

Stenographic Transcript  
Before the

COMMITTEE ON  
ARMED SERVICES

## **UNITED STATES SENATE**

HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON POSTURE OF UNITED  
STATES NORTHERN COMMAND AND UNITED STATES  
SOUTHERN COMMAND IN REVIEW OF THE DEFENSE  
AUTHORIZATION REQUEST FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 AND THE  
FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM

Thursday, March 14, 2024

Washington, D.C.

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1 HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON POSTURE OF UNITED STATES  
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6 Thursday, March 14, 2024

7  
8 U.S. Senate

9 Committee on Armed Services

10 Washington, D.C.

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12 The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:30 a.m. in  
13 Room SH-216, Hart Senate Office Building, Hon. Jack Reed,  
14 chairman of the committee, presiding.

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

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

3           Chairman Reed: Good morning. The Committee meets  
4 today to receive testimony from General Gregory Guillot,  
5 Commander of U.S. Northern Command and North American  
6 Aerospace Defense Command, and General Laura Richardson,  
7 Commander of U.S. Southern Command. This is General  
8 Guillot's first posture hearing as NORTHCOM commander, and  
9 we welcome you, sir. I would also note that this is General  
10 Richardson's last appearance before the Committee in her  
11 current role. General, I would like to express my  
12 appreciation for your decades of admirable service to the  
13 nation, including your outstanding leadership of our  
14 SOUTHCOM forces. Thank you very much, ma'am.

15           I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the  
16 ongoing crisis in Haiti. The situation is very concerning,  
17 and I understand that U.S. military forces have been  
18 deployed to augment security at our embassy in Port-au-  
19 Prince and evacuate non-essential personnel. This crisis  
20 involves both of your commands to varying degrees, and I  
21 would like to know what resources or support you need to  
22 respond.

23           U.S. Northern Command is key to our national security,  
24 as the principal command for protecting the American  
25 homeland. Indeed, the first of the four priorities outlined

1 in the National Defense Strategy is, quote, "Defending the  
2 homeland, paced to the growing multi-domain threat posed by  
3 the People's Republic of China." As we consider threats  
4 from China and other competitors, our very concept of  
5 homeland defense must evolve. General Guillot, I understand  
6 NORTHCOM published the first Homeland Defense Policy  
7 Guidance to meet this challenge, and I would ask for an  
8 update on the status of its implementation and how it will  
9 transform the homeland defense plans of the Department.

10 The urgency of this mission has been made clear over  
11 the past year with the incursions of a Chinese surveillance  
12 balloon and other unidentified aerial phenomena in our  
13 airspace. These events raised concerns that NORTHCOM and  
14 NORAD may have an awareness gap that needs to be resolved.  
15 America's skies and seas must be secure to protect our  
16 citizens, and the Department must pursue technologies that  
17 provide forward detection. General, I would be interested  
18 in your assessment of these potential awareness gaps and  
19 what additional tools or resources are needed to overcome  
20 them.

21 Regionally, NORTHCOM also provides support to the U.S.  
22 law enforcement mission by helping to counter cartels  
23 engaged in drug smuggling, human trafficking, and money  
24 laundering across the southwest border. The Committee would  
25 appreciate your views on the success of security cooperation

1 efforts with the Mexican Army and Navy, and what role  
2 NORTHCOM has in supporting the Department of Homeland  
3 Security in border security operations.

4 Turning to Southern Command, General Richardson, your  
5 command faces growing challenges from China and Russia in  
6 Latin America. The political and economic instability in  
7 the region presents a situation that our adversaries are  
8 seeking to exploit to increase their own influence. China,  
9 in particular, is expanding its presence in the region,  
10 including through investments in strategic infrastructure  
11 such as the Port of Balboa in Panama, 5G telecommunications,  
12 and an expanding network of space tracking installations.  
13 General, I am interested in your assessment of the challenge  
14 from near-peer competitors in Latin America, and how we  
15 might work strategically with our partners in the region to  
16 build resilience against these activities.

17 SOUTHCOM, like NORTHCOM, continues to work closely with  
18 the U.S. interagency to support counter-narcotic and  
19 counter-transnational criminal organization, or TCO,  
20 missions. I am concerned about the growing threats from  
21 TCOs and synthetic opioid trafficking, including fentanyl,  
22 which are contributing to more than 100,000 overdose deaths  
23 each year in the United States. General Richardson, I would  
24 ask for an update on SOUTHCOM's work with partner nations  
25 and other U.S. government agencies in counter-narcotic and

1 counter-TCO efforts, given SOUTHCOM's limited force posture  
2 and resources.

3 Finally, we know that insecurity throughout the  
4 SOUTHCOM area is contributing to the flow of migrants north  
5 to the U.S. border. Economic instability, violence, and  
6 corruption continue to be a major source of insecurity in  
7 much of the region, especially in the Northern Triangle  
8 countries of Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador. General  
9 Richardson, I would like to know your views on what more can  
10 be done to help improve the situation and strengthen border  
11 security throughout the region.

12 Thank you, again, to our witnesses. I look forward to  
13 your testimonies.

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

16 Let me now turn to my colleague, Senator Wicker.

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

3 Senator Wicker: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I want to  
4 thank our witnesses for being with us here.

5 Our adversaries, particularly China and Russia, are  
6 actively working to exploit America's vulnerabilities. They  
7 are doing so here at home and seeking to expand their  
8 influence in this Western Hemisphere.

9 The 2022 National Defense Strategy establishes homeland  
10 defense as its top priority. That was a year and a half  
11 ago. But the Biden administration has not matched that goal  
12 with action.

13 Year after year, the Biden administration has declined  
14 to fund NORTHCOM's request for the radars and sensors it  
15 needs for proper air defense. Numerous bases on American  
16 soil remain unable to protect themselves against small  
17 drones. This presents a clear and significant  
18 vulnerability. On top of it all, our war games continue to  
19 ignore crucial domestic resilience problems that would arise  
20 in a potential conflict.

21 The Biden administration also refuses to learn from its  
22 homeland defense mistakes. Last year's Chinese surveillance  
23 balloon lapse -- the lapse of last year's defenses with  
24 regard to the Chinese surveillance balloon -- is a case in  
25 point. Senior Biden administration defense officials

1 responded evasively to congressional oversight, and they  
2 leaked classified information selectively to deflect blame.  
3 The President's staff declined to conduct an internal review  
4 of the major air defense failure. They finally did so when  
5 this Committee mandated it in the NDAA, as presided over by  
6 our distinguished Chair.

7       The spy balloon was a significant failure, but the most  
8 pressing homeland defense crisis is the one at our southwest  
9 border. Approximately 70,000 Americans are dying annually  
10 from fentanyl overdoses. Most of the supply is synthesized  
11 in Mexico using Chinese precursor chemicals. Then it is  
12 trafficked to the United States by Mexico's criminal  
13 cartels. The crisis can only worsen as more deadly drugs  
14 flood the market.

15       The cartels are also executing an unprecedented human  
16 trafficking operation across our open border, and it is  
17 lucrative. The gangs are charging thousands of dollars for  
18 each person they traffic. The human tragedy is severe and  
19 so is the risk of terrorist infiltration. As CNN reported  
20 this past summer, a human smuggling network with ties to  
21 ISIS helped more than a dozen individuals enter our country  
22 illegally. In October, two Iranians who were on a security  
23 threat list were caught as they tried to cross the border  
24 from Mexico.

25       General Guillot, I recognize that many agencies have



1 responsibility at the southwest border, but DoD is one of  
2 them. I hope you will explain how DoD's border security  
3 contributions could be improved.

4 We also have challenges further south. I remain  
5 concerned about the growing Chinese threats in Central  
6 America and South America. The Chinese Communist Party  
7 continues to use its well-known playbook in the SOUTHCOM  
8 theater. It aggressively uses predatory economic and  
9 diplomatic practices to influence governments.

10 Simultaneously, it sets conditions to enhance its  
11 military presence, gather intelligence, and limit U.S.  
12 access and influence. Great power competition is happening  
13 right here in the Americas. We cannot ignore it.

14 Two quick examples underscore the urgency. Beijing is  
15 making Latin America dependent on Huawei for communications  
16 technology -- something they tried to do in our country  
17 -- an example of China's economic influence campaign. We  
18 see the CCP's military influence in Cuba, where we  
19 discovered a large Chinese intelligence collection center.

20 General Richardson, I look forward to hearing how these  
21 practices directly impact the stability of our region. We  
22 should understand the threat they pose to our national  
23 security. How real is it? How important is it?

24 Of course, there are other malign influences in this  
25 theater. Venezuelan President Maduro recently asserted a

1 provocative, extra-territorial claim of sovereignty over a  
2 large, oil-rich portion of the neighboring nation of Guyana.  
3 This type of instability so close to our homeland is  
4 troubling. Even more troubling is the consistent mismatch  
5 between the requirements SOUTHCOM has and the resources it  
6 receives. We need to find cost-effective ways to exert  
7 influence in this theater. For example, let's explore the  
8 use of the Office of Strategic Capital in the future.

9 I look forward to General Richardson's candid  
10 assessment of SOUTHCOM's most pressing resource and  
11 capability shortfalls, and I am eager to learn what Congress  
12 can do to help.

13 General Guillot, I note that your name rhymes with  
14 hero. Is that right?

15 General Guillot: Yes, Senator, it does.

16 Senator Wicker: Okay, good. Well, we expect both of  
17 you to live up to these expectations. Thank you.

18 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Wicker, and now let  
19 me recognize General Guillot, please.

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1           STATEMENT OF GENERAL GREGORY M. GUILLOT, USAF,  
2           COMMANDER, UNITED STATES NORTHERN COMMAND AND NORTH AMERICAN  
3           AEROSPACE DEFENSE COMMAND.

4           General Guillot: Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Wicker,  
5           and distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for  
6           the opportunity to appear before you today. It is a  
7           profound honor to command and represent the men and women of  
8           North American Aerospace Defense Command and United States  
9           Northern Command. As we speak this morning, American and  
10          Canadian military and civilian personnel from both commands  
11          are actively defending our homelands against significant,  
12          persistent threats from multiple vectors in all domains.

13          Although I have only been in command a few weeks, it is  
14          readily clear to me that the United States, Canada, and our  
15          expansive network of partners are facing an extraordinarily  
16          complex strategic environment. Competitors seeking to  
17          diminish our military and economic advantage have fielded  
18          advanced kinetic systems designed to strike civilian  
19          military infrastructure in North America, both above and  
20          below the nuclear threshold. Meanwhile, competitors have  
21          rapidly advanced and routinely used non-kinetic capabilities  
22          targeting our critical infrastructure and our essential  
23          networks.

24          Threats to the homeland are present in all domains and  
25          along all avenues of approach to include the Arctic Region.

1 As stated in the National Defense Strategy, the People's  
2 Republic of China remains our pacing challenge as the  
3 People's Liberation Army modernizes and grows at a rapid  
4 pace. The PRC's expanding nuclear capability and capacity,  
5 alongside its development of modern submarines, missiles,  
6 hypersonic weapons, all present significant challenges for  
7 homeland defense.

8 While the PRC's capabilities are growing quickly,  
9 Russia remains a threat to the homeland today and is an  
10 immediate nation state concern. Russia retains the world's  
11 largest stockpile of strategic and non-strategic nuclear  
12 weapons along with significant capacity to strike inside  
13 North America with air- and sea-launched precision  
14 conventional weapons. Despite heavy losses to its ground  
15 forces in Ukraine, Russia has invested heavily in systems  
16 that can threaten the United States such as advanced guided  
17 missile submarines, hypersonic live vehicles, ICBMs, as well  
18 as significant cyber and undersea capabilities, as well as  
19 developmental systems such as nuclear torpedo and a nuclear-  
20 powered cruise missile.

21 Meanwhile, North Korea continues its bellicose rhetoric  
22 while test launching increasingly advanced long-range  
23 missiles and expanding its ties with China and Russia.  
24 While Iran currently lacks the capability to strike North  
25 America with long-range missiles, it is investing in that

1 capability. Iran also supports violent militant groups in  
2 the Middle East and maintains a worldwide network of  
3 operational surrogates. And the most prevalent and growing  
4 threats include cyber and small, unmanned aerial systems  
5 that are being employed inside the U.S. and Canada against  
6 civilian and military infrastructure in ways that were not  
7 possible even just a few years ago.

8 With those risks firmly in mind, NORAD and NORTHCOM  
9 strive to begin homeland defense well beyond North America.  
10 To do so, both commands are working with the services and  
11 Congress to improve domain awareness in order to detect,  
12 track, and defeat threats, ranging from long-range ballistic  
13 missiles to small, unmanned aerial systems.

14 The defense of North America is an active endeavor that  
15 requires NORAD and NORTHCOM to campaign against threats in  
16 all domains, along all approaches. That effort requires  
17 seamless exchange of information with combatant commands,  
18 conventional and special operations forces, the intelligence  
19 community, and the spectrum of interagency and international  
20 partners.

21 The importance of collecting and disseminating  
22 information quickly cannot be overstated. I strongly  
23 support the Department's work to advance the Combined Joint  
24 All-Domain Command and Control concept as we seek to detect  
25 and track potential threats and share information as quickly

1 as possible with analysts, operators and decision-makers  
2 around the world.

3 Finally, upon taking command, I began a 90-day  
4 assessment to inform the Department, the Joint Force, and  
5 Congress on NORAD and NORTHCOM's ability to execute assigned  
6 tasks and make recommendations on where the commands could  
7 or should do more. Once complete I look forward to sharing  
8 my findings and updated vision on how NORAD and NORTHCOM  
9 will best execute the noble mission of homeland defense.

10 The challenges facing our homelands are real, but there  
11 should be no doubt about NORAD and NORTHCOM's resolve to  
12 deterred aggression and, if necessary, defeat threats to our  
13 nation and our citizens.

14 Again, I thank you for the opportunity to appear this  
15 morning. I look forward to working with the Committee, and  
16 I am happy to answer your questions.

17 [The prepared statement of General Guillot follows:]

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1 Chairman Reed: Thank you, General Guillot. General  
2 Richardson, please.

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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 today with  
6           General Guillot. I am honored to represent the dedicated  
7           men and women of United States Southern Command to discuss  
8           the challenges we share with our neighbors in Latin America  
9           and the Caribbean. Our national security strategy  
10          recognizes the direct link between this region's security  
11          and our own security.

12          We are harnessing the power of partnership from Team  
13          USA in support of Team Democracy by leveraging all  
14          instruments of national power -- diplomacy, information,  
15          military, and economics -- to expeditiously assist partner  
16          nations in addressing the challenges that impact our  
17          collective security.

18          This region, which is our shared neighborhood, remains  
19          under assault from a host of cross-cutting, transboundary  
20          challenges that directly threaten our homeland. I have seen  
21          these challenges intensify since I met with you last year,  
22          and this remains a call to action.

23          In almost 2 1/2 years in the command I have made it my  
24          priority to meet partners where they are, and to listen and  
25          understand the challenges that affect us all. The world is



1 at an inflection point. Our partners in the Western  
2 Hemisphere, with whom we are bonded by trade, shared values,  
3 democratic traditions, and family ties, are increasingly  
4 impacted by the interference and coercion. I have learned  
5 that our presence absolutely matters.

6 The People's Republic of China has exploited the trust  
7 of democracies in this hemisphere, using that trust to steal  
8 national secrets, intellectual property, and research  
9 related to academic, agriculture, and health care. The  
10 scope and scale of this espionage is unprecedented. Through  
11 the Belt and Road Initiative, the PRC aims to amass power  
12 and influence at the expense of the world's democracies.

13 Here in the Western Hemisphere, Latin America and  
14 Caribbean have the potential to feed and fuel the world.  
15 Understanding this, the PRC has already, and is already busy  
16 extracting and exploiting. Predatory investment practices,  
17 construction of megaports and dual-use space facilities, and  
18 criminal cyber activities are just a few of the PRC's malign  
19 activities that jeopardize the sovereignty and safety of the  
20 region.

21 Russia remains an acute threat and seeks to increase  
22 its foothold by bolstering authoritarian regimes in Cuba,  
23 Nicaragua, and Venezuela. In the last year, China, Russia,  
24 and Iran have increased their presence diplomatically,  
25 economically, and even militarily in the region. These

1 activities undermine democracies and challenge their  
2 credibility.

3 Both China and Russia exploit the presence of  
4 transnational criminal organizations and amplify their  
5 destabilizing impacts on democratic governments. TCOs  
6 traffic weapons, drugs, people, gold, lithium, rare earth  
7 minerals, commodities, and counterfeit goods while  
8 contributing to the surge of fentanyl-related deaths here at  
9 home.

10 The good news is working with our very willing partners  
11 leads to the best defense. We must use all available levers  
12 to strengthen our partnerships with the 28 like-minded  
13 democracies in this hemisphere who understand the power of  
14 working together to counter these shared threats. The  
15 United States remains the preferred and most trusted  
16 security partner in the region. We build trust through  
17 investment and security cooperation programs that train and  
18 equip our partners, our partner military and security  
19 forces, a robust joint exercise program to build  
20 interoperability, and the development and employment of  
21 emerging technologies. Moreover, we maximize the resources  
22 allocated by the Department of State's International  
23 Military Education and Training Program for military  
24 financing, for military sales, to build that  
25 interoperability and counterbalance PRC military engagements

1 and investments.

2 As the National Defense Strategy states, the U.S.  
3 derives immense benefit from a stable, peaceful, and  
4 democratic Western Hemisphere, that also reduces security  
5 threats the homeland.

6 USSOUTHCOM continues to innovate and adapt, putting  
7 integrated deterrence into action every day. We remain  
8 committed to working across all domains with allies and  
9 partners, combatant commands, the Joint Force, the U.S.  
10 interagency non-Federal entities, and the U.S. Congress to  
11 guarantee safety, security, and prosperity throughout the  
12 Western Hemisphere.

13 This is the work and promise of USSOUTHCOM, as part of  
14 Team USA, in support of Team Democracy. Thank you for your  
15 assistance in resourcing this team.

16 I would also like to recognize behind me in the  
17 audience the Interamerican Defense College class that is  
18 here today to see how the power of our United States  
19 Congress and how the Department of Defense, and us as  
20 combatant commanders talk about our regions.

21 I look forward to your questions. Thank you.

22 [The prepared statement of General Richardson follows:]

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1 Chairman Reed: Well, thank you very much. At the  
2 suggestion of my colleague, would all the students please  
3 stand to be recognized.

4 [Applause.]

5 Chairman Reed: And on behalf of my colleagues let me  
6 say bienvenidos, gracias.

7 Please be seated.

8 General Guillot, we have had widely reported  
9 penetrations of our airspace by unmanned vehicles. Has DoD  
10 developed defined standard operating procedures for  
11 individual base commanders in dealing with these vehicles,  
12 because they could show up and be detected minutes before  
13 they would be penetrating the space. Do we have a system or  
14 SOPs to deal with them?

15 General Guillot: Chairman, shortly after taking  
16 command and beginning my 90-day assessment I realized that  
17 the challenge of the large increase in the number of  
18 incursions by UASs was something that was going to drive and  
19 change probably the direction of my first year in command  
20 because of that acute number.

21 The services do have authorities, but work remains to  
22 be done to ensure that they are resource equipped, and that  
23 we have standardized operating procedures to address those  
24 threats. And also work remains to be done, Chairman, to be  
25 able to use especially the non-kinetic capabilities that can

1 bring down those systems safely without interfering with our  
2 airspace structure.

3 At this present time, NORAD and NORTHCOM do not have a  
4 designated role in that, but in my recommendations at the  
5 end of the 90-day assessment I will point out ways that I  
6 think that NORAD and NORTHCOM could and should play a role  
7 in bringing that standardization that you mentioned.

8 Chairman Reed: And this process would involve other  
9 agencies such as the Department of Justice, the FBI,  
10 Homeland Security? Are we working at that joint agency  
11 level?

12 General Guillot: Yes, Chairman. They have some  
13 authorities now, and then as you alluded to, we would need  
14 to bring them all together. So we are bringing each  
15 capability together against the same incursion threat.

16 Chairman Reed: Thank you. General Richardson, the  
17 situation in Haiti is deteriorating rapidly. On March 10th,  
18 we sent in augmentation forces to the embassy. There has  
19 already been some extractions of personnel from the embassy  
20 in Haiti. And then on March 11th, the Secretary of Defense  
21 increased DoD's contribution of up to \$200 million to  
22 provide logistics support for a security force to come in to  
23 Haiti.

24 Could you just give us your sense of the implications  
25 of the situation in Haiti for the United States and the

1 region?

2 General Richardson: Thank you, Senator and Chairman.  
3 Thank you for the question. So certainly USSOUTHCOM has a  
4 wide range of contingency plans, so we are ready for  
5 whatever would be required for a Department of Defense  
6 response. And we have conducted two missions that have been  
7 widely publicized of increasing security, and it is routine  
8 actions that would take place for any of our embassies  
9 across the globe.

10 And the situation in Haiti has been deteriorating over  
11 the past couple of weeks. So with the announcement that has  
12 come and the political negotiations that have been happening  
13 and occurring, the violence has been tamped down somewhat  
14 over the past couple of days. And so certainly the  
15 political solution seems to be working, and hopefully that  
16 continues on a positive path. But if not, we have, as I  
17 said, the contingency plans ready to respond from  
18 USSOUTHCOM.

19 Chairman Reed: Thank you. You pointed out the  
20 penetration of your AO by China and Russia. It seems that  
21 one of the leading edges of China's activities is economic  
22 -- buying ports, getting the Belt and Road project underway.  
23 And there is one other area too, and that is their  
24 willingness or their eagerness to acquire more interest in  
25 the Inter-American Development Bank. And I understand that

1 Congress must pass legislation to authorize the United  
2 States to buy the shares before the Chinese do. Is that  
3 accurate? And if the Chinese beat us out, would that be a  
4 problem?

5 General Richardson: That would be a problem, Chairman,  
6 and I think through the U.S. government's initiative with  
7 the American Partnership for Economic Prosperity, APEP,  
8 where the Administration hosted 11 Latin American heads of  
9 state in Washington, D.C., in November of 2023, and this  
10 would be part of that, our ability to invest in critical  
11 infrastructure through the Inter-American Development Bank  
12 and the Development Finance Corporation, DFC. And so these  
13 shares that are coming up, \$75 million in shares for the  
14 U.S. to purchase those shares in the Inter-American  
15 Development Bank. And this bank has been established in  
16 1959, to do exactly these things, to invest in critical  
17 infrastructure within the region.

18 Chairman Reed: And if we do not do it, the Chinese  
19 will.

20 General Richardson: Exactly right, Chairman.

21 Chairman Reed: Thank you. Senator Wicker, please.

22 Senator Wicker: Thank you. Let's just stay in  
23 SOUTHCOM. Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro took  
24 unprecedented steps to establish control over the contested  
25 Essequibo region of neighboring Guyana. This violated an

1 International Court of Justice ruling. The region accounts  
2 for two-thirds of Guyana's territory and extensive offshore  
3 oil riches.

4 How has this impacted the security of the region, and  
5 particularly the fact that Venezuela has deployed light  
6 tanks, armored carriers, and missile-equipped patrol boats  
7 along the affected border?

8 General Richardson: So, Senator, it absolutely has,  
9 and in terms of our relationship with Guyana, who is a very  
10 willing partner and a democracy in the region, very  
11 important partner, and we see that what the Maduro regime  
12 and Venezuela are doing and the activities they are taking  
13 against this democracy with an unjustified claim. And so  
14 our support for Guyana, we have shown that from the U.S.  
15 government, and through all the instruments of national  
16 power, the diplomacy, the military, and certainly --

17 Senator Wicker: Do you have directions from the White  
18 House or from your superiors in the Department as to what we  
19 should do?

20 General Richardson: So as we work my engagements and  
21 what we do with security cooperation we have a very robust  
22 plan with Guyana, and we have continued on that plan, and  
23 that has been coordinated with our U.S. government.

24 Senator Wicker: Can you briefly describe the plan?

25 General Richardson: So it consists of visits by folks



1 within my command and the engagements that we do, the  
2 exercises, the subject matter exchanges. We have continued  
3 with all of those. Not trying to exacerbate the situation  
4 but continued on path with our regular engagements that have  
5 been scheduled, and we have not halted any of that.

6 Senator Wicker: Is the international community  
7 assisting us in that regard?

8 General Richardson: The international community is  
9 very much assisting, and I would say our allies, as part of  
10 our Western Hemisphere Framework that we signed in  
11 USSOUTHCOM with our allies that work in the region -- the  
12 U.K., Canada, the Netherlands, and also France. And so as  
13 we work together to coordinate our activities they also have  
14 activities and engagements that they do in the region and  
15 are doing in Guyana, and those are also coordinated.

16 Senator Wicker: Thank you very much.

17 Let me switch to General Guillot, deployment of  
18 National Guard troops on the border. I think maybe a lot of  
19 American's do not understand how often we do this. But it  
20 has worsened considerably. The problem is not the lead  
21 agency but it has deployed troops there in 18 of the  
22 previous 21 years. They are called temporary deployments,  
23 but it is beginning to look like permanent.

24 There is a difference in the way we deploy and notify  
25 those units, is there not, in the sense that if it is a

1 temporary deployment they get 180 days' notice in advance.  
2 If it is regular deployment it is a year and a half. So  
3 could you discuss that with us, and is my understanding  
4 correct there, General?

5 General Guillot: Senator, your understanding is  
6 correct. The primary difference that we see in Northern  
7 Command is we are in support, as you mentioned, so therefore  
8 we wait for the request from the lead agency -- in this case  
9 Customs and Border Protection -- and a request for  
10 assistance that is reviewed and then has ultimately been  
11 approved by the Department of Defense. And then at that  
12 point we can start trying to match, through the joint staff,  
13 and the National Guard, the correct unit to support that,  
14 based on the needs that are in that request for assistance.

15 As you alluded to --

16 Senator Wicker: Would it be helpful if we treated it  
17 as a permanent deployment?

18 General Guillot: Senator, I think more than treating  
19 it as a permanent deployment would be earlier notification  
20 of the requirements. Since those change that allows us to  
21 tailor the National Guard force to meet the changing  
22 requirements of the Customs and Border Protection, whereas  
23 if we had a permanent force we might have permanently the  
24 wrong type of unit to support.

25 However, to your point, what we have established, and

1 we must maintain, is having a permanent command and control  
2 structure over there so we have continuity and  
3 predictability in how we present the forces and work with  
4 the Customs and Border Protection.

5 Senator Wicker: Do we need to give you different  
6 authority in that regard, or is it just a matter of the  
7 Department --

8 General Guillot: Senator, I think we have the -- I am  
9 sorry.

10 Senator Wicker: Okay.

11 General Guillot: Senator, we have the authorities that  
12 we need. The thing that we would most benefit from, as you  
13 alluded to, is time, time to pick and train and prepare the  
14 National Guard units that are going to go down there and  
15 support the CBP.

16 Senator Wicker: Well, to both of you, tell us what you  
17 need and we will try to get it for you. Thank you, sir.

18 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator Wicker.  
19 Senator King, please.

20 Senator King: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In my notes,  
21 since you have been talking, I have written the word "gap"  
22 about five times, so I am going to talk about gaps. General  
23 Guillot, do we have a censor gap at NORAD? We learn more  
24 from failures than we do from successes. What did we learn  
25 from the balloon incursion about the adequacy of our

1 sensors, which is essentially the basis of NORAD?

2 General Guillot: Senator, we learned a great deal. To  
3 the gaps, what we have is we had some gaps in the layered  
4 approach, where we want to be able to detect with domain  
5 awareness from satellites down to traditional air --

6 Senator King: One of the problems is low altitude,  
7 isn't it?

8 General Guillot: That is right, sir -- all the way  
9 down to the surface, and then even in the undersea.

10 We were able to address many of those on initiatives  
11 that were started by my predecessor, General VanHerck, by  
12 changing the sensitivity of the radars that we do have, and  
13 that has allowed us to have better domain awareness in that  
14 regime that you mentioned.

15 However, there are some gaps that will be manifesting  
16 in the near future. Those are currently scheduled to be  
17 addressed by the over-the-horizon radar, by the HPTSS, which  
18 is the Hypersonic and Ballistic Tracking Space Sensor  
19 system. Those capabilities are essential to fill gaps that  
20 are growing because of the increased capability of the  
21 adversaries.

22 Senator King: I would suggest that that is an urgent  
23 need, given the experience that we have had but also given  
24 the incredible militarization of the Arctic coast by Russia  
25 and the development of drone by. All those things added

1 together create a significant risk. I hope you can come to  
2 us with what you need because this is something we need to  
3 do in a hurry. We can't wait 5 years to develop this  
4 capacity.

5 General Guillot: Senator, we will.

6 Senator King: We also have an icebreaker gap --

7 General Guillot: Yes, sir.

8 Senator King: -- in terms of our ability to operate in  
9 the Arctic. As the Arctic Ocean opens up it is becoming, as  
10 I mentioned, more militarized by the Russians, and a much  
11 more important body of water. It is like we have suddenly  
12 discovered the Mediterranean Sea. Talk to me about  
13 icebreakers. We only have one and a half icebreakers, heavy  
14 icebreakers in the Arctic.

15 General Guillot: That is correct, Senator, and we are  
16 severely outnumbered. We appreciate the Coast Guard --

17 Senator King: Yeah, I would say 40 to 1 is  
18 outnumbered.

19 General Guillot: Yes.

20 Senator King: That is the approximate number that the  
21 Russians have.

22 General Guillot: Yes, Senator, and the Chinese  
23 declaring themselves a near-Arctic nation, they intend to  
24 bring more.

25 Senator King: Yeah, I noticed when the Chinese

1 declared themselves a near-Arctic nation my position is that  
2 Maine is a near-Caribbean state.

3 [Laughter.]

4 General Guillot: I share your view, sir. We do  
5 appreciate that the Coast Guard is procuring more  
6 icebreakers, but even with those we will be severely  
7 outnumbered, and that does limit our freedom of maneuver in  
8 that region.

9 Senator King: It is basically like not having a road  
10 to get where you need to get.

11 General Guillot: Yes.

12 Senator King: General Richardson, let's talk about  
13 another gap -- drugs. Since we have been sitting here about  
14 10 Americans have died of drug overdoses, just since we  
15 began this meeting 45 minutes ago. One person a day is  
16 dying in my home state of Maine. Do you have the capacity  
17 to interdict drug shipments coming in by sea, that we know  
18 of? I have asked this question every year for about the  
19 past 10 years and I am afraid I know the answer.

20 General Richardson: Senator, so in USSOUTHCOM we have  
21 detection and monitoring mission, and that is to gain the  
22 intelligence for drug shipments --

23 Senator King: I should not have said do "you" have the  
24 capacity. Do we, does the country? You have the terrific  
25 capacity for intelligence and identification. My concern is

1 once we know about a dangerous shipment then do we have the  
2 capacity to interdict it?

3 General Richardson: And so we pass that intelligence  
4 over to law enforcement, or our partner nations, and it  
5 depends on who is close enough to do that. And so in terms  
6 of the capacity, we anticipate that we are able to, of what  
7 we know is out there, interdict about 10 percent of the  
8 known problem, with the resourcing and capabilities that we  
9 currently are given.

10 Senator King: I would emphasize that figure to our  
11 colleagues. We can interdict 10 percent of what we know of.  
12 That is inexcusable. And I do not mean it is inexcusable  
13 for you. But one of the problems, it strikes me, is when  
14 everybody is in charge, nobody is in charge. And you have  
15 got yourself, DEA, DHS, the intelligence community, and the  
16 problem is Americans are dying. In about every 10 days we  
17 have September 11th. Three thousand people die in this  
18 country every 10 days. And you used the word, in your  
19 testimony, "assault," and that is what it is. It is an  
20 assault. But we are treating it as a kind of domestic law  
21 enforcement problem when it is an assault, and most of it is  
22 coming from outside of our country.

23 So I hope that you will work with your colleagues,  
24 perhaps form a task group to get after this problem of  
25 interdiction, and if we do not have capacity, if we do not

1 have enough Coast Guard cutters or DHS does not have the  
2 capacity, tell us. Tell us, because we cannot solve a  
3 problem if we do not know what it is. We know the general  
4 shape of the problem, but you are in a position to tell us  
5 what is missing and what you can do in order to help protect  
6 this country.

7 General Richardson: And Senator, I would offer that we  
8 cannot interdict our way out of this problem, and we have  
9 got to be able to go after the networks. We have got to be  
10 able to go after the drug labs. We have got to be able to  
11 follow the money and the money laundering, which is fueling  
12 this very rich environment that the transnational criminal  
13 organizations --

14 Senator King: Well, we agree, and we have to talk  
15 about the demand side here, and treatment, and prevention. I  
16 totally agree with that. But this is a discrete problem  
17 that I think we do have some capacity to deal with.

18 Final question, and this is not about a gap. What is  
19 your overall assessment of the Chinese incursion into Latin  
20 America, specifically they have been doing this for some  
21 time, doing infrastructure projects. In other parts of the  
22 world there is some development of buyer's remorse, that the  
23 Chinese have not performed as they were expected, that the  
24 debt colonialism is becoming a problem. Is that occurring  
25 in Latin America, in your view?



1           General Richardson: Absolutely, Senator, and my  
2 concern, as a combatant commander for the region, and 22 of  
3 31 countries in the region have signed on to the Belt and  
4 Road Initiative, but it is all investment, a lot of  
5 investment in critical infrastructure where the big money  
6 projects are. That is deepwater ports, 5G, space, safe city  
7 smart city technology to be able to spy on the populations.

8           And so with these state-owned enterprises from the RPC,  
9 and my concern is being able to use those for military  
10 application, if required, and it is in all of the critical  
11 infrastructure.

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

13           Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator King. Senator  
14 Fischer, please.

15           Senator Fischer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank  
16 you both for being here today.

17           General Guillot, I have appreciated our discussions on  
18 the challenges of detecting, characterizing, and tracking  
19 potential threats to our homeland. Most Americans are fully  
20 aware of the incident with the Chinese balloon, but NORTHCOM  
21 has other responsibilities as well, especially with  
22 protecting the homeland from the more advanced threats that  
23 are out there, which would include ballistic and cruise  
24 missiles.

25           Why is having that improved domain awareness, which is

1 the ability to detect and track the threats and also to  
2 provide a clear threat picture of what is out there and to  
3 be able to discriminate what you are seeing, why is that so  
4 important to defending our homeland?

5 General Guillot: Senator, it is important because it  
6 gives us time, time to inform leaders, make decisions, and  
7 enact defeat mechanisms to defeat these threats that are  
8 coming in. You mentioned the discrimination capability. As  
9 the threat becomes more advanced and they can put out  
10 decoys, we could needlessly shoot interceptors at objects  
11 that are not a threat, but having the discrimination radar  
12 makes sure that we can actually shoot and kill the warhead  
13 that would be a threat.

14 And the other thing I would quickly say, Senator, is  
15 the capabilities are growing so much by the adversary that  
16 domain awareness that you mentioned needs to push out  
17 further away from our shores, detect earlier, characterize  
18 them earlier, as you mentioned, so we have more time to  
19 employ the defense capabilities that we have.

20 Senator Fischer: Are we moving quickly enough?

21 General Guillot: Senator, we are right on the edge. I  
22 think that we are moving quickly, and I appreciate all the  
23 support from this body and the services. But we cannot  
24 pause at all because the adversary, and multiple  
25 adversaries, not just one, are growing very, very quickly,

1 and it really is at an alarming rate.

2 Senator Fischer: I am concerned about what we are  
3 seeing in the President's budget request for fiscal year  
4 2025. The Administration decreases spending for the glide-  
5 phase interceptor program, and it is stating that it is  
6 going to be delivered in 2035. Yet in the NDAA of fiscal  
7 year 2024, in Section 1666, that requires the Missile  
8 Defense Agency to achieve an initial operational capability  
9 of that program by December 31, 2029. How do you respond to  
10 my concerns?

11 General Guillot: Senator, my response is that I view  
12 hypersonics as perhaps the most destabilizing threat that we  
13 have out there because of the fast speed, and more than  
14 that, the maneuverability and the unpredictability on where  
15 it will impact, as opposed to a ballistic missile which is  
16 fairly predictable.

17 I have worked very closely, in my short period of time,  
18 with MDA. I am pleased with some of the efforts that they  
19 are doing to intercept in the glide phase, and then also  
20 using existing systems such as the SM-6 to adapt against  
21 that threat. And then I am also very pleased with what MDA  
22 is doing with the HBTSS, the satellite capability to detect  
23 and track hypersonics.

24 Senator Fischer: You know, just yesterday we heard  
25 from a senior analyst with the National Air and Space

1 Intelligence Center. He told Congress that, quote, "China  
2 now has the world's leading hypersonic arsenal." So given  
3 the pace that we are seeing with Russia and with China as  
4 they advance their hypersonic weapons programs, should the  
5 Department accelerate the development of those hypersonic  
6 defense systems, really, when it is technically feasible to  
7 do so?

8 General Guillot: Senator, I support moving all of our  
9 capabilities against the strategic threats that you  
10 mentioned as far left as possible, based on the growing and  
11 consistently growing capabilities of our adversaries.

12 Senator Fischer: Thank you. General Richardson, thank  
13 you for all the work that you have done and your service to  
14 this country. When we talk about China and the Belt and  
15 Road Initiatives, you answered Senator King on that. But  
16 when you are looking at the longer-term strategies that  
17 China has in the buying that they continue to do in your  
18 area of responsibility, how serious a threat is it?

19 General Richardson: I look at it as a serious threat  
20 because of the ability of these state-owned, controlled by  
21 the government, companies. If I just take the Panama Canal  
22 and the five state-owned enterprises that are along either  
23 side of the Panama Canal, and that is a very important,  
24 strategic line of communication. And so there are a lot of  
25 large implications there in terms of all the critical

1 infrastructure, the deepwater ports, the 5G space, safe city  
2 smart city technology. So very concerning.

3 Senator Fischer: Thank you, and thank you, General  
4 Guillot. You made comments, I think it was yesterday,  
5 before the House committee, or two days ago, before the  
6 House Armed Services Committee, about the possibility of  
7 seeing, in the very near future, Chinese aircraft's  
8 closeness to our homeland. I thank you for bringing that to  
9 our attention.

10 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Fischer. Senator  
11 Hirono, please.

12 Senator Hirono: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you  
13 both for being here.

14 General Guillot, I remain concerned about the DoD's  
15 missile defense posture, I guess you can call it, and that  
16 the DoD does not have a plan to address the current and  
17 future missile defense needs of Hawaii. It is an issue that  
18 I have brought up with just about everybody who comes to  
19 testify from the DoD. The 2024 NDAA directs a plan for the  
20 missile defense of Hawaii, which INDOPACOM is leading.

21 General, your predecessor told me last year that  
22 NORTHCOM is responsible for protecting Hawaii against  
23 ballistic missile threats from North Korea, but of course,  
24 we also need to concern ourselves with the missile threats,  
25 cruise missiles and hypersonics. Have you been coordinating

1 with INDOPACOM regarding the development of the missile  
2 defense plan?

3 General Guillot: Senator, I have. We work very close  
4 with INDOPACOM on all defense of our entire homeland. And I  
5 also agree with the characterization that General VanHerck  
6 did on our specific role in that.

7 Senator Hirono: So I have some concerns that there are  
8 so many different commands involved in the missile defense  
9 of Hawaii and missile defense, in general. So we have you,  
10 well NORTHCOM, INDOPACOM, SPACECOM, STRATCOM, Missile  
11 Defense Agency. Do you have some concerns about how all of  
12 you are coordinating and coming up with the kind of plan  
13 that we need for missile defense?

14 General Guillot: Senator, I think that we communicate  
15 very well with each other. I think that we all understand  
16 the priorities. So I have not seen any place where having  
17 multiple agencies responsible for a common area presenting a  
18 seam or a challenge. But I am very acutely aware of the  
19 potential, and I watch for that very closely.

20 Senator Hirono: The 2024 NDAA, as I mentioned, directs  
21 a plan from INDOPACOM. So that plan is going to be presented  
22 to us, I hope, by next month, which is the time frame for  
23 that plan. So I assume that plan will reflect the  
24 coordinated input from all of you.

25 General Richardson, China is building a deepwater port

1 in Peru that is expected to open this November, and it will  
2 be the first South American port controlled by China. This  
3 is just one example of China's growing influence in Latin  
4 America through economic ties, controlling critical  
5 minerals, and establishing port and space facilities. This  
6 presents unique strategic risks to U.S. national security  
7 and global order.

8 General, what changes are you seeing in the region as a  
9 result of the growing influence of the PRC, and what steps  
10 are you taking to counter China's influence in Latin  
11 America?

12 General Richardson: So thank you, Senator, and we have  
13 doubled down, and with the increase of finding last year  
14 from the United States Congress, us and SOUTHCOM and AFRICOM  
15 received some funding that went to secure the cooperation of  
16 programs, and then also with flexible authority. So that  
17 was extremely helpful, and it allows us to be very  
18 responsive in terms of being able to help our partner  
19 nations to counter the influence of China. So I want to  
20 thank you for that.

21 And our ability to be able to respond and be  
22 responsive, these heads of state are generally in the seat  
23 for one term of 4 years so they are working on a stopwatch,  
24 not a calendar, and they are trying to show progress within  
25 months, not years. So we really appreciate that resourcing.

1           Senator Hirono: So you mentioned that we have provided  
2 additional resources. Do you think that we are doing enough  
3 to counter? Because China is, from my perspective,  
4 everywhere, and especially, of course, in the Indo-Pacific  
5 area. We know what their influences are with the Pacific  
6 Island nations, for example. So now they are in Latin  
7 America. Are we doing enough to really address all of the  
8 kind of long-term focus that China has throughout your part  
9 of the world?

10           General Richardson: Senator, through all of the  
11 instruments of power of Team USA, and bringing those  
12 together, and synchronizing and integrating better, the  
13 Chairman brought up the APEP, the American Partnership for  
14 Economic Prosperity, and the IDBM Invest program, that  
15 through that initial program to invest in the Western  
16 Hemisphere is huge. And it is just a start, and I would  
17 recommend that that is something very similar, this program,  
18 to the Economic Recovery Act of 1948, which was so  
19 instrumental in terms of the economic recovery. And I see  
20 that this economic recovery for the region, due to the  
21 impacts of COVID, what it did to the economies of the  
22 region, and now the transnational criminal organizations  
23 taking advantage of this.

24           And so this is a first start with these 11 heads of  
25 state from Latin America that were here in Washington, in



1 November of '23, for this program that was rolling out  
2 billions of dollars for critical infrastructure investment  
3 by the U.S. government. So we are on a very good path with  
4 a third of our Latin American leaders with this economic  
5 investment. And I would say that national security rests on  
6 their economic security. And we can do more, and through  
7 this program, if we can build this out, we would be on a  
8 good path with our partners in our shared neighborhoods so  
9 close to our homeland.

10 Senator Hirono: Well, that aspect of working with our  
11 Latin American allies I think is really critical because  
12 that is what we are doing in the Indo-Pacific area.

13 Could I just ask one more question relating to some  
14 questions from Senator King?

15 Chairman Reed: Yes. Keep it short.

16 Senator Hirono: Keep it short. I will keep it short.

17 You mentioned that regarding the interdiction of drugs  
18 that it requires us to really pay attention to some other  
19 aspects such as going after these criminal forces. Is there  
20 an intergovernmental task force of some sort that you are  
21 all working together that would include DoD, DOJ, Coast  
22 Guard to counter the drug threat?

23 General Richardson: We are working together. I would  
24 say that there needs to be more focus, more resourcing on  
25 this particular grouping to get after the problem sets. And

1 I would say from the money laundering to the drug labs, and  
2 following where not just the small, semi-submersible that is  
3 loaded with counter-narcotics, but actually getting to where  
4 it is produced and getting in there.

5 And so the work that we have done in Colombia has been  
6 very effective, but the amounts are only increasing. And so  
7 we have got to figure out, we have got to follow this money,  
8 and we have got to get after the TCOs as a holistic, more  
9 filled-out, robust program.

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

11 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Hirono. Senator  
12 Rounds has yielded to Senator Budd. Senator Budd, please.

13 Senator Budd: Thank you, Chairman. Thank you, Senator  
14 Rounds, for yielding. Senator [sic] Guillot, thank you both  
15 for being here, by the way.

16 It is my understanding there have been a lot of drone  
17 incursions along our southern border. How many drone  
18 incursions have we had, and what are they doing?

19 General Guillot: Senator, the number of incursions was  
20 something that was alarming to me as I took command last  
21 month. I do not know the actual number. I do not think  
22 anybody does. But it is in the thousands. I have talked to  
23 Customs and Border Protection, who are responsible for the  
24 UAS incursions and the border, along with DOJ, and they put  
25 the number at thousands.

1           Senator Budd: Over what period of time is that  
2 thousands?

3           General Guillot: I would say in probably over a month.  
4 We could probably have over 1,000 a month.

5           Senator Budd: General, do they, in your view,  
6 represent a homeland defense threat?

7           General Guillot: Senator, they alarm me, from being  
8 the person responsible for homeland defense. I have not  
9 seen any of them manifest in a threat to the level of  
10 national defense, but I see the potential only growing.

11          Senator Budd: General, continuing on with a different  
12 topic. Do you consider the F-15E Strike Eagle to be a  
13 capable aircraft, and are there particular characteristics  
14 for the F-15 that make it ideal for homeland defense?

15          General Guillot: Senator, I think the F-15E Strike  
16 Eagle is a phenomenal aircraft. What makes it applicable in  
17 our theater is the same thing that makes it applicable  
18 around the world, is its versatility. It is, in many ways,  
19 unmatched air to ground, and in many ways it is unmatched  
20 air to air. It has a phenomenal radar. It is an AESA  
21 radar, electrically scanned, which allows it to pick up  
22 low, slow, moving, and also low radar cross-section such as  
23 drones or other threats like cruise missiles. So the Strike  
24 Eagle is a fantastic aircraft.

25          Senator Budd: Thank you. So in its fiscal year 2025

1 budget, the Air Force plans to divest 26 F-15 Strike Eagles  
2 at the same time that it is buying less than expected F-35s,  
3 F-15EXs, and other fights. So it has got me very concerned,  
4 not just for homeland defense, and the descriptions that you  
5 shared a moment ago, but including potential conflict with  
6 China, and also for responses to crises in other geographic  
7 combatant commands.

8 So if you would agree to keep your eye on that and  
9 share with us concerns as they arise related to the F-15.

10 General Guillot: I will, Senator.

11 Senator Budd: Thank you. Changing topics, General  
12 Richardson and General Guillot both, you mentioned TCOs just  
13 a minute ago, General Richardson, like the Mexican drug  
14 cartels. They often move not just drugs and lethal fentanyl  
15 but they move people. Many of these activities proceed  
16 without interruption in both of your areas of  
17 responsibility.

18 Section 1068 of the fiscal year 2024 NDAA requires the  
19 Secretary of Defense to submit a plan for coordinating with  
20 defense partners in North and South America and supporting  
21 interagency departments and agencies to counter human  
22 trafficking, including human trafficking by these TCOs.

23 So have either of you been consulted on developing that  
24 plan? General Richardson, we will start with you>

25 General Richardson: So, Senator, we work migration

1 every day in United States Southern Command, and for this  
2 past year with the trilateral agreement that the United  
3 States government signed with Panama and Colombia, so we are  
4 very aware of the migration.

5 Senator Budd: General, if I may, beyond just general  
6 awareness, the Secretary of Defense is required to submit a  
7 plan for coordinating with defense partners. Are you  
8 working on that plan?

9 General Richardson: I am not specifically working on  
10 that plan for the Department of Defense. The OSD and the  
11 Joint Staff will be working on that.

12 Senator Budd: Thank you. General Guillot?

13 General Guillot: Senator, the same answer. We are not  
14 working directly. We are in support of the Department.

15 Senator Budd: You know, not to you but to the  
16 Department of Defense and the Secretary, that is  
17 disappointing. So I would like to follow up with both of  
18 you and the Department on this to make sure that begins to  
19 get implemented so we can begin stopping the illegal flow of  
20 deadly fentanyl and other drugs and the tragic trafficking  
21 of humans.

22 You know, that is big business for the cartels, and it  
23 is contributing to instability in countries across our  
24 hemisphere. So what efforts, beyond that plan since that is  
25 not yet being developed, what efforts are already underway,

1 with you or your partners, to address human trafficking?

2 General Richardson?

3 General Richardson: Thank you, Senator, and I am not  
4 aware that the report not -- the report could very well be  
5 well along its way. We are just not actively working on it  
6 from our levels. And a lot of times the Joint Staff and OSD  
7 will work those things to allow us to continue to execute  
8 our daily missions.

9 But we are working very closely, because I have the  
10 Darién in my AOR, which is a huge human trafficking area.  
11 And you are exactly right in terms of the transnational  
12 criminal organizations have only gotten more powerful. Over  
13 \$300 billion annual revenue business. They traffic humans,  
14 drugs, gold, lithium, all kinds of counterfeit goods. And  
15 so only getting more powerful.

16 So the work that we do, the Colombian military and  
17 their operation, Hefesto, to go after the criminal networks  
18 that are doing these criminal activities as well as the  
19 Panama SENAFRONT and SENAN border forces that are going  
20 after the criminal networks in Panama.

21 Senator Budd: In the interest of time, Chairman, I  
22 will yield, but I would love to continue discussions,  
23 perhaps offline, about your efforts in regard to human  
24 trafficking in NORTHCOM. Thank you.

25 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Budd. Senator

1 Kelly, please.

2 Senator Kelly: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General  
3 Guillot, General Richardson, great to see both of you.

4 General Richardson, yesterday we were talking a little  
5 bit about Haiti and the situation on the ground being  
6 chaotic, gangs running rampant in their capital. And this  
7 week the prime minister of Haiti announced he would resign,  
8 and then Kenya paused the agreement to send 1,000 police  
9 officers until a new government would be put into place.

10 SOUTHCOM has successfully airlifted embassy staff out  
11 of the country, but a number of Americans still remain in  
12 Haiti, and some may be looking to leave. Some are concerned  
13 that the U.S. has not initiated a noncombatant evacuation  
14 order, a NEO, to get Americans out of Haiti.

15 General, have you been tasked to operate an evacuation?

16 General Richardson: So, Senator, as part of the wide  
17 range of contingency plans that USSOUTHCOM has we are ready  
18 for a NEO activation, if required, and have other plans  
19 ready to go, as we always do, and keep those plans refreshed  
20 over and over. So we are ready at any time for any type of  
21 crisis.

22 Senator Kelly: You say you are ready now, but are  
23 there any additional preparations in the event that this  
24 becomes a necessity?

25 General Richardson: I think the two missions of

1 increasing the security at the embassy and a little bit of  
2 my capability as well, expanding that, is the platform that  
3 we would use if we need to expand from there. And so we put  
4 in all of the necessary measures that are necessary for any  
5 of the plans to be activated.

6 Senator Kelly: So it would be true to say that there  
7 is mission planning currently underway in case you have to  
8 do this.

9 General Richardson: Senator, we always do mission  
10 planning in the military, so absolutely.

11 Senator Kelly: Well, thank you. Thank you, General.

12 General Guillot, just on Monday morning I got back from  
13 a trip to the Arctic, where I was able to see firsthand some  
14 of the efforts by the Navy to pursue our Arctic strategic  
15 objectives. And the Arctic is an area of concern and a  
16 great example of the intersection between defense policies,  
17 climate, and strategic partnerships. Melting ice is making  
18 the Arctic more accessible to everyone, including Russia and  
19 China. It is rich with oil, minerals, fishing, other  
20 natural resources, and we have to ensure that a free and  
21 peaceful Arctic benefits the United States and our partners  
22 and allies.

23 Russia seeks to use the Arctic as a staging ground for  
24 power projection in addition to it being a critical defense  
25 and deterrent for their homeland. But they also seek to



1 control the region.

2 We have made real progress in combating Russian  
3 influence in the Arctic over the last year, with Finland and  
4 Sweden joining NATO. Now every country with a border on the  
5 Arctic is part of NATO, with the exception of Russia, and we  
6 must not miss this opportunity to advance our interests in  
7 the Arctic while Russia is focusing on their illegal and  
8 brutal invasion of Ukraine.

9 General Guillot, I would like to hear, in more detail,  
10 what you think the U.S. and NATO's strategy should look like  
11 in the Arctic.

12 General Guillot: Senator, first thanks for visiting  
13 our forces up there during Ice Camp. As you alluded to, it  
14 is an extremely important operation that demonstrates our  
15 capability up there with the submarines and the LC-130s, and  
16 all the other aircraft and forces.

17 As far as what we could do, or should do, with NATO in  
18 the Arctic, you described exercises that we are doing on  
19 the, what I will call the Alaska side, or the ten o'clock  
20 approach. We have also had some success working with NATO  
21 and European command on the two o'clock, the northeast  
22 approach. Just last week, for the first time in over 2  
23 years, the Russians sent two Bear bombers down along that  
24 avenue through what we call the GIUK gap, Greenland,  
25 Iceland, and the United Kingdom, approaching the Canadian

1 and the United States air defense identification zones. I  
2 have not seen this activity in over 2 years.

3 We were able to track them the entire time, thanks to  
4 the radar network and the information sharing between  
5 countries within EUCOM -- Norway is one that I will point  
6 out -- and Northern Command. So we were able to track this  
7 activity --

8 Senator Kelly: What range were you able to intercept  
9 them?

10 General Guillot: Senator, we did not have to intercept  
11 them because we had aircraft flying to the point where we  
12 would intercept them before they crossed the identification  
13 zone, and the Russians turned around prior to reaching that  
14 zone. So we had aircraft, both Canadian and U.S. fighters,  
15 postured along the line, which I think is probably  
16 disheartening to the Russians to fly all that way to find  
17 out that we are waiting for them. And that is due to NATO  
18 cooperation.

19 Senator Kelly: So the Russians are pretty good  
20 operating in the Arctic. Have you seen advancement by the  
21 Chinese?

22 General Guillot: What I have seen, Senator, is a  
23 willingness and a desire by the Chinese to act up there. We  
24 have seen them in the maritime. We have seen them under the  
25 cloud of a technical or scientific research, but we think it

1 is certainly multi-mission, to include military. And then I  
2 expect to see air activity in the Alaska part of the Arctic  
3 as soon as this year, potentially. It is a very big concern  
4 of mine.

5 Senator Kelly: All right. Thank you, General.

6 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Kelly. Senator  
7 Rounds, please.

8 Senator Rounds: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General  
9 Guillot and General Richardson, first of all thank you to  
10 you and your teams for your service to our country.

11 I would like to follow up just a little bit with what  
12 Senator Kelly began talking about with regard to Haiti. So  
13 General Richardson, it seems to me that it rather surprises  
14 me that there may not have been any advanced notice  
15 requesting additional or follow-up with regard to the  
16 possibility of a NEO operation in Haiti. Wouldn't that seem  
17 to be kind of an advisory that would be appropriate if you  
18 received something, at least from the Administration,  
19 indicating that it is possibility? Wouldn't that maybe give  
20 you the opportunity to notify those individuals responsible  
21 for providing you with the resources necessary to do your  
22 duty to be ready to go? I mean, it doesn't not seem to me  
23 that they can be on high alert all the time. Could you just  
24 expand on that a little bit, please.

25 General Richardson: So, Senator, I did not mean to

1 give the perception that we are not ready or that nobody has  
2 asked us to be ready, or anything like that. We have been  
3 discussing that and talking about that, and I have been  
4 talking with our Joint Staff, our Chairman and our Secretary  
5 of Defense over the past two weeks about all of the range of  
6 plans that we might have to do -- an evacuation, a NEO, a  
7 mass migration, all of those things. So those missions of  
8 extracting some non-essential personnel from the U.S.  
9 embassy --

10 Senator Rounds: Okay, so it is not just a matter of  
11 being ready to fight tonight as much as, yeah, we are aware  
12 of it and we are doing some pre-planning, just in case that  
13 call is made.

14 General Richardson: Absolutely, Senator. We are ready  
15 to go. We have all of our plans ready to go.

16 Senator Rounds: Okay. Thank you. And then also I  
17 noted with regard to discussions earlier here about the  
18 transnational criminal organizations, the drug cartels, and  
19 so forth south of our border. Both of you have some  
20 responsibilities with regard to whether it is in other parts  
21 of the NORAD command or SOCOM. Just a reminder once again  
22 that under the NDAA we have already authorized the use of  
23 our cyber teams to be able to find out in advance and to  
24 know who these people are, where they bank, how they  
25 communicate, and so forth. So hopefully we will not just

1 authorize but now we will fund that part of the operation so  
2 that we can assist those countries who want our expertise  
3 and finding out more about these organizations, that that is  
4 available to them, and simply that it is available to you  
5 for your use.

6 Let me also just, General Guillot, with the potential  
7 divestments of fighter aircraft by the Air Force there are  
8 concerns about how the Air National Guard, who shoulder a  
9 significant portion of the burden of homeland defense, how  
10 they will be able to continue to support you in that  
11 capacity while also fulfilling their obligations under the  
12 National Defense Strategy.

13 I bring this up because the resourcing that the Air  
14 National Guard receives appears to be incongruent with their  
15 mission assignments, which include both the Aerospace  
16 Control Alert defense strategy, using the same resources,  
17 and then also supporting the Joint Force in that national  
18 defense strategy. I am just curious, are you involved in  
19 any planning or discussions with Secretary Kendall and  
20 General Loh as they discuss the plan for long-term Air Force  
21 fighter force structure, and if not I would encourage your  
22 involvement.

23 Could you share just a little bit about your  
24 communications with them?

25 General Guillot: Yes, Senator, and first thanks for

1 pointing out the outstanding contributions of the Air  
2 National Guard. We cannot conduct our air defense mission  
3 without them. They are not only the cornerstone, they  
4 provide, at 20 different ACA sites that you mentioned, our  
5 24/7 capability to respond.

6 Because of their importance I have talked directly with  
7 the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, General Alvin, about  
8 the commitment of the Air Force to that mission and then  
9 also what is going to happen with the future as we draw down  
10 some capabilities and bring on new capabilities to include  
11 the collaborative combat aircraft, the next-generation air  
12 dominance. General Alvin was very clear that he fully  
13 supports our mission and he understands the no-fail nature  
14 of our mission, and then he invited me to be a part of the  
15 future discussions on how they incorporate these  
16 capabilities.

17 Senator Rounds: Excellent because we have to be able  
18 to incorporate the Air Guard, and they have got to have the  
19 resources to do that successfully.

20 General Richardson, we discussed China's growing  
21 footprint and the influence throughout SOUTHCOM and how  
22 important it is that the U.S. remain engaged in the region.  
23 One of the main tools that you have at your disposal, as we  
24 discussed in my office, is Section 333 of Title 10, which  
25 lets the DoD help build the security capacity of friendly

1 nations. Unfortunately, Section 333 requires you to  
2 navigate a ponderous bureaucracy in both the Department of  
3 Defense and the Department of State before you can make use  
4 of this authority. It is not agile, and it clearly is not  
5 very quick. Ironically, the Chinese Communist Party is not  
6 bogged down by the same bureaucratic inertia.

7 How important is Section 333 authority to your mission,  
8 and how can it be improved?

9 General Richardson: It is my main lever in security  
10 cooperation, Senator, and so the Triple 3, as we call it,  
11 and the ability to be able to -- I have a Triple 3 package  
12 right now that is navigating all of the wickets that it  
13 needs to go through for a counter-PRC effort on port  
14 scanners, for example. And the stealing of data that the  
15 PRC does, and to be able to put a U.S. company in there to  
16 be able to do the scanning for in and out cargo is extremely  
17 important because, again, it is about the data.

18 And so the Triple 3 and flexible authorities and being  
19 responsive is extremely important, so I appreciate the help  
20 and the assistance on those authorities.

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

22 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Rounds. Senator  
23 Peters, please.

24 Senator Peters: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and General  
25 Guillot and General Richardson, thank you for all your

1 service and all the men and women who serve along with you.  
2 We appreciate that.

3 General Guillot, you mentioned the importance, or the  
4 challenges, I should say, the significant challenges we face  
5 in the Arctic in a previous question, and how we need to  
6 seek ways to address that, make additional investments into  
7 Arctic resilient platforms as well as cold weather training,  
8 which is essential for our troops.

9 And a key portion of CONUS cold weather training is  
10 completed every winter during Northern Strike at the  
11 National All-Domain Warfighting Center in Michigan. We are  
12 blessed with cold weather during the winters, and it  
13 provides a great training opportunity.

14 So my question for you, General, is while the summer  
15 training portion of Northern Strike is extensive, we believe  
16 that the exercises' winter iteration of that training that  
17 we conduct there has some great expansion opportunities to  
18 provide cost-effective cold weather training for men and  
19 women who may be tasked to serve up there. So my question  
20 for you is how can we grow CONUS Arctic training through  
21 exercises like Northern Strike to support the priorities of  
22 our national security strategy?

23 General Guillot: Senator, I would be a strong  
24 proponent of doing exactly as you stated. One of the  
25 concerns I have as I visited Alaska about a week into my



1 command to assess many of the areas that you just discussed  
2 was that the forces up there are extremely well trained and  
3 equipped with the right equipment to operate in the Arctic,  
4 but the backfill forces are probably very well trained but  
5 they are not equipped and they have not trained in that  
6 environment.

7 So anything that we could do for the supplementing  
8 forces or the backfill forces that would go into the Arctic,  
9 training them either in the Arctic environment or in  
10 something as you described that would replicate that will be  
11 very important, not only to give them those skills but to  
12 identify what are the pieces of kit and equipment that we  
13 need to develop and issue so they could seamlessly operate  
14 in that strategic environment.

15 Senator Peters: Very good. Thank you. General  
16 Richardson, as you know the National Guard State Partnership  
17 Program links our state National Guard units with global  
18 partners, and the program certainly has been invaluable, I  
19 believe, in strengthening our relationship with partner  
20 nations, including SOUTHCOM's 29 active SPP participants.  
21 As part of the State Partnership Program, U.S. embassies  
22 ideally have a bilateral affairs officer working as a  
23 conduit between the state as well as the partner country.  
24 But despite what I believe is a critical role, these billets  
25 unfortunately often sit vacant, forcing the COCOM commanders

1 to use their assigned billets to pay for these BAOs.

2 So my question for you, General, is first, what role do  
3 bilateral affairs officers play in successfully implementing  
4 these state partnership programs, and how can we address the  
5 gaps that exist in the billets to ensure that they are  
6 filled and we can get the maximum utility out of these  
7 partnerships?

8 General Richardson: Thank you, Senator, and I would  
9 say that the SPP program, I have the largest SPP program  
10 amongst all the geographic combatant commands, and we are  
11 very grateful for that program. It is a huge enabler. We  
12 have got to keep those BAA slots filled with those officers.  
13 They organize and synchronize the activities of the National  
14 Guard SPP program with the operations activities and  
15 investments that I have in USSOUTHCOM. So it is a critical  
16 role, and we have got to keep those filled.

17 And with the Theater Maintenance Partnership  
18 Initiative, which is a program that we are rolling out to  
19 put nine centers of excellence in the region, and this is  
20 partnering with the partner nation militaries and their  
21 military academies with program of instruction to teach and  
22 train maintenance and the culture of maintenance. But it is  
23 a tactical-level program, all the way up to an operational  
24 level, into the ministries of defense, where you can  
25 anticipate logistics and teach logistics, and that culture

1 of maintenance to keep equipment ready and increase the  
2 readiness of capability for these partner nations.

3 Senator Peters: I appreciate that. A question that I  
4 have for you, as well, General Richardson, is that my  
5 understanding is that right now the Chinese military is  
6 training about five times more Latin American and Caribbean  
7 military officers than the United States. I have some  
8 concerns that these Chinese professional military education  
9 exchanges may have an outsized impact on our allies,  
10 particularly in SOUTHCOM.

11 So my question for you is what are the risks associated  
12 with continuing to allow Chinese education exchanges to  
13 outpace what we are providing, and how can Congress support  
14 your command in countering this challenge?

15 General Richardson: So the PRC is using our playbook  
16 against us, in terms of these exchanges and these all-  
17 expense-paid training exchanges for a year to 2 years to  
18 China, and the aegis that we are able to provide through the  
19 IMET program for professional military education. But the  
20 difference that it makes when they come to our schools, in  
21 the United States, for example, when you don't speak the  
22 language or speak in the language, and I would say there are  
23 3 ministers of defense and about 15 chiefs of defense that  
24 have been to our United States schools. And so you have  
25 already built the trust. I do not have to build the trust

1 over a year with these leaders. So if they have been to our  
2 U.S. schools I would say that we need to continue to sustain  
3 that and even increase our IMET program.

4 Senator Peters: Thank you, General. Thank you, Mr.  
5 Chairman.

6 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Peters. Senator  
7 Scott, please.

8 Senator Scott: Thank you, Chairman. Before I begin my  
9 remarks and questions for each of you I want to say  
10 something about what Majority Leader Chuck Schumer is saying  
11 on the Senate floor right now. The Majority Leader, on the  
12 U.S. Senate floor, is calling for a new Israeli government.  
13 This is coercion, it is dangerous, it is undemocratic. If  
14 Chuck Schumer does not like Netanyahu it does not matter.  
15 The Israeli government should be respected by the American  
16 government. Americans should stand strongly with Israel's  
17 elected leadership, not threaten it as it fights terrorism.  
18 I hope that Israel destroys, kills every Hamas terrorist  
19 there is.

20 First off, thanks to both of you for your service. So  
21 I want to say a few things before I ask you a couple of  
22 questions.

23 Protecting our national security interests means that  
24 the military must be laser-focused on the cold, hard facts,  
25 and not only what our adversaries are doing but what they

1 are capable of doing. The violence and unrest in Haiti is  
2 heartbreaking. It is a symptom of political unrest that has  
3 only continued to grow under this Administration. Not only  
4 has the Biden administration taken an active role in  
5 destabilizing the region by appeasing Cuba, Venezuela, and  
6 Nicaragua, but it appears that the White House is totally  
7 unprepared to deal with the consequences of the political  
8 unrest these regimes create and support.

9 The policy in the United States should not be that we  
10 just let everyone into our country, totally unvetted, any  
11 time there is trouble around the world. That is what  
12 President Biden has done at the border with eight million  
13 people pouring across, and after the botched withdrawal from  
14 Afghanistan with 90,000 unvetted people coming in.

15 Not only does this Administration open the floodgates  
16 for people who do not know anything about what we believe in  
17 to come to our country, President Biden and Democrats at  
18 every level of government give these individuals cash,  
19 phones, lawyers, and everything else, paid for by the U.S.  
20 taxpayer.

21 The entire Biden administration can be summed up as  
22 this: Biden creates a magnet for illegal immigration here,  
23 appeases evil regimes, and forces the American people to pay  
24 for the unrest, humanitarian crisis, and mass border  
25 crossings that result. It does not work, and it cannot be

1 our answer to the chaos in Haiti.

2 It is also worth knowing that all of this works to the  
3 benefit of our adversaries like China, Russia, and Iran.  
4 Our enemies thrive on our chaos. These evil regimes are  
5 working every day to expand their foothold in the Western  
6 Hemisphere and increase the ability for their proxies to  
7 threaten the U.S. and destabilize the region.

8 For SOUTHCOM we see Iran infiltrating the region and  
9 Communist China using initiatives like Belt and Road to  
10 spread their influence and saddle poor countries in Latin  
11 America with massive debt. For NORTHCOM we see Russia and  
12 Communist China using unconventional warfare, especially  
13 cyberattacks, going after our supply chains or taking  
14 advantage of the open border. We are even seeing our  
15 adversaries undermine U.S. security while expanding their  
16 reach in places like the Arctic, bringing their militaries  
17 closer to the U.S.

18 So I have a couple of questions. General Richardson,  
19 let's start with Haiti. The people of Haiti have reached a  
20 breaking point. Florida families, we have a lot of Haitian  
21 families in our state, are compassionate, for they are  
22 worried about how this instability in the region, to not  
23 only include Haiti but all of SOUTHCOM theater, could  
24 possibly stroke a mass immigration event in my state.

25 I spoke with the Coast Guard last night. I would like

1 to hear from you. What is your plan to address the  
2 possibility of a mass migration event which may not only  
3 impact Florida but also our bases within the Caribbean?  
4 What are the options available to us with DoD assets and  
5 capabilities?

6 General Richardson: So in terms of a mass migration we  
7 have our contingency plan at USSOUTHCOM and we did a train  
8 walk last summer on Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, and that  
9 was with all of the interagency to walk through all the  
10 processes and ensure that all the steps that are necessary  
11 to take place are actually in place, everything is  
12 refreshed, the equipment, everything is ready to go.

13 And so as we work through all of our contingency plans  
14 I assure you that USSOUTHCOM and the Department of Defense  
15 are ready to go.

16 Senator Scott: Second question for General Richardson.  
17 I worked on, and a lot of us worked on, getting the dual-use  
18 amendment for Homestead Air Force Base in the fiscal year  
19 2023 NDAA. This base allows us to project power in the  
20 hemisphere where our enemies China, Russia, and Iran and its  
21 proxies are present and they are active. I asked Air Force  
22 leadership about the future of Homestead and having a  
23 permanent flying mission at the base. General Brown assured  
24 me that he was committed to having a platform operate out of  
25 Homestead. Can you talk about the strategic value of the

1 base and why we need it?

2 General Richardson: So Homestead Air Reserve Base  
3 actually is a great staging platform. When I was in  
4 NORTHCOM in my previous job as Army North Commander we  
5 staged out of Homestead for the response into the Bahamas  
6 for the damage that was done by Hurricane Dorian. We  
7 launched our missions -- my theater of Special Operations  
8 Command is at Homestead Air Reserve SOCSOUTH, and we staged  
9 our two missions that we conducted into Haiti this past week  
10 from Homestead.

11 So the ability for the Department of Defense to have  
12 Homestead as a staging base in South Florida, to be able to  
13 jump to respond to humanitarian assistance and disaster  
14 response type activities is very hugely helpful.

15 Senator Scott: I thank both of you.

16 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Scott. Senator  
17 Kaine, please.

18 Senator Kaine: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thanks to our  
19 witnesses for your great service. General Guillot, I want  
20 to begin with you. My colleagues and I on this Committee  
21 have recently discussed installation security with respect  
22 to drone threats at bases in the United States. Recognizing  
23 that we are in an unclassified setting, what can you tell me  
24 about how NORTHCOM is addressing this issue and with what  
25 partners are you working this challenge?



1           General Guillot: Senator, NORTHCOM, as part of my 90-  
2 day assessment, to tell the truth, the counter-UAS mission  
3 has dominated that so far in the first month. Of course, I  
4 knew it was an issue, coming from another combatant command  
5 where we faced that threat in a very different way because  
6 of the environment, but I was not prepared for the number of  
7 incursions that I see. I have gone into the events at Joint  
8 Base Langley-Eustis, and I am using that as the centerpiece  
9 of my 90-day assessment to see where NORAD and NORTHCOM can  
10 and should do more as this emerging capability outstrips the  
11 operational framework that we have to address it.

12           Senator Kaine: And can you talk about other partners  
13 that you are working with, because obviously there is sort  
14 of a law enforcement component of this. So who else is  
15 working with you on this problem, sir?

16           General Guillot: Yes, sir, absolutely. So primarily  
17 Department of Homeland Security and Department of Justice  
18 along the border have the primary responsibility. That is  
19 who I am working with there. In the interior it is the  
20 services that have the responsibility for defending their  
21 bases, so working with each individual service, and then  
22 again also Department of Homeland Security and Department of  
23 Energy for specific critical infrastructure locations.  
24 Those are the primary ones that I am working with.

25           Senator Kaine: Thank you for that. Now a question for

1 both of you about FMS. The importance of FMS was mentioned  
2 by General Kurilla last week. General Guillot, you  
3 mentioned it in your written statement. General Richardson,  
4 you and I talked about it a little bit last week when we  
5 were together. The FMS programs not only increase  
6 interoperability and strengthen partnerships but it can help  
7 reduce our partners' reliance upon strategic competitors, as  
8 well.

9 What are you hearing from your counterparts about FMS?  
10 And I want to particularly direct that to General  
11 Richardson, recognizing General Guillot's short tenure that  
12 has been dominated by other issues. But General Richardson,  
13 could you talk about this?

14 General Richardson: So FMS is a critical enabler, and  
15 obviously with being able to have our equipment, to have up-  
16 to-date equipment, and then having U.S. equipment and being  
17 interoperable and that sort of thing is an imperative.

18 So what Secretary Austin and the Chairman have  
19 instituted to speed up the processes within FMS over the  
20 past 2 years have taken place. But I would say that we have  
21 got to streamline that to the interagency, because it is not  
22 just the Department of Defense that has a stake in that and  
23 that approves things. So we have got to streamline that  
24 process a little bit better and speed it up.

25 Senator Kaine: We talked last week in my office about

1 the potential synergy between the State Partnership Program,  
2 that Senator Peters was discussing, and the Theater  
3 Maintenance Partnership Initiative. Could you talk a little  
4 bit about that and whether it could support or complement  
5 the FMS priorities that we have?

6 General Richardson: Well, absolutely. I mean, that is  
7 the whole reason for it, where we have U.S. equipment in  
8 these countries. So maintenance is hard for our U.S.  
9 military, and it is hard for our partner nations as well.  
10 And so with turnover, we always, in our U.S. military, have  
11 people coming in and going out and leaving the military, so  
12 there is a constant turnover. So you have to have a really  
13 good training, teaching and training program at the tactical  
14 level.

15 So the TMPI program, the Theater Maintenance  
16 Partnership Initiative that you mentioned, the nexus with  
17 the National Guard State Partnership Program, there are tons  
18 of maintainers in the National Guard. And so this makes a  
19 very simple, easy way to teach and train, it fits right in  
20 line with the institutional capacity building as well.

21 Senator Kaine: Last question I would like to ask you,  
22 General Richardson, one of the best advantages we have in  
23 your region is the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda. You  
24 have made this a real priority in your travels. Can you  
25 speak on the impacts that the WPS initiatives are having

1 within our partner countries?

2 General Richardson: Huge impact, so thank you for the  
3 question, Senator, U.N. Security Council Resolution 1325 for  
4 Women, Peace, and Security. So in every visit I do in the  
5 countries we have a Women, Peace, and Security event. The  
6 great thing is that we get what I call a "twofer" with our  
7 enlisted leader professional development program as well.  
8 We have many women enlisted leaders that are in our military  
9 formations in the region. So that dovetailing nicely with  
10 our different programs. They are both rock star programs,  
11 if I must say. And our partner nations doing that, and  
12 seeing the diversity and the ability to increase readiness  
13 within their forces, they have realized that and they  
14 continue on a really good path.

15 Senator Kaine: Thank you very much. I yield back.

16 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Kaine. Senator  
17 Tuberville, please.

18 Senator Tuberville: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thanks  
19 to both of you for being here today and your service to the  
20 most important combatant commanders. Everybody is  
21 important, but one of you guards our front door and one  
22 guards our back door. And we know how important that is in  
23 this day and time.

24 General, we have seen the change in the government in  
25 Canada, maybe the direction that they are going, which is

1 very important, should be very important to all of us. Have  
2 you seen any change with the military in terms of how they  
3 are helping us, you know, in NORTHCOM?

4 General Guillot: Senator, on the first day of my  
5 command I met with the Military of National Defense,  
6 Minister Blair, and the Chief of the Defense Staff, General  
7 Eyre, in Colorado Springs, and we talked about Canada's  
8 commitment to NORAD and NORAD modernization. And they told  
9 me at that time that they were committed, with funding  
10 aligned, for over-the-horizon radar, F-35, P-8, and MQ-9.  
11 All those systems will immediately have benefit to us in the  
12 homeland defense mission that we share in NORAD.

13 And so since the first day I have seen nothing but  
14 strong commitment from our Canadian partners for modernizing  
15 NORAD and working together to defend our homelands.

16 Senator Tuberville: Great. That is good news. What  
17 about the border? Are you getting any pushback from the  
18 northern border? We hear a lot about the southern border,  
19 but northern border is very important. We hear a lot of  
20 people are coming, especially terrorists, through the  
21 northern border. Have you had any conversations with any of  
22 your counterparts there?

23 General Guillot: Senator, I have. Although the  
24 Customs and Border Protection and Homeland Security have not  
25 requested DoD or NORTHCOM's support on the north border it

1 is something I watch very closely, for a number of reasons.  
2 One is the potential threats entering our country through  
3 the north, and I have frequent discussions with CBP and with  
4 the intel community to see if there are any threats that are  
5 coming through. And then, of course, it is shared border  
6 with a strong partner like Canada. So from mil-to-mil with  
7 Canada we talk about. So it is something I watch.

8 Senator Tuberville: So you are getting cooperation?

9 General Guillot: Absolutely getting cooperation and  
10 keeping a strong sense of situational awareness on the  
11 activities at the northern border.

12 Senator Tuberville: Thank you. General Richardson,  
13 the Panama Canal is one of the most important resources for  
14 us in Central America. Give us an update right now on that.  
15 If we had some kind of conflict all over the world would we  
16 be able to use the Panama Canal?

17 General Richardson: We have a very strong partnership  
18 with Panama, and that only continues to improve. But my  
19 concerns are the PRC state-owned enterprises that are along  
20 either side of the Panama Canal, the five. So that  
21 strategic sealine of communication, the Panama Canal, I  
22 would be extremely concerned about that, and am, and as a  
23 result we watch that very closely, Senator.

24 Senator Tuberville: Do you think the security there is  
25 adequate, above and beyond where we would be able to use it?

1           General Richardson: Again, my concern is being able to  
2 use those state-owned enterprises for military application,  
3 if required. So the proximity that that has to the Panama  
4 Canal is a concern to me. I have no doubt in Panama's  
5 ability to secure that and our ability to help defend that,  
6 if required.

7           Senator Tuberville: Is the expansion on target? I  
8 know the last time I was down there they were doing a lot of  
9 work at the Panama Canal. I do not know whether you keep up  
10 with that or not.

11          General Richardson: And that is the PRC, Senator?

12          Senator Tuberville: Yes.

13          General Richardson: Yes, and they are building a  
14 fourth bridge across the Canal. So we absolutely track  
15 everything that is done with the Panama Canal and work with  
16 our Panamanian authorities and our partners as we watch all  
17 of this activity that takes place and continues to take  
18 place.

19          Senator Tuberville: Have you or any of your staff  
20 visited the Darién Gap, where we have all the immigrants  
21 coming from South America to North America?

22          General Richardson: Senator, I visited the Darién  
23 several times, both on the Colombian side and on the Panama  
24 side, and I have been to the binational base that Colombia  
25 and Panama share together and conduct joint operations.

1 Senator Tuberville: Where is the funding coming from  
2 for that?

3 General Richardson: For the Darién, sir?

4 Senator Tuberville: Yeah.

5 General Richardson: So in terms of the operations that  
6 Colombia conducts comes from Colombian resourcing that they  
7 have for their military. The ones for Panama come from the  
8 Panama security forces. Our activities, OAI's -- operations,  
9 activities, and investments -- that we do with Panama are  
10 from my security cooperation funds in SOUTHCOM.

11 Senator Tuberville: Yeah. I saw your budget and there  
12 is no doubt both of you are so important to the protection  
13 of the American citizens and our country. You know, we just  
14 voted to give \$60 billion to Ukraine. I wish it would have  
15 gone to you all. I am sure you all could have used it. I  
16 have seen your budgets and your things that you use to work  
17 in both of your NORTHCOM and SOUTHCOM. What you do is  
18 amazing, but we need to help you. We really do.

19 Thank you very much.

20 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Tuberville. Senator  
21 Rosen, please.

22 Senator Rosen: Thank you, Chairman Reed, of course  
23 Ranking Member Wicker, for holding this hearing, and I would  
24 like to thank General Guillot and General Richardson for  
25 testifying today and of course for your service to our



1 nation. I really appreciate it.

2 I am going to hit a little bit on countering Chinese  
3 and Russian forces because as Russia continues its war in  
4 Ukraine and China acts with increasing aggression in the  
5 Indo-Pacific, both countries are also taking steps that pose  
6 a direct threat to our national security right here at home.

7 General Guillot, how can NORTHCOM adapts its force  
8 posture to proactively deter and respond to the increasing  
9 presence and capabilities of Russian and Chinese assets off  
10 our coast and actually within North America?

11 General Guillot: Senator, the best way for us to  
12 counter them is to have presence of our own. So the  
13 execution of exercises, patrols in all domains is extremely  
14 important, off all of our coasts, primarily focusing right  
15 now in the region of Alaska because of the number of  
16 incursions by Russian aircraft and then the number of  
17 maritime, the strong presence that both the Chinese and the  
18 Russians have there.

19 And the same thing applies on what we call the two  
20 o'clock approach off on the northeast, making sure that we  
21 have presence there. That is what I think is the best way  
22 to counter. And then part of that presence being exercises,  
23 a strong exercise program, multinational, a lot of partners,  
24 showing that we have the resolve to defend that most  
25 strategic area.

1           Senator Rosen: Thank you. I am going to move on  
2 again, General Guillot, on talking about cybersecurity  
3 because this is a big part of our homeland security system,  
4 as well. Can you talk to us about how NORTHCOM is currently  
5 addressing cybersecurity threats to the homeland? You are  
6 talking about other kinds of posturing. And in your opinion  
7 could the creation of a new subordinate unified command  
8 specifically responsible for defense cyber operations could  
9 ensure a better comprehensive and actually a cohesive  
10 defense posture against our cyber adversaries?

11           General Guillot: Senator, in my previous response I  
12 should have mentioned cyber because it is the most prevalent  
13 and consistent threat that we see on a daily basis. You  
14 know, sure we see the maritime and the air occasionally, and  
15 they are important, but every day we have state actors,  
16 including Russia and China, that are attempting to get on  
17 our Department of Defense networks. The strength that we  
18 have through Cyber Command in detecting and defeating those  
19 threats is what is keeping us operational.

20           Northern Command's role is, first and foremost, to  
21 protect the systems that we use inside our NORAD and  
22 NORTHCOM to operate, and we have four different networks  
23 that we protect. Beyond that is anything with a Department  
24 of Defense nexus we work with Cyber Command to make sure  
25 that all of those are addressed. And then the third thing

1 that we do, we work with the FBI and CISA, strong  
2 partnership with both of them, and in my short command I  
3 have already met with both of their leadership about how do  
4 we help other members of the critical infrastructure  
5 community, and if they need DoD support it is synchronized  
6 and presented through NORTHCOM to protect them.

7 For your question about a separate command, I would  
8 need to look into it. But my initial response would be that  
9 in the two combatant commands in which I have served the  
10 relationship and support from Cyber Command has been  
11 phenomenal. And I would really hesitate to do anything that  
12 bifurcated or separated them from their seamless ability to  
13 do operational offensive cyber and defensive cyber under the  
14 same leadership, because it has worked really well for us in  
15 my previous job in Central Command and is certainly working  
16 well for us in Northern Command.

17 So always looking to improve, but it is something I  
18 would look at very closely because Cyber Command, in my  
19 opinion, has been a tremendous partner in this realm.

20 Senator Rosen: Well, thank you. That is really  
21 valuable input. I appreciate it.

22 I am going to move on to you, General Richardson, and  
23 talk a little bit about linguists, with the Department of  
24 Defense increasingly making investments focused on  
25 countering the People's Republic of China. Do you have

1 concerns regarding a lack of language expertise for  
2 countries in the SOUTHCOM area of responsibility, or is this  
3 gap sufficiently addressed by the diversity of the force  
4 that we recruit?

5 General Richardson: I think with Spanish predominantly  
6 and Portuguese with Brazil, we have enough linguists,  
7 Senator, but because a lot of our linguists will speak  
8 Spanish as well as other languages, as well. So it is just  
9 a matter of making sure that we register our personnel  
10 demand and our requirements all the time, that this region  
11 is important and that we have got to keep these positions  
12 filled.

13 Senator Rosen: Well, you speak about the Panama Canal  
14 and the PRC investments around there, so it is important to  
15 have possibly more than Spanish and Portuguese even in that  
16 area, because we know our adversaries are also there, as  
17 well.

18 So thank you. I appreciate it. My time is up.

19 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator Rosen. We  
20 anticipate that Senator Schmitt will arrive shortly, and I  
21 will take this opportunity to ask questions.

22 General Guillot, as you know Congress has been  
23 considering taking S band, which is known exclusively for  
24 military use, and begin to share or sell it to private  
25 entities. Can you tell the Committee the impact that would

1 have on your operations?

2 General Guillot: Senator, sharing or yielding the  
3 spectrum between 3.1 and 3.45 gigahertz would have a  
4 significant impact on our homeland defense systems.

5 Chairman Reed: And is there a possibility of sharing?  
6 I know some folks have come back and said that we can use it  
7 mutually. Is that something that you could do?

8 General Guillot: Chairman, I would say that in our  
9 initial review I have not found a way that we could share,  
10 especially because with Northern Command, the 24/7 on-alert  
11 responsibility for defending the homeland, I would need full  
12 access to that, for all the various systems, which are sea-  
13 based, land-based, and air-based systems that use that  
14 frequency range.

15 Chairman Reed: And I would assume, too, that in a  
16 sharing arrangement there would be a period of time where  
17 some of your systems could not effectively operate as they  
18 modified themselves. Is that fair?

19 General Guillot: As we negotiate the potential to  
20 share we have made it very clear that we would need 24/7  
21 access to those frequency ranges.

22 Chairman Reed: And General Richardson, the Chinese  
23 influence, and Russian influence, to a degree, in your area  
24 of command is focused on many things, but one of the things  
25 they are focused on is strategic minerals, which could, in

1 fact, be the oil of the next generation as we move to more  
2 electric power, to vehicles, homes, et cetera. Have you  
3 seen a noticeable concentration of focus by the Chinese on  
4 trying to identify and control these strategic minerals?

5 General Richardson: Yes, Chairman, and especially with  
6 the work that I have done to partner with our U.S.  
7 ambassadors in Argentina and also Chile. And as we know,  
8 the Lithium Triangle is comprised of Argentina, Bolivia, and  
9 Chile. So 60 percent of the world's lithium is in that  
10 region, so the aggressive nature of which the PRC works to  
11 extract that lithium, as well as gold and copper from the  
12 region too.

13 Chairman Reed: And as we spoke before, resources in  
14 the Inter-American Development Bank could help non-Chinese  
15 companies acquire these mines and begin processing. Is that  
16 accurate?

17 General Richardson: This would all be part of that  
18 initiative, similar to what I mentioned before, Chairman, on  
19 the Economic Recovery Act of 1948, which was the Marshall  
20 Plan, and that APEP initiative, American Partnership for  
21 Economic Prosperity, through the IDBM Invest program at the  
22 Inter-American Development Bank and also Developmental  
23 Finance Corporation, and the infusion of billions of dollars  
24 into critical infrastructure, clean energy, and digital  
25 technology.

1 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, ma'am. I will  
2 recognize Senator Schmitt, and if Senator King has  
3 additional questions I will recognize him after Senator  
4 Schmitt.

5 Senator Schmitt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General, I  
6 wanted to ask about the increase, and by some accounts a  
7 tenfold increase, in the number of Chinese nationals that  
8 have come across our southern border. It is 50 times -- I  
9 mean, whatever account, there are a lot of Chinese nationals  
10 coming across in the last year. And, you know, flying in  
11 and out of China is not like getting out of DCA back home to  
12 St. Louis. It is a much different ordeal.

13 And I guess I just want to ask, and 60 Minutes had a  
14 report about some content that is being pushed through  
15 social media channels of vulnerabilities with the border. I  
16 am certainly concerned about espionage operations. What  
17 information do we have about who these people are, what  
18 activities are taking place when they cross our southern  
19 border? It seems like this is happening now at a rate that  
20 just does not feel natural, to the extent that any of what  
21 is happening on our southern border makes any sense. But  
22 certainly the number of Chinese nationals coming across is  
23 of great concern to me, and I wonder if you could speak to  
24 that.

25 General Guillot: Senator, the number of Chinese that

1 are coming across the border is a big concern of mine. In  
2 fact, in the short period of time that I have been in  
3 command I have gone down to the southern border to talk to  
4 the agents and leadership about that, and then I have also  
5 spoken with the Acting Commissioner of the CBP on this  
6 subject.

7 What concerns me most about specifically the Chinese  
8 migrants is, one, is that they are so centralized in one  
9 location on the border, and two is while many may be  
10 political refugees and other explanations, the ability for  
11 counterintelligence to hide in plain sight in those numbers.  
12 So therefore, we have a very strong and robust relationship  
13 with the interagency intelligence community, and I receive  
14 frequent briefings in the headquarters on the disposition of  
15 who has been apprehended and the potential of that threat  
16 that you described.

17 Senator Schmitt: Do we have any -- and if some of this  
18 is in a closed setting I am happy to -- but what kind of  
19 coordination is taking place here? Because you are right.  
20 I think there were 21,000 just in the last 4 months in  
21 California alone, were the numbers that I have seen  
22 recently. So there seems to be a concentration and it seems  
23 to be coordinated. Again, getting in and out of the  
24 People's Republic of China is a different deal.

25 What have you heard about sort of coordinated



1 activities, and are we aware of specific efforts on their  
2 part to be in parts of the interior United States with  
3 sensitive military locations?

4 General Guillot: Senator, I had some of the same  
5 questions that you brought up. What I have been told by our  
6 partners in CBP is that the reason that California is the  
7 focal point is just simply ease of flying from China into  
8 Tijuana and then across.

9 I am concerned, and I think you were alluding to, and  
10 have talked to our partners about this, is how the surges  
11 seem to be coordinated and command and controlled using  
12 social media, primarily by the cartels, to drive the  
13 migrants to areas where we might not be, similar analogy to  
14 squeezing the balloon. Where we squeeze down, they, with  
15 command and control, primarily through social media, I am  
16 told, know to go to the other areas.

17 So our role in NORTHCOM is we are in support of the  
18 Customs and Border Protection for detection and monitoring  
19 along the site with about 2,500 military members, primarily  
20 from the Army and the Marine Corps. And they work very  
21 closely to pick up where those surges are as well as where  
22 the gaps are with the monitoring equipment, to alert the law  
23 enforcement side of Border Protection to make the  
24 apprehensions.

25 Senator Schmitt: I look forward to working with you on

1 that and continuing that dialogue about what is happening,  
2 because I think it is potentially a very dangerous  
3 situation.

4 And then with my limited time one last question. As  
5 far as the drone activity that we see at the southern  
6 border, presumably being coordinated by the cartels, maybe  
7 other actors, what information can you share about what is  
8 it that they are doing? Are they tracking Border Patrol  
9 agents? What is sort of the drone activity? What are they  
10 seeking to discover with these drones that are coming  
11 across?

12 General Guillot: Senator, again I asked those very  
13 same questions to the Commissioner. He said the overall  
14 majority of the activity that they see, the incursions, are  
15 spotters, trying to find gaps, finding out where we are so  
16 they can be where we are not. That is the majority. There  
17 is a smaller number that are probably moving narcotics  
18 across the border.

19 Senator Schmitt: The drones themselves.

20 General Guillot: That is right. That is right,  
21 Senator. And then the last thing I would say, there is a  
22 lot of activity that is our own, that is doing the same  
23 thing to try to find where that activity is and make sure  
24 that we are prepared to stop it.

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

1 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Schmitt. Senator  
2 King, you have another question?

3 Senator King: Just one brief question to follow up  
4 with General Richardson on our conversation about  
5 coordination. I understand there is an Interdiction  
6 Committee that is led by the Coast Guard. Could we follow  
7 up together on upgrading that to a task force to include all  
8 the other agencies and really talk about how to better  
9 coordinate our response at the border? Is that something  
10 you are willing to work with us on?

11 General Richardson: Absolutely, Senator. The  
12 Interdiction Committee meets regularly, and actually the  
13 meeting is coming up, and that includes all of the  
14 interagency.

15 Senator King: Well, I would like to meet with you to  
16 talk about the activity and to further operationalize the  
17 activity of the committee.

18 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

19 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator King.

20 Thank you to the witnesses for your excellent  
21 testimony. I will adjourn the open session, and we will  
22 reconvene in SVC-217 at, let us say, 11:40. That would give  
23 people time to rest and recuperate.

24 But again, thank you for your service, and General  
25 Richardson particularly, your remarkable service over a

1 career that has really sustained this nation and set an  
2 example that we admire. Thank you, ma'am.

3 General Richardson: Thank you, Chairman.

4 Chairman Reed: With that I will adjourn the open  
5 session.

6 [Whereupon, at 11:23 a.m., the hearing was recessed, to  
7 be continued in closed session.]

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