

Stenographic Transcript
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 IN REVIEW OF
THE DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST FOR FISCAL YEAR
2024 AND THE FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM

Thursday, March 23, 2023

Washington, D.C.

ALDERSON COURT REPORTING
1111 14TH STREET NW
SUITE 1050
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005
(202) 289-2260
www.aldersonreporting.com

1 HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON THE POSTURE OF UNITED STATES
2 NORTHERN COMMAND AND UNITED STATES SOUTHERN COMMAND IN
3 REVIEW OF THE DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST FOR FISCAL YEAR
4 2024 AND THE FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM

5
6 Thursday, March 23, 2023

7
8 U.S. Senate

9 Committee on Armed Services

10 Washington, D.C.

11
12 The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:30 a.m. in
13 Room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Jack Reed,
14 chairman of the committee, presiding.

15 Committee Members Present: Senators Reed [presiding],
16 Shaheen, Gillibrand, Blumenthal, Hirono, Kaine, King,
17 Warren, Peters, Manchin, Rosen, Kelly, Wicker, Fischer,
18 Cotton, Rounds, Ernst, Sullivan, Cramer, Scott, Tuberville,
19 Mullin, Budd, and Schmitt.

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

3 Chairman Reed: I would like to call the Committee to
4 order. As an initial point of business, since a quorum is
5 now present I ask the Committee to consider 3,059 pending
6 military nominations. All of these nominations have been
7 before the Committee the required length of time.

8 Is there a motion to favorably report --

9 Senator Wicker: So moved.

10 Chairman Reed: Is there a second?

11 Senator Shaheen: Second.

12 Chairman Reed: All in favor say aye.

13 [Chorus of ayes.]

14 Chairman Reed: The motion carries. Thank you very
15 much.

16 Good morning. The committee meets today to receive
17 testimony from General Glen VanHerck, Commander of United
18 States Northern Command and North American Aerospace Defense
19 Command, or NORAD, and General Laura Richardson, Commander
20 of United States Southern Command. I would note that this
21 is General VanHerck's last appearance before the committee
22 in his current role. General, I would like to express my
23 profound appreciation for your decades of exceptional
24 service to the nation and the Air Force, including your
25 outstanding leadership of our NORTHCOM forces. Thank you,

1 sir, very much.

2 On behalf of the committee, I would also thank the
3 women and men who serve under your respective commands for
4 their selfless service to the nation.

5 The global threats to the United States are edging
6 closer and closer to home. The 2022 National Defense
7 Strategy identifies one of the Defense Department's top
8 priorities as "Defending the homeland, paced to the growing
9 multi-domain threat posed by the People's Republic of
10 China." General VanHerck, your command is responsible for
11 this homeland defense mission. To be successful, NORTHCOM
12 will need to re-evaluate its assumptions and plans against
13 the PRC's growing capabilities to threaten us territorially,
14 as well as in cyberspace and space. I understand NORTHCOM
15 has been working to develop a new Homeland Defense Policy
16 Guidance to meet this challenge, and I would ask for an
17 update on its status and how it would transform the homeland
18 defense plans of the Department.

19 The recent shoot-downs of a Chinese surveillance
20 balloon and three other unidentified aerial phenomena in our
21 airspace have raised concerns that we may have an "awareness
22 gap" that needs to be resolved. America's skies and seas
23 must be secure to protect our citizens, and the Department
24 must pursue technologies that provide 'forward detection' to
25 buy decision time for decision-makers.

1 Relatedly, Congress is considering auctioning the "S"
2 band spectrum, which is the spectrum in which NORTHCOM
3 radars operate for early warning around the continental
4 United States, for missile defense on the ground in Alaska,
5 and for maritime domain awareness with our AEGIS weapons
6 system. General VanHerck, the committee would like to know
7 the impact of curtailing or losing this spectrum with regard
8 to your operations.

9 Regionally, NORTHCOM provides support to U.S. law
10 enforcement to counter cartels engaged in drug smuggling,
11 human trafficking, and money laundering across the southwest
12 border. General VanHerck, I am interested to know more
13 about your efforts to build the capabilities of the security
14 forces in Mexico and the Bahamas to address these regional
15 threats, and your recommendations for strengthening those
16 efforts.

17 Turning to Southern Command, General Richardson, your
18 command faces growing challenges from China and Russia in
19 Latin America. The political and economic instability in
20 the region presents a situation that our adversaries are
21 seeking to exploit to increase their own influence. China,
22 in particular, is expanding its presence in the region,
23 primarily through acquisitions and investments in
24 strategically critical locations like Panama. And,
25 reflecting the growing influence Moscow has exerted in the

1 region, most South American countries have been non-
2 committal on Russia's war in Ukraine.

3 A critical task for SOUTHCOM is to find ways to counter
4 China and Russia's malign, hybrid activities. This
5 challenge includes addressing sources of insecurity among
6 our partners that our adversaries seek to exploit. It is
7 also important to strengthen the capabilities of U.S.
8 partners' security forces, including by building defense
9 institutional capabilities that adhere to the rule of law
10 and respect human rights.

11 General Richardson, I am interested in your assessment
12 of the challenge from near-peer competitors in the SOUTHCOM
13 area, and how we might work strategically with our partners
14 in the region to build resilience against these activities.

15 SOUTHCOM, like NORTHCOM, continues to work closely with
16 the U.S. government interagency to support counternarcotic
17 and counter-transnational criminal organization missions. A
18 critical component of this effort has been the Joint
19 Interagency Task Force-South, which provides a model for the
20 Defense Department to work with civilian agencies and
21 partner nations to build domain awareness and enhance
22 interdiction capabilities.

23 To help compensate for its limited resources, SOUTHCOM
24 has sought to leverage "non-traditional" approaches, such as
25 artificial intelligence and machine learning, to serve as a

1 testbed for new tactics and operational concepts. General
2 Richardson, I would like to know how the Department is
3 taking advantage of the SOUTHCOM area as a valuable
4 environment for innovative experimentation.

5 Thank you, again, to our witnesses. I look forward to
6 your testimonies.

7 And as a reminder for my colleagues, there will be a
8 closed session immediately following this hearing in Room
9 SVC-217.

10 Let me now turn it over to the Ranking Member, Senator
11 Wicker.

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

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

3 Senator Wicker: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I also
4 want to thank our witnesses for being here and also for
5 their gracious allocation of time to visit with us before
6 the hearing.

7 We rightly focus a lot of attention abroad, on Russia's
8 unprovoked invasion of Ukraine, the Chinese Communist
9 Party's constant march to dominance in the Pacific. But the
10 dangers we face are not limited to areas like Ukraine and
11 the Pacific. We also face dangers in our own neighborhood.

12 General VanHerck has been a frequent visitor here
13 recently, and I appreciate his candid briefings on the
14 Chinese surveillance balloon that violated our sovereignty
15 earlier this year.

16 Unfortunately, Secretary of Defense Austin has declined
17 to answer the simple questions Senator Rubio and I sent
18 regarding the Department of Defense's apparently inaction
19 during the earliest days of the balloon's excursion. In
20 response to the letter Senator Rubio and I sent with
21 questions, we received a very dismissive response from Under
22 Secretary Colin Kahl, which said that all of our questions
23 had already been answered. In fact, they were not answered
24 and have not been answered by the Secretary. I expect
25 General VanHerck will get some questions about that today,

1 and I am grateful for his help in understanding what went
2 wrong and how we can fix it.

3 The Chinese surveillance balloon is the most public
4 example of our homeland defense gaps, but it is not the only
5 one. Keeping in mind Putin's threats against our homeland
6 during the Ukraine war and China's threats of a military
7 conflict with the United States over Taiwan, I hope General
8 VanHerck will explain his requirements for keeping the
9 American people safe.

10 I am also concerned about the situation on both sides
11 of our southwest border. President Biden's lax border
12 policies have created a major opportunity for the Mexican
13 criminal cartels and an unprecedented humanitarian and
14 security crisis. In 2022, more than 70,000 Americans died
15 of opioid overdoses, largely from Mexican-produced fentanyl.
16 Since President Biden took office, more than 1.2 million
17 illegal migrants have evaded law enforcement and entered our
18 country. Most recently, the cartels murdered two American
19 citizens.

20 This simply cannot continue and does not have to
21 continue. Given the scale of the current crisis, I hope our
22 witnesses could comment on ways in which the southwest
23 border support mission could be made more effective. I
24 would also like to know whether there is anything Congress
25 can do to work more effectively with the Mexican government

1 to counter the cartels.

2 We also have challenges further south, in Central and
3 South America. The implications of the growing Chinese
4 threat continue to concern us. The Chinese Communist Party
5 is following a well-known playbook on SOUTHCOM. It is
6 aggressively using predatory economic and diplomatic
7 practices to bully countries while it sets conditions to
8 build up the PRC military presence, gather intelligence, and
9 limit U.S. access and influence. As General Richardson has
10 stated before, proximity matters. We should all be
11 concerned by what China is doing in the Southern Hemisphere
12 and what it means for the stability of our partners and our
13 national security.

14 Despite the significant and growing security threats in
15 that region, I am troubled to see that SOUTHCOM consistently
16 faces a mismatch between its requirements and its resources.
17 I look forward to General Richardson's candid assessment of
18 SOUTHCOM's most pressing resource and capability shortfalls.
19 I hope to understand how these shortfalls impact our troops'
20 ability to accomplish the mission and defend our nation. I
21 would also like to hear how the Office of Strategic Capital
22 might be used to help achieve military objectives at a lower
23 cost.

24 With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back and thank our
25 witnesses.

1 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much Senator Wicker.

2 Now let me recognize General VanHerck. Sir?

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

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

4 General VanHerck: Chairman Reed, Ranking Member
5 Wicker, and distinguished members of the committee, thank
6 you for the opportunity to appear today and represent the
7 men and women of the United States Northern Command and
8 North American Aerospace Defense Command.

9 Today's strategic environment is the most complicated
10 and potentially dangerous in my more than 35 years of
11 service. While the United States military remains the most
12 powerful and professional force in history, we have to
13 account for the recent erosion of military advantage and
14 take actions now to invest in modernization, implement
15 innovative processes, prioritize our personnel and civilian
16 hiring practices, and increase agile decision-making at all
17 levels.

18 Our competitors' actions and ambitions are global and
19 all-domain in nature. It is also clear that they have the
20 capability and intent to hold our homeland at risk above and
21 below the nuclear threshold and in multiple domains to
22 achieve their strategic objectives. The PRC and Russia have
23 fielded cruise missiles, delivery platforms, and non-kinetic
24 capabilities to hold at risk critical infrastructure of
25 military and civilian in the United States and Canada.

1 Those capabilities allow them to strike with limited warning
2 and significant consequences. Limited warning due to a lack
3 of all-domain awareness inherently limits the decision space
4 and options available to our national leaders which
5 increases the risk of miscalculation and escalation.

6 To address today's strategic environment, for nearly 3
7 years I have focused on four strategic priorities: domain
8 awareness, information dominance, decision superiority, and
9 finally, global integration. Those priorities are critical
10 to successfully defending the homeland and to providing our
11 national leaders with the only thing I can never give them
12 enough of, and that is time -- time to create deterrence
13 options, and if required, defend and defeat options.

14 While we have work to do, there has been some notable
15 progress towards these key priorities. I am grateful to the
16 Department and Congress for your support of the over-the-
17 horizon radars that will significantly improve air,
18 maritime, and space domain awareness and the ability to
19 detect and track threats well before they reach North
20 America. But we need to go faster. An acquisition plan
21 based on more than a decade is too long.

22 Both the Department of Defense and the Canadian
23 Department of National Defense have committed to funding
24 over-the-horizon radar capabilities, and I respectfully urge
25 both governments to ensure this vital and proven capability

1 is fielded as quickly as possible. Likewise, Space Force's
2 investment in advanced space-based warning capabilities and
3 the Navy's commitment to modernizing the Integrated Undersea
4 Surveillance System are vital to my homeland defense
5 mission. Yet again, we cannot wait a decade or longer to
6 field these new capabilities.

7 Our commands need your continued support to outpace the
8 rapid gains made by our competitors. Continued progress
9 will require the Department and Congress to accept some risk
10 by prioritizing modernization and innovation over
11 maintaining obsolete platforms, organizations, and
12 infrastructure, and occasionally accepting failure as part
13 of the process.

14 The generational challenges ahead of us require the
15 best minds and expertise we can find, and the Department
16 must also invest accordingly in civilian and military
17 personnel recruiting, hiring, and retention. And we must
18 continue to build an enormous advantage that comes through
19 our international alliances and partnerships.

20 I believe that the greatest risk for the United States
21 stems from an inability to change at the pace required by
22 the strategic environment we are operating in. Homeland
23 defense must be recognized as essential to contingency plans
24 at home and for power projection abroad, and it is vital
25 that all military planning account for that reality. In an

1 era of incredible innovation and technological achievement,
2 inflexible, outdated processes are a greater impediment to
3 success than many of our competitors' advancements.

4 Finally, I would like to comment on the incursion of
5 the PRC high-altitude balloon into our airspace. The PRC
6 HAB was obviously a significant event that shined light on
7 the PRC's brazen intelligence collection against the United
8 States and Canada. It was the first time NORTHCOM conducted
9 an engagement over United States in our history. From this
10 event, I commit to you that we have already generated
11 critical lessons learned, and I can guarantee that we are
12 doing whatever is necessary to keep our country and North
13 America safe.

14 On behalf of all the soldiers, sailors, airmen,
15 Marines, Guardians, and civilians of NORTHCOM and NORAD, I
16 would like to thank the committee for your steadfast
17 support, and I look forward to your questions.

18 [The prepared statement of General VanHerck follows:]
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

1 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, General VanHerck.
2 General Richardson, please.

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

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

3 General Richardson: Chairman Reed, Ranking Member
4 Wicker, and distinguished members of the committee, thank
5 you for the opportunity to appear before you with General
6 VanHerck. I am honored to represent the men and women of
7 U.S. Southern Command to discuss the challenges we share
8 with our neighbors in Latin America and the Caribbean.

9 As stated in the National Security Strategy, "No region
10 impacts the United States more directly than the Western
11 Hemisphere." Last year I testified before this committee
12 and stated, "This region, our shared neighborhood, is under
13 assault from a host of cross-cutting, trans-boundary
14 challenges that directly threaten our homeland." This is
15 still true today, and is a call to action.

16 In the last year I have spent time in the region,
17 meeting with leaders to better understand these challenges
18 and the threat they pose to our mutual interests. The world
19 is at an inflection point.

20 Our partners in the Western Hemisphere, with whom we
21 are bonded by trade, shared values, democratic traditions,
22 and family ties, are feeling the impacts of external
23 interference and coercion. The People's Republic of China,
24 our pacing challenge, continues to expand its economic,
25 diplomatic, technological, informational, and military

1 influence in Latin America and the Caribbean. The PRC has
2 the capability and intent to eschew international norms,
3 advance the brand of authoritarianism, and amass power and
4 influence at the expense of these democracies.

5 The PRC has expanded its ability to extract resources,
6 and gets 36 percent of its food imports from the region and
7 75 percent of its lithium from South America. The PRC also
8 leads the hemisphere in illegal, unregulated, unreported
9 fishing, raiding the fish of coastal countries, costing a
10 profit loss of about \$3 billion.

11 The PRC has also established ports in multiple
12 countries, manipulated governments through predatory
13 investment practices, and built potential dual-use space
14 facilities, the most space facilities in any combatant
15 command region.

16 Russia, an acute threat, bolsters authoritarian regimes
17 in Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela, and they continue its
18 extensive disinformation campaign and has media agreements
19 with 11 countries in the region. There are over 30 million
20 followers of Russia Today en Español and Sputnik Mundo.
21 These activities undermine democracies and challenge our
22 credibility.

23 Both China and Russia exploit the presence of
24 transnational criminal organizations and amplify their
25 destabilizing impacts on democratic governments. TCOs

1 spread violence and corruption throughout the region and
2 beyond. Their fentanyl-laced cocaine contributes to the
3 deaths of Americans in cities and towns across the country.

4 The good news is by working with our very willing parts
5 this leads to the best defense. We must use all available
6 levers to strengthen our partnerships with the 28 like-
7 minded democracies in the region who understand the power of
8 working together to counter these shared threats. Our
9 partners look to us to lead in the hemisphere. We have an
10 obligation to meet them where they are and continue to
11 aggressively address our common security challenges.

12 We must continue to maximize the effectiveness of
13 important tools like security cooperation programs to train
14 and equip our partner militaries and security forces;
15 conduct multilateral exercises; and build interoperability,
16 and increase the State Department's international military,
17 education, and training, foreign military sales programs to
18 educate, train, and build capacity that our partners put to
19 immediate use to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with us.

20 As the National Defense Strategy stages, the U.S.
21 derives immense benefits from a stable, peaceful, and
22 democratic Western Hemisphere that reduces security threats
23 to the homeland. USSOUTHCOM is putting integrated
24 deterrence into action every day, using innovative methods
25 to work seamlessly across all domains with the other

1 combatant commands, the Joint Force, allies and partners,
2 Congress, the U.S. interagency, NGOs, and the private sector
3 to help build a hemisphere that is free, secure, and
4 prosperous for our generation and generations to come. I
5 call this Team Democracy, and we need to field a resourced
6 team.

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

8 [The prepared statement of General Richardson follows:]

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

1 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, General
2 Richardson.

3 General VanHerck, as you know, Congress is considering
4 disposing of the S-band or auctioning parts of it to the
5 commercial sector. And I want to personally commend Senator
6 Rounds and Senator King for the very effective work they
7 have done in making sure the military and the Department of
8 Defense has an opportunity to look at this.

9 But this is a spectrum in which your early warning
10 system is there, your missile defense system, the Aegis
11 system, which you use for defense. Could you tell the
12 committee what the impact of curtailing, selling, or
13 compromising this spectrum would have on your operations?

14 General VanHerck: Chairman, absolutely. I am
15 concerned about the potential national security impacts of
16 auctioning or selling off that spectrum. It is my
17 assessment there will be impacts, as you pointed out, to our
18 domain awareness capabilities. What I think is good is a
19 study that we understand the national security impacts
20 before we make any decisions on auctioning or selling off
21 any spectrum.

22 Chairman Reed: Thank you, sir. I understand there is
23 a study ongoing with the support of the Secretary of Defense
24 and the Secretary of Commerce. Are you participating in
25 that?

1 General VanHerck: I have not been asked to participate
2 directly in that. I would welcome the opportunity to
3 discuss impacts to homeland defense.

4 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, sir.

5 General Richardson, you have indicated the growing
6 competition with China and Russia in South America and
7 Central America. China is using economic leverage at ports
8 and other infrastructure. They are trying to introduce 5G
9 telecommunications. They have set up a network of space
10 tracking stations which are probably doing more than space
11 tracking. Russia is acting through proxies like Venezuela,
12 Nicaragua, and Cuba, and as you pointed out and which I
13 think comes as an interesting surprise to many of us,
14 institutional investors very active with the media, with
15 Sputnik Mundo and RT en Español.

16 Do you have the resources to counter these efforts?

17 General Richardson: Thank you, Senator. I could use
18 additional resources in order to counter. We can do a lot
19 more in this region and a little goes a long way with our
20 partners. This region is fraught with critical
21 infrastructure by the PRC that has been invested in. As you
22 aid, Senator, the deepwater ports, space,
23 telecommunications, Safe City/Smart City, which is really
24 surveillance of the populations, and things like that.

25 And so with the disinformation, I mean, we play by the

1 rules. We have rules to follow. We have the rule of law
2 that we follow in the United States, and our adversaries do
3 not follow any laws, and they do not play by the rules. So
4 the answer is yes, Senator.

5 Chairman Reed: One of the areas that I think you are
6 probably deficient in is ISR, and that requires additional
7 equipment and also might be an opportunity to test
8 autonomous vehicles. Is that something that you are
9 suggesting to the leadership?

10 General Richardson: Absolutely. This region and in
11 the SOUTHCOM AOR, where our adversaries might not be
12 watching so closely, is to be able to test in a real-world
13 mission the innovation, the technology, and things like
14 that. We work with our partners. They are very much
15 involved with wanting to advance their ability to see and
16 have domain awareness, just like us at SOUTHCOM.

17 If we can see more and spot this malign activity,
18 expose the malign activity, we are able to better counteract
19 the adversaries and that malign activity in the region.

20 Chairman Reed: Thank you.

21 General VanHerck, the threats to the homeland have
22 changed dramatically and suddenly. The models we used, the
23 systems we used in the Cold War, and in the interim between
24 the Cold War and the present situation, do not seem to be
25 applicable, with hypersonics, with long-range precision

1 cruise missiles, with a host of different threats to the
2 United States. And you are looking at sort of the
3 assumptions and the plans that we have had and tried to
4 reconstruct for this new threat, new world.

5 How are we doing in terms of getting a new plan in
6 place and also new weapon systems? And you commented that
7 one of our problems is speed, and that is a function of not
8 only getting new equipment in place but putting aside legacy
9 equipment. Can you just comment, General, on those points?

10 General VanHerck: Chairman, yes. So after 2 years I
11 got policy on what to defend. I cannot go into that in this
12 forum. But the task that came back to me was to develop a
13 plan on that defense-critical infrastructure. It is inside
14 the Department of Defense critical infrastructure. I have
15 provided that back to the Department on what I recommend.

16 Where we are now is further assessment on my
17 recommendations. I provided a list of options from the
18 status quo to also including future types of systems. I
19 think the future of homeland defense is vastly different
20 than what we see today. It is likely including autonomous
21 platforms, airborne and maritime platforms, unmanned
22 platforms with domain awareness sensors, and effectors that
23 are kinetic and non-kinetic.

24 We also need to take those over-the-horizon radar
25 capabilities that I discussed and take that data and

1 information and fuse it into an integrated picture, a
2 globally integrated picture that allows us to see, globally,
3 threats before they become threats here in the homeland, and
4 tie that to an integrated air and missile defense system and
5 also into effectors, which are non-kinetic and also kinetic.

6 I see the future likely being much less kinetic. There
7 will be some areas that we should defend kinetically that
8 could bring us to our knees, but also non-kinetic such as
9 deception, denial, and the use of the electromagnetic
10 spectrum.

11 Finally, that policy needs to expand beyond defense.
12 Those discussions are ongoing within the Department and the
13 interagency and the Security Council, and I look forward to
14 hearing back on that.

15 What I would just point out -- sorry my time is up --
16 but much of the critical infrastructure that I defend, and
17 to ensure that we power project from the homeland, is not
18 solely held inside the Department or even Federal entities.
19 It relies on commercial entities, states, municipalities,
20 and we need to ensure that is part of the discussion.

21 Chairman Reed: Thank you, sir.

22 Senator Wicker, please.

23 Senator Wicker: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

24 First of all I have a unanimous consent request. I
25 mentioned in my opening statement that Senator Rubio and I

1 sent a letter to the Secretary of Defense and received a
2 very dismissive, non-answer from Under Secretary Colin Kahl.
3 I would like to ask unanimous consent to insert those two
4 letters into the record at this point.

5 Chairman Reed: Without objection, so ordered.

6 [The information follows:]

7 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

1 Senator Wicker: Thank you very much.

2 Now General VanHerck, with regard to these letters, I
3 have received quite a bit of information from talking to you
4 about this balloon incident, and you mentioned it in your
5 statement, so let me just go through some quick questions so
6 we can understand who knew what about the Chinese balloon.

7 You first learned about this on January 28 of this
8 year. Is that correct?

9 General VanHerck: Senator, I learned about it on
10 January 27th. We first detected it by radar, my sensors, on
11 January 28th, in the vicinity of St. Matthew Island, Alaska.

12 Senator Wicker: Okay. And that is United States
13 territory, right?

14 General VanHerck: That is correct, sir.

15 Senator Wicker: And you notified your chain of command
16 on that day, January 28, right?

17 General VanHerck: I had a conversation on the evening
18 of the 27th with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
19 about my plan to intercept and identify and make an
20 assessment, which we did on the 28th of January.

21 Senator Wicker: And you sent that notification to
22 Secretary of Defense Austin, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of
23 Staff General Milley, via classified email. Correct?

24 General VanHerck: I sent it to the Chairman of the
25 Joint Chiefs of Staff and to Secretary Austin's military

1 assistant. I am assuming that the military assistant passed
2 it to the Secretary.

3 Senator Wicker: Okay. And you still are not certain
4 at what point President Biden or Secretary Austin were made
5 aware of the balloon. Is that right?

6 General VanHerck: I do not know when the President was
7 made aware.

8 Senator Wicker: Fine. And when you confirmed the
9 balloon's existence on January 28, you tasked NORTHCOM, your
10 command, with preparing options to counter the balloon.
11 That is correct also?

12 General VanHerck: I tasked my NORAD team to develop
13 options. And Senator, what I would point out is I have
14 options every single day to defend our homeland. In this
15 case, the balloon did not meet the requirement or the
16 authority for me to engage it because it was not
17 demonstrating hostile intent or committing a hostile act.
18 Hostile intent would be maneuvering to an offensive
19 advantage on a platform, an airplane, or shooting missiles
20 or weapons would be a hostile act.

21 Senator Wicker: And you prepared options -- you asked
22 NORAD to prepare options in that instance.

23 General VanHerck: I directed my team to be ready with
24 options, just as we are every day. That is correct.

25 Senator Wicker: Okay. And had the Secretary of

1 Defense requested options for shooting down the balloon on
2 January 28, while the balloon was still over Alaska, you
3 would have been prepared to provide him those options. Is
4 that correct?

5 General VanHerck: Senator, I am prepared every single
6 second of every day to defend our homeland. That is
7 correct.

8 Senator Wicker: And ultimately you did not get a
9 chance to provide those options to the Secretary until
10 February 1st. Is that correct?

11 General VanHerck: On February 1st at 0700 I was in
12 D.C., and that was the first time we had a discussion.

13 Senator Wicker: Okay. So there is January 28, 29, 30,
14 31, February 1st. So on the fifth day -- it is apparent you
15 took the right steps, but it is also clear that you received
16 no direction from the President of the United States or the
17 Secretary of Defense until the fifth day of this crisis, by
18 which point the balloon had traversed Alaska and Canada and
19 then reentered the United States.

20 So I would publicly call on the Secretary of Defense to
21 answer the questions which the Vice Chairman of the
22 Intelligence Committee and I have asked him.

23 You have already talked about kinetic and non-kinetic
24 dangers in case we are in a major war in China. Do we have
25 the capabilities you need to defend our homeland from a

1 kinetic or non-kinetic attack by Russia and China?

2 General VanHerck: Senator, what I would like to do is
3 talk about that in a closed session in detail. I have
4 concerns, as I have articulated for 3 years, about my
5 ability to provide threat warning and attack assessments
6 with the threats to our homeland. Why that is crucial is
7 threat warning and attack assessment are crucial for
8 continuity of government and our nuclear force posture.
9 That increases the risk of escalation and strategic
10 deterrence failure. Those are significant challenges for
11 me.

12 I also have concerns about the time it would take me to
13 set the theater in the AOR to meet potential threat
14 timelines from oversea threats.

15 Senator Wicker: Okay. And quickly -- we are being a
16 little lax on the time today -- if the border control agents
17 that we have now, and ICE personnel, employees of the U.S.
18 government, were allowed simply to do their statutory jobs
19 along the Texas-Mexico border, would we be in a much better
20 situation now, and are they being restrained from fully
21 enforcing the law as they have in the past?

22 General VanHerck: I would have to defer to Customs and
23 Border Protection and Border Patrol whether they are being
24 restrained or not. I do think that the best solution here
25 is to fully resource Homeland Security and their entities to

1 conduct their law enforcement mission for the laws of our
2 nation. I do not see this as an enduring DoD mission, long-
3 term. We are happy to supported, as directed, to each and
4 every day.

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

6 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator Wicker.

7 Senator Shaheen, please.

8 Senator Shaheen: Thank you both, General VanHerck and
9 General Richardson, for being here this morning and for your
10 service to the country.

11 I would like to start with asking both of you about
12 drug trafficking. And General Richardson, I am very
13 concerned, as I know you are, about drugs flowing into the
14 United States through Latin America. In 2022, illegal drugs
15 killed over 100,000 Americans, so this is a significant
16 threat to the country, and fentanyl and the access to
17 fentanyl has made it much worse. And while I recognize that
18 some of those precursor chemicals are not coming from Latin
19 America, too many of the drugs are.

20 And General VanHerck, I understood that we are also
21 seeing an increase in drug trafficking coming across the
22 northern border. Is that something that you have seen?

23 General VanHerck: Senator, I understand there is a
24 slight increase, along with migration, coming across the
25 north border as well, but ultimately I defer to Border

1 Patrol and Customs and Border Protection.

2 Senator Shaheen: Well, that is really the question I
3 wanted to ask both of you is how your commands are
4 coordinating with other U.S. interagency partners, and have
5 you seen any particular initiatives that have been
6 effective? General Richardson, I will start with you.

7 General Richardson: Well, thank you, Senator, and to
8 comment on the ability to be able to see and with domain
9 awareness, as the urgency is at an all-time high and the
10 drug flow is at an all-time high, my ability to see and my
11 allocated resources is at an all-time low. The P-8s that I
12 used to have provided the long dwell, being able to see the
13 capabilities that I have for vessels, for maritime flow of
14 counternarcotics mission is also degraded because of the
15 migration and the assets being needed for that.

16 But in terms of the capabilities that I have within my
17 own headquarters and Joint Interagency Task Force South as
18 well, I have a whole host of interagency and law
19 enforcement. We work together to provide that synergy and
20 sharing of information, so it is quick and immediate. And
21 then also our partner nations that are inside of JIATF South
22 as well, because our partner nations have been able to
23 participate in 76 percent of the interdictions and
24 disruptions of the counternarcotics flowing to the United
25 States.

1 Senator Shaheen: So if you were going to get all of
2 the resources that you need, do you have any estimate of
3 what that would mean, in terms of equipment, assets,
4 dollars?

5 General Richardson: I would say a little goes a long
6 way, as I have said before, and the ability to be able to
7 see. I have about 2 percent of the DoD ISR, which gets
8 after about 17 percent of my requirement. I do not need 100
9 percent, but I need a little bit more than the 2 percent, I
10 would say, Senator.

11 Senator Shaheen: And we had a hearing in the Foreign
12 Relations Committee yesterday with Secretary Blinken, and
13 one of the issues that was raised was the potential to
14 designate drug cartels in Latin America as foreign terrorist
15 organizations rather than just TCOs. Do you have any view
16 about what that might enable you to do differently? Would
17 that provide any other authorities to address drug
18 interdiction?

19 General Richardson: I think the more that we can do to
20 get after this problem with the transnational criminal
21 organizations, the better. I have 42 of the 40 most violent
22 cities in the world. The TCOs create that instability and
23 that insecurity within our partner nations, and that is what
24 they are dealing with every single day. That is at the top
25 of their lists.

1 I also am very concerned about the PRC and the long-
2 term strategic competition that we have with the PRC, but
3 what our partner nations are facing every single day are the
4 transnational criminal organizations and how much more
5 powerful they are getting, the ability to do the money
6 laundering around the globe, we have really got to get after
7 that.

8 Senator Shaheen: So I interpret that answer is a yes,
9 it might be helpful, that designation.

10 General Richardson: Yes, Senator.

11 Senator Shaheen: I am going to switch topics because I
12 am almost out of time. General VanHerck, what do you think
13 is the most significant threat to our security in the Arctic
14 Region?

15 General VanHerck: I think the most significant threat
16 is the growing Russia influence, the illegal influence, and
17 also the Chinese influence right on the back of that, as we
18 develop capabilities. I used the analogy last year, you
19 have got to be on the field to play the game, in a football
20 analogy, and we are in the locker room, still developing a
21 game plan. We need to develop additional capabilities.

22 I am encouraged that the Department and the services
23 have a strategy. We just have not funded those strategies.

24 Senator Shaheen: And if we entered the Law of the Sea
25 Treaty, would that give us any additional ability to address

1 the challenge there?

2 General VanHerck: I think it gives us more credibility
3 to sit at the table and have that discussion, and I would
4 absolutely support that.

5 Senator Shaheen: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

7 Senator Fischer, please.

8 Senator Fischer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you,
9 General VanHerck, for your many, many years of service to
10 this country. It is deeply respected and also appreciated.

11 On your unfunded priorities list you included several
12 requests for programs to strengthen domain awareness,
13 allowing us to better detect and also to track potential
14 threats. Can you describe in detail some of the
15 capabilities you have requested and why they are so vital
16 for your needs?

17 General VanHerck: Thanks, Senator. Absolutely. Over-
18 the-horizon radar capability acceleration would procure a
19 test asset -- it is \$55 million -- to go faster to give us
20 the capability rather than fielding capabilities in 8 to 10
21 years. Maybe we could shorten that to 4 to 5 years to
22 enable me to get after the hypersonics that I described
23 earlier, the cruise missiles, etc. By the way, I need
24 Canada to do the same thing. A fielding of a capability in
25 a decade from now is not where we need to be. So those are

1 some of the dollars there. There is \$55 million.

2 There is \$211 million in the nine long-range mobile
3 radars that would help me plug the gaps when we have radar
4 failures or to get after critical defense infrastructure if
5 tasked to do that. As we move around the country I can move
6 those radars to give me additional domain awareness.

7 That is a couple of examples.

8 Senator Fischer: Okay. Thank you. I know that
9 NORTHCOM is required to track all kinds of threats to the
10 homeland, from the Chinese spy balloons to hypersonics that
11 you mentioned. Do you have tools you need right now to be
12 able to defend against them, not just to track them but to
13 defend?

14 General VanHerck: Yes, so for the high-altitude
15 balloon I think we are in a good place for that. For
16 hypersonics and cruise missiles, hypersonics specifically,
17 the U.S. base forces proliferated low-earth orbit capability
18 in satellite constellation will get us there, along with the
19 HBTSS, the MDA is working on. But we cannot wait decades to
20 field these things. So any way that we can accelerate those
21 capabilities.

22 Let me give you an example. We are stuck in an
23 industrial age process for acquiring and we field things in
24 serial processes. In today's digital and information
25 environment we can virtually test, we can virtually and do

1 things in parallel. These are things we should do
2 differently to field capabilities faster.

3 I would also ask for your help here in Congress. When
4 we go faster, we may have some failures. Let us not take a
5 2-year investigation of those failures. Let us jump back on
6 the horse and ride and move forward. And we have to be as
7 transparent in the Department with Congress as possible and
8 make sure that you are part of the discussion.

9 Senator Fischer: We always learn from failures too.
10 In fact, in many cases we learn more.

11 General Richardson, you made the comment that you have
12 2 percent of the ISR right now in SOUTHCOM. How does that
13 lack of ISR limit your options as a commander?

14 General Richardson: So it does limit. I have got a
15 very large AOR when you look at Central America, South
16 America, the Caribbean as well, and all the counternarcotics
17 or the narcotics flow out of the region and the ability to
18 see malign activity and be able to expose it. And that is
19 really what we need the ISR and the domain awareness to
20 provide.

21 Senator Fischer: You do not necessarily need the very
22 high-tech 5-Gen ISR at this point in time for your AOR, do
23 you?

24 General Richardson: I need a little bit of that, but
25 some of the lower capable platforms work very well in this

1 region, and then the long-dwell duration works well.

2 Senator Fischer: So you would encourage us to look at
3 considering keeping those other platforms?

4 General Richardson: Well, as we talked about, Senator,
5 it is always trying to turn over and get the next wave of
6 technology, to be able to have that while keeping some
7 legacy going. But certainly we have some low-end type
8 things that we could utilize in the SOUTHCOM AOR.

9 Senator Fischer: Okay. Thank you. General VanHerck,
10 have you seen any advances or movements from China or Russia
11 in the Arctic lately?

12 General VanHerck: Absolutely, Senator. Russia has
13 modernized their fleet of icebreakers. They have modernized
14 their strategic defenses along there, their submarine
15 forces. China is sailing into the Arctic under the guise of
16 research vessels, and we know they are doing military
17 options, surveying the seabed. You have seen that recently
18 as Canada released their recovery of a Chinese buoy. Those
19 are all things that are ongoing in the Arctic right now.

20 Senator Fischer: And General Richardson, do you see
21 China presently working even harder to build access and
22 influence in Latin America?

23 General Richardson: Absolutely, Senator.

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

25 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Fischer.

1 Senator Kaine, please.

2 Senator Kaine: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to
3 our witnesses for your service.

4 General Richardson, I would like to start with you on
5 sort of this resource shortage issue that you have testified
6 to and other colleagues have asked you about. One of the
7 bits of testimony that I recall pretty vividly from last
8 year was when you were talking about SOUTHCOM's cyber
9 capacity. You have got partners in the region that have
10 cyber threats just like we do, and I think you testified
11 that the cyber capacity you have in SOUTHCOM is just what is
12 provided through your state partnerships with state Guard
13 units. Is that correct?

14 General Richardson: Yes. I have a small capability
15 within my headquarters, but we do rely a lot on the National
16 Guard State Partnership Program as well and their cyber
17 teams.

18 Senator Kaine: I think those are really good programs
19 but I was shocked to hear that you did not have a more
20 robust in-house capacity in addition to the partnerships
21 with our cyber teams from the National Guard.

22 One of the potent things that the United States can do
23 is joint exercises with other nations' militaries, and this
24 is something that we do and that China, for example, is not
25 yet doing in the Americas. Is it my understand that a

1 common exercise that you have been doing with Southern Cone
2 nations you are not able to do this year?

3 General Richardson: Right, and we have that on my
4 unfunded priority list. We really need to get down to the
5 Southern Cone. That area, tyranny of distance, Chile,
6 Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, all want to continue to do
7 exercises. So I want to be able to put that Southern Star
8 Exercise back into play. Our exercises bring together like
9 over 20 partner nations, and that is absolutely what the PRC
10 is not able to do is to convene all these countries to come
11 together and work through exercises.

12 Senator Kaine: And so this Southern Star Exercise has
13 been common in the past but you are not resourced currently
14 to be able to do that.

15 General Richardson: Correct, and I have put that
16 forward to put that exercise back on the plate so we are
17 able to do that.

18 Senator Kaine: Let me ask you about Colombia.
19 Colombia has been a very strong military partner of the
20 United States in recent years. It has been a success story.
21 Colombia participates in global peacekeeping exercises. I
22 have seen Colombian troops in the multinational force of
23 observers in the Sinai, and they do a lot of good work
24 together with the U.S. I think there were some concerns
25 after the Colombian elections last year about whether that

1 would continue.

2 Describe for us the mil-to-mil cooperation with
3 Colombia currently.

4 General Richardson: Our relationship with Colombia is
5 very, very strong and continues to be very strong. We have
6 not cancelled anything. All the exercises, all the military-
7 to-military cooperations is absolutely continuing, and that
8 relationship could not be any more stronger than it is now.

9 Senator Kaine: Have you met personally with President
10 Petro of Colombia?

11 General Richardson: Yes, Senator. Twice.

12 Senator Kaine: Thank you.

13 General VanHerck, you had some questions about the
14 Chinese balloon incident. I want to ask you questions about
15 the following week, when your mission was involved in taking
16 down some other unidentified or kind of not completely
17 described aerial assets. And they were generally described
18 as commercial or benign, but they were in civilian airspace,
19 so they were not completely, even if they were not hostile,
20 they were not completely benign if they are in commercial
21 airspace where they could pose challenges to civil aviation.

22 So talk a little bit about how things get into
23 commercial airspace without us being aware of them, and are
24 there rules of strategies we need to put in place to be more
25 careful about even benign assets in commercial airspace.

1 General VanHerck: Yeah, ultimately the airspace is the
2 Federal Aviation Administration. They do have policy and
3 regulation in place for objects that fly within the airspace
4 structure. If you are flying objects -- and I believe the
5 number is if it weighs more than four pounds it is required
6 to have an identification device. In the case of the three
7 unidentified objects you are talking about, the FAA was not
8 tracking, was not aware of those objects, and when we
9 assessed them they were assessed to be of a size and
10 potentially a safety threat to aviation hazards. So we did
11 not know exactly what they were.

12 I have talked to the acting FAA administrator about
13 being more aggressive of messaging the requirements and also
14 putting out and enforcing those requirements as well. Those
15 are not mine to do, but I will identify and respond to
16 anything that is in our airspace the we need to potentially
17 assess as a potential threat.

18 Senator Kaine: General VanHerck, you indicated that
19 the FAA was not tracking them. Did that mean that these
20 devices did not have the identifier that they are supposed
21 to have if they are in that band?

22 General VanHerck: I cannot confirm whether they had it
23 or not. We did not recover them, due to the locations that
24 they were. But my assessment would be it was likely they
25 did not have a device if the FAA was not tracking them.

1 Senator Kaine: All right. Thank you. Thank you, Mr.
2 Chairman.

3 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Kaine.

4 Senator Cotton, please.

5 Senator Cotton: Welcome, General VanHerck, General
6 Richardson. Thank you for coming back and for your service.

7 General VanHerck, I want to return to the topic of the
8 Chinese spy balloon. You were discussing it with Senator
9 Wicker earlier. You had said your radars first picked up
10 the balloon on Saturday, January 28th. Is that right?

11 General VanHerck: That is correct, Senator.

12 Senator Cotton: But you were aware of it on Friday,
13 January 27th.

14 General VanHerck: The intel community made me aware on
15 the 27th.

16 Senator Cotton: And on Friday, January 27th, you
17 communicated -- is that when you communicated to General
18 Milley, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and to Secretary
19 Austin's military assistant?

20 General VanHerck: I communicated with the Chairman
21 only on the 27th, and conveyed my plan to intercept, ID, and
22 assess the balloon when it became a radar capability we
23 could do.

24 Senator Cotton: And when did you communicate with
25 Secretary Austin's senior military assistant?

1 General VanHerck: I did that on the 28th.

2 Senator Cotton: The 28th. Did you ever speak with
3 Secretary Austin about this balloon?

4 General VanHerck: I spoke with Secretary Austin on the
5 1st of February.

6 Senator Cotton: Wednesday, the 1st of February.

7 General VanHerck: To the best of my recollection, that
8 is the first verbal discussion with the Secretary. There
9 were emails transmitted back and forth. I set up a battle
10 rhythm, Senator, and updated the Department every 12 hours
11 beginning on January 28th, the location, threat, projected
12 flight path, and intent.

13 Senator Cotton: Is it your customary practice to speak
14 to Secretary Austin's military assistant and not Secretary
15 Austin?

16 General VanHerck: No. Verbally I routinely speak with
17 the Secretary of Defense. Email communication typically
18 goes through his assistant and provides it back that way.

19 Senator Cotton: Okay. On what date did you have
20 fighter aircraft in the air that could have shot down this
21 balloon?

22 General VanHerck: I had fighter aircraft in the air on
23 the 28th of January. They were armed. I sent two F-35s and
24 two F-16s.

25 Senator Cotton: They were armed on the 28th?

1 General VanHerck: Yes. The F-16s were armed. They
2 flew off of alert. In Alaska I have aircraft on alert, and
3 they were armed.

4 Senator Cotton: So all that was needed on January 28th
5 was to pull the proverbial trigger.

6 General VanHerck: So to say pull the proverbial
7 trigger, yes, had they had hostile intent or hostile act. I
8 had the authority and I would have made that decision. So
9 you are exactly correct. After that point it was not my
10 decision to pull the trigger, as you say.

11 Senator Cotton: There has been publicly released
12 pictures, maybe and video, I think one pilot taking a selfie
13 with this balloon behind him. Were you confident, on
14 January 28th, what the payload on that balloon was?

15 General VanHerck: Based on the intel community's
16 assessment I would say I had 80 percent confidence level we
17 knew exactly what we were going to see. That was further
18 developed over the next several days as we were able to
19 collect additional intelligence before finally downing the
20 balloon off the South Carolina coast.

21 Senator Cotton: I am aware of that assessment and I k
22 now we cannot talk about it here, but I cannot say that I
23 would have had the same level of confidence that it did not
24 have some kind of offensive capabilities. Are you aware of
25 at what point the President was personally aware of this

1 balloon?

2 General VanHerck: Senator, I am not.

3 Senator Cotton: Why was it okay to shoot the balloon
4 down off the coast of South Carolina but not off the coast
5 of Alaska?

6 General VanHerck: Well, I think there are many things
7 that go into that decision-making. First is originally we
8 did not really have a good model for what the payload would
9 look like when it fell or potentially threatened anybody on
10 the ground. Now you can look at population density for
11 various places where the balloon flew over.

12 Senator Cotton: I am not talking about anyplace over
13 the continental United States. I do not dispute that. I am
14 talking about the coast of Alaska versus the coast of South
15 Carolina.

16 General VanHerck: There is nothing that physically
17 prevents us from shooting that down on the 28th to the 1st.

18 Senator Cotton: And if the Administration's
19 policymakers thought they had legal justification to shoot
20 it down off the coast of South Carolina surely they had
21 legal justification to shoot it off the coast of Alaska,
22 right?

23 General VanHerck: Senator, my assessment is the legal
24 basis would have been the same for either place.

25 Senator Cotton: That is what I think too.

1 Well, I am glad that you had fighter aircraft in the
2 skies that were ready to shoot it down. I think that would
3 have been the right call. I know it was not your call, that
4 it goes up higher than you, but I think it was a bad mistake
5 to let a Chinese spy balloon float all across America and
6 only to leak it to The New York Times once some rancher or
7 amateur photographer in Montana spotted it. I suspect if
8 they had not it would have floated on its merry way all
9 across America and this would have never become public. And
10 I think that is a dangerous precedent to set, not just with
11 China but with all of our adversaries. But I am glad you
12 had fighter aircraft from your command in the sky that were
13 ready to act.

14 And again, thank you both for your service, and since
15 this is your last hearing, thank you for many years of
16 service. I know that you will not regret missing these
17 appearances in the future, but we have always enjoyed having
18 you here. Thank you, General. Thank you, General
19 Richardson.

20 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Cotton.

21 Senator Hirono, please.

22 Senator Hirono: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you
23 very much to both of you for your years of service and
24 commitment to our country.

25 General VanHerck, you are responsible for homeland

1 defense, and you noted this morning that you have concerns
2 about attack assessment and threat warning, and that brings
3 me to concerns I have about the missile defense of Hawaii,
4 concerns that I have been expressing for a number of years
5 now. And I do remain concerned that the Department of
6 Defense does not have a plan to address the current and
7 future missile defense needs of Hawaii. We did have HDR-H
8 Hawaii that is no longer on the table, and it appears to me
9 that between NORTHCOM, INDOPACOM, SPACECOM, STRATCOM, and
10 the Missile Defense Agency there is no single commander
11 entirely responsible for coordinating the DoD's defense of
12 Hawaii.

13 So just as we saw in the crisis at Red Hill, when no
14 single leader has ultimately responsibility for the
15 coordination and execution of the mission, there is room for
16 issues to fall through the cracks, and adding to the
17 concerning lack of trust that Hawaii's communities have
18 regarding the military.

19 General VanHerck, do you have the authority to
20 coordinate across the Department of Defense to ensure there
21 is a plan for missile defense of Hawaii?

22 General VanHerck: Senator, I am the authority for
23 ballistic missile defense such as an ICBM from DPRK, and I
24 am confident in my ability to defend Hawaii from those
25 ballistic missiles. Admiral Aquilino is responsible for the

1 defense of Hawaii, and in the INDOPACOM AOR, and I would say
2 he is the coordinating authority for that region. But I am
3 the authority for ballistic missile defense of Hawaii.

4 Senator Hirono: And I think that is the concern that
5 we have, is ballistic defense, so that would fall to you
6 then. I am assuming that of course you are going to talk
7 with Admiral Aquilino.

8 General VanHerck: Absolutely. We do coordinate, and
9 in many ways I will coordinate in real time with him for the
10 need to defend Hawaii from ICBMs potentially from North
11 Korea.

12 Senator Hirono: And China.

13 General VanHerck: I am not tasked to defend against
14 China or Russia for ICBMs. That is the nuclear deterrent,
15 Senator. Admiral Aquilino has a responsibility in the
16 INDOPACOM AOR for further defense of Hawaii.

17 Senator Hirono: You see, this is where I begin to have
18 concerns, continuing concerns about who exactly is
19 responsible, who is going to come and tell me that the
20 missile defense of Hawaii is going to take place, because as
21 I said, for years HDR-H Hawaii was going to be the way that
22 we were going to provide missile defense. That is no longer
23 on the table, and to date I have not gotten any clear
24 information. I am going to get a briefing on Monday, and
25 General, I do not know if you have someone who is doing that

1 briefing with me and my staff on Monday. Are you involved?

2 General VanHerck: I am not aware of that. But let me
3 just talk about the Homeland Defense Radar Hawaii. First of
4 all, I do not need Homeland Defense Radar for Hawaii for the
5 mission I am tasked to do, for ballistic missiles that
6 emanate from North Korea. Homeland Defense Radar for Hawaii
7 would be a contributor to an underlayer, which Admiral
8 Aquilino could certainly use, which could tether to AEGIS-
9 class ships or other ballistic missile defense capabilities
10 in the region.

11 Senator Hirono: Well, but then Admiral Aquilino has
12 said that he too is not looking to HDR-H Hawaii for the
13 missile defense of Hawaii. General, do you know if there is
14 missile defense for Hawaii that is going to take care of
15 your area of responsibility as well as his? Because we are
16 talking about missile defense against intentions from North
17 Korea as well as China.

18 General VanHerck: Senator, I --

19 Senator Hirono: HDR-H Hawaii was North Korea.

20 General VanHerck: -- I am confident in my ability to
21 defend Hawaii from ballistic missiles from DPRK. From
22 China, I am not tasked, and I will defer to Admiral
23 Aquilino. That is his responsibility.

24 Senator Hirono: Thank you. I think that provides some
25 level of better clarification.

1 General VanHerck: I want to add one thing, Senator.
2 General Cotton is responsible for the nuclear deterrent, and
3 ballistic missiles such as nuclear ballistic missiles from
4 China towards Hawaii, that is the nuclear deterrent that
5 does that. Conventional, I will defer to Admiral Aquilino.

6 Senator Hirono: So again, I am talking about nuclear
7 deterrent, not conventional. Nuclear deterrent. It is the
8 missiles emanating from China and North Korea that I want
9 Hawaii to be defended from. And yes, the shooters are not
10 in Hawaii. We are not talking about putting shooters on
11 Hawaii. Those are in Alaska and in California.

12 So again, you know, all my attempts to get
13 clarification as to who is the one agency, one entity, that
14 is responsible for missile defense of Hawaii writ large.
15 You know, I am not talking about any particular, whether it
16 is ICBMs or whether it is the ballistic missiles. You can
17 sense my frustration, so I will continue to pursue my line
18 of questioning.

19 I am sorry. I will add some questions for the record
20 relating to the impact of climate change on your AORs.
21 Thank you.

22 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Hirono.

23 Senator Rounds, please.

24 Senator Rounds: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and to both
25 of you I want to thank you both for your service to our

1 country and your teams' as well.

2 I would like to begin by following up with General
3 VanHerck with regard to the same line of questioning that
4 the Chairman began with, with regard to spectrum. I do have
5 real concerns about the loss of any portion of the spectrum
6 to sales to commercial operations, and I recognize that,
7 General VanHerck, your role in defending the homeland is
8 critical. And I just wanted to clarify or at least better
9 understand part of your response to the Chairman's question.

10 There is a study, which is underway, which has been
11 recognized by both the Secretary of Commerce and the
12 Secretary of Defense, specifically regarding the sensitivity
13 or the need to maintain, or the impact of the sale of the
14 3.1 to 3.45 GHz portion of the spectrum, which currently is
15 under DoD control. Could you share with us, in this
16 unclassified setting, the significance of that portion of
17 the spectrum to the defense of our country at this time? Do
18 we use all of that in the defense of our country today?

19 General VanHerck: Senator, absolutely we do. There
20 are multiple platforms, to include maritime homeland defense
21 platforms, airborne early warning platforms, ground-based
22 early warning platforms that enable me to provide threat
23 warning, attack assessment, defend from potentially airborne
24 assets, et cetera. So we need to understand the national
25 security impacts of selling or auctioning, and make a

1 conscious decision before we do so.

2 Senator Rounds: I also understand, and what I wanted
3 to follow up with in particular was, it would seem to me
4 that if we are doing a study, a legitimate study, that there
5 would be some participation by NORTHCOM since this is part
6 of the spectrum that they rely on. Confirming you are not
7 aware of being involved in that particular study at this
8 time?

9 General VanHerck: Senator, I have not personally been
10 involved. I will confirm the coordination with my staff,
11 but I have not personally been involved in that discussion.
12 I would welcome the opportunity to be personally involved.

13 Senator Rounds: I would imagine that you probably
14 would, sir, seeing as how it is a critical part of the
15 defense of our country. And I thank you for, when you have
16 provided this committee with your professional military
17 advice it really does ring true that there is a very serious
18 concern with the loss of any part of that spectrum. So I
19 appreciate that.

20 I did want to just follow up a little bit as well.
21 Senator Cotton laid out a very clear line of questioning
22 with regard to the timing and the decision-making process
23 with regard to the observation balloon from the PRC. If
24 this was a communications-gathering or an intelligence-
25 gathering unit you did have the ability and you could see it

1 coming from a long way off, several days in advance, not
2 just with intelligence recognition but also with radar
3 catching it.

4 But during that time period there was a point at which,
5 as you have indicated, it was not identified as being
6 hostile or trying to gain an offensive position, therefore,
7 still in international air, no reason to, or any purpose for
8 taking it out at that point. That is correct, is it no?

9 General VanHerck: There is no legal basis in
10 international airspace to take action. That would actually
11 undermine our position globally by taking action in
12 international airspace.

13 I would like to clarify one thing. I did not have the
14 capability to see that days away. That came through intel
15 community channels. I could not see it until it got within
16 radar, and I will talk to you in a classified environment.
17 But that was not days away. That was the 28th only.

18 Senator Rounds: And on the 28th, though, on the 28th
19 it was still outside of our legal operating area in terms of
20 protecting our borders.

21 General VanHerck: So it passed within sovereign
22 territory on the 27th, at the end of the Aleutian Island
23 chain, and then back into international airspace, until the
24 28th, where it passed within our sovereign space near Saint
25 Matthew Island, Alaska, and then transited over Alaska.

1 Senator Rounds: During that time in which it had
2 passed out in international waters you were aware of it and
3 knew that it had the possibility of coming back into our
4 airspace again. But by then pretty clear on your part that
5 it was not an offensively armed balloon or object.

6 General VanHerck: That is correct, Senator. The intel
7 community assessed that. That was what I verified on the
8 28th, when we intercepted and I had fighters get their
9 visual on it and their targeting pods to be able to make
10 that assessment. That is not a 100 percent guarantee, but
11 my assessment at that time, based on all the info, was there
12 was no physical military threat to the homeland at that
13 point.

14 Senator Rounds: And the reason why I am bringing this
15 out and going back through it again with you is, number one,
16 I think the American people have to understand that if it
17 would have been viewed as a threat our armed forces would
18 have protected and we would have taken it out prior to the
19 point of getting in and damaging any property or individuals
20 within the United States at that time. But the second piece
21 on this is it became a decision, not necessarily yours, but
22 somewhere farther up the chain of command as to not to take
23 it out, even though it was entering our airspace. It was
24 not your decision because it was not deemed a threat, or to
25 become an offensive threat at that time. Fair to say?

1 General VanHerck: So if it was a threat I am delegated
2 the authority by the President, through the Secretary, and I
3 would have taken that out. In this case I did not assess it
4 as a threat, and therefore I did not have the authority.

5 Senator Rounds: The authority would have rested with
6 someone above you in the chain of command.

7 General VanHerck: Depending on the legal basis for
8 assessment it would have resided either with the Secretary
9 of Defense or the President.

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

11 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Rounds.

12 Senator King, please.

13 Senator King: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am going to
14 ask both of you about unfunded priorities. General
15 Richardson, we are under attack -- 110,000 people died last
16 year of overdoses. That is 300 a day. Twelve people have
17 died in America since we have been sitting here in the last
18 hour. And yet your ISR capability to at least assist in
19 detecting and helping us to interdict this dread attack is
20 on an unfunded priorities list. Why is it not in the base
21 budget? This seems to be one of the most serious and
22 intensely important responsibilities that you will have in
23 order to help us to deal with this scourge. Why is it an
24 unfunded priority and not base budget?

25 General Richardson: Senator, I do not think any

1 commander will say they have enough ISR, and so certainly as
2 we look across the --

3 Senator King: But 2 percent of the ISR that is dealing
4 with this brutal attack that is killing our citizens just
5 does not seem to me to pass the straight-face test.

6 General Richardson: And I could do more with a little
7 bit more, and our partner nations, with the capabilities and
8 building their maritime domain awareness and being able to
9 share air tracks and things like that, all of us working
10 together. We have very willing partners.

11 And I would like to, if I might, Senator, behind me in
12 the audience we have part of our Inter-American Defense
13 College, and part of their instruction is to come here and
14 watch us testify as commanders to our Congress and talk
15 about the challenges --

16 Senator King: It is a lesson to them of what to avoid,
17 I would think.

18 General Richardson: And so if they would raise their
19 hands back there, so you can see all of them.

20 Senator King: Thank you.

21 General Richardson: They are in that whole group right
22 there.

23 Senator King: Let me follow up.

24 General Richardson: Yes, Senator.

25 Senator King: We have established that you do not have

1 enough ISR. The ISR that you have, previous testimony by
2 your predecessors has been we do not have the resources to
3 interdict but something like 25 percent of the drug
4 shipments we know about. Is that still true?

5 General Richardson: I have the detection and
6 monitoring mission for the Department of Defense through
7 JIATF South, Joint Interagency Task Force South. And so --

8 Senator King: But when you detect and notify --

9 General Richardson: -- we pass that right over to law
10 enforcement or partner nations to do the interdictions.

11 Senator King: And what percentage is interdicted, as
12 far as you know?

13 General Richardson: We believe that we are getting
14 after about 10 percent of what we know is the known flow of
15 narcotics flow.

16 Senator King: We are only getting 10 percent of what
17 we know.

18 General Richardson: Correct, Senator.

19 Senator King: That is appalling, and I realize it is
20 not your responsibility but it is a collective
21 responsibility that we are just simply not meeting in this
22 country, to have, number one, inadequate ISR on this
23 problem, and number two, to not make effective use of the
24 ISR we do have.

25 General VanHerck, let me turn to you about unfunded

1 priorities. One of your major unfunded priorities, again,
2 is essentially ISR, capability to observe what is going on.
3 We know the Russians are heavily militarizing their shore of
4 the Arctic Ocean. And again, my question to you is, it
5 seems to me you have made a powerful case in your unfunded
6 priority list. Why is it not in the base budget?

7 General VanHerck: I will have to defer to the
8 Department in the present budget why it did not come across,
9 Senator. I am asking for it. I would also point out I
10 asked for \$38 million for additional support for
11 transnational criminal organizations, to lead Federal
12 agencies that I am short as well. And there is additional
13 money in my unfunded priority list for that as well.

14 Senator King: Well, I am starting to think what we
15 should do is fund your unfunded priority list instead of the
16 base budget because you have articulated priorities that are
17 so important to us.

18 Talk about -- well, perhaps this has to be in a
19 classified setting, but the lack of visibility, of domain
20 awareness as the Arctic is fundamentally changing and
21 becoming one of the most strategic places on Earth.

22 General VanHerck: Yes, Senator, thank you for the
23 opportunity to talk about that. The National Defense
24 Strategy tasked me to monitor and respond in the Arctic.

25 I am encouraged with the monitor piece. We have got

1 some over-the-horizon radars. We need to go faster there.
2 Canada is committed to that. Again, we need to go faster.
3 But under monitor we need to think about the use of SpaceX
4 and Starlink capabilities and buying terminals that gives us
5 data and information sharing. I am encouraged by the Jobs
6 and Infrastructure Bill. There is \$250 million in that to
7 modernize the Port of Nome. We need to move forward to give
8 us some capability to be persistent in the Arctic for the
9 monitor piece as well.

10 But you need icebreakers as well, so we have got to go
11 faster there.

12 Senator King: You have just listed, basically we have
13 an Arctic gap. Is that correct?

14 General VanHerck: That is my assessment.

15 Senator King: Not geographically. I mean, national
16 security wise.

17 General VanHerck: That is my assessment. As I
18 mentioned earlier on the respond side, we are not organized,
19 trained, and equipped to operate and respond in the Arctic.
20 Infrastructure is a big concern for me, whether that be
21 runway lengths, whether that be building, whether that be
22 weapon storage, whether that be fuel storage. When you only
23 have a few days' worth of fuel and that fuel is shared with
24 indigenous local communities, those are challenges that we
25 will face in a crisis.

1 My homeland defense design is a layered defense. It
2 starts forward, and we need the Arctic to do that.

3 I would point out that Thule Air Base in Greenland is
4 crucial. There is some money in the budget for Thule, but
5 not to support my homeland defense design, which I am tasked
6 to do a layered defense of the homeland by the Department.

7 Senator King: Thank you both, and thank you for your
8 candid testimony today and for your service to the country.

9 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

10 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator King.

11 And let me also, on behalf of the committee, recognize
12 the Inter-American Defense College. Bienvenidos.

13 Senator Tuberville.

14 Senator Tuberville: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thanks
15 to both of you for being here and your service.

16 General VanHerck, just to follow up on Senator King's
17 question how would Maxar and Saildrone help you in the
18 Arctic? Would it be, you know, commercially, and how would
19 that help you?

20 General VanHerck: Can you say that again?

21 Senator Tuberville: Maxar and Saildrone. Would it
22 help you in the Arctic?

23 General VanHerck: I am not familiar with specifically.
24 I am familiar with the OneWeb efforts, Starlink, satellite
25 communications, anything that gives me additional domain

1 awareness, data, and information-sharing will absolutely
2 help in the Arctic. It is very challenging above 65-North
3 to communicate, to share data, to share information.

4 Senator Tuberville: Thank you, and I do not want to
5 pound on this balloon nonsense but how would you assess your
6 relationship with your Canadian counterparts through this
7 entire scenario?

8 General VanHerck: I think my relationship with our
9 Canadian counterparts -- by the way, I have a boss in
10 Canada, General Wayne Eyre, is exceptional.

11 Senator Tuberville: He runs NORAD, right?

12 General VanHerck: No. I run NORAD. He is the Chief
13 of the Defense Staff --

14 Senator Tuberville: Okay.

15 General VanHerck: -- in Canada. He is the CHOD. He
16 is their senior military member.

17 Senator Tuberville: So your relationship was good
18 through this whole scenario?

19 General VanHerck: Absolutely. Yeah.

20 Senator Tuberville: If that same balloon took off
21 today, same path, loaded the same way, now that we know what
22 was on it and that we brought it down, should or would we
23 shoot it down?

24 General VanHerck: That is a policy decision. My job
25 is to maintain options. I did that. I am very comfortable

1 that we had options from the moment we detected it until the
2 moment we shot it down. Ultimately "should" is a policy
3 decision. That is not a military decision.

4 Senator Tuberville: Okay. Thank you.

5 General Richardson, thanks for being here today and
6 thanks for the hospitality last week, coming to SOUTHCOM.
7 You have got a great organization. The people working for
8 you, they are outstanding. We learned a lot. I would hope
9 that we have more people come down that way would look at
10 your new program that you are building, quarters for your
11 personnel, through lend/lease, which I think we should look
12 at through the Air Force and through the Navy, because I
13 think we need to privatize more things on basis to cut back
14 on costs. But I look forward to seeing how that turns out.

15 Could you comment on that?

16 General Richardson: Thank you, Senator. That is for
17 our family housing for our servicemembers in Miami and
18 certainly a really tough housing market. And this will
19 absolutely get after being able to counter all of those
20 really high prices in a big city like Miami. So we are very
21 thankful that we are able to get that off the ground. And
22 with the support of Congress we have been able to do that,
23 so thank you very much.

24 Senator Tuberville: Yeah, and we are looking forward
25 to seeing how that works out. I was very impressed with the

1 people, after I go to Panama, that were there, actually from
2 my state of Alabama, Mobile. The Corps of Engineers are
3 down there working, and we have got a lot of good people.

4 Just tell us how important, in your eyes, the Panama
5 Canal is to us here in the United States, in your eyes,
6 since you have been there.

7 General Richardson: Well, Senator, more than 70
8 percent of our global goods go through the Panama Canal for
9 the United States. So the importance to the global economy,
10 though, it is not just about what the United States gets,
11 but that is the give-back through that canal being open as
12 the exchange of goods across the world. I talked about
13 trade before, over \$740 billion in trade. And so very, very
14 important to the global economy for the Panama Canal.

15 Senator Tuberville: And on top of that, recently, over
16 the last few years, China has signed 30 contracts with the
17 Panamanians, some of it to do with the canal, and the
18 Panamanians are now trying to get out of some of those
19 contracts because the Chinese have breached some of those
20 contracts, which we need, as the United States of America,
21 to protect Panama, because that is how important it is to
22 all of us. But really good people down there.

23 Could you talk a little bit about the two Iranian ships
24 that are parked outside the Panama Canal and the process
25 that we need to look at. Do they need to be able to use the

1 Panama Canal?

2 General Richardson: So in terms of the Iranian
3 warships that transited into the SOUTHCOM region and since
4 departed, but as part of their announcing their global
5 voyage to go around the globe, and certainly some of the
6 countries that were able to deny port calls and things like
7 that. But very concerning because they were just in the
8 region 2 years ago with missiles and with launchers on those
9 same two ships. So very, very concerned that they are
10 transiting again. We did not have the intelligence that
11 they had this cargo on board this time, but still the fact
12 that they came into the region again, and doing a global
13 voyage, is concerning.

14 Senator Tuberville: Thank you. Thank you for your
15 service. General VanHerck, thank you very much for what you
16 have done for our country.

17 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

18 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Tuberville.

19 Senator Warren, please.

20 Senator Warren: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you
21 to our witnesses for your service.

22 The Pentagon's budget request is \$842 billion. This is
23 one of the largest requests in history, but it is not enough
24 money for many components of DoD. Each year they push to
25 get even more money using unfunded priorities lists, or what

1 I call wish lists.

2 Now our colleagues on both sides of the aisle are
3 concerned about this and they want to see this practice
4 stopped. One of the excuses that I have received, as I have
5 asked about these lists, is that they reflect emerging
6 threats that cannot be accommodated in the regular budget
7 process. Now we have transfer and reprogramming authority
8 to account for exactly that situation, but even so let us
9 assume that is true. That means wish lists would only
10 include items that have been requested before. You could
11 not know about it when you put your budget together.

12 General VanHerck, last year your unfunded priority list
13 contained a request for \$50 million for missile defense. Is
14 that right?

15 General VanHerck: For this year or last year?

16 Senator Warren: Last year.

17 General VanHerck: I would have to go back and review
18 it. I believe that is correct.

19 Senator Warren: Well, I will tell you. It is there.
20 I understand you may not remember all the details, but it is
21 there. Had you requested funding for that program before?

22 General VanHerck: Yes. In this year's list as well.
23 Everything on my unfunded list --

24 Senator Warren: So let me just be clear here. I am
25 just trying to track this one argument, and that is, is this

1 some unexpected expense. You knew about it last year. How
2 do I know you knew about it last year? Because you had also
3 requested funding for it from the year before. In other
4 words, this is not an unexpected requirement for missile
5 defense that you are trying to get funded through the
6 unfunded priorities list. Is that right?

7 General VanHerck: Senator, everything on my unfunded
8 priority list I POM'ed for, asked for. It was not funded.

9 Senator Warren: I have no doubt that it was --

10 General VanHerck: Please allow me to finish.

11 Senator Warren: I have no doubt that it was not --

12 General VanHerck: Can I finish answering your
13 question?

14 Senator Warren: I am the one asking the question here.

15 Was this on your list before and was it a surprise what you
16 put on your unfunded priority list?

17 General VanHerck: There are no surprises on my
18 unfunded priority list.

19 Senator Warren: Okay. That is what needed to know.

20 General VanHerck: All of those were POM'ed for. They
21 are all missions I am tasked to do, which I am not resourced
22 to do, and the law directs me to put in an unfunded list
23 within 10 days of the budget, and that is exactly what I
24 did.

25 Senator Warren: No. Excuse me. The law does not

1 require that you put in any request. We know last year that
2 two different divisions actually put in requests of zero.
3 They did not go to an unfunded priorities list.

4 Now General Richardson, intelligence surveillance and
5 reconnaissance capabilities have repeatedly appeared on your
6 wish list as well. As Commander of Southern Command you are
7 on the front line, confronting transnational criminal
8 organizations, trafficking drugs in regions there and home,
9 and I appreciate that work. Last year you asked for an
10 additional \$268 million on your wish list.

11 Now General Richardson, did DoD approve reprogramming
12 money for any of the missions under your command this year?

13 General Richardson: So this year in terms of the
14 funding that I have received, I have \$130 million for
15 security cooperation for the region. And so in terms of the
16 reprogramming, I am not aware of that.

17 Senator Warren: Well, according to the Controller's
18 website, \$750 million was reprogrammed to support drug
19 interdiction. Does that sound about right to you?

20 General Richardson: I am not tracking the 750,
21 Senator.

22 Senator Warren: Okay. All right.

23 But look, here is the point I want to make on this.
24 DoD already has the tools to reshuffle its resources when
25 needed. Not only that, they have also done so for a key

1 SOUTHCOM mission in an amount that was almost three times
2 larger than your wish list. Both of you have already
3 submitted your lists for this year. I will be submitting
4 questions for the record to learn more about why you could
5 not include these in your budget priorities.

6 I understand you want more money, but you have to work
7 within the budget that is given to you. That is what every
8 other part of the government has to do. I have got a bill
9 with Senator King, Senator Lee, Senator Braun, that would
10 end the statutory requirement for these lists. But I want
11 to make clear -- DoD could shut them down on their own right
12 now. We do not let any other part of government behave like
13 this, and for good reason.

14 The budget process is about making tough choices and
15 setting clear priorities, and refusal to demonstrate
16 leadership here I think is a real mistake.

17 General VanHerck: Chairman, I want to correct the
18 record.

19 Chairman Reed: Senator --

20 General VanHerck: One hundred percent of my items on
21 my unfunded priority list were submitted as part of the
22 budget process.

23 Chairman Reed: I understand, sir. Any other comments,
24 General Richardson?

25 General Richardson: The same here, Senator. Those

1 requirements that I put forward to the Department as well.

2 Senator Warren: I do not think I quite understand what
3 our witnesses are saying here.

4 Chairman Reed: I think what they wanted was to be able
5 to fully respond to your questions, Senator, and with that I
6 would --

7 Senator Warren: But these are not on their budget now.

8 Chairman Reed: I think the time has expired. Thank
9 you very much.

10 Senator Schmitt, and Senator Rosen will preside as I go
11 to the Appropriations Committee.

12 Senator Schmitt, please.

13 Senator Schmitt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I want
14 to thank you both for being here. I would note to the
15 committee that both of these witnesses have Missouri ties
16 and Missouri roots.

17 It is my belief, and I have talked about it a little
18 bit in this committee before, that too few people, quite
19 frankly, understand the urgency, the gravity, and the
20 proximity of the threat that the PRC, China, poses to the
21 United States of America. They are rapid development as
22 being a militarized power now, and projecting that power is
23 very real. And it is that proximity that I want to ask both
24 of you separate questions about, given your roles.

25 The Belt and Road Initiative clearly is an initiative

1 to further their economic, militaristic, and political
2 goals, and the dual use that they get out of this once they
3 are involved with these countries is very real.

4 So General Richardson, I wanted to ask you. It seems
5 me that China is gaining far too much traction in the
6 Western Hemisphere, if we sort of look at this under the old
7 Monroe Doctrine. In the Western Hemisphere they continually
8 abuse, not just the debt traps that are established but they
9 abuse those agreements to then later expand militarily.

10 Could you talk about a couple of those examples that
11 you see, and Senator Scott, I think, had a great line of
12 questioning about how we can better explain to our folks
13 back home the real risks. So from your perspective, a
14 couple of examples that you would want to highlight that
15 raise real concerns for you in the Western Hemisphere.

16 General Richardson: So that Belt and Road Initiative,
17 Senator, that you talk about, that is really the guise or
18 the disguise of how I see that the PRC gets their foot in
19 the door, to expand a lot of these projects into the
20 critical infrastructure for the partner nations. And so
21 when you are talking deepwater ports in 17 countries, the
22 telecommunications, the 5G, 5G backbone in five of the
23 countries, 24 countries having the PRC 3G or 4G, and I worry
24 about that, the stealing of information. There have been
25 numerous cyberattacks of our partner nations in the region.

1 And you have a communist nation that does not respect
2 the human rights of their own people, with Huawei and ZTE,
3 and fostering this out to all of the other partner nations
4 across the globe, not just in my region. So they do not
5 respect the human rights of their own people. They are not
6 going to respect the human rights of every other nation. So
7 that is a huge concern in terms of telecommunications.

8 The space, space infrastructure. Eleven space-enabling
9 infrastructure sites in five countries in the region as
10 well.

11 So it is very, very concerning, especially with the
12 dual use that they come in, they are state-owned enterprises
13 from the PRC, which means that they can be used for military
14 application at a later date, if needed or wanted.

15 Senator Schmitt: General VanHerck, we have talked
16 about it before in classified briefings here and in previous
17 settings about the Chinese spy balloon, you know, fiasco,
18 and showed how brazen the Chinese Communist Party is willing
19 to be to gain intelligence. I think that opened the eyes of
20 a lot of Americans of, again, just how brazen they were.

21 But one obvious concern is that they will not just send
22 a spy balloon. There will be something else. And you have
23 talked about awareness. What are specifically a couple of
24 things that this committee can do to help with that?

25 General VanHerck: We need to continue to accelerate

1 domain awareness capabilities. The Department has done a
2 good job with recognizing my domain awareness capability
3 gaps, which includes funding over-the-horizon radar. But we
4 need to think differently about how we field capabilities in
5 a more timely and rapid manner, using digital technology we
6 have today vice industrial age processes. And you can help
7 with encouraging that and moving forward with that, and also
8 encouraging testing, development, and when there are
9 failures, let us not stop everything. Let us move forward
10 more quickly to field and rapidly develop capabilities.

11 Senator Schmitt: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

12 Senator Rosen: [Presiding.] Senator Peters, you are
13 recognized.

14 Senator Peters: Thank you, Madam Chair.

15 General VanHerck, I would like to build on the concerns
16 you mentioned in your earlier testimony regarding
17 cyberattacks here in the homeland, and specifically, could
18 you further explain some of your gaps with authorities,
19 personnel, and instructions for synchronizing and responding
20 to cyberattacks affecting local defense communities and how
21 you would coordinate with the Department of Homeland
22 Security in the event of such an attack.

23 General VanHerck: Senator, thank you. First, my
24 largest domain awareness gap, and my biggest concern, is
25 actually cyber domain awareness. The vast majority of the

1 critical infrastructure in our homeland resides outside of
2 DoD, which General Nakasone is responsible for, and outside
3 other Federal networks, which Jen Easterly at CISA is
4 responsible for.

5 My authorities there are limited to have domain
6 awareness. FISA-702 is crucial to having domain awareness,
7 to giving us indicators of potential threats in the
8 homeland, whether they be violent extremist threats or
9 whether they be peer threats. So I would encourage that we
10 continue doing that, to give the National Security Agency
11 and General Nakasone the ability to help fill those domain
12 awareness gaps.

13 My responsibility for cyber is I have two cyber
14 protection teams that defend my critical infrastructure in
15 my headquarters. More broadly, General Nakasone is
16 responsible for the DoDIN. I am responsible for providing
17 defense support to civil authorities. So for example, if
18 Jen Easterly at CISA needs support, and DoD is going to
19 provide Title 10 support, that support will go through me to
20 provide just like I do for hurricane or wildfire response.

21 Senator Peters: Well, I chair Homeland Security
22 Committee here in the Senate and work on the cyber issues,
23 so I look forward to working closely with you as to how we
24 coordinate that, because there is no question that cyber is
25 one of the most significant threats we face in the homeland

1 on a daily basis. And I want to throw out an example of
2 this and get your response.

3 Let us take an example in Fayetteville, North Carolina,
4 home to the Army Special Operations Command and the
5 Immediate Response Force. If they had suffered a
6 cyberattack to degrade the mobilization and deployment of
7 the 82nd Airborne Division, in response to some crisis,
8 would your command have the appropriate authorities and
9 personnel to respond and to mitigate? Do you have concerns
10 and are those things we should be looking at pretty
11 seriously?

12 General VanHerck: We should talk in a classified
13 environment about potential impacts, but to respond to the
14 actual cyber incident, that is going to be General Nakasone,
15 or if it is outside of the DoDIN it is going to be Jen
16 Easterly. I am comfortable that I have everything I need to
17 do to respond to provide defense support of civil
18 authorities should we be tasked to do that, to support a
19 lead Federal agency.

20 Again, it is a concern for me to not have domain
21 awareness in the cyber domain about potential threats.

22 Senator Peters: Well, I look forward to discussions in
23 a secure environment as we further examine that, to make
24 sure that it is working properly.

25 The other question I have for you is you discussed the

1 challenges of ensuring that Joint Force is able to operate
2 in the Arctic, and you are challenged to respond to
3 potential threats with forces that are either organic to the
4 National Guard command structures or assigned to external
5 combatant commands.

6 Given the awareness at NORTHCOM of the potential
7 threats in the Arctic -- and I think I am asking this
8 question before Senator Sullivan can ask you a question
9 related to this, but I am sure will be coming -- given that
10 awareness would you recommend the services prioritize Arctic
11 training and cold weather operational readiness for units
12 who may be ultimately assigned to your command? And when I
13 say Arctic training that does not necessarily mean
14 necessarily in Alaska but also other cold weather
15 environments like the state of Michigan, with our training
16 facilities there.

17 General VanHerck: Senator, absolutely I would. Fifty-
18 two percent of my AOR is in the Arctic, in the NORTHCOM AOR.
19 And as I said earlier I am tasked to monitor and respond.
20 On the respond piece it is crucial that we conduct training
21 operations. It is also crucial for campaigning, to
22 demonstrate we have the capability, the readiness, the
23 responsiveness, and the resiliency to operate in the Arctic
24 day-to-day, as part of our campaigning plan.

25 It is also crucial that we invest in research and

1 development to ensure that our platforms are able to sustain
2 and operate and the human is able to sustain and operate in
3 this environment. I think we have work still to be done
4 there.

5 Senator Peters: Thank you, General. Thank you, Madam
6 Chair.

7 Senator Rosen: Senator Scott, you are recognized.

8 Senator Scott: Thank you. I thank both of you for
9 what you do. Thanks for your hard work to try to take care
10 of national security.

11 General Richardson, can you talk a little bit about,
12 first, your ability to sort of watch what is happening in
13 the area that you are responsible for, and do you have the
14 resources you need to be able to monitor what is going on,
15 and do you have good partners with the military in countries
16 outside of our country?

17 General Richardson: So we have outstanding partners,
18 Senator, that want to work with us, and very willing
19 partners. And to be able to see everything, see the malign
20 activity, be able to spot it, be able to go after it, you
21 have got to see it in order to go after it. And so the
22 domain awareness, as I have talked to this committee before,
23 I get about 2 percent of the DoD ISR, gets after about 17
24 percent of my requirement. And I would just say in terms of
25 the urgency right now being at an all-time high, narcotics

1 flow being at an all-time high, my capability and capacity
2 to see is at an all-time low for my allocated resources.

3 Senator Scott: So what do you need?

4 General Richardson: So I would need the resourcing in
5 terms of the platforms. I would say in terms of allocated
6 forces the ideal platform would be a P-8 --

7 Senator Scott: How many?

8 General Richardson: -- with a long dwell, long
9 operation, being able to see. I would say anywhere from
10 four to six, which is what SOUTHCOM had a couple of years
11 ago, and those went away about a year ago in January.

12 And also for our partner nations their ability to see
13 as well. The ground-based radars are very important.

14 Senator Scott: So Guyana now is a rich country with
15 lots of oil, and they have got a lot of bad actors around
16 them. From a national security standpoint for us and also
17 to make sure they continue their democracy, what support do
18 we need to provide and what support can you provide?

19 General Richardson: That is a very willing partner,
20 Guyana, and the relationship that we have with Guyana,
21 fastest-growing economy in the world right now because of
22 the light, sweet crude that was discovered off their shores.
23 But they are very vulnerable in terms of their capacity and
24 being able to -- you know, our embassy there needs to be a
25 little bit bigger to help them channel and guide them with

1 all these new additional resources. My little DoD team
2 needs to be a little bit bigger as well.

3 But they can be a stabilizing factor in the region,
4 Guyana, just by fact of where they are located. They are a
5 neighbor to Venezuela, also to Brazil and Surinam, but a
6 very willing partner.

7 Senator Scott: Thank you. General VanHerck, the
8 southern border, there has been conversation in D.C. that
9 the military could go in and secure the entire southern
10 border, and I know we have National Guard down there that
11 are helping at the southern border.

12 Without taking a policy position on whether we should
13 or should not do it, is there really the ability, does the
14 military really have the ability to have much of an
15 influence on the security of the southern border?

16 General VanHerck: Senator, within the authorities we
17 have we cannot do that, but our military, the most
18 professional, capable on the planet, if tasked to do that,
19 absolutely we could. That is a policy decision, as you
20 alluded to. We have incredible capability to do whatever we
21 desire to do, as United States military.

22 Senator Scott: So, and I am sorry, you might have
23 answered this question before I got here. Talk about
24 hypersonics and our ability to defend ourselves against
25 hypersonics.

1 General VanHerck: I am not tasked to defend against
2 hypersonics in the homeland, with the exception of cruise
3 missiles. Where I am most concerned is about my ability to
4 detect and provide threat warning as the NORAD commander and
5 attack assessment, because of the erosion of strategic
6 stability that it has for providing continuity of government
7 and nuclear force posture survival.

8 We can talk more in a classified session. I will give
9 you some more details.

10 Senator Scott: All right. Thank you.

11 Senator Rosen: Senator Kelly, you are recognized.

12 Senator Kelly: Thank you, Madam Chair.

13 General Richardson, I want to follow up a little bit on
14 Senator Scott's question about what you need in SOUTHCOM,
15 and then the same for NORTHCOM, just recognizing that, you
16 know, my state, the state of Arizona, has 370 miles of
17 border with Mexico, and just the amount of transnational
18 criminal organizations that are operating south of the
19 border and the fentanyl that is coming from, you know,
20 chemicals that come from China into Mexico, manufactured
21 there and then come across our border is killing tens of
22 thousands of Americans every single year. That is
23 unacceptable.

24 You talked about needing four to six P-8s. How long
25 ago was it that you had a single P-8?

1 General Richardson: A year ago in January the P-8s
2 were retasked to another area.

3 Senator Kelly: And how many did you have then?

4 General Richardson: At that time it was two --

5 Senator Kelly: You had two?

6 General Richardson: -- from a high of six.

7 Senator Kelly: And you feel you need four to six.

8 General VanHerck, do you have P-8s available?

9 General VanHerck: I get a little more ISR than General
10 Richardson does, but my ISR request is pretty much on a not-
11 to-interfere basis that I get along the southwest border.
12 Now, Senator, you have to realize that I am limited on
13 collecting intelligence in the homeland, by the law, and so
14 therefore you cannot expect me to be able to do that on this
15 side. We do try to get additional information on the other
16 side of the border, as well, on transnational criminal
17 organizations as well as the National Security Agency
18 helping us.

19 Senator Kelly: So you cannot fly the airplane south of
20 the border without permission from Mexico. But can you fly
21 a P-8 along the border and get some valuable information? I
22 mean, is there something that, some utility?

23 General VanHerck: So we do fly U-2s and RC-135s, not
24 necessarily P-8, to gather information about threats to the
25 homeland that emanate from all of our borders, not just the

1 southwest border. My actual allocation of that ISR is very
2 low compared to, you know, forward geographic combatant
3 commanders.

4 Senator Kelly: But does NORTHCOM have P-8s available
5 right now?

6 General VanHerck: I have P-8s available, one allocated
7 to me for maritime homeland defense, which would be in
8 support of submarine activity, not necessarily southwest
9 border activity.

10 Senator Kelly: And where is that airplane based?

11 General VanHerck: That airplane is in Whidbey Island,
12 Washington.

13 Senator Kelly: I imagine it probably as a significant
14 OPTEMPO to it right now?

15 General VanHerck: Well, it is not one airplane. It is
16 an entire organization wing up there. The one airplane is
17 access to a single airplane. They are continually doing
18 their mission training and support. I get access to that
19 one airplane under the Maritime Homeland Defense EXORD.

20 Senator Kelly: What do you think we would need to do
21 to provide like a detachment to SOUTHCOM?

22 General VanHerck: Is that for me?

23 Senator Kelly: Either of you.

24 General Richardson: Senator, if I might be able to
25 talk about security cooperation in addition to the ISR

1 capability because our partner nations, that security
2 cooperation is my main lever in SOUTHCOM, and being able to
3 train and equip our partners to be able to handle and
4 counter the effects of the transnational criminal
5 organizations, which are at the top of their list that they
6 deal with every single day. The TCOs are way more powerful.
7 They are more sophisticated. They are five times more than
8 all the defense budgets added together for my entire region
9 of partner nations, and we have got to really get after
10 that.

11 But the foreign military sales, foreign military
12 financing, excess defense articles, we have got to speed
13 that process up because every delay in a piece of equipment,
14 a little goes a long way in this region. I do not need big
15 aircraft carriers. Our partner nations do not need big
16 brigades of soldiers or helicopters, but they need five or
17 six helicopters, a maritime patrol aircraft, the King Air
18 250. I mean, these go a long way for them, but every delay
19 in that means our partner is not in the fight with us. And
20 so we need to make them stronger to counter the powerful
21 TCOs.

22 Senator Kelly: General?

23 General VanHerck: I would just like to follow up. We
24 are not going to interdict our way out of this problem. It
25 is part of the transnational criminal organization model.

1 What we are attacking are the symptoms of the problem. That
2 is the human migration, the counternarcotics trafficking,
3 those kinds of things. The problem is transnational
4 criminal organizations and their network.

5 So I am encouraged. I just sat through the
6 Interdiction Committee. It is chaired by the Commandant of
7 the Coast Guard with interagency support, and there is a
8 great strategy out of the Office of National Drug Control
9 Policy to get after this. The challenge is operationalizing
10 that strategy across all the entities of the government who
11 have a hand in this. You cannot have multiple entities all
12 doing their own thing.

13 So I do not see this as a DoD lead, but I do think we
14 need a lead Federal agency empowered to get after the
15 problem that you are talking about across multiple agencies
16 across our nation.

17 Senator Kelly: Thank you, General VanHerck and General
18 Richardson, and my office will follow up.

19 Chairman Reed: [Presiding.] Thank you, Senator Kelly.

20 Senator Ernst, please.

21 Senator Ernst: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank
22 you both for your time this morning. This testimony is
23 important to this committee because right now our
24 adversaries are probing our homeland and really looking for
25 weakness right here in our hemisphere. Our homeland is no

1 longer a sanctuary, so thank you again.

2 General Richardson, your statement cites at least 11
3 China-linked space facilities across 5 different countries
4 in the region, and this is more than any other area of
5 responsibility that we see around the globe. So what are
6 the national security implications of these particular space
7 facilities?

8 General Richardson: Well just the ability for the
9 Chinese to be able to track and launch their own satellites,
10 but then also the ability to surveil not just the United
11 States but our partner nations' satellites as well across
12 the globe.

13 Senator Ernst: Right. And what are you doing to
14 mitigate that surveillance that you spoke of? Are there
15 things that we can do?

16 General Richardson: So we are partnering together, of
17 course, with SPACECOM, with NORTHCOM. We hosted the very
18 first inaugural Space Conference of the Americas, bringing
19 all of the space-faring nations together to talk about
20 responsible space operations. And also the capabilities and
21 being able to get after the malign activity possibly
22 associated with those. It is always under supposed research
23 and development and that sort of thing, and the concern is
24 maybe it is not.

25 Senator Ernst: Right. That is my concern. And what

1 are we doing then to prevent more of these space facilities
2 from being located in your AOR?

3 General Richardson: So I think just working with the
4 partner nations, with the governments in terms of the
5 responsible space operations and things like that, and
6 talking about and discussing and warning the possibilities
7 associated with it.

8 Senator Ernst: Again, relationships matter, so it is
9 very important in this region specifically.

10 General Richardson, during your confirmation you
11 committed to notify Congress if China emplaces long-range
12 missiles in the area of operations. How do you assess the
13 risk of this in the midterm?

14 General Richardson: So I assess all the development
15 and the Belt and Road Initiative and the critical
16 infrastructure as just setting the theater, or setting the
17 table, if you want to put it that way, in terms of possible
18 basing and that sort of thing in the future. I would say
19 that we are probably about 7 to 10 years behind what has
20 happened in Africa, and with the state-owned enterprises
21 from the Chinese in the region I worry about the dual-use
22 capability and used for military application.

23 Senator Ernst: Right. I do as well. And what more
24 can we do for SOUTHCOM to prevent China from continuing to
25 expand in the region?

1 General Richardson: Well I would say that Team USA can
2 do a better job in terms of tooting our own horn about all
3 the investment from the private sector all the way to what I
4 do in the military and defense sector. Foreign military
5 sales and foreign military financing, excess defense
6 articles, training and equipping is really what we get
7 after. We introduce the Inter-America Defense College that
8 is behind me here for their professional development
9 session. You know, our schools are so important to build
10 trust with our partner nations that we can communicate, talk
11 in the same language. And that is what I really bring to
12 the table is being able to work with our partner nations in
13 building that trust, so we can counter the malign activity
14 together.

15 Senator Ernst: I think that is so important. Again,
16 those relationships matter in this area of operations. And
17 you normally place in front of us what we call a placemat
18 that shows the region and Russian influence, Chinese
19 influence. I just want to make sure that it is very clear
20 to everyone that is watching today, listening to us, that
21 they understand that while China is our pacing threat and we
22 focus on the INDOPACOM, we have to recognize that they are
23 in this hemisphere as well. They are here. They are
24 everywhere around us. They are building space facilities.
25 They are building other points of operation, and they are in

1 our backyard.

2 So while we do focus on the INDOPACOM it is very, very
3 important. We have got to focus here as well and understand
4 that they are surrounding us, and we have got to do more
5 about that.

6 General VanHerck, just in the remaining few seconds
7 that we have, what would be the homeland defense
8 implications of persistent Russia or Chinese cruise missile
9 submarines off of our coasts? Do you assess this risk is
10 increasing or decreasing?

11 General VanHerck: It is absolutely increasing. Within
12 the last year Russia has also placed their Severodvinsk-
13 class submarines in the Pacific, so now not only the
14 Atlantic, we have them in the Pacific. And it is just a
15 matter of probably a year or two before that is a persistent
16 threat, 24 hours a day potentially. That impact is reduced
17 decision space for a nation's senior leader in a time of
18 crisis.

19 Senator Ernst: Absolutely. And again, thank you both
20 so much for your service and dedication to protecting our
21 homeland. I just want to emphasize again how important it
22 is that we pay attention to Russia and China in this
23 hemisphere as well. Thank you.

24 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Ernst.

25 Senator Rosen, please.

1 Senator Rosen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding
2 this important hearing, and I want to thank both Generals
3 Richardson and VanHerck for testifying today, for your
4 service, and General VanHerck, of course, for your service
5 to our very own Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada. Thank you.

6 I am going to build upon what so many others have
7 already been talking about, our adversaries in our own
8 backyard, China and Russia, 5G technology, all of that.

9 General Richardson, you mentioned in your opening
10 statement 24 countries in SOUTHCOM's AOR have existing 3G
11 and 4G Chinese telecommunication infrastructure. Of course,
12 we have been talking about the Belt and Road. An additional
13 five countries have upgraded to Huawei's 5G network. And as
14 has been discussed, this adoption of all this technology in
15 your AOR, it is more than concerning. It impacts our
16 national security and the security of all our regional
17 partners.

18 So again, I just want to build on what they have been
19 asking. What role do you, not just in countering the
20 adoption of the 5G technology in Latin America, do you think
21 there are ways to leverage public-private partnerships so
22 you do not have to do everything, and can you speak to this
23 and how you are doing that please?

24 General Richardson: Absolutely, Senator, and the fact
25 that traveling to the region and putting all of these data

1 points together and hearing from the leaders in the region
2 and then coming back here to the United States to talk to
3 our private sector as well, and hear from them, the billions
4 of dollars of investment. But then when you hear of the big
5 projects and tenders coming down from our partner nations,
6 and then there are only six Chinese companies that compete
7 for that project or the tender, then there is a disconnect
8 there. And that is why I think that we have got to show the
9 investment that our private sector is doing, which is
10 billions. When I hear from them and talk to them there is
11 billions of investment into the region, and we have got to
12 advertise that.

13 Team USA is there. Our partners want to work with us.
14 They will turn to us first. But their economies are
15 hurting, and if we cannot do it fast enough, and our foreign
16 military sales and our training and equipping sometimes is
17 not as fast. They are on a political timeline of one term,
18 which is 4 years, and so they are on a stopwatch to deliver
19 for their people, not a calendar. So we have got to speed
20 up our processes. Because they will look to us first, but
21 if we do not have capability to deliver then they are going
22 to look elsewhere to wherever they can get it.

23 Senator Rosen: I think accelerating the process and
24 having a budget, not a CR, going through, everyone has
25 talked about that.

1 And General VanHerck, I want to speak with you a little
2 bit about this because we know Huawei and foreign-owned
3 companies, they are responsible for our U.S. military
4 installations and ICBM fields, our training ranges,
5 obviously, at Nellis. We know that people are building
6 these telecommunications sites nearby all of these so they
7 can collect information.

8 And so I know we are in an open setting, but can you
9 talk about the threat this poses, what can we do, public-
10 private partnership, and your opinion. Can you elaborate a
11 little bit?

12 General VanHerck: Absolutely. I am very concerned
13 about Chinese communications infrastructure being built not
14 necessarily by Chinese but with companies here in the United
15 States in close proximity to national security locations.
16 We have to keep an eye on that. That is a threat to our
17 national security. It is an intelligence collection threat.
18 It may be even a more broad threat.

19 I would also point out in my AOR, in the Bahamas, China
20 is very aggressive. Their ambassador in the information
21 space, they have built a new embassy. Economic investment
22 in the largest resort outside of China is right in the
23 Bahamas, right off of our coast. It sits right on top of
24 the Navy's AUTEK test and train ranges, which there is
25 potential collection there. They are interested in

1 developing smart cities here in the region. I will not go
2 into detail. I would in a classified environment. Selling
3 equipment that we, or our partners, utilize for assessment
4 of goods crossing the border, all those kinds of things.

5 I would also point out one of the main lessons from
6 COVID for me was the supply chain and our supply chain
7 vulnerabilities, that we have farmed out so much to China.
8 You know, when you get 80 percent of your pharmaceuticals
9 from somebody that you may face in a crisis in the future,
10 that is a national security imperative that we need to go
11 look at.

12 Senator Rosen: Thank you. We just had a hearing about
13 that in Homeland Security yesterday, bringing back
14 particularly that pharmaceutical supply chain, critical
15 medications.

16 I am going to take my next question off the record, but
17 I want you to elaborate on cyber domain awareness that you
18 spoke about. But my time is up so we will just submit that.
19 Thank you again.

20 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Rosen.

21 Senator Budd, please.

22 Senator Budd: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and again,
23 thank you both for being here. General Richardson, it was
24 great to sit down with you yesterday and have a helpful
25 conversation.

1 Following up a little bit on Senator Rosen's questions
2 about foreign military sales, I have got a couple of yes-or-
3 no questions about the process, and I have asked similar
4 questions of other combatant commanders. General
5 Richardson, is the current FMS process fast and flexible
6 enough to meet our foreign partners' security needs in your
7 AOR?

8 General Richardson: No, Senator.

9 Senator Budd: Does the transfer of U.S. defense
10 articles build our partners' capacity to provide for their
11 own defense?

12 General Richardson: Yes, it does, Senator.

13 Senator Budd: Is China increasing arms exports to any
14 other countries in your AOR?

15 General Richardson: Yes, Senator.

16 Senator Budd: Is the United States still the security
17 partner of choice in your AOR?

18 General Richardson: The U.S. is the security partner
19 of choice, Senator, yes.

20 Senator Budd: Thank you. Is the United States at risk
21 of losing that security partner of choice status to China?

22 General Richardson: Yes, Senator.

23 Senator Budd: And if you would explain a little bit
24 about how FMS challenges are impacting strategic competition
25 with China in your AOR.

1 General Richardson: Yes. So the ability to be able to
2 deliver quickly. I think that there is also a backlog from
3 COVID and the impacts that our own private sector and
4 industries had to take. And being able to not be a year or
5 2 years behind delivery. Again, we do not need a lot in
6 this region. A little goes a long way. And when we are
7 talking about one country needing one King Air 250 maritime
8 patrol aircraft or four coastal patrol vessels or six helos,
9 we are talking about something that is not that large but
10 that they need to get after the transnational criminal
11 organizations, the malign activity that occurs in their
12 countries. And then that impacts, provides some stability.
13 It curbs irregular migration. It keeps the flow down if our
14 partner nations can provide that security and stability for
15 their countries.

16 Senator Budd: Thank you for that.

17 General VanHerck, again thank you for being here as
18 well. The North Carolina National Guard currently has
19 personnel mobilized to the southern border in support of
20 CBP, Customs and Border Patrol. We are very proud of them
21 and we want to make sure our troops have all the resources
22 they need to help secure the border.

23 Are there additional resources we could provide that
24 would make the southwest border deployment more effective?

25 General VanHerck: Senator, I am comfortable with the

1 resources I have based on the mission and authorities I have
2 right now.

3 Senator Budd: Thank you. So nothing else needed?
4 They have everything they needed?

5 General VanHerck: Their commanders have not asked for
6 anything to me. They are working for me in their Title 10
7 mobilization capacity and I am not aware of any asks.

8 Senator Budd: Thank you. And for both of you, we know
9 that illicit drugs are not the only thing being trafficked
10 through your AORs and into the United States. Human
11 trafficking is an all-too-common occurrence, and just this
12 week we learned that groups of Chinese nationals are paying
13 coyotes a premium to be smuggled across the southern border.

14 And from your perspectives, what is driving this
15 humanitarian crisis in your respective AORs, and what
16 resources would be helpful to enhance your work in
17 countering the human trafficking side?

18 General Richardson first.

19 General Richardson: So I would say the security
20 cooperation funding is my main lever, Senator, and that
21 really empowers the partner nation militaries and their
22 security forces to be able to handle that. And that malign
23 activity, as you said, is not just narcotics. It is human
24 trafficking. It is illegal mining. It is illegal logging,
25 illegal fishing. It is counterfeit goods. It is the whole

1 money laundering piece. They are more powerful, they are
2 more sophisticated, they are corrupt, and they drive
3 violence and irregular migration. And strengthening our
4 partner nations to be able to handle that is what makes them
5 stronger and then generally ends up helping us in the
6 homeland, where those malign activities do not end up on our
7 southwest border.

8 Senator Budd: Thank you. General VanHerck?

9 General VanHerck: Yeah, thank you. So the problems, I
10 call the symptoms. It is the human trafficking, migration,
11 those kinds of things, are driven by an instability created
12 by transnational criminal organizations. If you do not want
13 your family to live within that environment you are going to
14 try to get out, and you are willing to pay whatever it is to
15 get out of there. That is part of their business model.

16 I would also say natural disasters. They have had
17 several major hurricanes in Mexico and Central America
18 within the last few years. And also COVID. That created an
19 environment where folks who wanton leave, and they want to
20 come to the United States, and transnational criminal
21 organizations are seizing on that opportunity as part of
22 their business model.

23 We will not interdict our way out. This requires a
24 strategy to go after transnational criminal organizations.
25 We know how to do this as a nation -- cut off the funding,

1 cut off the weapons. Seize on those opportunities.

2 Interdiction will not get us out of this problem.

3 Senator Budd: Thank you both. My time has expired.

4 Mr. Chairman, I will be submitting a question for the
5 record.

6 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Budd.

7 Senator Blumenthal, please.

8 Senator Blumenthal: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank
9 you both for your service and for being here today.

10 I want to focus on Russia for the moment, and
11 particular, General VanHerck, the resources that you have,
12 NORAD and NORTHCOM, in the Arctic area. Do you think those
13 resources are sufficient to protect our national security?
14 Should they be enhanced?

15 General VanHerck: Senator, no, I do not think I have
16 the infrastructure, the communications, the ability to
17 respond and be persistent in the Arctic.

18 Senator Blumenthal: What kind of additional resources
19 do you think should be provided?

20 General VanHerck: Yeah, I would point back to the
21 report that NDAA directed me to do, that I provided to
22 Congress, that gives a list of the challenges that I face.
23 I need additional communications capability, data and
24 information sharing, the ability to be persistent, so fuel
25 north of Dutch Harbor, Alaska. We need to do more research

1 and development on capabilities that are going to go into
2 the Arctic platforms to ensure they operate. When you send
3 platforms into the Arctic and they are non-functioning, that
4 is a concern for me. I can talk more in a classified
5 environment.

6 The infrastructure is the biggest concern. So in a
7 layered defense concept I need to have forces forward. That
8 would include at Thule, Greenland, in Canada as well. So
9 NORAD in Canada has to be part of this discussion as well.
10 We need persistence. That requires icebreakers. We, as a
11 nation, are in a bad shape when it comes to icebreakers, and
12 I fully support the Coast Guard's plan. We need to go
13 faster.

14 Senator Blumenthal: The Coast Guard needs more
15 icebreakers in that area. Do you agree?

16 General VanHerck: I do agree.

17 Senator Blumenthal: General, have you seen any effect
18 in terms of the Russian resources or threat as a result of
19 the Ukrainian operation?

20 General VanHerck: So I am not aware of any direct
21 kinetic threat to the homeland. We continue to monitor the
22 cyber domain, and especially through their proxy actors. I
23 can talk in a classified environment. I am most concerned
24 about that cyber domain. I would point out that while
25 Russia appears to be a failure in the land domain in Ukraine

1 they still maintain significant strategic capabilities to
2 hold our homeland at risk, and we have seen them just as
3 active, actually more active globally, to include in the
4 NORTHCOM AOR, such as sailing the Gorshkov with hypersonic
5 missiles just a couple of months ago, through my AOR and
6 into General Richardson's AOR, and more persistent submarine
7 activities that can hold our nation at risk.

8 Senator Blumenthal: Let me ask you both, maybe
9 beginning with General Richardson, the Wagner Group has been
10 very active in Ukraine. It has been very active in Africa.
11 Have you seen any evidence of its malign activities in your
12 command?

13 General Richardson: Russian malign activity is alive
14 and well in SOUTHCOM, and in my statement I talked about the
15 disinformation campaign. Over 31 million followers now on
16 Russia Today Español and Sputnik Mundo. They do not play by
17 the rules. They do not have any rules. And they pose
18 journalists to be legitimate journalists. They are not.
19 Twitter bots are off the charts, and these especially
20 increase right before elections in our partner nations.

21 And so it is very concerning, but it is very much alive
22 and well with Cuba, Nicaragua, Venezuela that Russia
23 continues to keep their alliances with.

24 Senator Blumenthal: Thank you for that. That is very
25 helpful. And do they operate also through proxies, like the

1 Wagner Group?

2 General Richardson: Yes, Senator, they do.

3 Senator Blumenthal: In your command, General VanHerck,
4 what have you seen?

5 General VanHerck: Russia is active. As you know, the
6 Mexican military utilizes Russian helicopters. I would love
7 to see those helicopters go. They have asked, through
8 foreign military sales, for options. We do not move fast
9 enough, the question we got earlier about foreign military
10 sales, to deliver capability to basically punt the Russians
11 out of Mexico.

12 I would also point out that from a space perspective
13 that Russia is actively seeking, under academic and research
14 facilities, access for space monitoring in my AOR as well.
15 I will just leave it at that. I will talk to you more in a
16 classified environment about that. But it is alive and well
17 right here in the NORTHCOM and NORAD AORs.

18 Senator Blumenthal: Thank you. I agree with you about
19 the helicopters, by the way. We should be providing
20 American helicopters, not relying on Russian helicopters.

21 General VanHerck: Yes. Can I point out one more
22 thing?

23 Senator Blumenthal: Sure.

24 General VanHerck: I have been working for more than a
25 year after I committed to provide radars to the Mexicans for

1 domain awareness for transnational criminal organization and
2 drug control. We still have not been able to donate those
3 radars. The process is too slow.

4 Senator Blumenthal: Thank you. Thank you both for
5 your testimony. Very informative and helpful. Thank you.

6 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Blumenthal.

7 Let me note that the vote has started, and recognize
8 Senator Sullivan.

9 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I want
10 to thank both of the witnesses today for their outstanding
11 service to our country and excellent testimony. General
12 VanHerck, is this your last hearing?

13 General VanHerck: It is my last hearing in front of
14 this committee. I am sure there will be others.

15 Senator Sullivan: So I am sure you are sad about that.

16 General VanHerck: Senator, I actually enjoy the
17 opportunity. It is a great chance to tell our story. I
18 have been telling it for 3 years. Recent events have
19 brought it further into the light.

20 Senator Sullivan: Well, I want to compliment you both,
21 but I want to compliment you in particular on your career in
22 the military and your outstanding work that you did over the
23 last several months. It was a busy time for NORTHCOM, and I
24 think you led the troops of Northern Command exceptionally
25 well, not just the last couple of months but during your

1 tenure. So thank you for that.

2 I do want to reference -- can you do a quick shout-out
3 to the men and women in Alaska, their operations over the
4 last couple of months and what they were doing on a regular
5 basis, whether it is Chinese spy balloons or Russian Bear
6 bombers. Just your thoughts, very quickly, on General Nahom
7 and the team up there, including the Guard and Reserves.

8 General VanHerck: Yeah. Some exceptional work, not
9 only in Alaska but across the Department, especially when it
10 comes to the high-altitude balloon. That was Ph.D.-level
11 employment tracking. But most importantly the engagement.

12 That balloon went down, as you know, on the ice shelf
13 off the coast of northern Alaska with limited infrastructure
14 to support, and the National Guard stepped up, Tory Saxe and
15 his team, and General Nahom, to do incredible work, in just
16 incredibly challenging conditions, and monitoring additional
17 threats to our homeland. So I could not be more proud of
18 the entire team.

19 Senator Sullivan: Thank you on that. And Mr.
20 Chairman, I think this hearing has clearly, clearly
21 highlighted the need for serious FMS reform. Senator Budd
22 and I were in the Middle East on a codel with Senator Rosen,
23 Senator Kelly, a number of us, and everywhere we went our
24 allies, our military were like, "You have got fix FMS. It
25 is killing us." So I think that is something we need to be

1 looking at hard during this NDAA.

2 General VanHerck, can you briefly touch on the
3 highlighted challenges of domain awareness? You have been
4 talking about this for 3 years, but I think the Chinese spy
5 balloon and other recent activities have really driven home
6 what you have been talking about, and how we need to do it
7 more rapidly and in a timely manner.

8 General VanHerck: Yeah. So the bottom line, Senator,
9 is if you cannot detect something, you cannot defeat it, and
10 you certainly cannot deter. And so what has happened since
11 Shock and Awe, our operations in the Middle East, is Russia
12 and China, particularly, have developed capabilities to hold
13 our homeland at risk, to reduce our decision space, delay
14 and disrupt our flow. My challenge is to detect those
15 capabilities.

16 We have assumed, for decades, that the homeland is a
17 safe and secure environment, two moats on each side,
18 friendly nations on each side. That model is gone, and my
19 ability to detect those threats, whether they be undersea to
20 on orbit and in cyberspace has not kept pace with the
21 threat. That reduces decision space for our nation's senior
22 leader, it erodes strategic stability, and increases the
23 risk of strategic deterrence failures.

24 Senator Sullivan: Let me ask you, it is a multi-part
25 question and I would like you to answer it in the time I

1 have left. I have appreciated Senators Peters, King,
2 Tuberville, Blumenthal all raising the issues of the Arctic
3 and your ability to currently monitor and respond to threats
4 against the homeland, specifically in the Arctic.

5 Now can you also explain why the Arctic, why the Alaska
6 avenues of approach are so important, not just to Alaska --
7 we want to protect the great state of Alaska, my state --
8 but we also recognize, and you recognize, that Alaska often
9 is the avenue of approach with our adversaries' weapons
10 systems to attack the Lower 48, if they were going to do
11 that, whether that is Chicago, Miami, or New York.

12 So could you explain a little bit on the issue of what
13 you need more in the Arctic -- I appreciate your leadership
14 on this -- and the domain awareness issues that relate to
15 the importance of those assets in Alaska, not just for
16 Alaska but for the whole country.

17 General VanHerck: Yeah, Senator. So Alaska may be the
18 most strategic location on the planet.

19 Senator Sullivan: And I think I have said that a few
20 times before here, Mr. Chairman. That is Billy Mitchell's
21 famous quote. Correct?

22 General VanHerck: It is. So deploying from Alaska,
23 short to the Indo-Pacific, short to the Yukon AOR, shortest
24 avenue approach for ballistic missiles from Russia,
25 potentially China and DPRK to our homeland.

1 You know, allowing China and Russia to move forward
2 with putting ballistic missile submarines, due to the ice
3 now receding, in close proximity to Alaska and our homeland,
4 seriously erodes my ability to provide adequate threat
5 warning, capabilities, domain awareness. So I hope the Air
6 Force comes forward with an unfunded request to accelerate
7 the Wedgetail. The AWACS is worn out. We need a Wedgetail,
8 and we need it much faster, so I can monitor things in the
9 Arctic as well.

10 The communication capabilities, I hope that terminals
11 are funded for SpaceX, Starlink capabilities to give us the
12 domain awareness, and that we accelerate over-the-horizon
13 radar, and then more broadly think about globally integrated
14 air and missile defense, which would include sensors in
15 Alaska, strategic sensors in Alaska. We need to get long-
16 range, discriminating radar online sooner and utilize that
17 data better for deterrence purposes but if required, defeat
18 purposes.

19 Senator Sullivan: Great. Thanks again to both of you,
20 and again, General, thank you for your outstanding service
21 to our country for decades. We very much appreciate you
22 here on this committee.

23 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Sullivan.

24 General VanHerck, General Richardson, thank you for
25 your outstanding testimony today.

1 We have a vote on so we will vote, but I would announce
2 that we will reconvene in approximately 15 minutes in SV-217
3 for the closed session.

4 With that I will adjourn the open session, and thank
5 you both.

6 [Whereupon, at 11:44 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25