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Before the

COMMITTEE ON
ARMED SERVICES

UNITED STATES SENATE

HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON
THE POSTURE OF UNITED STATES
NORTHERN COMMAND AND
UNITED STATES SOUTHERN COMMAND

Thursday, March 24, 2022

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5 Thursday, March 24, 2022
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7 U.S. Senate
8 Committee on Armed Services
9 Washington, D.C.
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11 The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:30 a.m. in
12 Room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Jack Reed,
13 chairman of the committee, presiding.

14 Committee Members Present: Senators Reed [presiding],
15 Gillibrand, Blumenthal, Kaine, King, Peters, Rosen, Kelly,
16 Inhofe, Wicker, Fischer, Cotton, Rounds, Ernst, Sullivan,
17 Scott, Hawley, and Tuberville.
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1 OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JACK REED, U.S. SENATOR FROM
2 RHODE ISLAND

3 Chairman Reed: Good morning. The committee meets
4 today to receive testimony from General Glen VanHerck,
5 Commander of the United States Northern Command and North
6 American Aerospace Defense Command, or NORAD, and General
7 Laura Richardson, Commander of the United States Southern
8 Command. General Richardson, I would like to welcome you to
9 your first posture hearing in your current command, and I
10 want to thank both of you for your decades of service to our
11 nation. On behalf of the committee, I also want to thank
12 the women and men serving under your commands for their
13 selfless dedication and service. Thank you very much.

14 The United States is faced with a wide range of
15 security threats around the globe, but we are increasingly
16 finding these threats edging closer and closer to home. Our
17 strategic competitors, China and Russia, are seeking ways to
18 expand their power regionally, in South America and the
19 Arctic, as well to through advancements in long-range
20 missile capabilities and offensive cyber tools.

21 At the same time, this competition is unfolding amidst
22 a global pandemic, environmental degradation from climate
23 change, and the emergence of highly disruptive technologies.
24 The interconnected nature of these threats compounds the
25 challenges that NORTHCOM and SOUTHCOM have been tackling for

1 decades, and we must calibrate our approach to these regions
2 carefully. I expect today's hearing to help inform that
3 approach.

4 General VanHerck, your command is responsible for
5 protecting the homeland. Importantly, NORTHCOM is tasked
6 with operating our homeland ballistic missile defense, the
7 ground-based midcourse defense system, to defend the United
8 States against intercontinental ballistic missiles and
9 hypersonic missiles. The rapid advances we have seen on
10 this from states like China, Russia, and North Korea are
11 concerning, as the nature of hypersonics is difficult to
12 defeat with the technology we currently use. General
13 VanHerck, I would like to know your assessment of the Next-
14 Generation Interceptor program's current schedule for
15 deployment, and in light of recent, very recent, North
16 Korean missile tests, your confidence in the capability of
17 our current ground-based interceptors to meet these threats.

18 NORTHCOM also continue to play a vital role through its
19 defense support to civil authority mission, by which the
20 U.S. military responds to requests from civil agencies for
21 domestic assistance. This mission was highlighted recently
22 by NORTHCOM's leadership of Operational Allies Welcome,
23 which housed and cared for more than 84,000 evacuees from
24 Afghanistan on military bases across the country. Further,
25 NORTHCOM was integral to our nation's response to the COVID-

1 19 pandemic when personnel from NORTHCOM and the National
2 Guard distributed vaccines, ran testing centers and food
3 banks, and supported Federal health efforts. General
4 VanHerck, I would like to know whether your command and
5 other Federal agencies have the preparations in place to
6 manage the next pandemic outbreak or humanitarian crisis,
7 should they arise.

8 Turning to Southern Command, SOUTHCOM has traditionally
9 focused on counternarcotics and countering transnational
10 criminal organization mission. Even with limited resources,
11 including minimal intelligence, surveillance, and
12 reconnaissance platforms, SOUTHCOM has sought to leverage
13 nontraditional approaches, such as artificial intelligence
14 and machine learning, to serve as a testbed for new tactics
15 and operational concepts.

16 The SOUTHCOM region also continues to experience a rise
17 in political instability, including violence in Haiti, Cuba,
18 and Venezuela, and security deterioration in the Northern
19 Triangle countries of Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador.
20 The political and economic instability in these SOUTHCOM
21 nations presents a situation that China, Russia, and other
22 states actors are now seeking to exploit to increase their
23 own influence. Short of armed conflict, a critical task for
24 SOUTHCOM is to find ways to counter our competitors' malign
25 activities that are coercing our partners. This includes

1 identifying and addressing sources of insecurity and
2 vulnerabilities among our partners that our adversaries seek
3 to exploit to gain leverage or sow division. And it is also
4 important to strengthen the resilience of U.S. partners'
5 security forces, including by building defense institutional
6 capabilities that adhere to the rule of law and respect
7 human rights.

8 General Richardson, I am interested in your assessment
9 of the threat from near-peer competitors in the SOUTHCOM
10 area and how we might work strategically with neighboring
11 partners such as Mexico and Colombia, to build resilience to
12 China and Russia's malign activities.

13 I want to thank again our witnesses. I look forward to
14 your testimony.

15 As a reminder for my colleagues, there will be closed
16 session immediately following this hearing in room SVC-217.

17 Let me now turn to the ranking member, Senator Inhofe.

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1 STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES INHOFE, U.S. SENATOR FROM
2 OKLAHOMA

3 Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and welcome
4 to our witnesses who we have known very well for a long
5 period of time. Our attention is rightly focused on
6 Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine and the Chinese
7 Communist Party's constant march toward dominance in the
8 Pacific.

9 General VanHerck, you are responsible for defense of
10 the homeland. That is the big deal, as we discussed, given
11 these threats against our homeland during the Ukraine war
12 and China's threats of a military conflict with the United
13 States over Taiwan. I hope you will candidly speak about
14 your requirements. Do you have the resources that you need,
15 and get into as much detail? This is the place to do it.

16 I am also concerned about the situation on the
17 southwest border. It is a situation that people have --
18 that somehow got moved off the front page, and people are
19 not as concerned about that as you would think they should
20 be right now. We have had 12 straight months of 150,000-
21 plus illegal immigrants being stopped at the border.
22 Nothing like that has ever happened before.

23 Last month, CBP encountered nearly 165,000 illegal
24 immigrants at the border, which is the highest total for
25 February in the Department of Homeland Security's history.

1 Many of my good friends on the other side of the aisle
2 strongly opposed President Trump when he deployed troops to
3 assist the CBP at the border in 2018, but given the scale of
4 the current crisis, General VanHerck, I wonder whether more
5 border support might be necessary in the near future or
6 currently.

7 General Richardson, as we discussed in my office, I am
8 concerned about the growing Chinese threat in your area of
9 responsibility and its national security implications. What
10 China is doing in SOUTHCOM reminds me of what they were
11 doing in Africa 15 years ago. They are using predatory
12 economic and diplomatic practices to bribe and bully
13 countries while they set conditions to build up their
14 military presence and limit United States access and
15 influence. So I hope you will explain your strategy for
16 this very daunting task, and I thank you very much for being
17 here.

18 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

19 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Inhofe.

20 Let me recognize General VanHerck for his testimony.
21 General, please, sir.

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1 STATEMENT OF GENERAL VANHERCK, COMMANDER, UNITED
2 STATES NORTHERN COMMAND AND NORTH AMERICAN AEROSPACE DEFENSE
3 COMMAND

4 General VanHerck: Chairman Reed, Ranking Member
5 Inhofe, and distinguished members of the committee, thank
6 you for the opportunity to appear today alongside General
7 Richardson. It is my honor to represent the men and women
8 of the United States Northern Command and North American
9 Aerospace Defense Command, as we defend the United States
10 and Canada.

11 United States Northern Command and NORAD face the most
12 dynamic and strategically complex environment in their
13 respective histories. The commands face multiple
14 simultaneous challenges from strategic competitors who have
15 openly declared their intent to hold our homelands at risk
16 in an effort to advance their own interests. Today,
17 strategic competitors, rogue nations, non-state actors
18 possess the capability to strike institutions and critical
19 infrastructure in the United States and Canada.

20 Our country is already under attack every day in the
21 information space and the cyber domain. Our competitors,
22 especially Russia and China, are spreading disinformation,
23 actively sowing division and internal discord with the
24 intent to undermine the foundation of our nation, our
25 democracy, and democracies around the world. We are seeing

1 this play out with Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Those same
2 competitors have invested heavily in conventional precision-
3 strike capabilities and advanced delivery platforms which
4 Russia is currently displaying to the world. Their intent
5 is to hold critical infrastructure in the homeland at risk
6 below the nuclear threshold in order to disrupt and delay
7 our ability to project power globally while attempting to
8 undermine our will to intervene in a regional overseas
9 crisis.

10 I believe the strategic deterrent is the foundation of
11 homeland defense and that it is necessary for the United
12 States to maintain a reliable and effective nuclear triad.
13 At the same time, I am concerned that deterrence by cost
14 imposition is currently overweighted and does not adequately
15 account for the conventional capabilities our competitors
16 have already fielded. This overreliance increases the risk
17 of miscalculation and escalation because it limits our
18 national leaders to options in crisis and in conflict.

19 Our competitors advanced conventional capabilities make
20 it necessary to balance deterrence by cost imposition with a
21 model of deterrence by denial, an integrated deterrence that
22 employs all elements of national influence, leverages our
23 asymmetric advantage of our alliances and our partnerships,
24 and provides leaders with a wide range of timely deterrence
25 options. We must continually demonstrate to potential

1 aggressors that an attack on our homeland will result in
2 failure. We do that by demonstrating homeland readiness,
3 responsiveness, and resiliency, and by displaying a range of
4 kinetic and non-kinetic capabilities to defend the homeland.

5 NORTHCOM's support of civil authorities, our security
6 cooperation relationships with allies and partners are
7 critical to integrated deterrence as is NORAD's mission to
8 provide warning and defend the approaches to North America.
9 This strategic environment is the new normal. This
10 operating model that we assumed we could project power
11 globally from a safe and secure homeland has been eroding
12 over the last decade.

13 To provide national leaders with timely and informed
14 options that they need to achieve favorable outcomes,
15 NORTHCOM and NORAD, in our homeland defense design, are
16 focused on four key principles. That starts with all-domain
17 awareness, from undersea to on-orbit and everywhere in
18 between to include cyber domain. All-domain awareness is
19 required to achieve information dominance, which is the use
20 of advanced capabilities like machine learning and
21 artificial intelligence to quickly analyze, process, and
22 deliver data to decision-makers at the speed of relevance.
23 By doing so, we will increase senior leader decision space,
24 enable decision superiority over our competitors.

25 Finally, our problems are global and all-domain, and

1 they demand globally integrated strategies, plans, and
2 actions. These principles are vital elements of our ability
3 to execute a layered defense and integrated deterrence, and
4 they are critical to our nation's ability to deter in
5 competition, de-escalate in crisis, and if necessary, defeat
6 in conflict.

7 I will end by thanking the committee for all you have
8 done to support our soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines,
9 guardians. The fiscal year 2022 NDAA and the recent passage
10 of the fiscal year 2022 appropriations omnibus continue to
11 advance our national defense priorities and the missions of
12 U.S. Northern Command and NORAD.

13 Today's strategic environment calls for sustained,
14 sufficient, and predictable funding in order to prevail.
15 Persistently operating under continuing resolutions over the
16 last decade has contributed to the erosion of our nation's
17 competitive advantage. I join my fellow commanders, the
18 service chiefs, and the Secretary in expressing my
19 appreciation for the resources provided in the fiscal year
20 2022 omnibus and in urging the on-time passage of both the
21 NDAA and a full-year appropriations bill for fiscal year
22 2023.

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

25 [The prepared statement of General VanHerck follows:]

1 Chairman Reed: Thank you, sir. General Richardson,
2 please, your testimony.

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1 STATEMENT OF GENERAL LAURA RICHARDSON, COMMANDER,
2 UNITED STATES SOUTHERN COMMAND

3 General Richardson: Chairman Reed, Ranking Member
4 Inhofe, and distinguished members of the committee, thank
5 you for the opportunity to appear before you alongside
6 General VanHerck, my most important teammate in keeping the
7 Western Hemisphere safe.

8 I am honored to be here with you representing the men
9 and women of U.S. Southern Command to discuss the challenges
10 we share with our neighbors in this hemisphere and the
11 opportunities that we can unlock together.

12 Today more than ever, American's fate is inextricably
13 linked to events beyond our shores. This region, our shared
14 neighborhood, is under assault from a host of transboundary
15 challenges that directly threaten our own homeland. I have
16 been in command almost 5 months now, and the biggest eye-
17 opener for me has been the extent to which China and Russia
18 are aggressively expanding their influence in our
19 neighborhood.

20 Latin America and the Caribbean are experiencing
21 insecurity and instability that has been greatly exacerbated
22 by COVID-19. The People's Republic of China, our long-term
23 strategic competitor, continues its relentless march to
24 expand economic, diplomatic, technological, informational,
25 and military influence in Latin America and the Caribbean,

1 and challenges U.S. influence in all these domains.

2 Without U.S. leadership and modest investment, negative
3 PRC influence in this region could soon resemble the self-
4 serving predatory influence it now holds in Africa. Let's
5 be clear -- the PRC does not invest; they extract.

6 Meanwhile, Russia, a more immediate threat, is
7 increasing its engagements in the hemisphere as Putin looks
8 to keep his options open and maintain relationships in our
9 near abroad. In January, the Russian Deputy Foreign
10 Minister said he could neither affirm nor exclude that
11 Russia would send military assets to Cuba and Venezuela.
12 Just days before the Russian unprovoked invasion of Ukraine
13 the Russian Deputy Prime Minister visited Nicaragua, Cuba,
14 and Venezuela, countries that maintain close ties with
15 Russia and offer Putin a foothold in our hemisphere.

16 Finally, recent visits between the Presidents of Brazil
17 and Argentina with Putin in Russia demonstrate a concerning
18 potentially broadening of Russian ties in the region.

19 In this hemisphere, transnational criminal
20 organizations operate nearly uncontested and blaze a trail
21 of corruption and violence that creates a wedge and allows
22 the PRC and Russia to exploit these countries. They
23 threaten citizens' security, undermine public confidence in
24 government institutions, and drive irregular migration to
25 our homeland. These TCOs traffic opioids, cocaine, and

1 other deadly drugs into the U.S., fueling both drug
2 overdoses and drug-related violence.

3 In my initial travels to Latin America and the
4 Caribbean it has become obvious to me that our partners are
5 our best defense as we work together to counter our shared
6 threats. We must use all available levers to strengthen our
7 partnerships with the 28 like-minded democracies in this
8 hemisphere. We must maximize important tools like security
9 cooperation programs, to train and equip our partner
10 militaries, multilateral exercises to build interoperability
11 and the State Department's IMET FMF and FMS programs to
12 educate, train, and build capacity that our partners use to
13 stand shoulder-to-shoulder with us.

14 Colombia, for example, our strongest partner in the
15 region, exports security by training other Latin American
16 militaries to counter transnational threats. USSOUTHCOM is
17 putting integrated deterrence into action every day, using
18 innovative methods to work seamlessly in all domains with
19 the other combatant commands, the Joint Force, allies and
20 partner nations, Congress, the U.S. interagency, NGOs, and
21 the private sector.

22 Now more than ever, the U.S. must lead in this
23 hemisphere, and that requires consistent focus and a
24 sustained investment to help build a shared neighborhood
25 that is free, secure, and prosperous for our generation and

1 generations to come.

2 Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

3 [The prepared statement of General Richardson follows:]

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1 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, General
2 Richardson, and thank you also, General VanHerck.

3 General VanHerck, the North Korean missile activity is
4 quite disturbing. Indeed, hours ago they launched a missile
5 which, from analysis of the flight path, suggests could hit
6 the United States. Given this behavior what are your
7 thoughts about the current 44 ground-based interceptors and
8 their current capability?

9 General VanHerck: Chairman, I am comfortable with
10 where we are today, based on the intelligence I have, with
11 the current capabilities and capacity of North Korea. Going
12 forward, I do believe that they could exceed my capacity and
13 capabilities. That is why it is crucial to keep Next-
14 Generation Interceptor on time or early. In my discussions
15 with Admiral Hill he is confident right now that they are on
16 that path.

17 As far as the total number of 44 interceptors, that is
18 a policy decision. I look forward to seeing the Missile
19 Defense Review and the policy that it provides and guidance
20 to me to get after the capacity and challenges that you
21 allude to, sir.

22 Chairman Reed: So you are, at this point, confident
23 that the Next-Generation Interceptor is on track for
24 deployment? I think the plan is 20 interceptors at Fort
25 Greely by fiscal year 2028. Is that still holding?

1 General VanHerck: That is correct, and I am confident
2 that it is on track for that now, or slightly early, based
3 on what I have seen.

4 Chairman Reed: Very good. You have made your input
5 into the National Defense Strategy, which is yet to be
6 announced. Are you confident that your sort of contribution
7 will be forwarded to us?

8 General VanHerck: I am confident that my input will be
9 included. They have been very transparent in the Department
10 as they work this.

11 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, sir.

12 General Richardson, SOUTHCOM, because of a lack of
13 resources, which, as a veteran of USARSO I can tell you has
14 been the case for many, many decades, is now relying upon
15 artificial intelligence and other new technologies to
16 compensate. Could you comment on what you are doing and how
17 successful you are?

18 General Richardson: Absolutely, Chairman. So the
19 advanced ISR or nontraditional ISR that we utilize, since we
20 are not given a lot of resources we look for other ways of
21 being innovative and using other capabilities that either
22 the Department of Defense has or the other services are
23 trying to use. And so we will use that. All different
24 kinds of capabilities that use the AI and ML a lot with
25 unclassified data, that can rapidly sort through that data,

1 and then we use it to tip and cue what limited assets, the
2 higher-end assets that we do have to help out with our
3 challenges in the AOR.

4 Chairman Reed: You are working closely with the
5 Department of Defense to essentially test some new,
6 innovative prototypes in a whole range of both air, land,
7 and sea?

8 General Richardson: Absolutely. We have five joint
9 capability technology demos that we have in the AOR, and I
10 would like to highlight, in a permissive environment. I
11 offer that because where are adversaries maybe are not
12 paying as much close attention to us we can put that to
13 real-world use in our area of operations. And then it helps
14 me with domain awareness to find our threats, see what our
15 threats are doing, because the AOR is so big.

16 Chairman Reed: Well I want to thank you, because I
17 know you have been in contact with civil society groups,
18 particularly the Sisters of Mercy, and this whole-of-
19 government and beyond approach is necessary everywhere, but
20 particularly in SOUTHCOM. And in the Northern Triangle,
21 particularly Honduras, there is a need to support the
22 recently elected government and to begin to seriously
23 isolating individuals who are either involved with criminal
24 activities or other inappropriate activities and support a
25 more vibrant constitutional order. And I thank you for

1 that.

2 Any comments about the situation in the Northern
3 Triangle?

4 General Richardson: Well, first, Chairman, I have had
5 two meetings so far with the human rights leaders, and
6 Sisters of Mercy being one of them, Human Rights Watch, and
7 a couple of others, and they have such an important
8 perspective of the region. They have been traveling there
9 for decades. They have been working in those countries for
10 decades. And certainly taking their perspective and their
11 insight of what they have seen over that period of time is
12 truly valuable.

13 And we bake human rights into everything that we do in
14 USSOUTHCOM. I have a human rights office in SOUTHCOM. We
15 have had that for 25 years. But it is not about having an
16 office. It is actually what you do with that capability and
17 how we make that a priority in everything that we do in the
18 AOR.

19 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, General VanHerck
20 and General Richardson.

21 Let me recognize Senator Inhofe, please.

22 Senator Inhofe. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I said in
23 my opening statement, the crisis at the border has worsened
24 considerably under the current Administration. We have had
25 12 straight months of over 150,000 illegal migrants, which

1 was a 63 percent increase from February 2021 and a DHS
2 record for the month of February. And according to the
3 internal Border Patrol estimates, from January through
4 August of 2021, over 273,000 migrants avoided apprehension
5 and entered our country illegally.

6 These are new records. This has not happened before.
7 I am deeply concerned that the crisis will soon get even
8 worse, as we discussed in my office. If the Biden
9 administration ends the Title 42 border policy in April,
10 illegal immigration will surge even beyond the current
11 record-setting level.

12 So General VanHerck, given the worsening conditions and
13 crisis at the southwest border are you aware of any
14 discussion within the Administration or DHS that could
15 result in any request for additional troops at that border?

16 General VanHerck: Senator Inhofe, there is a request
17 from the Department of Homeland Security. It is in the
18 planning stages right now of the Department to provide
19 additional capability or capacity based on the potential for
20 additional immigration or folks coming to the southwest
21 border. I do not have the details of that right now, and I
22 have not been tasked to provide any additional support to
23 the Department of Homeland Security at this time.

24 Senator Inhofe: And I understand that, but it is a
25 reality that that is in discussion.

1 General Richardson, it is clear that SOUTHCOM continues
2 to be under-resourced, despite all of the threats in your
3 AOR. That is something that we need to take a closer look
4 at as we develop our NDAA, and we will have to do that.

5 China, as we discussed in my office this week, I am
6 concerned about their growing presence in SOUTHCOM and the
7 consequences for our military. So, General Richardson, what
8 do you find most concerning about China's growing presence
9 in your AOR, and how could it undermine DoD's ability to
10 operate in the years to come?

11 General Richardson: Thank you, Senator. My concern
12 regarding China in the region is just the access and
13 presence that they have and they have been able to create,
14 partly due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the economic
15 rollbacks that this has had in the region. So 8 percent of
16 the world's population is in SOUTHCOM AOR, 33 percent of the
17 world's COVID deaths were suffered. So they had a hard time
18 with that. The economy has contracted 8 percent, plunging
19 22 percent of the population into poverty.

20 And so when these 28 like-minded democracies in this
21 region, out of 31, are trying to deliver for their people it
22 is hard. And when China has the Belt and Road Initiative,
23 21 of the 31 countries in this region have signed up and are
24 signatories to that BRI. They need to show that they are
25 delivering for their populations, and infrastructure

1 projects is probably the best way, with the BRI, that shows
2 progress. But as we know, the work is not done to standard.
3 A lot of times it leaves these countries with even more debt
4 than when they started. A highway in Jamaica, Jamaica now
5 has six loans as a result of this. They lost 1,200 acres of
6 land, and oh, by the way, the highway has a toll on it that
7 most Jamaicans cannot even drive on.

8 The Chinese do not bring in and do not hire host nation
9 workers. They bring in Chinese laborers. So they do not
10 invest. It looks like they are investing. All they do is
11 they take, they extract, and they have strings tied to what
12 they offer.

13 Senator Inhofe: You know, you and I talked about this
14 in the office. It is so similar to what the Chinese have
15 been doing now for about 15 years in Africa. No surprises
16 here. But I think it is important that we get it into the
17 record what is happening now because it is happening in your
18 AOR, something that you did not anticipate. I did not.
19 None of us anticipated the gravity of that situation. I am
20 glad you are there at the helm. Thank you.

21 General Richardson: Senator, what I would like to
22 mention are my two greatest concerns, strategically, and
23 that is with the Panama Canal, the projects that the Chinese
24 have around the Panama Canal, which is a strategic line of
25 communication that we want to keep free and open for the

1 global economy but also for our global war plans. Also the
2 Strait of Magellan down around the tip of the southern cone
3 from Argentina, and the presence of China and projects and
4 things like that.

5 So that is what bothers me most are those two strategic
6 global lines of communication areas that the Chinese have
7 projects in and around those areas.

8 Senator Inhofe: With everything that is going on now
9 it is important that we, and you particularly, need to keep
10 reminding us of that, because that is something that people
11 are just not aware of.

12 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

13 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator Inhofe.

14 Let me recognize Senator Gillibrand, please.

15 Senator Gillibrand: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

16 General Richardson, just to continue the line of
17 questioning that Senator Inhofe started, given the
18 investments that China is making, regardless of how
19 extractive they are, what do you think our best response is,
20 and in particular can you talk a little bit about how we are
21 engaging with elected governments in the region to counter
22 authoritarian actors. Are we collaborating with agencies
23 and other institutions, with partner countries like
24 judiciaries, legislatures, NGOs, to support human rights and
25 democracy? And further, I do want to get a sense of, China

1 has also adopted a partner force training model that is of
2 some concern to me, and I would like you to assess how
3 effective is Chinese partner force training in those
4 countries that participate, and how do we ensure these
5 relationships are not enduring?

6 General Richardson: So the way I look at it, Senator,
7 is in terms of our partnerships. The U.S. has partners.
8 China has clients. They do not have the partners, and our
9 partner nations in the SOUTHCOM AOR want to partner with us.

10 I go to these countries. I have visited Colombia,
11 Brazil, Jamaica, Belize where I got to visit with leaders
12 from seven Central American countries, Honduras. And you
13 look in their eyes and they want to partner with us, and
14 they are having a hard time delivering for their population.

15 I will tell you, though, that the PRC is using our
16 playbook in terms of how I do security cooperation and the
17 other combatant commands -- the train and equip, the
18 partnering, the exercises. The Chinese do not have
19 exercises like we do. When we have exercises, the U.S. -- I
20 will bring 19, 21, 29 different countries together. As I
21 said, they want to partner with us and we have partners.

22 A great relationship with the interagency and
23 Department of State in the AOR I would like to highlight. I
24 have my deputy, who is a former ambassador for El Salvador
25 sitting behind me, Jean Manes, and I will tell you, we are

1 so lucky to have an ambassador from the Department of State
2 who can help bridge and communicate and help us work more
3 collaboratively with our chiefs of mission in the AOR. We
4 have 12 more to go for ambassadors to fill those very
5 important seats, and 8 have been nominated. So thank you
6 for your support in getting those ambassadors in there as
7 quickly as possible.

8 Senator Gillibrand: And then just one final question
9 before I move on to General VanHerck. SOUTHCOM has played
10 an important role in humanitarian operations, especially in
11 nations like Haiti where U.S. support was needed, not only
12 after the natural disaster but after the political crisis.
13 Can you explain how you foresee any changes to SOUTHCOM's
14 posture to continue providing humanitarian assistance,
15 especially as climate and other issues continue to increase
16 migration?

17 General Richardson: We will continue to watch this
18 AOR, Haiti, all of the challenges that we have in this AOR
19 that are ongoing, and work very closely for a whole-of-
20 government, a democratic solution, to instability and
21 insecurity in the region. We take that very seriously. We
22 bake in, as I said before, human rights, the rule of law,
23 everything that we do in our security cooperation programs.
24 Everything that I do, my main lever, because I do not get
25 assigned forces in SOUTHCOM, I get very limited GFMAP

1 resources that are assigned to me as well. So I really rely
2 on that triple-three security and cooperation funding to
3 work with these partner nations to help them increase the
4 capacity and capability of their militaries or their defense
5 forces.

6 Senator Gillibrand: That is helpful, General. Thank
7 you.

8 General VanHerck, China has attempted to establish a
9 foothold in the Arctic through economic relationships with
10 smaller Arctic states like Iceland, Denmark, Sweden, and
11 Finland. They grant China access to their vital natural
12 resources. This strategy is coupled with an increase in
13 China's Arctic capabilities to create something like a Polar
14 Silk Road. Do you see these relationships as leading to an
15 eventual movement of Chinese military assets into the
16 region? And then further, New York Air National Guard
17 conducts several unique missions in support of our
18 scientific missions with the National Scientific Foundation
19 in the Arctic. Can you speak to the importance of our
20 scientific missions in the Arctic and how it supports our
21 overall strategic goals when it comes to that region?

22 General VanHerck: Thanks. First, Senator, absolutely
23 the Chinese are active in the Arctic. Each of the last 5
24 years they have sent a vessel, under the guise of a research
25 vessel, into the Arctic, for military purposes we assess as

1 well. And so they are there. They are influencing nations.
2 They want to change and influence international norms and
3 behavior as well.

4 I would also point out, Senator, that the Arctic is a
5 strategic location, and being able to operate persistently
6 in the Arctic is something that we need to do. So the
7 research that you are talking about is crucial in the
8 investments.

9 Finally, I understand my time is up, but they are not
10 only active in the Arctic, they are active in the Bahamas.
11 They are active in Mexico as well, and I would point that
12 out. Thank you.

13 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Gillibrand. Thank
14 you.

15 Senator Wicker, please.

16 Senator Wicker: General VanHerck, let's keep talking
17 about the Arctic then. During your posture hearing last
18 year I asked you about the Coast Guard's authorization to
19 build six new icebreakers, and I appreciated your response
20 in support of these ships. But as we all know, they cannot
21 operate in the high north without fuel and supplies.
22 Currently, the farthest north deepwater port we have is
23 Dutch Harbor. On the other hand, Nome, Alaska, nearly 800
24 miles north of Dutch Harbor, has been granted money to
25 dredge and develop a port in order to provide services to

1 deep draft ships.

2 How would additional icebreakers and the development of
3 the port at Nome enable NORTHCOM to accomplish your mission
4 in the Arctic?

5 General VanHerck: Thanks, Senator. First, the six
6 icebreakers that are planned for the Coast Guard are crucial
7 to enabling persistence to operate within the Arctic.
8 Persistent is also enabled by having a fuel capability
9 further north than currently in Dutch Harbor, in Nome, as
10 you alluded to. That allows either the Coast Guard, through
11 their cutters, or their icebreakers, or Navy vessels to
12 remain more persistent. That is strategically important to
13 that location.

14 I would like to clarify one thing. In the
15 Infrastructure and Jobs Act that was just passed provided
16 about \$250 million for the port in Nome. The dredging
17 portion of that is not currently funded, and it would
18 require that dredging from a 30-foot depth to a 40-foot for
19 these vessels that we are talking about, to get in there.
20 We are going to work closely to make sure we can get that
21 additional funding for that persistence I need.

22 Senator Wicker: So the additional funding is not
23 adequate unless we get the dredging done.

24 General VanHerck: It is certainly adequate for
25 commercial operations, benefit from the local communities,

1 indigenous people in Alaska, absolutely. For military use
2 we have to get the additional dredging. That is correct.

3 Senator Wicker: Okay. Let me switch to General
4 Richardson. The Naval Small Craft Construction and
5 Technical Training School, NAVSCIATTS, provides training to
6 partner nations from every combatant command. To date, the
7 school has trained over 13,000 students from more than 120
8 partner nations. What is the importance of keeping
9 NAVSCIATTS? What are the potential risks in terms of
10 international support and partnerships? Should its capacity
11 be reduced?

12 General Richardson: Thank you for the question,
13 Senator, because NAVSCIATTS is a force multiplier, and it is
14 for all of our nations, as you said. One hundred twenty-
15 three partner nations utilize this school. Over 13,000
16 trained. This school has been opened for 52 years, and
17 quite honestly, what it does, low level, it is pennies to
18 operate. You talk about a low-cost, high return on
19 investment, this is it.

20 And quite honestly, if you think about it, the U.S.
21 Navy has big ships. Other nations, there are very few other
22 nations that have really big vessels, and most of the other
23 navies and coast guards from the other partner nation
24 militaries as well as the coast guards have smaller vessels.

25 You talk about the Amazon. They do not have highways;

1 they have rivers. And they need the training. They need
2 the smaller vessels to get this training, and it absolutely
3 critical to our security cooperation in helping build our
4 defense forces and our militaries and naval maritime
5 operations.

6 Senator Wicker: Good. I do appreciate that. Let me
7 follow up on an engagement that Senator Inhofe and Senator
8 Gillibrand had with you. I think the discussion with
9 Senator Inhofe was like-minded democracies in SOUTHCOM
10 working with us. Senator Gillibrand asked about engaging
11 with elected governments.

12 Let me just mention that the Organization of American
13 States is based here in Washington, D.C., is the only
14 multilateral organization that includes every country in the
15 Western Hemisphere except for Cuba. And I would point out
16 to my colleagues that in 2020, President Trump signed into
17 law the Organization of American States Legislative
18 Engagement Act. Senator Cardin and I were leaders in this
19 effort, just as we have tried to enhance our participation
20 with European parliamentarians, both in and out of
21 majorities in government and Europe through the OSCE.

22 Do you agree that moving to a parliamentary assembly,
23 as the Trump law anticipates, would be a positive and could
24 promote cooperation in a variety of government and security
25 issues?

1 General Richardson: Senator, I think that increased
2 engagement in this AOR can be nothing but good. I can only
3 cover so much. Our Department of State can only cover so
4 much. And with a program, a strategy, a focus on this area,
5 as I said in my opening statement, can only be more
6 goodness. Because out of 31 countries and 16 dependencies
7 in the Caribbean, it is a lot of ground to cover, and I
8 would certainly welcome the focus and the attention.

9 Senator Wicker: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

10 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Wicker.

11 And now, since a quorum is present, I ask the committee
12 to consider a list of 2,766 pending military nominations.
13 All of these nominations have been before the committee the
14 required length of time.

15 Is there a motion to favorably report this list of
16 2,766 pending military nominations to the Senate?

17 Voice: So moved.

18 Chairman Reed: Is there a second?

19 Voice: Second.

20 Chairman Reed: All in favor, say aye.

21 [Chorus of ayes.]

22 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much. The motion
23 carries. And let me recognize Senator Kaine, and thanks
24 Senator Tillis for staying with us.

25 Senator Kaine: Thanks, Mr. Chair, and thanks to our

1 witnesses for your service.

2 General Richardson, I want to echo a point that Senator
3 Inhofe made. I continue to believe that SOUTHCOM is really
4 under-resourced. You talked about the value of the security
5 cooperation program. Describe the kinds of activities that
6 you engage with our regional partners and through the
7 security cooperation program.

8 General Richardson: So we have a myriad of things that
9 we do in terms of the training and the equipping. We do
10 things from small teams, 8- to 13-man teams. We do it in
11 all the domains, Special Ops included, cyber, information
12 ops. We do big exercises, as I mentioned before. PANAMAX,
13 which is really a defense of the Panama Canal exercise.
14 Twenty-nine countries from this AOR participate in that with
15 us.

16 We have Tradewinds. That has been a name that has been
17 around for decades, and that is a security operation in a
18 contested environment that we train to. That will bring 21
19 countries together.

20 My components, my Navy component will do UNITAS this
21 year. Brazil will host that. That will bring 19 countries
22 together. And when you see the picture of UNITAS, of all
23 the different vessels -- the ships, the vessels from the
24 other countries and the navies and the coast guards -- it is
25 just really impressive.

1 Senator Kaine: And General Richardson, just to give
2 the committee kind of a magnitude, you have nearly 30
3 countries in your AOR. I believe, General, Admiral Fowler
4 last year testified that the total security cooperation
5 budget for SOUTHCOM, to do the activities you described,
6 with that many nations, is \$120 million. So that is sort of
7 what we are talking about, right?

8 General Richardson: That is correct, Senator. I know
9 that seems like a lot of money, but when I do not have
10 assigned forces and GFMAP capabilities then that is my main
11 lever for engaging with the partner nations. That is really
12 a low-cost, high return on investment.

13 Senator Kaine: Let me ask about another program, the
14 IMET program, International Military Education Training
15 program. Security cooperation tends to be in the AOR, but
16 IMET, we bring leaders from SOUTHCOM militaries, nations, to
17 the United States for training. That has also a very small
18 budget. But describe to the committee the value of the IMET
19 program in SOUTHCOM.

20 General Richardson: It is huge. That is the
21 professional military education. That is where they get to
22 come, for example, to our war college, which is at the
23 lieutenant colonel level.

24 Right now I have 17 chiefs of defense and 6 ministers
25 of defense that have been to school in the United States.

1 They know that they get the best education and training when
2 they come here. They want to come here. And what we try to
3 work with, at \$13 million annually, is to have sustained,
4 consistent personnel from their militaries attending our
5 professional military education.

6 Senator Kaine: Well these are both relatively small
7 investments in SOUTHCOM, a region without assigned forces,
8 as General Richardson says, and I am just going to suggest
9 to my committee colleagues, watch this space. I think there
10 is going to be a budget submitted to us very soon, and look
11 at the dollars in these two accounts to SOUTHCOM. I have a
12 grave concern that challenges elsewhere in the world are
13 going to take these de minimis investments and shrink them
14 even more, and if that is the case I am going to be
15 advocating strongly that we do not do less but we do more in
16 the region.

17 My understanding, General Richardson, is also with
18 respect to cyber assets. I know nations like Colombia are
19 dealing with a lot of cyberattacks and misinformation from
20 actors in Venezuela and elsewhere. They get particularly
21 active around elections. There are many elections that are
22 happening in the region this year.

23 U.S. Cyber Command has so much on them, I understand,
24 in SOUTHCOM, your cyber assets are pretty limited. You are
25 making good use of a state partnership program with the

1 South Carolina Guard. Good on them and good on you for
2 using them in an effective way. But I understand that Cyber
3 Command does not have many assets that it can currently
4 allow to be used in SOUTHCOM. Am I right about that?

5 General Richardson: That is correct, Senator. They
6 have higher priorities, looking towards Europe and then also
7 in the INDOPACOM region. And I would just like to highlight
8 and thank all the Senators for the support of the National
9 Guard State Partnership Program, which is a huge force
10 multiplier for SOUTHCOM.

11 Senator Kaine: We are not paying attention to this
12 region. You know, we are not paying attention to them in
13 diplomatic circles, we are not paying sufficient attention
14 to them in terms of vaccine distribution, and we are not
15 paying attention to them in the military area. But other
16 areas, especially China, are paying a lot of attention, and
17 I think we should do better.

18 I want to thank you for your testimony.

19 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Kaine.

20 And let me now recognize Senator Fischer, please.

21 Senator Fischer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General
22 Richardson, General VanHerck, thank you so much for being
23 here today.

24 General VanHerck, in your prepared testimony's
25 discussion of hypersonic threats you state, quote, "The

1 impact is the loss of critical decision space for national-
2 level decision-makers regarding continuity of government and
3 the preservation of retaliatory capabilities, resulting in
4 an increase in the potential for strategic deterrence
5 failure," end quote.

6 You make a similar assessment of cruise missile
7 threats, saying, quote, "Additionally, these advanced cruise
8 missiles and their supporting platforms will limit national
9 leadership decision space and my ability to provide threat
10 warning and attack assessment, which directly influences my
11 ability to support continuity of government operations and
12 provide support to STRATCOM missions. Again, the potential
13 consequence is an increased risk of strategic deterrence
14 failure."

15 Can you elaborate, please, on what you mean about the
16 threat to continuity of government and the risk of
17 deterrence failure?

18 General VanHerck: Senator, sure. So one of my biggest
19 challenges is domain awareness, and hypersonics and cruise
20 missiles significantly challenge my ability to conduct my
21 NORAD mission of providing threat warning and attack
22 assessment. What you cannot see you cannot deter and you
23 cannot defend from, and they will significantly challenge
24 me.

25 Why I primarily do that is exactly to support

1 continuity of government and the survivable of our nuclear
2 posture, our nuclear forces, as well. And when you cannot
3 do that then you have to make some assumptions, that those
4 threats might be nuclear threats that will be inbound, and
5 that increases the risk of miscalculation and also the risk
6 of strategic deterrence failure.

7 So that is my number one priority, is to gain that
8 domain awareness so I can provide that threat warning and
9 attack assessment. I am currently not tasked to defend
10 against hypersonics. I look forward to seeing the Missile
11 Defense Review. I am tasked to defend against cruise
12 missiles, and that is a very tough mission for me right now
13 without domain awareness.

14 Senator Fischer: Thank you. You mentioned NORAD.
15 Could you update us on our partnership with the Canadians
16 there, please?

17 General VanHerck: The Canadians are an outstanding
18 ally. Militarily, I have hundreds of them working for us at
19 the headquarters at NORAD, my combined headquarters. I have
20 met, multiple times, the chief of the defense staff. My
21 boss on the NORAD side is coming to visit me next week as
22 well. Minister Anand, I have met with her in person as well
23 in Canada. Great allies.

24 Canada is in the decision-making process to support
25 NORAD modernization. I look forward to seeing where they go

1 with NORAD modernization. I think the world requires us to
2 think hard about modernizing the forces to operate across
3 the entire AOR for NORAD, which includes the Arctic and the
4 infrastructure and the communication capabilities as well.
5 And so I look forward to seeing what they come up with.

6 Senator Fischer: Thank you. We saw this morning that
7 North Korea did another long-range missile test to
8 demonstrate that their ballistic missile capabilities
9 continue to grow and that the threat to the homeland, I
10 believe, is continuing to increase. With this in mind, is
11 it your view that Next-Generation Interceptor, the NGI,
12 needs to be fielded as soon as possible?

13 General VanHerck: Absolutely, Senator. As soon as we
14 can get that here, I am confident the contract mechanism
15 rewards fielding it faster, and I am glad it is on track
16 right now.

17 Senator Fischer: To be clear on this, when you say it
18 is on track right now, so to be clear on this, do you think
19 delaying the schedule or changing the requirements would put
20 us at a serious risk of being unable to pace ballistic
21 missile threats to our homeland?

22 General VanHerck: Senator, I am very concerned about
23 my ability to pace the capacity of production that we assess
24 and the capability that we assess the North Koreans continue
25 to adapt to. That is why the funding for the Service Life

1 Extension program for the current ballistic missile defense
2 capability is so crucial -- thank you for that funding --
3 and that is why Next-Generation Interception is crucial as
4 well, because it will help both get after the additional
5 capacity problems and the capability problems.

6 Senator Fischer: Thank you.

7 General Richardson, in the time we have remaining can
8 you talk about the role that you see that China and Russia
9 are playing in your AOR, and specifically, how do we improve
10 the relations we have, the quality of our engagements to
11 better compete? I know we are friends and they are clients,
12 viewed as clients, but can you be more specific on what
13 needs to be done?

14 General Richardson: The way I am on the field I do not
15 need to outspend China to outcompete them, but I do need my
16 security cooperation funding, that triple-three funding to
17 do security cooperation, to help build the capacity and
18 capability within those militaries and defense forces, which
19 helps them secure their borders, which helps them with
20 internal security in their country, and then also be
21 exporters of training to other Latin American countries, and
22 then in peacekeeping operations around the world too.

23 Senator Fischer: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

24 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Fischer.

25 Senator King, please.

1 Senator King: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With regard to
2 NORTHCOM, EUCOM, and PACOM, my concern is that in a moment
3 of crisis is a question of who is in charge. Are you
4 satisfied with the coordination level between the three
5 combatant commands and the Canadians in case of some kind of
6 crisis in the Arctic?

7 General VanHerck: Senator, I am comfortable with the
8 way the Unified Campaign Plan is currently laid out. We
9 have outstanding relationships with Canada, outstanding
10 relationships with EUCOM and INDOPACOM. I do think we need
11 to look at, based on threat changes, how we would command
12 and control those capabilities. So for example, the threats
13 to the homeland today do not reside in my area of
14 responsibility. They are actually existing in other areas
15 of responsibility, such as the INDOPACOM area of
16 responsibility and the EUCOM area of responsibility.

17 So I do think there is potential gaps in seams that we
18 need to make sure that we close those in a time of crisis
19 and conflict to ensure we do not have challenges that we are
20 unaccounted for.

21 Senator King: That is exactly my question, and I hope
22 that there will be work actively done to close those gaps
23 and seams, because we do not want to be working on that in
24 the middle of a crisis. We want the structure to be on the
25 shelf, ready to operationalize.

1 Can the current missile defense system that we have
2 defend us against hypersonics?

3 General VanHerck: Senator, I am not tasked to defend
4 against them, but no, it cannot, because we do not have the
5 domain awareness at this time.

6 Senator King: We do not have the domain awareness. We
7 also do not have the technology to deal, so I think that is
8 important to understand that we do have missile defense. It
9 is important for ballistic missiles but it will not suffice
10 when it comes to hypersonics.

11 General Richardson, could you estimate what percentage
12 of worldwide ISR resources we have to utilize in the
13 SOUTHCOM AOR?

14 General Richardson: Senator, I get about 1 percent or
15 a little bit less than 1 percent of the global ISR.

16 Senator King: That is what I was afraid you were going
17 to say, and, frankly, I just cannot believe that. America
18 is under attack. The principle attack on America right now
19 is drugs -- 300 people a day. That is one 9/11 every 2
20 weeks. Two people in my state every day are dying of
21 overdoses. And yet we are treating it as if it is some kind
22 of domestic problem or a law enforcement problem. This is
23 an attack, and the fact that you have 1 percent of the ISR
24 to keep track of this threat to me is a gross misallocation
25 of resources. I realize it is not your responsibility.

1 But I guess my next question is, why, in your opinion,
2 are we so short of ISR? If we need it in a particular area,
3 why do we not build more Global Hawks? I just do not
4 understand why this is not something that we cannot budget
5 for and deal with.

6 General Richardson: So Senator, and all my fellow
7 combatant commanders will always say that we do not have
8 enough to see and be able to see the threats in our AOR.

9 Senator King: Well, the budget ought to reflect that
10 fact so that we could fill that gap. I mean, that is a
11 pretty straightforward sort of mathematical question.

12 General Richardson: Well, and I certainly appreciate
13 Congress always gives me a little extra funding for ISR, and
14 so we have some contracted, operated contractor-owned
15 assets, and four airplanes that actually help me with ISR in
16 the region, to be able to look for threats and look for
17 counternarcotics, illicit trafficking.

18 Senator King: Let me ask you the same question that I
19 asked General VanHerck, and that is one of my principles of
20 management is that you always want to have one throat to
21 choke. Who is in charge of the antidrug activities in Latin
22 America? Who is in charge?

23 General Richardson: So, Senator, I am in charge for
24 detection and monitoring, and that is to get actionable
25 information about illicit drug trafficking, either by air or

1 maritime.

2 Senator King: Who is in charge of interdiction?

3 General Richardson: And for interdiction that would be
4 DHS and our law enforcement agencies.

5 Senator King: But there is no one individual who can
6 be held responsible for the overall dealing with this issue.
7 Is that correct?

8 General Richardson: I would say that that would be our
9 Department of Homeland Security, Senator.

10 Senator King: Well, I think that is something we have
11 to strengthen and clarify. I am not going to pursue this,
12 but for the record I would hope you would give us more
13 detail on what you mentioned earlier about the Panama Canal
14 and Chinese activity I understand at either end of the
15 Panama Canal, as well as the Strait of Magellan. I think
16 that is a very, very serious matter, and I would like to
17 have more detail. Thank you.

18 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

19 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator King.

20 Senator Cotton, please.

21 Senator Cotton: General Richardson, I will give you a
22 chance to talk in a little bit more detail about the Panama
23 Canal, because I was troubled by the brief comment you had
24 to Senator Inhofe, of all the things you described that
25 China is doing in your area of responsibility. I think the

1 strategic investments made along the Panama Canal is most
2 striking. I know that this is primarily a State Department
3 and Treasury matter, but can you tell us a little bit more
4 about what is going on around the canal and how SOUTHCOM
5 plays into the interagency efforts to counter the threat,
6 and what else you would like to see from the U.S. government
7 to do so?

8 General Richardson: Thank you for the question,
9 Senator. We work very closely with Panama, and our Corps of
10 Engineers just was able to negotiate a water tender contract
11 with Panama, which I think is huge because it has been 15
12 years in the making. And so we have a lot of ground to make
13 up with Panama.

14 But in terms of the investment, China and the strategic
15 investments that they make, you know, just like the Panama
16 Canal, when you enter and exit and on either side you have
17 Chinese state-owned enterprises. And what I worry about
18 Chinese state-owned enterprises that have capability and
19 infrastructure there is that they can be used for dual use,
20 which means civilian but also military.

21 And quite honestly, if you just look at where the port
22 projects are, 29 port projects in the AOR, in 17 countries,
23 I mean, these are very methodically thought out, in my
24 opinion, and again, I worry about the access that they get
25 in there under the guise of infrastructure and looking like

1 they are helping economies when they are really not.

2 As well as the resources that are in this AOR. It is
3 just off the charts. I have got 60 percent of the world's
4 lithium in the Lithium Triangle in South America. That is
5 in Argentina, Bolivia, and Chile. You have got 31 percent
6 of the world's fresh water. You have the Amazon. You have
7 the oil reserves in Venezuela, the light, sweet crude that
8 was discovered off the shores of Guyana. There are a lot of
9 resources in this region. And again, I go back to, it is
10 not an investment by our competitors. It is there to
11 extract in some way, shape, or form.

12 Senator Cotton: What do you think China is up to there
13 in all those investments around the canal? Is it more about
14 advancing their own interests or holding at risk and
15 threatening ours?

16 General Richardson: I think it is both.

17 Senator Cotton: We depend on the canal more because of
18 our geography than does China, right?

19 General Richardson: I would say yes, but the Panama
20 Canal, as well as the Strait of Magellan, in my AOR those
21 two very strategic global lines of communication must remain
22 open.

23 Senator Cotton: I agree. I mean, should we ever have
24 a conflict with China, the decisive effort would be
25 somewhere in the Western Pacific, not in the Caribbean Basin

1 or the Eastern Pacific. And it is the very essence of
2 strategy to try to force your adversary to defend when he
3 has no choice but to defend, far removed from the theater of
4 decision. That is one reason I am so worried about these
5 investments around the canal.

6 The Panama Canal Treaty was actually two treaties. One
7 of them was the Neutrality Treaty. We retain, under that
8 Neutrality Treaty, the uncontested right to ensure the
9 neutral operation of the canal. Correct?

10 General Richardson: That is correct, Senator.

11 Senator Cotton: Good. One other area I wanted to
12 discuss was agriculture. I know this is somewhat removed
13 from the Department of Defense's lane, but as we heard you
14 have no assigned forces and a lot of what you do is with
15 interagency partners and looking at non-military, non-
16 traditional ways to cooperate. Sometimes people overlook
17 the importance of agriculture. I do not think China
18 overlooks it, if you consider their investments in South
19 America, especially targeting crops like soybeans. I think
20 this economic investment seems to be aimed at creating
21 alternative markets for them to buy as well as to crowd out
22 our experts. Fortunately for us, Brazil's soybean crop did
23 not compare so well to ours, especially in Arkansas.

24 Can you give me your thoughts on how you can work with
25 agencies like AID and the trade representative to dissuade

1 countries in your area of responsibility from continuing
2 down the path of further economic entanglement with China in
3 the agriculture domain?

4 General Richardson: So, Senator, we work very closely,
5 as I mentioned before, regarding the focus that we have that
6 work in the Western Hemisphere. And so we have a very close
7 working relationship with USAID, and I have met with
8 Director Powers previously, and then she travels the region
9 as well. But none of us have the resources, and so I think
10 that helps us work together more collaboratively across all
11 of the interagency and work so close together to figure out
12 how we can invest in this region.

13 But I would also like to highlight that China gets 36
14 percent of its food source from this AOR as well. And so
15 the AOR just has a lot of resources that are being eyed by
16 our competitors.

17 Senator Cotton: Yeah, they are, and I think this is
18 going to be a matter of growing importance this year, given
19 the war in Ukraine and how much grain Ukraine and Russia
20 provide to the rest of the world as well as how many inputs
21 they provide into fertilizer or other agricultural inputs,
22 not only in increasing prices on our grocery shelves here in
23 America but also threats to stability in your region and in
24 Africa and the Middle East in places that have pretty
25 fragile governments and very limited food supplies.

1 Thank you.

2 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Cotton.

3 Senator Blumenthal, please.

4 Senator Blumenthal: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank
5 you both for your service. Thanks for being here today.

6 This morning, President Biden announced that the United
7 States will welcome 100,000 Ukrainian refugees who are
8 fleeing an absolutely intolerable situation in Ukraine. I
9 recently visited the border of Ukraine and Poland with a
10 number of colleagues, a bipartisan trip, and saw the women
11 and children -- they are almost all women and children --
12 fleeing the horror and terror that Putin has caused to their
13 country. And they will come here through a variety of legal
14 pathways and likely follow the same general program as the
15 Afghan refugees did.

16 I continue to call on the Administration to enable more
17 of our at-risk Afghan allies to escape the Taliban. They
18 have targets on their backs. They helped Americans, our
19 troops, our diplomats, while we were there, and they are
20 under dire threat from the Taliban.

21 But I also applaud the President for his effort to
22 welcome Ukrainians into the United States, and there is much
23 more to be done. The 3.5 million refugees who have already
24 fled Ukraine and the 10 million more internally displaced
25 have added to an already burgeoning refugee and humanitarian

1 crisis around the globe. Literally, last year, 26 million
2 refugees -- 26 million refugees -- were displaced from areas
3 as diverse as Syria, Venezuela, Afghanistan, South Sudan,
4 Myanmar, and other countries. And these refugees represent
5 a threat as well as an opportunity, literally an opportunity
6 because they have a great deal of talent and skills and
7 potential for contributing to the countries that they may be
8 moving to, but also a threat insofar as the failure to aid
9 them will lead to potential terrorism and other adverse
10 activities.

11 I have seen the tremendous support that NORTHCOM
12 provided to Operational Allies Welcome over the last year,
13 in finding capacity on U.S. bases and efficiently housing
14 and processing Afghan refugees fleeing the Taliban, and I
15 hope that NORTHCOM will play a role, as well, in welcoming
16 and resettling the Ukrainian refugees.

17 General VanHerck, have you been given instructions on
18 the role for NORTHCOM with respect to Ukrainian refugees?

19 General VanHerck: Senator, I am aware of the
20 President's announcement. I do not have any direct mission
21 task to plan for that yet. As we did with Operation Allies
22 Welcome, we stand ready, if directed by the Secretary of
23 Defense, to do that. It was an honor to support nearly
24 74,000 Afghans as we processed them through eight
25 installations from DoD. And we if directed we will move

1 out, Senator.

2 Senator Blumenthal: Are there lessons that we should
3 learn from the OAW experience with the Afghan refugees?

4 General VanHerck: There are absolutely lessons that we
5 have incorporated, that we learned during Allies Welcome,
6 that I am sure would make us better prepared if we had to
7 stand up to do this mission again.

8 Senator Blumenthal: What kinds of lessons?

9 General VanHerck: Interagency coordination lessons to
10 make more efficient use of data and information, the ability
11 to track, categorize, whether it be medical, whether it be
12 security screening. All of these things were worked
13 closely, and we are in a much better place today than we
14 were when we started last July.

15 Senator Blumenthal: Well I was tremendously impressed
16 when I visited Quantico, which is only one of those eight,
17 with the enthusiasm and dedication of the Marines who were
18 involved at Quantico in welcoming and aiding the refugees
19 there. Most of them had never served in either Afghanistan
20 or Iraq. For them, this was their deployment, so to speak,
21 and they loved doing it. And they provided a real American
22 welcome to these new Americans, and I think that we can all
23 be proud of the work that was done by our military at those
24 bases in providing that first American experience to the
25 Afghan refugees. And I hope the same is done with respect

1 to Ukrainian refugees. Thank you.

2 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Blumenthal.

3 Senator Rounds, please.

4 Senator Rounds: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me begin
5 by thanking both of you for your service to our country. I
6 would like to begin with General VanHerck.

7 With regard to your mission and your role in keeping
8 our country safe, could you share with us what the
9 activities at our southern border and the challenges that we
10 face at our southern border right now with regard to
11 transnational criminal organizations, violent extremist
12 organizations, and so forth, and the porousness of that
13 border right now, can you share with us what the impact is
14 that that might have on your responsibilities and role?

15 General VanHerck: Senator, currently I am in direct
16 support of the Department of Homeland Security, providing
17 about 2,450 National Guard troops on Title 10 status. What
18 they are doing is detection and monitoring, intel analysis,
19 and aviation support.

20 We are really treating the symptoms. You know,
21 counternarcotics, migration, human trafficking, those kinds
22 of things are symptoms, in my mind, of a broader problem,
23 and that is transnational criminal organizations, who create
24 an environment that is not conducive to raising a family,
25 for economic success, and we see that happening right on our

1 border, in Mexico.

2 My concern with that, Senator, is the instability it
3 creates, the opportunity it creates for actors such as
4 China, Russia, and others who might have nefarious
5 activities on their mind, to seek access and influence in
6 our AOR from a national security perspective.

7 Senator Rounds: Do you see evidence of that at this
8 time?

9 General VanHerck: There are actors who are very
10 aggressive and active all across the NORTHCOM AOR, to
11 including the Bahamas and Mexico, China and Russia. I would
12 point out that the largest portion of GRE members in the
13 world is in Mexico right now. Those are Russian
14 intelligence personnel, and they keep an eye very closely on
15 their opportunities to have influence on U.S. opportunities
16 and access.

17 Senator Rounds: General Richardson, this is your AOR.
18 Would you concur with the general's assessment?

19 General Richardson: Yes, Senator.

20 Senator Rounds: Does that impact your ability to do
21 your role, or how does that impact your ability to complete
22 your assignments there?

23 General Richardson: So we work very closely with our
24 partner nations, and as I said, how important the lever is
25 for security cooperation for us to be on the field, to have

1 our jersey on, have our number, and work shoulder-to-
2 shoulder with our partners. They really want to work with
3 us, and all the levers that I have that you all provide and
4 that I get from the Department of Defense, the Department of
5 State, go into action.

6 A little goes a long way in this AOR. Again, I do not
7 need to outcompete my competitors, or outspend them to
8 outcompete them. But we do have to be present and we do
9 have to be there with them.

10 Senator Rounds: Today we fight war, or at least we
11 have to be able to defend against war that comes from
12 multiple domains -- air, land, sea, space, and
13 cybersecurity. I understand that right now, with regard to
14 cyber capabilities, there is a limit to the number that we
15 have.

16 General Richardson, can you share with us the
17 challenges you face in terms of being able to meet your
18 responsibilities with the limited cyber capabilities or
19 cyber defense capabilities that we have?

20 General Richardson: So we do our best in terms of the
21 small teams, the subject matter exchanges, subject matter
22 expert exchanges that we do with our partner nations. We
23 will go with like a cyber assessment team to help with an
24 assessment of their network, maybe a 13-man team that works
25 with the partner nation. We work over the shoulder. We can

1 provide direction and subject matter expertise but we cannot
2 get on the keyboards with them and go to work with them.

3 Senator Rounds: Let me ask this in a different way.
4 In order to do your mission, are you able to receive the
5 number and types of cyber mission teams that you request?

6 General Richardson: We are able to do that through our
7 National Guard State Partnership Program. CYBERCOM does not
8 have the full capacity and capability to support all the
9 combatant commands, and I am not a priority AOR. As we see,
10 the EUCOM and the INDOPACOM are right now the two
11 priorities.

12 Senator Rounds: Demand exceed supply then.

13 General Richardson: That is correct.

14 Senator Rounds: Thank you.

15 General VanHerck, with regard to all-domain awareness,
16 can you very briefly describe to us just how critical cyber
17 is and the challenges that you face and getting the
18 resources that you need?

19 General VanHerck: Senator, cyber domain awareness is
20 absolutely critical. The vast majority of the key critical
21 infrastructure in the United States of America, and Canada
22 for that matter, exists in the private sector. Today I am
23 very comfortable where we are, with General Nakasone and his
24 teams on the DoDIN of the Department of Defense
25 infrastructure; CISA, with other Federal networks.

1 But domain awareness outside of that is relatively an
2 unknown. You know, many of those municipalities, companies,
3 their reporting is all we get, and so they are actually
4 voluntarily playing. And so from a domain awareness
5 perspective, we do not know exactly what we do not know.

6 Senator Rounds: Thank you. My time has expired.
7 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

8 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Rounds.

9 Senator Sullivan, please.

10 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to
11 thank both the witnesses. I think you both are doing an
12 exceptional job in an important AOR that do not always get
13 the attention that they deserve. General VanHerck, I
14 appreciate our meeting the other day.

15 I want to talk a little bit more and follow up on the
16 discussion about the provision that Senator King and I co-
17 sponsored in the NDAA on the Arctic Security Initiative.
18 You are already hearing here, in this hearing, a number of
19 Senators, a bipartisan group of Senators, are very focused
20 on that.

21 As you know, it authorizes the SECDEF to establish an
22 Arctic Security Initiative, which is modeled on the Pacific
23 Deterrence Initiative and the European Deterrence
24 Initiative, essentially initiatives from this committee,
25 where we have thought the Pentagon was not focusing enough

1 on critical regions. And I think both of them, PDI and EDI,
2 have been quite prophetic, saying hey, Pentagon, focus --
3 Europe, Asia, Taiwan -- and now the Arctic.

4 Can you please provide a status on the update regarding
5 the assessment, any conclusions you have drawn? As you
6 know, the Arctic Security Initiative that was passed into
7 law directs you, the NORTHCOM commander, not OSD, to
8 complete an independent security assessment of the Arctic.

9 General VanHerck: Senator, we are in progress with the
10 assessment. What I commit to you is you will get an honest,
11 candid assessment from me. I will coordinate that across
12 the Department. I expect to have my portion of it complete
13 within the next few weeks, and then the coordination will
14 begin. The suspense is here in the very near future. I am
15 likely going to ask for an extension. I believe it is
16 crucial not to do this fast, but to do it right, and I hope
17 to have it done by early summer, at the latest.

18 I would point out real quick, if you do not mind, that
19 I look forward to seeing what the budget comes out with next
20 week with regard to Arctic, for inclusion into my
21 assessment.

22 Senator Sullivan: Are there any things that you can
23 highlight already right now, with this committee, in terms
24 of your assessment?

25 General VanHerck: Senator, without seeing the 2023

1 budget I really cannot give you a full assessment of what we
2 are going to see for infrastructure support. I believe we
3 will see additional domain awareness capabilities
4 significantly funded with the 2023 budget, but I look
5 forward to seeing that.

6 I would assess that there may still be some work to do
7 with regard to the strategies that each of the services have
8 funded, or not funded but put out, and the Department
9 strategy. But when the budget comes out I will give you the
10 final assessment.

11 Senator Sullivan: Let me ask specifically on that.
12 When Secretary Austin was here for his confirmation hearing
13 I asked if he would commit to work with this committee to
14 ensure the Arctic strategies, from the different services,
15 are fully resourced, and he said, quote, "You have my
16 commitment to do that." That is what he told the committee.

17 Do you believe funding for the Arctic Security
18 Initiative, in a similar manner that has been done for PDI
19 and EDI, is critical to our integrated deterrence efforts in
20 the Arctic, and are you seeing that funding? Now, I am not
21 talking about the upcoming budget. I am talking about what
22 you have seen in the last year.

23 General VanHerck: To answer your last question, we
24 have not seen the funding that I would like to see with
25 regard to the Arctic.

1 Senator Sullivan: So the strategies are coming
2 together. I think they are all coming together well. They
3 are serious. That is a big change from a couple of years
4 ago. But you are not seeing the funding as of yet.

5 General VanHerck: In the past, that is correct,
6 Senator. I look forward to seeing the 2023 budget. The
7 Arctic is strategic in nature. We must be persistent there
8 to compete. That is a part of the integrated deterrence
9 that you mentioned as well.

10 Senator Sullivan: So just for the Pentagon folks
11 watching, it is not just forces, but as Senator Wicker
12 talked about, it is infrastructure. I know that it gives
13 some people neuralgia in the Pentagon when we talk about
14 strategic Arctic ports, but that is what we need, is it not,
15 General, the capability to have presence in a strategic
16 region where one of the most brutal dictators in the world,
17 Vladimir Putin, has said he is going to own the Arctic, he
18 is going to create the new Suez Canal in the Northern Sea
19 route, and he is going to dominate it. Do we not need a
20 presence ourselves to push back on this dictator in that
21 region of the world?

22 General VanHerck: We do need a presence, and fuel
23 north of Dutch Harbor would do that, as would infrastructure
24 and communications capabilities. I look forward to working
25 with the Canadians on their part of this. They need to be

1 part of it as well, not only the Department of Defense,
2 especially on the infrastructure piece.

3 Senator Sullivan: Well just a final point, Mr.
4 Chairman. I think this committee has been very strong on
5 this over the last several years, in a bipartisan way, and I
6 think the Pentagon needs to wake up. They need to wake up
7 and recognize this is a strategic interest for our nation.
8 And the signal that is coming from the Congress could not be
9 more clear. Just like with the European Deterrence
10 Initiative, the Pacific Deterrence Initiative, the Arctic
11 Security Initiative falls in that line. And I look forward
12 to working with you and this committee on your assessment
13 and seeing it soon. Thank you.

14 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Sullivan.

15 Senator Peters, please.

16 Senator Peters: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I could
17 not agree more with Senator Sullivan on the strategic
18 importance of the Arctic and investments in the Arctic, and
19 I think it is a consensus with members of this committee in
20 a bipartisan way that we need to be focused on that. I had
21 some questions related to that. Senator Sullivan did a
22 great job of addressing some of the questions that I had.

23 But maybe just pick up one thing with you, General
24 VanHerck, is the National Guard Bureau. To what extent are
25 you working with them to ensure that they are ready to

1 conduct some cold-weather operations in that region?

2 General VanHerck: We work with all the services,
3 including the National Guard Bureau, to do that. Actually,
4 I am highly reliant on the National Guard Bureau to execute
5 my day-to-day campaign plan, in a voluntary status,
6 actually, so I could not be more proud and appreciate the
7 support, because I do not get access to the forces through
8 the Global Force Management process and I do not have the
9 assigned forces to do that campaign plan.

10 I would point out that we need ready, trained, and
11 equipped forces to operate throughout my entire area of
12 responsibility, and that includes the Arctic. That is part
13 of the services strategy and something that we have to work
14 on.

15 I just concluded an Arctic Edge exercise, which
16 included some of the National Guard and many of the
17 services, a joint exercise, and some allies and partners.
18 In a classified environment I will share some observations
19 with you from that. But the Arctic is a challenging
20 environment to operate in, and we have work that remains.

21 Senator Peters: Great. I appreciate that.

22 General VanHerck, U.S. intelligence indicates that
23 Russia may be positioning itself to use chemical weapons in
24 Ukraine under the guise of a false flag. And certainly
25 while our hearts go out to the brave Ukrainians who are

1 defending their country from this illegal invasion and
2 fighting for freedom, I think we also must use this crisis
3 as an opportunity to consider our own preparedness for such
4 an attack.

5 So my question for you is, do you believe the United
6 States is properly prepared to contain and respond to
7 chemical attacks in the homeland, and are there any resource
8 shortfalls impacting CBRN response enterprise?

9 General VanHerck: So I believe we are prepared to
10 execute a response to a small event, such as we had planned
11 for based on a violent extremist type organization event.
12 For a large-scale event in the homeland, I think there is
13 much work that still needs to be done. That could be
14 additional resources applied to, Senator.

15 Senator Peters: Great. Thank you.

16 General Richardson, in your reply to Senator Kaine, a
17 question that Senator Kaine offered, you described the
18 importance of small-team engagement with our allies and
19 partners. Nearly every nation in SOUTHCOM AOR participates
20 in the National Guard State Partnership Program, as you are
21 well aware.

22 My question for you is, how do you plan to employ your
23 National Guard State Partnership Program units to deepen the
24 defense relationships that we have in the region?

25 General Richardson: So this is a huge force

1 multiplier, Senator, the State Partnership Program, and in
2 some cases two, three decades of relationships that have
3 evolved. And we see the impact of that with Ukraine and
4 California and that relationship that they have.

5 And so there was a creation a few years ago with a
6 bilateral affairs officer, which is a National Guard officer
7 that is actually embedded in the embassies with the DoD team
8 there, and then helps integrate that State Partnership
9 Program in my campaign plan and strategy for the region.
10 And as was brought out in other questions, you know, I do
11 not have all the resources I need, but that is reach-back
12 into the National Guard and the capabilities, especially
13 with the cyber battalions, to help me with operations in the
14 cybersecurity domain.

15 Senator Peters: Yeah. And area that we need to have
16 increased focus on, without question.

17 Another question for you, General. Are you seeing the
18 Chinese or the Russian militaries copy these types of
19 efforts in collaborating with regional militaries for
20 training opportunities? Is this something they are picking
21 up, as well?

22 General Richardson: I do, Senator. I see them using
23 part of our playbook against us, actually. And what I have
24 said before is that they do not have partners; they have
25 clients. And so when we do our big exercises and bring 20-

1 some countries together from the region, they do not do
2 that, but they do have a lot of funding to bring large
3 groups of personnel from the militaries or the defense
4 forces to all-expense-paid professional military education
5 in Beijing, for either a year or 2 years. And if they do
6 that, if I take the country of Guyana, for example, and they
7 do 15 or 20 a year, they can get through their defense force
8 in about, you know, 5 years.

9 As I have said before, I do not need to outspend China
10 to outcompete them, but I do need to be on the field in my
11 security cooperation and IMET funding. A little bit goes a
12 long way.

13 Senator Peters: Great. Thank you. Thank you, Mr.
14 Chairman.

15 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Peters.

16 Senator Scott, please.

17 Senator Scott: Thank you, Chairman.

18 General Richardson, first off, thank you both for being
19 here. Thanks for your service and the men and women and
20 that work with you.

21 General Richardson, can you describe what you have seen
22 from our enemies over the past 6 months since you have had
23 this command, what do you believe their primary goals are in
24 our hemisphere?

25 General Richardson: So, frankly, I am surprised at how

1 much our competitors have been able to expand within the
2 region and how they have done that with the proximity to the
3 homeland. And what I find myself doing is a lot of
4 educating and informing about my AOR, as I travel around and
5 speak to different groups, and go to different places to
6 offer the message and just educate folks. Because we tend
7 to look east and west, not necessarily south.

8 And I can fly to 80 percent of this AOR -- it is huge,
9 looks huge and it looks really far away -- I can fly to 80
10 percent of it in 2 to 3 hours from Miami, and we have just
11 kind of forgotten about that.

12 I would say with the investment of infrastructure over
13 the last 5 years by our long-term strategic competitor,
14 China, from '17 to '21 an investment of over \$50 billion. I
15 have Corps of Engineers, and we average about \$50 million
16 per year, so from '17 to '21, about \$250 million investment
17 in the region.

18 Now that is not it. I mean, USAID is there and there
19 are other businesses and corporations that are in the
20 region, but there is a huge investment by our long-term
21 strategic competitor in the region.

22 Some of these countries as well. As I look to levers,
23 levers that allow me to out-compete my adversary, foreign
24 military sales, IMET, foreign military financing, security
25 cooperation, being able to have responsive levers. We

1 cannot take a year to 2 years when our partner nations are
2 asking for capability -- a couple of helos, a fighter jet,
3 weapons, vehicles -- and we take 2 years. Our process has
4 got to be able to evolve with the times, and we have got to
5 be faster.

6 Senator Scott: Do you see, in our hemisphere, that
7 Russia and China have become, clearly no question about it,
8 they are adversaries?

9 General Richardson: They are definitely competitors,
10 and I do look at them as adversaries.

11 Senator Scott: So when you see American companies that
12 go do business in China, with the Chinese government, with
13 the Chinese military, does that make your job harder or less
14 hard?

15 General Richardson: I look at it from a perspective of
16 the dual use. They come under the guise of infrastructure,
17 doing a good thing for that particular country that they
18 look like they are investing in. They do not do a good job
19 on the project in the first place. That generally becomes
20 evident in anywhere from 5 to 7 years after a project is
21 done. They do not hire host nation workers. They bring in
22 their own laborers.

23 I would say from my perspective, I worry about the
24 civilian and dual use with the military, and the PRC being
25 able to bring in and switch something over that is a state-

1 owned enterprise to military use.

2 Senator Scott: When the Chinese bring in their own
3 labor do they take it back when it is finished, when the
4 project is finished, or do they leave their labor there?

5 General Richardson: I think it depends. I think they
6 actually do both.

7 Senator Scott: Okay. Do you see signs of our enemies
8 actively supplying weapons to any state or group in Latin
9 America?

10 General Richardson: Yes.

11 Senator Scott: And is that increasing? Decreasing?
12 What is happening?

13 General Richardson: I think recently, probably over
14 the past couple of years that has increased. Again, whether
15 they can do it faster or cheaper than us. That is why I say
16 our levers and our ability to be able to deliver has to
17 speed up, and our processes have to get faster with the
18 times.

19 Senator Scott: What type of weapons are they sending
20 into our hemisphere?

21 General Richardson: Fighter aircraft, helicopters, air
22 defense systems, small arms, vehicles.

23 Senator Scott: So SOUTHCOM has had an office that
24 supports trade and investment and works to connect small
25 businesses in the region. How is that doing?

1 General Richardson: In terms of the small business we
2 have the small business director actually attend the Chile
3 inauguration for the President, and in terms of small
4 business, I will tell you what I have done, Senator. We
5 were able to bring BENS, which is the Business Executives
6 for National Security, who coordinated a trip into Panama in
7 October with 10 CEOs. And I just took the outbrief a couple
8 of weeks ago. It was organized under my predecessor. And
9 just seeing the value of getting that perspective on the
10 ground, because when you talk about the investment levels
11 that the PRC has when they go into these countries, with
12 over \$50 billion in 5 years across the AOR, I am looking at
13 OPM, other people's money, how can we get investment in the
14 region to help with the economic problems that these
15 countries are having.

16 Senator Scott: I thank both of you for your service.

17 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Scott.

18 Senator Ernst, please.

19 Senator Ernst: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you,
20 General VanHerck and General Richardson for being here
21 today. We really do appreciate your service to our country.

22 You both are acutely aware of our adversaries and how
23 they are actively spreading their economic and military
24 influence beyond their borders to our own doorstep. This is
25 right here, as your predecessor, Admiral Fowler, used to

1 say, in our own neighborhood. And that is such a great way
2 to phrase that because they are there, right here.

3 China, in particular, is on the offensive here in the
4 Western Hemisphere, and there are days that I truly worry
5 that our posture remains very reactive, at best, and on
6 certain days weak, at worst. And that is not due to you.
7 It is because we have many, whether it stems all the way
8 from Pennsylvania Avenue all the way here, we just do not
9 give enough attention to our own neighborhood. Many of my
10 colleagues have already stated that.

11 So I think it is imperative that we must give you all
12 the tools that you need to have at your fingertips, the
13 authorities, making sure that they are flexible, but we also
14 need realists in the DoD policy shop and at the State
15 Department that will actually acknowledge the significance
16 of great power threat that is emanating through our area.

17 So General Richardson, I know that Senator Cotton
18 focused very heavily on this Panama Canal. I had a line of
19 questioning as well in that area. I am going to skip over
20 quite a bit of that. But just for everyone's information, I
21 think last year there were about 14,000 transits through the
22 Panama Canal, and the United States is the number one user
23 of the Panama Canal. And 60 percent of what goes through
24 the Panama Canal, it either originates in the United States
25 or is headed to the United States. And, of course, I come

1 from a very ag-heavy state. A lot of those commodities or
2 products do transit through the Panama Canal. So it is
3 extremely important for us.

4 So if we could just hammer down just a little bit more,
5 just very briefly, General Richardson, if you could talk
6 about what you see going on around the Panama Canal with the
7 Chinese influence that exists there.

8 General Richardson: So thank you, Senator, and
9 certainly I would like to highlight that our country does
10 \$740 billion in trade with Latin America and the Caribbean.
11 It is huge. And so the importance of keeping the Panama
12 Canal open and free for global economics and the economy is
13 not just the war plans, which I worry about as well, is
14 extremely important.

15 But the strategic way of the investments and the
16 proximity and the continued investment with other projects
17 that they make in and around the Panama Canal is very
18 concerning. And so \$6 billion additional, in addition to,
19 on either side of the canal, having state-owned enterprise
20 companies along the canal.

21 Senator Ernst: Yeah, it is very concerning. About a
22 week or so prior to the BENS group, Joe Votel's BENS group,
23 going into Panama, I had traveled there with a group of
24 other Congressmen to just really see the Chinese influence
25 that is on the ground there, and it is extremely concerning.

1 That is why I am so thankful that the BENS group is engaging
2 in Central America, in Panama, and in other regions. We do
3 need that economic support in that region so that we can
4 also be a good partner. And if there are ways that the
5 United States maybe will not invest, if we can find other
6 allies and partners that do have the type of supports that
7 might be necessary in that area I think that we should
8 facilitate where we can.

9 I would like to focus a little bit on the mining
10 activities that occur in South America as well. This is an
11 area where we have seen a number of businesses from the
12 United States attempt to get into places like Chile, where
13 they have lithium resources. But who beat us to the punch?
14 The Chinese.

15 So if you can talk a little bit about mining activities
16 and how valuable that would be to the United States if we
17 were able to engage in those types of activities.

18 General Richardson: So the region is just rich with
19 rare earth minerals, and as you talked about, I mean, I just
20 took my granddaughter to the history museum on the Mall a
21 couple of weeks ago and got to see just all the minerals and
22 the previous metals and things like that, resources, from
23 the region. You know, the rubies, the emeralds, all of
24 those kinds of things.

25 But when you talk about illegal mining it is illegal

1 mining, it is illegal logging, it is illegal fishing that
2 happens. I know you asked about mining, but if I could
3 mention the fishing. On any given day I have over 600 PRC
4 fishing vessels in my AOR that are off the coasts of
5 Ecuador, Peru, Chile, and they follow the fishing migration
6 patterns. And so you know where they are going to be by the
7 migration of the fish. And this is about \$3 billion in lost
8 economics, you know, productivity that those nations
9 desperately need that the Chinese are taking away.

10 And so it is all three of those things that are
11 extremely prevalent in this AOR.

12 Senator Ernst: Yeah, I appreciate that very much. I
13 am glad you brought up all of those other resources. It is
14 just incredibly important that we pay attention to our own
15 neighborhood, and not only through our military but also
16 through our State Department but also economically as well.

17 So I really appreciate your presence here today. Thank
18 you, General VanHerck, and thank you so much, General
19 Richardson, and I yield. Thank you.

20 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Ernst.

21 Senator Hawley, please.

22 Senator Hawley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thanks to
23 both of you for being here. Thank you for your service to
24 our country. General VanHerck, let me start with you and
25 let me say it is great to see a fellow Missourian here, as

1 always.

2 I noticed something you said in your opening statement
3 and I want to quote it to make sure I get it correct. You
4 said, I think, that our reliance, America's reliance, on
5 deterrence by cost imposition is currently overweighted and
6 significantly increases the risk of miscalculation by
7 limiting our national leaders' options following an attack.

8 That caught my attention because I have been arguing
9 for a while now about the importance of adopting a strategy
10 of denial, deterrence by denial, versus deterrence by cost
11 imposition, especially as it relates to China. So I wonder
12 if you could just expand on your comments a little bit and
13 tell us why you think it is important to end an overreliance
14 on deterrence by cost imposition.

15 General VanHerck: Thank you, Senator. First I would
16 say cost imposition, the nuclear deterrent is the foundation
17 of homeland defense, and we must fully fund a triad. That
18 is the foundation. We also must have a strong conventional
19 force, but that has to also be balanced with deterrence by
20 denial. And deterrence by denial is the capability to deny
21 a potential adversary the ability to believe they can
22 inflict damage on us that may bring us to our knees. And it
23 is the ability to demonstrate readiness, resiliency across
24 the whole-of-government, responsiveness. We do this every
25 day with hurricanes, wildfires. We have demonstrated with

1 Allies Welcome. All of those contribute to the overarching
2 integrated deterrence.

3 That is where my campaign plan is focused. I do not
4 want to start with defense kinetically in the homeland. I
5 want to keep us out of the crisis and conflict by focusing
6 on that deterrence by denial on a day-to-day basis.

7 Senator Hawley: Let me ask you this. When you say
8 that one of the dangers of over-relying on deterrence by
9 cost imposition is that it increases the risk of
10 miscalculation and limits options, can you just explain that
11 piece of it?

12 General VanHerck: Absolutely. So without the
13 deterrence by denial and the belief in a potential
14 adversary's mind that they cannot be successful, they may
15 actually believe that because the homeland is vulnerable and
16 they could bring us to our knees that that may be the
17 emboldening factor that leads them to make a decision to
18 attack, whether that be in Taiwan or another place, because
19 they believe that they can disrupt, delay, or destroy our
20 will in the homeland. We want to create them to believe and
21 understand that we have the capability that they could never
22 do that to us, by defending the key critical infrastructure
23 and having the resiliency and readiness to respond.

24 Senator Hawley: Very good. Thank you for that.

25 Let me shift to the situation involving the drug supply

1 at the southern border, and particularly fentanyl, which is
2 in our state, absolutely devastating, and we are seeing mass
3 quantities of it. Can you just give us an update on
4 NORTHCOM's efforts to help DHS stem the flow of illegal
5 drugs, and particularly fentanyl, there at the southern
6 border?

7 General VanHerck: Senator, currently NORTHCOM is
8 providing about 2,450 Guardsmen from various states in a
9 Title 10 status, doing detection and monitoring, intel
10 analysis, and also aviation support. The request for
11 support for fiscal year 2023 is in the Department as well
12 and being adjudicated at the Department level. I do not
13 have a tasking yet for 2023.

14 Senator Hawley: Let me ask you about the Mexican
15 government. Have they been helping with this, with the flow
16 of drugs, the human trafficking? Has it gotten better or
17 worse in the last year?

18 General VanHerck: The Mexicans are extremely good
19 partners. I have great relationships with General Sandoval
20 of SEDENA, with Admiral Ojeda of SEMAR. Both are coming to
21 visit me next month. They have tens of thousands of Mexican
22 troops conducting the mission to support what we need with
23 the common objectives, and we are very grateful for their
24 partnership.

25 Senator Hawley: What are you looking for them to do in

1 the year ahead?

2 General VanHerck: Continue to partner, provide
3 additional security. SEMAR has port security now. For
4 fentanyl that is crucial because those precursors often come
5 into ports. I would like to work additional information
6 sharing to enable them to be more successful in interdicting
7 much of those precursor chemicals that come into Mexico.

8 Senator Hawley: Very good. Let me shift back to China
9 here quickly, in my little bit of remaining time. You
10 mentioned Taiwan a second ago. It is no secret Beijing
11 would love to seize Taiwan. They would love to execute a
12 fait accompli with regard to Taiwan. And we also know that
13 if they attempted to do that they would seek to prevent us
14 from deploying forces from the West Coast into the theater.

15 Tell me about your concerns about China's ability to
16 strike military targets in the homeland using cyber
17 capabilities.

18 General VanHerck: Well China possesses extensive cyber
19 capabilities. Those responsibilities to defend the homeland
20 primarily reside with CISA, Director Easterly, and General
21 Nakasone on the DoDEN side. My role is to provide defense
22 support of civil authorities in the case of municipalities,
23 industry ask for support.

24 We have a good capability. What we do not know,
25 Senator, is the unknown. We do not know where the

1 vulnerabilities are because of the way we are set up across
2 multiple agencies, across multiple industries, that we rely
3 on volunteering their information for cyber vulnerabilities.

4 Senator Hawley: Got it. Thank you both for your
5 service again. General Richardson, I will give you a few
6 questions for the record. Thanks for being here.

7 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

8 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Hawley.

9 Senator Rosen, please.

10 Senator Rosen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I really
11 would like to thank Generals Richardson and VanHerck for
12 testifying today and for your service to our country. Thank
13 you.

14 I want to speak a little bit about Iran's presence in
15 the Western Hemisphere. General Richardson, during your
16 confirmation hearing we discussed Iran's presence in Latin
17 America through its proxy Hezbollah, its involvement in the
18 tri-border region of Paraguay, Argentina, and Brazil, and
19 its exchange of arms for oil with, of course, Venezuela.

20 Over a year ago, Brazilian authorities extradited a
21 leading Hezbollah financier to Paraguay, which dealt a blow,
22 of course, to the terrorist group. However, we do not often
23 receive the same support in combatting Iran or its proxy
24 activities from other countries in the region.

25 Just a little over 2 months ago, Iranian official,

1 Mohsen Rezaee, was wanted by Interpol for his role as leader
2 of the Iranian Revolution Guard Corps in the 1994 AMIA
3 Jewish Community Center bombing in Argentina. He made an
4 appearance at the inauguration of Nicaraguan President
5 Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua.

6 To hold Iran accountable and Hezbollah accountable for
7 their activities in Latin America, Senator Blackburn and I
8 introduced the Hezbollah in Latin America Accountability
9 Act.

10 So, General, could you please update the committee on
11 Hezbollah's recent activity in Latin America? Are we
12 effectively disrupting their agenda, and to your knowledge
13 is Hezbollah continuing to exchange arms for oil with
14 Venezuela?

15 General Richardson: Thank you for the question,
16 Senator, and, quite honestly, thank you for the act. The
17 work that we do partnering with our partner nations is so
18 important through the security cooperation, train and equip,
19 triple-three funding. That is my main lever to work with
20 these militaries and these defense forces, to counter our
21 competitors and counter our threats in the region. And just
22 as you listed off, you know, what I ran does and has done in
23 my AOR is very concerning, and obviously to impact that --
24 the Secretary of Defense uses the integrated deterrence, and
25 as I look at that, and you partner with all of the

1 capabilities that are in the region, it is so important that
2 the partner nations that are dealing with this internally,
3 be able to have the capacity and capability to do that too.

4 I just request that I am able to continue with that
5 triple-three funding so I am there, because they want to
6 partner with us. They want to partner. They look to us.
7 They look for help. They look for assistance. They look
8 for coaching, teaching, mentoring. They want to come to our
9 schools. This is how we make them stronger, to handle their
10 issues internally as we work together to counter the
11 threats.

12 Senator Rosen: Thank you. I want to continue on this
13 line of questioning because we know there is also Chinese
14 surveillance technology in South America. And so I asked
15 you at the confirmation hearing about Chinese state
16 companies deploying that Smart City, Safe City technology in
17 Latin America, and, of course, you said countries do not
18 like that in the region.

19 So I am concerned about the national security
20 ramifications of this. I know I have a short time left but
21 can you provide us an update on the countries who are trying
22 to get rid of the technology implemented in their countries
23 by China, and what can we do to stop this widespread Chinese
24 surveillance?

25 General Richardson: So we do our best, I mean, not

1 just the DoD but also Department of State, as we
2 consistently work with them, my senior defense officials and
3 my senior cooperation officials that are downrange, that are
4 actually embedded in the embassies and working with our
5 partner nations to advise them about the technology, the
6 surveillance technology, a back door of getting into the
7 defense networks and things like that. Certainly the
8 possibility of 5G, and if nations get 5G then our inability
9 to be able to continue to work with them because of that
10 cyber threat.

11 Senator Rosen: Thank you. I want to kind of keep on
12 the cyber threat, and I move over to General VanHerck, about
13 missile defense cybersecurity. As MDA works to rapidly
14 deploy missile defense systems to stay ahead of threats I am
15 concerned that we might not be taking potential cyber
16 vulnerabilities seriously enough before fielding new
17 systems.

18 So in the 2019 Missile Defense Review, software is
19 mentioned only once. This is a key way hackers get in.
20 Even more alarming, GAO's May 2021 report highlights that
21 none of MDA's 17 operational cybersecurity tests planned for
22 fiscal year 2020 were conducted, and that cybersecurity
23 testing since 2017 has revealed vulnerabilities.

24 I will take my answer off the record, but I would just
25 like to know what steps NORAD is taking to address the

1 cybersecurity vulnerabilities.

2 I see my time is up so I will yield to my question. I
3 will take it for the record. Thank you. Thank you both,
4 Generals.

5 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Rosen.

6 Senator Tuberville, please.

7 Senator Tuberville: Good morning. Save the best for
8 last. I am glad to see you all.

9 General VanHerck, we are hearing Title 42 is going to
10 expire March the 30th. Are we prepared for it?

11 General VanHerck: I would defer to DHS. That is their
12 mission. We are actively planning, based on the request of
13 DHS. I do not have a task to do that at this time, but I
14 understand the Department is working through that with DHS.

15 Senator Tuberville: One of my favorite movies is, I
16 think, We Were Soldiers. Mel Gibson played Colonel Hal
17 Moore, who was a friend of mine a few years ago and has
18 since passed away. In that movie they are getting run over,
19 and the code was "broken arrow." In other words, they are
20 up there on top of us.

21 I saw a Facebook page this morning from Border Patrol,
22 hollering "broken arrow." We have got huge problems, and I
23 know we have got huge problems all over the world but it
24 does not seem like we are addressing this enough. And we
25 are going to have to sooner or later, because it is really

1 going to affect, and it is affecting our country as we
2 speak, with the drugs and all that. But I just wanted to
3 bring that up.

4 Given your 3,200 hours of flight time, you have flown
5 about everything, I guess. Is there anything you have not
6 flown?

7 General VanHerck: There is plenty. I have not flown
8 what General Richardson flies -- helicopters.

9 Senator Tuberville: A former Thunderbird squadron
10 commander, JV Venable, recently wrote that a fighter pilot
11 needs at least 200 hours a year or 4 sorties a week. In
12 coaching we call that practice. But the Air Force and Navy
13 flight hours have fallen to historic lows. Is that
14 concerning?

15 General VanHerck: From a readiness perspective, from
16 somebody who receives forces from the service, it is
17 concerning to ensure that every force that we receive is
18 ready to execute the missions that I am tasked to do. Best
19 answered by the services, specific to their actual training,
20 but it would be concerning if the trend continues to drop on
21 the flight hours.

22 Senator Tuberville: Thank you.

23 Mr. Chairman, I would like to submit Mr. Venable's
24 report on Air Force readiness and a Wall Street Journal
25 article that references his assessment, for the record,

1 please.

2 Chairman Reed: Without objection.

3 [The information follows:]

4 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 Senator Tuberville: General Richardson, last week I
2 met with the Colombian ambassador. Good guy. They are huge
3 allies. What inroads have you made down there, what
4 relationships have you made, because we have got, even from
5 my state we have got a lot of input down in what goes on in
6 Colombia, you know, with their business dealings, minerals,
7 those things. What have you seen from Colombia?

8 General Richardson: Our number one security partner,
9 and I look to them as like a key linchpin to the security
10 and the stability of the region, quite honestly.

11 It is really hard in this AOR to take a snapshot in
12 time of a country, but if you look for when they, in 1999,
13 and where they were then to where they are now, it is just
14 really tremendous. I have the chief of defense, General
15 Navarro, visiting on Monday. We had our staff talks,
16 SOUTHCOM, Colombia, staff talks in January. That was the
17 first country I visited in the AOR when I came into command
18 of SOUTHCOM.

19 So our relationship is excellent. It is strong. We
20 share information. We are constantly communicating. Again,
21 it is coaching, teaching, mentoring. I look at our
22 partners. I mean, they are there on the ground. They see
23 the threats. They are dealing with the threats every day.
24 We have to have those good relationships with them in order
25 to increase our domain awareness, to make up for what I do

1 not have in domain awareness and ISR and things like that.
2 But the partnership gets you the trust and the access and
3 the presence with your partner nation.

4 Senator Tuberville: It is obviously going to be a big
5 key for us in your AOR. But thanks to you all. I will cut
6 my time short. I yield.

7 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator
8 Tuberville.

9 Senator Kelly, please.

10 Senator Kelly: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and General
11 VanHerck and General Richardson, thank you for being here
12 today.

13 Yesterday I held a hearing in this committee's panel on
14 emerging threats, to focus on how our military can work with
15 our partner nations to improve security conditions in our
16 hemisphere that, in turn, impact the U.S. border and our
17 national security.

18 Throughout South and Central America, criminal
19 elements, China and Russia, are seeking to destabilize the
20 region for their own gain. This is a national security
21 challenge, and we need to treat it as a national security
22 challenge.

23 With that context in mind, I would like to touch on
24 NORTHCOM's, first, NORTHCOM's mission at the southwest
25 border. The National Guard plays a critical role in this

1 mission, providing much-needed relief to overstretched
2 Border Patrol agents and local law enforcement. I have been
3 to the border many times and I stay in close contact with
4 local elected leaders and law enforcement. I have also
5 delivered additional Federal resources. And the Assistant
6 Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Hemispheric
7 Affairs committed to me earlier this year that National
8 Guard troops would be well resourced during these missions.

9 So General VanHerck, in your view is the National
10 Guard's border mission properly resourced to significantly
11 assist in addressing the crisis at the border?

12 General VanHerck: Senator, first I share your
13 assessment of the national security imperative, the
14 challenge for us, with what is going on at the border.

15 The National Guard forces that are working for us on a
16 Title 10 status are not only resourced by DoD but they are
17 provided resources by DHS. And my assessment is for the
18 most part they are resourced to where they need to be. They
19 could have additional resources for observation, detection,
20 and monitoring of those kinds of things from DHS.

21 I think long-term this is not an enduring mission of
22 the Department of Defense. We need to fully fund and
23 resource DHS to do their mission, and the DoD should be used
24 in extremis times for support on the border mission.

25 I would like to just make sure that our mission is

1 understood. We are not there enforcing the laws that DHS
2 can do. We are supporting them to free up capacity so they
3 can do that mission, and we provide support -- detection and
4 monitoring, aviation support to help them, and also the
5 intel analysis.

6 Senator Kelly: Until DHS is fully resourced to do this
7 let's make sure that the Guard and Reserve have the
8 resources they need in the interim there.

9 General, are you in regular communication with CBP,
10 with Customs and Border Protection, and local law
11 enforcement partners on this issue?

12 General VanHerck: Me, personally, yes. Not daily or
13 anything like that. I have been to the border multiple
14 times. I was at the border last month, as well, and met
15 with both the Customs and Border Patrol agents and
16 discussed. We had eight in the room as well. I visited in
17 your state as well, in Nogales, and have been to the border.
18 So we do that. I have multiple liaisons from 40 government
19 agencies that work in my headquarters, to include from DHS
20 and the border.

21 Senator Kelly: Well, that is good to hear. You know,
22 this is a comprehensive and challenging problem, and we need
23 to all have all agencies working together to try to deal
24 with this crisis.

25 General Richardson, in your posture statement you

1 mention the insecurity and instability that has been
2 exacerbated by COVID-19. You know, we know that
3 transnational criminal organizations routinely exploit
4 poverty and stability and corruption to gain political and
5 criminal power. This is bad for stability, it is bad for
6 our partners who are trying to sustain democratic societies,
7 and it is bad for our own interests.

8 When we spoke earlier this week you specifically
9 mentioned that criminal organizations are using the
10 instability brought about by the economic impacts of COVID-
11 19 to create a wedge that Russia and China are taking
12 advantage of. Can you elaborate on the relationship between
13 Russia, China, and criminal organizations in the region, and
14 how does the instability caused by criminal groups and
15 opportunism of countries like China allow them to expand
16 their reach?

17 General Richardson: So overall, Senator, I just look
18 at the insecurity and instability, the cycle of vicious
19 threats, this wedge that the TCOs can create, which allows
20 our competitors, you know, the PRC and Russia, to flourish
21 and look like the heroes of the day, right, when they come
22 in with their projects and their money or equipment and
23 capability and things like that. And as we talked about as
24 well, the Chinese money launderers that take the money from
25 these TCOs. When these TCOs have all this cash, huge, \$310

1 billion a year annual revenue, and move it back and turn it
2 around into goods that they send back for the TCOs to be
3 able to sell. And it is all cleaned, cleaned money if you
4 will.

5 You know, this is not just a DoD or a DHS. We also
6 have to, I think, get after this money, in terms of what our
7 whole-of-government approach is to follow the money and then
8 be able to crack down. But I know that it is very
9 difficult. These are complex cases that Treasury and
10 Justice have to deal with. But until, I think, we get after
11 that specific problem, we cannot interdict our way out of
12 this. We are not going to be able to do that. We have got
13 to go after and follow the money.

14 Senator Kelly: Well, I want to thank you for the
15 comprehensive answers from our phone call the other day that
16 your staff sent over. I really appreciate that, and those
17 were really helpful. I also want to make sure that you have
18 the resources that you need to tackle this challenge, so I
19 am interested to see what the President's budget looks like
20 for SOUTHCOM, and NORTHCOM as well.

21 And since I am over, thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I
22 have some additional questions for the record.

23 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator Kelly, and
24 let me thank you, General VanHerck and General Richardson
25 for your thoughtful and very, very responsive testimony.

1 At this juncture I will adjourn the open hearing, and
2 we will reconvene at 11:45, in approximately 15 minutes, in
3 SVC-217, for a closed session.

4 Thank you very much.

5 [Whereupon, at 11:30 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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