

UNCLASSIFIED

STATEMENT OF

VICE ADMIRAL TIMOTHY G. SZYMANSKI, U.S. NAVY

DEPUTY COMMANDER

UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

BEFORE THE

HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE AND EMERGING THREATS AND  
CAPABILITIES

February 11, 2020

Chairman Langevin, Ranking Member Stefanik, and Members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to represent the U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) before you today. On behalf of General Clarke, it is my privilege to join the Honorable Mr. Al Shaffer, Ms. Theresa Whelan, and Mr. Vayl Oxford at this hearing on how we work together to address some of the most critical national security challenges facing our country. These Department leaders are important partners for USSOCOM in its role as the Department of Defense (DoD) Coordinating Authority for countering weapons of mass destruction (WMD). We applaud the leadership of the office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Global Security in aligning Department policy for countering WMD (CWMD) with broader national and department strategy and policy and in guiding the prioritization of the Department's efforts within those same parameters. We salute the depth and breadth of the Defense Threat Reduction Agency's (DTRA) innovative CWMD programs and activities ongoing around the globe. We greatly appreciate the leadership of the office of the Assistant Secretary for Nuclear, Chemical, and Biological Defense Programs to ensure a robust nuclear, chemical, and biological defense posture for the Joint Force. We are proud to work together with this formidable group across the Department and the interagency, and with our foreign allies and partners, to counter threats from nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons wherever they may be in the world. In my statement today I will review USSOCOM's role and approach as DoD Coordinating Authority for CWMD and provide an update on WMD threats and our work to counter them over the past year.

#### **DoD CWMD Coordination Authority Role**

Many members on this subcommittee are already familiar with Special Operations Forces' long-standing operational role in CWMD proliferation. To this role, which remains

unchanged, the Unified Command Plan added coordination of the CWMD mission across the Department. Recognizing the relevance of USSOCOM's understanding of trans-regional threat networks, the Secretary of Defense approved formal transfer of this role to USSOCOM from USSTRATCOM at the end of 2016. Since his swearing-in last April as USSOCOM Commander, General Clarke has maintained the overarching strategic course set by his predecessor for the CWMD Coordinating Authority. Working within national and Department policy guidance and through USSOCOM's CWMD Fusion Cell, based both here in the National Capital Region and at USSOCOM Headquarters in Tampa, the Coordinating Authority conducts CWMD campaign planning, assesses the Department's execution of the CWMD campaign, and makes recommendations to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Secretary of Defense. For example, we worked with the Combatant Commands, especially USCENTCOM, USEUCOM, and USINDOPACOM, to help integrate CWMD tasks and objectives from the Functional Campaign Plan for CWMD into the Global Campaign Plans for which each of the Combatant Commands is the Coordinating Authority. Along the same lines, we worked with those Combatant Commands and others to integrate CWMD tasks and objectives into scheduled exercises. We also incorporated key concepts from our 2018 Functional Campaign Plan into updates to DoD CWMD military doctrine, such as Joint Publication 3-40. By incorporating key concepts from the Functional Campaign Plan into doctrine, and key tasks and objectives into plans and exercises, the Coordinating Authority thus synchronizes the department across military time horizons of strategy, plans, current operations, and future operations, while also conducting the annual CWMD Assessment.

## **WMD Landscape**

Since I briefed this subcommittee a year ago, the landscape of nuclear, chemical, and biological threats has changed in ways both great and small. We monitor and analyze these changes closely, with critical support from the Defense Intelligence Agency. Due to the classification level of this forum, I am limited in the amount of detail I can include in the picture we see from our Coordinating Authority vantage point, but news headlines are a good indicator of the complexity of the issues. Iran last year incrementally walked back its commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) designed to curb its nuclear program, and in January announced it would not comply with any of JCPOA's restrictions on its uranium enrichment program, although monitoring and transparency provisions remain in effect. Multiple U.S. designations in 2019 of entities associated with or supporting Iran's nuclear and missile programs highlighted continued procurement and proliferation activities, while Iran's January attack on U.S. bases in Iraq served as a sobering reminder of the Islamic Republic's extensive missile arsenal. The United States also believes Iran to be non-compliant with its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). U.S. diplomatic efforts towards denuclearization of the Korean peninsula continued in 2019; however, North Korea retains nuclear weapon capabilities, as well as a likely chemical weapons program, and likely biological warfare capabilities. A U.S. designation last year of a North Korean entity for importing and exporting goods in support of the government's WMD programs indicates continued activity. Meanwhile, the February 2019 conflict between India and Pakistan underscored the international risks of continued tension between these nuclear-armed rivals. China continues to modernize and expand its nuclear arsenal and weapon delivery systems while concerns persist about its compliance with the Biological Weapons Convention. Russia also continues to modernize its

nuclear weapons program, while the U.S. continues to question Russia's compliance with the CWC. In connection with the 2018 nerve agent attack on former Russian intelligence officer Sergei Skripal in the U.K., the U.S. imposed a second round of sanctions on Russia in August 2019. Finally, terrorist groups remain interested in CBRN capability.

### **Interagency and International Coordination**

Clearly, no one agency or even government can address any of these grave issues by itself. Nuclear, chemical, biological, and radiological weapons threats are complex trans-regional challenges that demand the application of specialized expertise and authorities from across our government as well as the unique access and placement of our foreign allies and partners. As our 2018 Functional Campaign Plan recognizes, the Department of Defense in all but the most acute crises is likely to play a supporting role to our interagency colleagues, especially at the departments of Energy, State, the Treasury, and Commerce, as well as our law enforcement entities. We coordinate, therefore, not only across the Department of Defense but also with interagency partners and with foreign allies and partners—without whom achieving U.S. objectives would be unlikely. One of the primary ways we do this is through our cycle of semi-annual CWMD Coordination Conferences. An action officer-level conference each fall identifies issues for senior leader attention which we elevate for deliberation at a Senior Leader Seminar each spring. The September 2019 CWMD Coordination Conference focused on identifying CWMD contributions to overall competition with one of the National Defense Strategy's designated priority challenge countries. More than 900 participants drawn from key U.S. government agencies and from nine foreign defense partners attended or contributed to more than three dozen information sessions or working groups. And later this month, more than 70 senior leaders from many of those same agencies and partner countries will convene for the

Senior Leader Seminar to assess the WMD-related threats and discuss operational approaches to dealing with threat actor WMD issues such as technology procurement, leveraging non-lethal tools to impact threat actor decision-making and intent to use, and denying the perception of benefit from potential use of weapons to nuclear armed states. Even as we follow up on agreed upon actions from those conferences, we are beginning to plan for this fall's action officer-level conference on CWMD contributions to competition with another National Defense Strategy-designated priority challenge country. Weaving between these two events every year is the related structure of Department of Defense CWMD Unity of Effort Council meetings, in which we are an active and supportive participant. We appreciate the Council's broad understanding of, and reach across, the Department's multi-faceted CWMD community and applaud the efforts of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Global Security in co-leading with the Joint Staff J5 the battle rhythm that supports the decisions this group needs to make. Connecting these interrelated cycles is one of the CWMD Unity of Effort Council's subcommittees, which we co-host with the CWMD staff of both the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Global Security and of the Joint Staff J5. This subcommittee provides a steady drumbeat of bi-weekly synchronization meetings for DoD Directors and action offices, which over the past year have facilitated broader community understanding and action on a range of CWMD issues, aligned with the CWMD Unity of Effort Council's vision.

In addition to hosting or participating in these discrete events, USSOCOM as Coordinating Authority supports and collaborates with interagency partners on a range of CWMD activities aligned against top U.S. national security challenges. At the Joint Staff's invitation, we are also leading the effort, as part of the Multinational Capability Development

Campaign, to develop a CWMD Handbook for distribution to allies and foreign partners. The unclassified CWMD Handbook will draw from the 2018 Functional Campaign Plan for CWMD and the new, revised Joint Publication 3-40 and will be focused on the trans-regional nature of the WMD threat and WMD pathways. It will support users in CWMD planning, exercises, training, and capability development and will be completed in January 2021.

### **Globally Integrated Operational Approaches**

To ensure that the DoD role in countering WMD is effective, we have developed Globally Integrated Operational Approaches for each of the Tier 1 WMD threat actors of concern prioritized in the Functional Campaign Plan, which were in turn drawn from the National Defense Strategy's priority challenges. The CWMD Coordinating Authority has collaborated closely with our DoD, interagency, and international partners to develop these frameworks, which lay out lines of effort and tasks aimed at achieving specific end states for each threat actor. Integrating the objectives and tasks of the Functional Campaign Plan and the Global Campaign Plans, these approaches support Combatant Command CWMD planning and provide a structure within which to array and understand ongoing DoD, interagency, and even foreign partner operations, activities, and investments (OAI) that contribute to achievement of those end states. The frameworks also allow us to identify potentially redundant or even conflicting efforts, as well as gaps and opportunities for action. Our first framework, which was in early stages this time last year, has since yielded significant results for our partner Combatant Command in the form of a Planning Order signed out by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. We believe that each framework has the potential to generate fresh and productive approaches to both enduring and evolving WMD challenges across DoD and the interagency.

### **CWMD Common Operating Picture**

Related to the development of these focused frameworks over the past year, we have also developed an accessible tool to collect and display the CWMD operations, activities, and investments (OAI) relevant to the lines of effort and end states of those frameworks. A clear visualization of OAIs enables us as the CWMD Coordinating Authority to support planning of integrated campaigns, coordinate and deconflict activities, and assess DoD-wide activities against adversaries' key WMD steps and decision points.

Over the past year, we migrated this common operating picture, which we originally built out on USSOCOM systems with technical assistance from the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, to the Joint Staff's Global Integration decision support tool—the Command and Control of the Information Environment (C2IE) data analytics platform. This migration captures several significant efficiencies for SOCOM and for the department, for example, enabling us to access, tag, and pull into our display relevant data that the Combatant Commands have already entered for other purposes. C2IE is now an authoritative repository of data across the Joint Force relevant to the CWMD mission set, enabling the tool to be a platform for not only coordination but also Artificial Intelligence and advanced analytics to increase effectiveness of our CWMD efforts.

We are working with the Joint Staff to broaden the use mandate to include Combat Support Agencies and Services and thus broaden the pool of information contributors. Fed by this greater source of data and serving a larger audience, the display will enable increased sharing and understanding of CWMD efforts across the department.

### **Assessments and Recommendations**

The CWMD Coordinating Authority also works closely with the Joint Staff, Combatant Commands, and Services to regularly assess Force progress toward CWMD campaign



objectives, and ensure the Department's plans appropriately address changes in the WMD threat environment. The common operating picture discussed above is intended to be part of this process. This tool will allow the Coordinating Authority to assess risk across multiple AORs and inform global risk calculus for the Secretary, Chairman, and Geographic Combatant Commands to make decisions pertinent to threats or incidents related to nuclear, chemical, and biological weapon development, acquisition or use.

Assessing the Department's CWMD campaign is a core part of the Coordinating Authority's mandate. We therefore strive to improve and refine our approach and methodology and ensure that it provides timely, reliable, relevant, and actionable data to support senior Department decision making with respect to this complex mission set. Our aim is to better support senior leaders charged with leading and employing the Joint Force today, developing and preparing it for tomorrow, and helping design a Joint Force that is ready to fight and win against the WMD threats of the future.

### **2020 Priorities and Conclusion**

Our CWMD Coordinating Authority priorities for this and the upcoming fiscal year include: continuing to support Globally Integrated Department planning, ensuring robust and actionable CWMD assessments, and making timely recommendations to inform senior leader risk calculus. In particular, we will be collaborating with Joint Staff and others to update an important DoD Concept Plan based on the outcomes of a related Globally Integrated Exercise this year. All of this will be fueled by accelerated information sharing, which we will continue to prioritize through close coordination with the intelligence community, as well as through broader data collection and other refinements to our CWMD OAI display on C2IE. Our ability to plan and execute globally integrated operations is directly tied to our commitment to education

and developing a cadre of military and civilian professionals who understand the CWMD mission space, and can think creatively about how we plan and campaign against new and evolving nuclear, chemical, biological, and radiological threats. That is why USSOCOM is also committed to ensuring the Department has a strong champion for CWMD leadership development and education programs that foster critical thinking skills and allow us to adapt quickly to changes in the character of warfare.

In closing, I would like to thank the members of this subcommittee once more for their support of this important national security mission. It is a privilege to work together with Mr. Shaffer, Ms. Whelan, and Mr. Oxford every day to keep our country safe from the threat of nuclear, chemical, and biological threats and I look forward to our continued partnership with them, with members of Congress, and with our interagency and international partners to ensure our safety now and into the future.