

GLOBAL SECURITY CHALLENGES AND STRATEGY

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

—————
FEBRUARY 15, 2023
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Printed for the use of the Committee on Armed Services



Available via: <http://www.govinfo.gov>

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U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

WASHINGTON : 2025

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GLOBAL SECURITY CHALLENGES AND STRATEGY

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2023

UNITED STATES SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC.

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:33 a.m., in room G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Senator Jack Reed (Chairman of the Committee) presiding.

Committee Members present: Senators Reed, Shaheen, Gillibrand, Blumenthal, Hirono, Kaine, King, Warren, Peters, Manchin, Duckworth, Rosen, Kelly, Wicker, Fischer, Cotton, Rounds, Sullivan, Cramer, Scott, Tuberville, Mullin, Budd, and Schmitt.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR JACK REED

Chairman REED. Let me call the hearing to order. Good morning. The Committee meets to discuss the global security challenges confronting the United States. Before I introduce our witnesses, I would like to welcome the Members of the Armed Services Committee to our first public hearing of the 118th Congress.

I am pleased to welcome our new Ranking Member, Senator Roger Wicker. He is a tremendous colleague, and I look forward to working with him leading this Committee in the bipartisan fashion that has been done for many, many years.

To our returning Members, thank you for your continued service and partnership, and to our new Members, Senator Mullin, Senator Budd, and Senator Schmitt, welcome. I look forward to working with each of you. Okay. Now, I have been informed, since we have a quorum, and that is transitory—

[Laughter.]

Chairman REED. Since the quorum is now present, I ask the Committee to consider 1,790, Pending Military Nominations. All of these nominations have been before the Committee for the required length of time. Is there a motion to table report this list of 1,790, Pending Military Nominations to the Senate?

Senator WICKER. So moved.

Chairman REED. Is there a second?

Voice: Second.

Chairman REED. Thank you very much. All in favor, say aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

[The list of nominations considered and approved by the Committee follows:]

MILITARY NOMINATIONS PENDING WITH THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE WHICH ARE PROPOSED FOR THE COMMITTEE'S CONSIDERATION ON FEBRUARY 15, 2023.

1. In the Army there is 1 appointment to the grade of major (William T. Johnson) (Reference No. 101)
2. In the Army there is 1 appointment to the grade of major (Eric J. Kunkle) (Reference No. 102)
3. In the Army there is 1 appointment to the grade of major (William E. McCarville) (Reference No. 103)
4. In the Army there is 1 appointment to the grade of major (Leslie A. McCampbell) (Reference No. 104)
5. In the Army there is 1 appointment to the grade of major (Hardy P. Merrill) (Reference No. 105)
6. **Col. Leigh A. Swanson, USAF to be brigadier general** (Reference No. 197)
7. **MG Sean A. Gainey, USA to be lieutenant general and Commanding General, US Army Space and Missile Defense Command/US Army Forces Strategic Command** (Reference No. 200)
8. **MG Heidi J. Hoyle, USA to be lieutenant general and Deputy Chief of Staff, G-4, US Army** (Reference No. 201)
9. **BG Laurence S. Linton, USAR to be major general** (Reference No. 202)
10. **In the Army Reserve there are 2 appointments to the grade of major general and below** (list begins with Stacy M. Babcock) (Reference No. 203)
11. **MG Andrew J. Gebara, USAF to be lieutenant general and Deputy Chief of Staff for Strategic Deterrence and Nuclear Integration, Headquarters US Air Force** (Reference No. 209)
12. **MG Robert M. Collins, USA to be lieutenant general and Military Deputy/Director, Army Acquisition Corps, Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology** (Reference No. 210)
13. In the Air Force there is 1 appointment to the grade of colonel (Natalie D. Richardson) (Reference No. 213)
14. In the Air Force there is 1 appointment to the grade of major (Jonathan M. Bise) (Reference No. 214)
15. In the Air Force there is 1 appointment to the grade of lieutenant colonel (Nathan K. Aiken) (Reference No. 215)
16. In the Air Force there is 1 appointment to the grade of lieutenant colonel (Jovon A. Williams) (Reference No. 216)
17. In the Air Force there is 1 appointment to the grade of lieutenant colonel (Bryan W. Sixkiller) (Reference No. 217)
18. In the Air Force there is 1 appointment to the grade of colonel (Lacresha A. Merkle) (Reference No. 218)
19. In the Air Force there is 1 appointment to the grade of lieutenant colonel (Justin T. Schneider) (Reference No. 220)
20. In the Army there is 1 appointment to the grade of colonel (D011285) (Reference No. 221)
21. In the Army there are 2 appointment to the grade of colonel and below (list begins with Lajohnne A. Morris) (Reference No. 222)
22. In the Army there is 1 appointment to the grade of lieutenant colonel (Yuland Tsou) (Reference No. 223)
23. In the Army there is 1 appointment to the grade of major (Blair R. Griffin) (Reference No. 224)
24. In the Army there is 1 appointment to the grade of major (Timothy J. Maki) (Reference No. 225)
25. In the Army there is 1 appointment to the grade of colonel (Russell W. Vanderlugt) (Reference No. 226)
26. In the Army there is 1 appointment to the grade of colonel (Brian J. Slotnick) (Reference No. 227)
27. In the Army there is 1 appointment to the grade of major (Jessica L. Home) (Reference No. 228)

28. In the Army there is 1 appointment to the grade of major (John R. Taylor) (Reference No. 229)
29. In the Army there is 1 appointment to the grade of lieutenant colonel (Jason L. Norquist) (Reference No. 230)
30. In the Army Reserve there are 7 appointments to the grade of colonel (list begins with Queschae B. Blue-Clark) (Reference No. 231)
31. In the Army there is 1 appointment to the grade of lieutenant colonel (Michael B. Cohen) (Reference No. 232)
32. In the Army there is 1 appointment to the grade of lieutenant colonel (Irene Garcia) (Reference No. 233)
33. In the Army there is 1 appointment to the grade of lieutenant colonel (Yong J. Lee) (Reference No. 234)
34. In the Army there is 1 appointment to the grade of lieutenant colonel (Mahealani N. McFarland) (Reference No. 235)
35. In the Army Reserve there is 1 appointment to the grade of colonel (Clayton A. Sutton) (Reference No. 236)
36. In the Army there are 58 appointments to the grade of lieutenant colonel (list begins with Kevin M. Adams) (Reference No. 237)
37. In the Army there are 2 appointments to the grade of major (list begins with Christopher M. Kientz) (Reference No. 239)
38. In the Army there are 26 appointments to the grade of lieutenant colonel (list begins with Adam D. Akers) (Reference No. 240)
39. In the Army there are 10 appointments to the grade of colonel (list begins with Jesse R. Chapin) (Reference No. 241)
40. In the Army there is 1 appointment to the grade of colonel (Brendan T. McShea) (Reference No. 242)
41. In the Army there is 1 appointment to the grade of lieutenant colonel (Matthew R. Burmeister) (Reference No. 243)
42. In the Army there is 1 appointment to the grade of colonel (Jessica K. Smuth) (Reference No. 244)
43. In the Army there are 2 appointments to the grade of major (Megan L. Jimenez) (Reference No. 245)
44. In the Army there is 1 appointment to the grade of major (Brendon M. Esquibel) (Reference No. 246)
45. In the Marine Corps Reserve there are 7 appointments to the grade of colonel (list begins with Robert J. Bell, Jr.) (Reference No. 248)
46. In the Marine Corps there is 1 appointment to the grade of lieutenant colonel (John C. Jarvis) (Reference No. 250)
47. In the Marine Corps there are 2 appointments to the grade of lieutenant colonel (list begins with Andres J. Agramonte) (Reference No. 251)
48. In the Marine Corps there are 2 appointments to the grade of lieutenant colonel (list begins with Robert A. Lien) (Reference No. 252)
49. In the Marine Corps there are 3 appointments to the grade of lieutenant colonel (list begins with Kevin F. Champaigne) (Reference No. 253)
50. In the Marine Corps there is 1 appointment to the grade of lieutenant colonel (Duane A. Gumbs) (Reference No. 254)
51. In the Marine Corps there are 2 appointments to the grade of lieutenant colonel (list begins with Richard P. Charest) (Reference No. 255)
52. In the Marine Corps there is 1 appointment to the grade of lieutenant colonel (Aaron S. Ellis) (Reference No. 256)
53. In the Marine Corps there are 4 appointments to the grade of lieutenant colonel (list begins with Michael P. Ruegger) (Reference No. 258)
54. In the Marine Corps there are 645 appointments to the grade of major (list begins with Patrick J. Abbott) (Reference No. 259)
55. In the Marine Corps there are 5 appointments to the grade of major (list begins with Adalberto Castro II) (Reference No. 260)
56. In the Marine Corps there are 4 appointments to the grade of major (list begins with Vincent S. Ginestra) (Reference No. 261)
57. In the Marine Corps there are 5 appointments to the grade of major (list begins with Jonathan J. Butler) (Reference No. 262)

58. In the Marine Corps there are 3 appointments to the grade of major (list begins with Dustin A. Hamm) (Reference No. 263)
59. In the Marine Corps there are 2 appointments to the grade of major (list begins with Scott M. Carter) (Reference No. 264)
60. In the Marine Corps there are 3 appointments to the grade of major (list begins with Branden D. Palmer) (Reference No. 265)
61. In the Marine Corps there are 7 appointments to the grade of major (list begins with Joshua Adornorivera) (Reference No. 266)
62. In the Marine Corps there is 1 appointment to the grade of major (Jeffrey Tang) (Reference No. 267)
63. In the Marine Corps there is 1 appointment to the grade of major (Robert W. Kreuger III) (Reference No. 268)
64. In the Marine Corps there are 3 appointments to the grade of major (list begins with David K. Coker) (Reference No. 269)
65. In the Marine Corps there are 6 appointments to the grade of major (list begins with James D. Ballard, Jr.) (Reference No. 270)
66. In the Marine Corps there are 6 appointments to the grade of major (list begins with Fadi S. Abdelhalim) (Reference No. 271)
67. In the Marine Corps there are 2 appointments to the grade of major (list begins with Bradley C. Kirby) (Reference No. 272)
68. In the Marine Corps there is 1 appointment to the grade of major (William D. Hawkins) (Reference No. 273)
69. In the Marine Corps there are 309 appointments to the grade of lieutenant colonel (list begins with Joussef J. Abchidonado) (Reference No. 274)
70. In the Navy there are 2 appointments to the grade of captain and below (list begins with Michael Holifield) (Reference No. 275)
71. In the Navy there is 1 appointment to the grade of commander (Martin L. Leonard) (Reference No. 276)
72. In the Navy there is 1 appointment to the grade of captain (James E. Hammond) (Reference No. 277)
73. In the Navy there is 1 appointment to the grade of captain (Mario J. Cardoso) (Reference No. 278)
74. In the Navy there is 1 appointment to the grade of lieutenant commander (Brett W. Sadowski) (Reference No. 279)
75. In the Navy there is 1 appointment to the grade of lieutenant commander (Leland H. Sebring III) (Reference No. 280)
76. In the Navy Reserve there is 1 appointment to the grade of captain (Beau D. Hufstetler) (Reference No. 281)
77. In the Navy there is 1 appointment to the grade of lieutenant commander (Kimberly Francis) (Reference No. 282)
78. In the Air Force there is 1 appointment to the grade of major (Jeffrey S. Clark) (Reference No. 295)
79. In the Air Force there is 1 appointment to the grade of major (Alicia K. Premo) (Reference No. 296)
80. In the Air Force there are 143 appointments to the grade of lieutenant colonel (list begins with David A. Alt) (Reference No. 297)
81. In the Air Force there are 365 appointments to the grade of major (list begins with Brant Adams) (Reference No. 298)
82. In the Air Force there are 36 appointments to the grade of lieutenant colonel (list begins with Phillip C. Barras) (Reference No. 299)
83. In the Air Force there are 60 appointments to the grade of major (list begins with Khashayar Azimi) (Reference No. 300)
84. In the Army there is 1 appointment to the grade of major (Apoorv Vohra) (Reference No. 301)
85. In the Army Reserve there are 2 appointments to the grade of colonel (list begins with Christopher W. Swiecki) (Reference No. 302)
86. In the Navy there is 1 appointment to the grade of lieutenant commander (Wisdom K. Henyo) (Reference No. 303)

TOTAL: 1,790

Chairman REED. The motion carries. Thank you, and returning now to my comments. We are lucky to have our extremely talented witnesses with us today. We understand there are significant challenges facing us, from China's growing influence, through Russia's reckless aggression on issues faces a complex and dangerous security environment. Prevailing in this environment will require a thoughtful, resolute strategy informed by experts like those before us today.

Dr. Bonny Lin is the Director of the China Power Project and Senior Fellow for Asian Security at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. She is an expert on United States military strategy in the Indo-Pacific, with leadership experience across the Department of Defense (DOD) and with the RAND Corporation. Dr. Fiona Hill is a Senior Fellow in the Center on the United States and Europe at the Brookings Institution.

Dr. Hill has served as a top advisor for European and Russian policy on the National Security Council, and is an expert on issues related to Russia, Central Asia, energy, and strategic competition.

Mr. Roger Zakheim is the Director of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute. He is an expert on U.S. defense strategy, having served as a professional staff member on the House Armed Services Committee and other national security positions. He currently serves on the 2022 National Defense Strategy Commission.

Our objective today is to examine the national security issues that this Committee should consider as we prepare for the Fiscal Year 2024 National Defense Authorization Act. As the Biden administration's national defense strategy makes clear, China is our primary competitor.

It is the only nation with both the intent and the capability to mount a sustained challenge to the security and economic interests of the United States, and its allies and partners around the world.

At the same time, Russia remains a violent, destabilizing force. Putin's assault on Ukraine has inflicted horrific suffering on innocent civilians seeking a free and democratic society, it threatens European stability, and harms the global economy. In addition, nations like Iran and North Korea continue to push the boundaries of military brinkmanship, and issues like terrorism and climate change remain persistent. The significance of these threats is widely understood.

The question is how to address them in order to deter or mitigate the threat to U.S. national security, and international stability more broadly. To begin, we have to recognize that America faces an existential struggle between democracy and autocracy. Beijing and Moscow seek to change the international order by exploiting vulnerable nations through coercive economic and military pressure.

America must offer an alternative to this kind of foreign policy. Given the economic, cultural, and geographic ties between many of our partners in China, we can't ask them to choose between engaging with the United States or China, based solely on an economic or military calculation.

We should use all our tools of statecraft and build mutually beneficial relationships. Indeed, forging and maintaining strong inter-

national partnerships is likely to be the decisive factor in any future conflict. We have seen this through Ukraine's remarkable performance against Russia, and it will hold true also in the Pacific.

Our greatest comparative advantage over China is our network of allies and strengthening that network should be at the center of our strategy moving forward. The development of the Quad, involving the United States, Japan, India, and Australia, presents a valuable framework.

Similarly, our defense agreement with the Australia and the United Kingdom, known as AUKUS [Australia, United Kingdom, United States], provides an excellent platform for improving the capabilities of our allies and increasing our engagement in the region.

Our adversaries' presence around the globe is evolving. I would ask our witnesses to share their assessment of the Ukraine conflict in a larger context of the evolving international order, as well as the implications for United States defense strategy going forward. Similarly, I would like to know what military and nonmilitary factors are most likely to impact Chinese decisionmaking with respect to potential aggression against Taiwan.

As the Russian shutdown of the Chinese surveillance balloon in our airspace should remind us, the top priority of the national defense strategy is homeland defense. America's skies and seas must be secure to protect its citizens, and the Department must pursue technologies that provide forward detection to buy decision time for decisionmakers.

Finally, as we adapt to meet these global challenges, we need to consider that we are entering an era of trilateral nuclear competition. The cold war was essentially a bilateral rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union, which developed deterrence theory and communications methods based on two competitors.

That has changed with the ascendancy of China and its growing nuclear arsenal. I would ask our witnesses to help us understand this new trilateral dynamic and how it may impact efforts to deter the use of nuclear weapons. Ultimately, long term strategic competition is not just a rivalry of military or economic power, but also a competition of ideas. This requires us to develop an understanding of our adversaries' strengths, weaknesses, philosophies, and objectives, as well as our own.

This is where the knowledge and insights of the experts before us today are so valuable. I look forward to our witnesses' testimony, and I thank them again for their participation. Let me now recognize and turn to the Ranking Member, Senator Wicker.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR ROGER WICKER

Senator WICKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to congratulate you for once again holding the position of chair of this important committee. As Ranking Member, I hope to and expect to continue the great bipartisanship that has become a tradition of this body.

Also, let's take a moment to salute my predecessor, Hon. Jim Inhofe of Oklahoma. He left us Oklahoma sized cowboy boots to fill, and we are going to do our best to carry his legacy, with a relentless focus on supporting the men and women who protect America every day.

I want to salute and recognize the invaluable contributions of our returning Members, and welcome three new Members of our Committee, Senator Mullin from Oklahoma, Senator Budd from North Carolina, and Senator Schmitt from Missouri. Their states play a critical role in defending our Nation.

Also, there are a number of servicemembers and veterans there. Particularly, I would say to Mr. Budd, my first Active Duty station as then Captain Wicker was Seymour Johnson Air Force Base. So I hope you will look out for my buddies there at Seymour Johnson, as well as the entire military.

Today's hearing is an important opportunity to speak with experts, and so we welcome them. Particularly important as we begin to craft this year's National Defense Authorization Act, hopefully earlier than usual.

The United States faces an increasingly complex and dangerous security environment. Indeed, it is fair to say that this is the most dangerous moment since the cold war. The Chinese Communist Party is engaged in a massive project of military modernization and its threat to unify, as they say, and I would say invade, Taiwan becomes clearer every day.

Nearly 1 year ago, Beijing's junior partner, Russia, launched an unprovoked and brutal invasion of Ukraine. This war poses a direct threat to peace and prosperity on the European continent and to America's vital economic and security interests. Moscow's war machine in Ukraine is aided by Iran.

In addition to supplying Russia with lethal drones, Iran continues to spread mayhem elsewhere as it marches closer toward a nuclear weapons capability. Iran's volatility and malign influence is matched by North Korea. The 38th parallel remains one of the most dangerous places in the world.

Further, we cannot take our eye off the global war on terror. Global terrorist organizations continue to recruit, train, and operate in the greater Middle East and beyond, and pose a direct threat to us here in our Homeland.

Our first job in this community is to provide the tools our military needs to deter and defeat these threats. There is no doubt that continued real growth in the defense budget top line above inflation, real growth above inflation is an absolute necessity, a bare necessity. We are in the crucial years of this military competition and we cannot afford to let our guard down, Mr. Chairman.

This Committee led the bipartisan charge to increase the defense budget in last year's cycle, a successful effort. I hope our witnesses will provide their views on the defense budget top line and the need to resource our warfighters, as well as initial thoughts on how to tackle the manifold threats we face from adversaries abroad.

The war in Ukraine illustrates the importance of properly funding our military. On a bipartisan basis, Congress has provided billions of dollars of equipment and munitions to help the Ukrainian armed forces defend their country's sovereignty and independence.

Although we have provided considerable resources, I remain disappointed that the Administration has been hesitant to provide Ukraine with advanced capabilities to secure victory.

Time and again the Administration's reluctance to provide rapid delivery of critical capabilities, stingers, javelins, HIMARS, and

Abrams, to name a few, has cost the Ukrainians valuable time. It has led to the projected battle of attrition we may be seeing today.

So I would ask our witnesses to comment on the war and suggest ways that this Committee can continue to help the brave and steadfast Ukrainian troops actually win, actually win, rather than preserve the stalemate.

Now, here at home, the war in Ukraine has exposed shortcomings in our defense industrial base and supply chains. Expanding our lines of production, especially for critical munitions, should continue to be a priority this year. I would welcome our witnesses' perspective on this issue and how it applies to the Taiwan situation.

The defense industrial base is not only important for today's fight in Ukraine but of supreme importance for the competition with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Both the Trump and Biden administrations have placed strategic competition with China as the top priority for the national defense strategy.

The previous Republican administration and the current Democratic administration are together, have been together on this issue. Winning this competition will require a significant investment.

Developing and fielding game changing technologies that will keep us a step ahead of Beijing, in addition to developing transformational technology, competing—out competing China will require increased production of platforms and weapon systems such as our battle fleet of ships.

Congress proved last year that it could take bold steps to advantage the United States by passing the CHIPS [Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors] and Science Act. We would be interested in our witnesses' views on how this Committee can help the Department of Defense focus on the long term strategic competition with the Chinese Communist Party in this respect.

So I thank our witnesses. I thank the indulgence of my friend the chair. I would note that the namesake of Mr. Zakheim's Institute of President Reagan, summed up his national security policy as peace through strength, and I hope all of my colleagues continue to keep that motto in mind as we embark on this very important year. Thank you.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Wicker. Dr. Lin, please.

STATEMENT OF DR. BONNY LIN, DIRECTOR, CHINA POWER PROJECT AND SENIOR FELLOW, ASIAN SECURITY, CENTER FOR STRATEGIC & INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

Dr. LIN. Thank you, Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Wicker, and distinguished Members of the Senate Committee on Armed Services. Thank you for the opportunity today to testify at this important hearing.

I will focus on three issues, the nature of the PRC [People's Republic of China] challenge, what the United States is doing, and how China is responding. The 2022 United States National Security Strategy appropriately identifies China as the only competitor with both the intent to reshape international order, and increasingly, the economic, diplomatic, military, and technological power

to do it. China continues to coerce United States allies and partners.

China continues to engage in rapid military modernization to become a world class military on par with the United States by 2049. On critical global challenges such as Russia's invasion of Ukraine, China's role remains problematic. The difficulty of dealing with China is magnified by Xi Jinping's dismantling of collective political leadership and the establishment of himself as a sole leader of China.

With respect to the United States approach to the PRC, the Biden administration has identified and made significant progress in three areas, invest, align, and compete. First, the Biden administration has worked with Congress to invest over \$1 trillion at home to improve U.S. economic innovation and competitiveness.

This includes the 2021 bipartisan infrastructure law, 2022 CHIPS and Science Act, and the Inflation Reduction Act. Second, the United States has trained its unique advantage we have over the PRC, our alliances and partnerships.

For example, Japan now not only shares a common strategic vision with the United States but is also committed to do far more than its own defense. Australia has agreed to enhance force posture cooperation and more United States rotational presence.

The Philippines has provided the United States with access to four additional military locations. The United States has resumed large scale military drills with South Korea. The Biden administration is also facilitating greater cooperation between allies and partners.

This includes the United States, Japan, Australia, a United States, Japan, ROK [Republic of Korea] trilateral cooperation, AUKUS and the Quad. NATO [North American Treaty Organization] is also increasingly engaging with Indo-Pacific countries. Third and central to the United States approach to the PRC is a need to outcompete China.

DOD has prioritized PRC as the pacing challenge and Taiwan continues as the pacing scenario. The problem in defense is improving United States posture and presence, logistics and pre-positioned material, and infrastructure throughout the Indo-Pacific. The United States is enhancing joint, allied, and partner capabilities, increasing training and information sharing, and co-developing critical and emerging technologies.

DOD is also investing in new operational concepts to fight in a highly contested environment. The Biden administration has made clear that engagement with China is necessary to prevent competition from spiraling into conflict. However, United States engagement efforts to date are prone to disruption, and the PRC continues to stonewall calls for critical dialogs.

Overall, the United States approach toward the PRC has encouraged Beijing to compete more against the United States and our allies and partners. The PRC blames the United States and our allies and partners for its—what it views as its deteriorating security environment and does not view its behavior as problematic.

We have not seen any clear indicators of dampening PRC ambitions or activities. There is a real risk that Beijing could miscalcu-

late, and intensifying United States-China competition could lead to confrontation.

Moving forward, the United States needs to continue to deepen our alliances and partnerships and strengthen this critical advantage that we have. The Biden administration also needs to bolster its economic strategy toward the PRC.

If joining the CPTPP [Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership] is completely off the table, the United States should look at other bilateral or multilateral arrangements. The United States should also continue to work with our coalition of friends to counter PRC economic coercion.

The United States also needs to continue to invest in our military to ensure that DOD has the resources needed to train and invest in our capabilities to deny PRC aggression, and to build a more resilient and dispersed United States posture.

Finally, the United States needs to maintain high level engagements with China and expand people to people contacts. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Bonny Lin follows:]



**Statement before the
Senate Committee on Armed Services**

***“U.S. Global Security Challenges and
Strategy”***

A Testimony by:

Bonny Lin

*Director of the China Power Project and
Senior Fellow for Asian Security, CSIS*

February 15, 2023

Dirksen Senate Office Building

Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Wicker, and distinguished members of the Senate Committee on Armed Services, thank you for the opportunity today to testify at this important hearing on “U.S. Global Security Challenges and Strategy.”

My testimony today will focus on three issues: the nature of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) challenge; what the United States is doing; and how China is responding.

The PRC Challenge

There is growing U.S. bipartisan consensus on the challenge that the PRC poses to the United States and international community. The October 2022 U.S. National Security Strategy (NSS) appropriately identifies China as “the only competitor with both the intent to reshape the international order, and, increasingly, the economic, diplomatic, military and technological power to do it.” Similarly, the NSS points out that “Beijing has ambitions to create an enhanced sphere of influence in the Indo-Pacific and to become the world’s leading power.”

Under President Xi Jinping, the PRC has been increasingly willing to leverage its comprehensive national power and extensive political, economic, and military gray zone tactics against U.S. allies and partners to advance its own interests.¹ In the last year, prominent examples on the military or quasi-military side include the unprecedented and large-scale military exercise surrounding Taiwan in August 2022 and attempts by the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) to “normalize” crossings of the Taiwan Strait centerline and intrusions into Taiwan’s Air Defense Identification Zone; the PRC’s continued and repeated use of the China Coast Guard and People’s Armed Forces Maritime Militia to coerce and assert its claims over the disputed Senkaku islands (administered by Japan) and over disputed islands and features in the South China Sea; and clashes between the PRC and India along their disputed border.

China also continues to engage in rapid military modernization to achieve its goal of becoming a world class military on par with the United States by 2049. This includes efforts to strengthen China’s conventional capabilities across the board. It also includes PRC efforts to expand, modernize, and diversify its nuclear forces to potentially field nearly 1,500 warheads by 2035. Although China has yet to change or revise its nuclear strategy or doctrine away from its public declaratory “no first use” policy, there is growing concern in the Indo-Pacific and beyond that China could leverage nuclear weapons for coercive purposes before or during a crisis or conflict with U.S. allies and partners.

On critical global and international security challenges such as Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and North Korea’s repeated regional provocations, China’s role remains questionable and problematic. China continues to refuse to condemn Russian aggression in Ukraine and blames the United States and NATO for prolonging the war. At the same time, in the past year, economic trade between China and Russia has increased, select Chinese companies have been sanctioned for providing

¹ A 2020 RAND study, for example, documents at least 80 different gray zone tactics across all instruments of national power that China has wielded against five key U.S. allies and partners. See Bonny Lin et al., *Competition in the Gray Zone: Countering China’s Coercion Against U.S. Allies and Partners in the Indo-Pacific*, Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2020, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR594-1.html.

products or services to enable Russian military operations, and the two countries have conducted multiple joint military exercises. On North Korea, China has aligned with Russia to shield Pyongyang from further UN sanctions and international pressure to halt its destabilizing missile tests and other activities. It is also not clear that China is willing to directly exert any bilateral pressure on Pyongyang to curb problematic DPRK activities.

The challenge of dealing with China is further magnified by President Xi Jinping's dismantling of collective political leadership and the establishment of himself as the clear and single leader of China. At the 20th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in October 2022, Xi not only secured an unprecedented third term, but also promoted his closest confidantes to the top positions of power within the CCP and the PLA. This extraordinary concentration of power within Xi's hands raises troubling questions regarding the nature of decision-making within Beijing: could Chinese policies be more unpredictable and more open to major or extreme shifts because it is now primarily based on the views of a single leader who is unlikely to receive significant bureaucratic or political pushback? Will Xi be able to receive sound advice and intelligence from his closest advisors to course-correct when needed, or would such candidness be political suicide? So far, China's rapid and astonishing unraveling of its zero-Covid policy is not reassuring.

U.S. Approach Towards the PRC

The Biden Administration's strategy and overall approach towards the Indo-Pacific and the PRC are laid out in three main documents in 2022: the U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy, the U.S. National Security Strategy, and the U.S. National Defense Strategy (NDS). The Administration has made significant progress on three major areas—invest, align, and compete—that it has identified as priorities.

Invest

First, the Biden Administration has worked closely with Congress to invest in technology to compete with China. The United States has invested over \$1 trillion at home to improve U.S. economic innovation and competitiveness, with prominent examples such as the 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the 2022 CHIPS and Science Act, and the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act (IRA).² These laws help strengthen U.S. manufacturing, supply chains, and infrastructure and direct more investment to science and technology and the U.S. workforce.

The Biden Administration has prioritized “three families of technology” for investment. They are computing-related technologies, such as microelectronics, quantum information systems, and AI; biotechnologies and biomanufacturing; and clean energy technologies.³ The Biden Administration, for example, launched a National Biotechnology and Biomanufacturing Initiative

² “FACT SHEET: CHIPS and Science Act Will Lower Costs, Create Jobs, Strengthen Supply Chains, and Counter China,” The White House, August 9, 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/08/09/fact-sheet-chips-and-science-act-will-lower-costs-create-jobs-strengthen-supply-chains-and-counter-china/>.

³ Gina M. Raimondo, “Remarks by U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo on the U.S. Competitiveness and the China Challenge,” U.S. Department of Commerce, November 30, 2022, <https://www.commerce.gov/news/speeches/2022/11/remarks-us-secretary-commerce-gina-raimondo-us-competitiveness-and-china>.

and a host of new investments and resources to support and expand biomanufacturing. This includes the Department of Defense (DoD) investing \$1 billion in bioindustrial domestic manufacturing infrastructure over the next five years.⁴

Align

Second, the United States has substantially strengthened the unique advantage it has over the PRC—its network of alliances and partnerships. The Biden Administration has engaged in extensive and bold diplomatic efforts to expand and deepen political and security relations with allies and partners to shape China’s external strategic environment. At the same time, U.S. allies and partners are more wary of China and responding to China’s coercive and aggressive behavior by working closer with the United States and each other to shore up defenses and strengthen capabilities.

The Biden Administration has strengthened bilateral relationships across the board. The United States and Japan are more aligned now than ever before in history. Japan’s new National Security Strategy and National Defense Strategy included unprecedented announcements, showcasing that Tokyo “not only shares a common strategic vision with the United States but is also committed to do far more than its own defense.”⁵ Japan is set to increase its annual defense spending by nearly 60 percent by 2027 and is seeking to acquire long-range precision strike land attack missiles among other key capabilities. Japan will establish a new joint operational headquarters for the Self-Defense Force, and both countries have also agreed to modernize the alliance through deepening defense and intelligence coordination, expanding use of military facilities, and increasing military exercises and training.

The United States and Australia have enhanced their “unbreakable” military alliance. The two countries have agreed to Enhanced Force Posture Cooperation, increased military cooperation in the air, land, and maritime domains as well as for logistics, sustainment, and maintenance. The United States is increasing its rotational presence of air, land, and sea forces in Australia. Canberra has also prioritized plans to develop and acquire critical military platforms and munitions, including longer range strike capabilities.

U.S. relations with the Philippines and the Republic of Korea (ROK) are also stronger. The Philippines has agreed to accelerate the full implementation of the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) with the United States that will allow U.S. troops and equipment to access four additional locations. U.S. forces will now have access to a total of nine military bases in the Philippines, increasing the resilience and dispersion of U.S. posture in the region. The United States has resumed large-scale military drills with South Korea, deepened its commitment to the

⁴ “FACT SHEET: The United States Announces New Investments and Resources to Advance President Biden’s National Biotechnology and Biomanufacturing Initiative,” The White House, September 14, 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/09/14/fact-sheet-the-united-states-announces-new-investments-and-resources-to-advance-president-bidens-national-biotechnology-and-biomanufacturing-initiative/>.

⁵ Jeffrey W. Hornung and Christopher B. Johnstone, “Japan’s Strategic Shift Is Significant, but Implementation Hurdles Await,” *War on the Rocks*, January 27, 2023, <https://warontherocks.com/2023/01/japans-strategic-shift-is-significant-but-implementation-hurdles-await/>.

U.S.- ROK alliance and extended deterrence, and is increasing deployment of advanced weapons to the Korean Peninsula.

The United States is making similar progress with key partners. This includes deepening overall relations and defense and technology cooperation with India on areas such as producing jet engines and military munitions, development of critical technologies, maritime security, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance.⁶ India is decreasing its reliance on Russian weapons and increasing its defense budget to procure new weapons platforms and expand investment in infrastructure near the disputed India-China border. The Biden Administration has notified Congress of nearly \$2.9 billion worth of arms sales to Taiwan and the United States has authorized Foreign Military Financing (FMF) assistance for U.S. arms sales to Taiwan for the first time. Taiwan has also significantly increased its defense budget and extended mandatory military service requirements from four months to one year. The United States is also shoring up its position with the Pacific Islands countries, including reopening a U.S. embassy in the Solomon Islands, renewing the Compact agreements with the Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, and Palau, and building new military facilities.

Beyond bilateral relationships, the Biden Administration has also worked to facilitate greater cooperation between allies and partners both in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond. Within the region, for instance, the United States, Japan, and Australia are engaging in critical trilateral defense cooperation to enhance interoperability and readiness between the three militaries, to explore trilateral technology cooperation, and to facilitate information and intelligence exchange. The United States has also successfully restarted trilateral U.S.-Japan-ROK dialogues and military cooperation, including trilateral missile defense and anti-submarine exercises.⁷ At the same time, U.S. allies and partners are also enhancing relations with each other, such as Japan deepening ties with the Philippines and the first-ever Australia-India joint military exercise (Austra Hind) in 2022.⁸

China is paying particular attention to developments related to the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue involving the United States, Australia, India, and Japan. Quad regional initiatives range from delivering Covid-19 vaccines to cooperating on emerging and critical technologies, as well as strengthening supply chains and developing a common operating picture in the region to identify and track illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing. Quad countries have also increased military exercises and defense cooperation in various formats, including all four countries participating in the Malabar naval exercise off of India's coast. Whereas Beijing used to brush the

⁶ This includes the initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (CET), "FACT SHEET: United States and India Elevate Strategic Partnership with the initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology," The White House, January 31, 2023, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/01/31/fact-sheet-united-states-and-india-elevate-strategic-partnership-with-the-initiative-on-critical-and-emerging-technology-cet/>.

⁷ U.S. has also expanded S&T agreement with ROK to include "emerging fields like biotechnology, quantum, artificial intelligence." See "Secretary Antony J. Blinken and Republic of Korea Foreign Minister Park Jin at a Joint Press Availability," U.S. Department of State, February 3, 2023, <https://www.state.gov/secretary-antony-j-blinken-and-republic-of-korea-foreign-minister-park-jin-at-a-joint-press-availability-2/>.

⁸ Rajeswari Pillai Rajagopalan, "China driving closer Australia-India security ties," *The Strategist*, Australian Strategic Policy Institute, December 22, 2022, <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/china-driving-closer-australia-india-security-ties/>.

Quad off as a coalition that lacked internal cohesion, it is now a force to be reckoned with and one that Beijing takes seriously.

The Indo-Pacific is also now more connected with Europe and NATO. In 2021, the United States established the trilateral security partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States (AUKUS) to support Australia's acquisition of nuclear-powered submarines and to develop emerging technologies and advanced military capabilities to increase interoperability. This partnership has deepened defense cooperation between the three militaries trilaterally and in various bilateral forms. It has also raised concerns in Beijing about the extent to which Australia will be more active and capable of supporting the United States and other regional allies and partners in a crisis or conflict involving China.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 has only driven this convergence. Most countries in the Indo-Pacific, including Australia, India, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, have provided some form of support and aid to Ukraine's resistance. China's refusal to denounce Russian aggression as well as PRC behavior in the Indo-Pacific and beyond has caused NATO to identify China as posing "systemic challenges" to Euro-Atlantic security and the European Union has called China a partner, competitor, and systemic rival. Individually, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom have issued Indo-Pacific strategies and are increasing their operations within the region. Similarly, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand, and Australia attended the NATO Summit in Madrid in 2022 and NATO is interested in regularizing their involvement. These growing ties mean that any PRC aggression in the Indo-Pacific is no longer just a threat to the Indo-Pacific but also a global challenge.

Although the Biden Administration has made impressive efforts to strengthen political and military relations throughout the Indo-Pacific, it has not done enough to decrease the degree to which U.S. allies and partners are economically dependent on trade with China. This is a critical weakness in the U.S. approach to China and has led some to criticize the United States as prioritizing security at the cost of economics. The Indo-Pacific Economic Framework and other efforts are helping allies and partners align with the United States economically, but they do not provide allies and partners with greater market access or money to support economic development.⁹ At the same time, China has applied to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement on Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) and Beijing is part of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) with 14 other Indo-Pacific countries that entered into force in 2022. China's current and potential involvement in these major free trade agreements could increase regional trade and economic dependence on China.

Compete

Central to the U.S. approach to the PRC—and where there is the strongest bipartisan support—is the need for the United States to outcompete China. Modernizing and strengthening U.S. military capabilities is essential to deterring and denying PRC coercion and aggression. The DoD has

⁹ Matthew P. Goodman, "Biden's China Economic Strategy Takes Shape, but Tensions Remain," Center for Strategic and International Studies, December 9, 2022, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/bidens-china-economic-strategy-takes-shape-tensions-remain>.

prioritized China by defining the PRC as the “pacing challenge” and a Taiwan contingency as the “pacing scenario.”

DoD has embraced a deterrence by denial approach for China with elements of deterrence by resilience and deterrence by direct and collective cost imposition. In a Taiwan contingency, for example, the United States would seek first and foremost to deny the PRC the ability to seize the island and accomplish a *fait accompli*. To do so, the United States is increasing the resiliency not only of U.S. forces, but the resilience of Taiwan’s forces and those of key allies that could come to Taiwan’s aid. The United States would also work closely with allies and partners to impose collective political, economic, and military costs on the PRC to undermine Beijing’s will and capability to sustain the fight.

DoD is engaging in efforts across the board to focus on China. As outlined in the NDS, the Department is planning a force construct to fight an all-domain conflict against one country—the PRC—while using integrated deterrence, contributions from allies and partners, U.S. nuclear deterrence, and other capabilities to deter other potential opportunistic aggressors. Each military service has developed new operational concepts to distribute forces and ensure their survivability in a highly contested environment. The advancements of the Joint Warfighting Concept (JWC) and the Joint All Domain Command and Control (JADC2) are useful approaches in a highly contested environment. DoD is investing to improve U.S. posture and presence, to improve logistics and prepositioning and stockpile munitions and fuel, and to improve infrastructure in new and existing facilities throughout the Indo-Pacific. The United States is working closer with allies and partners to enhance joint capabilities, increase bilateral and multilateral training and intelligence and information sharing, and codevelop critical and emerging technologies.

DoD efforts to deter and counter the PRC military threat are only part of the extensive U.S. whole-of-government effort to compete with China. Recent initiatives include the Department of Commerce’s unprecedented October 2022 export controls that restrict China’s ability to obtain and manufacture advanced computing chips. The Department of Commerce has also added over 100 PRC companies to its Bureau of Industry and Security’s Entity List.¹⁰ In addition to the CHIPS and Science Act and Inflation Reduction Act passed to support reshoring manufacturing to the United States, the Biden Administration is also encouraging “friend-shoring,” or the movement of critical supply chains out of China to close U.S. allies and partners. A leading example of such efforts is the U.S.-E.U. Trade and Technology Council that seeks to build more diversified supply chains that reduce the overdependence on China for production and processing of certain inputs and goods.¹¹

Engage

Although the Biden Administration is focused on competing with China, it has made clear that engagement with China is necessary to prevent the competitive relationship from spiraling into

¹⁰ “Commerce Adds Seven Chinese Entities to Entity List for Supporting China’s Military Modernization Efforts,” Bureau of Industry and Security, August 23, 2022, <https://www.bis.doc.gov/index.php/documents/about-bis/newsroom/press-releases/3121-2022-08-23-press-release-seven-entity-list-additions/file>.

¹¹ Emily Benson and Ethan B. Kapstein, “The Limits of ‘Friend-Shoring,’” Center for Strategic and International Studies, February 1, 2023, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/limits-friend-shoring>.

open confrontation or conflict. To the extent possible, the Biden Administration is seeking to set a floor in the U.S.-China relationship and maintain open channels of communication. The United States is doing so without any illusions that the PRC will change its goals or behavior solely through more U.S. engagement or cooperative efforts and, as a result, most engagements do not seek major deliverables or outcomes. The logic is that these engagements coupled with efforts to compete could cause China to rethink the costs and benefits of taking aggressive action.

Despite U.S. attempts to speak directly with the PRC, which have occurred at different levels and between U.S. and civilians and military leaders and their Chinese counterparts, engagement efforts are prone to disruption by the competitive actions both sides take. The PRC has continued to stonewall calls for critical dialogues. The PLA, for example, refuses to engage DoD on candid discussions about their strategic and nuclear capabilities. More recently, the PLA cancelled the Military Maritime Consultative Agreement (MMCA) meetings that were critical annual talks on unsafe encounters and incidents at sea and in the air between the two militaries. Even when the PRC is willing to engage, many of the exchanges move little beyond official talking points and PRC positions or explanations are not always credible.

How is the PRC responding?

Xi recognizes that China's external security environment has significantly worsened. The work report that Xi shared at the CCP's 20th Party Congress this past October assessed that

[China] has entered a period of development in which strategic opportunities, risks, and challenges are concurrent and uncertainties and unforeseen factors are rising. Various "black swan" and "gray rhino" events may occur at any time. We must therefore be more mindful of potential dangers and be prepared to deal with worst-case scenarios, and be ready to withstand high, choppy waters, and even dangerous storms.

Xi highlighted that China needs to be prepared to deal with "external attempts to blackmail, contain, blockade, and exert maximum pressure on China."¹²

Xi's work report blames the United States and its allies and partners for the deteriorating security environment the PRC faces. There is no recognition in that report that China's predicament is a result of PRC assertiveness and aggression. Instead, there is PRC concern that U.S. efforts will intensify and China needs to be even more prepared and ready.

This requires the PRC to build up its political, economic, and military capabilities across the board and seek advantage wherever possible. Politically, China is trying to divide and weaken U.S. alliances and partnerships. This includes what some scholars call a "charm offensive" that Chinese President Xi Jinping has launched after the 20th Party Congress to move away from Beijing's previous "wolf warrior" style diplomacy and to present a more benign and cooperative narrative of China. Xi has met with world leaders in person and in individual or in multilateral settings to try to diminish the growing threat perceptions and concerns many countries have of China. Despite the flurry of meetings and the positive optics associated with such high-level meetings, none of

¹² "Full text of the report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China," PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, October 25, 2022, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/zxxx_662805/202210/120221025_10791908.html.

the meetings have resulted in significant PRC concessions or compromises on issues of top concern to U.S. allies and partners. This represents a shift in PRC tactics. It does not mean there is a change in PRC ambitions. Nor does it mean that China is willing to limit its assertive behavior.

At the same time, the PRC continues to try to strengthen relations with countries it views as being less influenced by United States or more pro-China. Last December, for example, Xi made a landmark tour to the Middle East to attend summits with Saudi Arabia, the Gulf Cooperation Council, and Arab states. This tour occurred in the background of PRC assessed declining U.S. influence and interest in the region. Similarly, even as the international community has condemned and sanctioned Russia for its aggression in Ukraine, China continues to deepen relations with Russia. It is possible that as U.S.-China competition intensifies, Beijing may feel it has very little choice but to further align itself closer to Russia to gain strategic advantage against what Beijing increasingly views as U.S. containment or encirclement. A similar logic could also apply to China-North Korea relations.

Economically, the PRC is seeking to make itself less vulnerable to potential future U.S. and allied sanctions while simultaneously increasing the world's dependence on the PRC. Xi's 20th Party Congress work report called for China to strengthen "[mechanisms] for countering foreign sanctions, interference, and long-arm jurisdiction."¹³ As a result of these concerns and after witnessing less inflows of foreign investment in late 2022 and suffering one of the slowest PRC economic growth rates in the last 50 years, Beijing rapidly reversed its zero-Covid policy. Local and provincial governments in China are offering various tax and other incentives to attract foreign investment and promote development.

The PRC is further prioritizing self-sufficiency. For its semiconductor industry, for example, Beijing has issued guidelines to develop necessary talent, established a state-run \$50 billion National Integrated Circuit Industry Investment Fund, and is further considering increasing state-backed direct investment. China's talent pool has expanded rapidly, but its state-run investment fund has been plagued by corruption problems.

To fuel its manufacturing needs and to shield itself from potential sanctions, the PRC is also seeking major, long-term natural resource deals abroad. Examples of recent activities are China's 2021 \$400 billion deal with Iran to invest in the Middle East country for the next 25 years in exchange for oil; the PRC's 2022 \$60 billion, 27-year deal with Qatar for liquidized natural gas; and the PRC's 2023 25-year deal with the Taliban—the Taliban's first international contract since its August 2021 takeover of Afghanistan—to extract oil from Afghanistan.

Militarily, the PLA continues to rapidly modernize its capabilities and is more active than in previous years. The PLA is engaging in more realistic, less-scripted military exercises and becoming bolder in what it views as measures to "defend" China's sovereignty and interests. China regularly shadows U.S. close-in reconnaissance flights and U.S. ships within the first island chain. In May 2022, China conducted a joint bomber flight with Russia near Japan and Korea, forcing Japan and Korea to scramble jets as Quad leaders were meeting in Tokyo. This was the first joint exercise the two countries conducted since Russia's invasion of Ukraine and China used it to signal strong opposition against the Quad and suggest that the Quad could push China closer to Russia.

¹³ Ibid.

Last summer, China utilized then-Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan to engage in unprecedented military exercises around and above the island to help train the PLA to engage in a blockade or invasion of the island. This past December, China and Russia engaged in a week of live-fire naval drills in the East China Sea and near Japan and Taiwan. This exercise was timed after Japan's release of its new strategic documents and meant to signal opposition to close U.S.-Japan alignment. Most recently, in late January and early February 2023, China employed one of its PLA-controlled surveillance balloons to fly over Alaska and a broad swath of the continental United States to collect intelligence in U.S. airspace. This operation violated international law and occurred immediately before Secretary Blinken's planned trip to Beijing—which was postponed. This operation suggests that Beijing is not scaling back competition with the United States to make room for dialogue.

Overall, the U.S. approach toward the PRC to date has encouraged Beijing to compete *more* against the United States and its allies and partners. There are not any clear and long-term indicators of dampening of PRC ambitions, activities, and willingness to assert its claims and interest—and neither should the international community expect changes any time soon as long as Beijing believes the long-term trajectory is in its favor. At the same time, there is a real risk that intensified U.S.-China competition could lead to a confrontation and conflict. There is also the risk that Beijing could miscalculate the costs and benefits it faces and further venture in the direction that would be damaging to both U.S.-China relations as well as China's own interests.

Conclusion

Moving forward, the United States needs to continue to deepen its alliances and partnerships and strengthen this critical advantage it has over the PRC. This means not only enhancing dialogues, engaging in more exercises, and working on specific initiatives or agreed to deliverables, but having U.S. leaders—both from the Biden Administration and Congress—visit the region more often, listen to the needs and concerns of regional friends, and show them support and attention.

The United States also needs to take the long view on competition with China and exercise patience where needed. Many U.S. allies and partners are still highly dependent on trade with the PRC and may be reluctant to be as forward leaning as possible. The United States will need to strike the right balance between the speed at which the United States wants to implement efforts to compete with China and the pace at which allies and partners are willing to join and support us. Some of the discussions on difficult or sensitive topics may be best started as Track 1.5 or 2 dialogues and tabletop exercises.

Relatedly, the Biden Administration still needs to bolster its economic strategy towards the PRC. Although the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework and other efforts are helping allies and partners align with the United States economically, they do not provide allies and partners with greater market access or money to support economic development.¹⁴ If joining multilateral trade agreements such as the CPTPP is completely off the table, the United States should look at other bilateral or multilateral arrangements. A free trade agreement with Taiwan should be among them.

¹⁴ Matthew P. Goodman, "Biden's China Economic Strategy Takes Shape, but Tensions Remain," Center for Strategic and International Studies, December 9, 2022, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/bidens-china-economic-strategy-takes-shape-tensions-remain>.

Similarly, there are significant discussions and studies on-going about how best to mobilize a coalition of countries to counter PRC economic coercion and this is an area that needs greater U.S. action and attention.

The United States also needs to continue to invest in its military to ensure that the DoD has the resources to procure the weapon systems and platforms needed to deny PRC aggression, to increase its training, and to build a more resilient and dispersed posture in the Indo-Pacific. This includes stockpiling critical munitions and improving the U.S. defense production capacity to have the surge capacity to produce munitions and weapons at a much faster rate in the event of a major theater war.¹⁵ The United States also needs to bolster its ability to recruit and maintain top-quality personnel in the military, which is a major advantage the U.S. military has over the PLA.

The United States needs to couple intensified U.S.-China competition with maintaining high-level and critical engagements with Xi, the CPP, and the PLA. The extraordinary concentration of power within Xi's hands, the risks to subordinates of presenting views that contradict those of the General Secretary of the CCP, and the growing opacity in Chinese policy decision-making raises a serious concern that the Chinese bureaucracy may not be able to provide Xi with accurate and balanced assessments of international dynamics. The United States needs to engage more with Xi directly to ensure that critical messages are delivered unfiltered. Similarly on the military-to-military side, key dialogues such as the MMCA need to be restarted to prevent accidents at sea and in the air.

The United States should seek to insulate such engagements from competition. There is likely to be more incidents like the recent PRC surveillance balloon, and if high-level engagement is to be postponed or cancelled every time such an incident occurs, there will be very little room for engagement. Limited room for engagement means a free hand for the CCP to misinterpret, assume the worst of the United States, and further harden its position against the United States.

Finally, the United States needs to expand people-to-people contacts with China, including encouraging more Chinese students and visitors to the United States. This is not without risk given PRC laws such as the National Intelligence Law, which require Chinese citizens to support and cooperate with the CCP for intelligence and national security purposes. Yet, these opportunities are needed for the Chinese people—particularly the younger generation in China—to better understand the differences between the United States and the PRC, including the freedoms enjoyed in the United States. There is likely limited chance that the current generation of PRC leaders will change its views about the United States and change the course that China is on, but there is still hope and the United States should keep the door open to shaping the next generation of PRC leaders.

¹⁵ Seth G. Jones, "Empty Bins in a Wartime Environment: The Challenge to the U.S. Defense Industrial Base," Center for Strategic and International Studies, January 23, 2023, https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2023-01/230119_Jones_Empty_Bins.pdf?VersionId=mW3O0ngwul8V2nR2EHKBYxkpiOzMiS88.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Dr. Lin. Dr. Hill, please.

STATEMENT OF FIONA HILL, SENIOR FELLOW, CENTER ON THE UNITED STATES AND EUROPE, THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

Dr. HILL. Thank you so much, Chairman Reed, and Senator Wicker. It is a great honor to be with you, my fellow witnesses, the Members of the Committee today.

Before I begin my opening remarks, I would just like to flag that I have a news article in Foreign Affairs with my colleague Angela Stent on this very topic, and I would just ask that that could be submitted for the record so the Members and staff could read it later.

Chairman REED. Without objection.

Dr. HILL. Thank you. I want to focus on one specific challenge in my opening remarks and look forward to answering the questions that you and Senator Wicker laid out in your opening statements.

But first of all, just as you, Senator Reed, emphasized in your introduction, Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 was an assault on the post-World War II global order. The war in Ukraine has necessitated the third intervention by the United States and a European conflict in a little over a century, and what will now likely be our third attempt at revamping the international security system.

Now, this world order wasn't just our order, but a set of rules that all nations, including Russia and its predecessor, the Soviet Union, had agreed to. Russia violated the United Nations charter and fundamental principles of international law by attacking an independent State that had been recognized by all the international community, including Russia itself, for more than 30 years.

So, the current challenge in Europe is how to craft a more durable, regional security arrangement that rolls back Russia's land grab in Ukraine, is embraced by all Europeans, and sets a precedent for reinvigorating the largest set of international agreements. We need to find a formula that is not entirely dependent on the military and economic power of the United States or its political leadership to ensure long term success.

The European security environment was irrevocably altered or ruptured in 2014 when Russia annexed Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula and sparked off a brutal conflict and proxy war in the Donbas region.

None of the United States and Europe's mechanisms and practices for keeping the peace after World War II and during the cold war had much, if any, effect on deterring Russia from seizing Crimea in 2014, or attempting to take Kiev and the rest of Ukraine in 2022.

Western deterrence failed in part because American and European policymakers never meaningfully emphasized the West's red lines. Indeed, one might even ask, what were our red lines? Because we certainly did not appear to uphold the post-World War II principle of ensuring independent State sovereignty and territorial integrity after 2014.

Instead, European leaders, led by Germany and France, rushed to push Russia's annexation of Crimea to one side and broker a quick peace settlement in Donbas, the Minsk Accords, which would have limited Ukraine's sovereignty if fully implemented.

The tepid Western political response to Russia's violation of Ukraine's territory and the limited application of sanctions after this first invasion convinced Moscow that attacking Ukraine was not, in fact, a serious breach of post-World War II norms, and Western commentary since 2014 has more frequently focused on the risk of stepping over Russia's red lines rather than enforcing the West's.

We have spent more time contemplating the perils of provoking Russia's mercurial President Vladimir Putin, than the merits of bolstering Europe's resilience to Putin's coercive power.

In charting a path forward, we need to recognize that the war in Ukraine has been brewing for decades because of a key distinction in the way that the international community and the United States approach the collapse of the Soviet Union and the former Yugoslavia in the 1990's.

In the chaos of Yugoslavia, the country was dissolved without the recognition of a single successor State. Serbia's territorial claims against all of its members were rejected. In the case of the USSR, the United States and every other country recognized Russia as the sole successor State.

Moscow inherited the Soviet Union's United Nation (UN) Security Council seat and its other privileges and obligations, as well as it seemed, the Soviet Union's cold war sphere of influence in Eastern Europe. Ukraine, along with all the other former Soviet republics, fell into a gray zone where Russia's interests seemed to trump theirs, and they were deemed by all of us, Russia's near abroad.

Vladimir Putin has repeatedly stated that Moscow has the right to dominate this neighborhood and claim lost territory. For Putin, the war in Ukraine is a continuation of the Soviet struggle with the United States to carve up Europe after 1945.

Russia sees NATO as a United States Cold-War bloc, a cover for American imperialism, and not as an alliance of equals to ensure common defense and security. So in this context for Russia, NATO's post-cold war expansion and Ukraine's reluctance to implement the Minsk Accords in Donbas became the current war's *casus belli*.

So redefining European security and restoring deterrence will involve explicitly countering this narrative. Building an international coalition against Russia's aggression to facilitate the eventual settlement of the war in Ukraine will require the same.

The United States and its allies must clarify and emphasize that they are supporting Ukraine on the battlefield to uphold the United Nations charter and international law. We need to step up our diplomatic efforts, including in the United Nations, to convince friends and middle powers in the so-called global South that our goal is not to return Western supremacy, but to keep the world safer for every nation.

If Russia succeeds in carving up Ukraine, then the future sovereignty and territorial integrity of other states could be imperiled, so upholding international norms must once again be a central part of our global security strategy. Thank you so much for your time.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Fiona Hill follow:]



FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The Kremlin's Grand Delusions

What the War in Ukraine Has Revealed About Putin's Regime

BY FIONA HILL AND ANGELA STENT February 15, 2023

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ANGELA STENT is a Nonresident Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution and Professor Emerita at Georgetown University. From 1999 to 2001, she served in the Department of State's Office of Policy Planning. She is the author of *Putin's World: Russia Against the West and With the Rest*.

Despite a series of blunders, miscalculations, and battlefield reversals that would have surely seen him thrown out of office in most normal countries, President Vladimir Putin is still at the pinnacle of power in Russia. He continues to define the contours of his country's war against Ukraine. He is micromanaging the invasion even as generals beneath him appear to be in charge of the battlefield. (This deputizing is done to protect him from blowback if something goes badly wrong in the war.) Putin and those immediately around him directly work to mobilize Russians on the home front and manipulate public views of the invasion abroad. He has in some ways succeeded in this information warfare.

The war has revealed the full extent of Putin's personalized political system. After what is now 23 years at the helm of the Russian state, there are no obvious checks on his power. Institutions beyond the Kremlin count for little. "I would never have imagined that I would miss the Politburo," said Rene Nyberg, the former Finnish ambassador to Moscow. "There is no political organization in Russia that has the power to hold the president and commander in chief accountable." Diplomats, policymakers, and analysts are stuck in a doom loop—an endless back-and-forth argument among themselves—to figure out what Putin wants and how the West can shape his behavior.

Determining Putin's actual objectives can be difficult; as an anti-Western autocrat, he has little to gain by publicly disclosing his intentions. But the last year has made some answers clear enough. Since February 2022, the world has learned that Putin wants to create a new version of the Russian empire based on his Soviet-era preoccupations and his interpretations of history. The launching of the invasion itself has shown that his views of past events can provoke him to cause massive human suffering. It has become clear that there is little other states and actors can do to deter Putin from prosecuting a war if he is determined to do so and that the Russian president will adapt old narratives as well as adopt new ones to suit his purposes.

But the events of 2022 and early 2023 have demonstrated that there are ways to constrain Putin, especially if a broad enough coalition of states gets involved. They have also underscored that the West will need to redouble its efforts at strengthening such a diplomatic and military coalition. Because even now, after a year of carnage, Putin is still convinced he can prevail.

BACK IN THE USSR

One year in, the war in Ukraine has shown that Putin and his cohort's beliefs are still rooted in Soviet frames and narratives, overlaid with a thick glaze of Russian imperialism. Soviet-era concepts of geopolitics, spheres of influence, East versus West, and us versus them shape the Kremlin's mindset. To Putin, this war is in effect a struggle with Washington akin to the Korean War and other Cold War-era conflicts. The United States remains Russia's principal opponent, not Ukraine. Putin wants to negotiate directly with Washington to "deliver" Ukraine, with the end goal of getting the U.S. president to sign away the future of the country. He has no desire to meet directly with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. His goal remains the kind of settlement achieved in 1945 at Yalta, when U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill sat across the table from the Soviet leader Joseph Stalin and accepted Moscow's post-World War II dominance of Eastern Europe without consulting the countries affected by these decisions.

For Russia, World War II—the Great Fatherland War, as Russians call it—is the touchstone and central theme of the conflict in Ukraine. Putin's emphasis a year ago on ridding Ukraine of Nazis has faded somewhat into the background. This year, the victorious outcome in 1945 is his primary focus. Putin's message to Ukrainians, Russians, and the world is that victory will be Russia's and that Moscow always wins, no matter how high the costs. Indeed, beginning with comments ahead of his 2023 New Year's speech, Putin has cast off the

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depiction of the war in Ukraine as just a special military operation. According to him, Russia is locked in an existential battle for its survival against the West. He is once more digging deep into old Soviet tactics and practices from the 1940s to rally the Russian economy, political class, and society in support of the invasion.

Putin is capable of learning from setbacks and adapting his tactics in ways that are also reminiscent of Stalin's approach in World War II, when the Soviet Union pushed back Nazi Germany in the epochal battle of Stalingrad. In September 2022, as Russia was clearly losing on the battlefield, Putin ordered the mobilization of 300,000 extra troops. He then declared that Russia had annexed four of Ukraine's most fiercely fought-over territories: Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk, and Zaporizhzhia, transforming the military and political picture on the ground and creating an artificial redline. Putin has repeatedly made changes in Russia's military leadership at critical junctures, and he has worked fiercely to ensure his country has enough weapons for the war effort. When Russian forces began to run out of armaments, Putin purchased drones from Iran and ammunition from North Korea.

Putin has also shifted his narrative about the war several times to keep his opponents guessing about how far he might still go. He and other Russian officials, including his spokesman and foreign minister, have openly stated that the invasion of Ukraine is an imperial war and that Russia's borders are expanding again. They have asserted that the four annexed Ukrainian territories are Russia's "forever" but then suggested that some borders may still be negotiated with Ukraine. According to newspaper reports, they have pushed for the full conquest of Donetsk and Luhansk by March but also indicated that another assault on Kyiv could be in the offing. At this stage of the conflict, Russia's actual war goals remain unclear.

What is clear is this: after more than two decades in power, Putin is practiced at playing people, groups, and countries against one another and using their weaknesses to his advantage. He understands the weak points of European and international institutions as well as the vulnerabilities of individual leaders. He knows how to exploit NATO's debates and splits over military spending and procurement. He has taken advantage of European and American partisan divides (including the fact that only one third of Republicans think the United States should support Ukraine) to spread disinformation and manipulate public opinion.

At home in Russia, Putin has proved willing to allow some hawkish dissent and debate about the war, including the grumbling of pro-war commentators and bloggers who used to serve in the military. He seeks to use these debates to mobilize support for his policies. But although Putin is adept at managing quarrels, he cannot always control the content and tone of these disputes, just as he cannot control the battlefield. Some of the domestic commentary on the war has become shrill and even threatening to Putin's position. There is speculation that Yevgeny Prigozhin, the head of the Wagner paramilitary group, whose forces have been doing some of the war's bloodiest fighting, could even seize power at some point in the future. Russia's wartime casualties appear to be approaching 200,000. As many as one million people are estimated to have left Russia in the past year in response to the war, either because they oppose the invasion or simply to avoid being drafted. In this regard, the world has learned that there are some limits to Putin's coercive capabilities, even if this mass exodus of dissenters seems to leave behind a more quiescent majority.

DISSUADABLE, NOT DETERRABLE

Russian opponents of the war may have had no chance of stopping Putin from invading Ukraine on February 24, 2022. And none of the United States and Europe's mechanisms and practices for keeping the peace after World War II and the Cold War had much, if any, effect on his decision-making. The West clearly failed to stop Putin from contemplating or starting the invasion. Nevertheless, the United States' release of declassified intelligence before February 24 clarified Russian aims and mobilization and helped the pro-Ukraine Western coalition quickly come together once the war started. Furthermore, this past year has shown that even if he cannot be deterred, Putin can be dissuaded from taking certain actions in specific contexts.

Strategic partners of Russia, such as China and India, have criticized Putin's threats to use nuclear weapons on the battlefield. He allowed grain shipments from Ukraine through the Black Sea after complaints from the United Nations, Turkey, and African countries. Putin and the Kremlin remain committed to maintaining partner countries' support, as was demonstrated during the G-20 meeting in November 2022 in Bali, Indonesia. Russia still seems not to want a full-on fight with NATO. It has avoided expanding its military action outside Ukraine (at least so far), including by not shelling military supply convoys entering the country from Poland or Romania. But Moscow's aggressive rhetoric has risen and ebbed throughout the war. Former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, once known as a moderate leader willing to engage with the West, now plays the role of Putin's attack dog, periodically threatening a nuclear Armageddon.

The Kremlin is shameless in its rhetoric, and no one in Putin's circle cares about narrative coherence. This brazenness is matched by domestic ruthlessness. Putin and his colleagues are willing to sacrifice Russian lives, not just Ukrainians'. They have no qualms about the methods Russia uses to enforce participation in the war, from murdering deserters with sledgehammers (and then releasing video footage of the killings) to assassinating recalcitrant businessmen who do not support the invasion. Putin is perfectly fine with imprisoning

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opposition figures while sweeping through prisons and the most impoverished Russian regions to collect people to use as cannon fodder on the frontlines.

The domestic ruthlessness is in turn exceeded by the brutality against Ukraine. Russia has declared total war on the country and its citizens, young and old. For a year, it has deliberately shelled Ukrainian civilian infrastructure and killed people in their kitchens, bedrooms, hospitals, schools, and shops. Russian forces have tortured, raped, and pillaged in the Ukrainian regions under their control. Putin and the Kremlin still believe they can pummel the country into submission while they wait out the United States and Europe.

The Kremlin is convinced that the West will eventually grow tired of supporting Ukraine. Putin believes, for example, that there will be political changes in the West that could be advantageous for Moscow. He hopes for the return of populists to power in these states who will back away from their countries' support for Ukraine. Putin also remains confident that he can eventually restore Russia's prewar relationship with Europe and that Russia can and will be part of Europe's economic, energy, political, and security structures again if he holds out long enough (as Bashar al-Assad has in the Middle East by staying in power in Syria). This is why Russia is seemingly restrained in some policy arenas. For instance, it has vested interests in working with Norway and other Arctic countries in the Norwegian archipelago of Svalbard and the Barents Sea, where Moscow has been careful to comply with international agreements and bilateral treaties. Russia does not want its misadventure in Ukraine to embroil and spoil its entire foreign policy.

Putin is convinced that he can compartmentalize Moscow's interests because Russia is not isolated internationally, despite the West's best efforts. Only 34 countries have imposed sanctions on Russia since the war started. Russia still has leverage in its immediate neighborhood with many of the states that were once part of the Soviet Union, even though these countries want to keep their distance from Moscow and the war. Russia continues to build ties in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East. China, along with India and other key states in the global South, have abstained on votes in favor of Ukraine at the United Nations even as their leaders have expressed occasional consternation and displeasure with Moscow's behavior. Trade between Russia and these countries has increased—in some cases quite dramatically—since the beginning of the conflict. Similarly, 87 countries still offer Russian citizens visa-free entry, including Argentina, Egypt, Israel, Mexico, Thailand, Turkey, and Venezuela. Russian narratives about the war have gained traction in the global South, where Putin often seems to have more influence than the West has—and certainly more than Ukraine has.

BLURRING THE LINES

One reason the West has had limited success in countering Russia's messaging and influence operations outside Europe is that it has yet to formulate its own coherent narrative about the war—and about why the West is supporting Kyiv. American and European policymakers talk frequently of the risks of stepping over Russia's redlines and provoking Putin, but Russia itself not only overturned the post-Cold War settlement in Europe but also stepped over the world's post-1945 redlines when it invaded Ukraine and annexed territory, attempting to forcibly change global borders. The West failed to state this clearly after Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014.

The tepid political response and the limited application of sanctions after that first Russian invasion convinced Moscow that its actions were not, in fact, a serious breach of post-World War II international norms. It made the Kremlin believe it could likely go further in taking Ukrainian territory. Western debates about the need to weaken Russia, the importance of overthrowing Putin to achieve peace, whether democracies should line up against autocracies, and whether other countries must choose sides have muddled what should be a clear message: Russia has violated the territorial integrity of an independent state that has been recognized by the entire international community, including Moscow, for more than 30 years. Russia has also violated the UN Charter and fundamental principles of international law. If it were to succeed in this invasion, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of other states, be they in the West or the global South, will be imperiled.

Yet the Western debate about the war has shifted little in a year. U.S. and European views still tend to be defined by how individual commentators see the United States and its global role rather than by Russian actions. Antiwar perspectives often reflect cynicism about the United States' motivation and deep skepticism about Ukraine's sovereign rights rather than a clear understanding or objective assessment of Russian actions toward Ukraine and what Putin wants in the neighboring region. When Russia was recognized as the only successor state to the Soviet Union after 1991, other former Soviet republics such as Belarus and Ukraine were left in a gray zone.

Some analysts posit that Russia's security interests trump everyone else's because of its size and historical status. They have argued that Moscow has a right to a recognized sphere of influence, just as the Soviet Union did after 1945. Using this framing, some commentators have suggested that NATO's post-Cold War expansion and Ukraine's reluctance to implement the Minsk agreements—accords brokered with Moscow after it annexed Crimea in 2014 that would have limited Ukraine's sovereignty—are the war's *casus belli*. They think that Ukraine is ultimately a former Russian region that should be forced to accept the loss of its territory.

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In fact, the preoccupation of Russian leaders with bringing Ukraine back into the fold dates to the beginning of the 1990s, when Ukraine started to pull away from the Moscow-dominated Commonwealth of Independent States (a loose regional institution that had succeeded the Soviet Union). At that juncture, NATO's enlargement was not even on the table for eastern Europe, and Ukraine's affiliation with the European Union was an even more remote prospect. Since then, Europe has moved beyond the post-1945 concept of spheres of influence for East and West. Indeed, for most Europeans, Ukraine is clearly an independent state, one that is fighting a war for its survival after an unprovoked attack on its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The war is about more than Ukraine. Kyiv is also fighting to protect other countries. Indeed, for states such as Finland, which was attacked by the Soviet Union in 1939 after securing its independence from the Russian empire 20 years earlier, this invasion seems like a rerun of history. (In the so-called Winter War of 1939–40, Finland fought the Soviets without external support and lost nine percent of its territory.) The Ukrainians and countries supporting them understand that if Russia were to prevail in this bloody conflict, Putin's appetite for expansion would not stop at the Ukrainian border. The Baltic states, Finland, Poland, and many other countries that were once part of Russia's empire could be at risk of attack or subversion. Others could see challenges to their sovereignty in the future.

Western governments need to hone this narrative to counter the Kremlin's. They must focus on bolstering Europe's and NATO's resilience alongside Ukraine's to limit Putin's coercive power. They must step up the West's international diplomatic efforts, including at the UN, to dissuade Putin from taking specific actions such as the use of nuclear weapons, attacks on convoys to Ukraine, continuing to escalate on the battlefield to seize more territory or launching a renewed assault on Kyiv. The West needs to make clear that Russia's relations with Europe will soon be irreparable. There will be no return to prior relations if Putin presses ahead. The world cannot always contain Putin, but clear communications and stronger diplomatic measures may help push him to curtail some of his aggression and eventually agree to negotiations.

The events of the last year should also steer everyone away from making big predictions. Few people outside Ukraine, for example, expected the war or believed that Russia would perform so poorly in its invasion. No one knows exactly what 2023 has in store.

That includes Putin. He appears to be in control for now, but the Kremlin could be in for a surprise. Events often unfold in a dramatic fashion. As the war in Ukraine has shown, many things don't go according to plan.

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Chairman REED. Thank you, Dr. Hill. Mr. Zakheim, please.

STATEMENT OF ROGER ZAKHEIM, DIRECTOR, RONALD REAGAN PRESIDENTIAL FOUNDATION AND INSTITUTE

Mr. ZAKHEIM. Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Wicker, and distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me to testify today on global security challenges and strategy. Less than a year ago, I had the honor of testifying before this Committee, when, as many of you will recall, the world witnessed Russia's massive military convoy assembled on the road to Kiev.

One year later, that convoy of armor and steel is no more. The Russian military failed to seize Kiev, and Ukrainians are valiantly

fighting to preserve their freedom and sovereignty. We have learned a lot in a year, some of which is worth reviewing as we consider the State of our national security strategy and the efficacy of the national defense strategy.

First, we have learned that supporting Ukraine with military capabilities necessary to defend their sovereign territory will not lead to escalation or spillover. Instead, Western support has helped transform the battlefield, badly damaging Russia's military capabilities, and moderated for now, Putin's military objectives.

Going forward, our support to Ukraine, be it with tanks, drones, aircraft or missiles, should be tailored to executing a counter offensive strategy that rolls back Russia's gains and restores Ukraine's sovereign territory.

We have also learned that the war in Ukraine has revealed how the digital age is leveling the playing field between great powers and smaller countries. Ukraine has skillfully deployed precision munitions, drone technology, and sophisticated encrypted software to gain the upper hand against Russia's invading conventional military.

But while Russia's military conventional force is badly damaged, it is not defeated. We stand at the precipice of a new stage in the war, where Ukraine will need tanks and other conventional offensive platforms in order to dislodge entrenched Russian forces.

Russia's war in Ukraine demonstrates that conventional forces still matter. Submarines, tanks, fighting bombers, munitions, and end strength cannot be sacrificed in favor of a future capability that merely exists on a PowerPoint slide.

We need to sustain our conventional capability to prevail in today's conflicts. Third, industrial capacity may be America's Achilles heel as we implement our national defense strategy.

As Ranking Member Wicker pointed out, this is a key area of focus for this committee. Just in time manufacturing, which products are made only to meet existing immediate demand, may make business sense for big box stores and their suppliers, but the war in Ukraine makes clear that just in time means out of time on the battlefield.

The effort to deploy, arm, feed, and supply forces is a monumental task, and the massive consumption of equipment systems, vehicles, and munitions requires a large scale industrial base for resupply.

These takeaways lead to a more general observation that realizing the objectives of our national defense strategy requires a builders' mindset. Now is a time to build a force capable of winning today and tomorrow. The challenge before this committee is to ensure the NDS is executed.

To do so, I recommend the following steps which I outline in depth in my written testimony, which I hope is considered for the record. Number one, prioritize winning today by countering China. number two, investing in winning tomorrow, and three, resourcing the demands of the National Defense Strategy.

China's recent brazen breach of United States airspace is just the latest case of aggressive and provocative actions by the CCP. The primary test of the NDS [National Defense Strategy] is whether we

are able to deter China from seizing control of Taiwan and arrest its pursuit of hegemony in the Indo-Pacific.

Its actions in the Taiwan Strait, combined with its robust military modernization program, suggests Beijing is considering this sooner rather than later. While we have made and this Committee has done a remarkable job of progress in areas of warfighting that are relevant to the Taiwan scenario, more is needed for other high end munitions relevant in the Western Pacific.

While our force must be capable of deterring adventurism and the present competition with China, it must also be prepared for a future 21st century conflict. We are far below the scale of investment required to replace air, land, and sea platforms with AI [artificial intelligence] infused autonomous systems.

In comparison, as this committee knows, China is rapidly incorporating the achievements of its commercial sector into its military modernization. Not since the Reagan administration has our country committed itself to sustained multiyear rebuilding of our military. Executing this defense strategy, one, as was pointed out, is a line between the Trump and Biden administrations.

It requires a jump from today's spending levels of just 3 percent GDP [gross domestic product] to what I believe around 5 percent GDP. As Congress debates how to manage spending amidst the debt ceiling negotiations, it should be mindful that cutting defense to fiscal year 2022 levels, which would be about 10 percent of the top line, would render the defense strategy non-executable. It would reduce our military to nothing more than a regional force.

Our defense strategy seeks to preserve American peace and prosperity by building and sustaining the U.S. military that maintains what President Reagan called the margin of safety. Notably, this is not the most ambitious defense strategy. It does not seek military dominance everywhere, nor does it call for a force capable of winning two conflicts simultaneously.

Rather, it is a strategy prudently tailored to address the security needs of the country, not the political calculus of the moment, ensuring no foreign power threatens our interests. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Roger Zakheim follows:]



TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

HEARING ON GLOBAL SECURITY CHALLENGES AND STRATEGY

February 15, 2023

Statement by Mr. Roger Zakheim

Director, Ronald Reagan Institute

Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Wicker, and distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me to testify today on global security challenges and strategy.

Less than a year ago I had the honor of testifying before this committee on a similar subject. At the time, as many of you will recall, Russia had invaded Ukraine days earlier; the Biden administration previously had attempted to exercise "deterrence by disclosure" as the world witnessed the massive military convoy assembled on the road to Kiev. One year later, that convoy of armor and steel is no more, the Russian military failed to seize Kiev, and Ukrainians are valiantly fighting to preserve their freedom and sovereignty.

We have learned a lot in a year, some of which is worth reviewing as we consider the state of our national security and the efficacy of our national defense strategy.

1. **Ukraine is worthy of our support:** While Russia's military invasion of Ukraine, and the failure of deterrence in Europe more broadly, underscored the reality that great power competition is not limited to the Indo-Pacific, we have also witnessed the power of a free people willing to fight to preserve that freedom. Their determination, combined with Western technology, including encrypted command and control, the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS), infantry fighting vehicles, air defense systems, drone and counter-drone systems, have arrested Russian advances and rolled back some of Russia's gains.
2. **Support a Ukrainian Counteroffensive:** We've learned that supporting Ukraine with military capabilities necessary to defend their sovereign territory will not lead to escalation or spillover. Instead Western support has helped transform the battlefield, badly damaging Russia's military capabilities and moderated – for now – Putin's military objectives. Going forward, our support to Ukraine – be it with tanks, drones, aircraft or missiles – should be tailored to executing a counter offensive that rolls back Russian gains and restores Ukraine's sovereign territory.
3. **Tech protects small states from domination, but it does not rollback great powers:** The war in Ukraine has revealed how the digital age is leveling the playing field between great powers and smaller countries. Ukraine has skillfully deployed precision munitions, drone technology, and sophisticated encrypted software to gain the upper hand against Russia's invading conventional military. But...
4. **Conventional forces still matter:** While Russia's conventional force is badly damaged, it is not defeated. We stand at the precipice of a new stage in the war where Ukraine will need tanks and other conventional offensive platforms in order to dislodge entrenched Russian forces. Russia's war on Ukraine demonstrates that conventional forces still matter: submarines, tanks, fighters, bombers, munitions, and end strength cannot be sacrificed in favor of a future capability that merely exists on a powerpoint slide. We need to sustain our conventional capability to prevail in today's conflicts.
5. **Industrial capacity:** Ukraine is the latest reminder that Industrial capacity may be America's Achilles heel as we implement our national defense strategy. Just in Time (JIT) manufacturing, in which products are made only to meet existing, immediate demand, may make business sense for big box stores and their suppliers, but the war in Ukraine makes clear that JIT is a recipe for disaster on the battlefield. The effort to deploy, arm,

feed, and supply forces is a monumental task, and the massive consumption of equipment, systems, vehicles, and munitions requires a large-scale industrial base for resupply.¹ Whether it is building more Virginia class submarines, increasing munitions production, or scaling up missile and rocket inventory, “Just in Time” would mean “Just Out of Time.” Significant investments are needed along the lines of the provisions in the FY 2023 NDAA – the U.S. needs to spend more on production capacity, sign multiyear contracts, and remove more onerous contracting requirements. We likely need generational investments in large portions of our defense infrastructure.²

These takeaways – especially the final point on industrial capacity– lead to the more general observation that realizing the objectives of our National Defense Strategy (NDS) requires a builder’s mindset – now is the time to build a force capable of winning today and tomorrow.

Continuity: The NDS in the Trump and Biden Administrations

There is remarkable continuity across the Trump and Biden defense strategies.³ Each would have the United States lead in three primary regions of the world: the Indo-Pacific, Europe, and the Middle East. Each would seek to win — not simply manage — the competition against China and Russia. Each would also seek to deter Iran, North Korea, and terrorist groups. Delving into the details of each defense strategy such as the force planning construct and global posture priorities reveals both the Trump and Biden administrations constructed strategies that demand a U.S. military postured globally and capable of deterring, and if necessary, defeating China while also deterring other adversaries.

Winning Today: Countering China

¹ Seth Jones, “Empty Bins in a Wartime Environment: The Challenge to the U.S. Defense Industrial Base,” *Report: CSIS International Security Program*, January 2023, 8. https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2023-01/230119_Jones_Empty_Bins.pdf?VersionId=mW3OQngwul8V2nR2EHKBYxkpiOzMiS88.

² Connor O’Brien, “GOP Senators Look to Add \$50B for Defense into Critical Infrastructure Bill,” *Politico*, August 5, 2021. <https://www.politico.com/news/2021/08/05/gop-senators-look-to-add-50b-for-defense-into-infrastructure-bill-502622>.

³ Department of Defense, *Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2018), 2. <https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf>; Department of Defense, *2022 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2022), 4-6. <https://media.defense.gov/2022/Oct/27/2003103845/-1-/1/2022-NATIONAL-DEFENSE-STRATEGY-NPR-MDR.PDF>.

The primary test for the NDS is whether we will be able to deter China from seizing control of Taiwan, and arrest its pursuit of hegemony in the Indo-Pacific. China's aggressive and provocative actions in the Taiwan Strait and elsewhere combined with its robust military modernization program suggests Beijing is considering such a move sooner rather than later.⁴ Of immediate concern is fixing the backlog of Foreign Military Sales awaiting delivery to Taiwan while simultaneously exercising the \$1 billion of authority provided by the Taiwan Enhanced Resilience Act, even as Congress continues to work on appropriations for Foreign Military Financing .

As this committee knows well, industrial capacity limitations are most acute in key areas of warfighting that are highly relevant to a Taiwan scenario. While more work remains, the Army and Congress have made significant progress drastically expanding production of 155mm shells, GMLRS, HIMARS, Javelins, and Stingers. Progress is needed in other key munitions such as Standard Missiles, Long-Range Anti-Ship Missiles, Patriot missiles, and other high-end munitions relevant in the Western Pacific. As one analyst has written, the question for the future of warfare post-Ukraine "becomes less who has the silver bullet and more simply who has more bullets." Without generating more capacity, our deterrence posture in the Indo-Pacific is vulnerable.⁵

As the U.S. military manages its capacity constraints, the Chinese Communist Party's military modernization is robust and focused. The PLA Navy (PLAN) is the world's largest navy with 340 modern, multi-mission ships and submarines. With Taiwan in its sights, the PLAN recently commissioned two amphibious assault ships, and has enhanced its power projection with long range precision strike capabilities. To offset the U.S. Navy's undersea advantage, China continues to procure conventional subs.⁶ The PLAN's expansion in undersea capability contrasts with the U.S. Navy's declining inventory of fast boats where, due to industrial capacity constraints and retirements, it is expected to have fewer total SSNs in the coming years than it has today.⁷ It is a similar

⁴ Dustin Walker, "America and China: Whose Timeline is it Anyway?," *Breaking Defense*, February 6, 2023, <https://breakingdefense.com/2023/02/america-and-china-whose-timeline-is-it-anyway/>.

⁵Raphael S. Cohen and Gian Gentile, "Is the U.S. Military Capable of Learning from the War in Ukraine?," *Foreign Policy Magazine*, February 2, 2023, https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/02/02/us-military-lessons-war-ukraine-russia-weapons-tactics/?utm_source=PostUp&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Editors%20Picks%20OC&utm_term=66974&tpcc=Editors%20Picks%20OC.

⁶ PRC is expected to produce 25 or more YUAN class subs by 2025 see, Department of Defense, *Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China: 2022* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense 2022), 52, <https://media.defense.gov/2022/Nov/29/2003122279/-1/-1/1/2022-MILITARY-AND-SECURITY-DEVELOPMENTS-INVOLVING-THE-PEOPLES-REPUBLIC-OF-CHINA.PDF>.

⁷ "The United States must expand its submarine fleet", National Defense Strategy Commission, Providing for the Common Defense, 36; Megan Eckstein, "Workforce Development, Process Improvements Will Make or Break the Virginia Class Submarine Program," *Defense News*, January 6, 2022.

story with the Chinese Air Force which boasts the largest air force in the region and third largest in the world,⁸ while the United States' total inventory of air power is declining along with its qualitative advantage.

Winning Tomorrow

While our force must be capable of deterring adventurism in the present competition with China it must also be prepared for any future 21st century conflict. The NDS demands sustained and increased investments in new technologies critical to winning tomorrow's wars. Both the 2018 and 2022 National Defense Strategies delineate the technologies and capabilities critical to the future force.⁹ Integrating artificial intelligence and best-in-class software into current and future platforms, moving command and control to the edge of the battlefield, integrating space assets into military operations¹⁰, and deploying cheaper autonomous systems in the force are the *sine qua non* of tomorrow's force. Here, the challenge resides not just with developing new technologies but also with transitioning these technologies from research, development, testing, and evaluation projects into programs of record ready for production.¹¹ The double-digit real growth enjoyed by DOD's space programs in recent years serves as a template for what simultaneously investing in the capabilities of today and tomorrow looks like.

A survey of the Pentagon's budget materials reveals the dearth of funding dedicated to transition of critical technologies from R&D to the warfighter.¹² Investment in the DOD's fourteen critical technologies combined with its funding of advanced component

<https://www.defensenews.com/naval/2022/01/06/workforce-development-process-improvements-will-make-or-break-the-virginia-class-submarine-program/>;

⁸ 2800 aircraft and 2250 are combat aircraft. PLAAF fields larger numbers of fourth gen fighters (more than 800 of 1800) and operationally fielded the J-20, its fifth gen stealth aircraft with upgrades in progress. See, Department of Defense, *Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China: 2022*, 59.

⁹ Department of Defense, *2022 National Defense Strategy*, 6. "New applications of artificial intelligence, quantum science, autonomy, biotechnology, and space technologies have the potential not just to change kinetic conflict, but also to disrupt day-to-day U.S. supply chain and logistics operations." See also DoD list of 14 critical technology areas.

Office of the Under Secretary of Defense Comptroller, *Defense Budget Overview: FY23*, 4-5. https://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/defbudget/FY2023/FY2023_Budget_Request_Overview_Book.pdf.

¹⁰ Doug Cameron and Micah Maidenburg, "Space Launches Should Withstand Chinese Challenge, Pentagon Mandate Says," *The Wall Street Journal*, January 10, 2023.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/space-launches-should-withstand-chinese-challenge-pentagon-mandate-says-11673324393>. See New DOD requirements that new U.S. spy satellites must be capable of fending off Chinese and Russian interference, change from previous standards strictly concerned with cost and reliability.

¹¹ For more on this topic see Eric Lofgren, "Sources of Defense Tech Transition Funding," *Acquisition Talk*, October 27, 2022. <https://acquisitiontalk.com/2022/10/sources-of-defense-tech-transition-funding/>.

¹² See https://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/defbudget/FY2023/FY2023_Budget_Request_Overview_Book.pdf at p. 4-2

development and prototypes amounts to \$45 billion in fiscal year 2023. This includes \$10 billion toward hypersonics, a unique military capability which the United States has successfully tested once only and which DOD cannot rely on the commercial sector to innovate and deliver solutions. Meanwhile, China has conducted numerous hypersonic missile tests and Russia has used them in combat.¹³ Put in context, the \$45 billion investment is around five percent of the total Pentagon budget and about a third of the Pentagon's Research, Development, Test, and Evaluation (RDT&E) budget.¹⁴

In short, we are far below the scale of investment required to replace air, land, and sea platforms with AI-infused autonomous systems.¹⁵ In comparison, China is leveraging its civil-military fusion to rapidly incorporate the achievements of its commercial sector into its military modernization,¹⁶ allowing China to quickly integrate revolutionary technologies that will shape the future of warfare.

The Demands of the National Defense Strategy

The demands of winning today and tomorrow along with building an industrial and innovation base capable of sustaining such a force are substantial. Not since the Reagan administration has our country committed itself to a sustained, multiyear rebuilding of our military. At that time the impact was transformative: it proved pivotal in winning the Cold War and continued to deliver capabilities decades after President Reagan left office. Of the five administrations that followed President Reagan, all have either deployed the force in armed conflict or sought a peace dividend by reducing the size of and investment in the military. In other words, it has been over four decades since the military has seen sustained investment and growth outside the context of armed conflict.

Today, we are at another pivotal moment; unless we invest in our national defense, any effort to sustain U.S. military preeminence and realize the goals of the NDS will fail. The essential choice in executing the NDS is choosing to make a sustained, robust financial investment in the military. Yet, we have failed to resource the strategy. The Trump administration's so-called "military rebuild" turned out to be a one-year defense

¹³ Oren Liebermann, "US Air Force Carries Out First Fully Successful Test of Air-Launched Hypersonic Missile," CNN, December 12, 2022. <https://www.cnn.com/2022/12/12/politics/air-force-hypersonic-test/index.html>.

¹⁴ See also Eric Cheuning et. al, "How Will US Funding for Defense Technology Innovation Evolve?," *McKinsey & Company*, November 4, 2022. <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/aerospace-and-defense/our-insights/how-will-us-funding-for-defense-technology-innovation-evolve>

¹⁵ Id. Noting, "for defense start-ups seeking to raise funds or live up to lofty valuations, the relatively small portion of the DOD budget allocated to defense technology transition may not be sufficient to attain scale unless they carefully consider their options."

¹⁶ Department of Defense, "2021 Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China," (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2021), 147. <https://media.defense.gov/2021/Nov/03/2002885874/-1/-1/0/2021-CMPR-FINAL.PDF>.

bump that rightfully prioritized improving the readiness of the force following years of combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, but never made the sustained investments in growth and modernization.¹⁷ By the end of the Trump administration, the defense budget barely kept pace with inflation and the gap between the strategy and reality widened.¹⁸

It has been a similar story during the first two years of the Biden administration: an ambitious strategy accompanied by an insufficient defense budget request. The Biden budget outlook is flat and has all the markings of a defense program designed by the Office of Management and Budget — a political product divorced from the administration's strategy, which will result in a shrinking and less capable force. Making matters worse, spiraling inflation has effectively eliminated any real growth in the budget request. This has placed Biden defense officials in the impossible position of trying to build an under-resourced force in service to a broad and expansive strategy.¹⁹ This glaring gap between strategy and resources was so apparent that this Committee felt it necessary to increase the defense budget over and above the administration's request each of the past two years. Congress deserves credit for authorizing and appropriating increases that gave the Department of Defense three percent real growth in fiscal year 2022 and five percent real growth in 2023, a total additional investment of around \$70 billion.

The back of the envelope budget that the 2018 bipartisan National Defense Strategy Commission endorsed called for three to five percent growth annually. According to the Commission, the 3-5% benchmark was "indicative of the level of investment needed to meet the ends" established in the 2018 NDS.²⁰

In the seven year period since the start of the Trump administration, this threshold was achieved four times – fiscal years (FY) 2017, 2020, as well fiscal years 2022 and 2023

¹⁷ *Hearing On Global Security Challenges and Strategy, Before the Senate Armed Services Committee, 117th Cong. 3 (2022)* (statement of Roger Zakheim, Director of the Ronald Reagan Institute). <https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/SASC%20Testimony%20Zakheim%202-27%20FINAL.pdf>.

¹⁸ Department of Defense, *Fiscal Year 2020 Budget Request*, 4. <https://media.defense.gov/2019/Mar/12/2002099931/-1/-1/1/FY-2020-BUDGET-ROLL-OUT-BRIEF.PDF>.

¹⁹ Dov S. Zakheim, "Biden's National Security Strategy: A Vision More Aspirational than Realistic," *The Hill*, October 21, 2022. <https://thehill.com/opinion/national-security/3698227-bidens-national-security-strategy-a-vision-that-is-more-aspirational-than-realistic/>.

²⁰ National Defense Strategy Commission, *Providing for the Common Defense: The Assessment and Recommendations of the National Defense Strategy Commission*, Washington DC, 2018. XII. <https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/2018-11/providing-for-the-common-defense.pdf>. Ironically, this baseline, first advanced by former Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Joe Dunford, was tied to a defense program that preceded the 2017 National Defense Strategy and had not fully absorbed the breadth and reach of the new strategy.

– and only when Congress stepped in to appropriate above the threshold in FY 2022 and 2023. The remaining years saw effectively flat or declining budgets.²¹ Had the U.S. sustained 5% growth annually from FY18-23 the Pentagon would have had an additional \$375 billion to help place the military in a substantially more favorable position than it is in today.²²

In 1981, the defense budget jumped from 4.5% of GDP to 5.7% of GDP and 6.5% of GDP in 1982.²³ Executing the NDS requires a similar jump from today's spending levels of just over 3% GDP to around 5% of GDP. This would address the declining buying power of the Pentagon due to rising personnel costs and the expense of maintaining an aged force structure that hampers modernization.²⁴ It would allow the military departments to upgrade and utilize today's assets in the day-to-day military competition with China and Russia while allowing technology investments to mature and integrate into the force without an intervening capability gap. At the strategic level, these funds would allow the military to focus on the Indo-Pacific while also supporting our security interests in Europe and the Middle East. Additionally, funding at this level would provide the capital necessary to upgrade and expand industrial capacity for key military contingencies.

Reforms that Build the Force

So where do DoD reform efforts fit into all of this? To win today and tomorrow we need a healthy topline COMBINED with robust reform efforts. Each is necessary and neither is sufficient. The metric for reform efforts should be whether they directly contribute to a more capable and lethal force. Too often within the Beltway, reform is a euphemism for top line budget cuts. So called "reform efforts" legitimize efforts like the Budget Control Act and sequestration which lead only to inefficient financial management myopically focused on cutting budgets to an artificially mandated statutory cap that inevitably sacrifices readiness and modernization, thereby weakening our national defense. If reform leads to savings they should be redistributed to the military's areas of greatest needs, such as modernization and industrial capacity, not to deficit reduction.

²¹ Office of Management and Budget, "Budget Authority by Function and Subfunction: 1976-2027," (Washington DC: Office of Management and Budget, 2022), https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/hist05z1_fy2023.xlsx.

²² These calculations assume a 5% inflation factor for FY 22-23.

²³ Office of Management and Budget, "Budget Authority by Function and Subfunction 1976-2027," https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/hist05z1_fy2023.xlsx; Office of Management and Budget, "Gross Domestic Product and Deflators Used in the Historical Tables: 1940-2027," https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/hist10z1_fy2023.xlsx.

²⁴ Mackenzie Eaglen, "The Paradox of Scarcity in a Defense Budget of Largesse," *American Enterprise Institute*, July 2022, 4, <https://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/The-Paradox-of-Scarcity-in-a-Defense-Budget-of-Largesse.pdf?x91208>.

The following are a number of impactful reforms that would swiftly clean and upgrade the DoD engine:

- End Continuing Resolutions (CR) - CRs probably waste more money than any other DoD inefficiency. If that is a political impossibility, Congress should grant far more waivers for new starts during a CR and multi-year appropriations so the work of building the force can continue.²⁵
- Multiyears procurements – Authorizing and appropriating multi-year procurements saves money, allows industry to build at scale and enhances industrial capacity. Multi-years should be the rule – not the exception; Congress can realize this reform with the stroke of a pen.
- Contracting – Volumes have been written (and ignored) on ways the Defense Department needs to reform its contracting practices. At the top of the list are: more competition; more use of MTAs and OTAs; reduced time delays imposed by DCMA and DCAA actions; and ensuring contracting for software is not treated in the same manner as contracting for hardware.
- PPBE Reforms– The much anticipated PPBE Reform Commission this committee created is taking a comprehensive look at reforming DoD's 1960s era budgeting system. Based on discussions with the commissioners, I am confident this commission will bring you a range of significant options that improve budgeting and congressional oversight. At the very least it should jettison the DoD's two year long budget building cycle in favor of dynamic budgeting practices employed by Fortune 500 companies.
- Modernize – The faster DoD modernizes its software, systems and platforms the less capital it will need to maintain an older, less capable force structure. This is the only way to reverse the vicious cycle where operations and maintenance spending, the single largest category in the defense budget, crowds out funding for R&D and procurement.

The Debt Ceiling Debate

As Congress debates how to manage spending amidst debt ceiling negotiations, it should be mindful that cutting defense to FY 2022 spending levels – about a 10% cut to the topline – will disproportionately sacrifice military readiness and modernization and severely reduce the capability of the force. It would render the defense strategy envisioned by either Trump or Biden completely unachievable. We would only have the capabilities to lead in one region, certainly not three. . It would reduce the American

²⁵ See Mackenzie Eaglen, "The Paradox of Scarcity in a Defense Budget of Largesse," 5. <https://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/The-Paradox-of-Scarcity-in-a-Defense-Budget-of-Largesse.pdf?x91208>. In FY22 the CR slashed \$16.9B in DoD purchasing power.

military to nothing more than a regional power, paving the way for Chinese aggression or Russian expansionism.²⁶ As this committee knows, making the Department of Defense more efficient is not the same as cutting military spending: the former is essential to strengthening the military, while the latter will hollow out the force.

Conclusion and Margin of Safety

The NDS seeks to preserve American peace and prosperity by building and sustaining a U.S. military that maintains, what President Reagan called, our margin of safety. This margin constitutes the minimum force required to accomplish our strategic objectives. Notably, it is not the most ambitious strategy: it does not seek military dominance everywhere at once, nor does it call for a force capable of winning two conflicts simultaneously. Rather it is a strategy prudently tailored to address the security needs of the country – not the political calculus of the moment – ensuring that no foreign power threatens our interests.

In 1981, this meant restoring the margin of safety the U.S. had lost against the Soviet Union. Today's challenges are more complex, in large part because China poses both economic and security challenges. To meet this moment, we need a defense investment capable of winning today and tomorrow that preserves our military advantage in the Indo-Pacific, Europe, and the Middle East. To those who say we can not afford such a force without sacrificing our prosperity, Reagan's response from four decades ago still rings true: "Our government must stop pretending that it has a choice between promoting the general welfare and providing for the common defense. Today they are one and the same."

²⁶ See, Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments and the Ronald Reagan Institute, "America's Strategic Choices: Defense Spending in a Post Covid-19 World," *Report: CSBA-RR1*, January 2021, 7-8. https://www.reaganfoundation.org/media/356490/rr1_csba-americas-strategic-choices.pdf. A 10% cut jeopardizes DOD's force construct that can win one war while deterring another. The United States would be reduced to a regional power or be forced to accept astronomical risks in other vital regions should war erupt.

Chairman REED. Thank you very much, Mr. Zakheim. Thank you to all the witnesses for your excellent testimony. All of your written statements will be made part of the record. Without objection, thank you. Dr. Hill, President Putin has made several speeches over the years where he has made it clear he wants to restore the Russian Empire.

So if he succeeds in the Ukraine, can we have reasonable certainty he will continue these efforts in other countries?

Dr. HILL. Well I think, Senator, that we can. He has already made it very clear, as you have discussed, that he is interested in acquiring territory in what was the former Russian empire.

As I mentioned in my opening remarks, we recognized Russia as the successor State to the Soviet Union, which was itself the suc-

cessors to the Russian Empire. In fact, we incorporated many of the territories that were lost after the Russian Revolution.

So Putin has made it very clear, of course, the priorities of the Slavic states, Belarus and Ukraine, but also Moldova.

We have just heard recently in the last few days, I am sure people have been reading the press reports that the Moldovan Government feels under incredible strain and has been getting intel itself that Russia is planning, some kind of aggression against them.

Of course, also Kazakhstan, because northern Kazakhstan was settled by Slavs, Ukrainians and Russians, in the Soviet period. So all of those countries feel a great deal of anxiety.

We can also say, of course, that our allies and partners in Poland, the Baltic states, which were forcibly taken into the Soviet Union during World War II, Finland, which was attacked by the Soviet Union 1939, 1940, and other countries in the neighborhood feel similarly threatened by this expansionary nature of Russian aims.

Putin has said the world needs to get used to the fact that Russia is territory expanding again. In fact, Sergei Lavrov, the Foreign Minister of Russia, has demanded that the rest of Europe accept these new realities.

So even if we were to have a settlement based on some kind of recognition of the frontier lines that are now holding on the front, even a temporary one, we should be very certain that Russia, under Putin, and the people around him will look for every opportunity to push beyond that at some time in the future.

In fact, that is what we have seen in Ukraine from the beginning, 2014 was the beginning of a process, not the end of Russia's territorial aims.

Chairman REED. Now, you mentioned settlement. Can you give us any indication of what it would take to get Putin to sit down and have some type of settlement?

Dr. HILL. Well, right now there is not much indication of that, just to be frank. I mean, I think this is a pretty grim picture, in part because Putin didn't feel deterred in the first place. I think all of us have mentioned here.

The other thing is that Putin also feels that he has a lot of support from the rest of the world, including from China. I think it would be very interesting to hear from Dr. Lin about really what China's views of this are now.

Because unfortunately, it may very well take countries like China pushing Russia for there to be any break in Putin's resolve at this particular moment. It would have to be, I think, other countries beyond the United States and its Western allies, demonstrating to Putin in some fashion behind the scenes or more directly, that this war is not in their interests and that they want him to move toward the negotiating table.

Right now, the circumstances on the ground are such that Putin really believes that he can push more manpower. This gets back to what Mr. Zakheim was already saying about the importance of looking at the battlefield. But we need to have a diplomatic initiative. We need to get the rest of the international community behind us in support of pushing Russia back.

Chairman REED. Thank you. I always recognize an excellent question. So, Dr. Lin, can you comment upon the Chinese reaction to Ukraine, and particularly their willingness at some point to step up and help contain. I would note that they made statements against the use of nuclear weapons, which are somewhat encouraging. Dr. Lin.

Dr. LIN. Sure, thank you. So, Senator Reed, if you recall at the very beginning of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the position that China took was, I would say, very, very much pro-Russia. A 2-day China decision is still that the United States and our NATO allies are responsible for Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

What we are seeing is some shift since last year of China's position in terms of not fully taking Russia's position politically, as China wants to salvage its relationship with particularly our European colleagues.

We are also seeing that there is increasing reporting of Chinese support by select smaller Chinese companies, for example, providing of surveillance equipment for the Wagner Group, as well as Russian operations in Ukraine. We also know that China's trade with Russia increased 34 percent last year.

So as we move forward, I think one thing we need to pay attention to is what might push China more in Russia's direction. I worry that as China looks at how strong our position is with our allies and partners, China may feel it needs a stronger partner internationally and doesn't have too many options, and Russia is unfortunately one of the partners that China is keen to keep.

Chairman REED. Doctor Zak—Mr. Zakheim, excuse me, I get confused. Can you comment briefly, very brief because my time is running out, about this, the issue of the dynamic between China and Russia.

Mr. ZAKHEIM. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the elevation. You know, we saw that around the Winter Olympics and they made this explicit when Putin and Xi met. We are not seeing it on the operational side in terms of the military support like we are seeing between Iran and Russia.

But I think, as my colleague pointed out, it is the diplomatic support, legitimizing, equivocating in terms of what is and is not permissible is where China, I think, is helping Russia the most. Legitimizing war crimes would be the first example I would point to.

Chairman REED. Thank you very much. Senator Wicker, please.

Senator WICKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Zakheim, you participated in the current development of the National Defense Strategy and the previous National defense strategy. Is that correct?

Mr. ZAKHEIM. I had an opportunity to be on the Defense Strategy Commission to review the former one, and we will review the present one.

Senator WICKER. In your testimony, you make a case for real growth in the defense budget. That's real purchasing power over and above what is being taken out by inflation, and you talk about measuring our defense contribution in terms of a percentage of the GDP.

Why is that a good way to measure it? You talked toward the end of your testimony, your written testimony, about how we could

still—we can do that and still achieve some real savings and efficiencies.

Mr. ZAKHEIM. Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. GDP, I think, is a good way to look historically of what our country, our Nation has devoted to national defense. As you know, we are below 3.5 percent GDP and declining in the out years.

Historically, we have been over 10 percent. During the Reagan buildup, we were between 5 and 6 percent.

I think the combination terms of where our military is today, and that is a force that hasn't actually been modernized since the Reagan buildup for a variety of reasons, either peace dividends or what we have spent on armed conflict, plus inflationary challenges, plus the national environment, which my colleagues have outlined in their testimony, requires doing this.

I think there are three fundamental pieces here that are required. I think of it as winning today, which is taking our conventional force and upgrading it. I think it is leveraging the technologies that will transform our military, that China is doing as well.

That requires a whole new suite of investments led by autonomy in every domain of warfare, and the third, as you have pointed out and lead on, Senator Wicker, industrial capacity. The reality that we have seen from Ukraine, it will play out. We are seeing it right now in terms of backlog in supporting Taiwan.

What we need for our own national defense, we just don't have the industrial capacity to keep up. If you add all three of them, Chairman, Ranking Member I wouldn't disagree with you, but I am not sure 5 percent real growth is enough to get there. What I am trying to get to is what the national defense strategy actually calls for.

This is what the defense strategy says it seeks to do in terms of leading in three regions of the world, being able to compete today, and to prevail one conflict, while holding another adversary preventing a second conflict. To do all that requires a force that we simply don't have today and capabilities we don't have enough of today.

Senator WICKER. Well, that is a very important statement you just made. So it really, in terms of what we need, we need to quantify exactly what we need to buy in the near and foreseeable future, and that might be more than 5 percent.

Mr. ZAKHEIM. I believe so. Ranking Member Wicker and Chairman Reed, I think this Committee, what you have done in terms of adding to the defense request has gone a long way. I know it is hard to do, but I don't believe it is insufficient.

Senator WICKER. Dr. Hill, what about that?

Dr. HILL. Well, I—obviously planning ahead and trying to foresee where we might end up is pretty difficult, given as Mr. Zakheim is talking about, the capacity issues that have been revealed by the war in Ukraine. I mean, right now, unfortunately, it is very hard to say how long this is going to continue.

But I think one thing that we do have to factor in here is, you know, sadly listening to Dr. Lin, it seems more and more likely that China and Russia will find their interests converging, as they

already have up until this date. But we might be actually dealing with problems on two fronts for a long time to come.

I think, you know, something to add to what Dr. Lin said is China has no interest in Russia losing in this war, and in fact, might in fact have a vested interest in this war going on in Ukraine as long as possible, because, of course, it does take up a large amount of equipment and armaments, particularly ammunition, as we now know, and the increasing demands from Ukraine, which are tied very much to the battlefield, for other equipment.

We have seen our other allies from Europe, not just NATO countries but others, stepping up to assist Ukraine here too. So there is a question about their production capacity. I think that we should factor in as well what the European militaries are going to require, too, because they are also dependent on our production.

Senator WICKER. Do you agree that the Russian offensive seems to have stalled? If there were a successful counter offensive by Ukraine in the next 2 to 3 months, China would pay attention to that and perhaps alter their ambitions.

Dr. HILL. It is possible. I think, again, we know that it is extraordinarily difficult now for the Ukrainians to dislodge the Russians from certain positions. They have dug in very heavily in Zaporizhzhia and Kherson.

We are seeing this World War I like fighting on the front line in the Donbass region. I think all of us are looking at this, not just military experts, but others see that this is going to be quite a grind.

I think China obviously is watching this very closely. The situation in Taiwan is quite difficult. This is a maritime challenge, not one of land warfare. Actually, one thing to bear in mind is the Russian navy has not really been affected by this. We are seeing these joint naval exercises with South Africa.

That is why I mentioned the importance of getting two middle powers and other friends in the global South with China and Russia that might show different kinds of offensives or actions that Russia could take to distract us from what is happening in Ukraine.

As I said, this is extraordinary difficult situation that we are in, but I think we would make a mistake if we think if China and what Russia is doing as two separate things. I think right now they are melded together and we have to have a 360 degree perspective around this, including what our other allies and partners can bring to the table.

Senator WICKER. Thank you, and thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Wicker. Senator Gillibrand, please.

Senator GILLIBRAND. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you all for your testimony. I want to drill down on this convergence of China, Russia, Iran, and the concerns that you have all expressed about how these world powers are aligning.

China has been projecting power in many ways for a long time the last 10 or 15 years. Their doubling of their military budget, their investment in Belt and Road initiative to create bases, create opportunities worldwide to project their power.

Russia has been projecting its power through an invasion of Ukraine. What they are doing in Moldova right now. A constant push of their power. Iran has been projecting its power through conflict, through the use of proxies, through constant malign activities. So I would like your recommendations on the best way to try to create a deterrence, a stronger deterrence against conflict.

Ways to establish the future or path to peace with all of these different regions. Specifically with addressing China, Dr. Lin, you talked about building up our allies, our partners to maximize our deterrence capabilities and demonstrate a united front in the region. I would love some more specific ideas about how best to do that, whether that means basing agreements for deployments, whether that means any other alignment that you think is useful as a way to promote deterrence.

I would also like to hear about ways that we may be able to deter Iran and Russia. One of the ideas I would like your thoughts on is the Abraham Accords, specifically as a way to create a regional alliance across the Middle East against Iran, to counter Iran, and also to push those Middle East countries from aligning with China.

Because when we are absent, the gap is filled and we don't want that gap being filled by China. Many of our allies, that gap was filled by Russia. Russia gives them their weapons. Russia makes different kinds of investments, and when we don't participate in these international agreements and collaborations, the gap is filled by, unfortunately, others who do not align with our interests or values.

So I would like your thoughts on each of these questions, and your best recommendations for how do we create long term alignments for peace? How do we deter conflict, especially with China, and especially with Iran in the future?

Dr. LIN. Thank you, Senator. I can take a quick stab at the range of questions, excellent questions that you had. You mentioned the China, Russia, Iran alignment. I would just note that the stronger of them is between China and Russia, whereas the China, Iran one is one that is still growing.

If you look today, the Iranian President is actually in China meeting with Xi Jinping. One of the reasons why he is there is because of the fact that he wants to make sure that China can move as fast as possible on the major agreements that were signed last year.

He also recognizes that China is trying to do somewhat of a balancing act in the Middle East with the fact that China is heavily dependent on oil from Saudi Arabia and also recently signed major agreements with the Gulf Cooperation Council.

So I would just note that the China, Iran relation is one to watch, but I don't think it is, from China's view, as strategically important as Russia right now, given the fact that Russia is significantly much more powerful than Iran, and also besides that Russia is China's neighbor.

In terms of what the United States can do to further bolster our alliances and partnerships, what we already—we already have many developments underway. A couple that I will highlight that I think are worth very much following up on is recently we saw the

greater alignment between NATO and four East Asian countries, South Korea, Japan, Australia, New Zealand.

My understanding is NATO seeks to normalize that. We should try to support that as much as possible, increasing, as Dr. Hill mentioned, increasing the linkages between our European allies and partners, and our critical allies in the Indo-Pacific.

I would also note there has been consideration of whether Japan might join AUKUS. All of these developments that we already have underway we should continue. For example, United States, Japan, Australia, trilateral, the United States, ROK, Japan trilateral. All of these are incredibly important in terms of our positioning in the Indo-Pacific. Thank you.

Dr. HILL. I would like to agree with what my colleague, Dr. Lin, has just said about the importance of creating all the linkages with the various alliance structures and partnerships that we already have.

One of the things that I probably should have mentioned before about Russia's aims throughout this war and Ukraine is to begin to create new alliances for Russia as well.

As Dr. Lin pointed out, Russia is one of the few close partners of China at this point, but that is the same for Russia. Although Russia has emphasized a great deal in terms of partnership building in Middle East, for example, in other parts of East Asia, and Latin and South America, trying to revitalize old Soviet ties, the close relationship between Russia and Iran has been a problem there.

Senator, as you pointed out with the Abraham Accords, one of the main factors for those Accords was, of course, opposition to Iran and Iran's role in the region. If Russia remains the only power that has relations with Iran, that will actually become a problem in its other relationships over time, including with Israel and some of its other close partners, the UAE, for example.

So I think we do absolutely have to find ways in which we can work with these sort of middle powers, and others that, so far are trying to sit on the fence and watch us from a distance because they frankly don't want to choose sides.

India is one of those countries that has a crisis at the moment because India's relationships with Russia were an important counterpart for India against China. Of course, the closer the China and Russia pull together, the more untenable India's own security position becomes.

We should also pay attention to the so-called BRICS, Brazil, Russia and India. I have already said China and South Africa. I mentioned already this, but the new naval exercises that South Africa and Russia and China are conducting, I mean, we should make it very clear to South Africa that that is just not acceptable.

Other countries should be doing that, too. It shouldn't just be the United States stepping out there. We have just had President Biden visiting with President Lula in Brazil. Brazil is eager to take a larger international role.

We should try to capitalize upon that. We need to really think about how we can reinvigorate our own relationships with middle powers on countries in all of the key areas of Asia, Latin and South America, and Africa.

That should be part of our strategy, and one area in which we could focus on this. It is not perhaps in the mandate of this particular committee, but is focusing on the combination of fuel, food, and fertilizer.

Because one of the key things that we have seen as a result of this war in Ukraine is how important Ukraine, Russia, Kazakhstan, the Black Sea area for global food supplies, fertilizer, which is, of course, tied together, and also flows of fuel.

This is where we really have a lot of leverage with other powers, because they have been dependent on all of those flows and have been very concerned about the impact of this war. This also includes China, which was a major investor in Ukraine prior to the outbreak of war, particularly in the agricultural sector.

So there may be something there that we can look up as a recommendation for emphasizing in our outreach.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Gillibrand. Mr. Zakheim, for the record, you can submit something, if you would. Thank you. Senator Fischer, please.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Zakheim, what do you see as being the primary lessons learned from the war in Ukraine thus far?

Mr. ZAKHEIM. The number one lesson is that we are—should stand and we will advance our interests by standing with Ukraine. That aggression needs to be countered, and if we do so, that is not going to be escalatory, but in fact, stabilizing.

I think the best thing we can do for our national interests is to see Russia defeated in Ukraine. This Committee and this Congress has done a lot to support Ukraine in realizing that.

I think we have to start measuring our support for Ukraine by the particular weapons platform that is on the table and think more broadly and strategically, what is our aim, what is our goal?

The goal is to roll back Russia, to support Ukraine in their counter-offensive, and we should be supporting them with the necessary munitions and platforms to realize that objective.

That will return security and stability to Europe and deter Vladimir Putin. He has never been deterred because he has never had to deal with a counter to his aggression. We have talked about 2014 Crimea.

As the Senator knows, start in 2008 with Georgia. This is the first time we have had the counter, and we need to pull it, and support it through to the end.

Senator FISCHER. One thing that I have been focused on from the very beginning is our munitions capacity, and the production that we see, when you say—I thought you kind of glossed over that on your answer, and I think there is a real and urgent need to expand munition production capacity as quickly as possible, not just to address the ongoing war that we see in Ukraine.

What additional steps do you think you would recommend to Congress to consider to overcome our current limitations that we have on that capacity?

Mr. ZAKHEIM. Well, Senator, I agree with you and did not mean to gloss it over. In fact, I share your view that this is an urgent problem. It is an urgent problem in Ukraine. It is an urgent problem in Taiwan.

Many of those munitions and capabilities, we now need in those two theaters, but we also need here at home. As you are fully aware, we don't have that capacity, both in terms of what we need for current scenario planning and also for surge capacity.

I think this Committee started it in this past year's National Defense Authorization Bill, but it is limited. Most important thing this Congress could do, and I know I am preaching to the converted here in authorizing committee, but multiyear procurement. I think you saw a lot of this.

If you are able to buy things over the course of three or 4 years, you would make it cheaper. You know, that is an efficiency that I know Senator Wicker is focused on, other Members of this Committee.

But at scale, an industrial capacity, this is capital intensive investments, not just to get the particular ammunition that can be produced on the curved production line, but it is multiple production line. Senator, as you know, it is not just about munitions.

The most important capability for a Taiwan scenario, and I assume Dr. Lin would agree, is our undersea capability. We are retiring our undersea capability at a faster rate than we are producing them. That, in its essence, is a capital problem, focused, you know, around industrial capacity, Senator.

Senator FISCHER. I agree with you, and that was the reason that I was able to get the amendment in the NDAA, to address that problem specifically.

On this Committee, and this for all of our panelists, on this committee we have been debating and changing security dynamics, in particular the return of great power competition.

What do you see as being implications that we have for our military in that regard, and how do you think the events that we have seen play out over the past year may have changed your view of that discussion? Dr. Lin, would you like to start?

Dr. LIN. Thank you. So in terms of great power competition and looking at the China dynamic, I think if I could add really quickly to what China is learning from Ukraine, I think what China is seeing is how long a war can occur.

Related to the Taiwan scenario, and what the United States needs to do, is we need to make sure that we are not expending all of our ammunition, that is within a very short period of time.

Recently CSIS [Center for Strategic and International Studies] did extensive war gaming, and we found, given our current stocks, they would run out within 2 weeks. If we are expecting a Taiwan conflict to last more than that, we definitely need to buildup our defense industrial base, as well as both the surge capacity, as well as the capacity to be able to have more of these stocks pre-positioned in the region.

In terms of great power competition, what I am seeing from China's end, particularly after Speaker Pelosi's visit to Taiwan last August, is a greater willingness on China's end to use limited demonstration of military force to express its displeasure.

What it is taking away from Russia's invasion of Ukraine and why it thinks Russia needed to invade Ukraine was that it saw that Russian efforts at diplomacy with our NATO allies and with the United States failed.

If you don't believe that diplomacy can allow you to achieve your aims, then you have to think about a greater use of military force, including demonstrations of force, at smaller scale.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you. Dr. Hill.

Dr. HILL. Thank you so much, Senator Fischer. Again, I concur with my colleagues here on the panel. Actually, I want to pick up on something that Mr. Zakheim absolutely was right in emphasizing, but in fact, all of this started in 2008 with Russia's move into Georgia.

In fact, we have had 15 years of this phase of great power competition, if that is how we want to call it, that we should have been paying closer attention to. We thought that was an aberration.

It turned out not to be. What we have to recognize here is obviously we are in a very different competition, if that is what we want to call it, from Russia and China. Russia has been in the process of revanchism and revisionism, trying to overturn a territorial order in Europe.

Of course, Russia—China is similarly engaged with Taiwan, who is obviously of a different nature, but also territorial claims against many of its neighbors, Japan, Vietnam, and others in the South China Seas. The United States is not in that position of territorial acquisition.

Again, I think part of the message that we have to get across all the time, notwithstanding all the accusations that we have from previous U.S. actions and at different times in our history, is that we are actually trying to maintain the current international order, which means the territorial integrity of all of the recognized states. That is different.

That should enable us to build a coalition of other countries, including middle powers, to push back against the actions of China and Russia, and specifically of Russia at this juncture, but China over the future.

So we all have to focus on how when we are answering these questions, we are going to work with our allies in all of these different alignments that we have already talked about, in NATO, with all AUKUS, expanding that out, and also trying to push, as I mentioned before, countries like South Africa away from contemplating the kind of activities that they are now engaging in.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator. Senator Shaheen, please. Thank you, Senator Fischer.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, and thank you to each of you for being here today. Mr. Zakheim, I couldn't agree more about multiyear procurement. It would also help if people could count on our getting a budget done every year. That would be a good first start, so I hope all of us on this committee will take that to heart.

Ms. Hill, or Dr. Hill, Belarus has seemingly been reluctant to embrace Putin's war in Ukraine, but Russia continues to use the territory in Belarus to stage its an invasion.

Can you briefly tell me how Putin views his relationship with Lukashenko, and whether we expect Belarus to engage to a greater level in the war in Ukraine in the future?

Dr. HILL. Thank you, Senator Shaheen. It is actually very important for us to remember Belarus, because it still is technically an independent country, but as you were mentioning, it has been used

as a staging ground for this conflict by Ukraine—for Ukraine by Russia.

We also know, of course, that President Lukashenko of Belarus has been in some political difficulty in the most recent elections, and there is a lot of questions about whether he was, in fact, actually elected.

We had a large opposition movement that emerged, and this will continue to be questions about his long-term grip on power. What we do know, of course, is that he has become increasingly dependent for political and economic support for Russia, which is why Belarussian sovereignty is now being used.

I think Russia was also a model for what Putin wanted to achieve in Ukraine and still remain so. You know, we have probably forgotten that several decades ago, Belarus and Russia entered into a union State.

Nobody quite knew what that meant, but it was obviously one in which Russia dominates all of Belarus's security policy and politics and economics. That was clearly what Putin wanted with Ukraine after the initial phases of the invasion.

He wanted to do the same thing. So I think that we need to focus on Belarus and thinking forward as well.

Senator SHAHEEN. Excuse me for interrupting, but so do we think Lukashenko is going to bow to Putin's getting the country further engaged in the war in Ukraine?

Dr. HILL. I think he has limits to what he can actually do. He is dependent on Putin for propping him up on the one hand, but on the other, he has such a level of opposition. We are seeing Belarusians fighting for Ukrainians.

We have got a lot of Belarussian opposition in the Baltic states, in Poland and elsewhere. I think Lukashenko knows that if he used the country, or let the country be used as a platform for yet another set of invasions of Ukraine and actually then committed Belarussian forces, that he would face severe problems at home.

I think all the signs are that he is trying to shift his way toward the exit. I mean, he is been flashing sort of signals behind the scenes that he would like to do something different. The challenge is trying to figure out how to facilitate that under the current circumstances.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. Given the turmoil in the world right now, are there opportunities that we should be trying to take advantage of?

Obviously, in Syria, for example, the devastation of the earthquake has finally allowed or forced Assad to open up some more avenues into the country for humanitarian aid.

You talk, I think, Dr. Lin and Dr. Hill, each of you talked a little bit about the opportunities with some of our Asian partners to get closer together to address China. But are there other opportunities that we ought to be looking at in this turmoil and trying to take advantage of?

Dr. HILL. I will just say very quickly, in addition to those that you have outlined, because I think those are genuine opportunities, that we should also take a much harder look at all of the web of our relationships in the Western Hemisphere, for example.

One of the issues that we discovered under the last Administration when we had the crisis in Venezuela was that regional countries were not well-disposed toward the United States, in part because we failed to have a coherent policy toward our neighbors in Latin and South America.

We focused on problems rather than how we can build those relationships up. I think with the shift to President Lula in Brazil, this provides more of an opportunity because he is traditionally been much more interested in international affairs.

We also have opportunities in Mexico and in other countries to try to work with them looking forward. Our big problem is that 87 countries around the world, including many of our neighbors in Latin and South America still tend to have visa free regimes with Russia.

They are looking toward Russia and China for investment and sometimes assistance. We could work on that front as well. Thank you. Mr. Zakheim.

Mr. ZAKHEIM. Senator, I just would add that, and I know you do a lot of work on this, allies. I mean, there is no better way, in order to engage allies and allies more willing to work with us, than when you have revanchist powers invading other countries. They are playing out in terms of what the CCP is doing.

Certainly with Russia, you see Finland and Sweden, and then of course, as was mentioned, what the opportunities we have in the Indo-Pacific. I would add that we need to give these are more meat.

You know, the AUKUS framework is a great example, but other types, particularly industrial cooperation, how we deal with supply chain challenges in terms of impacts to the military, we are not making these alliances and relationships meaningful enough for the current security environment.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Shaheen. Senator Rounds, please.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to all of you for taking the time to visit with us today. My question will focus specifically on NATO and our obligations under Article 5, and the impact that we could see should we have to respond.

Assuming the possibility exists that a belligerent Putin attack or at least he has interest in perhaps expanding out of Ukraine and into one of our other allied countries that are part of NATO, what would be the probability, in your estimation, that we would also find ourselves not only legally obligated to respond in that area, but just very briefly, what do you believe the probability is of us having to also respond in short order to another conflict area regarding China?

Just the probability, and I am just going to do right down the line. Dr. Lin.

Dr. LIN. Thank you. So I think the possibility of a large scale conflict, two simultaneous, large scale conflicts are relatively low right now, mainly because we are not seeing clear signs yet that China coordinates its plans for Taiwan on what Russia is doing in Ukraine.

Because if we did see that, we would have seen significant more use of force by China against Taiwan in the past year or so.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you. Dr. Hill.

Dr. HILL. I think in addition to what Dr. Lin has said within the NATO realm in Europe, we are actually seeing Russia being quite cautious. Notwithstanding the brutality on the ground in Ukraine, we haven't yet seen some of the things that people were worried about in terms of talks of convoys going in to Ukraine from NATO countries. There were reports, of course, of missiles from the Black Sea going over potentially to—Moldova.

Senator ROUNDS. But my question is, should we have to respond under Article 5. Assuming we had to respond under Article 5, what is the probability of having a second front open up? What would be that probability on the other side of the world?

Dr. HILL. On the other side of the world, as I think Dr. Lin has said, I think that is quite low. I think in Europe what we are seeing is Russia is more likely to keep on trying with cyber, political, and economic intrusions than more military expansion because of Russia's own concerns about having to respond to too many fronts at the same time.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you.

Dr. LIN. If I could add quickly, I meant to say it is low now, but it would be increasing over time.

Senator ROUNDS. As we get closer to perhaps the 2027 timeframe.

Dr. LIN. But also as the United States-China competition intensifies, as China will be thinking, well, what are the best ways—if we need to use force, they will be thinking if the United States is distracted, it is a better opportunity for us to use force.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you.

Mr. ZAKHEIM. Senator Rounds, I am a little less sanguine than my colleagues here. This scenario that you have raised, the simultaneity problem is one that our defense strategy struggles with. As you know, we shifted away from building a force that could deal with two major regional contingencies.

What that did, as you know, raised the salience of nuclear weapons, a dangerous scenario. But that is what our approach is. If we are in one fight, the way we are going to hold off the other fight for the most part is rely on allies and rely on our nuclear deterrent. That is a place we don't want to be.

So winning in Ukraine is key here because it pins down Vladimir Putin, weakens his military, and reduces the likelihood we face the same simultaneity problem, which you have raised here.

But I am not sanguine. I think what we saw in the Winter Olympics, and this China, Russia axis presents the very problem that you are thinking about.

Senator ROUNDS. Following up on that, should we find ourselves in that type of a position, and we would be required to—I have always said, look, nobody wants to use nuclear weapons, but the best way not to have to use nuclear weapons is to be just overwhelming in our capabilities.

We are currently in the middle of upgrading our NC3. What would be, Dr. Zakheim, what would be your opinion as to our process in the upgrading, and what should we be working on or focused on right now with regard to our nuclear capabilities on the triad?

Mr. ZAKHEIM. Well, I think this Committee has done a great job of modernizing the triad. Of course, it is not happening fast enough, and you know that, the Committee gets the briefings on it.

I thought the Nuclear Posture Review was good. It certainly didn't change the doctrine. But we are still stuck at the strategic level. As you know, Senator, the Chinese and the Russians are modernizing not only at the strategic level, but also kind of at the theater level, intermediate level, tactical weapons, and we are behind there.

I think what that does is introduce the possibility and elicits a form of escalation that none of us would ever want.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am up against my time limit.

Chairman REED. Thank you very much, Senator Rounds. Senator Hirono, please.

Senator HIRONO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I thank all of the panelists. Clearly, there are many demands on our resources. That is an understatement. I would consider a foundational concern to be the need to invest in our infrastructure, which is not only a matter of geopolitical competition, but also the readiness of the force—the forces.

As chair of the subcommittee on Readiness, improving our military's readiness is a top priority. In the last year, let me give you some examples, there have been numerous issues with the military's infrastructure in Hawaii, from water main breaks to toxic chemical leaks and spills endangering our groundwater.

I know that these kinds of events are not particular to Hawaii, even across the country. We need to better maintain and modernize our DOD infrastructure to take care of our people, get our systems out of maintenance on time, and be able to support national security.

I will start with Dr. Lin. It is clear that INDOPACOM, AOR infrastructure needs to be modernized. Can you elaborate on the importance of our infrastructure for our national security, especially in the Pacific?

Dr. LIN. So our infrastructure in the Indo-Pacific, particularly the fact that we are now investing in much more resilient and dispersed basing is absolutely critical, particularly as we look at the range of missiles, the hundreds.

I think right now is based on what DOD release last year. The range of the missiles that China has in its vicinity is clearly around 2,000 or so. The range of missiles that China can bring to bear means that in any fight, whether it is over Taiwan, we will need to be able to be able to disperse our assets so we are not reliant on any particular base.

In order to be able to maintain that we can function for in particular airfields, we need harden our infrastructure. We also need to work with our allies and partners to make sure that we have the capabilities to quickly repair, for example, runways and other facilities. So it is absolutely critical to the fight.

Senator HIRONO. We basically, from what I can see, and especially with the examples of what is happening in Hawaii, we have aging infrastructure, which we tend to ignore until something

breaks, and then you have Tripler Hospital, which is the main military hospital, not have water or not have electricity. We can't have that and maintain readiness.

So I hope the other two panelists agree that even as we need to pay attention to other aspects of keeping our military ready, that let's not forget about some of these foundational concerns. I want to get to again, Dr. Lin, a key foundation of our national defense strategy is integrated deterrence, which highlights the need to work cooperatively with our allies.

A number of you have already emphasized how important it is to strengthen our allies and partners, to strengthen our economic, cultural, and defense relationships. It is all of a piece because we can't just focus on the mil to mil relationships.

We can deter aggression in the Pacific, for example, with our network of allies and partners, including increased posture forward and greater opportunities to conduct training in the region.

Dr. Lin, between the recently announced access agreements with the Philippines, the United States basing the historic AUKUS agreement to share nuclear propulsion information and work on emerging technologies, and the current renegotiation of the compacts of freely associated states, the Administration is taking large steps forward and strengthening our relationships in the important Indo-Pacific region. What kind of message do these steps send to both China and our regional partners?

Dr. LIN. Thank you. So our efforts to strengthen relations, whether it is on the defense front or on the political front, it sends a message of reassurance to our allies and partners that are looking to us to help them, to help deter Chinese coercion and deter Chinese aggression.

What I would note is China is watching these efforts very, very closely. While it does have a deterrent effort, it is also causing China to think, well, how do we counter this?

As China looks at this, what China is looking for is what they find as the weakest link among our allies and partners, and also they probably also have in their mind thinking, well, do we also need the same sort of partnerships and alliances?

That is where, again, returning back to the China-Russia relationship. As China is watching what we are doing with our allies and partners, it must be in Beijing thinking, well, we need to definitely have our own partnerships and Russia is definitely one of them that China needs to keep.

Senator HIRONO. So how important is our relationship with the Pacific Island nations, i.e. our compact partners?

Dr. LIN. Senator, absolutely important, because, as you know, China is trying to increase its military presence there. As the PLA becomes more or more active, it is now venturing much more beyond the first island chain into the second island chain.

So if we are able to deny China a military base within the second island chain area, that would allow the United States to continue to flow our forces into the region much more easily than if China, for example, had a military base on the Solomon Islands.

It would also make it much easier for us to support some of our key allies there, including Australia.

Senator HIRONO. Dr. Hill and Mr. Zakheim, do you agree that we can do a lot more with our Island nation partners, i.e. Marshall Islands, the Micronesia, Palau, and other island nations?

Mr. ZAKHEIM. Yes.

Dr. HILL. Absolutely.

Senator HIRONO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you very much, Senator Hirono. Senator Tuberville, please.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Zakheim, how would you assess our military recruitment, with all the politics we have added into it in the last few years?

Mr. ZAKHEIM. We are below where we need to be, Senator.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Another question here on spending. In 2023, the Department of Defense, we spent \$163 billion on procurement, \$139 billion on research and development. Don't you think that is a little bit much on research and development as compared to building machines and ammunition to fight wars?

Mr. ZAKHEIM. Well, Senator, I think we need to do better on procurement, as your question suggests.

The R&D [research and development] is critical for the military we need for tomorrow, but we also need to emphasize the transition of our current force, and getting the software it needs and the AI infusion that is going to be critical to making these platforms useful in some of the scenarios we are discussing here.

My own view is that the strategy is right, is we should focus on today and tomorrow, and the procurement needs to go up, Senator.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Yes, sometimes you worry about tomorrow, today, and tomorrow never happens, and it is dangerous, the world we live in now with all the hotspots.

Also with the risk posed by our Army and Navy's efforts to divest, you know, and especially in the SSGN [subsurface guided nuclear], we are going to do away with one a year, which carries 154 Tomahawk missiles, and we are going to transition over to a boat that carries 40 missiles. Are we gambling here on this research that we are just talking about?

Mr. ZAKHEIM. Yes, again, I don't have an issue with levels of research, but I agree with you, Senator, that we are not doing enough on the procurement side to keep pace with retirements.

You are right that the capability, both in terms of total number of boats and in terms of the tubes, in terms of what the boat could deliver is a huge problem for us in the Taiwan scenario.

It goes to procurement, as you point out, the multi-year piece, the fact that we can't build as many as we are retiring. Ultimately, I think this is capital required for industrial capacity improvement here, Senator.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Doctor, you got a comment on that?

Dr. HILL. I would just urge us to be really still emphasizing research as well as infrastructure that Senator Hirono also mentioned.

As Dr. Lin said, our adversaries look out for the weakest links and we can be sure that China is spending an awful lot of money right now on research and development, including trying to get access to our own IP [intellectual property] and our other research

as well. We can only really keep ahead, as you said, because there is always a risk that tomorrow never comes.

We can only ever really keep ahead of our adversaries by being on the cutting edge. That is why America has always succeeded in the past, because we have managed to find a balance between the needs of today and what we think is coming across the horizon tomorrow.

I think in a basic infrastructure, as the Senator pointed out, is pretty critical. We have just seen with what has happened in the earthquake in Turkey, how important roads are, port facilities, for example, how easily they can be destroyed. We need to be looking at where all our weak links are and what we can do to shore them up.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Thank you. Just one quick question, Mr. Zakheim on Ukraine and Russia, I have been perplexed for a year of what—how Putin has fought this war. He probably had some good thoughts about it. He kind of tiptoed into it. Do you think he is having second thoughts about not doing shock and awe like we did in Iraq?

Mr. ZAKHEIM. I think that was the original plan, and he realized that the military thought he had was not the one that was on the ground.

Now I think the strategy has changed, as we are all reading, Senator, which is he is going to fight us for as long as it takes and allow his people to mow down until they are able to advance inch by inch, foot by foot.

I think we, that is the side of freedom, Ukraine and its supporters, the West, the United States need to take advantage of this opportunity by speedily getting the platforms and capabilities in there not to allow this become a war of attrition.

Senator TUBERVILLE. This next wave of fighting that we are getting ready to have, don't you think, is going to be more of a precision fight, ISR [intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance]. We are talking about tanks and stuff. Those things aren't going to last very long if we go that direction.

Mr. ZAKHEIM. Well, I think that is where the future of warfare is. We are going to see whether what you are describing is able to roll back Russian forces, which are actually embedded and encamped and dug into territory.

I think that is why the Ukrainians need more of these conventional forces like tanks. I think they would also benefit from fighter aircraft as well to dislodging the Russian positions.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Because of the 500,000 troops Russia has got on the border, is that what you are saying?

Mr. ZAKHEIM. They are going to keep on pushing them in.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Yes. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you. Senator Tuberville. Senator King, please.

Senator KING. Thank you. First, I want to welcome Senator Tuberville from the end of the row. He is now no longer at the end of the—Senator Tuberville, welcome to the—from not being on the end of the row, as you have been very ably—

Senator TUBERVILLE. It got very lonely on that end, especially with this big room that we had. Thank you.

[Laughter.]

Senator KING. Mr. Zakheim, first, I want to thank you for your organization and leadership of the Reagan Defense Forum, which is a really important part of thinking through some of these strategic questions.

Here is my question. It strikes me, as you look back at the Ukraine conflict, that if you combine the Ukrainians' will to fight with the resources of the West and the United States, Putin really in the long run doesn't stand a chance.

It strikes me that Putin's best hope now is dividing the West and dividing the United States. Do you think that is a legitimate concern?

Mr. ZAKHEIM. I absolutely think that is part of the Putin strategy. I think he also questions the will of the West to continue to support Ukraine.

Senator KING. That is what I mean—

Mr. ZAKHEIM. Absolutely, yes. I agree with that.

Senator KING. He wants to divide us, get us tired of the conflict, and then he is just going to win through the passage of time.

Mr. ZAKHEIM. I think that is his approach, Senator. I agree.

Senator KING. You mentioned, you used the word a few minutes ago, speedily. One of my concerns is that, for example, with the tanks, our response has been slow and then we have to go through training.

I am worried right now at this moment that the Russians are preparing for a major offensive in the East that the Ukrainians aren't going to be ready for because they don't have the equipment.

In other words, we have telegraphed to them that we don't have the tanks there yet and they are going to try to take advantage of this gap. Is that something of concern?

Mr. ZAKHEIM. Yes, and I think the unclassified information I have reviewed certainly suggests that. The way I think about it, Senator, is the strategy here is to help Ukraine realize a counter-offensive, to break through that Russian line that is emerging in the Donbass.

To do that, we should give them all the capabilities necessary. Tanks is one example. Fourth generation fighter aircraft is another. We tend to think about the platform and get stuck rather thinking about the strategy.

If we trust Ukraine to restore its sovereign territory, then we should trust some of the platforms to do that, and not worry they are going to use the platform for some other purpose or escalate the battle beyond the territory of Ukraine.

Senator KING. Have the Ukrainians been respectful of those limitations in terms of escalating the battle into Russia?

Mr. ZAKHEIM. Best that I can tell, yes. There have been some debates, I believe, on the margins, but it has always been focused on within the sovereign territory of Ukraine.

Senator KING. Dr. Hill, I know you touched on this. It worries me, looking at a map yesterday, the Belarus border is about 60 miles from Kiev. If I were Putin, I would be very tempted to try to have another offensive toward Kiev and the decapitation of the government. I take it you believe that Belarusian politics and the regional balance does not raise the level of risk of that happening?

Dr. HILL. Well, look, I think the risk is always there because, of course, Belarus and its President Lukashenko are very much dependent on Russia at this particular point. Of course, there is an awful lot of troops.

I think that the pressures inside Belarus, political pressures would make it very difficult for Lukashenko to contemplate this. This would also be a huge alarm bell for all of the other former Soviet republics.

I mean, if Belarus is been actually deployed in this war, I think we are going to see a pretty aggressive response from others as well.

Senator KING. Based upon the intelligence that we saw a year ago, we would know if the Russians were moving significant forces in that direction.

Dr. HILL. Yes, we have seen buildup, you know, getting back to what Senator Tuberville was talking about before, about the placement of men and equipment there. Looks like some of them are being trained. But we haven't seen particularly at the moment that we are expecting waves of people going over the Belarusian border. But we mustn't rule it out.

Senator KING. In fact, that ties one of—part of the strategy probably of those deployments is to tie the Ukrainians down to some extent, defending that border rather than putting all their forces in the East and the South.

Dr. HILL. Absolutely, and Putin is at pains all the time to still raise the threat to Kiev itself of another assault. I think getting back to what Mr. Zakheim said before about not being sanguine about anything actually. We have to be continuously vigilant and continue to look at the intelligence about any of these contingencies.

Senator KING. Dr. Lin, final question. The key to the success thus far of the Ukrainians has been their amazing courage and will to fight. What do you assess of—how do you assess the will to fight of the people of Taiwan and their leadership? Is there leadership of the Churchillian quality of Zelenskyy? Or are they closer to, let's say, Gandhi?

Dr. HILL. That is an excellent question, Senator. I think Taiwan is strengthening its will to fight. It's being very encouraging for Taiwan to look at what Ukraine has accomplished, and it is instilling more confidence in the Taiwan people.

I would also note that unlike Ukraine, where folks could leave the land, Taiwan is surrounded by water. So even if we are not necessarily seeing the strong will now, when push comes to shove, I think many people in Taiwan will find they have no escape routes and they need to fight for their home.

Senator KING. Thank you. Thank you all very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator King. Senator Scott, please.

Senator SCOTT. I want to thank each of you for being here. I come from Florida. We have got 21 bases and three unified commands. Military is a pretty big deal, especially in our panhandle, but all across our State.

So you look at the Chinese spy balloon, you look at them build a military to defeat us, you would think that American citizens

would start waking up and saying we are to stop buying things from communist China because seems like they are taking the money they make to go—eventually defeat us is what their goal, so I guess the first thing is, do you think Americans are to stop buying things made in communist China because it ultimately flows to the Chinese Communist Party and it can hurt us? I mean, what do you all think?

Dr. HILL. Sure. So I think we definitely, the U.S. Government is already imposing significant restrictions on export of technology that could be used, as far as we know, to fuel military civil fusion in China, as well as the PLA. With respect to technology below that, I think there is still a lot of advantage that Americans actually get from the cheaper products from China.

Senator SCOTT. But doesn't China get a benefit?

Dr. HILL. For some of the more cheaper products, not as much, but definitely on the higher end, China is benefiting more. So we need to desegregate where we want to limit our exports to China and where exports to China or buying from China could actually benefit United States consumers and United States citizens.

Mr. ZAKHEIM. Senator, I might add that I agree with the way Dr. Lin framed it. It is the strategic decoupling that is key. We have failed, and as you know, you have led on this in the Senate, to make sure that we are not giving China the types of capabilities through our commerce that enhance the top tip of the spear for part of their military.

But we also have an interest in making China dependent on older technologies, and the scale of our exports to China in some ways could benefit us, but certainly on the military side, those elements, and I think we are seeing some good things out of the Bureau of Industry and Security and Commerce that are starting to put up walls, but it has taken way too long.

Senator SCOTT. Do you think that China thinks we are getting weaker or stronger in relative to them? How do you think their leadership thinks?

Mr. ZAKHEIM. What I have read, and the way that they are planning is that they think they can beat us, particularly in the Taiwan scenario.

Senator SCOTT. Right. What about, you read all this and what you hear is that how much time was put in on woke, having to woke military. It seems to me I have always thought we ought to have—I served in the Navy. I thought our job was to be a lethal military, that people are scared to death of us.

So do you think that—what do you think the government of China thinks when they read that we are focused on pronouns and things like that rather than how we have the most lethal military force?

Mr. ZAKHEIM. Senator, I think the defense strategy is clear on this and it starts with Secretary Mattis, we need to focus on being the most lethal force, as you point out, focusing on the core mission. Anybody in the U.S. military wants to focus on their mission.

We have done polling at the Reagan Institute, the Reagan National Defense survey. Politicization is a problem. The American people have reduced trust and confidence in the military because they believe the military is politicized.

The more we can do to allow our military, our men and women in uniform to focus on warfighting, the better it will be for our military and the more it will deter China.

Dr. HILL. I would like to make a comment that look, I am afraid that the more that we have partisan and political fights, the more adversaries think that we are weak. I have made that point many times in public before. They watch all of this and frankly, they think we have lost it.

So the more I am afraid that we make statements like this, the more that we start attacking our fellow Americans for whatever perspective we think they come from, the more that Russia and China think that we are working ourselves out of history.

They watch all of this very carefully, but not in the ways that you think. I think China and Russia do know that we still can be lethal, but we are most lethal when we get our act together and that we are all Americans fighting together on one side. That is what our adversaries and our friends are looking to us.

They would like us to get over all of these fights that we are having internally, and so, I mean, I would just urge to—I don't understand what that label means. I am trying not to use labels. I think the more that we can stand up and just show that we are Americans in solidarity, the more we will be able to have a deterrent effect on our adversaries, and more will bring our friends behind us, because they are watching us and thinking, has America lost the plot at this moment?

Senator SCOTT. So I just—we stopped the vaccine mandate just recently in December. One of the issues I think a lot of us have been focused on is how do we reinstate people that were discharged and how do we make sure they are not put in an adverse monetary position. We have a problem with retention.

We have a problem with recruitment. So how much do you think it would be important that we let people come back in, that for religious or health reasons, decided not to take the vaccine or—and also make sure that they don't have to pay back pay. They don't have to pay for training, things like that.

Mr. ZAKHEIM. Readiness is key here. We are not meeting our numbers, and so I believe this Congress has given authority to the Secretary of Defense and Department Health to do just that. It is about execution now at this stage, Senator Scott.

Dr. LIN. If I could add, one major event that our military has over the PLA is the quality of our personnel. If you look at the what President Xi Jinping has mentioned in terms of priorities for the PLA, after military theory and organization, the second priority is development of the PLA personnel, and equipment comes after that.

Senator SCOTT. Thank you, Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Scott, and for the information of my colleagues, there are two votes beginning at 11:30 a.m. Senator Manchin, please.

Senator MANCHIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, all. I am so sorry, I had another meeting I had to speak at. I am sure you probably covered this in generality, but I would like to ask the questions again.

First of all, I think what I am hearing loud and clear is if we have laundry that is dirty and need wash, don't do it in the public when the military is involved. I am hearing that loud and clear. Which probably every time we have military conversations or disagreement, it should be done in the skiff with all 100 of us so we can talk about it to each other, and how we come out of there unified.

So that is a clear message you are giving us, and you got to continue to give that. I feel very strongly about that. Next of all, I would like—Dr. Lin, I will start with you. First of all, does the Taiwanese have the ability to defend themselves against mainland China, to be independent?

If not, would they have the ability with the United States help? If it took the United States help, would we have any allies coming with us to defend Taiwan the way that they have come together in Europe on Ukraine?

Dr. LIN. Thank you, Senator, for the question. So to be frank, Taiwan would not be able to stand by itself.

Senator MANCHIN. It cannot defend itself, no matter what we do, no matter what equipment we give them.

Dr. LIN. When you are talking about a large scale invasion, given the vast power disparities that China can bring to bear, Taiwan would not be able to stand alone.

Senator MANCHIN. Okay. Can they do it with our help? Are we able to do it to deter that or just basically prolong it?

Dr. LIN. Yes. So I think that is what the department is focused on with Taiwan as the pacing scenario, to make sure that the United States can be able to flow enough assets and have the right, both posture and capabilities, as well as operational—

Senator MANCHIN. I am understanding there is a little bit of a difference of what we believe that they would need to defend themselves and be successful versus what they desire to have.

Dr. LIN. So, when Taiwan thinks about his defense needs, its thinking not only about the high end contingency of the Chinese invasion, it is also thinking about the day to day gray zone incursions that China is flying into Taiwan's air defense identification zone. So, from their perspective, they need to cover all the different threats.

Senator MANCHIN. Okay. How about allies? Which allies would come to the defense that look at Taiwan and the commitment other than the United States? I have not heard of other allies believing that it is of national interest to them to go and fight or support Taiwanese war against China.

Dr. LIN. So, we are increasingly hearing from Japan that the defense of Taiwan is vital to Japanese national security. That is why they made the critical national security documents, the new documents that came out in December from Japan's end reflect the seriousness that Japan takes for its problem.

Senator MANCHIN. About South Korea?

Dr. LIN. South Korea—I would put South Korea lower than potentially Australia and other—I put Japan—

Senator MANCHIN. Japan the highest.

Dr. LIN. Australia. South Korea would be a bit lower.

Senator MANCHIN. I got you, Okay.

Dr. LIN. The Philippines would probably be somewhere between Australia and South Korea.

Senator MANCHIN. We are pretty much effort in the Philippines right now trying to build that up. Okay, and Dr. Hill, Ukraine. Does Ukraine have the ability to fight and win the war to take back the Donbass and also Crimea?

Dr. HILL. Well, it is not just Donbass and Crimea, it is also these are the two regions, as well as Kherson and Zaporizhzhia.

Senator MANCHIN. Sure. I mean, basically putting their country—

Dr. HILL. Yes—I, as much as we have been talking before, depends on the provision of military assistance from the United States and other allies, and also a diplomatic effort too.

I think just primarily on the battlefield, it is going to be extraordinarily difficult, because, you know, we have already had a discussion about how much the Russians have dug in at this particular point.

So, we need to have diplomacy pushing alongside the military. I can't honestly say about whether it is feasible for Ukraine. There are differences of opinion in the United States, UK, and among other—

Senator MANCHIN. Are you all gauging the support of the Russian citizens toward this fight? Do they believe it is an honorable fight, it is a needed fight? It is one that they have to put their country and take back?

Dr. HILL. This is being put to the test. What Putin is trying to tell the Russians at the moment is this is the third patriotic war after Napoleon's invasion, Nazi invasion. I mean, this is ridiculous of Russia, the Soviet Union, and the Second World War. Now, this is the next invasion.

I think not all Russians are buying this. We have seen a million people leave, and I am not convinced myself that another additional 500,000 people are willing to be sacrificed on the front lines of what is, to some extent, a vanity project for Vladimir Putin.

Senator MANCHIN. Do you think Ukrainians have the willpower and the people power to continue this fight?

Dr. HILL. So, they certainly have the willpower. The people power is under some stress at the moment because of the sheer numbers that Russia is trying to push to the battlefield. We are aware of that, which is why, as Mr. Zakheim has been saying, it is very important to outweigh with the equipment. But again, diplomatic support is going to be crucial. It won't be just won on the battlefield, this war—

Senator MANCHIN. Yes, but diplomatic—and I am always concerned the United States might intervene in, or the Europeans put so much pressure on to go to the negotiating table and Putin is going to walk away with a win. No matter if he loses, he will walk away with the propaganda win.

Dr. HILL. I have exactly the same concerns, which is why we have to really step up our diplomacy with other countries to make very clear how unacceptable it is to have Putin get away with what is a violation of international—yes.

Senator MANCHIN. My final—I am running out of time. I know, I am so sorry. If I may, sir. The, basically the will for our allies

to stay in this fight, are they going to be forced back as energy independence or energy security or lack of it, or a need of the Russian energy cheap energy they have had before? Is that going to force maybe this to a table or to resolve prior to where it needs.

Dr. HILL. This is much less of a factor than it was before. I think actually you will find that Europeans resolve is much stronger than perhaps is often seen from here.

Senator MANCHIN. Thank you so much.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Manchin. Senator Mullin, please.

Senator MULLIN. Thank you, Chairman, and just for common purposes, I want to see if there is any way I could get a list of promotions before we vote on them because I think I just voted on my brother-in-law to be promoted, and I wanted Billy to maybe put a hold on them before I do that.

[Laughter.]

Senator MULLIN. I like him sometimes but not always.

Chairman REED. Absolutely. We could. You have to go through 1,700 names but—

Senator MULLIN. Well, that is fine. I will find him pretty quick.

Chairman REED. No, that is no problem.

Senator MULLIN. Anyways, I appreciate the opportunity to serve on this Committee, and I want to go straight to, sir, forgive me if I miss your name, but Zakheim? Is that kind of—

Mr. ZAKHEIM. But I will take Zakheim.

Senator MULLIN. Say that again.

Mr. ZAKHEIM. Zakheim.

Senator MULLIN. Zakheim. All right, Zakheim. In 2022, to the National Defense Strategy Briefing mentioned our enemies use of irregular warfare as a way to destabilize our allies and undermine our conventional military power. Can you speak of the effects of Russia's energy warfare has had on Europe's resolve and the allies in Ukraine?

Mr. ZAKHEIM. Thank you for the question, Senator. I want to associate myself with what Dr. Hill just said, where they absolutely tried to intimidate and browbeat the Europeans into submission on the basis of turning off the spigots, and energy warfare is really what it came down to.

I think in this regard, Europe, I guess from my standpoint, surprised me. They have diversified. Recently, as you may be aware Senator, Vladimir Putin is now going to reduce production because he hasn't seen the effects of this this form of warfare. So, I think it is actually been a good news story to date.

Senator MULLIN. Well, I have said this multiple times that U.S. energy independence brings on global stabilization. People want to do business with the United States.

Dr. Hill, you made a reference that we should be trying to help our allies move more with food, fuel, and fertilizer.

The problem is, is that underneath this current Administration, the war on energy, even the president's comments just recently that he is wanting to eliminate fossil fuels within 10 years, it causes problems with our allies, would you agree?

Dr. HILL. Well, it depends on, you know, how we are framing all of that. I mean—

Senator MULLIN. Well, if we cut fossil fuels, you are going to damage food supply. As a rancher, someone that produces a lot of protein for the American people, I can't run my tractors and our semis on electricity. If I could, it would cost two or three more times to buy that product, which there is not the margin in there.

So, it is going to hurt the food supply. Fertilizer, my lord, we saw the effects of that last year. So, when you make that comment, it would have to have worse effects on our allies because they would have to depend on somebody else for that.

Dr. HILL. Well, look, you are absolutely right in making this distinction and I am glad you did, because, of course, 70 percent of food production is fuel, just as you have pointed out. It is not the electricity, it is actually the fuel that is in the major equipment, but it is also for making fertilizer because all the ammonia phosphates and, you know, fertilizers are used with natural gas.

So, we have to—what I was going to say is we have to have a very sensible discussion about all of this. There is another dimension beyond the fuel, fertilizer, food mix, which you have quite rightly pointed out, which is of nuclear energy, too. We haven't put this in the mix.

Vladimir Putin has, of course, imperiled civilian nuclear power by attacks on the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant, going through the Chernobyl exclusion zone. We have been dependent on Russia for some of the fuel supply system for nuclear fuel.

This is a time for us to step up into this realm as well. I think, possibly for this Committee and many others, we should be having a very sensible, open discussion on the complexities of this issue and how to balance it off.

Senator MULLIN. Thank you. I agree. Sir, what lessons should we learn from Russia's irregular warfare?

Mr. ZAKHEIM. Well, they have been effective with hybrid warfare. As you know, in Georgia, in Crimea. In this case, Putin was perhaps overconfident in his conventional forces capability and didn't pursue that route.

Although I would note that the day before Russia had the physical land invasion of Ukraine, there were robust cyber-attacks on Ukraine, on their government servers, and actually globally. So, we have to think of this conflict as one that is playing out in all domains, including, I think, what you are characterizing as the irregular domain as well.

The notion that we are in some sort of steady State of either peace or conflict, the reality is that there are elements of military domains right now that are in active conflict, cyber being the primary example.

Senator MULLIN. Thank you, sir. With the fact that I came over from the House and we respect the time because we get cutoff, I am going to yield back the remainder of my time to you.

Chairman REED. Thank you. That is the example that everyone should follow. I agree. I think, Senator Mullin, you have added so much to the committee already.

[Laughter.]

Senator MULLIN. You will get over it soon.

Chairman REED. With that, let me recognize for 5 minutes, Senator Blumenthal.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you. I am not going to use any of my 5 minutes to comment on any reaction. Thank you all for being here. It has been very, very helpful and enlightening. I have been to Kiev three times in the past year.

Every time I go, I am so deeply moved and impressed by the resolve and resilience of the Ukrainian people, which I think in the end of the day is the reason that they will win. Because as Presidents Zelenskyy told me during one of my visits with him, they will fight to the last person and they will fight with pitchforks if they need to do it.

I have supported his requests for the javelins and stingers, and then for long range artillery and still longer-range artillery. The ATACMS [Army Tactical Missile Systems], not just the HIMARS [High Mobility Artillery Rocket System]. For the tanks that he needs, not just the Bradley and Stryker vehicles, but the Leopards and the Challengers. Now for the fighter aircraft.

As important as those munitions and artillery and other hardware are, I think the morale and determination of the people of Ukraine is equally important. In that connection, I have worked with Senator Graham to support designating Russia as a State sponsor of terrorism.

Every time I have met with Presidents Zelenskyy, he has mentioned it. In fact, when we brought him a copy of the resolution, passed unanimously by the United States Senate, asking the Administration to designate Russia as a State sponsor of terrorism, his face alighted.

We presented him with the resolution in July, Senator Graham and I. It has meaning to the people of Ukraine. Would you agree with me that Russia should be designated a State sponsor of terrorism?

Dr. HILL. I would actually have to say with regret that I would not. Let me just elaborate why. Because I think that what we really need to do is to be able to persuade other countries in the global South and elsewhere, that it is very important for them to support Ukraine and to push back against Russian aggression.

We have to focus this on what Russia has done to violate Ukraine's territorial integrity. I think once you put it into that designation, you then start to have a lot of countries pull back from any support that they might have given, because the consequences of that will be questioning whether that's going to happen to them as well. We have many other conflicts around the world.

We have Saudi Arabia's attacks on Yemen, for example, and many of those where I would hesitate to think that we would apply that designation. What we have to do when we look at this is to see whether we can actually use the precedent of whatever action we take.

There is one other element that I do want to point out, though, that we should be making very clear that the United States, along with the United Kingdom, have a special role in supporting Ukraine because of the agreements that we had in 1994 to support Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty, independence, when we pushed them to give up nuclear weapons.

One thing we haven't mentioned on this panel is the proliferation challenge that we now face because of this. So I do think that we,

the United States, along with the United Kingdom and others, should be stressing continuously how much—how important it is to support Ukraine. But I am afraid that with regret, I would hesitate taking this step.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. How about the Wagner Group? Would you agree with me that we should designate the Wagner group as a terrorist or a foreign terrorist group?

Dr. HILL. I think that would fall into that category. I think with the Wagner Group and another paramilitary formations, we can discuss those, some of the atrocious acts that they are undertaking. They have actually attacked Special Forces of the United States in Syria in 2018.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. So, you would distinguish—

Dr. HILL. I would distinguish Wagner. Is this the actions of particular groups under that State rubric.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Let me ask you, over the course of this year, the prospect of potential escalation by Putin has been raised as a reason not to provide each of these weapons' platforms as we have gone along. I have said the danger of escalation has been vastly overestimated.

Just as we have underestimated the capability of the Ukrainian forces, we have overestimated or exaggerated Putin's potential for escalating. Could you give me your thoughts about whether we are close to that escalation point, whether it would be triggered by the fourth-generation fighter aircraft that now we are urging be provided?

Dr. HILL. I want to seed some of this to Dr. Zakheim, but I just want to make it very clear, Putin escalates all the time. Sending 500,000 extra people, 300,000 extra people to the front is an escalation.

We are seeing a lot of caution, as we mentioned earlier, about crossing over into NATO territory because he doesn't want to have a full-on kinetic war with NATO. But I don't think that actually specific choices of equipment really—germane to this debate.

Mr. ZAKHEIM. I agree with Dr. Hill, and I think the point here is what is the platform going to be used for? Why is it necessary? That is the question that should animate decisionmaking with the emphasis on urgency and speed.

I agree with you, Senator. I think fighter aircraft, ones that this Congress has authorized the United States military not to use anymore, that could easily be sent over there, could have a material impact on the fight within the sovereign territory of Ukraine.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Blumenthal. Senator Cotton, please.

Senator COTTON. I agree with what Senator Blumenthal said that the Administration has been deterring itself from providing the Ukrainians the weapons they need. I would say from the very beginning they engaged in half measures while Ukraine has half succeeded, and they should quit pussyfooting around on the battlefield.

I want to look before Russians launched this war, though, Mr. Zakheim, to what happened in 2021. Winston Churchill, in his fa-

mous Iron Curtain speech, cautioned against offering temptations to a trial of strength.

He offered that caution specifically about the Russians, who had said he had just seen up close and personal as allies and friends for many years, and there is nothing they respect so much as military strength and nothing for which they have less respect than military weakness.

Can you tell us how did the botched withdrawal in Afghanistan perhaps tipped Vladimir Putin to a trial of strength in Ukraine?

Mr. ZAKHEIM. Well, I think they correlate, Senator. I agree with the thrust of your question. The United States looked weak. It didn't look like it was going to—did not support the State until every U.S. servicemember went home and it looked like we were unable to carry out military operations. So, we looked defeated, and I think when you look weak, people like Vladimir Putin seek to exploit the opportunity.

Senator COTTON. When Joe Biden took office, I think it is fair to say that Vladimir Putin's top two foreign policy priorities, at least as it related to the United States, were one, the extension of the New START treaty, which is a badly one-sided nuclear arms control treaty that the Obama administration entered, and two, the waiver of sanctions on the Nordstream 2 pipeline.

In his very first week in office, Joe Biden extended the New START treaty. Shortly after that, he waived sanctions on Northstream 2 pipeline. How did Joe Biden's decision to give Vladimir Putin his top two foreign policy priorities without any concessions whatsoever perhaps tempt Vladimir Putin into a trial of strength in Ukraine?

Mr. ZAKHEIM. Well, it made clear to everybody, including, I think, President Biden, that engagement of Vladimir Putin, that seeking to put forward a carrot in order to prevent the type of behavior that we have seen consistently from Vladimir Putin, as mentioned before, from 2008 in Georgia, 2014 in Crimea, is not going to work.

That, as you point out at the beginning of your question, Senator Cotton, President Putin responds to one thing, force in kind and strength. I think that is what the Ukrainians have shown and this Congress has supported, and actually pushed the President to be more forceful in that support and to understand the urgency that is required there.

Senator COTTON. Let's look at the provision of weapons to Ukraine. Actually, let's go back to the Obama-Biden era since. In President Obama's era, we provided meals ready to eat and blankets not ammunition and javelins. Then since then it has been a constant story of ammunition but not artillery, artillery but HIMARS, HIMARS but not armor. Infantry fighting vehicles, but not tanks.

Okay, tanks, but not fighters or ATACMS or cluster munitions or so forth. I have to assume, given this pattern, we are going to see provision of some of those weapons and platforms sometimes in the future when they are less effective than they would have been if they had been provided months ago or at the beginning of this war.

But let's look at one in particular, since a lot of these things we are talking about, Bradley fighting vehicles, special Abrams tanks, F-16s do have long logistics tails and take some training. We have heard a lot today about Russians being dug in trench lines, almost World War I style warfare.

We have more than 1 million cluster munitions in our stockpiles here in the United States. Today, we are not providing them in anything like sizable numbers. Could you explain what cluster munitions could do to help the Ukrainians perhaps break through the stalemate in Eastern Ukraine?

Mr. ZAKHEIM. Well, Senator, as you point out, they disperse, they clear the field, and they are very effective in having a strategic impact when you are dealing with the tactical problem that you have outlined.

Senator COTTON. Why would we not provide cluster munitions, which would be ready to fire in a matter of days, unlike, say, an Abrams tank or an F-16?

Mr. ZAKHEIM. Well, I think anything that we have in our inventory that would be useful for this battle, we ought to offer the Ukrainians.

Senator COTTON. Okay. One final question for you, Mr. Zakheim. This is in your role at the Ronald Reagan Institute. You will do an annual poll about the American people's respect and admiration for our military.

It has shown alarming downward trends in recent years. Can you give us some thoughts, both on the poll and from your experience, in crafting these questions and following over the years about why that is the case?

Mr. ZAKHEIM. Senator, thank you for that. We do the Reagan National Defense Survey annually, and just 4 years ago, the American people's trust and confidence in military was over 70 percent.

As you referenced there, Senator, now it is actually below 50 percent. The most recent defense survey we asked the respondents why, and the response was clear that the American people believe that the military has become politicized. That is expressed in a variety of different ways from civilian leadership politicizing the military, to military leaderships politicizing the military, to concerns about wokeism, and extremism, and divisive differently across percentage lines.

But I think it is not a concern of the American people that the U.S. military is unable to carry out their core mission of protecting this country and being the best military force in the world. It is a concern about politicization penetrating their mission, Senator.

Senator COTTON. Thank you.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Cotton. Senator Kaine, please.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and to the witnesses. If I had 10 minutes of questioning, I would spend 5 comparing a Biden administration that has assembled a global coalition to stand for democracy against an illegal invasion, and a previous Administration that illegally withheld congressionally mandated arms sales to Ukraine to extort a political advantage by doing so.

But I have 4 minutes and 39 seconds, and so I want to take 2 minutes, Dr. Lin, with you on a question about China and diplo-

macy, and then 2 minutes with Dr. Hill and Mr. Zakheim about an ally's reference, picking up on some of your verbal testimony. Dr. Lin, in the events surrounding this spying balloon incident, the thing that has troubled me the most is not the capacity of a high-altitude balloon.

I probably been troubled most by General Austin trying to call his counterpart in China and no one picking up the phone. What does this say about the diplomatic relationship, as an expert, that that is happening, and what do we need to do so that we have, at a minimum, clear channels of communication to avoid unnecessary escalations?

Dr. LIN. Senator, that is an excellent question. I am not surprised that Secretary Austin's counterpart did not pick up the phone.

We have a track record of us reaching out to the PLA, and them not picking up the phone, or responding at a much later time where it is no longer relevant to the situation that we are trying to deal with.

It shows that across the United States engagement with China, our military-to-military ties and relationship is relatively weak. Despite the efforts of this Administration to focus on deconfliction, crisis communications with the PLA, we have not made significant progress.

I wouldn't fault that to be on the United States side, I would fault that to be the Chinese. From their perspective, they have very little incentives to communicate or deconflict from us because they view our attempts to communicate with them as either allowing a green light of certain types of U.S. operations.

Senator KAINE. Don't they, though, value stability and they wouldn't like surprises or accidents or miscalculations that weren't in their sort of intentional interest?

Dr. LIN. They do value that. But we have seen since 2021 that they have canceled the Military Maritime Consultative Agreement, the key military to military dialogs to prevent unsafe encounters or whatnot.

I think from the Chinese perspective, they believe that if they can reach an agreement with the United States at the highest strategic level on how the relationship should be framed, all the other elements to fall in line, which is why from their perspective, they are very intent on constructing this framework of United States, China relations. Which from the United States perspective, that is only one piece of the relationship.

Senator KAINE. Right. Thank you. To Dr. Hill and Mr. Zakheim, Dr. Hill, you said something about, I think it was in reference to American allies in the hemisphere, that we pay attention to problems rather than build relationships. Mr. Zakheim, you said we need to always focus on allies as one of the most important strengths we have. Against any adversary, the network of allies we have is important.

I am the chairman of the Western Hemisphere subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations committee, and I see this throughout the Americas, deep Chinese involvement economically, humanitarian aid.

You know, debt deals that will get you in trouble later but they might be attractive upfront. What our allies tend to say to us is we would rather deal with you. I mean, we are culturally more connected. We are suspicious of some of the Chinese offers that are on the table.

But if they have got an offer and you have got nothing, how do we say to our people, well, we are turning down the free 5G system or the the port infrastructure bill. So, talk a little bit about, particularly in the Americas, your thoughts about the way to, you know, turn episodic attention to problems into a more sustained effort to build relationships.

Dr. HILL. I think this is absolutely spot on, and we need a strategy because China has a strategy. Maybe they come in, as you said, in a very specific way, as with the Belt and Road Initiative, investments in energy in places like Venezuela, for example, coming in with other forms of assistance, targeting elites. We know that the Chinese are extremely, very good at honing in on elites and propping them up. Russia does exactly the same.

It is part of this top-down approach that Dr. Lin has described, they look for a framework of the relations that starts at the top and then they let everything else flow from there. That is not the way that we approach our allies and partners in any hemisphere, let alone in the Western hemisphere.

When I was in the previous Administration, I worried a great deal as a result of the crisis in Venezuela, that we didn't have a plan. That we didn't have deep relationships. We took a lot of other neighboring countries for granted, and we didn't have a deep relationships.

Senator KAINE. Could I let Mr. Zakheim—we have identified the problem. He will give us the solution.

[Laughter.]

Mr. ZAKHEIM. No pressure there, Senator. I do think the answer here is diplomacy that Dr. Hill is speaking about. Brazil was raised before, and President Biden's engagement, I think is absolutely critical. Trade and commerce, and this is what needs to grow. That is what we do best as a country, unleash our free market.

We have tried this, and success and failed over the decades, but that continues to be worked aggressively. I think looking at Colombia, I think there is a layer where a security relationship appropriately tailored for the country can have a positive impact in terms of the type of effects that you are talking about, Senator.

Senator KAINE. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Kaine. Senator Budd, please.

Senator BUDD. Thank you, Chairman Reed, and Ranking Member Wicker. I am honored to join the Armed Services committee, and I will certainly be a good steward of our military interests in North Carolina.

Senator Wicker, I will work to keep your legacy alive at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base. Appreciate your service there. It is clear that deterrence failed in Ukraine. I am deeply concerned that the Biden administration's policies and actions will similarly lead to deterrence failing in Asia, and that China will attempt to take Taiwan by force.

Mr. Zakheim, you were recently reappointed to the National Defense Strategy Commission. Understanding that the Commission work just started on the 2022 National Defense Strategy, what does the NDS get right, and please give two or three examples of what the Biden administration got wrong.

Mr. ZAKHEIM. A glaring gap in the national defense strategy of the Biden administration, but I think it was also true for the Trump administration, is that Senator, when you look for the world resources, dollars, what is required to execute that strategy, you will not find that word.

So, I think for policymakers and elected officials, your challenge is to figure out what is exactly required to realize the significant objectives of that defense strategy. That is where I think the Commission historically has been helpful, and I think we will do so again. I think the simultaneity question that came up earlier, Senator, would be a second, I point to.

It is quite different than 2017 where we didn't see as clearly and didn't have as much evidence of this Russia, China axis. It is live, it is real, and we need to think through that.

Nuclear weapons cannot be the only answer, nor can some kind of vague reference to allies. It needs to have meaning. AUKUS is a good step, but that should be one of many examples which right now we don't have.

Senator BUDD. Thank you. Continuing on, last year you told this committee that a strategy of deterrence by denial is a sound approach to keep China from invading Taiwan. Do you maintain that position? If so, what is your current assessment of our posture in the Indo-Pacific? Should we, for example, invest more heavily or move faster in specific areas?

Mr. ZAKHEIM. Yes, I do think the denial approach, deterrence by denial is still sound, although as mentioned earlier in this hearing, some of the key elements, particularly undersea warfare capability, fast boats, submarines are just not being produced at a clip that will realize that—you know, the deterrence by denial.

I think this committee and this Administration previous mission has done a good job investing in some of the capabilities, missiles, anti-ship missiles. Long range precision munitions are key for that fight that was less apparent or we hadn't addressed that sufficiently the last go around.

So, I think those would be two areas where we need to emphasize really that are critical to accomplishing the deterrence by denial strategy. Last point on that, Senator, I would also say that we have to continue to focus on balancing.

Whereas Taiwan might be the most apparent and clearest flash point, the Indo-Pacific has other challenges. China has other ambitions in their global nature, as we see most recently in terms of China invading our aerospace.

Senator BUDD. So, Mr. Zakheim, much has been made about potential timelines for a Chinese invasion of Taiwan, but predicting when might make war seem inevitable, an invasion seems inevitable. So, what are the near and long term risks of deterrence failing without significant and sustained growth of our defense budget?

Mr. ZAKHEIM. Well, I take the view here that this strategy, which is a bipartisan strategy between the Biden and Trump administration, wants to deter for today. It recognizes the so-called Davidson window as a real possibility, and we have to deter and operate with the urgency that it could happen today.

That is the best way to push it out to tomorrow, and with tomorrow, we need to continue to make those investments where we have the modernized force that China is clearly investing in.

I think one thing this committee has done well, we know about the Chinese military modernization because this committee requires an annual China military modernization report. We learn a lot and we educate the public around it.

As much as we are concerned about what China is doing with their signal fusion, just focusing on their core military modernization has revealed what a significant challenge we are facing today.

Senator BUDD. Thank you. Many Americans, some would say a majority of Americans, support Ukraine, including the reclaiming of territory taken by Russia. A growing number of Americans, however, are rightly concerned in the U.S.—that the U.S. is providing too much aid, particularly in comparison to our European allies.

So, in my limited time, Dr. Hill, given that the United States is no longer resourced to fight two major wars simultaneously, we must consider real tradeoffs between continuing to arm Ukraine or being ready to deter, or if necessary, defeat a Chinese invasion of Taiwan.

Where and how should the United States encourage our European allies to step up so we can free up resources to focus on the priority theater in the Indo-Pacific?

Dr. HILL. Thank you, Senator. But I actually think that Russia and China are fused together in this regard. We all forget that Russia is actually in Asia, and as a Asia-Pacific power, it actually has a long border with China. In fact, the longest border that Russia has in any country is with China.

Russia has benefited from China's assistance and facilitation of this war, including moving its own troops from the Russian Far East to the front in Ukraine. So, China and Russia are part of the same problem, unfortunately. I do agree with you that we need to work very closely with our European allies.

We also have European allies who are interested in the Asia-Pacific region, the AUKUS alignment, for example, includes the United Kingdom. We have unfortunately got into a bit of a spat with France over that, but I think we can recover from this.

We need to think about our other European allies that are major maritime powers, which France and the United Kingdom actually are. But I do think we need to recognize that Europeans are stepping up on the front in Ukraine. We may also have to ask Europe what it is prepared to do in the Indo-Pacific region as well, because they have interest.

Senator BUDD. Very good. Thank you. My time has expired.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Budd. Senator Rosen, please.

Senator ROSEN. Well, thank you, Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Wicker, for holding this very timely hearing on global security challenges, which comes ahead of the unfortunately, the 1-year an-

niversary of Vladimir Putin's brutal and unjustified invasion of Ukraine. As Russia and Ukraine, of course, we know they are both preparing for spring counter offensives because of the weather there.

It is absolutely critical, I believe, that the United States and our allies stand with Ukraine for as long as it takes to help the Ukrainian people win. So, Dr. Hill, I want to build on a question that Senator Manchin asked you. If Ukraine were to undertake a military operation in Crimea, which was illegally annexed by Russia in 2014, how could the United States and NATO allies deter Russian escalation short of a direct military confrontation between NATO and Russia?

Dr. HILL. Well, first of all, Senator Rosen, thank you very much for this question, but there is a lot of territory between the Ukrainian front lines and Crimea at this particular point. The Ukrainians have been able to penetrate into the airspace over Crimea using drones and the long-range missiles.

We have seen some of this happen. But in actual fact, what Putin is trying to do is consolidate all the territory around Crimea to keep it. In fact, what Mr. Zakheim was already talking about, which is the military battle in the Donbass region, in Zaporizhzhia region, Kherson is pretty important.

So, we have got to look at that before Crimea comes onto the agenda. Now, there is a case, and I think that we have to be discussing this with the Ukrainians, behind the scenes about what to do when it comes to the issue of Crimea over the longer term. Russia has claimed all of this territory, not just Crimea. We have to figure out how are we going to push those claims back.

It is not just a question of how far we can push Ukrainian territory forward again in this battle, but what are we going to do about that territory over the longer term? The Ukrainians were willing to discuss some of the formulations internationally prior to all of the atrocities that have been carried out here.

I think we have to have an international level discussion in the United Nations of how to handle this. It is unacceptable at any point for Russia to have any kind of political control and claims of sovereignty over Ukrainian territory. So, it is not just a question of what happens when Ukraine tries to retake territory, but how are we going to handle this over the longer term.

Senator ROSEN. Well, thank you, and I kind of want to build on that because we know that we are trying to add Finland and Sweden. Their NATO ascension is really going to bolster our alliance, of course, in significant ways. We all know that.

So, what do you think the advantages, comparative advantages, or the challenges that we might have bringing them into the alliance. Will that help us? How will that help us in some of the things that we are trying to do as well?

Dr. HILL. Well, look, Finland and Sweden have made a strategic decision to join NATO. They could have gone to any point since World War II, since the creation of NATO, and they did not. Finland has a very long border with Russia. It was attacked by the Soviet Union in the 1930's, 1940's.

Finland has actually got an incredibly important defensive posture. They can put up to 800,000 people under arms. So, Finland

is determined to defend itself and is also making it very clear that it wants to be part of the defense of Europe, so this is very significant. Sweden was completely neutral up until this point. This is a huge rupture in the strategic posture of Sweden.

Sweden is also making it clear that it intends to defend Europe writ large, too. This puts on the agenda a whole rethinking of our European security posture. This isn't just something that the United States has to step up to, Sweden and Finland are stepping up as well.

Senator ROSEN. Thank you. I want to build on that in a minute or so I have left. Dr. Lin, I want to talk with you a little bit about mainly maintaining our defense technological edge. Global competition, we have declining R&D, we have contracting challenges, we have a huge STEM workforce gap, huge.

There are just a few of the impediments that we have to growing at the edge with our adversaries. We see them all around. We have been talking about this today, particularly China, and that is a pacing challenge for us.

How, in your opinion, do you assess the United States' ability to develop, to adopt, to deploy these emerging technologies for national security, and particularly as compared to China, which we know is really moving forward pretty quickly?

Dr. LIN. I guess I will separate the development of technology into two aspects. One is developing of the talent, which I think China is able to do much faster because they have more of the STEM education, because they are able to redirect education in certain ways that we and the United States Government are not—don't have the same authoritarian powers to do.

I would say that when it actually comes to the fielding and ability to operate these emerging technology, that is where, and this goes back to our discussion earlier, the personnel and the training within the PLA is far lacking than the United States. So, we can see a lot of, for example, new weapon systems online, but that doesn't mean that China's actually able to operate these new weapons systems.

I would say that I wouldn't characterize the United States as necessarily lagging behind the Chinese. I would say we have different advantages in terms of we have the personnel and we are able to incorporate the technologies, but China—I am sorry, on the military side.

But China is able to invest more and is also able to have more—they have also more STEM graduates to help try to develop that technology to begin with.

Senator ROSEN. So, you would say going broad and deep in STEM education, starting as early as possible, pre-K all the way through to develop the pipeline would be in our critical best interest.

Dr. LIN. Yes, for sure.

Senator ROSEN. Thank you.

Chairman REED. Thank you very much. Senator Sullivan, please.

Senator SULLIVAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and unfortunately, my colleague from Virginia is not here. Had I had 10 minutes to raise an issue, I would have asked you guys, a previous Democratic administration, the Obama administration wouldn't give the

Ukrainians javelins because they were scared about sparking a war with Putin. The next Administration, the Trump administration, immediately gave javelins.

Previous Democratic administration, the Obama administration declared a red line in Syria, then watched everybody walk over it, invited the Russians into the Middle East for the first time in decades, and the next Administration declared a red line in Syria with Russian proxies saying if they get any closer to our special forces, we will destroy them. Then we destroyed them. Hundreds of them, killed them.

So, there is a lot of comparisons here, and I just want my colleagues to know, but I don't have 10 minutes. I am going to turn to another topic that is all about American strategy and that is energy. I am glad to see Senator Manchin, Senator Mullin have raised this.

A very memorable meeting I had many years ago with our former chairman here, Senator McCain, and a Russian dissident, very brave Russian dissident who is now in jail, Vladimir Kar-Murza, I had asked him, what more can we do to undermine the Putin regime?

What more can we do to go after Putin and the oligarchs? He said it is easy, Senator. The number one thing you can do as a country is produce more American energy, number one. Do you agree with that, Dr. Hill, Mr. Zakheim?

If you can keep your answers short, I have a bunch of questions. American energy as a really important tool of American power to deal with great powers like Russia and China.

Dr. HILL. Well, I would say yes, writ large, together with our allies and rethinking also our energy posture, absolutely.

Mr. ZAKHEIM. Yes.

Senator SULLIVAN. Thank you. Dr. Lin, someone else who is very scared of American energy dominance is Xi Jinping. You read the reporting, it makes him very nervous. I was just in the Middle East, 60 percent of China's oil and gas goes through the Straits of Hormuz. If we are in a conflict with them, we could shut that down in 10 minutes.

Does American—is American energy dominance important for us, all the above oil, gas, renewables, whatever, but certainly oil and gas, is that important for our competition with China? Is that something we should emphasize?

Dr. LIN. Absolutely, and China imports about 70 percent of its oil, so it is a huge dependency that China needs to work around.

Senator SULLIVAN. So, they are scared when they look at American energy dominance, is that correct?

Dr. LIN. Yes.

Senator SULLIVAN. Let me ask another question. We haven't done American energy dominance. We haven't produced more American energy. To the contrary, when this Administration came into office, they did three things. They immediately started shutting down their production of American energy. They immediately started shutting down American energy infrastructure.

They immediately started pressuring American financial institutions not to invest in American energy, and then when the prices of energy went up on working families, they went overseas. Presi-

dent bended knee to the king of Saudi Arabia, begging for more oil, lifting sanctions on Venezuela, a terrorist regime to get more oil, and they make it harder to produce American energy here.

Let me ask you this question, assume that there was a project in America, \$9 billion investment, 200,000 barrels a day, 2,500 jobs to build it, 75 percent of which are union, lowest greenhouse gas emissions in the world, highest environmental standards in the world of any energy project.

From a national security perspective, if that was in front of you right now, would you say approve it or would you say, no, keep begging from Saudi Arabia and Venezuela? What would you do, Dr. Lin? Will you approve a project like that?

Dr. LIN. I would approve it, but I would also continue to strengthen our relations with Saudis and many of our partners.

Senator SULLIVAN. I agree 100 percent, but not Venezuela, right?

Dr. LIN. No, not Venezuela.

Senator SULLIVAN. You don't need to go begging from them. Dr. Hill, would you approve a project like that, from a national security perspective. That is all I ask.

Dr. HILL. From a national security perspective, absolutely, but we also need to look at the domestic versus the export potential.

Senator SULLIVAN. Correct.

Dr. HILL. Because I think what we have got—what we are talking about here is how much energy that the United States can also export in our own—

Senator SULLIVAN. But 200,000 barrels a day, that gives us muscle, right, from America—

Dr. HILL. Certainly, in the short to medium term it does.

Senator SULLIVAN. Yes, absolutely. Dr. Zakheim, what about you?

Mr. ZAKHEIM. I agree.

Senator SULLIVAN. Okay, thank you. Now, final question. Assume we had a senior Administration official who goes to Asia, who cautions our allies in Asia not to purchase clean burning American LNG and then tells these same Asian allies don't help some of the other countries, ASEAN countries, for example, transition from coal to gas, make them transition from coal to wind turbines. Would that be smart American foreign policy, diplomatic policy as it relates to Asia and building our alliances? Does that make sense to any of you?

Dr. HILL. There is one element and—

Senator SULLIVAN. Well just real quick because I am out of time, but—

Dr. HILL. No, no, but the point is that China is making huge inroads on renewables and on in a green energy use, including on constructing turbines. So it wouldn't necessarily be the wrong thing to do, if we can also have the technology that—

Senator SULLIVAN. China is building a coal plant a week, and in ASEAN, they want to build more coal plants. We have John, I am naming John Kerry, if you haven't noticed. Does that make sense for John Kerry to go to Asia and warn our allies not to buy American LNG and tell the ASEAN countries you can't go from coal to gas, you have got to go from coal to windmill, which no industrialized country has ever done. Dr. Lin, does that make any sense?

Dr. LIN. So I think one of the concerns that countries particularly in ASEAN but also in Pacific Island have is about climate change and how that affects their national security. So I don't know is, what Secretary Kerry was thinking behind that. But I think from a U.S. perspective, it makes sense to encourage our allies and partners to buy American.

Senator SULLIVAN. To buy American LNG. Dr. Zakheim.

Mr. ZAKHEIM. I associate with Dr. Lin.

Senator SULLIVAN. Thank you.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Sullivan. I am going to recognize Senator Duckworth and ask Senator Warren to take over as I go vote. I shall return. Someone said that once. Excuse me.

Senator DUCKWORTH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome to the panel. I want to pick up on a thread from earlier in the conversation and discuss why I find the CCP's actions across the Indo-Pacific, from the Mekong River to the South China Sea to the Pacific island nations, so incredibly troubling.

It is no secret that the CCP is using economic coercion and expanding its diplomatic presence in this key area of the world. Reality dictates that countries in this region cannot simply ignore China's presence and proximity.

Yet I still hear from our allies and partners about how the United States remains a strong partner of choice, and even those who are not yet allies and partners. I sat down and had a meeting with the prime minister of Cambodia, and he said he wanted to engage with the United States as a partner when it comes economically—to economic engagement. Which brings me to my first question.

Dr. Lin, it is lovely to see you again, and I appreciated your insights when I was preparing for my travel to Taiwan last year, and I look forward to hearing more of your thoughts as I plan another trip to the region. Your testimony highlighted how our Nation's alliances and partnerships are a critical advantage over the PRC, and I couldn't agree more.

That is why I am leading a CODEL next week to Indonesia and Japan to discuss a wide range of issues, including energy security and the role that biofuels can play in reducing our reliance on fossil fuels. Facilitating greater economic engagement among friendly nations or those who would like to become more friendly.

The importance of expanding people to people academic exchanges, including those that have brought many Indonesians to study in Illinois. I will also engage both countries on bolstering multilateral organizations like ASEAN.

Dr. Lin, how do you see the role of multilateral partnerships and agreements in countering malign CCP activity? How can the United States best show support for all of our Southeast Asian partners with our relationships with them, but also encouraging other partners like Taiwan to engage with our Southeast Asian partners? Thank you.

Dr. LIN. Senator Duckworth, great to see you, too. I am really heartened that you are taking another trip to the region, because part of what we need to do from the United States, not only the Biden administration, but also through our Congress, is to have more visits to the region.

Our own presence there to the region reassures our allies and partners, and also showcases that we care and are listening to them to what they are most concerned with. With respect to multilateral organizations, we are already doing quite a bit in this area, and I would point out for Indonesia, what is particularly valuable is the recent Indonesian agreement with Vietnam to settle their disagreements over the EEZ, and that settlement is a model that should be emulated, or that we should support other Southeast Asian countries to do because it shows that we can, or rather United States and other partners can settle disputes peacefully in the South China Sea.

That is a clear pushback against China's claims in the South China Sea, the nine dash line claims. As from Japan, I would recommend that given all the major shifts that were happening, that we are seeing since this December in terms of Japan's national defense strategy and whatnot, your trip comes at a very pivotal point to really understand what direction Japan is taking.

We had discussed earlier that Japan is likely one of the few countries that Taiwan can probably depend on more among United States allies for its defense.

Senator DUCKWORTH. Thank you, and you touched on this. I think that there are current cooperation agreements that we can expand upon, and there are new partnerships we should pursue to ensure stability in the Indo-Pacific region.

I also think we need to look at what is happening in Europe, specifically the war of choice in Ukraine. So my next question, Dr. Lin—to both, Dr. Lin and Dr. Hill, building on what Dr. Lin was just talking about, with working with our Asian partners to expand more of these partnerships and agreements.

With only a few exceptions, many countries in Southeast Asia have not joined in sanctioning Russia following the invasion of Ukraine, and many of them are watching what is happening in Russia and gaining a different lessons learned for what that means for them, whether it is Taiwan, whether it is for freedom of navigation in the South—in the Indo-Pacific region.

What message or actions help convince our non-European allies and partners to condemn Russian action? Conversely, what message in action resonate with European allies and partners as a counter to CCP malign activity? How do we get more of our engagement with Europe, and to get our European partners to understand that the Indo-Pacific region is important to them too?

Dr. LIN. Right. So in terms of getting more Asian allies and partners on board to sanction Russia, I think part of it is also trying to understand what is holding them back. Is it because they are very dependent on Russian arms? Is it because they are dependent on certain types of trade with villagers?

Or to the extent that we can decrease their dependency on Russia? I think that is a way in which we could shift their perspective because there's something holding them back. I think most guys you recognize that Russia's invasion of Ukraine is a clear atrocity and something that they oppose, but it is getting them to the sanctions that we need to work on.

Senator DUCKWORTH. Dr. Hill.

Dr. HILL. I agree completely with Dr. Lin. I think, you know, part of the issue that we face, not just in Southeast Asia but elsewhere, is a lot of countries are values neutral when they look at this.

So we have to clarify what is at risk. It is not autocracy versus democracy because they can constantly challenge us. It is really the violation of territorial integrity. So when Dr. Lin was talking about the importance of those helping Indonesia and Vietnam to work out their territorial disputes, this is what we have to clarify for countries in other regions. European countries are stepping up to try to make this point too.

It is the point that Finland and Sweden are making as they seek to join NATO. Poland, the Baltic states, other countries are expressing their deep concern, and that this is also a problem in the Indo-Pacific region.

India, for example, is a really important country to engage on this, and I hope that Members of this Committee will think about going to India. I know you already have had meetings with Indian officials, because India faces territorial disputes, not just with Pakistan, but also with China in the Himalayas.

India is wondering what are we going to do in the event of another outbreak of conflict there, for example, just as other countries around Asia wondering what our posture is going to be on these issues? That's what we have to clarify.

Senator DUCKWORTH. Thank you.

Senator WARREN. Thank you. Senator Schmitt is recognized.

Senator SCHMITT. Thank you, Madam Chair. I would say that I am very proud to be on this committee. This committee in Missouri has had a long history of service on this committee and look forward to working with all my fellow committee members.

As you know, there has been a lot of discussion of China, and rightfully so. As part of their ambition to project power across the world, they have been more aggressive in building military bases and partnerships with countries like Sri Lanka and the Solomon Islands and Cambodia.

A lot of Chinese firms now own and operate assets in 96 ports in 53 countries, all of which can be used to establish logistics and intelligence networks in strategic locations, enabling China to project its power globally.

This network poses significant threat to the United States and our allies, there is no doubt about that, particularly if China can cutoff access that our military needs during difficult times or times of conflict.

I guess Mr. Zakheim, maybe direct this to you initially because they don't have a ton of time. I want to get through at least a couple of questions. What specific actions should the Department of Defense undertake to ensure that China does not gain further access to ports throughout the world, especially in the South China Sea?

Mr. ZAKHEIM. Thank you, Senator. I think the critical thing for the Department of Defense or other pieces for government to deal with China's reach globally in the ways you have described is that we need to push out our logistics capability.

The notion that somehow, we are going to rely on shipping or transport aircraft to deliver forces, material to the battlefield like we did in the last century is not going to happen. That is why I think you see some of these memos coming out for those military leaders focused on pre-positioning, on the TRANSCOM type issues are most concerned because it is about getting there first with speed and making sure the kill chain is not reliant on pulling back the capability, you know, an ocean plus away.

Senator SCHMITT. Then, while we are talking about China, which I certainly believe is our biggest threat, what do they believe is their biggest weakness in a potential conflict with a foreign adversary, particularly the United States? How do they view that?

Mr. ZAKHEIM. I continue to believe, and I defer to Dr. Lin here and her studies of this as well, is that our undersea capability is something that I think spooks them. That is the one I would start with. It is why think we need to double down on it. They don't have the answer.

The quicker we can move from manned to unmanned, as well as sustaining the current man capability is our comparative advantage, and we should be investing that in a significant, urgent, speedy fashion.

Dr. LIN. Senator, I think one of—the Chinese don't say this quite easily. I think one of their biggest weaknesses that they see is actually their personnel because they don't do it—unlike the United States, where we have had significant experience fighting different types of wars, they have had very limited fighting experience.

Even though they have the equipment, there is no guarantee that transitioning from even a large-scale exercise to a minor conflict, they would be successful, much less a very high end contingency, one of the most complex operations we can think about in terms of the Chinese amphibious invasion of Taiwan.

Senator SCHMITT. I will just open this up to all three of you for probably the last question that I have time for, but you have all spoken about threats of foreign actors, especially in Western Asia.

One concern that I have is that we remain focused on obviously, those important threats, but may ignore threats closer to home, to our own borders. What actions should the department take to protect our national interests in the Western Hemisphere, specifically the Southern border and in the Panama Canal Zone?

By the way, how should we engage South—Central and South America in some of these efforts?

Dr. HILL. Yes. I mean, this obviously picks up on the question that Senator Kaine raised, and I analyze the problem that actually, Mr. Zakheim came up with a few solutions here in terms of our relationships with some of those critical countries.

I think we need to assess the strength of our relationships with our Western Hemisphere allies, thinking about how we can capitalize on the recent Presidential visit to Brazil and how Brazil can play a larger role not just in the region, but internationally because of its role in the BRICS.

Our relationship with China and Russia and India. Thinking about our relations with Mexico, that helps that relationship overall, not just as Mexico a problem, but how this can be strengthened as an alliance and as a relationship going forward.

I think we need to have a whole scale assessment of the nature of our military, diplomatic trade, as Mr. Zakheim, relationships, said, and be paying particular attention to those countries where China and also Russia have penetrated in terms of their military or intelligence investments, for example.

Mr. ZAKHEIM. I will just add, Senator, that Plan Colombia was a great success. I think what I have read and the conversation that is at risk, that is a model that needs to be replicated and we need to strengthen it in Colombia. That is coming out the military security cooperation plane, and I think it would have the effects that you rightfully point out we need in the Western Hemisphere.

Senator SCHMITT. Thank you.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator. Let me recognize Senator Warren, please.

Senator WARREN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So we often talk about the role of aircraft carriers and hypersonic weapons, excuse me, in the great power competition, but I would like to zero in on what people bring to the fight, specifically, our military personnel. Leaders in the People's Republic of China have repeatedly raised concerns that they lack personnel who are both capable and highly skilled for modern warfare.

A report for the United States-China Economic and Security Review Commission found that, "many People's Liberation Army commanders are still judged as incapable of properly assessing situations, making operational decisions, deploying forces or leading forces." We don't want to underestimate China's capabilities, but that is a pretty sorry State of affairs.

Dr. Lin, you are an expert on China and you were the Senior Advisor advising the Department of Defense in both the Obama and Trump administrations. So tell me, Dr. Lin, how important are personnel in winning on the battlefield?

Dr. LIN. Thank you, Senator Warren. Personal is absolutely important. As you indicated and as I mentioned earlier to Senator Schmitt, I think that is one of the major weaknesses that the Chinese assess to be within their PLA.

They aren't worried about whether they can get another, for example, Dongfeng-41 missile or another submarine. They are worried about whether their personnel can perform. So it is absolutely critical.

Senator WARREN. Okay. People, people, people. But after years of having forces that have little more than a 9th grade education, PRC is now starting to attract significantly more educated recruits. Dr. Lin, how successful has the PLA been at retaining more skilled troops?

Dr. LIN. So you are correct in saying that China, the PLA is attracting more educated PLA recruits, but I am not—we don't really have really good statistics on how they are in terms of retaining them. But I would say that the respect for the PLA broadly in China is nowhere close to the respect for the United States military in the United States.

Senator WARREN. It is an interesting point on this, because unlike the Chinese government, we actually care about our people. Still we have our own recruiting and retention challenges here at

home. For example, U.S. military families living in unsafe housing or struggling to access health care that they need.

I am looking forward to working on the personnel subcommittee with Senator Scott to tackle these problems. Dr. Lin, if the United States substantially disinvested in the programs we have to support our military workforce, things like access to child care and violence prevention programs, would that help us or hurt us in our effort to maintain a competitive advantage over China when it comes to the quality of our personnel?

Dr. LIN. I think it would definitely hurt us. Having worked with many military officers, I know how difficult it is to be able to sacrifice for the Nation while also taking care of needs at home. So without that, without the U.S. Government helping them with their child care, the home portion, I think it makes their day jobs much more difficult.

Senator WARREN. Good, and I see our other witnesses both nodding yes as well. Do I take it you both agreed on this?

Dr. HILL. We certainly do, and look, we can see the performance of the Russian military at this moment is a case in point, a country that does not care about the quality of its personnel, only the quantity that can be thrown at the battlefield. All of the issues that you have just raised are one of the reasons why Russia has not been performing as we might have expected.

Senator WARREN. You know—go ahead, Mr. Zakheim.

Mr. ZAKHEIM. I completely agree, Senator Warren. One of the things this committee does annually when they report out the defense authorization bill, what it has done for the men and women in uniform, I think that is the example and why we are able to realize these benefits.

Senator WARREN. Yes. I raised this today in this context because some Republicans want to cut programs that support our troops and our military families. They talk about fiscal responsibility, but I see two big problems.

First, anyone who is using a debate over the Nation's debt limit to crash our economy in order to extract massive spending cuts is being reckless, not responsible. Second, make no mistake, the same folks who claim to care about the size of the Pentagon budget will continue to get a blank check for weapons programs that go to billions of dollars of cost and not to our personnel.

The Pentagon funding these Republicans want to cut is the part that goes to safe housing and medical care for our troops. I get it. There is plenty of waste to cut in the Pentagon's budget, but programs that support our troops and inspire them to continue to put their lives on the line for our country aren't waste. They protect our greatest strength as a Nation, our people. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Warren. Senator Wicker, you have additional questions, please.

Senator WICKER. Right. I am going to take a short second round. You have all been extremely helpful and it has been a very informative but long two and a half hours for you, and I know you are anxious to get up. In terms of—Mr. Zakheim, in terms of our stake as American families in the Ukraine conflict.

We have heard arguments, this is an assault on the global rules based order, that Russia has violated the U.N. chapter. It is a violation of international law. In addition, there is the 1994 agreement that the United States made when Ukraine gave up their nuclear weapons. There are going to be a lot of families who say, that is not enough for me. I am trying to get my kids ready for college.

My spouse and I both work. I am furious about the border. Inflation is killing me. Why should any—why should my tax dollars—that doesn't affect me and my family where I live, that we are so interested in in Ukraine defeating Russia in this. What is our stake?

Mr. ZAKHEIM. Thank you, Senator Wicker. I think the response is let's not be pennywise and pound foolish. Ukraine winning means that we do not have a broader armed conflict in Europe. History is clear, the cost to America with a war on the continent could be so consequential, it takes over the entire country in the form of some world war like effort.

That is the difference, in my judgment, between allowing Vladimir Putin and his revanchist ambitions to have whatever they want in Europe versus not putting a single United States boot on the ground, investing in the Ukrainians along with our allies, to allow them to do essentially our work for us, that is to defeat an adversary.

Senator WICKER. So it is going to save that family tax money down the road?

Mr. ZAKHEIM. Potentially lives, Senator.

Senator WICKER. Dr. Hill.

Dr. HILL. I agree completely with Mr. Zakheim about this as well, and Senator Cotton, while he was opening up for his question, invoked Winston Churchill. This August buddy had debates about whether the United States should continue to support the United Kingdom before the United States entry into World War II back in the period from 1939 to 1941, in fact.

Senator WICKER. Indeed, it was controversial.

Dr. HILL. Exactly. So I think it is the same kind of debate about the knock on effects for all of us, and just one issue about the borders. The kinds of attacks that Russia has made on another country and its borders lead to more refugees and migrants. We have seen that.

In fact, we do have Russians, Ukrainians, and others coming over the Southern border who have taken roundabout routes to get here. We are now going to face on a global scale more of these kinds of violations. We have got a massive refugee and migration problem across the entire globe. Climate change is going to exacerbate this. We are going to be dealing with problems on the border from—

Senator WICKER. I have to hurry. Mr. Zakheim, you make a point that one of the worst wastes of money being pound foolish is a CR, a continuing resolution. Would you explain why that is?

Mr. ZAKHEIM. Thank you, and thank you for giving a chance. I didn't get to your reform question earlier. This Congress is all about how you deal with waste and inefficiency in Department of Defense enterprise of \$100 billion with the Congress year over year.

I know this is not the choice of this committee, but going on a CR, not allowing that the budget that the Department of Defense has requested to be executed, and forcing them, boxing them in their previous year's request, it raises inefficiency where you are spending money, authorize and appropriated funds in things that the Congress doesn't want them to spend on, the Department of Defense doesn't want them to spend on, all because of this larger context has happened for decades, year over year.

The exception is when we don't have a CR and it translates into tens of billions of dollars annually of inefficient spending of taxpayer money, sir.

Senator WICKER. One other thing. It seems to me the Russian offensive of this late winter has bogged down and is not likely to succeed any further. Would you comment on that?

Mr. ZAKHEIM. I think that is still a question. It is certainly hasn't proceeded at the pace that Vladimir Putin would have liked, but as Dr. Hill and others pointed out, Putin keeps on putting people, personnel, and capability forward.

What the Ukrainians need is the ability to strike through it and attack it from the rear, if I understand from military professionals, and they don't have that capability right now. It risks allowing the Russians to advance inch by inch, foot by foot. Vladimir Putin has the patience, so far, the ability, to do just that.

Senator WICKER. Thank you all. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Wicker. I want to thank the panel for an excellent hearing and presentation and commend you for your work. Thank you very, very much. With that, let me call this hearing to be adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:13 p.m., the Committee adjourned.]

