

[H.A.S.C. No. 117-67]

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

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

HEARING HELD
MARCH 8, 2022



U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

48-525

WASHINGTON : 2023

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS

ADAM SMITH, Washington, *Chairman*

JAMES R. LANGEVIN, Rhode Island	MIKE ROGERS, Alabama
RICK LARSEN, Washington	JOE WILSON, South Carolina
JIM COOPER, Tennessee	MICHAEL R. TURNER, Ohio
JOE COURTNEY, Connecticut	DOUG LAMBORN, Colorado
JOHN GARAMENDI, California	ROBERT J. WITTMAN, Virginia
JACKIE SPEIER, California	VICKY HARTZLER, Missouri
DONALD NORCROSS, New Jersey	AUSTIN SCOTT, Georgia
RUBEN GALLEGO, Arizona	MO BROOKS, Alabama
SETH MOULTON, Massachusetts	SAM GRAVES, Missouri
SALUD O. CARBAJAL, California	ELISE M. STEFANIK, New York
ANTHONY G. BROWN, Maryland,	SCOTT DESJARLAIS, Tennessee
RO KHANNA, California	TRENT KELLY, Mississippi
WILLIAM R. KEATING, Massachusetts	MIKE GALLAGHER, Wisconsin
FILEMON VELA, Texas	MATT GAETZ, Florida
ANDY KIM, New Jersey	DON BACON, Nebraska
CHRISSY HOULAHAN, Pennsylvania	JIM BANKS, Indiana
JASON CROW, Colorado	LIZ CHENEY, Wyoming
ELISSA SLOTKIN, Michigan	JACK BERGMAN, Michigan
MIKIE SHERRILL, New Jersey	MICHAEL WALTZ, Florida
VERONICA ESCOBAR, Texas	MIKE JOHNSON, Louisiana
JARED F. GOLDEN, Maine	MARK E. GREEN, Tennessee
ELAINE G. LURIA, Virginia, <i>Vice Chair</i>	STEPHANIE I. BICE, Oklahoma
JOSEPH D. MORELLE, New York	C. SCOTT FRANKLIN, Florida
SARA JACOBS, California	LISA C. McCLAIN, Michigan
KAIALI'I KAHELE, Hawaii	RONNY JACKSON, Texas
MARILYN STRICKLAND, Washington	JERRY L. CARL, Alabama
MARC A. VEASEY, Texas	BLAKE D. MOORE, Utah
JIMMY PANETTA, California	PAT FALLON, Texas
STEPHANIE N. MURPHY, Florida	
STEVEN HORSFORD, Nevada	

PAUL ARCANGELI, *Staff Director*

ROBERT IKOKU, *Professional Staff Member*

KYLE NOYES, *Professional Staff Member*

NATALIE DE BENEDETTI, *Clerk*

CONTENTS

	Page
STATEMENTS PRESENTED BY MEMBERS OF CONGRESS	
Rogers, Hon. Mike, a Representative from Alabama, Ranking Member, Committee on Armed Services	2
Smith, Hon. Adam, a Representative from Washington, Chairman, Committee on Armed Services	1
WITNESSES	
Dalton, Melissa G., Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Hemispheric Affairs, Office of the Secretary of Defense	3
Richardson, GEN Laura J., USA, Commander, U.S. Southern Command	5
VanHerck, Gen Glen D., USAF, Commander, U.S. Northern Command and North American Aerospace Defense Command	7
APPENDIX	
PREPARED STATEMENTS:	
Dalton, Melissa G.	53
Richardson, GEN Laura J.	67
VanHerck, Gen Glen D.	94
DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD:	
[There were no Documents submitted.]	
WITNESS RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ASKED DURING THE HEARING:	
Dr. Green	123
Ms. Jacobs	123
Mr. Waltz	123
Mr. Wilson	123
QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING:	
Mr. Banks	131
Mrs. Bice	133
Mr. Crow	137
Mr. Gaetz	131
Mr. Gallagher	130
Mr. Horsford	136
Mr. Lamborn	137
Mr. Moore	134
Mrs. Murphy	135
Mr. Scott	127
Mr. Waltz	132

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

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC, Tuesday, March 8, 2022.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:00 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. Go ahead and call the meeting to order. This morning, we meet to discuss the national security challenges and U.S. military activity in North and South America.

We have three witnesses with us: Ms. Melissa Dalton, who's the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Hemisphere Affairs at OSD [Office of the Secretary of Defense]; General Laura Richardson, who is the Commander of the U.S. Southern Command; and General Glen VanHerck, who is the Commander for U.S. Northern Command and North American Aerospace Defense Command. Greetings, and thank you all for being here.

There are a lot of challenges in the world right now, as we all know. I don't think anyone could argue with the basic statement that the threat environment has increased significantly in recent years, in recent months, and even in recent weeks, and most of our focus on that is overseas in other places.

For the last 20 years, we have had a huge focus on the Central Command in Iraq and Afghanistan. You know, we see China as, as has been described, the pacing threat in the world. And, obviously, we all know the threat from Russia right now, what's going on in Ukraine and the broader threat that they pose.

But I think it is very important that we have the commands before us today that we have because it's important to remember that our primary job is to protect the United States of America—to protect the homeland—and what's closer to home is the—are the primary threats that we need to be worried about, and there's two big things about that.

One, there are threats here at home. There continues to be a great deal of instability. Certainly, in Latin America, we have seen the impacts of that in a variety of different ways—the drug trade, the criminality, immigration flows. All of that has a profound impact on us.

Obviously, domestically, in the Northern Command, we are concerned about how that impacts us. But there are cyber threats and many others. So there are threats here in this region.

But I think, as importantly, the threats that are overseas are also present here. Certainly, we all know about how transnational terrorist threats can come home. But Russia and China are both very active in this hemisphere, certainly in Latin America and elsewhere.

So if we are looking at an era of great power competition, then that competition is here as well and we need to be aware of the threat that that poses.

As we talk with our witnesses about how we're going to meet those threats, you know, I'll hit upon the point that this committee has been very focused on for a number of years and that is, you know, updating our technology and understanding how to meet the threats in this age.

To me, it's all about, you know, information and survivability, and, certainly, here in the Northern Command, protecting our information is at the top.

We are very vulnerable to cyberattacks. How do we make sure that we better protect ourselves against that, and then equally, how do we take advantage of innovative new technologies to make sure that our information system, broadly speaking, is robust, effective, and protected?

It is my opinion, and I know the ranking member shares this opinion, that, you know, the Pentagon still needs to pick up the pace on implementing those new technologies and making sure that we take advantage of AI [artificial intelligence], machine learning, and other technologies that are crucial to defending us, to understanding how the battlefield has changed and what it means to truly defend yourself in the modern era.

And I think our witnesses today and the commands that they're responsible for are incredibly appropriate to answer some of those questions. How is it going? How are we doing at protecting the homeland?

How are we doing with dealing with the threats that are right here in our hemisphere, even as we see the threats metastasize around the world, mindful of the fact that those threats around the world are a lot closer than they may appear in terms of how they can impact our own security here at home.

So I look forward to our witnesses' testimony, the questions and answers, as always.

With that, I yield to the ranking member, Mr. Rogers.

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

Mr. ROGERS. I thank the chairman for holding this hearing. And I thank the witnesses for their attendance and their service to our country and the Western Hemisphere.

As we focus on the following—on the growing threat from China and Putin's appalling act in Ukraine, we must not neglect the many national security challenges in our own backyard.

Homeland defense is the foundation of our national security. A strong homeland defense enables us to project power around the globe. We rely on NORTHCOM [U.S. Northern Command] for everything from ballistic missile defense to stopping illegal trafficking of drugs and migrants across our borders.

But its mission has become increasingly difficult. Our adversaries are enhancing their ability to strike our homeland with ballistic missiles and now threaten us with hypersonics. Non-state actors trafficking narcotics and human beings across the border continues to be a major problem.

In fiscal year 2021, Customs and Border Protection [CBP] encountered more than 1.6 million inadmissible individuals at the southwest land border. That is the most ever encountered. Last year, border seizures of cocaine grew by 68 percent and seizures of fentanyl increased by 134 percent. CBP is simply overwhelmed. It must rely on support from the Department of Defense and NORTHCOM just to perform its basic mission.

I look forward to hearing from General VanHerck and Assistant Secretary Dalton's perspectives on how to best tackle these threats.

In Central and South America, instability is growing and further undermining our national security. SOUTHCOM [U.S. Southern Command] works hard to counter instability by building partner capacity, carrying out counternarcotics operations, and responding to disasters. They do a tremendous amount of good but their job is becoming more difficult.

China and Russia are expanding their influence both economically and militarily in the region. Their presence undermines our national security.

To counter these threats, we must build new, and enhance existing, partnerships in the region. I congratulate General Richardson on her new command, and I look forward to hearing how she intends to tackle these challenges.

The threats to our national security in North and South America are complex and increasingly connected to our great power competition. I look forward to hearing from our witnesses and getting their best military advice on how to overcome these challenges.

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

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Ms. Dalton.

STATEMENT OF MELISSA G. DALTON, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR HOMELAND DEFENSE AND HEMISPHERIC AFFAIRS, OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Ms. DALTON. Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Rogers, and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today.

I am the principal civilian policy adviser to the Secretary of Defense on homeland defense, mission assurance, defense support of civil authorities, Western Hemisphere affairs, and the Arctic and global resilience.

I'd like to emphasize two points up front.

First, DOD [U.S. Department of Defense] is working to increase preparedness to prevent and respond to threats in the homeland, namely, from state-based strategic competitors.

Second, to build resilience against these threats, DOD is modernizing our approach to partnerships for homeland defense missions.

The U.S. homeland faces challenges from state and non-state competitors, as well as trans-boundary challenges like climate change. These can put DOD's ability to defend the homeland, project power, and counter aggression.

The People's Republic of China [PRC] is the pacing challenge for the Department. Its rapidly advancing capabilities could allow the PRC to hold our homeland at risk and disrupt our ability to mobilize the joint force.

Russia poses an acute challenge to the United States and our partners. Abroad, Russia's invasion of Ukraine has already resulted in loss of life and threatens global peace and security.

At home, Russia has sought to weaken our democracy. Rogue regimes Iran and North Korea pose persistent challenges. Iran has attempted to execute influence campaigns in the homeland, including the 2020 Presidential election. The DPRK [Democratic People's Republic of Korea] focuses its malicious criminal activity on exploiting international financial systems, allowing it to evade U.N. [United Nations] sanctions.

The United States faces cyber threats from state and non-state actors, their proxies, and cyber criminals. The PRC and Russia are among our most sophisticated cyber competitors. They exfiltrate sensitive information to erode our economic vitality and they undermine voter confidence.

The Western Hemisphere's relative stability can be maintained only by building strong defense relationships with partners in the region. We know that competitors seek to foster instability and that transnational criminal organizations enable corruption and erode democratic institutions in the region.

Our Nation also faces natural and manmade hazards. COVID-19 [coronavirus disease] has claimed the lives of 936,000 Americans. Last year, the homeland endured 58 major disasters including hurricanes, wildfires, and flooding. Climate change is affecting the Arctic acutely, opening inroads for U.S. strategic competitors.

DOD's priority is to defend the homeland. One of the key ways the Department will do this is through integrated deterrence, working seamlessly across warfighting domains, theaters, the spectrum of conflict, other instruments of U.S. national power, and our alliances and partnerships to apply a coordinated effort to alter our competitors' perceptions of the potential costs and benefits of aggression.

The resilience of our critical infrastructure and capabilities at home strengthens deterrence of competitor aggression. Central to this effort is building the resilience of critical capabilities, particularly non-DOD owned capabilities on which we rely.

This requires cooperation with our partners in other departments and agencies; State, local, tribal, and territorial governments; and the private sector to address vulnerabilities and build resilience.

In the cyberspace domain, DOD is ensuring the joint force can fight and win wars even through disruption and while under attack. DOD also executes cyberspace operations to enable its partners and to disrupt cyber threats. Protecting our democracy from

foreign-based malign influence and election interference attacks is a DOD top priority.

DOD supports Federal, State, and local partners in securing our borders and responding to manmade and natural disasters. Over the last year, this has included providing support to whole-of-government responses to COVID-19, Operation Allies Welcome, and the southwest border.

DOD is supporting the national response to COVID-19, including approximately 118 requests for assistance last year. As of February 28th, DOD had 63 teams totaling 1,424 personnel identified to support hospitals and medical centers.

Over the past year, DOD supported care through Operation Allies Welcome for more than 80,000 Afghan evacuees through Operation Allies Welcome and with temporary housing and medical support at eight domestic military installations.

DOD's support for evacuees at military installations has ended but will continue at a non-DOD facility. DOD has supported DHS's [Department of Homeland Security's] mission at the southwest border for 17 of the last 21 years. Roughly, 2,500 DOD personnel are deployed to the border providing intelligence analysis, aviation, and other support.

To address shared threats in the Western Hemisphere, DOD has partnered with the region's militaries based on support for democratic institutions, civilian control of the military, and respect for human rights.

To conclude, the Department is committed to increasing preparedness with partners in and out of government to build homeland resilience and advance U.S. national interests.

Thank you for your support of the Department of Defense and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Dalton can be found in the Appendix on page 53.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

General Richardson.

I don't think your microphone is on there.

General RICHARDSON. Thank you, Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Great. Thanks.

STATEMENT OF GEN LAURA J. RICHARDSON, USA, COMMANDER, U.S. SOUTHERN COMMAND

General RICHARDSON. Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Rogers, and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you alongside General VanHerck and Assistant Secretary Dalton, two of my most important teammates in keeping this Western Hemisphere safe.

I am honored to be here with you representing the men and women of United States Southern Command to discuss the challenges we share with our neighbors in this hemisphere, but also the opportunities we can unlock together.

Today more than ever, America's fate is inextricably linked to events beyond our shores. This region, our shared neighborhood, is under assault from a host of cross-cutting trans-boundary challenges that directly threaten our homeland.

I have been in command for about 4 months now and the biggest eye opener for me has been the extent to which China and Russia are aggressively expanding their influence in our neighborhood.

Latin America and the Caribbean are experiencing insecurity and instability that has been greatly exacerbated by COVID-19. The People's Republic of China, our long-term strategic competitor, continues its relentless march to expand economic, diplomatic, technological, informational, and military influence in Latin America and the Caribbean, and challenges U.S. influence in all of these domains.

Without U.S. leadership, negative PRC influence in this region could soon resemble the self-serving predatory influence that it now holds in Africa.

Meanwhile, Russia, a more immediate threat, is increasing its engagements in the hemisphere as Putin looks to keep his options open and maintain relationships in our near abroad.

In January, the Russian foreign—the Russian deputy foreign minister said he could neither affirm nor exclude that Russia would send military assets to Cuba or Venezuela.

Just days before the Russia unprovoked invasion of Ukraine, the Russian deputy prime minister visited Nicaragua, Cuba, and Venezuela, countries that maintain close ties with Russia and offer Putin a foothold in our hemisphere.

Finally, recent visits between the presidents of Brazil and Argentina with Putin in Russia demonstrate a concerning potential broadening of Russian ties in the region.

In this hemisphere, transnational criminal organizations [TCOs] operate nearly uncontested and blaze a trail of corruption and violence, and this creates a wedge and allows the PRC and Russia to exploit these countries.

They threaten citizens' security, undermine public confidence in government institutions, and drive irregular migration to our homeland.

These TCOs traffic opioids, cocaine, and other deadly drugs into the United States, fueling both drug overdoses and drug-related violence that have affected so many of us and our loved ones.

In my initial travels to the region it has become obvious to me that our partners are our best defense. We must use all available levers to strengthen our partnerships with the 28 like-minded democracies in this hemisphere who understand the power of working together to counter these shared threats.

We must maximize important tools like security cooperation programs to train and equip our partner militaries.

Multilateral exercises to build interoperability and the State Department's IMET [International Military Education and Training], FMF [Foreign Military Financing], and FMS [Foreign Military Sales] programs to educate, train, and build capacity that our partners use to stand shoulder to shoulder with us.

Colombia, for example, our strongest partner in the region, exports security by training other Latin American militaries to counter transnational threats.

USSOUTHCOM is putting integrated deterrence into action every day, using innovative methods to work seamlessly in all domains with the other combatant commands, the joint force, allies

and partner nations, Congress, the U.S. interagency, NGOs [non-governmental organizations], and the private sector to help build a shared neighborhood that is free, secure, and prosperous for our generation and generations to come.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

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

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

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, thank you for the opportunity to appear today.

It's my honor to represent the men and women of the United States Northern Command and North American Aerospace Defense Command. It's also an honor to appear today with General Richardson and Assistant Secretary Dalton.

NORTHCOM and NORAD face the most dynamic and strategically complex environment in their respective histories. The commands face multiple simultaneous challenges from strategic competitors who have openly declared their intent to hold our homelands at risk in an effort to advance their own interest.

Today's strategic competitors, rogue nations, non-state actors possess the capability to strike our institutions and critical infrastructure in the United States and Canada.

To put it bluntly, our country is under attack every day in the information space and the cyber domain. Our competitors, especially Russia and China, are spreading disinformation, actively sowing division and internal discord with the intent to undermine the foundation of our Nation, our democracy, and democracies around the world.

We're seeing this play out with Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Those same competitors have invested heavily in conventional precision strike capabilities and advanced delivery platforms, which Russia is currently displaying to the world.

Their intent is to hold targets in the homeland at risk below the nuclear threshold in order to limit our decision space for our senior leaders by threatening critical infrastructure, by disrupting and delaying our ability to project power globally while attempting to undermine our will to intervene in a regional crisis overseas.

I believe the strategic deterrent is the foundation of homeland defense and that it is necessary for the United States to maintain a reliable and effective nuclear triad.

At the same time, I'm concerned that deterrence by cost imposition is currently overweighted and does not adequately account for the conventional capabilities our competitors have already fielded.

This overreliance increases the risk of miscalculation and escalation because it limits our national leaders' options in crisis and in conflict. Our competitors have advanced conventional capabilities make it necessary to balance deterrence by cost imposition with a model of deterrence by denial in an integrated deterrence

that employs all elements of national influence, leverages the asymmetric advantage of our allies and partners, and provides leaders with a wide range of timely deterrence options.

We must continually demonstrate to potential aggressors that they will not be successful in achieving their objectives with an attack on the homeland by demonstrating our homeland readiness, responsiveness, resiliency, and displaying a range of kinetic and non-kinetic capabilities to deter and, if required, defend the homeland.

NORTHCOM support to civil authorities and security cooperation relationships with allies and partners are critical to integrated deterrence as is NORAD's mission to provide warning and defend the approaches to North America.

This strategic environment is the new normal. The operating model that assumed we could project power globally from a safe and secure homeland has been eroding for the last decade.

In order to provide national leaders with timely and informed options they need to achieve favorable outcomes, NORTHCOM and NORAD in our homeland defense design are focused on four key principles, starting with all-domain awareness, from undersea to on-orbit and everywhere in between to include the cyber domain.

All-domain awareness is required to achieve information dominance, which is the use of advanced capabilities like machine learning and artificial intelligence to quickly analyze, process, and deliver data to decision-makers at the speed of relevance.

By doing so, we will increase senior leaders' decision space and enable decision superiority over competitors.

Finally, today's problems are all global and all domain, and demand globally integrated strategies, plans, and actions. These principles are vital to elements of our ability to execute a layered defense and integrated deterrence, and they are critical to our Nation's ability to deter in competition, deescalate in crisis, and if necessary, defeat in conflict.

I'd like to thank the committee for all you've done to support our soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, and guardians. The fiscal year 2022 National Defense Authorization Act continues to advance our national defense priorities and the missions of U.S. Northern Command and NORAD.

However, today's strategic environment calls for sustained, sufficient, and predictable funding in order to prevail. Persistently operating under a continuing resolution has continued the erosion of our Nation's competitive advantage over the last decade.

I join my fellow commanders, service chiefs, and the Secretary in stressing the importance of passing the fiscal year 2022 omnibus and the restoration of normal order in the appropriations process as a matter of national security.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to appear today, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of General VanHerck can be found in the Appendix on page 94.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, and amen on that last point. We are optimistic that we'll pass the appropriations bills next 48 hours, apparently.

But, hopefully, we'll get that done in the future. It needs to be a lot closer to October 1st than March 1st and we are aware of that and working on that.

Just two quick questions, first, for Ms. Dalton and General VanHerck, on the cyber front. We're aware of the threat. What would you say are the, you know, two or three most important things that this committee can do to help you meet that threat?

Ms. DALTON. Thank you, Chairman. While we don't have specific or credible cyber threats right now as they relate to the current crisis in Russia—in Ukraine—we are mindful of the prospect and do see that as Russia is conducting cyberattacks in Ukraine that there is the potential for spillover—

The CHAIRMAN. Right. But speaking more broadly, like I said, we're aware of the threat. What I'm interested in is what—you know, as you look at it and you're looking, whether it's Russia, whether it's China, whether it's, you know, transnational criminals, you know, as our systems are, what are the two or three most important things, you think, to meet the threat, and I'll broaden it. Not just what this committee can do, but what we as a government need to be doing to meet those threats?

Ms. DALTON. Absolutely, Chairman.

So continued support for U.S. Cyber Command and the unique capabilities, talent, and expertise that it brings to the equation, and then, more broadly, for authorizers and appropriators that support DHS to ensure that they have the capacity, talent, and expertise to work as part of a whole-of-government approach and the engaging with the private sector to patch current vulnerabilities is paramount.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. General.

General VANHERCK. Thank you, Chairman. The last one I would agree with—capacity. We need to look at the capacity of our cyber defenders not only across the Department of Defense but Homeland Security as well as CISA [Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency] under Director Easterly.

This is a domain awareness problem—cyber domain—and we need to have tools and capability to ensure we understand the vulnerabilities within our cyber infrastructure and the critical infrastructure.

Also, I would say that we need to look closely at policy and law, which, today, limits our ability to sometimes look inside our own country at specific vulnerabilities.

As we move forward, I think, from a national security perspective, we will only become more vulnerable. We don't know what we don't know on some of the critical infrastructure. So we need to go assess some of the limitations in policy and law. We need to figure out from a policy perspective what the most critical infrastructure is that we must defend and apply that to the limited resources that we have, Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much. And General Richardson, as you mentioned, Russia and China are very active in Latin America. Where are we most vulnerable?

What are they trying to do and what should we be doing to counter it either in terms of the countries they're closest to or what

their overall strategy is to destabilize us from being active in your command?

General RICHARDSON. Well, thank you for the question, Chairman. And they are very active, certainly, with China and the—being our long-term strategic competitor. The advances that they’ve made with the Belt and Road Initiative—21 of 31 countries have signed on to this initiative.

As we know, it starts with the infrastructure, economic projects, and then furthers into exploitation. A lot of those are state-owned enterprises by China and, certainly, we’re concerned about the dual use, just like in Africa.

I see that the Chinese are using the same playbook that they did in Africa 10 to 15 years ago and they’re using that in the SOUTHCOM AOR [area of responsibility] now.

In terms of Russia and what they do to sow discord, undermine our U.S. interests globally, the disinformation campaigns that they have, Russia Today, Spanish as well as Sputnik Mundo, the social media, the meddling in elections, that our partner nations are very concerned about.

And so, certainly, across the entire region, as we work with our security partners from Colombia, Brazil, very concerned with the inroads that our competitors are making, and we look to outcompete our competitors. We have got to be on the field. We have got to be with them every day. They want to partner with us, and so it’s important that we’re there and that we’re working with them with what they need.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Rogers.

Mr. ROGERS. General Richardson, you and General VanHerck have done a pretty good job characterizing the threat that both China and Russia pose in your areas of responsibility. Do you expect to see the resources that you need to combat that threat in this year’s PBR [President’s budget request]?

General Richardson.

General RICHARDSON. So I haven’t seen the budget just yet. But the—I aspire that it will give us modest investments in the AOR. I think a comprehensive strategy in the SOUTHCOM region as—you know, as we know there—as we look east and west quite a bit—we don’t look south so much—this is a very important AOR and so I’m hopeful that we’ll get what we need.

When we don’t, in terms of we look for other ways of low-cost, high-yield investments, and I’ll talk to AI and machine learning here in a little bit.

But the—certainly, as we look at innovation and using our AOR as a test bed as well with the capabilities where we might not have competitors watching us so closely, we’re able to work a lot of projects and innovation and things like that for the services and for the Department of Defense.

Mr. ROGERS. By saying that you hope you get the modest investment that you need, would that be an increase over what you had in fiscal year 2021?

General RICHARDSON. Congressman, I would say that the—in terms of as I do my assessment in the region—I’ve been in the seat for about 120 days now—4 months—and I think that we could do

better in terms of a comprehensive strategy for the AOR as opposed to just asking for bits here and there.

I don't have assigned forces, and so that forces us to be very innovative, and as we look to partner with our partner nations' militaries and security forces.

Mr. ROGERS. Okay. General VanHerck, same questions.

General VANHERCK. So I think from a domain awareness perspective, I think I'll see increased support, as I've conveyed over the last 18 months since I've been in command. But I haven't seen the final budget, Congressman.

From a theater security cooperation perspective, I think there'll still be work to be done. A little goes a long way in the Western Hemisphere, and to compete as part of integrated deterrence, I think we can do more.

China and Russia are both global problems. Instead of running to the South China Sea or to the EUCOM [U.S. European Command] AOR, we need to factor in that they're here in the Western Hemisphere and ensure adequate funding for integrated deterrence as well.

Mr. ROGERS. But that's the point I want to make is the theaters that you all have responsibility for as well as AFRICOM [U.S. Africa Command] are pretty inexpensive for us to do what we need to do.

So what I would request is that if, in fact, what you need is not in the President's budget request that you will guarantee this committee, that you will try to get it in your unfunded requirements list.

General VANHERCK. Congressman, I will absolutely do that.

Mr. ROGERS. General Richardson.

General RICHARDSON. Yes, Congressman.

Mr. ROGERS. Okay.

General VanHerck, in your testimony you reference Russian capability to launch cruise missiles at the homeland. Can you update us on what NORAD is doing to improve our capability to defend against that threat?

General VANHERCK. Yes, sir. So we're working closely with the Department and with the Department of National Defense in Canada on our homeland defense design, which starts with domain awareness, as I previously discussed.

I look forward to seeing the 2023 budget. I'm confident that we're going to move the ball, if you will, down the field on domain awareness, both in the air domain, space domain, and undersea domain.

We do need to work more on NORAD modernization on the way forward, which would include infrastructure in the Arctic to get after that problem, which also allows me to position forces for the cruise missile problem that you're talking about, as well as having organized, trained, and ready forces to operate throughout my AOR. That's a challenge for the services today that we're working closely with.

The final thing I would say, Congressman, on cruise missile defense is the Department needs to select a single point of contact to own cruise missile defense of the homeland and we haven't done that in accordance with the NDAA [National Defense Authorization Act] that direct us, I believe, in 2017.

Mr. ROGERS. Do you expect that to happen?

General VANHERCK. We're working closely with the Department on the Missile Defense Review. I've advocated to have a specific point of contact. I think we'll get there but I haven't seen the final version.

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

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Langevin is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can you hear me okay?

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Langevin.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Can you hear me okay?

The CHAIRMAN. Yeah, we got you. Go ahead, Jim.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to our witnesses for your testimony today.

The chairman was right to focus on the cyber challenges that we face and I want to build on that.

Ms. Dalton, in your testimony you stated that we are developing new opportunities to help partners improve their cyber and—

The CHAIRMAN. Hey, Jim? Sorry. Can you get a little closer to your mic? We hear you but it's kind of faint.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Okay. Is that any better?

The CHAIRMAN. Yes.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Okay. I'll start over again.

Ms. Dalton, in your testimony you stated that we're developing new opportunities to help partners improve their cyber and network defense capabilities so they can deter, detect, and defend against cyber threats in support of a free secure Western Hemisphere.

And let me just say I'm certain, glad to hear that. I think it's very appropriate, as I've long believed that we'll never again fight a war without some type of a cyber component to it.

So in this unclassified setting, can you expand on the work that is being done with our partner nations in the Western Hemisphere when it comes to cyber?

Ms. DALTON. Thank you, Congressman, and it's an excellent question and an area that I look forward to building upon as assistant secretary.

I'd like to break down the response, actually, into two parts in terms of the range of partners that we work with on this challenge set.

First of all, domestically, with the private sector and with the defense industrial base, we have three entities that work very closely to provide—with the private sector to provide cybersecurity services and tools.

Our Defense Cyber Crimes Center, the National Defense Information Sharing and Analysis Center, and, of course, NSA [National Security Agency], all provide cybersecurity services to key defense industrial base [DIB] companies to help identify key vulnerabilities, potential mitigations, and also can enhance information sharing in the event of attack to other partners in the DIB.

So that's a very important line of effort that we are building out closely with our colleagues in the interagency. And then with respect to partners in the hemisphere, through our security coopera-

tion efforts we are increasingly looking for opportunities to provide cybersecurity patches.

There's a lot of great, actually, capability and technology that's off the shelf commercially that we can provide to partners. So it's really along those two tracks that we're working along those lines. Thank you.

Mr. LANGEVIN. I hope we can increase those engagements sooner rather than later as well.

General Richardson and General VanHerck, how is cyber being utilized and developed in your defensive strategies?

General Richardson.

General RICHARDSON. In terms of cyber, we have—we need to do better in cyber. Our countries want to work with us. They aren't very long in terms of their cyber capabilities and so in terms of working through, they all want help and assistance with cyber, with their networks, making sure that they have protected networks.

And so we have small teams—joint cyber capability assessment teams—that we send, about 13-man teams with cyber experts and network experts to these countries and help with our partner nations, help do over-the-shoulder training to try to assist them with this because they are very much worried about the protection of their cyber capabilities and their networks.

General VANHERCK. Congressman, it's important to point out the mission of United States Northern Command in the cyber domain.

I'm the DSCA [Defense Security Cooperation Agency] synchronizer for support that we provided to CISA if we needed to respond outside of either the DODIN [Department of Defense Information Networks], the DOD infrastructure, or Federal networks that CISA provides. Cyber protection forces would be provided through me to support that.

We're closely partnering with both CISA, Homeland Security, and CYBERCOM [U.S. Cyber Command] to further our partnerships to understand the threat as well.

I would also provide defense support of civil authorities in the event there are outcomes from a cyberattack, such as lack of potable water, fuel, those kinds of things as well.

I think it's important to go back to a comment that I made that we're partnering with the Department first but also with the inter-agency through DHS—is to identify the key critical infrastructure that must be defended—those things that would be strategically significant if identified in a crisis that could bring us to our knees, whether that be power projection, finance, energy—those kinds of things. Those are all key parts of our strategy.

Mr. LANGEVIN. And last question. In what ways are you prioritizing joint initiatives such as JADC2 [Joint All-Domain Command and Control]?

General VANHERCK. At NORTHCOM and NORAD we're absolutely prioritizing JADC2. As I said in my opening statement, we're conducting experiments—the global information dominance experiment that brings all the combatant commands together. JADC2 is required to execute the integrated deterrence strategy.

Mr. LARSEN [presiding]. The gentleman's time has expired. The chair recognizes Representative Wilson of South Carolina for 5 minutes.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank each of you for your service. It's so inspiring and, General Richardson, I recently was at SOUTHCOM and so congratulations on your command. What extraordinary people that you have serving with you.

I'm grateful that the South Carolina National Guard bilateral cooperation is with the nation of Colombia through the State Partnership Program. It's only appropriate—Columbia to Colombia.

Our dedicated National Guard soldiers are dedicated to working with the Colombian military in capacity. It will be used against the criminal cartels who manufacture illicit drugs, including fentanyl, which will end up in the United States, being smuggled across, sadly, our open border.

What other bilateral agreements are underway to empower our South American partners to fight back against drug smuggling?

General RICHARDSON. So, Congressman, thank you so much for mentioning the State Partnership Program and the State of South Carolina's relationship with Colombia, and Columbia to Colombia. So, absolutely.

What a huge enabler to our efforts in the SOUTHCOM AOR. The National Guard State Partnership Programs are aligned with our strategy and with our campaign plan in SOUTHCOM, and they are so important because they've had relationships over decades, and you really look at the strength and the trust with our partner nations—our National Guard State Partnership Program is absolutely key to that.

And so in terms of the bilateral agreements, I'd like to talk about the Colombia staff talks we just had at the SOUTHCOM headquarters with the chief of defense and his joint staff that came, and we had developed a framework.

Believe it or not, we have had such a great relationship over the past couple of decades with Colombia, but actually developed a framework and then lines of effort with things that we wanted to work towards.

They have very important elections in Colombia coming up the end of May, and so we want to make sure that what we have seen in countries that have elections and change administrations is that the security relationships maintained are strong.

They continue to be strong. But we wanted to put in writing these lines of effort and our focus areas that we wanted to work towards—three lines of effort with about six focus areas per each one, and we both signed that, myself and the chief of defense, General Navarro, in January.

So we look forward to continuing to strengthen our military partnerships in cyber, in the human rights, rule of law, women, peace, and security. I mean, it covers the whole gamut of what we do in security cooperation with our partner nations. And, quite honestly, our partner nations are our best defense.

Mr. WILSON. And I want to congratulate you. Socialist dictator Maduro of Venezuela, of all things, is violating international sanctions in buying oil from Iran, and this—in fact, you have already stopped 1.1 million barrels of Iranian petroleum products, which

were going to Venezuela, which would actually pay for terrorist activity to achieve their goal of death to Israel, death to America.

And so what is being done, again, to stop such violations by the Maduro dictatorship?

General RICHARDSON. So, Congressman, I appreciate that. As we know, Iran is the single largest state sponsor of terror in the world. They exchange arms and petroleum to avoid sanctions and they exchange that with Venezuela.

And so in terms of the sanctions and things like that, that's more of an administration question. I don't get into the sanctions part of the—of what we do for SOUTHCOM.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you. It's inconceivable, a great country like Venezuela that should be producing oil and benefitting the people of their country, to buy Iranian oil. It's just—it's mind-numbing how insane this is.

Secretary Dalton, I've visited the U.S. border and—with Mexico, and it was shocking to me to see an open border where there's human trafficking, drug cartels, and terrorists.

With Homeland Security, how many on the terrorist watch lists have crossed the southern border in the last year?

Ms. DALTON. Congressman, thank you so much for highlighting this critical issue for our country and for our partners in the region. This will absolutely be a priority of mine as assistant secretary to work closely within our agency partners and partners in the region to address.

For your specific question, I will have to take that for the record. I don't have the number at my disposal, but would be happy to respond.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 123.]

Mr. WILSON. Thank you. Well, the American people need to know how many terrorists have come across. I yield back. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN [presiding]. Mr. Larsen is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LARSEN. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

General VanHerck, I had some other questions set up. But then you mentioned that—it sounded like the DOD was thinking of going into the intelligence collection business inside the United States.

Could you clarify your comment so I understand what you were talking about and how you propose to stay on your side of the line?

General VANHERCK. Congressman, I did not say DOD should go into intelligence collection. I said from a national security perspective we need to analyze policy and law to ensure that it best meets our Nation's needs to ensure we have full domain awareness of where our—

Mr. LARSEN. So why can't we rely on civilian law enforcement to do that with—in a—why can't DOD cooperate with civilian law enforcement to do that?

General VANHERCK. We can, certainly. That should be DHS, in my mind, doing most—

Mr. LARSEN. So why would you need additional authorities or policy to do that when that exists?

General VANHERCK. I just think we need to look at the whole broad nature of that and ensure we fully understand where the risk and vulnerabilities are. I'm not advocating that we need to do it right now. But we do need to understand where our vulnerabilities are from a national security perspective. Right now—

Mr. LARSEN. Do you say—you might be right. Are you saying—have you concluded that we don't?

General VANHERCK. No, I'm not saying that. I said we need to go look at it to ensure we fully understand where those vulnerabilities may be. The world is changing, Congressman, dramatically.

Mr. LARSEN. General, I'm fully aware the world is changing. But thank you for reminding me.

Secretary Dalton, on page 7 of your testimony you discuss a recent initiative to institutionalize capability to conduct a deep data-driven analysis required to understand critical infrastructure and dependencies.

Is that related to what the general was mentioning or is that something different?

Ms. DALTON. Thank you, Congressman, for highlighting this issue. I believe that it is related in the sense that in working closely with civilian-led agencies that have the lead for protections here at home, DOD is working very closely with the interagency to understand where critical vulnerabilities may exist, and then if, working together, we have the right tool set in place to close those vulnerabilities.

So that work is ongoing, working very closely with NORTHCOM and other components in the Department but in support of civilian-led agency efforts.

Mr. LARSEN. All right.

General, I understand our questions are fervent and, perhaps, uncomfortable. So I don't—you know, part of it is putting you on the spot just to answer our questions because you are sitting on the spot. So I'm not trying to get at you personally.

But I need to—I want to be assured, having been here for the 22 years and seeing the world change over that period of time and having had experience in those 22 years with oversight of the DOD, I want to be sure that at least I'm getting my point across about that past experiences where the DOD has crossed that line.

It's not—I'm not comfortable with that. I just want to make that point to you and try to do it in a nicer way in my second chance with you on that. So that's the first thing.

Second, I do want to ask you in particular, the Department's doing 5G pilot projects throughout the—throughout bases in CONUS [continental United States], and just wondering if your role, NORTHCOM's role in those 5G projects and what you expect to get—the results—what results you expect to get and use from those pilot projects?

General VANHERCK. It is not my role. I would point that out, Congressman. But I do applaud the Department for looking at that.

In time of crisis and conflict it is important to be able to have the ability to command and control forces across the homeland and around the globe. 5G could provide additional capability and capacity to do that through data and voice capability.

Mr. LARSEN. All right. Thanks.

General Richardson, can you comment on the role SOUTHCOM is playing—I'm sorry, the role SOCOM [U.S. Special Operations Command] is playing in SOUTHCOM, to the extent that you can share that with us here in the committee?

General RICHARDSON. So I have a component command, the Special Operations Command South, so SOCSOUTH, and one of the Theater Special Operations Commands, and they're doing a fantastic job.

Small teams that are working with partner nations in 12 to 17 countries, depending on which day, doing low-level—they have had these relationships, augmented by 7th [Special Forces] Group that—in terms of cultural training, language training, working with these Latin American countries for many, many years. Already built the trust, and really proud of my special ops team, and then the support that I get from General Clarke and SOCOM if we need extra capability or sometimes we cost share on some AI/ML [artificial intelligence and machine learning] programs, things like that.

The CHAIRMAN. I'm sorry. The gentleman's time has expired. And I think Congressman Larsen raises an important point. We talked a little bit about it when we met, General VanHerck, and I think what you're talking about is the vulnerabilities within the U.S. systems.

A lot of that is in the private sector. We saw it in the energy sector when we got hit by cyber. You know, there's all manner—also food processing, all kinds of places.

And while you and others are in charge of protecting our critical infrastructure, you don't know. They can be attacked and we won't ever see it. So how do we deal with that.

But Congressman Larsen raises the right point. You know, in our country, we don't do it by the government inserting themselves. But I think it's going to be a difficult policy choice.

I appreciate him raising that issue and it's something we need to talk about—how do we protect against those vulnerabilities without having the government reaching into information that our Constitution and our laws don't allow them to. It is a big challenge to protect ourselves and protect our civil liberties.

Mr. Lamborn is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LAMBORN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Dalton, I know you're new to your position so maybe that explains it. But I didn't see anything in your written statement about missile defense, and yet, that's a critical job in your portfolio to help with missile defense, NORTHCOM.

I'm about to ask some questions of General VanHerck about that. But I really would urge you to get up to speed as quickly as possible. And we haven't seen the Missile Defense Review that's supposed—that's, I think, overdue already. I hope there's no weakening in that when that comes out on the part of this administration.

Okay. General VanHerck, I was in your office real recently, a few weeks ago, and one of the things we talked about was North Korea and the missile defense capabilities that we need to have to counteract their threat.

Now, and I know we'll have a classified session later today, but here in open session what can you say about our ability to keep up with the evolving North Korean missile threat?

General VANHERCK. Congressman, I'm currently comfortable with the capability we have today for ballistic missile defense against the threat that I see today out of North Korea.

Certainly, they're trying to increase their capacity and capability. That's why you see the tests, nine since the beginning of the year. That will challenge us, going forward.

I would point out that North Korea is a very tough target to gain intelligence to understand their exact capability and capacity. Going forward, it is crucial to keep Next Generation Interceptor on target on time, if not field it sooner, and continue to service life extend the current system to give us more reliance and capability as well.

Mr. LAMBORN. Okay. Thank you. And what about the threat? Do we need to make changes in our space architecture to detect whether it's that threat or better detect hypersonic threats from near peers like Russia and China?

General VANHERCK. Congressman, I believe, yes, we need to go to space as soon as possible to detect hypersonic threats that will challenge my ability from a domain awareness perspective to see them and provide what I think is crucial.

That's threat warning and attack assessment. That directly informs continuity of government, posture of the nuclear forces, and those kinds of things.

Mr. LAMBORN. Okay. Thank you.

And General Richardson, you already asked some—or answered some very good questions by my colleague, Representative Wilson, about drug interdiction and fentanyl, in particular. I know you have a lot of responsibilities, but drug interdiction is one of those, is it not?

General RICHARDSON. So, Congressman, by law, we do the detection and monitoring to help with our interagency and partner nations do the interdictions?

Mr. LAMBORN. That's excellent, because fentanyl is—and other drugs are a crisis in our country. And I noticed in our briefing paper on page 5 it says DOD has an interest in preventing drug-trafficking organizations that operate with tacit or explicit support of Venezuelan authorities from entering the United States.

What can you tell us about Venezuela's involvement in drug trafficking?

General RICHARDSON. Well, certainly, drug trafficking is very prevalent in the—as it comes from the Central American and north tip of South America towards the homeland and, certainly, transnational criminal organizations are very prevalent. As I said before, we work very hard on the detection and monitoring.

I'd like to highlight that we have 16 interagency at my JIATF [Joint Interagency Task Force] South Command in Key West as well as 23 foreign liaison officers and, quite honestly, it's a great news story in terms of the training investment that we provide with our partner nations, sharing of actionable information. They have increased by 62 percent the interdiction—

Mr. LAMBORN. That's excellent. I'm going to have to interrupt because my time is about to run out. I'm concerned about—and I've zeroed in on Venezuela, in particular, because according to sources in the news—I don't know if this is accurate or not—but, apparently, we have administration officials that are about to or have gone to Venezuela to talk about importing some of their oil to the U.S. to replace the possible loss from stopping Russian oil imports and I would just be real concerned if that's true.

You don't have to answer this. But I'd just be really concerned if Venezuela plays any part of supplying U.S. energy when we have American energy that's just sitting there not being used because we have shut down permitting and pipelines and everything else.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back to you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. It is worth noting that we're at the highest level of production of oil and natural gas that we have ever been at and it's going up, literally, every week. Certainly, we could do better, but it's going up, not down. I just want to make sure we're clear on that.

Mr. Courtney is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. COURTNEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to the witnesses for being here this morning.

General VanHerck, in your testimony—your written testimony—on page 6 you did focus on the maritime domain, where you talked about the fact that Russia launched its second *Severodvinsk* cruise-missile sub this year with—and there's more on deck in their shipyards that are there. You describe them as designed to deploy within cruise-missile range of our coastlines.

Again, having been through a few of these hearings, normally, that's a focus on EUCOM but, I mean, I think, you know, now that it's in NORTHCOM's, you know, we're, obviously, dealing, again, with something that is very close to home.

Later in your testimony on page 17 you talked about the fact that we need to increase our maritime domain awareness and that we can, in fact, quickly improve that with the IUSS [Integrated Undersea Surveillance System] sensors and the OTHR [over-the-horizon radar] sensors.

Again, maybe you can just sort of explain what that means a little bit, you know, in an unclassified fashion because acronyms, I think, kind of go over a lot of people's heads.

General VANHERCK. Absolutely, Congressman. So, from a domain awareness perspective, first, for the submarines that you're talking about, that would be the integrated undersea surveillance capability that the Navy brings. And I would point out that Canada partners with us on and provides some of that capability as well to track and maintain awareness of submarine positions around the globe; a very challenging environment in the Central Atlantic when they get on the Mid-Atlantic Ridge to be able to track them.

And so to hold them accountable, if you will, before they become a threat is important. That's part of the integrated deterrence that we also talked about, and we partner very closely with EUCOM and we need to move that into the Pacific as well. I'm confident that we'll see some of that in the 2023 budget that we talked about.

You mentioned the *Sev*, the second one. They're on their way to field nine. Russia will be a persistent proximate threat to the homeland in the maritime domain within the next 5 years.

China is about a decade behind but they will do the same thing. And so 24/7 in the near future we'll have both persistent proximate threat in the sub—from a submarine perspective but also surface.

OTHR—over-the-horizon radar capability—gives us out to about 4,000 miles in the maritime domain and the air and space domain to be able to see much further than we can today.

We're limited today by curvature of the Earth because typical radar systems have that limit because they can't see over that. Over-the-horizon gives us that and the undersea gives us the undersea domain awareness as well.

Mr. COURTNEY. Great. Well, thank you. I mean, again, I think the one comment you made in your testimony is that those systems can actually be quickly deployed. And, again, I know this committee will be watching for that in the 2023 budget when it comes over.

General VANHERCK. Congressman, can I—you're exactly right. Over-the-horizon technology exists today. It's employed by other nations around the globe. It's something we can move out on relatively quickly, as well as undersea surveillance.

Mr. COURTNEY. And the point that this is a, really, almost iconic example of integrated deterrence. I mean, anti-submarine warfare is a team sport, and having Canada with the new agreement that the President signed in 2021, you know, to modernize NORAD, I think, you know, this is, again, a poster child example of that, and the same is true in the North Atlantic.

General Richardson, congratulations on your new position. In your testimony you mentioned, again, the success of the LCS [littoral combat ship] in terms of counternarcotics, which kind of echoes General Faller last time he was here. It seems like the LCS has finally sort of found a home in terms of its long career.

But I would just note that, you know, last year the Navy came over to decommission four LCSes. We still don't know what's in 2023. I think some of the chatter is that we're probably going to see some of that in the budget that's there.

It seems like, given the fact that we're selling Coast Guard ships to Latin American allies, that the LCS, given its success that you've described, would be a great candidate for foreign military sales to some of our allies to bolster their navies. I mean, what's your thoughts on that?

General RICHARDSON. Well, certainly, I am—I do—I think FMS is definitely a tool. We have to make sure that our partner nations can maintain the vessel, and that's what's really important about the equipment.

We have to make sure that—it's great to get the equipment. We have got to be able to maintain it and help them through that as well, and I think that's an area that we can certainly help in SOUTHCOM with our partner nation militaries.

Logistics is hard. Maintenance is hard. The LCS has done a fantastic job in my AOR. I don't get a lot of assets. I don't have assigned forces and I have very little GFMAP [Global Force Management Allocation Plan] resources that I do get.

But I do have two LCSes right now. They do a fantastic job. Working with the CNO [Chief of Naval Operations] to get maintenance done in the theater, so when it has to do maintenance while it's in my AOR it doesn't have to sail back to Mayport, Florida, take a week to sail back, a week to sail back into theater.

The CHAIRMAN. I'm sorry. The gentleman's time has expired. I should have said this at the outset. Even if we're in mid question we try to cut it off right at the time and get on to the next person, which we will do now, and that is Mr. Scott.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Generals, and ma'am, thanks for being here. And Ms. Dalton and General Richardson, I think this next statement is predominantly for you.

And, Ms. Dalton, I know you've spent a fair amount of time at the Defense Intelligence Agency in some—dealing with some pretty sporty regions of the world.

When we talk about SOUTHCOM, we typically talk about the fact that more Americans lose their lives to drug overdoses, not all of it coming from that region but a lot of it, than to terrorism. We talk about gangs. We talk about drugs. We talk about crypto, cyber, China, Russia, and the disruptions to democracy in the Western Hemisphere.

Twelve months from now, I think we're going to be talking about the issue of hunger and the disruption of democracies in the Western Hemisphere because of the lack of food supply.

This is a direct result of Russia's incursion into the Ukraine. It is going to come from the loss of the ability to put fertilizer on a lot of crops around the world. My understanding is that Russians have now said they're going to withhold fertilizer from the rest of the world, including countries like Brazil, who produce a tremendous amount of food supply.

I don't expect you to answer this question, necessarily. But I do think it would be worthwhile for this committee to see work done from the Defense Intelligence Agency on what a 5 percent reduction in the global food supply and a 10 percent reduction in the global food supply would mean to the people in the Western Hemisphere and the potential disruption of democracies in that hemisphere.

And so if you could help us have the Defense Intelligence Agency work on that I would very much appreciate it. I do think this is coming. Russia and Ukraine are responsible for about 12 percent of the calorie supply inside the United States, it's my understanding.

If the Ukrainians are not able to plant their crops over the next couple of months, and it certainly does not look like they will be able to, there's going to be a tremendous disruption in the food supply.

And if the fertilizer is not able to come out of the Black Sea region, and it does not look like it's going to be able to, there's going to be a significant reduction in the global food supply.

I can tell you, farmers in the southeastern United States where they normally would plant crops on what we call dry land that does not have irrigation and the production on those pieces of dirt are not as productive as they are if it's irrigated, farmers, because of

the cost, whether it be diesel or fertilizer, in many cases, are not going to plant the dry land fields.

And I think that it would do well for the U.S. to be prepared for the potential disruption in democracies from food supply. So any help with that would be appreciated.

With that said, I want to go back to the Russia issue in SOUTHCOM. You've hit on it before. They continue to exert their influence in the SOUTHCOM AOR—the disinformation and propaganda that they have become very good at.

General Richardson, would you go over our strategy again with regard to how we combat Russia and their misinformation, and I would appreciate it especially if you could talk about it with regard to Venezuela and Cuba.

General RICHARDSON. So we were—our partner nations are very concerned about this and they voice that. Colombia voices that. Very concerned with the disinformation that they sow.

The Russian media conglomeration Russia Today in Spanish [Actualidad RT], as well as the Sputnik Mundo that I mentioned earlier, is—continue. I mean, it used to have 7 million followers on RT Spanish and now it's over 18 million. Their ability to put out disinformation and just sow an environment that is full of untruths is very prevalent in the region.

And so we work very closely with our partner nations to—with Colombia, with Brazil, with—in the cyber capabilities with the small teams that we'll send forward.

Our National Guard State Partnership Programs, they have the cyber battalions that are very effective, and so we try to utilize those capabilities because there aren't enough high-end capabilities and, certainly, SOUTHCOM is not the priority AOR. So we work very closely with our State Partnership Program to—

Mr. SCOTT. Ma'm, I'm almost out of time. But is there discussion about actually taking those channels off the networks?

General RICHARDSON. So we're aware that as of yesterday we got the report that Ecuador took RT Spanish off their network, which is really good. And so we'll continue to work with our partner nations and—

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. And, again—

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you all.

The CHAIRMAN [continuing]. I apologize. The gentleman's time is expired.

Mr. Garamendi is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and General VanHerck, Ms. Dalton, General Richardson, thank you for appearing today, thank you for your testimony.

I want to hone in on a couple of issues that have been put on the table already. We have not spent a lot of time talking about the Arctic. We know that it is a new area of considerable concern, and we, in the 2022 NDAA, asked for a report.

Ms. Dalton, what is the status of that and does that report look at the necessary assets—military infrastructure, other assets—that are necessary to address the Arctic?

Ms. DALTON. Congressman, thank you for the question. Just a question for clarification. Is it the Arctic strategic ports report that you're asking about?

Mr. GARAMENDI. The Arctic assessment report.

Ms. DALTON. Arctic assessment? Yes.

Mr. GARAMENDI. It's due, like, soon, meaning next month?

Ms. DALTON. Yes. Congressman, thank you so much for highlighting that requirement, and I will expeditiously——

Mr. GARAMENDI. In other words, you don't have an answer for me today, where it is, and does it deal with any of the specific issues like airfields and facilities and over-the-horizon radar, things of that sort?

Ms. DALTON. I know we have been working very closely with Northern Command on the production of the report. So, perhaps, General VanHerck would be best positioned to answer.

General VANHERCK. Congressman, we're working feverishly on that report. That report is tasked to me to do. I will coordinate with the services and the Department to do that report right. It's likely not going to happen this month. We're going to seek an extension here in the near future.

I will be very candid in that report what the Department needs to be able to operate in the Arctic.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Good. Will it include icebreakers?

I promised my colleagues here I wouldn't mention icebreakers again but it's a promise not kept.

General VANHERCK. It will. We will look at everything. Persistence is something we have to have to operate in the Arctic; communications. Persistence requires fuel north of Dutch Harbor. Communications requires satellite terminals to utilize the bandwidth that is being put up there by commercial companies and the infrastructure that you're talking about.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Well, when your pencil gets down to broken and no more lead in it, then you'll send the report to us?

General VANHERCK. I will send it as soon as it's done and ready. I'm pushing my team harder.

Mr. GARAMENDI. As you and I discussed, we'd like this to be in this year's NDAA. We don't want to miss another year on this one. Thank you.

Critical infrastructure. Again, I promised my colleagues I wouldn't mention GPS [Global Positioning System]. But it is the single point of failure for most everything in this Nation. Are we addressing that in the critical infrastructure issues that you've talked about, General, and Ms. Dalton, and——

General VANHERCK. I work closely with General Dickinson at United States Space Command to ensure that we maintain precision navigation and timing and GPS capability. It's crucial for day-to-day operations. It's crucial for our economy to make sure we do that. Yes, we are working that hard.

Mr. GARAMENDI. No, you're not. We've been at this for 10 years—actually, for 23 years and we still do not have a backup to the GPS system, and the advanced GPS that the military is supposed to have will not be completed for another decade.

So let's look at critical infrastructure. That's one of them.

But your point about having to defend the critical infrastructure is critical and that requires integration with the Department of Homeland Defense security, which my colleague talked about a moment ago.

Ms. Dalton, are we—are you working with the Department of Homeland in defining the threats that the military, Mr.—General VanHerck has to deal with?

Ms. DALTON. Congressman, thank you for the question, and absolutely, DHS is one of our closest partners on the homeland defense portfolio. In fact, there is a unified coordination group on domestic response and preparedness that has been stood up to look at the implications of the current crisis in Russia and Ukraine. But that is in the broader context of daily communication and synchronization with DHS.

Mr. GARAMENDI. General VanHerck's testimony speaks to critical infrastructure over and over again and what he needs to have domain awareness.

It seems to me, given what my colleague said about the titles, that he's not supposed to mess within the United States but he has to defend it. That requires very, very close coordination, and I'd like far more detail on how you are accomplishing that.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Gaetz is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GAETZ. General Richardson, you said in your statement that Russia posed a more immediate threat in South America than China. As we know, China has their space mission there. We know the Chinese space mission is dual-use end to end. Which capabilities that Russia maintains in South America concern you more than China's space mission?

General RICHARDSON. I think, Congressman, in terms of—China is more our long-term strategic competitor. Russia is just more of an immediate security concern. I think that the—they undermine U.S. interest globally. They—

Mr. GAETZ. No. But in your AOR specifically—

General RICHARDSON. Right.

Mr. GAETZ [continuing]. Which Russian capabilities are you most concerned about?

General RICHARDSON. I'm concerned about the relationships that they have with Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Cuba.

Mr. GAETZ. Capabilities, not relationships.

General RICHARDSON. Capabilities would be the aircraft, the tanks, the air defense systems that they try to help Venezuela maintain in Venezuela that's close to our homeland.

Mr. GAETZ. And so if Russia wanted to marshal all of their South American capabilities to do as much damage to the United States as they possibly could, what would they do?

General RICHARDSON. I think that they would—they would provide parts to these capabilities that are in Venezuela. As we know, the deputy foreign minister probably about 3 or 4 weeks ago talked about not taking off the table about increasing infrastructure capacity within the region.

Mr. GAETZ. Okay. So as I'm trying to understand the moving pieces, China's got a space mission. That's not the more immediate threat than the Russian threat in South America. And the worst thing that Russia can do to us is to engage in arms enhancements in Venezuela.

Right now, the Biden administration is working to potentially purchase oil from Venezuela. If Venezuela saw a mass infusion of cash, what do you assess they would do with the money?

General RICHARDSON. I don't know what Venezuela would do with the money but—

Mr. GAETZ. That's concerning, right?

General RICHARDSON. That is concerning.

Mr. GAETZ. If we're making policy choices that could move a lot of resources into Venezuela, if your biggest worry about Venezuela is Russian military cooperation, isn't it possible that if Venezuela all of a sudden ended up with a lot more cash, that they would use it to buy Russian military equipment?

General RICHARDSON. They could. They also have a—quite a big humanitarian crisis on their hands as well as their own—

Mr. GAETZ. Yet, humanitarian issues have never really been as important to Maduro as military activity, right?

General RICHARDSON. That is true.

Mr. GAETZ. Right. So we cannot rule out that our policy choices of swapping Venezuelan oil for Russian oil as some sort of moral imperative wouldn't result in our most immediate threat in our hemisphere, then using that money to go buy Russian arms from the Russian Federation. That's your testimony, right?

General RICHARDSON. Well, I am concerned about the increase in relationships, the touch points that Russia is having in the region with Venezuela, Cuba, and Nicaragua.

Mr. GAETZ. How many people does Russia have in South America, either through their conventional or unconventional forces?

General RICHARDSON. We anticipate about a hundred.

Mr. GAETZ. And that's a more—a hundred Russians in South America concerns you more—

General RICHARDSON. Between the three countries—

Mr. GAETZ [continuing]. Than the sum of China's activity? That's very stark to me.

General RICHARDSON. I don't know that it concerns me more, Congressman. I have to worry about all our adversaries and the competition within my AOR. So I don't—

Mr. GAETZ. Why I'm asking is—I didn't expect you to say that you saw Russia as the more immediate threat in your AOR than China. I always view China as the more immediate threat there. But I do appreciate the testimony. I think it's very telling, because the way you think that threat would manifest is actually exacerbated and made worse by some of the policy choices that we see at least under consideration.

General VanHerck, what percentage of the people that DOD trains in Mexico end up working for the cartels or transnational criminal organizations?

General VANHERCK. I don't have that info and I'd defer that to Homeland Security. Are you talking about DOD—

Mr. GAETZ. DOD training. I know we do all these train-and-equip missions with Mexico. So when we train and equip Mexican special forces, elite Mexican forces, what percentage of them end up working against us and for the cartels?

General VANHERCK. I'll have to take that for the record. I don't—

Mr. GAETZ. Do you know if that's information that we track?

General VANHERCK. I don't, personally, track that in DOD.

Mr. GAETZ. But you know of cases where that's happened, right?

General VANHERCK. I would suspect that some folks have gone on and done that. I don't have those numbers, Congressman.

Mr. GAETZ. I have a number of anecdotal, you know, pieces of information. I'll be submitting those for the record here. And so maybe, as a question for the record, we could get that information. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Gallego is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GALLEGO. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Dalton, thank you for your testimony. I'm pleased that in your written remarks you mentioned that we need to continue advancing our defense relationship with Colombia.

I believe it is our closest military partner in the region and as you already know, this year marks 200 years of diplomatic relations with Colombia. And as the first Colombian-American in Congress, I look forward to continuing to work to deepen strategic partnerships between the United States and Colombia.

As we mark this important milestone, what states—what steps can we take to further strengthen our ties?

Ms. DALTON. Thank you very much, Congressman, for highlighting one of the most important defense relationships that we have in the hemisphere. The Colombians bring significant capabilities to the equation in terms of what they're able to do counter VEO [violent extremist organizations], what they're able to do to extend their influence and exert territorial control in the face of some of the extremist groups that have plagued the country for decades, and, frankly, also are a great partner in terms of being able to train up other partners in the region.

So I'm very much looking forward to working closely with the Colombians with General Richardson in Southern Command to advance those partnerships.

Mr. GALLEGO. Thank you, Ms. Dalton.

General Richardson, in your written testimony you mentioned that Russia intensifies instability, including engaging in disinformation campaigns. Could you describe in greater detail how you're seeing Russia conduct Spanish-language disinformation operations in South America and whether it differs from the way China is doing the same in the region? And what steps do you think we should take to better combat disinformation?

General RICHARDSON. I think the—with the reach that the disinformation has with Russia and then also you add in China, and the followers that they have and the prevalence just not in terms of in print, on radio, social media, Twitter, all over the place, and so, quite honestly, propping up candidates that are more authoritarian leaning and talk about aligning with China that has the BRI [Belt and Road Initiative] and lots of cash and lots of projects, and these fragile democracies, 28 of 31 are in this region.

Fragile democracies, trying to make it—trying to deliver for their people. COVID has really rolled back the advances that some of these countries have made by 10 to even 20 years due to the eco-

conomic impacts of COVID, and depending on what area of the region.

And so they're trying to deliver for their people, and, quite honestly, this—the disinformation campaigns are very prevalent and we work very closely with the partner nations to try to help them counter it and advise them.

Colombia just developed an information operations center—just stood that up within the last couple of months to try to get after this problem.

Mr. GALLEGO. Excellent. And then I want to also ask you a little more about the Chinese influence in South America. In your written testimony—and you just talked a little bit about this, about the One Belt, One Road Initiative. Are there particular Belt and Road Initiative projects that concern you the most? Which types of projects do you think are most important for us to prioritize as we not only monitor Chinese infrastructure investment but also see seek to provide alternatives to it? So not the bigger picture, but specifically are there port projects, energy projects, that we should be aware of that—you know, that concerns you?

General RICHARDSON. So the projects that China has in the AOR are extremely prevalent, and when I—there are other agencies that are providing projects like USAID [United States Agency for International Development] and things like that.

My lever, really, is the Corps of Engineers and the projects that they do. But in terms of for the Department of Defense, that's only about \$250 million in projects over a 5-year period.

If I look at what PRC is investing in the AOR over a 5-year period of 2017 to 2021, \$72 billion. It's off the charts. And I can read a couple of the projects. The most concerning projects that I have are the \$6 billion in projects specifically near the Panama Canal, and I look at the strategic lines of communication—Panama Canal and the Strait of Magellan.

But just to highlight a couple of the projects: the nuclear power plant in Argentina, \$7.9 billion; the highway in Jamaica, \$5.6 billion; the energy refinery in Cuba, \$5 billion; the highway in Peru, \$4 billion; energy dam in Argentina, \$4 billion; the Metro in Colombia, \$3.9 billion; the freight railway in Argentina, \$3 billion.

These are not small projects that they're putting in this region. This region is rich in resources, and the Chinese don't go there to invest. They go there to extract. All of these projects are done with Chinese labor, not with those nation countries.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. Bergman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GALLEGO. Thank you, General.

Mr. BERGMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General VanHerck and General Richardson, when it comes to national security, having secure borders is a critical component. Can you describe in what way your command is supporting DHS with its border protection mission currently?

General VANHERCK. Congressman, today we have 2,421 guardsmen on title 10 status that are providing detection and monitoring, intel [intelligence] analysis, and aviation support to the Department of Homeland Security on a day-to-day basis through the end

of this fiscal year. That's what NORTHCOM is contributing right now.

In addition to that, I have JTF [Joint Task Force] North, a joint task force under me that provides direct support and the same kind of supportive analysis in support of Homeland Security and other agencies as well trying to get after the border problems.

Mr. BERGMAN. Thanks.

General Richardson.

General RICHARDSON. Yes, Congressman. And so we work very closely with our partner nation militaries on the professionalization of their force, human rights, the rule of law, and in terms of the support that they provide, a lot of them have been doing a lot of domestic support, especially with COVID, as we have in our own country—

Mr. BERGMAN. Let's say directly related to this southern border in an unclassified way. Can you get a little more particular in that?

General RICHARDSON. So I would say, Congressman, with JIATF South, the command that I have underneath me where we do the detection and monitoring and then pass that actionable information to our interagency, the Coast Guard, as well as our partner nations to do the disruptions and interdictions to protect our border.

Mr. BERGMAN. Do any capability gaps exist in the mission that currently as it exists—any gaps that you see that your command could support but you lack resources for?

General RICHARDSON. So I would say domain awareness is absolutely essential in my AOR, and I want to thank Congress for the support that you give to me and this AOR in order to shore up some of the shortfalls that I do have in the area to understand our threat, to know where our threat is, to expose our threat. Extremely important.

And because we don't have enough ISR [intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance], and I don't need high-end capabilities in this region but I do need—and is just capability. I don't need big—I need low-cost high-yield solutions, which forces us to work very closely with Honorable Moultrie, the director of intelligence. We have Project Maven in my region. We also have five joint capability technology demos from Heidi Shyu from research and experimentation in OSD. And then we're also using actionable information.

Mr. BERGMAN. So you got a lot of—I hate to cut short, because I got some more questions.

General RICHARDSON. Yes.

Mr. BERGMAN. There's a lot of things you could do.

General VanHerck, any thoughts?

General VANHERCK. Domain awareness is certainly one of the challenges. What I would say is I don't see southwest border, which I view as a law enforcement challenge, as an enduring DOD mission. I think DHS needs to be fully resourced. They need to plan for this mission and execute the mission, which is a law enforcement mission on the border.

And more broadly, I think we need a whole-of-nation and a global approach to the problems on the southwest border. Candidly, I think transnational criminal organizations are the problem.

The symptoms are human migration, counternarcotics, those kinds of things. And a broader strategy to get after that, in my mind, such as going after finances, weapons that are flowing that direction, challenging the fentanyl or the precursors to fentanyl that flow in, those are things from a whole-of-government approach.

Mr. BERGMAN. Okay. So, quickly, this is not—you know, but for both of you. You know, there's been a debate about whether combatant commands being regionally oriented is still appropriate, given the changing dynamics of the threat environment.

Any thoughts on do we need to reorient the combatant commands based on function or domain? Which would be more appropriate? Because we know we get into food fights in different ways. Domain or function?

General VANHERCK. Congressman, I think we ought to take a look at the UCP [Unified Command Plan] and see if it could be adjusted based on the world that we're operating in.

I think the value of day-to-day having regional combatant commands is through the relationships, the integrated deterrence, the theater security cooperation, the partnerships that you build with that.

Whether we fight regionally or we have a single combatant command responsible for a global operation such as against China and Russia, we could go take a look at that.

Mr. BERGMAN. General Richardson.

General RICHARDSON. I would say that I agree with General VanHerck, quite honestly. It's the relationships that make the difference, the trust that we build with our partners. SOUTHCOM has a reputation that—

Mr. BERGMAN. And I see my time has expired, so I will yield back, whatever—that half a second that was left.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. Appreciate your generosity.

Mr. Carbajal is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

General Richardson, China's Belt and Road Initiative is a part of its strategy to assume a greater leadership role in global affairs, including in the SOUTHCOM AOR. Chinese investments, as has been said, in SOUTHCOM demonstrates the need to further U.S. engagement to offer an alternative to the countries in the AOR.

However, we are all very aware that the U.S. has a mixed history in Latin America. Iran-Contra comes to mind, for an example. That has led to distrust and the need to reset relationships. How does SOUTHCOM security assistance funds help offer an alternative to China?

General RICHARDSON. So it's absolutely essential, Congressman, and thank you for the question, because that is my most important lever is the security cooperation, the 333 funding and, quite honestly, that is what gets us on the field with our jerseys on working with our partner nations.

As I've said before, our partner nations are our best defense, and if we're not there working with them, they're going to work with whoever is there. That's how desperate they are and, quite honestly, our competitors are there ready to take our place. And so

that security cooperation funding is extremely important as my main lever. My next lever would be exercise funding.

Mr. CARBAJAL. What proposals have gone unfunded due to limited resources and, in addition, what whole-of-government initiatives should be expanded in the region to expand your work to improve cooperation with countries where there might be mistrust of U.S. intentions?

General RICHARDSON. Congressman, if we did not receive our funding in these—in my security cooperation funds, we would be absolutely ceding what I call key terrain and we would not be present on the field, and that void will be filled and it won't be filled with something or by relationships. It'll be with our competitors, unfortunately, because they are very prevalent.

The thing is is that the PRC doesn't have partners. We have partners. We have exercises where I have 29 countries that participate. For PANAMAX every year I have 29 countries that participate in this.

Tradewinds, which has been known for many, many years, 21 countries will participate in that. So we have partners and we—that is our best defense, and we show integrated deterrence through campaigning each and every day in the SOUTHCOM AOR.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Thank you, General Richardson.

Generals VanHerck and Richardson, the U.S. Coast Guard provides an extraordinary support to U.S. national security in defending the homeland and in supporting broader national strategic objectives around the world.

Its mission is to ensure our Nation's maritime safety, security, and stewardship. As chairman of the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Subcommittee, I would like to explore more about how the Coast Guard supports both of your commands. What are additional Coast Guard capabilities or assets that your commands would benefit from?

General VANHERCK. I'll go first, Congressman. Thanks for that.

Absolutely, the Coast Guard is crucial and as you are well aware, they work for Homeland Security. I integrate the Coast Guard. They were just in my commanders conference. I visit them as much as possible.

The capabilities—this really comes down to capacity, additional capacity that help us for that domain awareness and ensure that we're plugged in from a domain awareness perspective—any data they have from radar undersea capabilities to ensure that we're sharing that to give a complete picture of the threats to the homeland.

General RICHARDSON. So, Congressman, in SOUTHCOM I'd like to highlight the Coast Guard is extremely prevalent. I have my operations officer that's a coastguardsman. I have my JIATF SOUTHCOM—or my JIATF South commander is also a coastguardsman.

The Commandant of the Coast Guard used to be the ops [operations] officer for SOUTHCOM. So that tells you how important the Coast Guard and the SOUTHCOM relationship are. We have District 7, District 11, that are very close to where I am in Miami; and then the assets in terms of the Coast Guard supplements an increase with some capability to SOUTHCOM to help with the dis-

ruptions in the AOR as well. So just really can't say enough about the support from the Coast Guard.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Thank you.

Secretary Dalton and General VanHerck, DOD continues to support the national response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Now entering into the third year, we have gained a better understanding of the virus, our constraints, and our limitations in our capacity to fight this virus.

As the U.S. and other nations prepare to open travel and trade to pre-COVID levels, the threat of—

The CHAIRMAN. And I'm sorry but this—the gentleman is out of time. That question will have to be submitted for the record at a later point.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. And Mr. Waltz is now recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WALTZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you, General Richardson, VanHerck. Good to see you again, Ms. Dalton.

If we could just first talk about the Chinese influence and presence in your AORs.

I'll start with you, General Richardson.

I mean, just looking through your statistics, we have got 25 of 31 countries hosting infrastructure, 29 port projects, 7 countries hosting PRC-linked space facilities.

And I think what's most concerning—I know it's incredibly concerning to my constituents—is state-owned Chinese investments on the ports on both sides of the Panama Canal.

Can you talk to what you're seeing and what we can do to help you combat this pernicious influence?

General RICHARDSON. So thank you for the question, Congressman, and the—obviously, the resources that I rely on, as I talked to previously—the security cooperation funding, which is my main lever of competing and being on the field with my jersey on, all of my folks in SOUTHCOM—that will really hamstring us if we don't get that security cooperation funding. That's what allows us to partner with our nations, and like I said, our partners are our best defense.

Everywhere I've been—I've been to Colombia, Brazil, Jamaica, Belize—I've done a Central American security conference with seven countries. I just got back from Honduras. They want to partner with the United States. I have got to have all of the SOUTHCOM postured and in the AOR ready to partner with our partner nations to counter this.

Mr. WALTZ. Yeah. Thank you. Thank you, General, and I certainly share your concern—I think many of my colleagues—that this isn't—you know, this is a global competition. This isn't just about the Indo-Pacific.

Ms. Dalton, my understanding is in the Secretary's Global Posture Review SOUTHCOM lost force structure, for lack of a better term. Can you commit to the Department and the—or commit to the committee that the Department will continue that security assistance funding that General Richardson so badly needs in their request?

Ms. DALTON. Congressman, thank you for highlighting these requirements, and, absolutely, as assistant secretary, I look forward

to working with General Richardson to ensure that the requirements that SOUTHCOM has identified are met, and we also work very closely with the State Department, with USAID, with other interagency colleagues to address the holistic picture in this AOR as well.

Mr. WALTZ. Yeah. I can just tell you, from my own experience, SOUTHCOM continually gets shortchanged. I'll just be—I'll just be candid. This is our backyard. The Chinese and Russians are in it. And I think if anything, COVID and current events have shown us it's global supply chains matter and they're never more secure, I don't think, than in Central and South America and Canada in our own hemisphere. So I look forward to working with you on that and—going forward.

Just very quickly, General Richardson, FARC [Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia] delisting—the Biden administration delisted FARC. We're now in discussions with Venezuela and Maduro. The Colombian president, Duque, said of delisting he would have preferred another decision, certainly.

I think most of our Venezuelan population in Florida and Colombian population would have as well. Do you share Colombia's concerns that Russian military assistance to the Maduro regime will end up in the hands of the FARC and other combatants, and that if we end up lifting sanctions and putting more money into Venezuela, that would not be a positive outcome for stability on the continent?

General RICHARDSON. Congressman, I know, looking at my partner nations eyes of the chief of defense and then the joint staff that works for that nation is very concerned about Venezuela and what Russia is doing in Venezuela, and you can see it in their eyes. They're very concerned about the disinformation leading up to their elections and election meddling, and we have got to continue to work very closely with our partner.

Mr. WALTZ. Thank you. Just in the few seconds I have remaining, General VanHerck, can I take for the record—I share Chairman Garamendi's concern about our absolute total lack of basing in—along our northern coast and in the Arctic.

I do think Canada needs to step up as well, but I look forward to seeing that report. And if you could get back to me on exactly the base that you need in—along Alaska's northern coast, I'd appreciate it.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 123.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Time has expired.

Ms. Sherrill is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. SHERRILL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

You know, I'd like to thank all of you for your service and the commitment to keeping America secure, and note that the challenges of keeping the homeland safe are complex and persistent.

We briefly discussed the negative impact that climate change has, causing damage to installations and equipment and reshaping the geostrategic environment.

So, General VanHerck, as the commander of NORTHCOM and the designated DOD advocate for Arctic capabilities, how do you

see the Department modernizing its systems in the Arctic to meet the growing threat posed by Russia and China?

And then the Army has two brigade combat teams in Alaska, in an environment where logistical operations, battery life for vehicles and digital systems, and power usage intersect with survivability and lethality. As those forces modernize in line with the Army's climate strategy, will the complexities associated with Arctic operations impact newer, greener systems?

General VANHERCK. Ma'am, the last question is, absolutely, the complexity of the changing environment in the Arctic will absolutely impact our strategy and our ability as we go forward.

So what are we doing and what do we need? Well, presence and persistence in the Arctic, and that requires infrastructure to do that, whether that be maritime infrastructure, such as a commercial port that's deep enough for cruisers, destroyers, Coast Guard cutters, to maintain persistence; the communication capabilities to operate north of 65 [degrees north, latitude]; infrastructure for airplanes to campaign on a day-to-day basis not only in Alaska, but across Canada and into Greenland as well to execute our homeland defense design.

It takes services that are equipped and ready to operate in this environment and, candidly, we're not there today and we're working closely with the Department to get there, Congressman—or Congresswoman.

Ms. SHERRILL. Thank you.

And then, General Richardson, you know, we have been receiving reports about the capabilities of China in the Southern Hemisphere, their growing presence.

We certainly have seen Russia try to reassert its traditional alliance with Venezuela and we know both those nations are adept at misinformation campaigns and have a great deal of cyber capabilities.

So what tools do you need to combat the cyber threat from China and Russia in the region?

General RICHARDSON. So I'm currently assessing that, Congresswoman, and thank you for the question because it's very, very important. I find that with my own headquarters in terms of our capabilities to support our partners in this effort are fairly small, and as this becomes very, very prevalent in the region, and it already is, we have got to get after this.

And so my—between my components and what we have—my components underneath SOUTHCOM and what we have at the headquarters—that could be more robust and we're figuring out how to do that and how to make that more robust to help our partner nations counter those adversaries in that realm as they spread disinformation.

Ms. SHERRILL. Thank you. I look forward to seeing your request in that area.

And then with my remaining time, I wonder if you could tell us about the fight regarding international criminal syndicates, what your responsibility is there, [inaudible], and what tools you need to continue the fight there.

General RICHARDSON. So as I've said before, Congresswoman, us being there present with our partner nations, working with their

militaries and their security forces on their professionalism, their strengths, is hugely important.

As we work our exercises—so I have the Tradewinds exercise coming up in May. I have UNITAS coming up in September and then also PANAMAX. I mean, this is where we have 29 countries—19 countries coming together, 21 countries coming together.

You can't display more integrated deterrence than that and that, as I said before, for example, China doesn't have partners. But they are using our playbook in our region. So, for example, with professional military education, they're offering 1-year, 2-year, all-expense-paid to Beijing for professional military education with individuals.

But they don't have exercises and they don't have partners. So I've got to be able to keep up the security cooperation and the exercises that we do in this region to show the strengths of the partnerships.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. The gentlelady's time has expired.

Mrs. McClain is represented—recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MCCLAIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you all for being here today. I appreciate it.

General Richardson, I want to thank you for coming to my office last week. I appreciate the conversation.

I wanted to follow up with you on issues concerning Russia and China's operation in the AOR. Russia has been continually—continuing to try to expand its influence in these countries. It already has a significant military intelligence operation in both Cuba and Venezuela.

But the question is really, as the U.S. continues to implement sanctions on Russia due to the invasion in Ukraine, is there any indication that their grip on this region is beginning to wane or lessen or collapse? Part one.

Part two is should the United States implement any additional target sanctions that specifically focus on Russia's assets and their influence in the AOR?

General RICHARDSON. So thank you, Congresswoman, and thanks for the questions.

I can't comment on the sanctions. That would be more for the administration to comment on. But in terms of the—what we see happening as a result of what Russia is doing to the Ukraine and in our AOR, we, certainly, see the reaching out by Russia with these countries' leaders trying to reaffirm.

We had the visit by the deputy prime minister of Russia to Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela; also the president of their congress that visited Cuba and Venezuela as well; and this is all within the past 3 weeks.

And so, definitely, reaching out to solidify, I think, their ties. Whether they're going to increase, I have not seen that yet but we are watching very closely. And as I've commented before, our domain awareness is absolutely essential so close to the homeland.

Mrs. MCCLAIN. What is your sense? I mean, you know, I take a look at—it takes two things to fight a war, right. It takes money and it takes people, and a lot of their attention is on Ukraine right now. Do you get a sense that that's going to hinder their operations or their—

General RICHARDSON. I think that it remains to be seen. We saw the U.N. vote that took place, the countries that abstained—Cuba, Nicaragua, Bolivia, and El Salvador. They did not vote to condemn what Russia is doing. So I think that the—quite honestly, we have to wait and see. I hate to say that, but I think it's too early to tell.

Mrs. MCCLAIN. Okay. All right. I appreciate that.

And then, Assistant Secretary Dalton, turning to China and the AOR, as General Richardson mentioned earlier in her testimony, the Belt and Roadway Initiative projects have been implemented in, really, a predatory fashion. Congress attempted to counteract China's Belt and Roadway Initiatives in 2018, the BUILD [Better Utilization of Investments Leading to Development] Act.

As far as I can tell, and I may be incorrect, but there seems to be little interest by the underdeveloped nations to utilize the U.S. BUILD Act over China. Why do you think these nations have been so hesitant to utilize the U.S. and help—to help fund their initiatives?

Ms. DALTON. Congresswoman, thank you so much for the question, and I completely concur with General Richardson's characterization of what China is doing in the region through its gray zone tactics and leveraging BRI.

We have seen those predatory practices play out in other regions of the world and it's disturbing that it is happening in the hemisphere as well and with our close partners.

In response to your question, I would have to defer to the Department of State and USAID colleagues in terms of how the conversations are proceeding with partners in the region as they engage them on the BUILD Act; but certainly to underscore the need for a holistic approach to the region to get after the gray zone challenge.

Mrs. MCCLAIN. But it seems like we're offering—we're offering help and they're not taking it.

Ms. DALTON. Yes.

Mrs. MCCLAIN. But yet, you know, so when I talk is, is we need to provide assistance. We need to provide assistance. We need to provide assistance. Then we provide assistance and they don't want it. So is that really the issue or is there something I'm missing?

Ms. DALTON. It's an excellent question, Congresswoman, and, again, I would have to defer to the State Department, who's on the front lines of engaging with partners on that particular issue.

But, certainly, from a Department of Defense perspective, we continue our security cooperation, commitments, and relationships as a great way to continue to build the relationships in the region.

Mrs. MCCLAIN. But we have to get them off of China and our adversaries and we have to—we really have to spend some time on why, because it really isn't—

The CHAIRMAN. Sorry. The gentlelady's time has expired.

Ms. Escobar is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ESCOBAR. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

And I want to, first, express my gratitude to all of you for your service. It's wonderful to see you all here, and I appreciate the opportunity to talk about these really important issues.

I have the incredible privilege, as you all know, of representing Fort Bliss, Texas, here in Congress, and Fort Bliss was the site of

Operation Allies Welcome and I was so fortunate to be able to visit early on with both General Richardson and General VanHerck. So thank you for allowing me to tag along during that early visit.

I am so incredibly proud of how Fort Bliss, how our service members, and our leadership responded during that time, and just continue to be proud of that.

I also recently had the opportunity to sit and visit with JTF North leadership to talk through their mission and sort of their evolving mission and how they have moved away from, you know, more sort of—I don't want to mischaracterize it, but more like soldiers on the ground and focusing more on intelligence—on gathering intelligence in the field, trying to stop crimes like smuggling and human trafficking before they get to the border, which is something I have long advocated for.

You know, by the time those challenges, whether it be drug trafficking or immigration—by the time it arrives at our southern border, it's too late, and so I really appreciate this shift in strategy and trying to get—to use intelligence to kind of prevent the issues before they arrive at our front door.

And so, General VanHerck, I wanted to ask you what you see as the benefits of NORTHCOM and the shift for JTF North towards more intelligence gathering. Are you seeing benefits already and kind of what's the long-term vision there?

General VANHERCK. Thanks, Congresswoman.

Absolutely. I think that the benefits are going to be enabling our partners who provide the law enforcement more opportunities to engage but even not at the border but helping our partners in Mexico and even partnering with JIATF South and SOUTHCOM to get further ahead, what I call further left of the event at the border vice interdicting or generating effects much sooner in the chain before it comes to the border.

I think this is important to focus on data and info, which are strategic assets that are available to us today, and technology on the border and even further south and across the globe that will give us indicators to interdict much sooner before it becomes a challenge on our border and giving that intel to those agencies who do have law enforcement roles to be able to do their law enforcement mission.

That's what we're focused on, rather than the interdiction at the point—we're not going to interdict our way out of this problem at the southwest border. We don't have enough capacity and capability, and it's actually part of their business model. Transnational criminal organizations—they know they're going to lose so much. What we have to do is focus more strategic and operational and get out of the tactical business.

Ms. ESCOBAR. I could not agree more with you and I so appreciate this very intelligence—this very intelligent, rather, strategy that is focused on that intelligence and making sure that we do this in the smartest way possible.

You know, I—my community is right on the U.S.-Mexico border. I do also—you know, I need to mention publicly because I have been sounding the alarm, not necessarily for your—for a comment from you all but just to raise publicly my concerns around Operation Lone Star in Texas.

And I realize that is under a different authority but, you know, we have got to do better on that front for our National Guard, and I hope that Governor Greg Abbott sends our National Guard home quickly, as soon as possible.

In the remaining of—almost 30 seconds I have—actually, General Richardson, I had a question for you, but I've got 30 seconds. You and I had a great conversation earlier and so I'll just follow up with you.

Again, thank you all so much for your service and your leadership. I yield back, Mr. Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Bacon is recognized.

Mr. BACON. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to thank Ms. Dalton for being here, also both generals. Appreciate working—I had the honor of working with Brigadier General Richardson when I was a brigadier general back in the day, and I got to know Lieutenant General VanHerck, and so congratulations, both of you, on how well you've done and the leadership that you're performing now.

I have—my first question is for General VanHerck. It's about medical readiness for pandemics. In the 115th Congress and the 116th Congress, we put a requirement out for DOD to start building a surge capacity for pandemics and then we got hit with one—with COVID. So the planning for a future one got overtaken by events of a real pandemic.

But I think we're at this point now we should start looking outward again and start planning for the next pandemic because there's always going to be some at some interval. We just don't know what those intervals are.

So in 2020 and 2021, Congress directed DOD to establish a National Disaster Medical System to provide a surge capacity. I'm told that you were made the supported commander in this strategy or this plan.

So we're interested to know how DOD wants to fund this and the prioritization of it, for starters, and there's a self-interest here because the DOD picked five surge centers that they wanted to build off of and Omaha is one of them, and Omaha would like to partner with DOD to make this happen.

So my question to you, General VanHerck, is what do you see as your role in this medical readiness or a surge capacity for future pandemics and what kind of resources do you think you need? Thank you.

General VANHERCK. Congressman, first, I would say my role is defense support of civil authorities. If it's required to provide DOD forces to support medical in the homeland, then I provide that through my DSCA synchronizer role. I think that the task is not mine specific for the overall task. I'm looking at our ability within the homeland and moving those forces in the event of another pandemic but, more importantly, in the event of a crisis or conflict with medical capacity.

The one thing that the pandemic has shown us is that medical capacity is challenging. We don't need to just solely look at a pandemic response. We need to look at medical capacity from a crisis or conflict that may be global in nature, and not only in DOD but more broadly across the whole of the Nation to be able to provide that medical support.

As far as specific capacity today, I'll defer to the services and DHA [Defense Health Agency] and the Department on our current readiness.

Mr. BACON. [Inaudible] but thank you very much.

General Richardson, first of all, I'm sorry I missed you the other day. Votes came at a bad time for your visit. But we appreciate you coming by. I know how important ISR is to you and Southern Command and the services you provide other countries. But could you share with us the challenges that you have with ISR, because every COCOM, or combatant command, is wanting it and how can we better support you?

General RICHARDSON. So it's essential for domain awareness. I've said that a couple of times this morning and—but it's absolutely critical to know where our threats are, what our threats are doing, and be able to expose them and expose the bad behavior.

And so with ISR, I want to thank Congress for the extra that I get to—in order to contract the capability to have some domain awareness.

It forces us to look for other low-cost high-yield solution sets in the AOR using unclassified data that we're able to—you know, with patterns of life information, actionable information we can share with our partners as well, and that helps. So, certainly want to thank Congress for that.

All of the tools that I have—I did want to talk just briefly about the levers that I have because I use the 333 security cooperation funding. I use the FMS—foreign military financing, foreign military sales, the professional military education, the IMET—all of these levers, and as I'm—what I am finding is that we have got to speed these processes up in order to outcompete our competitors that are also out there vying for these partner nations' attention, and their money and getting embedded in their countries.

And so I look forward to working with my Department of State colleagues and also in my own Department with the teammates to making those processes faster.

Mr. BACON. With the short time I have left, as a percentage what would you say is—how much of your ISR needs are being met in Southern Command?

General RICHARDSON. Well, I get about 1 percent of the global ISR that's available. So like I said, domain awareness is essential, especially in my AOR. I can fly to 80 percent of my AOR in 2 to 3 hours, about the time that it takes here to fly to Washington, DC. That's pretty close.

The CHAIRMAN. Sorry. The gentleman's time is expired.

Mr. BACON. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Panetta is recognized for 5 minutes.

[No response.]

The CHAIRMAN. I'm not hearing you, Jim. I don't know—Mr. Panetta, are you with us?

[No response.]

The CHAIRMAN. All right. He is not.

Ms. Jacobs, are you with us?

[No response.]

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. We're off to a bad start.

Mr. Green, I can physically see you here in real life in 3D. So Mr. Green is recognized for 5 minutes.

Dr. GREEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Rogers. Thank you for scheduling this very important hearing on the defense posture in Western Hemisphere, and I want to thank our witnesses for being here and, of course, congratulations for the new assignment. It's great to see the Pentagon making good decisions on its future leaders.

The events of recent weeks have made one thing abundantly clear. Cultivating strong partnerships with our neighbors in the Western Hemisphere is more crucial than ever.

As the ranking member of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, I am particularly interested in how we can coordinate U.S. military's presence with our diplomatic and homeland security efforts.

Hard power and soft power are complementary tools. During a trying time for peace and national security, we must ensure the Department of Defense, the Department of State, the Department of Homeland Security cooperate effectively. Our diplomats, our law enforcement, and our warriors should be working hand in glove to build friendships and deter enemies with all tools at our disposal.

Unfortunately, it's clear that President Biden either doesn't understand this or is ignoring the challenges facing us in the Western Hemisphere.

The Biden administration is currently negotiating with the murderous Maduro regime to lift oil sanctions on Venezuela. This catastrophic idea reflects the naiveté that dictators can be wooed or somehow appeased into acting in the interest of the United States.

The actions of Vladimir Putin clearly illustrate that dictators cannot be appeased and do not work for the good of the global community. Venezuela has long been allied with the Kremlin, of course Havana, and now Beijing.

We shouldn't signal to our friends in South America that you can violate human rights, imprison American citizens, if you sell us your oil. That's why I've just introduced a new bill today banning not only purchases from Russia but Venezuela and Iran.

We need to produce more energy here in America, not buy it from our adversaries. That is a national security imperative. We need to produce it right here for another reason. We're the most environmentally safe producers of oil. Why not produce it here instead of asking people to produce it elsewhere? They're still on the same planet and the impact to the globe is the same. Doing so is, as I said, a national security imperative.

Changing the subject, though, Cubazuela—and I say that specifically and purposefully—Cubazuela is metastasizing throughout Latin America. Authoritarians tend to link themselves to other authoritarians like Russia and China. Nicaragua, Peru, Venezuela—the dominoes are falling.

And it appears we're facing a new entity, this narcoterrorist state where authoritarian governments are partnering with transnational criminal organizations to basically create a formidable alliance that crosses departments from State, Homeland, and DOD. And I want to hear—and my first question centers around this—

how is DOD working with Homeland and State to address this new sort of entity?

I guess it's not really new, but how Cuba and Venezuela and the drug organizations are working—partnering with Bolivia and other countries' militaries? How are we working together in some task force mechanism strategically to address that? And that's my first question and, perhaps, start with the SOUTHCOM commander.

General RICHARDSON. So in terms of in the Western Hemisphere and with our Department of State colleagues in the Western Hem, and quite honestly, none of us have the resources to counter our competitors and so we—it forces us to work extremely well and extremely close together.

I will say that having our ambassadors in place in this region is really, really important, and what we have started back up in SOUTHCOM is—and we have been able to brief up four ambassadors as they stop to SOUTHCOM before they go into the AOR and assume their position.

So we start that relationship very, very quickly. But it takes all of us and that's why I say integrated deterrence is very prevalent in our AOR already because we all bring—allies and partners. We have U.K. [United Kingdom], Canada, the Netherlands, France, all within my AOR as well. But it requires all of us to work very closely together.

Dr. GREEN. It would be helpful and, perhaps—I've heard resources every time I've been in the room and I know you mentioned it too, sir. If you guys could send our office a list, just these are the top 20 things we have to have. I mean, that would be very helpful.

And I know I may have missed testimony earlier where that was—had to go talk about China in another meeting on Foreign Affairs. So—but it would be great to get that list. You know, Congressman Green, these are the top 10 or 15 or 20 things we have to have.

Because I don't want you saying we don't have the resources, right. I mean, that just bothers me. That's a failure of this side of the—this branch of government to get you what you need.

I appreciate the ambo mention there. Unfortunately, that's the other side of the building, and we'll push those guys to get people, you know, through the nom [nomination] process, and because I understand Panama and some of these countries haven't had ambassadors for a very long time and that's unfortunate and shouldn't happen. So we'll push that.

But a resources list would be great, and with that, I yield.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 123.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. I'm with you on the ambassador point. I will point out that the Senate, you know, and, in particular, a few Senate Republicans have, you know, blocked just about every appointment that's been offered for one reason or another, and if we could get rid of this tradition—it's a bipartisan tradition, by the way, that if you don't like some policy the administration is doing, you're just going to stop them from appointing anybody.

If we could get rid of that, I think it would really help our country, and like I said, it's, you know, Republicans now because it's a Democratic President, but I've seen it happen the other way, too.

Just a couple quick announcements. So we have a classified brief at 1:00 o'clock. That is actually the INDOPACOM [U.S. Indo-Pacific Command]—classified INDOPACOM and Korea classified brief at 1:00 o'clock—2212—in 2212. We have a hard stop here at 12:30 just so—well, I can get lunch, basically, in time but before that 1:00 o'clock so—and staff as well. So we'll go till 12:30 if—you know, no further than 12:30. Let's put it that way. Then we've got to reconvene in 2212.

With that, we will give Mr. Panetta another shot.

Mr. Panetta, are you with us?

Mr. PANETTA. I'm with you. I apologize, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for this opportunity, and thanks to the witnesses for being available for these types of questions and providing the thorough answers that you are doing.

I know you focused a lot on the Southern Hemisphere. Let me focus north. Obviously, the Arctic is a convergent point for a great power competition as we're seeing. Considering just months before Russia started moving troops towards Ukraine, we saw an unprecedented buildup of Russian military might in the Arctic.

At the same time, China is looking to become a, quote, "Polar great power" by 2030, and including they had a white paper in which they said that controlling the region would afford its government a three continents and two oceans advantage.

My first question to Ms. Dalton, at the strategic level, where do we see the Arctic in our national security priorities; and then two, given Russia and China's posture towards the Arctic, can we expect to see a bigger presence of the Arctic in the forthcoming National Defense Strategy?

Ms. DALTON. Thank you, Congressman, for highlighting the importance of Arctic security. From our perspective in OSD Policy, we see, really, three U.S. national security interests in play in the region.

First is the need to defend the homeland, the second is in terms of deterring aggression, and the third is preserving our economic interests in the region as an Arctic nation.

And to the second part of your question, in my prior position before being confirmed into this one I was one of the members of the team working on the National Defense Strategy and I can assure you that the Arctic is receiving due focus in that review and that review will be forthcoming to Congress in the next several weeks.

And going forward, of course, at Congress' urging, we are standing up a DASD-ship [Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense office] focused on Arctic and Global Resilience that will be within my team, and so I look forward to engaging this committee, going forward, on those issues.

Mr. PANETTA. Great. Thank you, Ms. Dalton.

General VanHerck, as you probably know, I have the Naval Postgraduate School in my district there in Monterey, California, and I do believe they're doing excellent work when it comes to studying our Arctic capabilities.

However, what I've learned from them is that there's sort of a gap in our cold weather training for our armed services. Now, I know we send troops to Sweden, Norway, and Colorado. But I think, and you can probably agree with me, that that doesn't compare to actually being within the Arctic Circle.

So as you undertake the—an independent assessment of the Arctic security initiatives outlined in the 2022 NDAA, can you explain how NORTHCOM plans to improve training our forces to operate in the Arctic?

General VANHERCK. Congressman, first, I'd say NORTHCOM seeks every opportunity to have access, either forces allocated to me or that volunteer to train in the Arctic. But, candidly, we don't have the forces trained, ready, equipped, to operate in this environment.

Now, I am encouraged. Right now, we do have Arctic Edge ongoing. It's a longstanding exercise we had planned with a limited number of forces, slightly over a thousand, that are training in the Arctic region today.

With that said, I'm also encouraged by the strategies. The Department has a strategy and the services all have strategies. Now the question is, are we going to fund those strategies.

I look forward to seeing the fiscal year 2023 budget to see if we do fund, as part of the Arctic strategy, the actual capabilities that you're talking about.

Mr. PANETTA. You and me both, and I'll leave it at that and I appreciate your time today.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Mr. Wittman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WITTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to thank our witnesses for joining us today.

General VanHerck, I want to go to you, and specifically about your emphasis on the importance of deterrence by denial. And I think that's incredibly important, especially as we see this increasing aggressive behavior, obviously with Russia's attack but also with China and them being opportunists.

I think your observation that we have to be resilient and we have to use both kinetic and non-kinetic means to be able to deter are incredibly important across the spectrum.

I know that you told this committee that, based on your mission set in NORTHCOM, your ability to combat these growing threats continues to erode, things like having a ballistic missile defense system that's not up to par to be able to counter hypersonic glide vehicles and other hypersonic weapons.

And in testimony on March 1st you observed that China's effort to develop hypersonic weapons is tenfold to that of the United States. You also mentioned earlier in the hearing as far as the things that you have in the offing to deter hypersonics include things like over-the-horizon radars. Could you explain a little bit more about how do you bring what we have today to address the threat today, but also what are we doing to not only catch up but what do we do to hopefully advance past others in these realms where, unfortunately, we have delayed that? In fact, I have NASA [National Aeronautics and Space Administration] Langley right on

the edge of the district, and for years they did great hypersonic research there.

Beginning about 6 years ago, for some reason, somebody thought, well, let's just stop funding hypersonic research because we really don't need to do that. In hindsight, when we stopped the others caught up and here we are today.

So let me get your perspective on where we need to be and where do we need to make the appropriate investments to not only catch up but to advance.

General VANHERCK. Well, thank you for the question.

And to go back, what I was talking about on the tenfold was with regards to testing, specifically. China has tested more, about tenfold, than we have.

What do we need to do today? First of all, it's about domain awareness and sharing data and information that oftentimes is available today but is actually in stovepipes and not shared and available for decision-makers.

I think a focus on defense in the homeland, certainly we have to figure out what it is we must defend but, more broadly, I would say we need to get further left and by that I mean sooner in the kill chain and even before the launch actually occurs to be able to create deterrence options such as posturing of forces or use of the information space from the President or the Secretary.

That's my focus on deterrence by denial. In addition to that, we need to demonstrate every single day with the capabilities we have today across all levers of influence and with allies and partners our readiness, responsiveness, capability, and resiliency.

We hide too many things, candidly, in classified areas. It has no deterrent effect if the adversary or potential competitor cannot see that.

Mr. WITTMAN. Now, listen, I agree and you know the complexity of the physics of trying to shoot down a hypersonic weapon, especially one that doesn't gain a lot of altitude and then can maneuver going to target. That physics problem becomes right on the edge of impossible.

So the question then becomes just as you said. What do we do to give just enough information to our adversaries to know that if they fire one at us and say, per se, take out an aircraft carrier that there will be a dozen that go back to them and take out a number of different targets in different areas?

Because the concept of mutually assured destruction when it comes to the use of those weapons is very much like we use in the nuclear arsenal. You want to, as you said, get left of boom so that you are deterring those adversaries from even thinking about launching it.

So if you could maybe elaborate just a little bit more on that about how do we do that specifically?

General VANHERCK. Well, thanks. What I would say, again, it's about sharing data and information, and having the right domain awareness sensors that aren't singularly focused on a single threat that actually give us the ability to see multiple threats from a small UAS [unmanned aerial system] all the way to a ballistic missile.

The capability exists today. Those are things that we should do. Then we should share that and make it available for all levels of command across DOD and the interagency as well so that we can collaborate real time across all domains and develop a common picture, the common outcomes, and validate through logistics if those outcomes or options are actually executable.

Mr. WITTMAN. Are we making those investments today and, if so, should we be doing more? There's more this committee should do in this year's NDAA to address that?

General VANHERCK. I think the Department is. The deputy secretary is very aggressive. She's provided over \$50 million and provided personnel at each of the combatant commands to work some of this problem. My challenge is we don't go fast enough for me. We're in an Industrial Age acquisition process when we need to be thinking about a software-based process.

Mr. WITTMAN. Yeah, very good. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Mr. Kahele is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KAHELE. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman, and I really appreciate this hearing.

I guess my question—I'd like to start with General VanHerck. You said the Air Force did a review for an [inaudible] to detect ballistic and hypersonic missiles from space. That analysis—

[Audio malfunction.]

The CHAIRMAN. I do apologize, but you have frozen on us. So there's not much we can do about that.

Mr. KAHELE. Okay. I guess my question for the general would be, you know, would any type of space-based capability change his requirements for land-based systems?

General VANHERCK. What I would say is I think you have to work land-based systems with space-based capabilities. They're not mutually exclusive. So, for example, Space Force and Space Command are going down a space-based capability to detect hypersonics. The over-the-horizon capabilities that I'm talking about also contribute to space domain awareness and those systems have to be mutually integrated and share that data for the more broad domain awareness that we need.

Mr. KAHELE. Okay. Well, based on that answer then, is there any way that you could provide some type of details on how those plans or any type of cruise missile defense for the homeland would exist and any critical gaps that exist today?

General VANHERCK. Yes, there are multiple critical gaps that exist today for hypersonics and cruise missile defense. I'm confident that what I'm asking for from the Department is getting consideration. I look forward to seeing the budget in 2023. I think we're going to make some progress on that.

I would ask for a single point of contact for cruise missile defense of the homeland be designated by the Department in the Missile Defense Review. The Department has been very transparent and inclusive, and once that's complete I look forward to seeing the Missile Defense Review.

Mr. KAHELE. In regards to the development then of the Next Generation Interceptor [NGI], are there any areas where you have concern early in the program which you feel need to be addressed?

General VANHERCK. I'm very comfortable with where we are with the NGI, the inclusiveness of the Department and MDA [Missile Defense Agency]. I'm very closely partnered with Vice Admiral Hill at MDA and everything appears to be on schedule right now.

It would be very concerning if the Next Generation Interceptor is delayed. I look forward to potentially fielding it sooner than 2028.

Mr. KAHELE. Okay. All right. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Ms. Jacobs is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

General Richardson, I want to talk about a facility in your AOR which has not gotten a lot of attention today. There are currently 39 detainees held at Guantanamo Bay, and Chairman Smith has long argued that the facility at Guantanamo is not worth the cost to the American taxpayer to continue to operate such an expensive facility for so few detainees.

So, General Richardson, given that so few military commissions have even started, when do you realistically think sentences for all of the remaining detainees will even conclude?

It's been over 20 years since most of the remaining detainees were first brought to Guantanamo—I was in middle school back then—and the news yesterday that a detainee, Mohammad Al-Qahtani, was repatriated to Saudi Arabia is a step in the right direction.

So what efforts are being made to repatriate or resettle any of the other detainees already cleared for release from Guantanamo?

General RICHARDSON. So, Congresswoman, thank you very much for the question and, yes, we're down to—with that transfer that occurred yesterday, we're down to 38 detainees there in Guantanamo Bay.

And so in terms of what I do, SOUTHCOM provides the safe, legal, humane care of these law-of-war detainees. We don't—we aren't involved in the scheduling of the transfers or the hearings or anything—the commissions that will take place. And so I'd have to refer you to the Department of Defense for more information on that.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 123.]

Ms. JACOBS. Well, thank you. I will look forward to getting that information from you.

Ms. Walsh, I don't know if you have anything additional to add there.

Ms. DALTON. Thank you, Congresswoman. So the oversight of the Guantanamo Bay issue is actually in OSD Policy, SO/LIC [Special Operations/Low-Intensity Conflict], not within my assistant secretaryship. So, similarly, we're happy to take that question back to that authority.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 123.]

Ms. JACOBS. Sounds good. Completely changing topics here, the Biden administration has prioritized addressing root causes of migration, including violence, climate change, and economic hardship in the Northern Triangle.

Just last year, USAID announced its Centroamerica Local initiative to empower local actors in those three countries to address drivers of irregular migration. General Richardson, how are our military operations in these countries complementary and aligned with these efforts and has DOD increased its coordination with the State Department and USAID on its programs and operations since these efforts were announced?

General RICHARDSON. So, Congresswoman, we work very closely with our partner nation militaries on their professionalization on human rights, the rule of law, and stress that, that the—as they become or try to become the most trusted partner or trusted entity within their own country regarding migration, obviously, corruption, insecurity, instability, the economy, causes people to move and become on the move.

And so we work through the professionalization of the militaries through all the levers that I've talked about during this hearing to make them more professional with human rights at the top of the list.

Ms. JACOBS. Well, thank you. And on the topic of human rights, we'll move a little further south. We have seen some concerning reports of continued human rights violations by the Colombian paramilitary forces and by police forces during the protests last year.

How does SOUTHCOM encourage partners to act in accordance with the protection of human and civil rights and how would you grade our efforts to teach and train human rights values to the Colombian military and police, given the continued uptick in violence from state security forces?

General RICHARDSON. Thank you for the question, Congresswoman.

And so we work very closely with the military. We don't work with the police or the paramilitary and so, again, it's the professionalization of the military, and us—by just us being there with them, partnering with them, them participating in our exercises, they are also—I'd like to highlight the Colombian military as an exporter of training. They go to other Latin American countries to train other militaries and security forces.

They also run schools within Colombia that are taught in Spanish and, certainly, the—we work very closely with them. I can't highlight enough our Colombian military partners are outstanding military partners. I'd also like to highlight that they fought beside us in the Korean War. So when we look for partners in my region, Colombia with the Korean War and Brazil in World War II.

Ms. JACOBS. Well, thank you. Well, I would encourage you to continue focusing on human rights and governance of the security sector because as good as all the work is you're doing we're still seeing very concerning reports.

So, Mr. Chairman, I'll yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. The gentlelady's time has expired.

Those are all the questions that we have today. I want to thank our witnesses for their presentation and, more importantly, for the

work they are doing on behalf of our country, and we look forward to working with you throughout the rest of the year.

And with that, we are adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:21 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

MARCH 8, 2022

PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

MARCH 8, 2022

Statement by
Ms. Melissa Dalton
Assistant Secretary of Defense for
Homeland Defense and Hemispheric Affairs
Office of the Secretary of Defense

Before the 117th Congress
Committee on Armed Services
U.S. House of Representatives
March 8, 2022

UNCLASSIFIED

1

Introduction

Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Rogers, and distinguished Members of the Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today.

As the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Hemispheric Affairs, I am the principal civilian policy advisor to the Secretary of Defense and the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy on a range of matters, including homeland defense, mission assurance, defense support of civil authorities, Western Hemisphere affairs, and the Arctic and global resilience.

The Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy produces guidance for the Department of Defense (DoD), including the Combatant Commands, to align resources, activities, and capabilities in support of National Security Strategy and National Defense Strategy goals. This includes developing force posture policy and strategy and overseeing implementation.

Today, I would like to emphasize two key points after briefly assessing the array of national security challenges to the homeland. First, DoD is working to understand, raise awareness of, and energize attention and preparedness to prevent, mitigate, and respond to national security threats to the homeland, namely from state-based strategic competitors. Second, to address and build resilience against these threats, DoD is reviewing, renewing, and modernizing our approach to partnerships in DoD's homeland defense missions, both within DoD and with other Federal departments and agencies; international allies and partners; State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Governments (SLTT); and private sector partners.

National Security Challenges

Today we face a rapidly evolving array of adversary military capabilities, exacerbated by emerging technologies that pose intensified threats to the U.S. homeland. As the Interim National Security Strategic Guidance makes clear, the United States faces challenges from state and non-state adversaries that target the homeland, including our elections, intellectual property and technology, and infrastructure, through malicious cyberattacks and disinformation

UNCLASSIFIED

campaigns, as well as naturally occurring hazards like climate change and infectious disease. These threats and challenges can put at risk the Department's ability to defend the homeland, project power, and counter aggression.

People's Republic of China (PRC) and Russia: The PRC is the pacing challenge for the Department. Largely through its ongoing program of licit and illicit acquisition of others' technology, the PRC is rapidly advancing and integrating its capabilities, which could allow the PRC to hold our homeland at risk in multiple domains and to disrupt our ability to mobilize, project, and sustain the joint force. Russia poses an acute challenge to the United States and our allies and partners. Russia has carried out a multiyear influence operation campaign aimed at exacerbating societal divisions in the United States to weaken our democracy. Russia's decision to undertake an unprovoked, unjustified, and premeditated further invasion of Ukraine has already resulted in loss of life and human suffering, threatens global peace and security, and constitutes a threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States.

Other Persistent State Threats: Regional rogue regimes like Iran and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) continue to pose distinct, persistent challenges as both pursue game-changing capabilities at the expense of the welfare of their own people. Iran has attempted to execute influence campaigns in the homeland, including during the 2020 U.S. Presidential Election. DPRK focuses its malicious activity on exploiting international financial systems to steal money, allowing it to evade United Nations sanctions.

Cyber: The United States faces cyber threats from China, Russia, Iran, DPRK, their proxies, and non-state actors, including cyber criminals, all of which carry out operations daily against the United States, including targets at all levels of government and private entities. China and Russia are among our most sophisticated cyber competitors and conduct persistent malicious cyber campaigns to threaten U.S. strategic interests. Their malicious campaigns include exfiltrating sensitive information from U.S. public and private sector institutions to erode the Nation's economic vitality. And Russia has conducted cyber-enabled information operations that challenge our democratic processes. Over the past three election cycles, Russia, Iran, and other

countries sought to undermine U.S. voter confidence and promote the strategic interests of those countries.

Further, China and Russia are both adept at carrying out cyber espionage and other operations and have integrated cyber activities into their military and national strategies. As we are witnessing in Ukraine, Russia is employing its cyber capabilities prior to, and in conjunction with, its ground invasion to target online services at the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense, state-owned banks, and other entities. Iran has demonstrated the capability and intent to target the United States in cyberspace, and Iranian cyber actors are improving their ability to deliver disruptive and destructive attacks.

Cyber criminals are employing ever more sophisticated capabilities and tactics to extort, steal, or otherwise advance their malicious aims. Ransomware attacks, in particular, are increasing in both scope and sophistication as malicious actors experiment with new business models, such as the provision of ransomware infrastructure as a service that can be bought or leased. Last October, President Biden hosted ministers and representatives from the European Union and more than 30 countries who recognized that ransomware is an escalating global threat with serious economic and security consequences. Thus, the Department is working with other Federal departments and agencies to prepare to respond to cyber operations against a wide range of U.S. targets, including critical infrastructure.

Central and South America: The Western Hemisphere's relative stability can be maintained only by building strong, robust defense and security relationships with partners and allies in the region, both physically and in cyberspace. We know too well that competitors from outside the hemisphere seek to foster instability and to interfere with democracy in this region. We also know that transnational criminal organizations and other illicit actors in this hemisphere enable corruption, undermine the rule of law, and erode democratic institutions, at the expense of the health, safety, and well-being of the people of North and South America.

Natural and Man-made Hazards and Resilience: Concurrent with these national security challenges, our nation also faces the challenge of natural and man-made hazards. These

UNCLASSIFIED

hazards do not respect international or national boundaries in our increasingly interconnected world, nor do these hazards wait for ongoing crises to be resolved before striking. Last year, the U.S. homeland endured 58 major disasters caused by natural hazards, including hurricanes, wildfires, and flooding. Over the last two years, the outbreak of a global pandemic has claimed the lives of more than 936,000 Americans. We are also seeing increasing demands on the force to provide support to civilian authorities, most notably in the form of States using their National Guard personnel to respond to wildfires, which are increasingly a year-round rather than seasonal problem. The number of National Guard personnel days dedicated to fighting wildfires increased from 14,000 in fiscal year 2016 to more than 176,000 in fiscal year 2021. Supporting our civilian partners at the Federal Emergency Management Agency and State and local governments is necessary to protect our homeland from these threats. However, increased demands on the force pose opportunity costs as the force cannot simultaneously train and deploy for other defense missions. Hazards such as these are increasingly overwhelming Federal, State, and local responders. More generally, reliance on support from DoD is greater now than it has ever been, and is increasing (e.g., in 2011, DoD supported 97 requests for assistance from nine Federal partners; in 2021, DoD supported 241 requests for assistance from 14 Federal partners).

Even as we grapple with diverse security challenges from state and non-state actors, we must also account for transboundary challenges, such as climate change. Climate change threatens to worsen the severity of climate-related hazards such as hurricanes, floods, and wildfires both at home and abroad, with significant implications for U.S. national security and defense. Domestically, in recent years we have sustained billions of dollars in damage from climate-related disasters to important military installations, such as Tyndall Air Force Base in Florida, Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune in North Carolina, and Offutt Air Force Base in Nebraska. Damage to installations potentially undermines the ability of our military to carry out mission critical activities and diverts substantial resources to repairs.

Climate impacts are also felt around the world, including on our hemispheric neighbors in the Americas. The National Intelligence Estimate from last fall noted the particular vulnerability of a number of Central American and Caribbean countries. Governments and their civilian populations in the region face increasing vulnerability due to the impacts of climate change,

UNCLASSIFIED

including from hurricanes and droughts. Devastating storms pose acute challenges to human security while chronic droughts undermine livelihoods, with potential spillover consequences from increased pressures for migration.

Climate change is also affecting the Arctic acutely, creating uncertainty about the scope and nature of human and state activities in the region. Russia, which is the largest Arctic state, is engaged in a multi-year military buildup and ongoing pattern of bellicosity. The PRC has also clearly stated its interest in gaining diplomatic and economic stakes in the region. The PRC is building its ability to operate in the Arctic by expanding its small icebreaker fleet and conducting regular scientific research expeditions.

DoD's Approach to Homeland Defense

DoD's top defense priority is to protect the security of the American people and to defend the homeland. The Department's approach to advancing our priorities and addressing these interconnected challenges is "Integrated Deterrence" – working seamlessly across warfighting domains, theaters, the spectrum of conflict, other instruments of U.S. national power, and our network of alliances and partnerships to apply a coordinated, multifaceted approach to alter our competitors' perceptions of the potential costs and benefits of aggression. The resilience of our critical infrastructure and capabilities at home strengthens deterrence of competitor aggression.

Multi-Domain Homeland Defense: DoD integrates its efforts across domains to defend the U.S. homeland. In the air domain, DoD and our Canadian Forces partners provide for the air defense of North America against airborne threats through NORAD. In the maritime domain, DoD 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. DoD also provides global maritime situational awareness, enabling timely, accurate decision-making to counter emergent maritime threats, and enabling a coordinated threat response among Federal partners through the Maritime Operational Threat Response process.

DoD is working closely with Canada to implement the next steps in NORAD's modernization, as agreed to on August 17, 2021. This builds on the U.S.-Canada Roadmap

UNCLASSIFIED

signed by President Biden and Prime Minister Trudeau on February 23, 2021. NORAD modernization will improve NORAD's ability to detect, deter, and defend against aerospace threats and to detect maritime threats to North America. USNORTHCOM and U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) are responsible for homeland defense and defense support of civil authorities in their respective areas of responsibility.

DoD is working to understand, raise awareness about, and energize attention and preparedness to prevent, mitigate, and respond to national security threats to the homeland. Central to this effort is building the resilience of critical capabilities, such as the services provided by U.S. critical infrastructure sectors, particularly non-DoD owned capabilities on which we rely, in the homeland. Because these are generally not DoD assets, this requires close cooperation with our partners in other Federal departments and agencies, the international community, SLTT governments, and the private sector to address requirements or vulnerabilities and build resilience. This includes reviewing, renewing, and modernizing our approach to partnerships in DoD's homeland defense missions.

For example, in recent months we have worked closely with USNORTHCOM to more clearly and specifically understand our homeland critical infrastructure needs and how they relate to, intersect with, and in some instances diverge from those of our interagency and private sector partners. The general recognition that the homeland and its infrastructure are at risk from our adversaries is no longer sufficient. To effectively counter these risks, we must understand in detail what is most important, to whom, when, and why, and the threats and hazards they are subject to from our adversaries, malign actors, or naturally occurring disasters.

To achieve this, we are expanding our information-sharing efforts so that, both within the Department and with our external partners, we have a common understanding of our infrastructure priorities and the threats they face. Additionally, through a recent initiative we are institutionalizing the capability to conduct the deep, data-driven analysis required to understand our and others' critical infrastructure dependencies and interdependencies. These efforts will, in time, help inform our own understanding of threats to the homeland and, by extension, enable us to make effective policy and operational and resource allocation decisions that build critical infrastructure resiliency.

UNCLASSIFIED

Cyber: In the cyberspace domain, DoD is responding to cyber threats in two ways. First, DoD is taking the necessary steps to ensure that we can fight and win wars even while under attack in and through cyberspace. The Joint Force's ability to fight through disruptions to its network and systems is a foundational requirement for U.S. national security and underpins our approach to integrated deterrence, which depends on the United States' ability to employ the full range of national security tools even in a contested cyber environment.

Second, DoD executes cyberspace operations to enable its partners and to act, when necessary, to disrupt cyber threats. Working with both public and private partners is vital in the cyberspace domain. DoD is principally reliant on other entities to grant insights into cyber threat actors operating on non-DoD U.S. systems, information that we, in turn, leverage to take actions overseas to stop those threats.

Protecting our democracy from foreign-based attacks, malign influence, and election interference is a DoD top priority. The Department of Defense stands ready and postured for whole-of-government election defense support. More broadly, DoD collaborates closely with other Federal departments and agencies to coordinate operations, share information, and leverage unique technical expertise. The Department of Homeland Security's (DHS's) Joint Cyber Defense Collaborative is a step in the right direction to ensuring that, as a Federal Government, we can work with our private sector partners to respond to cyber threats to the U.S. homeland. As the Sector Risk Management Agency for the Defense Industrial Base (DIB), DoD also partners directly with DIB companies to protect our military advantage by raising the sector's collective cybersecurity and resilience posture by eliminating barriers to effective coordination while maximizing information transparency to ensure our partners have effective tools to mitigate risk.

Defense Support of Civil Authorities: DoD has a long history of leveraging its substantial capabilities and capacity not only to defend our nation, but also to support Federal, State, and local partners in their missions, such as in protecting our nation's critical infrastructure against cybersecurity threats, election security, securing our borders, and responding to man-made and natural disasters and public health emergencies. Examples of DoD support of civilian

UNCLASSIFIED

authorities in 2021 and early 2022 include responding to and providing support to the whole-of-government responses to COVID-19, climate-related incidents such as storms and fires, and Operation Allies Welcome, and providing support to DHS along the Southwest Border.

COVID-19: DoD continues to support the national response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021, DoD supported approximately 118 requests for assistance. As of February 28, 2022, DoD has 63 teams totaling 1,424 personnel identified to support hospitals and medical centers in need of staff augmentation. Based on our nation's pandemic response, we have gained a better understanding of the limitations of our nation's medical response capabilities and capacities, particularly with an event that creates demands for capabilities across the whole nation nearly concurrently.

The United States must be prepared to face biological threats from naturally occurring, accidental, and deliberate sources. Global travel, trade, climate change, and potential misuse of emerging biotechnologies creates the risk of biological threats endangering lives and disrupting society, the economy, and the food supply of the homeland. DoD is not isolated from the impact of biological threats, and must plan for ways to operate in a biologically challenged environment. The Department is conducting an internal Biodefense Posture Review; we anticipate this review will inform DoD roles and priorities for addressing biological threats to the Force and in supporting the broader federal biodefense enterprise.

Climate Change: The Department will have to remain vigilant in the face of escalating climate-related disasters in the hemisphere. Given how climate change is reshaping the geostrategic environment, exacerbating existing risks and creating new challenges for U.S. national security and defense, DoD is integrating climate considerations into major planning documents, including the National Defense Strategy, Guidance for the Employment of the Force, and the Chairman's Risk Assessment, as well as other DoD core guidance. We are discussing climate change and climate resilience cooperation during bilateral and multilateral meetings and conferences. Closer to home, in 2021, DoD also supported 66 requests for assistance to respond to a winter storm in Texas, four hurricanes or storms (e.g., Hurricane Henri, Hurricane Ida, and Tropical Storm Peter), tornados in Kentucky, and multiple wildland fires.

UNCLASSIFIED

Operation Allies Welcome: Over the past year, DoD also has provided considerable support to our Federal partners through Operation Allies Welcome to care for more than 80,000 Afghan evacuees. To accommodate this large influx of evacuees, the Department provided temporary housing, medical, and other associated support at eight domestic military installations while Afghan evacuees completed medical screenings, vaccinations, and resettlement paperwork. Although such support on military installations has now ended, DoD will continue to provide humanitarian support for Afghan evacuees at a non-DoD facility.

Southwest Border Security: DoD has supported DHS's border security mission at the southwest border for 17 of the last 21 years. In 13 of these 17 years, the duration of DoD support was for the entire fiscal year, and at all times was provided on a non-reimbursable basis. Currently approximately 2,500 military personnel are deployed to the southwest border, supporting U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) detection and monitoring activities, and providing intelligence analysis, aviation, command and control, and other support to CBP.

Although DoD recognizes that its support has been helpful over the years, it is important that our partners have sufficient capacity and capability to perform their missions, so that DoD can focus on its mission and be available when there truly is a temporary, exigent emergency. It is important that other departments and agencies have the capacity and capability to perform their own missions so that our nation is more secure and resilient. An over-reliance on DoD support could become an acute challenge in a scenario where DoD's capabilities and capacity are needed elsewhere for DoD's national defense missions. DoD is working with our partners to transition from DoD support to their organic capacity and capabilities.

Defense Partnerships in the Western Hemisphere

As emphasized in the Interim National Security Strategic Guidance, the vital national interests of the United States are inextricably bound to the fortunes of our neighbors and partners in the Western Hemisphere —and especially with Canada and Mexico. To address shared threats, DoD must continue to maintain strong partnerships with the defense and security ministries and the militaries of our neighbors in the Americas. Our partnerships are based on the

UNCLASSIFIED

bedrock principles of support for democratic institutions, civilian control of the military, and respect for human rights and dignity.

We are at a strategic inflection point, with the opportunity to forge deeper bonds within our hemisphere through defense engagement and strategic security cooperation. The strength of these partnerships will make a pivotal difference in our collective ability to successfully address the challenges we face. DoD continues to host and participate in strategic defense dialogues, defense and military exercises, seminars, and senior leader engagements. We continue to advance our defense relationships with strong allies and partners such as Canada, Mexico, Colombia, Brazil, and Chile. We have expanded our cooperation with Caribbean and Central American defense and security partners to support their regional security objectives, strengthen their defense capabilities, and help to make the air and maritime approaches to the United States more secure. We also participate in regional and hemisphere-wide defense and security venues, such as the North American Defense Ministerial, the Inter-American Defense Board, and the Conference of Defense Ministers of the Americas, which Brazil will host in July.

Secretary Austin directed DoD to align its priorities and capabilities to address a changing and dynamic threat landscape, including the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the influence of global competitors such as the PRC, and persistent threats such as transnational and non-state illicit actors. He expects the Department to address these challenges based on a sober assessment of our strategic needs and in recognition of the importance of working together with our allies and partners.

The COVID-19 pandemic is just one example of the importance of international partnership. The pandemic caused significant challenges across the hemisphere with political, economic, and public health effects likely to be felt in the region for years to come, with second and third order effects for our partner nations' militaries. USNORTHCOM and USSOUTHCOM deserve recognition for outstanding work in the region in delivering COVID-19-related assistance to our partners over the past two years, including more than two dozen field hospitals, personal protective equipment, medical and non-medical supplies, disinfectants, test kits, ventilators, and cold storage devices.

UNCLASSIFIED

DoD continues to provide support for humanitarian assistance and disaster response. Several of the militaries in the hemisphere have lead responsibility for disaster response within their countries, including those that are linked to climate impacts, such as powerful storms in the Caribbean. Nearly all of the hemisphere's militaries provide some level of critical support to their nation's response to these hazards. We recognize the value and importance of mutual support for mission success in a humanitarian or disaster response scenario. For example, in August 2021, USSOUTHCOM played a critical supporting role in the U.S. Government's response to the 7.2 magnitude earthquake in Haiti. DoD provided air transport and logistics to facilitate critical life-saving operations in hard-to-reach areas of southwest Haiti by rapidly deploying planes, helicopters, and ships to the affected area. We were not alone, as other countries' militaries in the hemisphere also provided support and relief to Haiti, including by delivering humanitarian supplies and donations.

We also see increased concerns across the hemisphere about the threat of malicious cyber activity, and, thus, see an increased demand for cyber, information sharing, and science and technology cooperation in the region. Many partners seek expanded cooperation and information-sharing with us to protect national networks. In response, we are developing new opportunities to help partners improve their cyber and network defense capabilities, so they can deter, detect, and defend against cyber threats. This network of partners is key to achieving our shared goals for a free, secure, and prosperous Western Hemisphere.

Arctic: In the Western Hemisphere, we are also focused on our northern borders and the Arctic region. In consultation with U.S. allies and partners, DoD is examining its strategy, posture, and equipment 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 as conditions there continue to evolve. DoD continues to maintain a watchful approach to the Arctic region, and is prioritizing working with allies and partners to build domain awareness and advance capabilities through training and exercises such as the forthcoming COLD RESPONSE exercise hosted by Norway. The new Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies, a DoD Regional Center, will support DoD's ability to evolve our strategic approach to the Arctic as conditions warrant. Defending the

UNCLASSIFIED

U.S. homeland requires DoD to closely monitor the evolving situation in the Arctic region, and be prepared to evolve strategy, posture, and equipment as required to deter aggression, support allies and partners, ensure stability, and preserve U.S. interests.

Conclusion

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Rogers, and distinguished Members of the Committee, in conclusion, the homeland and the Western Hemisphere face increased and evolving threats from state and non-state actors – adversarial actions that undermine stability and democratic institutions, cyber threats, an escalating climate crisis, and threats to critical infrastructure. To address these shared challenges, we will continue to raise awareness and increase preparedness with our partners in and out of government to prevent, mitigate, and respond to national security threats to the homeland, build resilience, and advance U.S. national interests in the Western Hemisphere. Thank you for the support of Congress and for your continued commitment and support of the women and men of the Department of Defense. I look forward to your questions.

UNCLASSIFIED

Melissa G. Dalton
Assistant Secretary of Defense
for Homeland Defense and Hemispheric Affairs

Melissa Dalton was sworn in as the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Hemispheric Affairs on March 4, 2022. She is responsible for advising the Secretary of Defense and other senior defense leaders on defense continuity and mission assurance; homeland defense and defense support of civil authorities; Arctic and global resilience; and U.S. defense and security policy for Canada, Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean, and South America.

Prior to being sworn in as the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Hemispheric Affairs, she served as the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy, Plans, and Capabilities from January 2021 to March 2022. In that role, she was responsible for advising the Secretary of Defense and other senior defense leaders on national security and defense strategy; the forces, contingency plans, and associated posture necessary to implement the defense strategy; nuclear deterrence and missile defense policy; and security cooperation plans and policies. Previously, Ms. Dalton was a senior fellow and deputy director of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) International Security Program and director of the Cooperative Defense Project. Her CSIS research focused on reinforcing the principled foundations of U.S. defense strategy and military operations. Prior to joining CSIS in 2014, Ms. Dalton served for a decade as a career civil servant in the Bush and Obama Administrations at DoD. Her assignments included senior advisor for force planning, special assistant to the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, policy adviser to the commander of the International Security Assistance Force in Kabul, Afghanistan, and country director for Lebanon and Syria in the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. She also served as an intelligence analyst at the Defense Intelligence Agency.

Ms. Dalton holds a B.A. in foreign affairs from the University of Virginia and an M.A. in international relations from the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies. She is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and was a Council on Foreign Relations International Affairs Fellow.

STATEMENT OF
GENERAL LAURA J. RICHARDSON
COMMANDER, UNITED STATES SOUTHERN COMMAND
BEFORE THE 117TH CONGRESS
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
MARCH 8, 2022



Introduction

Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Rogers, and distinguished members of the committee, it is my great honor to serve and lead the incredible team of patriots at U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM). As current national strategic direction states: “Today, more than ever, America’s fate is inextricably linked to events beyond our shores.” Nowhere is this more evident than right here in the Western Hemisphere. This region—our shared neighborhood—is under assault from a host of cross-cutting, transboundary challenges that directly threaten our own homeland. Countering these threats requires greater U.S. attention, commitment, and investments to reverse the current disturbing trends.

Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) are facing insecurity and instability exacerbated by COVID-19, the climate crisis and the People’s Republic of China (PRC). The PRC continues its relentless march to expand its economic, diplomatic, technological, informational, and military influence in LAC and challenges U.S. influence in all these areas. Without continued modest investment, negative PRC influence in this region could soon resemble the self-serving, predatory influence it now holds in Africa.

Meanwhile, Russia intensifies instability through its ties with Venezuela, entrenchment in Cuba and Nicaragua, and extensive disinformation operations. Transnational criminal organizations (TCOs), which operate nearly uncontested, and blaze a trail of corruption and violence that create conditions that allow the PRC and Russia to exploit, threaten citizen security, and undermine public confidence in government institutions. These threats, along with Iran, corruption, irregular migration, and climate change, all overwhelm the region’s fragile state institutions, springing unrest and increasingly frustrated populations. This combination of factors pushes many political leaders to seek resources and support from all sources, including our adversaries who are very eager to undermine U.S. presence and public image.

USSOUTHCOM is putting integrated deterrence into action, using innovative methods to work seamlessly with other Combatant Commands (CCMDs), the Joint Force, allies and partner nations, Congress, the U.S. interagency (IA), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the private sector to help build a shared neighborhood that is free, secure, and prosperous for our generation, and generations to come.

Security Environment

In USSOUTHCOM's area of responsibility (AOR), 28 of 31 countries across Latin America and the Caribbean are democracies that share our values such as the rule of law, human rights, and gender equality. We refer to this theater as our "neighborhood" because of physical proximity and interrelated familial, economic, and cultural ties. The region accounts for \$740 billion in annual trade with the U.S.; contains 60% of the world's lithium and 31% of the world's fresh water; has the world's largest oil reserves; and is home to the environmentally crucial Amazon rainforest. However, transboundary threats facing our neighborhood erode peace and security, weaken fragile democratic institutions, hinder economic prosperity, and create "wedges" for malign actors to expand their influence in our own hemisphere.

The People's Republic of China (PRC): The PRC's ambition to fundamentally revise the world order to serve its authoritarian goals and expand its global influence has triggered a new era of strategic competition with the United States. Our AOR is another front of this strategic competition. Over the past year the PRC and its state-owned enterprises (SOEs) continued to target, recruit, and bribe officials at all levels in the AOR to expand their economic, political, and military influence throughout the region. PRC activities include investments in strategic infrastructure, systematic technology and intellectual property theft, disinformation and propaganda campaigns, and malicious cyber activity – all with the goal of expanding long-term access and influence in this hemisphere.

As in other regions of the world, the PRC uses its economic might to co-opt and coerce countries to fulfill its strategic goals. To date, 21 regional countries participate in the PRC's One Belt One Road (OBOR), which provides PRC-backed loans for key infrastructure such as ports, telecommunications, roads and bridges, agriculture cultivation, and mining projects to satisfy the PRC's own growing domestic demand and pursuit of a continued monopoly of critical minerals. But all too often, burdensome OBOR loans come with clauses hidden from the public that give SOEs undue advantages, such as requiring countries to use PRC construction companies and labor to build projects, agreements for the host nation to offer natural resources as collateral, and even the potential for the PRC company to take over the projects when the debtor nation cannot repay the loan. In addition, several of these PRC-funded infrastructure projects lack due diligence, involve corruption, ignore

indigenous rights, and completely disregard environmental protections. More importantly, these projects give the PRC access to sensitive sectors and critical infrastructure in ways that expose these countries to national security and data privacy threats.

Several LAC governments are beginning to realize the very real risks that engaging with PRC entities can bring. For instance, Ecuador sued a PRC company for a poorly constructed dam that is now causing erosion along a major river. The erosion resulted in the rupture of an oil pipeline, spilling over 15,000 gallons of crude, which polluted the waters, destroyed wildlife, and negatively impacted over 150,000 people.¹ The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is now working with Ecuador to mitigate the effects of the erosion. This is just one of several examples of how PRC firms often over promise and under deliver in this region, and where the U.S. leverages our strength and reliable relationships to provide immediate support and effectively compete.

As COVID-19 ravaged the region, the PRC sold millions of vaccines and provided medical assistance and loans to pay for vaccines to several LAC countries. However, the PRC also pressured partner nations to adopt PRC-made 5G technology or switch diplomatic recognition from Taiwan in exchange for those vaccines.² Of the 14 governments (including the Vatican) that currently recognize Taiwan, eight are in the USSOUTHCOM AOR. In December of 2021, Nicaragua switched diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to the PRC – another clear sign of the PRC's growing influence in the region.

PRC SOEs are increasingly involved in developing facilities and other infrastructure near strategic maritime chokepoints such as the Panama Canal and the Strait of Magellan. In Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, the PRC has abused commercial agreements at host country ports for military functions³; our concern is that they are attempting to do the same right here in this region, close to our homeland. For example, in Panama, PRC-based companies are engaged in or bidding for several projects related to the Panama Canal, a global strategic chokepoint, including port operations on both ends of the canal, water management, and a logistics park.

¹ https://www.tearline.mil/public_page/china-bri-in-ecuador-hydropower/

² <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/15/world/americas/brazil-vaccine-china.html>; <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-56661303>

³ <https://www.wsj.com/articles/us-china-uae-military-11637274224>

In Argentina, the PRC-run space research facility in Neuquén could track and target U.S. satellites.⁴ A PRC SOE is securing rights to build installations near the port of Ushuaia, which would provide the PRC presence at the Strait of Magellan and improve access to Antarctica. In El Salvador, a Chinese investor with ties to the Chinese Communist Party is using bribes and corruption to expand and operate the La Unión port, a \$3 billion project encompassing 1,700 square miles, strategically located at the intersection of Salvadoran, Honduran, and Nicaraguan territory.⁵ These are just some of the dozens of PRC-funded port projects throughout the region that could be leveraged for military purposes.

The PRC engages in an aggressive information operations campaign that attempts to depict the PRC as a more trustworthy partner than the U.S., amplifies its vaccine distribution and OBOR projects, and spreads disinformation about the U.S. in the region. More LAC countries are adopting Huawei's 5G technology, which could give the PRC a back door into sensitive information on our partner nations and even the U.S. Several LAC countries are using PRC-created Safe City programs, causing a potential counterintelligence threat to U.S. and allied personnel. PRC-linked space observation projects are ongoing in Brazil and Chile as well, increasing the PRC's situational awareness in space.

In the military sphere, the PRC increasingly pays for members of LAC security forces to travel to Beijing and receive Spanish and Portuguese-language military education modeled after U.S. professional military education programs. In addition, more partner nation military personnel are traveling to the PRC to receive training in Mandarin, cybersecurity, and PRC military doctrine. The PRC also "gifts" security supplies and telecommunications equipment to gain access and win favor with regional security forces, in addition to selling military vehicles and aircraft to LAC countries.

PRC-based firms and individuals engage in illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing along the outer limits of South American Exclusive Economic Zones. Many of these fishing vessels are directly subsidized by the PRC central government. Each year, over 600 PRC-flagged vessels operate in international

⁴ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-space-argentina-china-insight/chinas-military-run-space-station-in-argentina-is-a-black-box-idUSKCN1PP0I2>

⁵ <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/national-security/project-el-salvador-shows-how-china-exerting-growing-power-america-n1278464>

waters off the coast of South America.⁶ They severely deplete fish stocks and leave plastics and other pollutants in the Galapagos Marine Reserve near Ecuador, costing the region almost \$3 billion in lost annual revenue. Such illicit activities not only drain partner nations' already scarce natural resources, but they also destroy the environment, threaten marine life, and deprive local workers of their livelihood, driving some those workers to join TCOs to supplement lost income.

Russia: Russia continues to destabilize the region and undermine democracy by flooding the region with disinformation, to include hundreds of articles distorting U.S. security actions. In 2020, Russia Today (RT)'s Spanish-language media outlets more than doubled their social media followers from 7 million to over 18 million. These disinformation campaigns are just one part of Russia's broader efforts to influence national elections throughout the region this year. Russia's relationship with its key regional partners— Venezuela, Cuba, and Nicaragua—allow Moscow to expand its air and sea access to project military power throughout the region. Agreements with Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Brazil allow Russian warships to make port calls on short notice. Russia doubled its naval deployments in this region, increasing from five (2008-2014), to 11 (2015-2020). Russia seeks inroads in the hemisphere by providing security training through \$2.3 billion in weapons and military equipment sales in the last 10 years, to include direct sales to Venezuela

Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs) and Violent Extremist Organizations (VEOs): At the end of 2021, the Biden administration established the U.S. Council on Transnational Organized Crime (CTOC), an interagency mechanism charged with countering TCOs.⁷ On December 15th, 2021, the Treasury Department issued new sanctions on 15 entities and 10 individuals involved in global illicit drug trade; this included two TCOs from our AOR: Primeiro Comando Da Capital in Brazil and Clan del Golfo in Colombia.⁸ It was a clear acknowledgement of the very direct threat TCOs pose to the U.S. homeland. They are trafficking opioids, cocaine, and other deadly drugs into U.S. neighborhoods, fueling both the drug overdose epidemic and drug-related violence. Tragically, more than 100,000 Americans died from drug overdoses within a 12-month

⁶ <https://projects.voanews.com/fishing/galapagos/>

⁷ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/12/15/fact-sheet-the-biden-administration-launches-new-efforts-to-counter-transnational-criminal-organizations-and-illicit-drugs/>

⁸ <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy0535>

period, representing an almost 30% increase over the same period the previous year. The Central American corridor remains the primary vector for Colombia-based networks to supply Mexico-based cartels with cocaine destined for our nation's streets.

Beyond drugs, TCOs traffic in humans (some "coyotes" charge between \$15,000 and \$20,000 per person to get illegal migrants to the U.S.⁹), arms, illegal logging and mining, and other illicit products. Because of their murderous tactics, 43 of the world's 50 most violent cities are in our hemisphere, largely due to conflict between warring TCOs and gangs. This violence causes further irregular migration into the United States. Many TCOs have larger budgets and more personnel than the security forces trying to stop them. They generate more than \$300 billion in profits that further degrade security in the region; that is 10 times the \$30 billion annual budget of the region's militaries combined.

Regional VEOs such as The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army (FARC-EP), Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – Segunda Marquetalia (FARC-SM), and the National Liberation Army (ELN) use Venezuela as a haven to conduct attacks and weaken political stability in Colombia. They also pose a severe threat to U.S. and partner nation military forces. In June 2021, the FARC-EP used a car bomb to attack a Colombian army base and claimed that the target of the attack were U.S. military personnel deployed there. The attack injured 36 Colombian military personnel and two U.S. service members.¹⁰ This is one of three attacks on a base with collocated U.S. service members in the last 18 months, demonstrating the increasing threat to U.S. persons within Colombia. These VEOs attack security forces, carry out targeted assassinations against political advocates, and terrorize the civilian population. The lines between TCOs and VEOs are increasingly blurred as TCOs like Clan del Golfo use terrorist tactics and regional VEOs use illicit trafficking to fund their operations.

Both al-Qaida and ISIS have supporters across the region who could act as facilitators. Several foreign terrorist fighters who traveled from nations in our AOR to join ISIS remain detained in Syria. Several dozen

⁹ <https://www.telemundo20.com/noticias/frontera/pollero-se-gana-la-vida-cruzando-migrantes/2114697/>

¹⁰ <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/farc-dissidents-say-they-carried-out-colombia-bombing-target-was-us-advisors-2021-09-23/>

family members who accompanied them remain in Syria as well, residing in displaced persons camps and are seeking to return to the region, challenging the region's security services who do not prioritize counterterrorism, and are now overstretched due to the pandemic.¹¹ We continue to support U.S. and partner nation law enforcement efforts to disrupt human smuggling networks involved in moving non-U.S. citizens from countries with pronounced violent extremist activity through Latin America who could pose a national security risk to the U.S. or its interests. Lebanese Hizballah (LH) leverages the region's Lebanese diaspora throughout Latin America and the Caribbean for fundraising, recruiting, and logistical support.¹²

Iran: In the past year, Iran expanded economic and security cooperation with Venezuela, Cuba, and Bolivia through fuel transfers, bartering, food staples, and military assistance, reducing the effects of U.S. sanctions. The Iranian regime purchased gold from illegal gold mines in Venezuela, allowing the Maduro regime to evade sanctions and finance its oppressive activities against its citizens. Last year, two Iranian warships were bound for Venezuela, potentially carrying weapons and missile attack boats.¹³ In this instance, U.S. diplomatic efforts thwarted Iran's intentions, which would have directly threatened our homeland, allies, and partners. Tehran also leverages Iranian state-sponsored and non-state media outlets to generate empathy for Iran and Shia Islam and diminish Western influence in the hemisphere. Tehran continues to maintain a Spanish-language channel that reaches 17 countries in the region, spreading disinformation and attempting to sow mistrust of the U.S.

Venezuela: Not long ago, Venezuela was a Latin American beacon of democracy, with democratic values and free-market principles and was the wealthiest nation in the region. Today, after the crushing authoritarian rules of Nicolas Maduro and Hugo Chavez before him, Venezuela has become one of the worst humanitarian crises this hemisphere has ever seen and poses a significant security threat to the region. As a result of the regime's rampant corruption and gross mismanagement, the Venezuelan people lack basic services

¹¹ <https://www.middleeasteye.net/fr/node/149336>; <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/trinidad-woman-syria-refugee-camp-al-hol-writes-prime-minister>; https://trinidadexpress.com/newsextra/70-trini-children-24-women-in-syrian-refugee-camp/article_91668618-a829-11eb-8ad2-b79061c61e5d.html

¹² <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/issue-brief/the-maduro-hezbollah-nexus-how-iran-backed-networks-prop-up-the-venezuelan-regime/>

¹³ <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/06/03/politics/us-iran-ships-venezuela/index.html>

like clean water, food, and health care. COVID-19, gas shortages, increasing levels of unemployment and inflation, and human rights violations are also adding to Venezuela's instability and insecurity. As of November 2021, more than six million Venezuelan refugees and migrants were displaced globally (more than 20% of the overall population). Venezuela has become the primary access point in the region for external state actors, and a refuge for TCOs and VEOs. The regime actively engages in narcotrafficking and harbors regional terrorist groups like the ELN, FARC-EP, and FARC-SM within its borders. The tragedy that has occurred in Venezuela serves as a dire warning of what can be expected when a partner nation backslides into authoritarianism.

Cuba: Cuba remains a regional corrosive influence, providing political, military, and intelligence support to prop up the illegitimate Maduro regime. In July 2021, thousands of people across Cuba participated in the largest protest since Fidel Castro took power in 1959, angered by the lack of food, basic products, medicine, and vaccines to combat COVID-19. In response, the Cuban regime cracked down hard, jailing protesters and cutting off internet access. PRC companies have played a key part in building Cuba's telecommunications infrastructure, a system the Cuban regime uses to control its people, just as the PRC does within its own borders.¹⁴

Nicaragua: President Daniel Ortega, a former Marxist guerilla leader, continues to strengthen his authoritarian grip in Nicaragua. More than 50 countries and regional institutions have denounced his regime and recent reelection, echoing Secretary of State Blinken's recent comments that Ortega and his wife, Vice President Rosario Murillo, were "preparing a sham election devoid of credibility, by silencing and arresting political opponents, and ultimately by attempting to establish an authoritarian dynasty unaccountable to the Nicaraguan people."¹⁵ As mentioned previously, Nicaragua continues to cozy up to and court the PRC, recently switching diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to the PRC. Nicaragua also maintains close ties with Russia, whose security assistance to Nicaragua focuses on professional military education, donations, and the provision of humanitarian support in a strategy to increase its influence over the Nicaraguan government and counter U.S. regional goals. Over the past decade, Nicaragua has played host to a Russian-built joint counternarcotics

¹⁴ <https://thediplomat.com/2021/08/how-china-helps-the-cuban-regime-stay-afloat-and-shut-down-protests/>

¹⁵ <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/blinken-accuses-nicaraguas-ortega-preparing-sham-election-2021-10-22/>

training center where over 500 Latin American and Caribbean officers have been trained and welcomed multiple Russian maritime and air deployments.

COVID-19 and State Fragility: The impacts of COVID-19 continue to change the geopolitical landscape of the AOR. LAC countries are still reeling from the public health and economic fallout of the pandemic, rolling back much of the progress this region has experienced over the past several decades. The AOR and Mexico have just 8% of the world's population but approximately 30% of the world's COVID deaths.¹⁶ The region's economy contracted 8% during the pandemic, plunging 22 million people into poverty.¹⁷ More than half of the region's school-age children are out of school, making them vulnerable to TCO and gang recruitment and stunting their long-term development.¹⁸ Our partner nation military and security forces have been at the forefront of the COVID-19 response in their countries, but their 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 items such as vaccines, fuel, food, and personal protective equipment at the expense of security operations. While the PRC immediately capitalized on our partners' needs during the pandemic by selling or trading its vaccine, the U.S. Government has now surpassed the number of vaccines the PRC provided by donating over 122 million doses to the region, free of charge, and no strings attached – as good neighbors do. While more U.S. COVID-19 aid is planned, our partners remain concerned that the PRC and Russia will continue to use the pandemic to increase their influence. Consequently, this enables an environment where TCOs gain even more freedom of action as conditions for corruption and illicit activity grow.

Corruption corrodes fragile institutions, scares off much needed foreign investment, and creates conditions for all other threats in the region to weaken our allies and partners. In June 2021, President Biden stated that fighting corruption is a core U.S. national security interest.¹⁹ It affects people in every aspect of their daily lives, draining resources from the state that could be dedicated to security, education, healthcare, and

¹⁶ <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/data/mortality>

¹⁷ <https://www.cepal.org/en/pressreleases/growth-latin-america-and-caribbean-2021-will-not-manage-reverse-adverse-effects>

¹⁸ <https://www.wsj.com/articles/latin-americas-long-school-shutdown-is-leading-to-crisis-11625396400>

¹⁹ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/06/03/memorandum-on-establishing-the-fight-against-corruption-as-a-core-united-states-national-security-interest/>

infrastructure. A recent study by Transparency International (TI) showed that 22 countries in the region have shown no statistically significant changes in their corruption levels over the past decade. In particular, Central America is at an all-time low on TI's 2021 Corruption Perceptions Index, and Venezuela, Haiti, and Nicaragua scored the lowest in the region.²⁰ Coupled with accusations against local governments for COVID mismanagement, corruption has dampened citizen faith in democratic institutions; a recent opinion poll in 18 Latin American countries showed that just 49% of those surveyed believe in their democratic systems.²¹ Such discontent has caused protests in several countries around the region, and will likely impact elections in key partner nations in 2022 and beyond. Corruption also allows malign state actors like the PRC and Russia, and non-state actors like TCOs and VEOs to expand their influence in the region.

Climate Change and Natural Disasters: Hurricanes, rising sea levels, flooding and drought are worsening economic and food security and contributing to irregular migration in the region. In August 2021, a 7.2 magnitude earthquake struck Haiti, killing more than 2,000 people and damaging thousands of homes. Communities in Central America are still recovering from the Category 4 hurricanes Eta and Iota that made landfall in 2020, destroying thousands of homes, decimating livestock and essential crops like rice, corn, and beans, and displacing nearly 600,000 people in Honduras, Guatemala, and Nicaragua.²² About 8 million people suffer from food insecurity due to drought in the Dry Corridor—a 1,000-mile-long geographic zone that runs through Mexico, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica.²³ Hurricanes and drought also further exacerbate an already difficult malnutrition context and food insecurity, with Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua having a combined 1.3 million children under 5 years old experiencing stunting which is a prevalence of 43, 20, and 14 percent, respectively, in each of those countries.²⁴ South America is suffering extreme drought not seen since the 1940s, hampering the flow of hydroelectric dams and river transport for

²⁰ <https://www.transparency.org/en/news/cpi-2021-americas-a-region-in-crisis>

²¹ <https://cnnespanol.cnn.com/2021/10/08/latinobarometro-2021-uruguay-venezuela-apoyan-democracia-orix/>

²² <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/climate-change-migration-central-america/>

²³ <https://www.actionagainsthunger.org/story/covid-19-and-climate-shocks-driving-dramatic-increase-hunger-latin-america-new-studies-find>

²⁴ <https://www.fao.org/publications/sofi/2021/en/>

Paraguay and Brazil.²⁵ In April 2021, a volcano erupted in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, displacing thousands. These natural disasters, along with the economic fallout of COVID-19, violence fueled by TCOs and VEOs, corruption, and a perceived change in U.S. immigration policy, have driven thousands of migrants to embark on long and dangerous journeys to the U.S. border.

Plan of Action—What We’re Doing to Address the Threats

Over the past several years, U.S. Southern Command has used three lines of effort to address cross-cutting, transboundary challenges: strengthen partnerships, counter threats, and build our team. These lines of effort remain valid, but we must execute them more aggressively, understanding that we achieve our most enduring effects through integrated deterrence with fellow CCMDs, the Joint Force, our allies, and partners, the IA, NGOs, and private industry. While USSOUTHCOM is committed to using all possible “levers” at our disposal to build partner capacity to address those cross-cutting challenges, many of the programs and processes in place are not designed to move swiftly enough to outcompete the PRC – an adversary that has no concern for transparency, oversight, or the rule of law.

Strengthen Partnerships—Build Trust

Integrated Deterrence with Interagency, Allies, and Partners: In the Interim National Security Strategic Guidance, President Biden stated: “when we strengthen our alliances, we amplify our power and our ability to disrupt threats before they can reach our shores.” At USSOUTHCOM we’re doing just that, putting integrated deterrence into action. We have representatives from 15 U.S. government agencies and 11 allied and partner nations working in our headquarters and component commands, each bringing unique perspectives, capabilities, and authorities to help us accomplish our mission. USSOUTHCOM members participate in venues such as the Global Engagement Center, Venezuela Task Force, The Interdiction Committee, and the Joint Interagency Coordination Group to share best practices and align initiatives with IA counterparts on countering the PRC, Russia, TCOs, and other malign actors.

²⁵ <https://www.wsj.com/articles/severe-drought-hits-south-america-11635240602>

We continue to strengthen relationships with our NATO allies that have presence in the region through operations and exercises. We coordinate with the UK, Canada, France, and the Netherlands on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR). The recent response to the earthquake in Haiti is a shining example of the U.S.-NATO relationship in this AOR. The immediate response and our ability to seamlessly leverage each other's ships, aircraft, forces, and local contacts are lauded by our partners and unmatched by our adversaries. We will continue to welcome IA and NATO participation in our annual HA/DR exercises. We also plan to host an annual senior-level IA conference to ensure whole-of-government alignment on outcompeting the PRC and Russia, countering TCOs and VEOs, addressing corruption and responding to climate disasters.

USSOUTHCOM is also integrated with regional NGOs like Global Fishing Watch to better understand IUU fishing and share this information with our regional partners to counter this illegal activity. Through our strategic partnerships with private sector entities like the Business Executives for National Security and corporate members of the Council of the Americas, we're increasing public awareness of our adversaries' malign activities in a range of areas and amplifying success stories from the U.S. private sector. For instance, USSOUTHCOM continues to amplify the great work by the U.S. Development Finance Corporation that finances infrastructure projects in the areas of climate, health and global health security, digital connectivity, and gender equity and equality.

Professional Military Education (PME): Through the Department of State's International Military Education and Training (IMET) program, USSOUTHCOM offers high-quality education that emphasizes professionalism and values like human rights, the rule of law, and gender equality. Our courses also stress the importance of a strong non-commissioned officer corps as a core element of legitimacy and professionalism across militaries. Each year, approximately 800 foreign military students from 27 countries participate in the IMET program. To date, 17 Chiefs of Defense and six Ministers of Defense have attended IMET-funded courses at U.S. institutions. USSOUTHCOM's portion of the State Department's IMET funding for the region has remained steady at approximate \$11-12M per year, which is about 10% of the global IMET budget.

Foreign Military Financing (FMF) and Foreign Military Sales (FMS): FMF is an important foreign policy tool funded by the State Department and carried out by DoD. Via Foreign Military Sales, FMF assists partner nation militaries in procuring U.S. defense articles such as vehicles, aircraft, arms, and equipment to bolster their defense capabilities. Each year, the Department of State obligates \$75 million in FMF funding, with 40-50% allocated to Colombia, our closest regional military partner. FMF and FMS success stories can be found throughout the AOR: Caribbean partners have used FMF-funded refurbished Coast Guard vessels to better interdict drug traffickers; Panama has used its FMF-funded vessel and aircraft for maritime patrols and search and rescue missions; and the Costa Rican Coast Guard has used its FMF-funded Metal Shark boat to conduct joint drug interdiction operations with Colombia and Panama. The levers that USSOUTHCOM uses must be responsive enough to outcompete in our area of responsibility.

Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HA/DR): USSOUTHCOM's HA/DR projects show how we can leverage flexible, responsive funding to save lives. Since the start of the pandemic, USSOUTHCOM used CARES Act funding to make over 500 humanitarian assistance donations valued at over \$74 million to 28 countries. These donations included field hospitals, personal protective equipment, ventilators, and medical supplies and immediately offset the delivery of substandard vaccines from the PRC and Russia. When a devastating earthquake struck Haiti last year, USSOUTHCOM supported the U.S. Agency for International Development's humanitarian response to save lives. After 21 days of around the clock teamwork with all our Component Commands, the National Security Council, the Department of State, NGOs, and Haitian authorities, our team assisted and rescued 477 people and delivered nearly 590,000 pounds of food, water, medical equipment, and other supplies. As we continue to provide HA/DR support, we will work more closely with regional emergency management organizations to coordinate our HA/DR responses

Medical-related Assistance: In 2021, Air Force - Southern (AFSOUTH) conducted Resolute Sentinel, where dozens of service members provided medical, surgical, dental, and veterinary care to thousands of people in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. This year, U.S. military medical personnel will deploy during the Health Engagement Assistance Response Team (HEART) surgical mission to Central America and the USNS

COMFORT medical mission to improve their own medical skills and readiness, save lives, alleviate overburdened hospitals, and earn goodwill from our partners.

Climate Defense: USSOUTHCOM has been working with partners to help mitigate some of the effects of climate change. As mentioned previously, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) continues to provide vital support to the USSOUTHCOM AOR, primarily through the Department of State's Foreign Military Sales Program. In addition to helping Ecuador assess and mitigate the erosion caused by the faulty PRC-built dam, USACE is also providing technical support to the Panama Canal Authority's multi-billion-dollar water management project; assisting Honduras with flood control; working on port and watershed development projects in the Dominican Republic and Brazil; and helping Colombia and Peru build critical military base infrastructure. These USACE projects are aligned with our theater strategy and directly support a range of our mission areas to include countering PRC efforts and illicit traffic as well as humanitarian assistance and security cooperation. Through these USACE projects, USSOUTHCOM is offering viable alternatives to PRC-funded infrastructure projects; and they represent the highest standards of transparency and anticorruption, financial sustainability, labor protections, and environmental preservation.

Women, Peace, and Security (WPS): At USSOUTHCOM, we are committed to integrating gender perspectives into all our activities, and we encourage our partners to create structural changes in their militaries to allow for the same through our WPS program. Our main objective is to maximize the talents of the force through recruitment, retention, training, and advancement. We consistently encourage our partner nation militaries to provide more opportunities for the women in their ranks, because doubling the talent pool will vastly improve that military's competitiveness and professionalism. No nation can afford to ignore half its population, especially given the crosscutting threats we're all facing. We must remain adaptable, innovative, and human-centric. When we look at the factors that influence prosperity and stability, incorporating concepts of WPS in strategic design and operational employment across the region is paramount.

Human Rights Training: USSOUTHCOM is the only Combatant Command that has a Human Rights Office, commemorating 25 years this year, which actively promotes building stronger military human rights programs within partner nation militaries. Emphasizing respect for human rights is an integral component of

military professionalism and a common value that unites military forces serving the democracies of the Western Hemisphere. Human rights are our guiding principle – our North Star – in all security cooperation with our partners. Several partner nation military personnel, especially those in Central America, attend the Defense Institute of International Legal Studies, where respect for rule of law and human rights feature prominently in the curriculum.

Counter Threats—Be Aggressive

In the same way that we rely on the IA, allies, and partners to strengthen partnerships in our AOR, we are using that same integrated deterrence approach to illuminate, disrupt, degrade, neutralize, and defeat our adversaries. Our number one pacing threat is the PRC, our secondary threats are Russia, TCOs, and Iran. USSOUTHCOM is also deploying innovative methods in cyber, space, information operations, artificial intelligence, and machine learning to counter these cross-cutting threats.

Understanding the Threat: Our senior defense officials, defense attaches, and security cooperation officials downrange must serve as the “scouts” and “sensors,” feeding key information about malign activities in their countries up to our intelligence analysts and component commands. By developing a more effective, flatter means of communication, their insight and information enables senior leaders to maintain a common intelligence picture and drive operations with clear impact. As we gather intelligence and information about our adversaries’ activities, we must also share it quickly and broadly with the IA, allies, partners, and other Combatant Commands. This will help us all expose our adversaries’ malign practices, narrow any seams and gaps that our adversaries try to exploit, and glean key insights and trends about our adversaries’ playbook throughout the AOR.

Competing in the Information Space: Our adversaries are aggressive in the information operation space, amplifying their assistance to partners in the region and spreading disinformation to diminish U.S. credibility. We must more effectively pierce the information space, using all the tools available to us—traditional media, radio, TV, social media, and podcasts—to amplify our own story, shape local perceptions, and expose malign actors and their disinformation. We must highlight the value of our neighborhood in defense

of our homeland and the role it plays in the global campaign for integrated deterrence. USSOUTHCOM and our components execute activities to counter threats and compete against our adversaries in the information space bringing to the attention of foreign audiences our steadfast commitment, through Military Information Support Operations (MISO) and Operations, Activities, and Investments (OAIs) throughout the AOR. MISO and Information Operations are two of best tools in achieving our objectives and our support to USG efforts. Our Special Operations Command-South (SOCSOUTH) is currently carrying out MISO in Guyana and developing similar operations for Central and South America, and the Caribbean. We have a great story to tell: the U.S. is the region's trusted partner because of the values we share and the alignment of our activities to create mutual gains toward greater resilience, peace, and prosperity in the AOR. We tell the truth.

Cybersecurity: USSOUTHCOM helps prepare our partner nations to defend themselves against a variety of threats in the cyber domain including from malign state and non-state actors, hackers, criminal groups, and terrorist organizations. Our Joint Cyber Center continues to conduct security cooperation through our Joint Combatant Command Cyber Assistance Teams and Subject Matter Expert Exchanges to share expertise, best practices, and cyber threat indicators to assist partner nations with incident response to cyberattacks, and to further harden and secure their networks. Separately, the USSOUTHCOM Network Operations & Security Center (NOSC) monitors for malicious cyber activity in the AOR 24/7.

Space Cooperation: USSOUTHCOM is working with U.S. Space Command and the U.S. Space Force to expand military space engagement with LAC countries. Our partners in the AOR are quickly becoming space-faring nations and USSOUTHCOM is engaged to increase future opportunities for combined operations to counter regional threats. For instance, we've increased Space Domain Awareness data sharing partnerships with Brazil, Colombia, Peru, and Chile. Air Forces-Southern (AFSOUTH), our air component, works with these same partners throughout the year to advance combined space operations. In November 2021, USSOUTHCOM worked with Joint Task Force Space Defense (JTF-SD) and the Chilean Air Force on the U.S. – Chile Sprint Advanced Concept Training (SACT) Space Domain Awareness (SDA) experiment, the first of its kind in South America. The SACT connected the US Air Force Academy Falcon Telescope located at the University of La

Serena in Chile with JTF-SD's commercial SDA operation at Catalyst Campus in Colorado Springs, to improve safety of orbital flight for all countries.

We are standing up a Space Component Command for USSOUTHCOM, with personnel focused on space cooperation, sharing open-source satellite data to help partners better track and target illegal activity happening within their borders, and signing more space cooperation agreements with partner nations.

Counternarcotics Successes: Our Joint Interagency Task Force-South (JIATF-S) in Key West conducts our statutorily directed mission to detect and monitor illicit drugs, delivering a high return on modest investments. In 2021, JIATF-S enabled the disruption of a total of 364 illegal "events," including a total of 324,000 kilograms of cocaine and 118,000 pounds of marijuana with a combined U.S. wholesale value of over \$8 billion. JIATF-S also enabled the detention of 1,017 persons through seizure operations conducted in maritime, land, and air operations; resulting in an estimated 3,200 American lives saved.

The Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) has enabled us to support our partners to counter threats and respond to natural disasters. Last year, the USS Sioux City, USS Wichita, and USS Billings all deployed to support counter-illicit drug missions in the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific. In the aftermath of the Haiti earthquake, USSOUTHCOM used the LCS to deliver 113,200 lbs of aid to the Haitian people.

Partners in the TCO Fight: TCOs and VEOs wage war against our partner nations every day, which directly impacts Americans. Our regional partners are actively in the counter-TCO fight with us. Colombia, Costa Rica, Panama, Ecuador, Guatemala, El Salvador, and others have been involved in more than 60 percent of drug disruptions. 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. In 2021, Colombia led Operation Orion, which encompassed two multi-national, all-domain, operations that disrupted 217 metric tons of cocaine and captured 7 aircraft, 106 vessels, and 8 low profile vessels. The U.S. provided maritime patrol aircraft (MPA) and analyst support to these operations. 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. Another example is Operation Kraken, conducted in coordination with Colombia, Panama, SOCSOUTH, and interagency partners. Due to this joint

and combined effort, the U.S. and partners seized 65 metric tons of cocaine, 22,000 pounds of marijuana, and 43 illegal vessels; destroyed 42 cocaine labs; and detained 129 drug traffickers.

Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR): One of the core ways we support our partners in their fight against TCOs is by providing ISR, a mix of traditional platforms, purpose-built sensors, and increasingly non-standard collection methods. USSOUTHCOM employs less than 2% of DoD ISR resources to counter malign state and nonstate actors. To meet the mission, we are pushing the envelope with innovative techniques, integrating publicly available information, advanced analytics, artificial intelligence and machine learning, and open collaboration with allies and partners to disrupt threats. These advanced ISR 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) at JIATF-S has demonstrated tremendous return on investment; at a cost of \$1.4 million, the TNAC denied TCOs of \$921.7 million in revenue by providing actionable intelligence to IA and partner nations, leading to numerous disruptions. SOCSOUTH is supporting law enforcement and partner nation efforts to counter TCOs and PRC malign activities by very quickly gathering, analyzing, and disseminating information to the interagency and partner nations for action. We also work with academic institutions like Florida International University and University of Miami as force multipliers, that can gather open-source information that can be quickly and easily shared with partners for action.

Last year, USSOUTHCOM used P-8 multi-mission maritime aircraft to detect and monitor illicit drug flows. They were the only DoD assets with sufficient range and dwell time to conduct detection and monitoring (D&M) in the far reaches of the Eastern Pacific, detecting low-profile go-fast and self-propelled fully or semi-submersible (“drug sub”) vessels. These drug subs are becoming more prevalent and, when interdicted, yield higher payloads of cocaine. Since April 2020, the P-8s assisted in the disruption of nearly 115 metric tons of cocaine (23% of our overall disruptions) worth \$2.85 billion. During the Haiti earthquake, the P-8s gathered real time video, and damage and threat assessments for disaster relief planning and distribution.

Maintaining the Innovative Edge: As these P-8s are now being deployed to address higher priority missions in other CCMDs, USSOUTHCOM will continue to find other innovative ways to gather actionable

intelligence and information. We currently use three contractor-owned/contractor-operated (COCO) aircraft for aircraft overland ISR, one COCO for D&M, and four government-owned/contractor-operated (GOCO) aircraft also for D&M. These aircraft target TCOs and VEOs and provide mapping for mission planning. These tools help us support our IA colleagues and partner nations to counter the TCO/VEO threat.

USSOUTHCOM serves as an innovative test bed for DoD, interagency, private industry, and academia to develop new technologies to maintain our innovative edge over the PRC, Russia, and other adversaries. The Western Hemisphere is a permissive environment with a higher tolerance for technology failure, and a diverse climate, geography, and topology. USSOUTHCOM leverages over \$150 million worth of technology prototypes, most of which are green energy compatible, ranging from the development of the first unmanned persistent solar powered aircraft with a 300-pound payload to an expeditionary 3D concrete printer that significantly reduces the carbon footprint. USSOUTHCOM is leaning forward when it comes to operationalizing resilient, energy efficient platforms that reduce emissions and enhance the mission through the innovative use of high-altitude balloons, stratosphere platforms, hydrogen fuel cells, and solar powered technology. We have submitted a Rapid Defense Experiment Reserve (RDER) joint proposal with the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command that will run operational tests to counter the PRC's capabilities.

USSOUTHCOM also leverages a Data-Driven Decision-Making (D3M) Cell to produce baseline analyses on malign actors, TCOs, partner nation security force risk, and Women, Peace, and Security measures. The D3M equips military leadership with trends, comparative analyses, and effects models to maximize efforts across the AOR. Further, this data will be aggregated and consolidated into a database to serve as a foundation for future artificial intelligence and machine learning integration.

Annual Exercises: Our exercises such as PANAMAX (defense of the Panama Canal), UNITAS (maritime security), and TRADEWINDS (Caribbean disaster response) build readiness and enhance our partners' capabilities, interoperability, and domain awareness. This is a vital component of our strategy to improve our collective ability to secure the region. USSOUTHCOM personnel also frequently participate in our partner nations' annual exercises, including Salitre in Chile, Angel de los Andes in Colombia, and CRUZEX in Brazil.

Security Cooperation: Our security cooperation program focuses 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 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. To date, we have fielded an NCPV in the Dominican Republic, Panama, El Salvador, and Honduras to increase interoperability and counter regional threats. Panama deployed its NCPV in December and in one month used it to conduct two successful search and rescue operations near the Gulf of Panama. We are also working closely with partners in Guatemala to strengthen their professional military intelligence capabilities, and Colombia to help them establish a secure communication network that is interoperable with the DoD.

USSOUTHCOM also offers partner nation militaries specialized riverine and littoral training through the Naval Small Craft Instruction and Technical Training School (NAVSCIATTS). In the Amazon Basin, rivers allow our partner nation military and security forces to extend their operational reach, provide security for their population against emerging threats, and stop narcotraffickers who pollute the rivers with precursor chemicals. Rivers are also a source of fresh water for our partners and crucial for the region's environmental health, particularly in the Amazon, the lungs of the earth. Brazilian, Colombian, Ecuadorian, and Peruvian military personnel have all received training from NAVSCIATTS Mobile Training Teams (MTTs), and they're producing clear results. For example, the Colombian Marines, which maintain five Riverine Brigades and 16 Riverine Battalions covering over 15,000 km of navigable rivers, depends on NAVSCIATTS MTTs to receive instruction in doctrine, exercises, material maintenance, logistics, and other specialized training. NAVSCIATTS MTTs train large groups of students at once, and the instruction is in Spanish, which dramatically increases the number of eligible students.

USSOUTHCOM has partnered with U.S. Africa Command and Brazil to develop a multi-nation maritime task force including South American and African partner nations, as well as the U.S. Coast Guard and allies. This initiative will seek to counter IUU fishing, piracy, and other malign influence from state actors and TCOs operating in the South Atlantic and the Gulf of Guinea.

U.S. Coast Guard: U.S. Coast Guard assets provide USSOUTHCOM with unique capabilities and authorities which, when used in conjunction with the U.S. Navy and Allied platforms, maximize the effectiveness of USSOUTHCOM missions. The Coast Guard is in the midst of executing its largest fleet recapitalization since World War II and deployments of the Service's National Security Cutters and Fast Response Cutters continue to provide the bulk of USSOUTHCOM's counter drug forces. The continued recapitalization effort will provide capabilities that support USSOUTHCOM's strategic initiatives to include enhancing Theater Security Cooperation (TSC), countering IUU Fishing, and combating TCOs. Additionally, the Coast Guard provides valuable humanitarian mission support across the region. Within just a few hours of the Haiti earthquake, USCG rescue helicopters were at the forefront of USSOUTHCOM's humanitarian effort, saving lives and delivering much needed aid.

Counterterrorism (CT) and DoD Rewards Program: 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 through training and exercises. In December 2021, the Treasury Department designated three individuals of a Brazil-based network affiliated with al-Qaida and their companies as Specially Designated Global Terrorists for supporting the terrorist group.²⁶ SOCSOUTH has continually monitored the al-Qaida threat in Brazil and provided actionable intelligence for our partners at Treasury to utilize their authorities to act against this threat.²⁷

The DoD Rewards Program has again provided tremendous return on investment in the fight against terrorism. In FY21, USSOUTHCOM paid \$1.3M in rewards to 54 informants that provided information resulting in 63 partner nation operations that neutralized 209 individuals who were terrorist or force protection threats, an increase of 100% compared to 2020. Although DoD Rewards is a counterterror and force protection program, it yields significant counternarcotic effects that included the seizure of over 10 tons of cocaine valued at \$239.2M; 5.5 tons of marijuana valued at \$11.1M; \$1.04M in bulk cash; and explosives and weapons valued

²⁶ <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy0546>

²⁷ <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy0546>

at \$1.2M. The program also led to the destruction of four drug labs with a monthly production output of 3400kg of cocaine valued at \$88.4M per month or about \$1.06B per year.

Counter-Threat Finance: 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, interagency, and international partners. This includes providing direct analytic support to law enforcement agencies to deny, degrade, or disrupt the illicit financial networks that malign state and nonstate actors use to launder money, traffic drugs and people, and co-opt government officials in the region. An area requiring more emphasis is TCO network mapping, exploitation, and holistic interagency, allied, and partner nation efforts to dismantle key TCO centers of gravity such as logistics and finances.

Total Force: Our National Guard and Reserve Component personnel and resources provide a low cost, high-return force multiplier to outcompete threats in this hemisphere. The Reserve Components are embedded in all our major exercises, and through a combination of part-time and full-time support, provide 30% of our headquarters staff, 20% of our Security Cooperation mission, 63% of our Joint Task Force Guantanamo Bay (JTF-GTMO), 25% of JTF-Bravo, and 25% of SOCSOUTH.

The National Guard State Partnership Program (SPP) has helped us build relationships with Caribbean and Central and South America nations since 1996. We have Guardsmen from 18 U.S. states, as well as Puerto Rico and DC, working with 24 partner nations—more than any other Combatant Command. Last year in Brazil, the New York National Guard exchanged counterterrorism lessons from 9/11 and took part in the Brazilian-led exercise TAPIO. In September 2021, South Carolina National Guard medical personnel, working with its state partner, Colombia, provided care to remote villagers in Tamana, and deployed F-16s to participate in the Colombian-led exercise Angel de los Andes. This past August, following the Haiti earthquake, the Puerto Rico NG flew aid to those in the most affected areas.

Our Coronet Oak mission is the longest airlift mission in the history of the National Guard and Air Force Reserve Command where we have active component, Air National Guard, and Air Force Reserve C-130s providing critical intra/inter airlift support to our theater for all missions. Additionally, we greatly appreciate

the mutually beneficial cost savings when Guard and Reserve C-5 & C17s provide inter theater airlift support to our Counter Drug and Denton Humanitarian Assistance missions.

Joint Task Force Guantanamo Bay (JTF-GTMO): JTF-GTMO continues to conduct safe, legal, and humane detention operations. 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 30 percent. This is part of an ongoing effort to continually assess all USSOUTHCOM operations to ensure we are maximizing use of resources.

Build our Team—Don't Settle

People First: People are our #1 resource, and we cannot successfully strengthen partnerships, counter threats, or outcompete our adversaries without the best team. However, we must never settle in providing our people with the tools and training they need to get the mission done. We are fostering a climate in which individuals have sufficient time for self-development and preparation. We will continue to look for ways to improve our own processes and efficiency while eliminating silos within our Command. This begins with looking at our own structure, roles, and responsibilities to ensure we retain the flexibility to maneuver physically and intellectually in response to emergent operations, opportunities, and challenges.

Expanding the Definition of “Team:” The broad nature of threats in this AOR, ranging from military, to diplomatic, to economic, and law enforcement problem sets, requires that we truly put integrated deterrence into action. USSOUTHCOM must ensure we are in lock step with the intelligence community, the State Department, law enforcement, and the rest of the interagency. We work in each other’s command centers, we share information and intelligence, and we bring our unique authorities and resources to bear on these challenges. We will continue to deepen this integration. That means including the Cyberspace Operations Planning Element, the Joint Integrated Space Team, the Joint Military Information Support Operations Center, and other similar entities into USSOUTHCOM battle rhythm events. This ensures the whole USSOUTHCOM team has a better understanding of what resources we have available and what our expanded teammates across DoD and the IA can contribute. This is what integrated deterrence looks like.

Ultimately, we want our partners to continue to associate USSOUTHCOM with professionalism, competence, and high standards worth emulating. As with any large organization, there are areas for improvement, and we will constantly look for unity of effort and alignment in everything we do.

Quality of Life: Our families are our strength and foundation, and we must take family members' concerns into account. While having our headquarters and two component commands in South Florida offers a great synergy with our AOR, it is also a very expensive place to live. The housing market is so competitive and volatile that personnel are faced with limited inventory of homes and extremely high up-front costs, with landlords requiring up to \$10,000 to secure a rental unit. Some USSOUTHCOM families were also forced to make sudden moves as landlords raised rents or broke leases. We are working with the supportive local community to find immediate relief options for our service members and civilians on housing. We are also working with the Department of the Army and OSD to secure a permanent housing solution in Miami-Dade County that would allow the Army to divest of high-cost leases, reliably house junior enlisted Service Members, and meet documented family housing requirements.

Congressional Support: We appreciate the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)'s recognition that our AOR matters and is critical to the security of our homeland. The challenges posed by the PRC, Russia, and TCOs are global, and we look forward to working closely with Congress to ensure adequate attention and resourcing in this region, specifically through your continued support of our Budget requests. We also 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 have very willing partners, who with our commitment and some equipment and training, multiply our efforts to keep this region secure.

I often say we must be on the field to compete, and our ability to be on the field is hindered when we are forced to operate under continuing resolutions. Budget uncertainty is disruptive to our operations and to the lives of our people. Our inability to plan and execute programs and operations on time also impact our partner nations, who also end up having to delay or cancel engagements with us. I ask for congressional support in passing a budget this year. To be on the field, it is also critical to have confirmed Chiefs of Mission to employ the full spectrum of U.S. capabilities, particularly given the many security challenges we face in our region.

ISR is critical to our ability to defend against threats in our neighborhood before they impact the homeland. With the loss of the ISR Transfer Fund in FY21, which the Congress had appropriated to meet CCMD ISR unfunded requirements, we lost almost half of our ISR funding. To mitigate some of this loss, we are exploring enhanced ISR solutions coupled with advanced analytics and commercially available data to help us generate more threat targeting at reduced costs. Such tools are essential for our partners to counter TCOs and VEOs, and thwart malign actor interference in domestic elections. As mentioned previously, our P-8 aircraft have been crucial in gathering ISR to disrupt TCOs' illicit activities; without them, we will be unable to detect or monitor threats in the far reaches of the Eastern Pacific, the area through which 80% of drugs destined for the United States flow. Continued Congressional support to USSOUTHCOM's ISR program will allow us to mitigate for the loss of these aircraft and increase our domain awareness and ability to stop threats bound for our homeland.

Finally, we appreciate that the NDAA provides a temporary authority that will enable Colombia to continue its role as a security exporter through the U.S.-Colombia Action Plan.

Conclusion

The safety of our homeland is directly linked to resilience, stability, and security of our Latin American and Caribbean partners. The U.S. and our regional partners are on the frontline of strategic competition, and we share crosscutting threats that we must confront together. As Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin stated, "our allies and partners are a force multiplier and one of the greatest strategic assets we have in protecting our nation...we will act together...making us stronger as a team than the sum of our individual parts." We at USSOUTHCOM believe this wholeheartedly, and we are committed to work shoulder to shoulder with our partners, maximizing our efforts where their priorities align with our own national interests. To meet these challenges, we are putting integrated deterrence into action, using all available levers—assets, resources, and authorities—across the DoD, interagency, allies, partners, NGOs, and private industry to fulfill our *Enduring Promise* to be the region's trusted partner—today, tomorrow, and always.

Laura J. Richardson
General, USA
Commander
U.S. Southern Command

General Laura J. Richardson is a native of Northglenn, Colorado and a graduate of Metropolitan State University of Denver, Colorado. She was commissioned into the U.S. Army and trained as an Army Aviator. She holds a Master of Science in National Resource Strategy from the National Defense University's Dwight D. Eisenhower School for National Security and Resource Strategy.

General Richardson previously served as the Commanding General of U.S. Army North (Fifth Army) at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, which is the Army Service Component Command for U.S. Northern Command.

Other assignments as a General Officer include Deputy Commanding General of U.S. Army Forces Command at Fort Bragg, North Carolina; Chief of Army Legislative Liaison to the U.S. Congress in Washington D.C.; Deputy Chief of Staff for Communications at Headquarters International Security Assistance Force in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, Kabul, Afghanistan; Deputy Commanding General of the 1st Cavalry Division at Fort Hood, Texas; and Commanding General of the U.S. Army Operational Test Command at Fort Hood, Texas.

Over her career General Richardson has commanded from the Company to Theater Army level. She commanded an Assault Helicopter Battalion in combat in the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), deploying her unit from Fort Campbell, Kentucky to Iraq 2003-04, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. She has also served in numerous staff assignments at a myriad of locations, including Military Aide to the Vice President at the White House in Washington, D.C., the Army's Legislative Liaison to Congress at the U.S. Capitol, and at the Pentagon as an Army Campaign Planner.

General Richardson's awards and decorations include the Defense Distinguished Service Medal, Distinguished Service Medal (with Oak Leaf Cluster), Defense Superior Service Medal (with Oak Leaf Cluster), Legion of Merit (with three Oak Leaf Clusters), Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal (with four Oak Leaf Clusters), and the Air Medal (with Numeral 7). She also has various unit, service and campaign awards, and numerous badges, including the Combat Action Badge, Parachutist Badge, Air Assault Badge, Senior Army Aviator Badge, Vice-Presidential Service Badge and the Army Staff Identification Badge.

She is married to Lieutenant General Jim Richardson and they have one daughter and a grandchild.

UNCLASSIFIED

STATEMENT OF
GENERAL GLEN D. VANHERCK, UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
COMMANDER
UNITED STATES NORTHERN COMMAND
AND
NORTH AMERICAN AEROSPACE DEFENSE COMMAND



BEFORE THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

8 MARCH 2022

UNCLASSIFIED

Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Rogers, and distinguished members of the Committee: thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am proud to lead the men and women of United States Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) and North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) as we defend the United States and Canada in an increasingly complicated and dynamic strategic environment. Our commands continue to face multiple simultaneous challenges from capable, highly advanced competitors who have openly declared their intent to hold our homelands at risk in an effort to advance their own strategic interests.

Today, strategic competitors, rogue nations, and non-state actors possess the capability to strike institutions and critical infrastructure in the United States and Canada. These threats, along with the realities of modern global competition, drive USNORTHCOM and NORAD to think globally and seek innovative capabilities that increase senior leader decision space and help to expand the range of available options for deterring in competition, de-escalating in crisis, and—if necessary—defeating in conflict.

As the U.S. combatant command responsible for homeland defense, for providing defense support of civil authorities, and security cooperation with allies and partners in our area of responsibility, USNORTHCOM is facing the most dynamic and strategically complex set of challenges in the history of the command. Together with NORAD, the distinct, complementary U.S.-Canada bi-national command responsible for aerospace warning, aerospace control, and maritime warning for the United States and Canada, our commands are taking decisive institutional and operational measures to defend our homelands.

DEFENDING THE HOMELANDS

In my testimony before the Committee last year, I described a rapidly evolving geostrategic environment in which our competitors were continuing to take increasingly

UNCLASSIFIED

aggressive steps to gain the upper hand in the military, intelligence, economic, and diplomatic arenas. For decades, the United States has been accustomed to choosing when and where the nation will employ the military lever of influence and project power around the globe from a homeland that was assumed to be secure. Our competitors have studied this operating model for the last 30 years and have developed strategies and capabilities intended to offset our military advantage and disrupt our force flows.

Quite bluntly, my ability to conduct the missions assigned to USNORTHCOM and NORAD has eroded and continues to erode. Our country is under attack every day in the information space and cyber domain. Competitors are spreading disinformation, actively sowing division and fanning the flames of internal discord with the intent to undermine the foundation of our nation, our democracy, and democracies around the world. These competitors are also constantly seeking to exploit security vulnerabilities and policy gaps, especially in the cyber domain. They are preparing for potential crisis or conflict with the intent to limit decision space for our senior leaders by holding national critical infrastructure at risk, disrupting and delaying our ability to project power from the homeland, and undermining our will to intervene in a regional crisis.

The threat to North America is complex. Over the last year, our competitors have accelerated their fielding of kinetic and non-kinetic capabilities specifically designed to threaten our homeland. Of equal or greater concern is their relentless, coordinated effort to weaken the institutions and alliances at the core of our strength and influence while expanding their own influence internationally. Today, our competitors hold our homeland at risk in multiple domains and are working constantly to exploit perceived vulnerabilities.

UNCLASSIFIED

Russia and China continue to aggressively pursue and field advanced offensive cyber and space capabilities, cruise missiles, hypersonic weapons, and delivery platforms designed to evade detection and strike targets in our homeland from multiple vectors of attack and in all domains. USNORTHCOM and NORAD's ability to defend against modern threats requires improved all-domain awareness, updated capabilities, and policies and strategies that reflect the current strategic environment and the advanced capabilities of our competitors. Meanwhile, I require access to ready and trained forces to operate throughout the USNORTHCOM area of responsibility, including the Arctic, to respond in crisis and quickly execute homeland defense campaign plans.

My mission to provide timely and accurate threat warning and attack assessment requires increased domain awareness and breaking down information stovepipes that restrict the flow of needed information to decision makers in the United States and Canada. The ability to detect a threat, whether from a cyber-actor or a cruise missile, is a prerequisite to defeating the threat. Timely and accurate detection, tracking, and assessment of potential threats provides critical decision space and time to national leaders, while an inability to do so limits available response options.

Lack of domain awareness contributes to increased risk of miscalculation, unnecessary escalation, and potential for strategic deterrence failure. Maintaining our strategic advantage begins with improving domain awareness globally, including in the approaches to North America. Incorporating artificial intelligence and machine learning into existing capabilities will allow users to pull needed information from existing data sets and share that data with leaders at all levels to expand their decision space and options necessary to achieve desirable outcomes.

UNCLASSIFIED

To ensure our ability to compete in the current strategic environment, DoD plans, force structure, and logistics must evolve beyond 9/11-era threats and outdated assumptions regarding competitor capabilities, strategies, and ambitions. In order to deter modern competitors, we must make clear that we have the capability to fight in and from the homeland. Further, policy determinations are needed regarding what key infrastructure is to be defended, and from what threats, in order to develop realistic assessments and plans for the defense of critical infrastructure that fully account for advancing competitor capabilities and strategies.

In order to defend the homeland in this complex strategic environment, USNORTHCOM and NORAD have shifted our efforts to left-of-conflict strategies, emphasizing integrated deterrence in competition, and dramatically improving our ability to provide leaders with needed decision space on a day-to-day basis. To be successful in competition, DoD must develop and implement globally integrated plans, strategies, operations, and exercises that incorporate all levers of influence, to include the essential contributions of our international allies and partners.

COMPETITORS AND THREATS

Russia

Russia is the primary military threat to the homeland, and their focus on targeting the homeland has provided the model other competitors are beginning to follow. First, Russia has invested significant resources to modernize all three legs of its nuclear triad in an effort to ensure its ability to deliver unacceptable damage on our homeland during a conflict. In December 2019, Russia fielded the world's first intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) equipped with a hypersonic glide vehicle (HGV) payload. These weapons are designed to glide at extremely high speeds and maneuver at low altitudes in order to complicate our ability to detect and track. In the next few years, Russia seeks to field a new heavy-lift ICBM that President Putin claims will

UNCLASSIFIED

be able to deliver nuclear warheads to North America from both northern and southern trajectories. Weapons such as these are designed to circumvent the ground-based radars utilized by USNORTHCOM and NORAD to detect and characterize an inbound threat, and challenge my ability to provide threat warning and attack assessment. The impact is the loss of critical decision space for national-level decision makers regarding continuity of government and the preservation of retaliatory capabilities, resulting in an increase in the potential for strategic deterrence failure.

Over the last 15 years, Russia has also executed a systematic program to develop offensive capabilities below the nuclear threshold that Russian leaders believe will constrain U.S. options in an escalating crisis. Their capabilities include very capable cyber capabilities like those demonstrated by Russia-based actors during last year's ransomware attack on the Colonial Pipeline. Russia has also invested in counter-space capabilities like the direct-ascent anti-satellite weapon that Russia recklessly tested in November 2021.

To augment these non-lethal capabilities, Russia has fielded a new family of advanced air-, sea-, and ground-based cruise missiles to threaten critical civilian and military infrastructure. The AS-23a air-launched cruise missile, for instance, features an extended range that enables Russian bombers flying well outside NORAD radar coverage—and in some cases from inside Russian airspace—to threaten targets throughout North America. This capability challenges my ability to detect an attack and mount an effective defense. In the maritime domain, Russia has fielded the first two of their nine planned Severodvinsk-class guided missile submarines, which are designed to deploy undetected within cruise missile range of our coastlines to threaten critical infrastructure during an escalating crisis. This challenge will be compounded in the next few years as the Russian Navy adds the Tsirkon hypersonic cruise

UNCLASSIFIED

missile to the Severodvinsk's arsenal. All of the Russian cruise missile capabilities present a significant domain awareness challenge. Additionally, these advanced cruise missiles and their supporting platforms will limit national leadership decision space and my ability to provide threat warning and attack assessment, which directly influences my ability to support continuity of government operations and provide support to USSTRATCOM missions. Again, the potential consequence is an increased risk of strategic deterrence failure.

China

China is our pacing threat and a long-term geostrategic challenge. China is increasingly exerting its economic and military clout around the globe as its leaders pursue a national goal of supplanting the rules-based international order with an approach that is more aligned with China's national interests. Like Russia, China has begun to develop new capabilities to hold our homeland at risk in multiple domains in an attempt to complicate our decision making and to disrupt, delay, and degrade force flow in crisis and destroy our will in conflict.

China has maintained the ability to strike our homeland with strategic nuclear weapons since the early 1980s, but today its nuclear capabilities are growing rapidly in quantity and sophistication. China's Fractional Orbital Bombardment System test in July 2021 delivered a hypersonic glide vehicle (HGV) and demonstrated the weapon's ability to survive reentry and perform high-speed and maneuvering glide after orbiting around the globe—a feat Russia never attempted before fielding their own HGV-equipped ICBMs two years ago. When fielded, China's ICBM-class HGV will be able to evade current ground and space-based early warning capabilities due to its low-altitude approach and ability to maneuver midcourse, which compounds the detection and warning challenges I already face from Russia's Avangard HGV and advanced cruise missiles.

In the coming years China will augment its homeland-threatening cyber capabilities with a growing long-range conventional strike capability of its own. In October 2019, China unveiled its first bomber capable of air-to-air refueling, the H-6N, which will be able to threaten targets in Alaska with air-launched ballistic or cruise missiles. Later this decade, China seeks to field its Type 095 guided missile submarine, which will feature improved quieting technologies and a probable land-attack cruise missile capability. While China's intent for employing its long-range conventional strike capabilities is not fully known, these weapons will offer Beijing the option of deploying strike platforms within range of our critical infrastructure during a conflict, adding a new layer of complication to our leaders' crisis decision-making.

North Korea and Iran

North Korea's successful flight testing of an ICBM capable of reaching the continental United States and detonation of a thermonuclear weapon underscores its leaders' determination to develop capabilities to threaten our homeland and constrain our options in crisis and conflict. In October 2020, North Korea unveiled a new ICBM that is probably even more capable than the weapons it last tested in 2017. Moreover, North Korea's launch last October of a submarine-based ballistic missile suggests Kim Jong Un may soon resume flight testing his most capable weapon systems, including a new ICBM design.

Iran maintains asymmetric capabilities to threaten our homeland in the cyber domain. In 2022, Iranian officials have threatened to carry out terror operations inside the United States and elsewhere around the world, in addition to its persistent support of threats by terrorist organizations like Lebanese Hezbollah. While Iran has announced a self-imposed range limit of 2,000 kilometers on its fielded ballistic missile force, its persistent advancement of ballistic missile technologies probably could increase its missile range outside of the region.

UNCLASSIFIED

Violent Extremist Organizations

While the strategic capabilities of our peer competitors are the most pressing concern for USNORTHCOM and NORAD, violent extremist organizations such as ISIS and al-Qa'ida remain committed to attacking the United States and our allies. The Taliban's takeover in Afghanistan will likely provide new opportunities for groups like al-Qa'ida to plot against the West, while homegrown violent extremists (HVEs) challenge our law enforcement partners by using simple attack methods that continue to present the most likely international terrorist threat to the homeland. Violent extremist groups continue to hone their tactics in response to a shifting operational environment and have maintained their focus on attacking civil aviation and U.S. military personnel and installations.

Transnational Criminal Organizations

Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs) continue to inflict enormous damage and create instability through corruption, violence, and illicit trafficking. International criminal syndicates have flooded the United States with illegal drugs that contributed to the deaths of over 100,000 U.S. citizens in the 12-month period from April 2020 to April 2021, while harming people and weakening institutions throughout the Western Hemisphere. As TCOs battle over territory and brazenly undermine the rule of law, they create obvious opportunities for exploitation by strategic competitors seeking to broaden their global coercive strategies and increase influence and presence in the Western Hemisphere.

Mitigating the harm done by TCOs is a national security imperative for the United States and our international partners that requires an overarching whole-of-government policy and plan for interagency action that takes into consideration the vast resources and widespread influence wielded by the TCOs and their international criminal confederates. USNORTHCOM's ability to

UNCLASSIFIED

counter malign influence in our region is complicated by the destabilizing influence of TCOs in our area of responsibility, and national policy and DoD planning must take that reality into account.

INTEGRATED DETERRENCE

Strategic deterrence remains the foundation of homeland defense, and I believe it is absolutely necessary to maintain a reliable and effective nuclear triad. However, reliance on deterrence by cost imposition is currently over-weighted and significantly increases the risk of miscalculation by limiting our national leaders' options following an attack. Given our competitors' advanced conventional capabilities, it is vitally important to move toward a model of integrated deterrence that employs all elements of national influence, leverages alliances and partnerships, and provides leaders with a wide range of timely deterrence options.

Integrated deterrence fuses traditional deterrence by cost imposition—in which an adversary is deterred by fear of costs that outweigh the benefit of an attack—with deterrence by denial, which causes a potential adversary to doubt the likelihood of a successful attack. Imposing costs on an aggressor that outweigh the potential benefits of an attack, demonstrating resiliency, and displaying a range of kinetic and non-kinetic response capabilities are all elements of deterrence by denial. This approach dramatically expands the military, diplomatic, and economic options available to national leaders in competition, crisis, and conflict and helps to avoid miscalculation and unnecessary escalation.

Integrated deterrence also involves competing in the information space under a strategic framework, while working with allies and partners to counter competitors' malign influence in the USNORTHCOM area of responsibility and beyond. Building the capacity to compete in the

UNCLASSIFIED

information environment reduces the risk of instability and strategic miscalculation that can stem from disinformation and other influence operations.

Demonstrations of resiliency, hardening, and the ability to recover from damage to communities and infrastructure also generate a deterrent effect. USNORTHCOM's defense support of civil authorities (DSCA) mission in the aftermath of wildfires, hurricanes, floods, and other contingencies in communities across the United States routinely showcases the ability of USNORTHCOM and the interagency community to respond quickly and effectively to natural and manmade disasters.

USNORTHCOM's track record of supporting coordinated responses and rapid recovery is the direct result of ongoing interagency planning, coordination, and exercises that ensures our readiness to support our partners at a moment's notice. To be clear, DSCA is a homeland defense mission, and USNORTHCOM's visible support to civil authorities remains a critical focus for the command, especially as environmental change contributes to more frequent and intense fires and damaging storms.

Finally, we must continue to foster the partnerships and alliances that provide the United States and our international partners with what is perhaps our most distinct asymmetric advantage. NORAD is an obvious example of the enormous benefit to shared security and regional stability generated by international cooperation. In addition, it must be noted that our relationships with NATO, the FIVE EYES community, and our regional defense and security cooperation partners in Canada, Mexico, and The Bahamas have a profound deterrent effect for the common benefit of all. USNORTHCOM and NORAD continue to foster these valuable alliances and partnerships.

UNCLASSIFIED

HOMELAND DEFENSE DESIGN

Homeland defense starts well outside the USNORTHCOM area of responsibility and necessarily involves our fellow combatant commands as well as our international allies and partners. Deterring and defending against advanced competitors that have the capability to hold the homeland at persistent risk requires an approach that emphasizes increased decision space and leverages all elements of national power over cost-prohibitive and narrowly focused kinetic defenses. DoD's ability to deter and defend against advanced global threats requires a shift from regional approaches to a global perspective that accounts for the realities of the modern strategic environment.

I believe it is necessary to accept near-term risk in order to compete against advanced, globally focused peers well into the future. Leaders must make difficult choices today in order to avoid impossible dilemmas tomorrow—to include divesting legacy systems and capabilities that consume significant personnel and fiscal resources and are of little to no use in today's strategic environment.

Therefore, a homeland defense enterprise that is capable of deterring and defeating threats is essential to a globally integrated forward fight and supporting broader national strategic objectives. The ability of the United States to deter in competition, de-escalate in crisis, and defeat in conflict is dependent on our collective ability to detect and track potential threats and friendly forces anywhere in the world, while delivering data to decision makers as rapidly as possible. This provides leaders with the time and informed options needed to achieve a favorable outcomes for the United States. That reality is the basis for the central principles of USNORTHCOM and NORAD homeland defense design: **all-domain awareness, information dominance, decision superiority, and global integration.**

UNCLASSIFIED

Domain Awareness can be achieved through an integrated network of sensors from the seafloor to space, including cyberspace, in order to detect, track, and deter potential threats. I need improved domain awareness to increase warning time and provide leaders at all levels with as many options as possible to deter or defend against an attack. Global all-domain awareness will generate a significant deterrent effect by making it clear that we can see potential aggressors wherever they are, which inherently casts doubt on their ability to achieve their objectives.

I am grateful to the Committee for your support of the over-the-horizon radar (OTHR) that was included on USNORTHCOM's unfunded priority list for Fiscal Year 2022. OTHR is a proven technology that will provide persistent surveillance of the distant northern approaches to the United States and mitigate the limitations of the Cold War-era North Warning System, while contributing to broader domain awareness challenges including space domain awareness. The ability to detect air-breathing and spaceborne threats in the approaches to Canada and the United States will be significantly enhanced by fielding OTHR as soon as possible. It is also vital to move quickly toward advanced space-based sensors capable of detecting hypersonic weapons, including hypersonic cruise missiles, and other advanced systems designed to evade detection. Modernizing and expanding the Integrated Undersea Surveillance System (IUSS) is equally important as Russia and China continue to field highly advanced guided missile submarines.

While some new domain awareness platforms will be required, it is possible to make exponential improvements in our nation's ability to detect and track potential threats by improving the ways data is collected, processed, and shared. As I testified last year, the technology already exists to apply artificial intelligence and machine learning to collect and rapidly distribute information gathered from sensors around the globe. Current processes rely on human analysts to comb through enormous volumes of data, and it can take days or weeks to

UNCLASSIFIED

process, exploit, and distribute critical information—if it is ever processed at all. We will always need expert human analysts in the loop, but I need the ability to tap into that technology to dramatically speed the delivery of information to leaders at all levels who need it.

Success in competition, crisis, and conflict depends on effectively distributing and integrating the data collected from domain awareness capabilities to establish **information dominance** over competitors and adversaries. To unlock the full value and potential of our intelligence and sensor networks, information must be integrated, appropriately classified, and rapidly shared to allow commands, agencies, allies, and partners to collaborate globally in real time and across all domains.

The potential for this capability has already been demonstrated in USNORTHCOM's Global Information Dominance Experiments (GIDE), which provided combatant commanders, intelligence and operations directors, and other participants at multiple sites with a shared, customizable, and near real-time data set. The data gathered by existing global sensors provided leaders, analysts, and operators with the information needed to make assessments and recommended courses of action that were coordinated across multiple commands in a matter of hours. Speeding the flow of information to senior civilian decision makers and commanders enabled significantly more options to achieve desired outcomes.

Decision superiority means increasing decision space and options to provide senior leaders. The ultimate goal of decision superiority is to provide multiple paths to avoid conflict through the application of all available elements of national power, rather than emphasizing options that are only available after a conflict has already begun. To successfully defend the homeland, we must provide leaders with pertinent information and as much time as possible to deter and de-escalate before a situation escalates out of control.

UNCLASSIFIED

Finally, I believe it is critical for the entire defense enterprise to shift its culture and vision toward global all-domain integration. Too often, DoD posture development, communications, planning, exercises, and operations are stovepiped and isolated in ways that do not reflect the reality that all challenges are global and all-domain in nature. The Department increasingly understands that competitors would likely intend to strike the homeland in an effort to prevent flowing U.S. forces toward a regional crisis or conflict. And, in the event that the United States and our allies become engaged in a regional crisis or conflict, other competitors would likely exploit that opportunity to their own advantage—which could quickly lead to simultaneous crises in multiple theaters.

Global challenges cannot be overcome with a hodgepodge of isolated regional plans. Success in competition, crisis, or conflict is increasingly dependent on moving past outdated parochial approaches in favor of greater focus on competition rather than restricting options and absorbing unnecessary costs by continuing to over-emphasize crisis and conflict. With that in mind, USNORTHCOM, our fellow combatant commands, the Services, and our Canadian partners have demonstrated the immediate impact of improved information sharing and collaboration between commands and allies in all phases of competition, crisis, and conflict.

The current regional approach to plans, strategies, and force design is outdated and more influenced by bureaucratic inertia than the realities of the modern strategic environment. The same is true of stagnant acquisition practices and cumbersome civilian hiring rules that only impede progress and hinder the Department's ability to move at the speed of relevance necessary to compete in today's environment.

UNCLASSIFIED

RISK MITIGATION

Risk mitigation must be a shared whole-of-government responsibility focused on broad nodes, enterprises, and capabilities rather than attempting to establish a priority-ranked list of specific sites or facilities to be protected. Mitigating the risk associated with an attack on the United States requires policy determinations about what must be defended from kinetic and non-kinetic attack. Those policy decisions, in turn, allow USNORTHCOM, NORAD, and our mission partners to determine the best ways to protect priority assets and resources.

Importantly, risk mitigation is the responsibility of the DoD, as well as a number of other interagency partners at the federal, state, and local levels. Risk mitigation requires a dedicated policy framework and deliberate interagency planning and coordination. Notably, the deterrent effect of resiliency and effective consequence management requires far fewer resources and less expense than direct defense systems.

Ballistic missile defense (BMD): Defending the United States against intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) threats from rogue nations remains a critical priority for USNORTHCOM and an important component of integrated deterrence. While current BMD capability and capacity is sufficient to defeat a limited ballistic missile attack from a rogue nation, North Korea's ongoing development of increasingly complex and capable strategic weapons requires the Next Generation Interceptor to be fielded on time or early, and for the Long Range Discriminating Radar in Alaska to achieve full operational capacity on schedule.

The ballistic missile defense system is not capable of intercepting hypersonic glide vehicles; I cannot defend, nor am I tasked to defend, against a hypersonic glide vehicle attack. It is imperative that the Department of Defense develop and field an integrated space-based domain awareness network capable of detecting and tracking ICBMs, hypersonic weapons, and cruise

UNCLASSIFIED

missiles as quickly as possible. I require the ability to detect, track, and assess potential missile threats of all types to immediately determine whether an attack is underway and provide national leaders with as much time and as many options as possible.

Cruise Missile Defense: Russia has the capability today to hold targets in the United States and Canada at risk with long-range air- and submarine-launched conventional cruise missiles. These highly precise and stealthy systems highlight the need for policy determinations regarding what must be defended along with continued demonstrations of resiliency and hardening. It is also necessary to quickly improve domain awareness by fielding sensors such as OTHR and the integrated undersea surveillance system (IUSS)—and by integrating and sharing the collected data with global stakeholders. To successfully deter aggression and defend the homeland, we must be able to detect and track the submarines, aircraft, and surface ships that carry weapons systems capable of striking the homeland before they depart from their home stations. We also need to improve our capability to defeat those launch platforms before they are within range of their targets.

It is vital that we accept risk today in order to compete against highly advanced and determined peers in the near future. As an example, the military Services must be allowed to retire aging platforms, especially those that cannot survive in combat against highly advanced and lethal capabilities already fielded and proliferated by our peer competitors. The Department must re-invest the savings from those divestments to resilient domain awareness and other capabilities necessary to increase the decision space that will provide national leaders with options to deter, de-escalate, and defeat threats. Those difficult choices are critical to integrated deterrence today and avoiding the unthinkable tomorrow.

UNCLASSIFIED

THE ARCTIC

The Arctic demonstrates how regional challenges increasingly take on global implications that require a global framework. The Unified Command Plan designates the Commander of USNORTHCOM as the DoD's Advocate for Arctic Capabilities in recognition of the fact that the region encompasses a vast geographic area overlapping the areas of responsibility of three separate geographic combatant commands and includes eight sovereign nations with inherent interest in the region. It is critical that USNORTHCOM, our fellow geographic combatant commands, the U.S. interagency, and our fellow Arctic nations continue our shared efforts to ensure the Arctic remains peaceful, stable, prosperous, and cooperative. This is especially true in light of the increasing potential for resource competition and opportunities for commercial enterprise, both of which must be balanced with the inherent rights of Arctic states to control their territorial waters and resources within their Exclusive Economic Zones.

Diminished Arctic ice has led to increased access to sea lanes, longer shipping seasons, and expanded access to subsurface minerals and proteins, although environmental changes are also increasing operational hazards and introducing new uncertainties. Those changes, in turn, now require clear communication and coordination among Arctic allies, partners, and competitors. A continued rules-based international order in the Arctic has served the international community well for decades, and forums like the Arctic Council are critical to emphasizing the value of the Arctic as a cooperative region where countries consistently work together to solve shared challenges.

Rising competition near the United States and Canada is of significant concern for USNORTHCOM and NORAD. The Arctic strategies published by DoD and each of the military

UNCLASSIFIED

Services demonstrate the shared understanding of the need to adapt policy, capabilities, and resourcing to meet the challenges and requirements associated with operating in the Arctic. However, the Services and the Department must accelerate implementation of those strategies or risk falling further behind rapidly advancing competitor capabilities, which jeopardizes USNORTHCOM and NORAD's ability to execute the commands' missions in the high north.

Likewise, Canada remains our essential partner in the NORAD mission and in ensuring NORAD's capability and capacity to deter aggression and defend the United States and Canada from airborne and maritime threats. That contribution includes investment in modernizing sensors, infrastructure, and platforms that ensure NORAD's ability to successfully conduct aerospace warning, aerospace control, and maritime warning. Those capabilities are vital to homeland defense and to our nations' capability to project forces forward in support of operations overseas, including meeting NATO commitments.

I am excited by the opportunities for building partnerships in the Arctic and the continued shared effort to maintain the stability and security of the entire region. The upcoming Arctic Security Forces Roundtable, to be held in Alaska in May 2022, will provide the United States with a rare opportunity to host an international forum focused specifically on Arctic security and military cooperation. USNORTHCOM and NORAD have important roles at the Arctic Security Forces Roundtable, and I am looking forward to joining Arctic military counterparts to make this a productive and forward-thinking event.

Likewise, the newly established DoD regional center, the Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies, in Anchorage will provide an important venue for academic, diplomatic, and military Arctic experts to address key challenges in the region, in alignment with DoD strategic guidance. None of those challenges, from mitigating the operational impacts of climate change

UNCLASSIFIED

to avoiding miscalculation resulting from undue militarization of the Arctic, can be overcome unilaterally. USNORTHCOM will continue to leverage the strength of our regional alliances and partnerships to enhance regional security cooperation and support a secure and stable Arctic.

DEFENSE SUPPORT OF CIVIL AUTHORITIES (DSCA)

USNORTHCOM's defense support of other federal agencies during the COVID-19 pandemic, hurricanes, wildfires, and Operation ALLIES WELCOME has tested the command in unexpected ways over the past year. While our DSCA mission can be time- and resource-intensive, USNORTHCOM support to our interagency partners continues to strengthen relationships, validate plans, and demonstrate the ability of the U.S. interagency enterprise to respond quickly and effectively to contingencies. In addition to supporting American citizens in need, these missions provide a visible deterrent effect by demonstrating flexible response options and effectively executing plans to mitigate and recover from the effects of disaster and other emergencies.

In 2021 and 2022, USNORTHCOM continued DoD's COVID-19 support by deploying military medical providers to civilian medical facilities around the country. Building on existing pandemic response plans and quickly adapting to lessons learned during the pandemic, USNORTHCOM's support to the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Department of Health and Human Services provided much-needed relief to hospitals overwhelmed by COVID-19 caseloads.

USNORTHCOM is also proud to work alongside the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of State throughout the Operation ALLIES WELCOME mission to evacuate, house, and resettle tens of thousands of Afghan partners and their families following the collapse of the Afghan government. With the support of the military departments, USNORTHCOM has

UNCLASSIFIED

been responsible for providing safety and security, shelter, food, and other essential services for Afghans who contributed to the U.S. mission in Afghanistan as they await resettlement in the United States.

SECURITY COOPERATION

Global alliances and partnerships provide the United States with a critical asymmetric advantage over our competitors. USNORTHCOM's military-to-military partnerships with Canada, Mexico, and The Bahamas remain critically important, and those ties continue to pay significant dividends as we work toward improving regional security, strengthening military ties with regional partners, and expanding interoperability. These efforts contribute to improved shared domain awareness and domain control, while strengthening the institutions that support our common strategic objectives. By working together toward these objectives, USNORTHCOM is supporting our partners' important contributions to regional security while emphasizing our shared prioritization of the rule of law, human rights, and denying our competitors the opportunity to expand their presence and malign influence.

The Mexican Secretariat of National Defense (SEDENA) and Secretariat of the Navy (SEMAR), are steadfast security partners and remain a bulwark against encroaching competitor presence and influence in Central and South America. USNORTHCOM was proud to host the annual U.S.-Mexico Bilateral Military Cooperation Roundtable in August 2021, during which key military leaders from USNORTHCOM, SEDENA, and SEMAR refined our shared efforts toward improved domain awareness, domain control, and institutional strengthening. In September 2021, I was also honored to personally attend the Mexico Aerospace Fair—commonly known as FAMEX—to demonstrate USNORTHCOM's commitment to the security relationship with our Mexican military partners and to join the Secretaries of SEMAR and

UNCLASSIFIED

SEDENA in reaffirming Mexico's vital contributions to the security of our region and our shared commitment to countering common threats.

Our partnership with The Bahamas remains critical. USNORTHCOM and The Bahamas' Bilateral Security Cooperation Framework provides a distinct and important venue for developing and implementing mutual objectives that contribute to regional security. Due to The Bahamas' geographic location along the U.S. southern approaches, domain awareness and domain control are in the vital national interests of both the United States and The Bahamas. In October 2021, I met with the new Bahamian government and my Royal Bahamas Defence Force counterpart in Nassau for the activation of a maritime surveillance radar donated by DoD that has already significantly improved our collective ability to detect and monitor traffic in the approaches to The Bahamas and the United States. China has expanded economic investment and visible diplomatic presence in The Bahamas and has highlighted the lack of a confirmed U.S. ambassador in an ongoing information campaign to boost Chinese influence while weakening that of the United States.

CONCLUSION

The global strategic environment will remain complex and extraordinarily dynamic for the foreseeable future. Our competitors already possess the capability to strike the homeland with kinetic and non-kinetic means, and they will take full advantage of slow responses, technological shortfalls, and policies that do not reflect the realities of the modern era.

USNORTHCOM and NORAD, in concert with our interagency colleagues, will continue our unending mission to defend our homelands and protect our citizens from threats in all domains, institutions, culture, and process. However, our commands' ability to effectively deter threats to the homeland will increasingly rely on improved domain awareness and providing

UNCLASSIFIED

leaders with the time and options necessary for success. Just as important, it is critical for military leaders and civilian policymakers to acknowledge that all regional challenges have global implications and present potential risk to the U.S. homeland. Our competitors have demonstrated their intent to leverage any opportunity to advance their own interests—often to the detriment of our own.

Defense of the homeland and continental defense remains the absolute priority for both USNORTHCOM and NORAD, and our commands' constant vigilance will be a key element of the integrated deterrence that safeguards our citizens and advances our vital national interests. It is my profound honor to lead all of the proud U.S. and Canadian military and civilian personnel of USNORTHCOM and NORAD as they stand our never-ending watch over our nations. I look forward to working with all of our vital partners as we continue to advance those efforts in the defense of our nations. We 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)

**WITNESS RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ASKED DURING
THE HEARING**

MARCH 8, 2022

RESPONSE TO QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MR. WILSON

Ms. DALTON. The Department of Homeland Security has information specifically about individuals who may have illegally crossed the southern border in the last year. We will pass along your question to DHS to facilitate direct communications. [See page 15.]

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MS. JACOBS

Ms. DALTON. The Biden Administration is committed to the closure of the detention facility at Guantanamo. Accordingly, the Administration is currently focused on responsibly reducing the population by pursuing transfers for the 20 detainees eligible for transfer. The Department of State has lead for the diplomacy associated with those efforts. Military Commissions are administered by the Department of Defense's Office of Military Commissions. Currently, there are 10 detainees involved in the military commissions process, all at varied points in the commissions process. [See page 45.]

General RICHARDSON. On your question regarding efforts to repatriate or resettle detainees who are cleared for transfer, I would refer you to the Department of State, which is responsible for engaging with foreign nations for potential relocation of detainees. On your question about the military commissions, I would refer you to the Office of Military Commissions within the Department of Defense. [See page 45.]

RESPONSE TO QUESTION SUBMITTED BY DR. GREEN

General RICHARDSON. In addition to the resources requested in the President's FY23 budget, USSOUTHCOM transmitted a list of unfunded priorities to the Defense congressional oversight committees on April 5, 2022. We provided this list to your office as well. This list includes resourcing for security cooperation, our main lever for building partner capacity to counter all threats in the region. It also includes resourcing for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance programs and assets that will increase our domain awareness of those threats. We also look to counter these threats by piercing the information space and engaging with our partners to maintain presence throughout the region. [See page 40.]

RESPONSE TO QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MR. WALTZ

General VANHERCK. My independent assessment as required by the Arctic Security Initiative, Section 1090 in the FY22 NDAA is ongoing, and I expect to deliver it to the Secretary of Defense by 31 May 2022. I believe it will provide valuable information to support the Secretary's future Arctic policy decisions. I have an operational requirement for the ability to refuel ships north of Dutch Harbor, AK, enabling persistent presence and supporting maritime power projection and sustainment. I am agnostic about the specific solution to mitigate this capability gap, but am closely tracking the development of the Port of Nome to assess how that effort might address my requirements. [See page 32.]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING

MARCH 8, 2022

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. SCOTT

Mr. SCOTT. How might recognizing Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs) formally as threats to national security in key national strategic documents result in direct positive impacts in the region?

General RICHARDSON. Recognizing transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) formally as threats to national security in the National Defense Strategy and National Military Strategy would better position programs and activities aimed at countering these threats to be prioritized for resourcing.

Supporting our partners (Allies, partner nations, and the US Interagency) in the region on this shared threat helps to strengthen partnerships and provides the U.S. with access and presence to sustain a balance of power that supports democracy in our hemisphere. Not doing so provides further inroads for the People's Republic of China and Russia.

Mr. SCOTT. The Drug Enforcement Agency estimates 99 percent of all cocaine destined for the United States travels through either the Caribbean Sea or the eastern Pacific. How many additional personnel and platforms are needed to interdict 100% of the cocaine? Please be specific in terms of personnel, manned and unmanned aircraft/ships, and any other desired capabilities or platforms.

General RICHARDSON. To substantially reduce cocaine coming to the United States requires a whole of government effort, supported by partner nation initiatives as well. The Department of Defense is one part of this broader effort, as the lead U.S. federal agency for the detection and monitoring of aerial and maritime transit of illegal drugs toward the United States. The Joint Interagency Task Force-South (JIATFS) conducts the detection and monitoring mission in this AOR, which then supports the interdiction and apprehension efforts performed by U.S. and partner nation law enforcement agencies. To support the reduction of the estimated cocaine flow by 50%, JIATFS would require a sustained deployment of approximately 27 force packages across the Eastern Pacific and Caribbean seas, as well as additional personnel to execute Command and Control of these resources. A force package consists of a long-range ship equipped with an over the horizon interceptor boat and a helicopter capable of conducting Airborne Use of Force (AUF), paired with an airborne ISR platform. For FY21, JIATFS had control of an average of six force packages across a 42 million square mile operating area.

Our partner nations also play a key role in this effort. Using the capabilities that we have helped build through our critical security cooperation programs, partner nations were involved in 62% of JIATFS facilitated interdictions in FY21.

Interdicting drugs is only one important aspect of reducing this overall threat posed by Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs). Eradicating illicit crops harvested to produce dangerous drugs is also a necessary aspect for an effective counternarcotic strategy, as are law enforcement investigations that lead to successful judicial proceedings that ultimately degrade and dismantle TCOs.

Mr. SCOTT. Does the United States need a single element to take control of law enforcement assets within the JIATF South operating area to tackle the counternarcotics mission and unify the strategic goals of DOD and the Coast Guard?

General RICHARDSON. The Department of Defense and U.S. Coast Guard strategic counterdrug objectives are aligned and pursued through a unity of effort coordinated by JIATFS. The U.S. Coast Guard provides critical support to counter transnational criminal organizations in the SOUTHCOM Area of Responsibility. Title 10 of U.S. Code, Section 124, designates Department of Defense as the lead federal agency for the detection and monitoring of aerial and maritime transit of illegal drugs toward the United States. JIATFS performs this unified mission within a Joint Operating Area that spans almost the entire Western Hemisphere. JIATFS executes tactical control over detection and monitoring resources employed to cue interdiction and apprehension efforts performed by appropriate U.S. law enforcement agencies or Partner Nations. JIATFS' organizational construct is optimized to coordinate resources from all U.S. Federal Agencies and over 21 international partners.

Mr. SCOTT. Brazil was the only country to fight alongside the Allies in World War II. August 2022 marks the 80th Anniversary of their entry into the war on the side

of the Allies. Does SOUTHCOM have any plans to commemorate Brazil's contributions to the Allied cause in World War II?

General RICHARDSON. Brazil is one of our strongest partners in the hemisphere and that partnership does include their commitment to fight alongside the Allies in World War II. SOUTHCOM does not currently have a planned commemoration for the 80th anniversary of their entry into the war. Brazil would generally take great pride in hosting a commemoration event for an occasion like the 80th Anniversary of their entry into the war. However, they are unlikely to host an event in August this year because they are hosting the multi-nation exercise UNITAS in September which will bring 19 partner nations together for a very important amphibious and maritime exercise. Also, the October presidential elections will complicate event scheduling for the Brazilian military.

In May 2020, Brazil planned to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of Victory in Rio de Janeiro but was unable to hold the celebration due to COVID lockdowns and travel restrictions. Brazil is considering rescheduling this commemoration in the May-June timeframe but have not confirmed the event.

Mr. SCOTT. Admiral James Stavridis, U.S. Navy (Retired), wrote in the July 2021 issue of Proceedings an article entitled, "Great Power Competition Requires Theater Deterrence." According to Admiral Stavridis, "Deterrence is the art of creating the fear of attack in the mind of an opponent. Theater deterrence, then, can be defined as having sufficient combat power within a given geographic theater that the enemy would hesitate to undertake hostile operations. If you have sufficient military force available to overmatch an opponent if you get into a fight, the bad guys will be hesitant to start one." How can SOUTHCOM better deter the non-state actors in the AOR?

General RICHARDSON. The best way to deter non-state actors in the SOUTHCOM AOR is to work at being the best partner every day. SOUTHCOM aims to be the partner of choice for all democracies in this region. We do this through our security cooperation programs that build our partners' capabilities to counter all threats together—ranging from malign state actors to transnational criminal organizations and natural disasters. We build interoperability through our exercise program, taking full advantage of our convening power to bring together dozens of partner nations and Allies for exercises such as Fuerzas Comando, PANAMAX, and Tradewinds. We also work closely with our interagency partners to bring the full support of the U.S. Government to our neighborhood with programs like the Department of State's Foreign Military Financing, Foreign Military Sales, and International Military Education and Training. All of our programs are transparent and include training on respect for human rights and the rule of law—democratic values shared by most nations in our AOR.

As ADM Stavridis discusses in his article—presence matters. We need to be present to be the best partner and deter any enemy or competitor. Presence does not have to be in the form of combat power like aircraft carriers and fighter jets, but it does have to be consistent, transparent, and at the speed of relevance to our partners.

Mr. SCOTT. What new tools and tactics do you need to dismantle the illegal narcotics trade?

General RICHARDSON. JIATFS tactically leads my team of teams aimed at disrupting the flow of illegal narcotics departing Central and South America and the Caribbean bound for the U.S. JIATFS-cued drug interdictions tangibly result in a reduction of drugs available in the U.S. These interdictions performed by U.S. law enforcement also produce critical evidence used in U.S. courts to dismantle Transnational Criminal Organizations promulgating the illegal narcotics trade. To further enhance JIATFS' ability to detect and monitor illegal drug flows across their 42 million square mile operating area, we are actively exploring wide area, long dwell, high resolution, edge processing-enabled detection and monitoring capabilities. We are incorporating artificial intelligence and machine learning (AI/ML) designed to efficiently process large volumes of collected data at machine speeds. I have also tasked JIATFS to work with other elements of SOUTHCOM to pierce the information space that cartels currently operate in with impunity.

Mr. SCOTT. The Marine Corps lacks a permanent installation in the Arctic. With no permanent infrastructure or regular rotational Alaskan deployments, is the U.S. Marine Corps ill-equipped and -trained to operate in the maritime Arctic environment?

General VANHERCK. No, the Marine Corps has a long history of conducting regular Extreme Cold Weather Training, most notably through recurring events in Norway. I would like to see the Navy-Marine Corps team build on this by increasing the resources allocated to achieving their "Blue Arctic" strategy objectives of maintaining enhanced presence in the Arctic and building Naval forces more capable of

Arctic operations. USNORTHCOM must be able to defend the homeland throughout its area of responsibility, and therefore I have a requirement for Joint Forces prepared to operate persistently in the Arctic across all domains; however, the extent of the Marine Corps' role in meeting this requirement is the purview of the Secretary of Defense.

Mr. SCOTT. What are the steps the United States Navy can take now and in the near future to develop operational capacity in the Arctic?

General VANHERCK. The Navy-Marine Corps team's "Blue Arctic" strategy lays out appropriate objectives to meet this requirement, if resourced properly. Maintaining enhanced presence and building a capable Arctic Naval force, in particular, are "Blue Arctic" objectives the Navy should continue to emphasize and resource. I believe the Navy must invest in organizing, training, and equipping forces to campaign and if necessary conduct decisive combat operations in the high north. I also have a requirement for fuel capacity north of Dutch Harbor, AK; the Port of Nome, once expanded under a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers plan, would serve as the only deep-draft port in the U.S. Arctic region.

Mr. SCOTT. What are the steps the United States Army can take now and in the near future to develop operational capacity in the Arctic?

General VANHERCK. The campaign design described in the Army's "Regaining Arctic Dominance" strategy lays out an effective approach to meeting this requirement, if resourced properly. I believe the Army must invest in the infrastructure required to conduct sustained operations in the Arctic, and in organizing, training, and equipping forces to campaign and if necessary conduct decisive combat operations in the high north.

Mr. SCOTT. What are the steps the United States Air Force can take now and in the near future to develop operational capacity in the Arctic?

General VANHERCK. The lines of effort detailed in the Air Force's 2020 Arctic Strategy provide an effective approach to meeting this requirement if resourced properly, and I support the efforts of the Air Force's Arctic strategy implementation team. I believe the Air Force must invest in the infrastructure required to conduct sustained operations in the Arctic, and in organizing, training, and equipping forces to campaign and if necessary conduct decisive combat operations in the high north.

Mr. SCOTT. What are the steps the United States Marine Corps can take now and in the near future to develop operational capacity in the Arctic?

General VANHERCK. I believe the Navy-Marine Corps team's "Blue Arctic" strategy lays out appropriate objectives to meet this requirement, if resourced properly. Maintaining enhanced presence and building a more capable Arctic Naval force, in particular, are "Blue Arctic" objectives the Navy should emphasize. I believe the Marine Corps must invest in organizing, training, and equipping forces to campaign and if necessary conduct decisive combat operations in the high north.

Mr. SCOTT. Should the U.S. Navy and Coast Guard prioritize personnel exchanges with partner navies and coast guards operating in the High North? If so, why?

General VANHERCK. I see significant potential value in learning from and leveraging the Arctic experience and capabilities of our Allies and partners, several of whom spend considerably more time operating in Arctic environments than U.S. forces do currently. While personnel assignment decisions like this are the purview of the Navy and Coast Guard, both the Navy's "Blue Arctic" strategy and the Department of Homeland Security's "Strategic Approach for Arctic Homeland Security" include objectives or goals that emphasize improved engagement and cooperation with international partners, and might be pursued through personnel exchanges.

Mr. SCOTT. Is the United States prepared to respond to disasters and fully participate in the High North with SAR capability, environmental disaster mitigation, scientific research, and other activities?

General VANHERCK. I won't speak for "the United States" but I will speak for NORAD and US Northern Command—it is my assessment that NORAD and NORTHCOM lack access to ready and trained forces and the capacity to operate throughout the year and across our areas of responsibility, including the Arctic in response to SAR, disaster, and other activities. I believe the Department and Services need to commit the resources necessary to implement concepts detailed in their Arctic strategies.

Mr. SCOTT. Does the United States lack the capabilities to advance U.S. security interests in the Arctic?

General VANHERCK. NORAD and US Northern Command lack capabilities such as infrastructure, communications, and access to ready and trained forces to operate year round in the Arctic in support of US security interests. It is my personal assessment that the United States has a range of diplomatic, informational, economic, and military capabilities that can be brought to bear to advance security interests in the Arctic—if we choose to resource and allocate them to the region. However to

improve our military options, I believe we need to invest in the infrastructure required to fight in the Arctic, and in organizing, training, and equipping more forces to campaign and if necessary conduct decisive combat operations in the high north.

Mr. SCOTT. Is more private sector investment needed in the Arctic?

General VANHERCK. Yes, as the Department of Defense advocate for Arctic capabilities I support investment in Arctic infrastructure as well as reliable communications above 65 degrees north latitude. The Arctic is a strategic region demanding our presence and persistence as part of an integrated deterrence. I require infrastructure and capability to operate in and out of the Arctic to execute my homeland defense design.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. GALLAGHER

Mr. GALLAGHER. General Richardson, under your command is an organization called JTF-Bravo which provides some military assets to Latin American operations. As the U.S. competes with China for influence in the region, and regional stability declines, would you welcome a greater U.S. military presence on the ground in Latin America to assist our partners and respond to any contingencies?

General RICHARDSON. Joint Task Force-Bravo (JTF-Bravo), located in Soto Cano Honduras, is SOUTHCOM's forward deployed presence in Central America. JTF-Bravo conducts and supports joint operations, activities, and investments to enhance regional security, stability, and cooperation and is my only immediate capability to assist in humanitarian assistance/disaster relief operations.

While I do not believe we need a large, permanent footprint throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, presence does matter, and we must be on the field to compete with external state actors that are active in the area.

SOUTHCOM makes great use of low-cost, rotational deployments of Security Force Assistance teams and Special Operations forces that offer a high return on investment. Small teams of special operations personnel deploy to 60% of the countries in the region to train with partner nation special forces. Likewise, Security Force Assistance teams deploy to train, advise, and assist partner nation military and security forces. Both elements build strong relationships that promote enhanced interoperability and demonstrate a commitment to our partner nations and their military forces, while subsequently exposing and illuminating violent extremist and malign activities that create instability in the region. Maintaining and potentially expanding this type of presence would increase our ability to better assist our partners and respond to contingencies.

Mr. GALLAGHER. General VanHerck, the FY22 NDAA required an independent assessment with regards to the Arctic by NORTHCOM in coordination with EUCOM and INDOPACOM, can you speak both to the progress of this assessment and to the importance of the corresponding Arctic Security Initiative which would enable you to overhaul U.S. military infrastructure, strategy, and posture in the Arctic region over the next five years?

General VANHERCK. My independent assessment as required by the Arctic Security Initiative, Section 1090 in the FY22 NDAA is ongoing, and I expect to deliver it to the Secretary of Defense by 31 May 2022. I believe it will provide valuable information to support the Secretary's future Arctic policy decisions.

Mr. GALLAGHER. General VanHerck, there are mentions in the PLA's 2020 Science of Military Strategy of possible conventional strikes against the U.S. homeland, assuming these strikes would be targeted against critical facilities such as U.S. Western ports and munitions facilities as a way to keep the U.S. out of a Taiwan fight. Can you speak a little more to that threat and what we should be doing to secure those facilities?

General VANHERCK. Regarding the threat, I assess in the next decade the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) will likely have the capability to conduct long-range precision strikes against land targets from its submarines and surface combatants using land-attack cruise missiles (LACMs), notably enhancing the PRC's global power projection and increasing the threat to CONUS. As for securing critical facilities, we must pursue all-domain awareness through a network of sensors and systems that provide persistent and complete battle-space awareness from subsurface to space and cyberspace. All-domain awareness includes information dominance systems that ingest, aggregate, process, display, and disseminate data that enables decision superiority that will mitigate risk to critical infrastructure in the homelands. When gained, all-domain awareness increases warning time for National leadership against multiple threats, expanding available response options. Investment in exceedingly capable technologies such as improved over the horizon radars, joint all-domain command and control, and undersea surveillance systems, will ultimately

allow the earliest detection of the near-term LACM threat from China. To further mitigate risk to the homelands, I need clear policy guidance on what to defend. With policy, we can design global layered defense and integrated deterrence solutions, including partnering with the Interagency and private sector to increase domestic resilience of our critical infrastructure that supports continuity of government, nuclear command and control, force projection, force protection, and the defense industrial base.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. GAETZ

Mr. GAETZ. Venezuela has bought over \$11.4 billion in Russian military equipment and weapons including fighter jets, attack and transport helicopters, air defense and naval platforms, tanks, armored personnel carriers (APC), self-propelled artillery, and various small arms to include surface-to-air-missiles.

In your testimony, you stated the primary military threat from Russia, should Venezuela receive an influx of cash from American oil sales, would be their ability to provide critical parts and maintenance for Russian supplied military equipment. The underlying issue being Russia can increase Venezuela's military readiness which poses a direct threat to U.S. interests in the region.

Which specific Russian provided military systems and/or capabilities are you most concerned about? Why are these capabilities most concerning to you? What steps can SOUTHCOM take to frustrate that supply chain process?

General RICHARDSON. Venezuela possesses Russian surface-to-air missile systems (SAMs) that are primarily defensive in nature. Venezuela also has up to 1,500 Russian SA-24 (Igla-S) Man-portable air-defense systems (MANPADS) with 5,000 missiles. An enduring concern is improper storage and accountability of MANPADS. SAMs pose a credible threat to military, civilian, and unmanned aircraft operating in the region. This includes posing a credible threat to U.S. forces conducting exercises with regional partners and operations in the Caribbean and South America. Venezuela's Army possesses Russian T-72 tanks and BM-21 and BM-30 multiple rocket launcher systems that could be used in a potential conflict against neighboring countries. Neighboring nations largely lack the capability to defend effectively against such direct or area attacks. Venezuela's Air Force acquired 24 Russian Su-30 fighter aircraft in 2008. Caracas struggles to conduct routine maintenance, but Venezuela seeks to extend the Su-30s' service life. Su-30s ensure sovereignty through patrolling and deterrence, to include past intercepts of U.S. military aircraft conducting reconnaissance flights. SOUTHCOM will continue to identify and publicly message about shortfalls in reliability and performance of Russian military equipment, to include potential sanction violations of breaking any US agreements. This public messaging will speak to readiness of the Venezuelan military and act as a deterrent to other nations who might consider buying Russian equipment. Numerous countries have agreements in place for Russian equipment and others consider purchasing Russian weapons and equipment based on initial cost. Given growing global concerns about the unprovoked Russian invasion of Ukraine, the US now has an opportunity to offer alternatives, and expand security cooperation and assistance in the region.

Mr. GAETZ. According to the Security Force Monitor, a project of the Human Rights Institute at Columbia Law School and the University of California—San Diego's Mexico Violence Resource Project, between 2007 and 2012, the U.S. was providing tactical training to an average of 261 members of Mexican security forces per year. After 2012, that number reached 1,454. According to Mexico's defense ministry, about 1,383 elite soldiers deserted between 1994 and 2015.

When NORTHCOM provides military training to Mexican forces, is there a mechanism or procedure to track who was trained and if any of those trainees have defected to the Mexican cartels?

If so, what is the percentage of U.S.-trained forces that have defected to Mexican cartels? If not, are there plans to develop this capability?

General VANHERCK. The Office of Defense Cooperation is tasked with the responsibility of tracking Mexican military personnel trained by the United States. USNORTHCOM is not tasked to provide this metric nor do we have a mechanism to track Mexican military members who have left military service.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. BANKS

Mr. BANKS. One of the priorities of U.S. Southern Command is to counter transnational criminal organizations that traffic drugs and weapons and engage in other criminal activity. The Joint Interagency Task Force—South plays an instrumental

role in targeting, detecting, and monitoring illicit drug trafficking, while coordinating with the Coast Guard, law enforcement, and partner nations for interception and seizure of illicit narcotics. To assist in this critical mission, JIATF-South relies on government-owned, contractor-operated aircraft for advanced detection and monitoring. The U.S. military has two Cooperative Security Locations, located in El Salvador and Aruba-Curacao, which allow U.S. and partner nation aircraft the use of existing airfields to support the region's multinational efforts to combat transnational organized crime.

General Richardson, I want to ask you about the sufficiency of your resources for detecting and monitoring narcotics traffickers at sea.

1. Is maritime airborne ISR an effective way of detecting and monitoring narcotics traffickers? Would you say that more ISR flight hours leads to more seizures of illicit narcotics?

2. Do you have enough dedicated maritime patrol aircraft to perform this mission?

3. Would additional ISR resources be helpful to assist our government partners and other partner-nations with interdiction?

4. Have there been discussions with international partners in the region to allow for more Cooperative Security Locations, which could expand the footprint of our maritime ISR assets?

General RICHARDSON. Airborne ISR is a critical component of any force package JIATFS employs to detect and monitor illicit drug trafficking and cue interdictions in the maritime domain. Without ISR, JIATFS' probability of detecting a drug trafficker is approximately 15%. ISR increases that probability of detection to 60%. Video collected by ISR also serves as a critical enabler to law enforcement and partner nation counternarcotic efforts. In FY21, partner nations were involved in 62% of JIATFS facilitated interdictions. With additional ISR capabilities, we can better vector US and our very willing and capable partner nation forces onto trafficking targets. In FY21, JIATFS' was allocated ~50% of the ISR necessary to meet drug seizure goals, and contracted ISR is used to partially mitigate this shortfall. Congressional support for four Government Owned Contractor Operated aircraft is greatly appreciated; a fifth platform is in the FY23 budget request. While there have been no formal discussions about establishing additional Cooperative Security Locations, SOUTHCOM routinely works with our international partners to operate U.S. ISR from locations throughout the hemisphere. JIATFS also employs Downrange Logisticians in Costa Rica, Panama, and Ecuador to optimize logistic support for steady-state and short notice Maritime Patrol Aircraft operations.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. WALTZ

Mr. WALTZ. The Joint Interagency Task Force-South (JIATF-South) plays an instrumental role in targeting, detecting, and monitoring illicit drug trafficking. To assist in this critical mission, JIATF-South relies on government-owned, contractor-operated aircraft for advanced detection and monitoring. The U.S. military has two Cooperative Security Locations, located in El Salvador and Aruba-Curacao, which allow U.S. and partner nation aircraft the use of existing airfields to support the region's multinational efforts to combat transnational organized crime. General Richardson, is maritime airborne ISR an effective way of detecting and monitoring narcotics traffickers, and do you have enough dedicated maritime patrol aircraft to perform this mission?

Have there been discussions with international partners in the region to allow for more Cooperative Security Locations, which could expand the footprint of our maritime ISR assets?

General RICHARDSON. Airborne ISR is a critical component of any force package JIATFS employs to detect and monitor illicit drug trafficking and cue interdictions in the maritime domain. Without ISR, JIATFS' probability of detecting a drug trafficker is approximately 15%. ISR increases that probability of detection to 60%. Video collected by ISR also serves as a critical enabler to law enforcement and partner nation counternarcotic efforts. In FY21, JIATFS was allocated ~50% of the ISR necessary to meet drug seizure goals, and contracted ISR is used to partially mitigate this shortfall. Congressional support for four Government Owned Contractor Operated aircraft is greatly appreciated; a fifth platform is in the FY23 budget request. While there have been no formal discussions about establishing additional Cooperative Security Locations, SOUTHCOM routinely works with our international partners to operate U.S. ISR from locations throughout the hemisphere, including Guatemala, Panama, Colombia and Ecuador. JIATFS also employs Downrange Logisticians in Costa Rica, Panama, and Ecuador to optimize logistic support for steady-state and short notice Maritime Patrol Aircraft operations.

Mr. WALTZ. Special Operations Command South (SOCSOUTH), SOUTHCOM has had considerable success using an innovative new software system for targeting that relies upon commercially sourced data. Can you share some of the results this system is yielding and any discussions you have had with other senior leaders to bring this capability to other Geographic Combatant Commands (GCCs)?

General RICHARDSON. Since August 2019, the Asymmetric Target Acquisition Center (ATAC), managed out of SOCSOUTH, has supported many operational achievements for SOUTHCOM. It has assisted in over 25 tactical Special Operations Forces operations, seven strategic operations (while also giving near real time support to teams deployed forward), provided refinement to the limited airborne ISR in theater to allocate the assets in a much more efficient manner, helped in two humanitarian assistance/disaster response efforts, and spearheaded the development of patterns and movements of non-traditional targets of interest across the intelligence community. The application of this toolset is very diverse, supporting the gamut of intelligence disciplines helping SIGINT, HUMINT, OSINT, All-Source, and more recently, undergoing testing of counterintelligence and personnel recovery missions.

Additionally, the diversity of the analytic process and data serve a range of problem sets, from TCOs to malign state actors. The collection, and derived intel from the ATAC feeds more than DOD. In the last fiscal year, law enforcement agencies have requested support, leading to the identification and location of 196 targets of which the ATAC has located approximately 184 with high confidence. The rate at which targets are found often exceeds the ability of law enforcement to judicially finish them.

SOUTHCOM is engaged with other Geographic Combatant Commands and supporting other units to develop pilot tests in other areas of responsibility that could benefit from this capability. Expansion of ATAC's tools and data sets would detect problem sets that cross Combatant Commands and lead to better detection of malign activities worldwide.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MRS. BICE

Mrs. BICE. The Committee is aware of developmental unmanned platforms that have the potential to stay airborne for upwards of several months at a time. Can you speak towards how this type of platform could be used in the SOUTHCOM AOR? Would this type of platform be a useful tool to help alleviate the shortage of persistent ISR capabilities at SOUTHCOM?

General RICHARDSON. To mitigate our persistent lack of ISR capability, SOUTHCOM is leveraging innovation. SOUTHCOM can serve as an innovative test bed for DOD and other interagency partners to try out new technologies to counter threats. SOUTHCOM leverages over \$150 million of technology prototypes to fulfill its mission and is leading the way when it comes to operationalizing resilient, energy efficient platforms that reduce emissions and enhance the mission through the innovative use of High-Altitude Balloons (HABs), stratosphere platforms, hydrogen, and solar powered technology. Non-standard ISR collection methods such as the employment of the long dwell autonomous solar powered aircraft known as the Autonomous Maritime Patrol Aircraft and the use of HABs are low cost, multi-intelligence sensor suites that can perform ISR in austere environments for months at a time. These advanced ISR 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.

Mrs. BICE. I understand that SOUTHCOM is participating in a Joint Capability Technology Demonstration (JCTD) for the development of a long-range, persistent, heavy payload, solar-powered unmanned ISR platform. Could you provide an update on how the JCTD is progressing and provide a timeline?

General RICHARDSON. The Autonomous Maritime Patrol Aircraft (AMPA) technical effort is on track. All systems have been thoroughly tested and checked for proper functionality (Technology Readiness Level (TRL) 6 achieved). The manufacturer "Skydweller" is currently working through a "safety pilot" vehicle stage of development, implementing the control systems necessary to deliver an unmanned version of the aircraft for a 7-day, continuous technical flight demonstration later this year. The team is about to complete the development of Fly-by-Wire capability which replaces most of the mechanical pilot systems with the components necessary for autonomous unmanned control. The first flight test of this autonomous configuration, from takeoff to landing (with pilot onboard as a safety backup only), is planned for the beginning of May. At completion of that step, AMPA will move to fully unmanned operations in preparation for the 7-day technical demonstration. We

anticipate achieving a TRL 7 at the completion of the technical demo and a TRL 8/9 with the completion of Military Utility Assessment in Summer 2023.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. MOORE

Mr. MOORE. Regional stability is compromised when adversaries exploit many of our neighbors social and economic liabilities. Any increase in Russian or Chinese influence diminishes American leadership. Through the lens of defense and security cooperation, how can the U.S. stop the growing relationship between South America and China and is it possible to reverse the emergent Chinese influence?

Ms. DALTON. The People's Republic of China (PRC) has a growing interest in Latin America and the Caribbean. The PRC seeks to establish new relationships with our defense partners in the region for both diplomatic and economic purposes. The PRC has made some inroads on defense cooperation and military sales. The PRC often entices partners with no cost training and military equipment sales free of conditions.

The Department of Defense bases its partnerships in the region on shared values of democracy, individual rights, sovereignty, and respect for the rule of law. The PRC activities are concerning to the Department because they could undermine our shared values. The Department is committed to strengthening our bilateral and multilateral defense partnerships to minimize PRC activities when they occur and to remain the trusted partner in the region.

Mr. MOORE. I share the grave concern of others on this committee about China's success in having South American countries no longer recognize Taiwan. What do you think the U.S. could have done different to avoid this pattern?

Ms. DALTON. The PRC has spent decades encouraging the dwindling number of countries that recognize Taiwan diplomatically to switch recognition by offering financial and diplomatic incentives. Currently, eight of the 14 partners that recognize Taiwan are in Latin America and the Caribbean. From the Department's perspective, humanitarian and disaster relief efforts such as medical engagements, civil affairs activities, and deployment of the hospital ship USNS COMFORT demonstrate our enduring solidarity and friendship with partners in the region, while countering negative messaging by adversarial nations such as the PRC. I defer to the Department of State to provide a diplomatic and economic perspective.

Mr. MOORE. Colombia's rapid transformation over the last 30 years continues to be a regional model of how to progress beyond internal conflict. Specifically, in what other countries in your AOR do you feel Colombia's success could be replicated?

Ms. DALTON. The transformation of the Colombian military over the last 30 years provides an example of what can be accomplished if partners have the political will to change, and the United States applies a long-term view and a whole-of-government approach to the problem set.

The success of Plan Colombia can be attributed to four main factors: (1) It had overwhelming bipartisan U.S. congressional support; (2) it was a whole-of-government effort, and interagency partners collaborated effectively to deliver results; (3) it was sustained year after year with predictable funding; and, most importantly, (4) the Government of Colombia played a strong leadership role, was committed to the plan, and provided the majority of the funding.

There are best practices and lessons learned from the Colombia model that the U.S. Government could apply to other regional partners' internal conflict. However, to build partner nations' capacity and transform defense ministries effectively, the Department designs security cooperation programs based on the particular country's requirements and problem sets rather than trying to replicate a model design for another country, such as Colombia.

Mr. MOORE. Regional stability is compromised when adversaries exploit many of our neighbors social and economic liabilities. Any increase in Russian or Chinese influence diminishes American leadership. Through the lens of defense and security cooperation, how can the U.S. stop the growing relationship between South America and China and is it possible to reverse the emergent Chinese influence?

General RICHARDSON. I believe the U.S. has an opportunity right now to reverse progress that Russia has made with countries in the Western Hemisphere. Given Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine, countries that may have once considered a partnership with Russia are taking pause, whether because they do not want to be associated with Russia on principle, or because they realize Russia has diminished its resources in this invasion. Even those countries that already have Russian-made weapons and equipment, may look to replace those with Western-made equipment, which will have a more reliable supply chain for spare parts and training. The U.S. should strive to be that partner of choice in this potential void.

The PRC presents a more long-term, strategic challenge. Twenty-one countries in this AOR have joined the Belt and Road Initiative, which opens the door for critical infrastructure investments that have potential for dual civilian/military use. PRC has 29 port development projects in 17 countries in the AOR, to include near the Panama Canal—a strategic line of communication. There are seven PRC-linked space facilities in three countries and ten countries are using safe city technology, which gives Chinese state-owned enterprise technicians access to government networks. Our best defense against China's ambitions in this region is our partnerships, as well as building and maintaining a shared awareness of the threat. Our security cooperation programs like Sec 333 training and equipping, institutional capacity building, exercises, and Department of State's Foreign Military Funding, Foreign Military Sales, and International Military Education and Training programs all contribute to strengthening our partnerships with the democracies in the region. While we do not need to outspend China to outcompete them, we must maintain presence and cooperation, at the speed of relevance to our partners.

Mr. MOORE. Colombia's rapid transformation over the last 30 years continues to be a regional model of how to progress beyond internal conflict. Specifically, in what other countries in your AOR do you feel Colombia's success could be replicated?

General RICHARDSON. Colombia has gone from being a nation in a decades-long civil war under siege by terrorist groups and drug traffickers, to being a linchpin of security and prosperity in South America. A number of factors contributed to this incredible progress. First, it took decisive commitment and determination from the Government and people of Colombia. The U.S. committed to sustained, bipartisan support across multiple Administrations, as did others throughout the international community. Plan Colombia, which was signed into law in 2000, aimed to address a wide range of security, economic, and social factors. U.S. commitment was largely driven by the concern that the drug traffickers and terrorist groups in Colombia posed a direct threat to our own national security. U.S. funding made up less than 20% of the overall Plan Colombia funding and was largely focused on security as the immediate need, without which economic development could not take hold. Colombia bore the majority of the financial burden, imposing a war tax to raise funds for the effort. It was also Colombian personnel—military and national and local police—who carried the security mission, with U.S. personnel in support. Colombians assumed the responsibility for restoring security and bringing government control to previously ungoverned areas. There are areas in this AOR that face many of the same security challenges that Colombia did prior to 2000, however, the unique set of circumstances that drove political will both in the United States and in these partner nations may not exist to the extent necessary to drive this type of transformation.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MRS. MURPHY

Mrs. MURPHY. I am particularly concerned about the influence of Russia and China in Caribbean countries. As an example, the Bahamas is just 50 miles from Florida, and we have heard of ongoing efforts by China to loan money and rebuild infrastructure in an effort to gain influence over the Bahamas. As you know, the Bahamas experienced hundreds of millions of dollars in infrastructure damage as a result of Hurricane Dorian. I am concerned China will try to exploit this need of the Bahamas by offering to loan more money and rebuild infrastructure to advance their presence and influence. Would U.S. aid or investment specifically targeted at rebuilding infrastructure damaged by Hurricane Dorian help?

General RICHARDSON. While all U.S. engagement and investment are helpful in building stronger partnerships, I would defer to U.S. Northern Command, which has responsibility for the Bahamas and would be better positioned to provide details specific to aid related to Hurricane Dorian.

Mrs. MURPHY. I am particularly concerned about the influence of Russia and China in Caribbean countries. As an example, the Bahamas is just 50 miles from Florida, and we have heard of ongoing efforts by China to loan money and rebuild infrastructure in an effort to gain influence over the Bahamas. As you know, the Bahamas experienced hundreds of millions of dollars in infrastructure damage as a result of Hurricane Dorian. I am concerned China will try to exploit this need of the Bahamas by offering to loan more money and rebuild infrastructure to advance their presence and influence. Would U.S. aid or investment specifically targeted at rebuilding infrastructure damaged by Hurricane Dorian help?

General VANHERCK. Yes, U.S. aid or investment targeted to rebuilding hurricane-damaged infrastructure would help. The U.S.-Bahamas military-to-military relationship is strong, and improving regional security relies on close economic, diplomatic,

and military partnerships. Additional funding for The Bahamas rebuilding efforts would support our position as the trusted partner and help counter Chinese influence in the region.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. HORSFORD

Mr. HORSFORD. I'm curious about the support NORTHCOM is providing to the Department of Homeland Security at the border. This mission has suffered well-documented challenges related to crime, discipline, and morale. At the same time, anecdotal reports from soldiers on the ground lead me to question the effectiveness of their utilization at the border.

It's my understanding that for fiscal year 2021, the total cumulative cost for border support provided to DHS was \$514 million, and the cost so far for fiscal year 2022 is \$158 million. It is also my understanding that these title 10 forces are deployed in a temporary duty, or "TDY", status—sometimes for periods of more than a year.

In fiscal year 2021, how many migrants did National Guard troops directly assist DHS in apprehending, and what percentage of total detentions does this represent?

How many apprehensions in which National Guard troops directly assisted DHS led to the seizure of narcotics or weapons; or a disrupted human trafficking?

Ms. DALTON. National Guard personnel providing DOD support to U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) are not directly participating in law enforcement activities. According to CBP, during fiscal year 2021, DOD support provided by National Guard personnel at the southern border assisted CBP indirectly in:

- Eighteen percent of the apprehensions of migrants by CBP (i.e., 322,550 of 1,734,686) at the southern border of the United States; and
- The CBP seizure of approximately 7,260 pounds of narcotics and 650 conveyances used for smuggling, including human smuggling.

Mr. HORSFORD. Has DHS asked DOD for support to CBP along the southern border for fiscal year 2023?

If so, what will this support entail, which States' National Guards do you expect to be affected, and what impact will their deployments have on readiness?

Ms. DALTON. Yes. Secretary Austin is considering a DHS request and has not yet made a decision. Should this request be approved, the Department will notify Congress in accordance with Section 1707 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020 (Public Law 116-92).

During previous years in which DOD provided support to DHS, participating units continued to maintain readiness levels, as continually assessed by the Military Services.

Mr. HORSFORD. I'm curious about the support NORTHCOM is providing to the Department of Homeland Security at the border. This mission has suffered well-documented challenges related to crime, discipline, and morale. At the same time, anecdotal reports from soldiers on the ground lead me to question the effectiveness of their utilization at the border.

It's my understanding that for fiscal year 2021, the total cumulative cost for border support provided to DHS was \$514 million, and the cost so far for fiscal year 2022 is \$158 million. It is also my understanding that these title 10 forces are deployed in a temporary duty, or "TDY", status—sometimes for periods of more than a year.

In fiscal year 2021, how many migrants did National Guard troops directly assist DHS in apprehending, and what percentage of total detentions does this represent?

How many apprehensions in which National Guard troops directly assisted DHS led to the seizure of narcotics or weapons; or a disrupted human trafficking?

General VANHERCK. The National Guard soldiers in Title 10 status supporting the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) on the Southwest Border are prohibited by law from conducting law enforcement operations and therefore are not directly involved in apprehensions or detentions. Their mission includes detection and monitoring, intelligence analysis, and aviation support. In their detection and monitoring role, the National Guard soldiers potentially enabled approximately 200,000 Customs and Border Patrol apprehensions. I defer to DHS for details regarding apprehensions, detentions, seizure of narcotics, weapons, or the disruption of human trafficking.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. CROW

Mr. CROW. The theater special operations commands (TSOC) provide a critical C-WMD capability in protection of the homeland. Are the TSOCs appropriately postured to execute this mission in support NORTHCOM?

General VANHERCK. Yes, Special Operations Command North (SOCNORTH) is currently postured to perform their assigned essential tasks during Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction missions in the homeland and throughout the US-NORTHCOM Area of Responsibility in accordance with specific plans and standing orders. The Department is reviewing Special Operations Forces future force posture, which could affect SOCNORTH. We are closely monitoring potential impacts of any force posture decisions for SOF.

Mr. CROW. Russian military activities and competition in the Arctic is increasing and this will continue due to the effects of climate change. Is NORTHCOM postured to deter Russian aggression and malign activities in the Arctic?

General VANHERCK. This question is best discussed in a classified setting. However, in the interim, Russia has demonstrated a consistent and increasing willingness to ignore international norms; we risk U.S. national interests if we assume Russia will abide by the rules-based order in the Arctic, particularly in light of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. To compete with and deter a more aggressive Russia, that is expanding its Arctic military presence and arming it with advanced weapon systems, the Joint Force must demonstrate the ability to maintain a persistent presence and conduct the full range of military operations in the high north. USNORTHCOM requires routine access to forces organized, trained, and equipped to deploy to the Arctic, and that are supported by resilient infrastructure, high north communications capabilities, and effective command structures.

Mr. CROW. What is NORTHCOM's cyber role and is it sufficiently integrated in the whole-of-government response to a major cyber incident impacting critical infrastructure within the U.S.?

General VANHERCK. As a whole-of-government partner, USNORTHCOM is the DOD Synchronizer for all domain operations for Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA), to include cyber. Upon approval of a Request for Assistance (RFA) from a federal agency, USNORTHCOM is supported by USCYBERCOM to conduct DSCA cyber response actions for DHS Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA). We have a liaison officer that resides at, and integrates with CISA to coordinate RFA needs, and we collaborate weekly with CISA through the NORAD and USNORTHCOM Joint Operations Center for information exchange sessions. Furthermore, we participate with USCYBERCOM through OSD in the CISA-led Joint Cyber Defense Collaborative, which leads the development of plans for cyber defense operations and coordinates execution across the federal government, critical infrastructure owners and operators, industry, and academia.

Mr. CROW. The 140th Wing, Colorado National Guard provides critical fighter support for the NORTHCOM and NORAD's "no-fail" protection of the Homeland mission. To date, the Air Force has not committed to replacing the 140th Wing's aging F-16 Block-30 aircraft with new fighter aircraft. Are you aware of any Air Force plans to end the 140th Wing's flying mission? Would the loss of the 140th Wing's flying mission put NORTHCOM's homeland defense mission at risk?

General VANHERCK. No, I am not aware of Air Force plans to end the flying mission at the 140th Wing. The loss of the 140th could create an unacceptable gap in the NORAD aerospace control alert (ACA) posture. If this was the case, another unit would need to be identified, trained and tasked to continue the defense of the nation's interior.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. LAMBORN

Mr. LAMBORN. Is there any evidence to suggest that China and/or Russia is working to place capabilities in South America solely for the purpose of causing harm to the United States?

General RICHARDSON. Chinese and Russian efforts to build influence often directly undercut U.S. goals in the region and have the potential to cause harm to the United States.

China develops capabilities and infrastructure under the guise of economic, academic, or diplomatic purposes that could also potentially be used for military purposes. The PRC also takes advantage of corrupt officials to win contracts for their state-owned enterprises. Such activity is especially concerning in South America when evaluating Chinese activities near the Strait of Magellan and the Panama Canal—two strategic lines of communication in the Western Hemisphere. China-based companies are engaged in or bidding for several projects related to the Pan-

ama Canal. In addition, a Chinese state-owned enterprise is attempting to secure rights to build installations near the port of Ushuaia, which would provide the PRC presence at the Strait of Magellan and improve access to Antarctica.

Russia continues to attempt to destabilize the region with disinformation through Russian media outlets and Moscow retains the capability to project military power throughout the region with Long Range Aviation and warship port calls. Additionally, Russia's capabilities in Nicaragua and Cuba consisting of two intelligence collection sites have the potential to cause harm to the United States.

Mr. LAMBORN. In the hearing, you mentioned that USSOUTHCOM receives a marginal amount of ISR. Has the command made efforts to work with commercial companies, particularly commercial space companies, to bridge this gap? Can you elaborate on specific arrangements that have been productive?

General RICHARDSON. Given the paucity of ISR we receive, commercial capabilities are a key part of SOUTHCOM's ISR toolkit. Through our partnerships with NGA and NRO, we have access to spaced-based geospatial intelligence (GEOINT) from the satellite constellations of companies like Planet Labs, MAXAR, Blackskey, and Hawkeye 360. Not only do these capabilities allow us to mitigate our limited ISR allocation, but they also provide unclassified, easily shareable GEOINT products that we can provide to our regional partners to enable their operations against shared threats. This regular sharing of unclassified products also allows us to develop the capacity of our regional partners, increasing our overall effectiveness in getting after shared threats.

- Commercial, space-based GEOINT has been critically important during our support to US forces and aid workers on the ground engaged in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations during Haiti's earthquake in August 2021 and Hurricanes Eta and Iota in 2020. SOUTHCOM regularly used these shareable images to provide awareness of road hazards, flooding, and damaged critical infrastructure.
- Planet and MAXAR imagery and products have been crucial in helping the Command counter transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) and supporting our partners' actions to neutralize these networks. For example, between January and March 2022, we provided the Colombian military with imagery of 11 maritime and three air facilities to assist their efforts to stem a recent uptick in vehicle borne improvised explosive devices attacks against security forces. These products derived from commercial imagery bolstered force protection and intelligence preparation of the environment to safeguard not only regional partner forces but also US personnel on a train, advise, and assist mission in country who were often collocated with Colombian forces.

SOUTHCOM also maintains a partnership with the University of Miami's Center for Southeastern Tropical Advanced Remote Sensing (CSTARS), which provides the Command with access to commercial synthetic aperture radar imagery. CSTARS is a core part of our effort to use artificial intelligence and machine learning to enable automated detections that allow us to expand domain awareness by providing early warning of changes in the environment, such as indicators of illicit maritime trafficking. Appropriations in FY21 and FY22 for commercial remote sensing capabilities have been key to SOUTHCOM retaining this capability.