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Before the

Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities

COMMITTEE ON  
ARMED SERVICES

**UNITED STATES SENATE**

HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON  
STRATEGIC COMPETITION AND  
SECURITY COOPERATION  
IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

Wednesday, March 23, 2022

Washington, D.C.

ALDERSON COURT REPORTING  
1111 14TH STREET NW  
SUITE 1050  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005  
(202) 289-2260  
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2 SECURITY COOPERATION IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

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4 Wednesday, March 23, 2022

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6 U.S. Senate  
7 Subcommittee on Emerging  
8 Threats and Capabilities  
9 Committee on Armed Services  
10 Washington, D.C.

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12 The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:30 p.m. in  
13 Room SR-222, Russell Senate Office Building, Hon. Mark  
14 Kelly, chairman of the subcommittee, presiding.

15 Committee Members Present: Kelly [presiding],  
16 Gillibrand, Kaine, Peters, Ernst, Fischer, Scott, and  
17 Tuberville.

1           OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. MARK KELLY, U.S. SENATOR  
2 FROM ARIZONA

3           Senator Kelly: The Emerging Threats Subcommittee meets  
4 this afternoon to receive testimony from the Department of  
5 Defense on strategic competition and security cooperation in  
6 the Western Hemisphere.

7           I would like to welcome our witnesses today, the  
8 Honorable Melissa Dalton, Assistant Secretary of Defense for  
9 Homeland Defense and Hemispheric Affairs; Mr. James Saenz,  
10 Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Counternarcotics;  
11 Brigadier General Frank Bradfield, Deputy Director for  
12 Political-Military Affairs for the Western Hemisphere, J5  
13 Joint staff. I want to take this opportunity to thank all  
14 of you for being here today.

15           The Western Hemisphere is seeing a growing set of  
16 challenges creating instability, undermining democratic  
17 institutions, increasing corruption, and threatening  
18 longstanding U.S. security relations in the region.  
19 Department of Defense operations in the region have  
20 traditionally focused on counternarcotics and countering  
21 transnational criminal organizations, all while the  
22 resources for these missions have decreased.

23           At the same time, the opioid crisis continues unabated,  
24 with opioid and synthetic drug trafficking returning to pre-  
25 pandemic levels. We are seeing this in Arizona, where

1 fentanyl seizures at or near the border continue to rise,  
2 putting a greater strain on local law enforcement, that is  
3 also stretched, at the same time, by the migrant crisis.

4 The Western Hemisphere is also increasingly the focus  
5 of strategic competition as near-peer rivals China, and also  
6 increasingly Russia, seek to expand their influence. China  
7 is using its investments throughout the region to create  
8 political influence it can leverage to weaken democracies.  
9 China is also exploiting the region's resources, including  
10 through Chinese blue water fishing fleets, engaged in  
11 illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing. And Russia is  
12 using military assistance and air and sea access agreements  
13 with Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Cuba to create instability  
14 and challenge democratic governance in the region.

15 A key tool in this strategic competition is U.S.  
16 security cooperation with foreign military and security  
17 forces in the Western Hemisphere. During today's testimony,  
18 I hope you will address how the Department is using its  
19 security cooperation authorities, including its Section 333  
20 capacity-building authority and bilateral and multilateral  
21 training and exercises to strengthen our longstanding  
22 security ties to countries in the region, and also what more  
23 can be done to counter the growing malign influence of  
24 Russia and China in the region.

25 Lastly, I would be interested in how DoD is engaging

1 with foreign ministries of defense to build longer-term  
2 capacity within those institutions in order to promote the  
3 rule of law, human rights, and respect for civilian control  
4 of the military.

5 I will now turn it over to Senator Ernst for any  
6 opening comments she may have.

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1                   OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JONI ERNST, U.S.

2   SENATOR FROM IOWA

3           Senator Ernst: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and  
4   thank you all very much for appearing in front of the  
5   subcommittee today.

6           Despite the war raging in Ukraine, this hearing is  
7   always timely because it concerns the security of our own  
8   neighborhood, right here in the Western Hemisphere. The  
9   security of this region is not guaranteed. China clearly  
10   views the Western Hemisphere as critical to fulfilling its  
11   global ambitions and displacing the United States as the  
12   global leader. China's successful inclusion of 21 Latin  
13   American states in the Belt and Road Initiative, its efforts  
14   to bribe and bully countries into lopsided deals that give  
15   the Chinese preferential access agreements, and its  
16   significant investments in dual-use infrastructure like  
17   ports, as well as military capabilities like space tracking  
18   sites really should concern us.

19           It is clear China's efforts are not purely economic.  
20   They are following their tried-and-true playbook that uses  
21   strong-armed economic and diplomatic efforts to set  
22   conditions for an eventual military buildup. The China  
23   Communist Party's autocratic, oppressive model is not in the  
24   long-term interest of our hemisphere.

25           Make no mistake. China is on the offense in the

1 Western Hemisphere, and I am worried our posture and  
2 policies are reactive at best, inert at worst.

3 During today's hearing I look forward to discussing how  
4 DoD can be more innovative and effective in competing with  
5 and countering our adversaries in the region and  
6 strengthening partnerships with key allies like Colombia.

7 And with that, Mr. Chair, I will turn it back to you.

8 Senator Kelly: General Bradfield, Ms. Dalton, Mr.  
9 Saenz, I understand that all of you do not have a prepared  
10 statement, but if you have a joint statement I think one of  
11 you are prepared to deliver that.

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1                   STATEMENT OF THE HON. MELISSA DALTON, ASSISTANT  
2 SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR HOMELAND DEFENSE AND HEMISPHERIC  
3 AFFAIRS

4           Ms. Dalton: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Chairman Kelly,  
5 Ranking Member Ernst, and distinguished members of the  
6 subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify  
7 before you today on how the Department approaches strategic  
8 competition and security cooperation in the Western  
9 Hemisphere. I am delighted to be joined by DASD James Saenz  
10 and Brigadier General Bradfield to provide our joint  
11 testimony today, and we would like to make two main points.

12           First, the Department is committed to maintaining  
13 strong defense relationships with our key partners in the  
14 Western Hemisphere, including Canada, Mexico, and the  
15 majority of the countries from the Caribbean and Central and  
16 South America. Security cooperation is a vital tool to  
17 maintain these relationships, as Russia and China continue  
18 expanding their influence and actively seek to compete with  
19 us in this hemisphere across multiple sectors.

20           Second, even as we engage in this competition, we must  
21 also support responses to threats posed by state or non-  
22 state actors, including drug trafficking, trafficking in  
23 persons and weapons, illicit financial flows, humanitarian  
24 disasters with natural and manmade causes, and malicious  
25 cyber activity. Our security cooperation partnerships serve



1 as a critical way to counter transnational threats as part  
2 of a whole-of-government approach.

3 As DoD addresses multiple threats to international  
4 peace and stability, we are mindful that a relatively safe  
5 and secure Western Hemisphere helps give us the bandwidth to  
6 tackle challenges elsewhere in the globe. However, we  
7 cannot take security in this hemisphere for granted,  
8 especially as our strategic competitors seek to shift the  
9 balance in their favor.

10 The People's Republic of China is the pacing challenge  
11 for the Department, including in the Western Hemisphere.  
12 The PRC continues to expand its diplomatic, technological,  
13 informational, military, and economic enticements to our  
14 partners in the region. We are concerned that PRC offers of  
15 military cooperation, scientific exchanges, and information  
16 technology assistance have nefarious objectives. We are  
17 also concerned that the PRC's economic investments are  
18 predatory in nature and may mask military purposes.

19 Russia continues to promote instability in the  
20 hemisphere with disinformation and by providing diplomatic,  
21 intelligence, financial, and military support to  
22 authoritarian regimes, and its activities could enter a new  
23 phase if Russia seeks to amplify these activities in  
24 reaction to the U.S. response to Russia's invasion of  
25 Ukraine.

1           Meanwhile, Iran's cooperation with the Venezuelan  
2 regime of Nicolás Maduro, among other countries, remains of  
3 great concern to us.

4           Responding to these threats requires attention,  
5 commitment, and investments. As the forthcoming National  
6 Defense Strategy will outline, DoD will need to maintain  
7 strong bilateral and multilateral defense partnerships in  
8 the hemisphere, enabled by engagements in presence,  
9 intelligence, and information exchanges, education programs  
10 and exercises, and other tools of security cooperation.

11           In addition to state competitors, drug trafficking and  
12 other transnational criminal organizations continue to  
13 accrue billions of dollars in illicit profit at the expense  
14 of American lives and regional security. They engage in  
15 illicit activities such as trafficking in humans and weapons  
16 and illegal mining. These organizations undermine stability  
17 by enabling corruption, eroding democratic institutions, and  
18 hindering governments from exercising effective sovereignty  
19 within their countries.

20           Western Hemisphere nations, particularly in Central  
21 America and the Caribbean, face the threat of extreme  
22 natural disasters, in many cases exacerbated by climate  
23 change. These disasters often lead to a variety of  
24 destabilizing effects that compound economic hardship and  
25 insecurity and can help drive migration.

1           We have also seen the devastating effects of the COVID-  
2 19 pandemic in the hemisphere. The pandemic's effects on  
3 political and economic stability and on public health will  
4 resonate across the region for decades to come.

5           Finally, there is concern across the hemisphere about  
6 the increasing threat of a range of malicious cyber  
7 activities, including unauthorized intrusions.

8           Addressing these strategic and transnational threats  
9 requires DoD to closely cooperate with other U.S. Executive  
10 branch partners and with our international partners.  
11 Building and strengthening these partnerships are key to  
12 maintaining the Western Hemisphere's security and stability.  
13 Our partnerships with other hemispheric nations are based on  
14 the essential principles of support for democratic  
15 institutions, civilian control of the military, and respect  
16 for human rights and dignity.

17           Dedicated training on human rights is a core component  
18 of our security cooperation activities with partners.  
19 Senior DoD officials have led multiple bilateral working  
20 groups and other senior leader engagements with our partners  
21 across the Americas, including several with Caribbean  
22 partners as part of our greater emphasis on cooperation with  
23 that vital region. We continue institutional capacity-  
24 building and professional military education programs with  
25 partners nations' defense and security ministries and

1   militaries, including in Central America. Our defense and  
2   security cooperation with Colombia remains strong, and is a  
3   key component of the U.S.-Colombia Bicentennial Partnership  
4   that Presidents Biden and Duque announced on March 10th.

5           At the same time, we are expanding into new areas of  
6   cooperation to include cyber, climate resilience, and space.

7   We also cooperate in multilateral settings to include the  
8   Inter-American Defense Board and the Conference of Defense  
9   Ministers of the Americas, which Brazil will host this July.  
10   In addition, to help our U.S. law enforcement and  
11   international partners disrupt drug trafficking and other  
12   transnational criminal organizations, DoD continues to  
13   provide detection and monitoring, intelligence analysis, and  
14   other forms of support, using the counterdrug authorities  
15   and appropriations provided by Congress for more than 30  
16   years.

17           Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Ernst, and distinguished  
18   members of the subcommittee, these are just some of the ways  
19   in which DoD employs security cooperation to address  
20   strategic competition and transnational threats. Thank you,  
21   and we look forward to your questions.

22           [The joint prepared statement of Ms. Dalton, Mr. Saenz,  
23   and General Bradfield follows:]

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1           Senator Kelly: Thank you, Ms. Dalton, for your  
2 statement. I will begin our first round of 5 minutes for  
3 questions.

4           Ms. Dalton, the DNI's latest annual Threat Assessment  
5 Report, issued in February of this year, highlighted the  
6 threat from illicit drugs, particularly synthetic drugs, has  
7 reached record levels, with more than 100,000 U.S. drug  
8 overdose deaths annually for the first time ever.

9           In Arizona, the DEA has said that they seized a record  
10 amount of fentanyl in 2021, with the primary source being  
11 the Sinaloa Cartel. This has taken the lives of many  
12 Arizonans and many Americans and has put a strain on local  
13 law enforcement.

14           So Secretary Dalton, do you agree that the threat from  
15 illicit drug trafficking is a national security threat and  
16 that the Department of Defense has an important role to play  
17 in assessing this threat?

18           Ms. Dalton: Chairman, thank you very much for the  
19 question, and yes, I do agree that this is a national  
20 security threat that we must be committed to addressing. It  
21 is a tragedy, the alarming rate of hundreds of thousands of  
22 Americans that are being affected by the illicit drug trade  
23 in states across America. And so DoD is committed to the  
24 important role that we play in detection and monitoring, in  
25 intelligence cooperation in the broader region as well as

1 through our security cooperation efforts, to try to address  
2 this phenomenon upstream, working closely with partners in  
3 the region and with our interagency partners, and then also  
4 in the homeland, in support of DHS, DOJ, DEA, and other  
5 relevant civilian-led authorities. We are absolutely  
6 committed to this mission and it is a national security  
7 challenge.

8 Senator Kelly: I imagine the Chinese and the Russians  
9 are looking at this as a big opportunity for them. Is it  
10 your assessment that our near-peer competitors like China  
11 and Russia are taking advantage of this instability created  
12 by this illicit drug trade and are using this to expand  
13 their influence in the Western Hemisphere?

14 Ms. Dalton: Chairman, thank you for pointing out this  
15 important nexus. You know, as we look at the threats in the  
16 region and what our strategic competitors are doing and how  
17 they opportunistically may seek to ride upon other drivers  
18 of instability, I think this nexus is going to be  
19 increasingly important to watch, which is why we have  
20 dedicated elements within Southern Command, within the  
21 broader Department, to track the behavior of our strategic  
22 competitors and what the interrelationships might be with  
23 some of the transnational criminal organizations, and would  
24 be happy to follow up through classified channels to share  
25 more.

1           Senator Kelly: Thank you. Mr. Saenz, the Department  
2 of Defense's budget for drug interdiction and counterdrug  
3 activities, as approved by the omnibus for fiscal year 2022,  
4 is over \$800 million, and two-thirds of that is focused on  
5 the Western Hemisphere and the U.S. homeland.

6           So, Mr. Saenz, how effective would you say the  
7 Department's counterdrug activities have been in cutting off  
8 the flow of illicit drugs into our country?

9           Mr. Saenz: Mr. Chairman, thank you so much for that  
10 question and this opportunity to meet with all of you today.  
11 So I think that the Department of Defense's activities, in  
12 conjunction with all of our partners, both interagency and  
13 international partners, work well together to help stem the  
14 flow of drugs into the United States, given our authorities  
15 and the funding provided by Congress.

16           I think that the authorities that are provided by  
17 Congress are really what shape what we are able to do, and I  
18 would like to thank all the Members of Congress and members  
19 of the Senate and members of this subcommittee for those  
20 authorities that help assist us in shaping how we provide  
21 our part of interagency, international effort to stem the  
22 flow of drugs.

23           Senator Kelly: Can you give an assessment of its  
24 effectiveness? Is there any kind of metric that you use,  
25 any way to measure the effectiveness of the \$800 million

1 budget, where most of that goes in the Western Hemisphere  
2 and the U.S. homeland?

3 Mr. Saenz: Thank you for this opportunity to clarify.  
4 So our budget that we provide, that \$800 million, is divided  
5 into several different areas. Part of that is for our own  
6 demand reduction activities within the Department of  
7 Defense, some of that is for our primary mission, which is  
8 detection and monitoring, and part of that is for the  
9 support that we provide through intelligence and logistics  
10 support. And then a large portion of that is the support we  
11 provide through the National Guard in supporting local,  
12 state, and Federal law enforcement.

13 Each one of those categories has different metrics in  
14 areas that we look at for how we providing that support in  
15 conjunction with our law enforcement partners. In those  
16 various areas we do have metrics that we look at to see how  
17 we are providing that support, and in general, those metrics  
18 show that the support that we are able to provide is  
19 effective and points out ways where we can become more  
20 effective and efficient with the funds that are provided.

21 Senator Kelly: I would like to follow up. Maybe we  
22 can get some details on those metrics, and myself and my  
23 staff can take a look at it.

24 So I appreciate that. I will recognize Senator Ernst  
25 for 5 minutes.



1           Senator Ernst: Yes. Thanks again to our witnesses.  
2           General Bradfield, if I could start with you, sir. I am  
3           increasingly concerned about China's investments in our  
4           critical mineral markets in the Western Hemisphere. How  
5           could growing Chinese influence in South American mining  
6           become a security risk for us?

7           General Bradfield: Yes, ma'am. Thank you, Senator,  
8           for the question. So the Joint Staff is gravely concerned  
9           about any seemingly economic deals with China in the  
10          hemisphere because of dual-use purposes. Some of these  
11          companies could easily be used for military application  
12          later. So any access that they gain through a business deal  
13          in the hemisphere may be militarized down the road.

14          Senator Ernst: Mm-hmm. Yeah. I do agree with that  
15          and I have grave concerns about it. Is there any  
16          coordination with our Department of State underway presently  
17          to counter the diplomatic pressure that China is putting on  
18          South American leaders regarding these critical mineral  
19          markets in South America, and particularly in Chile?

20          General Bradfield: Ma'am, I would have to defer  
21          specifically to Department of State, but I can tell you that  
22          the Joint Staff works with the interagency to share  
23          information and concerns. And as we detect and monitor and  
24          establish these well-founded relationships we have  
25          throughout the hemisphere with our partners and allies, to

1 share that information with the appropriate entities. It is  
2 a whole-of-government approach, ma'am.

3 Senator Ernst: And can you maybe explain the risks  
4 that are associated with that as well?

5 General Bradfield: Yes, ma'am. To understand your  
6 question then, the risk for -- I am sorry. Can you restate  
7 --

8 Senator Ernst: Well, the pressure that China is  
9 putting on South American leaders to gain access to these --  
10 basically the mining infrastructure, are there risk then  
11 with allowing China to continue to put pressure on those  
12 leaders? Is it blocking any attempts that the United States  
13 might have to work with those South American leaders, those  
14 type of interactions? Are you able to observe any of that  
15 from DoD perspective?

16 General Bradfield: Yes, ma'am. Thank you for  
17 clarifying the question. So yes, ma'am. They appear to  
18 have different tactics to gain access to, as you stated,  
19 minerals and business deals, but often what we are hearing  
20 from partners and allies and witnessing is that strings  
21 attached. So it may appear to be a business deal but then  
22 it turns into something about longer-term access, or, you  
23 know, there are 14 countries in the world that still  
24 recognize Taiwan. Eight of them are in the hemisphere. And  
25 we have heard that some of these deals come with, "We will

1 give you this good deal if you denounce recognition of  
2 Taiwan."

3           Senator Ernst: Okay. And there is definitely a risk  
4 in that. So, in particular, I have heard of opportunities  
5 for American companies to engage in some of these mining  
6 activities. However, with the pressure that is coming from  
7 China we do not have that same level of interest from the  
8 United States government in assisting some of our own  
9 companies, and access to these critical mineral resources  
10 are extremely important. So I appreciate your feedback  
11 there.

12           And General Bradfield, an increasing PLO presence in  
13 SOUTHCOM's AOR has direct implications for DoD requirements,  
14 given the strategic location along critical sealines of  
15 communication like the Panama Canal and the Strait of  
16 Magellan at the southern tip of South America.

17           In your professional military judgment then, how could  
18 an increased Chinese military presence near strategic lines  
19 of communication impact DoD's ability to execute contingency  
20 operations, both in the region and in other places like  
21 INDOPACOM?

22           General Bradfield: Yes, ma'am. Thank you for the  
23 question. So we are watching that closely and working with  
24 our allies and partners throughout the theater, not just  
25 Panama. But certainly your question is how could it impact?

1 It could certainly impact if China, for example, had control  
2 of the port authority on either or both ends of the Panama  
3 Canal. It could restrict movement. And they are also  
4 trying to gain access and strike a port agreement down in  
5 southern Argentina, and that could be of concern as well.

6 Senator Ernst: [Presiding.] Very good. I appreciate  
7 that. I am going to yield back my time. Senator  
8 Gillibrand.

9 Senator Gillibrand: Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

10 Ms. Dalton and General Bradfield, you noted in your  
11 written testimony that one way China attempts to expand its  
12 influence in the Western Hemisphere is strengthened by the  
13 PLA's ties with militaries in the Western Hemisphere. What  
14 arguments are we making to our Western Hemisphere neighbors  
15 that they should engage with our own armed forces over the  
16 Chinese? And one issue that is related and not unique to  
17 the Western Hemisphere is corruption amongst the political  
18 leaders and other elites. Can you speak to how our  
19 adversaries are exploiting corruption to their advantage and  
20 what tools should we use to counter that?

21 Ms. Dalton: Senator Gillibrand, thank you so much for  
22 the really important question here. It is an issue that we  
23 are closely monitoring and seeking to counteract, given our  
24 longstanding defense relationships in the region. So it is  
25 deeply worrisome to us that China is attempting to make

1 these inroads.

2 In terms of the arguments that we are using, it is the  
3 fact that we have decades-long defense relationships in the  
4 region, that the quality of the security cooperation that we  
5 provide in terms of training and equipment, in terms of  
6 sustainment, is second to none globally, and that are part  
7 of, therefore, a network of global U.S. allies and partners  
8 that share common interests and values. And I think that is  
9 a really compelling argument that most of our partners in  
10 the region, that it continues to resonate with them.

11 But I do think we will need to redouble our efforts as  
12 China seeks to make these inroads to ensure that we continue  
13 to live up to our end of the bargain and continue to build  
14 the relationships in ways that are going to be helpful to  
15 them. And I do think that, again, there is an  
16 interrelationship here, as we were speaking about earlier,  
17 in terms of some of the other drivers of insecurity. You  
18 mentioned corruption. There is also the TCO dynamic, where  
19 actors like China and Russia, through disinformation,  
20 through cyber means, are looking to piggyback on some of  
21 those dynamics and foster a sense of disconnection between  
22 the government and their people, potentially. And this is  
23 an area that we continue to watch very closely.

24 General Bradfield: Senator, thank you for the  
25 question. The Joint Staff and NORAD and NORTHCOM and

1 SOUTHCOM are keenly aware of how China is maneuvering  
2 throughout the AOR and in our backyard.

3       So what are we doing about it? We stand shoulder to  
4 shoulder with our partners and allies. We are on the field.  
5 The Joint Force is on the field every day with our partners  
6 and allies. And we have some longstanding relationships  
7 that many of you on this committee may be well familiar with  
8 as well -- a low-cost but high-return-on-investment program  
9 like Security Partnership Program through the National  
10 Guard. Four members in this subcommittee have states that  
11 work in the hemisphere, and we are proud of that. These are  
12 longstanding relationships where we build trust and we have  
13 earned the title of "partner of choice."

14       So while China will continue to do what they feel like  
15 they need to for strategy, our biggest strength in the  
16 hemisphere are our partnerships, our friends, our neighbors.  
17 So being on the battlefield and being in the space with  
18 them, both in training, exercises, and persistent  
19 engagements, is very important. And we need to meet our  
20 partners and allies where they, with their challenges. So  
21 that is very important. So the support of this committee  
22 and Congress to find those activities is very important.

23       Senator Gillibrand: Acknowledging that we are in an  
24 unclassified setting, the efforts that China is making to  
25 train foreign military, are those efforts successful, and

1 how would you rate them, and how do you think we should best  
2 counter it with the partnerships that we have forged over  
3 several decades in Latin America?

4 General Bradfield: Yes, ma'am. Thank you. So we do  
5 get feedback from our partnership and allies, and some do  
6 continue to send folks to training in Communist China. And  
7 again, you are right, at this level of classification -- I  
8 could be more specific for the record later, ma'am. But it  
9 is effective because they keep going sometimes, because it  
10 is a free, paid-for school, but we do get the feedback that  
11 because we have an emphasis on human rights, a respect for  
12 civilian government and democracy, that we are the preferred  
13 partner of choice.

14 Senator Gillibrand: Thank you. Thank you, Madam  
15 Chairman.

16 Senator Ernst: Senator Tuberville.

17 Senator Tuberville: Thank you very much. Thank you  
18 for your testimony today.

19 You know, we have got a lot of bad things going on  
20 around the world. You know, we are all worried about  
21 Ukraine and the people there. It is a shame what is going  
22 on. We will lose more in the first 6 months of overdoses in  
23 this country than they will lose, and it does not seem like  
24 we are much worried about it. We do not hear people talking  
25 about it, and this is my second hearing today about drugs.

1 I think we all need to get more and more concerned about.  
2 Senator Kelly obviously brought it up in his home state of  
3 Arizona.

4 At the end of the day, what have we got to do? I mean,  
5 we are losing. We are losing the war on drugs down at the  
6 border, and it is coming across right and left. And we will  
7 have people die around here today, overdose, around our  
8 building here.

9 Ms. Dalton, what do you think? I mean, is there  
10 anything else we can do, any more emphasis? What are we  
11 spending -- 800 -- how much do we spend? What is our  
12 budget? 800?

13 Ms. Dalton: Eight hundred million.

14 Senator Tuberville: Eight hundred million? Just  
15 elaborate on that a little bit.

16 Ms. Dalton: Senator, thank you for highlighting this  
17 challenge again, and I am really impressed by the focus that  
18 this subcommittee is giving to this issue, and you mentioned  
19 the other engagement going on here today, because I do think  
20 it needs more due attention, given the impact that it is  
21 having on Americans.

22 Again, I think the Department is absolutely committed  
23 to playing the important role that we do with our partners  
24 in the region to get after some of the upstream drivers of  
25 these illicit networks that are bringing drugs into our



1 country. I think the Administration is giving a lot of  
2 emphasis to trying to come up with a comprehensive strategy  
3 that will address some of those upstream drivers.

4 The challenge is that, you know, some of those  
5 initiatives will take some time to manifest because it  
6 fundamentally is about governance, it is about corruption,  
7 it is about the seeds that lay the foundation for those  
8 networks to be able to take hold in the points of origin.

9 And so through our security cooperation efforts in the  
10 region, continuing to work closely on the  
11 professionalization and capabilities and defense  
12 institutional capacity-building of our partners to try to  
13 address some of those upstream drivers I think is really  
14 critical, while, at the same time, bringing the focus here  
15 in the homeland to work with state and local authorities in  
16 our support capacity as a department, to support the  
17 important efforts of DHS, DEA, and other actors. I am  
18 grateful for Congress' continued support for our  
19 counternarcotics programs and our security cooperation  
20 programs, and in terms of what more we could do, I think  
21 additional congressional focus and funding for our civilian-  
22 led agencies, like DHS, like the State Department, like DEA,  
23 that need the capacity to get after this challenge.

24 Senator Tuberville: Well, here is a problem, I see  
25 what has happened over the years. Marijuana, heroin -- most

1 of those things you have to grow, right? This fentanyl is  
2 synthetic, and this can right here of fentanyl could kill  
3 everybody in this city, and they are making it right and  
4 left, and it is easy to get across the border. And it is  
5 awful. I mean, it is absolutely awful, and nobody seems to  
6 be worried about it. I know that it is you all's job, but  
7 we have got to do something about it or we are going to have  
8 a catastrophe in this country of somebody putting it in our  
9 water supply, putting it in air systems. We have got to  
10 wake up and smell the roses.

11 A couple other things. On the African continent we  
12 have one military base. In COCOM we have 76 bases in Latin  
13 America. Is there anything else we need to do down there to  
14 help? You know, it looks like we are pretty well targeted,  
15 you know, in Latin America, to helping things like this. We  
16 are not concerned about it in Africa. Any thoughts on that?

17 Ms. Dalton: Senator, thank you. I believe that those  
18 key nodes that we have in the region support the  
19 longstanding defense partnerships that we have been  
20 cultivating the last 30-some years, and those are critical  
21 to supporting the ongoing training, exercising, and  
22 capacity-building that we are doing with our defense  
23 partners in the region in support of the civilian-led law  
24 enforcement efforts in the region as well.

25 So, you know, combining that, again, as part of

1 increased support for our interagency colleagues and their  
2 capacities to also work with our partners I think is the  
3 pathway forward.

4 Senator Tuberville: Yeah. One other quick question.  
5 We are hearing at the March Title 42 is going to expire.  
6 Right now we are seeing 5,000 to 6,000 a week come across  
7 the border. I think that would probably enhance people  
8 coming across. It is going to be tougher to stop the drugs.  
9 It is going to be tougher to stop the human trafficking. It  
10 is really going to get bad. Do you all expect that?

11 Ms. Dalton: Senator, thank for highlighting that. We  
12 are closely coordinating with DHS and other interagency  
13 partners to anticipate the possible lifting of Title 42  
14 order. And while we are committed to providing support at  
15 the southwest border, from a homeland perspective, and again  
16 continuing to work closely with partners in the broader  
17 hemisphere, the Secretary has not yet made a determination  
18 for onward support for fiscal year 2023. But I am happy to  
19 work closely with you all as the Secretary makes that  
20 determination.

21 Senator Tuberville: Thank you. Thank you, Madam  
22 Chair.

23 Senator Kelly: [Presiding.] Senator Kaine is  
24 recognized for 5 minutes.

25 Senator Kaine: Thank you, and thank you to the

1 witnesses for what you do. You guys do really good jobs at  
2 what you do. I am going to be critical, and I am not going  
3 to be critical of you because I think my criticisms lie  
4 elsewhere. They lie with successive administrations and  
5 with us, Congress.

6 You do a good job with what you have. We do not give  
7 you very much. We do not give you very much. We have had  
8 testimony again and again before this committee that we can  
9 spot an awful lot of drugs coming to this country, in  
10 response to Senator Tuberville, but SOUTHCOM does not get  
11 the resources to interdict what we know is coming. SOUTHCOM  
12 has always been underfunded, even in terms of the ISR they  
13 get. SOUTHCOM asks for help for cyber defense and CYBERCOM  
14 does not have any resources to give to them. And what they  
15 say is, "Use the South Carolina Guard. They will help you  
16 with cyber defense." Good on the South Carolina Guard.  
17 That is great. But CYBERCOM tells SOUTHCOM, "We do not have  
18 resources for you."

19 We act like there is an east-west access to the world  
20 and there is not a north-south access. And this is not just  
21 defense. This is also in the diplomacy space. Vaccines.  
22 Eight percent of the population lives in SOUTHCOM, the  
23 global population. Thirty percent of the deaths were there.  
24 How about our distribution of vaccines? We sent 8 percent  
25 of our vaccines there. We sent what the population was, but

1 not what the death toll was, and you could argue that  
2 because SOUTHCOM is so connected to us through migration,  
3 even if they did not have an unacceptably high death toll we  
4 should have been doing better by them.

5 Six of us went to Central and South America in July,  
6 three Democrats and three Republicans. We went at the time  
7 the U.S. was delivering vaccines. They were thrilled that  
8 we were delivering vaccines because Sinovac and Sputnik  
9 vaccines, China and Russia were really making a play. They  
10 like our vaccines better. We were giving them. China and  
11 Russia were selling them. They thought our quality was  
12 higher. If they said something good about Taiwan, China  
13 would suddenly cancel it.

14 So we have a little open door with vaccine development,  
15 but even then I think we were under-distributing in the  
16 Americas when we could have been really building up power  
17 goodwill there because of the death toll there and because  
18 they really want to do business with us.

19 I am the chairman of the Western Hemisphere  
20 Subcommittee on Foreign Relations. Again and again, when we  
21 meet with heads of state they tell us, in Spanish, usually,  
22 when the translator is gone, they say, "We would much rather  
23 work with you than with China or Russia. We would much  
24 rather work with you. But they have resources on the table  
25 and you do not."

1           And you have talked about the security cooperation  
2 funding, and this IMET, International Military Education and  
3 Training funding. I am going to look really carefully. I  
4 think the President is going to send us a budget next week,  
5 and I would encourage everybody here, you guys have said we  
6 should do this hearing, look at that budget next week and  
7 see what happens to security cooperation funding and IMET in  
8 SOUTHCOM. I bet you are going to see it going down. I bet  
9 you are going to see that we are deciding to prioritize  
10 other parts of the world instead of SOUTHCOM. I am hoping I  
11 am wrong about that, and if I am wrong I am going to say  
12 publicly I was wrong. But I have a feeling we are going to  
13 see a continued devaluation of what we need to be doing in  
14 this region.

15           Now there are some bright spots. Ecuador, where we  
16 have virtually no presence for a very long time because they  
17 were pro-China, a year ago they swept out the president,  
18 they swept out 70 percent of their national assembly because  
19 China was ripping them off -- building crummy projects,  
20 drying up rivers, vacuuming up fish around the Galapagos.  
21 So even though we really were not doing much with them, the  
22 Ecuadoran population decided to sweep out an old crew, and  
23 they put in a very potentially friendly U.S. government.  
24 That is positive.

25           The Chilean elections have produced somebody who is not

1 necessarily Mr. Pro U.S. He is a candidate from the left,  
2 but he has been willing to speak out against Cuba, speak out  
3 against Nicaragua, speak out against Venezuela, speak out  
4 against the Russian invasion of Ukraine. There is an  
5 opportunity there for us.

6 Honduras has replaced a president, one who was corrupt  
7 and complicit in the drug trade in the United States, again,  
8 to somebody who is not necessarily going to be an ally of  
9 ours but at least there is a chapter that is open to us.

10 And the last thing that has happened recently is  
11 Panama, Costa Rica, and Dominican Republic have announced  
12 an alliance for democracy and development to try to counter  
13 the democratic backsliding in the region and lean forward  
14 and be more pro-democracy, and that gives us some  
15 opportunity.

16 But I guess I just want to say to my colleagues, when  
17 we get this budget next week let's take a look at what the  
18 allocation of resources are into this AOR. And I think you  
19 are going to conclude that no matter what kind of good  
20 people we have trying to do a good job, it has not been a  
21 priority. It has not been a priority, and it needs to be a  
22 priority.

23 The only question I will ask is, do you agree with me?  
24 I mean, you testified to it essentially, but programs like  
25 IMET and security cooperation, they are not the real

1 expensive ones, and it is some of the best things that we do  
2 in terms of building up alliances and friendships that can  
3 last for generations. Am I looking at this the right way?

4 Ms. Dalton: Senator, thank you so much for  
5 highlighting that. I think what I would say, in response,  
6 is with the resources that we do get for this region that we  
7 will be creative and innovative and make sure we get the  
8 best bang for our buck in terms of leveraging it through the  
9 security cooperation tools that we have at our disposal.

10 You know, through the NDAA the Department also has an  
11 opportunity through this Strategic Competition Initiative to  
12 highlight, both for this region as well as, I believe, for  
13 AFRICOM, the ways that we are going to leverage security  
14 cooperation, irregular warfare, institutional capacity-  
15 building going forward, to achieve our objectives.

16 So we will come up with a robust framework to be able  
17 to describe how we are going to innovate with the tools that  
18 we have.

19 Senator Kaine: Thank you. I appreciate it.

20 Senator Kelly: Thank you. Senator Peters.

21 Senator Peters: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you  
22 to our witnesses for being here today.

23 Ms. Dalton, my first question is to you. This comes  
24 from my perspective as chairing the Senate Homeland Security  
25 Committee and overseeing DHS. As you are well aware, many



1 of the security challenges that we face in Latin America are  
2 really more of a political and economic instability rather  
3 than the typical state-on-state competition. In fact, I  
4 think most of the security challenges that the U.S. faces in  
5 the region in dealing with Latin America is much more about  
6 homeland security than they are about national security,  
7 broadly.

8 So my question to you, as a senior DoD official at the  
9 nexus of homeland security and national defense, how are you  
10 working with your DHS colleagues at home and abroad to  
11 proactively combat issues like human trafficking, drug  
12 smuggling, illegal weapons sales that are taking place in  
13 Latin America and impact us in oftentimes very direct ways?

14 Ms. Dalton: Senator, thank you for highlighting this,  
15 and I think there is actually a great opportunity in terms  
16 of the ethos that this Administration is bringing to trying  
17 to break down the traditional silos of how we think about  
18 foreign policy and domestic policy. This was highlighted in  
19 President Biden's Interim National Security Strategic  
20 Guidance as an imperative for all of us to kind of think  
21 differently about some of these transcendent issues that you  
22 illustrated just now so well.

23 For my part, I talk to DHS on a daily basis on this  
24 issue set, to see how we can work together on both ends of  
25 the equation, and frankly, also in terms of how, now in OSD

1 policy, we are orienting the assistant secretaryship that I  
2 oversee, it allows us to work with DHS both on the homeland  
3 dimension, in support of their lead activities on the  
4 southwest border, but also working with DHS and other  
5 interagency partners in support of addressing the upstream  
6 drivers of migration that brings both legal and illegal  
7 migrants to our borders.

8 Senator Peters: Great. Thank you.

9 Mr. Saenz, our Special Operations Forces have a very  
10 long history of working with Latin American partners to  
11 combat transnational criminal organizations, principally  
12 those related to the drug trade. Special Operations Command  
13 reorients itself, like the rest of the defense  
14 establishment, towards undertaking great power competition.  
15 I am concerned that this type of support and training may  
16 not be as readily available going forward.

17 So my question for you, though, is can you discuss what  
18 Special Operations support for counternarcotics will look  
19 like in an era of constrained resources and competing  
20 priorities?

21 Mr. Saenz: Well, Senator, thank you so much for your  
22 question and pointing out that area of concern. The support  
23 that we receive in our counterdrug and counter-transnational  
24 organized crime work that we do across DoD does have a  
25 component of Special Operations which supports those

1 efforts. And that component looks to continue.

2 As you are aware, a lot of our Special Operations  
3 Forces are regionally oriented, and so they will continue to  
4 work within those regions. Within each one of those regions  
5 there are different sets of problems and challenges we want  
6 to get at. Certainly in the Western Hemisphere,  
7 transnational organized crime and drugs are a significant  
8 concern. So there will always still be an opportunity for  
9 them to support.

10 Currently right now we do have lots of support from  
11 Special Operations Command when it comes to doing our  
12 counterthreat finance work, which really works with the  
13 Department of Treasury to help identify, through  
14 intelligence analysis, ways where we can get after the  
15 financial side of these criminal networks. And that support  
16 that they provide is through individuals who have been  
17 specifically trained to do that work. And so they will  
18 always be focused on that type of work, as an example.

19 Senator Peters: Right. Thank you.

20 General Bradfield, so much of the Chinese influence in  
21 the region is built on -- and we are seeing this elsewhere  
22 around the globe -- massive subsidies for construction of  
23 infrastructure by the Chinese government. We see sea and  
24 airports, electrical grids, roadways. You can name all  
25 sorts of projects that are occurring.

1           So my question for you is, should the U.S. re-evaluate  
2 the type of material support we provide our partners and  
3 allies in the region to ensure that our offers of assistance  
4 remain attractive in the wake of what we are seeing in terms  
5 of Chinese cash flowing into these countries?

6           General Bradfield: Senator, thank you for the  
7 question, and this is a topic of discussion at many of our  
8 security conferences throughout the AOR. And the short  
9 answer, sir, is yes.

10           You mentioned quite a bit there, and we are monitoring  
11 deals and influence that China has throughout the hemisphere  
12 in areas like 5G, finance, energy, construction, and port  
13 projects, and the list goes on to include for military  
14 sales. So the concern and the threat is about any access  
15 and long-term deals and access not only having strings  
16 attached, because typically it is not just about the  
17 headline of the deal. It is what else did they agree to, to  
18 get there. And then it is the enduring presence.

19           And then there is the dual use, of if it is an economic  
20 or a business entity from China, because of the way they are  
21 structured it could be used for military purposes as well.

22           So yes, sir, we are working with partners and allies,  
23 but also across the whole-of-government, interagency,  
24 private industry to address that.

25           Senator Peters: Very good. Thank you. Thank you, Mr.

1 Chairman.

2 Senator Kelly: Thank you, Senator Peters. We will now  
3 go into our second round of questions. I will start out  
4 here for 5 minutes.

5 A little bit different topic here. You know, Russia  
6 has been intensifying its outreach in the Western Hemisphere  
7 to both client states -- Venezuela and Nicaragua and Cuba --  
8 and also to other states like now Brazil and Argentina,  
9 even. We have had longstanding relations with some of these  
10 states, particularly Brazil and Argentina.

11 If Russia uses offers of military assistance, bilateral  
12 military exercises, and air and maritime access agreements  
13 to create instability and undermine democratic governments  
14 throughout the region, they also have a strategy of offering  
15 a diplomatic lifeline to isolated states.

16 Secretary Dalton, how would you characterize Russia's  
17 motivations in aiding proxy states like Venezuela,  
18 Nicaragua, and Cuba, which engage in destabilizing  
19 activities regionally?

20 Ms. Dalton: Chairman, thank you so much for highlight  
21 this issue. I think, you know, as we look forward as a  
22 Department in looking at the behavior of our strategic  
23 competitors we are trying to be mindful of the different  
24 approaches that the PRC and Russia are taking in the region.

25 There are some similarities but they are also distinct.

1           And just to briefly draw that contrast because I think  
2 it is important, I think we would characterize the PRC's  
3 approach more as a long-term strategy that they have been  
4 building towards over the last 20 years, and is, frankly,  
5 more concerning to us, as I framed it in the opening  
6 statement, as the pacing challenge, whereas Russia is  
7 pursuing more of an opportunistic approach. And some of  
8 that has to do with resourcing. Some of that has to do with  
9 the appeal and perhaps even now with Ukraine, global  
10 impression that Russia carrier with partners and other  
11 actors in the region.

12           To your specific question, you know, in terms of their  
13 support for authoritarian regimes like Venezuela, Nicaragua,  
14 and Cuba, I think it exacerbates the trend lines and  
15 pathways that these states are already on in terms of the  
16 approach and example that they potentially set in the  
17 region. And looking to counteract that example, if you  
18 will, with the strong defense relationships that we have  
19 with the vast majority of countries in the region I think is  
20 so important.

21           You know, the case of Brazil is interesting. I believe  
22 that we are confident in our defense relationship there,  
23 although Russia and other actors are attempting to make  
24 inroads. But we are building upon a strong foundation there  
25 and do have, as I mentioned in the opening, an opportunity

1 with the upcoming Inter-American Defense dialogue this  
2 summer. Brazil is going to host it, and I think that is a  
3 really important testament to the strong foundation that we  
4 have there.

5 Senator Kelly: Thank you. General Bradfield, do you  
6 have an assessment from the Joint Staff on the impact of  
7 Russian arms sales in the Western Hemisphere, including  
8 weapons to Cuba and Nicaragua, and aircraft and any missile  
9 systems to Venezuela? Can you speak to that?

10 General Bradfield: Sir, thanks for the question. So I  
11 would like to provide a more full answer at a classified  
12 level, so I would like to take that for the record. But I  
13 can tell you that we are watching very closely the current  
14 crisis in Europe, and with embargos and sanctions how it is  
15 affecting partners and allies. Some of our partners and  
16 allies did purchase Russian equipment decades ago, when it  
17 was an economically good deal, but they are using them for  
18 good, for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief and  
19 security cooperation. If they are not able to maintain that  
20 equipment and use that equipment that is certainly something  
21 of concern and be seen as both a risk yet an opportunity for  
22 those that might want to step in, but also an opportunity  
23 for other adversaries. So we are watching that closely,  
24 sir.

25 Senator Kelly: I will have some more follow-up on this

1 area here in a second, but I want to recognize Senator Ernst  
2 for 5 minutes.

3 Senator Ernst: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and General  
4 Bradfield, how are the Chinese and Russians using  
5 disinformation and information operations in the region?  
6 How are they doing that, and are they undermining U.S.  
7 credibility and maybe those of our partners? And are they  
8 being effective if they are doing that?

9 General Bradfield: Thanks for the question, ma'am. So  
10 certainly that is part of the campaign, misinformation,  
11 disinformation, and with Spanish-speaking countries they do  
12 have internet and also television and radio broadcasts.  
13 Fortunately, due to the atrocities in Europe some countries  
14 have decided to stop broadcasting, but our adversaries do  
15 find other ways to spread mis- and disinformation.

16 So I cannot give any kind of metric on how effective,  
17 but we are working hard to work across the DIME -- I do mean  
18 the whole-of-government -- and the whole DIME -- diplomatic,  
19 information technology, military, and economic. But we are  
20 basically, because we follow the rule of law and we work so  
21 closely with our partners and allies that we are trying to  
22 spread the truth through those relationships and trust.

23 Senator Ernst: Good. Ms. Dalton, did you have any  
24 thoughts on that as well?

25 Ms. Dalton: Thank you, Ranking Member. I do think



1 that this is an important area to watch. We have seen  
2 Russia, in particular, providing support to local media, and  
3 Russia Today is broadcast in the region, I believe, in five  
4 different broadcasting areas, and through that is able to  
5 perpetuate disinformation campaigns through that medium.

6 So it is an important area to watch, and I think  
7 Congress' support for State Department and for USAID and for  
8 other mechanisms to promote the free and open expression of  
9 media more broadly in these societies is really important to  
10 counteract that.

11 Senator Ernst: Right. Thank you. And for any of you,  
12 we do know that Russia and China are actively trying to  
13 influence different elections in the region to put in place  
14 leaders that are more sympathetic their particular  
15 interests, and, of course, those that are hostile to the  
16 United States, and particularly as we look at the upcoming  
17 Colombian and Brazilian elections.

18 And so what is your assessment of Chinese and Russian  
19 efforts, and again, are they being effective in doing so?

20 Ms. Dalton: Thank you, Ranking Member. I am happy to  
21 take a start at that and welcome other comments from my  
22 fellow panelists. I do think that there are active  
23 attempts, both by the PRC and Russia, to shape the political  
24 debate in democracies in the region. I believe, though,  
25 that among the two that you mentioned, both Colombia and

1 Brazil, the fact that we have such a strong defense  
2 relationship with both countries and the fact that the  
3 people themselves are committed to their democratic process  
4 I think bodes fairly well in terms of where things will be  
5 headed, vis-à-vis U.S. interests, as we move forward.

6 But it is an important area to watch, and I think both  
7 competitors are seeking to be influential and opportunistic  
8 in shaping the debate in these countries.

9 Senator Ernst: Thank you. General Bradfield, did you  
10 have any thoughts?

11 General Bradfield: Yes, ma'am. I was fortunate enough  
12 to be able to travel in the AOR last year, to include going  
13 to Colombia. And the President told the SOUTHCOM commander  
14 that he was very concerned about the elections and the  
15 influence and mis- and disinformation and influence in  
16 cyber. So he did say that he was interested in seeking  
17 assistance in countering that, but it is certainly a  
18 concern.

19 Senator Ernst: Thank you. And of course we have  
20 watched everything that is going on in Europe right now with  
21 Ukraine, and our partners there have really been quite  
22 effective in pushing back against the misinformation that is  
23 put out there by Vladimir Putin and the Russian military.  
24 They are exposing what they can, as they can. What lessons  
25 should we be taking from what the Ukrainians are doing and

1 how can we apply that here in the Western Hemisphere with  
2 some of our partners in Central and South America?

3 Mr. Saenz: Well thank you, ma'am. I think that is a  
4 very important point you make there, and I think there are  
5 lots of lessons that we can learn from the situation in  
6 Ukraine and how things are evolving and how that can be  
7 applied in the Western Hemisphere.

8 To the point that you made there about the  
9 disinformation and the misinformation, I think it supports  
10 when we have all of our partners working together instead of  
11 just one nation, with one bilateral partner, us, the United  
12 States, trying to work against whatever that challenge may  
13 be, whether it be disinformation, whether it may be our  
14 counternarcotics works. Whatever we are working against, if  
15 we can attack that not only as a whole-of-government but as  
16 a community with all of our other partner countries in the  
17 area working together, I think we have a better chance of  
18 combating these things.

19 Senator Ernst: Very good. Okay. And with that I will  
20 yield. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

21 Senator Kelly: I want to follow up again on Russia.  
22 So we have been able to impose some significant economic and  
23 financial costs for their unlawful and unprecedented  
24 invasion of Ukraine. Do you see any way for us to impose  
25 additional costs in the Western Hemisphere, maybe with our

1 partners, you know, for their destabilizing activities in  
2 the Western Hemisphere but maybe also as a follow-on to what  
3 we have been able to do to their economy through economic  
4 sanctions?

5 Ms. Dalton: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think it is  
6 worthwhile to think holistically about the approach to  
7 Russia and the fact that, you know, based on, I think, the  
8 inspiration of the Ukrainian people there is this global  
9 mobilization to push back on Russia and what it is doing in  
10 Ukraine currently.

11 You know, I think the sanctions regime that has been  
12 put in place by the United States and our allies is  
13 significant and it is going to have impacts in terms of what  
14 Russia is able to do within the Western Hemisphere and also,  
15 frankly, vice versa, in terms of what our partners are going  
16 to be able to do in certain respects.

17 And so in terms of what specific steps we may want to  
18 take on top of that in the hemisphere I think we will want  
19 to be able to walk forward both the cost benefit analysis  
20 for horizontal escalation, vis-à-vis Russia, and how they  
21 will perceive it and ensuring that that is supportive of our  
22 overall deterrence, while also ensuring that we are doing  
23 that in close coordination with partners in the region so  
24 that it does not have unintended effects on their economies,  
25 their democracies.

1           Forgive me for not having the specific answers there in  
2 terms of ideas. I would be happy to take that back and  
3 follow up. But I think having an overall framework that is  
4 able to calibrate that cost benefit analysis will be  
5 important.

6           Senator Kelly: Have you seen any change in their  
7 activities in the Western Hemisphere in the last, let's say,  
8 2 or 3 months, just leading up to the invasion, and since  
9 then? Has anything been noticeable what the Russians have  
10 been involved in?

11          Ms. Dalton: Mr. Chairman, thank you. What I would say  
12 is that we are closely watching, as a Department and as a  
13 government, what Russia is doing globally and how it is  
14 posturing its military to be able to be cognizant of  
15 potential escalation factors. And I am happy to follow up  
16 more in classified channels.

17          Senator Kelly: Okay. I want to switch back to China  
18 and on space competition in the Western Hemisphere. In the  
19 past few years China has built space tracking facilities,  
20 including in Argentina. The purpose of these facilities is  
21 unclear to us, at least unclear to me at this time. You  
22 know, I think that this point we do not have a solid picture  
23 of the purpose of their tracking stations. And under the  
24 terms of a bilateral agreement that the Argentinians have  
25 with the Chinese they have no oversight over what this

1 tracking station does.

2 So Secretary Dalton, are Chinese space-related  
3 activities in the Western Hemisphere a cause of concern for  
4 the Department, and is there a potential use for these  
5 facilities for malign purposes?

6 Ms. Dalton: Senator, thank you for raising this  
7 important question. As I mentioned in my opening statement  
8 this is an area that we are concerned about, so yes, in  
9 answer to your first question. And then the answer would  
10 also be yes in terms of potential dual use or malign  
11 purposes, and again, I am happy to follow up in classified  
12 channels.

13 Senator Kelly: Thank you. Senator Ernst do you have  
14 any other --

15 Senator Ernst: I am done. Thank you.

16 Senator Kelly: I have got a few more questions. That  
17 does not mean you have to stay. I know you have got a busy  
18 day.

19 So U.S. Southern Command has announced its intention to  
20 expand space-related engagements in the Western Hemisphere  
21 as a counter to the activities of Russia and China.  
22 Potential partners on space include Brazil, Chile, maybe  
23 Argentina, and Peru. Do you see this as potentially a  
24 productive area of cooperation with these countries?

25 Ms. Dalton: Mr. Chairman, thank you for highlighting

1 this area of cooperation. I do think that this is a future  
2 pathway that we are exploring actively with our partners,  
3 including also cyber and information domains and how those  
4 are all interconnected.

5 Do you want to add anything?

6 General Bradfield: Yes, ma'am. Thank you. Senator,  
7 thank you. Yes, we definitely see value, and it is an  
8 important part of integrated deterrence, but also in our  
9 quest for better domain awareness. So it is critically  
10 important.

11 Senator Kelly: Thank you. Senator King.

12 Senator King: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I apologize  
13 for being late. I was at an Intelligence Committee meeting  
14 that ironically overlaps.

15 One of the things that was mentioned at the hearing  
16 that I was just at, and I keep running into this, is a lack  
17 of ISR. The testimony was a very limited amount of ISR  
18 available in the Latin American region. I guess my question  
19 is, why is that? Why can we not build more Global Hawks?  
20 What is the problem? I mean, it seems to me that is a very  
21 solvable problem that is not -- it is math. You have more  
22 resources to watch, whether it is satellites or other  
23 assets. Give me some thoughts on what appears to be a lack  
24 of ISR, particularly in the Southern Hemisphere.

25 General Bradfield: Senator, thank you for the

1 question. In my 11 months on the job and working with  
2 SOUTHCOM I have never heard them say that they could not use  
3 more ISR. So to your point, sir, the Joint Staff allocates  
4 ISR based on global priorities, and SOUTHCOM is certainly  
5 very important to the hemisphere.

6 What they are doing, sir, is through integrated  
7 deterrence and working with partners and allies and also  
8 innovation and private industry and other aspects of the  
9 interagency, they are working very hard to come up with  
10 other ways for domain awareness. But, sir, they have told  
11 me repeatedly that they can always use more ISR.

12 Senator King: Well here is what is bothering me. If  
13 this were a terrorist cell in Latin America, killing 100,000  
14 Americans a year, we would not be sitting here talking about  
15 not enough ISR and allocating it. I am really absolutely  
16 sick of this. The drug trade is one of the primary threats  
17 to this country. It is killing two people a day in my  
18 state. I mean, we need to think about it as an attack. It  
19 is an attack on our country, just as sure as it is an attack  
20 that came from Russia or Iran or anywhere else. And we are  
21 saying, oh well, we have got other needs. If we have got  
22 other needs in other places, let's buy some more resources  
23 to have them here.

24 And I realize this is not your job, but this is, I  
25 think, a gross misallocation of priorities. The reason I



1 seem frustrated is because I am, because I have been on this  
2 for 5 or 6 years and nothing seems to change. Did you want  
3 to comment?

4 Mr. Saenz: Yes, Senator King. Thank you very much,  
5 and you do raise a very significant point about the need for  
6 ISR. So when it comes to the counterdrug work, we are  
7 trying to find ways we can better approach that. And so  
8 what we have done with our funding provided is in the past  
9 we have purchased four De Havilland Dash 8 Pale Ale aircraft  
10 to do that ISR mission for the counterdrug effort.

11 And what we are doing now is we are looking through our  
12 budget process to see if we are able to buy a fifth aircraft  
13 that will add another 1,800 hours of ISR capability per  
14 year. And those are U.S. government-owned by run by  
15 contractors for us.

16 Senator King: I understand. I think the problem is,  
17 counterdrug is over here and military challenges are over  
18 here, and they are just separate. No. We have got to  
19 change our imagination here. This is an attack, and we have  
20 got to put the resources on.

21 And the second problem is -- and we are going to have  
22 testimony coming up from SOUTHCOM -- even with the limited  
23 ISR we have, we are only interdicting 25 percent of the  
24 shipments that we know of -- that we know of. That is  
25 inexcusable. We know 100 ships are coming and we interdict

1 25 of them because we cannot get the Coast Guard and the  
2 Navy and their partner nations together in such a way as to  
3 deal with this.

4 I am really tired of -- this is the sixth or seventh  
5 year this question has come up, and, you know, when you know  
6 where the shipments are, even with the limited ISR, and you  
7 cannot stop them because we do not have enough ships or  
8 airplanes that is inexcusable, given the state of the  
9 threat.

10 Ms. Dalton, what are we going to do about this?

11 Ms. Dalton: Senator King, thank you for your  
12 commitment to this issue, and it is an absolute tragedy that  
13 hundreds of thousands of Americans are dying and have lives  
14 that are being devastated by this phenomenon, and it is a  
15 national security threat, plainly.

16 And I would say that the Department is committed to  
17 playing an important role, both in the region, in working  
18 with our regional partners to strengthen their own capacity  
19 to address the transnational criminal organizations that are  
20 bringing these drugs into our country, and also we are  
21 committed to working closely with our interagency partners  
22 on the southwest border and within the United States to be  
23 able to detect and monitor and provide intelligence-sharing  
24 and support to that important mission. We are absolutely  
25 committed to that.

1           And I do think that when it comes to the ISR question,  
2 Senator, there is not enough ISR to cover China, Russia,  
3 Ukraine, Iran. It is a global challenge.

4           Senator King: Well let's buy more Global Hawks.

5           Ms. Dalton: Senator, thank you for highlighting that,  
6 and I know through --

7           Senator King: I will write a letter to the  
8 Appropriations Committee.

9           Ms. Dalton: Senator, thank you, and through the  
10 program budget review process I know that this was an issue  
11 that the Secretary and senior leadership of the Department  
12 looked closely at.

13          Senator King: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

14          Senator Kelly: Well, ISR is part of the puzzle. It is  
15 like what do we do after we identify it, right? And it  
16 seems like everybody, at least in this room right now,  
17 probably agrees, we need to be doing a lot more. And, you  
18 know, the interagency cooperation is important, but can we  
19 get like to some specifics? Like what do we think DoD --  
20 what more beyond identifying shipments, what are the other  
21 levers we can push on here through the Department of  
22 Defense? What are the other things that DoD could be doing  
23 to undermine these transnational criminal organizations, to  
24 interdict drugs coming into our country, whether through the  
25 southern border or through our coasts? What more,

1 specifically, could DoD be doing?

2 Mr. Saenz: Mr. Chairman, thank you so much for that  
3 question, and you are absolutely correct that we need to  
4 always continue to look at all the different options we have  
5 and what more we can do to help support getting after this  
6 very difficult, very challenging, and very troublesome  
7 problem.

8 So there are different areas in which we support beyond  
9 just the detection and monitoring. We provide a lot of  
10 support when it comes to intelligence support, and we do  
11 provide a lot of support down with our partner nations when  
12 it comes to doing security cooperation work and some other  
13 logistical support work.

14 So we work with the entire interagency and our partner  
15 nations to try and help provide better processes and better  
16 tools for identifying targets and then helping our law  
17 enforcement partners effect those targets.

18 Some of the things we are looking at right now is we  
19 are looking at how we can take some of the best solutions  
20 that have been developed in different regions and then  
21 invest in that solution so they can provide global support  
22 across all of our COCOMs and across all of our efforts. We  
23 are also looking at new ways of leveraging artificial  
24 intelligence and machine learning to take large amounts of  
25 data that is almost impossible for an analyst to get through

1 in a reasonable amount of time, using machine learning, so  
2 that that can be dealt with quicker, and taking analysts  
3 from a time that took them 6 months down to a time that  
4 takes them just a couple of days to help identify targets  
5 that they can go after.

6 So we are looking at ways to be able to leverage. Also  
7 a lot of information that is available in the public sector.  
8 We are trying to use geospatial information that is open to  
9 the public sector, interlay those altogether to produce a  
10 product that is very easy for people to understand and  
11 therefore very easy for us to hand off to law enforcement,  
12 both U.S. and international, who can take that information  
13 and quickly act upon it, and also be able to use it in  
14 future proceedings in court, because it is no longer  
15 classified.

16 So there are a lot of different things like that that  
17 we are looking at in how we can best improve the processes  
18 that we are using as a whole-of-government to get after this  
19 problem set.

20 Senator Kelly: Do we feel that DoD has all the  
21 authority it needs to be as effective as it could be with  
22 the resources at the Department's disposal?

23 Mr. Saenz: Mr. Chairman, thank you. That is a very  
24 good point. Yes, we think we have the authorities that we  
25 need to do what we need to do to support everyone in getting

1 after the counterdrug problem. We would like to thank  
2 Congress specifically for the authorities of 1021 and 1022,  
3 provided through the NDAA. Those have helped us greater.  
4 1021 helps us in Colombia to counter illegal armed groups  
5 that threaten a lot of our interests and work to move a lot  
6 of the illegal drugs who may or may not be associated any  
7 longer as a terrorist organization. We appreciate Congress  
8 extending that through fiscal year 2023, and we would like  
9 to work with Congress to extend that through fiscal year  
10 2025.

11 And 1022 authorities allows us to use counterdrug  
12 authorities and funding to support law enforcement in its  
13 efforts against terrorist organizations, transnational  
14 organized crime organizations that are identified through a  
15 specific process. And we appreciate that those have been  
16 extended through fiscal year 2027, and we would like to  
17 continue to work with Congress to see if we can make that a  
18 more permanent authority.

19 I think all the authorities that we have through U.S.  
20 Code and these additional authorities make a great set that  
21 we need to be able to do our job.

22 Senator Kelly: Thank you. Senator King?

23 Senator King: One of my principles of management is  
24 that you always want one throat to choke. Who is in charge?  
25 What individual in the United States government is in charge

1 of stopping drugs coming from Latin America? Mr. Saenz, is  
2 it you? Do not worry -- I will not choke you.

3 Mr. Saenz: Senator King, thank you very much for that  
4 question. I appreciate that you will not choke me.

5 We do work as an interagency and we do work closely  
6 together.

7 Senator King: See, that bothers me. When I hear  
8 "interagency" and "whole-of-government," to me that means  
9 nobody is in charge. Is there one person -- if the  
10 President calls and says, "I want to talk to the person who  
11 is in charge of keeping drugs out of the United States," who  
12 is going to show up in the Oval Office?

13 Mr. Saenz: Certainly the President has his Director of  
14 National Drug Control Policy, Mr. Gupta, who is responsible  
15 for our policies for controlling both the supply and demand  
16 of drugs in the United States at a strategic level.

17 Senator King: The policy. How about operations? That  
18 is what I am after. Who is in charge of the operations,  
19 going after the transnational organizations, going after the  
20 drug shipments? There is not anybody, is there?

21 Mr. Saenz: So the Department of Homeland Security is  
22 responsible for the flow of drugs and those organizations  
23 that flow those drugs into the United States. They  
24 certainly cannot do it alone and they rely on the rest of us  
25 to support them and help them.

1           Senator King: How do we measure success? Do we have  
2 any metrics? You are getting a fairly sizeable budget.  
3 What constitutes success?

4           Mr. Saenz: So Senator, if you are speaking about  
5 success of the overall problem of the supply of drugs coming  
6 into the United States, certainly a measure of success would  
7 be how much of those drugs we are able to stop from coming  
8 into the United States. That becomes a very challenging  
9 question, a challenging problem, when we are dealing with  
10 illicit trafficking, and so it is hard to put an exact  
11 number of what the overall amount of drugs coming this  
12 direction are and how many are stopped.

13          Senator King: Final question. It appears that a lot  
14 of the -- a lot, a great deal of what is coming in is coming  
15 through Mexico, not through the water, although that is  
16 something we can certainly do better on. And a lot of the  
17 fentanyl is coming in from Mexico. What authorities or what  
18 power or what leverage do we have over Mexico to force them  
19 to take this seriously and stop this horrible crime in  
20 progress? My sense is it is open season in Mexico.

21          Mr. Saenz: So Senator King, thank you so much for that  
22 observation. Certainly the vast majority of drugs coming  
23 into the United States are coming from Mexico, across our  
24 southwest border.

25          Senator King: Is the Mexican government serious about



1 trying to stop it?

2 Mr. Saenz: Certainly there are a lot of things that we  
3 would like the government of Mexico to do and to support  
4 countering that flow of narcotics into the United States. I  
5 would have to defer to the Department of State and their  
6 efforts in working with Mexico on how to best motivate the  
7 country of Mexico to do additional efforts, different  
8 efforts, whatever it takes to assist.

9 Senator King: Thank you. We have got a problem, Mr.  
10 Chairman.

11 Senator Kelly: We do.

12 I have two final questions and then we will conclude  
13 here. How often does DoD have some kind of direct action  
14 with a transnational criminal organization?

15 Mr. Saenz: So Mr. Chairman, thank you for that  
16 question about our direction with a criminal organization.  
17 The Department of Defense does not have authority to  
18 interdict drugs or to make arrests or to stop any criminal  
19 organization. Our support, our defense-unique support is in  
20 providing the information, is helping to assess that  
21 information, and analyze that information to law enforcement  
22 who has that authority and that capability.

23 Senator Kelly: If you had that authority do you think  
24 DoD could be effective engaging directly with TCOs?

25 Mr. Saenz: Mr. Chairman that is a very interesting

1 question. Thank you for that question. I think that has  
2 lots of areas of opportunity and lots of areas of risk that  
3 need to be considered. When the Department of Defense, when  
4 the militaries start engaging in what would otherwise be law  
5 enforcement activity, when they start engaging on those type  
6 of on-the-ground operations in foreign countries, there are  
7 a lot of different factors that need to be taken into  
8 consideration before we should consider doing something like  
9 that.

10 Ms. Dalton: Mr. Chairman, may I add to that?

11 Senator Kelly: Yes.

12 Ms. Dalton: Thank you, and thank you for the question.  
13 The Department of Defense, of course, brings tremendous  
14 capabilities to any equation, but just to complement DASD  
15 Saenz's comments, I think we need to be cognizant too about  
16 how that would play out in this particular region where the  
17 role of the military, particularly in democracies, has had a  
18 particularly checkered past. And so given that our efforts  
19 in the region would be a by-with-and-through approach,  
20 typically, that could then enhance the military's role in  
21 what is principally a civilian function in democracies I  
22 think is a pathway we would need to be very careful in  
23 walking down, in which I would be very cautious.

24 Senator Kelly: I want to come back to something  
25 Senator King said, as we have 100,000 Americans dying each

1 year. I think at the beginning of the hearing we  
2 established that this was a national security threat to our  
3 country, so we should be looking to do more. You know, just  
4 doing the same thing every year, we should not expect to get  
5 a different result. So I think we should be looking for  
6 other opportunities to be effective.

7 Finally, is there anything else you think we possibly  
8 could be doing that we did not bring up during this hearing  
9 today?

10 General Bradfield: Sir, I think it was pointed out  
11 earlier that there is certainly a limit of resources. But I  
12 would like to drive home again that integrated deterrence is  
13 not just a catch phrase. It is a powerful tool and a lever  
14 at our disposal. Empowering our partners, making sure they  
15 are trained and equipped and have the information that they  
16 need to help us, because we cannot do this alone, is a force  
17 multiplier.

18 So I think that is one area that we are making strides.  
19 I will note that so far this year partner nation narcotic  
20 interdictions are up 62 percent, and we hope that trend  
21 continues. But this is just one of the many challenges in  
22 the hemisphere. Thank you, sir.

23 Senator Kelly: Well thank you, all of you. I really  
24 appreciate you taking the time. This has been an  
25 informative discussion. It is clear that this has national

1 security implications, strategic importance. So I want to  
2 thank our witnesses for participating, and I look forward to  
3 some follow-up from us. I think there is more we certainly  
4 can do. That is clear. And we need to continue to find new  
5 ways to fight this threat in the Western Hemisphere.

6 So with that the hearing is concluded. Thank you.

7 [Whereupon, at 4:02 p.m., the subcommittee was  
8 adjourned.]

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