit goods. U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Air and Marine Operations (AMO) partners closely with U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM), U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM), the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), and other federal agencies in bringing to bear a whole-of-government capability against these transnational criminal actors exploiting the maritime environment. From my understanding, AMO is a critical partner to these interdiction efforts utilizing aircraft and vessels, hand in hand with DOD and USCG partners, to impact TCOs. I also understand that current authorities limit AMO's maritime enforcement zone to only twelve nautical miles from our coasts. There is a draft legislative proposal to extend AMO Customs Authorities from the current limit of twelve nautical miles out to twenty-four nautical miles, incorporating the Contiguous Zone to the fullest intended extent (as authorized by the 1999 Presidential Proclamation number 7219). Would the extension of AMO's authority help DOD in its overall counter-narcotics mission?

Admiral FALLER. You are absolutely correct that a whole of government approach to combat the trafficking of illegal narcotics and other contraband into the United States is essential to the protection of the homeland from TCOs. Because our mission really focuses on identifying activity as close to the source as possible, the impact of the referenced bill would be minimal to DOD. Under 10 USC 124 DOD is the single lead agency of the Federal Government for the detection and monitoring (D&M) of aerial and maritime transit of illegal drugs into the U.S. DOD may operate equipment to intercept a vessel or aircraft detected outside the land area of the U.S., but typically these interdictions are happening well beyond the U.S. Contiguous Zone and are closer to the departure zones in South and Central America. I would not speak for the Coast Guard, U.S. Northern Command, or other government entities who have missions that bring them much closer to U.S. soil.

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General VANHERCK. USNORTHCOM provides support to counterdrug operations at the request of federal law enforcement agencies, to include CBP. Because CBP operates under authorities that do not extend to the Department of Defense, extending AMO's authority would be unlikely to impact USNORTHCOM's counterdrug support.

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#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY DR. JACKSON

Dr. JACKSON. There are opportunities to help train young operators as they learn to use technology out in the field. One example could be training for sensor operators learning to perform surveillance and reconnaissance while piloting Remotely Piloted Aircraft.

These operators could get real world application by conducting their training in support of law enforcement by monitoring the southern border and providing surveillance coverage.

General VanHerck or Mr. Salasses, could either of you speak to the feasibility of this and perhaps identify other areas in which DOD could utilize its training time to support law enforcement in their efforts to address the crisis at the southern border?

Mr. SALESSES. I defer to General VanHerck, who is currently commanding DOD's military support of U.S. Customs and Border Protection at the southern border of the United States.

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General VanHerck or Mr. Salasses, could either of you speak to the feasibility of this and perhaps identify other areas in which DOD could utilize its training time to support law enforcement in their efforts to address the crisis at the southern border?

General VANHERCK. The DOD regularly leverages required military unit training when possible to also provide incidental support to the Department of Homeland Security. Specifically on the southern border, the 2-13th Aviation Battalion, which operates the U.S. Army Unmanned Aerial Systems Training Schoolhouse in Ft Huachuca, AZ, flies sorties to train and certify their soldiers while simultaneously providing support to U.S. Customs and Border Protection. I see the potential for expanded training opportunities that could support multiple USNORTHCOM missions, however I will defer to the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Services regarding the feasibility to execute.

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#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. MOORE

Mr. MOORE. Your testimony detailed the challenges posed to our legacy warning and assessment systems. Do you believe our deterrent capabilities outpace the modernization efforts of our adversaries?

Mr. SALESSES. Both Russia and China are advancing modernization programs aimed at eroding the U.S. military advantage, limiting U.S. freedom of movement, and deterring the United States from intervening in a regional conflict. As our competitors develop and deploy increasingly sophisticated offensive systems capable of striking the U.S. homeland, it is imperative that the U.S. modernization of assessment and warning systems outpaces competitor capabilities and provide sufficient decision space to enable timely action to detect and defeat incoming threats. Armed with timely information drawn from modern sensor systems and advanced software, and backed by flexible and responsive conventional defeat capabilities, DOD would be capable of deterring or denying adversary acts of aggression more effectively.

Mr. MOORE. Bad actors necessitate the need for increased missile defense of the homeland. Do you think recent efforts are adequate to address existing gaps in missile defense?

General VANHERCK. No. While I currently have the ability to defend against a limited number of ballistic missile threats from rogue nations, I am very concerned about their ability to exceed my defensive capacity and capability in the near future and my intelligence team keeps me continuously apprised of North Korean and Iranian efforts to advance their missile programs. Without improvements to our current system—such as fielding of the Next Generation Interceptor, on time or sooner, and a Department decision about a layered missile defense capability—our defensive capacity will remain constant, while the threat continues to grow, eventually exceeding my defensive capacity and capability.

I would also note that the U.S. strategic deterrent provides the foundation for our defense against ballistic missile threats. The reliable and credible U.S. strategic capability, backed by a policy of deterrence by punishment, makes clear to potential adversaries that launching a ballistic missile attack against the United States would result in an overwhelming and devastating response. That deterrent effect, when reinforced by the deterrence by denial afforded by a reliable and capable ballistic missile defense system is critical to defending the homeland against ballistic missile threats. As such, I believe future deterrence reviews such as the Nuclear Posture Review and Missile Defense Review should be a single product to ensure that U.S. deterrence policy and corresponding capabilities are part of a comprehensive approach that considers all elements of overarching deterrence.

In addition, I believe the emergence of peer competitors and their fielding of large numbers of long-range conventional cruise missiles and delivery platforms necessitates a more aggressive approach to missile defense for the homeland. A more aggressive approach must account for defense against the full spectrum of air and missile threats that we currently face in the homeland; we must avoid single threat solutions. The Department needs a more holistic approach in order to field an effective and affordable homeland defense capability.

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#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MRS. MURPHY

Mrs. MURPHY. With regards to the rise in transnational criminal organizations (TCOs), are there lessons that can be learned from our decades in countering violent extremism, and do you believe we are approaching the TCOs in the right way by having law enforcement take the lead? Are there other ways in which the Department of Defense could play a more robust role?

Admiral FALLER. Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs) are murderous, violent entities that pose a direct threat to our national security. The corruption, instability, and human suffering that is fostered by TCOs not only drives the flow of narcotics and illegal migration, but it also opens the door for competitors like China to leverage the dire circumstances in these countries for their gain. TCOs are an existential threat, and we need to approach them from every angle—not through law enforcement or military action alone but with a whole-of-government strategy that includes all U.S. elements of national power and leverages our partners and Allies globally. In order to do that, we must recognize the significant threat TCOs pose to our nation and include them in our national strategic documents that drive priorities and funding.

