

Statement by  
The Honorable Melissa Dalton  
Assistant Secretary of Defense for  
Homeland Defense and Hemispheric Affairs  
Office of the Secretary of Defense

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## **Introduction**

Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Smith, and distinguished Members of the Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. I am honored to be here in the company of General Glen VanHerck, the Commander of North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) and U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM), and General Laura Richardson, the Commander of U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM).

Since I testified before this committee in March 2022, the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy conducted a reorganization, and my portfolio was updated accordingly. As the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Hemispheric Affairs, I am the principal civilian policy advisor to the Secretary of Defense and the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy on a range of matters, including homeland defense, defense support of civil authorities, defense continuity, mission assurance, defense support of civil authorities, the Western Hemisphere, and the Arctic and global resilience.

The Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy produces guidance for the Department of Defense (DoD), including the Combatant Commands, to align resources, activities, and capabilities in support of National Security Strategy and National Defense Strategy (NDS) goals. This includes developing policy and strategy and overseeing implementation.

Today, after briefly assessing the array of national security challenges to the homeland, I would like to highlight the ways in which we are strategically putting the homeland front and center in our implementation of the 2022 NDS. As President Biden has said, we are living in a “decisive decade,” one that is defined by dramatic changes in geopolitics, technology, economics, and our environment. The 2022 NDS sets forth how the U.S. military will meet growing threats to vital U.S. national security interests and identifies four top-level defense priorities, the first, and foremost of which is defending the homeland.

The United States has the most capable military in the world, and the Department is committed to ensuring that advantage is enduring. The cornerstone of the Department’s strategy and the approach to advancing our priorities is integrated deterrence. Integrated deterrence entails

working seamlessly across warfighting domains, theaters, the spectrum of conflict, all instruments of national power, and our network of Alliances and partnerships, including, in the homeland, our federal, state, local, territorial, and tribal (FSLTT) partners. Tailored to the specific circumstances in the homeland and elsewhere, integrated deterrence applies a coordinated, multi-faceted approach to reducing competitors' perceptions of the net benefits of aggression relative to restraint.

### **National Security Challenges/Threats to the U.S. Homeland**

We face strategic challenges stemming from complex interactions between a rapidly changing global balance of military capabilities; emerging technologies; competitor doctrines that pose new threats to the U.S. homeland and to strategic stability; an escalation of competitors' coercive and malign activities in the "gray zone"; and transboundary challenges that impose new demands on the Joint Force and the defense enterprise. Our competitors are posing all-domain threats to the U.S. homeland in an effort to jeopardize the U.S. military's ability to project power and counter regional aggression.

**State-based Competitors:** In the NDS, the Secretary directed the Department to act urgently to sustain and strengthen U.S. deterrence, with the People's Republic of China (PRC) as the pacing challenge for the Department. Russia, based on its unprovoked, unjust, and reckless invasion of Ukraine, remains an acute threat. The PRC and Russia now pose more dangerous challenges to the safety and security of the U.S. homeland. Both the PRC and Russia are already using non-kinetic means against our defense industrial base and mobilization systems to subvert our ability to project power. Both are capable of employing a wide range of tools that would hinder military preparations and response in a conflict, including actions aimed at undermining the will of the U.S. public and targeting critical infrastructure.

A stark example of these challenges was recently brought to the attention of the American people and the world when the PRC irresponsibly entered our sovereign air space with a high altitude balloon (HAB). We know with certainty they intended to surveil sensitive U.S. military and critical infrastructure sites. By shooting down the HAB in our territorial waters, we sent a clear message to the PRC that activity such as this is unacceptable.

**Other Persistent Threats:** The NDS also ensures vigilance in the face of other persistent threats, including those posed by North Korea, Iran, and violent extremist organizations. North Korea continues to expand its nuclear and missile capability to threaten the U.S. homeland. Iran is taking actions that shorten its timeline to produce a nuclear weapon, should it make the decision to do so. Iran also continues to test and develop space launch technologies potentially informing development of long-range missiles - though it currently lacks systems capable of reaching the United States. Global terrorist groups have had their capabilities degraded, but some may be able to reconstitute them in short order, which will require monitoring indications and warning against the violent extremist organization (VEO) threat.

**Rapidly Evolving Domains and Technologies:** The NDS makes clear that a wide range of new or fast-evolving technologies and applications are complicating escalation dynamics and creating new challenges for strategic stability. These include hypersonic weapons and new and emerging payload and delivery systems for both conventional and non-strategic nuclear weapons. New applications of artificial intelligence, quantum science, autonomy, and biotechnology have the potential not just to change kinetic conflict, but also to disrupt day-to-day U.S. supply chain and logistics operations. One example of a technology that is creating new risks for the Department is the growth in the use of small uncrewed aircraft systems (sUAS). The market for sUAS is large and expanding with UAS sales projected to reach \$43 billion by the end of 2024. We appreciate the support the Committee has provided for the legal authorities necessary to address this challenge; however, the technology to counter these systems when they pose a threat to domestic DoD facilities and assets has not kept pace with this challenge.

**Resilience in the Face of Transboundary Challenges:** Per the NDS, our nation also continues to face the challenge of natural and man-made hazards, which do not respect international or national boundaries and do not wait for us to resolve other ongoing national security crises or hazards. Last year, the U.S. homeland endured 90 incidents caused by natural hazards, including hurricanes, severe storms, wildfires, and floods. The Department plays an important, but supporting role to our civilian partners at the Federal Emergency Management Agency and State and local governments in preparing for and responding to these hazards. Reliance on support

from DoD continues to be high (e.g., in 2011, DoD supported 97 requests for assistance from nine Federal partners; in 2021, DoD supported 241 requests for assistance from 14 Federal partners; and in 2022, DoD supported 114 requests for assistance from 10 Federal partners). In addition, in 2022, the National Guard, operating in their state-status, responded to multiple events, including: winter storms in New York and South Dakota; three hurricanes (e.g., Hurricane Fiona, Hurricane Ian, and Hurricane Nicole); flooding in Alaska, Kentucky, and Montana; tornadoes in Louisiana and Minnesota; and multiple wildland fires.

Rising temperatures, droughts, and more frequent, intense, and unpredictable storms and floods have already begun to affect military readiness and impose significant costs on the Department. These environmental hazards are affecting basing and access to locations vital for deterrence and warfighting objectives while degrading readiness, critical infrastructure, and capabilities. Just this past September, during Hurricane Ian, the U.S. Navy had to relocate its ships and aircraft, and evacuate non-essential active-duty military personnel, from Naval Station Mayport in Florida.

In the Western Hemisphere more broadly, our partners have experienced firsthand the devastating and increasing frequency and intensity of hurricanes, sea level rise, wildfires, droughts, flooding, and more unprecedented severe weather events, such as more powerful Category 4 and 5 storms. These disruptions also adversely affect our foreign partners by exacerbating state fragility, fueling conflicts, and contributing to large-scale instability and migration, creating conditions that state and non-state actors can exploit. These effects exacerbate existing risks and create new challenges for national security and defense.

### **Homeland Defense and Integrated Deterrence**

**Deter Attacks:** Per the NDS, we will deter these threats, and meet these challenges, with a series of actions that reduce a competitor's perception of the benefits of aggression relative to restraint. The Department is doing more than ever before to deter, defend against, and defeat aggression from the PRC against the United States, our allies, our partners, and our interests. In defending the homeland, we will take steps to raise potential attackers' direct and indirect costs while reducing their expected benefits for aggressive action against the homeland. We will do this, in

part, by increasing resilience. Our work in this area will prioritize closer coordination with our FSLTT partners and the private sector, starting with the defense industrial base.

Homeland missile defense is an important aspect of our overall approach to deterrence. Missile defenses can raise the threshold for initiating nuclear conflict by denying an aggressor the ability to execute small-scale coercive nuclear attacks or demonstrations. Missile defenses also complicate adversary decision-making by injecting doubt and uncertainty about the likelihood of a successful offensive missile attack, either through conventional or nuclear-armed weapons.

As highlighted in the 2022 Missile Defense Review, missile defense systems such as the Ground-based Mid-Course Defense system are an essential component of homeland defense, offering a visible measure of protection for the U.S. population while reassuring Allies and partners that the United States will not be coerced by threats to the homeland from States like North Korea and Iran. To deter attempts by adversaries to stay under the nuclear threshold and achieve strategic results with conventional capabilities, we are examining both active and passive defense measures to decrease the risk from any cruise missile strike against critical assets, regardless of origin.

Nested within our broader missile defeat approach, Integrated Air and Missile Defense is the integration of capabilities and overlapping operations, in part, to defend the homeland, and enable freedom of action by negating an adversary's ability to create adverse effects with air and missile capabilities. Looking to the future, the Department must develop, design, acquire, and maintain Joint Integrated Air and Missile Defense systems that are integrated, interoperable, and sufficiently flexible to protect the homeland from the full spectrum of air and missile threats.

**Deter Strategic Attacks:** We will continue to rely on strategic deterrence – underwritten by a safe, secure, and effective nuclear arsenal, and reinforced by a resilient sensor and Nuclear Command, Control, and Communications (NC3) architecture – to address and deter large intercontinental-range, nuclear missile threats to the homeland from the PRC and Russia. To maintain credible and effective deterrence of both large-scale and limited nuclear attacks from a range of adversaries, the Department is modernizing nuclear forces, nuclear command, control,

and communications, and the nuclear weapon production enterprise. Here too, the Department is employing an integrated deterrence approach that draws on tailored combinations of conventional, cyber, space, and information capabilities together with the unique deterrent effects of nuclear weapons.

**Defend the Homeland:** The Department's top priority is to defend the homeland. Canada remains our essential partner in the NORAD mission and in ensuring NORAD's capability and capacity to deter aggression and, if deterrence fails, to defend the United States and Canada from airborne threats and maritime threats. This requires investment in modern sensors, infrastructure, and platforms that ensure NORAD's ability to successfully conduct aerospace warning, aerospace control, and maritime warning. Those capabilities are vital to homeland defense and to our nations' capability to project forces forward in support of operations overseas, including meeting NATO commitments.

DoD is working closely with Canada to implement the next steps in NORAD's modernization, as Secretary Austin and his Canadian counterpart announced on August 17, 2021. They agreed on investment priorities to improve NORAD's ability to detect, deter, and defend against aerospace threats and to detect maritime threats to North America. We welcome the recent announcements that Canada plans to boost Canadian defense spending to modernize NORAD capabilities and enhance continental defense, including by investing in Over the Horizon Radar (OTHR) technology and modern fighters to replace its aging fighter forces. During the 240<sup>th</sup> meeting of the U.S.- Canada Permanent Joint Board on Defense (PJBD), in October 2022, representatives from both nations agreed to work together to develop a joint implementation plan to ensure that national investments are closely coordinated to avoid inefficiency and unnecessary duplication of effort as the United States and Canada invest in modernizing NORAD capabilities. The PJBD is one of our longest standing bilateral dialogues and, by enabling consultations and making recommendations on binational and bilateral joint political-military defense matters.

Here in the United States, we are grateful to the Committee for your support of the OTHRs in the Department's Fiscal Year 2023 appropriation. OTHR is a proven technology that will provide persistent surveillance of the distant approaches to the United States and mitigate the limitations of the Cold War-era North Warning System, while also addressing broader domain awareness

challenges. The ability to detect airborne, maritime, and space-borne threats in the approaches to Canada and the United States will be significantly enhanced by fielding OTHR, including four such systems in the United States, and two in Canada. We are working closely with our Canadian allies on an optimized OTHR siting arrangement that will maximize NORAD's coverage of the approaches to North America. The tracking and analyzing of the PRC surveillance HAB through NORAD in early February 2023 underscores the need for continued investment by the United States and Canada in NORAD modernization.

It is also vital that we secure an extension of the Secretary's authority under section 130i of title 10 to protect certain DoD facilities and assets in the United States from unmanned aircraft. The Department's February 4 response to the unlawful surveillance conducted by the PRC's HAB was authorized by section 130i. This provision expressly authorizes the Secretary to act to protect against threats posed by unmanned aircraft to the safety and security of covered DoD assets and facilities, including against surveillance from unmanned platforms. Absent your continued support in extending this authority, the Secretary's authority under section 130i will partially terminate on December 31 of this year, and with it, the Department's authority to protect facilities and assets associated with five of the nine DoD missions covered by the statute. The HAB incident, and indications that it is part of a continuing pattern, highlights the urgent need for action to keep this legal authority intact.

It is also vital to move quickly toward developing and employing advanced space-based sensors capable of detecting hypersonic weapons and other advanced systems designed to evade detection. Modernizing and expanding the Integrated Undersea Surveillance System (IUSS) is equally important as Russia and the PRC continue to field highly advanced guided missile submarines.

**The Arctic:** The United States is an Arctic nation by virtue of its sovereign territory within the Arctic in Alaska, which I am looking forward to visiting later this month. We are working with the White House on an implementation plan for the new National Strategy for the Arctic Region (NSAR) to achieve an Arctic region that is peaceful, stable, prosperous, and cooperative.

DoD's efforts are focused on the first pillar of the NSAR, the Security pillar, though we are also contributing to work under the other three pillars: addressing climate change and environmental protection, building sustainable economic development in a way that takes national security concerns into account, and supporting international cooperation and governance, including through the Freedom of Navigation program. Our contributions to all four pillars are guided by the five overarching principles set out in the new strategy: consulting with Alaska Native Tribes, deepening relationships with Allies and partners, planning for long-lead time investments, cultivating coalitions, and employing a whole-of-government evidence-based approach.

Under the Security pillar, we are undertaking a range of activities from modernizing domain awareness to improving our understanding of the impact of climate change on the operating environment in the Arctic through expanded observations, modeling, and analysis.

We are doing this because the Arctic is a strategically important region for the Department for three main reasons. First, the Arctic is the northern approach to the United States, and homeland defense is DoD's top priority. Second, we may need to flow forces through the Arctic to other theaters or operate in the Arctic to achieve our strategic objectives. Finally, as the Arctic is warming on average at three-to-four times the rate of the rest of the world, we are seeing heightened access to the Arctic, increasing its economic, diplomatic, and military importance.

As directed in the 2022 National Strategy for the Arctic Region and NDS, we will deter threats to the U.S. homeland from and through the Arctic by improving early warning and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities, coordination with Allies and partners to improve domain awareness, and calibrated activities and posture. These efforts will enhance our ability to defend our interests in the Arctic while mitigating the risks of unintended escalation through coordination with our Allies and partners, transparency, and strategic communications.

To that end, we regularly demonstrate combat-credible forces that are interoperable with our Allies and partners by training and exercising with our Arctic Allies and partners in all domains: land, air, sea, space, and cyberspace. Two examples are Arctic Edge, which provides bi-national training with Canada and saw more than 35 units from U.S. and Canadian armed services

participating in its 2020 iteration, and regular Bomber Task Force deployments -- with countries like the United Kingdom and Norway that allow for aerial integration among Allied and partner military aircraft to execute rapid, global power projection missions in support of the mutual defense of NATO Allies. We look forward to expanding the scope and complexity of these exercises to build capability and readiness. We also are working through the International Cooperative Engagement Program for Polar Research to close capability gaps and improve interoperability with our Allies and partners.

Following the establishment of DoD's first new Regional Center in 21 years -- the Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies in Anchorage, Alaska -- we are leveraging the center to help DoD leadership better understand the changing operating environment, educate current and future leaders on the Arctic, and convene international partners to discuss shared regional challenges. Additionally, we are working with our Allies and partners to strengthen governance structures that affect the Arctic and to uphold the international rules-based order in the face of concerted attempts by the PRC and Russia to subvert or bend it to suit their interests.

In 2018 the PRC declared itself a "near-Arctic state", a self-declared status that is not recognized by the United States or our Arctic allies and partners. While the PRC does not yet have an ability to project significant military power into the Arctic, it has been steadily pursuing a larger role in shaping governance and security affairs in the region by constructing research facilities that could serve both civilian and military purposes and taking steps to secure its access to new sea lanes and natural resources. More recently, we see the PRC taking active steps to demonstrate its capability to operate in the region, including by joining with Russia in a large-scale military exercise in the vicinity of the Aleutian Islands in September 2022.

Russia's geostrategic location and the increase in its military capabilities in the Arctic make it the most acute security challenge in the region. Russia has been very clear in stating its claims in the Arctic region, to include the right to regulate the waters of the Northern Sea Route in excess of the authority permitted under international law, and has displayed a willingness to use force in other regions to further its geostrategic goals. These illegitimate assertions of authority and actions are a danger to international peace and security.

Our strategy in the Arctic is calculated to challenge excessive territorial claims, maintain freedom of navigation in the region for all, and preserve regional stability while complicating Russia's ability to use the Arctic for strategic attacks against the homeland.

Regarding posture, we are constantly reassessing our requirements in light of the changing security environment. The Department of the Air Force is investing in infrastructure at Clear, Alaska, and at Thule, Greenland, to support expanded mission requirements. In fiscal year 2023, \$68M was appropriated to build new dormitories at Clear Space Force Station in support of upgrades to the site's Long Range Discrimination Radar, which will improve ballistic defense discrimination and increase the effectiveness of ground-based interceptors.

**Critical Infrastructure Resilience:** Our adversaries have strategies of achieving victory by undermining our military capabilities in the homeland. Current competitor tactics and technology require a greater focus on protecting key domestic assets, networks, and infrastructure. This is particularly problematic when it comes to gray zone activities – largely non-attributable, coercive means that fall below perceived thresholds for military action – affecting different elements of the FSLTT governments or the private sector.

Denying the benefits of aggression requires resilience – the ability to withstand, fight through, and recover quickly from disruption. DoD is improving its ability to operate in the face of multi-domain threats - including, cyber, counterintelligence, and espionage - to a growing number of vital networks and critical infrastructure, including in the homeland. The Department is bolstering deterrence by enhancing the resilience of U.S. systems that the PRC, Russia, and other adversaries may seek to target, working closely with the defense industrial base, interagency partners, and FSLTT governments, and through public-private partnerships. For example, the Department is working with and through our interagency and private partners to strengthen the resilience of the critical infrastructure that we depend on to project power and enable the warfighter. We will bolster our ability to fight through disruption by improving defensive capabilities and increasing options for reconstitution.

Our nation's infrastructure is designed for commerce rather than competition or conflict. The Department recognizes that adversaries are targeting U.S. infrastructure that both the military and the American people rely upon. We have observed the potential for attacks on private sector infrastructure to have far-reaching impacts, including low-cost physical attacks with minimal risk to the adversary, demonstrating the systemic challenges we must address in the near-term through prevention, mitigation, and preparation for rapid reconstitution.

To address this challenge, it is imperative that we work with interagency partners by leveraging their unique authorities, knowledge, and analytic capabilities to understand and manage risks to our national security. Our ultimate goal is to identify systemic risk, which will guide planning, standards development, and investments to transform our critical infrastructure and ensure that it can support daily commerce and survive competition and conflict.

The Department is pursuing a two-pronged approach. First, for DoD assets and facilities within the Defense enterprise, we have strengthened our internal processes to assess and resolve vulnerabilities. When necessary, we have increased investment in the resilience or redundancy of our most critical assets. The second element is more challenging – mitigating the vulnerabilities to civil and commercial infrastructure that we depend on to enable defense operations, such as the electric grid, water systems, and communications networks. Here the Department has more limited options, with neither the resources nor the authority to directly impact resilience of infrastructure “outside-the-wire.” This past year we have redoubled our efforts with our interagency partners to increase awareness of their vital role in national defense, share information about our interdependencies, and jointly develop options to mitigate risk. To inform these discussions, last year the Department established the Critical Infrastructure Defense Analysis Center (CIDAC) to merge, analyze, and disseminate all-source information about threats and vulnerabilities to “outside-the-wire” critical infrastructure that DoD depends on for priority operations.

As the Sector Risk Management Agency for the Defense Industrial Base (DIB), DoD partners directly with DIB companies to protect our military advantage by raising the sector's collective cybersecurity and resilience posture and eliminating barriers to effective coordination. The

Department is working to maximize information transparency to ensure our partners have effective tools to mitigate risk. Over the past year, we focused on improving and expanding bi-directional threat and mitigation information sharing with DIB partners.

**Federal Mission Resilience:** We also seek to ensure that DoD is prepared to operate through disruption, consistent with the Federal Mission Resilience (FMR) Strategy, December 7, 2020. The FMR Strategy drives the Department to increase our resilience by reducing our reliance on reactive relocation after disruption and emphasizing the routine and proactive distribution of personnel to continue our most essential functions. This includes increasing DoD's ability to operate in a more dispersed manner and from alternate locations, increasing redundancy in our capabilities, and by planning, training and exercising.

**Defense Support of Civil Authorities:** DoD has a long history of leveraging its substantial capabilities and capacity to support our FSLTT partners in their homeland security missions, such as responding to man-made and natural disasters, public health emergencies, and securing our borders. Examples of DoD defense support of civil authorities (DSCA) missions in 2022 and early 2023 include support of: whole-of-government support during special security events (e.g., State of the Union Address and the United Nations General Assembly); responses to climate-related incidents, such as hurricanes, tornadoes, and wild fires; support of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the State Department in the rescue and resettlement of our allies in Operation Allies Welcome; and support of DHS efforts at the Southwest Border. DSCA is a vital and visible mission, directly supporting the American public and shaping civil-military relations in the United States.

The National Defense Strategy includes an expectation that DoD will be prepared to support other Federal departments and agencies in responding to crises with DSCA contributions of a scale and duration that does not substantially impair warfighting readiness. With this in mind, DoD supports our Federal partners' efforts to develop their own capability so they can independently perform their missions and functions without relying on DoD for support. This will increase the resilience of the nation, especially in scenarios where DoD capabilities are focused on executing our defense missions. Recently, DoD has made an effort to use its

tremendous contracting capability to support civil authorities' requests for assistance. This will continue to be a focus for the future. Ensuring that a DSCA mission is scoped under the appropriate authorities, operates in support of a civilian lead Federal agency, uses trained forces appropriate to the mission, and employs forces in a professional manner calibrated for the mission's context, is vital for healthy civil-military relations in the United States. We must think about an integrated, whole-of-government approach to ensure our domestic partners are resourced to meet their mission requirements, while preserving DoD's ability to defend the nation.

**Southwest Border Security:** DoD has supported DHS's border security mission at the southwest border for 18 of the last 22 years. In 14 of these 18 years, the duration of DoD support spanned the entire fiscal year, and, in many cases, was provided on a non-reimbursable basis. Currently, approximately 2,500 military personnel are deployed to the southwest border on active-duty (Title 10) orders, supporting U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) detection and monitoring activities, and providing intelligence analysis, aviation, command and control, and other support to CBP.

**Enduring Advantage/Build a Resilient Joint Force:** Per the NDS, we will build enduring advantages across the defense ecosystem – the Department of Defense, the defense industrial base, and the array of private sector and academic enterprises that create and sharpen the Joint Force's technological edge.

As directed in the NDS, we are developing a strategic approach for addressing the nexus of climate change and national security. The effects of the changing environment are reshaping the geostrategic, operational, and tactical environments in which DoD operates, with profound implications for U.S. defense policy. Failing to build resilience against these effects could result in lost military capability and missed opportunity for technical innovation and economic growth. DoD is taking these challenges seriously.

The Department is integrating efforts to build global resilience into major planning documents, including the NDS and other DoD core guidance. Within the Department, we are working to

both strengthen the Department's ability to withstand and recover quickly from extreme environmental events and build a resilient Joint Force and defense ecosystem.

Recognizing our shared priorities, addressing climate security is part of our core mission of combat readiness and integrated deterrence. As the hemisphere grapples with the effects of a changing climate, we recognize ally and partner engagement on this issue is a strategic advantage and necessity for the United States, one that demands greater cooperation between military officials and civilian authorities, including in the areas of training, research, and development. To that end, we are discussing climate resilience cooperation with Allies and partners during bilateral and multilateral meetings. For instance, under the former Defense Environmental International Cooperation (DEIC) program, we funded a table-top exercise on disaster risk reduction as part of the upcoming Tradewinds meeting with Caribbean partners in August. We intend to use the new Defense Operational Resilience International Cooperation (DORIC) program to build awareness and early warning capabilities among our partners to reduce the need for DoD assets as disasters and other emergencies in the region become more frequent and severe.

**Advancing Regional Goals and Campaigning in the Western Hemisphere:**

The United States derives immense benefit from a stable, peaceful, and democratic Western Hemisphere that reduces security threats to the homeland. To preserve this benefit, we are deepening our core partnerships with Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Colombia, and Chile through ongoing engagement under existing arrangements, robust strategic dialogues, key leader engagements, and defense exercises, while at the same time reinforcing democratic institutions, civilian control of the military, and respect for human rights and the rule of law. Later this year, Mexico will host the 5<sup>th</sup> installment of the North American Defense Ministerial, the defense component to the North American Leaders forum, to discuss trilateral defense cooperation in the Western Hemisphere. Later this week, I look forward to traveling to Mexico for meetings with counterparts to discuss a range of bilateral and hemispheric defense issues.

We were very pleased that integrated deterrence was a discussion topic at last year's Conference of Defense Ministers of the Americas, or CDMA, a multilateral meeting hosted by Brazil that

marked Secretary Austin's first trip to the region. As Secretary Austin highlighted in his remarks at CDMA, "...credible deterrence demands military and security forces that are ready, capable, and under firm civilian control. And it demands defense ministries that serve their citizens transparently and without corruption." We need to build resilient defense relationships to make progress toward our shared interests and hemispheric security, regardless of political swings.

Along these lines, I led a discussion with our partners at CDMA on integrated deterrence and how our countries can apply it together to our mutual benefit. Since then, hemispheric security institutions such as the Inter-American Defense Board and the Inter-American Defense College have led important discussions on integrated deterrence.

DoD aligns campaigning efforts with other instruments of national power to sustain and leverage our comparative advantage and, together with partners, increase our strength over time in the Western Hemisphere. To retain this competitive advantage, we are deepening our defense and security partnerships and defense cooperation with nations in the Western Hemisphere. We also are working to increase the efficiency of our defense and security cooperation and security assistance tools. We are prioritizing Institutional Capacity Building and Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Response capabilities in our partnerships across the region. Our relationships with our hemispheric partners are the foundation that ensures we will have rapid-response capabilities ranging from those needed to conduct effective humanitarian assistance and disaster relief missions, to the ability to support civilian-led efforts to combat transboundary threats, such as organized crime through detection, monitoring, and intelligence analysis support. These relationships also help us to promote climate resilience and to undertake pandemic response.

### **Conclusion**

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Smith, and distinguished Members of the Committee, in conclusion, the homeland, the Western Hemisphere, and the Arctic all face increased and evolving threats. To address these shared challenges, we will raise awareness and increase preparedness with our partners within and outside of government to prevent, mitigate, and respond to national security threats to the homeland, build resilience throughout the defense ecosystem, and advance U.S. national interests in the Western Hemisphere and the Arctic. Thank

you for the support of Congress and for your continued commitment and support of the women and men of the Department of Defense. I look forward to your questions.