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STATEMENT OF

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BEFORE THE

HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE AND SPECIAL OPERATIONS

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Chairman Gallego, Ranking Member Kelly, 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 Ms. Jennifer Walsh, Dr. Brandi C. Vann, and Dr. Rhys M. Williams 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 across the Department of Defense (DoD) for countering weapons of mass destruction (CWMD). We applaud their leadership, depth and breadth of innovation, and competence. We are proud to work together with them across the Department and interagency, and with our foreign allies and partners to counter threats from nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons. In my statement today I will review USSOCOM's role and approach, provide an update on weapons of mass destruction (WMD) threats, and summarize our work to counter them over the past year.

DoD CWMD Role

The 2017 Unified Command Plan directed USSOCOM to coordinate the CWMD mission across the Department, and General Clarke has sustained that strategic course. The 2020 Unified Command Plan reiterates USSOCOM's responsibility for planning of the Department's CWMD efforts and integrating Department plans and intelligence priorities in support of the Combatant Commands, Department priorities, and other U.S. Government agencies as directed by the Secretary. Working within national and Departmental policy guidance, and through USSOCOM's J10 directorate, based both here in the National Capital Region and at USSOCOM Headquarters in Tampa, we conduct strategic planning, assess the Department's execution of the CWMD campaign, and make recommendations to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Secretary of Defense. USSOCOM has served in this role for nearly four years and we sustain

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a DoD-wide functional campaign plan (FCP) that enables the Joint Force to improve coordination in countering transregional WMD threats. The FCP supports National Security priorities and directs planning to achieve CWMD objectives.

Along the same lines, we work with Combatant Commands to integrate CWMD tasks and objectives into campaign and contingency planning, scheduled exercises, and operations, activities, and investments (OAIs). We also incorporate key concepts from our FCP into DoD CWMD military doctrine. By integrating key concepts into plans and doctrine, and campaign objectives into OAIs, we synchronize the Department across military time horizons from strategy to current operations while also conducting the annual CWMD Assessment. As we continue to focus on these priorities, we will continue to assess CWMD gaps across the Joint Force, and develop recommendations to improve planning, coordination, training and capabilities to counter WMD.

WMD Landscape

The landscape of nuclear, chemical, and biological threats has continued to evolve over the past year. We monitor and analyze progression of existing and over the horizon WMD programs closely, with essential support from the Defense Intelligence Agency. The classification level of this forum limits the detail I can provide from our vantage point, but news headlines are a good indicator of the complexity and nature of the threat. The COVID-19 pandemic likely affected nearly every adversary's WMD program, although these impacts will be difficult to quantify in the near term. The pandemic caused extensive delays in the shipping industry, which likely degraded global procurement activities.

China's continued implementation of conventional nuclear integration (CNI), i.e. placing nuclear capable weapons within conventional forces, remains a concern. Beijing continues

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modernization and expansion of its nuclear arsenal, focusing on diversified nuclear delivery and establishing a robust nuclear triad capable of surviving a first strike. China is flight testing and deploying several hypersonic glide vehicles (HGV), which can support nuclear or conventional munitions and are designed for high-speed maneuvers at altitudes where they pose challenges to U.S. missile defenses. China also sustained possible dual-use biological research, some of which raises concerns regarding its compliance with Article I of the Biological and Toxins Weapons Convention (BWC).

Russia continues to increase its nuclear stockpile, with an emphasis on nonstrategic nuclear weapons and, like China, is implementing CNI and testing HGV. As detailed in the 2021 State Department Compliance Report, the United States has found that Russia is in violation of its commitments to both the Biological and Toxins Weapons Convention (BWC) and Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) obligations. As we all have seen in recent years, Russia attempted to assassinate a former Russian intelligence officer with a Novichok nerve agent in the United Kingdom in 2018, and more recently attempted to assassinate Russian opposition leader Aleksey Navalny with another Novichok nerve agent in August 2020.

The Intelligence Community continues to assess that Iran is not currently undertaking the key nuclear-weapons development activities that would be necessary to produce a nuclear device. However, Iran continues to reduce its commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), including expanding its uranium enrichment program and threatening to reduce critical IAEA monitoring. Iran also continues to develop and flight test its space launch vehicles (SLVs) including boosters that could be capable of achieving ICBM ranges if configured for that purpose.

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North Korea retains nuclear and biological weapon capabilities as well as a likely chemical warfare program. North Korea almost certainly continued to acquire foreign-sourced goods for its nuclear and ballistic missile programs, as well as other dual-use items that could support chemical and biological weapons production and research. Although military hostilities in South Asia abated in 2020, the regional rivalry between India and Pakistan continued to simmer with both nuclear powers lofting reciprocal accusations.

Regarding Violent Extremist Organizations (VEOs), the U.S. and our Coalition partners have clearly had success against both ISIS and al-Qaida, attriting key leaders, preventing external attacks against the U.S. homeland, and disrupting chemical warfare aspirations; the Islamic State was the first non-state actor to have developed a chemical warfare agent and combine it with a projectile delivery system. While we necessarily realign our forces and resources as required to compete against multiple threats simultaneously, VEOs will remain an enduring threat and will continue to exploit widely available industrial chemicals for rudimentary chemical attacks in Iraq and Syria, while remaining intent on developing WMD capabilities and inspiring WMD-related attacks against Western interests. Moreover, VEOs offer potential instructions, documents and videos on the internet to enable the use of crude toxins and improvised chemical weapons by their supporters as well as lone actors. We need to maintain sustainable pressure against VEO groups that present a current or emerging threat to the U.S., while better aligning a Whole of Government and Whole of Coalition approach so our efforts are more complementary to host nation counterterrorism (CT) activities, providing assistance when required.

Interagency and International Coordination

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Clearly, no single agency or government can address any of these threats alone. WMD pose complex transregional challenges that demand the application of specialized expertise and authorities across our government as well as our foreign allies and partners. The Department of Defense, plays a unique and critical supporting role to our interagency colleagues, especially at the departments of Energy, State, Treasury, and Commerce, as well as our law enforcement entities, to prevent and contain threats, even as we prepare to respond to WMD crises in coordination with some of the same interagency colleagues. We coordinate, therefore, not only across the Department of Defense but also with interagency colleagues and foreign allies and partners, without whom achieving U.S. objectives would be exceedingly difficult.

USSOCOM supports and collaborates with interagency partners on a range of CWMD activities aligned against top U.S. national security challenges. We have implemented transregionally focused operational planning teams, which have enhanced shared understanding of WMD proliferation and procurement channels employed by adversaries and ensured deconfliction between the DoD and other USG agencies and departments while enabling OAI.

Further, exercising CWMD scenarios with interagency partners ensures senior leaders are informed about the range of possible strategic outcomes and perceptions of other state and non-state actors given potential or actual provocations, and the most effective U.S. responses. We are working closely with the Joint Staff, Combatant Commands, and interagency partners, such as the Departments of Homeland Security, Energy and the Federal Bureau of Investigation on CWMD exercise scenarios to enhance the U.S. and partners' responses to these threats. We look to advance our engagements with relevant academia, national laboratories, think tanks, and others to understand alternative points of view, promote innovation, and enhance the disruption of WMD proliferation networks. As we improve perceptions of strategic risk and associated

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mitigations, we can evaluate non-DoD contributions to counter the threat that may enhance our whole of government responses in heretofore unrealized ways.

We benefit from the Defense Counterproliferation Office's analytic and tradecraft proficiency, partner with DTRA for its technical expertise, and maintain liaison officers at ODNI's National Counterproliferation Center and OUSD (I&S) to ensure close collaboration. At the Joint Staff's invitation, we are leading the effort to develop an unclassified CWMD handbook for distribution to allies and foreign partners as part of the Multinational Capability Development Campaign. The handbook focuses on the transregional nature of the WMD threat, draws critical elements from our FCP and Joint CWMD doctrine, and incorporates our partners' inputs from France, Germany, Norway, Sweden, and NATO staff to support CWMD planning, training, capability development. Last November, USSOCOM became a party to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Management of the U.S. participation in the NATO Joint Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear Defence Capability Development Group (JCBRND-CDG) in order to improve collaboration between members, establish U.S. priorities for NATO's CWMD capability development, and shape NATO's new CWMD doctrine.

Assessments and Recommendations

We work closely with the Joint Staff, Combatant Commands, and Services to regularly assess the Department's CWMD campaign and ensure the Department's plans appropriately address changes in the WMD threat environment. We strive to improve our methodology and ensure it provides timely, reliable, relevant, and actionable information to support senior Department decision making. Our aim is to better support senior leaders charged with employing the Joint Force today, developing and preparing it for tomorrow, and helping to design a military that is ready to fight and win against both current and future WMD threats.

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We incorporated impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic to inform future risk calculus. As we ensure the Joint Force sustains adequate personnel protection and support capabilities, we intend to integrate COVID-19 lessons learned into Joint Operating Concepts that define requirements for CBRN defense.

As we finalize our 2020 comprehensive CWMD assessment, we are focused on improving chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear defense training and materiel readiness and implementing insights from recent U.S. Forces Korea and U.S. European Command CWMD-focused reviews to ensure the Joint Force can operate in a contaminated environment.. U.S. European Command identified several doctrinal, organizational, and personnel challenges among key findings of its own CWMD assessment, and we are working with their leadership to enhance their capabilities. These findings were a primary focus of our September 2020 CWMD Coordination Conference and proposed recommendations for improvement resulting from our February 2021 Senior Leader Seminar that included enhancing joint force readiness, interagency integration, and leveraging partner nation CWMD capacity in countering threats.

2021 Priorities and Conclusion

Our priorities for this and the upcoming fiscal year include improving joint force readiness, which serves as a deterrent to counter evolving WMD threats; producing actionable CWMD assessments; and making timely recommendations to inform senior leader risk calculus. We will collaborate with the Combatant Commands, the Joint Staff and other government agencies to further analyze Joint Force CWMD capabilities and make recommendations for improvement where appropriate. We will also ensure the Department's plans address evolving over the horizon, chemical, biological, and 4th generation agent threats. We will continue to accelerate information sharing through close coordination with the intelligence community.

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Finally, we will continue to work with combatant commands in the planning and execution of globally integrated operations and exercises designed to deter actors with existing capabilities from using them and deny emerging threats the means to produce or acquire WMD.

In closing, General Clarke and I would like to thank the members of this subcommittee for their support of this important national security mission. It is a privilege to work together with our colleagues to keep our country safe from the threat of nuclear, chemical, and biological threats. We 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.