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THE ROLE OF ALLIES AND PARTNERS IN U.S. MILITARY STRATEGY AND OPERATIONS

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THE ROLE OF ALLIES AND PARTNERS IN U.S. MILITARY STRATEGY AND OPERATIONS

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC, Wednesday, September 23, 2020.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 12:02 p.m., in room 200, Capitol Visitor Center, Hon. Adam Smith (chairman of the committee) presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ADAM SMITH, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM WASHINGTON, CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The CHAIRMAN. All right. We will call the meeting to order. Members will take their seats.

The full committee hearing this morning is on "The Role of Allies and Partners in U.S. Military Strategy and Operations."

First, I have what my staff has told me is a shortened script to explain the virtual—the remote participants in our meeting. I will point out that all of our witnesses this morning are going to be participating remotely.

So members who are joining remotely must be visible on screen for the purposes of identity verification, establishing and maintaining a quorum, participating in the proceeding, and voting.

Those members must continue to use the software platform's video function while in attendance, unless they experience connectivity issues or other technical problems that render them unable to participate on camera. If a member experiences technical difficulties, they should contact the committee staff for assistance.

Video of members' participation will be broadcast in the room and via the television/internet feeds. Members participating remotely must seek recognition verbally, and they are asked to mute their microphones when they are not speaking.

This is actually important for all of us. Apparently if we leave the microphones when we are not talking, it causes feedback that we can't hear but they can hear if they are online.

Members who are participating remotely are reminded to keep the software platform video function on the entire time they attend the proceedings.

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Finally, I have designated a committee staff member to, if necessary, mute unrecognized members' microphones to cancel any inadvertent background noise that may disrupt the proceeding.

So as I mentioned up front, the purpose of hearing is on "The Role of Allies and Partners in U.S. Military Strategy and Operations." We have three witnesses who will testify and then take our questions, all of whom, as I mentioned, are participating remotely. So they will be on the screens in front of you.

We have the Honorable Christine Wormuth, Director, International Security and Defense Policy Center for the RAND Corporation; Lieutenant General Ben Hodges, retired, Center for European Policy Analysis and former Commanding General, U.S. Army Europe; and Mr. Elbridge Colby, principal and co-founder of The Marathon Initiative.

I think this is an enormously important topic and one I know many members of this committee have worked on for quite some time.

It is incredibly important that we build the strongest possible alliances that we can, that we form partnerships and friendships wherever we can to help us achieve our goals, because as has been pointed out in this committee by both members and DOD [Department of Defense] witnesses, as well as others testifying, we face an incredibly complex series of threats, from a rising China to belligerent Russia, Iran, North Korea, transnational terrorist groups.

It is a very complicated threat matrix and one which, I would submit, we cannot possibly meet on our own. We are going to need friends. We are going to need partners.

Now, the good news in all of this is we have about at least 75 years' worth of developing those partnerships that have been robust and very successful for us, NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] being the most obvious. But we have very strong partnerships with South Korea and Japan and others in the Asian region.

We have built these partnerships, and they have been to our benefit, most notably immediately following 9/11 when NATO stepped up and defended us. And in Afghanistan today we are getting to the point where our partners are actually going to have more military forces on the ground in Afghanistan than we do.

These partnerships have undeniably worked. And when you look at the National Defense Strategy, partnerships and alliances are a cornerstone of that strategy. We need to figure out how to build and strengthen those partnerships as we look to meet the challenges that we face globally.

And going forward, we can't take that for granted. It is a constantly shifting and changing world. Allies have their own interests and their own pursuits. We need to work at it if we are going build those partnerships.

Now, I believe that the United States military can be an important part of working those partnerships and developing them. Certainly we need to use the other tools in our toolbox, diplomacy, development, the use of the State Department.

But as I have traveled the world, one thing that is notable: people really appreciate the support of the U.S. military. The partnerships that we build certainly help us in meeting our national security objectives, but they also develop more sustainable and long-term relationships in Africa and Asia and Europe and elsewhere. So I think the military needs to be part of working together on those partnerships. I think it is crucially important that we look at it that way.

And I will say I don't think an "American First" philosophy actually achieves our interests. It really doesn't get America what it really wants. If we tell the rest of the world that we are in it for ourselves and we have no interest in working with them or even concerning ourselves with their objectives, in the long run it undermines our credibility.

And that is the last point that I want to make. The President frequently talks about how the partnerships and alliances that we have had across the world are not to our benefit. He makes it clear that he thinks that the rest of the world is sort of a free rider on our largess and what we have done for them.

I don't agree with that. No country in the world has benefited more from the global stability, peace, and prosperity of the last 75 years than the United States of America. Those partnerships may be helping South Korea, for instance, prevent a war on the Korean Peninsula, prevent being invaded by North Korea. They may be helping Japan and Taiwan protect themselves against China or Europe protect themselves against Russia. But they are also helping us because they are giving us a stable world. And as the most prosperous country in the history of the world, we benefit from that more than anybody else.

I believe these partnerships have been of mutual benefit, and I think it is enormously important that we maintain them, strengthen them, and look for opportunities to build new partnerships where possible.

And with that, I will yield to the ranking member for any open statement he has.

STATEMENT OF HON. WILLIAM M. "MAC" THORNBERRY, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM TEXAS, RANKING MEMBER, COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to join in welcoming and thanking our witnesses, and to thank you for having a hearing on what I agree is such an important topic.

As Ms. Wormuth says in her statement, these alliances and partnerships give us a unique comparative advantage. And I know that General Dunford, when he was Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, would make that point repeatedly as well. Ms. Wormuth goes on to say, "they are the backbone of the international order that has ensured relative peace and security since the end of World War II."

I think that is right. Yet in both political parties there are doubts and questions and maybe even attacks on these alliances and partnerships that have been so successful since the end of World War II.

So I think it is very important for us to remind ourselves and examine the benefits that the United States has received in the last 75 years through this network of alliances and partnerships, but also see how they need to be adjusted to meet the needs of today and also tomorrow.

Of course, in thinking about World War II and alliances, I can't resist a couple of Churchill quotes. In a secret session in 1942 he said, "in working with Allies, it sometimes happens that they develop opinions of their own."

Well, that may be part of the challenge of working with allies. Our allies sometimes develop opinions of their own. We don't always perhaps give those opinions the respect they deserve.

Later, just about a month before the war ended in 1945, Churchill said, "there is only one thing worse than fighting with allies, and that is fighting without them."

Well, I hope the United States never finds itself in that position again.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

And we will now go to our witnesses, who I am counting on the system to magically appear on the screen. We are going to start with the Honorable Christine Wormuth.

You are recognized.

STATEMENT OF HON. CHRISTINE WORMUTH, DIRECTOR, INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFENSE POLICY CENTER, RAND CORPORATION

Ms. WORMUTH. Thank you, Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Thornberry, and members of the committee. It is a pleasure to be here and see you all again, even if it is just remotely.

As powerful as the United States is as a nation, our allies and partners around the world are critical elements of our National Security Strategy, as you all have indicated.

Particularly in an era of great power competition, the network of alliances and partnerships we have developed over the last 75 years provides us a unique comparative advantage.

The U.S. and its allies share intelligence, train and exercise side by side, and operate compatible weapon systems on a daily basis, coming together to create combined capabilities that far exceed what we could bring to bear on our own.

Chairman Smith spoke to the value our allies and partners have brought to us in the past. Today in Europe we are working closely with our NATO allies to deter Russia, while at the same time guarding against internal threats to freedom driven by ethnonationalism and illiberalism.

In Asia, our alliances with Australia, New Zealand, Japan, South Korea, and our partnerships with many others in the region strengthen our ability to confront a range of threats, whether it is North Korea's growing nuclear weapons and missile programs, China's military buildup and sweeping territorial claims, or the continuing threat of violent extremism.

It has become almost a cliché to say that the United Sates is at a strategic inflection point or even facing the end of the world order as we know it. Whatever you call it, the country is facing now sig-

nificant challenges ahead, most prominently competing successfully against a rising China while reducing the risks of war with Beijing.

This is going to require us to change our national security approach, a challenging assignment under any circumstances, but it will be all the more difficult because of the inevitable downward budgetary pressure on national security institutions that is coming and the many other difficult domestic problems that are going to compete for policymakers' time and attention.

Allies and partners remain critically important to this changing landscape, but we need to adapt and strengthen our network to better position us for the future. The U.S. needs to shore up deterrence in Europe and Asia, while at the same time carefully reducing its military footprint in the Middle East, without creating more insecurity there.

Going forward, we also need our allies and partners to do more for themselves, as well as more with the United States, in some cases. We need our NATO allies to continue to spend more on defense and to make good on their pledges to do so by 2024. We need our allies and partners to continue working with us, whether it is in the Middle East as part of the maritime coalition to interdict weapon shipments to the Houthis, or in the South China Sea, where Australia and Japan have joined with the U.S. to conduct freedom of navigation operations and to conduct naval exercises.

Developing a comprehensive plan to adapt and revitalize our networks and alliances is an essential component of a broader strategy for great power competition and a homework assignment that is going to take many years.

It is also an area where DOD needs help from Congress. DOD is going to have to make difficult decisions about the kinds of weapon systems it buys, how it is postured overseas, and what kinds of capabilities it is willing to sell—or not sell—to allies and friends.

Congress is involved in all of these decisions, and without congressional support for the tough calls ahead it is going be much harder to make the strategic adjustments we so clearly need to undertake.

America's network of alliances has served us well, but we can't take these relationships for granted. Alliances are like gardens: they don't grow overnight, you have to tend to them or they wither if you neglect them.

While the current national strategy emphasizes the importance of allies, I am concerned that a widening gap has emerged between our rhetoric and the actions the United States has taken in some cases with our closest friends and allies. The U.S. commitment to NATO's Article 5 security guarantee has repeatedly been called into question. Washington has accused our European allies of taking us for granted, and President Trump has seemed to contemplate possibly withdrawing from NATO altogether.

The decision to withdraw as many as 12,000 troops from Germany has been publicly messaged as a punishment and makes little strategic sense in today's environment. The abrupt decision to withdraw troops from Syria took our allies and friends by surprise and left them wondering when we could be counted on.

The U.S. and its allies need each other now more than ever. Increasing friction and uncertainty in our relationship can result in negative consequences. A survey released last week showed favorable views of the United States in several democratic countries is at an all-time low.

Ultimately, shared interests and concerns over common threats lie at the heart of strong alliances, but nations and their leaders, as Ranking Member Thornberry said, must balance many competing demands and pressures to govern, so it is rare that we will always agree.

In closing, sustaining alliances requires persuasion, consultation, an ability to listen, and a willingness to compromise. If we don't do a better job tending our gardens, we may find ourselves with friends who are unwilling to take on the hard work that we need in the days ahead.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Wormuth can be found in the Appendix on page 49.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. It was a little broken up there, but I think we, by and large, heard everything in that. I hope the future connections here are better.

General Hodges, you are up now and you are recognized.

STATEMENT OF LTG BEN HODGES, USA (RET.), CENTER FOR EUROPEAN POLICY ANALYSIS, FORMER COMMANDING GENERAL, U.S. ARMY EUROPE (2014–2017)

General HODGES. Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Thornberry, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

I would like to address three specific topics in my opening statement: U.S. capabilities in Europe, the importance of the Black Sea region, and the importance of our relationship with Turkey.

U.S. strategic interests are shifting increasingly towards the Indo-Pacific region, but the relationship with Europe remains vital to American security and prosperity, which in turn depends in large part on European security and prosperity. We need allies for support around the world, and our best and most reliable allies come from Europe, as well as Canada and Australia. NATO, the most successful alliance in the history of the world, is an essential element of U.S. security efforts in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa.

The current U.S. posture in Europe is understandably significantly less than what it was at the height of the Cold War. But given the security environment now, it is too small and without depth. In order to carry out U.S. strategy in Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, we depend on continuous deployments of rotational regular and reserve air, land, and naval forces to augment the relatively small U.S. military capabilities forward-based in Europe.

The decision to withdraw 12,500 soldiers and airmen from Germany, as described on 29 July by the Pentagon, is a mistake in my view. The administration's decision was not the result of strategic analysis or a coordinated interagency process. It appears that the planning will take months, and the execution will take years. My

estimate is that what actually ends up happening will probably bear little resemblance to what was initially briefed.

Russia has not improved its behavior anywhere, and in the face of that we would be reducing capabilities essential to effective deterrence, rapid reinforcement, and operations in Europe, Africa, and the Middle East.

My sense is that the plan as briefed will have a negative impact on readiness. But there are smart professionals in the Pentagon and in the various headquarters in Germany who will lay out the challenges and risks and try to come up with means to mitigate those risks and a timeline in which to do it.

NATO is still capable of effective deterrence. The combined militaries of 30 allies, plus partners in Europe, represent significant potential combat power and are a key component of effective deterrence.

However, I do believe that there are potential vulnerabilities which undermine NATO deterrence along its eastern flank. Those include, number one, a perceived lack of cohesion which could lead to miscalculation by the Kremlin, inadequate readiness levels of some allies, inadequate integration of air and missile defense capabilities, and shortfalls in military mobility.

The second point of emphasis regards the strategic importance of the greater Black Sea region. I believe that great power competition prevents great power conflict. Failure to compete and to demonstrate interests and a willingness to protect those interests, in all domains, can lead to power vacuums and miscalculations, which can in turn lead to escalation of tensions and then to actual conflicts.

This is particularly true in the greater Black Sea region where Russia is attempting to maintain its sphere of influence. The Black Sea region should be the place where the United States and our NATO allies and partners hold the line.

The Black Sea should matter to the West in part because it matters to the Kremlin. Taking the initiative away from the Kremlin, denying it the ability to support the Assad regime in Syria and launch operations into Libya, will reduce the flow of refugees into Europe, what General Breedlove called the weaponization of refugees, and limit the Kremlin's ability to spread its corrosive influence in the Balkans, the Caucasus, the Middle East, North Africa.

We need to change the rules of the game, develop our own approach to hybrid warfare, and shape events by using all the tools of national and alliance power, including diplomacy, private investment, as well as the military, instead of always reacting to Kremlin initiatives.

Finally, my third point of emphasis: It is time for Turkey-USA 2.0. We must repair the relations between Turkey and the United States and see Turkey as an essential but exposed ally that is at the crossroads of several regions and challenges.

Turkey is essential for deterrence of the Kremlin in the Black Sea region, and it is a critical bulwark against ISIS [Islamic State of Iraq and Syria] and Iran. Protecting this relationship should be a priority.

Nor do I condone or excuse several mistakes or bad choices by the Turkish government. They are at times a very difficult lot. But

we must think long term. The current Turkish administration will eventually change, but the strategically important geography of Turkey will never change.

We need to reframe the relationship from its Cold War structures. The current boundaries between U.S. European Command and U.S. Central Command, and the Department of State regional boundaries, currently align with the Turkish-Syrian border. Perhaps we can find something that is more mindful of Turkey's strategic situation and which would improve our own strategic thinking.

In order to start rebuilding trust with Turkey, we should respect Turkish concerns about providing weapons to the YPG [People's Protection Units]. We should recognize that Turkey is on the front line of the Middle East refugee crisis with more than 3.5 million refugees in Turkey along the Syrian border. We should offer Turkey a way out from its misguided S–400 purchase from Russia. We should resolve the Turkey-Greece issues in the eastern Mediterranean.

If the U.S. is not willing to make this effort, then we should put our full weight behind Germany or the U.K. [United Kingdom] to do it. Only the Kremlin benefits if two NATO allies are in conflict with each other.

Mr. Chairman, thank you. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of General Hodges can be found in the Appendix on page 61.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

And up next we have Mr. Colby.

Mr. Colby, you are recognized to give your opening statement.

STATEMENT OF ELBRIDGE COLBY, PRINCIPAL AND CO–FOUNDER, THE MARATHON INITIATIVE

Mr. COLBY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Thornberry, and distinguished members of this committee, for the invitation to appear before you. It is a great honor to testify before this body on a topic of the highest importance to our Nation.

Allies and partners are absolutely essential for the United States in a world increasingly defined by great power competition, above all with China. Indeed, they lie at the very heart of the right U.S. strategy for this era, which I believe the Department of Defense's 2018 National Defense Strategy lays out.

The importance to the United States of allies and partners is not a platitude. To the contrary. For the first time since the 19th century, the United States is not far and away the world's largest economy. More than anything else, this is due to the rise of China, and as has become very evident, Beijing is increasingly using its growing power for coercive purposes.

At the same time, the United States faces a range of other potential threats, including primarily from Russia against NATO, as well as from transnational terrorists, Iran, and North Korea.

In other words, there exist multiple challenges to U.S. national security interests, but given their breadth and scope, America can no longer expect to take care of them essentially alone. Accordingly, we must address this widening shortfall between the threats we

face and the resources we have to deal with them by a much greater role for allies and partners.

Precisely because of this, the NDS [National Defense Strategy] identifies a new approach to U.S. allies and partners as its critical second line of effort. This new approach is not simply a restatement that allies and partners are important and valued, as appropriate as that may be. Rather it is a call for a new logic for dealing with them.

This new approach proceeds in the NDS's revised strategic perspective. Because of China's power and wealth, the United States simply must play a leading role in blocking Beijing's pursuit of hegemony in Asia. This means that the U.S. defense establishment must prioritize dealing with China and Asia, and particularly on defending vulnerable allies and partners, such as Taiwan and the Philippines.

Given the high demands of this requirement, it will have to consume an increasing portion of U.S. defense effort and attention. In particular, we will not be able to dedicate the level of resources and effort to the Middle East and Europe that we have in the past. We will therefore need allies and partners to do their part, not just to help defend our interests and enable a concentration on Asia, but to defend themselves and their interests.

So the question is how. Let me lay out three points in this respect.

First, the United States should seek to add new partners and, where necessary, allies. Washington should seek to add them to address a particular mismatch between where the contemporary dangers to our interests present themselves and the threat perceptions of most of our established allies. The contemporary threats to the U.S. interests stem from China across Asia, transnational terrorists largely in the Middle East, Russia and Eastern Europe, the Persian Gulf area, and North Korea and Asia.

Yet the United States traditional closest and most significant allies are largely clustered in Western Europe and Northeast Asia. Many of these countries, especially in Europe, feel quite secure and are little motivated to contribute to more distant threats. This leaves wide areas, such as South and Southeast Asia and the Middle East, for which longstanding U.S. alliances are of minimal help. The natural way to rectify this is for the United States to add partners and, where necessary, alliances to help address these gaps.

Fortunately there is plenty of opportunity to do so, because many countries that are not our traditional close allies share our interest in checking Chinese bid for hegemony in Asia, resisting Russian or Iranian aggression, or combating transnational terrorism. Facing these threats more acutely than do our long established allies, these countries are highly motivated to do something about the problem.

In this effort, though, we should be very careful to distinguish between expanding our formal alliances or quasi-alliances from expanding our partnerships. The former should be approached conservatively, while the latter can be approached more liberally. When we extend an alliance commitment or something tantamount to it, as in the case of Taiwan, we tie our credibility to that nation's fate. We should, therefore, be chary about doing so.

In light of this, we should seek to expand our partnerships wherever possible. In particular, we should focus on increasing them in South and Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands, where China otherwise might have an open field to suborn states and add them to its pro-hegemonial coalition.

I do not see a near-term need to add any allies to the U.S. roster, but I do think we will increasingly need to consider this as the shadow of Chinese power darkens over the region.

Further, our effort to expand our network of allies and partners should primarily be focused on states with shared threat perceptions. It has become something of a commonplace that shared values form the bedrock of our alliances. It is true that such values help bind allies, but the most useful alliances generally proceed from shared fears.

The best motivator to fight is self-defense. Thus, states that have a shared interest in preventing Chinese or Russian or Iranian hegemony themselves have a natural alignment with our own interests. This is true whether or not they are democracies.

Second, given the scale of challenges we face, the United States should encourage allies and partners to assume a greater role in handling shared security challenges. This is, of course, a burden-sharing problem and it is a difficult one.

I do not think there is a neat solution to the burden-sharing quandary. The fact is that most countries can only do so much if they do not feel directly threatened by an adversary. My view is that we should work with this reality rather than vainly try to alter it.

Accordingly, we should focus on urging countries to increase their efforts where they will be able to generate sufficient political will to make an effective contribution to shared interests.

In Asia, given the scale of the threat posed by Beijing, we should concentrate most of our allies, like Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, and Taiwan, on readying to defend themselves alongside U.S. Armed Forces and provide access to U.S. forces in the event of a contingency.

Meanwhile, we should assist partners like Vietnam, Singapore, Indonesia, and Malaysia with whatever means available to enable their defense against an ever more powerful China, while concurrently seeking better access and logistic support for U.S. and other allied forces.

In the Middle East, the United States should urge Israel and Washington's Arab partner to take a greater role in containing Iran and combating transnational terrorism.

In Europe, finally, the overall U.S. goal should be, while preserving the fundamental U.S. commitment to NATO's defense, to have Europeans, especially Northern and Eastern Europe, shoulder more of the burden of defending the alliance from Russian assault.

The reality is that, given the stakes and consequences, the United States must prioritize Asia. The United States must therefore economize in its second theater, Europe. The main challenge to this revised model in Europe is Germany. The simple fact is that, given its size and wealth, Germany's role is critical. They can and should do much more for NATO European defense.

Finally, the United States should act to make this invigorated network of allies and partners more effective. In this light we should seek to integrate our own force development posture and war planning processes as much as possible with allies like Japan, Australia, the United Kingdom, and select others relevant to key scenarios.

The goal here should be to make sure our collective efforts are as efficient as possible, reducing duplication, and getting the most out of our efforts and money.

At the same time, we should seek whatever possible to strengthen important partners in their ability to resist China's coercion or aggression, or otherwise contribute to shared goals.

Congress has already done much on this front, but we should intensify the use of arms sales, technology transfers, and related military and intelligence tools to build up states like India, Vietnam, and other South and Southeast Asian states.

In this vein, though, we must fundamentally move away from using these tools as leverage over key partners for domestic political reform over secondary geopolitical objectives. The United States should always, of course, stand proudly for free government that treats its people with dignity.

We must keep our eye on the prize, though. China is the primary challenge to our interests in the world, including our interest in free government, both at home and abroad. Our top priority must, therefore, be to block its gaining predominance in Asia, which is a very real prospect. This means strengthening states in the region against Chinese power, whether or not they are model democracies.

In closing, this new approach to allies and partners will involve uncomfortable changes, hard decisions and compromises, as well as some friction with them. But the truth is that we are much stronger with allies and partners, and our power is magnified when we effectively align our efforts.

Done right, the end result will be a more powerful, equitable, and sustainable coalition of states, together standing up for the kind of world Americans want and need to be secure, free, and prosperous.

Thank you very much, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Colby can be found in the Appendix on page 73.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

We will now move to questions. We will take members in order. The members in the audience can come forward when they are called and take a seat at the desk on the right and the left there.

I am not sure when votes are going to happen. It would be my intention to continue the hearing through votes, since we have roughly 40, 45 minutes of a vote. We can have the member who is asking the question can stay here, and I think we can shuffle back and forth reasonably well to avoid any conflict there. So we will keep going through votes is the plan.

With that, Mr. Colby, I will start with you, building off of what you said at the end there, and I think you perfectly outlined the main area where alliances are so important in Asia and the reason for it, because of China.

You mentioned arm sales as one way to build those alliances. What are some of the other key steps, and not just within the military realm? I think you very correctly outlined the countries, particularly in some cases the island nations in the South Pacific.

What can we do, what should we do, either diplomatically, through aid, through policies? What is going to make those countries want to ally with us and not China? What are those key steps beyond, I think, as I said, I think you mentioned arm sales? What else should be in our toolbox when we look at how to deal with China by building those alliances?

Mr. COLBY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate your words.

I think it is definitely a whole-of-government approach. So, I mean, I think the economic and diplomatic pieces are obviously going to be vital.

Arm sales are part of it, but I think the signal of political involvement and commitment as commensurate with what those states can sort of process is also appropriate. I think the administration's clarification of the Mutual Defense Treaty to Manila, that it applies to the South China Sea, and by stating our rejection of China's claims in the South China Sea more forthrightly, are evidences of resolve.

I mean, I think fundamentally we have an alignment of interests because most of the states, certainly the more powerful states in the region, like Vietnam, Indonesia, et cetera, do not want to be dominated by China. They don't want to be put on the spot, but I think whatever we can do to empower them, and as I think you were suggesting, sir, the economic piece of this is really important.

So here I commend, for instance, what the Japanese and the Koreans, for instance, have been doing to invest more. I think Congress played a very important role with the pull back. But, as you say, I think it is—or indicate—I think it is a whole-of-government approach.

The CHAIRMAN. Understood. And I think the other key point that you made there was basically saying we need to stay focused on the importance of those alliances because of China. And, obviously, the conflict we always run into there is with our values, with human rights, with democracy.

And just a couple of examples of that. I am curious how you think we should handle it. Obviously, with the Philippines we have problems with Duterte and the way he is doing criminal justice amongst other things. So we have got that. You know, with India, India is still doing arm sales back and forth with Russia. We have seen that problem with Turkey as well.

Is it possible to get a little more specific about when should we just say, look, we are not going to worry about your domestic politics, we want to build the alliance, however possible? How would we deal with extreme human rights abuses as are alleged in the Philippines in terms of extrajudicial killings or in the case of India and, of course, we are dealing with this with Turkey and Europe as well, is doing the arm sales with Russia? Should we significantly back off on our sort of sanctions policy for those things, and if so, how do we signal that without undermining our credibility?

Mr. COLBY. Well, sir, I think you have put your finger on it. I mean, it is a very difficult problem and I don't want to simplify it.

I mean, I think my inclination would be that our benefit is—we benefit as much as possible from their ability to defend themselves from these coercions, particularly military coercion. So I would tend to air-gap those kinds of capabilities, for instance, in thinking about domestic, political, or human rights abuses or engagements with Russia.

I also think, and, I mean, others would know more about this, but, I mean, I think if you look at some of the best examples of improvements on human rights, say, in the Cold War, it was often from a sort of a close position.

I mean, I think if you look, for instance, at the pressure on Taiwan or South Korea, I think in the case of the Philippines as well, it was often from a place where they felt quite confident in our having their backs in terms of the kind of fundamental external threats, but also the ability to put pressure in an appropriate way sort of more privately. And I guess that would be one thing.

I mean, I would say I think private pressure, as I think this was President Reagan's view and Secretary Shultz, that can be very effective. And also maybe being—thinking ourselves, and I don't pretend to have the answer, but it is one thing to—or maybe think more narrowly about what are the kinds of abuses that we particularly want to focus on in terms of holding up the sort of crown jewels of arm sales and so forth, versus sort of other things like improvement on democratic [inaudible], these kinds of things that we may be able to hold off a bit on.

So I don't pretend to have the right answer, but I do think that we risk losing these countries, and the coming years are going to be critical, as I think you were suggesting, because the Chinese are so powerful and they are going to face a bit of a crossroads. We don't want to push them in the wrong direction at this critical juncture.

The CHAIRMAN. Understood.

I think one of the other things that we need to be careful about is perhaps our rhetoric and the expectations that we set. I think a lot of times, and this has happened in Democratic and Republican administrations, admittedly not so much in this one, is if our rhetoric is we will stand up for human rights, we will protect anybody in the world, and then our actions don't match that rhetoric, that undermines our credibility.

I think we should state more clearly up front the modest goals. We have a modest ability to force other countries to act in certain ways. I think we would be better served to acknowledge that and then the pragmatic nature of the approach that we will have to take.

That is all I have. I will say, as we are asking questions, given the fact that it is virtual, it is really kind of important for the people asking the questions to direct it to one of our specific witnesses so that we know who to pull up on the screen and all that as we work through it.

With that, I will yield to Mr. Thornberry.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Colby, let me just inquire about another facet of what you were just discussing, because this has proven to be a troublesome problem for the United States in the past.

I am thinking, in addition to arm sales and the things you and the chairman were talking about, military training and exchanges. We have a law that says we cannot do training sometimes for a whole unit that has been accused of certain human rights violations.

And in my experience a lot of countries desire most some sort of training exchanges with our military, the kinds of countries we would like to make closer partnerships with, and yet our own law prevents us from having that sort of thing. We have had terrible fights in Congress for years about a military training facility devoted to South and Central America, as another example. The chairman mentioned the Philippines.

Help us think through. I mean, you were doing that with the chairman, kind of the pluses and minuses. But when it comes to military training, other sorts of contact with our military, how does that apply in our desire to form greater partnerships with countries that may not be our idea of an ideal democracy?

Mr. COLBY. Well, sir, I fully agree with you, and thank you for raising the training point.

I would say, I mean, if we think about the scale of the military threat posed by the PRC [People's Republic of China] today and going forward, and I think within the next decade or so we will be thinking about the Philippines and South Korea and states in Southeast Asia as potential scenarios, given where the 2020 military defense or the military power report on China is saying, we need to start thinking about this now.

You know, I think training is a critical part because in a sense what we are going to need to do to leverage this greater power of this network, you know, allies, partners, whatever their role, is going to be interoperability, the ability to work to different standards, to communicate with each other. That is partially a technical problem and an equipment problem, but a lot of it is human training and an external organizational issue.

You know, Taiwan, I think I am very enthusiastic about the arm sales to Taiwan, and I know one was recently reported, I hope it goes through, because it is the kind of equipment that we want to see, this kind of, you know, A2/AD [anti-access/area denial] denial kind of capabilities to Taiwan.

But actually where I think, you know, would be really valuable to move forward with them, and that is obviously a sensitive issue, but I think this would be within the context of our traditional policy, would personally be on training. And that is something we could think about with Vietnam as well. Obviously, the Indians have a very sophisticated military, but there may be something we can offer there, too.

So I think that is a real sort of force multiplier, sir.

Mr. THORNBERRY. General Hodges, let me just pursue this a little bit with regard to Turkey, which you specifically mentioned.

I think your broad points, Turkey's geography, history, critical role is always going to be important, is certainly valid. And yet not only are there human rights and governance issues, the current leader of Turkey has policies that contradict in many ways the best interests of the United States.

So take that specific example. We don't want to make enemies of Turkey forever. But yet what do we do now to preserve that future when there is a different government but yet make clear or in some way help guide them on a better policy path?

General HODGES. Thank you, Mr. Thornberry.

Well, first of all, Turkey is a maddening ally. I was stationed in Izmir for 2 years. So I personally experienced what it was like there. But yet at the end of the day I cannot imagine our alliance without Turkey, and so that has got to guide our actions.

I think that part of the problem is, you know, for decades the boundary between Central Command and European Command has aligned with the border between Turkey and Syria. And when you think about the situation in the region right now, we would never put the border, the boundary right there if we were starting with a blank sheet of paper. And because Central Command has been the main effort theater for the last 20 years, what Central Command's priorities were would typically drive the thinking.

And so I think, for example, we made a strategic error by giving weapons to the YPG. There were benefits to it at a tactical level but the YPG—excuse me—ISIS was never going to be an existential threat to the United States or even to any European countries. And so we have risked a very important strategic partnership for what I think are tactical benefits.

So my point is how we have Turkey on the map, every NATO map Turkey is at the bottom right-hand corner, and the thinking is dominated by what is south of that border. I think that is part of it.

The second part is rebuilding trust. Turkey has a very unfortunate or bad history with Russia. I think they are 0-for-12 or 1-in-12 in their wars with Russia, and right now they have no confidence that the West will stick with them.

Again, I am not excusing President Erdogan's policies, which are very, very bad for the people of Turkey. But when we are thinking about strategic calculation, what is in our best interest? And I think that we have got to continue to try and reestablish trust with them, as well as hold them accountable in the different ways that the U.S. Government is still able to do.

Mr. THORNBERRY. And I think figuring that out is the challenge.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mrs. Davis is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate your all being here.

You know, I know that, Mr. Colby, you spoke of how we need allies and partners to do their part. And I want to ask you and Ms. Wormuth to weigh in as well. What do you think the appropriate cost share for our allies should be versus the benefits gained through those alliances? Can you be as specific as possible?

Mr. COLBY. Certainly. Congresswoman, I wouldn't be able to give you a dollar figure, but I think, I mean, I think fundamentally, if I was going to be sort of candid about it, I would say that Japan should strive to look more like what West Germany looked like in the Cold War, which is not exactly the figure but a considerably higher proportion of defense spending largely focused on territorial

defense. There may be other scenarios in the Western Pacific than the Japanese, as I mentioned, Taiwan should be prepared to help with, but largely focused on maintaining the integrity of the Japanese archipelago.

I think in Europe we have a standard, which is 2 percent, which we should stick to. You know, obviously, there is always reason to critique it.

But, I mean, fundamentally I think the reality is that the United States military is not large enough and almost certainly not large enough to fight two simultaneous wars against both China and Russia, and because China is a priority, that means Europe has to be prepared to do more, certainly until U.S. forces can prudently be swung.

But I think, you know, we do have examples of allies like Poland and actually South Korea spends a pretty solid proportion of GDP [gross domestic product]. Taiwan is making significant efforts to increase its defense spending. And actually a number of our partners do very well, I mean, Finland, India, Vietnam. I think something a little bit more like that is kind of what we are looking for.

Mrs. DAVIS. Ms. Wormuth, did you want to weigh in on that?

Ms. WORMUTH. Yes, and I am hoping you-all can hear me a little bit better this time.

I would agree with everything that Mr. Colby just said and add maybe a few thoughts.

I think, again, it is very important that the European members of NATO continue to make progress towards the 2 percent GDP pledge in 2024. But I think we oversimplify and sort of focus in a myopic way on that 2 percent number. As important as how much countries are spending is what they are spending that money on.

So I am as interested as seeing Germany, for example, go from, I think, about 1.2 percent of GDP to the 2 percent mark, but I am also focused on are they spending that defense money on the right kind of capabilities that we need to be able to deter Russia, for example.

I would also add that in addition to the——

Mrs. DAVIS. Can I ask you—I was just going ask you, when we have tried to intervene in that area and be, I guess, more forceful in terms what we are looking for, what kind of results have we had?

Ms. WORMUTH. Well, I think in my experience the German military and many in the Ministry of Defense are very sympathetic, frankly, to the calls from the United States to invest more. I think they see the challenges that Russia poses, they see the reality of that, and they want their own country to be able to do more.

But Germany, like all countries, like our own country, its leaders are trying to balance a range of competing pressures. They are looking at their domestic issues. They are looking at the economic effects of the pandemic on their country. And so they are sort of looking at a broader array of things and making judgements about how to allocate their overall national resources.

So there is work to be done, and I really think Germany in particular needs to step up.

But I would also say that, beyond just defense spending, alliances, countries that are part of the alliances with the United

States and who have partnerships with us bring other things to the table as well.

So, for example, while Germany may not be doing as much as I would like on defense, they are taking real pain in terms of the economic sanctions against Russia. Similarly, you see countries in Asia who are part of the sanctions regime against North Korea.

So I think basing access, willingness to sort of take economic losses as part of sanctions regimes, are important contributions to our alliances as well.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you very much.

I wanted to ask General Hodges really quickly, I mean, what is one thing you learned at the Department of Defense about the role of alliances and how to achieve U.S. national security? Can you give us one thing? You have about one——

The CHAIRMAN. It is going to have to be real quick, because she is out of time. If you can do it in 5 seconds, go ahead.

General HODGES. We lose without allies.

The CHAIRMAN. I am sorry. I missed that.

General HODGES. We lose without allies.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentlelady's time has expired.

Mr. Wilson is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you for calling this hearing in regard to our allies and partners.

In the last year I have had the remarkable opportunity to see the successes of President Trump around the world. I was in Krakow, Poland, where the people are so appreciative of the additional American troops being added there, in fact, the deterrence to Putin's aggression. Indeed, President Duda has indicated that the military facilities they are going to build for the Americans could be called Fort Trump.

In Israel, in Jerusalem, I was grateful to be present at the embassy that President Trump had the courage to move to Jerusalem. And then we saw last week with Prime Minister Netanyahu the extraordinary relationship the United States has with the Jewish state.

And then I had the opportunity with India to be present with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi and in Houston where the people of India now appreciate that President Trump had the courage to rename Pacific Command to Indo-Pacific Command. They now understand what an important ally the world's largest democracy is to the world's oldest democracy, the United States.

And then to visit in Bahrain, to see the American naval base there that has been so important for 70 years to provide security in the Middle East, and for then now Bahrain to take a lead in the Abraham Accords, which will bring peace and prosperity opportunity to the Middle East.

And finally with Colombia, I am very grateful in South America the South Carolina National Guard is a State partner with the military of Colombia. We have never had a stronger relationship to deter terrorism around the world with President Trump.

With that, Mr. Colby, last summer the House passed a bill that I co-led with Representative Ted Deutch, the U.S.-Israel Cooperation Enhancement and Regional Security Act. That bill included $3.8 billion a year in security assistance to Israel over the next decade. It would also provide financing to upgrade most of Israel's fighter aircraft, improve its ground forces mobility, and strengthen its military defense systems.

What are some of the emerging threats to Israel, and how can we target security assistance to Israel to be effective?

Mr. COLBY. Thank you, Congressman.

I need to consult the bill to understand it better, but it sounds very commendable. I think we certainly benefit. Essentially, the stronger Israel is, the better off we are.

From things that have been happening the last couple months, the Abraham Accords and these hopefully more steps, I think we are seeing, hopefully, real progress in the sort of [inaudible] cohesion and formalization of a coalition in the region designed to check and really roll back Iranian pursuit of dominance in the area. So I think that is very encouraging.

In terms of Israel's particular threat perceptions, I wish I was able to speak in great detail, but I think it seems to me that the primary threat they feel is largely Iran, Hezbollah, obviously some of the rejectionist groups.

It seems like things are in a pretty sustainable place on the rejectionist front. With Hezbollah, I know they learned a lot of lessons. David Thompson, Christine Wormuth's colleague at RAND, wrote a very important study on Israel's adaptation that we could learn a lot from. So I would say we could learn a lot from the Israelis. I know [inaudible] do.

But I would say I think build from this, as I mentioned in my testimony, and really encouraging and empowering regional partners to take a greater role. And of course that is all the more tenable and feasible now that they are becoming more cohesive.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you very much.

And then for General Hodges. Germany has so many important military facilities, and in fact the Army Corps of Engineers is building the largest military hospital, the Rhine Ordnance Barracks Army Medical Center, near Kaiserslautern, Germany, which is the sister city of Columbia, South Carolina, very important to all of us.

But I am concerned that with the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline nearing completion, what steps should be taken to limit the exposure of our strategic installations to this growing threat?

General HODGES. Well, Mr. Wilson, for sure we should keep up the pressure on Germany to stop, to discontinue the Nord Stream 2 construction. I think actually the poisoning of Mr. Navalny has changed a lot of attitudes here in Germany about how it views the Kremlin. So gives some hope there.

But I think the United States, we have got to treat Germany as our most important ally. Instead for the last several years we have been publicly [inaudible] treating them in a way that, I guarantee you, I live here in Frankfurt, Germany, does not engender any willingness to increase spending or to do the kinds of things that we

would like. So I think we need a more sophisticated approach [inaudible] from the Germans.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Langevin is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to begin by thanking our witnesses for being here today to discuss the very important topic of our allies. It is certainly an important and timely topic.

As I see it, the United States has allies, whereas China has business partners, and other countries know the difference. And previous administrations have understood that the best time to make a friend is when you don't need one.

So I would like to first ask about our efforts to make inroads in the South Pacific.

Ms. Wormuth and Mr. Colby, what value would partnerships with small island nations play in deterring China, for example, from attacking Taiwan or Guam?

And next, what role should the Department of State play in cultivating allies and partnerships versus the role of the Department of Defense? And are we striking the right balance? And what are the implications of getting that wrong?

And then finally, General Hodges, as our cyber capabilities mature and cyber becomes increasingly important as a vast attack base, if you will, we will clearly need stronger cyber partnerships with European partners.

Have European partners been willing to partner bilaterally with the U.S. on joint cyber operations? And which countries have the most interest in and could benefit most from U.S. mentorships in developing their capabilities?

We can start with Ms. Wormuth and Mr. Colby if we have got time.

Ms. WORMUTH. Apologies, Congressman. It was a bit hard to hear you, but I think you said start with me. So I will just try to be very brief.

The island nations can be quite important. As Mr. Colby said, we need to make adjustments to our posture in the region to be able to better deal with China.

And so the announcement by Palau, for example, that it is willing to host U.S. airfields and bases could be quite helpful to us, even though they are relatively small. We do need to diversify our footprint and be more balanced and not so heavily weighted in Northeast Asia exclusively, for example.

On the balance between the military and the Department of State, the Department of State has a very important role to play. As much as we need to have military capabilities to deter China, we also need to have a diplomatic effort, for example, to push back on their sweeping territorial claims. And the Department of State is essential to working with allies and partners to put forward diplomatic letters, for example, basically registering disagreement with China's sweeping territorial claims.

We don't want to—I think there is a tendency, as big as the U.S. military is, when you are a hammer, everything looks like a nail.

But many of the challenges China poses, the economic challenges, for example, are better addressed with nonmilitary tools. And I will stop there.

Mr. COLBY. Thank you, Mr. Langevin.

Yeah, I agree with Ms. Wormuth that the Pacific islands are really critical.

It sounds a little bit archaic, but fundamentally the tyranny of distance, as General Hodges would know better than I, is really significant in military affairs. And this is even more the case now that China is not just building a [inaudible] military, but a power projection military out beyond the first island chain.

And so they will be seeking to have the ability to contest our power projection in the ocean, and we will need to have combat-credible forward forces designed to blunt a fait accompli or deny a China assault, say, on Taiwan, I think, sir, as you rightly indicated.

But that is going to need to be supplied. It is going to need to be based. It is going to need to be dispersed. I think the Marines are thinking really at the forefront of thinking about this. But it is a big logistics sort of requirement, and that is where the Pacific islands really do come in, in great importance.

So I think they sort of—it is a little bit "Back to the Future," if you will, but I think they really are critical, and as Christine indicated, the Palau announcement is significant.

Mr. LANGEVIN. And, General, if you could address the cyber question.

General HODGES. Yes, sir. Thank you.

First of all, five European allies stand out as being leaders in cyber development and they certainly do a lot of work: Germany, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and the United Kingdom. Those are five good partners.

Cyber protection of our critical transportation infrastructure is essential for U.S. efforts in Europe. The port of Bremerhaven, for example, if that is not protected from a cyber strike, then we cannot bring in a single vehicle or a single soldier.

So I believe cyber protection of critical transportation infrastructure ought to count towards 2 percent. Lithuania and Latvia do that now. I think Germany knows how to do this as well.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Very good. Thank you.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. Turner is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. TURNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

My questions are going to be directed to General Hodges to give our witnesses and the tech people a little advanced warning.

General Hodges, good to see you again. Thank you for your continued service in the area of national security.

You mentioned your time in service at Izmir where you were the commander of the NATO Land Command, and, of course, you were the commanding general of U.S. Army Europe.

During that period you saw an unbelievable shift in Russians' aggressiveness, also our unpreparedness, and our allies without a unified view of the effects of the need to deter Russia.

You also saw the beginning of the European Reassurance Initiative that evolved into the European Defense Initiative. We have air policing in the Baltics, exercises in the Black Sea. We have forward-deployed troops. We have even Germany forward deploying troops in Europe.

From your experience, we are in somewhat of a different place than we were when we first began to be aware that we needed to take decisive action to deter Russia. But from what you see now and where we started, what works? What doesn't? How do we keep our allies unified on making certain that they are prepared to see Russia as a threat and to work cooperatively with us so that they can be deterred?

General HODGES. Thanks, Mr. Turner, and thanks for always being so active with our European allies.

First of all, of course it is American leadership. Even though throughout the history of the alliance we have had disagreements and debates, serious debates with our closest allies, there never, ever was a question of America's commitment or of American leadership. Even our most strict allies or our critics now still want and need American leadership. That doesn't mean necessarily American troops, but American leadership and commitment.

The second thing, what really works is the National Guard and the Army Reserve. Mr. Wilson referenced the State Partnership Program earlier. The State of Ohio, the State Partnership Program with Serbia, for example, is one of the best examples of where this works. And so the relationships that were built up over the past few decades with the work in the State Partnership Program, it pays off because of those relationships.

And of course, thanks to the Congress' support with the ERI [European Reassurance Initiative], now EDI [European Defense Initiative], we are able to fill critical gaps in capability with rotating National Guard and Reserve units.

So those really, I think, are critical. I have to say that the congressional support is part of it. So even though our allies are concerned about maybe what the administration has said, they turn back to the near unanimous support of Congress for America in the alliance.

Mr. TURNER. Well, continuing with you, General, the 2 percent requirement, as Ms. Wormuth was discussing, is an agreement from our allies. It was agreed unanimously at the NATO Summit in Wales. It is not the United States requirement, it is actually an agreement by the partners who are NATO members.

This administration has made a significant push to require that each NATO member rise to that occasion. I have spoken to several parliamentarians who have found that pressure helpful. They report that in their own legislative branch people used to say: "Why would we have to increase defense spending? We are in NATO." And now they are actually debating and saying: "We have to increase defense spending. We are in NATO."

Do you see that political shift happening of the independent states having an understanding of a goal to increase defense spending, and do you see it translating into real additional capabilities for NATO?

General HODGES. Well, sir, in short, I would say, most members of the alliance are moving in the right direction. They will not all make 2 percent by the year 2024, that is for sure.

And Germany, in particular, it is inexcusable that Germany does not spend more. So I won't try to defend that at all, and certainly the administration's pressure has had results.

What I would say, though, instead of just constantly clubbing people over the head about 2 percent, a bit more sophisticated approach about what the alliance really needs I think would be more helpful.

When I was a lieutenant in Germany about a hundred years ago, West Germany was a frontline state. We had a huge Bundeswehr across the border from huge Soviet forces. Today, the front line is about a thousand kilometers to the east. We don't need a big Bundeswehr. We need more German trains, not more German tanks. Germany is the logistics hub, transport [inaudible] so that we can move quickly.

I think if we encourage Germany and the Netherlands to think in terms of improving transport, providing cyber protection——

The CHAIRMAN. I am sorry, General, the gentleman's time has expired. Do want to get on to other questioners. I apologize for that. It is awkward to communicate back and forth this way, but we do the best we can.

Mr. Larsen is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LARSEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

My first question is for General Hodges. I think we have established that the role of allies and partners in U.S. military strategy and operations is important. I want to move to how.

And for General Hodges, can you and have you thought through how you see Special Operations Command [SOCOM] building partner capacity in its role being an effective tool in the future of our alliances and partnerships specific to great power competition?

General HODGES. Thanks, Mr. Larsen.

Sure, Special Operations Command in Europe, and also the NATO SOF [Special Operations Forces] headquarters in Mons, have both made significant impact on helping the front lines improve their—not only improve their own special forces, this is a very tight community throughout NATO and Eastern Europe inside the special forces.

But also, more and more nations are recognizing the importance of resilience, the ability to resist disinformation as well as attacks. This is an area where our special forces have been particularly helpful in strengthening resilience of nations along NATO's eastern flank. I would say you can never have too much [inaudible] forces, small numbers with big impact.

Mr. LARSEN. Thanks.

Ms. Wormuth, the next question is for you.

Have you thought through how we see, how you view SOCOM's global access and placement as a means to enable and support the DOD competitive advantage and achieve objectives as established in the NDS, again, specific to great power competition?

Ms. WORMUTH. Thank you, Congressman.

I would echo to some degree what General Hodges said. I think SOCOM is very focused on looking at how to adjust itself from the

focus it has had very heavily on counterterrorism and counterinsurgency for the last 20 years to looking at the role of special operations forces in great power competition.

And, in particular, I think, you know, there is quite a bit that our special operations community can bring to bear in terms of gray-zone competition, for example. So things like, just as General Hodges talks about, the importance of building partner capacity and helping frontline states develop resistance forces.

RAND did an excellent study just recently looking at what it would take to develop resistance forces in the Baltics, for example, and that is something that the Baltic countries could do at relatively little expense.

I think it is really going to call on SOCOM to return to some degree to a greater focus on unconventional warfare, which is obviously, you know, many of the hybrid threats and things that we did during the Cold War in sort of the gray areas and the shadows are relevant again, I think, in this area of great power competition.

Mr. LARSEN. Ma'am, thank you.

Mr. Colby, a little bit different angle on the question about great power competition. The Brookings Institute did a report last October titled "Don't Make Us Choose," and it had to do with the Southeast Asian countries basically making the case: Don't make us choose between China and the U.S.

Your testimony really seems to run more counter to that, the idea being that these countries do have to make a choice. They are sovereign. They get to make a choice.

How do you balance the public comments from some of the countries who are saying, "Don't make us choose," to your actually very thoughtful view about how to attract them closer to the U.S.?

Mr. COLBY. Well, thanks, sir, and I will be brief here given your time.

I would say that they don't want to choose between China and the United States. But, really, what we are asking them to do is choose between China and their own autonomy and sovereignty. And that is our interest is in bolstering Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia as much as they can to defend themselves against Chinese military or other forms of coercion.

It is not—you know, I always use the analogy of John Foster Dulles, the so-called Pactomania of the 1950s, where everybody had to become an alliance member.

As I think I mentioned in my testimony, we want to be very chary about extending an alliance commitment. There might be one or two we need to consider, but I think really what we want to do instead is empower them to defend their own independence and sovereignty.

Mr. LARSEN. That is excellent.

Thank you, and I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much. And I really appreciate you ending that answer right as time expired.

Mr. Lamborn, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LAMBORN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to ask all three of you to comment on Iran. As you know, Russia and China are actively opposing U.S. efforts to put pressure on Iran. Western European allies are doing little or noth-

ing. They are trying to evade sanctions to keep up commercial ties with Iran.

We have some Middle Eastern growing relationships, especially with the Sunni Gulf states, and they have done the Abraham Accords with Israel, largely, I think, because of the Iranian threat. So we have some potential allies and partners in the Middle East, but we don't seem to have very good partners willing to step up when it comes to Western Europe.

And I am concerned, if Joe Biden wins the election, we will go back to the JCPOA [Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action] program, which, in my opinion, does not prevent Iran from getting a bomb, it just delays it by a few years.

So what should we do about Iran? I would like to hear from all three of you.

Ms. Wormuth, could you start, please? Then General Hodges, then Mr. Colby.

Ms. WORMUTH. Sure. Thank you, Congressman.

Certainly, I would agree that Iran continues to pose a serious threat for us, to our allies in the Middle East, and to some extent to our allies in Europe.

So I think part of the problem that we have had in the last few years in terms of being able to find a common approach with our European partners, for example, towards Iran, I think the fact that some of the schisms that I talked about in my opening statement between our rhetoric about the importance of allies and partners and how we actually talk about allies and partners, publicly and privately, that experience, for example, the Germans and how they have been treated, I think has made it harder for them to find common ground with the current administration in terms of how to deal with Iran.

The European country representatives that I talk to I think also are not as clear as they would like to be on what do we want from Iran. Certainly, the current administration has articulated the maximum pressure campaign. But in the minds of many European diplomats that I talk to, the kinds of things that the administration has asked Iran to do are not realistic.

And so I think work needs to be done in articulating what is a sort of viable pathway that we can pursue to bring the Iranians back to the table. And I think Brian Hook at the State Department spent quite a lot of time working with the Europeans and it sounded like had gotten close, but ultimately were not able to bring them together.

Mr. LAMBORN. Okay. Thank you.

Ms. WORMUTH. So I think we need to be clearer.

Mr. LAMBORN. Okay. Thank you. I would like to hear from the other two, also. But thank you.

Mr. Hodges, and then Mr. Colby.

General HODGES. Sir, thanks.

Four points.

First of all, [inaudible] bomb is not such a terrible thing. For sure, it is better if we can stop them. But if we delay for a few years, that is not necessarily bad.

I regret that we have pulled out of the JCPOA, primarily because we now lose the opportunity or the vehicle with which we could be

putting more pressure on European allies to keep the pressure on Iran. It is better if we lead instead of leave.

Number three, support for Iranian civil society. I think the administration, our government was pretty quiet after the execution of this Iranian wrestler, for example. We should be going out of our way to support Iranian civil society.

Then finally, back to Turkey. Turkey is our bulwark against Iran.

Mr. LAMBORN. Thank you.

And Mr. Colby.

Mr. COLBY. Thanks, Congressman.

Well, I think your point about the Abraham Accords coalition in the region is the point I would like to stress, that I think is really where the future lies, which is in a sense it is almost a perfect example of the shared threat driving traditionally strange bedfellows together, but now we have them on the White House lawn, I think, if I am not mistaken.

I think that is the real way to build going forward. And, obviously, we have got to maintain a significant degree of pressure on Iran to respect our interests and those of our regional allies and partners like Israel and the Gulf states.

But I think this is what you really want to empower, especially because we will not be able to allocate the degree of attention and resources to CENTCOM [Central Command] that we have in the past.

Really one of the core areas of the NDS was not just the Middle East but having a lighter footprint, a more economical footprint, and doing this by and through and working with partners. And I think this political breakthrough, hopefully, will enable us to do so in a more sort of efficient and force-multiplying way.

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

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Courtney is recognized for 5 minutes.

I think you are still muted there, Joe. In fact, I think you are still muted. There we go. And yet we still cannot hear you. You unmuted yourself, but I am not—how are we doing?

Yeah, we can't hear you, I am sorry. We will try to get that fixed and come back to you shortly. You are unmuted, but for some reason it is not coming through. So we will work on that.

And we will go to Mr. Garamendi for 5 minutes.

Sorry about that, Joe, we will try to get it fixed.

Oh, one other thing. Sorry. This is awkward, I know, but as you are asking—once you have asked your question, it is better for the member to then mute their microphone while they are listening to the answer, because we get feedback if you don't. I know then you got to turn it back on when you talk again. But if you could do that on-and-off thing it would help reduce the feedback.

And with that, Mr. Garamendi is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And to the witnesses, thank you for very interesting and useful and important presentations.

Out in the West, in the technology community, we often talk about disruptive technologies. We have certainly over the last 4 years had a very disruptive leadership, one in which there has

been a very significant change from America working with allies to a philosophy of America first. We will have another leader, perhaps, or the same leader.

My question really goes to the large question of the philosophy that we should proceed with in the next 4 years, either changing President Trump's philosophy from America first to another philosophy, or a Biden philosophy.

Just on the large scale of things, should it be America first and the allies not so much to worry about, or should we be looking at partnerships and making our foreign and military partners and trade policies about partnerships? Just in the large scope.

Let's start with Ms. Wormuth, and then go to Hodges, and from there.

Ms. WORMUTH. Thank you, Congressman. I will try to be brief.

I think all of us at the witness table and many of you have spoken to the importance and the value that alliances and partnerships bring to the security of the United States. So I think that those alliances need to remain at the center of our national security strategy regardless of who is elected this fall. And if President Trump remains in the White House, I wouldn't expect him to dramatically change his approach.

But I think what I would emphasize is the importance, again, of that consistent messaging and consistent and reliable communications. I think some of the things that President Trump wants to achieve have been made more difficult by the disruptive communication style.

But, again, there has been a bipartisan tradition of alliances and partnerships being valuable to the U.S., and I think it made sense in the past, it makes sense going forward.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Thank you.

General Hodges.

General HODGES. Yes, sir. Thank you.

So one of the things that has been so helpful is the consistent support by the Congress for the alliance and for working with our allies. Our allies understand, by and large, the American political system. They understand that Presidents and administrations change. So having the consistent support from the Congress has really been important, and I hope that this will certainly continue.

Mr. COLBY. Congressman, I would say that I think what we want in our overall approach is one of enlightened self-interest. And, in fact, I would say alliances and partnerships are necessary if you are going to put America's interests first. I mean, I think it is—I am not being cute. But actually the way to achieve the interests of the American people is to have these alliances and partnerships, but make sure they work.

And a good friend and predecessor of mine, Jim Thomas, put it well, I think, a while ago, when he said we need to change our traditional alliance from protectorates to partnerships. As I think General Hodges was indicating, in some ways our traditional partnerships had the aspect of protectorates because, if we look back to World War II, we were half of global GDP. That just isn't the case anymore.

So I actually think friction is good and valuable if it is deliberate and intentional and achieving the results we want, which is a more

equitable coalition that is adjusting to the reality that what we and our traditional allies have to offer is not enough to outweigh China and what it is able to do, and Iran and Russia and terrorists.

So I think, you know, we have to adapt, and that is going to result in friction. I think, you know, the [inaudible] I saw in the press just downgraded its projections of the American economic growth over time. As Ms. Wormuth rightly pointed out, we are going to see pressure on the defense budget.

I actually think this could be a warning signal, this is sort of a flare. I say this to the Japanese, for instance, and the Germans a lot, is this is going to come due at some point, and Americans are ultimately, I mean, you would know better than I, are going to say something isn't right here. So we need to have more equity and something more balanced, but making the whole thing work together better as the goal.

Mr. GARAMENDI. My time has expired, and I thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Mr. Bacon is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BACON. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thanks for the panel for a great discussion. What I am hearing is what conforms to my perspective, that America is the indispensable nation. It is indispensable to freedom, rule of law, human rights, free and fair trade. But we can't do it alone. I think that is what I am hearing as well.

China's GDP is matching ours soon. We also have Russia that is spending much above our level of GDP. Then, of course, you have got Iran and still terrorists—terrorism.

But my question is really to—my first question is to Ms. Wormuth and Mr. Colby. I did serve 30 years in the Air Force, I did a lot with NATO. Can we try to do something similar again in the Pacific? Can we find a structure that better integrates ourselves with Japan and Australia, New Zealand and other countries, like we had with SEATO [Southeast Asia Treaty Organization] 30 years ago? Should we try to pursue something along these lines?

Ms. WORMUTH. Thank you, Congressman.

You know, my sense is that it would be difficult to establish a NATO- or SEATO-like formal alliance with the countries that you mentioned in Asia. But we do have already alliance mechanisms with Japan, Australia, South Korea. We have ASEAN [Association of Southeast Asian Nations]. And I think there are pieces to build on that are substantial.

The challenge is that many of the countries in the Indo-Pacific don't want to have to choose between the United States and China. They want to engage with China for very clear economic interests, while most of them lean towards the United States for security interests.

And I think they are trying to sort of thread that needle. I think it would make it difficult because of that to establish a formal relationship. But I think there is much more we can do, and Mr. Colby has spoken to it eloquently, and that is really where we need to be focusing with DOD and the State Department in the next 10 years.

Mr. COLBY. Thanks, Congressman. Just building on what Ms. Wormuth, I think, rightly said, about the difficulty of forming it.

So given that, I think it is better to use our political capital on that front to push for increased defense spending, posture enhancements and integration, and other kinds of preparation for a shared effort.

And I think one of the key reasons why we don't need to push so hard is I think when you look at it practically, what we need from each individual country is more its own self-defense, with I think the single exception of Australia, which is more of a collective defense model, and I commend them in their defense strategic update over their winter, our summer.

But really Japan needs to focus primarily on its own defense, Taiwan, South Korea, Vietnam, Philippines, et cetera.

So actually, NATO wouldn't really get us that much because we are not going to be asking too much of the allies to do for each other. So, again, I would rather spend that political capital on things that would actually contribute more to deterrence and defense in the region against China.

Mr. BACON. Well, thank you for your perspective. My concern is we have a lot of bilateral relationships there. If we had a little more multilateral and a little more integration, it may be more effective.

My next question is to General Hodges. I appreciate your perspective, sir, in how we can better deter in the Baltics. What more can we do to help preserve these countries that are way on the front line and vulnerable? Would it help to have a U.S.-flagged unit permanently there, such as like an air defense unit?

Thank you.

General HODGES. Thanks, Mr. Bacon.

Actually, we don't need to have that. I think the alliance has done a very good job responding to the threat in the Baltic region. We probably are better there than anywhere else in the alliance. I would favor maybe improving the transportation logistics infrastructure there to facilitate rapid reinforcement.

But I think in the Baltic region, we are in a good place. Kaliningrad is a liability for the Kremlin. The geography is in our favor in the Baltic Sea.

So keep what we are doing, maybe improve some logistics capability, transportation capability up there. The Black Sea is where we are on the wrong side of the equation.

Mr. BACON. Thank you.

And, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

We will give Mr. Courtney another try. Is he up on the screen there? Yeah, we don't seem to be making progress on that front.

So we will go to Ms. Gabbard.

Ms. GABBARD. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you for being here today.

I want to bring the conversation back to Turkey. I hope to hear from General Hodges and Ms. Wormuth. Sorry?

The CHAIRMAN. Go ahead.

Ms. WORMUTH. Congresswoman Gabbard, yes.

Ms. GABBARD. Okay.

Ms. WORMUTH. Do you want me to address?

Ms. GABBARD. Thank you.

In earlier comments, General Hodges talked about some of the issues with Turkey, one of which is the kind of arbitrary drawing of the line between CENTCOM and EUCOM [European Command] there between Turkey and Syria, and perhaps some differences between the commands on priorities in the region which drove some of the decisions being made.

I was surprised, though, to hear you, kind of the takeaway being that the United States needs to rebuild or earn back Turkey's trust and confidence rather than the other way around. When you look at the laundry list of things that Turkey has done and is continuing to do, not only that undermine U.S. objectives, but also undermine NATO objectives, with what is happening in the Mediterranean now, in conflicts and issues they have had in Greece and France and so forth.

You mentioned, General Hodges, about hold it—Turkey needs to be held accountable. What needs to be done to do that? And when you are finished, I will ask Ms. Wormuth to answer the same question.

General HODGES. Thank you, Congresswoman Gabbard.

This is very difficult, and I don't have a ready solution for many of these challenges.

My point is that if we think strategically, we have got to figure out how do we keep Turkey on the side. For sure, distrust is a two-way thing. I certainly did not mean to imply that the burden is on us to regain their trust, and I don't condone much of what the Erdogan administration has done or said.

My point is to think long term, and, fortunately, we have not done something that causes long-term damage on our side of this relationship.

I think we work with countries and allies around the world where we are not happy with the policies that they have about certain things, but we manage to keep that compartmented so that we can focus on our security, and our security is better when we are able to have radar, air bases in Turkey, and that Turkey controls the straits out in the Black Sea. That all is to our advantage.

Ms. GABBARD. Thank you. Thank you, General Hodges.

I think that one of the main issues that I have is that among the differences we have with Turkey's policies, they are not limited to their domestic policies or their interaction with other countries. You know, we have seen indirect fire on our troops at known American locations within northern Syria.

And really there is no recourse. Turkey acts with impunity, as they have for so long. And I have been asking these questions for a long time in Congress, and I am generally responded to with a shrug of the shoulders, like, well, we need—the basic thing is we need them more than they need us. And so Turkey feels like they can do whatever they want.

Ms. Wormuth, I wonder if you can weigh in on this, about some constructive actions either the United States or NATO can take to make it so that Turkey is not in a position of acting without any consequence whatsoever.

Ms. WORMUTH. Well, Congresswoman, as General Hodges said, there is not—you know, I am a big fan of "The Sound of Music."

How do you solve a problem like Maria? Turkey is a very challenging geostrategic problem.

You know, I was in the Obama administration when we were fighting ISIS, and we knew there was tension between the necessity to have partners on the ground, and the Syrian Democratic Forces were what we had. We knew Turkey had issues with that.

In my experience, however, the United States worked very hard and very closely with Turkey to try to assuage their concerns, and nothing was ever enough for them.

So we do have a challenge. They are very important in terms of where they are located. But the authoritarianism that Erdogan has turned to is concerning.

So I think we have to keep the dialogue open and continue to try to keep Turkey inside the fold, but at the same time communicate that doing whatever they want is not acceptable. And the S–400, for example, is a key example of that.

Ms. GABBARD. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentlelady's time has expired. Thank you.

Mrs. Hartzler is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I remain deeply concerned about China's growing economic and military footprint in Africa and our ability to adequately counter those activities. China is promoting not just the Belt and Road Initiative, but also its party-army model through training and education initiatives with African militaries.

So, Ms. Wormuth, how can the Department of Defense better utilize security cooperation authorities to build partner capacity so our partners in Africa understand the risk of doing business with China? And is there a way to successfully counter China's debt-trap diplomacy and military presence in Africa, especially in countries with a history of corruption? And, finally, what more should the Department of Defense be doing to counter this threat?

Ms. WORMUTH. Thank you, Congresswoman.

Well, first, I think AFRICOM's [Africa Command's] zero-based review, I hope, will shed light on which kinds of activities are helping us and helping our African partners. There is a lot you can do with building partner capacity, but as Mr. Colby and others have indicated, we are going to have to make some hard choices. So I think we have to look at where are we getting the most bang for the buck with the work we are doing with the Africans.

I think the security assistance programs we have are a valuable tool. And a lot of what I see China doing in Africa is, frankly, quite self-serving and exploitative, and I think many African countries see that. So the work we do with them isn't just about us being extractive, it helps them. So I think we should continue to do that, but be judicious in our choices.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Great. Thank you.

Lieutenant General Hodges, in your testimony you talk about the importance of U.S. leadership and resolving the rising tension between Greece and Turkey in the eastern Mediterranean.

In your opinion, what can the United States do to resolve this conflict between two NATO allies that have a history of tensions, and what role does the Department of Defense play in easing tensions between these two nations?

General HODGES. Congresswoman Hartzler, thank you.

If I may reference Africa, working with our allies.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Sure.

General HODGES. You know, the U.K., France, Germany, Italy, Spain all have extensive efforts going on in Africa. So this is an opportunity, once again, where we can work with allies to achieve what our objectives are.

When it comes to Greece and Turkey in the eastern Mediterranean, I think that the State Department's guidance to its diplomats in the region has been to keep Germany in front, let Germany be the lead diplomatic effort here.

I think, frankly, the United States in the past would have been the one to do this, to get these allies together, as we have had to do numerous times in the past. But we have got to find a way, with these two nations in particular, find a way for them to back down, to climb back down from where they are.

I think at the end of the day, for Turkey it is about economic relationships with the European Union [EU]. Perhaps Germany could find a way to offer Turkey some sort of a trade union with the EU as a return for them backing down.

Greece, of course, is under massive pressure from the refugees that are coming across the Mediterranean, and they are kind of the entry point, them and Italy, for all the refugees coming to Europe. Finding a way to help them would also be a part of this.

Most of these refugees would not be coming across if it was not for Russian support of the Assad regime in Syria or the support for General Haftar in Libya.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Do you think Germany is doing enough to be aggressive in reaching out and trying to resolve this issue?

General HODGES. I can't tell for sure. I have spoken with our ambassador in Greece, one of the best diplomats I have ever met, Ambassador Geoff Pyatt. He says that the Germans are working hard there, but I don't think that they are approaching it the way that maybe a senior American diplomat who had the responsibility for doing it might be able to do that.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Okay. Last topic here. Lieutenant General Hodges, the armed services has made great strides in providing expanded victim services for sexual harassment, assault response, and prevention. But I am curious if service members who are stationed or deployed overseas are afforded the same level of resources as service members stationed in the United States. I have an open constituent issue on this right now as it relates to Poland.

And so based on your previous experience as commander of U.S. Army Europe, what should the Department of Defense along with the State Department do, working with our allies, to ensure U.S. military victims of sexual assault in host nations are provided adequate resources? And do you think we should be doing a better job?

The CHAIRMAN. Unfortunately, the gentlelady's time has expired, and we will have to take that for the record. It is a very important question, but I would love to get your perspectives to Mrs. Hartzler and the committee on that.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 97.]

The CHAIRMAN. The gentlelady's time has expired.

Mr. Gallego is recognized for 5 minutes.

Are you with us there, Ruben? You still got the little mute sign in front of you there.

Mr. GALLEGO. Thank you. I apologize. It is always difficult when you are trying to do these events.

The CHAIRMAN. We got you now. Go ahead.

Mr. GALLEGO. Thank you. Okay. So a few questions that have come up. Thank you, again. This has been a great discussion so far.

I guess in terms of our kind of further going down the rabbit hole with Turkey to begin with, if Turkey isn't part of NATO and we can't rely on Turkey's ability to field the large—because they are the largest infantry in the European theater right now for us in terms of should something ever happen with when the balloon goes up and we would need their assistance, if we can't necessarily rely on NATO, then where are we going to find the kind of mass that they provide right now?

And I apologize, if we could start with Lieutenant General Ben Hodges, and then Christine, and then Mr. Colby.

General HODGES. Thank you, sir.

Well, for sure, Turkey brings a lot of military capability—air, land, and sea forces—to the alliance. And if for some reason they were no longer in NATO, that would be a gap that would have to be filled by us or the U.K. or other allies. So that is a problem right from the start.

But more importantly is control of the straits that connect the Black Sea to the eastern Mediterranean. And so having a NATO ally that has control and sovereignty over the straits——

The CHAIRMAN. I am sorry. We have lost—we seem to have lost the general there. If you want to move on to somebody else to answer the question.

Mr. GALLEGO. Yes. Ms. Wormuth. You are muted, Ms. Wormuth.

Ms. WORMUTH. Okay. I think I am unmuted now.

Mr. GALLEGO. Yes. Go ahead.

Ms. WORMUTH. I think the size of the Turkish military is just one reason why we need to continue to work hard, as challenging as Turkey is, to keep them in the alliance.

You know, certainly if they were outside the alliance the U.S. has a very large ground force, but we don't want to have to go there. And as General Hodges said, we need them from a maritime dimension. We need them in terms of just the geostrategic bridge they are between Europe and the Middle East.

So it is all of those reasons why I think we have to keep working very hard on these tough problems. I wish we had better answers, but I think we just have to keep grinding away on it.

Mr. GALLEGO. Mr. Colby.

Mr. COLBY. Thanks, Congressman. I actually don't—I don't really have anything to add to what has already been said, if you had some questions.

Mr. GALLEGO. I guess it is kind of a deeper dive question. I was earlier on a call with members of the Bundestag as part of the German Marshall Fund, and I do have conversations a lot with a lot of European defense ministers, both NATO and non-NATO allies. But there is a sentiment that I keep hearing that, though Congress is very affirmative in our NATO responsibilities and the fact that

we would back up Article 5, there is a sentiment that is still felt out there that the Trump administration itself is not a long-term ally when it comes to NATO.

So I guess this conversation goes to—first we will go back to General Hodges.

Like, have you heard of that sentiment, and how deeply is it taking root that there is some doubt whether we would uphold our NATO commitments?

General HODGES. Well, sir, the fact that we even have to have this discussion tells you the significance, and to imagine we would ever be in the place where allies would wonder whether or not the United States would ever be there, or that the President or any President would question Article 5, certainly not in a way like that.

Mr. GALLEGO. Ms. Wormuth, do you have anything to add?

Ms. WORMUTH. There is very significant concern, I think, in the conversations I have with folks from Germany, whether in the diplomatic corps or elsewhere, as well as European countries. And I think that is why you see what I would call hedging behavior to some degree, when you have got Macron talking about a European army, for example. While I think that would be a difficult undertaking, it is reflective of the concerns they have about our commitment right now.

Mr. GALLEGO. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I yield back my time.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Wittman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WITTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to thank our witnesses today.

I would like to acknowledge the importance that you all pointed out to our partnerships and our alliances. And I would like to go to the National Defense Strategy that talked about how do we actually look at ways to improve those alliances, especially getting them to the point where we can put them into extended networks to make sure that we have the ability to take decisive action, make sure we are able to deter.

And there are three elements in the plan that are of particular interest. The first item says, upholding the foundation of mutual respect, responsibility, priorities, and accountability. Number two, expanding regional consultative mechanisms and collaborative planning. And number three, deepening interoperability. And I wanted to spend a few minutes talking about items number two and three.

As we develop our operational plans, it doesn't seem like to me that we go in depth with our allies and partners who we are going to rely on, especially if there is a major conflict. Now, I understand that those operations, operational plans, are classified, but I worry that we don't involve folks to that level. And I want to make sure, too, we understand what our allies can do, because that drives decisions in what we need to do in the budgeting side, what they need to do in the policy side, especially in developing the NDAA [National Defense Authorization Act] each year.

I want to make sure, too, that we understand, it seems like to me that there is a lack of network architecture and communications to be able to do the interoperability that we need to do.

In fact, it was highlighted to me. I went to a RIMPAC [Rim of the Pacific] Exercise, and I was on board an Australian ship, and I will never forget an Australian brigadier coming out just flaming mad that he couldn't communicate with other folks in the exercise through the radio. So he was on the cell phone, on his cell phone, communicating to allies and partners in that exercise. It just goes to show some of the concerns.

And I wanted to ask this question. What are the concrete steps that the United States military can take to make sure we have the interoperability, the technology to where we can not just say in concept that we have these relationships, and not just that we practice them a few times a year and then see the problems, but how do we get the deep and meaningful interoperability that we need with our allies and partners if we find ourselves in a high-level conflict? And I argue it is also incredibly important on the deterrent side.

So, Mr. Colby, can you give me your perspective on that?

Mr. COLBY. Well, Congressman, I think you put your finger right on it. I mean, I think this whole idea—I mean, interoperability is important. Obviously, the capability to operate together. The phone example is really striking.

But as I mentioned in my testimony, I think we want to try to lean on the, for instance, force development. I think Ms. Wormuth may have started this under the last administration. But doing much more aligned force development plans with, for instance, the U.K. I think we could move forward on that with the Australians.

I think we do have to be cautious, and that is where a lot of this reluctance comes from, is that you don't know who is going to be there in the event that the balloon goes up, as Congressman Gallego said.

But I think given, for instance, where the Australians are going, given what the Japanese have indicated, I think we can't afford to be redundant. So a much deeper integration alignment in posture, in operational planning. You know, there are ways to build in uncertainty. But I think we should be prepared to take more risks because I think on the other side we will get more efficacy if we plan in a more integrated fashion.

Mr. WITTMAN. I would like to bring up one other point, too. I have heard from diplomatic and military leaders that have been involved in ASEAN about their concern about corruption. We hear Chinese officials paying officials at the ASEAN to be able to speak before the United States. And it seems like to me this is emblematic of a deeper-seated problem that we have with the Chinese clearly trying to take advantage through corruption in these processes.

I wanted to ask, what do you think the United States can do to combat this level of corruption, which seems to be growing into more systematic or systemic corruption within ASEAN, and what China does, not just in the Asia-Pacific, but around the world?

So, Mr. Colby, I would like to get your perspective on that.

Mr. COLBY. Great. Thanks, Congressman.

Well, I think this is one of the areas where we can use our values in our own advantage, we and the Europeans and the Japanese,

which is to say that we stand for long-term accountability, the rule of law, and this kind of thing.

I don't think we are going to be able to match every Chinese renminbi that they are going to throw around. But people in the region, if they are not put under the really coercive shadow of Chinese power and have to swallow Chinese hegemony, they will eventually see which is the better course to take, and I think that is where we want to be. Things like DFC [International Development Finance Corporation] factor and are valuable, but also our legal code and values.

Mr. WITTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. Carbajal, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

And I want to thank all the witnesses for participating today.

I want to take a minute to discuss New START [Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty], which is set to expire in February 2021 without further action by the administration.

I know this hearing is about our alliances, but the treaty is important in this conversation. While I understand the administration believes that they can negotiate a trilateral deal that includes China, my concern is that why would we put ourselves in a situation where we have no arms control agreement in place, especially with the U.S. withdrawing from the INF [Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces] Treaty in 2019?

Our allies clearly see the value of the treaty, and NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg has urged the United States to extend the agreement in order to provide the necessary time to pursue a new deal.

To all the witnesses, starting with Ms. Wormuth, do you think it is in the best interests of the United States and our allies to allow New START to expire without a new agreement in place?

Ms. WORMUTH. No, Congressman. I very much believe that it is in our interest to basically refresh New START and extend it, and exactly as you said, spend that time then working with the Russians to bring in their hypersonic weapons, the other, you know, nuclear torpedoes, et cetera, as well as their nonstrategic nuclear weapons into a treaty framework. And we could certainly continue during that time to try to engage the Chinese in conversations about their nuclear policy and their nuclear program. But I think it would be a negative development for the U.S. if we let New START lapse.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Thank you.

General Hodges.

General HODGES. Thank you, sir.

I also think it would be a mistake to not extend New START while we continue to work on refreshing it. But this, again, is a place where we need allies. I think Germany is probably the only country in Europe that could actually influence Kremlin behavior. So we could be working with allies and put pressure on the Kremlin to achieve this.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Thank you.

Mr. Colby.

Mr. COLBY. Thanks, Congressman.

I think the New START Treaty, while it has imperfections, it is still a solid basis for strategic arms control. It is based primarily—almost entirely derived from the framework which was negotiated by President Reagan and then President Bush in the early 1990s. And we would be better off with something like New START than——

Mr. CARBAJAL. Thank you. I think we lost you. I will proceed to my next question.

Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Thornberry both touched on a topic I want to discuss further, which is how do we balance security needs with political objectives when dealing with partner countries that have documented human rights violations and authoritarian leaders?

Ms. Wormuth, how can the Department of Defense be further utilized as part of the whole-of-government strategy to promote human rights and democratic values among partner countries?

Ms. WORMUTH. Well, I think one of the most important contributions the Department of Defense makes is leading by example in terms of demonstrating adherence to the rule of law and demonstrating the importance of human rights.

And in all of our security assistance programs, for example, building partner capacity, we include in the curricula courses on the rule of law and the importance of human rights. And we have things like the Leahy law, which we discussed earlier, that keeps us from operating with foreign country units that are abusing human rights.

I think that is the most important contribution DOD makes. There is a lot of action that needs to happen on the State Department side, but that is where I think DOD has a role.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Thank you.

Mr. Colby, with regards to whether there is a U.S. interest in having U.S. troops present in South Korea, President Trump has previously said, quote, "It can be debated. I can go either way," end quote.

Do you believe it is in the U.S. national security interest to maintain a presence in South Korea? And can you speak to the benefits of our forward posture in South Korea?

Mr. COLBY. Thanks, Congressman.

I think our posture, our alliance with South Korea makes a lot of sense, it is very valuable. We will need a presence there. It does need to adapt in light of the overriding importance on China going forward, and it needs to be equitable.

I would also just like to say, sir, that what I said at the end was that New START, while an imperfect agreement, is better than nothing at all. It is a solid basis.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Gallagher is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GALLAGHER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Today we are talking about the role of allies in strategy. Strategy is often difficult because it requires us to prioritize between what is essential and what is extraneous and identify, if nothing else, what are the strong points for geopolitical competition.

It seems obvious to me both geographically and geopolitically that there is perhaps no more strategically important piece of terrain right now in INDOPACOM [Indo-Pacific Command] than Taiwan.

So my question for Mr. Colby is, what are your views on our current policy of strategic ambiguity towards Taiwan and whether we need to rethink that policy and perhaps clarify it?

Mr. COLBY. Thanks, Congressman.

I fully agree with you, and I know you have been leading the discussion on this. Also, I think we should move towards more clarity on our position.

I do think under TRA [Taiwan Relations Act] and the Six Assurances we already are effectively committed, but I think we run into a danger of a Korea 1950 situation. Ambiguity is tremendously perilous when the other side has the capability to do something about it, the desire, and may think he can get away with it, as happened in 1950. And I think that is our danger today.

You know, Taiwan is valuable militarily in its placement in the first island chain, because our credibility is already on the line. Ask any of the people who talk to the Asian partners and everybody thinks it is the canary in the coal mine or the, you know, what-have-you.

And then, third, its status as a liberal democracy.

So I think moving towards the clarification consistent with our One-China policy makes a lot of sense. And I do think it is beginning to have more and more support. It is definitely bipartisan. I would commend Richard Haass' piece in Foreign Affairs recently. I think that clarity would be safer in a way that is judicious and prudent diplomatically with Beijing.

Mr. GALLAGHER. Thank you. Maybe I will follow up with you, Mr. Colby, on a different region of the world, Europe.

Obviously, there have been those on this committee, myself included, who have asked the White House for clarification on what exactly it intends to do with troop reductions in Germany.

You have been an outspoken, I don't know if critic is too harsh a word, but certainly pointed to the fact that there is more that Germany can be doing.

I would just be curious to get your views on any proposed troop reduction in Germany and your broader views on the way we can encourage our German allies to make more substantial commitments to the NATO alliance in light of Russian aggression.

Mr. COLBY. Well, thanks, Congressman. I think your and your colleagues' questions are important and they deserve answers.

I mean, based on what Secretary Esper and General Hyten and General Wolters said in July, this is an ongoing discussion, so we will see what it is like. They did say it is consistent with the National Defense Strategy designed to deal with the secondary threat from Russia and Europe, but over time making us more, as you rightly said, I think, sir, prioritizing Asia.

I would also like to put this, the Germany discussion, really in perspective and say that this friction—we can talk about whether each move or the overall tone is appropriate. But we do need to look at this in a couple of ways.

One, this friction is not new. I mean, President Johnson in the balance of payments crisis literally insisted on payment from Germany in order to retain the stationing of U.S. troops in West Germany at the time. And, of course, the Congress, as I understand, passed the Mansfield Amendment, I believe which was calling for the wholesale withdrawal of U.S. troops from Europe.

So we have been through this before. In the case of Korea, President Carter was going to remove all forces from the peninsula. And actually burden-sharing issues, I would say, were more intense but also more candid and I think more realistic during the Cold War.

The other thing I would say about Germany is, let's take them at their word. They say they are committed to the multilateral rules-based order. Nobody has benefited more from NATO and the post-war order than Germany itself. Of course, there is the sad history before that.

But as General Hodges indicated, the Bundeswehr of the Cold War after 1955 was the most capable European military in NATO, And in some ways, and I would defer to him, maybe more capable than the American Army in Europe at some points.

In 1988, the West German military had 12 active divisions on the inter-German border. That is a Germany two-thirds the size of the current Federal Republic. I don't think they can put one, certainly not two divisions together today.

And I disagree with General Hodges, with all due respect. If we are going to contribute more and more to Asia, and we have to focus on it given China's scale and scope, that means Germany does have to play a role, and that does involve German tanks and German artillery and German tactical aviation, as part of NATO, of course.

But, I mean, honestly, I am befuddled with Germany. I am actually a big fan of Germany. Like Congressman Gallego, I have done things with the German Marshall Fund. I go there at least once a year. But I don't understand, because on the one hand it is either a bit obtuse and there is its massive hypocrisy, that nobody has benefited more than they; or on the other hand it looks quite cynical, honestly.

And I refuse to believe the Germans are so cynical. So I think they really should meet their obligations as they claim to want to do.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. Cisneros is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CISNEROS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you to our panelists for being here today—or being here virtually, I should say.

As demonstrated by the COVID–19 [coronavirus disease 2019] pandemic, infectious diseases know no border and global health crises are a matter of national security. In turn, it is imperative that we work directly with the global community to improve pandemic preparedness at home and abroad, including through initiatives like the Global Health Security Agenda, a network of 69 countries working to coordinate on global health issues.

How can we elevate global health security as a key component of our bilateral and multilateral security relationships? And how should the military work with our diplomats and development pro-

fessionals to ensure we can address the national security threat with all the tools in our toolbox?

Ms. Wormuth, you want to go ahead first?

Ms. WORMUTH. Sure. Thank you, Congressman. Thank you very much. That is an issue I care a lot about. And I think we do, before this pandemic happened, I was absolutely a proponent of arguing that we should pay more attention to global health security challenges and invest more as a country in our own public health infrastructure as well as helping other countries around the world do that.

Our military has some pretty impressive health surveillance capabilities, some pretty impressive response capabilities that are relevant to global health challenges. So I think that our Defense Department has quite a bit to offer.

But really the center of gravity needs to be in the development side of things, I would argue, and revitalizing, for example, many of the programs that were started as part of the Global Health Security Agenda, and going back and allocating more to the other departments in our Federal Government that have an important role to play, like the CDC [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention], like [Department of] Health and Human Services, for example, and like USAID [United States Agency for International Development].

Mr. CISNEROS. Thank you for that.

So President Trump frequently discusses our overseas force posture in terms of financial costs without discussing the benefit to U.S. national security.

What are the benefits to U.S. national security for having U.S. forces forward deployed in the Indo-Pacific? And what risk would we incur if our posture was reduced? What challenges do the domestic political environment in the United States for alliance management? And what about the domestic political environment within our Nation's allies.

Mr. Colby, would you mind taking a shot that question?

Mr. COLBY. Sure, Congressman.

I mean, broadly, I agree with your point that a forward, full presence in particularly the Western Pacific is very valuable.

I mean, I think it is dependent. I mean, we do need to adapt that forward presence. It needs to be competent and credible, which means designed to deny China its ability particularly to take over or subordinate a country like Taiwan or eventually South Korea or the Philippines.

But as I said I think earlier, I mean, the way it seems to me to make it to America first is to do it alongside allies and partners. And that is not—I don't mean that in a sort of kumbaya sort of way. I mean, to be totally candid, I think they are more akin to business partnerships than friendships. But in business partnerships you also have to—you have to have candid conversations. You have to read, baseline, where things are.

But I am optimistic that we are going to, maybe, if for no other reason than the countries of Asia, they recognize they need the United States. And one of the things the administration has really done that I think is lasting and important is made very clear that the United States has a keen sense of the challenge posed by China

and what is going to be entailed to confront that challenge over the long haul.

Mr. CISNEROS. General Hodges, do you want to take a shot at that question, too?

General HODGES. Sir, thanks.

This is all about access. Without having allies and forward basing, we can't get there. You can't defend America just from Fort Hood, Texas, or from Norfolk Naval Air Station or Camp Pendleton.

And so with very small numbers. If you think about 60,000 American Army and Air Force and Navy that are in Europe, 60,000, that is barely over half of the stadium that the University of Michigan football team plays in. So a very small investment, yet gives us access.

And same with the Republic of Korea. I spent a year there. It gives us the chance to [inaudible] what Secretary Carter used to call horizontal escalation. If China does something against Taiwan, we are in a position to strike China somewhere else.

So these bases and the alliances that we have, the partnerships, give us multiple options. It is an important part of deterrence.

Mr. CISNEROS. Thank you all for those answers.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Ms. Houlahan is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My question, my first one, I believe would be most likely for Ms. Wormuth.

During World War II, Allied forces cooperated extensively in the development and manufacturing of new and existing technologies to support military operations and intelligence gathering during the war. We have continued that tradition with many of our allies and partners just ongoing to today.

And as we look at today's modern warfare, evolving warfare strategy, specifically in the realm of cyber and AI [artificial intelligence], I believe that it still is beneficial to the U.S. to share or collaborate on technological ideas or plans with our allies or partner nations.

Can you comment on what do you see as the barriers to improving the responsible collaboration with allies on new technologies?

Ms. WORMUTH. Sure, Congresswoman. Thank you for that question.

Certainly I agree that cooperating with our allies and partners on technology issues is an important thing that we should be doing. In the cyber domain, for example, we have a NATO Center of Excellence in the Baltics, for example.

I think one of the most important things we can do is along the lines of something that Mr. Colby brought up earlier, which is to in our planning processes, in our force development processes, to have much more robust and detailed dialogues with some of our closest partners, like the U.K., for example, in Europe, or Australia, Japan in the Indo-Pacific, for example.

Not only should we be talking to them about sort of what traditional, conventional capabilities they can bring to bear in a potential warfight, we need to be talking with them about AI, about

cyber technologies. And in many cases those countries are quite innovative. So that is an area I think we should work on.

The barriers, of course, are the sort of ones we traditionally encounter in technology transfer areas, which is we, of course, have to be concerned about protecting our intellectual property, we have to be confident that our allies are going to protect any sensitive technologies that we grant them access to.

But that is something that we sort of have a number of mechanisms to work through and a number of agencies who help us with that. There are barriers, but I think we could probably take a little bit more risk, given the gravity of the challenges we are facing today.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Thank you.

And, General and Mr. Colby, do you have anything to add to that?

General HODGES. Congresswoman Houlahan, three things.

First of all, the key to effective deterrence is rapidly identifying what is happening, to recognize what the Kremlin or what the Chinese might be up to, and that is going to require intelligence sharing at the speed of light. It won't be an American satellite that first detects the threat. It is going to be something else. So being able to knock down the walls that prevent information and intelligence sharing is going to be very important.

Secondly, the infrastructure. We depend so much on transportation infrastructure, airports and seaports, around the world to do what we do. If those are not protected from cyber strike, then it is the same thing as if somebody launched Iskander missiles at the port of Bremerhaven. So investing in cyber protection and working with allies there.

And then third, it is a specific example but I think it is illustrative. I am an infantry soldier, but I have grown to appreciate what maritime unmanned systems, Navy drones, how valuable those are. And the United States is leading in this field, sharing that with our allies in the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea.

It is so much more cost effective for them to complement the surface vessels that they have and would significantly change the balance of power in the Black Sea, for example, against the [Russian] Black Sea Fleet.

Ms. HOULAHAN. That is excellent. Thank you.

And, Mr. Colby, do you have anything to add?

Mr. COLBY. Thanks, Congresswoman.

Building on Ms. Wormuth's comments, with which I associate myself closely, I mean, I think that is right that we need to take more risk. I mean, I think this is an example of an area where, to use the academic kind of term, unipolarity has kind of put deep roots into the American defense establishment's mindset, which is to say I think candidly, when we think about a lot of planning and the way the American defense system went about things, allies were nice, but a lot of it was symbolic, with maybe the exception of the Brits and the Australians.

And I think what we need to go back to is more of a Cold War model. The Cold War is always a dangerous analogy. I don't mean this writ large. But I mean in the sense that I think during the Cold War, you know, the great example, there was an American di-

vision and then a German division, an American division, a Belgian division, and so forth.

And that involves risk. I mean, who knows if it sort of helps as well as the Germans or the Americans?

But I think we do need to lean forward because you leave a lot of value on the table if you are too protective.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Thank you.

I have run out of time and I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Crow is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CROW. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, all of you, for joining this great discussion.

And, General Hodges, good to see you virtually. I know it is late where you are.

I would like to start with Ms. Wormuth and Mr. Colby.

The administration has announced a pretty drastic withdrawal and rapid withdrawal of our forces from Afghanistan. We have about 12,000 troops as part of the Resolute Support mission overall, but 5,000 of those or so are our NATO partners, and indeed the only time when Article 5 in the history of NATO has been invoked was after 9/11 when our NATO partners came to our aid.

So very briefly, I would like to hear from Ms. Wormuth and Mr. Colby what the impact on that alliance would be and the message it would send if we were to withdraw without sufficient coordination and consultation with our allies who are there fulfilling their responsibilities to us under Article 5.

Ms. Wormuth, do you want to begin?

Ms. WORMUTH. Congressman, thank you.

Clearly we need to work closely with our allies who are still with us in Afghanistan to coordinate any kind of significant withdrawal, and certainly we are clearly in a process of drawing down there.

As you know, several of our NATO allies have served importantly as framework nations. Many of them are still with us there. And for a long time our philosophy has been "in together, out together."

So I think as we work through the final details of what the ultimate shape and composition of any continuing presence might be in Afghanistan, we are going to have to work closely with our allies to make sure that it is a coordinated effort and that everyone understands where we are trying to go and how we are going to get there together.

Mr. CROW. Are you seeing that happening or hearing that? Because I am not. I am not hearing that we are going through that process.

Ms. WORMUTH. I have not been following the discussions in Afghanistan around that very closely, but certainly we are not communicating generally as much as I think we need to be to be on a whole range of issues, whether it is the withdrawal of 12,000 folks from Germany or whether it is the details of how we are going to get out of Afghanistan.

Mr. CROW. Mr. Colby, I am going to skip you because I want to get to General Hodges for a question, given my time constraints.

General, the European Deterrence Initiative was passed in 2014 as a way to rebolster our defenses and show our commitment to our NATO partners and others in Europe. The administration now

has for two consecutive years reduced that budget and even shifted funds away from critical infrastructure and logistics investments.

What has the impact been of those reductions on our alliances and the perception of our allies' commitment to the Russian aggression issue?

General HODGES. Well, Mr. Crow, thank you.

First of all, the European Reassurance Initiative and then the European Deterrence Initiative—Defense Initiative—we considered it when I was in U.S. Army Europe as oxygen. Without that, you could not get the rotational forces, both Active, and even more importantly, the Guard and Reserve, you couldn't get them in the quantity and the frequency that we needed.

So those funds were extremely important for that, and also, of course, for improving infrastructure along NATO's eastern flank that we needed.

And so as allies see that this is decreasing without some sort of explanation, they begin to associate that with, okay, is this part of the U.S. shifting away or pivoting to the Pacific? Are we losing interest?

So the money, as well as the troops, are the two biggest signals that they follow.

Mr. CROW. Thank you, General.

And then very briefly also, General Hodges, there is the 2 percent GDP requirement, but also there is the 20 percent major equipment requirement. But I am hearing from our allies that 20 percent requirement should be reexamined because many of our partners there actually don't even have the personnel and the logistics to support additional major equipment purchases, the Belgians being one of them that are having recruiting problems, as well as logistical supply chain problems maintaining the equipment that they have now.

Would you recommend reexamining that 20 percent major equipment requirement?

General HODGES. Well, I think the 20 percent of the 2 percent being for modernization is a good thing. It doesn't have to be necessarily new equipment.

I think there are so many more ways that we could look at investment that ensures that the nations have—what they do have is at the right level of readiness. But there are other things that we need.

Mr. CROW. Thank you.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

I believe we have Mr. Keating. You are on the virtual platform there. We don't see a picture of you, and you are muted at the moment. So, Mr. Keating, are you with us?

It would appear that he is not. And if so, that is all the people we have for questions.

I really want to thank our witnesses today. This is not an easy setup, easy platform. I also really appreciate the work that the staff has gone into this.

I mean, the reason we do this is because in the COVID environment it is not a good idea to have a large number of people in an enclosed space. So we take advantage of the CVC [Capitol Visitor

Center] and we take advantage of being able to participate remotely so that they are not in the room, so that we can have fewer people in the room and hold hearings.

I don't enjoy this anymore than anybody else does. And of the many things that we are all looking forward to getting back to doing, one of the big ones for me is to get back into 2118 and hold our hearings the way we normally do. We will do that as soon as the guidance from the healthcare officials here in the Capitol tell us that is safe to do.

In the meantime we will continue to do hearings along these lines. We are trying to get one set up for next week.

And with that, I will yield to Mr. Thornberry.

He has no closing remarks.

Then we are adjourned. Thank you all.

[Whereupon, at 2:17 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

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Testimony

The Role of Allies and Partners in U.S. Military Strategy and Operations

Christine Wormuth

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Testimony presented before the House Armed Services Committee on September 23, 2020

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The Role of Allies and Partners in U.S. Military Strategy and Operations

Testimony of Christine Wormuth[1]
The RAND Corporation[2]

Before the Committee on Armed Services
United States House of Representatives

September 23, 2020

As powerful as the United States is as a nation, its allies and partners around the world are critical elements of its national security strategy. The U.S. Department of Defense (DoD)'s own 2018 National Defense Strategy states that "A more lethal, resilient, and rapidly innovating Joint Force, *combined with a robust constellation of allies and partners*, will sustain American influence and ensure favorable balances of power that safeguard the free and open international order."[3]

U.S. Allies and Partners Provide Comparative Advantage

Particularly in an era of great-power competition with China and Russia, the network of alliances and partnerships the United States has developed over the past 75 years provides it with a unique comparative advantage. These networks, particularly in Europe and Asia, are the backbone of the international order that has ensured relative peace and security since the end of World War II and created the space for so much economic growth, not just in the United States but around the world. Allies and friends help share the burden of common defense in tangible and intangible ways. Day in and day out, the United States and its allies share intelligence, train and exercise together, and operate compatible weapon systems —coming together to create combined capabilities that far exceed what the United States could bring to bear on its own.

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[1] The opinions and conclusions expressed in this testimony are the author's alone and should not be interpreted as representing those of the RAND Corporation or any of the sponsors of its research.

[2] The RAND Corporation is a research organization that develops solutions to public policy challenges to help make communities throughout the world safer and more secure, healthier and more prosperous. RAND is nonprofit, nonpartisan, and committed to the public interest.

[3] DoD, *Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America: Sharpening the American Military's Competitive Edge*, Washington, D.C., 2018, emphasis added.

One doesn't have to look far back into history to find examples of the importance of allies and partners to U.S. national security strategy and military operations. Allies and partners from around the world joined U.S. forces in the wake of the September 11, 2001, attacks and fought alongside them in Afghanistan and Iraq. Many joined U.S. forces again to fight the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria beginning in 2014. Without the basing and access agreements granted by U.S. allies and partners, without allied and partner trainers and special forces on the ground, and without the equipment these allies and friends provided to partner forces in Iraq and Syria, defeating the Islamic State and eliminating its physical caliphate would have been far more costly, and the fight would have taken much longer. In Europe, the United States is working closely with NATO allies to deter Russia while, at the same time, guarding against internal threats to freedom driven by ethno-nationalism and illiberalism. The United States is also working witb its European allies and partners to find ways to address challenges posed by an increasingly powerful and assertive China. In Asia, U.S. allies and partners play an essential role in deterring aggression, maintaining stability, and ensuring free access to the global commons. U.S. alliances with Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and South Korea and partnerships with many other countries in the region strengthen the United States' ability to confront a variety of security threats, such as North Korea's growing nuclear weapon and long-range missile programs, China's military build-up and sweeping territorial claims in the South China Sea, and the continuing threat of violent extremism.

Changes Are Coming and More Change Is Needed

It has become almost a cliché to say that the United States is at a strategic inflection point, standing at a crossroads, or perhaps is even facing the end of the international world order as we know it. Whatever you call it, the period when the United States was the sole superpower is ending, and the country now faces significant challenges ahead—most prominently, competing successfully against a rising China while reducing the risks of war with Beijing. This is going to require the United States to change its national security approach—a challenging assignment under normal circumstances but one that will be even more difficult because national security institutions will almost inevitably face pressure to trim budgets and because many other important domestic problems will compete for policymakers' time and attention.

Allies and partners will remain critically important in this changing landscape, but the United States needs to adapt and strengthen its network of alliances and partnerships to better position itself for this era of great-power competition. The zero-based reviews of the regional combatant commands that Secretary of Defense Mark Esper commissioned a year ago and that are wrapping up at the end of this month will inform DoD's effort to adjust its overseas footprint and activities. To meet future challenges successfully in an era of finite resources, the United States needs to shore up deterrence in both Europe and Asia while carefully reducing its military footprint in the Middle East without creating more insecurity in that region. The Indo-Pacific Reassurance Initiative concept, included in both the House and Senate versions of the yet-to-be-finalized Fiscal Year 2021 National Defense Authorization Act, would be a valuable tool for DoD to shore up deterrence in Asia.

The United States also needs its allies and partners to do more for themselves and their own security, as well as more with the United States, in some cases, if all are to meet future challenges successfully. For instance, NATO allies need to continue to spend more on defense and make good on their pledges to do so by 2024, without the United States becoming myopically focused on percentage of gross domestic product as the sole metric of the health of the Alliance. U.S. allies and partners also need to continue working with the United States to share the burdens of providing peace and security around the world—for example, in the Middle East, where France and Australia participate in the maritime coalition interdicting weapon shipments to the Houthis, and in the South China Sea, where Australia and Japan have joined the United States to conduct freedom of navigation operations and hold naval exercises this year.

Developing a comprehensive plan to adapt and revitalize the U.S. network of alliances and rebalance the U.S. military footprint overseas is both an essential component of a broader strategy for great-power competition and a homework assignment that will take years to complete. Palau's recent offer to host U.S. military bases and airfields and the Philippines' decision to freeze its withdrawal from the Visiting Forces Agreements are positive developments but there is much more work to be done. This is also an area in which DoD needs help from Congress. To compete successfully against China, deter Russian aggression, and recalibrate the U.S. military footprint in an era of finite resources, DoD will need to make difficult decisions about the kinds of systems in which it invests, how it is postured in key regions around the world, and what kinds of capabilities it is willing to sell (or not sell) to its allies and friends. Congress is involved in all these decisions, and without support from Congress for the many tough calls that lie ahead, it will be much harder for DoD to make the strategic adjustments that are so clearly needed.

The Perils of a Neglected Garden

The United States' network of alliances and partnerships has served the country well for decades and remains a unique comparative advantage for it strategically, but it cannot take these relationships for granted. Any military officer stationed overseas or fighting in a coalition likely would say that working with allies can be the hardest and most painstaking politico-military work there is, but ultimately it pays critical dividends.

Alliances and partnerships are like gardens: They don't grow overnight, they must be tended carefully to flourish, and they can wither if they are neglected. Maintaining a network of alliances and partnerships takes sustained effort and reliable and consistent communications, and it rests on a foundation of shared objectives and trust. Both the 2017 National Security Strategy and the 2018 National Defense Strategy emphasize the importance of allies and partners for the security of the United States, but I am concerned that a widening gap has emerged between the rhetoric in these documents and the actions that U.S. leaders have taken involving many of the United States' closest allies and friends. The U.S. commitment to NATO's Article V security guarantee has repeatedly been called into question. U.S. leaders have accused our European allies publicly and privately of taking the United States for granted and have even appeared to contemplate withdrawing from the NATO alliance altogether. The decision to withdraw as many as 12,000 U.S. military personnel from Germany without any apparent advance consultation with

Berlin has been publicly messaged as punishment and makes little strategic sense given Russia's continuing aggressive actions in Europe and in the United States. Furthermore, the abrupt decision to withdraw U.S. troops from Syria cleared the way for Turkey's ensuing incursion into Syria, took U.S. allies and friends by surprise, and left them wondering when the United States could be counted on. Deriding Seoul as a free rider, the United States demanded that South Korea pay $5 billion to host U.S. troops on the peninsula, a 400-percent increase over the previous year's bill, and has threatened multiple times to pull U.S. troops out of Korea entirely. Japan has also been threatened with a four-fold increase in payments to host U.S. bases.

Growing threats from China and Russia mean that the United States and its allies and friends need each other now more than ever. But growing points of friction and uncertainty in those alliance relationships can result in negative consequences. A 13-nation Pew Research Center survey released on September 15 showed that the share of the public with a favorable view of the United States was as low in several democratic countries as it has been since Pew began polling almost 20 years ago.[4] Ultimately, shared concerns over common threats and shared security interests lie at the heart of strong alliances and are what binds them together. But nations and their leaders must balance many competing demands and pressures to govern; hence, it is rare that the United States and its allies will see each problem the same way or agree fully on how best to solve it. Building and sustaining alliances requires persuasion, persistence, consultation, an ability to listen, and a willingness to compromise. The chances are small that the United States' closest friends would leave their alliances outright, but if the United States does not do a better job tending its gardens around the world, it may find itself with friends who are far less willing to provide the support that is required to take on all of the hard work that lies ahead.

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[4] Richard Wike, Janell Fetterolf, and Mara Mordecai, "U.S. Image Plummets Internationally as Most Say Country Has Handled Coronavirus Badly," Pew Research Center, September 15, 2020, https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2020/09/15/us-image-plummets-internationally-as-most-say-country-has-handled-coronavirus-badly/.

Christine Wormuth
Director, International Security and Defense Policy Center; Senior Fellow
Washington Office

Education
M.P.P. in public policy, University of Maryland;
B.A. in political science, Williams College

Christine Wormuth is director of the RAND International Security and Defense Policy Center. ISDP researchers conduct in-depth analysis to help policy leaders make decisions about major national and international security challenges. ISDP's work spans political, security, and economic issues. Our analysis draws extensively on the best available qualitative and quantitative data, methodological tools, and RAND's core values of quality and objectivity.

Wormuth is a frequent writer and speaker on foreign policy, national security, and homeland security issues. Prior to joining RAND, she was Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (USDP) at the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) from 2014 to 2016. In that role, she advised both Secretary Chuck Hagel and Secretary Ash Carter on the full range of regional and functional national security issues. As USDP she frequently represented DoD at the White House and spent considerable time on the counter-ISIS campaign, the rebalance to Asia, counterterrorism operations, and U.S. defense relations with countries in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East.

From 2012 to 2014, Wormuth was Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for strategy, plans, and forces, and led the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review. She served as Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Defense at the National Security Council (NSC) from December 2010 until August 2012, where she was the primary liaison from NSC to the Pentagon on defense issues. She holds an M.P.P. from the University of Maryland.

DISCLOSURE FORM FOR WITNESSES
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Hearing Date: September 23, 2020

Hearing Subject:

The Role of Allies and Partners in U.S. Military Strategy and Operations

Witness name: Christine Wormuth

Position/Title: Director, International Security and Defense Policy Center

Capacity in which appearing: (check one)

● Individual ○ Representative

If appearing in a representative capacity, name of the organization or entity represented:

RAND Corporation

Federal Contract or Grant Information: If you or the entity you represent before the Committee on Armed Services has contracts (including subcontracts) or grants (including subgrants) with the federal government, received during the current and two previous calendar years and related to the subject matter of the hearing, please provide the following information:

2020

Federal grant/ contract	Federal agency	Dollar value	Subject of contract or grant
Contract	Office of the Secretary of Defense	$65,676,999	NDRI
Please see attached			

2019

Federal grant/ contract	Federal agency	Dollar value	Subject of contract or grant
Contract	Office of the Secretary of Defense	$64,047,994	NDRI

2018

Federal grant/ contract	Federal agency	Dollar value	Subject of contract or grant
Contract	Office of the Secretary of Defense	$62,888,034	NDRI

Foreign Government Contract or Payment Information: If you or the entity you represent before the Committee on Armed Services has contracts (including subcontracts or subgrants) or payments originating from a foreign government, received during the current and two previous calendar years and related to the subject matter of the hearing, please provide the following information:

2020

Foreign contract/ payment	Foreign government	Dollar value	Subject of contract or payment
Grant	Government of Japan	$145,340	U.S-Japan Alliance

2019

Foreign contract/ payment	Foreign government	Dollar value	Subject of contract or payment
N/A			

2018

Foreign contract/ payment	Foreign government	Dollar value	Subject of contract or payment
N/A			

Fiduciary Relationships: If you are a fiduciary of any organization or entity that may have an interest in the subject matter of the hearing, please provide the following information:

Organization or entity	Brief description of the fiduciary relationship
N/A	

Organization or Entity Contract, Grant or Payment Information: If you or the entity you represent before the Committee on Armed Services has contracts or grants (including subcontracts or subgrants) or payments originating from an organization or entity, whether public or private, that has a material interest in the subject matter of the hearing, received during the current and two previous calendar years, please provide the following information:

2020

Contract/grant/ payment	Entity	Dollar value	Subject of contract, grant or payment
N/A			

2019

Contract/grant/ payment	Entity	Dollar value	Subject of contract, grant or payment
N/A			

2018

Contract/grant/ payment	Entity	Dollar value	Subject of contract, grant or payment
N/A			

Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Thornberry, thank you for the privilege of appearing before you today.

I would like to address three specific topics in my opening statement and then look forward to your questions. They are: US capabilities in Europe, the importance of the Black Sea region, and the importance of preserving our strategic relationship with Turkey.

US strategic interests are shifting increasingly towards the Indo-Pacific region but the relationship with Europe remains vital to American security and prosperity. American economic prosperity depends in a very large part on stability, security, and prosperity in Europe. Our best and most reliable Allies come from Europe, as well as Canada and Australia. Continued leadership within NATO, the most successful Alliance in the history of the World, is the mainstay of US security efforts in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa.

The current US posture in Europe is understandably significantly less than what it was at the height of the Cold War. But given the security environment now, it is too small and without depth, and depends to a significant degree on continuous employment of rotational Regular and Reserve Component forces, which is only possible with sustained Congressional support. Permanent, forward-based US military capabilities under US European Command in Germany, Spain, Italy, Greece, UK, and Turkey enable execution of US strategy. Rotational forces (Regular and Reserve) are employed along the eastern flank in central and eastern Europe.

The announcement on 29 July by the US Secretary of Defense, the VCJCS, and COMEUR that the White House is to withdraw up to 12,500 US Soldiers and Airmen from Germany was in fact a concept brief and not a plan. It appears that the planning will take months and the execution will take years. My estimate is that what actually ends up happening will bear little resemblance to what was initially briefed. This is a good thing.

The press briefing on 29 July, with its lack of detail, demonstrated that the Administration's decision was not the result of strategic analysis or a coordinated, inter-agency process.

Russia has not improved or changed its behaviour anywhere...and in the face of that we are giving up capabilities essential to effective deterrence and rapid reinforcement as well as operations in three different theatres (Europe, Africa and the Middle East).

But I do know that there are really good, smart people in the Pentagon and in the various HQ's in Germany who will lay out the challenges and risks and lost capabilities and try to come up with means to mitigate those risks...and a timeline in which to do it. They'll do their best.

The good news is that the Congress will require the Administration and the Pentagon to demonstrate all of the outcomes this statement claims the proposal will accomplish.

NATO is still capable of effective deterrence. The combined militaries of 30 Allies plus Partners in Europe represent significant potential combat power that, if trained and ready to operate in multinational formations and organizations, are a key component of effective deterrence. The key to maximizing the benefit of this hard power potential is Speed:
(1) speed of recognition of Kremlin intentions, despite cyber-attacks and disinformation efforts, as well as exercises and movements, which will require improved intelligence fusing and sharing processes;
(2) speed of decision at all echelons of the Alliance and/or national forces; and
(3) speed of assembly to prevent or respond to a potential crisis, which requires substantial improvements in "Military Mobility" in Europe. Training and resourcing should be prioritized towards readiness and "speed".

Potential vulnerabilities which undermine NATO deterrence along its Eastern Flank include:
(1) a perceived lack of cohesion which could lead to miscalculation by the Kremlin;
(2) inadequate readiness levels of some Allies;
(3) inadequate integration of air and missile defense capabilities; and
(4) shortfalls in military mobility.

My second point of emphasis regards the strategic importance of the greater Black Sea region.

Great Power Competition prevents great power conflict. Failure to compete and demonstrate interest and a willingness to protect those interests, in all domains, can lead to power vacuums and misunderstandings of interests which can in turn lead to escalation of tensions and then to actual conflict. In an era of Great Power competition, countries like Russia and China are creating and maintaining spheres of influence, including the Black Sea. The Black Sea region must now be the place where NATO and the West hold the line against anti-democratic forces, take the initiative, and begin to expand our influence.

The Black Sea matters to the West because it matters to the Kremlin. Taking the initiative away from the Kremlin, denying it the ability to launch operations into Syria and Libya, will reduce the flow of refugees into Europe and limit the Kremlin's ability to spread its malign influence in the Balkans, the Caucuses and the Middle East.

If Ukraine is not secure, then Russia completely dominates the Black Sea, presents a threat to NATO allies (Romania, Bulgaria, and Turkey), and continues to occupy 20% of Georgia. If Ukraine is not secure then Belarus becomes even more vulnerable to pressure from the Kremlin and Russian ground troops are soon back in Belarus...which raises the risk for our Allies in Lithuania, Poland, and Latvia.

So to avoid escalation and ensure effective deterrence, without a resort to force, we must gain the initiative in the region. The West needs to change the rules of the game, develop its own approach to hybrid warfare and shape events by using all the tools of national and alliance power including diplomacy, private investment, and effective deterrence instead of reacting to or ignoring or accepting Kremlin initiatives, coercion, false narratives and impediments to economic growth.

For any of this to be effective and successful, we need sustained American leadership and high-level coordination between the United States, the European Union, and NATO.

Finally, my third point of emphasis...it is time for TURKEY-USA 2.0.

We must specifically address the relationship between Turkey and the West, as an essential NATO Ally. Washington DC and Brussels must find a way to embrace Turkey as the strategic pivot linking the Black Sea, Levant, and North Africa and as a major regional power that is at the crossroads of several regions and challenges. Turkey is essential for deterrence of the Kremlin in the Black Sea as well as a critical part of the Bulwark against ISIS and Iran. Protecting all of this must be a priority for Brussels and for Washington DC. And it should be a priority for Turkey as well.

Turkish geostrategic thinkers and planners know that the Black Sea has been an historical vulnerability for them for the last few centuries. They would like to do more to advance NATO's interests in the Black Sea, but they are distrustful of the willingness of the USA and the rest of NATO to come to their support if they do in fact push back firmly against the Kremlin. It would be helpful if the USA made it clear that it would stand with Turkey in such a case. Turkey has fought more wars with Russia in its history than any other opponent, and without much success.

The danger of not taking a strong, cooperative approach with Turkey is that the EU's priority of solidarity among its Members risks further alienating Turkey within the Transatlantic Community, including in the Black Sea.

So what do we do?

Think long term, beyond the current Turkish Administration. That will eventually change but the geography of Turkey and its surrounding region will never change.

Start by rebuilding trust between Turkey and the USA and NATO. Cease providing weapons to YPG, recognize that Turkey has a legitimate internal security concern wrt the Gulenists, and find a way to resolve the current legal impasse regarding Gulen. Recognize that Turkey is on the 'front line' of the Middle Eastern refugee crisis, with more than 3.5 million refugees in Turkey or on its border with Syria.

Reframe the relationship from its Cold War structures, including changing the EUCOM/CENTCOM and Department of State regional boundaries which currently sit on the Turkish-Syrian border to one that is more mindful of Turkey's strategic situation.

Offer Turkey a way out from the S400 purchase...consider a special case for Patriot sales to Turkey that include some technology transfer and co-development with Turkish defense industry, similar to the arrangement for F35 production...and then bring Turkey back into the F35 program.

Resolve the Turkey-Greece issues in the eastern Mediterranean. If the US is not willing to lead this effort, then Germany must lead, with strong US and British support.

Offer to support construction of the proposed Istanbul Canal, not for the purposes of evading Montreux Convention, but for the purposes

of improving economic potential of the Black Sea region...and do it before China or Russia step in to offer to do it.

Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Thornberry, thank you. I look forward to your questions.

Updated: 1 September 2018

LTG (Ret.) Frederick Benjamin "Ben" Hodges III
Tallahassee, FL

- Pershing Chair in Strategic Studies, Center for European Policy Analysis
- Advisor, Berlin Global Advisors
- Board Member, Spirit of America
- Senior Associate Fellow, Royal United Services Institute for Defense and Security Studies

U.S. Army Experience:

2014-2017	Commander, U.S. Army Europe
2012	Promotion – Lieutenant General
2011	Promotion – Major General
2008	Promotion – Brigadier General
2002	Promotion – Colonel
1994	Promotion – Lieutenant Colonel
1991	Promotion – Major
1984	Promotion – Captain
1981	Promotion – First Lieutenant
1980	Graduated from U.S. Military Academy

Selected Media and Analysis:

- Ben Hodges and Elizabeth Braw, "Deutschland sollte Autobahnen bauen," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 14 May 2018.
- Thomas Gutschker, "The Long Trek," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung*, 13 May 2018.
- Brooks Tigner, "Waiting for Europe's Budgetary Chickens to Roost—or Roast—At NATO," *Atlantic Council*, 10 May 2018.
- Interview with 15min in Lithuania (27 March 2018)
- Interview with TVN 24 BiS in Poland (9 May 2018)
- Interview on Bugajski Hour at Voice of America, Washington, D.C. (1 May 2018)
- Interview with AGERPRES in Romania (24 April 2018)
- Interview with InfoTV in Lithuania (3 April 2018)
- Interview with LRT in Lithuania (2 April 2018)

Selected Commentary:

- NATO defense expenditures: "We need a more sophisticated approach to the spending guideline. The 2-percent number gets tossed around like dues in a club, which is unhelpful. I think the Alliance should take a hard look at the 2-percent calculus to redefine it. There should be a formula that is acceptable to all where allies get credit for dual-use spending that has real and demonstrable military value."
- U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA: "I was disappointed that we were leaving the agreement with Iran. Not because it is a good deal, but because cooperation with our allies is very important... It worries me when we show contempt for such allies as Great Britain, Germany, Germany or France. The cohesion of our nations was our strength and advantage. Considering all factors, one must remember that one must stand not against the allies." [As seen on TVN]

Personal: Born 16 April 1958 in Jacksonville, Florida. Native of Quincy, Florida. Speaks German.

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Hearing Date: September 23, 2020

Hearing Subject:

The Role of Allies and Partners in U.S. Military Strategy and Operations

Witness name: Frederick B Hodges

Position/Title: LTG (Ret), Pershing Chair, Center for European Policy AnalysisR

Capacity in which appearing: (check one)

● Individual ○ Representative

If appearing in a representative capacity, name of the organization or entity represented:

Federal Contract or Grant Information: If you or the entity you represent before the Committee on Armed Services has contracts (including subcontracts) or grants (including subgrants) with the federal government, received during the current and two previous calendar years and related to the subject matter of the hearing, please provide the following information:

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Fiduciary Relationships: If you are a fiduciary of any organization or entity that may have an interest in the subject matter of the hearing, please provide the following information:

Organization or entity	Brief description of the fiduciary relationship
CEPA (Center for European P	My principal employer
GDELS	I provide consulting to GDELS one day/month
OshKosh Defense	I provide consulting to OshKosh Def one day/month
Raytheon Missile Defense	I provide consulting to Raytheon Missile Def one day/month

Organization or Entity Contract, Grant or Payment Information: If you or the entity you represent before the Committee on Armed Services has contracts or grants (including subcontracts or subgrants) or payments originating from an organization or entity, whether public or private, that has a material interest in the subject matter of the hearing, received during the current and two previous calendar years, please provide the following information:

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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

HEARING ON THE ROLE OF ALLIES AND PARTNERS IN U.S. MILITARY STRATEGY AND OPERATIONS

BY

ELBRIDGE A. COLBY

SEPTEMBER 23, 2020

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Thornberry, and distinguished members of this Committee for the invitation to appear before you. It is a great honor to testify before this body on a topic of the highest importance to our nation – the importance and role of allies and partners in U.S. strategy.[1]

U.S. Allies and Partners in U.S. National Defense Strategy

Allies and partners are absolutely essential for the United States in a world increasingly defined by great power competition, above all with China. Indeed, they lie at the very heart of the right U.S. strategy for this era, which I believe the Department of Defense's 2018 National Defense Strategy (NDS) lays out.[2]

The importance to the United States of allies and partners is not a platitude. To the contrary. While in the years following the collapse of the Soviet Union some might have dreamed about the United States handling its defense challenges basically alone, that time is now past.

The fundamental reality is that the United States is no longer as powerful relative to other countries as it once was. For the first time since the 19th century, the United States is not far and away the world's largest economy; today the United States comprises roughly one-fifth of global GDP. More than anything else, this is due to the rise of China. Indeed, China's economy is already larger than America's according to purchasing power parity metrics and may exceed it in market exchange terms in the coming decades.[3] Moreover, as has become very evident, Beijing is increasingly using its growing power for coercive purposes. At the same time, the United States faces a range of other potential threats, including primarily from Russia against NATO as well as from transnational terrorists, Iran, and North Korea.

The United States therefore cannot do everything it needs to do in the international arena on its own. Accordingly, the United States must focus on what really matters. It must have a coherent strategy and make the hard choices to implement it effectively.[4]

This first and foremost requires we have a clear sense of what our national interests are. This, as the 2017 National Security Strategy and NDS set out, means ensuring favorable regional balances of power in the world's key regions.[5] As these Strategies reaffirm, it is a paramount and enduring interest of the United States to deny any other state hegemony over Asia, Europe, or, to a lesser degree, the Persian Gulf. A state that could gain predominance over one or more of these regions could exclude the United States from fair trade with these enormous markets, severely weakening our economy, and use the ensuing power advantage it would gain over us to coerce us over our domestic affairs – or worse.

This is not a theoretical problem. China is now becoming a superpower, and Asia is the world's largest market (indeed the region boasts a growing share of global GDP).[6] According to the U.S. Government, China is pursuing regional hegemony over Asia – and ultimately more.[7] Indeed, the evidence is before us: Beijing has shown its willingness to exert coercive influence not only against the United States but also Australia, Canada, India, Japan, the Philippines, South Korea,

Taiwan, Vietnam, and other states. Consequently, because of China's unique power and Asia's status as the world's largest market, the threat of China establishing hegemony over Asia is the primary geopolitical challenge for the United States.

The solution to this challenge proffered by the NDS is coalitions – allies and partners.[8] What *are* those favorable balances of power, after all? They are *coalitions* of states that share our interest in denying another state like China hegemony over a region – in other words, alliances and partnerships. If those coalitions are strong enough and stand together, then our basic goal of open access to and trade with the region is served. If they do not, and an aspiring hegemon like China can assemble a strong pro-hegemonial coalition of its own, we will not be powerful enough on our own to stop them. Fortunately, there is growing evidence that such a coalition is forming to check China's aspirations, centered around the United States, Japan, India, and Australia but also including other Asian and some extra-regional states. At the same time, although the danger of a state achieving regional hegemony over Europe is considerably less acute, NATO plays a highly valuable role in preventing such an outcome.

The primary threat to this strategy is that an aspiring hegemon like China or, to a lesser but still significant degree, a dangerous revanchist power like Russia in Europe will try to pry apart, short-circuit, or fracture such a coalition. Thus in essence the NDS goal of defense planning for the United States is about *alliance defense*: to protect and sustain those states commonly dedicated to this anti-hegemonial purpose, above all formal allies and quasi-allies like Taiwan, given that they implicate U.S. credibility in a particularly important way.[9]

Given China's power and the proximity of vulnerable allies and Taiwan to China, achieving this goal in Asia will be a demanding – even consuming – requirement. Fortunately, the Department of Defense has made a firm turn to focus on addressing this with the 2018 NDS. With this shift, the Department made clear that the Joint Force must first focus on China as its pacing, peer competitor, and in this light must concentrate on Asia as the priority region, with Russia against NATO as a second priority.[10] The Department also recognized that it must refocus on warfighting over shaping activities, and give priority to first winning a major war, particularly with China, before allocating resources and effort to preparing for a second, simultaneous conflict.[11] And, while concentrating primarily on Asia, the Department also took steps to rectify deterrence and defense shortfalls on NATO's Eastern Flank against a dangerous Russia.

While progress on these fronts has been uneven, I believe it has been significant and meaningful, as evidenced most recently by the laudable forward movement on the part of the Marines and Air Force.[12] Congress has played a critical role in encouraging and enabling this progress, not only in creating the conditions for a meaningful National Defense Strategy in the first place but through providing the resources to fund the Strategy as well as through efforts like the Pacific Deterrence Initiative.[13]

The Role of Allies and Partners in the Strategy

This strategy's success, however, is not only a matter of how the Department of Defense is doing. Rather, it is premised on active participation by U.S. allies and partners. Precisely because of this, the NDS identifies a new approach to U.S. allies and partners as its critical second line of effort.[14]

I must say that I am not convinced that this new approach is widely understood. This new approach is not simply a restatement that allies and partners are important and valued, as appropriate as that may be. Rather, it is a call for a new logic for dealing with them.

Most fundamentally, it calls for *truly* integrating allies and partners, not as totems to show flags but rather as active and more equal participants who share a much greater part of the burden. In other words, there exist multiple challenges to U.S. national security but, given the rise of China and the continuing threat to NATO from Russia, America can no longer expect to do things alone. Accordingly, we must address this widening shortfall between the threats we face and the resources we have to deal with them by a much greater role for allies and partners. This is not only about a change in their behavior, though – it also requires changes in our own ways of dealing with them such that we promote and enable this greater role.

This new approach proceeds from the NDS' revised strategic perspective. As discussed previously, the prime challenge to U.S. interests is China in Asia – but it is not the only one. There are also Russia against NATO, transnational terrorists, Iran, and North Korea. But because of China's power and wealth, the United States simply must play a leading role in blocking Beijing's pursuit of hegemony in Asia; without U.S. leadership, no anti-hegemonial coalition in the region is likely to succeed. This means that the U.S. defense establishment must prioritize dealing with China in Asia, and particularly on defending vulnerable allies and partners such as Taiwan and the Philippines. Given the high demands of this requirement, it will have to consume an increasing portion of U.S. defense effort and attention.

To put it bluntly, we will need help to accomplish this, and this focus will also leave exposed flanks. While the United States must retain a strong nuclear deterrent and a substantial counterterrorism enterprise, the simple fact is that America will not be able to handle all of the other contingencies that could arise to threaten its allies – or U.S. interests, for that matter. In particular, we will not be able to dedicate the level of resources and effort to the Middle East and Europe that we have in the past. *We will therefore need allies and partners to do their part – not just to help defend our interests and enable a concentration on Asia, but to defend themselves.*

But how? I will address this issue in three parts:

- First, how we should think about adding new allies and partners to increase the cumulative power of our overall coalition.
- Second, what we should encourage allies and partners to do, with the goal of increasing their level of effort.

- Third, what the United States can do to make our collective efforts more effective and efficient.

How We Should Think About Adding Allies and Partners

As noted, there is a mismatch between the full range of threats we face and what we alone can do. Moreover, there is a *particular* mismatch between where these dangers present themselves and the threat perceptions of most of our established allies. The contemporary threats to U.S. interests stem from China across Asia, transnational terrorists largely in the Middle East, Russia in Eastern Europe, Iran in the Persian Gulf area, and North Korea in Asia. Yet the United States' traditional closest and most significant allies are largely clustered in Western Europe (the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy, et al) and Northeast Asia (Japan and South Korea). Many of these countries, especially in Europe, feel quite secure, and are little motivated to contribute to more distant threats, for instance in Asia or the Middle East. This leaves wide areas, such as Southeast Asia, South Asia, and the Middle East, for which longstanding U.S. alliances are of minimal help.

The natural way to rectify this is for the United States to add partners and, where necessary, alliances to help address these gaps. Fortunately, there is plenty of opportunity to do so, because many countries that are not our traditional close allies share our interest in checking China's bid for hegemony in Asia, resisting Russian and Iranian aggression, or combating transnational terrorism. Bound by some degree of overlapping threat perception, we can collaborate more closely with countries like India and Sri Lanka in South Asia, Vietnam and Indonesia in Southeast Asia, and the Gulf States in the Middle East to pursue our shared goals. Facing these threats more acutely than our long-established allies, these countries are highly motivated to do something about the problem – as evidenced by the level of effort they allocate to defense and their willingness to put "skin in the game." India, for instance, is directly confronting the Chinese military along the Line of Actual Control and Vietnam is contesting Beijing's territorial claims in the South China Sea.

It is important to emphasize two points in this effort to expand our roster of allies and partners.

First, we should very carefully distinguish between expanding our formal alliances or quasi-alliances from expanding our partnerships. The former should be approached very conservatively, while the latter can be approached more liberally. When we extend an alliance commitment or something tantamount to it (as in the case of Taiwan), we tie our credibility to that nation's fate. We should therefore be chary about doing so. When we add a partner, however, we may have deep engagement with that state and indeed even come to its defense, but our credibility is not tied to it.

In light of this, we should seek to expand our partnerships wherever possible. In particular, we should focus on increasing them in Southeast Asia, South Asia, and the Pacific Islands, where China otherwise might have an open field to suborn states and add them to its pro-hegemonial

coalition. We should therefore seek to partner with countries like Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh – ideally to align efforts to check China's bid for regional predominance, or at minimum to prevent them from aligning with Beijing.

It may make sense, though, to add additional states as allies. We should add new states as allies if they are defensible – that is, we and our other allies and partners could defend them at a cost and risk we are willing to tolerate, consistent with our other obligations – and if they might otherwise bandwagon with an aspiring regional hegemon. In practice, because bandwagoning pressures are quite limited in Europe and the Middle East, the only region where we might really want to add new allies is Asia. In this region, the more important a state is to our anti-hegemonial efforts against China, the more we should be willing to suffer and risk to defend them.

While I do not see a near-term need to add any allies to the U.S. roster, I do think we will increasingly need to consider this as the shadow of Chinese power darkens over the region. The state I could see most readily adding is Indonesia, which is very large and also relatively defensible, given U.S. advantages in aerospace and maritime power. Vietnam will be a critical partner but, given its own traditions of autonomy and our interests in avoiding alliances on the Asian mainland, we should not presently pursue an alliance with Hanoi. Rather, we should seek to build up Vietnam's strength as much as possible such that Hanoi has the power and confidence to continue resisting Beijing without an alliance guarantee from the United States.

Second, our effort to expand our network of allies and partners should primarily be focused on states with shared threat perceptions. It has become something of a commonplace that shared values form the bedrock of our alliances. It is true that such values help bind allies, but the most useful alliances generally proceed from shared fears. Alliances, after all, are networks of states committed to each other's defense. The best motivator to fight is self-defense; thus states that have a shared interest in preventing Chinese or Russian or Iranian hegemony over them have a natural alignment with our own interests. This is true whether or not they are democracies.

Thus key allies or partners in blunting China's pursuit of hegemony could include not only model democracies like Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, but also semi-democracies like Malaysia and Singapore and even authoritarian governments like Vietnam. And our natural partners in blocking Iranian ambitions in the Persian Gulf include the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and other monarchical states. Meantime, while he United Kingdom and France contribute to our shared goals, other European states are not doing so much.

The upshot is that, in expanding our network of allies and partners, we should focus on adding states that share our perception of the threat and are willing to do something about it – whether or not they are democracies. In light of this, we should especially concentrate on expanding and deepening our partnerships in Southeast and South Asia in order to strengthen an anti-hegemonial coalition against China or, at minimum, to inhibit states in the region from bandwagoning with China. In other theaters, we should seek to expand and deepen partnerships wherever possible to help offload burdens, particularly in the Middle East.

What We Should Encourage Allies and Partners to Do

Expanding our network, though, is not enough. Rather, given the scale of challenges we face, the United States should encourage allies and partners to assume a greater role in handling shared security challenges.

This is, of course, the burden-sharing problem. And it is a difficult one. Indeed, based on my review of the literature and my time in the Pentagon, I think this is one of the areas where our strategic thinking is farthest behind what the nation needs. On vital issues like nuclear strategy, decisionmakers have a highly developed and sophisticated body of thinking. In trying to get allies and partners to shoulder more of the burden, there is far less to draw on.

That said, I do not think there is a neat solution to this quandary. The fact is that most countries will only do so much if they do not feel directly threatened by an adversary. My view is that we should work with this reality rather than vainly try to alter it. Accordingly, we should evolve our network based on where our allies and partners' feel enough of a common threat to do something meaningful. We should therefore *focus on urging countries to increase their efforts where they will be able to generate sufficient political will to make an effective contribution to shared interests.* At some level, this is obvious – but actually this isn't what we have been doing in recent decades. For years, for instance, we urged NATO allies and some in Asia like Australia to contribute troops to Afghanistan and Iraq; even more recently, we have pressed Canberra to contribute to missions in the Persian Gulf.[15]

We should approach things differently. In Asia, given the scale of the threat posed by Beijing, we should concentrate most of our allies on readying to defend themselves alongside U.S. armed forces and providing access to U.S. military forces during a contingency. Taiwan, the Philippines, and South Korea should focus on defending themselves alongside the United States; this will be hard enough in light of a rising, enormously powerful China. Meanwhile, we should assist partners like Vietnam, Singapore, Indonesia, and Malaysia with whatever means available to enable their defense against an ever more powerful China, while concurrently seeking greater access and logistics support for U.S. and other allied forces. The United States can build these partners' capacity while generating good will through increased foreign military sales (FMS) and appropriately-scoped combined exercises to build interoperability with U.S. and allied forces.

Given its vulnerability to China, Japan should primarily focus on defending itself alongside the United States. Fortunately, it is already moving in this direction; its commendable 2018 National Defense Program Guidelines are closely aligned with the 2018 NDS.[16] Tokyo should also prepare to play an important role in any defense of Taiwan, which is critical to Japan's own defense. While Tokyo's strategic *focus* is commendable, though, Japan simply must do and spend more. Its defense spending remains far too low given the darkening threat posed by China, which Japan's government and strategists keenly appreciate.[17] Washington should therefore not be shy about emphasizing this point. Japan can and should do more, and time is short.

The United States should urge India to concentrate on its own defense against China as well as countering Chinese regional power projection and influence in South Asia and adjacent Southeast Asia, such as Myanmar. This would be different than some past practice, which has urged India to project power out of its core region, for instance into the South China Sea or beyond. This is not the best use of India's resources and resolve for a number of reasons. For one thing, while South Asia is a secondary theater for the United States, it is the primary one for India, which means that New Delhi's pursuit of local objectives will command greater domestic political support. Moreover, India's military has largely been developed for its immediate area; it is thus better suited for exerting influence and fighting in its own theater. Finally, given China's strength, wealth, and connections with states like Pakistan, New Delhi will likely have its hands full achieving more local aims. The United States should therefore aid India – through FMS, information sharing, and appropriately-scoped combined bilateral and multilateral military exercises – in focusing on the Indian Ocean Region, and in helping New Delhi support the autonomy of vulnerable proximate states like Myanmar, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives. This will allow the United States to focus more on the Western Pacific, where its efforts are most needed.

Australia is the prime exception to this overall approach in Asia. Because Australia is currently secure but rightly recognizes that its best defense is a forward one, we should encourage Canberra to focus on assisting the defense of more exposed allies like Taiwan and Japan, while also cooperating with U.S. efforts to build military capacity and interoperability with countries across South and Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands. Fortunately, Australia is already moving toward such a collective defense approach with its Defence Strategy Update of this past summer.[18] Canberra deserves plaudits for this visionary and important move.

In the Middle East, the United States should urge Israel and Washington's Arab partners to take a greater role in containing Iran and combating transnational terrorism. Fortunately, recent moves by the UAE, Bahrain, and hopefully other Arab states to forge links with Israel indicate that a more cohesive regional coalition may be forming that can do just this. The United States should encourage this kind of dynamic in order to reduce its own role in the region.

In Europe, the overall U.S. goal should be, while preserving the fundamental U.S. commitment and readiness to contribute to NATO's defense, to have Europeans shoulder more of the burden of defending the Alliance from Russian assault. The reality is that, given the stakes and consequences, the United States must prioritize Asia. The United States must therefore economize in its second theater, Europe. Since the United States will not have a military large enough to mount two major simultaneous wars with China and Russia, this means that European allies and partners will need to be prepared, in the event of conflict, to do more with limited American contributions, particularly until such time as the United States could prudently reallocate attention from Asia. Indeed, even if a war broke out only in Europe, the United States

could not take too much risk in Asia and thereby open the way for Chinese opportunistic aggression there.

This means Washington should particularly press the states of Northern and Eastern Europe to ensure their adequate defense in such an eventuality. Fortunately, these states already perceive the threat from Moscow, largely recognize the U.S. shift to Asia, and are already beginning to address the challenge. I would particularly commend Poland, Finland, and Sweden for doing more to prepare to address a Russian assault.[19]

The United States should urge other states in this part of Europe to focus on preparing to do the same. This includes the United Kingdom, which is currently undertaking its Integrated Review of security and defense strategy. London would be best off focusing its efforts primarily on defense of NATO Europe, as well as helping the United States and other partners in the Middle East and South Asia. At the same time, though, the United Kingdom, France, and others can take more indirect steps to help address the China problem. They can, for instance, cooperate on defense-related research and development, participate in shared acquisition of weapons systems that defray the costs for Asian states, and prepare to deal with any Chinese military forces projecting power into the European theater, which is likely to become an increasing problem.

In the case of Southern Europe, where there is less of a direct military threat from Russia, Washington should urge countries to bolster their own resilience to Russian or Chinese pressure, help keep a lid on regional instability in the Mediterranean, and contribute to counterterrorism missions in North Africa.

The main challenge to this model in Europe is Germany. The simple fact is that, given its size and wealth, Germany's role is critical – and it can and should do much more for NATO European defense. Germany has an interest in doing so; a Russian assault into Eastern NATO and its consequent effect on stability in Europe would directly undermine Germany's interests. Germany is also fully capable of contributing more; its defense spending, while slowly improving, remains an anemic 1.38% of GDP, well below the NATO target of 2% agreed to by all member-states at the Wales Summit.[20] By comparison, in 1988 West Germany, which was two-thirds the size of today's Germany, fielded twelve divisions along the inner-German border, with three in ready reserve – a much larger and more formidable force than today's Bundeswehr but well within contemporary Germany's capabilities.[21] Moreover, a greater effort by Germany would seem more consistent with Berlin's proclaimed foreign policy of standing up for multilateralism and honoring its pledges and duties. What better evidence of Germany's commitment to these goals would there be than doing its part to defend its allies in Eastern Europe, just as West Germany received the benefit of a NATO defense during the Cold War? In other words, while I earlier cast doubt on the role of moral obligation in nation's defense efforts, the state that would seem the most likely to be susceptible to such arguments is contemporary Germany. Let us take Germany at its word and call upon it to meet its historical and NATO obligations.

What We Should Do To Enable our Allies and Partners to Contribute More

Finally, the United States should act to make this invigorated network of allies and partners more effective. It – and Congress in particular – has the power to do so in ways that will make a difference.

This too requires a break from the past. For many years, the U.S. defense establishment has adhered to a unilateral approach to planning, force development, and posture. Allies, in this context, were "nice to haves," but plans usually adopted very conservative assumptions and basically focused on U.S. contributions. At the same time, the United States used arms sales and technology transfers as leverage for domestic political reform and other goals unrelated to strengthening states' ability to resist coercion or aggression, especially from China.

Both of these need to change. On the first point, the United States can no longer afford wholly unilateral planning. Given China's power, as well as the other threats facing the United States, we need to make sure our efforts are as efficient and complementary with those of our allies and partners as possible. Of course we need to be realistic about what allies and partners will actually do in the event of war. And deliberate redundancy for military resilience is necessary. But we should not be building a set of capabilities that are genuinely duplicative of what reliable allies are developing.

Accordingly, we should integrate our force development, posture, and war planning processes as much as possible with allies relevant to key scenarios. In particular, we should seek as much as possible to align our efforts with those of Australia and Japan in the Pacific and with the United Kingdom in Europe. We should also be able to integrate our efforts more – albeit probably to a lesser degree – with other allies such as South Korea, Canada, Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Poland, and France. The goal here should be to make sure that our collective efforts are as efficient as possible. Given how powerful China will be, we cannot afford to waste money and effort with duplication.

At the same time, we should seek wherever possible to strengthen important partners in their ability to resist Chinese coercion or aggression, or otherwise contribute to shared goals. Congress has advanced this effort through the use of security cooperation authorities, including the Indo-Pacific Maritime Security Initiative, as well as through support for multilateral training and exercises and regional deterrence initiatives in the Indo-Pacific and Europe. We should intensify the use of arms sales, technology transfers, and related military and intelligence tools to build up our allies and partners.

In this vein, though, we must fundamentally move away from using these tools as leverage over key partners for domestic political reform or secondary geopolitical objectives. The United States should always stand proudly for free government that treats its people with dignity. We must keep our eye on the prize, though. China is the primary challenge to our interests in the world – *including* our interest in free government both at home and abroad. Our top priority must

therefore be to block its gaining predominance in Asia. This means strengthening states in the region against Chinese power, whether they are model democracies or not.

This is especially important in Southeast and South Asia, which will be key theaters of competition with Beijing, but where there are no model democracies. We cannot afford to alienate or weaken these states. Rather, we should seek to build their capacity against China however possible. In this context, Congress should remove penalties and barriers associated with legislation like CAATSA that inhibit our ability to work with and aid key countries like India, Vietnam, and Indonesia.

It is worth emphasizing in this context that, while our interests in preventing Chinese hegemony are primarily geopolitical and economic in nature, the reality is that such an outcome would also have major ideological consequences. If China is ascendant in the world, there seems little doubt that authoritarian government will follow in its wake. Preventing that requires, as I laid out earlier, strong and resolute allies and partners – *even* if we have (often justified) objections to their form of government or if their policies do not fully align with ours on other matters. By contrast, the most likely route to enduring liberalization is through succeeding in great power competition – it was no accident that many countries democratized as the Cold War ended and in its wake.[22] Therefore, even if one is more concerned about ideological and governance factors, Washington should still be willing to work with non- and semi-democratic states.

Conclusion

In closing, the NDS was designed to initiate a fundamental shift in our nation's defense efforts. Critical to this whole model is a new approach to allies and partners – one in which they would be far more integrated into our common efforts than in the unipolar era that has now past. This will involve uncomfortable changes, hard decisions and compromises, as well as some friction with our allies and partners. Indeed, friction with allies may be necessary and even good if it means we are facing up to new realities in a way that helps us get to our goal.

Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis' characterization of the spirit of all this is highly illuminating. He always emphasized that he had never fought in a U.S.-only formation, with all the advantages and challenges of that cheek-by-jowl integration with foreign partners, and wanted the whole Department of Defense to strive to adopt the mindset he had gained from such experience.[23] I took this admonition to mean that this model for dealing with allies and partners would not be easy or comfortable, but the benefits would be worth the aggravation and costs. The truth is that we are much stronger with allies and partners, and our power is magnified when we effectively align our efforts. Done right, the end result will be a more powerful, equitable, and sustainable coalition of states together standing up for the kind of world Americans want and need to be secure, free, and prosperous.

[1] I am testifying solely in a personal capacity and am not representing the views of any organization, including The Marathon Initiative.
[2] U.S. Department of Defense, *Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America: Sustaining the American Military's Competitive Edge* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, 2018), https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf. For my further analysis and assessment on the National Defense Strategy, please see *Hearing to Receive Testimony on China and Russia, before the Armed Services Committee, United States Senate*, 116th Cong. (2019) (statement of Elbridge A. Colby), https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Colby_01-29-19.pdf.
[3] Both metrics have merits and defects. Given China's ability to produce military equipment from its own economy, however, purchasing power parity measures should not be discounted.
[4] For my more developed views on what this strategy should look like, please see *Great Power: The Future of U.S. Defense Strategy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, forthcoming).
[5] White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: White House, 2017), 25.
[6] Oliver Tonby et al., *Asia's Future is Now* (New York: McKinsey Global Institute, July 2019), 3, https://www.mckinsey.com/~/media/McKinsey/Featured Insights/Asia Pacific/Asias future is now/Asias-future-is-now-final.pdf.
[7] As the U.S. Department of Defense assessed in June 2019: "As China continues its economic and military ascendance, it seeks Indo-Pacific regional hegemony in the near-term and ultimately global preeminence in the long-term." U.S. Department of Defense, *Indo-Pacific Strategy Report: Preparedness, Partnerships, Promoting a Networked Region* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, June 1, 2019), 8.
[8] I use the term "allies" to refer to states with which the United States has a formal defense commitment; this includes states such as Japan, South Korea, Australia, the Philippines, and the NATO member states. I use the term "partners" to refer to states with which the United States has a strategically collaborative relationship but not a formal defense commitment; this includes states such as India and Vietnam. Of note, a third category of "quasi-allies" includes those like Taiwan, the UAE, and Kuwait. While the United States does not have a treaty-based defense commitment to these, Washington's credibility is widely regarded as tied to them due to a variety of other formal statements of commitment as well as Washington's patterns of behavior. In the case of Taiwan, for instance, there are the Taiwan Relations Act, the Six Assurances, and Washington's resistance to Chinese attempts to coerce Taiwan. In the case of Kuwait, there are a history of political commitments and of course the U.S.-led effort to eject Iraq from conquering Kuwait in 1990-1991.
[9] Robert Komer, *Maritime Strategy or Coalition Defense?* (Cambridge, MA: Abt Books, 1984).
[10] Mark T. Esper, "Defense Secretary Addresses Free and Open Indo-Pacific" (Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, Honolulu, HI, August 26, 2020), https://www.defense.gov/Newsroom/Transcripts/Transcript/Article/2328124/defense-secretary-addresses-free-and-open-indo-pacific-at-apcss-courtesy-transc/source/GovDelivery/.
[11] Jim Mitre, "A Eulogy for the Two-War Construct," *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 41, no. 4 (Winter 2019): 7-30, https://doi.org/10.1080/0163660X.2018.1557479.
[12] See, e.g., David H. Berger, *Force Design 2030* (Washington, DC: U.S. Marine Corps, March 2020), https://www.hqmc.marines.mil/Portals/142/Docs/CMC38%20Force%20Design%202030%20Report%20Phase%20I%20and%20II.pdf?ver=2020-03-26-121328-460; and Charles Q. Brown, Jr. *Accelerate Change or Lose* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Air Force, August 2020), https://www.af.mil/Portals/1/documents/csaf/CSAF_22/CSAF_22_Strategic_Approach_Accelerate_Change_or_Lose_31_Aug_2020.pdf.
[13] There is also a vigorous burgeoning literature on how to make this strategic shift a reality. For important contributions, please see, for instance, David Ochmanek, *Restoring U.S. Power Projection Capabilities: Responding to the 2018 National Defense Strategy* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, July 2018), 8, https://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PE260.html; Mike Gallagher, "State of (Deterrence by)

Denial," *Washington Quarterly* 42, no. 2 (Summer 2019): 31-45, https://doi.org/10.1080/0163660X.2019.1626687; Christian Brose, *The Kill Chain: Defending America in the Future of High-Tech Warfare* (New York: Hachette, 2020); and Michèle A. Flournoy, "How to Prevent a War in Asia: The Erosion of American Deterrence Raises the Risk of Chinese Miscalculation," *Foreign Affairs*, July 18, 2020, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-06-18/how-prevent-war-asia.

[14] See, for instance, Mark T. Esper, "Implementing the National Defense Strategy: A Year of Successes," U.S. Department of Defense, July 2020, 5-6, https://media.defense.gov/2020/Jul/17/2002459291/-1/-1/1/NDS-FIRST-YEAR-ACCOMPLISHMENTS-FINAL.PDF.

[15] See, for instance, Primrose Riordan, "Australia to Join US-led Naval Coalition in the Gulf," *Financial Times*, Augst 20, 2019, https://www.ft.com/content/5ba72c32-c3b8-11e9-a8e9-296ca66511c9.

[16] Japanese Ministry of Defense, *National Defense Program Guidelines for FY2019 and beyond* (Tokyo: Japanese Ministry of Defense, December 18, 2018), https://www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/agenda/guideline/2019/pdf/20181218_e.pdf.

[17] Though Japan's defense spending has increased for several consecutive years, it was merely .94% of its gross domestic product in 2019. International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance* 120 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2020), 531.

[18] Australian Department of Defence, *2020 Defence Strategic Update* (Canberra: Australian Government, July 2020), https://www.defence.gov.au/strategicupdate-2020/. For a lucid vision of this overall collective defense approach, see Ashley Townshend, Brendan Thomas-Noone, with Matilda Steward, *Averting Crisis: American Strategy, Military Spending and Collective Defence in the Indo-Pacific* (Sydney, AU: The United States Studies Centre, August 2019), https://www.ussc.edu.au/analysis/averting-crisis-american-strategy-military-spending-and-collective-defence-in-the-indo-pacific. .

[19] Please see, e.g., Polish Ministry of National Defence, *The Defence Concept of the Republic of Poland* (Warsaw: Polish Ministry of National Defence, May 2017), https://www.gov.pl/web/national-defence/defenceconcept-publication; Connie Lee, "Finland Upgrading Military Capabilities," *National Defense*, May 20, 2020, https://www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/articles/2020/5/20/finland-upgrading-military-capabilities; and Swedish Defence Commission Secretariat, "White Book on Sweden's Security Policy and the Development of Military Defence 2021-2025," unofficial summary (Stockholm: Government Offices of Sweden, May 2019), https://www.government.se/4ada4f/globalassets/government/dokument/forsvarsdepartementet/forsvarsberedningen/defence-commissions-white-book-english-summary.pdf.

[20] North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2013-2019)," PR/CP(2019)123 (Brussels: North Atlantic Treaty Organization, November 29, 2019), 3, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2019_11/20191129_pr-2019-123-en.pdf; and North Atlantic Council, "Wales Summit Declaration," PR(2014)120 (Brussels: North Atlantic Treaty Organization, September 5, 2014), https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_112964.htm.

[21] Congressional Budget Office, *U.S. Ground Forces and the Conventional Balance in Europe* (Washington, DC: Congress of the United States, June 1988), 93, https://www.cbo.gov/sites/default/files/100th-congress-1987-1988/reports/doc01b-entire.pdf; and Michael Shurkin, *The Abilities of the British, French, and German Armies to Generate and Sustain Armored Brigades in the Baltics* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2017), 10, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1629.html.

[22] See, e.g., Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1991; 1993).

[23] Jim Mattis and Bing West, *Call Sign Chaos: Learning to Lead* (New York, Random House, 2019), 243.

Elbridge Colby

Elbridge Colby is co-founder and principal of The Marathon Initiative, a policy initiative focused on developing strategies to prepare the United States for an era of sustained great power competition.

Previously, Colby was from 2018-2019 the Director of the Defense Program at the Center for a New American Security, where he led the Center's work on defense issues.

Before that, he served as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy and Force Development from 2017-2018. In that role, he served as the lead official in the development and rollout of the Department's preeminent strategic planning guidance, the 2018 National Defense Strategy (NDS). The NDS focuses the Department on the challenges to U.S. military superiority posed by China in particular as well as Russia and therefore prioritizes sustaining the Joint Force's warfighting edge against these major power competitors. He also served as the primary Defense Department representative in the development of the 2017 National Security Strategy.

Prior to this, Colby was from 2014 to 2017 the Robert M. Gates Senior Fellow at the Center for a New American Security. From 2010 to 2013 he was principal analyst and division lead for global strategic affairs at CNA. Earlier in his career he served for over five years in the U.S. Government working on a range of strategic forces, arms control, WMD, and intelligence reform matters, including service with the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq in 2003 and with the Office of the Director of National Intelligence during its stand-up in 2005-2006. Colby has also served on the staff of a number of government commissions, including the 2014 National Defense Panel, the 2008-2009 Strategic Posture Commission, and the 2004-2005 President's WMD Commission.

Colby's work has appeared in outlets such as Foreign Affairs, The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, Foreign Policy, The National Interest, and Survival. He is also the author of many book chapters, reports, and articles on defense and foreign policy issues, and co-edited a volume on Strategic Stability: Contending Interpretations. He has testified a number of times before Congress and the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission. Colby is a recipient of the Distinguished and Exceptional Public Service Awards from the Department of Defense and of the Superior and Meritorious Honor Awards from the Department of State. A member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the International Institute of Strategic Studies, Colby is a graduate of Harvard College and Yale Law School.

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Hearing Date: September 23, 2020

Hearing Subject:

The Role of Allies and Partners in U.S. Military Strategy and Operations

Witness name: Elbridge A. Colby

Position/Title: Principal and co-Founder, The Marathon Initiative

Capacity in which appearing: (check one)

● Individual ○ Representative

If appearing in a representative capacity, name of the organization or entity represented:

Federal Contract or Grant Information: If you or the entity you represent before the Committee on Armed Services has contracts (including subcontracts) or grants (including subgrants) with the federal government, received during the current and two previous calendar years and related to the subject matter of the hearing, please provide the following information:

2020

Federal grant/ contract	Federal agency	Dollar value	Subject of contract or grant
HDTRA120P0036 (to Marathon)	Defense Threat Reduction Agency	$179,190.160	Marathon Research Study, Making the NDS Second Line of Effort a Reality...
SKS70020IN0015	Department of State	$250	State Speakers' Program - Virtual briefing to Experts in S. Korea
SGE21020IN0011-M001	Department of State	$4,760.00 ($1600 honorarium/stipend/per diem)	State Speakers' Program - Germany
Don't have information	Naval War College	$500	Speaker on NATO and China

2019

Federal grant/ contract	Federal agency	Dollar value	Subject of contract or grant
Don't have information	Department of State	$3002 (including $1200 honorarium)	State Speakers' Program - Vietnam
Don't have information	Department of Defense	$1000	Briefing at NDU
Don't have information	Department of State	$622	State Speakers' Program - Germany
Don't have information	Naval War College	$2000 + expenses	Participation in NWC Bridging the Straits conference

2018

Federal grant/ contract	Federal agency	Dollar value	Subject of contract or grant

Foreign Government Contract or Payment Information: If you or the entity you represent before the Committee on Armed Services has contracts (including subcontracts or subgrants) or payments originating from a foreign government, received during the current and two previous calendar years and related to the subject matter of the hearing, please provide the following information:

2020

Foreign contract/ payment	Foreign government	Dollar value	Subject of contract or payment
See attached #1			
See attached #2			

2019

Foreign contract/ payment	Foreign government	Dollar value	Subject of contract or payment

2018

Foreign contract/ payment	Foreign government	Dollar value	Subject of contract or payment

Fiduciary Relationships: If you are a fiduciary of any organization or entity that may have an interest in the subject matter of the hearing, please provide the following information:

Organization or entity	Brief description of the fiduciary relationship
See attached #3	

Organization or Entity Contract, Grant or Payment Information: If you or the entity you represent before the Committee on Armed Services has contracts or grants (including subcontracts or subgrants) or payments originating from an organization or entity, whether public or private, that has a material interest in the subject matter of the hearing, received during the current and two previous calendar years, please provide the following information:

2020

Contract/grant/ payment	Entity	Dollar value	Subject of contract, grant or payment
See attached #4			

2019

Contract/grant/ payment	Entity	Dollar value	Subject of contract, grant or payment

2018

Contract/grant/ payment	Entity	Dollar value	Subject of contract, grant or payment

Addendum To Disclosure Form for House Armed Services Committee

From: Elbridge A. Colby

Hearing Date: September 23, 2020

FOREIGN GOVERNMENT CONTRACT OR PAYMENT INFORMATION

2019

1.

Foreign Contract/Payment: Travel, lodging, and meal costs

Foreign Government: Republic of Korea

Dollar Value: Unknown. Estimate: ~$10,000

Subject of Contract or Payment: Study trip to South Korea for meetings with South Korean government officials and experts to discuss policy issues, including U.S.-ROK alliance, inter alia. NB: Payments for this trip were for travel, lodging, and meals in South Korea. There were no services rendered or compensation provided.

2.

Foreign Contract/Payment: Travel, lodging and meal costs

Foreign Government: Taiwan

Dollar Value: Unknown. Estimate ~$10,000

Subject of Contract or Payment: Study trip to Taiwan as part of delegation organized by The Wilson Center for meetings with Taiwan government officials and experts to discuss policy issues. NB: Payments for this trip were for travel, lodging, and meals in Taiwan. There were no services rendered or compensation provided.

FIDUCIARY RELATIONSHIPS

3.

I am trustee of family trusts. As far as I know, none of the holdings of these trusts has a material interest in the subject matter of the hearing, but I mention it for the sake of completeness. I would be happy to provide further information upon request.

ORGANIZATION OR ENTITY CONTRACT, GRANT, OR PAYMENT INFORMATION

4.

In the period covered by this disclosure form I have received honoraria and consulting fees from several companies and Federally-Funded Research and Development Centers that I have reason to believe have Department of Defense contracts. As far as I know, none of these companies has a material interest in the subject matter of the hearing, but I mention this for the sake of completeness. I would be happy to provide further information upon request.

WITNESS RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ASKED DURING THE HEARING

SEPTEMBER 23, 2020

RESPONSE TO QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MRS. HARTZLER

General HODGES. Thank you for this question. I regret that we did not get the chance to answer it in real time during the Hearing.

First, it is important that the Congress continue to hold the Department of Defense accountable and responsible for creating a safe and healthy work environment for all of our Service Members and DOD civilians.

Second, the Congress should expect and require that the Department of Defense set an appropriate example for all of our Allies and Partners for how every Member of our Team is respected and valued and treated . . . and to make it clear that there is no place for sexual assault within our formations if we are to maintain the appropriate level of readiness and if we expect qualified, talented young Women and Men to step forward and Serve in our Armed Forces.

Third, the Department of Defense should work closely with the NATO-designated "Gender Advisor" programs in all NATO headquarters, in order to find where there is common ground and understanding and where we might integrate our unique programs to get the best benefit.

The United States is far ahead of most of our European Allies when it comes to integration of Women into our Armed Forces and in taking active measures to eliminate sexual assault. Our Scandinavian Allies and Partners are probably at the same level or slightly ahead of us . . . but the rest are lagging behind. Since it is now the norm that we are task organized at the tactical level, ie company and battalion, in many exercises and in the conduct of NATO operations, such as the enhanced Forward Presence Battle Groups, the Department of Defense should pay particular attention to these potential disparities to ensure that the overall combat readiness and effectiveness of these formations is strong, not eroded by the effects of sexual assault and sexual harassment.

At a minimum, deployed U.S. units who are task organized with Allied and Partner units should have the same level of support as U.S.-only units back in CONUS and that Soldiers from Allied and Partner nations should participate in training and education programs and command discipline programs required to ensure the elimination/prevention of sexual assault. Special coordination will need to be made in the case of actual assaults and the resulting investigations and prosecution where appropriate. This is typically best done within the specific national chain of command.

Thank you for the opportunity to answer this question. [See page 31.]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING

SEPTEMBER 23, 2020

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. KEATING

Mr. KEATING. Much of the discussion regarding our allies and partners—specifically with regards to those in Europe—centers on the U.S. bolstering our relationships with the elected officials of those countries. I feel there is a fundamental problem with this approach. Just last week, the Pew Research Center reported the results of a new, 13-nation survey that revealed, not only is America's reputation among key allies and partners in decline, but in several of those countries the public's image of the U.S. "is as low as it has been at any point since the Center began polling on this topic nearly two decades ago." This suggests we need to repair our image with the constituents of those elected officials that lead those ally and partner nations. What insights do you have on how we can best repair the reputation of the U.S. with the public overseas in support of our long term alliances and our development of new partnerships?

Ms. WORMUTH. Leaders in the United States do need to develop and cultivate strong relationships with elected leaders in our allied and partner countries, but it is also important to reach out to the publics in those countries. U.S. leaders can reach out to public overseas through speeches, visits to important cultural landmarks, schools or sporting events, and be taking advantage of opportunities on foreign visits to talk to individuals other than just government officials. People in other countries certainly pay attention to the words and actions of U.S. leaders, and their assessments of those actions are an important element of how overseas publics view the United States.

At the same time, people overseas also form views of the United States based on what they see happening in our country, how Americans conduct themselves in host countries, and their own experiences if they are able to visit or live in the United States. In addition to U.S. leaders reaching out to members of the public in foreign countries, American citizens can be important ambassadors for the United States and play a role themselves in how people overseas view the United States. For example, studies have indicated that countries hosting U.S. military personnel and their families, for example, often have more positive views of the United States than those that do not. International exchange programs, both those aimed at sending Americans overseas and bringing foreigners to the United States, are excellent vehicles to build positive people-to-people relationships and demonstrate the many strengths of the United States. Congress has an important role to play in supporting international educational and cultural exchange programs, as well as ensuring that the United States remains a leader in hosting international students at our colleges and universities.

Mr. KEATING. Much of the discussion regarding our allies and partners—specifically with regards to those in Europe—centers on the U.S. bolstering our relationships with the elected officials of those countries. I feel there is a fundamental problem with this approach. Just last week, the Pew Research Center reported the results of a new, 13-nation survey that revealed, not only is America's reputation among key allies and partners in decline, but in several of those countries the public's image of the U.S. "is as low as it has been at any point since the Center began polling on this topic nearly two decades ago." This suggests we need to repair our image with the constituents of those elected officials that lead those ally and partner nations. What insights do you have on how we can best repair the reputation of the U.S. with the public overseas in support of our long term alliances and our development of new partnerships?

General HODGES. Thank you. Key to rebuilding trust and confidence in the USA and in American Leadership requires five things:

#1 Demonstrate commitment to NATO . . . remove all doubt that the U.S. is committed to continued leadership within the Alliance, despite its flaws. This includes acknowledging that we benefit from NATO as much as any of our Allies. . . . and that American access to bases and ports and training areas in Europe benefit us for executing our strategy in Africa and the Middle East and Eurasia as well as Europe.

#2 Understand the importance of the European Union to European countries . . . that it is the key to their quality of life and economic development . . . and that the

USA should look for ways to compete with the EU in the economic space but don't treat it as an enemy. It is at the core of life for most European countries.

#3 Encourage private investment in Europe . . . especially central and eastern Europe . . . projects that improve transportation and telecommunications infrastructure, energy independence, education, and health care. This is part of competing with the Chinese Communist Party and the Kremlin.

#4 Improve the relationship with Germany, our most important Ally. Germany is the one country that can change Kremlin behavior, due to its economic power and its leadership within the EU and Europe. We should still maintain high expectations of Germany fulfilling its NATO obligations . . . but that should not hinder us working together more closely.

#5 Expand/sustain all programs that encourage student exchanges, cultural exchanges, sister city programs, and all other programs that build trust and confidence and understanding. I meet older Europeans all the time who tell me how much their experience as a young person in America as a student gave them a positive view of America and American ideals, even if they don't like some policies.

Mr. KEATING. Much of the discussion regarding our allies and partners—specifically with regards to those in Europe—centers on the U.S. bolstering our relationships with the elected officials of those countries. I feel there is a fundamental problem with this approach. Just last week, the Pew Research Center reported the results of a new, 13-nation survey that revealed, not only is America's reputation among key allies and partners in decline, but in several of those countries the public's image of the U.S. "is as low as it has been at any point since the Center began polling on this topic nearly two decades ago." This suggests we need to repair our image with the constituents of those elected officials that lead those ally and partner nations. What insights do you have on how we can best repair the reputation of the U.S. with the public overseas in support of our long term alliances and our development of new partnerships?

Mr. COLBY. Thank you, Mr. Keating, for the question. These results are clearly concerning. Buy-in from elected officials and parliamentarians and the publics they represent in allied and partner countries is critical for enduring, stable relationships with these states as well as their support in crises and conflicts. While the Executive Branch naturally has the leading role in U.S. foreign relations, this is an area where Congress can play an especially important role by signaling strong, bipartisan support for an American strategy along the lines of the National Defense Strategy and by engagement with parliamentarians, officials, and key opinion-shapers abroad. Overall, however, I remain confident in the fundamental appeal of the United States as an ally and partner in the regions of the world critical to our interests. Part of this, needless to say, is a result of our continuing status as a beacon of liberty and opportunity. Critically, though, we alone are strong enough to help states in regions like Asia and Europe avoid falling under the sway of their most ambitious and powerful neighbors. There is therefore a lasting structural attractiveness to aligning with the United States among many of the world's countries. To maintain this element of our appeal, it is critical that we sustain a strong defense and a vital, growing economy that underwrites it.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. GOLDEN

Mr. GOLDEN. I would appreciate your perspectives on a recurring and often difficult to address issue impacting our national defense strategy—adversary operations in the grey zone between peace and conflict—and their impact on our relationships with allies and partners.

The Commission on National Defense Strategy's 2018 "Providing for the Common Defense" report observed that grey zone operations have become the "tool of choice for those who do not wish to confront U.S. military power directly," and because "grey zone challenges combine military and paramilitary measure with economic statecraft, political warfare, information operations, and other tools, they often occur in the 'seams' between DOD and other U.S. departments and agencies, making them all the more difficult to address."

Since responding to adversary grey zone operations is difficult within our own interagency process, it is likely even more challenging to coordinate a response to such tactics among our allies and partners.

Some of our closest allies have already begun incorporating adversary grey zone tactics into their national defense strategies. Australia, for example, recently released its "2020 Defence Strategic Update,' which stated that Australia's military must work with other branches of its government to respond to grey zone activities, and that such tactics are becoming "integrated into statecraft and are being applied

in ways that challenge sovereignty and habits of cooperation" including "to long established and mutually beneficial security partnerships."

I would appreciate your views on: (1) How can DOD better coordinate with our allies to respond in a more comprehensive manner to grey zone operations by countries such as China and Russia? and (2) When considering the frequent difficulty of responding to grey zone operations, are current defense partnerships with longstanding allies adequate or might additional agreements be required?

Ms. WORMUTH. The most important step to better coordinating with our allies in a more comprehensive manner would be to develop a comprehensive, whole of government strategy for competition with China and Russia; addressing gray zone challenges should be a subset of that larger effort. Working closely with allies and partners is an essential element of a comprehensive, proactive competitive strategy and while gray zone challenges are certainly an agenda item in many bilateral conversations there is a need for a more coordinated approach so that the United States and its allies can respond to provocations more quickly in the future. While our allies and partners may not agree with the United States on how to react to every specific provocation, aggressive actions by both China and Russia are raising concerns in both the Indo-Pacific and Europe, creating an opportunity for the United States to build coalitions to counter gray zone activity. In addition to developing a U.S. government-wide comprehensive competitive strategy, the Department of Defense can take some specific steps to support and enable the broader strategy. In particular, DOD should continue to reaffirm its commitment to allies and partners in Europe and Asia, and back these statements with increased activity in forums dealing with gray zone activity such as cyber-attacks and disinformation. DOD could increase its involvement with regional organizations like ASEAN and the European Union, and build on its already robust exercise program to include a focus on thwarting gray zone activity where appropriate. In most cases, existing defense partnership agreements and alliance agreements already provide a broad scope for DOD to deepen its focus on combating gray zone activity in concert with allies and partners. More than a need for new arrangements, the challenge for DOD is determining how to design multilateral responses with partners and allies who may have different risk tolerances than the United States when it comes addressing Russian and Chinese behavior. Frequent conversations with allies and partners about gray zone activity and how best to counter it in their regions before specific situations arise would better position DOD to gain allied and partner support quickly when confronted with a provocation.

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General HODGES. The key to success here is to look at this as part of Great Power Competition and that we have to compete in all domains . . . diplomacy, information, military, and economic (DIME) . . . it can't be just DOD . . . it will take most of the other departments of the U.S. Govt . . . and to recognize that neither the Kremlin or the Chinese Communist Party play by the same rules observed by the USA and our Western Allies. Instead they work thru the continuum of national power in all

domains, and using illegal as well as legal means, to achieve their aims. This also means that we have to make a focused effort on building up societal resilience within the USA and within the societies of our Allies and Partners. Sweden and Norway are doing a particularly good job on this. This means taking steps to build/rebuild confidence in the pillars of our liberal democracy (electoral process, judicial process, media, governmental competence) in order to reduce our vulnerability to disinformation, hardening our vulnerable infrastructure from cyber-attacks, and reducing our reliance on foreign energy and critical materials and medicen. The U.S. Govt needs to work more closely with NATO, not as an afterthought or 'additive' measure but as the start-point, if we want to have coordinated efforts with the leading nations of Europe, especially Germany, France, and UK. This will help us achieve a common view of the threat . . . often the hardest part since many European nations, especially in western and southern Europe, are reluctant to be so blunt in assessing the Kremlin or China.

Mr. GOLDEN. I would appreciate your perspectives on a recurring and often difficult to address issue impacting our national defense strategy—adversary operations in the grey zone between peace and conflict—and their impact on our relationships with allies and partners.

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Mr. COLBY. Thank you, Mr. Golden, for the question. By far the most serious threat to American political interests in the world is defeat in war; by definition provocations in the gray zone pose a far less significant threat. Moreover, challenges in the gray zone can often be a reflection of our success—the opponent's recognition that direct challenges to U.S. interests are too dangerous or futile to be countenanced. Thus, while activities under our threshold for the use of military force may in certain contexts be concerning, I believe that the overwhelming primary focus of the U.S. defense establishment must be ensuring the Joint Force can prevail in the conflicts that matter to us. This requires a clear focus on restoring the American military's warfighting edge in light of the rise of Chinese military power in particular. This means that gray zone challenges must be dealt with economically, in ways that do not detract from the overriding goal of preparing for war to deter it. This is a serious issue because responding to gray zone provocations can eat up time, effort, and resources that would otherwise be used by our armed forces for training or outfitting for high-end conflict scenarios. Moreover, responding to gray zone activities is very often a matter far more of political-diplomatic, economic, and intelligence responses than military ones. Thus in most circumstances other organs of the U.S. Government than the Department of Defense should play the leading and most significant roles in these areas.[1] That said, the gray zone is a concern. In addition to economically and selectively employing our armed forces to deal with gray zone provocations, we can help address them through encouragement of allies and partners to take on a greater role. The most effective way to do so is to encourage allies and partners that have the most resolve to push back on particular gray zone provocations to lead the way in doing so. The United States can then focus

[1] For a valuable elaboration, see Jim Mitre and Andre Gellerman, "Defining DOD's Role in Gray Zone Competition," Center for a New American Security, August 24, 2020, https://www.cnas.org/publications/commentary/defining-dods-role-in-gray-zone-competition.

largely on being the "cavalry" that can swiftly ride in to "save the day" if needed. At the same time, we can help bolster the ability of allies and partners to do this through arms transfers and other forms of capacity-building, and their resolve by reassuring them of our willingness to stand by them effectively if they are pressed by our common adversaries. Thus, for instance, the United States is better off aiding Japan to be the "face" of resistance to gray zone salami-slicing tactics by China in the East China Sea and aiding the Philippines, Vietnam, and other friendly claimants to do the same in the South China Sea. The United States can retain its military forces primarily to deter China from escalating to try to dominate these U.S. allies and partners.

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