

UNITED STATES EUROPEAN COMMAND

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

MARCH 1, 2016

Printed for the use of the Committee on Armed Services



Available via the World Wide Web: <http://www.fdsys.gov/>

U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

25-644 PDF

WASHINGTON : 2017

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Publishing Office
Internet: bookstore.gpo.gov Phone: toll free (866) 512-1800; DC area (202) 512-1800
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UNITED STATES EUROPEAN COMMAND

TUESDAY, MARCH 1, 2016

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:32 a.m. in Room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Senator John McCain (chairman) presiding.

Committee members present: Senators McCain, Inhofe, Sessions, Wicker, Ayotte, Fischer, Cotton, Rounds, Ernst, Tillis, Sullivan, Lee, Graham, Reed, Nelson, Manchin, Shaheen, Gillibrand, Blumenthal, Donnelly, Hirono, Kaine, King, and Heinrich.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN, CHAIRMAN

Chairman MCCAIN. Good morning.

The Senate Armed Services Committee meets this morning to receive testimony on the security situation in Europe and the posture of the United States European Command. We are pleased to welcome back General Philip Breedlove, the Commander of the United States European Command and Supreme Allied Commander, Europe.

General, this may be your last appearance before this committee. I hope not. So I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your decades of distinguished service to our country. Probably most distinguished was your tour of duty in Arizona, but anyway, I am very grateful for your candor in alerting Americans and Europeans alike to the threat posed by Russia, which is growing significantly worse. Unfortunately, you have sometimes been a lonely voice, but you have always been an impactful voice. This committee relies upon the candor of our Nation's senior military commanders. I believe your colleagues, as well as your successor, should profit from the example of your leadership. We certainly have.

I would like to welcome your wife Cindy, a proud graduate of Arizona State University. She has been a strong advocate for Air Force and military families, especially concerning education. We are grateful to her and your three children for the sacrifices they have made over your many years of service.

To the surprise of no one on this committee, it only took until the second day of the so-called ceasefire in Syria before Vladimir Putin resumed his airstrikes in support of the murderous Assad regime. I am sure Russia will say it has only targeted "terrorists." While the administration and many others will likely express their "concerns," I am sure they will preserve the agreement, regardless

of the price to U.S. credibility and the cost to our partners on the ground.

All of this comes as no surprise. We know why Mr. Putin agreed to a cessation of hostilities when he did. It is no accident that he violated that agreement when he did. This is the same movie we have been watching in Ukraine for 2 years: Russia presses its advantage militarily, creates new facts on the ground, uses the denial and delivery of humanitarian aid as a bargaining chip, negotiates an agreement to lock in the spoils of war, and then chooses when and where to resume fighting. This is diplomacy in the service of military aggression. It is working because we are letting it.

In Ukraine and now in Syria, Putin has been learning that military adventurism pays. The only deterrence that we seem to be establishing is over ourselves. Indeed, 2 years after Russia invaded Ukraine and annexed Crimea, the administration has still not provided Ukrainian forces with the lethal assistance they need to defend themselves and which the Congress has authorized.

Now we may be starting the cycle once again. In recent weeks, fighting in eastern Ukraine has intensified. Russian shelling and small-scale skirmishes have increased. Russian tanks have been moving to support the separatists, and Russian forces conducted a snap military exercise near Ukraine and the Caucasus in February. The ceasefire in Ukraine, which was coordinated to begin precisely as Russia readied its intervention in Syria, now appears increasingly tenuous. Of course, Russia still has not lived up to its obligations under the so-called Minsk II agreement. With the fighting in Syria capturing the headlines, Putin has succeeded in diverting international attention from his invasion of Ukraine.

It is not that the United States and NATO have done nothing to respond to the challenge posed by Russia. It is that none of the actions we have taken thus far are adequate to the scope, scale, and seriousness of the challenges Russia presents to our national security and to the international order.

Ultimately, the reason for maintaining a strong U.S. military presence in Europe is the same as it ever was: to deter conflict and prevent aggression. We must revisit the question of what it will take to achieve this goal when confronting a revisionist Russia that is undergoing significant military modernization and that is willing to use force not as a last resort, but as a primary tool to achieve its neo-imperial objectives.

In short, the United States and NATO need to prepare ourselves to deter and, if necessary, defeat Russian aggression whether it is in the nuclear, conventional, or hybrid domain.

Vladimir Putin views nuclear weapons as an integral part of his strategy to reestablish Russian dominance in the former Soviet Union. To increase the credibility of NATO's nuclear deterrent, we must continue the ongoing modernization of U.S. nuclear forces and ensure that NATO's nuclear deterrent forces are survivable, well-exercised, and increasingly ready to counter Russian nuclear doctrine, which calls for the first use of nuclear weapons.

As General Breedlove has pointed out, the current U.S. force structure in Europe and its underlying resourcing is predicated on the mistaken policy of what he terms "hugging the bear." While some may try to argue otherwise, Putin is not a security partner.

General Breedlove, we look forward to hearing what steps you think are required to rectify our force posture and resource deficiency in light of Russia's modernized conventional capabilities, especially in its anti-access/area denial network from Kaliningrad to Crimea to the Eastern Mediterranean Sea.

In the realm of hybrid warfare, we are unfortunately playing catch-up. In areas such as information operations and cyber warfare, we have been bested by Putin's propaganda machine and his army of trolls and hackers. Again, under the misguided premise that Russia is a partner, we have let our intelligence on Russia's tactical and operational capabilities languish. This has made countering "hybrid" tactics through effective attribution all the more difficult.

Finally, as we consider all of these important issues, it is important that we never forget the nature of the regime that threatens our security and the peace of Europe.

This weekend marks the 1-year anniversary of the murder of Boris Nemtsov on a bridge in the shadow of the Kremlin. Boris was a friend to many of us. He was a Russian patriot who had the courage to tell the truth about the authoritarianism, rampant corruption, and imperial ambitions that are endemic to Putin's regime. Boris gave his life to tell these truths. We must honor his memory by resisting Vladimir Putin's dark and dangerous view of the world and by speaking up for the aspirations of so many Russians who still long for a future of opportunity, rule of law, and good relations with Europe and the United States.

That is what 30,000 Russians did this Sunday, marching across Moscow in tribute to Boris chanting "Russia will be free." That is our hope as well.

Senator Reed?

STATEMENT OF SENATOR JACK REED

Senator REED. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Let me join you in welcoming General Breedlove. Again, this could likely be your last hearing here. General, let me thank you also for your extraordinary to the Air Force and to the Nation and to thank Cindy for her service and the family. You have made us extraordinarily proud of all your efforts. Thank you, sir.

The security landscape in your area of operations has undergone fundamental changes on many fronts. To the east, an aggressive Russia continues to violate international convention in an attempt to fracture the post-Cold War vision of a Europe that is whole, free, and at peace. To the south, Europe faces multiple threats to stability, including the ongoing conflicts in Syria, Iraq, and North Africa, the prospect of foreign terrorist fighters returning to your area of operations, and the overwhelming influx of refugees that shows little sign of abatement. In the far north, as the Arctic becomes increasingly accessible to international shipping traffic, Russia has intensified their military activity along the Northern Sea Route, in what may be seen as an attempt to militarize a region that should remain peaceful.

To address this multifaceted security situation, your command recently released an updated EUCOM theater strategy. The strategy characterizes Russia as the most prominent and imminent se-

curity challenge, and it lists deterring Russian aggression as the top priority. This is a significant departure from past strategy documents. Despite these new realities, the U.S. force posture in Europe is still sized for a time when we viewed Russia through a much different set of lenses.

The President's budget requests the European Reassurance Initiative is designed to address this new security paradigm. The ERI request would increase ongoing efforts to reassure allies and partners and focus more intently on deterrence measures. The predominant expenditures are for prepositioning equipment in Central and Eastern Europe and for the heel-to-toe rotational deployment of an armored brigade combat team. However, this force posture will only represent a fraction of the Cold War presence. General, the committee will be interested to hear your views on the appropriate size and shape of U.S. forces in Europe to effectively carry out these assurance and deterrence missions.

ERI also provides funds for increased and expanded bilateral and multilateral exercises and additional efforts to build partner capacity. The committee will be interested to hear your views on how we can best assist our allies and partners to be capable and credible forces. We would also like to hear your views on what you believe these activities will do to help incentivize NATO members to fulfill their Wales commitment to achieve defense spending at 2 percent of their GDP in the coming years.

In light of the hybrid warfare tactics used by Russia in seizing Crimea and secretly supporting separatist forces in the eastern Ukraine, it is critical that we have the proper capabilities to provide indications and warnings of Russian military activities. The committee will be interested to hear your views regarding the capabilities you need in order to provide early detection of Russian intents and actions.

The Middle East conflicts and resultant refugee crisis in Europe is something unseen since the founding of the alliance. The security implications of the crisis are enormous, threatening to unravel a vision of Europe that has permeated the last 2 decades. While not specifically a military challenge, the committee will be interested to hear your views especially regarding the cooperation among allies and partners in addressing this instability and stemming the flow of foreign fighters that may be returning to Europe.

General Breedlove, again, thank you for your service. We look forward to your testimony.

Chairman MCCAIN. Welcome, General Breedlove.

STATEMENT OF GENERAL PHILIP M. BREEDLOVE, USAF, COMMANDER, U.S. EUROPEAN COMMAND AND SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER, EUROPE

General BREEDLOVE. Chairman McCain, Ranking Member Reed, distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today.

I have had no greater honor in my 39-year career than to lead the soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines, coast guardsmen, and civilians of the U.S. European Command. These remarkable men and women serve not only in the European theater but also in harm's

way across the globe. I thank this committee for your continued support to them and their families.

Representing those families and with me this morning is my wife Cindy. I would like to recognize her for her own 37 years of service.

I am also honored to serve alongside the men and women in uniform of the nations of Europe. They are willing and capable. They play an essential role in helping to protect our own vital interests.

The last time I addressed this committee, the security situation in Europe was complex. Since then, the situation has only grown more serious and more complicated. Today Europe faces security challenges from two directions.

First, to the east, Europe faces a resurgent, aggressive Russia. Russia has chosen to be an adversary and poses a long-term existential threat to the United States and to our European allies and partners. Russia is eager to exert unquestioned influence over its neighboring states in its buffer zone. So Russia has used military force to violate the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, Georgia, and others like Moldova.

In Ukraine specifically, Russia continues to use all elements of national power to hinder Kiev. We have recently seen an increase in the level of violence along the line of contact in the Donbass, as well as a number of diplomatic, economic, and propaganda efforts to keep Ukraine from moving closer to the West. The U.S. and other allies continue our effort to assist the Ukrainians reform their military and better train and develop Ukraine's service members. Russia uses snap exercises to mask real deployments and to desensitize us to that possibility. Russia has established anti-access/area denial environments, as you have labeled and I do as well, A2AD, in Kaliningrad, in the Black Sea, and most recently in the eastern Mediterranean Sea and western Syria, sharply constraining our access. Russia seeks to reestablish a leading role on the world stage.

Russia does not just want to challenge the agreed rules of international order, it wants to rewrite them. Russia sees the U.S. and NATO as threats to its objectives and as constraints on its aspirations. So Russia seeks to fracture our unity and challenge our resolve. Russia recognizes strength and sees weakness as opportunity.

To that end, Russia applies all instruments of national power, including its military, to coerce, corrupt, and undermine targeted European countries. Some call this unconventional warfare. Some call it hybrid. In the end, we see Russia using diplomatic, economic, and informational tools, in addition to military pressure, to shape and influence nations while trying to remain below triggering a military response.

To the south, from the Levant through North Africa, Europe faces the daunting challenge of mass migration spurred by state instability and state collapse and masking the movements of criminals, terrorists, and foreign fighters. Within this mix, ISIL, or Daesh, is spreading like a cancer, taking advantage of paths of least resistance, threatening European nations and our own with terrorist attacks. Its brutality is driving millions to flee from Syria and Iraq, creating an almost unprecedented humanitarian challenge.

Russia's entry into the fight in Syria has exacerbated the problem, changing the dynamic in the air and on the ground. Despite public pronouncements to the contrary, Russia has done little to counter Daesh but had a great deal to bolster the Assad regime and its allies. Together Russia and the Assad regime are deliberately weaponizing migration in an attempt to overwhelm European structures and break European resolve.

All genuinely constructive efforts to end the war are welcome, but actions must speak louder than words.

The war against Daesh hits home particularly hard for our close NATO ally Turkey, which shares borders with Syria and Iraq. Turkey faces its own internal threat from the PKK and it views the Syrian Kurdish opposition group, the YPG, as a close PKK affiliate. This prospect of YPG control of Syrian territory all along the Turkish border is unacceptable in Ankara. Further complicating the picture, sharply divergent interests in Syria have created a deep tension between Turkey and Russia. The risks of miscalculation or even confirmation remains credible.

EUCOM is standing firm to meet this array of challenges. To counter Russia, working with allies and partners, we are deterring Russia now and preparing for conflict, if necessary. That demonstrated preparedness to defeat is an essential part of our deterrent message. In an ideal world, as a core element of deterrence, we would significantly bolster our permanent forward presence. In a resource-constrained environment, we are aiming for the appropriate mix of forward presence, prepositioned war stocks ready to be used if needed, and the ability to rapidly reinforce with troops coming from the continental United States. This means making sure we can accomplish our mission even when confronted with A2AD challenges.

To counter Daesh, EUCOM is actively facilitating intelligence sharing and encouraging strong military relationships across ministries and across borders. To meet all real and potential challenges, EUCOM is a central part of U.S. leadership of the NATO alliance. As the Alliance continues its adoption through the Warsaw Summit, that includes increasing the readiness and responsiveness of the entire NATO force structure, improving our indications and warnings, or I&W, and sharpening our ability to make decisions at speed.

This year's budget request reflects our solemn commitment to the security of our allies and partners and to protecting our homeland forward. EUCOM does not yet have the personnel, equipment, and resources necessary to carry out its growing mission, but the continuation of the European Reassurance Initiative, or ERI, would strongly support EUCOM's efforts to counter Russian aggression and other threats by closing gaps in our posture and resourcing. EUCOM has carefully planned and executed ERI funds you have authorized over the past 2 years, and we are thankful for those funds. We have done this even as our headquarters continues to shrink.

This year's budget request would significantly increase ERI. That would let us deepen our investment in Europe along five key lines of effort: providing more rotational force, increasing training with our allies and partners, increasing prepositioned warfighting equip-

ment in theater, increasing the capacities of our allies and partners, and improving the requisite supporting infrastructure. Together the tools ERI would provide would send a clear and visible message to all audiences of our strong will and resolve. Our further efforts to assure, deter, and defend supported by ERI would complement those of the entire whole of government team.

EUCOM remains committed to a shared vision of a Europe while, free, at peace, and prosperous. As my military career draws to an end, Chairman, I want to thank you again for your unwavering support of the men and women of our armed forces and the opportunities that you all have given me to lead them. I now look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of General Breedlove follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT BY GENERAL PHILIP BREEDLOVE

I. INTRODUCTION

As I arrive at the end of my assignment as both Commander of U.S. European Command (EUCOM) and Supreme Allied Commander for Europe (SACEUR), I have had no greater honor in my 39-year career than to lead the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Coast Guardsmen and civilians of EUCOM. These remarkable men and women continue to serve not only in the EUCOM theater, but put themselves in harm's way across the globe and I thank this Committee for its continued support to them and all our nation's armed forces.

I cannot overemphasize how important European nations, in particular our NATO Allies and non-NATO partners, are to ensuring America's security and safety. Many of our most capable and willing Allies and partners are in Europe, playing an essential role in promoting our vital interests and executing a full range of military missions. In this time of increasing military and strategic risk, we will continue to seize this opportunity to further strengthen the Transatlantic Alliance as EUCOM continues to experience unprecedented instability in an area of the world we once viewed as whole, free, prosperous, and at peace.

Europe is not the same continent it was when I took command, as new threats and challenges continue to emerge. EUCOM's steady state operations, activities, and actions, alongside our European Allies and partners, are targeted at meeting these challenges to ensure our national security interests, including defending our nation forward from conventional, asymmetric, and even existential threats emanating from our Area of Responsibility (AOR).

EUCOM continues to play a vital deterrence role, against state and non-state actors alike, in support of the U.S. military's larger global strategy. The forces forward deployed in this theater operate across Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. Likewise, the forward operating bases in Europe provide the U.S. Joint Force with essential access in the Mediterranean and the Levant, as well as North Africa and the Arctic.

Our theater priorities and supporting activities in Europe fully support both the National Security and the National Military Strategies. First and foremost they support our national direction to counter malign Russian influence and aggression, as well as meet our enduring interests—the security of the United States; a strong U.S. economy; respect for universal values at home and abroad; and a rules-based international order.

However, it is not enough to simply have a strategy that supports our national security objectives; we also require resources in the theater necessary to accomplish these objectives. Since the release of the 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance and our national decision to rebalance to the Asia/Pacific region, EUCOM has paid a steadily increasing price in resources and assigned forces to help achieve rebalance. During the height of the Cold War, there were over half a million United States personnel assigned in the European theater. Today that number is around 62,000 permanent military personnel, of which 52,500 are in direct support of EUCOM missions. The remaining personnel support the missions of other organizations, such as United States Africa Command (AFRICOM), United States Transportation Command (TRANSCOM), and NATO. EUCOM-assigned forces are now tasked with not only the same missions we have performed for the past several decades but with a substantial increase in our deterrence and reassurance operations in response to Russian occupation of Crimea and its aggression in eastern Ukraine, as well as require-

ments in the United States Central Command (CENTCOM) and AFRICOM AORs. EUCOM conducted Operation ATLANTIC RESOLVE (OAR), trained Ukrainian National Guardsmen and defense forces, provided resources in support of AFRICOM's counter-Ebola mission and continued to provide critical support of CENTCOM's counter-ISIL mission. It is important to understand the critical roles these permanently stationed forces and bases play in this theater.

In response to the new European security environment, I have strongly advocated for, and our Defense Department, Administration, and Congress have supported, not only suspending further drawdown of this theater, but now the need to look at tailored, supportable increases in capabilities as we requested in the FY 2017 budget.

II. THEATER ASSESSMENT

The United States and NATO face two primary threats to our security interests: Russian aggression and growing instability on our southern flank. Russia continues to foment security concerns in multiple locations around the EUCOM AOR. Concurrently, we deal with a variety of transnational threats that largely emanate from instability in Iraq, Syria, North Africa, and the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). The U.S. and NATO must take a 360-degree approach to security—addressing the full-spectrum of security challenges from any direction and ensure we are using all elements of our nation's power.

A. *Russia*

For more than two decades, the United States and Europe have attempted to engage with Russia as a partner by building military, economic, and cultural relationships. During the 1990s, Russia became a Partnership for Peace member with NATO, signed the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, and endorsed the 1997 NATO–Russia Founding Act. The text and tone of these instruments presumed Russia was a partner who shared our commitment to security, prosperity, and inclusive peace in Europe. With these Russian commitments, the Department of Defense made security and force posture determinations significantly reducing European force structure based on the assumption that Russia was a sincere partner and in 2009, the United States sought to “reset” its relationship with Russia, which had been damaged by Russia's 2008 invasion of the Republic of Georgia.

Despite these and many other United States and European overtures, it is now clear Russia does not share common security objectives with the West. Instead, it continues to view the United States and NATO as a threat to its own security. Since the beginning of 2014, President Putin has sought to undermine the rules-based system of European security and attempted to maximize his power on the world stage.

Russia continues its long-term military modernization efforts, and its recent actions in Ukraine and Syria demonstrate an alarming increase in expeditionary force projection and combat capability and logistical sustainment capacity. Russia has spent the past 20 years analyzing United States military operations and has established a doctrine and force to effectively counter perceived United States and NATO strengths. In examining the threats Russia poses to NATO and the United States, we should consider Russian actions comprehensively, taking into account their capabilities, capacities, and intentions.

To the north: Arctic region. Increased human activity is changing the way the United States, one of the eight Arctic nations, views the Arctic. EUCOM, along with our Allies and partners, is working to contribute to a peaceful opening of the Arctic. We strive to prevent and deter conflict, but we must be prepared to respond to a wide range of challenges and contingencies. We work with our Allies and partners to ensure the Arctic is a stable, secure region where U.S. national interests are safeguarded and the homeland is protected.

Decreasing sea ice is increasing commercial and recreational activity in the high north. In the EUCOM AOR, shipping activity along the Northern Sea Route (NSR) is providing shorter alternatives for cargo. The unpredictability of weather and ice between seasons makes the Arctic a harsh environment for commercial shipping; however, the trend is clearly toward less Arctic ice and longer shipping windows.

The eight Arctic states have a solid history of cooperation in the region. This includes the 2011 Arctic Search and Rescue Agreement, signifying an important step in Arctic cooperation. However, we cannot ignore Russia's increase in military activity which concerns all nations—not just those in the Arctic. Russia's behavior in the Arctic is increasingly troubling. Their increase in stationing military forces, building and reopening bases, and creating an Arctic military district—all to counter an imagined threat to their internationally undisputed territories—stands in stark contrast to the conduct of the seven other Arctic nations.

Russia's improvements to Arctic settlements are ostensibly to support increased shipping traffic through the NSR. However, many of these activities are purely mili-

tary in nature and follow a recent pattern of increasingly aggressive global posturing. We continue to encourage all of our Arctic partners to respect the broad and historical agreements against militarization of the high north and remain dedicated toward maintaining a peaceful opening of the Arctic.

Under the United Nations Convention on the Law of Sea (UNCLOS), several Arctic states are submitting extended continental shelf claims. Joining the Convention would allow the United States to submit our claims, promote U.S. interests in the environmental health of the oceans, and give the United States a seat at the table when rights vital to our national interests are decided. Cooperation among the Arctic states and adherence to the UNCLOS legal framework will deter escalation in the Arctic.

To the east: Russia and periphery (Ukraine and Baltic States). The Kremlin views the current situation in Ukraine as unsettled and a critical point of long-term friction. Russia's coercive use of energy has grown with threats and outright use of force. Eastern and Central European states, to include the Baltics, are concerned about Russia's intentions in Europe and consider Russia's aggression in Ukraine validation of their concerns.

Russia's aggressive foreign policy toward Ukraine and the Baltic States amplifies a general sense of unease among NATO's eastern flank members, with tensions across the region, both inside and outside NATO, exacerbated by Moscow's illegal occupation of Crimea and direct support for combined Russian separatist forces in eastern Ukraine. Kremlin efforts to establish levers of influence in the Baltics across the diplomatic, economic, information, and security spectrum are meant to develop an environment favorable to Moscow and present an ongoing challenge to Western efforts aimed at assuring these NATO Allies.

Russian use of Unresolved Conflicts as a Foreign Policy Tool. Describing the prolonged conflicts in states around the Russian periphery as "frozen" belies the fact that these are on-going and deadly affairs often manufactured by Russia to provide pretext for military intervention and ensures the Kremlin maintains levels of influence in the sovereign matters of other states.

- *Georgia:* A clear purpose motivating Russia's invasion of Georgia in August 2008 was to prevent Tbilisi from pursuing its sovereign decision to become a full member of the European and transatlantic communities—a decision endorsed by NATO in the Bucharest Summit Declaration. In the aftermath of the 2008 war, Russia recognized Abkhazia and South Ossetia's independence, and Russia's military still occupies the regions. In an attempt to create additional obstacles to Georgia's Euro-Atlantic integration, Russia also signed so-called "treaties" of alliance with Abkhazia and South Ossetia to increase its military, political, and financial control over these regions. Moreover, Russia has continued its policy of "borderization" along the Administrative Boundary Lines separating the two territories from the rest of Georgia by building fences and other physical barriers. In coordination with the de facto authorities in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Russian border guards prevent freedom of movement of Georgian citizens into the territories and obstruct unfettered access for international and humanitarian organizations.
- In Moldova, Russian forces have conducted "stability operations" since 1992 to contain what is described as a separatist conflict in Transnistria. Moldova remains disappointed with Russia's continued political, economic, and informational support to the separatist regime. Most upsetting to Moldova is Russia's military presence (1,500 troops) on Moldovan territory, which is aimed at maintaining the status quo in the region. Moldova has two battalions (150 personnel each) and one company (120 personnel) permanently deployed on the peace-keeping mission in the security zone of the Transnistrian Region.
- Regarding Armenia and Azerbaijan, Russia is part of the Minsk Group process, aimed at resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh (NK) conflict. Despite this, Moscow has actually increased instability in the region by selling arms to Azerbaijan while maintaining a troop presence in Armenia. In fact, violence along the Line of Contact and the Armenia-Azerbaijan border has escalated significantly in the last two years, with 2015 being the deadliest year in the conflict since the ceasefire was signed in 1994. The complicated NK conflict is arguably the greatest impediment to the spread of peace and security through Europe to the Caucasus.

Russia modulates these conflicts by manipulating its support to the participants, while engaging in diplomatic efforts in order to preserve its influence the affected regions. Just as the Soviet Union dominated the nations of the Warsaw Pact, Russia coerces, manipulates, and aggresses against its immediate neighbors in a manner that violates the sovereignty of individual nations, previous agreements of the Russian government, and international norms.

Other unresolved conflicts in Europe require persistent attention to keep them from escalating. In the Balkans, Serbia's continued reluctance to recognize Kosovo's independence detracts from regional stability and security. Kosovo also struggles with interethnic tensions between Kosovo Serbs and Kosovo Albanians, while fledgling government institutions, unlawful parallel government structures, and a weak rule of law contribute to high levels of corruption, illicit trafficking, and weak border security. NATO's Kosovo Force, supported by EUCOM, plays an essential role in ensuring a safe and secure environment and freedom of movement and is respected by both Kosovo and Serbia.

Russian Support to Syria. Russia's military intervention in Syria has bolstered the regime of Bashar al Assad, targeted United States-supported opposition elements, and complicated U.S. and Coalition operations against ISIL. The Syrian crisis is destabilizing the entire region, and Russia's military intervention changed the dynamics of the conflict, which may lead to new or greater threats to the U.S. and its Allies for years to come. Moscow's ongoing operations in Syria underscore Russia's ability and willingness to conduct expeditionary operations and its modernized military capabilities which are emboldening the Kremlin to increase its access and influence in a key geopolitical region.

B. Threats to European Allies and Partners

ISIL and Other Threats Coming from the South. Numerous terrorist attacks have taken place in the EUCOM AOR over the past year, including the near simultaneous attacks in Paris that killed approximately 130 people this past November, with several additional disrupted plots targeting U.S. forces and interests. Over the past 12 months, ISIL has expanded its operations throughout the EUCOM AOR, formally declaring an expansion of its self-declared "caliphate" into the Caucasus while conducting multiple attacks across the region. ISIL uses social media and on-line propaganda to radicalize and encourage European extremists to travel to Syria/Iraq or conduct attacks in their home countries. We anticipate additional European terrorist attacks in the future. From Paris to Copenhagen, Belgium to Turkey and the Caucasus, ISIL and al Qaeda inspired terrorists have conducted attacks that tear apart the fabric of free and democratic societies. These terrorists are not geographically limited to Europe. ISIL elements have conducted multiple attacks against European individuals and interests in North Africa including the Sinai. While we expect ISIL terrorists in North Africa will remain focused on internal issues in Africa in the near term, they may pose a greater threat to Europe should they achieve a safe haven in Libya or another North African country.

Similar to ISIL, al Qaeda and its affiliates in the Middle East, North Africa, and Asia, such as al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and al Nusrah Front, possess the ability to conduct mass casualty attacks against United States and Allied personnel and facilities in Europe. Complicating this picture are self-radicalized terrorists who, with little guidance from parent organizations, pose an unpredictable threat.

Left- and right-wing politically inspired violence. Internal dissent also threatens our partners in Europe. As an example, leftist groups such as the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front (DHKP/C) in Turkey remain a persistent threat to both the Turkish Government and United States interests. DHKP/C was responsible for the August 2015 small-arms attack outside the United States Consulate in Istanbul and the February 2013 suicide attack at the United States Embassy in Ankara.

Refugee crisis. Europe is facing a historic refugee crisis as displaced persons, primarily from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, and unstable parts of Africa flee conflicts and attempt to reach Western European countries such as Germany and Sweden. Over 1 million refugees or economic migrants arrived in Europe in 2015, entering primarily in Italy and Greece with 2.6 million refugees residing in Turkey. These figures have trended upward for the past two years and will likely continue to rise in 2016 as the conflict in Syria continues.

There is a concern that criminals, terrorists, foreign fighters and other extremist organizations will recruit from the primarily Muslim populations arriving in Europe, potentially increasing the threat of terrorist attacks. Also, local nationalists opposed to a large-scale influx of foreigners could become increasingly violent, building on the small number of attacks against migrant and refugee housing observed to date.

The refugee crisis is tragic, and the nations in the European Union are taking steps and adding resources to increasing humanitarian assistance to conflict affected countries while expanding domestic security measures and pursuing diplomatic solutions to the growing problem and its root causes. EUCOM work with our inter-agency partners to monitor this humanitarian situation.

Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTF). Foreign terrorist fighters remain a key concern for EUCOM and our foreign partners. Over 25,000 foreign fighters have traveled to

Syria to enlist with Islamist terrorist groups, including at least 4,500 westerners. Terrorist groups such as ISIL and Syria's al Nusra Front (ANF) remain committed to recruiting foreigners, especially Westerners, to participate in the ongoing Syrian conflict. The ability of many of these Europe-originated foreign fighters to return to Europe or the United States makes them ideal candidates to conduct or inspire future terrorist attacks.

European Economic Challenges. The growing instability in Europe fueled by a revanchist Russia is occurring while most of the continent remains stagnated in a persistent financial crisis, anemic economic growth, and continued energy dependence. The Greek economic crisis that nearly led that country to leave the 'euro zone' in the summer of 2015, is unfortunately indicative of the wide European debt crisis that at one time threatened the health of the European economy, which is unambiguously linked to the United States economy. Continued weak economic growth not only keeps unemployment rates high, specifically among young migrants susceptible to radicalization, it also hinders European countries' ability to increase defense spending, resulting in most NATO countries remaining below the two percent NATO benchmark. European continued dependence on Russian energy, specifically former-Soviet and eastern-bloc states, only serves to bolster Russia's ability to coerce those nations to achieve political gains.

Challenges for NATO. As NATO undergoes a profound historical change, it is both performing its core tasks of cooperative security, crisis management and collective defense and is recommitting to the basics, emphasizing Articles 3, 4, and 5 of the Washington Treaty.

Article 3 commits Allies, through "self-help" and "mutual aid," to develop "their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack." It reminds us that defense begins at home, that all members must contribute to collective defense, and that each nation has a responsibility to maintain their capability for their own defense. Poland is a good example of an Ally who has reformed its military structure and is modernizing its military to meet the security needs of both itself and NATO.

Article 4, highlights the fact that Allies may consult together when the security of any of them is threatened. While it has only been invoked five times in the six decades since NATO's creation, spurred by events in Ukraine and Syria, three of those have come in the past four years. Aside from these Article 4 consultations, NATO practices consultation on an almost daily basis.

Article 5 is the most known and understood Article and it emphasizes the responsibility of Allies to respond collectively to attacks on any member state. As declared by the Heads of State and Government at the Wales Summit, the events of the past two years have reminded us all of our responsibilities to each other and that "the safety of our citizens and protection of territory is the foremost responsibility of our Alliance." In response to a changed security environment, NATO is adapting its processes, increasing its responsiveness and renewing its focus on collective defense by enhancing the Alliance's deterrence and defense posture, including increased awareness, resilience, readiness, solidarity, and engagement. Even so, additional work needs to be done to improve intelligence sharing and indicators and warnings among NATO members.

NATO's ability to perform its core tasks is underpinned by the capabilities provided by each member state. It is publicly acknowledged by all Allies that defense spending, in support of the right capabilities, must increase. While there is much to be done by all Allies to ensure the needed capabilities are present for today's strategic environment, there are some promising trends. In 2015, 21 Allies halted or reversed declines in defense investment as a percentage of GDP, and 24 halted or reversed declines in equipment investment as a percentage of defense investment. Five Allies met the 2% of Gross Domestic Product guideline in 2015, compared to just three in 2013. Eight Allies allocated the NATO guideline of 20% or more of their defense budgets to equipment in 2015, up from four in 2013.

III. EXECUTING EUCOM MISSIONS

On any given day, EUCOM forces throughout Europe are engaged in a variety of activities to deter Russia, and counter the threats posed to our Allies and partners. These missions include: (1) training and exercising of our forces in order to be ready, if called upon, to conduct full spectrum military operations; (2) assuring our Allies of our commitment to collective defense; (3) training and collaborating with our NATO Allies and partners to maintain interoperability; and (4) working with our Allies and partners to effectively prepare for and support disaster relief operations.

In addition to my responsibilities as a warfighting commander, I also often serve in the role of a supporting commander. EUCOM forces are ready to support the

needs and missions of four other Geographic Combatant Commanders, three Functional Combatant Commanders, and numerous Defense Agencies. This includes the ability to appropriately base and provide logistics support functions to forces assigned to operations in the AFRICOM and CENTCOM areas of responsibility.

A. Deter Russia

Russia's continued aggressive actions and malign influence remain a top concern for our nation and my highest priority as EUCOM Commander. The cease fire in eastern Ukraine remains tenuous at best, and Russia continues its destabilizing activities in direct contravention of the Minsk agreements. Russia also shows no signs of engaging in dialogue over its illegal occupation of Crimea, and seems intent on transforming this situation into a permanent redrawing of sovereign boundaries in Europe. While the United States and European nations have responded with diplomatic and economic sanctions, Russia continues its aggression in eastern Ukraine by providing personnel, equipment, training, and command and control to combined Russian-separatist forces. EUCOM, along with Allies and partners, continue to contribute to Ukraine's efforts to build its own defense capabilities, including providing training for Ukraine's armed forces. It also continues to destabilize countries throughout its periphery. We must not allow Russian actions in Syria to serve as a strategic distraction that leads the international community to give tacit acceptance to the situation in Ukraine as the "new normal." Shortly after Russia's illegal occupation of Crimea, our immediate focus was on assuring our Allies, through Operation ATLANTIC RESOLVE, of our steadfast commitment to NATO's Article 5 provision on collective defense. Now that we are nearly two years into this operation, our efforts are adding a deterrence component with the goal of deterring Russia from any further aggressive actions. These supporting roles tax the capacity of EUCOM's assigned forces, straining our ability to meet other operational requirements.

As the Department continues to refine a holistic United States-Russia defense strategy, events in Europe continue to evolve. As a result of emergent requirements, EUCOM has undertaken a number of assurance and deterrence measures that will continue throughout 2016 and are greatly expanded in the fiscal year (FY) 2017 Budget request.

European Reassurance Initiative (ERI). ERI continues to provide the additional funding that allows us to increase our assurance activities throughout the EUCOM AOR. EUCOM believes that the strategy of assuring our NATO Allies and Partners while seeking to deter Russia from further aggression, as undertaken by the Department, through ERI has significantly helped EUCOM with the dynamic security challenges within the AOR. We are grateful for the strong congressional support of this initiative that reassures and bolsters the security and capacity of our NATO Allies and partners. With your continued support, we will use FY17 ERI request to expand deterrence measures against Russian aggression. As an example of assurance measures, the U.S. Army deployed an Armored Brigade Combat Team (ABCT) set of equipment (known as the *European Activity Sets* (EAS)) to the European theater. EUCOM is currently distributing Company and Battalion sized elements of the equipment along NATO's eastern border. This equipment is used by the Army's regionally aligned force personnel for the purpose of training and exercising with our Allies. Storing and maintaining EAS equipment in this manner helps reduce transportation time and costs and reassures Allies and partners in the region of our steadfast commitment.

With the FY17 ERI submission, EUCOM supports the Army's effort to increase *Army Prepositioned Stocks* (APS) unit sets to increase deterrence. This set of equipment helps shorten the response time in a time of crisis. EUCOM plans to use existing infrastructure for APS unit set storage and maintenance to the maximum extent possible, to include former locations used by the United States for this purpose. New locations, however, may be needed given the 80% reduction of European infrastructure over the past 25 years and NATO's expansion along its eastern boundary.

The United States, along with its NATO Allies, will continue to take actions that increase the capability, readiness, and responsiveness of NATO forces to address any threats or destabilizing actions from aggressive actors. Over the last 15 months we have helped NATO members better defend themselves, along with non-NATO partners in the region, who feel most threatened by Russia's actions against Ukraine. Continued congressional support sends a clear message to the Russian leadership the United States is wholly committed to European security.

Reassurance Measures. Operation ATLANTIC RESOLVE supports the mission to assure and defend NATO, enhance our Allies' and partners' abilities to provide their own security, and deter further Russian aggression. EUCOM engagement, training, exercise, and cooperative activities will continue to support enabling regional co-

operation with our Allies and partners to address the challenges on Europe's eastern and southern flanks, and the threats emanating from and within Europe. These activities will enable the timely generation of fit for purpose forces, capable of addressing common and collective security challenges within Europe.

Russia Strategic Initiative (RSI). A Russia staunchly committed to challenging international norms is not just a EUCOM security challenge, but a challenge for the entire Department of Defense. We need look no further than its ongoing intervention in Syria and the serious operational implications it presents CENTCOM. Accordingly, we are addressing this threat collectively across numerous Combatant Commands through the Russia Strategic Initiative (RSI). RSI provides the Combatant Commanders a framework for understanding the Russian threat and a forum for integrating and coordinating efforts and requirements related to Russia. RSI allows us to confront this immediate threat to ensure we maximize the deterrent value of our activities without inadvertent escalation. RSI also provides DOD an avenue to analyze the Russia problem set across the interagency, academia, and think tanks for broad perspectives on an extremely complex problem.

Strategic Messaging and Countering Russian Propaganda. EUCOM's strategic communications, information operations (IO), and related influence capabilities such as Military Information Support Operations (MISO) are the most powerful tools EUCOM has to challenge Russian disinformation and propaganda. Russia overwhelms the information space with a barrage of lies that must be addressed by the United States more aggressively in both public and private sectors to effectively expose the false narratives pushed daily by Russian-owned media outlets and their proxies. As part of the FY17 ERI request, EUCOM has requested the authority and appropriation to conduct IO. EUCOM will continue to increase its collaboration with Department of State, other agencies, partners, and Allies in order to effectively engage select audiences and counter malign actions and activities.

B. Support to Allies and Partners

Support to NATO. EUCOM is the visible symbol of the United States' commitment to the NATO Alliance. The Command serves as a key agent to build capabilities and conduct NATO operations. EUCOM will continue to support regional cooperation with our Allies to address the challenges within Europe as well as those coming from its eastern and southern flanks, enabling the generation of forces capable of addressing common and collective security challenges.

The Allies' commitment under Article 3 of NATO's Washington Treaty, with its dual principles of "self-help and mutual aid," provides the basis of EUCOM's security cooperation in support of NATO. EUCOM is a key enabler for the Alliance's unique and robust set of political and military capabilities to address a wide range of crises before, during, and after conflicts. EUCOM assists Allies in building security capacities, command and control, interoperability, and deployability to provide their own internal security, contribute to regional collective security, and conduct multilateral operations.

EUCOM also supports NATO's actions with crisis management, operations and missions. With the invocation of Article 4 consultations by Turkey and Poland in recent years, EUCOM has worked with other Allies through OAR, theater security cooperation programs, and air defense support to Turkey to provide a tangible Alliance response.

U.S. support to the continued implementation of NATO's Readiness Action Plan (RAP) is essential for a credible Article 5 deterrence. The RAP contains new operations plans, an enhanced NATO Response Force with quicker deployment times and assigned forces, new authorities for SACEUR, and an improved NATO command structure. The U.S. pledge to contribute key enablers is critical to the success of the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF), while seven Allies (France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain, Turkey, and the United Kingdom) have committed to provide the lion's share of land force contributions. EUCOM has also continued its support to other key aspects of the RAP, including maintaining continuous presence in the eastern portions of NATO, establishing prepositioned supplies and equipment, enhancing the capabilities of NATO's Multinational Corps North East and Multinational Division South East, and the establishment of a NATO command and control presence on the territories of eastern Allies. Continued U.S. support on all of these efforts is essential to ensuring Allied cohesion and capability to meet our collective Article 5 commitment.

Missile Defense in Europe. EUCOM continues to implement the three phases of the European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA) and deepen our missile defense partnerships and assurances within NATO. Phase 2 of the EPAA, the first Aegis Ashore Missile Defense System (AAMDS), which is located in Deveselu, Romania, will provide enhanced medium-range missile defense capability, to expand upon

Phase 1, which has been operational since 2011. While EUCOM has benefited tremendously from the Phase 1 forward deployment of four Aegis ballistic missile defense (BMD) capable surface ships to Rota, Spain, this capability is greatly enhanced by the on-schedule completion in December 2015 of the AAMDS site in Romania, the final building block of Phase 2. EUCOM is working to certify the site's capability and ensure its interoperability with NATO command and control systems. To validate this construct, EUCOM and our NATO Allies will be conducting test and evaluation exercises, and we look forward to certifying our command and control interoperability, and delivering the key capability to NATO.

As we complete the work on Phase 2, EPAA Phase 3, which includes the second AAMDS at Redzikowo, Poland, is on track for completion in the 2018 timeframe. The basing agreement is complete and was ratified by the Polish Parliament by an overwhelming majority. The implementing arrangements are progressing on schedule, meeting both U.S. and Polish expectations, and Poland continues to invest heavily in preparing for the AAMDS deployment. Building upon Phase 1 and 2, the AAMDS site in Poland will support EUCOM plans and operations and represent the U.S. voluntary national contribution to NATO's missile defense of European populations, forces, and territory.

Within NATO, EUCOM is working with key Allies such as Spain and the Netherlands who continue to invest in air and upper tier ballistic missile defense, and are considering investment in capabilities which complement the U.S. Aegis ballistic missile defense capability. Another shared concern is defense of the Aegis Ashore sites.

To support other key allies, United States Army Europe's 10th Area Air Defense Command and 5th Battalion 7th Air Defense Artillery Regiment have been doing yeoman's work in their deployments to Turkey and supporting engagement and exercises with NATO, Poland, Germany, Romania, Israel, and many other nations. As their strikes in Syria have made clear, Russia presents a robust potential threat across the range of ballistic and cruise missiles from land, sea, and air. EUCOM requires the ability to protect our headquarters, bases, and forces. Since BMD forces worldwide are strained, EUCOM has diligently engaged with our Service components, fellow combatant commands, the Missile Defense Agency, and the Joint Staff to find solutions and drive future capability deliveries to address current and future threats. We ask for continued Congressional support in these efforts.

Cyber Operations. Emerging threats to national security, spurred by the global diffusion of information, advancements in technology, and a rapidly changing operational environment are impeding both U.S. and our Allies' ability to operate freely in the cyber domain. Both state and non-state actors have offensive cyber capabilities that can disrupt and damage weapon systems, platforms, and infrastructure throughout our AOR. Non-state actors are seeking to develop capabilities to conduct sophisticated cyber-attacks in the future and will likely pose an increasingly dangerous threat to our forces.

Our theater cyberspace supporting strategy is the foundation of all cyber operations in the EUCOM AOR and enables us to integrate cyber operations with the other warfighting domains to achieve campaign objectives. Among the Command's top priorities are the full implementation of Joint Information Environment (JIE) and a Mission Partner Environment (MPE). JIE is DOD's initiative to address the security, effectiveness, and efficiency challenges of the current and future Information Technology (IT) environment. MPE is DOD's initiative to enable operations with allies and other partners, both inside and outside of the DOD, in support of ongoing and future operations. While much more work must occur, EUCOM is already beginning to reap the benefits of these initiatives to enhance our mission effectiveness, improve cyber security and reduce risk to missions and our forces.

Nuclear Deterrence and Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). The supreme guarantee of Alliance security is provided by its strategic nuclear forces, particularly those of the United States. EUCOM collaborates closely with U.S. Strategic Command to assure Allies of the U.S. commitment to the Alliance, including, for example, bomber assurance and deterrence missions. NATO's 2010 Strategic Concept, 2012 Deterrence and Defense Posture Review, and 2014 Wales Summit Declaration all affirmed that deterrence, based on an appropriate mix of nuclear, conventional, and missile defense capabilities, remains a core element of our overall strategy, and that "as long as nuclear weapons exist, NATO will remain a nuclear alliance." Consistent with NATO's commitment to the broadest possible participation of Allies in the Alliance's nuclear sharing arrangements, EUCOM maintains a safe, secure, and effective theater nuclear deterrent in support of NATO and as an enduring U.S. security commitment within the EUCOM AOR. Through rigorous and effective training, exercises, evaluations, inspections, operations, and sustainment, EUCOM en-

sures that U.S. nuclear weapons and the means to support and deploy those weapons are ready to support national and Alliance strategic objectives.

WMD in the hands of a state or non-state actor, continue to represent a grave threat to the United States and the international community. Through our Countering WMD Cooperative Defense Initiative Program, EUCOM executes bilateral, regional, and NATO engagements to bolster our collective capability to counter the proliferation of WMD (and their precursors) and mitigate the effects of a WMD event.

Foreign Fighters. The flow of returning foreign terrorist fighters to Europe and the United States poses a significant risk to our European forward-based forces and the homeland. Actively encouraged by ISIL, returning foreign terrorist fighters are mounting attacks, a problem that will magnify as the flow of returning individuals increases over time.

Our Allies and partners share these concerns. EUCOM works in conjunction with the Department of State, AFRICOM and CENTCOM to monitor and thwart the flow of foreign fighters going to and from Syria and the Levant, dismantle extremist facilitation networks, and build partner nation capacity to counter the flow of foreign fighters on their own. We are pursuing efforts bilaterally, regionally, and within a NATO construct to reduce the potential for successful terrorist attacks within EUCOM and at home. USAREUR has created a program called WOLFSPOTTER whereby they integrate various intelligence feeds and share those effectively with partners to assist in the identification of “lone wolf” actors more effectively.

Foreign Military Sales (FMS). Foreign Military Sales benefits not only interoperability with our Allies and partners, but also our defense industrial base, with defense articles and services totaling well over \$5 billion per year in the European theater. From Israel to the Arctic, our FMS programs are improving Alliance capabilities and meeting the challenges associated with meeting NATO’s capability targets.

FMS offers opportunities for the United States to improve the trends in European capability acquisition. Our Allies and partners understand the quality of our FMS program in comparison with other sources of defense articles and services, and seek ways to acquire our defense articles while balancing the requirements of the European Union and offers from other sources. Recognizing the quality we offer comes with a high price tag, EUCOM encourages our partners to engage in shared FMS actions by pursuing multi-national and multilateral FMS solutions in order to reduce costs for participants and provide opportunities to pool and share resources, increasing NATO capabilities across the theater.

EUCOM appreciates the various Congressionally-authorized Building Partner Capacity (BPC) programs which engage the FMS infrastructure to provide defense articles and services more quickly than traditional FMS, as illustrated by our actions in the Baltics and Ukraine. These BPC processes are benefitting the readiness, capability, and interoperability of nearly all of our partners in Central and Eastern Europe.

C. EUCOM Support to NATO in Afghanistan

The continued operational and financial support of NATO and other partners is a crucial pillar of building sustainable security in Afghanistan. NATO has transitioned from International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to the RESOLUTE SUPPORT Mission (RSM). Our European Allies and partners continue to bear the burden of providing the bulk of forces, second only to the United States. As we conduct RSM, EUCOM will continue to prepare our Allies and partners for deployments to support the train, advise, and assist mission. Authorities such as Global Lift and Sustain, “Section 1207” (loan of certain U.S. equipment to coalition partners), 10 USC 2282 (global train and equip authority), and the Coalition Readiness Support Program are absolutely essential for EUCOM to provide Allies and partners with logistical support and continued interoperability with U.S. and NATO forces. These authorities allow countries to receive much needed equipment such as intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets; interoperable communications gear; counter-IED and explosive ordinance disposal equipment; medical equipment; and night vision devices; as well as training to effectively use the equipment.

D. Assistance to Israel

A continued deterioration of security in the Levant region is a threat to the stability of Israel and neighboring countries. With limited warning, war could erupt from multiple directions with grave implications for Israeli security, regional stability, and United States interests.

EUCOM primarily engages with Israel through our Strategic Cooperative Initiative Program and numerous annual military-to-military engagements that strengthen both nations’ enduring ties and military activities. The United States-Israel exer-

cise portfolio includes major bilateral exercises and continued engagement resulting in renewed and strengthened United States-Israeli military and intelligence cooperation relationships. Through these engagements, our leaders and staff maintain uniquely strong, frequent, personal, and direct relationships with their Israeli Defense Force counterparts.

The direct threat to Israel by ballistic missiles and rockets with longer range and increased accuracy pose a significant challenge. EUCOM maintains plans to deploy forces when requested in support of the defense of Israel against ballistic missile attacks. EUCOM also conducts maritime BMD patrols and weekly training exercises in cooperation with Israel. The United States and Israel have continued to execute the “Combined United States-Israel BMD Architecture Enhancement Program,” which includes both exercises and dedicated test events managed by the Missile Defense Agency, all supported by EUCOM.

E. Support to other Combatant Commands

In addition to EUCOM’s responsibilities as a warfighting command, it also must serve in the role of a supporting command.

EUCOM continues to provide direct operational support to AFRICOM by determining growing opportunities for al Qaeda and its affiliates and adherents, ISIL, and other terrorist organizations and criminal networks across the African continent. As the supporting command to CENTCOM for Operation INHERENT RESOLVE, EUCOM continues to provide combat ready forces, force enablers, and critical combat support in the fight against ISIL in both Iraq and Syria. Turkey has expanded its role in the counter-ISIL coalition, allowing the United States to stage armed aircraft from Incirlik Airbase, and has increased its internal security operations against the group. ISIL can no longer view Turkey as a permissive operating environment and will likely attempt targeted attacks against United States and Turkish government.

EUCOM’s postured forces remain ready for rapid reaction in the volatile environments of North Africa and the Middle East. Special Operations crisis response forces based in Europe continue to provide immediate theater response capability, while remaining prepared to support inter-theater Combatant Command requirements, primarily with aerial lift assets. In 2016, Special Operations Command Europe will assume the role of NATO Response Force Special Operations Component Command. The Marines of the Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force in Spain, Italy, and Romania are ready to respond in Africa and Europe. Strike and associated support aircraft stationed in Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom are also on alert to react to crises as needed. Strategic facilities and associated access agreements with European Allies and partners enable EUCOM to support this vital mission of protecting U.S. personnel and facilities.

The mature network of U.S. operated bases in the EUCOM AOR provides superb training and power projection facilities in support of steady state operations and contingencies in Europe, Eurasia, Africa, and the Middle East. This footprint is essential to TRANSCOM’s global distribution mission and also provides critical basing support for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets flying sorties in support of AFRICOM, CENTCOM, EUCOM, U.S. Special Operations Command, and NATO operations. For example, over the past two years, EUCOM forces provided logistics enabling capabilities at airfields throughout Europe to forces deploying to the Central African Republic, enabling AFRICOM to support the African-led, multinational effort to stabilize that nation. Strategic facilities and associated access agreements with European Allies and partners enable EUCOM to support this vital mission of protecting U.S. personnel and facilities. An increasing number of embassies and consulates, however, remain at risk, on both the African continent and within Europe. AFRICOM maintains no permanent bases outside the Horn of Africa that can support forces assigned to this mission. Moreover, the capabilities available for EUCOM force protection are not keeping pace with the number of at-risk locations and people, and the magnitude of the threats they face.

At the same time, EUCOM is supporting DOD and State Department efforts to establish and/or improve agreements with several eastern European and the Baltic countries. We believe these formal agreements will enhance bilateral relations and also serve as a means to convey the U.S. commitment throughout the region.

Finally, and most importantly, EUCOM plays a supporting role to U.S. North Command and U.S. Pacific Command in defense of the homeland.

IV. EUCOM CAPABILITIES AND RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

Setting the Theater. Given the historic changes in our security environment, we must reassess how our resources meet the most imminent and dangerous threats. EUCOM supports the Department’s strategy providing a mixture of assurance to

our NATO Allies and Partners and activities that deter Russia. As the dynamics of this strategy continue to shift, EUCOM finds that ERI fills many of the personnel, equipment, and resource gaps we need to meet the Russian aggression. As stated earlier, our current force posture in Europe has been based on Russia as a strategic partner. EUCOM greatly appreciates the authorization and appropriations for ERI by Congress over the past two years, which has mitigated the risks and improved EUCOM's ability to meet its strategy. ERI has also reduced the challenges associated with reductions in our permanent force posture. EUCOM finds itself in a shifted paradigm where the strategic threat presented by Putin's Russia requires we re-address our force allocation processes to provide a credible assurance against what remains the only nation capable of strategic warfare against the homeland. Looking forward we will need to continue to appropriately prioritize the requirements of this theater. EUCOM will most likely require continued Congressional support in the future— at a minimum of FY17 PB levels—as we effectuate all elements of the planning efforts currently underway. Additional assets are required from Army, Navy and the Air Force to ensure we are able to perform our missions within the AOR. Further, EUCOM needs additional intelligence collection platforms, such as the U2 or the RC 135 to assist the increased collection requirements in the theater.

The augmentation of additional forces and APS in the FY17 budget continue the process of helping EUCOM meet several of its resource needs. The challenge EUCOM faces is ensuring it is able to meet its strategic obligations while primarily relying on rotational forces from the continental United States. Congressional support for ERI helps mitigate this challenge. The European-based United States infrastructure that supports EUCOM, CENTCOM, AFRICOM, and SOCOM exists as a result of the established relations between EUCOM forces and host nations. The constant presence of United States forces in Europe since World War II has enabled the United States to enjoy the relatively free access we have come to count on—and require—in times of crisis. Further force reductions will likely reduce our access and host-nation permissions to operate from key strategic locations during times of crisis. I am aware, however, of the tremendous demands on our current force structure and the numerous competing factors involved in managing the force.

Combatant Commanders Exercise and Engagement Training and Transformation (CE2T2) Fund. The CE2T2 fund is used to train U.S. Joint Forces at the strategic and operational levels. The CE2T2 has been instrumental to fund the EUCOM Joint Exercise Program, support interoperability with NATO and sustain theater security cooperation through EUCOM regional exercises. The CE2T2 is the only funding the COCOM has that is identified for Joint Training and establishes the foundation of the theater Joint Exercise portfolio. We encourage Congress to continue funding CE2T2. CE2T2 funding increases the readiness of our Joint Force, improves opportunities for our organic, rotational and regional aligned forces to jointly train with and engage with our Allies and Partners.

European Reassurance Initiative (ERI) Requirements. In FY17, we seek to continue a majority of the initiatives previously funded in FY15 and FY16. However, as you have seen, the FY17 ERI request greatly expands our effort to reassure allies and deter Russian aggression.

We plan to continue to pursue the lines of effort currently underway in fiscal year 2017: (1) increase the level of rotational military presence in Europe; (2) execute additional bilateral and multilateral exercises and training with allies and partners; (3) enhance prepositioning of United States equipment in Europe; (4) continue to improve our infrastructure to allow for greater responsiveness; and (5) intensify efforts to build partner capacity with newer NATO members and partners. However, in light of the new security environment, in addition to the continuance of assurance measures, we are strengthening our posture in Europe.

EUCOM Headquarters Manning. Since the end of the Cold War 25 years ago, EUCOM forces and resources have been on a steady decline while our nation appropriately refocused its global security efforts elsewhere. We embarked on a policy of 'hugging the bear' with what we perceived was a former adversary turned strategic partner. The current force structure in Europe, most recently influenced by the 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance and our rebalance to the Asia/Pacific, is roughly 80% smaller than in 1991—making it the smallest COCOM—and is resourced with the strategic assumption that Russia is a partner, not a threat. EUCOM understands Congressional desire to reduce the size of headquarters across the Department. However, Congressional mandates to further reduce headquarter sizes come as the command is transforming from one focused on theater security cooperation to one focused on warfighting.

EUCOM's Footprint Network. As EUCOM continues to implement the 2014 European Infrastructure Consolidation (EIC) decisions, we will ensure that remaining 1 properly supports operational requirements and strategic commitments. The De-

partment is considering whether an emerging need exists to augment the remaining infrastructure to support assurance and deterrence activities in Europe. As discussed earlier, Congressional approval of last year's ERI last year permitted the deployment of an European Activity Set (for training purposes) into theater, while the fiscal year 2017 request seeks Congressional authorization and appropriation for APS (for crisis response). This equipment in the EUCOM AOR supports the rapid introduction of forces, reduces demands on the transportation system, and appreciably shortens response times. Just as important, it helps assure Allies of continuing U.S. commitment and supports a wide spectrum of options, from traditional crisis response to irregular warfare.

Key Military Construction Projects (MILCON). EUCOM's fiscal year 2017 military construction program continues to support key posture initiatives, recapitalize infrastructure, and consolidate enduring locations. I appreciate Congress's willingness to continue to fund these priorities, in particular ERI projects, the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center/Rhine Ordnance Barracks theater medical consolidation and recapitalization project (ROBMC), and the relocation of the Joint Intelligence Operations Center Europe (JIOCEUR) and Joint Analysis Center (JAC) to Croughton, United Kingdom.

ROBMC remains one of the command's highest priority military construction projects, providing a vitally important replacement to theater-based combat and contingency operation medical support from the aged and failing infrastructure at the current facility. This project is vital to continuing the availability of the highest level trauma care for U.S. warfighters injured in the EUCOM, CENTCOM, and AFRICOM theaters.

Another key EUCOM MILCON priority project is the consolidation of the Joint Intelligence Operations Center Europe Analytic Center and other intelligence elements at RAF Croughton, UK. The Department requested Phase 1 planning and design funding for the consolidation during fiscal year 2015, with three phases of MILCON construction in fiscal year 2015–17 respectively. Phases 1 and 2 have been authorized and appropriated over the past two legislative cycles. We anticipate the construction completion will occur in FY20/21. The planned replacement facility will consolidate intelligence operations into an efficient, purpose-built building which will save the U.S. Government \$74 million per year and reduce significant operational risk associated with the current substandard and deteriorating facilities. The RAF Croughton site also ensures continuation of the strong EUCOM–UK intelligence relationships and our sponsorship of the co-located NATO Intelligence Fusion Center. The maintenance of our intelligence relationships and the intelligence sharing we maintain with the UK and NATO remains vital to EUCOM's capability to conduct military operations from and within Europe.

Information Operations. As mentioned previously, Russia dedicates enormous resources and intelligence efforts in shaping its information operations domain. This is a key enabler for its aggressive hybrid tactics executed in Eastern Europe to distribute its propaganda campaign and help fabricate facts on the ground when needed. EUCOM's efforts in coordination with the interagency on countering this messaging campaign are critical in our overall assurance and deterrence measures.

V. CONCLUSION

As I prepare to conclude my time in command, I would like to reiterate how proud I am to have been given the opportunity to Command this team of professionals. EUCOM is a tremendous organization doing extraordinary things with limited resources to ensure we achieve our mission and objectives.

I cannot emphasize enough the somber reality that Europe will remain central to our national security interests. From having fought two world wars in part on European soil to the current instability in the east and south of Europe, our nation must remain indisputably invested in a region that is inexorably tied to our own freedom, security and economic prosperity. The Russia problem set is not going away, and presents a new long term challenge for the EUCOM area of responsibility and our nation. Russia poses an existential threat to the United States, and to the NATO alliance as a whole. It applies an impressive mixture of all elements of national power to pursue its national objectives, to include regular reminders of its nuclear capabilities. While Russia understands the importance of NATO and its Article 5 commitment, it has embarked on a campaign to corrupt and undermine targeted NATO countries through a strategy of indirect, or "hybrid," warfare.

Besides dealing with an aggressive Russia, Europe also faces the challenges of ISIL, managing the flow of migrants, and foreign terrorist fighters from the Levant and Middle East. In my opinion, these new threats emanating from the south and integrating throughout the continent will get worse before they get better. They will

continue to stress the already strained European security elements, which will only embolden our common state and non-state adversaries.

EUCOM needs to be better postured to meet our assigned missions, including those in support of AFRICOM, CENTCOM and other combatant commands. With your support of the fiscal year 2017 budget request, EUCOM will be better postured to meet these assigned missions. Additionally, EUCOM needs Congress' support for a credible and enduring capability that assures, deters, and defends with a coordinated whole-of-government approach. This EUCOM team will continue to relentlessly pursue our mission to reestablish a Europe that is whole, free, at peace, and prosperous.

Chairman MCCAIN. Thank you very much, General. I wish that every American could have heard your testimony today. Maybe we would have a presidential campaign that does not focus on the size of people's ears and whether they sweat or not. It is disturbing because I wish that every American could hear your assessment of the situation and maybe we would focus on some of these issues. So I thank you for a very compelling testimony.

General, some of us have believed that the Russians are using the refugee issue as a means to break up the European Union. Do you share that view?

General BREEDLOVE. Chairman, as you heard me describe, I have used the term "weaponization" of immigration. I cannot find any reason for the way Bashar al Assad has prosecuted much of his campaign against his own people. As a fighter pilot, I understand the ballistics of how you deliver a weapon. There is no understandable method by which you deliver a barrel bomb that reaches military utility. Barrel bombs are designed to terrorize, get people out of their homes, and get them on the road and make them someone else's problem. These indiscriminate weapons used by both Bashar al Assad and the non-precision use of weapons by the Russian forces—I cannot find any other reason for them other than to cause refugees to be on the move and make them someone else's problem.

Chairman MCCAIN. Some of us also worry about the so-called cessation is the Russians seeking the opportunity to consolidate their gains, remove largely the modern opposition from the area around Aleppo, and then consolidate their gains, authenticated by the facts on the ground. I wonder what your view of that is.

General BREEDLOVE. Chairman, I would like to say up front that any genuine effort to bring a peace that is durable and meets the needs of the Syrian people would be welcome I think for all of us. What we see, of course, as you have described, is a cessation. We have not really seen a change in the type of sorties being flown, et cetera, as you described in your opening statement. We do understand that the sorties are ostensibly being flown against Daesh and al Nusra and others, but I think that this remains to be seen and we will have to watch the actual activity of the cessation to determine whether it is a valid one or not.

Chairman MCCAIN. In your ability to attempt to predict, do you predict that the Russians will increase their military activity in eastern Ukraine? Do you support us supplying defensive weapons to the Ukrainians?

General BREEDLOVE. Chairman, thank you for the question.

I literally just hours ago got off the phone with our ambassador in Ukraine to get his latest reading of what he sees happening along the front because we get reporting consistently that the number of attacks are up. In an unclassified format, the reporting I see

is in the last 24 hours, over 71 attacks, and in the last week, over 450 attacks along the line of contact. The report from the ambassador is there are several disturbing trends in those attacks, and that is that some of them are now happening in places that were heretofore quiet, closer to Luhansk, and also that the type and style of the attacks reflect the weapons that were banned heretofore before, caliber size and range.

I believe that Russia will dial up and down the pressure along the line of contact to keep Kiev under pressure to meet their part of the agreements first, which as you know, are tough for Kiev to do. I do believe that we will see Russia using the line of contact and the activity on the line of contact to keep unhelpful pressure on Kiev.

Chairman MCCAIN. Finally, do you believe we should provide defensive weapons?

General BREEDLOVE. Sorry, Mr. Chairman.

I have said to you before and this committee before that I believe that we should not take any tools off of the plate as we address this problem. Russia is using all the tools of a nation's power against Ukraine. We use that simple model of DIME, diplomatic, informational, military, and economic. We see Russia bringing pressure in all of those. In the military environment, I do not think that any tool should be necessarily precluded, and I have made my recommendations along those lines.

Chairman MCCAIN. Thank you.

Senator REED. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, General, for your excellent testimony.

I know when you were here last year, there was a real concern that these separatist elements, actually Russian surrogates, would either surge beyond the Minsk line and indeed go for some major urban areas, particularly coastal ports. Because of your activity and more importantly because of the courage of Ukrainian forces, that has been stopped. As you point out, there is continued activity, military activity.

There seems to be, based on my trip last September, a shift to political destabilization of the regime in Kiev. That requires not only a military response but also reforms by the Ukrainian Government, support by the international community. Can you talk about this other dimension of the fight, which at this point might be more critical? Your comments, please.

General BREEDLOVE. Yes, sir. Thank you for that.

In my conversation with the ambassador this morning, I just would point out again in an unclassified setting, that there appears to be some probing actually going back and forth across the line now. It is nothing like major military muscle movements.

Clearly the path that you described is a very tough one and a critical one for the Ukrainian Government. As we all know, the current leaders of Ukraine were elected in a reform environment, and their own people expect reform as a part of their performance. As you, I think, correctly lay out, what we see now is Russia bringing broad pressure on that government to force problems in this change. I must say—and I have said this before—it is really hard to do major change in your government when your nation is in the field fighting for its existence. Having to effect these changes, while

the military is defending forward, is also tough. I believe that by slowing and discrediting the government, that there is a lot of pressure by the people and encouraged by these actions that you mentioned. It is, I think, a very worrisome matter.

Senator REED. Thank you.

Stepping back a bit in terms of the overall Russian both strategy and capacity, I think the chairman once famously described Russia as a gas station masquerading as a country. I do not think it has been said any better, frankly. We saw the initiation of a lot of these activities when gas was roughly \$80-\$100 a barrel. It is now \$20 to \$30 a barrel. It suggests long run or at least raises the question long run if we can, through our actions, keep prices at this low range, at what point might you see the Russians either lack the capacity or have internal problems that distract them from these efforts. Have you seen any indications yet?

General BREEDLOVE. Senator, I think that I am not an economist, but I think I could talk to——

Senator REED. That does not stop anyone here from talking about the economy.

[Laughter.]

General BREEDLOVE. I think clearly the combination of sanctions, of the general economy, and the extremely challenging gas prices for Russia has brought pressure on them. In the past, I have actually intimated that I did not see it changing anything on the battlefield.

I would tell you that now, Senator, I do see a few changes, and I would like to just stop there. I would happy to have my staff discuss the particulars in a classified environment.

Senator REED. Fine, sir. Thank you for your answer.

Just a final point too. When we had a chance to meet, you indicated as part of the area denial efforts of the Russians are their extensive use of submarines. In fact, in your command, you are only able to fill a fraction of the requests that you make for U.S. submarine activity. If you could share that information with us, I think it would help.

General BREEDLOVE. Senator, thank you very much. I may actually just get up, if it is okay, and walk over to the map just for a tiny moment.

Senator REED. Yes.

General BREEDLOVE. I will tell you what. I will just sit here and do it from here.

Senator REED. Why do you not have somebody to cover the map? If the mountain will not go to the man, the man shall go to the mountain, or vice versa.

[Laughter.]

General BREEDLOVE. So, Senator, as you know, this is an area that we sort of describe as the bastion, and this is where Russia does all of its production testing and work of its most sophisticated submarines. This is not classified information. Then to get out into the world to be able to employ those submarines, they have to come out through this area over here that we call the GIUK gap. We love acronyms. Greenland, Iceland, UK gap. So, Senator, at an unclassified level, we are challenged to be able to watch all this activity. The Russians understand the utility of submarines and have in-

vested heavily in those submarines. That does challenge our abilities.

Senator REED. Thank you very much, General.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Inhofe?

Senator INHOFE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First of all, General Breedlove, let me join in the conversation about your career, your contributions, what you have done. If this ends up being the last one, I mean, you can still come by and visit. Right?

General BREEDLOVE. Yes, sir.

Senator INHOFE. Back when the continent of Africa was in three different commands, I was one of them who felt that we should have an AFRICOM. We have had it now for a few years. The problem was, as it was set up, it was set up really without resources. So if something happens, then they would depend upon you, upon EUCOM, to be able to be resourced so they could deal with those problems. Right now, I can name a lot of places in Africa that I personally looked at and I could see problems coming, Burundi, Eastern Congo, Zimbabwe, and several other areas on both coasts where there have been oil findings and pirating all of that.

Now, if that should happen, you have already stated in your testimony—you testified that you do not yet have the personnel, equipment, or resources necessary to carry out your own missions. What would you do if all of a sudden you had to have those resources there and you do not have adequate resources to carry out the mission as you see it now?

General BREEDLOVE. Senator, if you would allow me just a moment of sharing a point of pride of mission, and that is our EUCOM forces are, as you pointed out, all also available to AFRICOM, and all of the forces that AFRICOM actually have, we support in Europe in our basing, et cetera. Our command takes great pride, when there is an Africa mission, in being the very best support team commander to Rod Rodriguez and our AFRICOM brothers and sisters that we can.

So what I would say is we do have a full-time job addressing the challenges that we see in the east, Russia; in the south along Turkey's border where Russia also is, but the problems down there. Our forces do have a full-time job in those endeavors. When we do have to use our forces to support AFRICOM—and that is relatively often—of course, that lowers our capacity to respond and also it uses our forces' time when they are normally in what we call dwell, remembering that all of EUCOM's forces are still in the rotation like forces from America and other places to do the missions in CENTCOM. So when our forces are home from their CENTCOM rotations are when they are able to address AFRICOM challenges. So we call that doing that mission in our dwell or the time we are supposed to be recovering from and training for our next rotations. It is a challenge, but again, I would offer in a small moment of pride to say that our EUCOM forces do a great job.

Senator INHOFE. Good. I was not implying that they did not. I am just saying that if your resources really are not adequate now and something like that could happen there or the Balkans or someplace else, it would be a serious problem.

We have talked about—Senator Reed gave his gas station characterization. I think we all understand that. You have actually written the European continued dependency on Russian energy specifically for Soviet and Eastern Bloc states only serves to bolster their—and you are right. You are exactly right on that.

Now, when we lifted our 40-year ban on exports, how do you see that as rectifying this problem that we all know is there?

General BREEDLOVE. So, Senator, thank you. Again, just to go back to that simple model, that D-I-M-E, the “E” part—and I can just use Ukraine as an example. In the “E” part, Russia is very apt to use energy dependency and energy capabilities as one of the tools, adjusting prices, restricting flows, et cetera, et cetera. More available energy sources I think would help to diffuse that tool that they could use.

Senator INHOFE. I appreciate that. My time has just about expired, but I did want to remind you about our conversation in my office. We talked about the—I happened to be over there at the time they had their problem, its election. That is the first time in 96 years. There is not one communist in their parliament. Both Poroshenko and Yatsenyuk are having other problems right now. You were asked about sending defensive weapons over there, and you answered that question. Do you see the fact that they have domestic problems there as also contributing to the problem that we are having over there?

General BREEDLOVE. Yes, sir, I do in that I believe that a lot of pressure is being brought on them from the outside to continue this problem that they have to meet the requirements of their people. These are definitely pressures that are being used to exacerbate their attempt to make the changes that they need to make.

Senator INHOFE. Thank you, General.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Blumenthal?

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I want to join the chairman in thanking you for your excellent testimony today and also for your service over many years and your families as well.

You began to describe for Senator Reed some of the threats posed in terms of undersea warfare capability by the Russians, especially our apparent inability to fully track their egress and activities in that area. I wonder more broadly whether you believe that our investment in undersea warfare capability is sufficient. The President has proposed \$5.2 billion in funding of Virginia class submarines in his budget and \$1.9 million for the Ohio replacement program. More broadly than just tracking Russian submarines in your area of command, do you believe that our investment in undersea warfare capability is sufficient?

General BREEDLOVE. Senator, I would rather not delve into the service’s budget because I do not know the different things they are having to trade off and do inside of their budget.

I would rather, if you would allow me to, speak to the fact that submarines, like other assets, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets and other things, are what we call low-density/high-demand, meaning that typically the combatant commanders have more appetite than there is supply. I think it is a place where we have to make tough resource allocations as a military.

I am sorry to not satisfy about particular budget line items, but I would say that clearly we could use more of these capabilities.

One other thing that I would say as it relates to submarines is as it relates to our Nation's nuclear capability, I believe it is important to remain ready and capable in that way.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. A number of witnesses before this committee from the Department of Defense have characterized submarines as one of our chief asymmetric points of dominance. You would agree, would you not?

General BREEDLOVE. I think we have a magnificent capability in our submarine force.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Turning back to the Ukraine, how significant is the issue of corruption there in your view?

General BREEDLOVE. Senator, this is something I think that is a challenge in many places that we are dealing with around the world. I know that it has been a challenge in Ukraine and I know that, if you read the papers, you see that they are getting after this and it is causing some disturbance among those who are officials and others in the country. I think that it is a challenge, and I see that, as they try to address it, it does cause turmoil.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. In the fiscal year 2016 NDAA, Congress authorized \$300 million for the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative. \$50 million of that was intended for lethal assistance, including anti-armor weapon systems, mortars, crew-serve weapons, grenade launchers, and small arms. Are you satisfied with the pace of provision and delivery of those weapons?

General BREEDLOVE. Sir, this year we have a group that I think does a wonderful job, a multinational joint commission, that goes into Ukraine and works with the Ukrainian leadership, both uniformed and civilian leaders of their military, and sits down, based on our military expertise and those who we carry with us from our ministries, to determine what we think in a broad sense is what is needed for the Ukrainian military in the context of these funds that you have graciously provided. That work typically tracks very closely with what they ask us for when they provide us their wishes.

I tell you that to say that we have this year done our work and put together what I think is a comprehensive set of capabilities that would answer broad requirements because they are everything from communications through lethal aid that they do need. I have provided my inputs to my leadership with both lethal and non-lethal options, and I know that that is working through the process now, sir.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. So they are getting pretty much everything they ask for? When you say they track their requests, I understand that to mean that those requests are met.

General BREEDLOVE. They track closely with what the Ukrainians typically provide when they provide lists to visiting CODELs and others.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. My time has expired. I thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Ayotte?

Senator AYOTTE. Thank you, Chairman.

General Breedlove, I would like to thank you for your excellent leadership and service to our country and your family as well.

I would like to ask—you have said I think on several occasions before this committee today that you have submitted your plans on your recommendations for both lethal and non-lethal support to Ukraine. I would like to ask you how long ago did you submit those proposals to the administration.

General BREEDLOVE. Ma'am, I will get this exactly wrong. It has been some weeks ago.

Senator AYOTTE. Has it been over months?

General BREEDLOVE. Can I get you that answer so I can get it exactly right?

Senator AYOTTE. Yes.

The information referred to follows:

EUCOM submitted the Multinational Joint Commission-created Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative (USAI) proposals to OSD and Joint Staff on 22 December 2015. There were two proposed courses of action (COA): One COA contained a lethal assistance (anti-armor capability) along with non-lethal support; the second COA contained only non-lethal recommendations in line with previous assistance to Ukraine.

Senator AYOTTE. I mean, so here is my question. So you have been before our committee before. You have talked about the dire need in Ukraine. We all know the situation continues to escalate based on your testimony. Is it fair to say, though, that you have already submitted your recommendation? I know you are going to check on me, but we are talking more than weeks. Are we not talking months here?

General BREEDLOVE. It could be, ma'am. I just need to get it right.

Senator AYOTTE. I think it is important for us to understand this because you have not gotten an answer yet. Have you?

General BREEDLOVE. We have not seen the final result of that—

Senator AYOTTE. Well, here is the problem. There is a real urgency here. We got an issue with Russia, and you have made your recommendations. We admire your service. You have said let us make sure we do not take any options off the table. This committee, over a year ago plus, as a whole on a bipartisan basis, said let us provide lethal support so Ukrainians can defend themselves. It has not happened. You have not even gotten an answer.

So we look forward to hearing when you submitted this. I would call on the administration to support Ukraine and to take up your recommendations and to act with some urgency here on behalf of our friends, the Ukrainian people, who we have seen Russia blow off the Budapest Memorandum and we also see their aggression, and it is time for us to stand with the people of Ukraine.

I would like to also ask you in the wake of the November terrorist attack in Paris, to what degree do you believe that ISIS will continue to attempt to infiltrate their refugee flows.

General BREEDLOVE. Ma'am, I think that they are doing that today. I think that as you know, over a year, maybe even as much as 2 years ago when we had refugee flows that were not completely consistent but probably more legitimate refugees fleeing nonresponsive governments, ungoverned spaces, civil war, terrorism, what we have seen growing in the past months and year is that in that flow

of refugees, we see criminality, terrorism, and foreign fighters. I know that does not sound like a distinction, but I see a distinction in the latter two. This criminality, the terrorists, and the returning foreign fighters are clearly a daily part of the refugee flow now.

Senator AYOTTE. So this is a real risk, obviously, both to Europe and ourselves as we look at this refugee issue and something that we need to be very careful about in terms of screening and also making sure, especially with the number of refugees flowing both into Europe and also some of them coming here that we are very careful about this. Would you agree with that?

General BREEDLOVE. Ma'am, I think we need to be careful about all flows of these refugees. Yes, ma'am.

Senator AYOTTE. Thank you.

I would like to ask what specific steps have we taken in European Command to ensure that Moscow does not gain a military advantage as a result of its development of ground-launched cruise missiles in violation of the INF Treaty. This violation has been something that has been noted many times in this committee over the last couple of years.

General BREEDLOVE. Ma'am, thank you for that question.

I think you have heard actually in testimony before this committee the Secretary of Defense's plan on how to address that. At an unclassified level, he lays out four steps, and that is what we are doing—or five steps, and that is what we are doing. Again, at a classified level, I would love to have my staff get with yours over those steps.

Senator AYOTTE. That would be helpful. What I have not seen, though—maybe I am missing it—I have not seen us really press Russia or call them out on this in a very strenuous way. Am I missing something?

General BREEDLOVE. Ma'am, I guess that is a question of degree. We are calling them out, and the State Department and others who deal with this in the treaty realm are the first and primary voices now. I would not want to speak for their efforts at this point.

Senator AYOTTE. Well, I look forward to also hearing more in a classified setting about our response. I continue to remain concerned. Russia has essentially blown off the INF Treaty, and what it means for, obviously, the protection of us and our allies.

General BREEDLOVE. Ma'am, we will have the staffs connect so that the classified piece can be done.

Senator AYOTTE. Thank you.

Chairman MCCAIN. General, in response to Senator Ayotte about terrorists in the flow of refugees, logic compels us to assume the risk of attacks on the United States of America or European countries is significantly increased. Is that a conclusion you could draw?

General BREEDLOVE. Chairman, I would take Daesh at their word. They have stated that they intend to attack the West, to include the United States, and I believe that they will take the opportunities that they can to effect those attacks.

Chairman MCCAIN. If they are in the flow of refugees, the likelihood of attack is significantly increased?

General BREEDLOVE. I think we have to look at every refugee flow with the eye towards this could be that source.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Manchin?

Senator MANCHIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First of all, General Breedlove, let me just tell you that of all the professionals that appear before this committee, I think yours is with anticipation and appreciation more than any. We have heard from everybody. Trust me. So that speaks highly. I would hope that you would reconsider maybe your exiting a little bit later than earlier.

With that being said, sir, this whole refugee thing is a great concern to the State of West Virginia and my constituents in my State. I know that we are concerned. You have said that basically those people that are the refugees sincerely that are migrating because of the danger to them and their families—there are terrorists. There are foreign fighters and extremists entwined in that group for the purpose of basically wreaking havoc on the rest of Europe and the rest of the world, if they can.

Are the European officials as concerned as what we are seeing? They are speaking out and that is why they are cracking down more, you think?

General BREEDLOVE. Senator, thank you. So the timing of my exit—my wife is sitting behind me, so I must be very careful.

Senator MANCHIN. I was not sure if I saw you nudged or get kicked or whatever. I am not sure.

General BREEDLOVE. We all have bosses, and I have a clear one. [Laughter.]

General BREEDLOVE. Sir, I do believe the Europeans understand and are addressing this issue, especially—well, all of the nations, but I would highlight that those nations who have come under attack have shown us that this is a problem and that the problem in one nation can quickly go across a border into another nation. I do see all of the things that you would expect of our nations as far as we collaborate, include on intel sharing, policing functions, and things to try—

Senator MANCHIN. Let me ask then does that lead back into the thought process that there should be a secure no-fly zone, something of that sort that NATO is going to participate, all the countries that are concerned will participate in that versus basically eliminating the refugees who are really sincerely looking for some stability and peace in their life.

General BREEDLOVE. Senator, I have heard this concept discussed in multiple forums. It was a large discussion at this year's Munich Security Conference in several discussions. So I do know that these are things that Europeans are considering.

Senator MANCHIN. As you know, politics sometimes gets us entwined a little bit more than what we should be. The whole refugee bill that we have been working on, trying to basically make sure that these types of people that are entrenched, the terrorists, foreign fighters, and other extremists, is really the concerns of West Virginians. Could they be coming to this country under the guise of looking for some asylum, if we can do a better job on that end before they get to this end?

General BREEDLOVE. Senator, as I said, I think that every refugee flow needs to be looked at with an eye towards it could be taken advantage of by those who would seek to do us harm.

Senator MANCHIN. So they are looking for every avenue they can in order to get here or get wherever they can to wreak havoc. That is known. I mean, the intelligence tells us that. Correct?

General BREEDLOVE. Yes, sir.

Senator MANCHIN. Sir, also as far as on the NATO participation, 2 percent, are you seeing more of our NATO allies stepping up to the plate, if you will?

General BREEDLOVE. So, Senator, thank you for that question, and it is worth discussing.

The numbers that I will give you will be exactly wrong from day to day, but they are approximate. Since Wales, the nations have taken this seriously I think. The numbers that we are using now, as we move through our last ministerials, is that 16 of our nations have arrested the decline in their budget. About five of our nations exceed 2 percent now, and about 7 percent—my opinion, not an official opinion of anyone's, but in my opinion there are about seven of the nations which I think have very creditable plans over a creditable amount of time to attempt to get to 2 percent.

So still work to do. I do not want to overemphasize this in a positive light, but what I do think this indicates is a trend that the actions that our nations have seen in Ukraine, the actions that our nations have seen on NATO's southern border have affected a change in the approach to these budgets.

If I could, just one more thing, Senator. As important to me as the 2 percent is the other modifier that we talk about, which is 20 percent of that 2 percent should be spent on recapitalization, bringing capabilities to our military function. If the 2 percent is all personnel costs, that does not sustain capability over time. So the 2 percent investment in recap is also important—or the 20 percent investment in recap is also important.

Senator MANCHIN. My time is running out, sir.

I would like to say this. You know, the concerns that people have—and I think if you watch television at all and the anger that you are seeing in the American voters and people that are participating in the political process—very concerned about the United States of America carrying the load for everybody. NATO being able to maybe call the shots and have so much influence and input, but expected for America to protect the rest of the world. That is what you are seeing the pushback. People in my little State, one of the most patriotic States in the Nation, is concerned about why do we have to carry the heavy load. Why cannot other people participate?

What you had recommended—can NATO fulfill that they go down that mission road, or can they just pick and choose and say, listen, we fulfilled our obligation, here is our 2 percent?

General BREEDLOVE. Senator, the policing function is really the rest of NATO working on each other.

Senator MANCHIN. Thank you, sir. I appreciate very much you being here.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Fischer?

Senator FISCHER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It is nice to see you again, General. I too would like to thank you for your many years of service to this country. It is truly appreciated by the people of the United States.

Last year, you spoke about the lack of ISR coverage in the European theater. What percentage of your ISR requirements are currently being fulfilled?

General BREEDLOVE. Ma'am, I will get this number exactly wrong again, but it is a very small percentage. I think that is based on where we see where our larger ISR enterprise is focused right now.

Senator FISCHER. If you would have to guess, would you say it is less than 5 percent? I know we heard from General Kelly that it was about 5 percent for his combatant command. My guess is it is quite a bit less.

General BREEDLOVE. Ma'am, I would say it is definitely below 10 percent.

Senator FISCHER. Is that an improvement over last year? Do you believe the assets are increasingly being devoted to counter the ISIL fight?

General BREEDLOVE. So, ma'am, it has increased somewhat over last year. Again, in this forum, I cannot speak to the specifics. There are a few things that we are doing different. As you remember, ma'am, the counter-ISIL fight is really a CENTCOM fight, and so those assets are truly being allocated to CENTCOM for that rather than EUCOM.

Now, what I do know is that once again we are proud to be a good supporting commander. A good percentage of what we are given in EUCOM to do ISR is actually being used along the Turkish border. So it sort of supports both our EUCOM requirements and CENTCOM requirements.

Senator FISCHER. Correct. I am referring to the annual airborne ISR requirements.

General BREEDLOVE. Yes, ma'am.

Senator FISCHER. I believe you have also mentioned the shortfalls in the numbers of analysts when it comes to Russia and dealing with Russia. Do you still have gaps in that area?

General BREEDLOVE. The short answer, ma'am, is yes. There is good news here, and I would like to give credit to the intel community. When we first started having our issues in Crimea, I went to our two most senior leading intel leaders. When I sat down with them and talked about where we were in the height of the Cold War, where we were at the end of the Cold War, and where we are now with Russian analysts, and it is a demonstrative difference.

To the two directors' great credit, they created what is called Bare Essentials, and we have turned around an effort to begin to bring analysts back to the Russia problem. Now, that is a good thing, but this will deliver slowly over time. Yes, we still are challenged with not only the analytical capacity, but the physical capacity of being able to look at this problem.

I want to say one more time to give credit to the intel community for recognizing the problem and beginning to turn around an approach.

Senator FISCHER. As we look at the effectiveness of the ISR, it is not just the collecting of the information. It is also the analyzing. I am happy to hear that you believe that gap is starting to close a little bit. What can we do to help that process move a little quicker?

General BREEDLOVE. Ma'am, can I take advantage of that question and maybe change the answer just a little bit and explain to you what is really worrisome to me and what we need to do in my opinion?

We need to develop what we call indications and warnings so that we can be predictive of what our opponents might do. Because we are primarily a U.S.-stationed force and U.S. EUCOM forces forward are somewhat less, are smaller than they were in the past, we need to be able to accurately predict when we need to bring forces over to solve a problem before it starts to deter it. That is based on what we call indications and warnings. Indications and warnings is based on a solid understanding of the day-to-day intelligence. We need to understand what is normal so that we can see the spike out of normal that says, wait a minute, we need to deploy the very high readiness joint task force or we need to deploy elements of our rapid reaction capabilities. So to develop that I&W, we need to first establish a solid base and understanding, and that will take more intel capability and ISR than we currently have allocated.

Senator FISCHER. To what extent are we sharing information with our NATO allies in order to help really fill that gap as well? How are they contributing? First, how are we sharing with them?

General BREEDLOVE. We are sharing with them, and they are sharing with us. Now, talking to you a little bit as the NATO Commander not the U.S. Commander, our intel function called the NIFC, NATO Intelligence Fusion Center, is where all the nations come in and put in their intelligence. It is fused and then put back out as a NATO product. We are all sharing into there to try to establish that baseline of understanding that we need. We are sharing with them. As you know, our Nation has some very good technical capabilities, and what our friends bring to the table or others where they have great on-the-ground capabilities that they share with us. I think we should stop there on that conversation.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you, sir.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator King?

Senator KING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

A couple of specific questions, General. In your testimony, you unequivocally state that you believe that we should ratify the U.N. Law of the Sea Treaty. Do you believe it is compromises our national security—our failure to do so is a compromise to our national security?

General BREEDLOVE. Senator, I would not want to put a price like that on it. I think what I would do is tell you that military people have consistently supported the UNCLOS. If I could just use a simple vignette of what is happening now in the Arctic, as we see the Arctic rim become militarized, especially in a Russian context, and then as we see just like I think a week, 10 days ago, 2 weeks ago now, renewed different claims into the Arctic shelves—

Senator KING. We are not at the table where those claims are being adjudicated.

General BREEDLOVE. That is correct. That is where I was headed, sir. Because we are not a member of the UNCLOS, we do not have the standing at the table to address that.

Senator KING. I think I have asked practically every flag officer that has appeared before this committee that question and gotten the same answer. I hope the Congress will listen to the advice of our military commanders.

Last fall, I was in Iceland and was struck by the strategic value of that country and toured the old Keflavik air base. Should we be rethinking our decision to leave that base and find some way of having a presence there? To me, it is a giant unsinkable aircraft carrier right in one of the most strategic lanes in the world. Your thoughts?

General BREEDLOVE. So, Senator, as I used the map to explain that GIUK gap, Greenland, Iceland, UK gap, our ability to project intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance and other capabilities from places like Keflavik are very important to us. We are already renewing some of these conversations.

Senator KING. I hope that will continue, particularly since before the facilities either get reused or deteriorate. It is a marvelous facility.

We talked about the Russian economy, and I have heard various estimates if oil prices stay where they are, 18 months, 2 years, 3 years before there is a real collapse. I think you mentioned this or suggested it. I think that is a moment of maximum danger. When Putin's popularity—my understanding—is being maintained by his foreign adventurism and to the extent that the domestic economy and political situation tightens in the country, he is going to be more likely to be adventurous. I think that creates some real risk for us. Would you concur?

General BREEDLOVE. Sir, this is something that we talk about a lot, and it is one of the scenarios that concerns us. As the other elements of national power diminish due to the economy and the military continues to be invested in that, that dynamic is of concern.

Senator KING. What do you make of his, I think, unsettling discussions about nuclear weapons, particularly along the NATO line, this idea of escalate to de-escalate? It seems to me this is a change in doctrine that is really disturbing and we should be thinking very seriously about what the implications are.

General BREEDLOVE. Sir, I am on record that I think this is irresponsible discussion—I actually called it irresponsible talk.

Senator KING. For them I hope.

General BREEDLOVE. Yes, sir. That is correct. I am sorry. I should clarify.

It is not just Mr. Putin. As you know, it has been a series of their officials from several levels of ministries, to include the uniformed military, that the nuclear weapon is considered a normal weapon in the normal escalation or de-escalation matrix of resolving an issue. I have said more than once that I do not think that is responsible talk by a nuclear power.

Senator KING. Is NATO article 5 credible today? Does Russia view NATO, particularly in the Baltic States, as a credible responder?

General BREEDLOVE. Sir, if I could, just a tiny bit of background. I would actually, if I was talking about the articles of the Atlantic Treaty, it would start with article 3. Article 3 essentially says, in

my Georgia terms, defense starts at home. In other words, our nations also have to be focused on their own internal defense, and I think that I would remark to you that that has taken a very good turn since Wales and since Crimea.

Then article 4 is the next step I would talk about, and that is where nations begin to talk about the challenges that they see and that they might be facing a threat.

Then article 5, of course, is that collective defense article. It is the one that is most talked about, but I think the others are equally important.

I do believe that Mr. Putin understands the difference between a NATO border and a non-NATO border when it comes to overt military——

Senator KING. The Ukraine.

General BREEDLOVE. Yes, sir.

I do not think necessarily that those NATO borders mean that other elements of power will not be used. I think there is an incredible information/disinformation campaign and other types of pressures like economic pressures and energy, as was mentioned earlier, that are being brought on some of our NATO partners and allies.

Senator KING. A very important point. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Rounds?

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, thank you for your service.

I would like to follow up a little bit with what Senator King has touched on, and that is the escalate to de-escalate approach. I noticed in your written testimony, you talk about the missile defense in Europe and you have identified four phases. The missile defenses that we talk about here—what are they designed to protect against?

General BREEDLOVE. So the current EPAA, European Phase Adaptive Approach, is our American contribution to overall European missile defense. The essential elements of that are, as you know, four cruisers—or not cruisers—sorry—let us be precise—four destroyers that have been delivered to Rota with the Aegis system and then to build two remote Aegis Ashore sites, one in Romania and one in Poland, and then to couple those with a TPY-2 radar, which we have placed in Turkey. The first elements of that are all in place, the four destroyers, the TPY-2 in Turkey, and the first—we have just taken delivery of and working towards IOC, initial operating capability, at our site at Deveselu in Romania. Then following, we are now on time, on schedule as we begin the process of the Polish site. These are aimed at the threat that we see from the Middle East and Iran and others in their missile capabilities in order to defend Europe.

Senator ROUNDS. So these would be defensive weapons for both tactical or non-nuclear, as well as nuclear weapons?

General BREEDLOVE. Sir, they would defend against any missile because we would not really know. We might have a good guess, but we would not really know what kind of missile it is. So these ballistic missiles emanating out of the areas we are concerned about.

Senator ROUNDS. I noticed that when we talk about our activity and our nuclear deterrence and weapons of mass destruction with regard to our capabilities, you are very specific in your statements talking about them in terms of strategic nuclear forces. I would suspect it is in regard to strategic versus tactical.

Would you think that the Russians at this point view the same approach in terms of strategic versus tactical when we talk about nuclear weapons and the possible deployment of them?

General BREEDLOVE. That is an excellent question that I have not really thought much about, and I will explain why. I actually look at the problem in a different way, and it was mentioned before. That is that if you read the open writings, completely unclassified writings, of Mr. Gerasimov, all the way up in their organizations, the Russians talk about—I would not use the word “routine,” but talk about nuclear weapons being a part of that weapons continuum that could be used and is envisioned to be used in order to solve a conflict.

To answer your specific question, I would do it in this way. I think that they see nuclear weapons as a part of a solution if they need it, and so they do not draw nearly the strong distinctions that you might be describing as it relates to tactical versus strategic.

Senator ROUNDS. So if you were to compare our approach with regard to nuclear weapons, we are still in a position of looking at them as strategic in nature, whereas at the same time, it is very possible that Russia may very well look at them as a tactical weapon. My question is, are we prepared to respond in the case that that is their actual long-term approach? Do we need to reevaluate our capabilities if that is their approach?

General BREEDLOVE. Senator, I will not dodge your question. I just do not think that is appropriate for this forum. If I could invite my staff to come sit down with yours and we can give you pretty specific answers to those questions.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, sir.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator HIRONO?

Senator HIRONO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, I also add my thanks to you for your service and, of course, that of Mrs. Breedlove.

I wanted to just comment on your position regarding the U.S. not joining in UNCLOS. While you did not go so far as to acknowledge that that is the threat to our national security, it clearly disadvantages the United States in our dealings in that part of the world. Correct?

General BREEDLOVE. Ma'am, I am not trying to be evasive. Just like other military individuals, I support that we need the UNCLOS to be able to address issues that we face today.

Senator HIRONO. I agree with you.

In your written testimony, you mentioned the European Phase Adaptive Approach, and you were asked briefly about that just a little while ago and its capabilities to deepen our missile defense partnerships with NATO. I know that we have an initial operating capability in Romania and we are on track to put another site in—where is it?

General BREEDLOVE. Poland, ma'am.

Senator HIRONO. In Poland.

So what is Russia's reaction to our development of EPAA sites?

General BREEDLOVE. Ma'am, we need to be very straightforward. Russia looks at this as a huge problem. They talk about it all the time as being destabilizing, et cetera. Russia believes that these sites challenge their strategic nuclear capability, which they then believe unbalances the nuclear balance with the United States. Russia has been consistently opposed to EPAA in all shapes and forms in Europe.

Senator HIRONO. So in response, then has Russia done anything because of the position that they have regarding EPAA sites?

General BREEDLOVE. Ma'am, I cannot tie any actions directly. I would just offer the following. Russia continues to aggressively recapitalize its nuclear capability. It continues to invest in its strategic nuclear forces. As you have heard mentioned here, most of the world believes they have abrogated the INF Treaty in developing tactical nuclear weapons that are outside of what the INF was described for. I cannot tie any of that directly to EPAA, ma'am, and I would not want you to take that inference. What I would say is that Russia sees the need and value for having a diverse and capable nuclear force, and they continue to invest in it.

Senator HIRONO. Thank you.

You also mentioned that the 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance that outlined our rebalance to the Asia-Pacific was determined at a time when we thought Russia was a partner and not a threat. Now that Russia is deemed one of our primary threats, what are the implications to that regarding the rebalance to the Asia-Pacific? Can you also talk about some of the challenges of being able to maintain our interests in the Asia-Pacific while also effectively trying to limit Russian aggressive behavior?

General BREEDLOVE. Ma'am, what I would rather not do and what I have refrained from for most of my military career is what we call shooting on someone else's target. So I would not like to address my concerns based on something that is happening in the Pacific Command.

I would just tell you that we do see, as you have described, that we have been in a period for 2 decades of trying to make a partner out of Russia, and we have approached our strategies, our force sizes, our headquarters size capability and type. All the things in Europe have been adjusted for almost 2 decades for that situation where we would hope that we could go forward together with Russia to create a Europe whole, free, at peace, and I personally add prosperous.

Again, as you have said, what we have seen starting probably in 2008, but certainly across the last 2 years is we do not have a partner in Russia. We are now ill-placed in Europe as far as our force sizing capability, our headquarters sizing capability, and we are having to readdress our planning and other things as well to readdress this issue. I would advocate that that understanding of what Russia now represents would require us to think about how we allocate forces.

Senator HIRONO. I think the same goes for our understanding of aggressive behavior from North Korea and China with regard to the Asia-Pacific area.

So thank you for not pitting one area of the globe against another.

General BREEDLOVE. Yes, ma'am.

Senator HIRONO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Ernst?

Senator ERNST. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

General Breedlove, thank you very much for your years of admirable service. I know I appreciate it. All the members of this panel appreciate it, and of course, all of the folks across the country appreciate it as well.

In your written testimony, you say the capabilities available for EUCOM force protection are not keeping pace with the number of at-risk locations and people and the magnitude of the threats they face. You did state that there is a growing mission and we are being stretched very thin.

So as much as you can in this open setting, could you provide us with greater insight into the risks you are assuming due to a lack of force protection capabilities? I know you touched upon military intelligence and maybe we need a better understanding of its role in EUCOM. If you could expand on that.

Then also, specifically what sort of capabilities do you need to enhance force protection in Europe not only for our service members, but for those families that are stationed there as well?

General BREEDLOVE. Ma'am, if you could allow me to hit some generalities.

Senator ERNST. Absolutely.

General BREEDLOVE. Again, I would offer my staff to come speak specifics to you. I do not think they would be appropriate here to talk about our vulnerabilities——

Senator ERNST. Yes, thank you.

General BREEDLOVE.—so that our opponents could hear those.

Let me assure you first and foremost that the force protection of our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines and their families and those who support us like civilian entities like Dods and other things out there, teachers and others that are employed. These are a keen interest to us as commanders, and we work this issue every day.

To the point that you mentioned, which I think is very salient for today's discussion, our ability to have the authorities and the capabilities to share widely with our partners and our allies is very important. We do this every day. As you know, some of our relationships are better than others, but part of our requirement is to understand what is going on on the ground, and normally our allies and partners know that better than we do. So key to our ability is that ability to share these things that we can bring to the table with the things they can bring to the table to put together a holistic picture to be able then to make the adjustments that we need to make. I would tell you that we are working that aggressively all the time.

If I could, I would save the rest for a staff-to-staff discussion.

Senator ERNST. Absolutely. It is imperative that we do assume certain risks, but there are risks that you should not have to assume. I would appreciate additional feedback on that.

Sir, how will the Syrian ceasefire affect Russia's intervention into Syria, and specifically what impact will it have in your area of operations with respect to Russia's activities in Ukraine, Crimea, Georgia, the Baltics, and of course, elsewhere in Europe? I know we have mentioned the migrant flow. If you could just visit a little bit more about those specific areas, please.

General BREEDLOVE. Ma'am, as I stated before, I think it is important or at least I can say that any creditable and real genuine approach to bringing a ceasefire that respects and addresses the needs of the Syrian people I think will be welcome and we would support that. What we see in the mechanization of the ceasefire so far we need to watch and see how it works. We see continuing activity that is ostensibly aimed at the Daesh and al Nusra and other deemed terrorist fronts. So I think that the real effect of what is happening now—again, we support it if it is genuine and authentic, but we need to watch it. I have said before that the actions will speak louder than the words. We are really early now, and we need to see how those actions bear out.

Senator ERNST. Great.

I am running out of time, but very briefly a number of these places that I just mentioned, Ukraine and so forth—we do have through the National Guard our State partnership programs. Yes or no. Do you support those programs?

General BREEDLOVE. Ma'am, they really represent almost 24 percent of my outreach to other nations, and they are, in some cases, our very best tool for developing partnership capacity in our nations.

Senator ERNST. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Shaheen?

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Breedlove, I certainly share the sentiment of everybody on this committee about appreciation for your service to the country and your family's service to the country, and that we will miss you. I certainly hope that once you take off your uniform and rejoin civilian life, that you will continue to be involved in thinking about how we should be responding to the challenges that we face in Europe.

I want to go back to the testimony that you gave about NATO and where we are with our NATO partners and building their defense capabilities. I wonder if you could talk about what you hope to see coming out of the upcoming Warsaw Summit.

General BREEDLOVE. Yes, ma'am. Thank you for that.

So as we approach Warsaw, I have said more than once and I sort of said it poorly in my opening statement that it is really the road through Warsaw, not the road to Warsaw. In other words, I believe that NATO will have to continue to adapt across time.

What I believe is most important is that we continue the regime of increasing the readiness and the responsiveness of the entire NATO force structure. You saw at Wales we made adaptation to the NRF and we built the very high readiness joint task force. We increased the readiness of all of the NRF-designated forces and their capabilities.

That is not enough. We need to look and address the entire force structure, and that is why the investment regime that we talked about before is important, the overall 2 percent, but also inside of that 2 percent, the 20 percent recapitalization investment. I believe what would deter Mr. Putin in the end game is if he looks at a NATO that is more fit to purpose, more ready, more responsive, and a strong transatlantic alliance with Canada and U.S. on the other side of the Alliance. I think these are all very important. I do see recognition of this in our NATO allies and partners.

Senator SHAHEEN. There has been a lot of—I do not want to say “controversy” yet, but potential for controversy over Great Britain’s looking at exiting the EU and while they would still be a member of NATO. Do you see a referendum that would take Great Britain out of the EU as having an impact on the security in Europe and the potential for an impact on NATO?

General BREEDLOVE. Ma’am, I struggle to be qualified to make that judgment, and I am being very honest with you. I would say this, that the UK [United Kingdom] remains a staunch part of NATO, and there is no discussion either way about that. The UK is one of our great leaders in doing things that we do inside of NATO, providing forces, providing leadership. They and five to six other nations are those very highly technically capable nations that are incredibly important to some of the exquisite missions that we have to do in NATO. I remain completely confident in the UK as a functioning, contributing, and leading partner in NATO.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. I certainly hope that that continues to be the case regardless of the outcome of that referendum.

I wonder—one of the things that NATO is working with the EU on right now is the challenge of the migrants that are coming into Europe. They have agreed to undertake a mission to help combat the criminal networks and the traffickers that are bringing those migrants across the Aegean from Turkey. Can you talk a little bit about how this operation is expected to work and what we think the chances for success are?

General BREEDLOVE. Yes, ma’am. Another small point of pride. The ministers asked us to do this at our last ministerial, and the responsiveness of the NATO force and the positioning and the way that we plan and use our standing NATO maritime groups. We were able to respond within 48 hours and have ships on station to begin the mission because the mission is still evolving. My headquarters and I have put out two directives to begin the mission and now NATO is refining what it looks like.

Just very quickly, we are there to increase the surveillance, monitoring, and view of what is going on on the ocean, not to be a policing function, but to connect then to the Turkish coast guard and the Greek coast guard who are policing functions and hand off actionable information so that they can bring the policing function. So we are adding that capability to extend their eyes and ears and do the point-out of problems so that they can do the policing functions associated.

Of course, the NATO ships, if they observe bad things on the ocean, they are still bound by the Law of the Sea, and they will react appropriately. Turkey has agreed—now, I know we are still doing some negotiations, but Turkey has agreed in principle to

receive any of these migrants that are picked up by our NATO ships in this operation.

Senator SHAHEEN. So they would go to Turkey, not to Greece.

General BREEDLOVE. That is correct, ma'am. That is the understanding today.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you very much. My time is up.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Lee?

Senator LEE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, General Breedlove, for your service to our country. Thanks for being here with us today.

I want to start just by reiterating a concern expressed by my colleague, Senator Manchin. It worries me that the U.S. accounts for about three-fourths of NATO funding even though the European members have an even larger combined economy and population, and that defense spending in European countries has decreased by 28 percent since 1990. Meanwhile, just over the last 12 years, Russia has increased its defense budget by over 100 percent. This worries me a little bit especially given that I think there are some additional uncertainties that come into this in light of President Obama's request to quadruple funding for the European Reassurance Initiative in fiscal year 2017. It worries me about, among other things, what this could say about the willingness of our European allies to increase and modernize their own defense systems.

On that note, given the fact that he does want to quadruple the funding for the European Reassurance Initiative to \$3.4 billion, the Russian Government is obviously not going to be taking this announcement happily. The objective of the spending is, of course, to reassure our European allies that we are committed to their defense and we are committed to doing what we can to try to deter any further Russian aggression.

I would like to ask you what are the chances that this spending, this increased spending, might have the opposite effect and that the Russian Government might use increased spending levels in this area both as propaganda and as sort of a public relations excuse to increase Russia's own military buildup along its western border or activity in Eastern Europe. How are you addressing the potential that we could, in one way or another, unwittingly, unintentionally, be catalyzing an arms race on the Russian border with Eastern Europe?

General BREEDLOVE. So thank you. It is a complicated question. If I could dissect it just a little bit to the front end of the question about the concern of the investment of our NATO nations.

Clearly we are focused on all of the nations addressing their individual requirements. As we discussed earlier, article 3 of the Atlantic Treaty is essentially, in my words, defense begins at home. In other words, nations are required to prepare for their own defense.

The numbers I use, sir, are probably exactly wrong. They fluctuate a little bit. Here are the numbers that are pretty widely accepted. Since Wales, 16 of our nations have stopped their decline in defense spending. Five of the nations at this moment are investing 2 percent or better. Now, my personal opinion, not that of our government or others, is there is about seven of the nations that I think have a very creditable internal plan to reach 2 percent within a creditable amount of time. At Wales, the decrease in 10

years—I think that a shorter time frame would be more appropriate.

Senator LEE. 17 nations?

General BREEDLOVE. Seven.

Senator LEE. Seven nations that would get there.

General BREEDLOVE. So what we see—and again, this is not to be overly optimistic, but I am just reporting sort of what we see now is that the nations have taken notice and are beginning to address the issues.

To this latter half of your question, which is the Russian reaction to ERI [European Reassurance Initiative], everything we do in Europe the Russians react to. Everything we do in Europe they use as a part of their propaganda campaign. Every small exercise, every big exercise, every investment, when we fly a couple of bombers in an exercise, it gets big notice. As you have seen, they have a steady flow of aircraft into our area.

So I do not want to belittle what you are concerned about, the opposite effect in propaganda. Sir, they are already talking about ERI in their propaganda efforts to discredit what we are trying to do. I would offer you my opinion, which will sound a bit strident, but I believe that Russia is on a path right now to recapitalize and reinvest in its military, and it is moving forward in that effort, and it will use things as an opportunity to label them as a reaction. I believe they are on a scheduled plan and they are executing their approach to recapitalization, reinvestment, reinvigorating, and probably most disturbingly, to use their military as you have seen them use it in Crimea, Donbass. They reset the line recently and violated Georgian territory again by moving the line about 1,600 meters south in South Ossetia to cover an energy transmission point. Now you see what is going on in Syria.

So, sir, I think they are on a schedule and they are going to execute that schedule. They will use whatever they can to address the propaganda piece to talk about it.

Senator LEE. Thank you very much, sir. I see my time has expired.

Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Donnelly?

Senator DONNELLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If you do not mind, I was going to defer to Senator Kaine for the moment and then go next.

Chairman MCCAIN. I mind.

[Laughter.]

Senator DONNELLY. Thank you.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, General Breedlove. Again, I echo the comments about your service. You have addressed most of my questions.

One area that we have spent a lot of time on in this committee kind of at the edges of is the concern about the Nation's cyber doctrine, sort of when is a cyber attack an act of war, when it is sort of a lesser magnitude, what should our response be. Do we have a deterrence doctrine? If we do, do we publicize it? If we do not publicize it, does it really deter?

I am kind of curious about article 5 and collective self-defense. If you could talk about NATO-level discussions on when a cyber

attack of a NATO ally would potentially trigger an article 5 common defense obligation.

General BREEDLOVE. Again, Senator, we would love to offer some folks to come talk to you about in a classified——

Senator DONNELLY. Great.

General BREEDLOVE. There are things we can say here, which I think are very pertinent to your question.

When I came to NATO about 3 years ago, NATO was in a very nascent place as it relates to cyber activity and how they would react to cyber. I must tell you that in an unqualified way that has changed. As you know, we have come under cyber attack. We are under cyber attack every day. The nations have very much understood that there are 28 doors into our Alliance, and if we have a few that are massive and well-formed and a few that are wide open, we have an issue. We have had a better understanding of the collective requirement to address this challenge.

I think I will stop there on that piece. What I would offer to you is to have your MLA, maybe the next time you are in Europe, take you through Tallinn, Estonia and see the center of excellence there. It is an incredibly well functioning place. It is putting out usable tools and capabilities to our Alliance, and it is making a difference. You would be able to see a little bit firsthand if you were to visit that in Tallinn.

Senator KAINE. I would love to do that, and I think this is a topic the committee I am sure will be spending a lot more time on generally, cyber doctrine.

The second thing. I am really interested in U.S. activities to train the militaries of foreign nations, you know, in terms of building up a NATO capacity. Certainly it is the budgetary question but also the U.S.—we do some of our best work on the training side. In particular, since 2010, you have had a Black Sea rotational force, which has been a Marine component attached to EUCOM, which has some other responsibilities too, crisis response. A lot of their work has been training the militaries I guess especially in the southeastern portion of the EUCOM geography. Describe a little bit the utility of the Black Sea rotational force in its 6 years of existence.

General BREEDLOVE. So, Senator, if I could, I would really like to open that up even a little bit bigger, and I will just use the work that the 173rd Sky soldiers have just finished up in Ukraine and handed off to another unit there.

I would tell you that your United States forces, all of them, Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine, are doing some incredible things training our allies and partners in Europe. The BSERV is an incredible example of that. The nations that the BSERV specifically works with, of course, Romania, Bulgaria, are incredibly appreciative of what they do, and they are benefiting because we see the troops that they train serving alongside of us in Afghanistan and other places, and they are capable and a lot of times come with zero caveat and work and serve right alongside our folks.

So let me just throw out a couple of other examples, the Marine work and now beginning some of the Army work in Georgia. Some of the finest soldiers that served with us in Afghanistan and

Kosovo and other places come from Georgia. At one point, Georgia was——

Senator Kaine. I think they are in the Kurdish region in northern Iraq as well.

General Breedlove. Yes, sir. They are serving alongside our NATO partners and allies in many, many places.

As I mentioned, we have just finished a very successful series of training opportunities in Yavoriv in Ukraine where we have trained the national guard forces, not exactly similar to our National Guard forces but we have just finished that iteration. Now we are beginning to train the ministry of defense forces in Yavoriv, and this is an incredibly successful program and the forces that we have been training have been doing very well as they then move forward.

I know you are aware as well, sir, we have just finished our first iteration of training Ukrainian SOF, and we are just starting the second class. Again, I just spoke to the ambassador now about 4 hours ago about some of the things going on in Ukraine, and he is very complimentary of both the work at Yavoriv and the work with the SOF.

So there are multiple examples, Georgia, Romania, Ukraine, BSERV. These are all very successful and our allies and partners are producing soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines who are serving alongside us in some tough, tough places.

Senator Kaine. Thank you.

General Breedlove. I hope I was encouraging there because this is a good news story.

Senator Kaine. I think it is a small portion of the DOD budget that we devote to training foreign militaries whether it is overseas or bringing foreign military leaders here. In terms of bang for the buck, it is one of the best expenses we make. Thank you, General.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman McCain. Senator Graham? Oh, I am sorry. Senator Cotton. I am sorry.

Senator Cotton. Thank you.

General, thank you very much for your many years of service to our country.

I want to return to something to which you alluded briefly in your testimony here and before the House Armed Services Committee and about which the chairman asked you. You said that Vladimir Putin is weaponizing immigration in Syria. Could you explain a little bit more what you mean by that concept?

General Breedlove. Senator, thank you for the question.

I think I have to step back a little bit in the conflict to start first with Bashar al Assad because this story builds from that point, and that is that what we have seen is the Assad regime using weaponry that has almost zero military utility. Again, as a fighter pilot, I understand the ballistics of a weapon. I have delivered a lot of them myself. The ballistics of a barrel bomb does not lend itself to military utility. What it lends itself to is terrorizing populations, getting them on the move, getting them on the road, and making them someone else's problem. What we have seen is that continue into this weekend, that style of approach by the Assad regime.

Then I would also say is that what we see in our Russian counterparts in Syria is the use of a lot of very indiscriminate weapons, and the percentage of precision weaponry used is very low. It is hard to tell from what they are doing on their targets what their real intent is. What we do see is that it is causing a lot of flow of people out of the stricken areas, getting them on the road, and getting them into someone else's hair. Our ally Turkey, over 2 million that they are taking care of. In Jordan, half of that. In Lebanon, a huge number. So what we have seen is not only the flow into Europe and other places caused by these efforts, but an intense flow into the neighboring nations.

I have used that word. I use that because I cannot see the military utility of some of the actions being taken by these individuals in the conflict.

Senator COTTON. Most of these migrants and refugees are Sunni Arabs from Syria?

General BREEDLOVE. I cannot say that because we do see a pretty large migration flow still from Afghanistan and other places.

Senator COTTON. From Syria.

General BREEDLOVE. From Syria, I do not want to hazard a guess there, sir. I will get you an answer to that.

The information referred to follows:

Yes. We assess the Syrian refugees are mostly (80% or greater) Sunni Arabs.

The country of Syria is estimated 90% Sunni Arab. The UNHCR (the official organization tracking this) estimates the number of registered Syrian refugees that have left Syria is 4.182 million. Turkey has ~2,715, 789. Lebanon has ~1,067,785. Jordan has ~636,040. Egypt has ~119,301. N. Africa has ~28,027.

Senator COTTON. While there not be military application, it would be a convenient political development if Bashar al Assad, who represents a minority sect in Syria, were to ethnically cleanse much of his country of Sunni Arabs, which have been a historic source of resistance to Israel, destabilizing Jordan and Turkey, two key U.S. allies on its border, as well as destabilizing much of Europe and the Balkans and Eastern and Central Europe.

General BREEDLOVE. Yes, sir.

Senator COTTON. Is it a long-term goal of Vladimir Putin to ultimately divide the European Union and NATO?

General BREEDLOVE. Sir, I said that in my written testimony, and I think I actually said it in my opening statement as well. I do believe that one of the primary goals of Mr. Putin is to find a division in NATO and find a division in the European Union.

Senator COTTON. We often speculate about the possibility of hybrid warfare, as it is called, in one of the Baltic countries, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania. That would be a very high risk maneuver if you are thinking about it from Vladimir Putin's standpoint. Right?

General BREEDLOVE. So I believe Mr. Putin, as I said, does understand article 5 and understands what a NATO border is as it relates to conventional force. I do not believe that he feels necessarily restrained in using the other tools of national power, diplomatic, informational, economic in these areas.

Senator COTTON. If you look at the political controversy that this flow of migrants and refugees has created over this last year in Europe, from Vladimir Putin's standpoint, it might appear that this

is a much lower risk way to divide Europe against itself than that kind of risk of invading a NATO country. Correct?

General BREEDLOVE. Sir, I cannot make that judgment for Mr. Putin, but what we have seen is that this is bringing great pressure on the nations of Europe.

Senator COTTON. What do you think is going to happen as winter turns to spring and we see more migrants and refugees? Just in the last week to 10 days, we have seen the Visegrad countries meet with the Balkans excluding Greece from this meeting and discussions about shutting the Macedonian-Greek border, and therefore cutting off the land bridge for refugees and migrants going into Austria and Germany. Yet, Chancellor Merkel has just said that she remains committed to keeping her borders entirely open. What is the end game here for Europe?

General BREEDLOVE. Sir, first to the first part of your question, I was just in the Balkans the last—about 2 weeks ago visiting everyone from Montenegro to Serbia actually. On all of their minds is the concern of what happens in the spring. Also, what happens in the dynamics if some nations close borders and others do not. It could shift the pattern through nations that are even less capable of addressing these flows. So this remains a big concern for the nations of the area.

Senator COTTON. Thank you, General. My time has expired. I do think it is always important to remember that as troublesome as these flows of migrants and refugees are, it is merely a symptom, and the ultimate disease is the Syrian civil war. The U.S. administration bears responsibility for that disease.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Donnelly?

Senator DONNELLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, thank you for all your service to our country.

When you were here before, when you were kind enough to appear before us, one of the subjects we talked about was Russian incursions into areas that they traditionally have not been, Russia's being intercepted along Great Britain's south coast, and that in order to avoid conflict, rather than going head on with them, sometimes we have worked them out, but they have not gone into greater conflict with them.

Is this continuing apace as great a rate as it was before? How long do you think this will continue, and what message does it send to Putin that he can continue to do these things?

General BREEDLOVE. Sir, thank you. We did talk about that, and yes we have seen the Russian Federation aircraft in places that we have not seen them before, and that still continues to today. I need to be intellectually honest. I would tell you that it has decreased a little bit. I think that is primarily because there is a great focus right now on Syria. Assets are dedicated to Syria, other things. I am not sure that we would not see that go back up after a Syrian conflict. It may just be a question of capacity and focus, et cetera. So we need to be honest in our reporting that it has dipped a little bit as we have seen Syria pick up.

I would just like to say—I would not question the words you use, but our responses to these things in these unconventional places have not been that we yield but we do what is professionally correct in those responses in those spaces.

Senator DONNELLY. What is your worst scenario in regards to Russia? What are the things that, you know, when you begin a day, you go this would be the worst case that could happen?

General BREEDLOVE. I would really love to do that in a classified sense. I would tell you that we see a force that is becoming more capable, more fully qualified. We see a force that is being used routinely in ways that we have not seen in years. I have been pretty straightforward about that what we see now in Eastern Europe, that force is again a tool used to change internationally recognized borders. Russia continues to occupy the Ukrainian peninsula of Crimea. Force was used to go across the international border of Ukraine in the Donbass, and some of those forces remain. My concern, sir, in an unclassified setting, is that we see a force that is, once again, being used in ways that we thought were over in Europe.

Senator DONNELLY. It has appeared—and I do not know if this is the exact way to describe it, but it is almost as if Putin in Russia has talked about their nuclear arsenal in a fairly casual way. When you look at this, what do you think we should make of it? One of the things that has been discussed is, as our conventional strike munitions and conventional strike ability increases, they use this as an effort to try to balance against it. What is your view of how fast and loose they actually are in this area?

General BREEDLOVE. Sir, I have remarked more than once publicly and in testimony that I think this is irresponsible talk or irresponsible behavior, the way that nukes are talked about and they are talked about from the relatively junior military levels right up to the most senior members of the Russian Federation leadership. None of us in the West believe that this is responsible behavior in the way that nukes are discussed.

What do we do about it? First, we do not engage in that kind of discussion. Second, I think what is really important to me is that we retain a creditable, capable, nuclear force, and that the world sees that force as being creditable and capable.

To your other question that our increasing capabilities, as it relates to precision, conventional attack and other things, this is one of the reasons that we hear these discussions. If a situation is not going well, the other side discusses that nukes could be used to escalate, to de-escalate, et cetera. I do not think that we should dampen our ability to use our conventional force in the way that we have used it in the past.

Senator DONNELLY. Thank you. My time is up.

I just wanted to ask you do you think that Vladimir Putin believes that article 5 would be enforced, that all of the different members would come to the other member's defense if he took action in one of the NATO countries.

General BREEDLOVE. I believe he absolutely understands what article 5 means in relation to a NATO boundary. I would say, Senator, that the nations of NATO at the Wales Summit were very demonstrative, very quick about the absolute commitment to article 5 collective defense.

Senator DONNELLY. Thank you, and thank you so much for your service to the country.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Graham?

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you, General. You have done a really good job in your position here.

It is 2016. Is it fair to say that Russia had successfully dismembered the Ukraine?

General BREEDLOVE. Sir, I think that I am not sure I would use those terms, but the way I would characterize it is Russia is right now holding the levers to bring great pressure and to adjust the way things happen in Kiev and by fielding a force in the Donbass that will give him those levers into the future.

Senator GRAHAM. Well, if you do not like “dismembered,” what word would you use?

General BREEDLOVE. Sir, I think he is now able to exert great influence on what happens in Ukraine.

Senator GRAHAM. To the Ukrainian people’s detriment and our detriment?

General BREEDLOVE. Sir, I believe that the Ukrainian people voted for a different agenda when they elected Mr. Poroshenko and Mr. Yatsenyuk.

Senator GRAHAM. So it is 2016. Do you agree with me that Russia has intervened on the side of Assad in a significant capacity?

General BREEDLOVE. I do believe, Senator, and I have said it before that I believe the main effort of the Russian forces in Syria are to support the Assad regime.

Senator GRAHAM. The Russians have been bombing people we have trained in Syria. Is that correct?

General BREEDLOVE. Yes, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. Are the sanctions against Russia working?

General BREEDLOVE. Senator, I think that the combination of economic pressure, the drop in the fuel prices, and the sanctions that are on Russia—the combination of those have had effect.

Senator GRAHAM. Are they working? Are they changing Russian behavior?

General BREEDLOVE. Some months ago or maybe even a month or so ago, I would have answered no. I think today in the classified sense I could come to you and say there are a few things we are beginning to see happen.

Senator GRAHAM. Well, I would like to have that briefing because my answer would be no. I do not see them changing in a positive way at all. Maybe you should do this in a classified setting.

What are we not doing that we could do that would change Russian behavior? Do you want to talk about that in a classified setting?

General BREEDLOVE. Sir, I would love to do that.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay.

Let us talk about Turkey. Are you familiar with the Syrian Defense Forces?

General BREEDLOVE. I am, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. What percentage of that force is Kurdish?

General BREEDLOVE. That question I simply do not know, and I will have to get you an answer to that.

The information referred to follows:

CENTCOM estimates the YPG (Kurds) forms 80–85 percent of the Syrian Defense Forces (SDF). We project YPG to be anywhere from 30,000–40,000 fighters. Press

consistently reports the Arab component (tribes and opposition groups) to be around 5,000.

Senator GRAHAM. Is it fair to say that Turkey has a problem with what we are doing inside of Syria with the Kurds?

General BREEDLOVE. Sir, I do believe that we have disagreements with our great ally over some of the approaches we take with the Kurdish forces in north Syria.

Senator GRAHAM. Do you see any scenario where the Syrian Defense Forces in their current construct could take Raqqa away from ISIL?

General BREEDLOVE. Sir, if I could ask you to ask that of the CENTCOM commander, I think it would be a better place to answer that.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay.

From a NATO perspective, in terms of Afghanistan, do you believe that NATO nations will follow whatever we do in terms of troops in 2017?

General BREEDLOVE. Sir, I do believe that the NATO nations are willing to follow our lead. Actually I cannot speak for those nations, but several have intimated that they would stay, if required, to get the mission done.

Senator GRAHAM. Would you recommend against going to 1,000 U.S. personnel in 2017 in Afghanistan, given what you know about Afghanistan?

General BREEDLOVE. Sir, what I have said is that I believe that we need to accomplish the mission. We are there now, doing now, and that until we see that mission accomplished, I think we need to stay—

Senator GRAHAM. Have we accomplished that mission?

General BREEDLOVE. Not yet, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. The counterterrorism is a mission that we are trying to accomplish to stop an attack on the homeland. Is that correct?

General BREEDLOVE. Counterterrorism is an important part of that. Yes, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. During your time in the military, have you seen more threats to America?

General BREEDLOVE. Sir, I think that we are in one of the toughest situations that we have faced in decades right now.

Senator GRAHAM. So do you think it is smart for Congress, in light of what you just said, to reimpose sequestration next year?

General BREEDLOVE. Sir, allow me to speak to the European Command and my mission. I have said that sequestration would be very tough on our ability to accomplish our mission.

Senator GRAHAM. Do you think it is the signal we want to send to our NATO allies as we tell them to up their spending and we cut ours?

General BREEDLOVE. I think it is important for us to lead, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. What kind of signal would it send to Russia?

General BREEDLOVE. I think they are watching exactly what we do with our modernization programs and our presence programs and our employment overseas. It is important that we sustain the appropriate presence and capability forward.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you for your service.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Tillis?

Senator TILLIS. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

General, thank you for being here.

A quick question that is really to follow up on questions that Senators Lee and Cotton touched on.

The divided West is a great threat for you in doing your job. One of the things you mentioned that sanctions seem to be having some effect. Do you believe that they are prepared to renew those sanctions going into summer in your discussion with our partners?

General BREEDLOVE. Sir, I learned a long time ago as the Supreme Allied Commander of NATO that I cannot speak for the nations. So I would defer on that question. I think that that would be much—I would be on shaky ground as a military man to speak to the political positions of the nations. I am sorry to dodge your question, but that is a realistic answer I think.

Senator TILLIS. What is your personal recommendation? Do you think that it is a tool that you hope that the renewal of the sanctions go back into place? Rather than speculate on the positions, are you an advocate for continuing the renewal of the sanctions?

General BREEDLOVE. I am, sir. The way I look at this it is one of our tools. As I spoke about today, I think that our opponents use all of the major tools of a nation's power. We use a simple model called DIME, diplomatic, informational, military, and economic. The economic piece is what you are talking about. Our opponents use all of those tools to bring great pressure on nations, and we should not take any of those tools off of the table.

Senator TILLIS. Thank you.

General, do you think that—or could you talk a little bit about the linkage of Putin's plans in Ukraine with respect to Syria? Is there some sort of strategic linkage there? Can you describe that if there is?

General BREEDLOVE. Sir, yes. I do not think that Mr. Putin nor the leaders of—the small group of leaders of the Russian Federation do anything in isolation. I think all these things are connected. As I have answered other of your colleagues today, I think that one of the major goals—or two of the major goals of Mr. Putin is to bring dissolution to either NATO or to the European Union, preferably both. If Mr. Putin can find a way to fracture those alliances or organizations, it makes it much easier for him to accomplish his larger goals in Europe at that point. I do not think that any of these operations of Mr. Putin from Syria to the Arctic are disassociated. I believe they are all brought in a broad sense.

Senator TILLIS. General, in your written testimony, you have commented that our current force posture in Europe has been based on Russia as a strategic partner. I think you described it as hugging the bear. That is obviously not working.

So what concrete steps do we need to take to change our force posture in Europe to be able to deter Russia more effectively?

General BREEDLOVE. Thank you, sir.

So if I could just very briefly on NATO, I think that what NATO needs to do I described earlier as bringing the entire force of NATO to an increased readiness and responsiveness. In Wales, we focused on the NRF, the VJTF, and some of the smaller forces, and we are

delivering that. Now we need to bring focus across all of the force to bring readiness and responsiveness up.

In a U.S. context, as I described in my opening statement, I think it is sort of a three-step approach, and it would take me about half a minute to lay that out.

First and foremost, our forward position forces are incredibly important. Permanently forward stationed forces are the optimum.

Understanding the environment that we are in, we then look at two other steps to address forward presence. One is that we will look at and are and a part of ERI is prepositioning forward materials that we can rapidly fall in on to rapidly increase our posture. Then the second piece is those heel-to-toe, fully funded rotational forces that use the prepositioning or come over to have presence and exercises. So that is sort of the step two basket.

The step three basket is a little tougher to describe, but in shorthand, it is we need to be able to rapidly reinforce. That sounds very straightforward. It is not. Remember that Russia has created a very dense pattern of A2AD, anti-access/area denial. We need to be investing in those capabilities and capacities that allow us to enter into an A2AD environment and be able to reinforce, and then some of the investments of the European Reassurance Initiative are on the ground, such as improving railheads, railroads, improving our ports, and our airfields again so that once we puncture the A2AD, we can rapidly address our issues.

So it is a three-step approach. Look at our forward-stationed forces. Look at our rotating forces and prepositioned materials, and then ensure that we can rapidly reinforce. That is the framework in which I am trying to drive the conversation with my leadership.

Senator TILLIS. Thank you, General.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Sullivan?

Senator SULLIVAN. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

General, I want to thank you again for your service. I want to thank your wife. I know that you have committed decades to serving our country. I think you have done it in an outstanding manner, particularly your current billet.

I want to follow up on Senator King's questions and in some ways ask similar questions that Senator Graham did.

It is 2016. Do you think it is safe to say that Russia has successfully militarized the Arctic?

General BREEDLOVE. Sir, I do believe that we see a pattern there that concerns many of our nations and partners. As you know, we share the Arctic with our other NATO ally Canada and then six other allies and partners of NATO. Each are concerned with what they see happening in the Arctic where we see the creation of intelligence and surveillance capabilities, weaponization such as surface-to-air missiles, coastal defense cruise missiles, et cetera, et cetera.

Senator SULLIVAN. Four new BCTs, a new Arctic command, 13 new airfields.

General BREEDLOVE. Yes, sir.

Senator SULLIVAN. So is it not safe to say that Russia has successfully militarized the Arctic?

General BREEDLOVE. They have certainly increased their capability and capacity there.

Senator SULLIVAN. Can you describe a little bit—and you and I have talked about it, but really how massive the last year the two different Arctic military exercises were? These were huge. Maybe you cannot talk about it in this setting, but I will ask the question anyway of whether or not we were even aware that they were going to happen or happening. When you move tens of thousands of troops and hundreds of aircraft and dozens of ships, normally that is something the United States military has an inkling about. It seems in this case, they did it and we were pretty unaware. Can you talk about that a little bit?

General BREEDLOVE. I would like to have my staff work with yours on some more classified answers to fully flesh this out. What I would say is I agree with you that we have seen some very demonstrative exercises, and in certain ways, they did absolutely surprise us. One of the things that surprised us is how one of those exercises then morphed into a larger exercise in the western military district so that we saw a very large what I would call strategically focused exercise, not that an exercise in the Arctic alone is not strategic, but we saw it morph into a bigger exercise.

Senator SULLIVAN. When Vladimir Putin does those kind of things, as you mentioned before, that is not normally—there is usually something to that. Correct?

General BREEDLOVE. Sir, as I said before, I think he has taken a very strategic approach to everything he does.

Senator SULLIVAN. Let me ask another question. Secretary Carter, General Dunford—they have all mentioned—we have talked about the Arctic in front of this committee, how we are late to the game. You know, if you look at the DOD's Arctic strategy, it is pretty much a joke. It is 13 pages, 6 of which are pictures. It mentions climate change five times and mentions Russia solely in a footnote. So I think we provided proper oversight here and, in a bipartisan way, move forward on requiring the Secretary of Defense to put forward a no-kidding, real strategy and an operations plan for the Arctic. We got a commitment from Secretary Carter and General Dunford to make sure that is a very robust OPLAN for the Arctic. Can I get your commitment that we would have the EUCOM's participation in that as well? I think it is going to be important.

General BREEDLOVE. Absolutely, Senator. As importantly, NATO is beginning to take a look at this as well.

Senator SULLIVAN. Great.

Let me ask more specific questions. You know, as Russia is building up—you have been in Alaska recently. You are aware that our Department of Defense is looking at building down in the Arctic, getting rid of the only airborne brigade combat team in the Arctic, the Asia-Pacific, the only mountain-trained Arctic BCT in the entire U.S. military. That is the 425. You talked about a permanently forward presence. You talked about rapid reinforcement capability. This is a unit that you uniquely can do all of those things and fight in the Arctic.

To his credit, General Milley is taking a look at this, and he made some comments last week that he thinks that maybe given

the situation with regard to Russia, with regard to Korea, that the Army should reverse this decision, what I think is a strategically short-sighted decision. Admiral Harris and General Scaparrotti last week were supportive of that decision by General Milley to keep the 425.

Do you support that decision by General Milley? What do you think that that does to show Vladimir Putin resolve, that hey, wait a minute, things have changed? They are rapidly building up the Arctic. We have this ERI initiative, but we also need forces out east. The easiest way to keep the American resolve is to just keep our best Arctic warriors in place. Do you support what General Milley is doing? How do you think Vladimir Putin would view keeping that 425, which by the way, as you know, the Russians watch them train all the time? They do an airborne jump. The Russians do an airborne jump. They are very, very aware of this unit and its capability. Can you comment on those questions?

General BREEDLOVE. Senator, I think it is important that we keep this capability and that we maintain its currency and continually address its capability to do its mission.

I think Mr. Putin understands physics, and the physics are that those forces in the north across the pole are as close if not closer than many other forces we have in our inventory. The speed and response of that set of forces and capabilities are very important, and I think Mr. Putin understands that.

Senator SULLIVAN. So do you support what General Milley—

General BREEDLOVE. We need to keep this capability, sir.

Senator SULLIVAN. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Wicker?

Senator WICKER. Thank you very much.

Thank you, General.

I have been in and out, but let me ask you about—let me get back to Ukraine and then maybe touch on the refugee crisis too.

We have got these frozen conflicts throughout the region, Moldova, Transnistria, Nagorno-Karabakh. In your judgment, is Ukraine now to be added to that list of frozen conflicts or is the situation a little too kinetic there for us to know?

General BREEDLOVE. Sir, thank you, and please do not take this as any sort of a disagreement. I really do not like the term “frozen conflicts.”

Senator WICKER. It is a term that is widely—

General BREEDLOVE. Yes, sir, absolutely. That is where I was going. It is a term that is widely used, but I would like to point out that most of these are still hot and people are dying in some of these places. There are four or five of them. Georgia, as I mentioned earlier—the Russians recently moved the line in South Ossetia another 1,600 meters to the south, and it took over a major energy transmission point.

Senator WICKER. What were the casualties there?

General BREEDLOVE. That was done bloodless. They simply moved the line.

In Nagorno-Karabakh, we routinely have days where soldiers are injured and occasionally killed there.

Transnistria. We have not seen any actual injuries, sir, but we have seen the reinforcement, refitting, and strengthening of that garrison in Transnistria.

South Ossetia, Abkhazia, still extant.

Now I believe that Ukraine is in a position where the Russians would like to maintain the capability to continue to put military pressure on Kiev via that conflict. It is anything but frozen. As I said, yesterday about 71 engagements in the last 24 hours in that area, and over 450 engagements in that area over the last week.

Senator WICKER. What term would you prefer that we use?

General BREEDLOVE. We are wrestling with that, sir. I think "frozen conflicts" is good because people recognize it. I would just like to point out that they are really anything but frozen. Some of them I would call pretty hot.

Senator WICKER. In your professional military judgment, is the current situation, as it stands in Ukraine, helpful or harmful to Mr. Putin's long-term interests?

General BREEDLOVE. Let me answer the easy question first. The situation in Ukraine is absolutely unhelpful to the people of Ukraine's long-term interests.

Senator WICKER. No question about it.

General BREEDLOVE. In Kiev, there is no question about that.

I think that Mr. Putin very much wants to have a hand in the direction of Ukraine, a hand in being able to regulate their desire to join the West, a desire to keep pressure on the economic and political decisions of Kiev. I think that his interests are to maintain enough pressure and influence in the Donbass to be able to shape that. So I think it is in his interest to be able to pressure Kiev through the tool of the Donbass.

I am not sure that I am ready to answer whether it is in his long-term interests as it relates to his own national concerns. Is that the question you are asking, Senator?

Senator WICKER. Yes.

General BREEDLOVE. Can I get back to you on that?

Senator WICKER. That would be great.

Senator WICKER. As far as you have observed, is the Ukrainian Government in Kiev working together?

General BREEDLOVE. Sir, I have seen some very good things and some challenges. I think that there is a great commitment. I have sat down personally several times with Mr. Poroshenko and with Mr. Yatsenyuk, and I do think both of those individuals have the best interest of their nation in the future. I think that there are some pretty tough structural problems that they have had to address. Frankly, I think their people expect a lot from them. As I mentioned earlier in this testimony, I think that some of the change they need to make is pretty hard to take when they are on a front and militarily engaged. They face some pretty tough challenges ahead.

Senator WICKER. Well, thank you very much.

Let me, Mr. Chairman, if I might, just ask the General briefly with regard to the refugee situation. We had a question I think from Senator Manchin when I was at the hearing earlier about the possibility of infiltration, and certainly that is a concern.

Would you comment as to the destabilizing effect in the territory of our European allies of this influx of immigrants and migrants passing through and the prospect for that either increasing or being mitigated somehow?

General BREEDLOVE. The destabilizing effects are multifaceted. The easiest ones to speak to is as I have described before and I have in my written testimony that I believe there is criminality, terrorists, and foreign fighters in those flows. Those all have their own form of destabilizing effect, criminality in just moving of humans and moving of drugs and other things, those kind of people using the flows to do that, terrorists, who have ill-intent in the West. Then just returning foreign fighters who have skills and may not actually be returning with any ill-intent, but when they get home and they have no economic opportunity and others, what do they eventually do with those skills? So there is a lot of destabilizing effect of this criminality, terrorism, and returning foreign fighters.

The other piece that is, I think, more widely understood is just the destabilizing effect economically and straining the social fabric of these nations as these large flows of people challenge already challenged governments and social systems as they arrive. I think there is a multifaceted challenge to the nations of Europe.

Senator WICKER. Thank you very much.

I appreciate the chair's indulgence.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Sessions?

Senator SESSIONS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

With regard to the European Union, someone wrote recently that oddly you would think the European Commission, Brussels, would be the one that would lead a unified effort to deal with the migrant crisis. In fact, in essence, rightly or wrongly, legally or otherwise, they are the ones that are blocking the nation states from taking action that those states would normally take—or attempting to block them. Is that correct?

General BREEDLOVE. Senator, being a military officer and not a leader of one of these nations, I am not sure I am really qualified to say that. What I would say is that—

Senator SESSIONS. The European rules—and the European Union is not making immediate decisions that would facilitate a more effective control. Is that not correct?

General BREEDLOVE. I believe, sir, that there could be efforts made that could bring more unified pressure.

Senator SESSIONS. One of the things we all need, I think, to understand here is just because we got a group of nations together that pretend to be an effective leadership, sometimes they undermine the ability of action to actually occur that could be beneficial.

Is it still true that a high percentage of these migrants are young males?

General BREEDLOVE. I believe that to be true, Senator.

Senator SESSIONS. Well, let me take another subject. Thank you for your great service—you and your wife—and the commitment you have made to the country.

You have spent now almost 3 years in Europe. You had time in Aviano and Ramstein and other places. So you know the region well. Did the Europeans and NATO—are they willing to improve

and increase their share of funding for the defense of Europe? You have raised that a number of times. Would you briefly tell us your latest communication with the region about what they need to do and what achievements have occurred in the last several years, not promises for the future?

General BREEDLOVE. So the numbers I have used today once, Senator, are again not going to be perfect, but the numbers that we see now in Europe follow the following line. About 16 of our nations have stopped the decline in their budgets, not perfect, but a first step.

Senator SESSIONS. Well, it is worse than not perfect. I mean, they have been declining and they are below their commitment of 2 percent, most of them. Are they not?

General BREEDLOVE. Only five now, sir, are at 2 percent or better. I would offer to you that I believe there are about seven now that have a realistic plan to attain 2 percent in a realistic amount of time. So, again, not perfect numbers, but this is an improvement since Wales. I do not want to overstate, but it is an improvement since Wales.

Senator SESSIONS. Well, of course, we have a real interest in Europe in that they be able be free and independent and not be vulnerable to encroachment from the Russians.

However, I mean, I have to ask the President's request for \$3.4 billion in the European Reassurance Initiative—how much of that has been matched by the Europeans? Do they have any formal commitment to increase their spending for similar projects?

General BREEDLOVE. Sir, I cannot speak to individual commitments at this time. What I have seen, not from the \$3.4 billion, because it has not been delivered yet, but thank you for the first 2 years of ERI. As you know, it was about just under a billion the first year and about \$800 million the second year. The improvements that we have used that to make in the forward nations to railheads, ports, and airfields—

Senator SESSIONS. Well, let me just—so my time would not be eroded here. This is very troubling. So a European delegation from the parliament group was here, and I asked them to increase their spending, and the head of the delegation responded quite frankly. He said, Senator, we agree it is unacceptable that the United States pay 75 percent of the cost of NATO. So now we have this problem that we need to have some more resources there, and we add \$3.4 billion and these countries are not even putting in their fair share.

I am wondering do they have a will to survive themselves and/or have they just gotten in the habit of expecting us to step up to the plate to fund their defense. It is an unacceptable thing, as the parliamentarian said.

Would you have any final comments?

General BREEDLOVE. Well, sir, on that we observed the same thing over the last 20 years when the nations of Europe were trying to treat Russia as a partner. They all took a vector which was decreasing budgets. Again, I do not want to overstate, but what we have seen since Wales is at least a turning in the bow of the ship. It is not perfect yet.

Senator SESSIONS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Sullivan has one additional question.

Senator SULLIVAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, I appreciate your focus on all instruments of American power as part of our strategy. Last week, there was a very good article, front page article, in "The Wall Street Journal" on the importance of the beginning of LNG shipments from the United States, because we are now, once again, the world's energy super power in terms of oil and gas production—LNG [liquified natural gas] shipments from the United States to Europe, to some of the countries we have been talking about, to some of the countries that are at risk of Russian energy blackmail as part of their policies.

How important is that part of our national power as an instrument for the longer-term strategy to thwart Russian aggression and to provide a moral boost to some of these countries over there that feel like they are under the boot of the Russian energy policies? That certainly came out in this article. I do not know if you had the opportunity to read it.

General BREEDLOVE. Senator, I am not sure I have read that exact article, but the concept is absolutely applicable, as we have discussed a little bit here today as well.

Just like you stated, Russia uses every element, and that economic element is both in the terms of pressure on returning payments and calling in loans, et cetera. A huge part of that economic tool that is used is, as you correctly state, fuels in all manners are used as a tool, restrictions and pricing of those fuels. So anything that we can do to broaden the capability of the nations to be able to deal with that pressure I think is a good possibility, a good process.

Senator SESSIONS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MCCAIN. General, would it be of great concern to us if Russia developed a capability to sever our transatlantic cables?

General BREEDLOVE. Yes, Senator, it would. Or excuse me. Chairman, it would.

Chairman MCCAIN. Thank you.

General, we really appreciate your appearances before this committee, but most of all your outstanding leadership and we look forward to seeing you again in the future. To me, you are the very best of what we expect of our military leadership, and I thank you.

Jack?

Senator REED. I simply want to second the chairman's comments very sincerely and very appreciatively.

General BREEDLOVE. Thank you, sir.

[Whereupon, at 12:00 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

[Questions for the record with answers supplied follow:]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR KELLY AYOTTE

MOSCOW'S ACTIVITIES IN EASTERN UKRAINE

1. Senator AYOTTE. What kind and how many Russian military personnel are operating in eastern Ukraine?

General BREEDLOVE. [Deleted.]

2. Senator AYOTTE. What kind of military equipment has Moscow given the separatists?

General BREEDLOVE. [Deleted.]

3. Senator AYOTTE. Is there Russian military equipment in eastern Ukraine? If so, what type and how much?

General BREEDLOVE. [Deleted.]

AEGIS ASHORE

You note in your prepared statement that European Command is completing work on Phase 2 of the European Phased Adaptive Approach in Romania, which consists of an Aegis Ashore Missile Defense System (AAMDS) that will provide enhanced medium-range missile defense capability.

4. Senator AYOTTE. How important is it that NATO certify that the European Phased Adaptive Approach has reached 24/7 Initial Operating Capability before the Warsaw Summit in July?

General BREEDLOVE. The operational certification that NATO is capable to exercise command and control of all elements of the European Phased Adaptive Approach is a critical milestone for the declaration of Initial Operating Capability at the Warsaw Summit in July. The United States has offered the Aegis Ashore Missile Defense System in Romania for the defense of NATO European Territory as a U.S. national contribution under NATO Command and Control on a persistent basis. The operational certification proves that NATO is ready, trained and able to execute Command and Control of this significant increase in ballistic missile defense capability.

5. Senator AYOTTE. Do you believe it will be technically ready by then, including the command and control systems?

General BREEDLOVE. Yes. Both USEUCOM and NATO are continually testing the operational command and control systems and all of the supporting components: the data links, communications systems, interfaces, situational awareness displays as well as the planning systems and the personnel and processes that support these systems. USEUCOM and NATO will conduct operational certification exercises, CAMDEX 16, under U.S. command and control to test the operational integration of the Aegis Ashore site in Romania. We will also use exercise STEADFAST ALLIANCE 16 under NATO command and control, to demonstrate the effectiveness of the systems, processes, and personnel to conduct the NATO BMD mission described as the NATO Initial Operational Capability. From what I have seen of these preparations, I am confident that we will be able to achieve a level of system support for command and control processes that will allow the U.S. and NATO to be successful in missile defense operations.

6. Senator AYOTTE. Not only does this system help protect our European allies, but it helps protect our forward deployed troops, correct?

General BREEDLOVE. Yes. However, it is important to understand the context of what threat is countered by Aegis Ashore ballistic missile defense system. This system, utilizing the Standard Missile-Three (SM-3) interceptor, is designed to counter medium and intermediate range ballistic missiles outside of the Earth's atmosphere. The Aegis Ashore BMD systems deployed to EUCOM through the European Phased Adaptive Approach are sized, scoped, and postured to defend against current medium and intermediate range ballistic missile threats originating from Iran. Those U.S. forces in the EUCOM AOR under threat from these Iranian systems within the coverage area of Aegis Ashore sites can and will be defended by the Aegis Ashore sites. For consideration, ballistic missile defense is also more than the Aegis Ashore system, and EUCOM is poised to conduct and support the full range of missile defense operations (active, passive, and counter force) to defend our Allies and partners as well as U.S. forces and interests as directed by the President.

7. Senator AYOTTE. How important is it that we proceed with Phase 3, which consists of an Aegis Ashore Missile Defense System in Poland by 2018?

General BREEDLOVE. The construction of the Aegis Ashore Missile Defense System in Poland and the deployment of the forces and interceptors under EPAA Phase 3 are vital to keeping pace with the advancement in ballistic missile threats. For example, Iran has demonstrated an active, on-going, and fully resourced ballistic missile development and flight test program. The continued proliferation of missile technologies, development, and test of systems by Iran coupled with the possibility that such technologies may fall into the hands of non-state actors are worrying to me as the USEUCOM Commander. Additionally, the capabilities Phase 3 will bring us in terms of longer reach and expanded coverage using the SM-3 BLK IIA interceptor go a long way to providing defenses to U.S. Forces deployed in our Area of Responsibility as ballistic missiles increase in number, range, and capability.

8. Senator AYOTTE. In your prepared statement, you said that “Another shared concern is defense of the Aegis Ashore sites.” Can you provide more details regarding your concerns about threats to these sites?

General BREEDLOVE. The issue, as I see it, is despite all evidence and communication, exchanges of information, and efforts to be open and transparent, Russia has only responded with mistrust and senior level hostile rhetoric threats towards the Aegis Ashore Missile Defense sites. These sites are neither postured nor configured for use against Russian strategic capabilities, and are not technically capable against Russian strategic missiles. Despite this fact, Russia has closed every door to open discussion and transparency. Russia’s open hostility towards these facilities, and threatening language used by some officials, have raised concerns within the DOD and among some Allies that the sites will need to be defended in a comprehensive manner against a wide range of air and missile threats.

In addition to stout Russian opposition, there are emerging concerns in NATO regarding asymmetric threats from proliferated cruise missiles. This new threat capability that we cannot ignore is increasingly available due to worldwide proliferation and instability.

Both of these factors have led to discussions and concerns regarding defense of these sites which I, quite frankly, share. Aegis ballistic missile defense is configured to only defend against simple ballistic missiles operating outside of the atmosphere. The capability is sized, oriented, and configured to address threats originating from outside the Euro-Atlantic area. Given these potential new threats, it is prudent military planning for EUCOM to fully support analysis of potential defensive measures by the host nations, NATO, and DOD.

9. Senator AYOTTE. How important is it that NATO be asked to defend these sites?

General BREEDLOVE. It is absolutely vital that NATO is involved in the discussion. Both Romania and Poland are NATO nations who have agreed to both host the Aegis Ashore Ballistic Missile Defense sites and defend them. The sites themselves will be the U.S. contribution to NATO Ballistic Missile Defense mission against threats originating from outside the Euro-Atlantic area. If the threat changes in a way a country feels exceeds their capability or capacity to defend as a NATO facility, they are fully in keeping with the letter and spirit of the Atlantic Charter to request support from the Alliance.

10. Senator AYOTTE. Does the U.S. have spare Patriot capacity to deploy for the defense of these sites?

General BREEDLOVE. All DOD Patriot units and other Ballistic Missile Defense capabilities are concurrently committed to support multiple contingencies across several Combatant Commands. We in EUCOM are currently working closely with services and the Joint Staff under the leadership of OSD Policy (as required in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016, Section 1677: Missile Defense Capability in Europe) to review all potential capabilities which could be part of a defensive solution for emerging threats against the Aegis Ashore facilities.

11. Senator AYOTTE. Are there anti-air warfare capabilities intrinsic to Aegis shipborne weapons systems that could be applied to Aegis Ashore sites to provide them self-defense against airborne threats without taking away defensive capability from other defended areas?

General BREEDLOVE. The current scope, configuration, and capability of the Aegis Ashore sites are bound by existing international treaty obligations and our bi-lateral agreements and arrangements with the Aegis Ashore host nations. Any adjustments of the Aegis Ashore weapon system need to be carefully reviewed to ensure the U.S. remains in compliance with these treaties, agreements, and arrangements.

As required in the 2016 National Defense Authorization Act, EUCOM, in coordination with OSD Policy, the Joint Staff, and the services, is assessing what active and passive defense measures could be appropriate and adaptable to counter emerging threats against the Aegis Ashore facilities. Capabilities integrated into the Aegis combat system for surface ships could be part of the solution, but we need some time to assess what capability, against which threats, and under what circumstances to get the answer right.

12. Senator AYOTTE. Do you recommend that these systems be applied to the Aegis Ashore sites?

General BREEDLOVE. It is a bit premature for EUCOM to recommend one solution or another at this point in time. The question and problem are complex, and we need to make sure the approach is legal, proper, and appropriate. DOD is concerned

in maintaining compliance with existing international treaty obligations and our agreements and arrangements with the Aegis Ashore host nations. USEUCOM, in coordination with OSD Policy, the Joint Staff, and the services, is assessing what active and passive defense measures across the entire portfolio of solutions could be appropriate and adaptable to counter emerging threats against the Aegis Ashore facilities. Capabilities integrated into the Aegis combat system for surface ships could be part of the solution, but we need some time to assess what capabilities, against which threats, and under what circumstances to get the answer right.

U.S. MILITARY FORCE PROTECTION IN EUROPE

In your prepared statement, you state that, "Similar to ISIL, al Qaeda and its affiliates in the Middle East, North Africa, and Asia, such as al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and al Nusra Front, possess the ability to conduct mass casualty attacks against U.S. and Allied personnel and facilities in Europe. Complicating this picture are self-radicalized terrorists who, with little guidance from parent organizations, pose an unpredictable threat."

13. Senator AYOTTE. Is EUCOM taking all appropriate and necessary force protection measures to ensure the safety of U.S. military personnel and their families stationed in Europe?

General BREEDLOVE. Yes, of course. US European Command continuously collaborates with the international intelligence community to ensure we have situational awareness regarding terrorism related indications, warnings and evolving threats throughout the theater. Our overall EUCOM force protection posture and our Country specific Force Protection Conditions are adjusted as appropriate based largely upon these information streams which are continuously evaluated through a network of local, component and theater level Threat Working Groups.

Moreover, terrorists' tactics, techniques, and procedures, also known as 'TTPs' tend to be very dynamic in nature. We monitor these 'TTPs' as they develop to ensure that we can, in turn, develop and implement tailored anti-terrorism counter measures, providing the highest possible levels of security for our personnel and their families as they work, live and travel throughout the theater. Prudent and reasonable measures to safeguard and protect DOD personnel are in place. U.S. European Command has placed emphasis on hardening our installations, on lowering our off installation profiles, and on avoiding, in higher threat locations, public transit systems and other sites which have been targeted by terrorists in the past. We have also made it clear that leaders at all levels have a responsibility to scrutinize operations and travel within Europe while developing and implementing comprehensive strategies to mitigate risks for all missions and activities.

FORCE POSTURE

14. Senator AYOTTE. Not including the resources being provided under the European Reassurance Initiative, what additional Army, Navy and Air Force assets, capabilities, and personnel do you need?

General BREEDLOVE. [Deleted.]

15. Senator AYOTTE. What gaps most concern you?

General BREEDLOVE. As far as capability gaps, what concerns me the most is not having the full-time required presence of U.S. Army armored forces. I am optimistic that Congress will fully support the FY17 ERI request which will significantly help close this gap. Armored forces serve a dual purpose in the theater. First, their presence and availability helps assure Allies and affords the opportunity to enhance interoperability and participation in exercises. Second, trained and ready armored forces help to deter further Russian aggression in Europe.

16. Senator AYOTTE. Do you believe you need another Army brigade combat team permanently stationed in Europe?

General BREEDLOVE. EUCOM is aware of the National Commission on the Future of the Army's recommendation to station an Armored Brigade Combat Team (ABCT) in Europe and would welcome a discussion along these lines. Assigning and forward stationing forces provides many benefits such as: (1) increasing operational flexibility and responsiveness; (2) providing persistent presence for both EUCOM and combatant commands; (3) enhancing habitual relationships and interoperability with Allies and partners; (4) generating coalition partners; (5) setting the theater; (6) demonstrating U.S. resolve and commitment; (7) ensuring access and bases for global operations; (8) assuring partners and deterring adversaries; (9) enabling U.S.

leadership of the NATO Alliance; and (10) decreasing costs associated with Operations and Maintenance and sustaining readiness.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TOM COTTON

NATO–RUSSIA FOUNDING ACT

There are concerns that the Founding Act prohibits NATO from permanently stationing troops in Eastern Europe, but a recently released RAND study states that it will take seven brigades, including three heavily armored, to deter Russia from taking the Baltics in 60 hours or less.

17. Senator COTTON. Since Russia is arguably in violation of the Founding Act, why don't we permanently station forces in Eastern Europe?

General BREEDLOVE. The Department of Defense evaluates numerous factors, such as operational requirements, costs, force management, and Political-Military relationships, in their deliberations of permanently stationing or rotationally deploying forces to a Combatant Commander. Our current national policy is to abide with the NATO–Russia Founding Act, in spite of recent Russian aggression. Using rotational forces provides a level of assurance and deterrence without violating the NATO–Russia Founding Act.

18. Senator COTTON. Will an armored brigade combat team sufficiently improve NATO's ability to respond?

General BREEDLOVE. Additional ABCT would significantly enhance the ability of the U.S. to assist NATO in the early days of a crisis. NATO's enhanced NRF currently consists of a multinational brigade at five to seven days notice-to-move, two additional Allied brigades at 30 days notice-to-move, and the current U.S. rotational ABCT.

From the two U.S. brigades currently assigned to the EUCOM AOR (2nd CR and 173rd ABN) and the rotational U.S. ABCT, the U.S. also maintains distributed persistent presence on the territory of the eight eastern trace Allies, leaving two consolidated and intact U.S. brigades to respond to a NATO crisis. An additional brigade would allow the U.S. to maintain the distributed assurance presence, while bolstering the size and readiness of the forces available on short notice. This would significantly increase the combat power of the forces NATO might expect to complement the NRF in the early days of a crisis. It would also provide additional forces to participate in large scale deterrence focused exercises, while maintaining forward presence.

19. Senator COTTON. Will the rotating unit deploy with their organic equipment and rolling stock or fall in on theater equipment?

General BREEDLOVE. EUCOM is aware of internal Army plans that may require rotational forces to deploy with their organic equipment should the equipment already postured in the theater be unavailable to them. Should Army units deploy with organic equipment, EUCOM believes there is both an assurance and deterrence benefit in that these deployments will demonstrate the ability to move entire units with their equipment from CONUS to Europe, assemble these forces in Europe, and move the units to forward training locations. Additionally, these initial deployments provide the theater with modernized armored equipment with its personnel as the Army modernizes an Armored Brigade Combat Team activity set for a future deployment to the theater, after which personnel will fall in on this modernized equipment.

20. Senator COTTON. If so, do you have any concerns about the strain this will place on the rotating force?

General BREEDLOVE. EUCOM is aware of internal Army plans that may require rotational forces to deploy with their organic equipment should the equipment already postured in the theater be unavailable to them. Should Army units deploy with organic equipment, EUCOM believes there is both an assurance and deterrence benefit in that these deployments will demonstrate the ability to move entire units with their equipment from CONUS to Europe, assemble these forces in Europe, and move the units to forward training locations. We are unaware of any concerns that the Army may have about the strain this would place on the rotating force. Additionally, these initial deployments provide the theater with modernized armored equipment with its personnel as the Army modernizes an Armored Brigade Combat Team activity set for a future deployment to the theater, after which personnel will fall in on this modernized equipment.

21. Senator COTTON. Are you aware of any costing analysis on permanently stationing an ABCT in Europe?

General BREEDLOVE. EUCOM is aware of previous cost estimates regarding the permanent stationing of an ABCT in Europe but believes these estimates require an update based on changes to the force structure within an ABCT (units have expanded in size recently). For example, we understand GAO Report GAO-10-745R in 2010 indicated it would cost approximately \$1B over 10 years to retain the two ABCTs that were in Europe at that time (or \$50M per year for one ABCT). However, we are not familiar with the basis of this cost estimate and acknowledge the facilities to house these units are no longer available. We are unaware of any recent Army estimates regarding permanent stationing of an ABCT and how this would compare to a CONUS-based rotational force deployment scheme.

22. Senator COTTON. Id no, do you think the Army has drawn up a cost estimate for a permanent stationing?

General BREEDLOVE. EUCOM is aware of previous cost estimates regarding the permanent stationing of an ABCT in Europe but believes these estimates require an update based on changes to the force structure within an ABCT (units have expanded in size recently). For example, we understand GAO Report GAO-10-745R in 2010 indicated it would cost approximately \$1B over 10 years to retain the two ABCTs that were in Europe at that time (or \$50M per year for one ABCT). However, we are not familiar with the basis of this cost estimate and acknowledge the facilities to house these units are no longer available. We are unaware of any recent Army estimates regarding permanent stationing of an ABCT and how this would compare to a CONUS-based rotational force deployment scheme.

23. Senator COTTON. Where do rotational forces break even with a permanent basing model?

General BREEDLOVE. EUCOM is aware of previous cost estimates regarding the permanent stationing of an ABCT in Europe but believes these estimates require an update based on changes to the force structure within an ABCT (units have expanded in size recently). For example, we understand GAO Report GAO-10-745R in 2010 indicated it would cost approximately \$1B over 10 years to retain the two ABCTs that were in Europe at that time (or \$50M per year for one ABCT). However, we are not familiar with the basis of this cost estimate and acknowledge the facilities to house these units are no longer available. We are unaware of any recent Army estimates regarding permanent stationing of an ABCT and how this would compare to a CONUS-based rotational force deployment scheme.

24. Senator COTTON. Does the NATO-Russia Founding Act, signed in 1997, have a formal agreed definition as to what constitutes "substantial" forces?

General BREEDLOVE. The NATO Russia Founding Act does not have a definition of "what constitutes substantial combat forces". Further, there is no NATO-agreed definition of "combat forces," "substantial" or "permanent stationing."

ELECTRONIC CAPABILITIES

25. Senator COTTON. What electronic warfare capabilities would help you in EUCOM, and would it be helpful to speed up the acquisition process for electronic warfare?

General BREEDLOVE. [Deleted.]

26. Senator COTTON. Given Russia's demonstrated capabilities in electronic warfare, should we accelerate the Army's program? At present, the Army will not have a long-range jammer until 2023.

General BREEDLOVE. [Deleted.]

EUROPE BASED RESOURCES

27. Senator COTTON. This summer, Turkey opened Incirlik Air Base to U.S. forces for use in Operation Inherent Resolve, which has great strategic benefits for the fight against the Islamic State, but how does it affect readiness in Europe?

General BREEDLOVE. Currently the only EUCOM forces supporting OIR from Incirlik Air Base are assigned to the 39th Air Base Wing and are conducting Base Operations Support duties. The unit is responsible for supporting and protecting U.S. and NATO assets operating from the base.

Support requirements on the base have steadily increased since the summer of 2015, when U.S. manned aircraft began OIR operations from Incirlik and the terrorism threat continues to remain significant. The base is currently operating under

Force Protection Condition Charlie plus additional measures from Force Protection Condition Delta; this is due to an assessed imminent but non-specific terrorist threat. Additional security forces have been deployed, but due to the recent nature of the deployments, there is no assessment as to long-term readiness affects.

Since there are no other EUCOM forces currently directly supporting OIR, there has not been a measured negative affect on EUCOM readiness.

28. Senator COTTON. For example, has the rotational deployment of F-16s from Aviano, Italy, F-15 Eagles and F-15 Strike Eagles from Lakenheath, UK, 6th Fleet naval resources and USAF "Guardian Angels" search and rescue crews from Europe for the OIR mission impacted readiness or deterrence in EUCOM's AOR?

General BREEDLOVE. The recent deployment of F-16s from Aviano, Italy, F-15 Eagles and F-15 Strike Eagles from Lakenheath, UK, 6th Fleet naval resources and USAF "Guardian Angels" search and rescue crews to Turkey in support of OIR did not negatively impact long-term readiness or deterrence in EUCOM's AOR.

Although readiness is impacted anytime forces are deployed for real world operations, the recent support to OIR did not have long-term, negative impacts to EUCOM's readiness. The USAFE and NAVEUR staffs worked closely with EUCOM, the 31st Fighter Wing and the 48th Fighter Wing to meet OIR mission requirements while minimizing impacts to operational readiness. USAFE's Guardian Angels were already postured to support CENTCOM through the normal AEF tasking process, so their support to OIR did not change their already anticipated readiness level.

29. Senator COTTON. How does this affect operational planning in EUCOM's AOR?

General BREEDLOVE. USEUCOM relies on a balance of forward-stationed and rotational forces to support NATO Assurance Measures, participate in NATO Response Force (NRF) Exercises, and to train with ally/partner nation forces in support of USEUCOM theater campaign objectives. Rotational forces complement, but do not substitute for USEUCOM assigned forces.

Rotational forces provide additional presence and engagement with Allies and partners and fill steady state requirements that cannot be met by assigned forces. However, rotational forces cannot form the same habitual relationships or provide the same responsiveness or assurance to Allies and partners as US forces based in Europe.

30. Senator COTTON. Should we find a way to implement these ERI programs faster than 6 months from now when Fiscal Year 2017 starts?

General BREEDLOVE. We of course cannot implement FY17 ERI proposals until they are actually approved; however, we are leaning forward now to make sure that implementation goes as quickly and effectively as possible. The Army is already exploring some options that would accelerate critical planning and design work related to a prepositioned equipment site along with expediting the delivery of Army Prepositioned Stocks equipment to the theater (which addresses a large portion of the FY17 request). Additionally, all of the services are collaborating with EUCOM in terms of planning the menu of training events and exercises to be carried out in FY17. There is some concern that a continuing resolution may delay the start of some new efforts in FY17 (similar to the delays experienced in FY15 which we were able to overcome), but with current FY16 budget constraints it would be difficult to begin some other new efforts now.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR LINDSEY GRAHAM

USE OF EAGLE VISION SYSTEM

As you know, the Eagle Vision System is the only commercial mobile satellite ground station capable of providing rapid unclassified imagery to support domestic responses as well as to support our international partners globally.

31. Senator GRAHAM. During your tenure as Commander of EUCOM, have you ever requested to use this asset or capability to assist partners and allies in your area of responsibility?

General BREEDLOVE. [Deleted.]

32. Senator GRAHAM. If yes, what was the result of your request?

General BREEDLOVE. The only recent request was during the Ebola outbreak. We asked for imagery of the flooded area around the area of the Ebola outbreak to provide situational awareness of the environment and transient movement. However,

Eagle Vision stated the request was too large with regards to the size of the imaging area, and therefore Eagle Vision was not be the ideal candidate to fulfill the request.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR CLAIRE McCASKILL

EUROPEAN REASSURANCE INITIATIVE FUNDING REQUEST

European Command is one of the smallest Combatant Commands in terms of personnel assigned to the headquarters and historically has served in a peaceful mission of maintaining relations with European allies and partners and seeing Russia as a strategic partner.

33. Senator McCASKILL. With today's Russian influence and aggression from multiple directions, increased requirements to reassure our European allies and partners, increased transnational terrorist threats, and increased migrant flows, is the headquarters postured appropriately in terms of size, shape, and type of personnel to execute the additional European Reassurance Initiative funds without incurring headquarter bloat?

General BREEDLOVE. The EUCOM component of ERI funds is relatively small in comparison to the funds that go directly to service accounts (e.g., EUCOM controls less than 5% of the FY16 ERI funds). I'm confident that my current headquarters staff will be able to provide appropriate oversight associated with the current and anticipated ERI funding that goes directly to the headquarters.

In your written statement you mention the need to have equipment on station, or at least on the continent, in order to shorten the response time during a crisis. To store and maintain this equipment, you say existing locations will be used to the greatest extent possible, but that there may be a need to build new locations.

34. Senator McCASKILL. Since some of the European Reassurance Initiative funds are for construction and prepositioning assets would European Command be better served to have the funds in the base budget rather than the overseas contingency operations account?

General BREEDLOVE. EUCOM does not have a specific preference on where funds to adjust the theater to address the changed security environment reside. We recognize the challenges faced by the services to not only undertake one-time actions (e.g., construction projects) but also the increased sustainment requirement.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

EASTERN EUROPEAN TRAINING INITIATIVE

As you know, last year I worked with the leadership of this committee to provide EUCOM with additional flexibility in funding training to enhance the interoperability and capabilities of new NATO members and Partnership for Peace countries to defend against external and hybrid warfare threats.

35. Senator SHAHEEN. How is EUCOM making use of this additional authority? Are there any changes that need to be made?

General BREEDLOVE. This new Section 1251 authority is helping our overall security cooperation efforts, and I thank you again for your leadership in making it a reality. So far, we have developed a recommended country eligibility list for OSD and DoS consideration and subsequent Congressional notification that includes Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Hungary, Slovak Republic, Romania, Bulgaria and Slovenia. We are working toward execution of the authority in the third quarter of FY16, leveraging already planned exercises and Operation ATLANTIC RESOLVE rotational forces.

36. Senator SHAHEEN. You've mentioned several times about the need of our nation to use all elements of national power to deter further Russian aggression in Eastern Europe. I'm concerned about Russia's pervasive use of propaganda in Eastern Europe. What could we do to assist our NATO allies in combatting the pervasiveness of the Russian propaganda machine?

General BREEDLOVE. [Deleted.]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MARTIN HEINRICH

RUSSIA NUCLEAR STRATEGY

Many foreign policy experts have suggested that Russia is in the midst of changing its nuclear strategy to a concept of de-escalatory nuclear strikes, or “escalate to deescalate” policy. This concept essentially means Russia would use small or tactical nuclear strikes in a conventional conflict to have opponents deescalate and submit to terms of peace.

37. Senator HEINRICH. Give us your assessment of Russia’s willingness to pursue this doctrine, and the importance of NATO’s and EUCOMs nuclear deterrence efforts.

General BREEDLOVE. [Deleted.]

38. Senator HEINRICH. Has NATO’s nuclear posture changed at all since Russia has become increasingly aggressive in the region?

General BREEDLOVE. In short no. However, NATO’s Nuclear Planning Group continually assesses the alliance’s nuclear posture to account for changes in the security environment and Russian nuclear strategy. This on-going analysis continues ahead of the upcoming June 2016 NATO Defense Ministerial, with the results potentially influencing the July 16 Summit, where representatives may address any potential changes to NATO’s nuclear posture.

39. Senator HEINRICH. In your opinion should NATO’s nuclear state of readiness be reviewed?

General BREEDLOVE. NATO’s nuclear state of readiness is continuously monitored and evaluated. During the course of the year, NATO exercises and evaluates its theater nuclear capabilities and addresses key issues and challenges as needed. To maintain the proper level of deterrence and assurance, it is appropriate to maintain a close eye on our forces in order to test their responsiveness, flexibility, and ability to ensure safety, security, and effectiveness.

B61-12 PROGRAM

The US nuclear force is undergoing a modernization effort for all three legs of the nuclear triad. The B61-12 Life Extension Program (LEP) is one piece of that modernization effort and is important to Europe and deterrence in the region.

40. Senator HEINRICH. Can you tell us the importance of the modernization effort of the B6-12 LEP program, over the B61 gravity bomb, to the EUCOM AOR and its impact on stability and deterrence in the region?

General BREEDLOVE. Legacy B61 nuclear weapons require replacement of critical components to ensure the safety, security, and reliability of the weapon. The B61 LEP will extend the service life of the weapon, and consolidate multiple B61 variants into one modification. Additionally, it will ensure its functionality with U.S./NATO Dual Capable Aircraft, and the F-35, while making safety, security, and use control enhancements to maintain weapon confidence. The B61 LEP is critical to maintain the U.S. nuclear commitment to NATO and remains a cornerstone to NATO’s deterrence and assurance mission.

41. Senator HEINRICH. How does the ability to dial-up or dial-down a warhead’s nuclear yield contribute to our deterrent strategy in Europe?

General BREEDLOVE. [Deleted.]

FOREIGN TERRORIST FIGHTERS

Over 25,000 estimated foreign fighters have traveled to Syria to join Islamist terrorist groups—at least 4,500 of which are Westerners. As the ideal travel times are coming in spring and summer, the likelihood of foreign fighters to return to Europe would seem to only increase. In your submitted testimony you anticipate additional European terrorist attacks in the future.

42. Senator HEINRICH. How can we better share intelligence and identify “lone wolf” actors who seek to commit these heinous acts of terrorism?

General BREEDLOVE. [Deleted.]

NATO DEFENSE SPENDING

The United States currently spends roughly 73 percent of NATO’s essential defense expenditures. In 2015, only five NATO members met the goal of spending 2 percent GDP on defense: the US, Estonia, Greece, Poland, and the UK. Many

criticisms have come from this arguing that European members are hollowing their defenses.

43. Senator HEINRICH. Are we seeing any changes in terms of Europe's commitment to defense spending in response to Russia's increased aggression in the region?

General BREEDLOVE. NATO Heads of State and Government agreed at the Wales Summit to "aim to meet" the NATO Guideline of 2% of GDP toward Defense Spending and the NATO Guideline to spend at least 20% of their defense budgets on major new equipment. There are some early positive signs that these downward trends are halting, if not reversing. Five Allies now meet the 2% target in 2015, compared to four in 2014. In 2015, 16 Allies spent more on defense in real terms than they did in 2014. Twelve Allies increased defense spending as a percentage of GDP in 2015. In 2015, 23 Allies increased the amount they are spending on new equipment, and 8 Allies met the NATO Guideline of committing more than 20% of their defense budgets to the purchase of new equipment.

44. Senator HEINRICH. What has the European response been to the \$3.4 billion European Reassurance Initiative (ERI) in the FY17 budget request?

General BREEDLOVE. Not surprisingly, the President's announcement to increase his ERI submission to \$3.4 billion was widely popular across all our NATO Allies. Nations see this as a credible contribution to the Alliance's collective defense commitment, and supportive of NATO's overall Readiness Action Plan to meet the emerging threat on the continent. There is quite a bit of anticipation on the ultimate location of our Army Preposition Sets, but our Allies understand the need for assessments to ensure maximum effectiveness and deterrent value.

45. Senator HEINRICH. What has the Russian response been to the \$3.4 billion European Reassurance Initiative (ERI) in the FY17 budget request?

General BREEDLOVE. As expected, the open source response from Russia after the President's announcement was antagonistic. Alexander Grushko, the Russian Permanent Representative to NATO, declared that Russia was prepared to counter the "confrontational patterns" adopted by the U.S. and NATO. While the Russian government highlights that it feels threatened by new states entering NATO and the possibility that other states on its periphery would follow the same path, it fails to acknowledge its own aggression against those very nations. Similarly, Russia fails to acknowledge that its open and repeated threats and aggression against European nations demands a NATO response.

ARMY ARMORED BRIGADE COMBAT TEAMS

I am pleased to see the President's budget for FY17 calls for \$3.4 billion for the European Reassurance Initiative. This quadruples last year's budget request. It would also introduce a permanent presence of American forces in the Baltics, which is critical for providing tripwires against Putin's aggression.

46. Senator HEINRICH. Can you describe the current NATO presence in the Baltics and the impact that this rotational deployment of U.S. forces will have on our European allies?

General BREEDLOVE. NATO maintains a persistent presence in the Baltics as a sign of its collective defense commitments to include increased air, maritime and land forces with contributions from all 28 Allies. One example of that commitment is the Trans-Atlantic Capability Enhancement and Training (TACET) Initiative. Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States are co-lead nation on the TACET initiative to build capability and capacity in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland. Other contributing nations include Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway and Spain.

Rotational U.S. deployments to the Baltics assure Allies of the continued U.S. commitment to NATO and to Article 5, increase Allied interoperability and readiness, and build partner capacity. The persistent presence of U.S. personnel in the Baltics demonstrates U.S. resolve and allows U.S. units to train regularly with Allied military forces. This persistent presence complements enhanced, joint combined exercises in the region, such as BALTOPS, SABER STRIKE, and TROJAN FOOTPRINT, which improve interoperability and readiness at the operational as well as tactical level. Most importantly, the year-round presence of an armored brigade combat team will improve the credible combat power of our deterrent forces in Europe.