

USNORTHCOM and USSOUTHCOM in Review of the Defense Authorization Request for FY24 and the Future Years Defense Program

March 23, 2023

U.S. Senate - Committee on Armed Services

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jack Reed [D-RI] [presiding]
Jeanne Shaheen [D-NH]
Kirsten E. Gillibrand [D-NY]
Richard Blumenthal [D-CT]
Mazie Hirono [D-HI]
Tim Kaine [D-VA]
Angus King [I-ME]
Elizabeth Warren [D-MA]
Gary C. Peters [D-MI]
Joe Manchin III [D-WV]
Jacky Rosen [D-NV]
Mark Kelly [D-AZ]

Roger Wicker [R-MI]
Deb Fischer [R-NE]
Tom Cotton [R-AR]
Mike Rounds [R-SD]
Joni Ernst [R-IA]
Dan Sullivan [R-AK]
Kevin Cramer [R-ND]
Rick Scott [R-FL]
Tommy Tuberville [R-AL]
Markwayne Mullin [R-OK]
Ted Budd [R-NC]
Eric Schmitt [R-MO]

WITNESSES:

General Glen D. VanHerck, USAF -Commander, United States Northern Command and North American Aerospace Defense Command

General Laura J. Richardson, USA - Commander, United States Southern Command

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

Is there a motion to favorably report –

SENATOR WICKER: So moved.

CHAIRMAN REED: Is there a second?

SENATOR SHAHEEN: Second.

CHAIRMAN REED: All in favor say aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

CHAIRMAN REED: The motion carries. Thank you very much.

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

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

The global threats to the United States are edging closer and closer to home.

The 2022 National Defense Strategy identifies one of the Defense Department's top priorities as "Defending the homeland, paced to the growing multi-domain threat posed by the **People's Republic of China**." General VanHerck, your command is responsible for this homeland defense mission. To be successful, NORTHCOM will need to re-evaluate its assumptions and plans against the **PRC's** growing capabilities to threaten us territorially, as well as in cyberspace and space. I understand NORTHCOM has been working to develop a new Homeland Defense Policy Guidance to meet this challenge, and I would ask for an update on its status and how it would transform the homeland defense plans of the Department.

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

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

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

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

growing influence Moscow has exerted in the region, most South American countries have been non-committal on Russia's war in Ukraine.

A critical task for SOUTHCOM is to find ways to counter **China** and Russia's malign, hybrid activities. This challenge includes addressing sources of insecurity among our partners that our adversaries seek to exploit. It is also important to strengthen the capabilities of U.S.

partners' security forces, including by building defense institutional capabilities that adhere to the rule of law and respect human rights.

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

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

To help compensate for its limited resources, SOUTHCOM has sought to leverage "non-traditional" approaches, such as artificial intelligence and machine learning, to serve as a testbed for new tactics and operational concepts. General Richardson, I would like to know how the Department is taking advantage of the SOUTHCOM area as a valuable environment for innovative experimentation.

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

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

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

SENATOR WICKER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I also want to thank our witnesses for being here and also for their gracious allocation of time to visit with us before the hearing.

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

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

Unfortunately, Secretary of Defense Austin has declined to answer the simple questions Senator Rubio and I sent regarding the Department of Defense's apparently inaction during the earliest days of the balloon's excursion. In response to the letter Senator Rubio and I sent with questions, we received a very dismissive response from Under Secretary Colin Kahl, which said that all of our questions had already been answered. In fact, they were not answered and have not been answered by the Secretary. I expect General VanHerck will get some questions about that today, and I am grateful for his help in understanding what went wrong and how we can fix it.

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

I am also concerned about the situation on both sides of our southwest border. President Biden's lax border policies have created a major opportunity for the Mexican criminal cartels and an unprecedented humanitarian and security crisis. In 2022, more than 70,000 Americans died of opioid overdoses, largely from Mexican-produced fentanyl.

Since President Biden took office, more than 1.2 million illegal migrants have evaded law enforcement and entered our country. Most recently, the cartels murdered two American citizens.

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

with the Mexican government to counter the cartels.

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

Despite the significant and growing security threats in that region, I am troubled to see that SOUTHCOM consistently faces a mismatch between its requirements and its resources.

I look forward to General Richardson's candid assessment of SOUTHCOM's most pressing resource and capability shortfalls.

I hope to understand how these shortfalls impact our troops' ability to accomplish the mission and defend our nation. I would also like to hear how the Office of Strategic Capital might be used to help achieve military objectives at a lower cost.

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

CHAIRMAN REED: Thank you very much Senator Wicker.

Now let me recognize General VanHerck. Sir?

GENERAL VANHERCK: Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Wicker, and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear today and represent the men and women of the United States Northern Command and North American Aerospace Defense Command.

Today's strategic environment is the most complicated and potentially dangerous in my more than 35 years of service. While the United States military remains the most powerful and professional force in history, we have to account for the recent erosion of military advantage and take actions now to invest in modernization, implement innovative processes, prioritize our personnel and

civilian hiring practices, and increase agile decision-making at all levels.

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

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

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

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

Both the Department of Defense and the Canadian Department of National Defense have committed to funding over-the-horizon radar capabilities, and I respectfully urge both governments to ensure this vital and proven capability is fielded as quickly as possible. Likewise, Space Force's investment in advanced space-based warning capabilities and the Navy's commitment to modernizing the Integrated Undersea Surveillance System are vital to my homeland defense mission. Yet again, we cannot wait a decade or longer to field these new capabilities.

Our commands need your continued support to outpace the rapid gains made by our competitors. Continued progress will require the Department and

Congress to accept some risk by prioritizing modernization and innovation over maintaining obsolete platforms, organizations, and infrastructure, and occasionally accepting failure as part of the process.

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

I believe that the greatest risk for the United States stems from an inability to change at the pace required by the strategic environment we are operating in. Homeland defense must be recognized as essential to contingency plans at home and for power projection abroad, and it is vital that all military planning account for that reality. In an era of incredible innovation and technological achievement, inflexible, outdated processes are a greater impediment to success than many of our competitors' advancements.

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

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

CHAIRMAN REED: Thank you very much, General VanHerck.

General Richardson, please.

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

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

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

Our partners in the Western Hemisphere, with whom we are bonded by trade, shared values, democratic traditions, and family ties, are feeling the impacts of external interference and coercion. The **People's Republic of China**, our pacing challenge, continues to expand its economic, diplomatic, technological, informational, and military influence in Latin America and the Caribbean. The **PRC** has the capability and intent to eschew international norms, advance the brand of authoritarianism, and amass power and influence at the expense of these democracies.

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

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

Russia, an acute threat, bolsters authoritarian regimes in Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela, and they continue its extensive disinformation campaign and has media agreements with 11 countries in the region. There are over 30 million followers of Russia Today en Español and Sputnik Mundo.

These activities undermine democracies and challenge our credibility.

Both **China** and Russia exploit the presence of transnational criminal organizations and amplify their destabilizing impacts on democratic

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

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

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

As the National Defense Strategy states, the U.S.

derives immense benefits from a stable, peaceful, and democratic Western Hemisphere that reduces security threats to the homeland. USSOUTHCOM is putting integrated deterrence into action every day, using innovative methods to work seamlessly across all domains with the other combatant commands, the Joint Force, allies and partners, Congress, the U.S. interagency, NGOs, and the private sector to help build a hemisphere that is free, secure, and prosperous for our generation and generations to come. I call this Team Democracy, and we need to field a resourced team.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

CHAIRMAN REED: Thank you very much, General Richardson.

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

But this is a spectrum in which your early warning system is there, your missile

defense system, the Aegis system, which you use for defense. Could you tell the committee what the impact of curtailing, selling, or compromising this spectrum would have on your operations?

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

CHAIRMAN REED: Thank you, sir. I understand there is a study ongoing with the support of the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Commerce. Are you participating in that?

GENERAL VANHERCK: I have not been asked to participate directly in that. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss impacts to homeland defense.

CHAIRMAN REED: Thank you very much, sir.

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

Do you have the resources to counter these efforts?

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

And so with the disinformation, I mean, we play by the rules. We have rules to follow. We have the rule of law that we follow in the United States, and our

adversaries do not follow any laws, and they do not play by the rules. So the answer is yes, Senator.

CHAIRMAN REED: One of the areas that I think you are probably deficient in is ISR, and that requires additional equipment and also might be an opportunity to test autonomous vehicles. Is that something that you are suggesting to the leadership?

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

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

CHAIRMAN REED: Thank you.

General VanHerck, the threats to the homeland have changed dramatically and suddenly. The models we used, the systems we used in the Cold War, and in the interim between the Cold War and the present situation, do not seem to be applicable, with hypersonics, with long-range precision cruise missiles, with a host of different threats to the United States. And you are looking at sort of the assumptions and the plans that we have had and tried to reconstruct for this new threat, new world.

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

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

Where we are now is further assessment on my recommendations. I provided a

list of options from the status quo to also including future types of systems. I think the future of homeland defense is vastly different than what we see today. It is likely including autonomous platforms, airborne and maritime platforms, unmanned platforms with domain awareness sensors, and effectors that are kinetic and non-kinetic.

We also need to take those over-the-horizon radar capabilities that I discussed and take that data and information and fuse it into an integrated picture, a globally integrated picture that allows us to see, globally, threats before they become threats here in the homeland, and tie that to an integrated air and missile defense system and also into effectors, which are non-kinetic and also kinetic.

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

Finally, that policy needs to expand beyond defense.

Those discussions are ongoing within the Department and the interagency and the Security Council, and I look forward to hearing back on that.

What I would just point out – sorry my time is up – but much of the critical infrastructure that I defend, and to ensure that we power project from the homeland, is not solely held inside the Department or even Federal entities.

It relies on commercial entities, states, municipalities, and we need to ensure that is part of the discussion.

CHAIRMAN REED: Thank you, sir.

Senator Wicker, please.

SENATOR WICKER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First of all I have a unanimous consent request. I mentioned in my opening statement that Senator Rubio and I sent a letter to the Secretary of Defense and received a very dismissive, non-answer from Under Secretary Colin Kahl.

I would like to ask unanimous consent to insert those two letters into the record at this point.

CHAIRMAN REED: Without objection, so ordered.

[The information follows:] [COMMITTEE INSERT]

SENATOR WICKER: Thank you very much.

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

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

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

SENATOR WICKER: Okay. And that is United States territory, right?

GENERAL VANHERCK: That is correct, sir.

SENATOR WICKER: And you notified your chain of command on that day, January 28, right?

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

SENATOR WICKER: And you sent that notification to Secretary of Defense Austin, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Milley, via classified email. Correct?

GENERAL VANHERCK: I sent it to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and to Secretary Austin's military assistant. I am assuming that the military assistant passed it to the Secretary.

SENATOR WICKER: Okay. And you still are not certain at what point President Biden or Secretary Austin were made aware of the balloon. Is that right?

GENERAL VANHERCK: I do not know when the President was made aware.

SENATOR WICKER: Fine. And when you confirmed the balloon's existence on

January 28, you tasked NORTHCOM, your command, with preparing options to counter the balloon.

That is correct also?

GENERAL VANHERCK: I tasked my NORAD team to develop options. And Senator, what I would point out is I have options every single day to defend our homeland. In this case, the balloon did not meet the requirement or the authority for me to engage it because it was not demonstrating hostile intent or committing a hostile act.

Hostile intent would be maneuvering to an offensive advantage on a platform, an airplane, or shooting missiles or weapons would be a hostile act.

SENATOR WICKER: And you prepared options – you asked NORAD to prepare options in that instance.

GENERAL VANHERCK: I directed my team to be ready with options, just as we are every day. That is correct.

SENATOR WICKER: Okay. And had the Secretary of Defense requested options for shooting down the balloon on January 28, while the balloon was still over Alaska, you would have been prepared to provide him those options. Is that correct?

GENERAL VANHERCK: Senator, I am prepared every single second of every day to defend our homeland. That is correct.

SENATOR WICKER: And ultimately you did not get a chance to provide those options to the Secretary until February 1st. Is that correct?

GENERAL VANHERCK: On February 1st at 0700 I was in D.C., and that was the first time we had a discussion.

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

So I would publicly call on the Secretary of Defense to answer the questions

which the Vice Chairman of the Intelligence Committee and I have asked him.

You have already talked about kinetic and non-kinetic dangers in case we are in a major war in **China**. Do we have the capabilities you need to defend our homeland from a kinetic or non-kinetic attack by Russia and **China**?

GENERAL VANHERCK: Senator, what I would like to do is talk about that in a closed session in detail. I have concerns, as I have articulated for 3 years, about my ability to provide threat warning and attack assessments with the threats to our homeland. Why that is crucial is threat warning and attack assessment are crucial for continuity of government and our nuclear force posture.

That increases the risk of escalation and strategic deterrence failure. Those are significant challenges for me.

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

SENATOR WICKER: Okay. And quickly – we are being a little lax on the time today – if the border control agents that we have now, and ICE personnel, employees of the U.S.

government, were allowed simply to do their statutory jobs along the Texas-Mexico border, would we be in a much better situation now, and are they being restrained from fully enforcing the law as they have in the past?

GENERAL VANHERCK: I would have to defer to Customs and Border Protection and Border Patrol whether they are being restrained or not. I do think that the best solution here is to fully resource Homeland Security and their entities to conduct their law enforcement mission for the laws of our nation. I do not see this as an enduring DoD mission, long- term. We are happy to supported, as directed, to each and every day.

SENATOR WICKER: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN REED: Thank you very much, Senator Wicker.

Senator Shaheen, please.

SENATOR SHAHEEN: Thank you both, General VanHerck and General Richardson, for being here this morning and for your service to the country.

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

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

GENERAL VANHERCK: Senator, I understand there is a slight increase, along with migration, coming across the north border as well, but ultimately I defer to Border Patrol and Customs and Border Protection.

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

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

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

SENATOR SHAHEEN: So if you were going to get all of the resources that you need, do you have any estimate of what that would mean, in terms of

equipment, assets, dollars?

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

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

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

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

SENATOR SHAHEEN: So I interpret that answer is a yes, it might be helpful, that designation.

GENERAL RICHARDSON: Yes, Senator.

SENATOR SHAHEEN: I am going to switch topics because I am almost out of time. General VanHerck, what do you think is the most significant threat to our security in the Arctic Region?

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

capabilities.

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

SENATOR SHAHEEN: And if we entered the Law of the Sea Treaty, would that give us any additional ability to address the challenge there?

GENERAL VANHERCK: I think it gives us more credibility to sit at the table and have that discussion, and I would absolutely support that.

SENATOR SHAHEEN: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN REED: Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

Senator Fischer, please.

SENATOR FISCHER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, General VanHerck, for your many, many years of service to this country. It is deeply respected and also appreciated.

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

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

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

That is a couple of examples.

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

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

Let me give you an example. We are stuck in an industrial age process for acquiring and we field things in serial processes. In today's digital and information environment we can virtually test, we can virtually and do things in parallel. These are things we should do differently to field capabilities faster.

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

SENATOR FISCHER: We always learn from failures too.

In fact, in many cases we learn more.

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

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

SENATOR FISCHER: You do not necessarily need the very high-tech 5-Gen ISR at this point in time for your AOR, do you?

GENERAL RICHARDSON: I need a little bit of that, but some of the lower capable platforms work very well in this region, and then the long-dwell duration works well.

SENATOR FISCHER: So you would encourage us to look at considering keeping those other platforms?

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

SENATOR FISCHER: Okay. Thank you. General VanHerck, have you seen any advances or movements from **China** or Russia in the Arctic lately?

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

SENATOR FISCHER: And General Richardson, do you see **China** presently working even harder to build access and influence in Latin America?

GENERAL RICHARDSON: Absolutely, Senator.

SENATOR FISCHER: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN REED: Thank you, Senator Fischer.

Senator Kaine, please.

SENATOR KAINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to our witnesses for your service.

General Richardson, I would like to start with you on sort of this resource shortage issue that you have testified to and other colleagues have asked you about. One of the bits of testimony that I recall pretty vividly from last year was when you were talking about SOUTHCOM's cyber capacity. You have got partners in the region that have cyber threats just like we do, and I think you

testified that the cyber capacity you have in SOUTHCOM is just what is provided through your state partnerships with state Guard units. Is that correct?

GENERAL RICHARDSON: Yes. I have a small capability within my headquarters, but we do rely a lot on the National Guard State Partnership Program as well and their cyber teams.

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

One of the potent things that the United States can do is joint exercises with other nations' militaries, and this is something that we do and that **China**, for example, is not yet doing in the Americas. Is it my understand that a common exercise that you have been doing with Southern Cone nations you are not able to do this year?

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

SENATOR KAINE: And so this Southern Star Exercise has been common in the past but you are not resourced currently to be able to do that.

GENERAL RICHARDSON: Correct, and I have put that forward to put that exercise back on the plate so we are able to do that.

SENATOR KAINE: Let me ask you about Colombia.

Colombia has been a very strong military partner of the United States in recent years. It has been a success story.

Colombia participates in global peacekeeping exercises. I have seen Colombian troops in the multinational force of observers in the Sinai, and they do a lot of good work together with the U.S. I think there were some concerns after the Colombian elections last year about whether that would continue.

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

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

SENATOR KAINE: Have you met personally with President Petro of Colombia?

GENERAL RICHARDSON: Yes, Senator. Twice.

SENATOR KAINE: Thank you.

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

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

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

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

SENATOR KAINE: General VanHerck, you indicated that the FAA was not tracking them. Did that mean that these devices did not have the identifier that they are supposed to have if they are in that band?

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

SENATOR KAINE: All right. Thank you. Thank you, Mr.

Chairman.

CHAIRMAN REED: Thank you, Senator Kaine.

Senator Cotton, please.

SENATOR COTTON: Welcome, General VanHerck, General Richardson. Thank you for coming back and for your service.

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

GENERAL VANHERCK: That is correct, Senator.

SENATOR COTTON: But you were aware of it on Friday, January 27th.

GENERAL VANHERCK: The intel community made me aware on the 27th.

SENATOR COTTON: And on Friday, January 27th, you communicated – is that when you communicated to General Milley, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and to Secretary Austin’s military assistant?

GENERAL VANHERCK: I communicated with the Chairman only on the 27th, and conveyed my plan to intercept, ID, and assess the balloon when it became a radar capability we could do.

SENATOR COTTON: And when did you communicate with Secretary Austin’s senior military assistant?

GENERAL VANHERCK: I did that on the 28th.

SENATOR COTTON: The 28th. Did you ever speak with Secretary Austin about this balloon?

GENERAL VANHERCK: I spoke with Secretary Austin on the 1st of February.

SENATOR COTTON: Wednesday, the 1st of February.

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

SENATOR COTTON: Is it your customary practice to speak to Secretary Austin's military assistant and not Secretary Austin?

GENERAL VANHERCK: No. Verbally I routinely speak with the Secretary of Defense. Email communication typically goes through his assistant and provides it back that way.

SENATOR COTTON: Okay. On what date did you have fighter aircraft in the air that could have shot down this balloon?

GENERAL VANHERCK: I had fighter aircraft in the air on the 28th of January. They were armed. I sent two F-35s and two F-16s.

SENATOR COTTON: They were armed on the 28th?

GENERAL VANHERCK: Yes. The F-16s were armed. They flew off of alert. In Alaska I have aircraft on alert, and they were armed.

SENATOR COTTON: So all that was needed on January 28th was to pull the proverbial trigger.

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

SENATOR COTTON: There has been publicly released pictures, maybe and video, I think one pilot taking a selfie with this balloon behind him. Were you

confident, on January 28th, what the payload on that balloon was?

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

SENATOR COTTON: I am aware of that assessment and I know we cannot talk about it here, but I cannot say that I would have had the same level of confidence that it did not have some kind of offensive capabilities. Are you aware of at what point the President was personally aware of this balloon?

GENERAL VANHERCK: Senator, I am not.

SENATOR COTTON: Why was it okay to shoot the balloon down off the coast of South Carolina but not off the coast of Alaska?

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

SENATOR COTTON: I am not talking about anywhere over the continental United States. I do not dispute that. I am talking about the coast of Alaska versus the coast of South Carolina.

GENERAL VANHERCK: There is nothing that physically prevents us from shooting that down on the 28th to the 1st.

SENATOR COTTON: And if the Administration's policymakers thought they had legal justification to shoot it down off the coast of South Carolina surely they had legal justification to shoot it off the coast of Alaska, right?

GENERAL VANHERCK: Senator, my assessment is the legal basis would have been the same for either place.

SENATOR COTTON: That is what I think too.

Well, I am glad that you had fighter aircraft in the skies that were ready to shoot

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

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

CHAIRMAN REED: Thank you, Senator Cotton.

Senator Hirono, please.

SENATOR HIRONO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much to both of you for your years of service and commitment to our country.

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

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

General VanHerck, do you have the authority to coordinate across the

Department of Defense to ensure there is a plan for missile defense of Hawaii?

GENERAL VANHERCK: Senator, I am the authority for ballistic missile defense such as an ICBM from DPRK, and I am confident in my ability to defend Hawaii from those ballistic missiles. Admiral Aquilino is responsible for the defense of Hawaii, and in the **INDOPACOM** AOR, and I would say he is the coordinating authority for that region. But I am the authority for ballistic missile defense of Hawaii.

SENATOR HIRONO: And I think that is the concern that we have, is ballistic defense, so that would fall to you then. I am assuming that of course you are going to talk with Admiral Aquilino.

GENERAL VANHERCK: Absolutely. We do coordinate, and in many ways I will coordinate in real time with him for the need to defend Hawaii from ICBMs potentially from North Korea.

SENATOR HIRONO: And **China**.

GENERAL VANHERCK: I am not tasked to defend against **China** or Russia for ICBMs. That is the nuclear deterrent, Senator. Admiral Aquilino has a responsibility in the **INDOPACOM** AOR for further defense of Hawaii.

SENATOR HIRONO: You see, this is where I begin to have concerns, continuing concerns about who exactly is responsible, who is going to come and tell me that the missile defense of Hawaii is going to take place, because as I said, for years HDR-H Hawaii was going to be the way that we were going to provide missile defense. That is no longer on the table, and to date I have not gotten any clear information. I am going to get a briefing on Monday, and General, I do not know if you have someone who is doing that briefing with me and my staff on Monday. Are you involved?

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

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

GENERAL VANHERCK: Senator, I –

SENATOR HIRONO: HDR-H Hawaii was North Korea.

GENERAL VANHERCK: – I am confident in my ability to defend Hawaii from ballistic missiles from DPRK. From **China**, I am not tasked, and I will defer to Admiral Aquilino. That is his responsibility.

SENATOR HIRONO: Thank you. I think that provides some level of better clarification.

GENERAL VANHERCK: I want to add one thing, Senator.

General Cotton is responsible for the nuclear deterrent, and ballistic missiles such as nuclear ballistic missiles from **China** towards Hawaii, that is the nuclear deterrent that does that. Conventional, I will defer to Admiral Aquilino.

SENATOR HIRONO: So again, I am talking about nuclear deterrent, not conventional. Nuclear deterrent. It is the missiles emanating from **China** and North Korea that I want Hawaii to be defended from. And yes, the shooters are not in Hawaii. We are not talking about putting shooters on Hawaii. Those are in Alaska and in California.

So again, you know, all my attempts to get clarification as to who is the one agency, one entity, that is responsible for missile defense of Hawaii writ large.

You know, I am not talking about any particular, whether it is ICBMs or whether it is the ballistic missiles. You can sense my frustration, so I will continue to pursue my line of questioning.

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

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN REED: Thank you, Senator Hirono.

Senator Rounds, please.

SENATOR ROUNDS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and to both of you I want to thank you both for your service to our country and your teams' as well.

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

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

GENERAL VANHERCK: Senator, absolutely we do. There are multiple platforms, to include maritime homeland defense platforms, airborne early warning platforms, ground-based early warning platforms that enable me to provide threat warning, attack assessment, defend from potentially airborne assets, et cetera. So we need to understand the national security impacts of selling or auctioning, and make a conscious decision before we do so.

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

GENERAL VANHERCK: Senator, I have not personally been involved. I will confirm the coordination with my staff, but I have not personally been involved in that discussion.

I would welcome the opportunity to be personally involved.

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

I did want to just follow up a little bit as well.

Senator Cotton laid out a very clear line of questioning with regard to the timing and the decision-making process with regard to the observation balloon from the **PRC**. If this was a communications-gathering or an intelligence-gathering unit you did have the ability and you could see it coming from a long way off, several days in advance, not just with intelligence recognition but also with radar catching it.

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

GENERAL VANHERCK: There is no legal basis in international airspace to take action. That would actually undermine our position globally by taking action in international airspace.

I would like to clarify one thing. I did not have the capability to see that days away. That came through intel community channels. I could not see it until it got within radar, and I will talk to you in a classified environment.

But that was not days away. That was the 28th only.

SENATOR ROUNDS: And on the 28th, though, on the 28th it was still outside of our legal operating area in terms of protecting our borders.

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

SENATOR ROUNDS: During that time in which it had passed out in international waters you were aware of it and knew that it had the possibility of

coming back into our airspace again. But by then pretty clear on your part that it was not an offensively armed balloon or object.

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

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

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

SENATOR ROUNDS: The authority would have rested with someone above you in the chain of command.

GENERAL VANHERCK: Depending on the legal basis for assessment it would have resided either with the Secretary of Defense or the President.

SENATOR ROUNDS: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN REED: Thank you, Senator Rounds.

Senator King, please.

SENATOR KING: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am going to ask both of you about unfunded priorities. General Richardson, we are under attack – 110,000 people died last year of overdoses. That is 300 a day. Twelve people have died in America since we have been sitting here in the last hour. And yet your ISR

capability to at least assist in detecting and helping us to interdict this dread attack is on an unfunded priorities list. Why is it not in the base budget? This seems to be one of the most serious and intensely important responsibilities that you will have in order to help us to deal with this scourge. Why is it an unfunded priority and not base budget?

GENERAL RICHARDSON: Senator, I do not think any commander will say they have enough ISR, and so certainly as we look across the –

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

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

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

SENATOR KING: It is a lesson to them of what to avoid, I would think.

GENERAL RICHARDSON: And so if they would raise their hands back there, so you can see all of them.

SENATOR KING: Thank you.

GENERAL RICHARDSON: They are in that whole group right there.

SENATOR KING: Let me follow up.

GENERAL RICHARDSON: Yes, Senator.

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

GENERAL RICHARDSON: I have the detection and monitoring mission for the

Department of Defense through JIATF South, Joint Interagency Task Force South. And so –

SENATOR KING: But when you detect and notify –

GENERAL RICHARDSON: – we pass that right over to law enforcement or partner nations to do the interdictions.

SENATOR KING: And what percentage is interdicted, as far as you know?

GENERAL RICHARDSON: We believe that we are getting after about 10 percent of what we know is the known flow of narcotics flow.

SENATOR KING: We are only getting 10 percent of what we know.

GENERAL RICHARDSON: Correct, Senator.

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

General VanHerck, let me turn to you about unfunded priorities. One of your major unfunded priorities, again, is essentially ISR, capability to observe what is going on.

We know the Russians are heavily militarizing their shore of the Arctic Ocean. And again, my question to you is, it seems to me you have made a powerful case in your unfunded priority list. Why is it not in the base budget?

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

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

Talk about – well, perhaps this has to be in a classified setting, but the lack of

visibility, of domain awareness as the Arctic is fundamentally changing and becoming one of the most strategic places on Earth.

GENERAL VANHERCK: Yes, Senator, thank you for the opportunity to talk about that. The National Defense Strategy tasked me to monitor and respond in the Arctic.

I am encouraged with the monitor piece. We have got some over-the-horizon radars. We need to go faster there.

Canada is committed to that. Again, we need to go faster.

But under monitor we need to think about the use of SpaceX and Starlink capabilities and buying terminals that gives us data and information sharing. I am encouraged by the Jobs and Infrastructure Bill. There is \$250 million in that to modernize the Port of Nome. We need to move forward to give us some capability to be persistent in the Arctic for the monitor piece as well.

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

SENATOR KING: You have just listed, basically we have an Arctic gap. Is that correct?

GENERAL VANHERCK: That is my assessment.

SENATOR KING: Not geographically. I mean, national security wise.

GENERAL VANHERCK: That is my assessment. As I mentioned earlier on the respond side, we are not organized, trained, and equipped to operate and respond in the Arctic.

Infrastructure is a big concern for me, whether that be runway lengths, whether that be building, whether that be weapon storage, whether that be fuel storage. When you only have a few days' worth of fuel and that fuel is shared with indigenous local communities, those are challenges that we will face in a crisis.

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

I would point out that Thule Air Base in Greenland is crucial. There is some money in the budget for Thule, but not to support my homeland defense design,

which I am tasked to do a layered defense of the homeland by the Department.

SENATOR KING: Thank you both, and thank you for your candid testimony today and for your service to the country.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN REED: Thank you, Senator King.

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

Senator Tuberville.

SENATOR TUBERVILLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thanks to both of you for being here and your service.

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

GENERAL VANHERCK: Can you say that again?

SENATOR TUBERVILLE: Maxar and Saildrone. Would it help you in the Arctic?

GENERAL VANHERCK: I am not familiar with specifically.

I am familiar with the OneWeb efforts, Starlink, satellite communications, anything that gives me additional domain awareness, data, and information-sharing will absolutely help in the Arctic. It is very challenging above 65-North to communicate, to share data, to share information.

SENATOR TUBERVILLE: Thank you, and I do not want to pound on this balloon nonsense but how would you assess your relationship with your Canadian counterparts through this entire scenario?

GENERAL VANHERCK: I think my relationship with our Canadian counterparts – by the way, I have a boss in Canada, General Wayne Eyre, is exceptional.

SENATOR TUBERVILLE: He runs NORAD, right?

GENERAL VANHERCK: No. I run NORAD. He is the Chief of the Defense Staff –

SENATOR TUBERVILLE: Okay.

GENERAL VANHERCK: – in Canada. He is the CHOD. He is their senior military member.

SENATOR TUBERVILLE: So your relationship was good through this whole scenario?

GENERAL VANHERCK: Absolutely. Yeah.

SENATOR TUBERVILLE: If that same balloon took off today, same path, loaded the same way, now that we know what was on it and that we brought it down, should or would we shoot it down?

GENERAL VANHERCK: That is a policy decision. My job is to maintain options. I did that. I am very comfortable that we had options from the moment we detected it until the moment we shot it down. Ultimately "should" is a policy decision. That is not a military decision.

SENATOR TUBERVILLE: Okay. Thank you.

General Richardson, thanks for being here today and thanks for the hospitality last week, coming to SOUTHCOM.

You have got a great organization. The people working for you, they are outstanding. We learned a lot. I would hope that we have more people come down that way would look at your new program that you are building, quarters for your personnel, through lend/lease, which I think we should look at through the Air Force and through the Navy, because I think we need to privatize more things on basis to cut back on costs. But I look forward to seeing how that turns out.

Could you comment on that?

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

SENATOR TUBERVILLE: Yeah, and we are looking forward to seeing how that works out. I was very impressed with the people, after I go to Panama, that were there, actually from my state of Alabama, Mobile. The Corps of Engineers are down there working, and we have got a lot of good people.

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

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

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

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

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

SENATOR TUBERVILLE: Thank you. Thank you for your service. General VanHerck, thank you very much for what you have done for our country.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN REED: Thank you, Senator Tuberville.

Senator Warren, please.

SENATOR WARREN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to our witnesses for your service.

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

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

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

GENERAL VANHERCK: For this year or last year?

SENATOR WARREN: Last year.

GENERAL VANHERCK: I would have to go back and review it. I believe that is correct.

SENATOR WARREN: Well, I will tell you. It is there.

I understand you may not remember all the details, but it is there. Had you requested funding for that program before?

GENERAL VANHERCK: Yes. In this year's list as well.

Everything on my unfunded list –

SENATOR WARREN: So let me just be clear here. I am just trying to track this one argument, and that is, is this some unexpected expense. You knew about it last year. How do I know you knew about it last year? Because you had also requested funding for it from the year before. In other words, this is not an unexpected requirement for missile defense that you are trying to get funded through the unfunded priorities list. Is that right?

GENERAL VANHERCK: Senator, everything on my unfunded priority list I POM'ed for, asked for. It was not funded.

SENATOR WARREN: I have no doubt that it was –

GENERAL VANHERCK: Please allow me to finish.

SENATOR WARREN: I have no doubt that it was not –

GENERAL VANHERCK: Can I finish answering your question?

SENATOR WARREN: I am the one asking the question here.

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

GENERAL VANHERCK: There are no surprises on my unfunded priority list.

SENATOR WARREN: Okay. That is what needed to know.

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

SENATOR WARREN: No. Excuse me. The law does not require that you put in any request. We know last year that two different divisions actually put in requests of zero.

They did not go to an unfunded priorities list.

Now General Richardson, intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities have repeatedly appeared on your wish list as well. As Commander of Southern Command you are on the front line, confronting transnational criminal organizations, trafficking drugs in regions there and home, and I

appreciate that work. Last year you asked for an additional \$268 million on your wish list.

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

GENERAL RICHARDSON: So this year in terms of the funding that I have received, I have \$130 million for security cooperation for the region. And so in terms of the reprogramming, I am not aware of that.

SENATOR WARREN: Well, according to the Controller's website, \$750 million was reprogrammed to support drug interdiction. Does that sound about right to you?

GENERAL RICHARDSON: I am not tracking the 750, Senator.

SENATOR WARREN: Okay. All right.

But look, here is the point I want to make on this.

DoD already has the tools to reshuffle its resources when needed. Not only that, they have also done so for a key SOUTHCOM mission in an amount that was almost three times larger than your wish list. Both of you have already submitted your lists for this year. I will be submitting questions for the record to learn more about why you could not include these in your budget priorities.

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

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

GENERAL VANHERCK: Chairman, I want to correct the record.

CHAIRMAN REED: Senator –

GENERAL VANHERCK: One hundred percent of my items on my unfunded

priority list were submitted as part of the budget process.

CHAIRMAN REED: I understand, sir. Any other comments, General Richardson?

GENERAL RICHARDSON: The same here, Senator. Those requirements that I put forward to the Department as well.

SENATOR WARREN: I do not think I quite understand what our witnesses are saying here.

CHAIRMAN REED: I think what they wanted was to be able to fully respond to your questions, Senator, and with that I would –

SENATOR WARREN: But these are not on their budget now.

CHAIRMAN REED: I think the time has expired. Thank you very much.

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

Senator Schmitt, please.

SENATOR SCHMITT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I want to thank you both for being here. I would note to the committee that both of these witnesses have Missouri ties and Missouri roots.

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

The Belt and Road Initiative clearly is an initiative to further their economic, militaristic, and political goals, and the dual use that they get out of this once they are involved with these countries is very real.

So General Richardson, I wanted to ask you. It seems me that **China** is gaining far too much traction in the Western Hemisphere, if we sort of look at this under the old Monroe Doctrine. In the Western Hemisphere they continually abuse,

not just the debt traps that are established but they abuse those agreements to then later expand militarily.

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

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

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

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

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

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

But one obvious concern is that they will not just send a spy balloon. There will

be something else. And you have talked about awareness. What are specifically a couple of things that this committee can do to help with that?

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

SENATOR SCHMITT: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR ROSEN: [Presiding.] Senator Peters, you are recognized.

SENATOR PETERS: Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

GENERAL VANHERCK: Senator, thank you. First, my largest domain awareness gap, and my biggest concern, is actually cyber domain awareness. The vast majority of the critical infrastructure in our homeland resides outside of DoD, which General Nakasone is responsible for, and outside other Federal networks, which Jen Easterly at CISA is responsible for.

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

My responsibility for cyber is I have two cyber protection teams that defend my

critical infrastructure in my headquarters. More broadly, General Nakasone is responsible for the DoDIN. I am responsible for providing defense support to civil authorities. So for example, if Jen Easterly at CISA needs support, and DoD is going to provide Title 10 support, that support will go through me to provide just like I do for hurricane or wildfire response.

SENATOR PETERS: Well, I chair Homeland Security Committee here in the Senate and work on the cyber issues, so I look forward to working closely with you as to how we coordinate that, because there is no question that cyber is one of the most significant threats we face in the homeland on a daily basis. And I want to throw out an example of this and get your response.

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

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

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

SENATOR PETERS: Well, I look forward to discussions in a secure environment as we further examine that, to make sure that it is working properly.

The other question I have for you is you discussed the challenges of ensuring that Joint Force is able to operate in the Arctic, and you are challenged to respond to potential threats with forces that are either organic to the National Guard command structures or assigned to external combatant commands.

Given the awareness at NORTHCOM of the potential threats in the Arctic – and I think I am asking this question before Senator Sullivan can ask you a question

related to this, but I am sure will be coming – given that awareness would you recommend the services prioritize Arctic training and cold weather operational readiness for units who may be ultimately assigned to your command? And when I say Arctic training that does not necessarily mean necessarily in Alaska but also other cold weather environments like the state of Michigan, with our training facilities there.

GENERAL VANHERCK: Senator, absolutely I would. Fifty- two percent of my AOR is in the Arctic, in the NORTHCOM AOR.

And as I said earlier I am tasked to monitor and respond.

On the respond piece it is crucial that we conduct training operations. It is also crucial for campaigning, to demonstrate we have the capability, the readiness, the responsiveness, and the resiliency to operate in the Arctic day-to-day, as part of our campaigning plan.

It is also crucial that we invest in research and development to ensure that our platforms are able to sustain and operate and the human is able to sustain and operate in this environment. I think we have work still to be done there.

SENATOR PETERS: Thank you, General. Thank you, Madam Chair.

SENATOR ROSEN: Senator Scott, you are recognized.

SENATOR SCOTT: Thank you. I thank both of you for what you do. Thanks for your hard work to try to take care of national security.

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

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

capability and capacity to see is at an all-time low for my allocated resources.

SENATOR SCOTT: So what do you need?

GENERAL RICHARDSON: So I would need the resourcing in terms of the platforms. I would say in terms of allocated forces the ideal platform would be a P-8 –

SENATOR SCOTT: How many?

GENERAL RICHARDSON: – with a long dwell, long operation, being able to see. I would say anywhere from four to six, which is what SOUTHCOM had a couple of years ago, and those went away about a year ago in January.

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

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

GENERAL RICHARDSON: That is a very willing partner, Guyana, and the relationship that we have with Guyana, fastest-growing economy in the world right now because of the light, sweet crude that was discovered off their shores.

But they are very vulnerable in terms of their capacity and being able to – you know, our embassy there needs to be a little bit bigger to help them channel and guide them with all these new additional resources. My little DoD team needs to be a little bit bigger as well.

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

SENATOR SCOTT: Thank you. General VanHerck, the southern border, there has been conversation in D.C. that the military could go in and secure the entire southern border, and I know we have National Guard down there that are helping at the southern border.

Without taking a policy position on whether we should or should not do it, is

there really the ability, does the military really have the ability to have much of an influence on the security of the southern border?

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

SENATOR SCOTT: So, and I am sorry, you might have answered this question before I got here. Talk about hypersonics and our ability to defend ourselves against hypersonics.

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

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

SENATOR SCOTT: All right. Thank you.

SENATOR ROSEN: Senator Kelly, you are recognized.

SENATOR KELLY: Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

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

GENERAL RICHARDSON: A year ago in January the P-8s were retasked to

another area.

SENATOR KELLY: And how many did you have then?

GENERAL RICHARDSON: At that time it was two –

SENATOR KELLY: You had two?

GENERAL RICHARDSON: – from a high of six.

SENATOR KELLY: And you feel you need four to six.

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

GENERAL VANHERCK: I get a little more ISR than General Richardson does, but my ISR request is pretty much on a not- to-interfere basis that I get along the southwest border.

Now, Senator, you have to realize that I am limited on collecting intelligence in the homeland, by the law, and so therefore you cannot expect me to be able to do that on this side. We do try to get additional information on the other side of the border, as well, on transnational criminal organizations as well as the National Security Agency helping us.

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

GENERAL VANHERCK: So we do fly U-2s and RC-135s, not necessarily P-8, to gather information about threats to the homeland that emanate from all of our borders, not just the southwest border. My actual allocation of that ISR is very low compared to, you know, forward geographic combatant commanders.

SENATOR KELLY: But does NORTHCOM have P-8s available right now?

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

SENATOR KELLY: And where is that airplane based?

GENERAL VANHERCK: That airplane is in Whidbey Island, Washington.

SENATOR KELLY: I imagine it probably as a significant OPTEMPO to it right now?

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

SENATOR KELLY: What do you think we would need to do to provide like a detachment to SOUTHCOM?

GENERAL VANHERCK: Is that for me?

SENATOR KELLY: Either of you.

GENERAL RICHARDSON: Senator, if I might be able to talk about security cooperation in addition to the ISR capability because our partner nations, that security cooperation is my main lever in SOUTHCOM, and being able to train and equip our partners to be able to handle and counter the effects of the transnational criminal organizations, which are at the top of their list that they deal with every single day. The TCOs are way more powerful.

They are more sophisticated. They are five times more than all the defense budgets added together for my entire region of partner nations, and we have got to really get after that.

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

SENATOR KELLY: General?

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

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

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

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

SENATOR KELLY: Thank you, General VanHerck and General Richardson, and my office will follow up.

CHAIRMAN REED: [Presiding.] Thank you, Senator Kelly.

Senator Ernst, please.

SENATOR ERNST: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you both for your time this morning. This testimony is important to this committee because right now our adversaries are probing our homeland and really looking for weakness right here in our hemisphere. Our homeland is no longer a sanctuary, so thank you again.

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

GENERAL RICHARDSON: Well just the ability for the **Chinese** to be able to track and launch their own satellites, but then also the ability to surveil not just the United States but our partner nations' satellites as well across the globe.

SENATOR ERNST: Right. And what are you doing to mitigate that surveillance that you spoke of? Are there things that we can do?

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

SENATOR ERNST: Right. That is my concern. And what are we doing then to prevent more of these space facilities from being located in your AOR?

GENERAL RICHARDSON: So I think just working with the partner nations, with the governments in terms of the responsible space operations and things like that, and talking about and discussing and warning the possibilities associated with it.

SENATOR ERNST: Again, relationships matter, so it is very important in this region specifically.

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

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

SENATOR ERNST: Right. I do as well. And what more can we do for SOUTHCOM to prevent **China** from continuing to expand in the region?

GENERAL RICHARDSON: Well I would say that Team USA can do a better job in terms of tooting our own horn about all the investment from the private sector all the way to what I do in the military and defense sector. Foreign military sales and foreign military financing, excess defense articles, training and equipping is really what we get after. We introduce the Inter-America

Defense College that is behind me here for their professional development session. You know, our schools are so important to build trust with our partner nations that we can communicate, talk in the same language. And that is what I really bring to the table is being able to work with our partner nations in building that trust, so we can counter the malign activity together.

SENATOR ERNST: I think that is so important. Again, those relationships matter in this area of operations. And you normally place in front of us what we call a placemat that shows the region and Russian influence, **Chinese** influence. I just want to make sure that it is very clear to everyone that is watching today, listening to us, that they understand that while **China** is our pacing threat and we focus on the **INDOPACOM**, we have to recognize that they are in this hemisphere as well. They are here. They are everywhere around us. They are building space facilities.

They are building other points of operation, and they are in our backyard.

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

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

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

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

CHAIRMAN REED: Thank you, Senator Ernst.

Senator Rosen, please.

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

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

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

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

GENERAL RICHARDSON: Absolutely, Senator, and the fact that traveling to the region and putting all of these data points together and hearing from the leaders in the region and then coming back here to the United States to talk to our private sector as well, and hear from them, the billions of dollars of investment. But then when you hear of the big projects and tenders coming down from our partner nations, and then there are only six **Chinese** companies that compete for that project or the tender, then there is a disconnect there. And that is why I think that we have got to show the investment that our private sector is doing, which is billions. When I hear from them and talk to them there is billions of investment into the region, and we have got to advertise that.

Team USA is there. Our partners want to work with us.

They will turn to us first. But their economies are hurting, and if we cannot do

it fast enough, and our foreign military sales and our training and equipping sometimes is not as fast. They are on a political timeline of one term, which is 4 years, and so they are on a stopwatch to deliver for their people, not a calendar. So we have got to speed up our processes. Because they will look to us first, but if we do not have capability to deliver then they are going to look elsewhere to wherever they can get it.

SENATOR ROSEN: I think accelerating the process and having a budget, not a CR, going through, everyone has talked about that.

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

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

GENERAL VANHERCK: Absolutely. I am very concerned about Chinese communications infrastructure being built not necessarily by Chinese but with companies here in the United States in close proximity to national security locations.

We have to keep an eye on that. That is a threat to our national security. It is an intelligence collection threat.

It may be even a more broad threat.

I would also point out in my AOR, in the Bahamas, China is very aggressive. Their ambassador in the information space, they have built a new embassy. Economic investment in the largest resort outside of China is right in the Bahamas, right off of our coast. It sits right on top of the Navy's AUTECH test and train ranges, which there is potential collection there. They are interested in developing smart cities here in the region. I will not go into detail. I would in a classified environment. Selling equipment that we, or our partners, utilize for assessment of goods crossing the border, all those kinds of things.

I would also point out one of the main lessons from COVID for me was the

supply chain and our supply chain vulnerabilities, that we have farmed out so much to **China**.

You know, when you get 80 percent of your pharmaceuticals from somebody that you may face in a crisis in the future, that is a national security imperative that we need to go look at.

SENATOR ROSEN: Thank you. We just had a hearing about that in Homeland Security yesterday, bringing back particularly that pharmaceutical supply chain, critical medications.

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

Thank you again.

CHAIRMAN REED: Thank you, Senator Rosen.

Senator Budd, please.

SENATOR BUDD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and again, thank you both for being here. General Richardson, it was great to sit down with you yesterday and have a helpful conversation.

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

GENERAL RICHARDSON: No, Senator.

SENATOR BUDD: Does the transfer of U.S. defense articles build our partners' capacity to provide for their own defense?

GENERAL RICHARDSON: Yes, it does, Senator.

SENATOR BUDD: Is **China** increasing arms exports to any other countries in your AOR?

GENERAL RICHARDSON: Yes, Senator.

SENATOR BUDD: Is the United States still the security partner of choice in your AOR?

GENERAL RICHARDSON: The U.S. is the security partner of choice, Senator, yes.

SENATOR BUDD: Thank you. Is the United States at risk of losing that security partner of choice status to **China**?

GENERAL RICHARDSON: Yes, Senator.

SENATOR BUDD: And if you would explain a little bit about how FMS challenges are impacting strategic competition with **China** in your AOR.

GENERAL RICHARDSON: Yes. So the ability to be able to deliver quickly. I think that there is also a backlog from COVID and the impacts that our own private sector and industries had to take. And being able to not be a year or 2 years behind delivery. Again, we do not need a lot in this region. A little goes a long way. And when we are talking about one country needing one King Air 250 maritime patrol aircraft or four coastal patrol vessels or six helos, we are talking about something that is not that large but that they need to get after the transnational criminal organizations, the malign activity that occurs in their countries. And then that impacts, provides some stability.

It curbs irregular migration. It keeps the flow down if our partner nations can provide that security and stability for their countries.

SENATOR BUDD: Thank you for that.

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

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

GENERAL VANHERCK: Senator, I am comfortable with the resources I have

based on the mission and authorities I have right now.

SENATOR BUDD: Thank you. So nothing else needed? They have everything they needed?

GENERAL VANHERCK: Their commanders have not asked for anything to me. They are working for me in their Title 10 mobilization capacity and I am not aware of any asks.

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

And from your perspectives, what is driving this humanitarian crisis in your respective AORs, and what resources would be helpful to enhance your work in countering the human trafficking side? General Richardson first.

GENERAL RICHARDSON: So I would say the security cooperation funding is my main lever, Senator, and that really empowers the partner nation militaries and their security forces to be able to handle that. And that malign activity, as you said, is not just narcotics. It is human trafficking. It is illegal mining. It is illegal logging, illegal fishing. It is counterfeit goods. It is the whole money laundering piece. They are more powerful, they are more sophisticated, they are corrupt, and they drive violence and irregular migration. And strengthening our partner nations to be able to handle that is what makes them stronger and then generally ends up helping us in the homeland, where those malign activities do not end up on our southwest border.

SENATOR BUDD: Thank you. General VanHerck?

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

I would also say natural disasters. They have had several major hurricanes in

Mexico and Central America within the last few years. And also COVID. That created an environment where folks who wanton leave, and they want to come to the United States, and transnational criminal organizations are seizing on that opportunity as part of their business model.

We will not interdict our way out. This requires a strategy to go after transnational criminal organizations.

We know how to do this as a nation – cut off the funding, cut off the weapons. Seize on those opportunities.

Interdiction will not get us out of this problem.

SENATOR BUDD: Thank you both. My time has expired.

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

CHAIRMAN REED: Thank you, Senator Budd.

Senator Blumenthal, please.

SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you both for your service and for being here today.

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

GENERAL VANHERCK: Senator, no, I do not think I have the infrastructure, the communications, the ability to respond and be persistent in the Arctic.

SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: What kind of additional resources do you think should be provided?

GENERAL VANHERCK: Yeah, I would point back to the report that NDAA directed me to do, that I provided to Congress, that gives a list of the challenges that I face.

I need additional communications capability, data and information sharing, the ability to be persistent, so fuel north of Dutch Harbor, Alaska. We need to do

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

The infrastructure is the biggest concern. So in a layered defense concept I need to have forces forward. That would include at Thule, Greenland, in Canada as well. So NORAD in Canada has to be part of this discussion as well.

We need persistence. That requires icebreakers. We, as a nation, are in a bad shape when it comes to icebreakers, and I fully support the Coast Guard's plan. We need to go faster.

SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: The Coast Guard needs more icebreakers in that area. Do you agree?

GENERAL VANHERCK: I do agree.

SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: General, have you seen any effect in terms of the Russian resources or threat as a result of the Ukrainian operation?

GENERAL VANHERCK: So I am not aware of any direct kinetic threat to the homeland. We continue to monitor the cyber domain, and especially through their proxy actors. I can talk in a classified environment. I am most concerned about that cyber domain. I would point out that while Russia appears to be a failure in the land domain in Ukraine they still maintain significant strategic capabilities to hold our homeland at risk, and we have seen them just as active, actually more active globally, to include in the NORTHCOM AOL, such as sailing the Gorshkov with hypersonic missiles just a couple of months ago, through my AOR and into General Richardson's AOR, and more persistent submarine activities that can hold our nation at risk.

SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: Let me ask you both, maybe beginning with General Richardson, the Wagner Group has been very active in Ukraine. It has been very active in Africa.

Have you seen any evidence of its malign activities in your command?

GENERAL RICHARDSON: Russian malign activity is alive and well in SOUTHCOM, and in my statement I talked about the disinformation campaign.

Over 31 million followers now on Russia Today Español and Sputnik Mundo. They do not play by the rules. They do not have any rules. And they pose journalists to be legitimate journalists. They are not.

Twitter bots are off the charts, and these especially increase right before elections in our partner nations.

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

SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: Thank you for that. That is very helpful. And do they operate also through proxies, like the Wagner Group?

GENERAL RICHARDSON: Yes, Senator, they do.

SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: In your command, General VanHerck, what have you seen?

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

I would also point out that from a space perspective that Russia is actively seeking, under academic and research facilities, access for space monitoring in my AOR as well.

I will just leave it at that. I will talk to you more in a classified environment about that. But it is alive and well right here in the NORTHCOM and NORAD AORs.

SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: Thank you. I agree with you about the helicopters, by the way. We should be providing American helicopters, not relying on Russian helicopters.

GENERAL VANHERCK: Yes. Can I point out one more thing?

SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: Sure.

GENERAL VANHERCK: I have been working for more than a year after I

committed to provide radars to the Mexicans for domain awareness for transnational criminal organization and drug control. We still have not been able to donate those radars. The process is too slow.

SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: Thank you. Thank you both for your testimony. Very informative and helpful. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN REED: Thank you, Senator Blumenthal.

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

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

GENERAL VANHERCK: It is my last hearing in front of this committee. I am sure there will be others.

SENATOR SULLIVAN: So I am sure you are sad about that.

GENERAL VANHERCK: Senator, I actually enjoy the opportunity. It is a great chance to tell our story. I have been telling it for 3 years. Recent events have brought it further into the light.

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Well, I want to compliment you both, but I want to compliment you in particular on your career in the military and your outstanding work that you did over the last several months. It was a busy time for NORTHCOM, and I think you led the troops of Northern Command exceptionally well, not just the last couple of months but during your tenure. So thank you for that.

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

GENERAL VANHERCK: Yeah. Some exceptional work, not only in Alaska but across the Department, especially when it comes to the high-altitude balloon. That was Ph.D.-level employment tracking. But most importantly the

engagement.

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

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you on that. And Mr.

Chairman, I think this hearing has clearly, clearly highlighted the need for serious FMS reform. Senator Budd and I were in the Middle East on a codel with Senator Rosen, Senator Kelly, a number of us, and everywhere we went our allies, our military were like, "You have got fix FMS. It is killing us." So I think that is something we need to be looking at hard during this NDAA.

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

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

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

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Let me ask you, it is a multi-part question and I would like you to answer it in the time I have left. I have appreciated Senators Peters, King, Tuberville, Blumenthal all raising the issues of the Arctic and your ability

to currently monitor and respond to threats against the homeland, specifically in the Arctic.

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

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

GENERAL VANHERCK: Yeah, Senator. So Alaska may be the most strategic location on the planet.

SENATOR SULLIVAN: And I think I have said that a few times before here, Mr. Chairman. That is Billy Mitchell’s famous quote. Correct?

GENERAL VANHERCK: It is. So deploying from Alaska, short to the **Indo-Pacific**, short to the Yukon AOR, shortest avenue approach for ballistic missiles from Russia, potentially **China** and DPRK to our homeland.

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

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

defeat purposes.

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Great. Thanks again to both of you, and again, General, thank you for your outstanding service to our country for decades. We very much appreciate you here on this committee.

CHAIRMAN REED: Thank you, Senator Sullivan.

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

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

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

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