

STATEMENT OF
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HOMELAND DEFENSE AND GLOBAL SECURITY
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EMERGING THREATS AND CAPABILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE
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INTRODUCTION

Chairman Ernst, Ranking Member Heinrich, and Members of the Subcommittee, I am pleased to testify today about Department of Defense (DoD) efforts to counter chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) threats both at home and abroad. The recently released National Security Strategy (NSS) makes clear that this Administration recognizes preventing nuclear, chemical, radiological, and biological attacks as a key priority and an essential component of the U.S. Government's efforts to protect the American people, the homeland, and the American way of life. Achieving success across the CBRN-threat spectrum requires a whole-of-government approach, and the DoD has an important role to play in support of this mission. That is why today I would like to talk about both DoD's roles and responsibilities within the countering-weapons of mass destruction (CWMD) mission, and where DoD plays a supporting role to other departments and agencies, including the U.S. Department of State, the Department of Energy (DOE), the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

THREAT ENVIRONMENT

The use, or threatened use, of CBRN weapons poses a significant threat to U.S. national security and peace and stability around the world. In the past year, North Korea has accelerated its relentless pursuit of nuclear and advanced missile delivery capabilities and threatened to use nuclear weapons against the United States and our allies in the region. Further, its conventional, chemical, biological, and cyber capabilities continue to threaten the United States and our allies. Russia has expanded and improved its strategic and non-strategic nuclear forces. And China's military modernization has resulted in an expanded nuclear force. The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism confirmed that the Syrian regime and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) used chemical weapons in Syria. Additionally, we know ISIS has used chemical weapons in Iraq. Iran has agreed to constraints on its nuclear program in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Nevertheless, Iran retains the technological capability and much of the capacity necessary to develop enough fissile material for a nuclear weapon within one year of a decision to do so.

More broadly, rapid technological advancements and increased access to dual-use goods (*i.e.*, items that can be used for both peaceful and military purposes), expertise, and materials, heighten the risk that adversaries will seek or acquire weapons of mass destruction (WMD). It has never been more difficult to prevent adversaries from acquiring the materials or expertise necessary to develop WMD, or use CBRN materials in intentional attacks. Emerging technologies are increasingly lowering the threshold for a range of adversaries, including non-State actors, to develop WMD. This trend is accelerating. Additionally, the speed and volume of the international transportation system means that naturally occurring pathogens of security concern can spread worldwide in days – potentially having the same catastrophic consequences of a deliberate biological attack.

These diverse threats require multifaceted approaches that keep up with and adapt to the current threats while remaining postured to mitigate future risks. The Department of State, the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Energy, the Department of Justice, the Department of Commerce, the Department of the Treasury, and the Intelligence Community, among others, all play critical roles in detecting threats, preventing attacks on the homeland, and working with foreign partners to stop and respond to incidents. DoD supports these efforts through both domestic and overseas activities and works closely with allies and partners to counter the wide range of CBRN threats that exist today.

DOD ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Global Security ASD (HD&GS), I am responsible for the Department’s CWMD strategy and policies, as well as the Homeland Defense¹ mission. My office develops and oversees DoD’s policies and guidance to protect the U.S. Armed Forces, the homeland, and other U.S. interests from a CBRN attack or any type of destabilizing CBRN-related event, including the natural or intentional spread of dangerous pathogens and toxins, and represents DoD’s interests on traditional counter-proliferation and non-proliferation policy issues. I am also responsible for the coordination of DoD assistance to Federal, State, and local officials in responding to threats involving nuclear, radiological, biological, chemical weapons, or high-yield explosives or related materials or

¹ DoD defines “Homeland Defense” as “[t]he protection of United States sovereignty, territory, domestic population, and critical infrastructure against external threats and aggression or other threats as directed by the President.”

technologies, including assistance in identifying, neutralizing, dismantling, and disposing of these weapons and materials.

I work closely with the Joint Staff and the Combatant Commanders, including the U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) in its new role following the January 2017 Unified Command Plan (UCP) change, and U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) and U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM) with their Homeland Defense and Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA) missions. USSOCOM has brought a renewed sense of enthusiasm to the CWMD mission, and is playing a critical role in ensuring that the Combatant Commands are fully integrated into the broader CWMD mission and taking a transregional approach to countering these challenges. We also work closely with our partners in Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics (“Acquisition and Sustainment” as of February 1, 2018) to ensure that DoD has the capabilities necessary to protect our forces and leverage partners’ capabilities in countering global threats.

DoD’s efforts to prevent, counter, and respond to CBRN threats and incidents are carried out by a number of dedicated and hardworking Airmen, Sailors, Marines, Soldiers, Coast Guardsmen, and civilians. DoD’s cadre of CWMD experts supports a diverse range of activities, including countering WMD-related planning, research and development, programming, exercising, analysis, technical reach-back support, and mission execution. Experts are positioned throughout the Services and DoD, including at the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA); the U.S. Army 20th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosives Command; the U.S. Army Edgewood Chemical and Biological Center (ECBC); and the Air Force Technical Applications Center (AFTAC). This mission is a team effort, and it is an honor to work with such dedicated professionals.

STRATEGIC APPROACH FOR COUNTERING TODAY’S CBRN CHALLENGES

Given the scale and complexity of threats facing the United States and its partners today, DoD pursues three lines of effort to counter WMD threats: prevent acquisition, contain and reduce threats, and respond to crises. Close cooperation with the other U.S. departments and agencies, and our allies and partners, is crucial to all of these activities since DoD must prioritize capabilities and efforts that counter operationally significant WMD risks and activities that are best executed by the Department. Ultimately, DoD seeks to ensure that the United States and its

allies and partners are neither attacked nor coerced by actors with WMD. We do this by ensuring that we have a layered approach to detecting and mitigating CBRN threats at the source, preventing them from reaching the homeland and, if attacked, responding militarily to disrupt ongoing and preclude additional attack, and providing support to domestic and international consequence response efforts as requested.

Preventing Acquisition

A critical element of efforts to counter WMD threats is preventing those that do not possess WMD from obtaining them. Although the majority of activities in this space are led by other U.S. departments and agencies, DoD works closely with our interagency partners to leverage DoD authorities, resources, and capabilities where possible to prevent adversaries from acquiring the technologies, materials, and expertise needed to develop WMD. For example, DoD works closely with the intelligence community and other agencies to ensure DoD understands the threat environment and maintains situational awareness of the location, quantity, and vulnerability of global materials and stockpiles, and of the intentions and capabilities of actors of concern. This is foundational to all DoD CWMD efforts, particularly efforts to prevent State and non-State actors from acquiring WMD.

DoD has the authority to work with foreign partners to secure or eliminate threats at the source and build partner capacity to prevent proliferation. For example, the DoD Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) Program is engaged in more than 30 countries, helping partners to detect, secure, or eliminate CBRN and related materials and pathogens of security concern.

Working with the Department of State, DoD also continues to raise the barriers to acquiring WMD material through the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). Over the nearly 15 years since its inception, PSI has brought together 105 nations to build political will to stop the trafficking of WMD, delivery systems, and related materials. By supporting and participating in numerous bilateral and multilateral exercises, and through leadership in the PSI's Operational Experts Group, DoD works alongside the Department of State and experts from other U.S. departments and agencies to engage with partners to address all aspects of the proliferation threat from enhancing partners' CBRN defense capabilities, to preventing access to dual-use materials, to interdicting shipments of proliferation concern.

In addition, DoD supports State and other U.S. departments and agencies that lead efforts to implement and monitor international treaties and agreements, including the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). DoD also supports efforts to prevent the misuse of sensitive dual-use technologies through its support to the Nuclear Suppliers Group, Australia Group, and other key regimes. As part of these efforts, DoD works with partners to monitor over-the-horizon threats and consider the implications of emerging and disruptive technologies, such as synthetic biology, for multilateral treaties and regimes, as well as for ways to ensure that our forces remain protected in the face of what may be emerging threats.

Containing and Reducing Threats

For States that already possess WMD programs, DoD supports efforts to deter use and contain and reduce threats. The use of chemical weapons by ISIS in Iraq and Syria and by the Syrian regime in Syria over recent years has reinforced the importance of containing and reducing CBRN threats and the risks posed by extant WMD.

In an effort to leverage the capabilities of foreign allies and partners, one of Secretary Mattis's top priorities, DoD engages multilaterally through the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and bilaterally with other countries such as the United Kingdom on a number of CWMD issues. We also work with partners to strengthen their ability to detect, interdict, and mitigate threats at and within their borders. For example, the DoD CTR Program works with partners in the Middle East and North Africa, as well as along vulnerable borders in Eastern Europe to prevent the proliferation of CBRN capabilities.

Other U.S. Government departments and agencies have key roles preventing illicit trade and technology transfers relevant to WMD, including the Department of State's role in negotiating and implementing export control regimes, the Department of Treasury's authorities to sanction proliferators, the Department of Homeland Security's responsibilities to prevent and screen for dangerous exports, and the Department of Commerce's efforts to ensure that U.S. goods are not available to dangerous actors. DoD is prepared to support interdiction options authorized by United Nations Security Council Resolutions if there are no other options available. We also engage with domestic interagency partners including the Department of Homeland Security, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Department of Health and

Human Services to leverage unique DoD capabilities in support of U.S. Government efforts to prevent and, if necessary, interdict CBRN weapons and materials from crossing our nation's borders into the Homeland.

Where hostile actors persist in making significant progress toward acquiring WMD, DoD will be prepared to undertake or support kinetic and non-kinetic actions to prevent such capabilities from being fully realized. DoD is postured to counter imminent WMD threats and maintains specialized plans and capabilities to isolate, intercept, seize, and secure lost or stolen items and manage CBRN threats from hostile or fragile States. DoD maintains the ability to conduct specialized pathway and WMD defeat missions. This involves developing and fielding tailored kinetic and non-kinetic capabilities to neutralize or destroy weapons and agents; delivery systems; and materials, facilities, and processes, including the functional or structural defeat of hardened targets. DoD also has the authority to work cooperatively with foreign partners to dismantle and dispose of CBRN weapons and materials. This includes deliberate technical processes that reduce or dismantle production methods, materials, stockpiles, and technical infrastructure; the redirection of an actor's capabilities and expertise towards peaceful productive activities; and the establishment of monitoring regimes to ensure a WMD program is not reconstituted.

Finally, a cornerstone of U.S. efforts to contain and reduce threats is our ability to deter coercion or use. The United States maintains a range of capabilities, both conventional and strategic, to deter adversaries and ensure that those actors that already possess WMD do not use them against the United States or its allies and interests. Defenses in depth, including passive countermeasures, enhanced border security, and missile defenses, also help to deter the transfer or use of WMD. Although strategic deterrence and missile defense are not a function of the ASD (HD&GS), building resilient capabilities both overseas and in the homeland supports deterrence, and my office helps ensure that we are prepared to respond to an attack.

To decrease incentives for retention and employment of WMD arsenals, DoD supports the creation and implementation of effective arms-control initiatives, including measures to enhance security and safety practices. As noted in the recently released Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), the United States intends to work to create the conditions for disarmament by pursuing transparency measures, engaging in confidence and security-building measures with adversaries,

and pursuing new arms-control measures when conditions permit that would improve the security of the United States and its allies and partners.

Responding to WMD Use

As the National Defense Strategy makes clear, should deterrence or efforts to contain and reduce threats fail, the Joint Force must be prepared to prevail. Our top Military CWMD priority is to attack the source of the WMD attack to prevent ongoing or further attacks. To guarantee DoD's warfighting capabilities, DoD must safeguard the force and mitigate the hazards and effects of use to ensure U.S. military and other mission-critical personnel can sustain effective operations in the event of war or other contingencies. This includes recovering casualties rapidly, decontaminating personnel and equipment, and establishing a protective posture while continually monitoring the force.

DoD works closely with allies and partners to ensure that we are prepared to respond to international CBRN incidents. For example, supported by other U.S. departments and agencies, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, USPACOM, and U.S. Forces Korea work closely with our Republic of Korea and Japanese counterparts to ensure that our regional alliances are prepared to respond to WMD contingencies on, or emanating from, the Korean Peninsula. This includes the conduct of semi-annual CWMD-focused bilateral engagements, support to regional exercises, and providing policy guidance to enable effective CWMD operations. The U.S. Army's 20th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosive (CBRNE) Command also continues to develop and refine the extensive capabilities and technical expertise necessary to deploy rapidly in support of U.S. forces around the world and conducts regular training exercises to operate in highly challenging realistic operational environments. In addition, DoD works with foreign military and civilian first-responders through the CBRN Preparedness Program to help strengthen our partners' ability to respond to and mitigate the effects of a CBRN incident. Building partner nation response capabilities promotes regional security cooperation and bilateral and multilateral interoperability and reduces the potential for a large U.S. Government requirement to provide assistance to international CBRN incident-response operations.

From the homeland perspective, I work closely with the Commanders of USNORTHCOM and USPACOM to ensure DoD forces remain ready to deter, defend against,

and, when required, defeat nation-State or terrorist WMD or CBRN attacks on the homeland in the air, maritime, and land domains. As noted, DoD's primary responsibility is to employ our warfighting capabilities to prevent, interdict, and respond militarily to preclude further WMD attacks; however, DoD also plays an important supporting role in the national response system.

As provided in the National Response Framework, the national response system and its protocols provide tiered levels of support when additional resources or capabilities are needed. Most incidents begin and end locally and are managed at the local level. Some may require additional support from neighboring jurisdictions, State governments, and, as necessary, the Federal Government. The Federal Government's role is to support State and local emergency assistance efforts to save lives, protect property and public health and safety, and lessen or avert the threat of a catastrophe. DoD's role is to assist the Federal Government's support of the State and local response.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is responsible for coordinating the Federal Government's response to major disasters, including WMD attacks. DoD supports this response, providing DSCA – using available capabilities developed for DoD's warfighting mission – in support of FEMA or another lead Federal agency, when directed by the President or when the Secretary of Defense has approved a request for assistance pursuant to the Stafford Act² or the Economy Act.³ This arrangement is absolutely critical to ensuring that DoD capabilities are utilized as effectively and efficiently as possible to save and sustain lives, particularly incidents involving multiple States.

DoD supports its Federal- and State-partner preparedness efforts to respond to CBRN incidents in the homeland, such as integrated regional planning, training, and exercises in coordination with DHS, FEMA, the Department of Health and Human Services, the FBI, and other Federal partners. DoD is postured to assist civil authority efforts to detect, identify, neutralize, dismantle, and dispose of CBRN threats before they can reach our nation's borders and, if they succeed in penetrating our borders, before they can be employed against our nation. DoD has developed a wide range of CBRN-response capabilities and continuously trains and exercises to employ these capabilities rapidly in support to civil authorities to help save and sustain lives in the aftermath of a CBRN incident.

² The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Public Law 93-288), as amended.

³ 31 U.S.C. §1535.

The DoD CBRN Response Enterprise – almost 18,735 military personnel strong – currently consists of:

- 57 National Guard Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Teams (one in each State and territory and two in California, Florida, and New York);
- 17 National Guard CBRN Enhanced Response Force Packages (stationed in Alabama, Colorado, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Minnesota, Nebraska, Nevada, Oregon, Puerto Rico, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin);
- 10 National Guard Homeland Response Forces (one stationed in each of the 10 FEMA regions);
- One Defense CBRN Response Force; and
- Two Command and Control CBRN Response Elements.

The CBRN Response Enterprise provides such critical capabilities as detection and assessment of CBRN hazards; casualty search and extraction; casualty decontamination; emergency medical, patient triage, trauma care, and surgical and intensive medical care; fatality recovery; ground and rotary-wing air patient movement; security; command and control; engineering; logistics; transportation; and aviation lift.

CONCLUSION

We must anticipate that our adversaries will continue to evolve and develop increasingly sophisticated methods to pursue, develop, or deploy CBRN weapons. The diversity of these threats makes it imperative that DoD be rigorous in prioritizing its efforts and work closely with other U.S. departments and agencies and international partners to confront the threats posed by WMD at home and abroad. As WMD-related crises continue to emerge, your continued support in the areas described today are critical to our ability to understand, anticipate, and mitigate these threats.

Chairman Ernst, Ranking Member Heinrich, Members of the Subcommittee: We appreciate your leadership and your continued support for the Department of Defense. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to your questions.