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Before the

COMMITTEE ON
ARMED SERVICES

UNITED STATES SENATE

HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON WORLDWIDE
THREATS

Thursday, May 2, 2024

Washington, D.C.

1   HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON WORLDWIDE THREATS

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5   U.S. Senate

6   Committee on Armed Services

7   Washington, D.C.

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9   The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:30 a.m. in

10 Room SH-216, Hart Senate Office Building, Hon. Jack Reed,

11 chairman of the committee, presiding.

12   Committee Members Present: Senators Reed [presiding],

13 Shaheen, Gillibrand, Blumenthal, Hirono, Kaine, King,

14 Warren, Peters, Rosen, Wicker, Fischer, Cotton, Rounds,

15 Ernst, Cramer, Scott, Tuberville, Mullin, Budd, and Schmitt.

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1   OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JACK REED, U.S. SENATOR FROM

2   RHODE ISLAND

3   Chairman Reed: Good morning. The Committee meets

4   today to receive testimony on the global threats facing the

5   United States and our international partners. I would like

6   to welcome our witnesses, Director of National Intelligence

7   Avril Haines, and Director of Defense Intelligence Agency,

8   Lieutenant General Jeffrey Kruse.

9   I would take a moment to recognize that this is General

10 Kruse's first posture hearing before the Committee. Thank

11 you both for joining us, and please convey the Committee's

12 gratitude to the men and women of the intelligence community

13 for their critical work.

14   Over the past several months, this Committee has

15 received testimony from nearly every military department,

16 armed service, and combatant command about the threats they

17 face. As they have testified and as the DNI's Annual Threat

18 Assessment has made clear, these challenges are evolving

19 quickly. China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea seek to

20 undermine, if not outright challenge, the United States'

21 interest and leadership in the world. I am encouraged that

22 many of these threats are addressed, in part, by the

23 national security supplemental that Congress passed 2 weeks

24 ago. This bill was long overdue, but we cannot overstate

25 its importance.

1   Even in our most conflicted moments the world looks to

2   the United States for leadership. Our allies rely on us for

3   fortitude, and our adversaries hope for us to falter. By

4   finally passing the national security supplemental, Congress

5   sent a powerful message to the world. The legislation

6   demonstrates that we stand resolutely with our allies and

7   partners and that America's interests and safety will not be

8   challenged by dictators or bullies.

9   For the Ukrainians, the bill would provide critical

10   weapons, ammunition, and combat vehicles to revitalize their

11   heroic fight for freedom. Vladimir Putin must be stopped,

12   both for the safety of Ukraine's survival and the security

13   of all Americans. As the Annual Threat Assessment warns,

14   Putin has repeatedly said that if he succeeds in Ukraine he

15   intends to, quote, "reunify other former Soviet states."

16   This would almost certainly involve direct military conflict

17   with a NATO country, requiring the United States to send our

18   own men and women into harm's way.

19   Director Haines, General Kruse, I would ask for your

20   assessment of the Ukraine conflict in the larger context of

21   the evolving international order. I hope you will also

22   address the extent to which Russian and Chinese efforts are

23   aligning under their so-called no-limits partnership, and

24   potential implications for U.S. national security.

25   As we know, China is watching us closely, and the

1 supplemental aid package will serve as an important

2 deterrent to President Xi's aggressive ambitions in the

3 Indo-Pacific and around the world. For several decades, the

4 People's Liberation Army has studied the United States' way

5 of war and focused its efforts on countering our advantages.

6 China has invested in offsetting technologies like anti-

7 access and aerial denial systems, artificial intelligence,

8 hypersonics, and of course, nuclear weapons.

9   Further, China has leveraged a combination of military

10 and civil power against its neighbors, including statecraft,

11 economic pressure, coercion, and deception. Beijing has

12 sought ways to achieve its national objectives while

13 avoiding a direct confrontation with the United States

14 military.

15   Just as Chinese leaders have studied our way of war, we

16 need to study theirs. With that in mind, I would ask our

17 witnesses for their assessment of how China is evolving its

18 competitive strategies and objectives. I would also

19 appreciate an update on what military and non-military

20 factors are most likely to impact Chinese decision-making

21 with respect to potential coercive actions against Taiwan

22 and other regional partners.

23   Finally, in the Middle East I am concerned that we are

24 facing a uniquely dangerous moment. With Israel and Hamas

25 engaged in a violent conflict in Gaza, Iran is seeking to

1   exploit the chaos as an opportunity to force the United

2   States out of the region. Iran appears to have calculated

3   the best strategy to achieve this is by directing its proxy

4   forces to attack American, Israeli, and allied interests in

5   the Middle East.

6   The Iranian-linked Houthi rebels in Yemen have launched

7   hundreds of drones and missile attacks against U.S. and

8   international vessels in the Red Sea, and even further,

9   disrupting nearly 15 percent of global commercial trade,

10   driving up costs and inflation around the world. The

11   national security supplemental will equip U.S. forces with

12   the resources they need to protect our servicemembers and

13   international shipping lanes and will help Israel defend

14   itself from vicious attacks from Iran, Hamas, and other

15   violent groups.

16   Just as importantly, it will provide critical

17   humanitarian aid to Palestinians caught in the crossfire. I

18   would appreciate our witnesses' perspectives on these

19   complex challenges.

20   Thank you again to our witnesses. I look forward to

21   your testimony.

22   As a reminder for my colleagues, there will be a closed

23   session immediately following this hearing in Room SVC-217.

24   Now let me turn to Ranking Member Wicker.

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1   STATEMENT OF HON. ROGER WICKER, U.S. SENATOR FROM

2 MISSOURI

3   Senator Wicker: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

4 Today's hearing is a chance for the Committee to hear the

5 intelligence community's assessment of the many threats that

6 our country faces. I regularly hear from our nation's top

7 uniformed and civilian personnel. Their testimony makes it

8 clear to me that the United States faces a troubling threat

9 environment and that the situation urgently requires

10 American leadership.

11   Armed conflict is raging in multiple theaters.

12 Regional instability is on the rise. Violent Islamic

13 terrorism is expanding. Several of our principal

14 adversaries are deepening their cooperation, forming a new

15 axis of evil and striving to reshape the geopolitical order.

16   We have reached a pivotal moment in history. The

17 decisions we make this year will have far-reaching

18 implications for our national security.

19   It is disturbing to me that the intelligence community

20 seems unable to give our national security officials or the

21 American public an answer about the size of the Chinese

22 defense budget. That said, we do know that our principal

23 adversary, Communist China, has announced another 7.2

24 percent increase to its defense budget for 2024. I would

25 like our witnesses to articulate a plan for how they will

1   answer this question, a plan that involves more than one

2   full-time analyst working on the problem, as is currently

3   the case.

4   No matter the exact size of the Chinese budget, we see

5   with our own eyes, in public and in classified settings, the

6   scope and scale of the Chinese military modernization. If

7   we hope to maintain deterrence or win a fight, we will need

8   the military and the intelligence community to work more

9   closely together than they ever have. To that end, I would

10   like to understand what specific policies the intelligence

11   community has changed to enable a more effective targeting

12   process for the military.

13   Beijing is leading that increasingly integrated axis of

14   countries bent on undermining United States' interest. This

15   new alignment of cooperation among China, Russia, Iran, and

16   North Korea is a greater menace than we have faced in

17   decades. I do not believe the American people have a

18   sufficient understanding of the danger. Many of us do not

19   know the ways in which these adversaries are working

20   together to make Americans, our allies, and our partners

21   less safe. I hope our witnesses can comment with specific

22   examples about this new threat.

23   The national security supplemental that Congress passed

24   last week is an important and historic step in the right

25   direction, as the Chairman just stated. It was necessary,

1   but it is insufficient. We have much more work to do to

2   restore our industrial base to a wartime footing, to

3   strengthen our allies, and to get innovative technologies

4   into the hands of our service members. We do all of this

5   because we hope to prevent a war from ever coming to pass.

6   So I thank our witnesses for their service to the

7   country and for being with us today. Thank you.

8   Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Wicker. Director

9   Haines, please.

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1   STATEMENT OF HON. AVRIL D. HAINES, DIRECTOR OF

2 NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE

3   Ms. Haines: Thank you very much, Chairman Reed,

4 Ranking Member Wicker, and members of this Committee. Thank

5 you for the opportunity to be here alongside my wonderful

6 colleague, General Kruse, the Director of the Defense

7 Intelligence Agency, to present the IC's Annual Threat

8 Assessment.

9   Before I start I want to thank publicly the people of

10 the intelligence community, from the collector to the

11 analyst and everybody in between. We are presenting the

12 result of their labor at this hearing. They work tirelessly

13 every day to support our military, to keep our country safe

14 and prosperous, and we are proud to represent them.

15   Today the United States faces an increasingly complex

16 and interconnected threat environment characterized by

17 really three categories of challenges. The first is an

18 accelerating strategic competition with major authoritarian

19 powers that are actively working to undermine the rules-

20 based order and the open international system, which the

21 United States and our partners rely on for trade, for

22 commerce, and for the free flow of information.

23   The second category is a set of more intense and

24 unpredictable transnational challenges such as

25 cybersecurity, terrorism, climate change, narcotics

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1   trafficking, and health security that often interact with

2   traditional state-based political, economic, and security

3   challenges.

4   And the third category is made up of regional and

5   localized tensions, including those that have erupted into

6   full-blown conflicts, with far-reaching and at times

7   cascading implications, not just for neighboring countries

8   but globally. And all three categories are affected by

9   trends in new and emerging technologies, environmental

10   changes, and economic strain that is stoking instability,

11   making it that much more challenging for us to forecast

12   developments and their implications.

13   And the report we have issued goes through the threats

14   we see in all three categories as they intersect with these

15   key trends, giving you a sense of the IC's baseline

16   assessments of the most pressing threats to U.S. national

17   interests.

18   But rather than attempt to summarize the report here I

19   will just touch on some of the issues that I know are top of

20   mind, starting with the PRC's outlook this year, then

21   provide a brief update on Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the

22   conflict in Gaza, and the scale and scope of cyberattacks

23   that we are currently monitoring.

24   With respect to the PRC, President Xi and his senior

25   leadership expect some degree of future instability in the

1   bilateral relationship with the United States, and they

2   continue to believe that the United States is committed to

3   containing China's rise and undermining the party's rule,

4   but they also perceive value in projecting stability in the

5   relationship this year, particularly from a domestic

6   economic perspective, which is their main priority.

7   We assess that the PRC's leadership recognizes the

8   productivity, debt, demographic demand challenges that

9   China's economy is facing. But rather than looking to

10 stimulate consumer spending or adopting more investment-

11 friendly approaches, President Xi appears to be doubling

12 down on a long-term growth strategy powered by manufacturing

13 strength and technological innovations that will almost

14 certainly deepen public and investor pessimism over the near

15 term.

16   And President Xi is counting on China's investments in

17 technology, such as advanced manufacturing and robotics,

18 artificial intelligence, and high-performance computing to

19 drive productivity gains and spur growth in the future. Yet

20 he is increasingly concerned about the United States'

21 ability to interfere with China's technological goals.

22   Consequently, PRC leaders modified their approach to

23 economic retaliation against the United States over the last

24 year, imposing at least some tangible costs on U.S. firms.

25 And we remain of the view, though, that in the coming months

1   they are likely to limit the level of economic retaliation

2   they engage in, in order to avoid the domestic costs of such

3   actions. In particular, the significant decline in foreign

4   direct investment in China, down 77.5 percent in 2023, is

5   likely to prompt the PRC to be more measured in their

6   responses absent an unexpected escalation by the United

7   States. Rather than engaging in direct economic retaliation

8   that might result in such negative domestic economic

9   consequences, the PRC's tactics are evolving to promote an

10   increasingly sophisticated exploitation of loopholes, avoid

11   detection, engage in stockpiling.

12   Moreover, the PRC also remains focused on achieving its

13   regional and global ambitions, which warrants, from their

14   leadership's perspective, a strategy to boost China's

15   indigenous innovation and technological self-reliance,

16   supports efforts to acquire, steal, or compel the production

17   of intellectual property and capabilities, and controls

18   critical global supply chains that provide the leverage to

19   achieve certain geopolitical outcomes to their advantage.

20   And furthermore, given its ambitions, Beijing will

21   continue to use its military forces to intimidate its

22   neighbors and to shape the region's actions in accordance

23   with the PRC's priorities, most obviously in relation to

24   Taiwan as the PRC presses for unification. And we expect

25   the PLA will field more advanced platforms, deploy new

1   technologies, grow more competent in joint operations, and

2   seek to strengthen their nuclear forces and cyber

3   capabilities will also seeking to divide us from our allies

4   in Europe and in the Indo-Pacific.

5   In the meantime, China is working to develop its own

6   form of multilateralism while deepening its relationship

7   with Russia and Iran, in particular. In fact, China's

8   provision of dual-use components and material to Russia's

9   defense industry is one of several factors that tilted the

10 momentum on the battlefield in Ukraine in Moscow's favor,

11 while also accelerating a reconstitution of Russia's

12 military strength after their extraordinarily costly

13 invasion.

14   And when it comes to Ukraine, we assess that President

15 Putin thinks that domestic and international trends are in

16 his favor. Russia is making incremental progress on the

17 battlefield with the potential for tactical breakthroughs

18 along the front lines in areas such as Donetsk and Kharkiv.

19 And publicly, Putin touts his ammunition and missile

20 production capacity in contrast with what he portrays as

21 significant U.S., European, and Ukrainian limitations. He

22 likely views his position based on Russia's economic

23 trajectory, rearmament efforts, and his political staying

24 power as advantageous compared with the challenges facing

25 the Ukrainians, including the hard fight here and in Europe

1   for continued support for Ukraine.

2   Like Ukraine, Putin has, for months, indicated a

3   willingness to enter into talks with Ukraine and the United

4   States about the future for Ukraine, but without any

5   indication that he is willing to make significant

6   concessions. Putin's increasingly aggressive tactics

7   against Ukraine, such as the strikes on Ukraine's

8   electricity infrastructure, are intended to impress on

9   Ukraine that continuing to fight will only increase the

10   damage to Ukraine and offer no plausible path to victory.

11   By targeting critical infrastructure, Moscow aims to

12   create logistical hurdles that impede Ukraine's ability to

13   move forces and supplies to the front, slow Ukrainian

14   defense production, and build pressure for Kiev to consider

15   pathways out of the war, including through negotiations.

16   And these aggressive tactics are likely to continue, and the

17   war is unlikely to end any time soon.

18   In fact, in a major change in fiscal policy, President

19   Putin has increased defense spending to almost 7 percent of

20   Russia's GDP, nearly double the historical average. The

21   defense budget now accounts for roughly 25 percent of

22   federal spending in Russia. And in many ways this is

23   prompted by the fact that Russia has paid an enormous price

24   for the war in Ukraine. Not only has Russia spent hundreds

25   of billions of dollars, suffering more military losses than

1   in any time since World War II, with more than 300,000

2   casualties, but the war precipitated Finland's and Sweden's

3   membership in NATO, which Putin believes requires an

4   expansion of Russia's ground forces. And Putin continues to

5   judge that Russia is under threat and almost certainly

6   assumes that a larger, better-equipped military will drive

7   that point home to Western and domestic audiences.

8   Putin's strategic goals also remain unchanged. He

9   continues to see NATO enlargement and Western support to

10   Ukraine as reinforcing his long-held belief that the United

11   States and Europe seek to restrict Russian power. In turn,

12   he has tried to capitalize on global events such as the

13   outbreak of the conflict between Israel and Hamas, to divide

14   us from our allies.

15   And the crisis in Gaza is another striking example of

16   how a localized conflict can produce global impact. Nearly

17   7 months in, the Gaza conflict has roiled the Middle East,

18   presenting new security paradigms and humanitarian

19   challenges while pulling in a range of actors. Most

20   prominently, there was the unprecedented level of attacks

21   between Iran and Israel, with Iran and its proxies launching

22   hundreds of weapons towards Israel in response to Israel's

23   killing of Iranian officials in Damascus. And additionally,

24   cross-border attacks along Israel's northern border with

25   Lebanon continue at a pace and intensity that is controlled

1   but has the potential to escalate, even as we continue to

2   assess that Hezbollah does not want the situation to develop

3   into an all-out war with Israel and the United States.

4   And as of last week, the Houthis resumed nearly daily

5   maritime attacks after announcing last month that they

6   intend to escalate strikes and expand their hostile actions

7   to the Indian Ocean. And meanwhile, Iranian-aligned militia

8   groups in the region continue to plan attacks against our

9   forces, but have broadly paused conducting such attacks,

10   though it is not clear how long that pause will last.

11   Moreover, the crisis has galvanized violence by a range

12   of actors around the world. Both al Qaeda and ISIS,

13   inspired by Hamas, have directed supporters to conduct

14   attacks against Israel and U.S. interests, demonstrating yet

15   again the degree to which so many threat streams have system

16   effects.

17   Finally, I will just end by talking about the

18   increasing challenge associated with one of our most

19   pernicious transnational threats, cyberattacks. We have

20   seen a massive increase in the number of ransomware attacks

21   globally in the last year, which went up as much as 74

22   percent in 2023. U.S. entities were the most heavily

23   targeted, with attacks against the health care sector

24   roughly doubling what they had been the year before.

25   And moreover, this year cyber actors are attacking U.S.

1   industrial control systems, which are typically used to

2   automate industrial processes at record levels. Many

3   critical infrastructure sectors, including water and

4   wastewater, food, and agriculture, defense, energy, and

5   transportation rely on such systems. And although the

6   likelihood of any single attack having a widespread effect

7   on interrupting critical services remains low, the increased

8   number of attacks and the actors' willingness to access and

9   manipulate these control systems increases the collective

10 odds that at least one could have a more significant impact.

11   And in virtually all of the attacks we have seen

12 against U.S. critical infrastructure, cyber actors took

13 advantage of default or weak passwords, unpatched known

14 vulnerabilities, and poorly secured network connections to

15 launch relatively simple attacks. And for this reason it is

16 crucial that all of us, particularly critical infrastructure

17 owners and operators, improve our cybersecurity practices to

18 reduce our vulnerability to such efforts.

19   State actors, of course, can use more sophisticated

20 capabilities to more reliably cause greater disruptions by

21 breaching better-defended targets, resulting in, for

22 example, multiple failures at once. State actors, however,

23 also tend to recognize their own vulnerabilities, and are

24 unlikely to engage in attacks on critical infrastructure

25 unless they are at war. Instead, these actors put a premium

1   on preparing offensive capability basically during

2   peacetime, in part by preemptively planting footholds in our

3   infrastructure. And what is often the case, particularly in

4   the context of ransomware attacks, is that we are dealing

5   with unaffiliated cyber actors focused on obtaining money,

6   power, or hacktivists who seek notoriety for specific

7   causes.

8   And there are, of course, so many threats and scenarios

9   that I have not covered in my opening remarks, but I hope we

10 can do so when we get to your questions. And most of all,

11 thank you for your support for the intelligence community's

12 work and also for the work on 702 reauthorization. We very

13 much appreciate it. Thank you.

14   [The prepared statement of Ms. Haines follows:]

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1   Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Director.   General

2   Kruse, please.

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1   STATEMENT OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL JEFFREY A. KRUSE,

2 USAF, DIRECTOR OF DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

3   General Kruse: Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Wicker,

4 and distinguished members of this Committee, thank you for

5 the opportunity to join Director Haines in presenting our

6 assessment of the global security environment. I would like

7 to streamline my opening comments this morning first by

8 echoing the DNI's overall assessments in her remarks as well

9 as her thanks to the men and women of the intelligence

10 community.

11   The Defense Intelligence Agency alone has officers in

12 more than 140 nations around the globe, and we are joined by

13 thousands more from across the 18 members of the IC. And

14 with your support they are world class in their commitment

15 and their results, and it is a privilege to represent them

16 and their work before the Committee.

17   The national security arena's complexity, trajectory,

18 and rate of change is perhaps the highest and most

19 consequential we have seen in several decades. How we

20 respond matters, and our level of innovation, focus, and

21 integration must equal or outpace that of our adversaries.

22 In this vein I would offer three overarching themes beyond

23 what the DNI has already mentioned, that are the most

24 concerning to me as the Director of the Defense Intelligence

25 Agency.

1   First is that while individually threats are growing,

2 whether specific countries or rapid growth in malign use of

3 advanced technology, artificial intelligence, biotechnology,

4 unmanned systems, or cyber, there are a growing number of

5 adversaries who are interacting and partnering in ways, and

6 toward ends, that we have not seen before. Historical

7 friction points are no longer governing their relationships,

8 and the new resulting partnerships are still nascent and

9 untested, meaning how we predict and shape their trajectory

10 is nascent and untested, as well.

11   Second, while much of our collection, our analysis, our

12 modernization, and our engagements are laser-focused on near

13 and midterm issues and impacts in Ukraine, the Indo-Pacific,

14 and the Middle East, the long-term trajectory in these

15 regions and the impacts on the United States are equally

16 troubling and perhaps even more far-reaching. For example,

17 how events in Ukraine play out in the months ahead will be

18 critical and will impact how Russia emerges, postured and

19 emboldened for potential future conflict with its neighbors,

20 including NATO.

21   Similarly, the Chinese Communist Party's national and

22 military plans are not solely focused on Taiwan and the

23 South China Sea in the 2020s, but also on securing an

24 entirely new place for the People's Republic of China

25 throughout the 2030s and the 2040s. These ambitions and

1 their associated military, space, cyber, and nuclear

2 expansion to entice or compel outcomes are at the expense of

3 their neighbors, the region, the United States, and the open

4 international system.

5   And in the Middle East, as mentioned, how the current

6 conflict between Hamas and Israel is resolved is likely to

7 determine regional dynamics for decades.

8   Consequently, how we view and adequately prepare for

9 these longer-term outcomes is a near-term issue, with near-

10 term actions required.

11   And then finally the third issue is our unquestionable

12 need to protect our networks, our data, and our people from

13 the pervasive threat of cyber actors, foreign intelligence

14 entities, and insider threats. This includes not only the

15 sophisticated capabilities of state actors, such as Russia

16 and China, but also rogue cyber actors loosely aligned to

17 governments.

18   In addition to what Director Haines has already stated

19 on the growing threat to critical infrastructure and local

20 governments, this threat directly endangers our defense

21 industrial capabilities, our hard-won technological and

22 military advantages, our allies and partners, and our future

23 defense operations. We must partner, invest, and integrate

24 in new ways to secure what we value and safeguard the

25 assured resiliency of our networks, the data, and the

1   people.

2   Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the

3   Committee today. We are grateful for the Committee's

4   longstanding partnership and support, and I look forward to

5   your questions.

6   [The prepared statement of General Kruse follows:]

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1   Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, General.

2   For both the director and the general, the intelligence

3   community, I believe, and correct me if I am inaccurate,

4   concluded that Iran was not aware prior to the attack by

5   Hamas of the operation, but they seem to be exploiting it

6   significantly by using their proxies throughout the region.

7   And as you pointed out, Director Haines, our retaliation in

8   September, 82 different strikes, has at the moment inhibited

9   many of their proxies.   Still, the Houthis are conducting

10 operations.

11   Can you give me an assessment of the Iranian strategy?

12 Is it reactive or proactive?   Are they trying to organize a

13 decisive victory, or are they simply reacting to what is

14 going on, or trying to take advantage of what is going on?

15   Ms. Haines: Thank you so much, Chairman.   I think

16 really it is a combination of all of those things, which is

17 to say that even though we do not assess that they were

18 aware of the particular attack at the moment that it

19 occurred, in the way that it did, they obviously have been

20 supportive of Hamas in the past, have provided funding and

21 training and other assistance of different types, and the

22 reality is that, in many ways, they support efforts to

23 counter Israel, as we have seen.   They see Israel as their

24 enemy, and they have long done so.

25   And so as things have developed I think they are taking

1   advantage of every opportunity to ultimately try to

2   undermine the state of Israel, in many respects. So that is

3   certainly part of what they are doing.

4   It is also, I think, true that they are looking to take

5   advantage of opportunities to enhance their influence in the

6   region, and that is something that, again, they have long

7   worked on, whether it is through the Iranian-aligned militia

8   groups that we are all aware of in the region or through

9   their relationship with the Houthis, or through their

10 relationship with Hamas, and, of course, one of their

11 closest partners, Hezbollah.

12   And so in supporting them, and in also increasing their

13 influence there is a kind of a long-term strategy of trying

14 to enhance that, including in countries like Iraq and so on.

15   General Kruse may have more to add.

16   Chairman Reed: General Kruse?

17   General Kruse: I think I would just echo a couple of

18 things that the DNI mentioned. One is that they have had a

19 long-term strategy, over many decades, and they have been

20 long-term suppliers and supporters of the groups already

21 mentioned.

22   Within that larger strategy, this conflict came into

23 being and they have used every opportunity to take advantage

24 of the circumstances. I would not call it necessarily

25 reactive, but the ability to, within their larger construct,

1   increase their influence and come out. At some point this

2   conflict will end.   Iran has gone through various sets of

3   calculus over time about escalation or not escalating, and I

4   think they are navigating a path by which they think they

5   can create more influence within the region for the longer

6   term environment that we will find at the end of the

7   existing conflict.

8   Chairman Reed: In looking at China you mentioned,

9   Director Haines, and both, I think, General Kruse, that they

10   are trying to use their economic powers throughout the

11   world's supply chains, and that seems to be the particular

12   case with strategic minerals. Do you see us in a fight,

13   quote/unquote, over securing adequate strategic minerals?

14   Because these are essential to batteries and other things

15   that could be the source of power in the next generation.

16   Ms. Haines: Yes, absolutely. I mean, one way to think

17   about this is as follows. They have used rare earth

18   elements and critical minerals as a leverage point for

19   achieving geopolitical outcomes in different spaces, because

20   I think they both recognize their capacity with respect to

21   mining and processing is significant, and it gives them the

22   ability to sort of move forward on a plan for how do we

23   control the global supply chains in these areas, and

24   recognizing that these are incredibly important to the

25   prosperity of many economic futures for different countries.

1   And moving forward they have seen the ability to use that,

2   again, as a leverage point.

3   And what we have seen in this area, and I think their

4   sort of history is a useful lesson in this, which is to say

5   that they have actually passed laws, dating back decades now

6   even, for being able to control the rare earth elements, and

7   we saw them actually use this first, I think, in the context

8   of a dispute with Japan over the Senkaku Islands, where they

9   ultimately used their leverage there by cutting off exports

10 that were important to Japan's economy at the time, as a way

11 of pressuring them in the context of a land dispute and a

12 maritime dispute.

13   So I think that is an example of what we have seen. We

14 have also seen them pass export controls of gallium and

15 uranium more recently and other things that are important,

16 and again, using this as a leverage point. And I think what

17 we have been trying to do is try to help policymakers

18 understand how they are approaching this, where they are

19 getting close to having control over a critical supply

20 chain, and then being able to highlight opportunities for

21 trying to disrupt that so that we can maintain resilience in

22 these areas.

23   Chairman Reed: Thank you. No need for a response

24 unless I am inaccurate, but one the key advantages is they

25 do a tremendous amount of refining, so these minerals could

1   be -- in fact, I think Australia has a huge cache of these

2   minerals, but the refining is all done in China, and that is

3   the choke point.

4   Ms. Haines: Yeah, lithium is a good example of this.

5   Chairman Reed: Senator Fischer, please.

6   Senator Fischer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank

7   you both for being here today.

8   Director Haines, in the 2024 Annual Threat Assessment

9   it stated that if Beijing believed that a major conflict

10   with the United States were imminent it would consider

11   aggressive cyber operations against U.S. critical

12   infrastructure and military assets. Such a strike would be

13   designed to deter U.S. military action by impeding U.S.

14   decision-making, inducing societal panic, and interfering

15   with the deployment of U.S. forces.

16   In your opening comments you mentioned how Chinese

17   cyber actors are currently working to disrupt and destroy

18   some of our critical infrastructure, putting things in place

19   for future possibilities of using that. In this setting,

20   can you provide us with any examples of this type of malign

21   cyber activity?

22   Ms. Haines: Yes. I think just to be precise, but I

23   think consistent with what you just said, what we see is

24   both China and Russia effectively trying to pre-position

25   themselves in ways that would allow them to conduct those

1   kinds of attacks, not actually yet necessarily engaging in

2   those attacks, and obviously we can discuss this further in

3   a closed session.

4   And I can get back to you. I think we do have one or

5   two examples that we have declassified of where they have

6   tried to produce such footholds, essentially, in

7   infrastructure. So I will do so in a follow-up.

8   Senator Fischer: Okay. Does the intelligence

9   community work at all with our utility companies and others

10 so that you can increase awareness about the possibility of

11 attacks and how these companies can work with you to help

12 mitigate their vulnerability?

13   Ms. Haines: Yes. We do so largely through, for

14 example, CISA for cybersecurity related to critical

15 infrastructure, but we are very heavily working with them to

16 ensure that they are able to provide the kind of warnings

17 that you are describing for critical infrastructure across

18 the board. And this is something that we spend quite a bit

19 of time on, and as I indicated, we are seeing this sort of

20 significant increase in attacks on control systems, which is

21 so important to critical infrastructure. So much of our

22 critical infrastructure relies on these types of automated

23 control systems that are vulnerable to cyberattack.

24   But again, sort of working through exactly the

25 attribution chain of where those attacks are coming from is

1   quite challenging, and that is something that we spend quite

2   a bit of time on. And again, as I indicated, so many of

3   those attacks are basically possible as a consequence of

4   just not engaging in good cybersecurity practices -- not

5   updating passwords, not doing the kind of work that needs to

6   be done, patching vulnerabilities that we are aware of. The

7   government will put out notices, essentially, about such

8   vulnerabilities, and we really think it is crucial for folks

9   to do those types of cybersecurity practices. Because if

10 they did that, it actually would reduce the -- yeah,

11 significantly.

12   Senator Fischer: Right. Over the past several years

13 we have watched as Russia and China, Iran, North Korea, they

14 are rapidly expanding and modernizing their nuclear

15 arsenals. They are also developing some really dangerous

16 new capabilities that they can strike the United States

17 with. And it really can happen without much warning.

18   Do we have any idea, General or Director, on how large

19 of stockpiles these countries have and/or also what their

20 intention is in future production?

21   General Kruse: I think in this setting I would say

22 yes, we have a great, I think, insight into a handful of the

23 countries with good precision. There are a few countries

24 where we have some ranges, and in the closed session we

25 would be happy to share those with you, as well as their

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1 likelihood of delivery of those to the continental United

2 States.

3   Senator Fischer: Right now the United States provides

4 a nuclear umbrella to our allies. They are dependent upon

5 that, and I believe it limits nuclear proliferation around

6 this world because of the confidence that our allies have in

7 our umbrella that we provide them. Do you worry about our

8 allies losing confidence in our ability to provide them with

9 a strong deterrence when we see our adversaries continue to

10 build at a breathtaking pace their nuclear capabilities?

11   Ms. Haines: I will start. I mean, I think you are

12 absolutely right that the nuclear umbrella that we provide

13 is intended to ultimately counter proliferation of nuclear

14 weapons. And whether or not we are seeing a degradation in

15 our allies' confidence that we will be there in these

16 circumstances, I would say it is not that I take it for

17 granted, but rather that I think it is something that we

18 have to continue to be very vigilant in working with our

19 allies to ensure that they continue to have confidence in

20 that nuclear umbrella in certain circumstances.

21   I think there has been a fair amount of discussion

22 about whether the Republic of Korea, for example, is

23 particularly concerned, and given what they are seeing from

24 the north, and whether or not they continue to have

25 confidence in us being able to provide that nuclear umbrella

1 versus their own particular -- you know, whether or not they

2 should, in fact, engage in their own nuclear program. But

3 our assessment at this stage is not that they are pursuing

4 that at this point, even though we recognize it is an area

5 of public conversation.

6   General Kruse: And I would just echo that having been

7 assigned in the Indo-Pacific many times, with really some of

8 the adversaries who present a threat and then some of our

9 allies who engage in the dialogue with us, is that they will

10 occasionally, when we see a change in stockpile, have a

11 great conversation with us. And what you will see is that

12 as long as we continue that dialogue they are confident in

13 the U.S. nuclear umbrella.

14   And I would offer as we think through this, sometimes

15 it is not just the capacity. An increase in the numbers do

16 not change the nuclear umbrella that the U.S. provides. It

17 is really only when you get to changes in capabilities. And

18 every conversation that we have had to date have been good,

19 constructive conversations, and those will just continue.
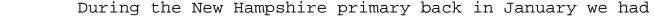
20   Senator Fischer: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

21   Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Fischer.

22   Senator Shaheen, please.

23   Senator Shaheen: Good morning. Thank you both for

24 being here.

25   During the New Hampshire primary back in January we had

1   a domestic actor who used artificial intelligence to voice

2   clone President Biden's voice and to target voters on a

3   roboscam in New Hampshire. Your threat assessment talks

4   about how Russia is contemplating using electoral outcomes

5   in 2024 to effect Western support for Ukraine. Both Russia

6   and China are using AI to improve their capabilities to

7   reach into Western audiences. You both mentioned that in

8   your opening statements, that potential impact.

9   So I have a couple of questions. First of all, are you

10   able to share information with state and local officials

11   when you see those kinds of AI or cyber-generated influence

12   into what is happening in states? Director Haines?

13   Ms. Haines: Yes, thank you. So yes, working with

14   CISA, what we have been doing is, in fact, been trying to

15   expand our capacity to do so, but we do have direct

16   communication with them on basically deepfakes and other

17   types of manipulated media.

18   Senator Shaheen: And are our adversaries using AI

19   platforms in the United States to conduct disinformation and

20   spread propaganda?

21   Ms. Haines: Yes, absolutely. Russia, in particular,

22   has engaged in the use of artificial intelligence,

23   generative AI in the context of their information

24   operations. This is something that we have seen pretty

25   consistently, and they are not the only ones.

1   Senator Shaheen: And to what extent are we seeing

2 those kinds of efforts attempting to manipulate the unrest

3 that we are seeing on college campuses?

4   Ms. Haines: I do not have any information that

5 suggests that they are doing this at this stage, but that

6 does not mean that it will not develop over time.

7   Senator Shaheen: Really? Because Rutgers had a report

8 that looked at the back end of TikTok, which has now been

9 closed off, that says that, in fact, the Chinese are

10 manipulating through disinformation to populations who use

11 TikTok to manipulate the situation in Gaza and spread

12 misinformation. You are not seeing any of that, even though

13 that has been publicly reported?

14   Ms. Haines: Yes, that we are seeing with respect to

15 the Gaza conflict. Apologies. I thought you talked about

16 using that to instigate protests in the United States, and

17 that is what we are not seeing. Does that make sense?

18   Senator Shaheen: You do not consider the protests on

19 campuses protests in the United States?

20   Ms. Haines: I do. I am sorry. We are seeing

21 misinformation/disinformation, and even true information,

22 that is being exacerbated with respect to the Gaza conflict.

23 It is not directed at protesters, so far as I am aware at

24 this stage. Does that make sense? In other words, looking

25 to direct protests.

1   Senator Shaheen: I am not being clear, because there

2   have also been public reports that particular Chinese

3   sympathizers are funding some of these protests to exploit

4   the situation in Gaza. I mean, that has been reported

5   publicly for several months, and in fact, even the committee

6   in the House that is looking at China, Mike Gallagher, has

7   talked about this. So are we seeing that?

8   Ms. Haines: I am not seeing information that indicates

9   that the Chinese government is directing that. So that is

10   the piece that --

11   Senator Shaheen: Okay. I am sorry.

12   Ms. Haines: -- I do not see.

13   Senator Shaheen: We do see Chinese sympathizers who

14   are doing this.

15   Ms. Haines: That is part of FBI pieces, was they are

16   looking at what is happening within the United States, and I

17   defer to them, and we can certainly get back to you on that

18   question.

19   Senator Shaheen: I can follow up in the closed

20   session.

21   But I also wanted to raise the concerns about renewed

22   reporting that has again, as a result of work done by CBS 60

23   Minutes, that suggests that our adversaries could be behind

24   the anomalous health incidents that have affected so many of

25   our diplomats and servicemembers abroad. Are you rethinking

1   how the intel community is looking at what has happened with

2   those anomalous health incidents and thinking that maybe we

3   should do a little more investigating about who is behind

4   those?

5   Ms. Haines: Thank you, Senator. We absolutely are

6   continuing to investigate what is happening with anomalous

7   health incidents, and we identified in our last, which is

8   now a little over a year ago, intelligence community

9   assessment a whole series of gap areas that we have to

10   continue to work to ensure that we are collecting

11   intelligence, making sure that we are, in fact, closing

12   those gaps so that we can be more confident in our

13   assessment but also to determine whether or not they

14   undermine any of the basic assumptions that we make in those

15   assessments. And so that has been a continued process, and

16   will continue as a process. And there is no question that

17   we all see this as a very important and priority for the

18   intelligence community.

19   When we went back, obviously, after the 60 Minutes show

20   we said, you know, is there anything here that changes our

21   assumptions, our assessments. Our analysts took a very

22   close look at it. The vast majority they say they had

23   already actually known before the intelligence community

24   assessment was issued. But there were new things since the

25   intelligence community assessment that had come in. And

1   they still have not changed their basic assessments at this

2   point, which is essentially that some elements think it is

3   very unlikely, some think it is unlikely. They have various

4   degrees of confidence as to whether or not a foreign actor

5   is behind AHIs.

6   But that is something that we just have to continue to

7   work at in order to make sure that we, in fact, have that

8   right, and moreover, that there is not some further

9   information that would be useful to us in understanding what

10 is causing these.

11   Senator Shaheen: Well, thank you. I appreciate that,

12 and I hope you will report back to the Committee.

13   Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

14   Senator Rounds, please.

15   Senator Rounds: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to

16 both of you for your service to our country and for your

17 testimony here today.

18   We live in what is perhaps the most complex, if not

19 most dangerous, threat environment this nation has had to

20 deal with since World War II. Accurate intelligence

21 assessments are crucial to our success in navigating these

22 challenges.

23   Director Haines, your Annual Threat Assessment points

24 out the persistent threat of malign influence operations

25 that are being conducted by Russia, China, and Iran. A host

1   of our systems and platforms critical to our national

2   security operate on the 3.1 to 3.45 gigahertz band of the

3   spectrum, or the lower 3G band. I know we are going to get

4   into the weeds a little bit on this, but I just want to get,

5   for public understanding, the seriousness of this particular

6   issue.

7   Are you aware of any, or of the Chinese efforts to

8   encourage other nations to build out their 5G infrastructure

9   on the 3.1 to 3.45 gigahertz portion of the spectrum?

10   Ms. Haines: Let me come back to you on that question,

11 sir.

12   Senator Rounds: Okay. Let me ask it this way. Are

13 you aware of any Chinese campaigns to encourage U.S.

14 companies to push the Department of Defense to auction off

15 their share of the lower 3 band of the spectrum?

16   Ms. Haines: I should come back to you, just to be

17 confident that I have it right, sir.

18   Senator Rounds: Okay. I will skip the rest of the

19 questioning along that line until later, okay. All right.

20   Director Haines, based on the increasingly robust

21 cooperation between China and Russia, is it fair to assume

22 that if either one of them engaged in hostilities with the

23 United States and our allies that it would increase the

24 likelihood that the other would also initiate some form of

25 hostilities, as well?

1   Ms. Haines: Yeah, we see China and Russia, maybe for

2   the first time, exercising together in relation to Taiwan,

3   and recognizing that this is a place where China definitely

4   wants Russia to be working with them, and we see no reason

5   why they would not.

6   Senator Rounds: General Kruse, in your professional

7   military opinion, is the Department taking into

8   consideration this increased cooperation between Russia and

9   China when it comes to identifying Joint Force requirements?

10   General Kruse: I think the Department is concerned,

11   has been for a while, and then what we have seen over the

12   last 2 years has caused the Department to relook at its

13   analysis and become even more concerned about what our Joint

14   Force requirements, in an environment where as discussed, we

15   would anticipate. Even if Russia and China and a military

16   force are not interoperable they would certainly be

17   cooperative, and we would need to take that into account in

18   force structure, in planning.

19   Senator Rounds: I will just address this to both of

20   you then. Have any of our plans been updated to reflect

21   this "no limits" partnership between Russia and China?

22   General Kruse: I think what I would say is from a

23   departmental perspective our planning process is a multiyear

24   processing, starting with what the threat looks like, and

25   then how do we step through a fairly intensive vetting of

1   what kind of operations we might want to conduct. And for

2   the plans that you are probably most interested in, we are

3   in the middle of that revision today.

4   Senator Rounds: Director Haines?

5   Ms. Haines: Yeah, and we have produced quite a bit of

6   analytic materials, I think a lot of which you have read,

7   that indicates this increasing cooperation in the "no

8   limits" partnership, as you say, but just across really

9   every sector of society -- political, economic, military,

10 technological, and so on. So that is something that our

11 understanding is prompting new planning across the

12 government in many respects.

13   Senator Rounds: The bottom line is that basically if

14 we were to have a conflict with one, that chances are we

15 would have a second front, and that the planning that we

16 have to do includes confrontation on not just one front now

17 but the capabilities, the planning, the equipment, manpower,

18 that would be necessary for two different fronts

19 simultaneously. Am I correct?

20   Ms. Haines: Yeah, I think certainly it is a

21 possibility. The question of just how likely it is I think

22 differs depending on the scenario, which I am sure is

23 obvious to you. But yeah.

24   Senator Rounds: A greater possibility now than what it

25 was 2 or 3 years ago, though.

 1   General Kruse: I think from the Department of Defense

 2   perspective that would certainly be the case, and it just

 3   has to be taken into account whether or not we actually

 4   believe there would be two full upfronts. That is analysis

 5   and assessments that will mature over time. But certainly

 6   we have to take that into account into the planning, as you

 7   have suggested.

 8   Senator Rounds: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

 9   Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Rounds.

10   Senator King, please.

11   Senator King: Thank you, Mr. Chair. First I want to

12   thank you, Director Haines, for starting with an emphasis on

13   cyber. The truth is we are in an invisible war on many

14   fronts on cyber already, as you outlined anything from

15   ransomware to attacks on SCADA systems to insertion of what

16   I call sleeper cells in our critical infrastructure. You

17   also emphasized, rightly, the fact that it has got to start

18   at the desktop, and personal cyber hygiene is critically

19   important.

20   However, particularly on these state-sponsored

21   potential attacks -- well, I would say they have already

22   occurred on our critical infrastructure -- we are not going

23   to be able to patch our way out of that, and you sort of

24   slid by this in your opening comments. But these state

25   adversaries have to be deterred, do they not? They have got

1 to understand that we hold their systems at risk, and that

2 has got to be part of our strategy. It cannot just be

3 patching and cyber hygiene. Do you agree?

4   Ms. Haines: I do. I think that the deterrence does

5 not necessarily have to be about holding their systems at

6 risk from a cyber perspective alone. It is part of an

7 integrated strategy that --

8   Senator King: Right, but they have to feel that they

9 have something at risk and that there will be costs imposed

10 if they move in this direction. Otherwise, it is a low-cost

11 kind of warfare, to which we are very vulnerable.

12   Ms. Haines: Yeah.

13   Senator King: Do you see, and I think you also touched

14 on this, do you see heightened Russian activity with regard

15 to the upcoming elections?

16   Ms. Haines: Yes. I mean, we are consistently, you

17 know, obviously, the last several intelligence community

18 assessments that we have done on election threats have

19 identified Russia as really the major actor in this space,

20 we continue to see them focused on this, and increasingly

21 so.

22   Senator King: Well, one of the things that worries me,

23 in 2016 and 2018 we saw them penetrating something like 40

24 states' electoral systems, in terms of databases of voters

25 and that kind of thing. They never did anything with it,

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1   but my contention was they were not doing that for fun.

2   There is a great potential for disruption our election

3   simply by erasing a voter database in Miami or having the

4   lights go out in Atlanta. Assess that risk, please.

5   Ms. Haines: Yeah. I mean, I think there is no

6   question that they are increasing their capacity and that

7   they are developing and using new technologies that are

8   available to them to get better at doing what they have done

9   before, and ultimately pursuing the potential for such

10   altering.

11   As you say, though, they have not done it, and what I

12   would also say is that I agree -- General Nakasone, before

13   he left, indicated that he thought we were never better

14   prepared to actually defend our election security

15   infrastructure, and I think, honestly, the intelligence

16   community, and in particular NSA and others, have really

17   done tremendous work in this area, and CYBERCOM is

18   consistently engaged in both defensive and offensive work in

19   this area, to try to protect.

20   Senator King: General Nakasone coined the term "defend

21   forward," which we all know what that meant.

22   Ms. Haines: Yeah.

23   Senator King: But CISA is also working with the states

24   --

25   Ms. Haines: Absolutely.

1   Senator King: -- and there has been a relationship of

2   trust that I think is important.

3   Ms. Haines: Yeah.

4   Senator King: One other area, and you have not touched

5   on this, and that is part of my problem, I am afraid it all

6   the pivot toward great power competition we are losing focus

7   on terrorism.   The terrorism threat has not gone away, and

8   in terms of great power competition, deterrence is an

9   important factor. But when you are talking about terrorism,

10   deterrence is not really a factor. They do not have a

11   capital city that is at risk. They do not care about dying.

12   So intelligence is our first line of defense. Reassure

13   me that the intelligence community is not losing focus on

14   terrorism because we are just three or four guys with

15   malintent who can do an awful lot of damage in our country.

16   Ms. Haines: Yeah. I absolutely agree with you. This

17   is a critical issue, it is a growing issue in many respects,

18   and it is one that we are absolutely focused on. And we can

19   talk further in obviously closed session about some of the

20   things we are doing in that area.

21   Senator King: Well, I just hope that we do not lose

22   that focus, because again, we tend to shift. You know, we

23   had 9/11 and terrorism was everything for 15 or 20 years,

24   and now it is all about China and Russia. And I just do not

25   want to lose that focus.

1   Final question. I recently finished a book about the

2   KGB. The KGB is essentially a paranoid organization. They

3   believe that the West is out to get them. And Putin came

4   out of the KGB. How do we convince Putin that NATO is not

5   an aggressive entity? We do not want to invade Russia.

6   Nobody wants to invade Russia. We just want to protect the

7   borders of Europe as they have existed since World War II.

8   Do you agree with me that Putin really believe that NATO is

9   winding up to somehow invade or otherwise violate the

10   sovereignty of Russia?

11   Ms. Haines: Yes. I do agree with you that there is a

12   certain paranoia associated with this, and as I indicated in

13   my opening remarks, Putin really does believe that the

14   security of his country is at risk, on some level. It is, I

15   think, a question actually I wish Director Burns were here

16   for. How could you convince him psychologically that, in

17   fact, NATO is not? Because in so many respects the actions

18   that NATO has taken has actually been intended to reassure,

19   and at the same time it has not landed.

20   And in many ways what Putin has done has precipitated

21   so many events that he was seeking to avoid. I mean, he

22   obviously did not want to see NATO enlarge, and yet his

23   invasion of Ukraine precipitated Finland and Sweden joining,

24   something that never would have happened, frankly, or we

25   certainly would not have assessed that as being likely on

1   the timeline that it occurred, before the invasion. He has

2   actually made it much harder to convince him of that,

3   because there were a number of efforts in NATO to actually

4   talk to Russia --

5   Senator King: He has provoked the very things he was

6   worried about.

7   Ms. Haines: Yeah, exactly.

8   Senator King: I am sorry. My time is up.

9   Ms. Haines: Yeah, please.

10   Senator King: Thank you very much, Director. Thank

11 you, Mr. Chairman.

12   Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator King.

13   Senator Ernst, please.

14   Senator Ernst: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank

15 you both for testifying in front of us today.

16   Director Haines, of course we are here to talk about

17 global threats. We have heard about China, Russia, and so

18 forth. But earlier this week the press reported an effort

19 that would bring one of our global threats here to our

20 homeland. A recent poll found that 71 percent of Gazans

21 viewed Hamas' brutal attack on Israel, including the rape of

22 innocent women, their murder of children, and their murder

23 and capture of Americans as, quote, "the correct decision."

24   Do you believe that welcoming a significant number of

25 Gazans who likely are harboring these views into the United

1   States, do you believe that would threaten the safety of

2   Americans?

3   Ms. Haines: I obviously think it is outrageous to

4   think that Hamas' attack on Israel was anything other than a

5   terrorist attack that was utterly brutal and depraved, and I

6   do not have enough information to understand, you know, when

7   we analyze threats and where the threats come from and how

8   they develop, that is something we do with great care and

9   deliberation. And if you pointed us to here are the

10   individuals that we are concerned about then we would

11   obviously do an assessment for you.

12   Senator Ernst: So just broadly, though, 71 percent in

13   this poll of those in Gaza support what Hamas did, and yet

14   our President is considering an action to bring Gazan

15   refugees to our homeland. So I know you have spent your

16   career working in the intelligence field, but given this

17   poll, which I would assume is factual, can you tell me for

18   certain that this proposed action by the President of the

19   United States will not put our citizens at risk here in the

20   United States?

21   Ms. Haines: I am unfamiliar with the poll, but I can

22   tell you that the process for bringing individuals into the

23   United States includes a very significant vetting process.

24   That would be the kind of process I would expect would

25   occur, and so therefore that would mitigate against any

1   concern or risk that we would have.

2   Senator Ernst: Okay. I know that we have tried to do

3   vetting on Afghans and other refugees as they come in. Many

4   times that has not been successful. I am adamantly opposed

5   to what the President is attempting to do.

6   So you are serving, by law, as the head of the

7   intelligence community, and so you are saying basically,

8   under oath, that you are really unaware of any risk that

9   that might pose to our citizens?

10   Ms. Haines: Sorry. What I am saying is that if there

11 is a process for bringing people into the United States I am

12 familiar with that process, and that process is intended to

13 mitigate against any risk of security. And that is

14 something that I would feel confident about.

15   Senator Ernst: Okay. Thank you. I would like to

16 pivot now to Hamas' backers, the Iranian mullahs. Iran is

17 currently enjoying a golden era of oil profits. We have

18 seen over $80 billion in oil revenues, enabling Iran to give

19 pay raises and recruitment bonuses to its proxies, and you

20 have discussed some of those proxies earlier. These

21 revenues come from sanctioned transactions, but the

22 enforcement of the sanctions remains non-existent.

23   Do you agree, yes or no, that the decision not to

24 enforce sanctions has directly led to the death of U.S.

25 citizens?

1   Ms. Haines: I could not make a sweeping statement like

2   that, I am afraid. I think it is no question that Iran

3   continues to benefit from oil sales and that they look for

4   ways to get around sanctions, and that is something we have

5   seen them engage in, and that they are also, as you say,

6   funding and assisting various groups in the region. I think

7   it is also the case that, frankly, the Iranian economy is in

8   deep trouble right now and is actually suffering

9   significantly. It has been one of the challenges that they

10   are facing.

11   But beyond that, unless I am faced with a particular

12   scenario that we can assess for you then we would obviously

13   do that.

14   Senator Ernst: Well, what I would say is that they do

15   back Hamas. We know that. They back Hamas. And I would

16   not even say they are trying to get around sanctions,

17   because we just do not enforce them. So there is open trade

18   of Iranian oil. We, as the United States, have these

19   sanctions; we do not enforce them. So a good deal of their

20   profits, of course, will go to support these proxies. And

21   Hamas has killed Americans. They killed Americans on

22   October 7th. They have held eight Americans. Three we know

23   are confirmed dead. They are still holding five.

24   So I would say that, just in my mind, my estimation, is

25   that yes, they are using the profits to kill Americans.

1 They have done it already. I would like to see additional

2 enforcement of these sanctions. Not your area, but

3 certainly it all ties together.

4   So I look forward to visiting more about this, maybe in

5 a closed session. But we have got to do better, and I am

6 just using this time to make a statement, too, that I

7 disagree wholeheartedly with what the President is trying to

8 do, by taking people out of Gaza and bringing them to the

9 United States. I have seen failures in the vetting process

10 before. I certainly do not want to see those failures

11 repeated. So I appreciate your time today. Thank you.

12   Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Ernst.

13   Senator Hirono, please.

14   Senator Hirono: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Director

15 Haines, you have acknowledged Russian interference with our

16 upcoming elections. In another area, I am wondering whether

17 the intelligence community was able to identify Russia's use

18 of social media to put out messages that the Maui wildfire

19 was caused by government or that the Maui community should

20 not trust FEMA. Was the intel community able to identify

21 Russian use of social media in this regard?

22   And this is an important question because, of course,

23 as we experience so many more of these kinds of massive

24 climate disasters, or natural disasters, we can expect that

25 Russia will use social media or some other ways to create

1   instability and questions.

2   Ms. Haines: Yeah, thank you very much for the

3   question, ma'am, and I do not remember. So we will get you

4   an answer to that, yeah.

5   Senator Hirono: I know that, for example, Microsoft,

6   for example, was able to discern that Russia was doing this

7   with regard to the Maui wildfire, so I really would like you

8   to address this for me.

9   We know that there is a huge need for people to be able

10   to work in the intel environment. So both of you, we know

11   that there is a huge need for that. And for General Kruse,

12   the Pacific Intelligence and Innovative Initiative is

13   working to create a local skilled workforce to meet DoD's

14   demand for cyber and intel professionals in Hawaii. There

15   is a huge need in Hawaii for people with this kind of

16   background. How is this working, and are you also resorting

17   to AI and other means of making your intel collection more

18   efficient and effective, because there is a huge need for

19   people with this kind of background, but we do not have

20   those people yet. So can you respond to those two

21   questions?

22   General Kruse: Certainly. As mentioned, I have done

23   several assignments to include 2016 to 2019 as the Director

24   of Intelligence at USINDOPACOM and Camp Smith, and

25   personally participated in several recruiting events with

 1   local universities and in partnership with the National

 2   Security Agency and DIA. Lots of recruiting, even down into

 3   the high school level, to build some local recruiting and

 4   local workforce, and then in partnership with the

 5   intelligence community, working to develop centers of

 6   academic excellence in a recruiting pool, as well. So it is

 7   absolutely critical.

 8   I do not believe we will be able to fully man the

 9   intelligence requirements on island without doing local

10   recruiting and being able to develop the workforce, and the

11   local partners have just been absolutely tremendous. So to

12   your answer there, it is critical to do. We are investing

13   in additional STEM and cyber pay, where those kinds of skill

14   sets are required. But to your point, we have skill sets

15   that we need all across the board.

16   On the artificial intelligence question about how do we

17   become more efficient, I think what you will find across the

18   intelligence community is that we are applying AI, and in

19   closed session we can also talk about counter-AI. But how

20   can we be the most effective and the most efficient? I

21   would be happy to walk you through a couple of very specific

22   examples that the Defense Intelligence Agency is currently

23   doing. And then right now we are looking at how do we

24   partner with NGA, NRO, and NSA, and DIA to bring almost a

25   system of systems to be able to queue and be much more

1 effective and much more efficient in how do we collect and

2 how do we assess what we are collecting.

3   Senator Hirono: Thank you. Director Haines, you

4 acknowledged that we have critical infrastructure in the

5 private sector, i.e., our electrical grids, that are subject

6 to cyberattacks, and you noted that you spent quite a lot of

7 time in this area, talking, I suppose, with the state people

8 and the private sector who provide these kinds of grids.

9 And you noted that good cybersecurity practices, such as

10 something as relatively simple as updating passwords, would

11 be very helpful. Do you know if this is happening, and do

12 you partner with, for example, the Public Utilities

13 Commission in the state of Hawaii, and other agencies that

14 actually regulate what these entities do, our electrical and

15 other power entities?

16   But I just want to know. Something as simple as

17 updating passwords, do you know if this is happening?

18   Ms. Haines: Yeah, so we are not working directly with

19 sort of the utility companies across the United States. It

20 is really DHS in the form of CISA and the Department of

21 Energy and others that are doing that, and we support their

22 work by trying to make sure that they have the intelligence

23 they need to provide warning, but also then to better

24 understand what the questions are that are coming from

25 utilities in this space.

1   And my understanding is that they are working very hard

2   with them to improve their cybersecurity practices, patch

3   vulnerabilities, deal with these issues. But it is just

4   more of an observation from our perspective that as we are

5   looking at the attacks that are occurring, particularly

6   against industrial control systems in the country, that the

7   vast majority of them would have been actually prevented if

8   it were not for those kinds of cybersecurity practices not

9   being what they need to be, and instead using default

10   passwords, weak passwords, not patching vulnerabilities that

11   are publicly available, and so on.

12   Senator Hirono: So it is the Department of Homeland

13   Security and basically the Energy Department who would be

14   the people that I should ask?

15   Ms. Haines: Yeah, CISA within the Department of

16   Homeland Security, and we can work with your staff to make

17   sure that you have exactly who is talking to who, and that

18   sort of thing, and if that is helpful for Hawaii.

19   Senator Hirono: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

20   Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Hirono.

21   I will recognize Senator Scott, but I will depart

22   shortly for the Appropriations Committee, and Senator Kaine

23   has agreed to chair the proceeding in my absence. I shall

24   return. Someone once said that. So Senator Scott?

25   Senator Scott: Thank you, Chair. Director Haines and

1   General Kruse, thanks for being here.

2   We have discovered that the DoD purchases equipment

3   from Communist China like printers, computers, TV cameras.

4   Also they purchase drugs made in Communist China, which

5   shocks me. I do not think it is a secret that Communist

6   China wants to destroy our way of life. I think we ought to

7   stop everything -- we should never buy anything. None of us

8   should ever buy anything from Communist China. I do not

9   think they should get a penny of our money, because all they

10   do is build up their military to eventually try to defeat

11   us.

12   A couple of weeks ago, the Secretary of Defense

13   testified that he does not think we should purchase anything

14   from China. Do you each agree with the Secretary?

15   General Kruse: I would echo the Secretary's comment.

16   Ms. Haines: Certainly I make it a practice to agree

17   with the Secretary of Defense.

18   Senator Scott: So Israel was attacked on October 7th.

19   I went back over to visit a kibbutz I was at and I saw the

20   devastation. The Secretary of Defense also testified that

21   there was no evidence that Israel was committing genocide in

22   Gaza or committing war crimes in Gaza. Do each of you agree

23   with that?

24   Ms. Haines: I certainly have no evidence that that is

25   the case, but the fact is in the intelligence community we

1   do not make that kind of determination. That is a legal

2   determination made by others in the U.S. government.

3   General Kruse: And I would echo that answer.

4   Senator Scott: So you have no intelligence that Israel

5   is committing genocide or war crimes. So you do not have

6   any evidence that they are.

7   Ms. Haines: As I said, sir, we just do not make that

8   determination. What we do is we identify the intelligence

9   as we see it, and we give it to others who would make that

10 kind of determination.

11   Senator Scott: Okay. So we have watched what is

12 happening on a lot of our college campuses, like Columbia,

13 UCLA, even here in D.C. at George Washington University. Do

14 you have any intel of outside countries or groups funding

15 some of these violent protests that are going on around the

16 country?

17   Ms. Haines: We have yet to see intelligence that

18 Hamas, which is generally how the question is framed to us,

19 is actually influencing the Gaza-related protests occurring

20 the United States or directing it in any way. That does not

21 mean that, over time, we will not gather intelligence that

22 indicates that certainly, for example, I would expect other

23 countries to take advantage of the opportunity and use it as

24 part of influence operations. But we will continue to

25 monitor that.

1   Senator Scott: General Kruse?

2   General Kruse: The same thing. I do not believe we

3 have seen exactly what you are asking, but I would

4 anticipate the environment would be an opportunity that

5 others would take advantage of.

6   Senator Scott: Okay. How about Qatar? Have you seen

7 any evidence that they are supporting these protests?

8   Ms. Haines: No, sir.

9   Senator Scott: A couple of weeks ago, the head of

10 Space Command, I asked him a question. If 12 of our

11 satellites were destroyed and all the debris was up there,

12 how much of an impact would it have on the rest of our

13 satellites that we depend on, and how would it impact our

14 ability to defend ourselves? Have you done any intelligence

15 briefings that you believe this is a risk, not a risk?

16   Ms. Haines: This is one of these things where it is so

17 case dependent. In other words, just having debris in space

18 is always a problem, and one that obviously ultimately

19 allows for the potential damage of not just national

20 security interests but also commercial and other interests

21 that are effectively facilitated by space. But where the

22 debris occurs makes a difference, and so how much of an

23 impact it would have would matter upon where it is, what

24 other satellites are in the region, what satellites have

25 been destroyed, for example. All of those things are

1 important. And we can talk further in closed session, I

2 think, about some of the modeling that we have done that

3 might be helpful to you.

4   Senator Scott: General Kruse?

5   General Kruse: I would just add the other part of the

6 calculus there is which 12 satellites in this scenario would

7 be taken out, and there is a capability reduction that is

8 also a decrement that we would be very much concerned about.

9 But purely to the debris question, I agree, there has been

10 some modeling done that we could discuss.

11   Senator Scott: How big a risk do you think it is on

12 ingredients in our drugs from China, for our military?

13 Either of you?

14   General Kruse: I do not know that I know enough about

15 that topic to be able to speak on that, and I would be more

16 than happy to work with our analysts to see if we an answer

17 for you that would be useful for you.

18   Senator Scott: Does it surprise you guys that so many

19 of the ingredients in our drugs are coming from China, when

20 they are, at the same time, trying to kill Americans through

21 fentanyl and everything else, and that our military is still

22 relying on I think it is the majority of our drugs'

23 ingredients are coming from China.

24   General Kruse: I do not believe that I am surprised by

25 how the market has developed over years and decades, and

1   then where we find ourselves today. As the environment want

2   us to withdraw there is a supply chain that we will have to

3   modify to implement the policies you are talking about. But

4   certainly you have accurately described how the market has

5   developed and how our supply chains currently work.

6   Senator Scott: Thank you.

7   Senator Kaine: [Presiding.] Thank you, Senator Scott.

8   Good to see you both. I want to just acknowledge some

9   amazing work that the U.S. military has done in two very

10 challenging contexts recently. The U.S. effort to support

11 Israel, together with other nations, during the attack from

12 Iran was truly a superb operation, and I do not think that

13 kind of thing happens by accident or by chance. It

14 demonstrates an awful lot of training, an awful lot of

15 capacity, and an awful lot of cooperation. And had we not

16 been successful in that, the level of escalation that we

17 might have seen in the region, the damage to Israeli cities,

18 communities, people, the likely escalation thereafter could

19 really have been devastating, at a very critical time where

20 the last thing we need is escalation in the Middle East.

21   And so at a hearing like this I want to acknowledge the

22 great service of U.S. military in forming together with

23 Israel and other nations a defense against the Iranian

24 attack.

25   And second, the work that the U.S., primarily the Navy

1   but not solely the Navy, has done in the Red Sea to repel

2   attacks by Houthis against commercial ships, military ships,

3   again in tandem with allies, but most of the work, the hard

4   work, the kinetic, hostile fires being taken by U.S.

5   military has been truly remarkable. And the remarkable

6   thing -- and I know this has got to keep you guys up every

7   night -- is when we are sitting there in the Red Sea and

8   absorbing incoming over and over and over again, we have to

9   have 100 percent success rate. It cannot be 98, it cannot

10   be 99 percent. My understanding is it has been 100 percent

11   up to now. I do not want to jinx it. And we have been as

12   close as 3,000 yards from striking a U.S. ship that we were

13   able to take down with the Gatling gun. Some use of

14   missiles has enabled us to take down incoming missiles or

15   drones at further distance. But 3,000 yards is pretty

16   close. And we have got a lot of Virginians on those ships

17   in the Red Sea, and I know other members here have sailors

18   from their states there too.

19   So I want to start with that, and it takes a lot of

20   work to get to that. I mean, the development of the Aegis

21   system goes back decades, and good intel, and using the

22   intel well, both to defend but also to strike positions in

23   Yemen that could do damage. I mean, I just want to express

24   appreciation.

25   I do want to focus on the Red Sea, so let me begin with

1   Director Haines. What does the IC assess about the Houthis'

2   continuing threat on commercial shipping and how long is

3   that threat likely to remain active?

4   Ms. Haines: Yeah, so our assessment is essentially

5   that it is going to remain active for some time. It is, in

6   part, because Abdul-Malik, the leader of the Houthis,

7   continues, we think, to see domestic political advantage for

8   some of the actions that he is taking, that he is interested

9   in kind of burnishing his regional reputation, and he has

10   seen this to be adding to that in many respects. And that

11   they continue to indigenously produce a fair amount of UAVs,

12   other weapons systems, and so on, and of course they are

13   also getting assistance from the Iranians in this respect,

14   and that neither of those things are likely to change in the

15   near future.

16   Now, that does not mean that the strikes that the

17   Department of Defense and the coalition with our allies have

18   taken have not had impact. They have. But it has been

19   insufficient to really stop the Houthis from going down this

20   road, and so that is sort of our --

21   Senator Kaine: What is your assessment about if there

22   were to be a ceasefire in Gaza? What is the likelihood that

23   the pace of attacks would significantly reduce?

24   Ms. Haines: Yeah, it is honestly unknown at this

25   stage. They have indicated, at different times, that they

1   would comply with a ceasefire, so I think there is a fair

2   possibility that that is what --

3   Senator Kaine: And wasn't there some abatement of the

4   pace of attacks into the Red Sea during the first --

5   Ms. Haines: The prior.

6   Senator Kaine: -- the ceasefire.

7   Ms. Haines: That is exactly right. They did in the

8   prior one. But one of the things that has been challenging

9   is that their rationale for their attacks has shifted over

10   time a bit, and it has gotten more complicated at times,

11   even indicated that they would not stop until humanitarian

12   assistance had been delivered to a certain degree, things

13   like that. So it seems like there are additional

14   requirements that he has added, but it does not mean that he

15   would not pause during a ceasefire.

16   Senator Kaine: And even if the ceasefire might, under

17   past rationale, lead them to stop to the extent that they

18   feel like this is burnishing their reputation for being kind

19   of a bad actor, they might continue even in a ceasefire

20   condition.

21   Ms. Haines: Yeah, it is possible.

22   Senator Kaine: Last question. Why aren't more allies

23   and members of the coalition helping the United States and

24   actually taking military action against Houthis who are

25   targeting their ships? I mean, we are protecting commercial

1   ships of other nations. The number of nations that are

2   participating in the military activities seems small to me.

3   How should I understand that?

4   Ms. Haines: Yeah. I mean, I will start, and General

5   Kruse may have more to add here. I think a number of them

6   really are trying to help in any way that they can, and we

7   have seen it come in different forms, you know, and I would

8   really defer to the Department of Defense in terms of the

9   degree. But let me --

10   Senator Kaine: Provide a quick answer since I am over

11 my time, General Kruse.

12   General Kruse: Sir, I think I would just add that, to

13 the DNI's point, many of them are contributing in other

14 ways, and they are important ways. And while there are few

15 that might be doing defense in the Red Sea specifically,

16 they are doing things that we actually count on. And we

17 appreciate the partnership, but would welcome anyone else

18 who would want to participate.

19   Senator Kaine: Senator Cotton.

20   Senator Cotton: Senator Ernst raised the media reports

21 that suggest President Biden may admit Gazans to this

22 country as refugees. I agree with her. I think that would

23 be insane. There is a reason why Egypt will not let them

24 in, and Egypt is right on their border and speaks their

25 language and has a vested interest in protecting itself from

1   threats from Gaza. If they will not let them in, I do not

2   think the United States should let them in either.

3   But I want to focus now on the actual threats from the

4   crisis at our southern border of actual migrants who have

5   crossed into this country already. Director Haines, the FBI

6   director recently said, the terrorist threat level that we

7   are contending with right now is at a whole other level. Do

8   you agree with Director Wray's assessment?

9   Ms. Haines: Yes, absolutely the terrorist threat level

10   is of great concern, and we can obviously have discussions

11   in closed session about what that means. So I would agree

12   with that.

13   Senator Cotton: How many illegal immigrants on the

14   terror watch list have been caught at the southern border

15   this year?

16   Ms. Haines: I do not remember the number exactly, and

17   we can get you that. Many of them, as I recall, are ones

18   that came out of Colombia. We should give you --

19   Senator Cotton: The answer is 75. Do you think we

20   pitched a perfect game at the border and caught every single

21   migrant on the terror watch list trying to cross into our

22   country?

23   Ms. Haines: No, but being on the terrorist watch list,

24   meaning that if there is known or suspected terrorists or

25   there is information that they may have had contact with

TP One

1   does not actually mean that they are all --

2   Senator Cotton: Okay. How many terrorists have tried

3   to cross the southern border during the Biden

4   administration's tenure?

5   Ms. Haines: Sir, I do not know that I can give you a

6   percentage on that.

7   Senator Cotton: I think the answer is 357. Again, do

8   you think we pitched a perfect game for the last 3 1/2 years

9   and got 357 out of 357? No, I do not think so.

10   How many terrorists tried to cross the southern border

11   during the 4 years of the Trump administration?

12   Ms. Haines: I don't know, sir.

13   Senator Cotton: I think the answer is 11. The Biden

14   administration has also granted entry to more than 7,300

15   illegal aliens who are known as special interest aliens,

16   which means they come from notorious terrorist breeding

17   grounds like Uzbekistan, Syria, Iran, and impose a potential

18   national security risk. That number was based on data

19   collected before Hamas' October 7th atrocity against Israel.

20   Since then, do you think that there may be an even

21   greater surge if Islamic extremists trying to cross our open

22   southern border?

23   Ms. Haines: Can you repeat the question, sir?

24   Senator Cotton: The Biden administration had granted

25   entry to more than 7,300 illegal aliens in the special

1   interest alien category from places like Uzbekistan, Syria,

2   and Iran, and that number came before the October 7th

3   atrocity in Israel. Since then, do you think there might

4   have been an even greater surge in Islamic extremists trying

5   to cross our open southern border?

6   Ms. Haines: We have not seen Hamas directly

7   essentially folks or others in the region to come into the

8   United States to engage in attacks from the Gaza conflict.

9   That does not mean that obviously this is not something that

10   could develop over time, but we are not seeing that related

11   to the Gaza conflict, if that is what --

12   Senator Cotton: Last year, Customs and Border Patrol

13   officials in San Diego issued an internal intelligence

14   notice titled "Foreign Fighters of the Israel-Hamas Conflict

15   May Potentially be Encountered at the Southwest Border." So

16   CBP certainly expect Islamic radicals will try to exploit

17   the border.

18   Ms. Haines: We are trying to --

19   Senator Cotton: Do you think that report is excitable

20   and exaggerated?

21   Ms. Haines: No. I think it is absolutely, you know,

22   it is appropriate to be vigilant on these issues, and as we

23   have talked about in the context of the Gaza conflict we

24   have seen that galvanize, in a sense, different terrorists

25   around the world in different ways. And so I think we are

1   just trying to be as careful as we can. We just have not

2   seen --

3   Senator Cotton: Okay. I want to turn to China briefly

4   here. Last week, Secretary Blinken, on his ballyhooed trip

5   to China, said that China is, quote, "overwhelmingly the

6   number one supplier for Russia's war against Ukraine." Do

7   you agree with Secretary Blinken's assessment?

8   Ms. Haines: There is no question that the dual-use

9   material that is coming through China is having an enormous

10   impact --

11   Senator Cotton: Is China overwhelmingly the number one

12   supplier?

13   Ms. Haines: I mean, they are overwhelmingly the number

14   one supplier to the defense industry in Russia right now.

15   Senator Cotton: Okay. He also said that those

16   supplies are having, quote, "a material effect," end quote,

17   on the war in Ukraine. Do you agree with Secretary

18   Blinken's assessment there?

19   Ms. Haines: I do. I indicated in my opening remarks

20   that we see their supplies actually one of the key factors

21   that essentially adjusted the momentum on the battlefield in

22   Ukraine.

23   Senator Cotton: Okay. On March 18, 2022, three weeks

24   after the war started, President Biden had a call with Xi

25   Jinping where he said do not provide, quote, "material

 1   support," end quote, to Russia. Otherwise you and China

 2   could find yourself in, quote, "significant jeopardy," end

 3   quote. That appeared to have gotten Xi Jinping's attention

 4   in 2022, if you look at trade data, but over the last year

 5   China has now become what you and Secretary Blinken call

 6   Russia's overwhelmingly number one supplier.

 7   One of your predecessors as Deputy National Security

 8   Advisor says that Joe Biden is now not enforcing the red

 9   line he drew on March 18. Do you agree that President Biden

10   is now refusing to enforce that red line he drew with Xi

11   Jinping in March 2022, about providing material support to

12   China?

13   Ms. Haines: I do not. Here is the challenge that I

14   think we have encountered, which is basically there was a

15   lot of focus on China not providing lethal support, and what

16   they have done is try to avoid what is characterized as

17   lethal support, in other words, a fully constructed gun or

18   weapon system, et cetera, to Ukraine, and that has been

19   something that they have maintained. But what has happened,

20   in the meantime, is they provided effectively dual-use

21   materials such as nitrocellulose, a whole series of other

22   things that are critically important sort of folds in the

23   tent for the Russia reconstitution of their defense

24   industry. And that has been the space that policymakers, I

25   know, have been working, including with Congress, to try to

1   prevent from going to Russia, and there has been mixed

2   success in pushing back against that.

3   Senator Cotton: Well, my time is up. I would dispute

4   the characterization that China is only providing dual-use

5   material, but I do not think there is any question that

6   President Biden drew a red line in March of 2022, and he has

7   not been enforcing it against China since.

8   Chairman Reed: [Presiding.] Thank you, Senator

9   Cotton. Senator Gillibrand, please.

10   Senator Gillibrand: Director Haines, earlier this week

11 the Administration published an updated national security

12 memorandum on critical infrastructure security and

13 resilience. How is the IC ensuring effective intelligence

14 sharing and information exchange regarding threats to

15 critical infrastructure, including threats to food and

16 agriculture sector?

17   Ms. Haines: Thank you, Senator. I know this has been

18 an area that you have focused on for quite some time, and we

19 are basically, through our Cybersecurity Threat Integration

20 Intelligence Center we have been expanding our support, in

21 effect, anticipating the NSM but also more generally for

22 critical infrastructure working with CISA, working with the

23 cyber director, obviously, out of the executive branch, and

24 across the interagency. And I think it continues to be an

25 effort in moving across different sectors that are at risk

1   in this area.

2   Senator Gillibrand: Given the recent news about avian

3   bird flu has leapt to other animals, can you talk a little

4   bit about since COVID-19, I have been advocating for a one-

5   health approach to biosecurity that incorporates animal,

6   plant, and environmental health in addition to human health,

7   to detect and prevent the next pandemic. Do you believe

8   that the IC is sufficiently equipped to detect and assess

9   the full range of biological threats that can appear in

10   humans, animals, and plants, and how is the National

11   Counterproliferation and Biosecurity Center at ODNI

12   supporting this effort?

13   Ms. Haines: Yeah, I think it would be always an

14   overstatement to say that we can detect everything that

15   would be ultimately a potential vector for both human and

16   animal concerns.

17   But the fact is we have really expanded and invested a

18   tremendous amount in improving our biosecurity practices,

19   not just in terms of what the National Counterproliferation

20   and Biosecurity Center does in the context of allocating

21   resources for collection, to ensure that we actually have

22   what we need in order to be able to identify vectors but

23   also in doing some really extraordinary modeling for how it

24   is that we can detect when there are outbreaks what is

25   happening and how we can manage it, thinking through the

1   analytic structure that we need to build it into a variety

2   of different functional and regional areas that we are

3   managing in these spaces, and supporting, which has been

4   obviously a main effort by the policy community, a broader,

5   all-of-government kind of biosecurity effort in these areas.

6   So I do think we have improved, but I think there is still

7   room to grow.

8   Senator Gillibrand: Because what the legislation would

9   do, it would co-locate not only the IC community but with

10 the agriculture and scientific communities, so that you are

11 in constant communication, on a regular basis. In the same

12 way we do fusion centers for antiterrorism, fusion centers

13 for cybersecurity, it would be a one-health fusion approach.

14 And I know that is not the exact organization today, but

15 today are you at least having communications with those

16 sectors to be informed and to get the most up-to-date

17 information possible?

18   Ms. Haines: Yeah. Our director has actually invested

19 quite a lot in improving our communication with non-Title 50

20 agencies, which is how we think about it, including the

21 Department of Agriculture and others, so that we can

22 actually have those sorts of conversations. And it has also

23 been supported by the work that our Cybersecurity Threat and

24 Integration Center has done, which has also been improving

25 our communication with various non-Title 50 agencies and

1 departments, including again the Department of Agriculture,

2 because we see them as one of the major sorts of threat

3 potential vectors.

4 Senator Gillibrand: Thank you. I think as you know,

5 the National Defense Authorization Act from 2024 expanded

6 the Cyber Service Academy to allow up to 10 percent of

7 graduates to serve in the non-DoD intelligence community if

8 that component enters into an agreement with the Department

9 of Defense. Has ODNI entered into discussions with the DoD

10 yet to take advantage of this source of cyber professionals,

11 and have you encouraged non-DoD components of the IC to

12 pursue this talent pool?

13 Ms. Haines: Yes, absolutely, and I believe we are in

14 discussions but we have not yet concluded an agreement.

15 Senator Gillibrand: Thank you. Thank you, Mr.

16 Chairman.

17 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator

18 Gillibrand. Senator Mullin, please.

19 Senator Mullin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Director

20 Haines, you had mentioned briefly a little bit about Iran's

21 economy. Do you want to broaden a little bit more on that?

22 Ms. Haines: I should get you the fact and figures. I

23 do not have them in front of me.

24 Senator Mullin: But you said it was in bad shape,

25 right?

1   Ms. Haines: Yes.

2   Senator Mullin: I do not disagree that it is probably

3   not in great shape, but would you agree it is in better

4   shape than it was 3 years ago?

5   Ms. Haines: No. We just recently did a piece that

6   really looked at some of the challenges.

7   Senator Mullin: Ma'am, according to the statistics

8   that study that, actually the GDP for Iran is projected to

9   have a ninth consecutive year by 2029, and in the last 4

10 years since Biden released the sanctions they have actually

11 doubled their GDP. In 2019, they were just about $250

12 billion GDP, and in 2020, they had dropped to below 200, and

13 today they are over 500, and projected to continue to grow

14 until 2029, underneath the current statistics.

15   Now this stuff is open source that you can get, and I

16 actually read it to you. The gross domestic product for GDP

17 as currently priced in Iran was forecasted to continue to

18 increase between '24 and '29, which has already had 4

19 consecutive years of increase, over $101 billion, U.S.

20 dollars, at a 24.15 percent increase over the next 4 years.

21 Since 2025 to 2022, the gross domestic output is $576.24

22 billion.

23   So have the sanctions that were lifted been a good

24 thing or a bad thing for Iran and the war on terror?

25   Ms. Haines: I will get you the figures that we have on

1   this issue and see if that --

2   Senator Mullin: I mean, these figures are government

3   figures. I literally pulled them up since we were sitting

4   here, since you said that. And so I think, I mean, you are

5   the Director of Intelligence. These are something that you

6   really should know, because the more money they have is not

7   good for the U.S. Would you agree with that?

8   Ms. Haines: I certainly think that the more money that

9   they spend on destabilizing activities, on funding various

10   groups --

11   Senator Mullin: Is there any --

12   Ms. Haines: -- what we see as destabilizing, all of

13   those things are not --

14   Senator Mullin: Is there really any debate that Iran

15   is the number one sponsor of war on terror at this point?

16   Ms. Haines: They are absolutely a sponsor.

17   Senator Mullin: So we can both agree that the more

18   money they have is bad.

19   Ms. Haines: For that, absolutely.

20   Senator Mullin: Okay.

21   Ms. Haines: But what I would say is --

22   Senator Mullin: So is this --

23   Ms. Haines: -- for example, if you look at --

24   Senator Mullin: -- is this a good thing --

25   Ms. Haines: -- at the value of --

1   Senator Mullin: Ma'am, what I am trying to get to is

2   we saw a decrease in their GDP when Trump put in strong

3   sanctions and worked with Congress. Those were lifted

4   underneath the Biden administration. Do you agree with

5   those actions?

6   Ms. Haines: I do not take policy positions from the

7   intelligence community.

8   Senator Mullin: Well, the intelligence is following

9   the money.

10   Ms. Haines: I understand, and if you want --

11   Senator Mullin: So from the intelligence perspective,

12   not a policy, then, from an intelligence perspective,

13   Director Haines, was that a good thing?

14   Ms. Haines: It is neither a good thing nor a bad

15   thing. If you want an assessment on whether or not --

16   Senator Mullin: How can you say it is neither a good

17   thing nor a bad thing, ma'am, when you just said they are

18   the number one sponsor of war on terror? That is not

19   debatable. We know that. And a while ago you said that

20   their economy was faltering, but yet we have seen that it

21   has actually doubled underneath the Biden administration

22   since they lifted the sanctions that Congress and the Trump

23   administration put in place. That means they have more

24   money to spend on this. And that is not really a policy

25   question. That is from an intelligence perspective. That

1   has got to cause problems.

2   Ms. Haines: Senator, so on the economy, why don't we

3   get you our assessment of how they are doing. Even if I am

4   right that they are having challenges economically, I do not

5   think that necessarily is a line that you can draw directly

6   between sanctions and how their economy is doing. There are

7   a number of factors that obviously you have to look at in

8   order to determine that. And I am more than happy to do an

9   assessment for you that helps to identify what the impact of

10   different sanctions, less sanctions, more sanctions, all of

11   those things on the economy, and then how that relates to

12   spending, for example, on national security issues that are

13   of importance to us, which we do produce an annual report

14   for you on.

15   Senator Mullin: Well, I would appreciate that. And I

16   do not think that we would say that their economy is in

17   great shape. But we can say that throughout all of the

18   Middle East, the middle of the Middle East, we can say that

19   there is a problem there with their economy.

20   But what I am getting to is that the current position

21   that the Administration, this current Administration, has

22   taken underneath Biden has not been helpful for our security

23   posture. We have seen that their economy has greatly

24   increased and is going to continue to increase if we stay

25   underneath the continued projection of the way we are

1   treating Iran currently.

2   I think that our posture should, and you can agree,

3   disagree, or not -- in fact, you do not even have to answer

4   it because I am not going to put you in that position again

5   -- that we have to relook at our posture we have with them,

6   because their GDP has increased. And that means their

7   spending on the war on terror, against us and against our

8   allies, has also increased.

9   With that I will yield back.

10   Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Mullin.

11   Senator Warren, please.

12   Senator Warren: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So Director

13   Haines, when you testified before the Committee last year we

14   talked about how crypto is being used to help finance major

15   threats against national security, like North Korea's

16   nuclear weapons program, Iran's ability to evade sanctions,

17   and ransomware attacks on American hospitals. It seems the

18   problem is getting worse.

19   According to the Wall Street Journal last month, crypto

20   has become, quote, "indispensable to Vladimir Putin's war

21   machine, allowing Russia to get around sanctions and to

22   throw billions of dollars into its war against Ukraine."

23   According to the Treasury Department, Hamas' terrorist

24   attacks against Israel in October were financed, in part,

25   with crypto, and their current financing depends on crypto.

1 According to the blockchain analytics firm, Elliptic, Iran

2 is deep into crypto.

3   So let's focus for just a minute on how Iran is using

4 crypto. Director Haines, reports from our Intelligence and

5 National Security Agency say that Iran uses crypto to evade

6 U.S. sanctions. For example, in 4 years, Binance, just one

7 of many crypto exchanges, processed $8 billion in

8 transactions for Iran. Can you explain what threat that

9 poses for our national security?

10   Ms. Haines: Yeah. There is no question that

11 cryptocurrency is a significant issue for our national

12 security, and as you say, we talked about DPRK last time,

13 and today we continue to produce statistics that indicate

14 that I think it is now over 50 percent of their foreign

15 currency revenues are coming through crypto, that there is

16 really just significant exploitation of this as a way to get

17 around sanctions to ultimately engage in illegal

18 transactions, to support a system, and certainly the

19 ransomware attacks and other things like that demonstrate

20 it.

21   And with respect to Iran, we see this. So there is no

22 question that Iran permits the use of cryptocurrencies and

23 smart contracts to pay for imported goods because it lacks

24 access to the U.S. dollar, and that is a consequence of the

25 sanctions regimes that are in place. What is also true,

1 though, and I think just to frame it, does not mean that

2 this is not a problem, but its use is relatively limited as

3 compared to other transaction pieces.

4   So it has not been as much of a major factor, in our

5 judgment, as it might otherwise seem. So in other words, we

6 have got, in early August 2022, the country made it first

7 official cryptocurrency payment for imports, which were $10

8 million, out of a total of $102 billion for imports. And it

9 is sort of a similar challenge in the context of Russia, as

10 well, where we see them using cryptocurrency, and I think it

11 is almost certainly going to expand in different ways.

12   But there are some kinds of structural limitations on

13 their capacity to use that.

14   Senator Warren: So let's look into that. Let's look

15 at the structural limitations here, because I think what you

16 are telling me is Iran is definitely using crypto to move

17 money around.

18   Ms. Haines: Yes.

19   Senator Warren: And to do that to evade sanctions and

20 to fund Hamas. And your assessment is consistent with the

21 assessment of the Treasury Department on this.

22   But that is not all that Iran is doing with crypto.

23 Iran is also making money by processing crypto transactions

24 for other people. As you know, crypto relies on middlemen

25 -- in the crypto world they are called miners or validators

1   -- and they process or verify transactions. The Iranian

2   government officially entered the crypto industry in 2019,

3   because it could make money doing it.

4   So if I sent $1,000 in Bitcoin over to you, Lieutenant

5   General Kruse, and you and I might be sitting here in

6   Washington when we engage in this transaction, but Iran may

7   be the one that is processing the transaction for us and

8   pocketing the transaction fee that I pay. And neither one

9   of us would ever even know that we were enriching Iran

10 through this transaction. According to one estimate, in

11 2021, Iran processed as much as 7 percent of the world's

12 Bitcoin transactions, enough to earn them about $1 billion.

13   So Lieutenant General Kruse, the bigger the crypto

14 market gets, the more opportunities Iran has to profit by

15 processing other people's crypto transactions. Let me ask

16 you, how important is it that we cut off this revenue source

17 for Iran?

18   General Kruse: Well, if I could, what I would say is

19 this is not dissimilar to the previous conversation about

20 the source of revenue, whatever Iran's source of revenue,

21 crypto or other transactions, oil sales, and then how Iran

22 uses it. So it does come to more finances they have

23 available to them, this or other sources, certainly allows

24 Iran to make decisions on how it is going to --

25   Senator Warren: Look, we have the tools to cut off

1   countries like Iran from the banking transactions, but those

2   tools were not designed for cryptocurrencies, so crypto

3   money keeps flowing here. And that is why I am concerned

4   about any effort to regularize stablecoins without giving

5   regulators the full set of tools they need to crack down on

6   terrorist financing. Anything Congress does to legitimize

7   and grow the crypto market must have strong protections so

8   we do not increase moneymaking opportunities for Iran and

9   other adversaries.

10   Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

11   Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Warren.

12   Senator Rosen, you are recognized.

13   Senator Rosen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I would

14   like to thank Director Haines and General Kruse for

15   testifying today and for your service.

16   So I guess the theme this morning is Iran, and of

17   course I am going to expand a little bit about Iran and the

18   Russia defense cooperation because Iran has used the war in

19   Ukraine to bolster its own military partnership with Russia

20   by providing Putin's regime hundreds of drones that have

21   killed Ukrainian civilians. In return, Russia is providing

22   Iran with missiles, cyber tools, air defense systems, and

23   Iran is also seeking to acquire modern Russian fighter jets,

24   helicopters, and radars.

25   So General Kruse, how does Iran's capacity to produce

1   and export long-range attack drones, evident in both the

2   Middle East and against Ukraine, potentially accelerate the

3   spread of such capabilities globally, particularly with Iran

4   supplying these systems to Russia for its use in war? And I

5   will just add, if you want to talk about both of these, how

6   does this acquisition also enable Iran to take an even more

7   aggressive posture right now in the Middle East?

8   General Kruse: I think Iran has spent considerable

9   time and effort to be able to produce the kinds of UAVs and

10   other equipment that others would find of value, and they

11   continue to improve the capabilities of what they have been

12   selling over time. You mentioned several hundred. I would

13   say it is probably even 1,000 or more of UAVs that Iran has

14   provided directly to the Russians, that they are using on

15   the battle space, and also providing designs so Russia can

16   do their own manufacturing of that.

17   This has been a somewhat new business line. It is just

18   a continuation of Iran's previous business line. But it

19   does provide two things. One is a revenue source to Iran.

20   It provides also some capabilities to the proxy

21   organizations and other adversaries and increases their

22   capability and their capacities over time.

23   Senator Rosen: Thank you. I want to move on a little

24   bit into what powers a lot of these systems, particularly as

25   we think about Bitcoin, cyber, all these threats --

1   artificial intelligence. So we have a little bit to worry

2   about in artificial intelligence competition. So Director

3   Haines, as we continue to explore really the potential of

4   artificial intelligence, we have to really discuss these

5   ethical boundaries, right, because there are growing

6   concerns that our strategic competitors like China, Russia,

7   and others may not adhere to the same ethical standards,

8   especially regarding the weaponization of technology,

9   potentially leading to abuse which can threaten our global

10   security, our national security.

11   So could you discuss the implications of this

12   difference in ethical standards for AI development and

13   deployment, particularly in terms of threats to our

14   security, and how do we work with our allies to put in these

15   ethical standards, because we know artificial intelligence,

16   it is garbage in, garbage out. Whatever you put in is what

17   comes out, and that is why this is particularly important.

18   Ms. Haines: Yeah, absolutely. I mean, I agree with

19   how you have characterized the challenge, and I think it is

20   one of the -- there is sort of the first-order issue, which

21   is an ethical issue but may be even a step beyond what you

22   are describing, which is to say that --

23   Senator Rosen: It is an educational issue, because

24   computers learn.

25   Ms. Haines: Exactly, yeah. And so one is it clearly,

1   in many respects, generative AI in particular but AI

2   generally can exacerbate existing threat streams, as we have

3   seen them make our adversaries far more effective and also

4   sort of lower the cost of entry into these kinds of threat

5   streams. So in other words, for information operations, for

6   cybersecurity, for biosecurity, other issues like that,

7   obviously these are technologies that allow you to be more

8   effective and to do so more cheaply, in many respects, in a

9   number of scenarios. So there is that piece of it.

10   A second piece of it I would say is that there are, as

11   you say, different standards that we apply. So for example,

12   our commercial companies will only train their models on

13   what is appropriate from an intellectual property

14   perspective, whereas you may see other countries not paying

15   attention to those kinds of standards and getting into other

16   material, and that can create a different series of

17   challenges in these spaces and how you sort of develop

18   against that. You obviously need to ensure that you are

19   paying attention, if that regulatory through standards or

20   other things that can be useful to try to achieve that.

21   In addition, to your point, we obviously care very much

22   about the governance of AI, how we are applying sort of

23   privacy and civil liberty issues to the work that we are

24   doing. And I think on the one hand that may mean that we

25   move sometimes just slightly more slowly or we are thinking

1   through how it is that we are ensuring that what we are

2   producing is consistent with our values and our ethics in

3   these spaces.

4   But at the same time I actually think that can increase

5   the efficacy, in many respects, of the work that we are

6   doing, because ultimately what you really want to do is

7   train AI on the best possible data, quality data, things

8   that do not have inherent biases in them, things along those

9   lines that will actually get you the answers that are more

10   effective in answering the questions that you are ultimately

11   trying to do.

12   So we are spending quite a bit of time, both on

13   thinking about how we use it in a positive way and for our

14   mission but also how to counter what it is what we are

15   seeing obviously from allies in these spaces. Maybe I will

16   leave it at that.

17   Senator Rosen: Thank you. I have some questions on

18   antisemitism. I will submit them for the record. Thank

19   you, Mr. Chairman.

20   Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator Rosen.

21   Senator Schmitt, please.

22   Senator Schmitt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Director

23   Haines, I have a couple of questions. Recently you stood up

24   the Foreign Malign Influence Center, and you were quoted as

25   stating that it would allow the FMIC to track disinformation

1   campaigns from a foreign country but also, quote, "the

2   public opinion within the United States." What does that

3   mean?

4   Ms. Haines: I do not know. That --

5   Senator Schmitt: Oh, actually, okay. Well, are you

6   tracking the public opinion of the United States?

7   Ms. Haines: No.

8   Senator Schmitt: Okay. How is FMIC different than

9   CISA? I thought CISA was created to do this?

10   Ms. Haines: Okay. So FMIC is actually, we established

11 it pursuant to a statute --

12   Senator Schmitt: Right.

13   Ms. Haines: -- that asked us to establish it. What we

14 do within the Foreign Malign Influence Center, which

15 encompasses our election threat work effectively across the

16 community, is allocate resources in relation to collection.

17 We work through analytic work that is supportive of what

18 CISA does, for example, but also in coordination with our

19 Cybersecurity Intelligence Threat Integration Center. And

20 we ultimately coordinate the work that the community is

21 doing in order to counter foreign malign influence.

22   That is not something that CISA does. In other words,

23 CISA is taking our products and the intelligence that we

24 produce and is ultimately deciding what it is that needs to

25 be, for example, shared with local and state partners, with

1 industry depending on the cybersecurity threat or other

2 things like that, in order to protect our critical

3 infrastructure.

4   So in a sense we do the normal intelligence community

5 work that we do and they basically take that information.

6 Hopefully we are supporting them in their mission to

7 actually take action in response.

8   Senator Schmitt: Okay. In your 2024 unclassified

9 Annual Threat Assessment, you make several mentions of the

10 threats of misinformation and disinformation. Specifically

11 the report mentions adversarial state actors leveraging

12 disinformation intended to propagate divisive societal

13 issues to weaken America and our democracy. It also

14 references medical disinformation as a threat to global

15 health security.

16   What are you doing here? Because as you know, a court

17 has found that there has been great coordination between the

18 intelligence community and government agencies to censor

19 speech, in Missouri v. Biden, the Fifth Circuit, to censor

20 speech. And so the determination was made that opinions

21 about efficacy of masks or transmissibility of COVID after

22 the vaccine was taken down at the behest of government

23 actors.

24   So my big concern is, are you using this to quell

25 dissenting points of view? Because I do not know what

1   medical disinformation means and why, you know, if you are

2   involved with censoring or limiting speech of Americans who

3   may have different points of view, let's say if masks work

4   or not. So is that what you are talking about with medical

5   misinformation?

6   Ms. Haines: So just a few things. I obviously do not

7   play a lawyer in this position, but I would not accept your

8   characterization of what the court has found.

9   Senator Schmitt: Well, I actually was the lawyer -- I

10   was the attorney general that filed the lawsuit, so I am

11   pretty familiar with that case.

12   Ms. Haines: Okay. Understood. I am just saying that

13   from my perspective the intelligence community does not, and

14   has not, engaged in any sort of censorship of --

15   Senator Schmitt: Well, okay. I have limited time, so

16   let me just --

17   Ms. Haines: But let me focus on --

18   Senator Schmitt: Okay, sure.

19   Ms. Haines: -- the question you are asking, which is

20   just basically in the context of medical disinformation, so

21   for example, we saw Chinese efforts to ultimately engage in

22   disinformation campaigns about the U.S. vaccine, for

23   example, the quality of those types of vaccines, that

24   ultimately if you take a different vaccine you might be

25   better, the Russian efforts to do that as well. So that is

1   the kind of thing --

2   Senator Schmitt: Is medical misinformation, if I were

3   to go online right now and say that masks are ineffective

4   and they might actually hurt kids, is that medical

5   misinformation?

6   Ms. Haines: Well, you are not a foreign actor so that

7   would not be foreign malign influence. What we would be

8   looking for is a campaign from another country such as

9   Russia and China engaging in disinformation about, for

10   example, what I just described in the context of --

11   Senator Schmitt: So just one last question. So

12   obviously you work with the FBI, right?

13   Ms. Haines: Absolutely. The FBI is actually part of

14   the intelligence community.

15   Senator Schmitt: Correct. Have there been any

16   consequences to the FBI's prebunking of the Hunter Biden

17   laptop story? Because we know that Elvis Chan was claiming

18   that the Hunter Biden laptop, even though it was in the

19   FBI's possession, was a, quote/unquote, "Russian hack-and-

20   leak operation." And it was not, right. We know that it

21   was not. But yet there are sworn affidavits now from senior

22   executives of social media companies that said that it is

23   exactly what they were told.

24   Have there been any repercussions? Has anybody been

25   fired for claiming this was a Russian hack-and-leak

1   operation, when in fact it was Hunter Biden's laptop, and by

2   the way the story got censored? Have there been any

3   repercussions? Have you done anything about that?

4   Ms. Haines: I suspect that we are not going to have

5   the same characterization of the scenario either. But I am

6   happy to take this offline and see if there is anything that

7   we need to answer --

8   Senator Schmitt: I hope so, because I have genuine

9   concerns about the credibility of the intelligence community

10   after what has come to light in that litigation. Anyway,

11   but I am happy to talk to you about it more. I am out of

12   time. Thanks.

13   Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Schmitt.

14   Senator Blumenthal, please.

15   Senator Blumenthal: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. Thank you

16   both for being here and thank you for your service to our

17   nation.

18   There have been reports, as recently as this morning,

19   about potential progress in discussions with Saudi Arabia

20   about a pact that in effect could lead to normalizing

21   relations with Israel. Those discussions, I am aware, were

22   underway before the October 7th attack, with great promise.

23   Could you update us as to what you know about those

24   discussions and whether an agreement with Saudi Arabia

25   directly, without involving Israel in the first stage, is

1   possible at this point?

2   Ms. Haines: Thank you, Senator. I could not. The

3   intelligence community is not involved in those discussions,

4   but I am happy to defer that, obviously, and we can get you

5   an answer from the policy community.

6   Senator Blumenthal: Thank you. On Iran, I am somewhat

7   perplexed about what you say in your report -- Iran is

8   currently not undertaking the key nuclear weapons

9   development activity necessary to produce a testable nuclear

10   device. But then you say Iran continues to increase the

11   size and enrichment level of its uranium stockpile, and so

12   forth. Isn't Iran continuing to take steps that would put

13   it in a position to have nuclear arms?

14   Ms. Haines: Yeah, I think we can probably talk about

15   this more in closed session, but I think the distinction

16   that is being made in the report, in that particular

17   scenario, is basically to say that what they are doing is

18   shortening the time period that it would take for them to

19   actually, for example, enrich a sufficient amount of

20   material for a nuclear weapon, if they make a decision to

21   move forward on it, as opposed to actually having made a

22   decision to move forward on it. Does that make sense?

23   Senator Blumenthal: It does, and I guess that leads to

24   the next question, which is what is the time period now that

25   they have shortened to?

TP One

1   Ms. Haines: Yeah, I think we can discuss this in

2   closed session.

3   Senator Blumenthal: Okay. Could you talk a little bit

4   about efforts to free Evan Gershkovich, the Wall Street

5   Journal reporter currently imprisoned in Russia? Are we

6   making any progress there?

7   Ms. Haines: We are working on that. I think we can

8   discuss that in closed session.

9   Senator Blumenthal: Which leads to my next question.

10   There is a lot of public interest in it, and I have long

11   felt that there is overclassification of information. As

12   you know, the present system dates from, I think it is Harry

13   Truman.   Executive orders in terms of classifications of

14   different materials are, in my view, very antiquated. I

15   have been to countless classified briefings in the SCIF, and

16   I have read about them the next day, or the previous day, in

17   the New York Times or wherever. Aren't we overclassifying

18   information? Shouldn't we be disclosing more of it?

19   What I find -- and I say it in these briefings -- our

20   adversaries know what you are telling us about them. We

21   know our adversaries know all about it. They know we know.

22   The only people who do not know are the American people.

23   Aren't we overclassifying?

24   Ms. Haines: Yes, I have been very public in saying

25   that overclassification is an issue, and it is one that we

1   are working quite hard on. It is not going to be solved

2   quickly because it is actually, there are a lot of

3   institutional issues that are at stake and challenging. And

4   one of the things that we are doing, for example, is related

5   to the fact that we recognize we produce an enormous amount

6   of information. Some of it gets declassified over time. It

7   is necessary for us to get that information out. We are

8   trying to use technology in a more productive way to

9   actually ensure that we are doing this at a more rapid rate.

10   We have had some progress on this, and there is actually

11   money in our current budget proposals to try to increase the

12   amount of technology and work that we can do in this area to

13   ensure that we are pushing out information that should be

14   pushed out.

15   We are working with our FOIA offices to basically

16   ensure that they are better staffed, that they are in a

17   position to be able to do more work, more quickly,

18   prioritize what is of the highest public interest. We are

19   working to try to ensure that we actually incentivize, to

20   the greatest extent possible, accurately classifying things,

21   not overclassifying things, et cetera.

22   I am happy to share we have got a lot of lines of

23   effort, frankly, on this issue, to try to improve the

24   situation.

25   Senator Blumenthal: Just one last quick question on

1   Evan Gershkovich. Are we making progress, or not?

2   Ms. Haines: Honestly, this is not an area where I am

3   involved in the specific talks, and I would rather, yeah.

4   Senator Blumenthal: Okay. Thank you.

5   Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Blumenthal.

6   Senator Budd, please.

7   Senator Budd: Thank you, Chairman. General, Director,

8   thank you both for being here today.

9   Director Haines, the Annual Threat Assessment, it

10   states that the intelligence community assesses that, and a

11   quote from there is, "that Iranian leaders did not

12   orchestrate, nor had foreknowledge of the Hamas attack

13   against Israel." So how confident are you about that

14   assessment, and to the extent that you can discuss it here,

15   how has October 7th impacted the relationships and

16   operations of the broader Iranian threat network?

17   Ms. Haines: Sure. I can give a start at this and

18   General Kruse may have more to add too. I mean, I think we

19   are reasonably confident, and growing more confident over

20   time, that that assessment is correct with respect to their

21   foreknowledge of the attack. And then in terms of the

22   relationship impact that it has had, as you indicate, I

23   think it has certainly increased the degree of work that is

24   being done between, for example, Iran and the Houthis. That

25   was obviously a long-standing relationship, but that one

1 continues to build, and the Houthis are increasingly relying

2 on Iran for assistance in their capacity for weapons systems

3 and so on, and to make them more precise, in many respects.

4   It has certainly continued. I mean, I think the

5 relationship with the Iranian-aligned militia groups, as we

6 often refer to them, within the region, these are

7 classically Shia militia groups that have been working with

8 Iran that get money, training, weapons systems, and so on

9 from them. And we continue to see that relationship. I do

10 not know that it has had an enormous impact on the

11 relationship since October 7th, but it has been one that has

12 been quite active, obviously, during this period, and they

13 have been assisting in the sort of strategy that Iran has

14 taken with respect to the conflict in the region during this

15 period.

16   I would say that the relationship remains strong

17 between Iran and Hezbollah. That continues to be a key

18 partner from their perspective and one that they rely on to

19 manage security in the region in many respects, from their

20 perspective. And I guess that is sort of a general

21 waterfront landscape --

22   Senator Budd: I am going to ask another part to that

23 question, Director. Since October 7th, Iran has encouraged

24 and enabled its proxies to conduct strikes against Israel

25 and then also U.S. interests. In fact, we saw more than 100

1 attacks against U.S. forces in the Middle East, including

2 the killing of three American soldiers. These attacks have

3 dissipated, but they seem to have started again.

4   Director, what is the IC's assessment of whether the

5 Iran threat network will renew a campaign of attacks against

6 U.S. forces, or has some level of deterrence been

7 established? And Director, we will start with you, and

8 General, if you would add in.

9   Ms. Haines: Okay. Yeah, currently they continue to

10 sort of be in this pause. The question of how long it will

11 last is unknown to us, but here are some of the factors that

12 I think are relevant to it.

13   One is the Iranians have really been focused on

14 pressuring the Iranian threat network, as you call it, the

15 Iranian-aligned militia groups, on Israel, as you pointed

16 out. That is sort of their primary instruction, in many

17 respects. And what has really, in part, been driving the

18 Iranian militia groups in this scenario, particular the

19 Iraqi groups, has been also to drive U.S. forces out of the

20 region, and coalition forces out of the region, but

21 particularly U.S. forces.

22   And so how the talks with the Higher Military

23 Commission go, how the conversation goes in Iraq, and how

24 much Sudani is able to manage that, President Sudani, will

25 make a difference to essentially the calculus of those

1   groups and whether or not they initiate continued attacks,

2   is sort of where we are on this. But we will continue to

3   watch this, and we do think, obviously, that the pause

4   reflects a certain amount of deterrence that has been

5   established during this period. But again, these factors

6   can adjust that, and it is possible for it to start as any

7   time as a consequence of that discussion. Please.

8   General Kruse: I would probably just echo. The point

9   I would have made would have been the Iraqi connection and

10 what the drivers are and the calculus of the Iranian threat

11 network and the Iranian-aligned militia groups.

12   And then the deterrence I think that we have seen

13 temporarily, it is a fleeting piece and needs to be

14 refreshed and renewed or rediscussed, and it is the

15 variables that the Director laid out that I think will drive

16 that.

17   Senator Budd: Thank you. Bottom line, in the interest

18 of time, could you describe the threats from Hamas and

19 Hezbollah to the homeland and how they have evolved since

20 October 7th, Director?

21   Ms. Haines: Yeah. I mean, in many respects the

22 greatest threat that they pose to the homeland is the degree

23 to which they inspire folks within the homeland to conduct

24 attacks, and also for other groups. As I mentioned in my

25 opening remarks, al Qaeda and ISIS have basically directed,

TP One

1   in a sense, renewed instructions to continue to go against

2   U.S. interests. So that is more of the impact that they are

3   having with respect to the homeland at this point. But over

4   time that will develop, and I do not want to suggest in any

5   way that the counterterrorism concerns that we have are

6   significant at this point.

7   Senator Budd: Thank you.

8   Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Budd.

9   Senator Peters, please.

10   Senator Peters: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Director

11   Haines, as you know all too well, rapid technological

12   improvement like artificial intelligence and advanced photo

13   editing is allowing malicious actors to spread very

14   sophisticated deepfakes of photos, videos, auto-recordings.

15   A notable example of that was a video that was circulated in

16   early 2022, depicting Ukrainian President Zelensky appearing

17   to surrender Russia troops in that deepfake.

18   So in response to similar incidents, several Fortune

19   500 companies have created a Coalition for Content

20   Prominence and Authenticity to address these threats and to

21   verify the origins of digital content. And in support of

22   their efforts I was pleased to include a pilot program in

23   the fiscal year 2024 NDAA for the DoD to assess the

24   feasibility of establishing content standard technologies on

25   DoD-produced and owned media content, which can be used by

1   malicious forces.

2   So my question for you, Director Haines, is, with

3   thousands of government websites containing digital content

4   easily altered by our adversaries, how concerned are you

5   about the proliferation of deepfakes and the resulting

6   impacts on our national security?

7   Ms. Haines: Thank you, sir. I am very concerned about

8   the proliferation of deepfakes and the capacity to use

9   generative AI and other technologies, basically, to improve

10   information operations, and I think that is true just across

11   the board. As you indicated, there was the example that we

12   saw in the context of Ukraine. There was also a deepfake

13   audio recording that we saw in the Slovakian parliamentary

14   elections that had impact. There are a variety of examples

15   now of these types of things being produced, and whether

16   they are produced from information that is available through

17   a government website or otherwise, frankly, they are a

18   challenge.

19   Senator Peters: Director Haines, I chair the Homeland

20   Security Committee, and I am keenly aware of the current and

21   emerging threats associated with unmanned aircraft systems,

22   both for the homeland as well as our folks abroad. Major

23   technological investments are going to be clearly needed to

24   combat these risks. But just as importantly, we need to

25   actually synchronize all of our fragmented interagency

1   efforts.

2   So my question for you is, how is the intelligence

3   community coordinating and sharing intelligence with your

4   interagency partners to mitigate these UAS threats, and in

5   response if you could tell us any roadblocks that you are

6   facing in those coordination efforts to get everybody on the

7   same page.

8   Ms. Haines: Thank you, sir. Obviously you know that

9   the Department of Defense has a counter-UAS strategy. We

10   have nested essentially against that. We do these sorts of

11   unified intelligence collection strategies, and it is

12   intended to support that strategy. And that is sort of how

13   we organize ourselves to ensure that we are, in fact,

14   supporting the work that is getting done at DoD, but also in

15   other parts of the U.S. government on these issues.

16   And we really have not encountered so much challenges

17   in the context of interagency cooperation or sharing in this

18   space but more in the sense of just actually going after the

19   problem, ensuring that we are actually getting the

20   information that we need for supporting them, and also

21   including talking to private sector and others who may have

22   knowledge about some of the technologies that are being

23   used, mapping out supply chains so that we can help to

24   disrupt issues, things along those lines.

25   Senator Peters: Very good. General Kruse, Russian

1   disinformation efforts, including attempts to influence EU

2   elections and spread harmful propaganda are being used to

3   achieve military objectives in the war in Ukraine.

4   My question for you sir is, what specific lessons has

5   DIA gained from Russia's ongoing information operations?

6   General Kruse: So there are probably a couple, and I

7   think I would even add to your question to say what have

8   some of our other adversaries learned from Russian

9   misinformation campaigns. I worry probably less about our

10   ability to how do we detect some of these pieces, which in

11   partnership with the rest of the community, I think we are

12   able to identify a lot of that data. The issue is how do

13   you counter it, what is the pathway by which you can

14   authoritatively say something is fake and then provide it to

15   the people in an authoritative way.

16   The piece that I do worry about is what are the Chinese

17   learning, what are the Iranians learning, what does the

18   impact of disinformation mean on all future battle spaces,

19   or in the lead-up to future conflicts, which drives the need

20   to really get our arms around how do we effectively and

21   efficiently detect deepfakes and other pieces and have a

22   dissemination system in the same way that we do with

23   traditional intelligence.

24   Senator Peters: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

25   Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator Peters.

1   Director, General, thank you for your excellent testimony.

2   We will now adjourn the open session and we will reconvene,

3   let's shoot for 12 noon in SVC-217.

4   With that I will adjourn the open session.

5   [Whereupon, at 11:44 a.m., the hearing was recessed, to

6   be continued in closed session.]

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