

Amendment to H.R. 5515
National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019

Offered by: Mr. Cook of California

In the appropriate place in the report to accompany H.R. 5515, insert the following new Directive Report Language:

**WESTERN HEMISPHERE REGION REPORT ON STRATEGY TO INCREASE
ENGAGEMENT WITH REGION.**

The committee notes that the security, stability, and prosperity of the Western Hemisphere region are vital to the national interests of the United States. The United States has a military capability in the Western Hemisphere region that builds goodwill and is able to project power, build partner capacity, deter acts of aggression, and respond, if necessary, to natural disasters, regional threats or to threats to the national security of the United States by the activities of actors, such as Iran, China, Russia, North Korea, transnational criminal organizations, or terrorist organizations in the region. The Committee believes continuing efforts by the Department of Defense to increase investments in the Western Hemisphere are necessary to build and maintain a robust United States commitment to the region.

Therefore, the Committee directs the Secretary of Defense, in coordination with the Secretary of State, to submit a report to the congressional defense committees, the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate, and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives by April 1, 2019, that contains a strategy on effective U.S. defense engagement with the Western Hemisphere region as outlined, a plan to implement that strategy, and any additional funding requirements to implement such strategy. The strategy shall address each of the following:

- (1) The security challenges, including threats, emanating from the Western Hemisphere region, including from natural disasters, and any capability gaps in United States defense posture to the region;
- (2) The security threats to the United States or to its interests in the Western Hemisphere region from the engagement of Iran, China, Russia, and North Korea in the region, with a specific focus on Iran's engagement in the Tri-Border region of South America, Bolivia, and Venezuela and Russian engagement in Nicaragua, Cuba, and Venezuela;
- (3) The counterintelligence threats to the United States from Cuba and the role of Cuba in supporting the Venezuelan government;
- (4) The threats to the United States from transregional and transnational threat networks, including in drug trafficking, illegal mining, deforestation, human trafficking, and other illicit activities;

- (5) The threats to the United States from the links of the Venezuelan government with drug trafficking and transnational criminal organizations and corrupt government actors in the region;
- (6) Department of Defense plans, force posture, capabilities, and resources to address any gaps in intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, or counter-intelligence capabilities in the region; and
- (7) The allies, partners, and other countries in the region that the Defense Department has prioritized for increased cooperation and a description of the areas of proposed increased cooperation.