

Stenographic Transcript
Before the

COMMITTEE ON
ARMED SERVICES

UNITED STATES SENATE

TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON

UNITED STATES SOUTHERN COMMAND

AND UNITED STATES NORTHERN COMMAND

IN REVIEW OF THE DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST

FOR FISCAL YEAR 2022

AND THE FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM

Tuesday, March 16, 2021

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1111 14TH STREET NW

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(202) 289-2260

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1 TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON UNITED STATES SOUTHERN COMMAND AND
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5
6 Tuesday, March 16, 2021

7
8 U.S. Senate

9 Committee on Armed Services

10 Washington, D.C.

11
12 The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:31 a.m. in
13 Room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Jack Reed,
14 chairman of the committee, presiding.

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

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

3 Chairman Reed: Let me call the hearing to order. Good
4 morning. Today the committee will receive testimony from
5 General VanHerck, Commander, United States Northern Command
6 and North American Aerospace Defense Command, or NORAD, and
7 from Admiral Craig Faller, Commander, U.S. Southern Command.
8 General VanHerck is appearing for his first posture hearing
9 in his current command, and Admiral Faller is returning to
10 testify as SOUTHCOM Commander, and this could be your last
11 hearing before the committee, Admiral. Thank you for your
12 dedicated service to the nation and the Navy. We appreciate
13 it very much.

14 I want to thank both of you, indeed, for your decades
15 of service and also, obviously, thank your families for the
16 sacrifices that they have made to support you. And on
17 behalf of the committee, I also want you to thank the men
18 and women under your commands for their selfless dedication
19 and service to the nation.

20 The security environment we face today is fundamentally
21 different than even a decade ago. Near-peer competitors
22 China and Russia have significantly narrows the
23 technological advantages that the U.S. military previously
24 enjoyed, and they threaten to contest our military
25 operations across all domains, including land, sea, air,

1 cyberspace, and space. The 2018 National Defense Strategy
2 shifted our defense priorities to focus foremost on
3 strategic competition with China and Russia, but we need to
4 better define what our objectives are for out-competing our
5 adversaries in this geopolitical rivalry.

6 General VanHerck, you are responsible for protecting
7 the homeland, and over the last year that mission has
8 centered on the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. At the
9 request of the FEMA, NORTHCOM has deployed more than 2,200
10 personnel at part of 25 vaccination support teams at 17
11 sites in nine states, administering more than 50,000 doses
12 daily. I understand that FEMA has discussed with you
13 ramping up to 100 vaccination support teams, with the
14 capacity to vaccinate over 400,000 people per day. This is
15 in addition to the more than 30,000 National Guard members
16 supporting civil authorities across 46 states and 3
17 territories. General VanHerck, I hope you will share your
18 views on the challenges in scaling up this effort and any
19 lessons learned regarding what we need long-term for
20 addressing future pandemic threats to our nation's health
21 security.

22 NORTHCOM is also tasked with operating our homeland
23 ballistic missile defense, the Ground-Based Midcourse
24 Defense system, to protect the United States against an
25 intercontinental ballistic missile attack from rogue states.

1 The threat from North Korea has only grown in recent years,
2 and I would be interested in hearing your assessment of what
3 additional steps can be taken to better integrate our domain
4 awareness and modernize our missile defense systems,
5 including plans for the Next Generation Interceptor, and the
6 so-called "underlayer" of missile defense protection for the
7 homeland.

8 NORTHCOM is designated as the advocate for capabilities
9 in the Arctic, and plays a leading role in bringing together
10 the combatant commands that share responsibilities for this
11 increasingly critical region. As Russia and China become
12 more assertive in the Arctic, it is essential that we
13 develop a unified response across combatant commands and
14 across the interagency, as well as in coordination with our
15 allies and partners. General, I would appreciate any
16 updates you can provide on this critical region.

17 The situation along our southern border has
18 implications for both NORTHCOM and SOUTHCOM. Despite
19 President Biden's termination of the declaration of a
20 national emergency along the border, and ending of the
21 diversion of funds for the border wall, roughly 3,600
22 military personnel remain deployed in the region in support
23 of the Customs and Border Patrol. This raises questions
24 about what the Defense Department's role should be in a
25 whole-of-government response to the situation at the

1 southern border. In addition, recent weeks have seen an
2 increase in the number of unaccompanied children arriving at
3 the southern border seeking to escape instability and
4 violence in their home countries. While these children need
5 to be cared for in a human and safe manner on a case-by-case
6 basis, I also believe we need to address the migration
7 problem at its source, including the conditions causing
8 adults and children to seek asylum at our border. Admiral
9 Faller, I would be interested in your thoughts on how the
10 Department can use security cooperation strategically to
11 build partner capabilities and institutional capacities to
12 counter the drivers of instability in Central America.

13 SOUTHCOM's traditional mission has focused on
14 countering the scourge of narcotics and the threat from
15 transnational criminal organizations. The growing influence
16 of China and Russia, however, threatens to further
17 destabilize the region, as these geopolitical rivals take
18 advantage of corrupt governance in the region to advance
19 their own strategic interests. China's malign financial
20 influence, and Russian disinformation amplified on Russian-
21 controlled Spanish language media outlets, threatens to
22 undermine democratic governments. And in Venezuela, the
23 Maduro regime, propped up with external support from Russia,
24 China, and others, has caused millions of Venezuelans to
25 flee into neighboring countries, with Colombia bearing the

1 brunt of this exodus. Admiral Faller, I am interested in
2 your assessment of the threat from near-peer competitors in
3 the SOUTHCOM area, and how we might work strategically with
4 partners in the region to build resilience to China and
5 Russia's malign activities.

6 I want to thank you again for being here this morning
7 and I look forward to your testimony. And I also just want
8 to note, for my colleagues, that there will be an informal
9 classified briefing by Admiral Faller in SD-C217 immediately
10 following this session, until 12:30, when we must cease, and
11 the subject will be the increasing Chinese influence in the
12 SOUTHCOM area.

13 With that, let me recognize Senator Inhofe.

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

3 Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you
4 for calling this important hearing. I want to also thank
5 our two witnesses, NORTHCOM and SOUTHCOM. As you know, my
6 top priority remains ensuring the effectiveness and
7 implementation of the National Defense Strategy -- we have
8 all agreed this is our roadmap. This is what we are
9 supposed to be doing. It is as true today as it was two
10 years ago -- which identifies competition with China and
11 Russia as the central challenge to the United States'
12 prosperity and security.

13 However, the growing influence of China and Russia is
14 not limited to Europe and the Indo-Pacific. Most people,
15 when they think about that they talk about the South China
16 Seas and other places where there are problems. Both
17 countries have shown their way that they view the Western
18 Hemisphere as critical terrain for fulfilling their global
19 ambitions in challenging the United States. Admiral Feller,
20 China and Russia are expanding their access and influence in
21 your AOR, through increasing arms deals, military
22 deployments, and economic and diplomatic coercion.

23 At the same time, much of the drugs poisoning American
24 cities are coming from Latin America through the vast
25 illicit networks operated by multi-billion-dollar criminal

1 organizations. General VanHerck, you have operational
2 responsibility for the defense of the United States
3 homeland. We are facing a lot of challenges from the
4 growing Chinese and Russian missile capabilities, including
5 advanced cruise missiles and hypersonic missiles. I hope
6 you will discuss any emerging gaps you foresee in our
7 homeland defense and offer your recommendations for
8 addressing these challenges. Specifically, I am interested
9 in your views on whether waiting another decade for a new
10 ground-based interceptor makes any sense or if we need to
11 act sooner, given the growing threat from our adversaries.

12 Meanwhile, we are seeing a new crisis brewing on the
13 southwest border. According to The New York Times,
14 approximately 78,000 immigrants tried to cross the border in
15 January. That is double the number that were there from the
16 year before. So we know that is happening. We know that
17 his increasing. We do not have the numbers yet of the -- I
18 tried to get them this morning -- of February. We do not
19 have those numbers yet, but we will get them, and we see
20 that this thing is getting worse.

21 I have always said border security is a national
22 security, and my visit to the border in August of '19
23 confirmed this belief. These new statistics are alarming,
24 so I hope you will address whether NORTHCOM's border support
25 mission is sufficient and what we can do to better ensure

1 that our laws are enforced.

2 And, you know, we talk around this thing, and nobody
3 wants to talk about it. No one wants to admit it. We have
4 got a new President now and the new President has a
5 different mission. You know, he wants everyone to love him,
6 and I understand that. I have a picture here that I want to
7 be made part of the record. This is all these people coming
8 across illegally, wearing their Biden t-shirts. Now this is
9 going on, you guys. Do not act like it is not. Anyway, we
10 need to face this problem.

11 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

12 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator Inhofe,
13 and now let me recognize Admiral Faller for his testimony.

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1 STATEMENT OF ADMIRAL CRAIG S. FALLER, USN, COMMANDER,
2 UNITED STATES SOUTHERN COMMAND

3 Admiral Faller: Good morning, Chairman Reed, Ranking
4 Member Inhofe, distinguished members of the committee. I
5 thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today.
6 I am honored to be here with my friend and shipmate, General
7 Glen VanHerck from the United States Northern Command.

8 Now more than ever, I feel a sense of urgency about the
9 global threats we face here in our neighborhood, this
10 region, our home. This neighborhood is our home. It is a
11 shared neighborhood. It is a hemisphere which is of vital
12 national interest to the United States.

13 Two of the most significant threats we face are China
14 and transnational criminal organizations. The Chinese
15 Communist Party, with its insidious and corrupt influence,
16 seeks regional and global economic dominance, in its own
17 version of a rules-based international order. Our strategic
18 competition with China is global, not just in the Taiwan
19 Strait or the South China Sea. China is quickly growing its
20 influence here, in our hemisphere, working on over 40 port
21 deals, dishing out significant loans for political and
22 economic influence, pushing for IT structure, and engaging
23 in predatory practices like illegal, unregulated, and
24 unreported fishing. We have seen many of these tactics in
25 Asia and Africa, and we cannot let them prevail here in our

1 neighborhood.

2 Transnational criminal organizations pose a direct
3 threat to our national security. They traffic in arms,
4 humans, drugs, and they claim tens of thousands of lives in
5 America every year. These murderous tactics have resulted
6 in 43 of the 50 most violent cities in the world being here
7 in this hemisphere, and they drive illegal migration and
8 they allow bad actors like China to gain influence.

9 COVID-19 has hit this hemisphere hard. According to
10 the IMF, the economies of Latin America and the Caribbean
11 shrunk 7.4 percent in 2020. The impacts of the pandemic,
12 like a perfect storm, will alter the hemisphere for years to
13 come.

14 In the midst of all this, two back-to-back hurricanes
15 devastated Central America, causing even greater
16 instability. The pandemic and these unprecedented storms
17 struck on top of this already vicious circle of threats,
18 creating strong push factors for people in the region
19 seeking a better life, seeking security, to come with their
20 families to the United States. Despite an economy in a
21 tailspin, more than five million refugees have fled
22 Venezuela in the illegitimate Maduro regime. Maduro
23 continues to cling to power with the support of Cuba,
24 Russia, Iran, and China.

25 We cannot face such daunting challenges alone. The

1 only way to counter these influences, these threats, is to
2 strengthen partnerships. That is how we will in the
3 strategic competition.

4 I have been impressed with nations who have worked
5 shoulder-to-shoulder with us, despite the pandemic, to
6 counter threats. Nations like Colombia, whose professional
7 forces have stepped up in the midst of the pandemic to
8 conduct counter-transnational criminal organizations with
9 dozens of other nations, and nations like Brazil, who sent
10 their airborne company to our high-end training with the
11 United States Army at Fort Polk, Louisiana.

12 Good neighbors are here when you need help, and that is
13 what the United States did in SOUTHCOM when COVID hit. We
14 stepped up with our humanitarian assistance program,
15 contributing over 450 projects in 28 countries. Overall,
16 the United States is the leader in humanitarian assistance
17 in COVID in Latin America and the Caribbean.

18 SOUTHCOM works every day to build readiness with our
19 trusted military and security partners. We do this through
20 security cooperation. This includes institution capacity-
21 building, legal training, education, IMET, and exercises.
22 We focus on developing professional military forces that
23 know how to fight and use the lawful use of military force.
24 We focus on human rights training, Women, Peace, and
25 Security programs, and NCO development. Modest investments

1 in these programs and intelligence, surveillance, and
2 reconnaissance, and our presence, our posture, go a long way
3 in this hemisphere and will help our partners counter these
4 global threats.

5 Finally, our success would not be possible without the
6 men and women of our SOUTHCOM team. We are taking proactive
7 steps to protect them from unacceptable behaviors, like
8 sexual assault and harassment, racism and extremism. We
9 take these threats seriously. They are a cancer to our
10 readiness, and it is the right thing to do.

11 Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Inhofe, on behalf of
12 the SOUTHCOM team thank you for the trust you place in us,
13 and I look forward to our discussion and questions today.

14 [The prepared statement of Admiral Faller follows:]
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1 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Admiral. General VanHerck,
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1 STATEMENT OF GENERAL GLEN D. VANHERCK, USAF, COMMANDER,
2 UNITED STATES NORTHERN COMMAND AND NORTH AMERICAN AEROSPACE
3 DEFENSE COMMAND

4 General VanHerck: Chairman Reed, Ranking Member
5 Inhofe, and the distinguished members of the committee, it
6 is a privilege to testify with you here today. I am honored
7 to serve as the Commander of the United States Northern
8 Command and North American Aerospace Defense Command, and I
9 am grateful to appear alongside Admiral Faller, as SOUTHCOM
10 is a crucial partner in homeland defense.

11 USNORTHCOM and NORAD are separate commands charged with
12 the critical mission of defending the United States and
13 North America, respectively. USNORTHCOM is the U.S.
14 geographic combatant command responsible for the defense of
15 the homeland, defense and support of civil authorities, and
16 theater security cooperation for Canada, the Bahamas, and
17 Mexico. NORAD is the bi-national command that provides
18 aerospace warning, airspace control, and maritime warning
19 for the United States and Canada.

20 USNORTHCOM and NORAD's servicemembers and civilians are
21 executing the Secretary of Defense's top priority by
22 standing watch to defend our nation against all threats,
23 whether posed by competitors, natural disasters, or a
24 pandemic. Over the last year, NORAD fighters, tankers, and
25 airborne early warning aircraft responded to multiple

1 incursions into our Air Defense Identification Zones,
2 multiple ships sortied under USNORTHCOM Operation Control to
3 defend our maritime approaches, and USNORTHCOM synchronized
4 the Department of Defense's support to lead Federal agencies
5 as thousands of servicemembers deployed within the
6 USNORTHCOM area of responsibility to aid states and local
7 communities in the fight against coronavirus.

8 Today, thousands of servicemembers are providing
9 lifesaving vaccinations to our citizens. No matter the
10 threat, we are always ready to defend the lives of our
11 citizens and our homelands.

12 Right now, as we confront the scourge of this pandemic,
13 the threats we face and the pace of change in the
14 geostrategic environment continue to advance. We have
15 entered an era of renewed global competition, and this time
16 we are facing two peer competitors, both nuclear armed. We
17 must adapt to the challenges posed by this reality.

18 Since the first Gulf War, the United States military
19 has focused on projecting power forward to confront rogue
20 regimes, violent extremist organizations, and other
21 potential adversaries who threatened American interests. We
22 trusted in our nuclear deterrent and an assured power
23 project capability, as well as the blessings of geography,
24 to prevent an attack on our soil.

25 In parallel, our competitors expanded the definition of

1 competition into economic and informational areas, and have
2 aggressively advanced their own military capabilities to
3 hold our homelands at risk, both kinetically and non-
4 kinetically. Those efforts were predominantly focused on
5 long-range strike, improved delivery platforms, cyber
6 capabilities intended to circumvent our defenses from all
7 directions and in all domains, and exploiting a perceived
8 gap between our foundational nuclear deterrent and our
9 conventional homeland defense deterrent capabilities.

10 Concurrently, the rise of transnational criminal
11 organizations and the subsequent strains on governance and
12 the instability they create has created additional
13 opportunities for our competitors that they are working to
14 exploit today.

15 We must outpace our competitors by accelerating our own
16 efforts to transform our culture, investing in our people to
17 grow both talent within the ranks and counter extremist and
18 destructive behaviors anti-ethical to our values. We must
19 invest early and often in relationships with allies and
20 partners to develop a global team of like-minded nations,
21 and we must factor homeland defense into every strategy,
22 plan, force management, force design, as well as all aspects
23 of acquisitions and budget, so we deter in competition, de-
24 escalating crisis, and defeat in conflict. To do this both
25 USNORTHCOM and NORAD are concentrating efforts on building

1 our capability to deter, and, if needed, defend against
2 increasingly advanced all-domain threats.

3 Together with the Canadian Armed Forces we are in the
4 early stages of NORAD modernization and building additional
5 military capabilities in the Arctic. In coordination with
6 the Missile Defense Agency, United States Strategic Command,
7 and United States SPACECOM we are maintaining and improving
8 our ballistic missile defense capability.

9 In order to balance our readiness for crisis and
10 conflict, while also staying in global competition, we are
11 placing significant emphasis on left-of-launch framework.
12 This framework will increase decision space, uncovering more
13 deterrents and de-escalation options vice end-game defeat.
14 We are advocating for investment in all-domain awareness, to
15 generate a layered sensing grid and a layered defense
16 approach that emphasizes the use of an open sensor data
17 architecture and machine-enhanced processing in order to
18 achieve information dominance and decision superiority.
19 Through information dominance we will grant decision-makers
20 increased decision space and build flexible response options
21 to deter, deny, and defeat every threat to the United States
22 and Canada.

23 I am grateful for the trust that you place in United
24 States Northern Command and NORAD, and both commands take
25 solemn pride in our responsibility to defend our homelands.

1 We will forever have the watch.

2 Thank you for your support and time, and I look forward
3 to answering your questions.

4 [The prepared statement of General VanHerck follows:]

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1 Chairman Reed: Well, thank you very much, General, and
2 before we begin I want to remind my colleagues of the
3 procedures.

4 Since it is impossible to know exactly when our
5 colleagues who will be joining via the computer arrive, we
6 will not be following our standard early bird timing rule.
7 Instead, we handle the order of questions by seniority,
8 alternating sides, until we have gone through everyone.
9 Once we reach the end, if there is anyone we missed we will
10 start back at the top of the list and continue until
11 everyone has had their turn.

12 We will do the standard five-minute rounds. I ask my
13 colleagues on the computers, and at their desk, to please
14 keep an eye on the clock, which you should see on your
15 screens or right before you.

16 Finally, to allow for everyone to be heard, whether in
17 the room or on the computer, I ask all colleagues to please
18 mute your microphone when not speaking. Thank you.

19 Admiral Faller, again, thank you for your distinguished
20 service over many years. The Northern Triangle --
21 Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador -- is a particular
22 unstable region, and many of those who are seeking relief
23 and moving towards our border are coming from this area.
24 Security and human rights have deteriorated there
25 significantly, increased violence by criminal organizations

1 and narcotics distributors. And we can continue to provide
2 security assistance to these countries, yet corruption
3 remains rampant and international efforts to build
4 capabilities are not effective.

5 In Honduras, in particular, the corruption appears to
6 have reached the highest level of the government. The
7 criminal trial in the Southern District of New York of the
8 Honduran President's brother unearthed evidence of the
9 Honduran President and other senior officials taking
10 millions of dollars in bribes from drug traffickers.
11 Honduran security forces are also documented as having
12 engaged in gross human rights violations for years.

13 Given all of this, Admiral, do we need to reconsider
14 whether our approach to security assistance in the Northern
15 Triangle countries is achieving our national objectives?

16 Admiral Faller: The perfect storm of conditions that
17 you outlined, Senator, of violence, the impact of the
18 pandemic, the impact of the hurricanes has created untenable
19 security for the citizens, and that is why we are seeing
20 this flood of migrants to our borders.

21 Our focus at SOUTHCOM should and remains in support of
22 U.S. Government hold efforts. Our diplomats in our
23 embassies, and that security cooperation is a long-term
24 investment on the professional militaries. So institutional
25 capacity-building, we have a longstanding human rights

1 training program that has been effective in developing
2 forces that know how to use force in a professional manager.

3 Our Women, Peace and Security Program has proven to be
4 a game-changer. Those nations want to model and emulate our
5 success. Our NCO development, our IMET, there is an
6 appropriate place, moving forward, Senator, for our long-
7 term engagement with our partners. They model their
8 professionalism after us, and I can trust elements of the
9 Honduran and Guatemalan forces. We vet them. We work with
10 our interagency.

11 Chairman Reed: It seems, in those areas, and other
12 areas around the world, we have invested a great deal in the
13 military, and we have developed effective military forces,
14 but so much of this is a law enforcement issue and a
15 judicial issue. And we do not seem -- and again, this is
16 outside your lane, but a whole-of-government approach would
17 seem to need more of an investment in training police, in
18 providing judicial remedies that are actual, not fictitious.
19 Is that your view also? Do we need more help through our
20 other agencies?

21 Admiral Faller: One of the successes I have seen is
22 watching our other agencies actually engage in judicial
23 training programs and moving that forward. One of our own
24 programs is the Defense Legal Security Cooperation Program,
25 the DIILS program, out of Newport, Rhode Island, where we

1 work with partners on how they can develop and effective
2 judicial system.

3 I think these programs are effective, Senator. It
4 takes time to see the results of that effectiveness. But in
5 the past year, when there was a lot of opportunity for our
6 partner militaries to commit human rights violations because
7 they were deeply involved in helping with internal security,
8 they stayed on the field in a professional manner, and they
9 did model their professional behavior after the training
10 that we have been able to provide.

11 Chairman Reed: Thank you. General VanHerck, I am
12 sorry, I have but a few minutes, but could you give us
13 quickly sort of your takeaways from the COVID virus
14 situation, what fundamental changes we might have to make?

15 General VanHerck: Chairman, absolutely. COVID has
16 given us great opportunity to reflect and learn on our
17 planning, as we were ready. What we have done is continued
18 to adapt. What we have found is that the support functions,
19 the emergency support function process through the
20 interagency is crucial, working with local and state
21 authorities to ensure that we are synced up to provide that
22 response. We worked closely with DHS. We worked closely
23 with HHS, public health services, to ensure we are ready.

24 In addition to that, we are going back and changing and
25 updating our global pandemic and infectious disease plan to

1 ensure that we are ready and have adapted the lessons
2 learned, Chairman.

3 Chairman Reed: Well, thank you very much, General.
4 Thank you both for your service.

5 Senator Inhofe, please.

6 Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You know,
7 there is a crisis on the border. I think we all know that.
8 The number of migrants trying to cross more than doubled in
9 January 2021 from the year prior to that, and the number of
10 migrant children in custody has tripled.

11 Now we have come a full circle. We do not like to talk
12 about it. We had weak enforcement of our immigration laws
13 under President Obama, and strong enforcement under
14 President Trump, and now the expectation of a weak
15 enforcement under President Biden is driving a surge of
16 illegal migrants. And that is where I have this picture
17 here. They are all coming across the border, you know, they
18 are coming fast, and they are all wearing Biden t-shirts.

19 So we have got a problem down there, and I just have to
20 ask the question. Admiral Faller, do you agree that a
21 strong enforcement of the immigration laws serves as a
22 deterrent against illegal migration?

23 Admiral Faller: Senator, all nations deserve secure
24 borders, and our focus has been on the heinous insecurity in
25 Central America, caused by transnational criminal

1 organizations that have no respect for the rule of law, rain
2 violence on their population. They market in drugs and
3 people and guns and illegal mining, and one of the prime
4 sources that underwrites their efforts is Chinese money-
5 laundering.

6 So our focus has been on the source, working with --

7 Senator Inhofe: Okay, but just a specific question.
8 Do you agree that strong enforcement of immigration laws
9 serves as a deterrent against illegal migration?

10 Admiral Faller: The number one deterrent that I hear,
11 when I speak to all our partner nations, is the United
12 States judicial system. I agree, Senator.

13 Senator Inhofe: Okay. And do you agree with that
14 also, General? Simple question.

15 General VanHerck: Chairman, as previously stated,
16 border security is national security. I agree that we must
17 consider our laws that are in place. What we are doing
18 right now is we are supporting the lead Federal agency from
19 NORTHCOM, which is Homeland Security, that allows them to
20 enforce the laws that are on the book. We are providing
21 support in the form of aviation support, ground support
22 through detection and monitoring as well.

23 Senator Inhofe: Okay. But you do agree then --

24 General VanHerck: I do --

25 Senator Inhofe: -- strong enforcement of those laws.

1 You can have all the laws on the books you want but if you
2 do not enforce the laws, it is not going to work. Do you
3 agree with that?

4 General VanHerck: I do agree with that.

5 Senator Inhofe: Very good. And Admiral Faller, I am a
6 little concerned about something in terms of resources down
7 there. In your opening statement, or it was in the written
8 statement, I guess it was, you said that you only receive
9 less than 1 percent of all DoD ISR, only 1 percent of all
10 DoD ISR. Is that right?

11 Admiral Faller: Senator, intelligence drives
12 everything. That allows us to have the domain awareness
13 that General VanHerck spoke about, so we can then inform our
14 other interagency partners what the threats are up to. And
15 we have less than 1 percent of the ISR.

16 Senator Inhofe: You know, I read that some time ago,
17 and we had a visit. I tried to figure out how that could
18 be. Maybe I am missing something here. Less than 1 percent
19 of ISR comes into that area, and I do not understand. That
20 is not adequate, right?

21 Admiral Faller: Senator, we are short in ISR, in
22 intelligence assets and security cooperation, and we have,
23 in general, our posture is thin. We have got to be on the
24 field to compete, Senator.

25 Senator Inhofe: Mm-hmm. Yeah, I agree with that.

1 You know, I know the border. Back in the days when I
2 was enjoying life I can remember I was a builder and
3 developer down there. People on the East Coast do not
4 understand this, but there is an island down there called
5 South Padre Island. It is actually -- now do not leave
6 because you need to hear this -- the island down there is
7 140 miles long and one block wide. And I was a builder and
8 developer down there. I know the border, and they talk
9 about the tough border security and what is necessary.

10 So I just want you to know I am familiar with that down
11 there, and I think it is doing a disservice not to talk
12 about it. We need to enforce the border. And I do want to
13 have this picture made a part of the record at this point.

14 [The information follows:]

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1 Senator Inhofe: With that I will yield the floor.

2 Chairman Reed: Senator Shaheen, please.

3 Senator Shaheen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank
4 you to both of you for your service and for being here this
5 morning.

6 Admiral Faller, I want to start with you because I find
7 the maps that you have given us and the statistics on these
8 alarming, to say the least. On the map that shows Chinese
9 influence, if you were going to give us a map that said
10 "United States influence," how many, for example, countries
11 could we site that are hosting American infrastructure
12 projects, and how many countries are enjoying training and
13 military support or other economic support from the United
14 States, and how many heads of state meetings could we cite
15 since 2015?

16 Admiral Faller: Senator, our influence is eroding, and
17 that margin is shrinking, and we would be best able to show
18 that with arrows that have downward trends. It is important
19 that we remain engaged in this hemisphere. It is our
20 neighborhood that proximity matters. And as you pointed
21 out, the Chinese see that.

22 We hosted a conference last week at SOUTHCOM with our
23 allies -- UK, Canada, France, and the Netherlands -- who
24 have significant interest in ensuring a stable, secure
25 neighborhood. And one of the foreign participants said that

1 the region is in a lifeboat and it is sinking in the
2 violence and it is sinking in Chinese influence.

3 What I hear from my partners is, "We hear you, Admiral
4 Faller. We know that the United States military is the
5 best. We want to partner with you, but when you are
6 drowning and you need a life ring, you are going to take the
7 life ring from whoever throws it."

8 Senator Shaheen: That is disappointing. I appreciate
9 what you are saying and that was my reason for the question,
10 because it is very clear that we are not keeping up in the
11 way that we should in terms of influence and support in
12 Latin America.

13 Can I ask, when you talk about -- Senator Inhofe raised
14 the 1 percent of resources that you have for SOUTHCOM, and
15 one of the operations that you are responsible for is
16 counternarcotics operations. In New Hampshire we have been
17 dramatically impacted by the opioid epidemic, and obviously
18 drugs coming in across our southern border come up
19 Interstate 95 all the way to New Hampshire and northern New
20 England. If you were going to define what percentage of
21 your operations are counternarcotics, can you describe that,
22 and if you had more resources would you be able to address
23 more of what is happening with the transnational criminal
24 organizations?

25 Admiral Faller: Senator, I would like to start by

1 thanking the New Hampshire National Guard, our state partner
2 for El Salvador, a critical partner, and National Guard
3 across our region. That is our number one force provider.
4 They have stayed engaged despite the pandemic in a way that
5 builds trust and partners, and helps train them. What our
6 real goal is here is to train our partner nations to take
7 care of their own security problems.

8 We cannot interdict our way out of the narcotics
9 problem. We have got to get our partners in the game, and
10 this past year, despite a pandemic, they actually increased
11 their performance, their involvement up to 60 percent of all
12 our disruptions.

13 But that is still not enough. We have got to focus on
14 the source and the destination. And one of the key areas
15 that needs more emphasis -- and we have really worked hard
16 this past year with our partners -- is in countering the
17 money supply. I talked about the importance of that, really
18 getting to break the back of these organizations. And I
19 would that, in that regard, the DEA has cited Chinese money-
20 laundering as the number one underwriter of transnational
21 criminal organizations.

22 So it has got to be a whole-of-government effort, and
23 we have got to work to build our partners' capacity.

24 Senator Shaheen: Well, thank you, and thank you for
25 your nice comments about the New Hampshire National Guard.

1 I agree, they have had an excellent partnership with El
2 Salvador.

3 General VanHerck, I only have a little bit of time
4 left, but I wanted to ask you about the impact that you are
5 seeing from climate change on the Arctic, which we know is
6 melting a lot of the ice there and opening up routes through
7 the Arctic. What potential impact is that having on our
8 national security, and what do we need to do to respond?

9 General VanHerck: Senator, environmental change is
10 having a significant impact, as it creates opportunities and
11 it also creates vulnerabilities. The question is, are we
12 postured to seize on opportunities and to defend against
13 potential competition and vulnerabilities. This creates
14 access, access to resources. Twenty-five percent of
15 Russia's GDP is dependent upon resources in the Arctic, and
16 both Russia and China are trying to establish new norms and
17 rules and behavior for international law.

18 I understand the time is out here. I would love to
19 talk more to you about this subject.

20 Senator Shaheen: I would love to hear that, and I
21 would bet if we joined the Law of the Sea Treaty we might be
22 able to better address some of the influences that China and
23 Russia are doing. You do not need to respond to that.

24 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

25 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Shaheen. Senator

1 Wicker, please.

2 Senator Wicker: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Admiral
3 Faller, could you supplement, on behalf of Senator Shaheen
4 and me, the three charts that she mentioned? There is a
5 Chinese influence, Russian influence, and Iranian influence.
6 Can you get back on the record and just do one that says
7 "U.S. influence"?

8 Admiral Faller: The U.S. remains a partner --

9 Senator Wicker: No. Will you supplement, on the
10 record, a chart? I am asking you to do that.

11 Admiral Faller: Yes, Senator.

12 Senator Wicker: Okay. Very good. Let me ask you
13 then, Admiral, about the involvement of the Coast Guard in
14 what you do. I am also on the Commerce Committee where we
15 have oversight there, and I have grown concerned that the
16 Coast Guard is not sufficiently resourced to conduct its
17 own missions, much less support what seems to be a growing
18 demand for having Coast Guard units supporting DoD missions
19 to SOUTHCOM and other AORs.

20 Do I have correct information there? How much do you
21 rely on the Coast Guard not just to counter drug and illegal
22 fishing missions but also for theater engagement with us and
23 our allies?

24 Admiral Faller: The Coast Guard is a tremendous asset
25 for us, and they are on the field in a meaningful way. They

1 are a top priority for all our partners, building capacity
2 and countering the threats. Despite the pandemic, the
3 national security cutters, the fast response cutters, these
4 are well-manned, well-trained ships, making a difference,
5 day in, day out, including their aircraft. We could not do
6 our mission without the United States Coast Guard. They are
7 a principal source to counter threats in this hemisphere.

8 Senator Wicker: Do we have enough ships to meet your
9 theater requirements?

10 Admiral Faller: We do not. We do not have sufficient
11 Coast Guards or Navy ships to meet the requirements. We
12 need additional assets and planes.

13 Senator Wicker: Okay. General VanHerck, let's
14 transition then to NORTHCOM, and once again I have the same
15 interest as Senator Shaheen about the Arctic. I was pleased
16 that the previous administration released an updated
17 strategy for the Arctic. I am afraid that we lag behind our
18 peers, particularly Russia. Is that correct?

19 This year the Coast Guard begins construction of the
20 first of a new class of icebreakers, the Polar Security
21 Cutter. Six total ships have been authorized, a vast
22 improvement over the two aging ships we have, but a far cry
23 from Russia's fleet of 40.

24 Can you explain why icebreaking capability is so
25 critical, and do you believe it is important to advocate for

1 a larger fleet of Coast Guard cutters and icebreakers?

2 General VanHerck: Senator, yes, thank you, and I agree
3 with your assessment. We are lagging behind. Why it is so
4 important is you have to be on the field to play. It is
5 about persistence. Not only do we need to have access
6 through persistence to break ice, to ensure that we can have
7 Coast Guard cutters or potentially Navy destroyers or
8 cruisers in the area, we have to have communications as well
9 for persistence.

10 I am thankful to the Committee for \$46 million that got
11 us started with polar communications. North of 65 latitude
12 it is really tough to communicate. That will get us an
13 initial start. But I also have a require for fuel north of
14 Dutch Harbor, Alaska, which will also contribute to the
15 persistence of competing in the Arctic.

16 This is about persistence. We are in competition, as I
17 said in my opening statement, and to be competitive with
18 Russia and China, specifically in the Arctic, you have to be
19 part of the on-the-field, if you will. So it is crucial
20 that we do that and continue producing capabilities that
21 will allow us to be in the Arctic.

22 Senator Wicker: So fuel capabilities and
23 communications capabilities are now where they ought to be.
24 Last year the Navy was investigating the possibility of
25 establishing a new base in the Arctic. Have you been

1 involved in any discussions with the Navy regarding
2 establishing a permanent base in the Arctic, and how could a
3 Navy base improve your ability to execute U.S. Arctic
4 strategy?

5 General VanHerck: Senator, to answer your question
6 directly I have not been involved in any discussions with
7 the Navy. I am aware of the study that was done for a
8 potential port, specifically with regards to Nome, Alaska,
9 which will get after the requirement for fuel north of Dutch
10 Harbor. That report was completed by the Army Corps of
11 Engineers and submitted for congressional awareness.

12 Senator Wicker: Would this be helpful?

13 General VanHerck: Yes.

14 Senator Wicker: Do you have an opinion?

15 General VanHerck: It would be helpful to meet my
16 requirement to have fuel for that persistence to compete
17 with the nations that are interested in the Arctic.

18 Senator Wicker: Thank you.

19 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Wicker. Now via
20 Webex, Senator Gillibrand.

21 Senator Gillibrand: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Admiral
22 Faller, as you noted in your written testimony, Russia has
23 eagerly flooded online communities in Latin America with
24 disinformation intended to undermine faith in democratic
25 institutions and in the United States. Separately, China is

1 investing heavily in information technology that can be
2 easily manipulated by the Chinese government through
3 discretion for espionage or cyber intrusions.

4 Do you feel that SOUTHCOM is adequately equipped to do
5 its part to handle the separate but overlapping risks posed
6 by these efforts?

7 Admiral Faller: Recently, in a visit to one of our
8 partner countries, I had the leader of that country lean
9 over and say, "How do I get rid of the Chinese information
10 technology that was sold to get after the violence in the
11 city, but then oddly appears outside the U.S. Embassy and
12 other places, which are in the most secure parts of the
13 city?" These efforts have got to require a whole-of-
14 government, whole-of-world approach where we offer safe
15 technology and safe, affordable solutions, moving forward.

16 For our part, we have really participated with U.S.
17 Special Operations Command in standing up appropriate
18 information capabilities to counter in the information
19 space, and I think that effort is nascent. It is having
20 some effect, but is very small scale, given the volume. In
21 Russia alone, they had over 17 million disinformation hits
22 last year in social media. Outside Russian language, their
23 Spanish language social media is their biggest effort, and
24 they increased it three-fold last year, particularly trying
25 to discredit everything the United States did to help our

1 partners recover from the pandemic.

2 Senator Gillibrand: Admiral, as you pointed out
3 earlier, while China's economic coercion practices are only
4 one element of its strategy to exert influence in the
5 region, it is certainly an important one. Is there a way
6 for SOUTHCOM and other U.S. entities to facilitate
7 opportunities for economic engagement, where we can
8 highlight the benefits of working with the U.S. as opposed
9 to China?

10 Admiral Faller: There are some great efforts that
11 Congress has championed, the Developmental Finance Corps and
12 others, in support of that. I think it is incumbent on all
13 professionals like myself to learn as much about the
14 economic elements as power as possible.

15 But then to focus on what we do best, which is working
16 with our partner militaries, supplying them professional
17 training, professional education, and exercise programs.
18 They want to partner with us. That is their North Star, and
19 we have got to have the right security conditions so that we
20 can have sustainable economics. Businesses are fearful when
21 they cannot invest in a safe environment.

22 Senator Gillibrand: Understood. General VanHerck, as
23 the Admiral noted, it is clear that one of our biggest
24 challenges in the Western Hemisphere will be China's
25 technological engagement that threatens our security. Are

1 we beginning to see any signs that China's growing
2 technological presence in the SOUTHCOM region is forcing
3 NORTHCOM to rethink its strategy of how it defends its
4 domain, given the close proximity between the two regions?

5 General VanHerck: Senator, we look closely at China's
6 influence. They are absolutely in the NORTHCOM AOR,
7 attempting to influence in the Bahamas, working through 5G,
8 for example, the same thing in Mexico. We continue to
9 defend all domains. NORTHCOM defends our critical cyber
10 infrastructure with allocated cyber protection teams, and we
11 work closely with CYBERCOM and NSA as well. We are the disc
12 synchronizer for cyber if there is a need to provide defense
13 support of civil authorities. We continually work with
14 civil authorities as well to assess the needs for homeland
15 security, as well as other agencies across the government.

16 Senator Gillibrand: Thank you. In your written
17 statement you indicated Russia and China had developed
18 hypersonic and nuclear warhead-tipped cruise missiles.
19 North Korea is also advancing its intercontinental ballistic
20 missile program. These weapons put our allies and our own
21 national security at risk. The current missile defense is
22 based at the Ground-Based Interceptor, or GBI, which was
23 fielded 16 years ago.

24 Since that time we have improved the system and grown
25 the size of the available arsenal. Last year, we

1 appropriated money for the Next Generation Interceptor, the
2 NGI system, to improve our defenses.

3 While I am clear-eyed about the threat posed by enemy
4 states' missiles, it is currently a time of competing
5 priorities, particularly in light of COVID. In your
6 opinion, can we still rely on the GBI for the foreseeable
7 future, and two, assuming we need to push back on the NGI
8 system, how long can we rely on the current arsenal?

9 General VanHerck: Senator, I am comfortable with my
10 ability to defend the homeland, including Hawaii, against a
11 limited state actor such as DPRK, which the system is
12 designed for, for the foreseeable future. The key thing is
13 to maintain the timeline of no later than 2028 for NGI, to
14 ensure that we maintain capacity and capability to defend
15 against a ballistic missile threat.

16 Senator Gillibrand: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

17 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Gillibrand. Now via
18 Webex, Senator Fischer, please.

19 Senator Fischer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General
20 VanHerck, I appreciated our discussion last week and I would
21 like to revisit our conversation on the NGI. Senator
22 Gillibrand was just touching on some points of that as well.

23 When you talk about the threat that we are facing and
24 the advancing threat that we are seeing, do you believe that
25 the additional capabilities that NGI will provide the

1 warfighter over our current interceptor fleet are absolutely
2 necessary?

3 General VanHerck: Senator, I do. It gives us extra
4 capacity to go against threats that are developed that could
5 exceed our current GBI inventory. In addition to that, it
6 will give us capability, because the threat continues to
7 advance their capabilities, such as decoys and diversion
8 with that capability. So the NGI is crucial to give us that
9 capability. It also provides us a foundation for our
10 deterrence. It provides deterrence by denial. The nuclear
11 deterrent is the foundation, but the NGI and the GBI give us
12 deterrence by denial, Senator.

13 Senator Fischer: Thank you, sir. Also, you and I
14 discussed the increasingly capable cruise missile arsenals
15 that our adversaries possess and the very real threat they
16 pose to the homeland. In your opening statement you talk a
17 lot about the concept of domain awareness. Can you talk
18 about what that means for you, how it relates to the threats
19 that are posed, say, by cruise missiles?

20 General VanHerck: Senator, yes. Thank you for the
21 opportunity. Cruise missiles challenge our legacy warning
22 system significantly. They have generated very long-range
23 capabilities. They can actually shoot cruise missiles --
24 they, being Russia -- today from over their homeland, which
25 will challenge our legacy systems.

1 We do not want to be in a situation, my personal
2 opinion, where end-game defeat is our only option. We need
3 to get further left, and that starts with domain awareness,
4 left of the archer, if you will, before they take off,
5 whether that be in a submarine, whether that be in a sea
6 vessel, or whether that be in a bomber, to have decision
7 space for our senior leaders.

8 Decision space starts with that domain awareness. Once
9 you take that domain awareness, whether that be from
10 undersea, to space, to cyberspace, and everything in
11 between, and you use machine learning and artificial
12 intelligence capabilities, what I call information
13 dominance, now we are able to get further left and give our
14 decision-makers deterrence capabilities beyond the
15 foundation, which is our nuclear deterrents, and an end-game
16 kinetic attack, which would require a response, very
17 escalatory in either one, Senator.

18 Senator Fischer: You know, you are using all sorts of
19 technologies now that you are applying on your
20 demonstrations that NORTHCOM has conducted in this area. Do
21 you have other examples you can share with us?

22 General VanHerck: Absolutely, Senator. So we have a
23 program called Pathfinder that we have moved out on over the
24 last year, that takes information data. I am a believer
25 that the future of competition, crisis, and conflict, he or

1 she with the data and the information will win.

2 What we have taken is an example. So you will
3 remember, in 2015, when the gyrocopter actually flew down
4 from north here in the National Capital Region and landed on
5 the Capitol lawn, that situation, none of the sensors in the
6 area, whether they be the NORAD sensors that we have or
7 other sensors alone detected that target. But when we took
8 the Pathfinder capability and we analyzed the information,
9 we took information that was left on the cutting room floor
10 that was not previously analyzed, there that gyrocopter was.

11 That is what I am talking about, information today that
12 exists in stovepipes in government agencies, even within the
13 Department of Defense, that is not shared more broadly. We
14 have to take advantage of data and information going
15 forward, Senator.

16 Senator Fischer: Thank you, General.

17 Admiral Faller, Nebraska's RC-135s are frequent guests
18 in your part of the world, and we know that the Air Force is
19 doing what it can, but there are shortfalls. Last year, you
20 told the Committee you only have 20 percent of the ISR that
21 you need, and the bulk of that amount comes from Customs and
22 Border Protection assets.

23 As a commander, you said that only 8 percent of
24 SOUTHCOM's overall ISR need is met by military assets. Is
25 that still the case?

1 Admiral Faller: Senator, compounding that 8 percent
2 figure we received a 46 percent cut to our ISR-related
3 budget this year, in year, so that will significant
4 challenge our ability to understand the threats of all types
5 in the hemisphere. Intelligence drives everything.

6 Senator Fischer: So what gets left on the table as a
7 result of your inability to get that ISR coverage?

8 Admiral Faller: A significant amount of movement of
9 transnational criminal organizations, our understanding of
10 what our competitors are up to -- Russia, China, Iran. A
11 lot gets left on the table that is contributing to this
12 violence, that is driving the instability here in the United
13 States and in our partner nations.

14 Senator Fischer: And we see their presence growing in
15 your combatant command area, so I understand the need for
16 that. Thank you, Admiral. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

17 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Fischer. Senator
18 Blumenthal, please.

19 Senator Blumenthal: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. Thank you
20 both for your service and for being here today. As you
21 know, the COVID-19 pandemic has hit the Caribbean and South
22 America very hard. I am concerned that we need to continue
23 to stay vigilant against attempts by Russia, and most
24 especially China, to exploit the suffering of our neighbors
25 to the south to increase their influence in the region.

1 Admiral Faller, in your posture statement you stated
2 that China and Russia are using the COVID-19 pandemic to
3 gain greater influence in South America. Can you explain
4 how that is occurring, and what would you recommend the
5 United States do to maintain American influence in the
6 region in the face of that public health threat during that
7 time?

8 Admiral Faller: The conditions that the pandemic has
9 caused in Latin America and the Caribbean rival those of the
10 Great Depression here in the United States. It will take
11 years for the region to recover. The IMF has estimated it
12 as the region with the longest recovery time.

13 We have seen, and there was a New York Times article
14 today on this, China particularly move in with a heavy-
15 handed mask and vaccine diplomacy, that they are using the
16 vaccines to leverage deals for their IT, their 5G, and they
17 are using it to try to drive a wedge between some nations
18 like Taiwan and others in the region. This is indicative of
19 Chinese global coercive, insidious behavior. We are seeing
20 it play out. We need to stay on the field, with a whole-of-
21 government effort, and once we have taken care of the United
22 States, be first with a concerted plan to take care of our
23 neighborhood with the vaccines here.

24 Senator Blumenthal: I hear you saying that we need a
25 much more aggressive and, frankly, humanitarian effort in

1 this part of the world, our neighboring region, in fact,
2 part of the Western Hemisphere family, to take care of
3 people in our own enlightened self-interest.

4 Admiral Faller: Senator, to date I have been very
5 proud of the U.S. Government effort in PPE and other COVID-
6 related supplies. We are not taking much credit for it, but
7 by far and away the single donator in this hemisphere, and
8 the Department of Defense using our humanitarian assistance
9 authorities, we moved out with small projects at speed, over
10 400 projects, \$54 million, and it made a real impact. But
11 the next phase is going to be in vaccines and long-term
12 recovery, and we have got to be as aggressive and forward-
13 leaning in that phase, I would say particularly in this
14 hemisphere, because the proximity here matters to the
15 security of the United States.

16 Senator Blumenthal: And it is not only a public health
17 crisis, it is really a very deep-seated economic crisis
18 linked to the pandemic, I hear you saying.

19 Admiral Faller: Senator, in October I traveled with my
20 Civilian Deputy Commander, Ambassador Jean Manes, a
21 wonderful diplomat, great civ-mil relationship, in our
22 headquarters. We went on our first multiple-day trip. We
23 traveled to Central America, Honduras, El Salvador,
24 Guatemala, and Costa Rica. And the hollow look in the eyes
25 of our partners, they are struggling to fill their gas tanks

1 and find food for their security forces, because of the
2 stress the pandemic, and the violence, has place. And this
3 creates real opportunities for our competitors who are more
4 than willing to step into that violent sauce and take
5 advantage of it for their own interests.

6 Senator Blumenthal: And it has ramifications in terms
7 of generating flow of migrants, the drug trade, all kinds of
8 other ramifications that are disruptive to our country,
9 potentially.

10 Admiral Faller: Yes, Senator.

11 Senator Blumenthal: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

12 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Blumenthal. Senator
13 Cotton, please.

14 Senator Cotton: Admiral Faller, I want to speak about
15 the legal conditions on the ground in the Northern Triangle
16 -- Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. Do the governments
17 of those three countries systematically persecute their own
18 citizens on the basis of race, ethnicity, sex, political
19 views, religious beliefs, or other such categories?

20 Admiral Faller: Senator, when I go I am lockstep with
21 our embassies, and we have got great diplomats. We do not
22 see a systematic exploitation. I work with the militaries,
23 and the elements we work with are vetted and trusted, and I
24 find they are doing the right thing, whether it is Honduras,
25 Guatemala, or El Salvador.

1 Senator Cotton: Thank you. I think that is a very
2 important point. The governments of Honduras and El
3 Salvador and Guatemala do not persecute their own citizens
4 systematically on the basis of race, sex, ethnicity,
5 religion, or political views, which is the basis for asylum
6 and refugee status under our laws. An economic migrant is
7 not eligible for asylum. They are not eligible for refugee
8 status. Asylum is designed for people, let's say, a Hong
9 Konger whose student visa expires and does not want to
10 return to Hong Kong now that the Chinese Communist Party has
11 cracked down on that country.

12 The reason we have a crisis at our border is because
13 President Biden and his administration opened the border and
14 ended the policies of the Trump administration that made it
15 clear you could not make the very dangerous journey across
16 Mexico, you could not pay smugglers and traffickers
17 thousands of dollars to get to our southern border and then
18 expect to be let in. If you let them in, more will come.
19 That is why we have a crisis at the border.

20 General VanHerck, we have been supporting the
21 Department of Homeland Security at the border for some time
22 now with DoD personnel. The most major adjustment of
23 numbers was in 2018. Is that right?

24 General VanHerck: That is correct. In 2018 and this
25 year we are up to nearly 4,000, total numbers.

1 Senator Cotton: And has the status of the border
2 changed from 2018 to March of 2021?

3 General VanHerck: When you say "status of the border,"
4 can you clarify?

5 Senator Cotton: The conditions there and whether or
6 not we are closer to having a secure border or do we have a
7 less secure border now than we did when this major personnel
8 change first started.

9 General VanHerck: I would defer to Homeland Security
10 for the security of the border. We are in direct support of
11 Homeland Security for that mission. I can tell you the
12 numbers of migrants coming across had dramatically increased
13 here in recent months.

14 Senator Cotton: And what kind of strain does that put
15 on our personnel at the border?

16 General VanHerck: Our personnel being DoD?

17 Senator Cotton: DoD personnel.

18 General VanHerck: DoD continues to provide support to
19 Homeland Security and Customs and Border Protection, mainly
20 in the detection and monitoring. Total number of 4,000 does
21 not place an incredible strain on the force, and has not
22 shown significant strategic readiness of our ability to
23 accomplish our missions.

24 Senator Cotton: I have seen some media reports that
25 suggest in addition to economic migrants, who are not

1 eligible for asylum, showing up at our border from Latin
2 America, that we are now beginning to see foreign nationals
3 from other countries in Africa and Asia. To your knowledge,
4 is that correct?

5 General VanHerck: Senator, I am aware of intelligence
6 reports that corroborate exactly what you just said.

7 Senator Cotton: What kind of threat does it pose to
8 our country that persons might be traveling from the old
9 world to the new world to join these migrant flows?

10 General VanHerck: I believe that we must continue to
11 monitor anybody who has nefarious desires for our country.
12 Homeland defense, border security is national security which
13 equals homeland defense. There will be people take
14 advantage of the opportunity to come across that border.

15 Senator Cotton: Yeah, I could not agree more, General
16 VanHerck. I mean, if our border is open, anyone from around
17 the world could get to Mexico and try to cross our border,
18 not just to seek a better life here but to harm or
19 ultimately try to kill our own people. And I go back to
20 this simple point: if you let them in, more will come.

21 And the controversy you see in the media are misplaced,
22 talking about how faster we are processing migrants through
23 these detention facilities, or whether they have enough
24 showers or beds or cots. If you do not let them in in the
25 first place, you do not have to worry about the conditions

1 in the detention centers.

2 The Biden administration has to reverse course. There
3 are three simple solutions. First, it should reapply the
4 public health declaration under Title 42 to all foreign
5 nationals, to include minors, just like the Trump
6 administration did, as the Biden administration still does
7 for adults. Second, it should renegotiate a new migrant
8 protect protocol with Mexico, which it tore up for no reason
9 on its first days in office. And third, it should re-enter
10 a safe third country agreement with Guatemala. If you are
11 seeking asylum at our border, there is no reason you cannot
12 seek asylum in Guatemala. That was the lesson of the last
13 administration. Those three things alone will solve our
14 crisis at the border, and they could all be done tomorrow.

15 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Cotton. Senator
16 Kaine, please.

17 Senator Kaine: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and Admiral
18 Faller, I want to follow up on the comments made about the
19 border crisis. It is a crisis and there are important
20 things that we must do. I want to puncture the partisan
21 finger-pointing that has been done, because it is a crisis,
22 I think that we all have to solve. The notion that this was
23 bad under the Obama administration, fine under the Trump
24 administration, and now bad again is just not realistic.

25 During the Obama administration, we worked together in

1 Congress on a comprehensive immigration reform bill that
2 would have poured tens of billions of dollars into border
3 security. It was bipartisan in the Senate. It could go
4 nowhere in a Republican-dominated House. It would not even
5 get a committee hearing.

6 During the Trump administration, we came up with a plan
7 that was bipartisan in February of 2018, that would have
8 protected Dreamers and put \$25 billion into border security,
9 every penny that the President had asked for, and when the
10 bill was introduced with 16 co-sponsors -- 8 Democrats, 8
11 Republicans -- the Trump administration, having said that
12 they would sign the bill -- "You put it on my desk, I will
13 sign it," is what the President told many of us -- they
14 decided, within a day, that they so did not like Dreamers
15 that they were willing to turn away \$25 billion in border
16 security.

17 We missed an opportunity in 2013 to put about \$40
18 billion into border security because of a Republican House.
19 We missed an opportunity in 2018 to put \$25 billion into
20 border security because the President did not like Dreamers.

21 Now I do not say that to suggest that the problem at
22 the border is the fault of one party or another. It is a
23 challenge, we all have to deal with it, and we have to find
24 solutions. And I share my colleagues' views that one of the
25 solutions is putting some tough laws in place and enforcing

1 them. I think the asylum rules maybe need to be tightened
2 up.

3 I want to correct my colleague. He asked you a
4 question about asylum rules, and asked if there was
5 persecution for another reason, but he left out persecution
6 based on political status. I can assure you, in the
7 Northern Triangle, having lived there, there is significant
8 persecution in the nations in the Northern Triangle against
9 political dissidents, against journalists, against
10 environmental activists, and there has been a history of
11 persecution against indigenous people. There are some other
12 groups -- my colleague is right. They are not being
13 persecuted directly now, but political opponents are.

14 In Honduras, where I lived, the OAS said, after the
15 last presidential election, that the election should be re-
16 run because they were so corrupt. Instead, the U.S.
17 recognized the corrupt government and then cut off aid to
18 the corrupt government, and then what we see today, as you
19 said, Admiral Fallor, is sort of a perfect storm. If we do
20 not invest in security and economics there will be economic
21 refugees, and my colleague is right, an economic refugee is
22 not entitled to asylum status. But nevertheless, if we are
23 not working to promote security and economic improvement,
24 there is a natural consequence to that.

25 So we need tougher border security, we need to increase

1 investments in security assistance in the region, and we
2 need to hold authoritarians accountable rather than turn a
3 blind eye to their misdeeds. These are things that we can
4 do and we can do together.

5 General VanHerck, I want to ask you a question. Canada
6 is a pretty good ally of the United States militarily,
7 aren't they?

8 General VanHerck: Absolutely, Senator.

9 Senator Kaine: In my conversations with the Canadian
10 Foreign Minister and the Canadian Minister of Defense, it
11 has been a sore point with them that the U.S. uses national
12 security waivers against them to impose tariffs. We have
13 trade disputes with Canada over milk, over lumber products,
14 over all kinds of things. That is not unusual given the
15 sizeable border that we share. But they expressed to me a
16 particular concern when the previous administration labels
17 them a national security threat, and they point out, "Hey,
18 we fight with you in every war. We are side by side with
19 you in military hospitals, at Landstuhl and elsewhere."

20 Have you heard a similar concern expressed,
21 dissatisfaction from the Canadian side about U.S. using
22 national security, labeling them a national security threat
23 in order to impose tariffs?

24 General VanHerck: Senator, my discussions with the
25 Minister of National Defense, the Deputy, and also the chief

1 of the defense staff, I have not been engaged or had that
2 discussion.

3 Senator Kaine: Okay. Thank you for sharing that.
4 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

5 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Kaine. Now via
6 Webex, Senator Rounds.

7 Senator Rounds: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Gentlemen,
8 good morning. I thank you for both of your continued
9 dedication to our country and for your previous service.

10 Let me begin. I would like to start with Admiral
11 Faller. Understanding and combatting Russian and Chinese
12 influence operations truly is critical to our national
13 security. Senator Gillibrand began this discussion with you
14 a little while ago, talking about what is happening in our
15 southern regions. Admiral Faller, I would like to talk a
16 little bit about what our options are, what the tools are
17 that are available to you to counteract that misinformation,
18 and what tools you may need right now, or what additional
19 assistance you need, in order to be able to counteract some
20 of the misinformation that currently is occurring.

21 Admiral Faller: I cannot stress enough the full-court
22 press that China has on to gain their economic dominance in
23 their version of a world order globally and in this
24 hemisphere, which I look at this hemisphere as the front
25 line of competition, and we have to approach that as such,

1 as a U.S. government, across all elements of power, with the
2 diplomats and in the lead, clearly.

3 Military plays a role. Our principal method to block
4 Chinese military interests, the PLA, is by staying engaged
5 with our partners in our exercise program, our IMET program.
6 These are world class. China has tried to copy them. They
7 have tried to replicate Leavenworth in Spanish and
8 Portuguese. We need to remain the best at what we do and
9 ensure we provide the volume that is needed to allow our
10 hemisphere partners to be professional and partner with us.

11 In the IT space, we have to stay engaged to understand
12 what they are up to. That goes back to intelligence
13 resources.

14 So I would sum this up by saying additional
15 intelligence assets, continued security cooperation, and
16 increased volume of IMET and exercises, and then enough
17 assets to stay on the field. That includes our small
18 special operations force teams, which are very effective.
19 And last year we received great support from the United
20 States Army to put some small security force assistance
21 teams in places like Colombia and Honduras, which are having
22 great effect, to train. And it is only training, not
23 accompany, our partners.

24 Senator Rounds: Thank you, Admiral. General VanHerck,
25 right now you have got, on a day-to-day basis, you clearly

1 have more individuals trying to cross the border into the
2 United States. There is no question about that, and clearly
3 that is something which most certainly, in your supporting
4 role, will take up a fair part of your day. But at the same
5 time you have one of the most critical responsibilities out
6 there, defending the homeland against those possibilities of
7 strategic attack.

8 Today we have this discussion going on about the need
9 for the triad, the continuation of our triad, and also the
10 need to provide specific defense protection against incoming
11 weapon systems. Can you talk about the connectivity, or the
12 connection between having all three legs of a triad
13 available and also needing to still have the ability to
14 defend the homeland, and if we were to take away any one of
15 the legs of the triad what that would do, in terms of
16 increasing the challenge for you of defending the homeland
17 with missile systems set up to protect against incoming
18 weapon systems?

19 General VanHerck: Sure, Senator. First, the nuclear
20 deterrent and the triad remains the foundation of homeland
21 defense. I would defer to Admiral Richard on specifics
22 about the triad. I know that the triad today was designed
23 for specific capabilities to basically take the calculus of
24 any threat and create deterrence options because of the
25 flexibility that the triad creates. The most reactive

1 forces are ICBMs, the most flexible force is the bombers,
2 and certainly the most survivable force is the submarines.
3 Each of those contributes significantly to homeland defense.

4 We have not had a great power conflict since World War II,
5 and the trial and the nuclear deterrent has been part of
6 that.

7 With that said, our competitors today are trying to
8 circumvent the nuclear triad and have developed, and stated
9 intent, to attack the homeland because they assume they can
10 be successful to destroy our will, below the nuclear
11 threshold. I am concerned about having the ability to give
12 decision-makers key decision space in that realm, but not
13 all end-game defeat.

14 And so deterrence by denial is what I talk about, and
15 that is giving options to senior leaders to create doubt in
16 a competitor or adversary's mind about their ability to
17 achieve their objectives with a strike on the homeland,
18 Senator.

19 Senator Rounds: Thank you. My time has expired.
20 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

21 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Rounds. Now let me
22 recognize Senator King via Webex.

23 Senator King: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and General, I
24 would like to follow up on a comment made at the end of her
25 question by Senator Shaheen, and ask in your professional

1 military opinion, would it be in the interest of the United
2 States to accede to the Law of the Sea treaty?

3 General VanHerck: Senator, yes, it would be. It gives
4 us a better posture, a seat at the table, more credibility
5 when we work many of the issues that we have to work around
6 the globe with allies, partners, and potential competitors.

7 Senator King: And that is particularly true in the
8 Arctic, isn't it? That is where the Russians are staking
9 claims as we speak.

10 General VanHerck: Senator, I agree with your
11 assessment, and as Russia takes over the Arctic Council in
12 May, it has never been more crucial for us, with our like-
13 minded nations and allies and partners that we come to
14 agreement to not allow Russia and China to exploit any seams
15 and gaps.

16 Senator King: Thank you. I would like to turn for a
17 moment to the immigration question and the crisis at the
18 border, which everyone recognizes. Admiral Faller, I think
19 at the beginning of your testimony you pointed out that
20 there were significant what I call push factors as well as
21 the change of administration, which is a pull factor. But
22 the combination of the impact of COVID, the two major
23 hurricanes, and the transnational gangs is making life
24 intolerable for people in those Northern Triangle countries.
25 Is that not also true?

1 Admiral Faller: Senator, I have met with folks who
2 have walked all the way to the border and come back, and
3 their drive was the violence, the fear for their life, their
4 lack of food for their families, the insecurity. And in
5 this past year, we have had that perfect storm of additional
6 factors, COVID and then back-to-back major hurricanes. The
7 region is fragile, the conditions are on par with our Great
8 Depression, and our engagement is critical to help our
9 partner nations overcome this challenge.

10 Senator King: It strikes me that whatever we do on
11 border security, and I am fully supportive of a secure
12 border, as long as we have these three countries near our
13 border that are in such terrible shape, people are going to
14 continue to try to find ways to escape. I have heard the
15 term "we need a Marshall Plan" for that region in order to
16 try to stabilize these countries in terms of their own
17 internal security, their own economies. Does that ring any
18 bells for you?

19 Admiral Faller: Senator, I think a Marshall Plan would
20 be a wonderful model as we look at the entire hemisphere,
21 really, and look at the sources of instability across the
22 hemisphere. In addition to Central America we see Haiti,
23 Cuba, and Venezuela, all sources of illegal migration to the
24 United States, and Venezuela alone, 5 million migrants now
25 have swelled out of their borders. We need the big ideas.

1 We need the sustained engagement of the all-of-nations and
2 whole-of-government of the United States, and the Department
3 of Defense plays a role, particularly in that
4 professionalism and institutional capacity-building so their
5 security forces do the right thing and contribute to overall
6 sustainable security.

7 Senator King: You mentioned in your testimony the
8 Russian and Chinese disinformation campaigns in these
9 countries. Are they also encouraging migration as a way to
10 undermine the U.S.? Do they see this as a weapon, just as
11 they did with the Syrian migration into Europe several years
12 ago?

13 Admiral Faller: The disinformation by Russia seeks to
14 discredit every act of goodness, and we do many that the
15 United States provides in the hemisphere. And to the extent
16 that drives migration there is no doubt. China seeks their
17 own influence, their own economic dominance, and they seek
18 clients while we seek friends and partners. I think their
19 information campaign, best exhibited by a recent visit to a
20 country where I was asked about the illegal and unregulated,
21 unreported fishing in the region, and I cited the example of
22 Chinese involvement off of Ecuador, where their fleets
23 would, for great periods of time, go silent and sweep into
24 the ecological preserve. And then within minutes after my
25 facts-based statement, which is based on various credible

1 sources, the Chinese proceeded to attack me and the media.
2 That is just typical of their disinformation globally,
3 Senator.

4 Senator King: Well, I am out of time, but I think your
5 testimony that you (a) do not have adequate ISR resources,
6 and (b) there are not enough ships to interdict the drugs
7 that are coming and killing Americans, including more than
8 one a day in my home state, is very powerful, and that is
9 within our control. That is a matter of allocation of
10 resources, and I hope this committee can bring some pressure
11 on the administration to allocate adequate resources for ISR
12 and for interdiction, because we are not even interdicting
13 the drug shipments we know about, let alone finding ones
14 that additional ISR could provide. So that is something
15 that I hope this committee can work on.

16 Gentlemen, thank you both for your testimony. It has
17 been very illuminating. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

18 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator King. Let me
19 recognize Senator Ernst.

20 Senator Ernst: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and gentlemen,
21 thank you so much for being here today and for your service
22 to our great nation and the men and women within your
23 commands. We truly appreciate everything they do for us
24 every day.

25 Admiral Faller, we had a great conversation last week,

1 and you really stressed to me the importance of our
2 neighborhood, and I want to continue visiting about that
3 today because we do need to be very aware, and I think this
4 committee is, but that we have a lot of nefarious
5 influencers within our own neighborhood. And I would like
6 to talk a little bit about those transnational criminal
7 organizations as well as those that maybe influencing those
8 TCOs and where that is coming from.

9 You have provided the placemats for us today -- China,
10 Iran, Russia. They are all influencers in our neighborhood,
11 and they are all operating. We see the TCOs as well. They
12 are operating to our south, and they are bringing about \$90
13 billion of revenue annually. That is very concerning to me.
14 And then the increase of movement across our borders is
15 something troubling, that we have all been talking about
16 today, and we have to make sure that we are defending that
17 border and pushing back against these influencers.

18 So let's talk a little bit about the TCOs and what they
19 are doing in the SOUTHCOM AOR, and are they working
20 alongside China, Russia, and Iran?

21 Admiral Faller: The trinational criminal organizations
22 are just murderous, violent organizations. They are
23 murdering people, driving migration, and they are fueled on
24 corruption. And so when I look at the interconnection of
25 these organizations and the China-Russia players in our

1 hemisphere, I look at corruption as a common element. It
2 fuels both. Then we look at lack of regard for human
3 rights, and there is a commonality there. And then we look
4 at lack of regard for rules-based international order, or
5 rules in general, and there is a commonality there. So
6 there is an interconnection.

7 The money-laundering connection is the most
8 significant, where Chinese money-laundering underwrites TCOs
9 a significant portion, and that is something that we are
10 tracking as part of all interagency effort here in the
11 United States. And so this corrosive influence undermines
12 our democracies and contributes to the fragility and the
13 security concerns we have right in proximity to the United
14 States. Location, location, location drives everything, and
15 that location is so important in this neighborhood.

16 Senator Ernst: So Senator Shaheen was asking about
17 Chinese influence. So there is above-the-board operations
18 going on with China, where they may be engaging in legal
19 activities. But then you are saying they engage in these
20 criminal activities as well, and under the radar type of
21 criminal organizations.

22 Admiral Faller: So the National Defense Strategy and
23 our Secretary's guidance cites China as the pacing
24 challenge, and I side with what the INDOPACOM commander
25 said. It is the most significant threat we face in the 21st

1 century. And we want this competition to work out
2 peacefully and not end in conflict and not be adversarial.
3 But Chinese, in addition to the illegal, unreported,
4 unregulated fishing is involved in illegal mining, illegal
5 logging. They are at least tacitly supporting the money-
6 laundering. They are using COVID and vaccines as a hammer
7 to further Chinese Communist Party interests, particularly
8 to get better deals for Huawei and 5G, and to try to drive a
9 wedge between the remaining countries that support Taiwan,
10 and the majority of those are here in this hemisphere.

11 So yes, Senator, their corrosive, insidious influence
12 is being felt right here in our neighborhood.

13 Senator Ernst: Thank you, Admiral, and I appreciate
14 our discussion to that effect last week. And General
15 VanHerck, in the remaining time that I have, we have had a
16 number of our own troops working the southern border, which
17 I think has been extremely important. They have been
18 supporting United States Customs and Border Patrol. Are
19 they still playing a vital role in the defense of our nation
20 at our southern border?

21 General VanHerck: Senator, probably answered by CBP
22 and DHS. My recent visit would tell you that we are playing
23 a role to enable them to do their law enforcement role by
24 providing support.

25 When I look at the challenges the transnational

1 criminal organization create on the border, the symptoms
2 that we are seeing are the migration, the human trafficking,
3 the counternarcotics. From a homeland defense perspective,
4 Mexico, being in the United States NORTHCOM AOR, and two
5 major transnational criminal organizations with the Sinaloa
6 and New Jalisco, we have a national security imperative with
7 regards to the instability that they create, the tragedies
8 they create, and the opportunities they create for nefarious
9 actors such as China or Russia, right on our own southern
10 border, to have access and influence. And so it concerns me
11 very much, Senator.

12 Senator Ernst: Yeah. Thank you, gentlemen, very much,
13 and I appreciate you safeguarding our neighborhood.

14 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

15 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Ernst. Let me
16 recognize Senator Warren via Webex.

17 Senator Warren: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and
18 thank you to Admiral Faller and General VanHerck for being
19 here today. We appreciate the work that you are doing.

20 General VanHerck, COVID-19 vaccinations are well
21 underway all across our country, and the DoD is helping
22 people get vaccinated. Each day, millions more Americans
23 are receiving hope in the form of these vaccines as we move
24 closer to defeating this pandemic.

25 But the data show that the vaccines are not reaching

1 every community equally. Death rates for Black Americans
2 and Native Americans, Native Alaskans are nearly twice as
3 high as the death rates in white communities. But the
4 vaccines have disproportionately gone to white Americans.
5 Although vaccine demographic data are incomplete at this
6 point, it appears that only about 7 percent of the 65
7 million administered doses have gone to Black Americans.

8 So, General VanHerck, several thousand of the troops
9 you command have been deployed to assist the Federal
10 Government's vaccination efforts. Can you explain how
11 Northern Command made decisions about the deployment of
12 vaccine teams to ensure that communities of color are
13 getting the vaccines that they desperately need?

14 General VanHerck: Senator, absolutely. The United
15 States Northern Command does not make the decision where
16 teams go. That is done through the FEMA process, and we
17 answer to their mission assignment and go to the locations
18 determined by that interagency process.

19 Senator Warren: Fair enough. Do you know if FEMA is
20 prioritizing communities of color?

21 General VanHerck: In my discussions with the Acting
22 Director, Mr. Fenton, they do take all considerations in,
23 from state and local officials, governors that are asking
24 for support, and factoring in those specifics, and based on
25 the need of where the transmission rates are the highest

1 they do take all that in, from my discussions.

2 Senator Warren: Well, it is hard then to explain why
3 we are down at 7 percent vaccination rate for Black
4 Americans. Can I ask you to commit that in future
5 discussions, as you are talking about how to deploy these
6 teams, that you will support making sure that we are making
7 adequate vaccination efforts in communities of color?

8 General VanHerck: Senator, I commit to you that I am
9 agnostic with regards to where we provide support, and I
10 will work closely with the FEMA team to make sure we do
11 that.

12 Senator Warren: Well, I would like to hear that you
13 are not agonistic but that you are really committed to
14 helping in the communities of color that are being hit
15 hardest, and where we are seeing the highest death rates.

16 General VanHerck: I apologize --

17 Senator Warren: I am sorry. Go ahead.

18 General VanHerck: I apologize. I am fully committed.
19 I thought I said that, the second part.

20 Senator Warren: Okay.

21 General VanHerck: Absolutely.

22 Senator Warren: I hope so. I am also concerned about
23 reports of Russian misinformation campaigns against the
24 vaccine that are aimed at reducing the number of Americans
25 willing to get vaccinated. Can you just say a word about

1 what strategies is Northern Command using to combat this
2 misinformation?

3 General VanHerck: Senator, it is an information and
4 education campaign, primarily within our own forces. I am
5 happy to report to you that we have approximately 85 percent
6 acceptance rate within the command. In my discussions with
7 the Secretary of Defense and within the interagency we have
8 talked and shared the lessons learned about how to educate
9 and also exploit or expose the disinformation. So I think
10 that is crucial to combine both the education aspect and
11 exposing the disinformation.

12 Senator Warren: Well, thank you. This pandemic has
13 not affected all Americans equally. Black and brown
14 communities have disproportionately suffered from COVID-19,
15 and its effects will likely be felt for years. Northern
16 Command and the Federal Government's vaccination efforts
17 must prioritize the hardest hit communities, and I hope that
18 you will continue to work hard to ensure that the vaccine
19 goes to those who need it most.

20 Thank you very much, and thank you, Mr. Chairman.

21 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Warren. Senator
22 Tillis, please.

23 Senator Tillis: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Gentlemen,
24 thank you for your decades of service.

25 General VanHerck, I want to go back and just finish, or

1 make sure I understood, with respect to any DoD resources
2 supporting local mission objectives around vaccine
3 dissemination. You are there to basically provide personnel
4 support after the decisions about where to administer the
5 vaccines, which populations should be prioritized. You are
6 not actively involved in that prioritization process. Is
7 that correct?

8 General VanHerck: Senator, that is exactly correct.

9 Senator Tillis: Okay. Thank you. Admiral, I had just
10 maybe an addendum to the request that Senator Wicker made,
11 following on to Senator Shaheen's comments. This one
12 graphic that shows China influence, I think what would be
13 helpful in there is just to show American influence but also
14 to show the trend lines. My guess is based on a comment you
15 made, they are trending in the wrong direction. So I think
16 it would just be helpful, when you provide that graphic, to
17 show us the heat map on where we really need to muster more
18 resources.

19 On the TCO graphic, you all summarized the disruption
20 in terms of narcotics, I think 313 metric tons in FY 2020.
21 How does that compare to FY 2019, and what are the trend
22 lines for FY 2021?

23 Admiral Faller: In overall amounts, Senator, it is
24 comparable. But what is significant about FY 2020 is the
25 impact of the global pandemic. So we know that, for a time,

1 the narco traffickers went to ground and did not push as
2 much of their product. And then when they did, because a
3 lot of border controls were tighter and the methods of
4 delivery were harder because economies had shut down, they
5 ride their traffics on the backs of the economies so they
6 were having difficulty getting precursor chemicals and so
7 on. When they did start pushing it, it was in smaller
8 loads, in different routes.

9 What is significant about the DoD's performance, and as
10 part of the whole-nation effort, really what we do is we
11 detect and monitor and pass that off to law enforcement is
12 that we never step back. We stepped up on the face of
13 pandemic. And we accounted for a significant increase of
14 the amount that we targeted. So while the total amount was
15 the same, our percentage of getting at effective targets was
16 up, and that was because we did have a modest increase in
17 resources throughout the year. The United States Navy
18 stepped up, at the direction of the Sec-Def, with Navy
19 ships, additional P8's, and the Coast Guard sustained their
20 always excellent support. And what we saw is when the U.S.
21 stayed on the field, our partners stayed on the field.

22 So overall we held the line, as part of the effort. We
23 will never interdict our way out, but we have got to keep
24 pressure on that part of the supply chain. The Colombians
25 did their part. They had a record eradication year. Where

1 we need to go next is in the finances, into their data, into
2 that source of their power, and really break the center of
3 gravity of these organizations, and I think we can do that
4 more effectively with a better, effective targeting and
5 whole-of-government approach here in the U.S., and training
6 our partners to do the same.

7 Senator Tillis: Thank you. Something that would be
8 helpful, if you do not have it available I would also be
9 interested in a similar update on human trafficking
10 disruption. If we could just get that submitted for the
11 record I would appreciate it.

12 At the southern tip of your area of responsibility,
13 General VanHerck, and Admiral, the northern, what is the
14 change in posture? What is the environment like now as
15 compared to, say, this time last year? I mean, military
16 presence -- I know even at the southern border, the
17 southwest border of the United States, we had stepped up
18 Mexican military presence. How would you summarize that
19 today, and then also the southern Mexico border and our
20 border states, what is their posture there, trying to manage
21 flow of immigrants moving across those borders, now compared
22 to a year ago?

23 General VanHerck: I will go first. From Mexicans'
24 perspective, they are tremendous partners. We have a
25 fantastic military --

1 Senator Tillis: Are they maintaining the same sort of
2 operations tempo that they have for the past year or so?

3 General VanHerck: They are. They have been great
4 partners.

5 Admiral Faller: Same for Guatemala. They are
6 committed, they are committed to doing the right thing here,
7 but they are stressed with COVID and the other insecurity by
8 the transnational criminal organizations. So their ability
9 to surge more in the migrant problem set is limited.

10 Senator Tillis: Thank you. As we move forward with
11 funding and NDAA this year I would also be interested in
12 maybe you submitting for the record key funding flow that
13 are trending in the wrong direction that we should focus on
14 when we get back to appropriations discussions, and any sort
15 of authorities you may need in the NDAA. Thank you very
16 much.

17 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

18 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Tillis. Let me
19 recognize Senator Manchin.

20 Senator Manchin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank
21 both of our panelists for their service to our country, and
22 we appreciate very much you being here today.

23 Admiral Faller, I do not think it is possible to
24 overstate the threats adversaries are posing in your
25 area of responsibility and AFRICOM, because they know

1 whatever investments they make in South America and Africa
2 are cheap and will pay dividends in the future.

3 At the end of February, U.S. Army South finished pre-
4 deployment training for Operation Alamo Shield, to prepare
5 1st Security Force Assistance Brigade personnel for future
6 missions in Colombia, Honduras, and Panama. In addition to
7 our state partnership program's ongoing training and
8 advising, operations like this one are crucial for promoting
9 interoperability and relationship-building in your area of
10 responsibility.

11 So my question would be, what specific training
12 programs in SOUTHCOM are you going to develop to increase
13 the capabilities and the capacity and to further combat the
14 growing concern for corruption within the ranks of our
15 partners, and especially with the migration that we have
16 going on right now? Can't they play a bigger role in that,
17 sir?

18 Admiral Faller: Senator, I would like to commend the
19 West Virginia Guard, which does fantastic work through the
20 state partnership program with Peru, and has been an active
21 participant in our exercise program. You cited the security
22 force assistance teams that the United States Army has
23 developed. That is exactly the right capability. It is
24 small. It is small teams that focus on training, think four
25 or five people. And our partners want to emulate the

1 professionalism of the United States Army, the United States
2 Navy, the Coast Guard, Air Force, Marines, and that is the
3 way forward, staying engaged on the team, on the field, with
4 the small teams that train our partners' trainers in the
5 professional use of force, that involve Women, Peace, and
6 Security training, that involve human rights training. This
7 is the way to go, and we continue to emphasize and
8 strengthen those programs, Senator.

9 Senator Manchin: Thank you, sir. And to General
10 VanHerck, our current major ballistic missile defense assets
11 around the globe include the GBMD, THAAD batteries, Aegis
12 systems, and PAC-3 missile capability. As China and Russia
13 continue to increase their influence abroad I am concerned
14 that their objectives provide them with the ability to deny
15 us access, break apart our relationships, further corrupt
16 governments, and ultimately place threats closer to the U.S.

17 However, as we begin to think in terms of hypersonic
18 threats, geographical location does not mean much anymore.
19 And the importance of early detection and coordination
20 between the combatant commandments becomes an even more
21 crucial concern.

22 So my question is, as we continue to develop space-
23 based sensor layers, what role do you see for NORTHCOM and
24 NORAD in tracking threats in North America as well as
25 interfacing with other combatant commands to track threats

1 such as hypersonics?

2 General VanHerck: Senator, wearing my NORAD hat, we
3 are directly responsible for integrated threat warning and
4 attack assessment, so that is crucial. We will continue to
5 play a crucial role for assessment of threats to the
6 homeland, specifically from missile threats. I am concerned
7 about the ability going forward to track and assess
8 hypersonics, and so we must go to space, and in my recent
9 discussion just this Friday, talking with Jon Hill at the
10 Missile Defense Agency, they are moving out.

11 What we have to provide is space-based capabilities to
12 track hypersonics, especially as they maneuver, and those
13 space-based capabilities have to provide fire control
14 capability data to systems that will be able to engage
15 hypersonics. That is crucial for that deterrence by denial
16 aspect that I mentioned earlier, that also contributes to
17 overarching deterrence.

18 Senator Manchin: Is there a requirement for
19 [inaudible] at each of our combatant commands that
20 represents the other commands in order to build situational
21 wellness to coordinate the efforts?

22 General VanHerck: Senator, I believe homeland defense
23 starts forward, and that means all combatant commands must
24 be engaged and part of the overarching solution for homeland
25 defense and missile defense.

1 Senator Manchin: Thank you, General. Thank you, Mr.
2 Chairman.

3 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Manchin. Let me now
4 recognize Senator Sullivan.

5 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Gentlemen,
6 thank you for your service. Good to see both of you again.
7 Admiral, it has been a while. Thank you for all you are
8 doing down south.

9 General, I want to focus on some issues I know that
10 have already been mentioned. First, on missile defense.
11 One, I think, a good news story, that does not make a lot of
12 press. But in the last few years this has been a strong
13 bipartisan support in this committee, in this Congress, on
14 building up our missile defense I think, in part, because of
15 the threats from North Korea. However, there have been
16 challenges. Right now we have 20 empty silos at Fort
17 Greely, which makes no sense. Some estimates are it is
18 going to be 10 years before we have missiles in there.

19 Can you talk to me about that, and why in the world
20 aren't we filling those silos as soon as possible?

21 General VanHerck: Senator, my goal would be to have
22 additional capability and capacity as soon as possible. I
23 continue to work closely with Jon Hill at the Missile
24 Defense Agency. My top priority is to stay on timeline, to
25 field additional capabilities against ballistic missiles

1 that could attack our homeland.

2 Senator Sullivan: And isn't that in part because there
3 is intel that given the rate of what North Korea is
4 producing in terms of nukes and intercontinental ballistic
5 missiles that their capability could overwhelm our
6 capabilities as early as 2025?

7 General VanHerck: Senator, I would like to have that
8 conversation in a classified environment. I remain
9 extremely concerned about the capacity of the ballistic
10 missile defense system going forward.

11 Senator Sullivan: And would quickly fielding the NGI
12 help with addressing that challenge?

13 General VanHerck: The sooner we can field the NGI, the
14 better for addressing that challenge.

15 Senator Sullivan: There was an article in a defense
16 media news source recently saying that the NGI decision is
17 on the Deputy Secretary of Defense's desk and yet it is
18 being delayed. Some are thinking that she might kind of use
19 this as a budget-cutting tool to say maybe we do not need
20 it. Is that a good idea to delay this and have the Pentagon
21 say we do not need NGI right now?

22 General VanHerck: Senator, I will stay out of the
23 policy aspect of that.

24 Senator Sullivan: Well, you kind of are already dumped
25 into it, so let me get your personal opinion on that. Is

1 that a good idea for the Deputy Secretary, or the Secretary,
2 to say let's figure out where we can cut the budget. Let's
3 cut the budget on the system that protect the entire United
4 States of America from a clear and growing threat. Is that
5 a good idea?

6 General VanHerck: Again, that is a policy decision.
7 My perspective is about the risk, and I remain very
8 concerned about the risk of having a capable ballistic
9 missile defense system against future capacity changes and
10 capability changes by threats.

11 Senator Sullivan: Would the risk increase if we cut
12 the NGI program --

13 General VanHerck: My assessment --

14 Senator Sullivan: In your personal opinion?

15 General VanHerck: In my opinion, cutting that would
16 reduce our capability to defend against increased capacity
17 and capability of any threats.

18 Senator Sullivan: Mr. Chairman, this is a huge issue
19 and I think we, as a committee that has been very
20 bipartisan, need to send a message to the Pentagon, like,
21 hey, fund this now. It is clear it would be a risk to the
22 country.

23 Let me turn to the Arctic. I know there have been a
24 number of discussions already. The good news is, in his
25 confirmation hearing, Secretary Austin, Deputy Secretary Dr.

1 Hicks, both said they were committed to this committee to
2 fully fund new Arctic strategies -- I think the Army is
3 going to introduce it today -- with regard to fully funding
4 the different service-oriented strategies.

5 Senator Wicker talked about icebreakers. It is good we
6 are finally building them. It is taking too long. There is
7 this leasing option that the Trump administration was
8 looking at, at the end of the administration, and now the
9 Biden administration is looking at. Do you think that is a
10 good idea to close this icebreaker gap with the opportunity
11 to lease icebreakers, get them homeported in America's
12 Arctic, which is Alaska? What is your thought on that?

13 General VanHerck: Senator, that is a policy decision.
14 I have a requirement for capability. I am agnostic to what
15 provides that capability.

16 Senator Sullivan: But you think we need the
17 capability.

18 General VanHerck: Absolutely.

19 Senator Sullivan: Good. So do I. So does this
20 committee, by the way.

21 Let me ask one final thing. There is going to be a
22 high-level meeting between our diplomats and Chinese
23 diplomats in Anchorage Thursday and Friday. We talk about
24 Alaska in terms of the Arctic, but as you know, General,
25 Alaska also is critical for the Asia-Pacific, particularly

1 as we look at dispersing of our forces. We had the PACOM
2 commander here last week talking about challenges, perhaps
3 in the Taiwan Strait, as early as 5 to 6 years from now.

4 Now important is it, do you think, that the Chinese,
5 when they come to Alaska, see that there is, within the end
6 of this year, going to be over 100 fifth-generation fighters
7 based in Alaska, that can get to the Taiwan Strait probably
8 in 6 hours?

9 General VanHerck: Senator, Alaska is a strategic
10 location. It is a strategic location for homeland defense,
11 something that we must preserve and preserve that
12 capability. I think it is important that they see our
13 capabilities. It is part of our overarching deterrence.

14 Senator Sullivan: Great. Thank you. Thank you, Mr.
15 Chairman.

16 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Sullivan. Let me
17 recognize Senator Peters, please.

18 Senator Peters: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and,
19 gentlemen, thank you for your testimony here today and for
20 your service every day.

21 General VanHerck, a seldom-discussed area of the civil
22 support mission is chemical, biological, radiological, and
23 nuclear response, and this is good considering the subject
24 matter, but as long as supporting units are resourced
25 appropriately we can be more assured.

1 So my question to you, sir, is, the Command and Control
2 CBRN Response Element B has experienced a cumulative 25
3 percent decrease in funding over the past 3 years, and I
4 understand these are Title 32 funds, and I know that you do
5 not control those funds. But the effect should at least be
6 of concern to you because the unit augments Northern Command
7 for CBRN, and DSCA, more broadly.

8 So my question to you, General, is, does the decrease
9 for the Guard and Reserve C2 element reflect your priorities
10 or those of the Army North and Joint Task Force Civil
11 Support?

12 General VanHerck: First I would say I remain confident
13 in my ability to provide support in case there is an
14 incident -- chemical, biological, radiological -- in the
15 continental United States. And with regards to the specific
16 prioritization, I would say that I need to get further
17 detail on the cut for Title 32. I am not tracking that.
18 But we are well integrated with state and local authorities
19 and have our capability ready to go, some of it on an hour's
20 notice, others on a day's notice. So I am confident in my
21 ability to perform that mission.

22 Senator Peters: Well, I appreciate that, and you are
23 willing to take a look at that and get back to us? We could
24 follow up with you?

25 General VanHerck: I will.

1 Senator Peters: I appreciate that. Thank you.

2 Admiral Faller, the Southern Commands takes a
3 nontraditional approach to intelligence, integrating public
4 information with advanced analytics, artificial
5 intelligence, and machine learning. My question is, is this
6 in-house RDT&E effort unique to the Southern Command?

7 Admiral Faller: The nontraditional efforts that you
8 speak of, through our special operations force, looks at big
9 data and what the enemy is doing in big data's commercially
10 available information and machine learning, artificial
11 intelligence. It is a unique effort that is now being
12 replicated, and it is a key area that we need to emphasize
13 in our intelligence efforts going forward, appropriately
14 working within the U.S. whole-of-government.

15 This data, it is data that my shipman, General
16 VanHerck, talks about, and stovepipes in that data that we
17 create with our own policies have to be broken down so we
18 can leverage that to understand what the threat is doing.
19 And certainly our malign actors that are working in this
20 hemisphere, China and Russia, they do not respect laws when
21 they look at exploiting that type of data for their own
22 benefit.

23 Senator Peters: You mentioned some of that is being
24 replicated. Are you aware of some similar successful
25 methods with other combatant commands or the intelligence

1 community?

2 Admiral Faller: We have a pilot program that we have
3 worked, to look at cryptocurrency. In this hemisphere, with
4 only 8 percent of the world's population, 60 percent of the
5 cryptocurrency is being leveraged, and that is because of
6 the plethora of transnational criminal organizations that
7 are wreaking violence in the hemisphere. So that is a
8 concern.

9 So how do we get at that center of gravity to break the
10 backs of these threats, working with Treasury and other
11 partners, in support of. We are not looking to take the
12 lead here. We are looking to play the appropriate role. So
13 there are efforts, and those efforts are, frankly, funded
14 every year on the unfunded request or through additional
15 support from Congress. So we need to appropriately sustain
16 that going forward.

17 Senator Peters: Thank you. On Thursday, NORTHCOM will
18 begin Global Information Dominance exercise, and I
19 understand that 9 of the 11 combatant commands are planning
20 to participate in this exercise, which is meant to prototype
21 and test a set of AI tools, and I know there was some
22 discussion about Pathfinder earlier. But the intent is to
23 support joint all command and control implementation.

24 So my question for you, General, is, can you explain
25 why these types of exercises are absolutely critical to our

1 modernization and readiness efforts and why NORTHCOM is
2 leading this initiative?

3 General VanHerck: Absolutely, Senator. From the
4 NORTHCOM and NORAD perspective, we view data and information
5 as a strategic asset. And so we are conducting these
6 exercises to bring everybody together to show the true value
7 and importance of the strategic ability that we can utilize
8 information and data. So we look forward to continuing to
9 partner with the combatant commands, the services, and
10 bringing them together to demonstrate capabilities that can
11 not only help us in conflict but, more importantly, help us
12 de-escalate in crisis and to deter in competition.

13 Senator Peters: Great. Thank you, General.

14 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Peters. Senator
15 Cramer, please.

16 Senator Cramer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank both
17 of you for being here. I appreciate your service, Admiral
18 and General.

19 I am going to start with you, Admiral, because early
20 on, in a response to a question from Senator Inhofe, you had
21 cited the fact that you only get 1 percent of the ISR, and
22 that was fairly stunning to me, especially since the Air
23 Force has been trying to retire their RQ-4's and cut the
24 production of the MQ-9's, two systems that we are very
25 familiar with in North Dakota, of course. They are operated

1 quite effectively out of our state, one by the Air Force and
2 the other by our Guard in Fargo.

3 One of the reasons that they use for wanting to cut
4 production or retire, and realizing some of it is that they
5 want to save money for new systems, and that is noble. We
6 need to make some tough decisions about that. But one of
7 the reasons they use is these platforms are not survivable
8 in near-peer competition.

9 So my question to you, Admiral, is could you use our
10 RQ-4's and MQ-9's in your theater, and is there significant
11 threat to the survival of these platforms in SOUTHCOM?

12 Admiral Faller: As you mentioned, Senator, we receive
13 less than 1 percent of the DoD ISR, and it is a
14 prioritization, and there are global challenges and I
15 recognize how that plays out. But this is a good
16 environment in SOUTHCOM for unmanned. We have had, for the
17 first time ever, an MQ-9 through the past year, and we have
18 Customs and Border Protection MQ-9 as well. And they have
19 proven their utility because they can stay on station for a
20 long time and stare at the threats. They can also learn, in
21 general, about the environment beyond the transnational
22 criminal organization threat, so we have the understanding
23 that we need to ensure that we are appropriately postured
24 moving forward.

25 Senator Cramer: Thank you, Admiral. General, thank

1 you for our discussion last week. I enjoyed it very much.
2 I found it very interesting, and I learned a lot, as is
3 often the case. And one of the things that you and I talked
4 about, of course, was the fact that NORAD and NORTHCOM
5 participated with the Air Force Research Laboratory in an
6 over-the-horizon study that included some testing at Camp
7 Grafton, North Dakota, our National Guard Camp. And that is
8 part of the OSD Coalition Warfare Program-funded Arctic HF
9 surveillance program. And we were told, of course, that the
10 results exceeded expectation.

11 My question to you is, do you still the need for an
12 over-the-horizon radar system and capability, and do you
13 expect further, more advanced testing any time soon?

14 General VanHerck: Senator, my focus and top priority
15 is domain awareness, and over-the-horizon radar would
16 certainly contribute to domain awareness. My understanding
17 is right now, with regards to the test that you are talking
18 about, the current Northern Strategic Approach's study is
19 with the Air Force. We are waiting for that to come out. I
20 talked to General Brown on Friday about that. Once that
21 report comes out we will in a better position to see, on the
22 way forward, with the Research Lab, or however we are going
23 to pursue that. But domain awareness is at the top of my
24 integrated priority list.

25 Senator Cramer: Thank you for that and thanks for that

1 answer, and thanks for following up with General Brown.

2 One other question for you, General VanHerck. There is
3 a lot less military presence between Michigan and Montana,
4 obviously along the northern border, than there used to be
5 during the Cold War, even though, I mean, one could argue
6 that there are more threats in the Arctic and from missiles
7 coming over the Arctic even than there were during the Cold
8 War.

9 If there was a threat coming over the Pole, through
10 Saskatchewan, say, do we have enough fighters, tankers, missile
11 warning, missile defense systems to meet that threat?

12 General VanHerck: Senator, day to day I am confident
13 in my ability to defend against the threat that we have.
14 Day to day, I am postured primarily against a 9/11-type of
15 response. If indications and warning or a crisis evolved, I
16 would go ahead and ask for additional forces. At that time,
17 if I was allocated additional forces or not I would have to
18 make a broader assessment in my ability to defend.

19 Senator Cramer: Well, and as you mentioned, obviously
20 domain awareness is the critical aspect of being prepared.
21 Is the radar coverage for that area modern enough to track
22 any threat reliably, do you believe?

23 General VanHerck: Senator, I remain concerned about
24 domain awareness in the north, with the legacy North Warning
25 System. If we apply capabilities such as Pathfinder, that

1 will increase my capability. But more broadly, we need to
2 get after it with more modern systems, systems not designed
3 to go after a stovepipe, single domain, single threat. We
4 need systems capable of going after everything from small
5 counter-UAS to ballistic missiles, that are able to be
6 efficient and effective.

7 Senator Cramer: Excellent. Thank you. You are both
8 awesome. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

9 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Cramer. Now I would
10 like to recognize Senator Rosen via Webex.

11 Senator Rosen: Thank you, Chairman Reed, and I want to
12 thank the witnesses for being here and for your great
13 service to our nation. I would like to speak a little bit
14 about Hezbollah in the Western Hemisphere, because for
15 decades Iran's proxy has long maintained an active presence
16 in the Western Hemisphere, engaging in terrorist activities,
17 drug trafficking, and money-laundering. In 1994, Iran and
18 Hezbollah bombed Jewish community center in Argentina,
19 killing 85 civilians and injuring more than 300. The
20 Treasury Department has sanctioned new Hezbollah-linked
21 operatives and entities in the Western Hemisphere for links
22 to transnational organized crime.

23 So, Admiral Faller, in your written testimony you
24 stated that Hezbollah's external operations are responsible
25 for at least three high-profile attacks in the region and

1 three other planned operations that were disrupted. Can you
2 elaborate on the threat that Hezbollah poses to U.S.
3 interests in the Western Hemisphere, and if its presence is
4 growing where do you see it growing?

5 Admiral Faller: Senator, these threats to right back
6 to Iran, the single largest state sponsor of terror in the
7 world and the long arm or Iranian malfeasance is felt
8 globally and in this hemisphere. Significant Lebanese
9 diaspora. Lebanese Hezbollah receives funding support, and
10 they are intertwined with Iranian state-sponsored terrorist
11 in ways that undermine global security and security in this
12 hemisphere.

13 We have seen an increase in presence of Iran activities
14 in Venezuela to support the illegitimate Maduro regime,
15 increasing the readiness of some of their defense systems,
16 and we have seen the continued involvement with the diaspora
17 and economic fundraising particularly down in the tri-border
18 region, neighboring Paraguay, Argentina, and Brazil.

19 Senator Rosen: Well, you know, you are speaking of the
20 diaspora that is extremely important. So how can we improve
21 information sharing with our regional partners to identify
22 and disrupt Hezbollah's activity in Latin America?

23 Admiral Faller: One of the very positive things that I
24 have seen over the last couple of years is the extent to
25 which we have increased our information sharing with key

1 partners, Brazil and Colombia. We rely on them, they are
2 like-minded democracies, to share information so that we
3 understand the threat. We have expanded that information
4 sharing significant this year. It is key to moving forward
5 and it is built on longstanding trust that we have, that is
6 borne out of professional military education.

7 We have security cooperation programs that work to
8 build professional intelligence services. We do this
9 through our 3-3-3 program, and sustaining those programs are
10 very important.

11 During the past year we have been able to expand,
12 modestly, those programs in cybersecurity, and that will
13 really be critical to understanding both the threat that is
14 posed by Iran and their state-sponsored terrorist
15 organizations and other nation-state actors like China.

16 Senator Rosen: Thank you. I would like to move on and
17 ask General VanHerck a little bit about our COVID response
18 and support. You have been so terrific. You have deployed
19 Navy hospital ships at the start of the pandemic. You have
20 cared for coronavirus patients at Army field hospitals. And
21 now, of course, President Biden is directing states to open
22 up vaccination appointments to all American adults by May
23 1st.

24 So I am curious what your role may be in this new
25 mission. How is NORTHCOM generating and deploying forces to

1 support the vaccine distribution and administrative mission,
2 and specifically, as members of the military and their
3 families get vaccinated, and once military installations are
4 covered, do you have coordinated plans or have you had
5 preliminary conversations with local civil authorities to
6 leverage the capacity you have on the bases and refer to
7 local communities to get the vaccines deployed?

8 General VanHerck: Senator, we work with not only the
9 local communities, state authorities, and our local bases to
10 ensure that we follow the DoD's published guidelines along
11 with the CDC as well. And so I am confident going forward
12 that we will continue to provide that support. We have
13 worked with the Department. I have put in a request for 100
14 teams, 50 Type 1 teams, the most capable, capable of
15 delivering about 6,000 shots per day, and also 50 Type 2
16 teams. As far as sourcing those, the Joint Staff works with
17 the services and the departments to calculate and come up
18 with sourcing solutions. The Secretary approves those and
19 allocates them to me, and we work through FEMA for the
20 actual location and mission assignment on how we are going
21 to continue executing President Biden's mission to get where
22 he needs to be on 1 July.

23 Senator Rosen: Thank you very much.

24 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Rosen. Senator
25 Scott, please.

1 Senator Scott: Thank you, Chairman Reed. Admiral
2 Faller, thank you for the conversation last week. As we all
3 know, the fundamental problem in our hemisphere is Cuba.
4 They are the root of all instability in Latin America. They
5 terrorize their own citizens, they steal from their own
6 citizens, and they support dictators in Latin America, such
7 as Maduro in Venezuela and Ortega in Nicaragua.

8 How important is it, in your role, for the Cuban regime
9 to not have resources, to do everything we can as a country
10 to make sure that the Castro regime does not have the
11 resources to terrorize their own citizens and be involved in
12 these other countries?

13 Admiral Faller: In addition to the nefarious activity
14 you cite, Senator, Cuba and Russia and China are actively
15 engaged just miles from our home state, and it is concerning
16 as we see that relationship going forward. So to the extent
17 to which we can prevent those kinds of relationships from
18 developing and from Cuba enhancing its capabilities, it is
19 very important. One of our assets, one of our real
20 strategic toeholds in that effort is our naval station at
21 Guantanamo Bay.

22 Senator Scott: Is it important that they do not have
23 resources?

24 Admiral Faller: I think it is extremely important that
25 we prevent the Cubans and the communists from doing what

1 they are doing in Venezuela, where they are keeping Maduro
2 in power, and where they are undermining. We see them
3 actively undermining free and fair elections in democracies
4 across the hemisphere. So yes, Senator.

5 Senator Scott: What is their involvement in Venezuela
6 now, and are they part of provoking Venezuela's aggression
7 against Guyana?

8 Admiral Faller: Cuba's Praetorian Guard keeps Maduro
9 in power. They are there in the thousands. They own the
10 intelligence service alongside Russia primarily, and Iran,
11 and China to a lesser extent. They are supporting,
12 maintaining Maduro's defense systems and security forces.
13 And undoubtedly that then gives Maduro the capacity and
14 capability to rattle the saber and threaten the neighbors,
15 and also, frankly, allows a safe haven for narco traffickers
16 and narco terrorists, which is what Venezuela has become.
17 It is hell for its citizens and it is heaven for the
18 terrorists.

19 Senator Scott: So what can your command do to confront
20 the reports of illegal shipping activity out of Venezuela?

21 Admiral Faller: We are actively involved with all of
22 our interagency partners to track that and learn as much as
23 we can about it, and then provide that information to our
24 diplomats who can call it out and come up with solutions
25 that support the whole-of-government efforts to shift

1 Venezuela to a democracy.

2 Senator Scott: Have you or our government through
3 sanctions been able to do much to stop the flow of oil from
4 Venezuela to Cuba?

5 Admiral Faller: The pressure has worked. The Maduro
6 regime has been denied resources. But in any of these
7 things they are very clever. When you have no regard for
8 rule of law and corruption fuels everything you do and you
9 are supported by nation-state actors like Russia and China,
10 you can circumvent rules and laws, and they have been able
11 to keep the follow up just enough to maintain their economy,
12 particularly the regime's grip on that economy and its
13 people on life support.

14 Senator Scott: Can you talk a little bit about the
15 humanitarian crisis, both in Cuba and in Venezuela, as a
16 result of the Castro and Maduro regimes?

17 Admiral Faller: Well, the United Nations Human Rights
18 Report lays it out. The atrocities that the regime has
19 committed on the people are beyond compare in this
20 hemisphere, and they have created the largest migrant crisis
21 this hemisphere has ever seen, some 5 million migrants that
22 have swelled the services, of all the social services. That
23 is why we deployed Hospital Ship Comfort twice in a year's
24 period prior to the pandemic. It is a credit to Colombia
25 and Brazil and other democracies that they have been able to

1 handle it as effectively. I commend them.

2 And similarly, in Cuba, we have had past migrant crises
3 and we have a mission set to prepare with Homeland Security
4 for that. We have seen a slight uptick this year in
5 migrants coming out of Cuba. We are watching it very
6 closely, and undoubtedly, again, it is due to the brutal
7 economic conditions and the repression that we see. We
8 study that intensely in our intelligence and information-
9 sharing efforts.

10 Senator Scott: Thank you, Admiral Faller. Thank you,
11 Chairman.

12 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Scott. Let me
13 recognize Senator Kelly, please.

14 Senator Kelly: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Admiral
15 Faller, you and I had an extended discussion last week about
16 activity in the region as well as some of the push factors
17 contributing to migration flows that are exacerbating the
18 challenging situation at the southern border. I would like
19 to focus on the strength of criminal organizations in the
20 region.

21 A recent report by the Center for Strategic and
22 International Studies found that the countries of the
23 Northern Triangle lose more than 3 percent of their GDP to
24 organized crime each year. These TCOs also contribute to
25 outsized homicide rates and undermine governance and

1 security in the region. The bottom line is they are, in
2 some ways, better resourced than state actors, and have
3 proven capable of trafficking guns, money, drugs, and
4 people. It is a major problem.

5 Given these dynamics, do you feel you have the
6 authority necessary to conduct operations that will
7 effectively disrupt their activity in the long term?

8 Admiral Faller: As you mentioned, Senator, they
9 control territory. They are well funded. They have a
10 strength of close to 200,000 when you look across the
11 region, which is on par with all the police and military
12 forces in total. So a powerful enemy to host nations'
13 democracies and direct impact on our homeland defense here
14 in the United States.

15 Our role is appropriately in support, detection, and
16 monitoring, which means we find out as much as we can, and
17 where we have authorities we pass that off to law
18 enforcement to interdict, and then we work at building our
19 host nation partners' capacity. We are short in
20 intelligence assets. We have less than 1 percent of those
21 assets. We need additional capacity to build our partners
22 so that they can take care of this problem themselves. And
23 we have received about the right amount of presence, but it
24 is important we stay on the field.

25 An example of that is our Joint Task Force-Bravo, which

1 is a small team of about 700 soldiers and airmen and Marines
2 at Soto Cano, Honduras, that can support law enforcement
3 with lift, with some intelligence, but more importantly can
4 rapidly respond. We saw it this past fall with two back-to-
5 back hurricanes, major hurricanes, and we saved hundreds of
6 lives rapidly. What that does is it builds trust and
7 actually helps us build the case for these partnerships in
8 sustainable security long term.

9 Senator Kelly: Earlier you stressed, and you did
10 again, that the 1 percent of ISR funding goes to SOUTHCOM.
11 Is that correct?

12 Admiral Faller: It is 1 percent of the overall --

13 Senator Kelly: Of the overall.

14 Admiral Faller: -- assets and capabilities, Senator.

15 Senator Kelly: But beyond that, if you wanted to ramp
16 up the effectiveness of disrupting their activity, what
17 other resources would you need?

18 Admiral Faller: Senator, we have got to come up with a
19 more effective whole-of-government effort in the United
20 States and really get at mapping these networks. We are
21 doing that but it is nascent. It needs more effort. And
22 then finding the center of gravity, what is key to each
23 organization, and then going at, disrupting, defeating or
24 deterring that. And most of that is law enforcement or
25 judicial or a partner nation effort with SOUTHCOM in

1 support. So we play a critical role but it has got to be
2 more holistically designed in the U.S. We cannot interdict
3 our way out of this.

4 Senator Kelly: Well, thank you, Admiral. General
5 VanHerck, you mentioned in your testimony the Pathfinder
6 program as a complement to the work done by the Defense
7 Innovation Unit, and also the importance of being able to
8 rapidly field capabilities of the future. As Chair of the
9 Emerging Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee, this is
10 something I have been thinking a lot about.

11 Are you looking into technologies like artificial
12 intelligence to assist in processing the increasingly large
13 volumes of data that come from our sensor systems?

14 General VanHerck: Senator, absolutely. As a matter of
15 fact, Pathfinder does exactly that, uses machine learning
16 and additional capabilities. We must go down that path to
17 operate in a timely and efficient and effective manner.

18 Senator Kelly: Any sense if our adversaries are doing
19 the same thing, using these technologies?

20 General VanHerck: Absolutely, Senator, especially
21 China. They are actively moving forward with artificial
22 intelligence.

23 Senator Kelly: And then finally, are there any
24 research gaps that you see that you think we should be
25 investing more in?

1 General VanHerck: Not specific to research. I would
2 say we must go to space sooner, and space-based capabilities
3 that give us persistent domain awareness. That is where I
4 would be focusing my efforts right now.

5 Senator Kelly: Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Mr.
6 Chairman.

7 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Kelly. Let me
8 recognize Senator Hawley, please.

9 Senator Hawley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you,
10 gentlemen, for being here.

11 General VanHerck, let me start with you, and let me
12 thank you on behalf of all Missourians. It is great to see
13 a fellow Missourian here, as before, and we are very proud
14 of you and your service, so thank you for being here.

15 Let's come back to this question of the border.
16 Customs and Border Patrol issued a new batch of operational
17 statistics last week that showed that CBP had encountered
18 more than 100,000 persons attempting entry across the
19 southern border in February. That is about a 200 percent
20 increase over this time last year. They also show that the
21 number of unaccompanied minors attempting to cross our
22 border -- that is children -- has doubled since January, and
23 the number of family units has more than doubled from
24 January to February.

25 Give us a sense of how this surge of migrants is

1 helping or hindering the cartels' operations along the
2 border.

3 General VanHerck: Senator, I am not aware of
4 necessarily how it hinders or helps. I think it is a
5 symptom of the transnational criminal organization problem
6 that we actually see. As Admiral Faller pointed out, you
7 know, hurricanes, transnational criminal organizations, all
8 the murders, contribute directly to what we are seeing on
9 the border, which includes the migration that you are
10 alluding to.

11 Senator Hawley: I think it is today that the Secretary
12 of Homeland Security said that we are on pace now for a 20-
13 year high in border encounters, a 20-year record, which is
14 pretty astounding considering some of the previous surges we
15 have seen, for instance in 2014. Is it fair to say that we
16 have got a crisis now at the southern border, General?

17 General VanHerck: Senator, I will stay out of the
18 politics of whether it is a crisis or not. It is absolutely
19 a homeland defense issue that I am concerned about. I am
20 concerned because it creates opportunities, it creates
21 vulnerabilities, and we have to be postured for each of
22 those. The vulnerabilities that it creates for us is
23 instability, and it creates instability in governance, it
24 creates instabilities in the rule of law, if you will, in
25 neighboring countries. Those will be exploited by countries

1 such as China, Russia, and Iran. So for me it is a homeland
2 defense and a national security imperative to take a look at
3 that.

4 Senator Hawley: Yeah, I think you are absolutely
5 right. It is also a humanitarian crisis, and I, for one, am
6 not afraid of the word "crisis." I cannot understand why
7 this administration is afraid of the word "crisis." And
8 given the unbelievable humanitarian issues we are seeing at
9 the border and record surge that we are on pace for, I think
10 this administration's inability to admit that their own
11 policies are causing this crisis, and the effect it is
12 having in terms of emboldening the cartels, as you are
13 saying -- we know that nobody crosses that southern border
14 without the permission and indeed without the profit of the
15 cartels. Nobody. It is a wholly run criminal enterprise on
16 the southern end of the border, and this administration's
17 inability to grapple with that and do something about it I
18 think is frankly astounding. And we are seeing it just day
19 on day on day grow worse and worse.

20 Let me ask you this, General. We sent billions of
21 dollars in security and money, security assistance, to the
22 Mexican government over the past 14 years, yet we are
23 seeing, as you just alluded to, escalating violence. Even
24 more drugs headed northward. Those drugs make their way
25 into every state of the union, including our home state, my

1 home state of Missouri. In your assessment, why has our
2 security assistance to Mexico fallen so short of its
3 security objectives? I mean, why have not we been able to
4 achieve more, considering the prodigious sums that we have
5 invested?

6 General VanHerck: First, I would talk to Homeland
7 Security about the problem. It is a law enforcement issue,
8 much of it coming across the border. But I would tell you
9 that the Mexican military, we have an incredibly close
10 partnership and they are doing incredible things down there.

11 With that being said, I think, as Admiral Faller
12 alluded to, we need a whole-of-government strategy. You
13 know, the arms that are arming these transnational criminal
14 organizations come right here from the United States of
15 America and they flow south. In addition to that, the money
16 that they are creating is being generated by precursors
17 coming from Asia, from China businesses and industry, if you
18 will, that flows in there.

19 So we have to take a broader approach to get after
20 this, which includes a whole-of-government effort and
21 prioritizing and putting resources to the problem.

22 Senator Hawley: Speaking of China, Admiral, let me
23 come to you in just the little bit of time I have got
24 remaining. You wrote in your testimony that China is
25 seeking to establish global logistics and basing

1 infrastructure in our hemisphere in order to project and
2 sustain military power. What kind of presence do the
3 Chinese forces maintain in the Western Hemisphere today,
4 that we ought to be concerned about?

5 Admiral Faller: We have to ask ourselves the question,
6 why is China trying to achieve deep-water ports in the
7 Dominican Republic, Jamaica, El Salvador, Panama -- Panama
8 Canal is a key strategic ground -- Argentina. They are
9 using economic influence and access to set the conditions
10 for the blue-water navy that they have built.

11 Senator Hawley: Very good. I think we are going to
12 have closed session, aren't we, Mr. Chairman?

13 Chairman Reed: We are planning that, yes.

14 Senator Hawley: Okay. I will have a few more
15 questions for you then. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

16 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Hawley. Now let me
17 recognize Senator Tuberville.

18 Senator Tuberville: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank
19 you both for being here today and what you have done for our
20 homeland and our hemisphere. General, it has been 20 years
21 since we have had an attack on our homeland. Thank you for
22 that, and everybody at NORTHCOM, the hard work that you have
23 done. I very much agree with you, what you said about
24 outpacing our competitors. I am proud to say that in
25 Alabama we are working to leap ahead in the area of

1 hypersonics. We are working very hard on that. And right
2 now the world's largest and fastest hypersonic wind tunnel
3 is under construction in Huntsville, and I know they are
4 working at a fast pace.

5 Admiral, I enjoyed our conversation last week and I
6 enjoyed your straight talk. I hope the American people will
7 start getting a sense of urgency. You have your hands full
8 in SOUTHCOM, no doubt about it. Between transnational
9 criminal organizations and Russia and China you are a busy
10 man.

11 I do believe, for a moment, that the PRC's plan in our
12 hemisphere are benign, and I hope that it will not take a
13 Chinese aircraft carrier sailing between Florida and the
14 Bahamas for Americans to wake up to the fact that the CCP
15 wish to dominate the world stage. I hope it does not take
16 something like that.

17 You know, the work that both of you have done for
18 SOUTHCOM and NORTHCOM for our nation is incredible,
19 important to maintaining our strategic military objectives.
20 Many of the items for both of you in the areas of
21 responsibility strongly impact my home state of Alabama.

22 Admiral, following the 2018 National Defense Strategy
23 is something I personally believe in a good way to position
24 our forces to thinking towards the future. Can you explain
25 how SOUTHCOM is important to this strategy, and

1 specifically, how would you describe China's strategic
2 objectives in a 5- or 10-year timeline?

3 Admiral Faller: Well, I think China seeks economic
4 dominance globally, and their strategic objective is to be
5 the dominant global power, unquestionably, and they will do
6 that in whatever way possible to ensure they have the
7 preeminence of the Communist Party.

8 In this hemisphere it is across all fronts. It is not
9 just economics. Typically we think about that and we have
10 this fallacy that it is just economics. In the military
11 realm, they have recognized that partners in this hemisphere
12 cannot afford a lot of equipment, so they have upped the
13 game in gifts. And when they do offer military equipment it
14 is often through corrupt deals that we cannot compete with.

15 They have replicated our professional military
16 education. They have ubiquitous IT solutions. They have
17 created engineering and cyber scholarships for military
18 personnel that goes beyond the kind of education and
19 training that we offer in our IMET programs. They have
20 expanded their defense attaché presence. They have at least
21 turned a blind eye to a range of illegal activity,
22 unregulated fishing, unreported fishing, illegal mining and
23 logging. And all this is done in an environment fueled by
24 corruption, with no regard, or little regard for human
25 rights, in trying to write their version of the rules of the

1 game.

2 We have got to stay on the field to compete. We do
3 that well. No one is better than the United States
4 military, Department of Defense. But we have got to work
5 hard and tirelessly, with a sense of urgency that you
6 mentioned, to stay number one in the game and to be the
7 best.

8 Senator Tuberville: Thank you. General, in regards to
9 our southern border security we hear all the negatives.
10 What do you think has improved the most in the last four
11 years, and then what worries you most looking forward at the
12 southern border?

13 General VanHerck: I think the coordination between the
14 Department and the interagency with regards to since 2018,
15 has been probably the biggest improvement. With regards to
16 what worries me most, it is about having domain awareness
17 and the opportunities and vulnerabilities that I already
18 talked about, in our own Western Hemisphere, for state
19 actors such as China, Russia, or Iran, in our own
20 neighborhood, due to instability, due to ungoverned areas
21 and spaces. So I am significantly concerned about what is
22 going on right here in our own hemisphere and neighborhood.

23 Senator Tuberville: Do you think we need a wall?

24 General VanHerck: I will stay out of the politics of a
25 wall. Border security --

1 Senator Tuberville: Not politics. Do you think we
2 need one?

3 General VanHerck: Border security is national
4 security. We need to ensure that we have policies in place,
5 laws are enforced to ensure that homeland defense does not
6 become a more strategic issue from the borders.

7 Senator Tuberville: Yeah. One thing I noticed
8 coaching for 40 years and being in education is just the
9 influx of drugs. You know, just take away everybody coming
10 across the border, it is just the influx of drugs are
11 killing our kids. We are losing 60,000 a year to overdose.
12 I mean, that right there should be just an alarm that we
13 have got to have something different.

14 General VanHerck: Senator, I agree with you.
15 Actually, I believe the number this past year was
16 approximately 80,000. That is unsatisfactory, and we have
17 to get after that. And that is a symptom of that broader
18 problem that I talked about, transnational criminal
19 organizations, that we can apply priority and resources to,
20 to get after it.

21 Senator Tuberville: Thank you. Thank you. Thank you,
22 Mr. Chairman.

23 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Tuberville. Now let
24 me recognize Senator Blackburn via Webex.

25 Senator Blackburn: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We so

1 appreciate having the hearing today and getting the update,
2 and Admiral Faller, thank you for the time that you spent
3 with me on the phone last week.

4 General VanHerck, I want to go back to your statement
5 on Pathfinder, the prototype Pathfinder data analytics
6 project. This is the kind of project that I think attacks
7 two primary concerns with DoD data streams. One is the
8 stovepiping and the other is the need for modernization.
9 And many times I sound like a broken record, if you will, by
10 talking about what has happened with DoD through the years
11 as things have become so stovepiped, and the need for this
12 modernization, because information is power. We all know
13 that. But you have to be able to analyze to share and to
14 make actionable that data.

15 So my question for you is, how could the Pentagon
16 better utilize some of these emerging technologies such as
17 artificial intelligence, such as the data that we are
18 getting via ISR, and the AI that is used by Pathfinder to
19 really make that information accessible, sharable across
20 platforms and divisions, and actionable when you are looking
21 at how you implement plans for the future, how you change
22 plans based on the information that you are getting?

23 General VanHerck: Senator, first I would tell you that
24 I am encouraged by the joint warfighting concept, which also
25 has a supplement for information advantage that will help us

1 move down this.

2 As far as utilizing the data, I agree, it is a
3 strategic asset, if you will, data. We can utilize it to
4 not only dominate in conflict but to create deterrence day
5 to day. So, for example, as an operational commander, this
6 data that is available to me, if I utilize it, with applying
7 artificial intelligence and machine learning, and then
8 disseminate it to key decision-makers, I am able to position
9 forces ahead of a competitor or adversary's actions, which
10 creates deterrence. It is deterrence by denial.

11 But we must go faster in the Department. Thirty years
12 ago, the Department led the way with innovations. Today, I
13 think that paradigm has flip-flopped to where much of
14 industry and Silicon Valley is leading the way forward,
15 especially with regard to data. And so we need to take a
16 look at our acquisition processes, our modernization
17 processes, and potentially flip the paradigm to stay
18 competitive.

19 Senator Blackburn: Do you feel like that the Pentagon
20 itself is flexible and agile enough to make these changes,
21 utilize this data, make a change in a game plan immediately,
22 and apply what they are learning from that intel?

23 General VanHerck: I believe that the Pentagon has
24 proven, over history, to be incredibly successful in
25 adapting when we need to. It has not always been as fast,

1 and that is one of the reasons I talk about it. We have to
2 have some culture change.

3 I would also tell you this may require some looks at
4 policy. It may even require some looks at law, to utilize
5 data differently as we go forward. What we do not want to
6 do is create capabilities that we can utilize, and the
7 policies that we have and the laws that we have do not allow
8 us to be successful with the data and the information that
9 is available.

10 Senator Blackburn: Thank you for that. I may come
11 back to you for some specifics.

12 Admiral Faller, we have talked a lot about China this
13 morning and the transnational organizations. But as you
14 look at dealing with China, whether it is through fentanyl
15 and drugs or Belt and Road or great power competition, what
16 do you not have access to in SOUTHCOM that you need?

17 Admiral Faller: As we have discussed, China is a
18 global threat and we have got to address that challenge
19 holistically across the U.S. Government. In the SOUTHCOM
20 AOR we have to be appropriately postured, so we need the
21 right footprint of forces, working with our embassies and
22 our interagency team to stay engage with our partners. So
23 additional locations for presence, not permanent, but access
24 is really critical moving forward.

25 Senator Blackburn: So it is the teamwork concept with

1 our allies. Correct?

2 Admiral Faller: Correct, Senator.

3 Senator Blackburn: Okay. Thank you all for that.

4 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

5 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator, very much. And
6 gentlemen, thank you for your testimony and your service to
7 the nation. Let me remind my colleagues that upon
8 adjournment we will immediately move to SVC-217 for a
9 classified briefing by Admiral Faller about increasing
10 Chinese influence in the SOUTHCOM area. There also is a
11 vote scheduled for noon, so we will accomplish both. I will
12 see you shortly over there, Admiral Faller, and General,
13 thank you for your distinguished service at NORTHCOM.

14 No further business before the committee, I will
15 adjourn.

16 [Whereupon, at 11:58 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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