

STATEMENT OF
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INTRODUCTION

Chairman Gallego, Ranking Member Kelly, distinguished members of the Subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to testify on the Department of Defense's (DoD) efforts to counter weapons of mass destruction (CWMD) alongside Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear, Chemical, and Biological Defense, Deborah Rosenblum; Acting Director of the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, Dr. Rhys Williams; and Deputy Commander of the U.S. Special Operations Command, Vice Admiral Collin Green. I would also like to express my appreciation for the strong support Congress provides the Department. My years in the military as well as working in the Pentagon, the White House, and here on the Hill, have given me a deep appreciation for the importance of close collaboration between the executive and legislative branches in order to protect the security of the American people by ensuring our armed forces have the resources and authorities required to deter, and if necessary, defeat any foe.

The DoD CWMD Enterprise's mission is to dissuade, deter, and, when necessary, defeat actors who use or threaten to use WMD against the United States and our interests. Accomplishing this mission requires that the DoD CWMD Enterprise constantly evolve to maintain the capability to respond to and mitigate the effects of WMD use in a continuously shifting threat environment. Russia's further invasion of Ukraine has featured Russian nuclear saber-rattling and firefights at nuclear power facilities, underlining the importance of the CWMD mission in the current geopolitical environment.

The President's Interim National Security Strategic Guidance emphasizes the importance of collective action to meet today's threats, which respect no borders. This is particularly true of WMD threats, including the proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, pandemics and other biological risks, and the efforts of violent extremist

organizations to acquire and use WMD—all of which pose profound and, in some cases, existential dangers. While these threats cannot be met by any one nation acting alone, they do require American leadership and partnership.

Across all WMD threats, this Administration has successfully cultivated increased alignment and cooperation with our allies and partners in managing, mitigating, and reducing the danger posed by WMD. We stand shoulder-to-shoulder with our allies and partners in Europe and the Indo-Pacific region to meet a range of threats including nuclear proliferation, the use of traditional and next-generation chemical weapons, and emerging and persistent biological threats.

THE DEPARTMENT’S RESPONSE TO WMD CHALLENGES

The Department’s response to WMD threats are organized under three lines of effort that span the CWMD mission spectrum: prevent acquisition, contain and reduce threats, and respond to crises. As global WMD threats continue to evolve and become more sophisticated, strong collaboration across the DoD’s CWMD enterprise and with interagency partners remains essential to carrying out effective activities under these lines of effort.

To improve efficiency within the DoD CWMD enterprise, the Department established the DoD Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction-Unity of Effort (CWMD-UoE) Council in 2018. This body leverages existing processes and systems across the Department to share information, improve cooperation, identify issues, generate solutions, and determine actions that are required to meet CWMD policy and strategic goals. Through the CWMD-UoE Council, we are tackling some of the Department’s most challenging CWMD issues, such as addressing chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN)-readiness, to advance defense strategic objectives. In January 2021, the then-acting Secretary approved the Department’s first list of CWMD

priorities as produced by the CWMD-UoE Council. These priorities are designed to align our CWMD resources and efforts around the gravest WMD threats to the nation and to the Joint Force.

The Department is working tirelessly to strengthen the capability of the Joint Force, allies, and partners to operate in a CBRN-contaminated environment. This includes developing the right plans, policies, authorities, and capabilities to protect U.S. forces on a contaminated battlefield. This is important not only for responding to CBRN crises, but also for deterrence: signaling to adversaries that using WMD against U.S. and/or allied or partner forces will not help adversaries achieve their objectives. This approach works in tandem with our prevention efforts, particularly by shaping adversary motivation and intent to acquire WMD. To this end, the Department works with European and Indo-Pacific allies and partners to develop interoperable capabilities and to encourage burden sharing through allies' and partners' own development of robust CBRN defense capabilities. We also utilize security cooperation authorities to help allies and close partners build CBRN defense capabilities necessary to operate alongside U.S. forces.

The Department is prioritizing the improvement of CBRN defense training and exercises, capabilities, personnel, and equipment in Europe and in the Indo-Pacific region (including the Korean Peninsula) and is working with our allies and partners to share the burden of CBRN defense through their own development of robust capabilities. As part of our budget request we are asking for \$629.9M to help bolster U.S. European Command's CBRN defense capabilities and equipment. As we've learned during the last few weeks, this is an immediate priority we must address. These efforts send a signal to threat actors that aggression using WMD will fail.

The Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) is a global effort that aims to stop the trafficking of WMD, their delivery systems, and related materials to and from States and non-

state actors of proliferation concern. During the pandemic environment, the Department, in close collaboration with the Department of State, has sustained and advanced PSI objectives via virtual meetings and by embedding PSI into dialogues with foreign partners. U.S. Indo-Pacific Command will host this year's Asia Pacific Exercise Rotation event, FORTUNE GUARD 22, which we are planning to execute this August as an in-person event in Honolulu, Hawaii.

The Department continues to spearhead the Pacific Security Maritime Exchange (PSMX), in which we are joined by eight other countries—Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, and the United Kingdom—to meaningfully enforce Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)-related UN Security Council Resolutions, particularly preventing North Korea from receiving illicit refined petroleum and helping to deny North Korea revenue from illicit sources for use in advancing its WMD and missile programs. Multinational enforcement operations such as those conducted by PSMX's Enforcement Coordination Cell raise the costs on North Korea's smuggling activities.

The DoD Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) Program has adapted to the changing WMD threat landscape and is now active in more than 30 countries worldwide, working with partners to reduce the risk of WMD proliferation and use across the CBRN spectrum. Support from the DoD CTR Program helped a number of countries to more rapidly identify and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, while also building regional networks to share outbreak data and best practices for COVID-19 diagnosis and reporting. The Department's successes achieved through the DoD CTR Program are a result of the continuing partnership and support of Congress. Looking ahead, the DoD CTR program is undertaking a strategic review to identify how it must adapt to prevent or mitigate future outbreaks of deadly disease and to promote U.S. security in a world in which adversarial States pose an increasing threat to U.S. interests and who

often pursue WMD capabilities to offset U.S. conventional advantages. I look forward to discussing the outcome of the review with this Subcommittee in the future.

The Department finalized the 2022 National Defense Strategy (NDS), which details the Department's strategic approach for advancing our defense priorities in support of the National Security Strategy. A core concept of the NDS is integrated deterrence, which provides a framework for working seamlessly to strengthen deterrence across warfighting domains, theaters, and the spectrum of conflict, in close collaboration with the U.S. interagency and Allies and partners. This includes taking steps to deny the benefits of competitors acquiring and using chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear weapons. In keeping with this approach, the 2022 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) and 2022 Missile Defense Review (MDR) are nested with the NDS. The classified NPR and MDR reports were transmitted to Congress on March 28, and release of the unclassified NPR and MDR is forthcoming.

As this committee understands, we face a profoundly changed international security environment across all domains, including WMDs. It is with this in mind that DoD has decided to update the Department's 2014 CWMD strategy. While the strategy has proved useful and enduring, it is reflective of the paradigms of that era. As such, it does not adequately account for the WMD risks and challenges posed by the increasing role of strategic competition in global affairs, something the conflict in Ukraine has highlighted all too clearly. My team has just begun the effort reshape the department's CWMD guidance with this new reality in mind. I would be happy to provide the committee with a briefing once our work is complete.

The Department has also initiated a first-ever Biodefense Posture Review to address biological threats, whether naturally occurring, accidentally released, or part of a deliberate attack. This review intends to unify the Department in addressing future biological threats and,

in the near-term, incorporate lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic. The review will also assess our ability to successfully fulfill our role in national defense, including the ability to operate in a biologically challenged environment. We expect completion of the report by mid-summer.

THREAT ENVIRONMENT

Secretary Austin has continued to emphasize that China is the Department's pacing challenge, and this includes concerning developments in the WMD space. China is dramatically expanding its nuclear arsenal and delivery systems with intentions that remain opaque. As noted in the 2021 China Military Power Report, the accelerating pace of the People's Republic of China's (PRC's) nuclear expansion may enable the PRC to have up to 700 deliverable nuclear warheads by 2027. The PRC likely intends to have at least 1,000 warheads by 2030. China is supporting this expansion by constructing fast breeder reactors and reprocessing facilities that will increase its capacity to produce and separate plutonium.

Despite China's status as a State Party to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), the United States continues to note the concerns captured in the 2021 Department of State Compliance Reports and the 2021 China Military Power Report. China has engaged in activities with potential dual-use applications, which raise concerns regarding compliance with Article I of the BWC. In particular, these reports note studies conducted at People's Liberation Army (PLA) medical institutions that included identifying, testing, and characterizing diverse families of potent toxins with dual-use applications. In addition, the United States does not have sufficient information to determine whether China eliminated its assessed biological warfare (BW) program, as required under Article II of the BWC. Moreover, the United States cannot certify that China has met its

obligations under the CWC due to concerns regarding Chinese research on dual-use pharmaceutical-based agents (PBA) and toxins.

China is pursuing a Military-Civil Fusion Development Strategy that leverages civilian scientific and technological advancements for military end-uses. We have particular concern that, in keeping with this strategy, China seeks to acquire advanced equipment, components, technology, and know-how from the United States and our partners and allies for use in advancing China's nuclear and other strategic military programs. Chinese entities continue to transfer proliferation-sensitive materials to North Korea, Iran, and other threat actors, and China has demonstrated lax enforcement of domestic export controls and multilateral sanctions regimes intended to prevent such transfers.

At the same time, Russia continues to expand its WMD and associated delivery system programs, which are of increased concern given its ongoing invasion of Ukraine, which has destabilized the post-WWII European security environment. Russia is investing substantial resources in expanding its strategic and non-strategic nuclear capabilities across all legs of its triad.

In the chemical and biological weapons space, the United States assesses that Russia maintains an offensive biological weapons program in violation of its obligations under Articles I and II of the BWC, and has certified Russia's non-compliance with the CWC for its employment of Novichok nerve agents in assassination attempts against Sergei Skripal (2018 in the United Kingdom) and Aleksey Navalny (2020 in Russia). These attacks make clear that Russia retains an undeclared chemical weapons program and is willing to use these weapons. Russia also continues to prop up the Assad regime, despite its use of chemical weapons against

its citizens on at least 50 validated occasions. Finally, we continue to have concerns about Russian PBA programs and their intended purposes.

Russia has manufactured false claims of Ukrainian and U.S. attempts to develop and use chemical or biological weapons in an attempt to justify its war of choice in Ukraine. This is not the first time Russia has invented such false claims against another country, and they have been debunked conclusively and repeatedly over many years. The reality is there are no Ukrainian biological weapons labs, and the United States does not support the development of biological weapons in Ukraine or anywhere else in the world.

DoD participates in a wider international partnership that includes international organizations, such as the World Health Organization, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and other foreign partners to improve Ukraine's ability to safely and effectively detect and report disease outbreaks. This partnership has improved the capacity of Ukrainian health labs to detect and diagnose diseases, including pandemics like COVID-19. Any suggestion of a connection between this important public health effort and biological weapons is malicious fabrication.

North Korea's unlawful WMD and ballistic missile programs constitute a serious threat to the United States and our allies and partners. The DPRK is undertaking increasingly dangerous provocations, including a series of short-and long-range missile tests that began in September 2021 and have continued into 2022. The United States assesses that North Korea possesses an offensive biological warfare program intended to counter U.S. and South Korean military superiority. The Department supports the Administration's calibrated, practical approach in coordination with our allies and partners that is open to exploring diplomacy with

the DPRK. The intent is to make tangible progress that increases the security of the United States, our allies and partners, and our deployed forces.

Given the risk that the DPRK could seek to employ WMD in the course of or to stave off a conflict on the Korean Peninsula, the Joint Force must be ready for any number of WMD-related contingencies that require operating in a CBRN-contaminated environment. DoD works with our South Korean ally to increase decontamination capabilities in support of an improved CBRN deterrence posture on the Korean Peninsula. These efforts focus on maintaining the capability to decontaminate and operate air and seaports that support reception, staging, onward movement, and integration of forces in the event of a contingency.

We are deeply concerned by Iran's nuclear advances since it began ceasing performance of its Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) commitments in 2019, and we remain committed to preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. The Department supports the President's prioritization of diplomacy as the preferred course of action to constrain and roll back Iran's nuclear program, but retains credible military options should the President request them. The Intelligence Community continues to assess that Iran is not undertaking the key nuclear weapons-development activities that it assesses would be necessary to produce a nuclear device, although its pursuit of higher levels of uranium enrichment is a concern. The United States has also certified Iran in non-compliance with the CWC. The United States has concerns that Iran is developing agents intended to incapacitate for offensive purposes and that it did not declare all of its traditional chemical weapons agent capabilities when it ratified the CWC. We also remain concerned that Iran has not abandoned its intent to conduct research and development of biological agents and toxins for offensive purposes.

Syria has used chemical weapons dozens of times against its own population. As a result, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Conference of the States Parties adopted a decision on April 21, 2021, to suspend Syria's rights and privileges under the CWC.

Violent Extremist Organizations (VEOs) have pursued WMD with varying degrees of success. The availability of dual-use chemical and radiological material that can be used to make a crude WMD is a particular concern. Given safe harbor and access to knowledge, skills, and materials, VEOs still pose a WMD threat to the United States, to our allies and partners, and to U.S. interests. We must work tirelessly to deny VEO's the safe havens they need to create such devices, and work with allies and partners to limit access to knowledge and materials.

As highlighted in last year's posture testimony, we continue to carefully watch advances in the biotechnology field that pose both promise and risk for U.S. national security and for DoD in particular. As biotechnology and biomanufacturing advance, we have genuine opportunities to leverage these and other critical capabilities (such as artificial intelligence and additive manufacturing) to revolutionize healthcare, enable the fight against climate change, build the American bioeconomy, and support resilient supply chains. At the same time, there is a growing risk of these innovations being misused by adversaries to develop advanced biological weapons and to enable other advanced military capabilities. China's Military-Civil Fusion policy includes leveraging biotechnology advances for military purposes. Meanwhile, the rapid growth in the fields of genomics—that has such promise for medical and scientific development also means growing databases of sensitive biological data. It is essential that the United States prioritize efforts to protect and secure biotechnological data, innovations, and capabilities against exploitation by adversaries.

These CWMD threats are persistent and managing and reducing them requires a whole-of-government response. I would like to highlight some emerging trends in the CWMD threat environment.

EMERGING TRENDS

The Administration's efforts to revitalize our alliances and partnerships are paying off in the CWMD space. We see increased alignment across WMD threats with our allies and partners, strengthening our position as we work to reduce and mitigate these threats. China, Russia, DPRK, and Iran are all confronting an increasingly unified world actively opposing their efforts to produce, proliferate, or leverage WMDs for political gain.

Just last week, NATO Allies spoke with one voice in responding to the threat from Russian WMD. NATO Allies are working to improve the readiness of their CBRN defense capabilities and deploying additional CBRN defense forces to reinforce NATO's Battle Groups. NATO has activated its CBRN defense elements to improve our warning, technical support and cooperation, and increase the readiness of NATO's Combined Joint CBRN Defense Task Force, and NATO Allies are working to help Ukraine detect, identify, and respond to CBRN threats.

Separately, disinformation is now pervasive across the security landscape including in WMD issues. As an example, the DoD CTR Program, which is working to help partner countries upgrade their public and animal health detection, diagnostic, safety, and security capacity, has been targeted by Russian propaganda. These investments in improving public health capabilities in Eastern Europe, the South Caucasus, and central Asia demonstrated their worth during the ongoing pandemic, resulting in enhanced diagnostic capacity and response to COVID-19 that saved lives. The laboratory upgrades and training the United States provided to Ukraine, Georgia, Kazakhstan, and other partner countries, are a frequent target of unscrupulous

and baseless Russian disinformation campaigns claiming that the United States is developing biological weapons that are killing people in partner countries. These are outright lies, designed to drive a wedge between the successful biological threat reduction efforts of the United States and its partner countries and to justify Russia's unprovoked and unjustified further invasion of Ukraine.

CONCLUSION

Chairman Gallego, Ranking Member Kelly, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the effort of Department of Defense's CWMD Enterprise. The threat landscape is changing as State adversaries such as China and Russia grow increasingly assertive and willing to risk confrontation. We are adapting to ensure we are prepared to meet the threats of tomorrow alongside our crucial allies and partners. We look forward to continuing the conversation with this Subcommittee on the threat environment and how DoD must adapt. Thank you for your continued commitment to and support of the CWMD mission.