STATEMENT OF

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INTRODUCTION

Chairman Langevin, Ranking Member Stefanik, Chairman Bera, Ranking Member Yoho, and members of the sub-committees, I am honored to testify today regarding the Department of Defense's (DoD) efforts to counter biological threats around the world, and how we work in coordination with the Department of State on this issue. My office focuses on developing and shaping policy for countering weapons of mass destruction (CWMD), including biological threats. We represent but one component of the overall DoD and U.S. interagency enterprise that contributes to this mission, some of whom are joining us today.

The DoD CWMD mission is to dissuade, deter, and, when necessary, defeat actors of concern who threaten or use weapons of mass destruction (WMD) against the United States and our interests. Our mission also includes preventing and responding to intentional or accidental use of biological agents as well as naturally occurring outbreaks of especially dangerous pathogens (EDPs). I work alongside the valued colleagues joining me today: Director, Defense Threat Reduction Agency, Vayl Oxford; Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Nonproliferation Programs, Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation, Phil Dolliff, and Acting Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs Jonathan Moore, as well as other DoD, interagency, and international counterparts to advance this mission in the face of existing biological threats and a rapidly changing threat landscape that will inevitably yield new ones. I likewise want to recognize at the outset the Department's appreciation for the interest and support that Congress lends to the threat reduction mission. We recognize that we are stewards of U.S. treasure, including taxpayer dollars, U.S. military and civilian personnel, and capabilities—a responsibility that brings to bear our targeted, specific defense capabilities.

As we look to prevent and contain biological threats before they reach the United States, we also work consistently to ensure we can respond to crises and mitigate the effects of biological agent use at home and abroad—all while continuously improving internal DoD practices and processes, and interagency coordination. The DoD biological threat reduction mission is extensive and complex, requiring expertise from across the Department's components to ensure the effective development and implementation of guidance, analysis, capabilities, and activities. The DoD biological threat reduction enterprise continues to work collaboratively and with

increasing efficiency to prevent the accidental or deliberate release of harmful pathogens, to detect and diagnose naturally occurring outbreaks of security concern quickly, and to respond to and contain outbreaks after they have occurred.

HOW DOD VIEWS BIOLOGICAL THREATS

The Department's biological threat reduction activities are guided by objectives set forth in U.S. national defense and security strategies, including but not limited to: the 2018 National Defense Strategy (NDS); the 2017 National Security Strategy (NSS); the 2018 National Strategy for Countering WMD Terrorism (NSCWMDT); and the 2018 National Biodefense Strategy (NBS). Each strategy acknowledges the threat posed by the deliberate weaponization or accidental misuse of biological threat agents, with the NSCWMDT comparing the potential scale of casualties caused by biological agents to that of nuclear weapons. Our objectives in confronting these threats are dissuading, preventing, deterring, and detecting State and non-State actors' attempts to pursue, acquire, or use biological weapons. Further, DoD's activities align with goals set forth in U.S. and international global health strategies, including the Global Health Security Strategy (GHSS) and the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA). The GHSS and GHSA call for national and international efforts to strengthen global capacities to prevent, detect, and respond to infectious disease threats that could pose security concerns. Within its mission space, DoD addresses GHSS and GHSA objectives by strengthening biosafety, biosecurity, and biosurveillance capacities of partner nations worldwide.

The Department recognizes the significance of infectious disease threats and their potential impact on U.S. national security and defense interests. Our perspective and involvement in the biological threat reduction space is shaped by three core concerns: the health and readiness of U.S. forces and partner and ally militaries; the destabilizing effects of disease outbreaks on the United States and its interests; and the diversion of focus, resources, and capabilities from priority defense objectives to meet emergency needs during an outbreak.

Infectious disease outbreaks, whether naturally occurring or the result of accidental or deliberate release of a biological agent, do not respect borders. A biological threat abroad has the potential to spread quickly and pose a direct threat to the United States as well as to the health and readiness of U.S. forces and allies and partners abroad. An infectious disease outbreak has

the potential to undermine DoD's operational readiness and ability to provide combat-credible military forces needed to deter conflict and to protect the security of the nation.

Similarly, disease outbreaks in partner nations can impair national security partnerships and, in the absence of adequate response measures, lead to long-term economic, political, and security destabilization. As partner nations are forced to devote more time and resources to combatting the spread of a disease within their borders, fewer resources are available to address external defense and security challenges. This is currently playing out with the COVID-19 pandemic, as defense budgets and exercises of partners and allies have either reduced or are likely to reduce as nations focus on combatting the virus domestically. This weakens America's network of allies and partners and their ability to confront common threats jointly, which in turn places a greater financial and operational burden on DoD to protect vital U.S. security interests abroad.

Finally, widespread disease outbreaks divert DoD's attention, resources, and capabilities from long-term strategic defense objectives in order to meet the immediate needs of the crisis. This has been made abundantly clear throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. DoD shifted resources, manpower, and operational focus to support domestic response. Our primary responsibility is to protect the American people by preserving the Department's readiness, lethality, and deterrent ability in an era of strategic competition, which, in the context of the pandemic, includes ensuring the availability of personnel, equipment, and supplies to be provided, as required, for the domestic COVID-19 response.

THREAT LANDSCAPE

In an always changing threat landscape, the Department is positioned to address a range of biological threats, regardless of how or where they arise. This includes naturally occurring infectious disease outbreaks and accidental or deliberate release of biological threat agents; threats posed by State and non-State actors; international and domestic outbreaks; and potential threats posed by existing and emerging dual-use technologies, which hold both promise and peril in their applications.

Impacts of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has further altered the threat landscape. This pandemic has demonstrated the wide-reaching and destabilizing impact that infectious disease outbreaks can

have on the world, and may result in greater interest by non-State actors and terrorist organizations in developing biological weapons.

Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic may erode norms around the development and deliberate usage of biological agents. Although international norms condemn these types of weapons, witnessing the impact of a pathogen of pandemic potential firsthand may embolden State or non-State actors to pursue and use biological agents that could potentially create a constant upheaval of everyday life.

There also may be an increased interest by terrorists and non-State actors in exploiting security vulnerabilities of laboratories housing especially dangerous pathogens. Facilities that lack appropriate biosecurity measures could allow actors who wish to do harm to acquire and/or divert pathogen samples. Adding to this problem are the increasing number of high containment facilities worldwide that house the most dangerous pathogens; some of those facilities lack suitable security measures to protect their pathogen stockpiles.

Impacts of Emerging Technologies

CWMD Policy is actively monitoring emerging technologies, including biotechnologies, to assess how they might impact our broader threat reduction efforts. We recognize that emerging biotechnologies, including gene editing and synthetic biology, may reduce the barrier to biological weapon development as they become more readily accessible by the general public. Other emerging technologies may pose additional biological threat reduction challenges. For example, 3D-printing may help facilitate the production of complex and previously costly and difficult-to-procure equipment that is necessary for producing such agents. Similarly, advances in drone technology may aid in targeted dissemination of biological threat agents. Furthermore, the inherently dual-use nature of biological capabilities makes countering proliferation of biological-related technologies, material, and expertise even more challenging. Finally, adversaries' pursuit of advanced biotechnologies could threaten U.S. technological superiority and economic competitiveness. CWMD Policy is incorporating the threats posed by these emerging technologies into our strategic guidance and assessments, and coordinating DoD's efforts through forums such as the CWMD Unity of Effort Council.

HOW DOD IS ORGANIZED TO ADDRESS BIOLOGICAL THREATS

As mentioned previously, biological threat reduction-related stakeholders across DoD ensure that the Department is postured to address the full range of biological threats. Outlined below are several of the offices that contribute to this mission and their respective responsibilities:

Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (DASD) for Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction (CWMD)

My office has a unique role in focusing on the WMD linkage with various biological threats. Regarding the CWMD mission, we seek to ensure that the United States and its allies and partners are neither attacked nor coerced by actors with WMD or WMD-related capabilities. With respect to biological threats, we focus on activities to prevent, detect, and respond to high-consequence biological incidents, regardless of origin. We continually consider the tools we can bring to bear to mitigate threats from: naturally occurring infectious disease outbreaks; accidental or deliberate release of especially dangerous pathogens; biological weapon development, proliferation, and usage; and State and non-State actor interest in or deployment of biological threat agents. My office coordinates closely and regularly with our U.S. interagency colleagues and international partners, including Canada and the United Kingdom, to ensure that biological threat reduction efforts are deconflicted and leveraged to maximize U.S. investments while achieving the greatest threat reduction impact possible.

Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR)

The primary mission of the DoD CTR Program, as it relates to biological threats, is to reduce the proliferation of biological weapons (BW), BW components, and BW-related technologies and expertise. It is also charged with facilitating the detection and reporting of diseases caused by especially dangerous pathogens, regardless of whether they are naturally occurring or the result of accidental or deliberate release. DoD CTR focuses exclusively on the "left of boom," meaning to prevent and detect the full spectrum of WMD-related activities, whether nuclear, biological, or chemical WMD.

The DoD CTR Program, through the Biological Threat Reduction Program (BTRP), works with international partners to accomplish its threat reduction mission in three ways. First, we assist partner nations in developing sufficient capabilities to counter biological threats—most

notably by working to improve biosafety and biosecurity (BS&S) and biosurveillance (BSV) capacities—with the goal of transitioning ownership and sustainment of these capabilities to the host nation. By doing so, CWMD Policy is reducing long-term reliance of partner nations on DoD assistance and is building a network of capable partners able to address emerging biological threats collectively. Prime examples of these can be seen in the cases of the Republic of Georgia and the Republic of Kazakhstan, both of which are leveraging laboratory capacities previously provided by the DoD CTR Program as part of their respective COVID-19 preparedness and response activities.

Second, we promote cross-border collaboration between partner nations to encourage regionalized, networked approaches toward biological security and actively encourage partner nations to assume regional leadership roles in this space. This includes data sharing regarding outbreaks of especially dangerous pathogens, promoting BS&S and BSV best practices within a region, fostering international scientific research engagements, and integrating national BS&S and BSV capabilities into regional efforts, thereby leveraging collective assets to advance shared threat reduction objectives. This can be seen through such engagements as our Biosurveillance Network of the Silk Road effort, which is currently promoting collaboration among health experts throughout Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and Central Asia to share outbreak data and best practices for safe and effective COVID-19 diagnosis and reporting.

Finally, CWMD Policy works with other donor nations to pool resources and share responsibilities for common biological threat reduction goals. We work through international forums like the G7 Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction and the Global Health Security Agenda to identify mutual threat reduction objectives, align and de-conflict activities, and pool resources. In this way, we are simultaneously reducing the financial burden on DoD while maximizing the impacts of our shared biological threat reduction investments.

In Fiscal Year 2019 (FY 2019), the Secretary of Defense carried out the first Defense-Wide Review, a line-by-line examination of defense agency and activity budgets. The Secretary recognized that, in an era of flat defense budgets, he must make tough prioritization choices, and accept that there would be resulting risks. The Secretary focused on freeing up time, money, and manpower to redirect towards NDS priorities, ultimately resulting in a Fiscal Year (FY) 2021

savings of approximately $5.7 billion across the Department. At the conclusion of the DoD CTR Program review, the Secretary directed an across-the-program budget reduction of 27 percent. CTR Policy is working with interagency partners and international partners, and within the Department to minimize risk in eliminating or transferring lower-priority activities to host-nation sustainment.

Transnational Threats (TNT)

The CWMD Policy office also works to prevent and deter adversaries from acquiring biological weapons or weaponizing dual-use biotechnologies. Like DoD CTR, the TNT effort focuses on "left of boom" activities. The team develops policies to address the potential risks of emerging dual-use biotechnologies and reduce the likelihood of adversaries developing or obtaining new biological weapons. TNT work also seeks to protect and promote the U.S. biotechnology sector, or "bioeconomy," which is critical to maintaining our technological advantage, while also working to ensure that our advancements do not leave us more vulnerable.

Biodefense

Our team also focuses on incident response in order to prepare U.S. forces properly to operate in and through the consequences of an international chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear crisis. The team works to engage international partners to develop their forces' capacity to withstand and respond to CBRN incidents, as well as to advocate for DoD biodefense capabilities. The Office of the DASD for Homeland Defense Integration and Defense Support of Civil Authorities, within the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (OUSD) for Policy, leads the Department in the implementation of the National Biodefense Strategy. My office supports that implementation with a focus on the capabilities to prevent bioincidents.

The three teams under CWMD Policy work across a range of DoD offices that focus on preventing, detecting, containing, and responding to biological threats worldwide, as summarized below:

Office of the DASD for Homeland Defense Integration and Defense Support of Civil Authorities Policy (HDI&DSCA)

The DASD for Homeland Defense Integration and Defense Support of Civil Authorities Policy (HDI&DSCA), under the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Global Security (ASD(HD&GS)), is responsible for the development, coordination, and oversight of the integration and implementation of plans and policy for homeland defense, defense support of civil authorities, programs, and budgets within the DoD Components, and for homeland security-related interagency relationships. HDI&DSCA focuses on domestic efforts with regard to CWMD and CBRN defense. Partnerships for these missions include, but are not limited to, the Department of Justice, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Department of Health and Human Services.

With regard to the National Biodefense Strategy (NBS), the HDI&DSCA office is the coordinator for the Department and assists in the establishment of: risk mitigation and prevention of, preparation for, response to, and recovery from biological threats, including natural, accidental, or deliberate biological threats. Additionally, the HDI&DSCA office provides oversight for the Global Campaign Plan for Pandemic Influenza and Infectious Disease in support of the National Strategy and Implementation Plan for Pandemic Influenza.

Office of the DASD for Health Readiness Policy and Oversight (HRP&O)

Within the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, the DASD for Health Readiness Policy and Oversight (HRP&O) serves as the principal advisor to the ASD for Health Affairs with responsibility for all medical readiness-related DoD policies, programs, and activities. Among HRP&O's many responsibilities are medical countermeasures, preventive medicine, medical preparedness, and the Office of Global Health Engagement (GHE). HRP&O oversees research and development of medical solutions to endemic diseases and operational health threats, and provides policy and oversight of medical countermeasure use and compliance under the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) rules and regulations. HRP&O regularly interfaces with DoD stakeholders and the FDA to ensure the DoD has the capabilities needed to protect the force, and for use of medical countermeasures through FDA pathways.

DoD's GHE activities are primarily focused on force health protection. These activities require collaboration with partner nations to achieve mission success. This includes a global biosurveillance network, coordinated by the Global Emerging Infections Surveillance program; research to mitigate biological threats to DoD warfighters, which is conducted at Army and Navy Overseas Laboratories and elsewhere; and the Department of Defense HIV/AIDS Prevention Program, which works closely with the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) program to assist militaries in addressing HIV in more than 50 nations. GHE activities help build health capabilities and capacities, increase interoperability with partner nations, and contribute to meeting the security cooperation objectives of our Combatant Commands. As has been true for requests for other DoD humanitarian assistance and foreign disaster response efforts, these capabilities are also being leveraged to support DoD's international response to COVID-19.

The Offices of the ASD(HD&GS) and ASD Health Affairs are the co-leads for DoD representation to the GHSA: a multisectoral, multilateral effort composed of 69 countries, international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and private sector groups to improve global capacities to prevent, detect, and respond to infectious disease threats around the world. My office (under the ASD(HD&GS)) and HRP&O (under the ASD for Health Affairs) work on GHSA-related issues. Most notably, our offices are working to increase partner nation defense sector engagement in global health security, as many defense sectors worldwide have significant expertise, capabilities, relationships, and resources in health security that both complement and strengthen activities by their civilian counterparts

Through these activities and Foreign Medical Liaison Officers, HRP&O has longstanding relationships with several major partners, including, but not limited to, Australia, Canada, Germany, Ghana, Indonesia, Kenya, Nigeria, Peru, South Korea, Thailand, and the United Kingdom.

The Office of the DASD for Chemical and Biological Defense (CBD)

Within the Office of the USD for Acquisition and Sustainment, DASD CBD's mission is to anticipate future threats and deliver capabilities that enable the Joint Force to fight and win in chemical and biological (CB)-contested environments through a coordinated effort designed to neutralize CB threats.

The Chemical and Biological Defense Program (CBDP) is a comprehensive research, development, and acquisition program providing capabilities to the Military Departments and Services to ensure the Joint Force is ready to continue operations when facing current, emerging, and future chemical and biological threats posed by NDS actors of concern. The CBDP addresses the evolving threat and changing domain space created by the convergence of multiple scientific disciplines and the rapid pace of technological advances, which present both a bright promise of new capabilities for the warfighter and a dark promise of novel and complex threats that will need to be addressed by the Department.

In addition, the CBDP focuses on medical countermeasures to combat biological threats. Currently, the CBDP is transitioning from conventional approaches for diagnostic, vaccine, and therapeutic development to an increased emphasis on dynamic response capabilities that can be more easily adapted to a rapidly changing threat environment.

The CBDP works with our closest allies and partners to leverage existing technologies and maximize investments as we collectively are constrained by the resources available to address problems in the CB WMD-space. For example, the CBDP supports programs in the Asia-Pacific region that bolster preparedness on the Korean Peninsula and works with regional partners, such as Singapore and Australia, to increase situational awareness tools for earlier detection and response to emerging biological threats at the regional level.

The Office of the USD for Research and Engineering (R&E)

The Under Secretary of Defense for R&E has eleven technology modernization priorities, each led by a Principal Director who is responsible for unifying and advancing the Department's investments and capabilities in their respective area. One of the modernization areas is biotechnology, which is classified as an engineering discipline that uses living systems to produce a wide range of technologies and products. Future advances in biotechnology will provide new operational capabilities to the Department of Defense across multiple domains spanning material and systems, military medicine, warfighter performance, and chemical-biological defense. Biotech modernization aims to accelerate the transition of science and technology towards prototyping and production at a rate faster than is currently possible, through government, academia, and industry partnerships with domestic and international scientific experts.

COOPERATION WITH INTERAGENCY AND INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

A critical component of the Department's strategy for countering biological threats is working in close coordination with interagency and international partners. Strong, durable alliances and partnerships are crucial for advancing long-term U.S. interests, maintaining favorable balances of power that deter aggression, and lessening the security burden placed on DoD. Pooling resources and working toward shared objectives for our common defense are paramount to ensuring U.S. security and defense interests are met.

More specific to my colleagues attending today, Phil Dolliff and I have biweekly conversations that span the CWMD spectrum. On threat reduction, my director and the CTR Policy staff coordinate on strategic matters on a weekly basis. It is Phil's team that shepherds DoD CTR Program determinations with the State Department offices that have equities—which span regional bureaus and other functional offices—to ensure there is a coordinated, informed review of DoD CTR programs. We take this process seriously, given the importance of a unified approach the U.S. Government must take in this mission space. Both of our teams work on identifying efficiencies in process and procedure, and we have made great strides.

With specific regard to biological threats, CTR Policy works closely with the State Department's Biosecurity Engagement Program (BEP) to coordinate, leverage, and deconflict activities. Although both offices share similar goals of improving BS&S and BSV capabilities in partner nations, we each bring unique relationships, experience, and expertise to bear, which complement each other's work and maximizes our threat reduction impacts.

Bottom line is that this thorough, deliberate, and informed review and coordination process ensures that our program is driving toward the right strategic outcomes that align with national security objectives.

CONCLUSION

Looking forward, the collective capabilities and expertise of biological threat reduction-related stakeholders across DoD will enable us to address the existing and emerging biological threats of 2020 and beyond. We will continue working to mitigate the likelihood of and impacts from outbreaks of especially dangerous pathogens worldwide—regardless of whether such outbreaks are naturally occurring or the result of deliberate or accidental release of a biological

agent—while at the same time positioning the Department both to utilize emerging technologies and to counter the threats posed by them. Prioritization efforts led by DoD's policy experts will further ensure that programs overseen by CWMD Policy are focused on areas where the Department has a core role, where the highest threat reduction value lies, and that align with our strategic political-military objectives. We will continue working closely with U.S. interagency and international partners to help reach peak return on our investments.

Thank you for your continued support of CWMD Policy and the Department's efforts to prevent, detect, contain, and respond to biological threats worldwide.