

# Generals Say China, Russia Persist in Western Hemisphere Meddling

March 24, 2022 | By David Vergun, DOD News |   

China and Russia are looking for opportunities to undermine U.S. partnerships in the Americas, generals said.

Air Force Gen. Glen D. VanHerck, commander, North American Aerospace Defense Command and U.S. Northern Command, and Army Gen. Laura J. Richardson, commander, U.S. Southern Command, testified today before a Senate Armed Services Committee.

"Russia and China are spreading disinformation, actively sowing division and internal discord with the intent to undermine the foundation of our nation, our democracy and democracies around the world," VanHerck said.

Russia and China's intent is to hold critical infrastructure in the homeland at risk below the nuclear threshold in order to disrupt and delay U.S. ability to project power globally, while attempting to undermine the U.S. will to intervene in a regional overseas crisis, he said.

"We must continually demonstrate to potential aggressors that an attack on our homeland will result in failure. We do that by demonstrating homeland readiness, responsiveness and resiliency, and by displaying a range of kinetic and non-kinetic capabilities to defend the homeland," he said.



Also, security cooperation relationships with allies and partners are critical to integrated deterrence, as is NORAD, with its mission to provide warning and defend the approaches to North America from aircraft, missile and other threats, VanHerck said.

Homeland defense design is focused on key principles that start with all-domain awareness, from undersea to outer space and everywhere in between to include the cyber domain, he said.

All-domain awareness also includes the use of advanced capabilities, like machine learning and artificial intelligence to quickly analyze, process and deliver data to decision makers at the speed of relevance, he said.

"By doing so we will increase senior leader decision space and enable decision superiority over our competitors," he said.





"China and Russia are aggressively expanding their influence in our neighborhood," said Richardson. China continues its relentless march to expand economic, diplomatic, technological, informational and military influence in Latin America and the Caribbean, and challenges U.S. influence in all these domains.

Without U.S. leadership and modest investment, concern regarding negative continued predatory Chinese influence in this region could continue. Beijing "doesn't invest in Latin America, it extracts," she said.

In January, the Russian deputy foreign minister said he could neither confirm nor deny that Russia would send military assets to Cuba and Venezuela, she said.



Recent visits between the presidents of Brazil and Argentina with Russian President Vladimir Putin demonstrated concerning potentially broadening of Russia ties in the region, Richardson added.

In this hemisphere, transnational criminal organizations operate nearly uncontested and blaze a trail of corruption and violence that creates a wedge and allows China and Russia to exploit these countries, she said.

"Our partners are our best defense as we work together to counter our shared threats. We must use all available levers to strengthen our partnerships with the 28 like-minded democracies in this hemisphere. We must maximize important tools like security cooperation programs to train and equip our partner militaries, multilateral exercises to build interoperability," she said, adding that partners include the State Department, and nongovernmental organizations, along with the private sector.

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