

Statement by

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## **Introduction**

Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Rogers, distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me to testify on our defense policy in the U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM) and U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) theaters, alongside Commanders General Townsend and General McKenzie. I would also like to express my appreciation for the strong support Congress provides the Department. As a career civilian in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, I have seen firsthand how executive and legislative branches work together to ensure our armed forces have the resources and authorities required to deter, and if necessary, defeat any foe.

Secretary Austin has emphasized the need to match resources to strategy, strategy to policy, and policy to the will of the American people. The President's Interim National Security Strategic Guidance speaks to that approach by prioritizing the security of the American people, the expansion of economic prosperity and opportunity, and the defense of the democratic values at the heart of the American way of life. This requires the Department of Defense to defend our people and economy, deter and prevent adversaries from directly threatening the United States and our allies, and support whole of government efforts to lead and sustain a stable and open international system. The Department of Defense will achieve these goals by working in coordination with the Department of State to reinvigorate our global alliances and partnerships and prioritizing China as our pacing challenge. We will remain fully ready to respond to and effectively deter nation-state threats; and will disrupt transnational and non-state actor threats from violent extremist organizations (VEOs) that threaten the U.S. homeland.

An early priority for the Secretary of Defense is to match our resources to this strategy by right-sizing our posture investments. To that end, at the President's direction, the Department is undertaking a Global Posture Review to balance among operational requirements, risk, readiness,

and global commitments.

In Africa and the Middle East, the Department of Defense plays a supporting role to broader U.S. Government efforts, as we recognize that employment of military force is not the answer to these regions' challenges. Our policy objective is to increase stability and secure U.S. interests by working by, with, and through reinvigorated networks of regional partners and international allies. By enhancing the capabilities and capacity of our partners to provide for their own defense and to address regional problems, we reduce the risk to our interests while increasing the internal security and stability of potentially vulnerable states. We will represent and advance U.S. interests and values in our defense relationships as we do in our broader bilateral relationships.

### **Africa**

The Department of Defense will continue to build partnerships in Africa to support conflict resolution, combat threats posed by violent extremism, improve the institutions of defense ministries, and strengthen democratic norms and the rule of law. Enhancing our alliances and partnerships in Africa through diplomatic, development, and security initiatives will enable us to be more effective in protecting and securing U.S. interests in and related to Africa.

Overall, the security challenges in Africa include growing instability posed by VEOs in the Sahel, al-Shabaab in Somalia, the entrenched presence of ISIS in Mozambique (ISISM) in portions of northern Mozambique, and conflict in Ethiopia. These challenges garner the attention of many U.S. allies, partners, and strategic competitors.

DoD supports a holistic approach to the security challenges in Africa, ensuring that U.S. security and governance approaches are mutually reinforcing and sufficiently comprehensive. Working with our colleagues at the State Department and across the U.S. Government, we are reviewing all of our deployments, including in Africa, to ensure they are right-sized to balance

near-term challenges with long-term DoD modernization and readiness. This holistic approach is also evidenced by the diverse set of programs DoD implements in Africa to help build resilient defense institutions. For example, in coordination with the Department of State, DoD's training activities promotes a respect for the law of armed conflict, civilian oversight over the military, human rights, and gender diversity in partner nation security and defense sectors. Other aspects of this approach include key leader engagements, counter-terrorism training and assistance, bi-lateral and multi-lateral dialogues, military training exercises, foreign military sales and other security-related assistance, intelligence sharing, institutional capacity building, crisis response, and humanitarian assistance.

The Department's force posture in Africa is primarily concentrated in the Horn of Africa. This is supplemented with modest security cooperation investments, which are also directed to the Maghreb, Sahel, and Lake Chad Basin regions. Our engagements elsewhere on the continent, such as in Central and Southern Africa, are designed to keep an open dialogue and encourage positive changes toward more robust bilateral efforts, where possible.

#### *Horn of Africa*

In the Horn of Africa, progress has been challenging. At present, DoD remains committed to supporting the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and Troop Contributing Countries to that mission, including Ethiopia, Kenya, Burundi, and Uganda. We seek to address the threat posed by al-Shabaab and to adopt a tailored, effective, and sustainable strategy to pursue our national security interests in Somalia and East Africa. As an element of that focus, we are reviewing our posture in the region and looking closely at the safety of U.S. personnel operating in Somalia and the current terrorist threat in the region.

In Ethiopia, we are troubled by the loss of life and mass displacement that are a result of the

conflict in the Tigray region and are calibrating our assistance based on the ongoing situation. At the same time, we value Ethiopia's contribution to AMISOM. Kenya continues to be a strong DoD partner in AMISOM and we mutually benefit from our bilateral engagements. In Uganda, we share the concern of other U.S. departments and agencies related to the conduct of the elections, the erosion of Uganda's democratic norms, and the Ugandan security forces' violence against opposition supporters and other civilians. Although we value Uganda's key role in AMISOM as the largest troop contributing country, we support the Department of State in promoting accountability for those individuals who have violated the Ugandan people's human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Djibouti, as host to Camp Lemonnier with about 3,500 DoD military and civilian personnel, remains a critical U.S. partner. Djibouti's geostrategic location near the Bab al-Mandab strait is an important node in supporting DoD force flow and counterterrorism operations between the AFRICOM and CENTCOM areas of operations. Djibouti also hosts a constellation of foreign militaries to include U.S. partners like France and Japan, as well as China, whose first overseas naval base is six miles from Camp Lemonnier.

### *Sahel and West Africa*

In the Sahel and West Africa, DoD supports interagency and multilateral efforts to address the drivers of insecurity, contain the spread of violence, and stabilize the region. DoD supports both the militaries of our African partners, and our European partners who support them, in their fight against VEOs. We also work closely with international partners to coordinate security and civilian protection efforts, including the Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), France's Operation BARKHANE, the G5 Sahel Joint Force, the Multinational Joint Task Force, and bilateral security forces of Chad, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Niger, Nigeria, and

Senegal. Military assistance to Mali is currently suspended due to the August 2020 coup. We are focused on improving coordination of these efforts, and preventing the spillover of instability into littoral West Africa. DoD also works closely with West African partners to professionalize their armed forces, including adherence to the law of armed conflict, and prevention and accountability for human rights violations.

In West Africa, DoD is also concerned by the rising rates of piracy, illicit trafficking, and illegal, unregulated, and unreported (IUU) fishing in the Gulf of Guinea that impedes global trade and puts freedom of navigation at risk. Alongside the Department of State, DoD continues to work with global and regional partners to secure the South Atlantic from maritime threats, including through the provision of security cooperation activities and joint exercises that enhance the capabilities of partner nation navies and coast guards.

#### *North Africa*

In North Africa, Morocco and Tunisia continue to be key security partners who broadly support our common security objectives on the continent and the southern Mediterranean. As the only two major non-NATO Allies in Africa, Moroccan and Tunisian partnership is important for U.S. readiness as they host the largest land and naval exercises in Africa as well as other training events. Both countries have committed to helping export security to other African partners through training, exercises, and support to United Nations peacekeeping missions in Mali and the Central African Republic.

In terms of positive change, for the first time in years Libya appears to be making real progress through the UN-facilitated process toward political reconciliation and de-escalation. While malign foreign presence, like that of Russia and disparate foreign-backed mercenaries, continues to threaten a peaceful and a sovereign Libya, the Libyan people have committed to

holding national elections in December of this year and have agreed to a ceasefire that calls for the departure of all foreign forces and mercenaries. DoD supports interagency efforts to support these elections and urge foreign elements to begin their withdrawal. We see a real opportunity to support the development of a functioning Libyan state aligned with our common security interests. Finally, we continue to engage Algerian leaders with the sincere desire to strengthen ties as we face the challenge of persistent violent extremism in North Africa and the Sahel.

### *Strategic Competition*

DoD's work is also important in the light of our strategic competitors' interests in Africa. China remains a serious competitor on the continent where its expansive economic, security, and political engagements provide access and influence. While China could make positive contributions to African security, its activities too often undercut regional and global efforts to strengthen local defense institutions and long-term stability grounded in international rules and norms. As China's overseas development and security interests expand, so too may its military and logistical support system to project power and protect those interests. A global People's Liberation Army logistics network could interfere with U.S. and allies military operations and eventually support offensive operations. We are seeing warning signs of this in Djibouti, China's first overseas military base, where the PLA has violated international norms by lasing U.S. military equipment and sought to restrict Djiboutian sovereign airspace. DoD is committed to halting the spread of these destabilizing activities in Africa through strong partnerships, multilateral engagement, and support of interagency initiatives that provide our partners with options that adhere to international norms.

Concurrently, Russia's security cooperation efforts and outsourcing to private military companies directly undermine our efforts to advance U.S. interests and values in Africa. Together

with interagency partners, we are concerned about Russia's expanding military partnerships, resource extraction, and malign influence in Africa.

### *Burden Sharing*

DoD values the support of European partners who have deep ties to Africa. The Sahel and West Africa highlight the assistance of European partners such as France taking the international lead to counter VEOs and achieve mutual objectives. In Mozambique, Portugal has shown strong interest in training the Mozambican military in its fight against ISIS-Mozambique. In East Africa, the UK is a key partner in countering al-Shabaab. The Department of Defense welcome the support of like-minded partners to help bring stability and peace in support of African solutions to African problems.

### **Middle East**

In the Middle East, the Department of Defense will work with our allies and regional partners to deter Iranian aggression and threats to sovereignty and stability, disrupt al-Qa'ida and related terrorist networks, prevent an Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) resurgence, and protect other U.S. vital interests such as freedom of navigation. We will also support diplomatic efforts to deescalate regional tensions and improve security and stability in the Middle East.

As we continue to foster ironclad, decades-long defense relationships with our Middle East partners, we must recognize that China and Russia continue to pursue their own interests and influence, which often aim to counter U.S. policy objectives, threaten U.S. force protection, and limit operational flexibility. China continues to expand its military and intelligence footprint and increase its involvement in the region's ports and technological infrastructure, while Russia increases its presence in the Eastern Mediterranean. This has the potential to create new complications for U.S. forces conducting global operations. Russia seeks to reshape Middle East



security structures and expand its regional influence by creating frozen conflicts and exploiting governance vacuums to increase Russian leverage and influence. Both countries use weapons sales as a leading tool to deepen their influence in the region. China seeks to exploit Iranian economic weakness to secure long term, discounted access to Iranian resources. In response, the United States continues to invest in our long-standing regional partnerships to ensure that we remain the partner of choice in the Middle East. Our partners increasingly recognize the risks associated with accepting Chinese technological infrastructure and debt traps, reliance on Russian weaponry, and the destabilizing role Russia is playing in perpetuating Middle Eastern conflicts.

### *Iran*

The Department of Defense plays a supporting role in the United States' Iran strategy by focusing on deterring and defending against Iranian military threats, while the Department of State leads diplomatic efforts to bring Iran's nuclear program back into compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. The Department will calibrate its force posture to deter Iranian aggression, while building the capabilities and capacity of our partners to increasingly address Iranian destabilizing activities, including the development and proliferation of short and medium range ballistic missiles and unmanned aerial systems, deniable attacks on commercial shipping and oil facilities, training and equipping of proxy forces outside the control of states, and global cyber attacks.

Although we seek de-escalation, when required and directed by the President, we will act to protect American and coalition personnel from Iran-backed threats. In February 2021, at the President's direction, the Department of Defense executed an airstrike in self-defense that targeted infrastructure in Syria used by Iran-backed militia groups in response to an attack on our forces in Iraq. The strike was carefully calibrated to avoid a broader escalatory cycle in the region, but also

made clear that this administration always stands ready to take necessary and proportionate actions to defend U.S. forces when necessary at a time and place of our choosing. We will continue holding Iran responsible for attacks by militias that Iran backs with arms, training, and funds.

*Operation INHERENT RESOLVE*

We maintain our leadership role in the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, which brings together 78 nations and 5 international organizations to provide an array of military capabilities, funding, and political support to the campaign against ISIS. Since 2014, the United States and its partners in the Global Coalition have made tangible progress in the fight against ISIS in Iraq and Syria. After the successful re-claiming of ISIS's territorial holdings, Operation INHERENT RESOLVE (OIR) formally transitioned to stabilization activities under Phase IV in July 2020. In this phase of OIR, we have shifted our focus toward advising, equipping, and assisting partner forces to improve their capabilities and capacities, enabling them to manage the ISIS threat independently.

In Iraq, the Coalition continues to work by, with, and through the Iraqi Security Forces and Kurdish Peshmerga. As Iraqi military capabilities have strengthened, Iraqi forces have taken the lead in combating ISIS. Although ISIS no longer holds territory in Iraq, it remains a dangerous insurgency movement, still capable of carrying out attacks. The January twin suicide bombing attacks in Baghdad are evidence of the ongoing threat ISIS poses, and reaffirm the continued need for Coalition-supported counterterrorism pressure in Iraq. However, the enduring defeat of ISIS is not just a military effort. Instead, OIR is just one piece of a broader whole-of-government strategy designed to address the underlying social, economic, and political conditions that gave rise to ISIS and that ISIS continues to exploit. U.S. and Coalition forces support the Iraqi Security Forces as they establish security and stability in Iraq, which also enables the Government of Iraq to address

underlying issues.

Attacks by Iran-backed militia groups in Iraq threaten to divert attention and resources from the fight against ISIS and pose a threat to the security of U.S. forces, Iraqi civilians, and neighboring states. The United States is in Iraq at the invitation of the Government of Iraq to support our Iraqi partners in the fight against ISIS, but the protection of U.S. and Coalition forces remains our top priority. The United States does not seek conflict with Iran or their proxies, and we remain well postured to defend our forces in Iraq and respond to attacks and threats of attacks.

In Syria, the Coalition continues to work by, with, and through the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and other vetted Syrian partner forces and individuals. The SDF, with Coalition support, liberated vast stretches of Syria from ISIS control and has successfully kept a lid on ISIS activity in the northeast. ISIS has retreated to mostly un-governed spaces, such as the Badiyah Desert in central Syria, from which it intends to regroup and launch attacks. Coalition-supported counterterrorism pressure is crucial to disrupting ISIS activity and preventing it from reconstituting. Off the battlefield, the SDF shoulders the responsibility of the international community by detaining approximately 10,000 ISIS fighters, including 2,000 foreign fighters. Additionally, the SDF provides security around Internally Displaced Person (IDP) camps, including the sprawling al-Hol camp with more than 60,000 residents. In recent months Al-Hol suffered a number of security incidents, and we remain concerned about the long-term implications of exposing children and families to ISIS ideology within the camp. To bolster the safety and security of al-Hol, the SDF recently concluded an operation designed to degrade and disrupt ISIS activity. With U.S. support, the SDF displayed remarkable professionalism in executing this operation and coordinating on security issues with the camp administration and the humanitarian community to ensure life-saving NGO services continue.

## *Yemen*

In Yemen, the United States seeks a peaceful resolution to the conflict that will improve stability in Yemen and the region, and reduce human suffering. Together with the Department of State and the United Nations, we support the UN Special Envoy's efforts to achieve a nationwide ceasefire, alleviate the dire humanitarian situation, and re-start the political process. The Department has two lines of effort in Yemen. The first is our fight against terrorist organizations that threaten U.S. national security interests, and have capitalized on Yemen's instability. Along with our partners, we degraded al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula's ability to conduct external attacks and ISIS-Yemen's presence.

Our second line of effort is to provide limited, non-combat support to the Saudi-led Coalition (SLC) focused on defending Saudi Arabia from external threats. This non-combat support is consistent with President Biden's February 4, 2021 announcement to increase U.S. diplomatic efforts to end the war in Yemen and cease U.S. support to SLC offensive operations in Yemen. Continued U.S. assistance is designed to reassure U.S. partners of our commitment to their defense so that they can meaningfully engage in the United Nations political process to end the war. In support of the President's policy, roughly 60 DoD military advisors are deployed to help Saudi Arabia's Armed Forces defend their territory from threats emanating from Yemen.

With Iranian support, the Houthis are using increasingly sophisticated ballistic missiles and explosive unmanned aerial vehicles against our partners—including against civilian infrastructure and airports where American citizens are present. The Houthis also target military and commercial vessels in the Red Sea, threatening a major maritime corridor. Despite the spike in cross-border attacks on civilian infrastructure in the Kingdom by Iran-backed Houthi rebels, Saudi leaders supported a comprehensive ceasefire proposal made to the Houthi rebels on March 22.

Unfortunately, the Houthi leadership has prioritized offensive operations in Marib and repeated attacks on key infrastructure in Saudi Arabia over reaching agreement on the UN-brokered ceasefire proposal.

*Partnerships: Levant and Gulf*

The United States will only achieve its objectives for a more stable and secure region if it has capable partners with whom it can cooperate and burden share. For decades, we have invested in these bilateral partnerships to advance our collective security. U.S. national security depends on more than force posture and unilateral actions. Through our resources and network of partnerships and alliances, we seek to build local capacity, develop coalitions that can respond to future threats, and ensure the United States remains the defense partner of choice in the region.

Our partnership with Israel rests on shared democratic values dating back to the founding of the modern State of Israel in 1948 when we were the first country to recognize its independence. We are continuing and expanding a decades-long tradition of cooperation that spans virtually every aspect of our two defense establishments: from advanced technology and systems development to care for wounded warriors, from space awareness to counter-tunneling. Our own forces' capabilities benefit greatly from our cooperation in areas ranging from air and ballistic missile defense, armored vehicle defense, and long-range precision fires. The United States and Israel share common views of the major threats to regional stability and collaborate in countering them. Moreover, U.S. security assistance signals to the region and the world our unbreakable commitment to Israel's security. The Department supports ongoing efforts to normalize relations between Israel and Arab partners. The transfer of Israel to the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility will provide additional opportunities for cooperation with our U.S. Central Command partners, while

maintaining strong cooperation between Israel and our European allies and partners. DoD also supports the Office of the United States Security Coordinator for Israel and the Palestinian Authority (USSC) in building capable and professional Palestinian Security Forces.

In the rest of the Levant and in Egypt, we maintain strategic partnerships focused on our shared interests in regional security and stability. Jordan is a steadfast and enduring partner, a key contributor to the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, an invaluable partner in our search for peace between Israelis and Palestinians, and a bastion of safety to the region's many displaced people. In Lebanon, we maintain a strong commitment to support the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF), which we have helped develop into a professional and capable counterterrorism and security partner since 2006. However, as the Lebanese political system and economic situation continues to deteriorate, rampant inflation has diminished the purchasing power of LAF salaries and strained the LAF's ability to maintain and sustain its capabilities. Strong U.S. interest in Lebanon's stability and security necessitates that we continue to assist the LAF as they take on additional duties in response to compounding crises.

In Egypt, we continue to support capacity building efforts focused on counterterrorism in the Sinai Peninsula, security of land borders, and partnership on maritime security to ensure the free flow of vessels in and around the Suez Canal. The blockage of the Suez Canal for six days in late March shows how important this waterway is to the world, and in particular to U.S. economic and security interests.

The recent reduction in tension and end to the Gulf rift that began in May 2017 offer opportunities to improve regional security, reduce tensions, and focus on the threat from Iran. Saudi Arabia remains a central pillar of our regional counterterrorism efforts, and is a key stakeholder in the Yemen conflict. The Saudis are an important partner for cooperation in

promoting regional stability, security, and countering Iranian influence. The United Arab Emirates remains a willing and capable partner in regional security efforts, including participation in maritime security initiatives and joint counterterrorism operations in Afghanistan and Yemen. Oman serves as a critical waypoint for DoD operations in the USCENTCOM area of responsibility and is a consistent voice for moderation in regional affairs. Kuwait remains a key partner for force-flow and logistic support to U.S. forces throughout the region, and continues to host the fourth largest presence of U.S. forces outside the United States. Qatar is a critical host for U.S. forces and is taking steps to increase its interoperability with U.S. and NATO forces. Bahrain is a key U.S. partner in regional coalitions and hosts the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet, a critical resource in protecting the freedom of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz. The U.S. goal is to support multilateral cooperation among the nations of the Gulf Cooperation Council. Working together, these nations can enable a more secure region.

### **Afghanistan**

For two decades, our mission in Afghanistan has been to prevent terrorist groups from using the country to threaten the interests and security of the United States, our allies, or partners. After two decades of U.S. military involvement, President Biden announced on April 14 that we have accomplished this objective. Following a rigorous policy review, President Biden has decided to draw down the remaining U.S. forces from Afghanistan by September, giving us the requisite time to conduct an orderly drawdown. We judge the threat to the U.S. homeland now emanating from Afghanistan to be at a level that we can address without a persistent military footprint in the country and without remaining at war with the Taliban. The President also announced that we will continue to support the government of Afghanistan and provide assistance to Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF).

I would like to thank members of this committee for your continued support for the men and women of the U.S. armed forces, civilians, and contractors supporting these critical missions, and for your enhanced support for the Afghanistan Security Forces Fund (ASFF) through which the United States provides the majority of funding necessary to sustain the ANDSF. This funding sustains ANDSF's combat operations while continuing to build their capabilities so they can secure Afghanistan, protect the Afghan people, and contribute to regional security. This funding is increasingly important as U.S. force levels and our advisory and enabler support reduce. As Taliban levels of violence remain unabated, we are focused on sustaining ANDSF combat power until a negotiated political settlement that ends the war can be reached. Accordingly, ASFF funds the key requirements that enable the ANDSF to remain cohesive – army payroll, aircraft and combat vehicle maintenance, maintenance training, fuel, and ammunition, among others. Given the Afghan government's limited budget, ASFF will be necessary to fund about three-fourths of total ANDSF requirements absent a peace settlement, and will be necessary post-peace to ensure Afghan forces remain viable to keep the peace.

The United States, our NATO Allies, and partners remain committed to supporting the ongoing diplomatic process. We have worked in coordination with NATO Allies and partners to plan for a drawdown of their forces in the same timeframe: beginning before May 1 and ending before the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of September 11<sup>th</sup>. We will remain in lockstep with them as we undertake this transition. We went in together, adjusted together, and now we will prepare to leave together. The Administration has continued the strong emphasis on the diplomatic process to help broker a settlement between the Afghan Government, the Taliban, and other Afghan stakeholders, while ensuring that we consult our allies and partners at every step.

Regional partners have also contributed to the Afghanistan peace process. For example,



Pakistan has used its influence to press the Taliban to come to the negotiating table, participate fully in peace negotiations, and reduce violence on the battlefield. We continue to work with Pakistan to advance regional stability. To the north, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan have taken an active role in supporting international efforts in Afghanistan. In addition to their critical role in providing logistical access to Afghanistan, they have also moved to strengthen their economic and political cooperation with the Afghan government and participated in various peace talks and conferences. At a Russian-organized meeting in Moscow on March 18, representatives of the “extended troika,” comprised of the United States, Pakistan, China, and Russia, issued a joint statement calling on all parties to accelerate the peace process. The Qatari Government continues to play a pivotal role in the peace process, hosting negotiations in Doha and facilitating discussions between negotiating teams. Turkey has similarly played an important facilitator role, notably by offering to co-host an Afghan senior leaders meeting, along with the United Nations and Qatar, on April 24 in Istanbul.

We are cognizant of the continued presence of terrorists in the region. In coordination with Afghan partners and other regional partners, we will reposition our counterterrorism capabilities, retaining significant assets in the region to counter the potential reemergence of a terrorist threat to the U.S. homeland from Afghanistan, and to hold the Taliban to its commitment to ensure al-Qa’ida does not once again threaten the United States, our interests, or our allies. And we will refine our counterterrorism strategy to monitor and disrupt terrorist threats to the homeland and to our interests in a way that contends with the dispersed threats we face today.

The Department remains confident that the best way to end the war in Afghanistan and achieve U.S. national security interests is through a political settlement, and we have the support of our allies, partners, and other regional actors in this effort.

## **Conclusion**

I am confident in the Department's capacity to contend with the range of dynamic challenges facing the United States in Africa and the Middle East. The United States retains many advantages, including our formidable combination of economic power, innovative dynamism, democratic values, military might, and global alliances. As a result, we remain well positioned to deter, compete with, disrupt, and defeat adversaries throughout the Middle East and Africa.

Thank you.