

VADM ALVIN HOLSEY, NOMINEE TO BE ADMIRAL AND COMMANDER, UNITED STATES SOUTHERN COMMAND

Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Wicker, and distinguished members of the committee, I am honored and humbled to appear before you today as the nominee to lead United States Southern Command. I would like to thank President Biden, Secretary Austin, and General Brown for their trust and confidence. I am honored to testify alongside Lt General Nordhaus as the National Guard's State Partnership Program is a key enabler when it comes to building partner nation capability and capacity throughout the region. I would also like to recognize and thank General Richardson, the current SOUTHCOM commander and her husband, Jim, for their loyal and dedicated 70 plus years of service to our nation. General Richardson's guidance to SOUTHCOM and the impact she has made in the region has been inspiring.

If confirmed, I will build on her efforts and work across the whole of government, our allies and partners to ensure we address the security challenges and expand opportunities to truly realize SOUTHCOM'S vision of a secure, free and prosperous Western Hemisphere.

I would like to thank my family for their love and support throughout my military career. With me today is my wife of 34 years, Stephanie and our youngest son Jordan. Stephanie is my best friend, a wonderful mother, an educator turned dentist, who has practiced in five states based off our multiple moves as a family.

Our oldest son, Joshua, could not be here. He's charting his own path in Naval Aviation and is preparing for an upcoming deployment. Together, we have a combined 45 years of service, and I like to think that we've made a difference.

Jordan is in his third year at the University of Virginia Medical School, conducting his clinicals at NOVA Fairfax. I could not be prouder of the young men they have become.

I would also like to thank my parents, the late Charles Holsey, Sr., an engineer and my mother, Rosa Holsey, a retired educator. They raised four sons and taught us the importance of faith, family, education and service. My father served in the Army during the Korean War and his three brothers all served in the Navy. Three of my mother's four brothers serve in the Army in Vietnam. Service is not just what we do, it's who we are as a family.

My first deployment to the SOUTHCOM area of responsibility was over 33 years ago conducting counter-drug missions flying off a Knox Class frigate, but this region, our neighborhood is so much more. It is on the frontline of strategic competition. Most focus to the East and West when they think of Great Power Competition. A look to our South reveals that our adversaries have established a strong presence, jeopardizing security and stability across the Americas. The PRC and Russia are strategic competitors who seek to undermine democracy while gaining power and influence in the region. Transnational Criminal Organizations create and exploit the permissive environment while undermining the rule of law and disrupting legitimate government functions. Additionally, transboundary threats demand our attention as well, from irregular migration, climate change, eroding democracies, to food and water insecurities.

Our time is now – If we don't take deliberate and meaningful steps over the next 5 – 10 years, this region will change forever. To be clear, partnerships are our best deterrence to countering shared security and economic concerns, and for now, we remain the trusted partner. But we can't take that for granted. Over the past 19 months as the deputy commander, I have

personally seen the importance of our enduring presence in the region, and how partners seek us as a better alternative to the PRC, Russia, and others. Rapidly responding to crises is not just a phrase in our mission statement, over the last year, SOUTHCOM has responded, and we will respond again to earthquakes, floods, wildfires, volcanoes, hurricanes and droughts. To be a trusted partner, we must be credible, present and engaged. Our main campaigning tool in the region is Security Cooperation. If confirmed, I will work tirelessly with our partners to understand their requirements and then work across the whole of government to deliver at the point of need and build partner nation capability and capacity to respond to our shared threats in our neighborhood.

I also look forward, if confirmed, to working with Congress who are essential partners in the defense of our nation.

Thank you again, Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Wicker, and members of the committee for this opportunity. I look forward to your questions.