

HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE HEARING U.S. MILITARY POSTURE AND NATIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES IN THE GREATER MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA

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WITNESSES:

DR. CELESTE WALLANDER ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR
INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS., DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
GENERAL MICHAEL "ERIK" KURILLA, COMMANDER, U.S. CENTRAL COMMAND
GENERAL MICHAEL LANGLEY, COMMANDER, U.S. AFRICA COMMAND

ROGERS: The Committee will come to order. Before we begin, I have one housekeeping matter. In consultation with the Ranking Member, I plan to adjourn the public portion of his hearing at 1:00 p.m. and immediately move upstairs for the classified portion. Today we continue our posture hearings with AFRICOM and CENTCOM. I want to thank our witnesses for being here and their service to our nation, and the time it took preparing for this hearing. These are very special to us as policymakers. Earlier this month we heard from the Commanders of NORTHCOM and SOUTHCOM about the growing presence of the Chinese Communist Party in North and South America. The situation in AFRICOM and CENTCOM is even more concerning. Most countries in Africa and the Middle East are now members of the CCP's Belt and

Road initiative.

The CCP built their first overseas military base in Djibouti, at a strategic point on the Horn of Africa. This base can accommodate the CCP's aircraft carriers and sits only 6 miles from our own outpost.

Now, they're actively looking to the Atlantic coast of Africa for new military basing opportunities. Across the Middle East, the CCP is building ports, providing Huawei telecommunications, conducting joint military exercises, and delivering military equipment.

But what worries me most is Xi's growing friendship with the Ayatollah. In the last few years, the CCP

signed valuable trade deals with Iran, bought Iranian oil in defiance of international sanctions, and joined

Russia in conducting joint drills with the Iranian navy.

Last week, they played peacemaker between Iran and Saudi Arabia. These actions provide a lifeline to

Iran at a very dangerous time. The Ayatollah continues to fund and equip terrorists targeting American

troops. He's providing Putin with advanced weapons to prosecute the brutal invasion of Ukraine. And his

regime is aggressively pursuing nuclear weapons. We absolutely cannot allow that to happen.

Finally, both General Langley and General Kurilla continue to face tremendous challenges snuffing out

hardened terrorists in their AORs. In Africa, lack of adequate resourcing has led to a worsening security

situation, especially in the west where terrorist havens are expanding.

In CENTCOM, President Biden's decision to unilaterally and unconditionally withdraw all U.S. forces

from Afghanistan has undermined our national security. It has left a security vacuum the Taliban, Al-

Qaeda, and ISIS are filling it - that vacuum.

The assessment is that some of these terrorists could conduct attacks against the U.S. in as little as

six months. I remain very concerned that we're no longer positioned to detect an imminent attack and

stop it. That's because the President's so-called "Over the Horizon" counter terrorism strategy is a farce.

Without persistent ISR, reliable partners on the ground, and nearby facilities to launch assets, our

ability to strike these terrorists is severely limited. I look forward to this afternoon's classified discussion

on what capabilities we've lost and how we can help restore them. We cannot allow for blind spots,

especially in these two AORs.

With that, I yield my friend and colleague, the Ranking Member for any comments he may have.

SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate. I appreciate Dr. Wallander, General Kurilla and

General Langley joining us today. And I appreciate your leadership on these issues.

And I think the

Chairman started in the place where I think most members are going to be most interested and that is the

role of China and Russia in both of your AORs.

As we know it is growing, and I think the Chairman did a pretty good job of describing it in the

challenge that we face to balance against this. And I think it's important to understand why that matters,

and actually it's one aspect of General Langley's AOR that sort of drives home that point, that's West

Africa, where the Wagner group has been so active in taking over a security role. And we've seen the

coups and the violence and the chaos that is followed.

Certainly, we continue to have the challenge of the violent extremist organizations operating there. But

Russia and China's presence is making that worse. So we need to make sure that we figure out how to

effectively counter that. And that's what I'm most interested in hearing.

As we're working with all of the countries throughout Africa and CENTCOM, they are working with

China and Russia for reasons. And there are things that they see to their individual countries advantage.

It's not enough for the U.S. to show up and say we're better than them, you have to be with us.

We have to understand in great detail why these countries are working with China.

Why are they

working with Russia? What is being offered by China and Russia that we aren't offering? How can we

effectively counter, work with partners globally as well, to make sure that China and Russia don't begin to

have dominant control in most parts of the world.

Without question that's the number one biggest challenge and these is to understand

how we balance that out. And then very specifically within Africa, we do continue to be concerned about the terrorist groups that are present there. I mentioned West Africa briefly, but we would love to have an update also on what's going on with Somalia. Al-Shabaab continues to be the most well organized and effective arm of Al-Qaeda. How is that fight going? And speaking of unilateral decisions, President Trump's unilateral decision in the dying days of his administration to simply pull out of Somalia without any sort of plan to follow up, also had consequences and would be curious to see what we're doing in that part of the world to deal with that. And then in the Middle East, Iran was mentioned. But the other thing that I think we need to really think about is in Iraq. We have had a presence there now since 2003. That presence has varied in terms of its purpose. Certainly in the 2015-16 timeframe it was very focused. ISIS had risen, it was a profound threat, and we showed up to help our partners in that region to quell that threat. What is our presence in Iraq right now doing? Well, how is our partnership with Iraq? As the Chairman noted, we are clearly targets for what Iran and their proxies are doing. What is our mission there, who are our partners? And going forward, what should be our mission in that part of the world? These are two very interesting Commands. We look forward to your testimony to help enlighten us as to challenges there and most importantly, how we can be helpful and making sure that we meet the national security needs of our country in those regions, and help all of you do your jobs in that region. With that, I yield back, and look forward to your testimony.

ROGERS: Thank you, sir. We will now introduce the witnesses. We have the honorable Celeste Wallander. He is the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs. Dr. - I mean, General Eric Kurilla is the Commander, United States Central Command; and General Michael Langley is the Commander, United States Africa Command. I want to welcome our witnesses. And Dr. Wallander, we'll start with you for five

minutes to give us
your opening statement.

WALLANDER: Thank you. Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Smith, distinguished members of the

Committee, thank you for inviting me to testify. As the Department of Defense articulated in the 2022

National Defense Strategy, a strong, principled, adaptive U.S. Military is a central pillar of U.S. leadership.

This strategy sets out how the U.S. military will address growing threats to vital national security

interests and a stable and open international system. It is focused on combining our strengths to

maximum effect through integrated deterrence by campaigning to disrupt destabilizing activities and push

back against competitors' course of actions, and by undertaking reforms and making investments to build enduring advantages.

The Department remains committed to using our instruments to further U.S. interests in the Middle

East and Africa. We will continue to stand with our partners and allies to win what we view as the

competition of coalitions that is becoming increasingly critical to our common security.

The Department's priorities in the Middle East are to promote stability and security, maintain credible

Military options to deny Iran a nuclear weapon, counter Iran's destabilizing activities, disrupt violent

extremist organizations or VEOs, safeguard freedom of navigation throughout global waterways, and

work with Israel to ensure its security.

The Department maintains readiness to unilaterally respond to any crisis or contingency, but our

preference is to work alongside interoperable and capable partners within coalitions.

This emphasis on

consultation and cooperation is the U.S. competitive advantage in the Middle East.

Though others seek to

strategically compete, there is no combat credible, willing alternative prepared to share cutting-edge

capabilities and invest vital national resources in support of regional security and defense of others within

the rules based international order.

Iran is a persistent threat across a range of domains, most notably its nuclear program, support for

Iran aligned militia groups in Iraq and the proliferation of advanced conventional weapons and attack drones.

In Iraq and Syria, the Department remains committed to the enduring defeat of ISIS, both through military activities and by working with agency partners to support comprehensive whole of government approaches, to deliver security and stability.

In Yemen, U.S. policy objectives remain focused on creating the conditions to implement a resolution under UN auspices that will end the now eight year conflict. Within the Middle East, U.S.-Israeli military exercises, demonstrate our ongoing work to improve our interoperability and increased military cooperation. And as Israel's alignment to U.S. CENTCOM's AOR matures, there will also be increased focus on working multilaterally, with other partners throughout the region, including strategic partners in the Gulf.

Africa's geopolitical importance to U.S. national security must not be overlooked. Many of the world's most pressing challenges and global solutions will emanate from this continent as it continues to grow in political and economic power. Africa's extraordinary potential is threatened by episodes of political instability, democratic backsliding, transnational threats, the entrenched and growing presence of the VEOs and the impact of climate in a complex interoperating environment.

The Department takes an African led, U.S. enabled approach in close coordination with allies and partners to address security challenges. The Department prioritizes disrupting VEOs that threaten the homeland and vital U.S. national security interests, and supports a holistic approach to the security challenges in Africa through robust cooperation. This approach ensures that U.S. security and governance initiatives mutually reinforce each other to address the transnational nature of threats.

In East Africa, we remain steadfast in our support of regional initiatives to counter the threat from Al-Shabaab in Somalia. In West Africa, we remain focused on countering ISIS and JNIM

in the Sahel by
investing in and supporting our security partners.

The security situation continues to deteriorate in the Sahel and coastal West Africa.

Growing threats

presented by the VEOs, governance challenges and a lack of development
opportunities have

exacerbated conflicts in the region. Recent political transitions challenge U.S. military
assistance as well

as access and influence to help counter advances by malign actors, namely Russia
and the PRC.

The PRC is the only country with the intent and increasingly the capability to
fundamentally reshape

the rules based international order, and Africa is key to us strategy to prevent the
PRC from achieving its
objectives.

With the support of Congress, the Department of Defense remains positioned to
support our allies and

partners, compete with Russia and the PRC, and deter and defeat our adversaries
across the Middle

East and Africa.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify, and I look forward to your questions.

ROGERS: Thank you Dr. Wallander. General Kurilla, you're recognized.

KURILLA: Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Smith, ladies and gentlemen of the
Committee. I'm

joined by Command Master Chief Fleet Derrick Walters, the Command senior enlisted
leader of U.S.

Central Command.

On behalf of the soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines, Coast Guardsmen and
guardians, we serve this

Command, the central region and the nation every day. Thank you for allowing me to
testify regarding the

posture of U.S. Central Command.

This year is the 40th in our CENTCOM history. In January of 1983, the United States
Congress

authorized the establishment of CENTCOM to serve as the security guarantor in the
Middle East, the

Levant, and the Central Asian States. Today, we rely heavily on partnerships the
Command has

developed, and CENTCOM serves as the security integrator of the world's central
region.

The story of his Command between 1983 and today is one that parallels the threats
and opportunities

of the region it supports for the past four decades. Central Command was formed to counter the influence of the revolutionary regime that had seized power in Tehran, and to compete strategically with the Soviet Union.

The organization's original charter was to direct and enable military operations and activities with partners to increase regional stability in support of American interests. That mission remains essentially unchanged to this day. Iran remains the focus. We now battle violent extremist groups who threaten United States, our interests in the region. The Soviet Union has been replaced with China and Russia has strategic competitors.

The region remains vitally important to the nation and the world. Ours is an area of responsibility that encompasses 21 nations, 600 million people, and serves as a strategic nexus of the world's most important quarters of trade. Today, CENTCOM's priorities are to deter Iran, counter violent extremist organizations, and compete strategically with China and Russia. That is what we do.

For decades after CENTCOM's formation, Iran remains the primary destabilizing element in the region.

We've seen rapid advances in Iranian Military capability over time, the Iran of 2023 is not the Iran of 1983.

In fact, Iran today is exponentially more militarily capable than it was even five years ago.

Today, Iran possesses the largest and most diverse missile arsenal in the Middle East, with 1000s of ballistic and cruise missiles. Iran also maintains the largest and most capable UAV force. Iran's vast and deeply resourced proxy forces spread instability throughout the region and threaten our regional partners.

Iran continues to enrich uranium far above of what is needed for commercial use. Iran can enrich uranium far faster it could even two years ago on. An Iran with a nuclear weapon would change the Middle East overnight and forever.

As Iran continues to destabilize the region, we continue to fight violent extremist organizations. Four years ago today, March 23, 2019, was an historic day in CENTCOM's 40 year

lifespan. In Baghuz, Syria, the global coalition eliminated the last so-called ISIS territorial Khalif. This historical achievement did not come without loss. During the fight against ISIS in Iraq and Syria, 10s of 1000s of our partner forces were wounded or killed. Our partners were fully in the lead. 20 American service members were killed and dozens were wounded. They will always remember throughout U.S. Central Command by their countrymen for their sacrifice in defense of stability in the region. Today, we continue to fight against ISIS and Syria alongside our Syrian democratic force partners to ensure the enduring defeat of ISIS. And we remain in Iraq to advise, assist and enable the Iraqi security forces in the fight against ISIS. In Afghanistan, ISIS-Khorasan seeks to expand its ranks, and develop the capability to inspire, enable or direct attacks in the region and beyond, with the group's ultimate goal to attack the U.S. homeland. Amidst these challenges, strategic competition is deeply manifest in the region. The People's Republic of China aggressively expands its informational, military and economic instruments of national power across the region. And now Beijing seeks to establish its diplomatic influence. China, dependent on the region for over half of its imported crude oil, and more than a third of all its natural gas is also moving beyond energy based investments to encompass physical and telecommunications infrastructure that advances its Belt and Road Initiative. 19 of 21 CENTCOM countries have signed a Belt and Road agreement with China. We are in a race to integrate with our partners before China can penetrate the region. Russia, on the other hand, seeks to expand its influence in Syria, seeking a permanent base in there and undermining our efforts towards stability and security. Putin seeks a foothold of influence in the Central Asian States, leveraging historical relations and perceived decline in U.S. engagement to challenge our influence in this area of the world. With these challenges, the CENTCOM region holds the greatest risk of derailing the

national defense strategy with a flashpoint international incident that may demand responses in unplanned resources or attention. That is why we require a sufficient and sustainable force posture to accomplish these missions without relying on additional forces. And to accomplish these strategic priorities, CENTCOM focus on a strategic approach centered on people, partners and innovation. People are our greatest asset and our most critical resource. Our partners are the nation's comparative advantage against competitors like China and Russia.

And across CENTCOM, we cultivate deep abiding partnerships that can serve as a hedge against threats in the region, while deterring Iran from its most destructive behavior, and China views our partners as merely customers and clients. Innovation of thought, innovation of process, innovation of concept and

technology extends the value of our partnerships, and innovation allows us to move faster, operate more efficiently and increase progress across all operational efforts.

So deter Iran, counter violent extremist organizations and compete strategically are what we do.

People, partners and innovation, that is how we do them. In closing, let me thank you again for the support of our servicemembers, civilians and their families. For 40 years, much of that time in sustained combat in CENTCOM area of responsibility, the United States and the region relied on the American servicemember for the security and stability of the region and to advance American interests.

Those men and women have fulfilled the original promise of this Command in some of the toughest circumstances and we owe them a debt of gratitude. It is the greatest honor of my lifetime to be their Commander.

ROGERS: Thanks, sir. General Langley, you're recognized.

LANGLEY: Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Smith, distinguished Committee members, it's an honor to appear before you today to testify on the state of affairs of the United States Africa Command.

I'm proud to testify alongside my dedicated colleagues, General Kurilla and Assistant Secretary

Wallander.

Now, I assumed Command last August and since then, I've embarked upon a campaign of learning.

And over the last seven months, all to inform this discussion today. I undertook this campaign of learning

to fulfill my commitment to this Congress and completely holistic assessment upon confirmation. And I will

make that assessment and I will continue it throughout my tenure at Command.

Upfront, I want to make one thing crystal clear. The team of servicemembers and civilians at

AFRICOM is a talented and dedicated body. I'm honored to serve among them. I'm joined today by my

State Department Foreign Policy Adviser Mr. Bill Nelson, who represents this exceptionally skilled

diplomatic team embedded at our headquarters.

Our entire team is laser focused on implementing our whole government approach with our partners

from the Department of State, USAID, the intelligence community and other U.S. government

organizations. We campaign with our allies and partners to advance mutual interests and promote

stability and prosperity on the African continent. You should be proud of their efforts. I know I certainly

am.

Africa, is a vast and dynamic continent of sovereign nations. Collectively and individually, these

nations are increasingly important players on the global stage. And as such, AFRICOM's contribution to

American security must be viewed through a global lens.

Threats once contained on a continent are transforming into worldwide threats.

Terrorism, poverty,

food insecurity, climate change and mass migration, shatter African lives. They sow the seeds of violent

extremists and Russian exploitation. The Kremlin's invasion of Ukraine has aggravated the food insecurity

crisis in Africa by blocking bottled food shipments to the same nations that feel the deepest impacts of

climate change.

Russia's Wagner mercenaries turn chaos into cash and destabilize entire regions across the African

continent, and it cuts at American interest worldwide. The expansion of Middle East based violent extremist groups such as ISIS and Al-Qaeda, including the biggest franchise of Al-Shabaab, threatens American lives.

Solutions to these colossal problems must be a shared burden. African nations need to be at the helm of the concerted international efforts to produce sustainable outcomes. Assessing African nations and achieving their goals, while advancing American interests can only be accomplished through a synchronized whole of government strategy.

We call it the 3D approach, which is the toolkit of diplomacy, development, and defense. But one tool does not succeed without the whole kit. So I will advocate for State Department and USAID partners to receive the resources they need to succeed.

Now, Africa face faces many challenges. However, putting Africa's needs at the forefront of our campaign, reinforced by multilateral and whole government engagement will help AFRICOM and our partners work towards a sustainable peace, stability, and prosperity.

Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Smith and distinguished members of this Committee, thank you

for giving the opportunity to be here today. I look forward to your questions.

ROGERS: Thank you, General. Thank all of us for your opening statements and for your service. I

now recognize myself for questions.

General Kurilla, you assess that ISIS-K can conduct an attack on the U.S. or Western interest abroad

in six months or less. What could we do as Congress to help you best be prepared to thwart that or at least detect it?

KURILLA: Thanks gentleman. And when I say, be able to - capable of conducting attack in under six

months, there's three types that we look at. An inspired attack that's inspired by their vile ideology. They

can do that today. They can do that tomorrow. There's an enabled attack where they're providing funding

in some direction to be able to do that. And then there's a directed attack where it is commanding

controlled from the region to do that.

Really what we see right now is their ability to do that in under six months is the enabled attack against U.S. or Western interests abroad. Obviously, much harder to do against the homeland. So part of that is our ability to increase our intelligence and collection efforts inside of Afghanistan. We are working right now with the Department. We have received funding to increase our alternative airborne ISR, and we should have some systems coming online that is a 400 percent increase in the ability to collect over the top. We're trying to increase our other forms of intelligence, SIGINT, HUMINT to enable us to penetrate those networks to target better.

ROGERS: Right. General Langley, the CCP has built a base in Djibouti. They've announced they're building a space port there, and they're looking to build a naval base on the Atlantic coast of Africa. Could you tell us the impact of those plans and what we can do to help you best thwart those?

LANGLEY: Chairman, what I'm concerned about is the strategic implications. I'm concerned about that these, aspirations of space based or any other technologies that can be dual use, into military uses that the PRC or the CCP will establish a platform for power projection, that changes America's strategic calculus going forward.

We need to be concerned. And what I have at my disposal is become and maintain the partner of choice as we engage with our African nations. In my travels across the - Chairman, I traveled across the continent, our partners don't want to be militarized in a strategic sense. That's what I need to be able to articulate to them in my engagements.

ROGERS: Great. I'm curious there's a concern that we may not be able to get appropriations bills passed on time. If we were not to be able to get, a Defense Authorization Bill passed on time, what would the implications of a CR be to you and your AOR? And I'll start with you, General Langley.

LANGLEY: Chairman, first of all, it affects readiness as we do the calculus of risk to force, risk mission, the readiness of our forces, as the violent extremist organizations and the

layered threat of the PRC and also Wagner's actions, it increase risk. We need new starts to be able to address these challenges. A delayed budget will hamper our new starts to address those issues.

ROGERS: Great. General Kurilla?

KURILLA: Hey, Chairman. Thank you. We require a sufficient, timely and predictable funding. Bottom-

line, it affects readiness. As Mike Langley said, one of the key issue is we can't have new starts, and we

will see that affect readiness for forces coming forward in our allocated forces.

ROGERS: General Langley, I'm curious, you know, you've made reference to Russian activity in the

African continent. Have you seen any diminution of that activity given their focus on Ukraine and their

devotion of resources there? Or has it been uninterrupted?

LANGLEY: Chairman, first and foremost, let me state that, Wagner. Wagner and Benni (ph) Prigozhin,

they're about power and profit. And they do this in engaging. They fill a void of where we are not - where

we have backed off because one reason or another. They are the vanguard for the Russian Federation,

and they are cash for profit agency. And there is a revenue stream of what they garner on - through their

illicit activities on the African continent goes up to Putin.

ROGERS: Great. I'm interested, General Kurilla, you know, one of my frustrations about the way we

left Afghanistan was we did not maintain a base anywhere in Afghanistan from which we could conduct

ISR. Can you tell me how adequate, or if it is adequate, what you're receiving now in the way of ISR? I

know we're going to talk more about this in a classified section. But, can you in a public way talk about

how adequate it is or inadequate?

KURILLA: So, I have, validated requirements right now for ISR. We are not filled completely to our

validated requirement. One of the challenges I have is the time I spend in transit.

About 80 percent of the

time I spend in transit to get to Afghanistan. But we are working with some alternative airborne ISR, like I

said, high duration stuff that can stay up for days. And we're working towards programs and platforms that

can stay up for weeks.

ROGERS: Great. I recognize Ranking Member.

SMITH: Thank you. So focusing on China, well, and some degree Russia's role. But the treaty that -

not treaty or the reopening of relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia, the China just recently negotiated.

Part of that is that Iran says publicly that they're going to stop sending arms to Yemen - to the Houthis in

Yemen, which would be, you know, a significantly positive step.

So, I guess, first question is, do you believe that, do you see that coming out? Do you see some

positive aspects of Iran and Saudi Arabia, reestablishing diplomatic ties?

KURILLA: Thank you, Chairman or Ranking Member Smith. So I think there is goodness, anytime

tensions can be lowered. A agreement is not implementation. While they were negotiating this over the

last 90 days, we stopped five major shipments of Iranian arms that were going to the Houthis, and some

of those were advanced components like inertial navigation systems for short range ballistic missiles.

And I think that what we should be concerned about in this is that China is the one that mediated this.

It was being done by two countries in the Middle East over the last two years. But what it shows is that

China, not only do they have their, economic information and military instruments of national power being

coming into the region, we are now seeing really for the first time their diplomatic instrument of national

power.

SMITH: Yes. And Dr. Wallander, just sort of follow-up on that from a policy standpoint, because this

room is kind of conditioned to not be fond of China, and that's where the conversation goes, and that's

fine.

But looking at the broader world, we're talking about Chinese involvement - we'll leave the Russians

out of it for the moment. You know, they are doing a huge development initiative throughout Africa, and

now they're negotiating, you know - well, peace treaty is the wrong word, but they're negotiating between

Iran and Saudi Arabia.

If you're in Africa, if you're in the Middle East, you know, what's our argument for why China's a problem? And how do - frankly, how do we balance. I understand the nefarious aspects of what China's up to. But how do we effectively make that case to these countries that we're trying to make our partners.

As opposed, I think everyone in this room is going to be there, but we're not the ones we're trying to persuade. We're trying to persuade the countries out there that they need to be careful about their relationships with China and Russia. How do we do that in light of those facts?

WALLANDER: Well, thank you, Congressman. I share your assessment and what General Kurilla laid out as his concerns. I think that what our duty and our argument to countries in the Middle East and Africa is that, we want to work with them on common interests to improve their capabilities for national security and stability.

Whereas, the track record of China and Russia in the form of Wagner, actually comes in for their narrow national interest. Often is, as we've seen a track record of China going in with what sounds like very tempting deals, which end up on the back end, costing countries quite a lot and providing a lot less capability. So the track record is something we can point to, and we're beginning to see that effect.

In Africa Wagner is beginning to not have the stellar reputation that the Russian government would like to claim that it has.

SMITH: What I would strongly suggest is that we need to make that case and we need to make it better. I think there's a tendency, at least in the pronouncements that I hear, just like, we're the U.S., we're good. They're China, they're bad. Therefore you have to agree with us. I can assure you and everyone at the table, the rest of the world doesn't look at it that way. They look at a mixed record coming from us. They look at their needs. I think we are right. I think our role in the world is incredibly important. I think the alliance that we put together and the idea of a rules-based international order is vastly better than China's debt traps and China's desire to come in and extract

resources.

China's autocratic approach, crucially, you know, if you say anything, I mean, literally anything that

China doesn't like, they'll cut you off at the knees. OK. That's the argument we need to be making. I

mean, South Africa is out there doing joint exercises with Russia and China, and we're going, don't do

that. We need a better argument. And it's really crucial that we do that.

Just in the last couple of minutes on my question, I raised in the first place. What are we doing in Iraq

right now? What's our plan? Why are we there? What the mission?

KURILLA: So Iraq is a strategic partner, Congressman. And what we are doing there is for the

enduring defeat of ISIS. We are partnered with the Iraqis, and obviously the Syrian Democratic Forces.

We did 313 partnered operations last year. We've done 129 this year to-date. And those are Iraqis in the

lead or Syrian Democratic Forces in the lead.

The Iraqis just did a major large scale operation where we are providing some of the intelligence and

the fires aspect of that, to go after the enduring defeat of ISIS. There's about 20,000 ISIS detainees inside

of Iraq. And when we can get to them where they can do this on their own, that's when we'll know when

we see the enduring defeat of ISIS.

SMITH: Thank you very much. Thank you all. I yield back,

LAMBORN: Good morning everybody. I'll now recognize myself for five minutes.

General Kurilla, I'm

extremely concerned about the rapid progress Iran has made on its nuclear program. Earlier this month,

the IAEA said that Iran has produced uranium particles that were enriched up to 83.7 percent. Last week,

you testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee that Tehran can now produce sufficient fissile

material for a nuclear weapon in less than 14 days.

Iran is on the brink of being a nuclear weapon state, which would change the security layout of the

Middle East in unpredictable ways. So general, what activities or plans are you engaged in to reinforce

U.S. deterrence and convey to Iran that acquiring nuclear weapons will not be in its best interest?

KURILLA: Thank you, Congressman. I mean, the U.S. policy is Iran will not have a nuclear weapon. I

think anything about plans that we have against any nuclear program would be best in a classified setting.

LAMBORN: Thank you. And we will bring a - bring that topic up in the classified setting. And Dr.

Wallander, do you have anything to add to that here in this public setting?

WALLANDER: Just to endorse, or support your assessment of the challenge and to reiterate that the

role of the Department of Defense is to provide the Secretary of Defense and the President with military

options for the prevention of Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons.

LAMBORN: OK. Well, thank you both. Further on Iran, they are posturing to be more than just a

regional challenge. Over the course of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Iran has increasingly provided

military support to Russia, specifically drones. Russia is planning to provide Iran with advanced

capabilities, including military fighter jets, helicopters and air defense systems.

So - and they're also planning to jointly build a drone factory inside Russia that would produce

thousands of drones per year. This has more than just regional impact for Iran. So how is CENTCOM

posturing to respond to this increasing collaboration between Iran and Russia? And what do you assess

the implications to be for the region?

KURILLA: Congressman, it is very concerning with this relationship that Iran and Russia have. We are

seeing them move the UAVs to Russia, to be able to use them in Ukraine. These are the very same

UAVs that they use to attack our forces in Iraq and Syria. And they're improving upon them.

And we are seeing - we saw Iranian state media to publicly announce that they'll be getting, SU-35,

which is a fourth gen plus fighter aircraft, they'll be providing those. We think that'll happen at some point

this year. And it is this closer collaboration between two adversaries that is concerning. What we are

doing is building the regional partnerships in the region to be able to counter that.

LAMBORN: And what about the - I think it's called the S-400 Air Defense System that Russia is

saying it will provide to Iran?

KURILLA: we have not seen the S-400 be provided to Iran. But Iran also produces a very capable

indigenous air defense systems as well.

LAMBORN: Thank you. And Dr. Wallander, do you have anything to add to what General Kurilla just said?

WALLANDER: I just want to, especially note the importance of the work of CENTCOM in creating regional constructs for integrating and improving the capabilities of partners in the region to push back, and defend against the growing threat of Iran.

LAMBORN: Thank you. And lastly, General Kurilla, there are numerous efforts underway in Congress this year to enhance U.S. and Israeli collaboration on future warfare technologies. I have a lengthy amendment in the NNDA on this, for instance. This would include working together on directed energy, quantum computing, artificial intelligence, missile defense, space, and other cutting edge programs.

Do you support efforts to provide Israel with additional capabilities to ensure that it can effectively respond to enhanced Iranian threats that we've been already talking about?

KURILLA: Thank you, Congressman. We are committed to the defense of Israel. We work very, very closely with them in lot of their new technologies. I have been to the country multiple times and looked at everything from their ballistic missile defense, their counter UAS, and a lot of their advanced technologies like their Iron Beam that they're coming out with. And we also are coming out with our own directed energy systems as well.

LAMBORN: Excellent. And Dr. Wallander, anything to add to that?

WALLANDER: You know, the United States has an ironclad commitment to the defense of Israel, and its manifested most recently in the extraordinarily successful exercise, Juniper Oak, which exercised and demonstrated the level of interoperability, and capability and the ability of the United States, CENTCOM in particular, to surge that capability and work closely with Israel to exercise and also demonstrate that capability.

LAMBORN: Very good. Thank you all for being here. I now recognize, Representative Courtney for five minutes.

COURTNEY: Thank you, Mr. Lamborn. Thank you to the witnesses for being here today. General Langley, it was striking to me in your testimony, sort of where you contrasted sort of Russia's entry into - particularly countries like the Central African Republic, using basically the Wagner group as the sort of enticement to get into that country and other countries like it. Whereas, China is using more of an economic investment sort of approach in terms of trying to again ingratiate itself to these countries, as well. So going back to the Wagner group, sort of, enterprise. Can you just sort of describe what is Wagner group in Russia get out of that? Are, are they getting sort of - and there's been reporting that they basically get paid or reimbursed or compensated by gold, diamonds, other materials and minerals that obviously are valuable?

LANGLEY: Congressman, absolutely. Wagner has ill intentions. They're destabilizing activity. They have a history of it along the continent. And then, as we can see in the Central African Republic, and there are no good stories in their entrenchment in Libya as well and now, Mali. I'm concerned about that. That's a layered threat, that we're really concerned that they are the vanguard of the Russian Federation, because they have a thinly veiled that false value proposition that says we're going to provide security for you, especially nations that have been affected by a coup. That's what happened in Mali. And, then they come up their invoice. And where's only security they actually provide is the bubble around the elite or those that were - that initiated the coup in the first place. And there's also a roadmap to rare Earth minerals or diamonds or gold. There's all - Benni (ph) Prigozhin is all about power for profit. What we're doing, Congressmen is, initiating a campaign plan with our OAs across the whole government approach to suppress this. And I can get more specific on what we're doing in the closed session.

COURTNEY: And again, China's approach is, again, using its sort of economic

muscle to - again -

and I think it was described. I mean, it's a bait and switch, you know, type of plan. But so, four days ago, five days ago, there was, an incident in the Central African Republic where nine Chinese nationals were gunned down in brought daylight at a goldmine.

Again, the initial claim by the government was that it was rebel forces that were responsible for that mass shooting. Last night there was actually reporting that eyewitnesses described that the perpetrators

were actually Wagner group which is kind of an interesting colliding autocracies playing itself out in that continent.

Xi Jinping actually stopped - interrupted the summit he had a few days ago with Putin to condemn this

shooting and, you know, promise that there would be a full investigation to get to the bottom of it.

But I, again, it was kind of a - you know, it's hard to get your head around the way that, you know,

again, these two exploitative autocracies are now basically, almost like scorpions in a bottle where their

approach to this part of the world is now even possibly creating, you know, conflict amongst themselves.

So you know, Dr. Wallander, I don't know if you want to comment on that. That, you know, that actually

going back to Mr. Smith's comments is maybe an opportunity for us to really show that, you know, neither

one of these players are really going to create stability or prosperity in this part of the world. And, and

there's a better way to proceed.

WALLANDER: Thank you, Congressman. Yes. we are very clear with partners in - particularly in West

Africa, in - at the evidence that Wagner brings not security instability for their countries, but in fact is an

entry point for economic exploitation, for instability, actually extraordinary and horrifying assaults on

civilians in these countries. Because what Wagner offers is regime security, not national security to these

countries.

I would say on this China-Russia issue, that is a interesting incident and we'll have to track it more

closely. I am more struck by the consonants in the alignment of strategic interests at the, at the level of Xi and Putin. And that's the real challenge we have going forward. That they share an interest in undermining global security and the rules-based international order and use one another to advance their national goals. But often those goals are very complimentary.

COURTNEY: I yield back.

ROGERS: Thank the gentleman. Chair, now recognize gentlemen from Virginia, Mr. Wittman for five minutes.

WITTMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Dr. Wallander, General Kurilla, General Langley, thank you all so much for joining us. General Kurilla, General Langley, I want to begin with you. If we look at where we are today as necessarily focused on this era of great power competition with China in Russia. I believe that potentially opens up a door for an opportunity for a black swan event. And my question is, based on your testimony, General Kurilla beginning with you, where you set a flashpoint with Iran, a crisis in the region of successful large scale attack on a partner country or an attack on the homeland by a VEO would necessarily redirect resources away from Central Command - or, excuse me, away from other areas to Central Command, I think that's meaningful. General Langley, you said, an underinvestment in African security raises a risk of an unexpected crisis that would abruptly strip us resources away from our top national security challenges in that arena of great power competition. Gentlemen, in your professional military judgment, do you assess that the shift in great power competition and resources and focus by the United States increases the risk of a black swan event?

And do you believe, though, that our military building capability to address great power competition in any way would deter a black swan event? And thirdly, do you believe that efforts by either Russia or China are adding to the potential of any actors out there that may be interested in perpetrating a black swan event?

KURILLA: Congressman, thanks for that question. An interesting question. So when I

took Command

in the first month - at the end of the first month, we had a commander's conference, and one of it - we had

to come up with - each group had to come up with two black swan events that they could see happening.

We had 12 of them.

At the end of this, we briefed them all. We found that 11 of the 12 were actually highly likely or were at

least probable that could occur, by definition, they're no longer a black swan event.

But I think to your

question about preparing for strategic or doing strategic competition, does that take away from not being

able to see a black swan event? I don't think so.

Because I think when you are preparing and you're doing strategic competition, you were increasing

the capability of your military force and that includes the intelligence gathering apparatus. And I think

anything, it helps us be able to see some of those things that we might not otherwise be able to see.

WITTMAN: Very good. General Langley?

LANGLEY: Congressman, the NDS, or National Defense Strategy tells me to specified and implied to

monitor and respond. I need to be able to identify indications and warnings. My capability in a posture

limited and economy of force command is a decrement of our ISR capabilities. That is the foundational

piece that I need.

And as also on my unfunded priority list of being able to bolster that capability, so I can see those

black swans, so I can provide indications and warnings, and so we can reposition assets. Or I go to my

colleague General Kurilla to have - to assist and we can aggregate some of our forces to do that. But at

this point now, that's what pressurizes our efforts of exploitation. It's a layered threat here.

So, yes, answer to your last question, any exploitation by the violent extremist organization? I say,

yes, that's why I need increased ISR to address all of those issues.

WITTMAN: Very good. Thank you. Gentlemen, let me ask too, you, you laid out that you have

assessed this particular situation, those risks. In your assessment, where do you

believe the greatest risk exists? And General Langley, you talk about maybe needing more ISR to be able to even further define that risk.

But from both your professional judgements about what you see today, what's the greatest risk and what do you have currently that you're using to mitigate that risk? And what might you need in order to do everything possible to make sure that we deter those actors that may be wanting to perpetrate black swan event?

KURILLA: Congressman for us, our greatest risk is with Iran right now. That is why it is our number

one priority to deter them. And then I would tell you it's the violent extremist organizations that we are seeing, the ISIS-Khorasan group in Afghanistan.

And what we're doing is we're applying our resources to both of those efforts. We look at - also

through our partners to be the regional constructs to deter Iran. And again, it's increasing our capability and intelligence inside of Afghanistan.

WITTMAN: Very Good. General Langley

LANGLEY: Congressman, again, on African continent is a layered risk. It's a layered threat. So my

first and immediate, as I engage with our partners, because it is going to be partner-led U.S.-enabled, it is

violent extremist organizations and how do we address that? So that segues into how we address that

through our programs and our portfolios of Security Force Assistance.

As we look at 333, Title 10 to train and equip or build institutional capacity in 332, that's what we need

to address this. But we do have a pacing threat, and we do have that immediate, threat as well. And that's

where it's going to be a whole of government approach. Collectively, all the OAs coming together and

putting together a value proposition to our African partners to deter them becoming the partner of choice.

WITTMAN: Very Good. Thank you to our witness. Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

ROGERS: I thank the gentlemen. Chair, now recognize Mr. Garamendi from California.

GARAMENDI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Secretary Wallander, General Kurilla, and,

General Langley,

thank you very much for the testimony today and the - and your insight into the issues. I'd like to focus on

Africa here and specifically, General Langley and Dr. Wallander, you mentioned the whole of government.

It's rather obvious that it's not within our current military capability to deal with all of Africa.

So, Dr. Wallander, if you could talk to us about what you see the State Department, USAID and U.S.

private investment could and should be doing in Africa to address the problems that have been discussed here.

WALLANDER: Thank you, Congressman. it's an excellent question and I would point to as a, a

signature element of that whole of government approach, including the private sector, the African Leader

Summit, that was so successful in December of last year.

There were elements of that summit that were focused on defense and security, on diplomacy on

development, and there was a significant private sector involvement in the discussions about how to

advance, security, stability and prosperity in Africa.

The Department of Defense works closely with USAID to support their programs when they need

assistance and when they need AFRICOM support. And we work very closely with the Department of

State in advancing governance, rule of law, institution building.

When we talk about security assistance, a lot of our security assistance is focused not merely on train

and equip, but also on building civil military relations, resilience and capacity of our partner government

so that they have that strong governance structure to be able to advance policies for their countries

across the board.

GARAMENDI: Thank you. General Langley, same subject area.

LANGLEY: Thanks for the question, Congressman. Because, the whole of government in

conceptually will work, can work. We need to address some issues. As I look at USAID and talked to

some of the administrators over there and even administrative power, says that their non-humanitarian

efforts to put the full throws or horsepower into the whole of government approach.

Most of that funding is earmarked. So they can't do in-stride adjudication, they can't do in-stride

relocation, I should say, to the problems, brought to bear in some of the African countries, whether it be

famine relief or any other thing of development across their governance.

These African partners say that, holistically, the enduring solution to violent extremist organizations is

good governance. To bolster the capacity in their governance USAID and State Department need flexible

funding to address these current near term issues.

And just one point as far as the military perspective, we add to that within our 333 programs, and we

just want that to be more responsive as well.

GARAMENDI: 333 explain, please,

LANGLEY: I'm sorry. That's our - the 333, Title 10 authorities is authority that I have as they - as these

African countries are embarking upon the violent extremist organization fight, they need training and they

need assistance within that. The 332 builds ministerial capacity so they can have - so they can embark

upon the whole of government approach to address these issues.

GARAMENDI: I would, note that the Peace Corps is return into Africa, at least I'm pleased about that.

I want to deal with the violent extreme organizations, the relationship between the U.S. military and

French in Mali and other Sahel areas. If General Langley and Dr. Wallander, if you could speak to that

issue, and where the French are and where they're not and where we are and where we're not?

LANGLEY: Yes. I - Congressman, I talk to the French weekly. And as their President came out with a

new strategy, more of advice and assist and institution across, they're just moving some of piece on the

chessboard. We still have the same strategy that's in line with each other to be able to help and enable

partner led, but U.S. enabled, to be able to ensure that they achieve their objectives.

So I work with the

French all the time and our operational plans and campaigning are in line.

GARAMENDI: I'll yield back. Thank you very much.

ROGERS: Thank the gentleman. Chair now recognize gentlemen from Georgia, Mr. Scott for five

minutes.

SCOTT: Thank you, chairman. I - the Air Force is moving assets from UCOM to INDOPACOM, and it just seems kind of strange that we would be moving those assets right now with everything going on in the Ukraine. Do you - do both of you have a need for additional air assets or do you have the air assets that you currently need in CENTCOM and in AFRICOM?

KURILLA: I have a requirement for additional air assets, Congressman.

SCOTT: Do you need A-10s in CENTCOM?

KURILLA: We have been given A-10s or have been approved to come to CENTCOM.

SCOTT: OK. Are you being given what you've requested or are you being shorted on your request?

KURILLA: So we have - you know, four of the five NDS priorities are in the CENTCOM area. Every day I'm looking at the missions I have, the resources I've been allocated, and I'm dynamically balancing risk against those. In a closed session, I can talk about specifically what some of those shortcomings are.

SCOTT: OK. General Langley, thank you for your help when, Congressman Panetta and I got to go to a couple of countries in Africa. We couldn't have done it without your assistance. The thing that sticks in my mind on that trip is, Wagner and how effective they have been with social media. It's open source that the French ISR picked up mass graves where Wagner had killed a lot of people.

By the time it made it to the public what had happened, Wagner had already hijacked the pictures and

convinced the public that it was the French that had carried out the atrocities.

I'm concerned about the speed at which we are handling unconventional warfare and how we're able

to increase our pace to deal with what I consider to be a terrorist organization like Wagner. What

discussions are happening about how we increase the pace of our unconventional warfare to compete

with Wagner and others who don't have to operate by the rules?

LANGLEY: Congressman, thanks for that question, because that's one of my concerns. We need to

be able to operate at the speed of relevance. And as we concerned in the military, as you well know, the

OODA loop, to be able to observe, orient, decide, and act. And once Wagner does something like that,

through our military information support operations, we need to be able to go at that cadence, faster

cadence that interdicts their illicit activities, especially their malign information activities.

So we're working whole government as well. State Department does have some programs in place as

well to deter the ill effects of the information spate that Wagner is espousing.

SCOTT: I mean, speed is the key to it. Once people have already made up their mind then it's hard to

unmake it, especially in those countries, and I'm very concerned. And we've met with the current

leadership of Chad and some other countries about what is happening with the French. And there seems

to be, an attitude might not be the right word, but kind of the belief that if they kicked the French out of the

country, that the U.S. is going to build an enduring mission. But it was the French Mirages that saved us

in Tongo Tongo. My assessment is we would've lost everybody in Tongo Tongo had the French not had

Mirages. Is that yours as well?

LANGLEY: Congressman, I've read the Tongo Tongo report. And as every time we come around to

matching capabilities, and readiness assessment, we ask for more vertical lift. And we thank, this

Congress for the War Fighting Recovery Network. We bolster that. But I'm still going to be asking for

more as we look at our repost and as we're starting to expand our activities to address the violent

extremist organization going into the Gulf of Guinea states as well. So that's going to be comparable to

what I asked for in this, coming budget over.

SCOTT: OK. I appreciate both of you. I'll have more questions, when we get to the other meeting. I

look forward to coming back to Africa this year, General Langley and seeing you over there again. Thank

you. Thank you, Dr. Wallander. Sorry I didn't have any questions.

ROGERS: Chair now recognize Ms. Houlahan for five minutes.

HOULAHAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you all for being here today. General Kurilla, thank you as

well for, your testimony. And I was really excited to hear about CENTCOM's Innovation Oasis

competition. And I think that you probably do think as well that some of the best ideas for innovation and

best practices come from people who are on the front lines rather than not necessarily the leadership.

So I was hoping you might be able to share a little bit more about the genesis of that idea. Are there

any projects in particular that have come from that idea? And is there anything further that we can do

here in Congress to be supportive of that initiative?

KURILLA: Thanks, Congresswoman. So Innovation Oasis is our Shark Tank like idea where what we

do is, we find some of the best ideas are trapped inside of a hangar, on a ship, in a cubicle or down in a

squad and we use it as a way to elevate those ideas and then use the resources at CENTCOM to then

promote those ideas. And we've received a lot of really good ideas.

One of them was a counter UAS trainer. We had a bunch of proprietary systems out of there, and we

created one in - one of our sergeants in E-5 from the Massachusetts National Guard programmed it

himself on the weekends and came up with a counter UAS trainer that we're able to use. And we're in the

process of trying to advance that idea, putting the resources and energy of CENTCOM behind it.

We have another one coming up in the end of May from each of the different components within

CENTCOM. They'll pick their best person and send them up. And it's a chance really to elevate, great

ideas that are otherwise trapped inside a squad or a ship, et cetera. You know, it was Staff Sergeant

Cahill from the New Jersey National Guard who figured out a way to break through the hedgerows at

France - a staff sergeant figured that out.

HOULAHAN: And is there any kind of way that you guys are tracking those successes and - so that

we can kind of continue to elevate them and encourage that sort of, innovative thinking in a - what is

otherwise sort of stodgy kind of an organization? I say that as a former Air Force person myself.

KURILLA: Ma'am, we do have a open portal website where people submit their ideas and people can see those.

HOULAHAN: Excellent. Thank you. And General Langley as well, thank you for being here today.

U.S. Africa Command is a relatively new Combatant Command, and it was designed from the start to lead with diplomacy, with development and defense in a supporting role. And that's a fascinating, until this last

Congress I was able to serve both on the armed services and the Foreign Affairs Committee, which I really enjoyed that kind of combination of defense as well as diplomacy. So as part of the Combatant Commander - in part - part Combatant Commander and part diplomat, how can you balance those roles? How are you able to balance those roles as you're working with the Department of State or USAID to offer a whole of government support for our African partners? How are you finding that?

LANGLEY: Congresswoman, thanks for asking that question. Because, yes, on my engagements on the continent, in these countries, they know that their solution to their immediate threats is violent extremist organizations, and they know that they need to create a holistic approach and their whole of government approach.

So I always engage with assistant secretaries over at state or administrators over at USAID to ensure that we can build that capacity. And they ask me to advocate for their need for more flexible funding or increased funding in the number of programs.

But also on the back of that, Prosper Africa, these are initiatives that this conference - this Congress has legislated. We need to get after that, especially, GFA, you know, formally - well actually now known as, Prevent Conflict, Promote Stability. So holistically, that's what I have in discussions with the leadership of the countries that I engage with. Being able to add more to that, and more capacity to those programs, full funding will be helpful.

HOULAHAN: If you would let us know if there are any further authorities or help and support that we can provide to allow that to be easier for you, that would be terrific. And with the last minute of my time, I

wanted to talk a little bit about the threat posed by infectious diseases. I had a chance to go on a bicameral delegation with Senator Coons and Senator Portman this past summer, and particularly struck by the Kibera slums that I was able to visit and how dangerous an outbreak in those slums could be. Or frankly, a rural outbreak as well that is a zoonotic one. Can you all speak a little bit more in half a minute about what CENTCOM is doing on this issue and what we think we should be doing, or how Congress can be more helpful on that,

KURILLA: Congresswoman, I think it's by working with our partners on this to make sure that we

identify the threat and we are working with them as they help identify the needs.

LANGLEY: I concur what Eric is saying. We bring this up with our partners and have that discussion.

And it's going to be a partner led on these initiatives. But we will enable.

HOULAHAN: Thank you. I've run out of time and I yield back, Mr. Chair.

ROGERS: Thank the general lady. Chair now I recognize gentleman from Tennessee, Dr. DesJarlais.

DESJARLAIS: Thank you Chairman, and thank you panel for being here today. I'm going to start with, General Kurilla and Dr. Wallander. As mentioned earlier in today's hearings, the - over the last few years, Iran and its proxies across the region have escalated their use of projectiles, particularly, drones to attack U.S. forces and U.S. allies.

Can you give us an idea of how we are defending ourselves against these threats? And what does the data show about the performance of Counter UAS systems deployed in the region?

KURILLA: Thanks, Congressman. So what we do see is advanced capabilities that Iran is using. I do thank the services providing the counter UAS capabilities that we do have in the region. It's a layered defense. No one system is effective against all. And so what we do is we look at the performance of the systems and look at ways to help improve them.

We just finished a, counter UAS experimentation of live fire down in Saudi Arabia at our Red Sands

Integrated Experimentation Center that we have down there. We finished that last week against complex threats to identify weaknesses in other areas that we can improve in the tactics,

techniques, and
procedures of those counter UAS systems.

DESJARLAIS: Can you share any numbers on performance, percentage wise of how we're doing against those assets?

KURILLA: I would have to take that for the record to give you the exact performance parameters.

DESJARLAIS: OK. Dr. Wallander, did you have anything to add?

WALLANDER: I would just emphasize in addition to the partnerships with countries in the region that the focus of CENTCOM and also policy and support has been to emphasize the opportunities for integrated approaches where regional partners, especially in the Gulf, can work together to more comprehensively address the threats that you identified.

DESJARLAIS: OK. And, we also talked earlier about the Iran nuclear deal. And Dr. Wallander, does it remain, the policy of the United States to ensure that Iran will never acquire or develop a nuclear weapon?

WALLANDER: Yes. Congressman, President Biden has made that clear.

DESJARLAIS: OK. You know, given the strides that the Iranian nuclear program has made, I'm not sure we should be confident that we won't be witnessing a rise of nuclear Iran in the near future. So how do you assess CENTCOM's ability to respond to an Iranian nuclear breakout?

KURILLA: Again, Congressman, I'll be happy to talk about the Iranian nuclear program in a closed session.

DESJARLAIS: OK. Fair enough. There's probably no bigger threat to one of our greatest allies, Israel, than the Iranian nuclear program. Do you believe that if it became necessary, the IDF has the capabilities today to defend themselves against the rising threat of nuclear Iran?

KURILLA: I think Israel has the capability to defend itself against ballistic missiles. I think any discussion, other than that on a nuclear program is best in closed session, Congressman.

DESJARLAIS: OK. Do we have contingency plans being prepared to defend U.S. personnel and asset in CENTCOM's AOR against Iranian retaliation in the event of Israel's strike on Iran's nuclear

program,

KURILLA: Congressman, we're always prepared to defend our forces that are in the region.

DESJARLAIS: OK. Just one final question. Shifting, to what impact the Ukraine war has had on

Russia's posture in the Middle East. For instance, have we seen a reduced, footprint in Syria?

KURILLA: A very small reduction in the footprint. We've seen some reduction in terms of munitions,

but for the most part they've maintained their force posture, because it's very important to them. It shows

the importance that they place on Syria. And you saw that Assad just went to Moscow, and he welcomed

a permanent Russian base in the region.

DESJARLAIS: And we continue to observe Iran and its proxy shipping weapons to Russia for use

against Ukraine. General, if you see such a shipment, say Iranian drones headed to Russia through your

AOR, do you have the authority to interdict these shipments?

KURILLA: We have the authority to stop things that we can see inside of certain countries. But I think

that's best in a closed session, Congressman.

DESJARLAIS: OK. And I'll save a few more questions for the closed setting. Thank you all for being

here. I yield back,

ROGERS: Thank the gentlemen. Chair, now recognize the gentleman from Massachusetts, Mr.

Moulton for five minutes.

MOULTON: Mr. Chairman, thank you very much and thank you all for, for being here. I think it is

incredibly important that we don't take our eye off the ball in the Middle East, even as we rightly focus on

the rising threat of China and the necessary deterrence initiatives in the Pacific.

Dr. Wallander back to this deal, that the PRC was able to broker between Iran and Saudi Arabia, what

do you think that this could mean for the region in the medium term? And what lessons should we learn

from it with respect to how we compete with China outside the Indo-Pacific region?

WALLANDER: So, thank you, Congressman. I want to emphasize two points about the, what looks

like a deal. As General Kurilla pointed out, it's an agreement. We'll see about

implementation. One is that these were quiet talks that Saudi - the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Iran were having for some time about reestablishing embassies, exchanging diplomats. So China came in on the backend, played a role, but this was something that was in the works for a while. Second of all, if, if this contributes to greater security and stabilization in the region, if this does - and again, we're waiting to see lead to end to Iranian provision of capabilities and fueling of the conflict in Yemen and the threat that that is posed to other Gulf countries, that would be a welcome development. So we are in a watch and wait posture. But I also want to emphasize, we are concerned about China's increased activity in the diplomatic front to present itself as a problem solver. And we will make clear to our partners, such as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, with which we have broad, deep, longstanding security, economic and political ties, that we are a strategic partner of choice. And just because China came in at the end here and maybe helped seal a deal, does not mean that the reliability and the longstanding partnership between the United States and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is something to discount.

MOULTON: So you're saying that China swooped in here at the last minute and took credit for the whole deal, which I think is something that we're all quite familiar with in the realm of politics and world affairs. If we get wind of the Chinese about to do something similar with perhaps another country in the Middle East and Iran, would it be wise for us to be the ones who swoop in and seal the deal, as you said,

WALLANDER: We remain closely engaged with all of our partners in the region and are attuned to their security concerns, support their diplomatic efforts that are consistent with international law and advanced stabilization and security. So we need to be forward-leaning, as you're suggesting, in working with our partners in the region so that they know the United States have their best interest at heart and they can count on us.

MOULTON: So if that's what we should do in the future, why didn't we do it in this case?

WALLANDER: We have a close relationship with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. And, I can't speak to

the details of diplomatic discussions between countries that we were not privy to.

MOULTON: OK. Well, I hope we go into this more into the classified session, because if we knew this

was happening, I don't know why we wouldn't be the ones to get diplomatic credit here, especially when

the alternative choice is the PRC.

General Kurilla, we're tracking that in Syria, Russian military forces have been behaving

unprofessionally towards U.S. forces and have repeatedly harassed our troops with low-flying aircraft.

Could you please describe Russia's behavior in Syria towards our troops and how that has changed over

the course of the conflict in Ukraine?

KURILLA: Thanks Congressmen. So what we see is their behavior is unprofessional and unsafe.

Since 1 March, it's the highest number of tactical air flights over U.S. forces in areas. Since the beginning

of the conflict Russia was in the AOR. Really starting on 1 March, it's - when I talk tactical flights that is

fighter aircraft or air to ground aircraft flying over our area.

We always have our own fighters, we'll intercept them. So we always have the ability to protect

ourselves. But really we are there for the ISIS. They are under the guise of being there under the ISIS.

We do not see them doing a defeat ISIS role. When they're doing that, it's unnecessary, unsafe and

unprofessional.

MOULTON: Dr. Wallander, do you think there's an escalation risk here?

WALLANDER: There's always a risk when Russian forces are behaving unprofessionally. And making

sure to maintain American presence and appropriate responses is something we count upon from our

military commanders. But escalation management is something that we know that they are mindful of as

well.

MOULTON: Well, my time is up. But I would just say that if there's always a risk when Russian

soldiers are behaving unprofessionally, it also seems that Russian soldiers always behave

unprofessionally. And so we really have to manage this risk. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

ROGERS: Thank you, gentlemen. Chair, now recognize gentlemen from Mississippi, General Kelly for five minutes.

KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And my first question is for you, General Langley. And have you seen a shift in the Wagner forces available in Africa with the shift to Ukraine, or has it pretty much stayed consistent since they got more deeply involved in Ukraine?

LANGLEY: Congressman, that's a great question. I have not seen a shift, but here's what my analysis would tell me, though, that they wouldn't have - what you have on the African continent is a false value proposition of security. So I don't think they're going to have their experts on the continent of Africa for that purpose. They're going to have the businessmen that are trying to make their way to the mines for profit.

KELLY: And, and I'm going to follow-up on, on Seth Moulton's, because I agree with him. We need to be forward leaning in diplomacy. And right now, the partner of choice around the world, whether that's South America or CENTCOM or AFRICOM, is the United States military. However, our State Department sometimes make that very, very difficult. So we have Jackson-Vanik and a lot of things that we punish people wholly when we see their policies don't align with U.S. policies. And that's not a bad thing. There's a purpose for that. But do you guys see any way that we can do that on a sliding scale, on a reward punishment basis as opposed to a wholesale, you acted bad, so therefore we're not going to do IMEP (ph) with your country anymore. We're not going to provide U.S. aid to your country anymore. We're not going to do anything. We completely cut them out and create a vacuum in those countries where they have to choose China or Russia, because we're not available because of our State Department. And I use a prime example. I visited five countries in Africa last July - may or July, somewhere around

that timeframe. And I went to Tunisia, Burkina Faso, Chad, Ethiopia, and Djibouti. And in all those, we had State Department restrictions that were preventing us from being effective as a military as we can.

What is the solution to this so that we can build those future leaders in those countries, instead of just saying, no, we can do an incentive based program, as opposed to just saying no. Any ideas?

LANGLEY: Congressman, the 7008 sanctions on that country by restrictions for me. I have to look at the whole government approach. For example, Burkina Faso, 7008 was imposed. But I had to thank you for - I just really want to thank you for the language within the 8823 that says, notwithstanding authorities.

There is still some notwithstanding authorities.

And that's why at Flintlock we had last week major exercise in West Africa, Burkinamis (ph) were there. They were there. So until they - this a message to them that they need to set the stage to return back to democratic norms. But across the whole government, I met with State Department last week, so they also have some, some activities and investments that they can do to be able to employ in Ouagadougou, because Ambassador Clark, she's looking for what CT mechanism that we can do to still engage with Burkina Faso so they can embark upon the fight against violent extremist organization.

KELLY: Thank you. Let me, kind of get it. I need - I got one more question. But I think you're 100 percent right and I just think we really have to work this problem set because there's a lot of opportunities that we are missing and we're giving opportunities to our competitors by not using a reward system to modify behavior to our culture.

The final thing, and, General Kurilla, you've done an outstanding job than your predecessors. The state partnership programs, and we need to get stronger in Africa General Langley, but you've done an outstanding job of using that resource, which is a low resourced, dollar wise programs, which can be very, very effective.

But it also takes, at your levels engaging with those state partnership and generals to make sure that their priorities align with your priorities in those countries that they represent. And so I think there's a lot of opportunity, and just if you can comment on those.

KURILLA: Congressman, thanks. If I could just back up one on the IMEP program. I think that's the highest return on investment for every dollar we spend. Because I'll tell you in the CENTCOM region, many of our chiefs of defense went to school at our military school of professional military education back in the states.

I thank you for what Mississippi does with Uzbekistan. I think we do have great alignment and the return on investment we get from our state partnership program is significant. And it's one of the highest requested things from a lot of our countries in the region.

ROGERS: I thank the gentleman. Chair now recognizes gentlelady from New Jersey, Ms. Sherrill for five minutes.

SHERRILL: Thank you. And thank you all for being here today and for all of your service to our country, not just now, but over many years. As you may know, Picatinny Arsenal in my district does a lot of work on our supply chain, especially with some of the minerals that we need in our supply chain.

And so General Langley, as you know, the African continent is full of rare earth mineral deposits, and I'm wondering what you're doing in that area to increase the stability of our supply chains, especially with the incursions of China into the African continent and the relationships they have there?

Is there an ability for us to stabilize our partnerships there to better protect our supply chains? Or do we really need to be thinking about moving our supply chains out of rare earth minerals coming from Africa?

LANGLEY: Congresswoman, that's a great question, because here's another opportunity for me to illuminate the illicit activities and the shady deals that the PRC is starting to embark upon with some of

our partners. Just illuminate, amplify their activities and we do that through the whole government

approach and through these country teams to give the cautionary tales.

Because as we look at these rare Earth minerals, we do know that that's - some of those rare Earth

materials are - from military sense, we will go into our future weapons, or high tech weapons. But in the

holistic sense as for the society it's - a lot of these are clear - clean energy type necessary items they will

need to be able to be harvested for that particular capability. So just engaging with our partners, given the

cautionary tale in the information space of that the negative effects in the long run.

SHERRILL: Thank you. And then also with - back to Picatinny Arsenal, we have the Joint Center of

Excellence for Guns and Ammunition. And we're working on a new gun based counter to small,

unmanned aircraft systems. I know there are different ways we are approaching unmanned systems. But

General Kurilla, how would a gun based system, which would potentially be cheaper and easier for

partners especially to train on, be beneficial to supporting your organization's efforts to combat threats to

our allies in the region?

KURILLA: Congresswoman. So counter UAS systems, it's a layered defense.

Generally the gun type

systems, and we have them employed right now with our counter rocket mortar systems. A lot of our

partners use a gun type system. Ukraine uses gun type systems. It's generally the last line of defense,

just based on the range of the munitions of the guns that they use. We're using the rockets or - sorry, a

missile that would go out and then do the interception or electronic warfare. But there is a there is a need

for a gun type system as part of a layered defense.

SHERRILL: Thank you. And General Kurilla as well, during the last year's CENTCOM posture

hearing, I discussed with your predecessor my concerns about the 2019 bombing in Baghuz, Syria, which

led to the deaths of over 60 civilians. The FY '23 NDAA authorized \$25 million towards operationalizing

Secretary Austin Civilian Harm Mitigation and Response Action Plan.

Can you elaborate on what your team is doing to fully support the harm mitigation

plan and what

actions you've taken to eliminate civilian casualties in the AOR?

KURILLA: So ma'am, we were involved in the civilian harm mitigation process in that and the

implementation. And so what it's done, we're in the process of implementing now.

There will be a center

of excellence at OSD. And then we have been authorized individuals both at the CENTCOM

headquarters and each of our components to hire experts on that.

SHERRILL: And do you need additional resources for that mission?

KURILLA: I think those resources that were provided with that is what's going to help us in our ability

to authorization to hire those individuals.

SHERRILL: Thank you. And I yield back

SCOTT: Chair recognizes, General Bacon for five minutes.

BACON: Thank you, Mr. Scott. Thank you Dr. Wallander, General Kurilla, General Langley for being

here. Most of my questions are with the CENTCOM AOR. General Kurilla, is it true that we have - with

this recent report that we have 7.1 billion in weapons that were left behind in Afghanistan when we withdrew?

KURILLA: Congressman, I have seen the list of items. It is exhaustive. I can't give you the exact

amount, but I do know that 7 billion is a number that I've seen out there.

BACON: Are there particular weapons that you're most concerned with falling in the hands of the

Taliban or ISIS or Al-Qaeda?

KURILLA: I think there is a wide variety of munitions that would be concerned that would be used

outside of the country by individuals if they got their hands on them.

BACON: Now, 7 billion in weapons, is a grave concern to many of us here. A second line of

questioning. How often are you under attack from Iran with the unmanned aerial vehicles? Is it weekly,

monthly? Can you give you, give us a feel for how often you're being attacked?

KURILLA: It is periodic. We see periods where they'll do more. There has been a number - since, 1

January, 2021, the number is about 78 times that we have been attacked/

BACON: 78 times we've been attacked. Are these UAVs flying out of Iran striking us, or are they

being used by militias?

KURILLA: Controlled by Iran. So what Iran does to hide its hand is they use Iranian proxies. That's

either UAVs or rockets to be able to attack our forces in either Iraq or Syria.

BACON: Are these considered acts of war by Iran?

KURILLA: They are being done by the Iranian proxies, is what I would tell you, Congressman,

BACON: Do we have the right level of investment and fielding for counter UAV? I know we, you talked

a little bit about it, but just are we - should we be doing more or are we about right?

KURILLA: We are doing more right now in terms of getting additional capability to the field. We'll be

bringing some directed energy systems online. You know, everything is a layered defense. I think when

we bring some new capabilities online, you want to be able to then test these systems and make sure

they have the right probability of kill, based on different systems and the techniques that the enemy is

using to be able to attack you.

So I think this will be an area we'll continue to invest in. I know that there's other organizations like

SOCOM that are doing some to bring additional capability to it. But all of it is part of a layered defense.

BACON: Well, thank you General Kurilla. I appreciate your inputs there. The number 78, to me, that's

a big number and we should be focusing more on that, that Iran's doing this. Dr. Wallander is the Iranian,

Saudi Arabian reproachment a positive or a negative thing when it comes to United States national security interests?

WALLANDER: Congressman, if it contributes to security and stability in the region, if it contributes to

an end, to Iran's provision of military capabilities to the Houthi regime in Yemen, if it contributes to an end

to the offensive attack from Yemen to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, it would be a positive development.

But if is the important word and we will have to monitor that closely.

BACON: And I believe that's a very valid point with the effects on Yemen. But does this take some

pressure off Iran on its nuclear program?

WALLANDER: Congressman, we do not see any signs that any of the countries in the region, our

partners in the region are complacent about the dangers that an Iranian nuclear weapons capability would

pose to their very direct security. So I do not believe so.

BACON: Is there a potential for the Abraham Accords expanding to other countries?

Are we seeing a

potential there?

WALLANDER: Congressman, I won't speak for the State of Israel and its relationship - regional

relationships. But I will, say that we know that there are opportunities and there are discussions with other

countries in the region and the United States supports those discussions and would welcome that

development.

BACON: It's one of the best developments we've had, I think in recent years there.

My final question,

I'll go back to General Kurilla. What is the impact, if we turn off the 2002 AUMF?

What's the impact to

you?

KURILLA: Congressman, right now we do not use the 2002 for any of our operational activities.

BACON: Does it have any impact in responding to the Shia militias that have Iran fingerprints on

them?

KURILLA: So right now if there's an Iranian fingerprint on that, we can use the Article II from the

President.

BACON: OK. Thank you very much. I appreciate the concise answers. Mr. Chairman, you'll back.

ROGERS: Chair now recognizes Congressman Carbajal for five minutes.

CARBAJAL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Secretary Wallander, General Kurilla and

General Langley for being here today. I'm nursing at cold, as you can tell. General Kurilla, last year,

Secretary Austin was focused on improving civilian harm mitigation and response.

And last August signed

a Civilian Harm Mitigation and Response Action Plan. How is the implementation of this plan going and

how is it impacting operations in the AOR? Are we seeing positive effects?

KURILLA: Congressman, we were involved in the development of the overall plan and the

implementation aspect. What it will do is create a center of excellence up at the OSD

level, and it has authorized each of the Combatant Commands to have higher experts at the Combatant Command level and each of the components. And we're in the process right now of going through the hiring process to be able to get those experts online and in the headquarters.

CARBAJAL: Thank you. General Langley, I just returned from delegation to Morocco, which was very informative. African nations are increasingly influential in the United Nations and other international forums. There continues to be misunderstanding about the AOR. You've been commander of AFRICOM now for about six months. What are some of the misconceptions you hear about from both American officials and the American public about the AOR? And how can we approach the AOR in a more productive and effective manner?

LANGLEY: Congressman, thanks for that question. Because I wanted to just echo, what - in my visits to Morocco that they want to us to be a partner of choice, but also to talk about how - what capabilities they have to export security. African nations want to solve African problems themselves. They want to own it. They just need us to enable us - enable them in various Title 10 authorities that I have in 333, which is, train and equip. What Morocco is right now, they're a microcosm of what we have in the IMEP program. They bring other African - Sub-Saharan African nations to - on to their ground to be able to train with them. And we have African Lion getting ready to kick off. Exercises like that is sharing of ideas and sharing norms, supporting democratic ideals and also a full-fledged fight against violent extremist organization capability and capacity building.

CARBAJAL: African Lion exercises started in May or June?

LANGLEY: Yes, we just got - we just finished out the second phase. It's going to extend through June.

CARBAJAL: Great. General Langley, violent extremism has been a very difficult problem to address, particularly in the AFRICOM AOR there continues to be an alarming rate in violent

events by militant

Islamic groups, including Al-Shabaab and Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb.

What is the biggest impediment to being able to better address these threats? Do you think the U.S.

needs to amend our strategy in AOR to do so?

LANGLEY: Congressman I'll state that the countries that I've been to, as we see this threat starting to

metastasize West Africa, which I characterize as the tipping point, these countries recognize that. And

they think that the regional players are going to address this issue, regional players like Niger, Ghana and

the ECOWAS initiative, the ECOWAS economic construct are trying to enable some of these countries to

be able to form a regional coalition to address this issue.

They just need help in the various authorities that they have, but what we need is more responsible

authorities so they will go over to Wagner. And so in 333 areas of training acquit in a 332 and building -

capacity. That's what needs to be more responsive, as we collectively work with State Department in this

Congress to be more responsibility more selects Wagner, which is a threat and destabilizing action.

MOULTON: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

SCOTT: Chair recognizes Congressman Gallagher for five minutes.

GALLAGHER: Thank you, General Kurilla. I appreciate your commitment to fostering technological

innovation through taskforce 59, 99 and 39. I think the task force is a very important test of innovative

technologies. But how would you assess the Department of Defense's effectiveness and actually

operationalizing new technological outputs and particularly adopting commercial technology and

integrating it into what you need as warfighter?

KURILLA: So thanks, Congressman, if I could talk about using just 59 as an example. We're using

commercial off the shelf, to be able to increase maritime domain awareness. We are using a lot of

commercial technology that was used for the tuna industry. And that industry, when they don't go out to

find fish, they go out to catch fish.

So we're using a lot of these systems right now, whether that's a sail drone, or an

unmanned surface vessel or an undersea vessel, that can have a lot of wide variety of commercial use, as well, we're operationalizing that and putting it towards this maritime domain awareness, which allows us to more effectively use our manned assets. So a destroyer right now, patrolling in the Red Sea, is the equivalent of one Police car patrolling the state of California. We take these unmanned systems, and we put them out there and they act as indications and warnings and early sensors, to then more effectively use an unmanned system can go up and find anomalies, and look at behaviors that normal is not normal. We run that through structured database, run algorithms against it, and they can say, hey, you need to take a look at this, this is an abnormal behavior, and then more effectively use that manned asset. We've done this, we've also gone to the INDOPACOM and we've gone to EUCOM and shown them this capability, we've exercised with those countries. We just finished an exercise last week, 7000 participants, 42 countries, 35 ships and 30 unmanned systems. That was 42 countries participating in that and if you saw Admiral Gilday, the CNO of the Navy, he was just on 60 minutes like he sees that 40 percent of the Navy in the future is some type of unmanned system. We think we are helping inform that in a way that we can test out in our region as well.

GALLAGHER: So you're taking commercial technology unmanned technology, in this case? You are then using it and adapting it to meet a war fighting need to enhance your maritime Domain Awareness.

What then, OK, having proved the concept in this taskforce, what then are the barriers to scaling that are applying that in other areas from your perspective?

KURILLA: Funding would be one, and I think taking systems that we're using right now and converting them to programs of record, but I really defer to the services on that to what would be the barriers to do that.

GALLAGHER: Have talked a little bit about have allies in the region, allies and

partners in the region

been receptive to this? Have you been able to integrate them in any cases talk about the ally and partner

PCB --?

KURILLA: Well, Congressman, we that is probably the strength of it. So our goal by the end of this

year is to have 100 unmanned surface and subsurface vessels. Right now we're on path we're getting

close to 50. We can see right now our way forward to 85, 75 percent of them through our partners.

We just did an exercise with - randomly did an exercise in the Gulf of up in October, where we took

partners and everybody was able to see the same fee that didn't go with back through NAVSUP. Naval

Command Central it didn't go back to them it went directly to our partner nations.

That's what they find so useful about it. And candidly, it's because it's not foreign Military sales, and

some of the bureaucracy that's associated with that, to be able to get it in the timelines to get it because

you can they can go directly to the vendor and purchase.

GALLAGHER: Thank you for that and quickly, General Langley. I only have a little bit over a minute.

Can you talk a little bit about the threat as you see it proposed by the Chinese Communist Party's

infrastructure investments in the African AOR?

LANGLEY: Yes, Congressman some of the infrastructure and investment such as smart cities have

problems with glossily dual use or infringe upon the privacy of African citizens is large. So there are some

ill intentions by their actions and we cannot, you know, show that, talk to it with our partners, and tell the

cautionary tales.

That some of their infrastructure on the face of it may serve them sort of purposes.

But in the end

through the financing around, it can have some ill effects on their society.

GALLAGHER: I appreciate that. I probably don't have enough time for another question. Maybe just

quickly back to General Kurilla within your AOR going back allies and partners. What do you think is that

the country that doesn't get enough focus or attention, that we need to be paying a little bit closer

attention to?

KURILLA: Congressman, that's a hard question. I mean, I spend about 50 percent of my time in the region. I've been to every country except Iran, Afghanistan and Turkmenistan right now.

GALLAGHER: Interesting. OK, I guess we'll answer another time. It wouldn't be offensive to the other countries that you leave out, but appreciate it.

SCOTT: Chair now recognizes Congresswoman Escobar for five minutes.

ESCOBAR: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and many thanks to our witnesses, for your time today before

our committee, but also, of course, most especially for your service to our country. I represent El Paso,

Texas, home to Fort Bliss, key military installation in our country.

General Kurilla as you've taken command of a command that has seen a very significant redirection of

resources over the last decade, as the United States repositioned focus from the global war on terrorism

to great power competition. You have mentioned in your testimony, the threats in your AOR continue to

evolve in complexity and risk, particularly in air domain.

Can you elaborate on the cooperative efforts between industry and academia that are propelling the

work of Task Force 99? I have long held a particular interest in making sure that we link as closely as

possible to the brilliance within academia to our advantage.

KURILLA: Thank you, Congresswoman. So Task Force 99 that is our air domain innovation task force

one of the things we're working with them is to shorten the kill chains. We're doing a lot of stuff with

artificial intelligence and machine learning, to be able to do dynamic targeting and what we are seeing.

And our goal is by this January from a year ago, to be able to increase 700 percent, or ability to target

dynamic targets in a 24-hour period. Part of that comes from our work on being able to educate our force

on how to use machine learning and artificial intelligence when we look across the entire force.

We look one of them is our digital literacy. So how do we improve the digital literacy of the force? A lot

of our younger generation that comes in they have this but then again, as our leaders are a little older,

they may not have it. So how do we educate them and through academia is one of the methods that we do it.

ESCOBAR: Are there some key opportunities in that area in terms of the education that you see where Congress can be helpful?

KURILLA: I think this we identify these will certainly come to Congress if we need the assistance, but I think we have all the authorities that we need to be able to do that now ma'am.

ESCOBAR: Great, Thank you. Dr. Wallander, General Kurilla, while Russia and the Chinese Communist Party look to metal incent common foster financial dependencies by other countries, the United States has and will continue to provide security assistance and weapons to strategic allies in the region, just as we are currently doing in Ukraine.

However, shortfalls of our domestic industrial base have come to the forefront of conversations, as we look to backfill our own stockpiles for our security and that of our allies. To this point, can you outline some of the broad FMS challenges that affect your ability to maintain commitments to our allied nations?

And what risks do we incur when our domestic industrial base cannot meet those FMS requirements?

And we'll start with Dr. Wallander, please.

WALLANDER: Thank you, Congresswoman, as I believe you are aware, but allow me to besides the department recognizes the challenges in the defense industrial base in providing timely capabilities, for example to Ukraine, backfilling ourselves and allies and fulfilling a lot of this contracts. And Deputy Secretary Hicks is leading a whole of department focus on identifying obstacles and opportunities in relations with the defense industrial base. One of the achievements had been Congress authorizing and allowing us to do multi-year procurement contracts because that's one of the things we have heard from industry.

This is a major focus of the department and we've already seen progress in some areas in procuring ammunition producing and procuring ammunition more quickly, but much remains to be done, including in fulfilling many of those partner contracts.

ESCOBAR: Thank you, General Kurilla?

KURILLA: Congresswoman specifically what specific munitions we see it really on our high end

munitions, our patriots, fad and even the F-16, because we have but the good news there is we just had

our very first F-16. Block 70 comes off the South Carolina line, and that's going to be going to Bahrain.

And we have orders for those for Bahrain and Jordan as well.

ESCOBAR: Great, thank you so much. Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

ROGERS: Chair now recognizes gentleman from Florida, Mr. Gaetz for five minutes.

GAETZ: General Langley, I have constituents that have been scattered across Africa on train and

equip missions so just ballpark in the last decade. How many Africans has the United States Military

trained and equipped?

LANGLEY: A continental has that figure I can get that figure for you.

GAETZ: The ballpark, you know, how many?

LANGLEY: --I would be a while it'd be a wild guess.

GAETZ: --we should know, right?

LANGLEY: Over the years, we have trained a substantial number, especially in the Gulf of Guinea

States, but then include

GAETZ: More than 10,000?

LANGLEY: It is more than more than 10,000.

GAETZ: More than 50,000?

LANGLEY: I say we're reaching around 50,000 at least.

GAETZ: And what percentage of the people we've trained end up participating in insurrections or

coups against their own government?

LANGLEY: Very small number. Congressman, very small numbers.

GAETZ: What percentage do you think?

LANGLEY: I'd say, probably less than 1 percent.

GAETZ: But it does happen?

LANGLEY: The IMA program is in force and we've pushed a number, a significant number through

our schools across the --.

GAETZ: And what data sets do you track to arrive at the conclusion that less than 1 percent of the

roughly 50,000 that we've trained, have participated in coups? Because it'd be about 500, that 1 percent

of 50,000.

LANGLEY: Congressman, we may have information. I don't at this time.

GAETZ: But I know there's some right like in going through up that image. This is Colonel Mamady

Doumbouya, and this is a photo of him. Did we train and equip him? In Guinea?

LANGLEY: By name I cannot identify that.

GAETZ: Well, that guy in the middle with a big red hat. Colonel Mamady Doumbouya, that's him with

a bunch of U.S. service members outside of our embassy and just months after this photo was taken in

2021, he led a coup in Guinea and threw out the leader. Does that concern you?

LANGLEY: Congressman, core values is what we start off with in IMA programs.

GAETZ: Do we share the core values with Colonel Doumbouya?

LANGLEY: Core values, I'll repeat that core values--

GAETZ: Do we do we share those values with Colonel Doumbouya?

LANGLEY: Absolutely, in our curriculum.

GAETZ: He led a coup?

LANGLEY: We do.

GAETZ: OK, well, that's a very telling answer. In Burkina Faso, did we share core values with the

leader that we trained there who led a coup?

LANGLEY: It's in our curriculum. We stress core values.

GAETZ: Leading coups is in our curriculum?

LANGLEY: We request civilian lead governance.

GAETZ: Wait, hold on, hold on, and is leading coups in our curriculum?

LANGLEY: Absolutely not. - lead.

GAETZ: My question is do we share core values with the coup leader in Burkina Faso, who we trained?

LANGLEY: Holistically, we teach hold of your core values with respect for civilian governance, a

political and that's what sticks across a very high percentage in the --.

GAETZ: But not everybody right? But not everybody and I wonder how many people it takes to plan a

coup? I mean, initially, you didn't know how many were trained and equipped. Then you said it was 1

percent. You had no basis for that 1 percent number because there's no data set to track.

Mr. Chairman, I seek unanimous consent to enter into the record. Another U.S. trained stole soldier

stages a coup in West Africa by the intercept.

ROGERS: Without objection, so ordered.

GAETZ: And I further seek unanimous consent to enter into the record, U.S. forces trained Guinean

Colonel behind the recent coup in West African country, and this is regard to Guinea.

ROGERS: Without

objection, so ordered.

GAETZ: So I guess the question is, why should U.S. taxpayers be paying to train people to then lead coups in Africa?

LANGLEY: Congressman, our curriculum harvests core values and also to be able to embolden these countries for a representative democracy.

GAETZ: But General, that democracy isn't what emerges. The problem is I know you may have great confidence in what you're teaching. But when two governments had been overthrown, I guess, how many governments have to be overthrown by people we train before you sort of get the message that our core values might not be sticking with everyone? Is it five countries? Ten?

LANGLEY: We'll continue with our persistence in assuring.

GAETZ: But do you think--

LANGLEY: That they harbor democratic norms, democratic values.

GAETZ: Just a moment ago you said we shared core values with Colonel Doumbouya. You said that

just moments ago, in response to my question, and his core values seems to be leading a coup. So I

don't think it's stuck. I think we should at least know how many countries we train the coup plotters in, how many is too many, because clearly two is not too many and I think we could use our resources far more effectively than doing this.

ROGERS: Gentleman's time has expired. Chair now recognizes gentleman from New York, Mr. Ryan for five minutes.

RYAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you all for being here. In particular, I just want to thank General

Langley, General Kurilla, as we marked the 20th anniversary, essentially, of our tremendous sacrifice in service of all of our service members in Iraq. I know you both spent a significant amount of time there.

And I just want to thank you, as someone who also spent some time there, and thank everyone that

has risked and sacrificed in those conflicts and just appreciate you all. Want to follow up General Kurilla; I really appreciated your focus. And my colleague, Mr. Gallagher, was talking about the innovation

opportunities, just to build on that and follow on that.

And also bring General Langley a little bit into the conversation. I think this is one of the most

important exciting things that you all are doing. Wanted to ask between Tesla 59, 99, 39, and also what

you're both seeing and observing out of Ukraine. You know, our allied forces fighting, innovating, iterating rapidly.

What are we learning there? What are you all observing there that we can carry to the threats and

you're AORs as well as threats and other AORs?

KURILLA: Congressman, thank you for that? I think you nailed it, we are watching what they're doing

there. And again, I think the innovation is because they're in conflict because they're in this operation right

now. That's where we see the most learning and the best ideas coming forward.

You're familiar with the how they are using cell phones to be able to identify drones, and they use the

base to operationalize the populace. Our task force 39, working with a vendor, we have created a very

similar system, but that also uses artificial intelligence.

They apply against it, that we think we can operationalize a lot of the population in the Middle East to

help identify and track drones outside of just using radar. We do find that the best ideas on how to

operationalize things come from those at the pointy end of the spear.

RYAN: And just to follow up on that, how can we of course, there's no substitute for being in direct

combat, but how can we replicate? How can we create? How can we scale what you're doing in your

tasks versus General Langley? Are you taking similar approaches? And what authorities and tools can we

give you all too as close as we can create those cycles of innovation?

KURILLA: So Congressman, what I would tell you that we are sharing with our other combatant

command partners, and back with the services, obviously, we get a lot of funding from the service to do

this. One of the ways we do this is by training and exercises.

I think that's where you really can flesh out the best ways and you put them through very difficult

training where you stress the systems. We've had numerous exercises, like I said; we just finished one

7000 people, 42 countries, 35 shifts, 30 platforms, AI platforms and artificial intelligence platforms.

By doing that, we learn from that and then we say, well, how can we get better? What do we take from

this and apply it at scale?

LANGLEY: Congressman, I have the same enthusiasm about what affects what we're going to get

from our joint exercise program. We just finished last month though Obangame Express, for maritime

awareness. We also finished Flintlock and also embarking on African line.

This is where a form where we collectively share ideas with our partners, and then they gained

capacity and capability from and also interoperability. So to address some of the needs and whether it be

in the maritime domain space or in a counter BTO type operations.

RYAN: Thank you, and I think just as a follow on to encourage us to think about no need to answer

but how we can scale and keep, you know, these sorts of initiatives not personality based in by exception,

but make them both institutionalized but still adaptive.

So really appreciate that brief amount of time left, but I wanted to ask people to expand a little bit more

on your answer General Kurilla on the 1991 and 2002 AUMF related to Iraq. We're obviously having this

debate now in Congress, which I think is very necessary and healthy.

And would ask again, just to expand on your brief answer, General Kurilla, you don't foresee

significant or any operational risks were those to be repealed?

KURILLA: Congressman, I do not use the 2002 as the basis for our operations, we use the 2001

AUMF.

RYAN: Thank you, General Langley?

LANGLEY: We use the 2001 AUMF and if that was considered, we will need to take another look at

what would be in this place at that address.

RYAN: Thank you. I yield back Mr. Chair.

ROGERS: Chair now recognizes gentleman from Indiana, Mr. Banks for five minutes.

BANKS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, General Kurilla last week or two weeks ago, the House voted against a measure that would have tied the hands of the administration on our troop levels in Syria. I've been out of the room for a little bit. I don't know if you've already discussed this. But can you talk about what we're doing in Syria? Why it's important? How many troops are there, give us the full defense of our activities there.

KURILLA: Thanks, Congressman. So we're in Syria for the enduring defeat of ISIS. That is our daily mission. We are doing that through a partnered force called the Syrian Democratic Forces. And if I can talk about ISIS in Syria, we put them into three categories. The first one is ISIS at large; those are the individuals that we are going after every day through our partner forces. Last year, we did 313 partnered offs in Iraq and Syria this year, we've done 129, there in the lead. That same debt, Syrian democratic force that was in Syria going after ISIS, they took over 10,000 killed, over 20,000 wounded, going after ISIS, basically from 2014 until today. That is the ISIS at large that we see most of the ISIS very senior leadership, the leader of the Caliph, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, Abu Qurashi, those are the ones they were basically command and controlling the ISIS global enterprise from Northwest Syria, in areas inside of Syria.

We think we have contained ISIS in Syria, but the ideology is uncontained and unconstrained. The next category is ISIS in detention, and I call it an ISIS army in detention is over 10,000 ISIS detainees across 26 prisons, that those are at risk. When we do our targeting inside of Syria, we go after those that are doing external operations or those that are trying to break that army out of prison. If they were to get out that's approximately 2000 ISIS is our estimate in Syria, you would five times more the size of the - what they currently have. And lastly is the last is the potential for the next generation of ISIS in Al-Hol and in Al-Roj camps. I was in these camps two weeks ago. I've been in Syria six times and I've seen I've been in I was in that detention facility in Hasakah. That's why we are there is the go after the enduring defeat of ISIS.

BANKS: So would you quantify the troops who are in Syria as special operations troops, what types of personnel that we have there?

KURILLA: Every kind, Congressman, we have special operations forces, we have National Guard and we have active duty.

BANKS: Yes, and can you quantify the troop level again?

KURILLA: It's 900, but it goes plus or minus on that base and we have to bring up a temporary

enabling force because of that. And also, when you do what we call a relief in place, Transport Authority,

those numbers go up. So when we bring in based on a capability that we want to bring.

It's called temporary enabling, much like we've brought Bradley Fighting Vehicles in for a temporary

period of time that you'll see those numbers will go up. And I think it for the return on investment you get

for that very small force. What you're seeing is really the containment of ISIS in Syria right now.

BANKS: OK, I appreciate you the overview of why we're there. Tell us what would happen if we

weren't there? And maybe perhaps Afghanistan is a parallel example if you removed. So that what

happens if we leave Syria?

KURILLA: It is my commander's estimate, my Intel analysts that if we were to leave Syria and if the

SDF could not fight the ISIS by themselves, you could see a break out of the prisons. You could see the

radicalization inside our hall, and is our estimate that ISIS would return in one to two years.

Again, there's no military solution for Syria is going to take a whole of government approach when you

look at the detainees. When you look at the IDPs that are in our hall, we need to repatriate them,

rehabilitate and reintegrate them back into their countries of war.

BANKS: How important is it to protect our oil fields? What would happen if we weren't there to that

would ISIS take over the oil fields?

KURILLA: I think if we weren't there, I mean, we're not there to protect the oil fields that were there for

the enduring defeat of ISIS. I think you would see the Wagner forces that are along the doors or river or

you'd see Russian forces or Syrian forces going there.

If you remember back in 2018 Wagner a very large force of Wagner tried to go and actually attacked

U.S. forces in our Syrian partners, the Syrian Democratic Forces and they understood what American

firepower can do and we killed over 300 of them.

BANKS: What about the ISIS threat to Israel if we pull it out? What would that? What could potentially

occur we see the Israel from a threat from Syria?

KURILLA: What we see with ISIS in Syria that is an area where they do try and do their external apps.

That's why we target the external operations. ISIS Sinai is probably a bigger threat where they try and go

across and then there's an ISIS, really in the Levant. But from a serious standpoint, that's where they do

their command and control from at the highest levels.

BANKS: Mr. Chairman, I'm glad I got it the way that I did a couple of weeks ago. With that I yield

back.

ROGERS: I thank the gentleman. Chair now recognizes Gentle lady from Virginia, Ms. McClellan for

five minutes.

MCCLELLAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate this opportunity to discuss the priorities of

AFRICOM and CENTCOM, especially in two regions of the world where incredible instability and the

widespread use of irregular warfare have largely defined the nature of the conflict.

We are now approximately a year and a half removed from the withdrawal of American forces in

Afghanistan. How is CENTCOM working to reposition resources following the withdrawal to continue

addressing emerging threats in the region?

KURILLA: Thank you, Congresswoman. So what we are doing is we are trying to increase our

intelligence collection capability inside of Afghanistan. It's not just about an ISR platform flying over the

top, but it's also increasing our SIGINT, our cyber, and most importantly, is our human intelligence

collection Inside of there.

One of the things that positively story is that we have been funded from alternative airborne ISR. This

is something other than an MQ-9. We're trying to find things that can go up and have endurance that go for days and weeks, and still be able to have the appropriate sensor payload on them, whether that's image intelligence, or full motion video or signals intelligence and we should be bringing some of those capabilities online as early as this may.

MCCLELLAN: Thank you, and General Langley, could you elaborate on what AFRICOM is doing to combat irregular warfare, particularly misinformation to bolster stability within Africa, partners and allies?

LANGLEY: Yes, thanks for that question. Yes, a lot of misinformation and disinformation in the name of competition with our immediate - threat, and also the patient threat. And so we address this with a whole government approach. I do have some authorities to address this from our military information now support operations.

But then it goes deeper than that across the whole of government. State Department has some authorities on themselves, as well as they are near term authorities will be in across the interagency as well. So that we can apply collectively for cumulative effects.

MCCLELLAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I yield back.

ROGERS: Thank you Gentle lady. The Chair now recognizes gentleman from Florida, Mr. Waltz for five minutes.

WALTZ: Thank you, General Kurilla. I just want to build on Mr. Banks's questions, I mean you laid out a compelling case for why it's critical that we have partnership, we have presence, and we have bases in and around Syria to maintain pressure on ISIS. Is that a correct characterization?

KURILLA: That is a correct characterization Congressman.

WALTZ: Ms. Wallander, from a policy standpoint, why is it critical to have a presence in partnership in Syria to go after ISIS, but it's acceptable to not have an in Afghanistan?

WALLANDER: Congressman, the there's a decision made that --.

WALTZ: I'm familiar with the decision I'm talking about now going forward President, the United States that was extraordinary success over the horizon capabilities. No problem. We do it in Syria. We do it in

Somalia. Why do we? Why is it not important to have a presence in Afghanistan for counterterrorism standpoint?

WALLANDER: Congressman General Kurilla made clear that the ability of CENTCOM to monitor and act against the coalescence and the effectiveness of an ISIS threat from Afghanistan is something he believes he is able to build additional resources on. And it remains the CENTCOM mission and fully supports CENTCOM in that mission.

WALTZ: Ms. Wallander, I think history is going to prove you very wrong. The President wrong and just as it proved many members of this committee and the National Security Committee or the National Security Community in Washington wrong when we yanked out of Iraq in 2011 really had no follow on plan.

We have the rise of ISIS by 2014 and we now have more forces back in Iraq than we had in 2011 at a tremendous cost of lives and treasure. So, General Kurilla, do you think there's likelihood if we have another attack, which you have stated is possible within the next six months, that will have to go back in some way, shape or form to Afghanistan?

KURILLA: Congressman, the one I stated that we have that they could attack in under six months with little or no warning. I'm referring to enabled attack where it is funded directly against interests abroad, U.S. interests abroad, and going back into Afghanistan would obviously be a policy question how we would address that? I would try and address that.

WALTZ: Is ISIS gaining and capability in Afghanistan, gaining and capability that they certainly have the attempt to hit our interests around the world. Are they gaining the capability?

KURILLA: ISIS is stronger today in Afghanistan.

WALTZ: Than they were last year?

KURILLA: Yes.

WALTZ: Are we seeing cooperation with ISIS in Afghanistan and other elements, for example, in Syria and Iraq.

KURILLA: So much like there are regional combatant commands. ISIS has is a global organization,

they have an organization called the Al Siddiqui office that is responsible for all of ISIS from Kazakhstan,

Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, all the way down to Indonesia. They are core offices in -
-

WALTZ: I know, I'm familiar with the broad organization, are we seeing active cooperation with ISIS in Afghanistan with those other entities?

KURILLA: They do communicate back and forth with the head of ISIS, the global affiliate.

WALTZ: And we've experienced an 80 percent loss and what remaining ISR you have, which is less than you had, or less than CENTCOM had two years ago, right? And then 80 percent degradation due to transit time, correct?

KURILLA: I'm spending 80 percent of my time in transit; it is actually greater than 80 percent loss.

WALTZ: Do we have any bases in any country surrounding Afghanistan with which we can use the launch ISR any type of strike or assets?

KURILLA: Congressman, we think that great to talk about that in a closed session, I can talk about the efforts that we're working.

WALTZ: Would it be helpful if you had a base and the neighboring country?

KURILLA: Proximity reduces transit time. So what I'm trying to do is increase the time I am over the target. That's just airborne ISR but there's a lot more than just other intelligence parameters.

WALTZ: Given our presence in Syria. Did you agree with John McKinsey, your predecessor that having a small footprint at Bagram in Afghanistan would be helpful, and for ongoing counterterrorism efforts?

KURILLA: Congressman, I think that decisions already been made.

WALTZ: Right, do you agree that it would be helpful now say that decision was reversed?

KURILLA: So anytime you have proximity to the target, you're more effect.

WALTZ: You know, general how far Bagram is from the Chinese border?

KURILLA: I don't know the exact --.

WALTZ: Several 100 miles, it's actually closer to the border of China, where, by the way, they have a massive nuclear build up. The Mexico City is to the Texas border.

KURILLA: I spent about five years --.

WALTZ: Yes, it's close. Alright, 12,000-foot runway capable of holding strategic bombers. Just bear with me hypothetical. Do you think China, if China had that close of an airbase to the Texas border, they would have just given it up?

KURILLA: I'm not sure, Congressman.

WALTZ: I would bet not. I think we know the answer to that. Thank you General, I yield.

ROGERS: Thank you, gentleman. I now recognize the gentleman from North Carolina, Mr. Davis for five minutes.

DAVIS: All right. Thanks so much, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member and good afternoon to each one of you. And thanks so much for your leadership and service to the nation. In particular, your command units at different times in your career, Fort Bragg and the - as a North Carolinian. My first question I want to direct to General Kurilla, Israel rail line from the European Command

Central Command in late 2021. How has the inclusion of Israel strengthened the partnership between militaries and with forces throughout the Middle East?

KURILLA: We viewed it as a net positive right now, Congressman, and as they bring tremendous capability, they have the ability to share some of the things that they are doing. We viewed it as a net positive across the board. If you look at the Abraham Accords, those aren't just military those roles economic as well.

DAVIS: Awesome. General Langley, I want to pivot then. And speaking of the Abraham Accords. Can you talk specifically about the impact of the Abraham Accords with African partner nations?

LANGLEY: Congressman, Morocco, they were part of Abraham Accords. And I would just go ahead and state that they are probably our top or one close to the top non-NATO Allies them and Tunisia that actually export security. So we see that with African line coming up. That their handshake with Israelis is going forward and collectively for regional security across the merge of EUCOM and AFRICOM's AORs is going to just add capacity for that region

in an agreement the sharing of ideas and shared tactics that these exercises have bring. So I see it as a positive thing.

DAVIS: All right and General Langley, General Richardson previously testified about the growing PRC space infrastructure, and particularly the footprint in SOUTHCOM AOR. There's a concern with those developments and related advancements in Chinese space capabilities. Can you please discuss the PRC's growing space footprint with African nations, and security implications for the U.S. and our allies?

LANGLEY: So, Congressman thanks for that question because there are aspirations across a number of countries across the continent, in which they've already established agreements for building space capacity. And in various countries, just up late, there's --, but they're coming with a thinly veiled proposition.

That is for Goodwill. So but I am concerned that it will maybe have some other sharing or dual use in military sense, especially in tracking satellites. They're already down that Swakopmund is down in Namibia, in which they do that by one of their state owned institutions, but they have to share technology, by law, to the CCP. And therein lays probably an indicator, a leading indicator that it will probably have some future military use.

DAVIS: OK, and do you believe that any of the PRC space infrastructure projects are going to benefit those countries? Or is this just more of a one-way relationship?

LANGLEY: Congressman the time is going to tell.

DAVIS: And General Kurilla, early this month, Saudi Arabia and Iran announced an agreement brokered by China to normalize relations. Can you speak to concerns you have about China mediating disagreement?

KURILLA: Yes, Congressman. So I think the concern we should have is that we've seen China use its National Instruments of power, their economic through their Belt and Road Initiative through the region for informational their military, for their quick, fast FMS and now for the first time, we're

seeing their
diplomatic.

China has chosen to compete on a global scale and this is an area where they're
choosing to
compete.

DAVIS: What does this mean, as it pertains to our military relations with Saudi Arabia?

KURILLA: We have very strong military relations with Saudi Arabia. What we're
talking about in this

agreement is really about opening up diplomatic ties. They had it for 37 years until
2016, until Iran

stormed their embassy and burned part of their embassy, and they cut off their
diplomatic ties.

So that was they had it for 37 years prior to that there was still high tension between
both of them. And

so I think what this means really in the region is that this was going on for two years
prior, but that shot I

came in to swoop and try and take the credit for this mediation.

DAVIS: Thanks, again for being here today and I yield back, Mr. Chair.

ROGERS: I thank the gentleman. Chair now recognizes the gentleman from
Louisiana, Mr. Johnson,
for five minutes.

JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and thank you all for being here. General
Langley, there's been

a lot of discussion today and everyday hear about the influence of China, on the CCP,
and we're

concerned about that in Africa, as well as all over the globe.

A couple of weeks ago, when we had the NORTHCOM, SOUTHCOM posture
hearing, I spoke with

General Richardson about the tools that we have at our disposal to combat that
growing influence. And

she mentioned that our partnerships with those countries are one of the biggest
benefits in that endeavor.

Would you say that's true of AFRICOM as well?

LANGLEY: Yes, Congressman.

JOHNSON: General Richardson also mentioned that there's probably more that we
could be doing as

a country to make our presence more visible. And she indicated that, you know,
defense partnerships and

commercial endeavors and other things can help in that regard.

Are there things that you're doing to increase that visibility and try to make a pitch that
the United

States is really the country to partner with and not China?

LANGLEY: Congressman, thanks for that question, because a holistically if China had to look at our

3d approach, in a negative sense, they would probably tell our partners that it's an empty suit. So what I'm

saying here, Congressman, is we need to be able to respond at the speed of relevance and in the

quantity that the PRC is providing across all fronts.

In my title 10 authorities, China will sell their wares, their military wares to a partner that is at the cusp

of being subjugated by an extremist organization. They can provide the weapons for you really quick. My

title 10 authorities and 333 training equip, or even our FMS type program is moves too slowly.

So we want to reach the panacea, this is become the partner of choice, but we just need the

authorities to move faster. And that goes across the whole of governments with USAID and flexibility

funding, and also State Department as well.

And lastly, I'd say that China moves at the speed of relevance in that and we're not forcing our

partners to choose. But we need they do know that we do have a value proposition of quality equipment,

and they will hang in the balance waiting for us to respond.

MCCLAIN: It's disconcerting to us as members of Congress to hear, we might be regarded as an

empty suit anywhere at any time, because we don't maintain the peace through strength. If that's how

we're regarded in a perfect world, how would that title 10 authority is expanded? What would it look like?

LANGLEY: So, congressman, first of all, I would say this, just holistically of the entire whole portfolio,

state partnership programs, and then the security force assistance brigade, they need persistent

presence. So, as we, as our country teams make this request, we need to be able to be able to affect this

in less than 24 months.

We need to shorten that boot on that from that request the boots on the ground real fast; because

these partners are saying we don't need your boots on the ground. We don't we just need to training. And

our partnership is affecting that through exercises. And then collectively, what's

actually just going outside
the U.S. go?

Thanks for the legislation will prosper Africa, digital Africa, and other types of
legislation that causes
that effects our private sector to invest in Africa holistically, that will make a full suit.

MCCLAIN: Very good. Thank you. Shifting gears quickly, General Kurilla. As we've
entered this new
era, I'm curious about how all of your process and prioritize competing mission sets
specifically with
weighing strategic competition versus counterterrorism threats that have dominated
us for last 20 years.

Do you have any recommendations for us about the way that we should view this the
lens through which
we should see these issues?

KURILLA: Thank you, Congressman. So, as I look at it, I prioritize the turnaround
counter VEO and
strategic competition against China and Russia. I believe CENTCOM is literally and
figuratively central to
competition with China and Russia. We have a six and a half times longer border with
Russia than NATO,
that's along the Kazakhstan border, we have a longer border with China than we have
in the U.S.

Mexican border.

I think our strategic competition is our presence as well. And it's our partnership. What
we bring is

long, enduring partnerships. We've been there in the past, we were there for 75
years, or we're there

today. And we'll be there in the future. China, everything China does is for its own
self-interest. And they

view the partners in the region through a lens of customer or client.

It's no real surprise that they tried to negotiate the Iran KSA deal, because they get 50
percent of their

energy comes to the Straits of Hormuz that gets to one third of their gas come
through from the region.

And so, when we look at that they are trying to ensure that their interests are secure,
but it's only for their
own self-interest.

MCCLAIN: Thank you very much. I yield back.

ROGERS: Gentleman's time has expired. Chair, I recognize gentleman from Texas
Mr. Veasey.

VEASEY: Mr. Chairman, thank you very much and want to welcome everyone from

coming to for
coming to testify today. I would also like to give a special welcome to General
Langley, we're both
graduates of the Fort Worth Independent School District, and this maybe the first time
that you Fort Worth
Independent School District.

People have to ask questions back and forth to each other. And so, welcome you. We
know that the

PRC has planted seeds all over at all over the African continent. And then your
statement General

Langley, you said that USA Africa does not seek to block the benefits of the PRC can
bring to the

continents nations.

Based on your overall threat assessment and level of knowledge, is there a solution
that can further

contain Chinese influence in the AR?

LANGLEY: Congressman, thanks for that question. Because on the forefront as
engagement with our

competitors, as we engage with our African partners, that we want to become and
stay the partner of

choice for strategic access and strategic influence, in some cases.

Trying to just have a proposition, I would say the Belt and Road Initiative, but they
characterize it. The

whole name is One Belt One Road. That's a one-way road back to Beijing. Those are
the cautionary tales

that across the interagency and across the whole of government that we do tell them,
we're not forcing

our partners to choose.

But we need to be able to represent our value proposition across the whole of
government that builds

capacity across their institutions, as well as their governance as well. In the end, our
partners realize that

we are the partner of choice.

VEASEY: Yes. Another question that I want to ask you are how does Africa work with
African

countries to promote regional economic development and stability? And what role
does this play in

advancing U.S. interests? I know that when, you know, me, and Mr. Panetta and
Austin Scott went to

Djibouti, back in 2017, we saw the base that the Chinese were building there.

You know, later learned through reports in the media that there was a secret base that they were building underneath the base that the Djibouti government probably didn't know anything about. So, we know that some of these some of these economic development projects come with certain strings attached.

These, can you talk a little bit about how we're doing that? And if you think that we're doing enough to advance economic stability in Africa, because we know especially with these mineral rich areas that they have their that actors, like the Russians and the Chinese are certainly going to want to make long term strategic partnerships with these African countries.

LANGLEY: Congressman, there's a couple of things to address your question. What we are doing holistically across the whole of government approach, and various legislations in the last couple of years of prosper Africa that will affect more investment through the private industry, and a number of agencies and departments that are signatories of that, we just need to get it off the ground. And then for the fragile states Global Fragility Act, which is now characterized as the prevent conflict; promote stability, or other mechanisms that that we share with our partners in the country teams to get this off the ground. But from the PRC's persistence on going after rare minerals or mining, there is a mechanism where we illuminate and amplify some of the ill effects of those partnerships or those deals that were struck by the PRC. And we pay attention to that, that we do that in the information space in direct, direct conversations with our partners.

VEASEY: Yes, now, thank you. General Kurilla, I wanted to know about just the level of co-operation and co-ordination between AFRICOM, EUCOM and other government agencies, particularly as we're trying to talk about the Wagner group's activities in Africa. And I was hoping that both of you could briefly touch on that.

KURILLA: So, I'd say in terms of information sharing human resource sharing, Mike and I share

resources all the time and include a crystal ball; he was the commander of EUCOM. So, we all make sure we see the same sight picture on the Intel specifically for Wagner. I have Wagner in Syria; he has Wagner all over Africa. And Crystal Ball is dealing with Wagner up in the Ukraine. So, I think it's important that we're all talking and sharing about the intelligence as well as the resources.

VEASEY: Yes.

LANGLEY: So absolutely, I concur what, you know, Erik was saying, you know, the goal the integrator construct, especially in the NDS talked about integrated deterrence. Just processes like that sharing of information collaborating between our staffs, sows up those scenes, so collectively; it is very effective in the overall global integrated construct.

VEASEY: Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

ROGERS: Thanks, gentlemen. The chair now recognizes gentleman from California, Mr. Ro Khanna.

KHANNA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. General Kurilla, I appreciated our conversation yesterday. I was hoping you could share with the committee some of the insights you shared with me about why the Strait of Hormuz is critical to our relationship with China. And why if America wants to make sure that we're leading in the 21st century, your work and your group's work is critical, even vis-à-vis China.

KURILLA: So, thank you, Congressman. So, what we talked about yesterday was the fact that China gets over 50 percent of its oil and over one third of its natural gas from the CENTCOM region. 98 percent

plus goes through by ship, it'll come through the Straits of Hormuz that makes them vulnerable. 72

percent of all Chinese oil is imported.

They have domestically produced about 28 percent. So that can make them vulnerable. God forbid there's ever a conflict with China, but we could end up holding a lot of their economy at risk of the CENTCOM region.

KHANNA: So, our having a presence there and dominance there to keep it a free flowing, sea is a

strategic value even as we look at the competition and strategic threat that China poses.

KURILLA: Correct, Congressman and it's not just the Straits of Hormuz, it's also global commerce. 30

percent of all container traffic in the world goes through the Suez Canal, I think in 2021; about 22,000

ships went through there. So really, we saw what happened when the ever given was stuck in the Suez

Canal that stopped \$10 billion of trade a day until it was unstuck.

KHANNA: In our values, we keep the freedom of the seas, for every nation, it's not just that we're

doing it for our nation. So, we're upholding our values in these areas. Is that correct?

KURILLA: And so, what we also have is the combined maritime force, its 38 countries that participate

in CENTCOM, it's the largest maritime partnership in the world. They do everything from maritime

security, to anti-piracy, and to counter smuggling. And that's how we keep the, you know, the international

rules-based order in the maritime domain.

KHANNA: Now, I know you spend a lot of your testimony also on Iran. And I have a lot of constituents

of Iranian background who say that this time, the protests are different, this time as a regime rally is not

going to last. I don't know if you're in a position to have a comment from what you're hearing in the area

about what the sentiment is towards the regime and the protests.

KURILLA: So, congressman, what we can see is that the regime can deal with the domestic situation,

but also do their malign behavior externally. So, their foreign policy, if you will, while they still deal with

their domestic policy, it is my assessment right now that even though the protests have put stress on the

regime, it has not put the regime at risk.

KHANNA: Thank you. General Langlely, I appreciated your focus on development in Africa beyond

just the defense. I'll tell you, briefly and I can respond my own perspective. My grandfather was in jail with

Gandhi is part of the independence movement, which of course also inspired Mandela. And my first view

is that Africa should have what Africa wants, not a plaything for his great power competition.

I'm concerned that China has used Africa not to see African self-determination, but to

basically use it for their own self-interest in a form of neo-colonialism. I wonder how you think America can have a policy towards development and economic growth that respects what African nations and Africa wants, and respects their sovereignty.

LANGLEY: Congressman, thanks for that question. And I know, I profess the whole government approach, but it also it's more than that, that will actually put more horsepower, us being the partner of choice. So outside of the 3D construct, and I thank just this congress, again, for legislation of the past to get things off the ground for private investment, and also various departments investment in prosper Africa, digital Africa, but I think we need more, I think I really do think we need more. Because not just me, saying that this is some of the things that are communicating to me as I made my travels across the continent, engaging with these countries. The Global Fragility Act formerly known as, but the strategy, what that professor is prevent conflict and promote stability. They think the enduring process to actually address their immediate threat is good governance.

Collectively, State Department, USA ID and DOD were working together to be able to build capacity and

bolster their governance under democratic norms. But we need more investment across the others across the - mentioned legislations that have been passed. We just need to put more investment into it.

KHANNA: Thank you.

ROGERS: Thank the gentleman. Chair now recognizes gentleman from California, Mr. Panetta for five minutes.

PANETTA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Gentlemen, ma'am as I get to my notes recently, we heard about hostage couple hostages, hostages that were released. One of them is been his second time being a hostage, I guess, Mr. Woodke, that is. But I guess my question is surrounding the circumstances around his release.

In that - J and M.I.N supposedly released him without any ransom. And it's kind of unclear whether

Niger had anything to give up in these; I guess negotiations as you may call them. If he was released

without ransom, what's your assessment of J and M.I.Ns, motivation for the kidnapping?

LANGLEY: Congressman, I'll be able to speak or speak to that fully in closed session, but I will tell

you this. This was an indication of and we just want to come in and thank Niger and Bazoum in his efforts

to be able to release Mr. Woodke. And that's but in closed session, I'll be able to shed a little bit more light

on what we think will unfold as he has interviewed a firm on that.

PANETTA: And I think we actually have a lot to thank Niger for considering as I call them, sort of the

Alamo in the cell right now. And that you're seeing a lot of be at our forces, be at our allied forces kind of

gathering there and staying there and being able to operate in there and out of there in order to deal with

many of the DEOs.

On that note, talking about Burkina Faso, obviously, that's experienced two military coups since

January of 2022. You got these regional insurgencies are linked to al Qaeda in the Islamic State. And

then you're starting to see a little overt outreach, potentially, to the Wagner group, which is active in neighboring Mali.

Now, J and M.I.N and ISGS, obviously, the Islamic State of Greater Sahel they control much of

Burkina Faso's national territory in particular, the northern and eastern regions have faced a surgeon's

threats from Islamist CEOs since 2016. Now, unfortunately, you're seeing the French forces being

expelled or being expelled or actually removing themselves from that area.

I've been working with my good friend, Austin Scott; we've travelled to the region. We want to make

sure that our service members, they understand the danger that they're in. But we want to ensure that

they're paid accordingly, with imminent danger pay something that your predecessor tried to push through

last May. A couple of questions, can you tell us whether service members in Burkina Faso should be

afforded IDP?

LANGLEY: Congressman, yes.

PANETTA: Thank you for that straightforward answer. Second, obviously, I remember asking somebody, I think it was in this position about two years ago, dealing with QRF. And the potential for Quick Reaction Forces and the need for Quick Reaction Forces, not just in West Africa, but throughout Africa and realizing that how important they are. And the question I posed to them is what are we doing about QRF? And they said we're relying on our allies, with the French removing themselves from most of Africa; do you feel we still can rely on our allies for a Quick Reaction Force? And if not, what's, who we can we rely on?

LANGLEY: First of all, Congressman thanks for asking that question. Because while I have to do on a regular basis, assess the risk of stress, the risks of being able to respond to crisis, a foundational piece of that a foundational capability is intelligence is surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities. So that we can reposition our, our assets to be able to respond to the probability of consequence connected to that is also being able to identify indications and warnings that helps us do that. And I think this congress and in the last couple of years or the last couple budgets, the war fighting, war fighter recovery network has gained and bolstered capacity anymore. And you're right, congressman, yes, we still support the French and the French, supports us as well. But we're also building capacity into our African partners, to be able to go into that calculus, and being able to respond to crisis accordingly, and cover some of the 16 high threat embassies that we have across the ground and the men and women of Africa that are doing their due diligence and execution of their mission.

PANETTA: Gentlemen, Doctor, thank you. I yield back.

ROGERS: Thank the gentleman. Chair now recognize gentleman, Mr. Keating for five minutes.

KEATING: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank all of you for your service to the country. So many of us are coming in and out, because we have coinciding hearings, many of them related so, I just have a

couple of questions. Given everything you've been asked to this point this morning. One of them, I'm curious, you know, Russia is involved in Africa with at least 20 countries for precious resources.

That includes gold. And many of the Russian oligarchs are involved in gold mining and activities and the reports that many of them have circumvented sanctions and, and monies ending up back in Russia this helping to fuel their war effort against Ukraine.

What do you know about the ability of Russia? In the last analysis, getting some of those revenues to help fuel their efforts in defiance of the sanctions, General?

LANGLEY: Congressman, I had been briefed that's exactly what's going on. Yevgeny Prigozhin and head of his private military company that's what they're, they are the Vanguard back to the Russian Federation. And they do it through profit, cash and profit.

So, they have a false value proposition, especially the fragile governance across West Africa, where I characterize that the tipping point was you're looking for assistance, to be able to provide security in the face of vile extremist organizations. And sometimes they select Wagner to do it. But Wagner has a hidden agenda road mapping unto their closest mind would be gold or diamonds. That's what I'm concerned about, there's a revenue stream back to the Russian Federation.

WALLANDER: Congressman, I would just add two points. One is that with the designation of Wagner as a transnational criminal organization, we have new instruments to constrain its ability to move money freely, and the Biden Administration is focusing on those instruments and secondly, in the realm of sanctions, evasion, and illicit moving of money and resources.

Similarly, we are focused on sanctions enforcement, working with countries to shut down banks that Russia is using to move money, and we can talk more about it in a classified setting, if you'd like.

KEATING: Thank you for those efforts. You know, our effort is to try and choke off as much resourcing as we can to Russia during this period. Just even though General clearly, you know, obviously said in terms of Bagram, that that decision is made already, but it keeps being asked all the

time. So, could you tell me from president standpoint, what would be a, "small footprint" in Bagram?

I mean, you need support forces; you just can't have a small footprint there. Can you just give us an approximate idea? I mean, how many people would it take not just to have a "small footprint", but to be able to support it safely?

KURILLA: I mean I couldn't give you an exact number right now, because it would all depend on the threat. If we were back in Bagram right now, you would be that would you would have the Taliban trying to attack us as well, as well as ISIS-K.

KEATING: That's what I mean right now. So it would be, it wouldn't just be a small footprint, you'd need support services, and maybe the tens of thousands, or just in total, to make sure that you have.

KURILLA: So, it would be based on the threat and the size of the force. What is the mission that they're there for?

KEATING: Just a presence there in terms of, you know, intelligence -

KURILLA: You'd have to; you'd have to sound here the entire base. And that would require, you know, a security force knowing if you're bringing in the intelligence apparatus and all the support structuring.

KEATING: So, my inclination is, presently, which we do, there's no such thing as a small footprint in that regard. I just like to ask this, this is troubling. The situation in the Middle East is getting worse. We're approaching the coinciding holidays, our efforts as a country, as well as Jordan, Egypt and other countries are just trying to get through the holidays, just trying to keep calm through the holidays.

But the situation and it was shared with this committee by people in the region prior, this is really fragile house - is right now. And how these threats of disruption even during the holidays could trigger a collapse even what would happen, what would be the impact of that in the region mass and other groups?

Can you give just give us some of your feelings on what that would mean? Because it's, we're being told it's very real at this point. And that's why we're working so hard to keep it calm.

KURILLA: So, Congressman, I think the concern right now is that there is all the kindling and the tinder is there for a flashpoint. And it can take just one incident that can cause that that fire to start inside the West Bank, and I think it would be bad for the entire region.

KEATING: Thank you. I yield back.

ROGERS: Thank you, gentleman. Chair now recognizes gentleman from Nevada, Mr. Horsford for five minutes.

HORSFORD: Thank you, Chairman Rogers and to the ranking member for this important hearing. As this committee knows Russia and China continue to challenge American influence in Africa and the Middle East. In 2021 trade between Africa and China surged to \$254 billion, up about 35 percent as Chinese exports increased to the continent. China has steadily increased its influence in Africa by promoting a political and economic model for countries on the continent all while the United States has fallen behind on investment. Algeria, a global energy exporter, with Africa's largest defense budget continues to be one of Russia's top arms export clients, behind only India and China.

So, I was glad to see that the conclusion of the 2021 Global Posture Review directed under Secretary

Austin included ensuring that the Department of Defense appropriately monitors threats from regional extremist groups, supports our diplomatic activities, and enable our allies and partners in Africa.

General Langley, it's good to see you again. This committee has heard from combatant commander's time and again, that global competitors, specifically China out compete us by responding to partner

nations faster than we can. Is that an accurate assessment of the problem, from your perspective? And if so, what additional authorities do you need to meet security challenges in a responsive way?

LANGLEY: Congressman, thanks for that question. Now answer it in just saying that we need to be the partner of choice through various actions or through the whole of governance. From the military

standpoint, when I engage with our partners on the continent, they said our near and present danger right

now is by extremist organizations.

I have the portfolio available to be able to build partnership and capacity with them.

So, they can

professionalize their forces; train their forces in the face of the threat, their immediate threat. I don't think

China does that. China will sell them weapons systems that will be in a weapon system graveyard within

a couple of years.

So that's that value proposition that I have the leverage that need to continue to leverage but the

system needs to work, be more responsive. Our title 10, 333 authorities, that process is kind of low, kind

of slow. Our foreign military sales that process is very slow, where China can operate at the speed of

relevance.

So, we need to get that back from across the whole of governments just in the developmental alarm as

they start looking at their societies and building their societies in for the citizens in the name of

democracy, they want to be able to do that. So, their development programs in U.S.

ID, you need to have

flexible funding as such in our State Department as they build capacity across the government. Thank

you.

HORSFORD: And general Kurilla, can you describe the threat China and Russia pose in your

respective area of responsibility?

KURILLA: Thanks, Congressman. Again, what we've seen is them go in with their economic. And

that's where we have 19 of 21 countries have signed a Belt and Road agreement with China. And what a

lot of them don't understand is the predatory nature of the financing or how they are doing that when they come into the region.

We've seen it with their informational. Their military is I look at the military domain, which is my

business. They come in very quickly, they bring up a whole catalogue of equipment, they allow him to

ship very quickly, they give them financing, and they have no end user agreement.

As Mike said, we do see a lot of their equipment ends up breaking but our partners

have real security needs based on the region and what China's doing is very quickly filling that for them. So, I think there are things that we can do to improve our foreign military sales. Because when you buy into the American system, you buy into the quality, you buy into the training, you buy into the upgrades you buy into the sustainment, but you're also buying into the bureaucracy as well. In terms of Russia, we are seeing them in Syria. They want to undermine our efforts in the Middle East.

And they want a permanent base into that warm water port where they signed the port of Tartus for 49-year lease. And now Assad had asked them to stay longer is what it looks like. HORSFORD: I'm pleased to see the Biden Administration's step-up engagement with Africa as a counterweight to China's influence on the continent. And I am glad to see both the First Lady Jill Biden, which focused on the United States commitment to the region. And I know I look forward to the vice president's visit to the continent later this month, which will only strengthen that commitment.

Now, I think it's the committee's job to follow suit, we must continue our investment in Africa's future and stability. And I want to thank the panel for taking our questions today. And I look forward to working with you on this important issue. Thank you.

ROGER: The gentleman's time is expired. Chair now recognize Gentle lady from California, Ms.

Jacobs for five minutes.

JACOBS: Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to our briefers. It's great to see you here. I

also want to thank you, General Langley, for your service and all your important work on the African continent and also for your thoughtfulness today.

I want to especially thank you for your comments earlier about the need for a whole of government approach to addressing good governance on the continent and how that is a key pillar of our national security. And I couldn't agree more. And I'm very excited to see the Global Fragility Act plans which we

should be imminently receiving here and how you're going to put that into practice. So earlier this month, General Fenton and Assistant Secretary Maier testified before the committee and I asked about what lessons SOCOM had learned from our decades of counterterrorism operations in Sub Saharan Africa.

And General Fenton largely deferred to Africa. I'm so I'm going to ask you the same question General Langley, as you know, despite two decades of our investment in counter-terrorism in Africa, and over \$3 billion in equipment, training and logistics, we've actually seen violent extremism increased threefold since 2013.

And just in the last year, we thought increased by 22 percent and fatalities by 50 percent. And just in the Sahel, we saw 130 percent increases since 2020 in violence. So, I wanted to ask you, what lessons has AFRICOM learned from this, you know, apparent lack of success of our investments in the continent?

And how can we take that moving forward as we focus on the region?

LANGLEY: Congresswoman, thanks for that. And, and thanks for your business on the continent,

especially with the Codell you went on. And that's, that's a result of this blue map, that's shown here of

our investments on the continent. But getting back to your question, as our engagements with our African

partners as I go from country to country, knowing that it is going to be a partner led U.S. enabled

proposition or remedy to their fragile governance.

And when they look at their immediate threat, and as you just said that a number is really starting to

metastasize across from the Lake Chad region, by the trimmers organizations over the shortened

encroach upon the Gulf of Guinea States. So, given that my, what my discussions with them are, I asked

a question as part of my campaign of learning, what is the solution?

What is the panacea, and they said, responsible governance. Responsible governance is the enduring

solution to violent extremist organizations. And they realize that so just as much as they are buying

weapons systems, they want to be able to add bolster capacity and or total governments providing for the

people.

And as we look at Sheikh Mohamud, President Sheikh Mohamud, in Somalia, what story is not really

told, is how he's turning a lot of the al-Shabab to laying down weapons and repatriating them into the

Somali government. Those are the good news stories that are told enough.

So, Congresswoman, that's the - our African partners get what the solution is, we just need to help

them across the whole of government approach to get there.

JACOBS: Well, I appreciate that. I think getting governance right on the continent is going to be key.

And I look forward to working together both on this whole of government approach and implementing the

Global Fragility Act, and making sure we're being very thoughtful about how all of DOD's activities on the

continent feed into that good governance.

I wanted to ask you about Somalia as well. We are increasing what we're doing.

They're increasing the

tempo. We've recently put troops back in. I just wanted to ask what our theory of the case is. Or how does

it end when can we leave? What are we trying to get to, so that we are able to actually not have troops

stationed there anymore?

LANGLEY: Congresswomen, I'll answer that from operational perspective. What we're doing to enable

President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud in the Somali National Army, being able to take the fight to al-

Shabab in turn to and follow up, follow that up with being able to bring in their rest of their governance to

go out to the other regions, and to the clients that have been turned in also preventing famine, preventing

effects from climate change.

That is just a clear indicator that the campaign by President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud is working

holistically. So, given that he is going to turn south and go into some of the regions, where's the

stronghold by al-Shabab? And I think he's going to be able to do that. But we will be with them until our

policy changes.

ROGER: Great. Gentleady's time has expired. Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey, Mr.

Kim for five minutes.

KIM: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Actually, I want to just kind of build off of that. Dr.

Wallander, I would love

to kind of hear your thoughts about the challenges that we're facing in Somalia. We are taking some new steps, as a general just articulated on that front.

But you also kind of raised that this is in a broader context is we're seeing the African Union transition

mission to small is that a plan to draw it out over the next two years, are you really kind of talking about at

this critical two-year period? So could you elaborate on just how you're seeing this, and kind of to the

point of my colleagues, what is the end state that we're trying to get to here, that'll allow us to start to pull

back some of our resources?

WALLANDER: Thank you, Congressman; it's nice to see you. I would build on or endorse what

General Langley just lay out, which is the key to our support to Somalia, in countering the al-Shabab is

working with our partners and investing in our partner country.

There is a, there's current operations, but there's actually been a period of time of training and

equipping and working with the small armed forces, not only through Africa, but also through State

Department authorities and developing the --brigades.

So it's a great example of all of government, whole government work to build a security force and to

enable a security force that is trained in American standards, that has trust in good relationships with

AFRICOM and leaders in AFRICOM.

And we're seeing the material benefits of that, because we're seeing an increasingly effective force

that also is working constructively with other regional partners in Africa and African led operations that are

enabled by U.S. presence in AFRICOM's assets. That it really is a great example of an implementation of

the approach that was laid out in the national defense strategy.

KIM: Appreciate that context. Thank you. General Kurilla, I want to just turn to you.

You've, some of

my colleagues have asked you about ISIS Corizon. I've heard some of your comments on that front. I

guess we can talk about this in a skiff at a higher classification as well.

But just to kind of situate for the American people, what we're talking about here, what is the current that we can talk about in this forum right now about how many fighters they have, what their general health is right now?

KURILLA: Congressman, thank you. So, the current strength of ISIS at the unclassified level is about 2000 to 2500 in Afghanistan, and that's ISIS course. And when we say that, that it's specifically for, for

Afghanistan, but we do see the threat really coming from the Al Siddiqi Office, that's the region that sits above it. But they're based out of Afghanistan as well. And it's not so much the fighters, that it is their ability to plan and enable operations from there.

We do know that Taliban and ISIS course on our fighting, but the Taliban is more of a blunt force to go after them and doesn't have the intelligence and the precision to get after the real threats that we are seeing.

KIM: So, there is, and that was something I wanted to kind of pull on, because you did talk about in your testimony as well that that ISIS Corizon and Taliban who continues to be challenged as they are. But what you're saying is that the Taliban is not able to kind of produce the kind of precise enough pressure upon ISIS chorus on such that some of the foreign threats are the ones that can be mitigated. Is that correct?

KURILLA: Yes, just to be clear, ISIS Corizon on the Taliban hate each other, they're fighting and killing each other. But the Taliban doesn't have the precision to go after the individuals; they will do large sweeping clearance operations. It can be disruptive to a point, but they don't have they're not doing the precision targeting of individuals.

KIM: What is the current again in the setting of kind of connection or relationship between ISIS

Corizon and sort of the core ISIS that we've engaged with in Iraq and Syria?

KURILLA: So, the ISIS, the core ISIS that's in Syria, they are in charge of a global enterprise. And the general director of provinces, he was killed about two weeks ago. He is the one that

would provide guidance for external operations ISIS course on falls underneath the Al Siddiqi Office, which basically runs from the stands all the way down to Indonesia. Mike has the - Al Karar office, that's the below all - office, which is in Iraq in Iran. So, they basically have this global enterprise. And what we see right now the most prolific is coming out of the Al Siddiqi Office. And in closed session, I'll give a very specific example how we've disrupted a couple of threat streams and not all threat streams or kinetic in terms of our disruption.

KIM: Thank you and my time is going to run out here. But I'd love to do a follow up with you General Langley and Dr. Wallander as well, just about what we can be doing to sort of increase cybersecurity efforts with our partners and that's certainly something general Langley as well we can engage in.

But it feels like a place where we can really engage, I'm hearing a lot from these partner nations throughout the Middle East and North Africa and now elsewhere. So, let's make sure we're engaging on that.

KURILLA: We're doing a lot with that congressman. We look forward to talking about that some time.

KIM: Thank you.

ROGERS: Thank the gentleman. Thank all of our witnesses, we will now adjourn this. Do you need to, you know, in essence, go ahead, gentlemen, Georgia is recognized.

MCCORMICK: I know you've been waiting for this one moment. So, I heard the testimony that you gave to Representative Gates. And I want to kind of give you a second go at this, just because I know you made four stars for reason in Marine Corps. That's not an easy thing to do. And AFRICOM is a very challenging environment.

I know our intent is never to create bad guys who are in leadership positions. And yet it has happened several times in our history, it has happened famously in Somalia. And you and I have suffered the consequences from that in our careers, and the enemies that we've combated with. My plea to you, and

then I'll give you your ability to respond is that, we do revise our position on how we train and what kind of caliber we have.

Because it is obvious to me that we have created some situations, especially in AFRICOM, where we've gone against people we've literally trained. And so, I do want you to kind of maybe just give us an insight on how you think you can approach this with, with, with the collaboration of congress and the president - who's in our state of command to mitigate that for the future.

LANGLEY: Congressman, thanks for the opportunity. So just going forward, as we look at our IMAT program holistically, we'll probably need to add more capacity to it. Because that's the last thing we want to do, or want to see is some episodic event, such as a coup by someone that we formerly had trained in the past.

So just broadening on that and focusing in broadening the curriculum that focuses on civilian led militaries. Within that we had that discussion over at National University, amongst our partners at the African leader summit, where it was led by the Secretary of the Army, and also representation from Senegal, General Sisi and myself.

And well, we pounded the table on this is a must. There were over 43 countries in attendance to that.

So more of that so as we focus on civilian led governance, civilian led militaries that actually endorse, fully endorse democratic norms and democratic values, and holistically core values, just to prevent this from happening.

MCCORMICK: OK. Do you feel like you have the intelligence that, you know, I'm not talking about personal intelligence? I'm talking military intelligence that required deciphering who are the good guys and the bad guys. And do you have the personnel that required in this very robust, dynamic AFRICOM scenario?

LANGLEY: Just not the lay vetting process is in effect, and we take that very seriously. And we were very, very deliberate in our processes of vetting our African partners as they come into the IMF programs.

MCCORMICK: OK. General Kurilla, just real quick question. In looking, we talked about keeping Iran from having nuclear capabilities as part of nuclear capabilities for energy, but as far as weaponry, we know what Israel's opinion is on this. And you say to yourself, that we want to make sure that we avoid that at all costs. What does that mean?

And I'm not talking about from a classified standpoint, but what are we willing to engage how militarily we know, politically, we're engaged. And we can only do so much when we talk about negotiations. But how do from military aspect and maybe I'm going too far when I say unclassified? Is there a way to posture that would create a scenario where they would back down?

KURILLA: Congressman, I really do recommend that that's in a classified setting if we talk about any of the Iranian nuclear program.

MCCORMICK: Fair enough. Doctor, do you have anything to add?

WALLANDER: No, no. But if I may, on the issue of military training, I think it would be a real, not just a tragedy. But it would be a great loss to American national security. It's the very regrettable fact of instances of military abroad who've been trained by the United States and - and other programs are undermined what is an extraordinarily important program. There is no better way to build capacity and relationships among our foreign partner countries and the extraordinary examples of American military professional American military, fulfill their duties as American citizens.

And you heard from the generals that they believe that this is a vital program. The civilian leadership in

DOD fully supports the importance of these military education programs and takes very, very seriously the need to make sure that we are training the right people as well.

MCCORMICK: Thank you. I just want to add for the record that I believe that we also have to be very careful about an isolationist mentality because of a couple bad apples that obviously have bad results.

Thank you. With that, I yield.

ROGERS: I thank the gentlemen, and thank the witnesses. We will now adjourn this

portion of the
hearing and reconvene in five minutes for the classified portion in room 2212.

END

SPEAKERS:

REP. MIKE D. ROGERS, R-ALA., CHAIRMAN

REP. JOE WILSON, R-S.C.

REP. MICHAEL R. TURNER, R-OHIO

REP. DOUG LAMBORN, R-COLO

REP. ROB WITTMAN, R-VA.

REP. AUSTIN SCOTT, R-GA.

REP. SAM GRAVES, R-MO.

REP. ELISE STEFANIK, R-N.Y.

REP. SCOTT DESJARLAIS, R-TENN.

REP. TRENT KELLY, R-MISS.

REP. MATT GAETZ, R-FLA.

REP. MIKE GALLAGHER, R-WIS.

REP. DON BACON, R-NEB.

REP. JIM BANKS, R-IND.

REP. MICHAEL WALTZ, R-FLA.

REP. JACK BERGMAN, R-MICH.

REP. MIKE JOHNSON, R-LA.

REP. PAT FALLON, R-TEXAS

REP. RONNY L. JACKSON, R-TEXAS

REP. LISA MCCLAIN, R-MICH.

REP. BRAD FINSTAD, R-MINN.

REP. CARLOS GIMENEZ, R-FLA.

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REP. JEN KIGGANS, R-VA.

REP. DALE STRONG, R-ALA.

REP. MORGAN LUTTRELL, R-TEXAS

REP. NICK LALOTA, R-N.Y.

REP. MARK ALFORD, R-MISS.

REP. CORY MILLS, R-FLA.

REP. RICH MCCORMICK, R-GA.

DEL. JAMES MOYLAN, R-GUAM

REP. ADAM SMITH, D-WASH., RANKING MEMBER

REP. JOE COURTNEY, D-CONN.

REP. JOHN GARAMENDI, D-CALIF.

REP. DONALD NORCROSS, D-N.J.

REP. RUBEN GALLEGGO, D-ARIZ.

REP. SETH MOULTON, D-MASS.

REP. RO KHANNA, D-CALIF.
REP. SALUD CARBAJAL, D-CALIF.
REP. JASON CROW, D-COLO.
REP. VERONICA ESCOBAR, D-TEXAS
REP. JARED GOLDEN, D-MAINE
REP. CHRISSY HOULAHAN, D-PA.
REP. WILLIAM KEATING, D-MASS.
REP. ANDY KIM, D-N.J.
REP. MIKIE SHERRILL, D-N.J.
REP. ELISSA SLOTKIN, D-MICH.
REP. SARA JACOBS, D-CALIF.
REP. JIMMY PANETTA, D-CALIF.
REP. MARILYN STRICKLAND, D-WASH.

REP. STEVEN HORSFORD, D-NEV.
REP. PAT RYAN, D-N.Y.
REP. CHRIS DELUZIO, D-PENN.
REP. JEFF JACKSON, D-N.C.
REP. GABRIEL VASQUEZ, D-N.M.
REP. DON DAVIS, D-N.C.
REP. JILL TOKUDA, D-HAWAII
REP. TERRI A. SEWELL, D-ALA.
REP. MARC VEASEY, D-TEXAS